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The American University in Cairo

School of Global Affairs and Public Policy

**CAN SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS INFLUENCE THE AGENDA
SETTING OF TRADITIONAL MEDIA? TWO CASE STUDIES FROM
EGYPT**

A Thesis Submitted to the

Public Policy and Administration Department

**in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Public Policy**

By

Salma Oda

Spring18

ABSTRACT

This research aims to examine if social media content that is widely shared or commented on can influence the agenda of traditional media on women issues namely the sexual harassment and undocumented marriages, to what extent and whether or not the same framing applies when the discussion moves from traditional media to social media.

The topics chosen were related to sexual harassment and undocumented marriages which are two crucial, sensitive topics for Egyptian women. Three traditional media outlets were purposefully selected for this study channels. Interviews with the producers of the primetime TV shows were also conducted to assess how and to what extent they rely on social media to set their daily and weekly agenda of topics. These shows are “Sabaya Al Kheir” on Nahar TV, “Al Ashera Masaan” on Dream TV and “Hona Al Assema” on CBC Channel. An online analysis tool was used to measure the volume of online conversations and determine their sentiment. The results showed that social media trending topics such as sexual harassment and undocumented marriages do make it to traditional media especially if they are related to bigger societal issues like undocumented marriage and sexual harassment. Viral content also are more likely to reach traditional media, which follow the framing of online sentiment.

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Salma,

January 2018

Table of Content

CHAPTER 1: Study Overview.....	7
- Introduction	9
- Statement of the research problem	10
- The purpose of the research	11
- Research question and sub-questions	11
- The significance of the research	11
CHAPTER 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework	
- Literature Review.....	12
• Digital and Social media.....	13
• Facebook.....	14
• Twitter.....	16
• Cyberactivism.....	17
• Social media and women empowerment.....	19
- Theoretical Framework	21
• Agenda building.....	21
• Agenda Setting	22
• Agenda setting, social media and a new model for gatekeeping	24
• Focusing Events	25
• Framing:	25
CHAPTER 3: Methodology 29	
- Measurement.....	29
- Agenda Setting and Intermedia agenda setting.....	32
- In-depth interviews and content analysis	34
- Case study selection criteria.....	36

CHAPTER 4: Findings and Discussion.....	37
CHAPTER 5: Conclusion and Recommendations	71
Appendix	73
References.....	75

List of Figures

1. Figure 1. The online sentiment for the Mall Girl Hashtag.
2. Figure 2. The demographics of the online users commenting on the Mall Girl Hashtag.
3. Figure 3. Problem Definition Indicator- Al Ahsera Masaan Talk-show- “Mall Girl” case study
4. Figure 4 Problem Definition Indicator- Sabaya El Kher Talk-show- “Mall Girl” case study
5. Figure 5. Causal interpretation Indicator- Al Ahsera Masaan Talk-show- “Mall Girl” case study
6. Figure 6 Moral Evaluation Indicator- Al Ahsera Masaan Talk-show- “Mall Girl” case study
7. Figure 7. Moral Evaluation Indicator- Sabaya El Kher Talk-show- “Mall Girl” case study
8. Figure 8 Treatment/Recommendation Indicator- Al Ahsera Masaan Talk-show- “Mall Girl” case study
9. Figure 9. The volume of the online conversation on Facebook & Twitter about the “Support Hadeer” case study
10. Figure 10 The online sentiment for the “Support Hadeer” Hashtag.
11. Figure 11. Gender breakdown of the engaged users for the “Support Hadeer” Hashtag.
12. Figure 12: Problem Definition Indicator- Hona Al Assema- “Support Hadeer” Hashtag.
13. Figure 13. Problem Definition Indicator- Al Ashera Masaan- “Support Hadeer” Hashtag.
14. Figure 14. Problem Definition Indicator- Sabaya El Kher- “Support Hadeer” Hashtag.
15. Figure 15. Causal interpretation Indicator- Hona Al Assema - “Support Hadeer” Hashtag.

16. Figure 16 Moral Evaluation Indicator- Al Ahsera Masaan Talk-show- “Support Hadeer”

Hashtag

17. Figure 17. Moral Evaluation Indicator- Sabya El Kher- “Support Hadeer” Hashtag

18. Figure 18 Treatment/Recommendation Indicator- Al Ahsera Masaan - “Support Hadeer”

Hashtag

19. Figure 19. Treatment/Recommendation Indicator-Sabaya El Kher - “Support Hadeer”

Hashtag

20. Figure 20. Treatment/Recommendation Indicator-Hona Al Assema - “Support Hadeer”

Hashtag

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction:

Agenda-setting for traditional media namely TV shows, is a task that is getting harder every day with the emerging of new media and new content sources. “Social media conversations are gaining an increasingly important agenda-setting function

because internet communities are becoming stronger and more fully voiced” (Olson, 2016, P.781) However, in developing countries, this social media driven conversation and its impact on agenda-setting can be proof more difficult because without full internet penetration like Egypt (with internet penetration rate 33% in 2017 according to a report by the Egyptian Ministry of Communication and Information Technology). TV remain a key source for receiving information and prioritizing of topics. Therefore, there is a need to examine the dynamics between social media and traditional media and how the topics discussed on both media are framed and which one of these mediums influence the other particularly in topics related to women.

Through the framework of framing and agenda-setting theories, this research attempts to identify whether social media influence traditional media like TV namely on women issues and how discussing the same topic in two different medium would differ in framing if any.

The reaserach examines two case studies of content that was initiated on social media originally and then was picked up by traditional media. The study examines three primetime TV shows with highest rates of subscribers on YouTube and analyze the content appearing on them six months prior to the case studies and one month after. The study also interviews the three main producers of these shows as the are the main responsible persons on the content appearing on

them. As for the online part, the study used an online analysis tool, called “Crowd Analyzer” that gauge and analyze all posts written in Arabic on the hashtags specific for them and analyze the sentiment of these posts on both Facebook and Twitter.

The case studies are known in the media as the “mall girl” and the “single mother.” The first case was about a girl who was caught on surveillance camera while being sexually harassed by a young man and she found no cooperation from the police services, so she resorted to social media and posted the video of his groping her and she slapped her back before the people joins her in the video. Various TV shows interviewed her and hailed her courage until one popular TV show called “Sabaya El Kher” during a live interview where the host displayed undisclosed personal photos from her phone she left behind cameras on the beach in a swimsuit and with male friends to reframe the whole case and depicting the sexual harassment victim as unconservative girl who reciprocated on social media with engagement about whether girls’ behaviors and dress code justifies harassment. The girl filed an official complaint and sued the harasser to be attacked again by him but this time by cutting her in the face by a bladed weapon which initiated another conversation online about the appropriate punishment for such crimes. The other case is about unmarried single mother who posted a photo of her newborn in the hospital telling her story and struggle with the father of her son who refuse to document their informal marriage after getting pregnant, which considered be against norms and religious habits for Egyptians girls, to resort to social media to talk about the portrayal and stereotypes of unmarried mothers and kicking the hashtag #singlemother and “#supporthadeer” where millions of engagements occurred whether pro or against her actions. The vitality of her photo and post was reflected on TV when it was picked up by several TV shows including one of the ones chosen for the content analysis.

The research uses on content analysis of these primetime TV show and in-depth interviews with its producer to determine whether trending topics on social media have influenced the agenda-setting of these shows. The content analysis also examines how these women-related issues were framed when the discussion moved from interactive medium like Facebook to less interactive medium like TV.

1.2 Statement of the research problem:

The media landscape is getting complicated every day with the increase of the input to the communication messages. With the emergence of social media platforms, the topics that are public debate are not coming from traditional media outlets like TV and newspaper only.

Social media has been theorized as being able to break the press' monopoly on agenda-setting, giving the public greater influence over which stories are covered in the news.(Jacobson, 2013). However, the body of research about online media hardly discusses the direct relationship between Arabic online viral content and the reflection of these content and topics on social media in Egypt. The literature, however, examines online initiatives to combat abusing phenomena for Egyptian women like sexual harassment like the study by Young in 2014 that examined the online tool called "Harass Map" that used crowd sourced data to map sexual harassment in Egypt or the study by Boutros in 2017 that examined the emergence of Egypt's anti-harassment groups. However, such researchers focus primarily on the innovation of online tools and their usage patterns but not necessarily on how user-generated content on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter can force the discussion of these issues on traditional media in an initial step towards media advocacy.

The research into the agenda-setting privileges of the press is more than 40 years old. Agenda-setting is the notion that the media “may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about” (Cohen, 1963, p. 20) ([Jacobson 2013](#)). In these 40 years, inputs to agenda always change and adapt and therefore the need to examine to what extent the discussions on social media can participate in shaping the agenda of social media and thus reshaping the debate on online media again.

Therefore, this study examines the relationship between viral content on social media and to what extent these materials can influence the agenda of traditional media, namely TV through analyzing both the online and traditional media content coupled with in-depth interviews with producers of this traditional content.

1.3 The purpose of research:

In this study, certain objectives are identified to outline the correlation between social media and traditional media in terms of agenda setting regarding topics such as sexual harassment and undocumented marriages:

- Identify to what extent social media content can influence the traditional media agenda regarding women issue
- Analyze the sentiment of viral content and the sentiment towards this content before and after it was picked up by social media.
- Identify the frames applied by traditional media on user-generated content on online platforms

Research question and sub-questions

The central research question is:

To what extent user-generated online content can influence the agenda of traditional media, namely TV and how this material differed in framing?

Research sub-questions are:

Q1 -what is the agenda building process of traditional Egyptian media, namely TV?

Q2 - To what extent the social media is a component of the Egyptian traditional media agenda building?

Q3 - To what extent the social media can influence the agenda-setting process of traditional media?

Q4 - Does traditional Egyptian media accepts the same framing of the user-generated content in the online world when it picks it up for the traditional media?

Q5 –Does women issues differ when it comes to framing?

Q6 – Was the topics of the selected cases studies on the traditional media map before they emerged online? If yes, what was the framing of these issues?

Q7 – Are there factors that made online content was more likely to be featured on traditional media?

Significance of the research

This research helps the media practitioners to be more aware of the online sentiment of content that they chose to be featured on traditional which should impact the way decided to frame this content to be more informative for the audience. Also, this research identifies several trends

within the Egyptian media scene when it comes to tackling with an online content that goes viral. The research also examines Arabic content in the first place and specifies in women-related topics which covers a gap in the body of the literature.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Introduction

The literature review section starts with reviewing the conceptual parts of traditional media, social media.

The literature will also go over how the agenda of traditional media, namely TV and social media are being set. Then the agenda-setting theory will be reviewed, what it entails and how it evolved through time with the new and updated inputs and influencers to the agenda-setting and agenda-building process. Since the research question is about the portrayal of women issues, in particular, social media and its use as empowerment tool by women will also be reviewed in later part. However, to get a better overview of the dynamics between traditional and social media agendas, the gatekeeping and a revised gatekeeping theory in the digital age will also be tackled.

Finally, after examining the how and why women issue can be reflected on traditional media, the framing theory will be reviewed to give us the review on what happens after agendas are set and whether focusing events ¹ play a role in the framing and priming of user-generated content in digital media in the traditional media.

In the researcher's analysis, the literature covers each one of the above aspect separately or examines the relationship between only one or two and not all of the factors like the study by Intermedia Agenda Setting in the Social Media Age: How Traditional Players Dominate the News Agenda in Election Times ([Harder et al. 2017-07](#)) where it looked at the agenda setting process without examining the framing aspect or the study, or the "Technologically mediated

¹ The focusing events concept will be thoroughly explained in later part of the literature.

empowerment and transformation among young arab women” study by Courtney C.Radsch and Sahar Khamis where it looked at how social media empowered women by giving them a voice with looking at the framing aspect of these communications. Therefore, this research fills a gap by looking at a niche topic which is women issues in the Egyptian TV and examines the relationship between the public, media, and social media agenda and how gatekeepers’ roles are adapting and influencing which topics to be primed. But also look beyond that at the framing of these issues through content analysis for both online and traditional media and in-depth interviews with the content creators online and the content curators in the traditional media.

1. Digital and Social media:

This study examines how the digital and social media have a role in reshaping the gatekeeping theory (Chin-Fook & Simmonds, 2011), and a new input to the agenda-setting influencing factors, so a thought definition to this medium is in order as well the usage pattern of these media in Egypt where the case studies were picked. Shoemaker and Vos (2009) in their gatekeeping theory model argued that even though digital media are directed to the mass but these media “provides increased opportunity for interactivity and two-way conversation” (Chin-Fook & Simmonds, 2011:5). In other words, social media platforms enable the audience to part of the conversation, giving their opinions directly and have a direct line of communication with, channels, journalists, and newsmakers. Finnemann (2011) outlines that “hypertextual, interactive, and multimodal features [are] unique to digital media” (p. 83). This interactivity is key feature allows “immediacy, authenticity, and transparency of digital media” and can transform the flow of news. (Chin-Fook & Simmonds, 2011). There is general agreement that the new media environment is characterized by interactivity, user-generated-content, and multi-

directional communication flows. Broadly, the transition to Web 2.0 marks a shift from a “one-way conversation” to a “multi-way conversation,” in which users participate as both creators and consumers of web content. More importantly, Digital media platforms enable fewer filters and gates online, leaving individuals to determine truth, what is news, and what is important (Basen, 2011).

The social media are not just platforms to archive or post content but create certain experience, Kietzmann et al. (2011) identified seven critical features for functions of social media: “1) identity (the extent to which users show their identities on a social media platform); 2) conversations (the extent to which users interact with other users in a social media setting); 3) sharing (the extent to which users exchange, distribute, and receive content); 4) presence (the extent to which users can know if other users are available and where they are; 5) relationships (the extent to which users can be related to other users, i.e. that two or more users have some form of association that leads them to talk, socialize, meet up, or just become virtual friends; 6) reputation (the extent to which users can identify the status of others in a social media setting); and 7) groups (the extent to which users can form communities and sub-communities)” (Kietzmann et al., 2011).

1.1 Facebook:

Facebook is a social media network that allows users to create individual user profiles, business pages, groups, and causes that help individuals, “connect and share with the people in[their] life” (facebook.com, 2018, para. 1). “The network is predicated on authenticity and transparency,

supporting the notion of increased human-to-human and human-to-business interaction” (Chin-Fook & Simmonds, 2011,p.5). Digital authenticity requires that one’s online persona accurately reflects and portrays one’s actual reality. Thus, authentic communication, on social media platforms, focus on “building relationships and trust” (Kanter & Fine, 2010,p. 60). Similarly, online transparency focuses on the sharing of information, as “a way of thinking and being for organizations (Kanter & Fine, 2010, p. 76).

As of September 2011, Facebook was recognized as the largest social media platform with over 2.07 billion monthly active users as of September 30, 2017. (Facebook.com, 2018, para.9). Egypt is the place where the researcher is trying to answer the RQs, so the data on how Egyptians are using Facebook is crucial in this context. The Arab Social Media Report is a series of reports were initiated by the Governance and Innovation Program at the Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government in 2011 and provide important data on these platforms across the Arab region. In its latest version in 2017, the report stated that “Facebook remains the most popular social media platform in the Arab region by a far margin. Collectively, the number of Facebook users in the Arab region has steadily increased over the past six years as per the findings of the Arab Social Media Report series, reaching more than 156 million in 2017. This number represents “a year-on-year increase of close to 41 million, up from 115 million at the beginning of 2016.” (Salem, F.,2017,p.34). The report also showed that Egypt is the first country of the top 10 countries with the biggest Facebook presence.

Also, since the research tackles two topics that can be dubbed as women issue in particular, then gender balance on Facebook is important to look at. The same report found that “the social media gender gap in the Arab region continues to be persistent over the past six years. By 2017,

on average, females make up 32.3% of the total Facebook users in the region, almost unchanged from 31.8% in 2014, and 33.4% in 2013.” (Salem, F.,2017,p.34)

In the case studies picked to examine the RQs, the language that the content was analyzed upon was Arabic after the Arab Social Media report in its 2017 edition found that “Yemen continues to be the top country in terms of Arabic use on Facebook (with 95% of users using Arabic), followed by Egypt (94%).” (Salem, F.,2017,p.36)

1.2 Twitter:

Twitter is a digital media platform, which provides a mechanism by which over 330 million active users worldwide (www.statista.com, 2017, Para,1) can “create and share ideas and information instantly, without barriers” (Twitter.com, 2018, para1).

The Arab social media report for 2017 showed that almost 11 million user around the Arab region uses Twitter actively, a number that doubled from 5.8 million three years ago and that the most significant portion of these users amounts to: 29% are in Saudi Arabia, followed by Egypt with 18% share. (Salem, F., 2017, p.44)

Similar to Facebook, the report found out that the gender imbalance is also reflected on Twitter for the Arab countries with similar percentages in Egypt as Facebook where 30% of total users only are females.(Salem, F.,2017,p.46)

In Twitter, it is possible to measure the volume of the conversation more easily, so the Arab Social Media report stated that “the Arab world generates an average of 27.4 million tweets a day. More than half of all tweets generated in the Arab region are coming from two countries: Saudi and Egypt.” (Salem, F.,2017,p.52)

2. Cyberactivism:

Cyberactivism, defined as “the act of using the Internet to advance a political cause that is difficult to advance offline” (Philip N. Howard 2011, p. 145). This definition became a form of empowerment, “a way to exert control over one’s personhood and identity while gaining a sense of being able to do something in the face of a patriarchal hierarchy and an authoritarian state.” (Radsch et al., 2013)

Cyberactivism can be operationalized three main steps which are; Awareness/advocacy, organization/mobilization, and action/reaction as explained by (McCaughey & Ayers, 2003). Since “new technologies always affect the way that we perceive and participate in the world around us” (Chamberlain, 2004), activists are capitalizing more and more on online tools as a resource for the above three steps, awareness, mobilization and action. Online spheres also challenge the traditional gatekeeping and censorship of the mainstream media especially on sensitive and marginalized topics like human rights records or women issues respectively. Cyberactivism has been used as a tool for policy making by exerting pressure on governments by signing e-petitions or organizing online campaigns. “Technology activism points us to transformations in the organization of social and political life, and consequently challenges the traditional models of representation and policy-making.” (Milan et al., 2013)

Lobbying, another concept stemming out of cyberactivism, was also made easier via the Internet, because of email campaigns and its vast reach with minimal cost. Social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter took this cyberactivism to a new level by “permitting communication between groups that are otherwise unable to communicate”(Watson, Nessim,2017). Another manifestation for cyberactivism is what is called “hashtag activism” where representative hashtags are used to express support of denunciation of certain cause the personal profiles on social media like the incident when in 2014, the Nigerian terrorist group Boko Haram kidnapped two hundred and seventy six girls. Fifty seven of these girls managed to escape but two hundred and nineteen of the girls remained as hostages. (Aminu Abubakar 2014). Online users kick-started the hashtag #BringBackOurGirls hashtag was initiated hoping that this activism would bring media attention and make authorities feel more pressured to act. When this incident happened, and for two weeks, only few headline in international media covered it. ((Aminu Abubakar 2014). In the online world, this story was widely shared and commented on by many users around the world using the hashtag #BringBackOurGirls.

This online conversation which is considered as a form of cyber-activism brought the international media attention to the issue after two weeks of being under-covered. The hashtag used in this incident was used “more than four million times in 2014” (The Stream 2015). More recent example for hashtag activism is the viral #metoo campaign which surfaced in October 2017 to expose the sexual misconduct of the movie mogul named Harvey Weinstein who has tens of victims according to the actresses’ profiles on Twitter where they used the #metoo hashtag. The hashtag was used initially by social activist Tarana Burke to help victims overcome the pain of sexual trauma, but the hashtag has been used in the wake of this incident millions of times, usually with a personal story of sexual harassment or assault.

Online conversations and platforms provided a tool and arena for activists working to organize, and mobilize their followers. Manuel Castells theorizes that activist hashtags “act in a similar way as occupied spaces have traditionally worked for social movements”(Castell, 2012). Castells also argues that hashtags are able to create a sense of a community that one can belongs to, a public arena for deliberation, “which ultimately becomes a political space, space for sovereign assemblies to meet and to recover their rights of representation” (Castells, 2012).

“Effective hashtag movements are supported by in-person, broadcast, and print communication channels that connect diffuse communities.” [\(Loiseau et al. 2015\)](#). In other words, capitalizing on hashtags can be a tool to influence traditional media agenda, but the support of these traditional media can elevate the status of these hashtags and their visibility regardless of the framing.

3. Social media and women empowerment:

The above section talked about how hashtags and cyberactivism can be a tool used different society sectors to bring their topics to the public and media agenda. Women, like many sectors of the society suffers from underrepresentation of their needs and view in the public arena so they resorted to the Social media has proved to be a powerful spotlight to shed the light and bring forward women issues to the attention of both media and public which may entice actions on streets and thus exert more pressures on policymakers.[\(Loiseau et al. 2015\)](#) “The explosion of social media and unprecedented use by women of new technologies represents important opportunities to bring gender equality and women’s rights issues to the forefront of both policy making and media attention” [\(Loiseau et al. 2015\)](#)

Social media has enabled women to map opportunities in economic and political life and thus enhancing their engagement through providing a toll for self-expression. (Tomlin, 2012).

Tomlin also argues that social media became a diary for the Arab women daily life and “affect the way they interact with the government, do business, and engage in civil society movements” (Tomlin, 2012).

Since 2011 and the rise of Arab Springs, large segments of the population has been motivated to instill political and economic change; women have also become one of the drivers for change. (Daher, 2012). The tool to inspire this change and initiate the change discussion is presumed to be social media which made the “debate about the role of social media in these transformations, making it to the policy-making circles.” (Daher, 2012, p.10)

The above debate about social media can be validated by reports like the Arab social media report conducted in 2011 by Dubai School of Government and found that the most common for social media is as a tool of empowerment by communication and self-expression. The report also found that men with 65% believed that social media could be used for the political empowerment of women (Dubai School of Government Report, 2011).

The reasons behind why women resort to social media first for self-expression according to Daher can be attributed to the continuous media stereotypical depictions of the Arab women. Ayish (2011) documents numerous of debates during the last forty years in traditional media “consistently dehumanized and commercialized women in conventional print and electronic media” (Daher, 2012, P.13). According to Ayish and Daher, social media offered a new

alternative to this narrative and created new gatekeepers after “the appeals to media executives and journalists to demonstrate more responsibility when dealing with women’s issues had little success.” (Daher,2012)

Theoretical Framework

This study utilizes two main theories; agenda setting and framing. These two theories are useful because the researcher wanted to examine whether social media influence the choice of traditional media topics and this is better examined by agenda setting theory. Also, examining the narrative of these topics when the medium change, is better examined through framing theory.

Agenda-Building

Agenda-building is defined as the “overall process of creating mass media agendas” (Berkowitz & Adams, 1990, p. 723). Many researchers argue that “agenda Building and agenda-setting are two phases of one integral process” (Kioussis & Wu, 2008, p. 71). Agenda-Building digs deeper on the sources of that build agenda that as explained earlier has both external and internal factors impacting it. Further investigation through agenda building is encouraged when we need to study the “reciprocity and structural interdependencies among public policymakers, mass media, and mass publics,” (Denham, 2010, p. 309).

In the agenda-building process, some stories make while others do not. Wallack argues that the main factor is newsworthiness which means being timely, relevant to public's interest but Shoemaker and Mayfield’s also offer a more comprehensive list that provides extensive list that

includes “sensation, conflict, mystery, celebrity, deviance, tragedy, and proximity” (Wallack, 1994, p. 427).

Agenda Setting:

Agenda setting entails how to get an issue and a message on the media and policy agendas. Agenda setting theory is one of the influential media theories to study the effects of media and its impact. The origin of agenda setting can be traced to 1922 to Lippmann’s work in 1922 about news media filter reality (McCombs, 2005). However, McCombs and Shaw in their study in 1972 about agenda-setting effects laid the ground for the evolution of this theory. The theory argues that “the media has the ability to influence the salience of issues/topics from the news agenda to the public agenda, referred to as agenda-setting function and summarized in the well-known agenda setting phrase ‘mantra’: It is not what to think, but ‘what’ to think about” (McCombs, 2005). By influencing the salience of topics, agenda-setting serves as a guide to the public opinion for their priorities by directing their attention to specific issue, giving it a particular importance and thus impact their perception of these problems and consequently reality.

Even though agenda-setting theory was stemmed initially in 1972 but it “remains one of the most enduring and most researched theories in mass communication and political communication” (Meraz, 2011, p.177).

“With more than 425 empirical studies about the agenda-setting conducted worldwide, this theory is among the most frequently used approaches for studying media effects”. (Slavnić, 2016, p.47)

A fundamental question in the agenda-setting theory, is which factors can influence and sets the media agenda? McCombs and Reynolds (2009) categorized this influence into both internal and external factors. The external factors included politicians, public officials, press releases and news sources while internal is other media influencing each other.(Shata, 2014)

In this section, the study examines further the internal factors influencing the agenda-setting theory or the inter-media agenda setting as this can govern the relationship between social media and traditional media.

Online media and social media were gradually introduced as factors to setting intermedia agenda but the literature is still young on that leaving “unidimensional, leaving room for non-mainstream media outlets to affect other media’s agendas” (Meraz, 2011).

However, this is the role of intermedia agenda setting which seeks to examine how the media’s agenda is being set by sources, and “explains the flow of influence among media entities.”(Meraz, 2011).

Agenda setting, social media and a new model for gatekeeping:

The emergence of social media as an internal factor for influencing agenda setting of traditional media. The concept of “producers” where users are also producers of media content through social media emerged pushing the boundaries of agenda-setting. (Groshek, 2013). The gatekeeping concept, which is a theory examines the flow of information from the media to the public, existed because “there is only so much space on the front page of a newspaper, and only so much time devoted to the news on radio and television, agenda setting is unavoidable”

(Groshek, 2013). However, this is not the case anymore with the existence of accessible platforms like social media and audience who is also producing their content.

The agenda setting as we know it is being adopted by the increase of the concept “producers” as dubbed by Groshek making it a no longer “ only a top-down process from (mainstream print and broadcast) media to audiences, but also as a dynamic process where, under certain conditions, citizen reporting advanced in online spaces can give shape and definition to media and policy agendas among the public”(Groshek et al. 2013,p.17).

“The Internet in general, and social media in particular, have been theorized as being able to break the press’s monopoly on agenda-setting because the Internet diminishes barriers of communication among citizens and between citizens” (Jacobson 2013).

The social media plays a role in changing the shape of the gates and filters which surrounds a story because of the accessibility to virtually anyone to “determine truth, what is news, and what is important” (Basen, 2011, Fook, & Simmonds,2011).

Focusing Events:

When it comes to agenda-building and agenda-setting, the concept of “focusing events” is key to examine especially with the 24 hours news cycle in the age of social media. The focusing event is “a sudden event that can generate attention to the public problems or issues, particularly issues and problems that are actually or potentially harmful” (Birkland, 2011, P. 101). Focusing events assists in bringing the media attention to certain topics and thus influence the agenda-setting process which will eventually pressure policymakers to look into this event. (Birkland, 2011,

Wolfe, 2013). Focusing events are characterized by being “sudden, relatively rare events that spark intense media and public attention because of their sheer magnitude or sometimes because of the harm they reveal” (Birkland, 2011, p. 118). “Focusing events can and often do shift the attention of the media, refocusing attention to problems or issues that are either novel or were previously unattended or under-attended” (Wolfe, 2013, P.180). The focusing event can lead to a spike in the public attention that might facilitate the calls for policy changes by serving as a catalyst. (Wolfe 2013; Birkland 1998; Corbin, 2010).

Framing:

Framing is one of the fundamental media theories that is used for interpreting the ‘how’ aspect of media effects. Entman (1993) in his iconic article under the title “Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm” explained framing as “To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Entman, 1993, p.52). Framing theory tackles the ‘how’ part of an issue portrayal or ‘how’ it is depicted in the media. De Vreese (2005) defines a frame is “an emphasis in the salience of different aspects of a topic” (p.53).

Gamson (1992) has identified a framing “signature matrix” that includes various “condensing symbols (catchphrases, taglines, exemplars, metaphors, depictions, visual images) and reasoning devices (causes and consequences, appeals to principles or moral claims).” (Weaver, 2007, p.142)

Framing works through including and/or excluding information to shape or direct our focus and attention on certain issues over others. It does through the technique of “selection and salience”. Selection is the choice of certain information to be highlighted while Salience takes

this highlighted information an extra step and making it more memorable. (Shata, 2014). Just like Gamson's signature mix, Entman identified several ways that can promote salience like "text placement, repetition or symbol/value association" (Entman, 1993).

Entman (1993) argues that framing happens in the different levels of communications. It happens through communicator by deciding what to say, in the message that includes and exclude certain information, in the receiver and culture represented in common frames.(Shata,2014) .

This framing on all these levels is most effective when it resonated with existing schemata; which is the "individual's pre-existing attitudes and values, a belief system that guides message receivers on how to accept messages and frames". (Shen, 2004; Entman, 1993).

Entman (1993) provides a structure to measure the message framing which can be applied to the content analysis. This structure includes four aspects which are; how we define the problem or the item described, how causes of this problem or topic are attributed, how is the topic is morally evaluated and what are the recommended treatments.

As for the communicator side of framing, Shoemaker and Reese (1996) identified five factors that can influence their framing which is; societal values, organizational pressure, external pressure, journalist ideological orientation and professional routine. (Shata, 2014)

To measure framing, content analysis is the most obvious answer to identify frames as explained by Entman (1993). However, researchers like Borah (2011) recommends the use of in-depth interviews and survey to have a more understanding of the behind the scene of this content.

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Chapter 3: Methodology and study design

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first sections offer the measurement procedures of the study where the conceptualization and the operationalization measures of the main variables in the research are defined.

The second section goes over the three TV stations that were selected for the study as well as the two case studies chosen for the content analysis. This section explain the in-depth interviews that were used and how the content analysis was designed. The content analysis conducted is both qualitatively and quantitatively.

The reasons and selection criteria for the two case studies featured in the research are covered in the third section.

3.1 Measurement of Agenda Setting and Framing

3.1.1 Agenda Setting and Intermedia agenda setting:

The media sets the agenda by setting the public's priority be actively choosing certain topics to be featured on the medium's agenda. Therefore, measuring this will be through analyzing the content of the sampled media for six months to survey if they the topics of the selected case study have been featured or not. Following the content analysis, in-depth interviews with the content creators of the sampled traditional media will be conducted to get qualitative data about how the process of setting their agenda works.

3.1.2 Framing:

The second level of this study is to examine if the social media did influence the traditional media agenda, how this influence is portrayed. This can be examined through framing theory which examines the how not the “what” aspect of the effects of the media.

Therefore to measure framing, four aspects should be looked upon while performing the content analysis:

- Problem definition: or how the topic/issue was defined using certain catchphrases, taglines and descriptions.
- Causal interpretation: which includes in which manner the causes the topic were identified and using which language.
- Moral evaluation: this refer to whether the issue/topic was framed within a moral frame or subjected to moral evaluation process.
- Treatment recommendation: which is the direction which the media has proposed solution for the topic or issue which highly related to the problem definition as well.

A list of keywords for each of the above indicators was defined to be able to quantify these aspects.

For the problem definition, the researcher coded how many time the following keywords were mentioned:

- Referring as "victim"
- Referring as "cause"
- Using the word problem
- Using the word scandal
- Introducing her as a victim

- Neutrality of the episode video on youtube
- Hosting religious leaders
- Hosting social science scholars
- Using related footage
- Using violating personal footage
- attributing to westernization
- Hosting guests with legal backgrounds

For the causal interpretations, the below terms were coded to measure the framing:

- Allowing the girl to explain fully
- Referring to her as a victim
- Referring to her a cause
- Asking her if she regrets it
- Referring to the other party as a perpetrator
- Number of male guests
- Number of female guests

When it comes to the moral evaluation indicator, these keywords were monitored:

- Referring to her looks
- Referring to her family knowledge of the marriage
- Referral to the cultural traditions
- Referral to the religious rulings
- using culturally appropriate footage

For content creators or the journalist involved in framing the content for the sampled media, Shoemaker and Reese (1996) identified five factors that will influence their framing of a topic which are:

- Societal values, culture, and norms,

- Organizational pressure,
- External pressure from policy makers or advocates,
- Journalist ideological orientation and
- Professional routine

These factors have been considered in coding data, looking at the following:

- Treatment from religious perspective
- Treatment from a social perspective
- Treatment from a legal perspective
- Recommending laws to criminalize or support undocumented marriages/Sexual harassment

3.2- In-depth interviews

Three interviews were conducted with the producers of the sampled three talk-shows. The interviews were done upon receiving of the approval Institutional Review Board in July 2015. The three interviews took place in April 2016 and July 2017.

The selection of this sample of producers to interviews was a non-random purposive to include the most involved members in the content creation process.

On selecting the shows to be content analyzed, the study chose the sample based on what is the most viewed talk-shows on the TV channels with the most subscribers on Youtube as there were no recent available independent data on the viewership of programs in Egypt.

Viewership ratings that were produced in the year 2014 by Egypt's office of IPSOS international
The selected stations and programs are:

1. "Sabaya Al Kher " on Al-Nahar TV station with one million and seven hundred subscribers on Youtube.
2. "Hona Al-Asema" on CBC Egypt TV station with eight hundred and fifty thousand subscribers on Youtube.
3. "Al Ashera Masaan" on Dream TV station with seven hundred and seventeen thousand subscribers on Youtube

The study were based non-random purposive sample by position to include the most involved members in the content creation process of the sampled media who are the producers.

From a practical point of view and based on the researcher experience working in the media field, the producers are the main stakeholders responsible for the content gathering and creation and therefore the agenda setting. Presenters play a key role as well, but due to lack of resources and difficulty for reaching them, they were not sampled for the interviews.

All of the three targeted interviews were conducted.

The justification for choosing the format of Talk-shows are chosen in the research aside they are the most viewed ones on the YouTube channel is that the offer an opportunity for audience engagement and therefore present a domain for discussion.

Content Analysis:

"Content analysis is any research technique for making inferences by systematically and Objectively identifying specified characteristics within text" (Stone, Dunphy, Smith & Ogilvie, 1996, p. 5).

This study capitalizes on both qualitative and quantitative content analysis. The categories used in the content analysis were determined both inductively and deductively as Berg (2014) suggested. The researcher identified categories deductively based on the theoretical framework that reviewed earlier which are; problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and treatment. The inductive categories were identified by immersing in the selected case studies to identify the meaningful and relevant themes (Berg, 2014).

In the quantitative analysis, there are seven elements identified by Berg that can be counted. The researcher only counted the relevant elements which are words, concepts and characters.

For the qualitative analysis, the researcher followed Berg's model that outlined the stages for qualitative content analysis which included the following stages; identifying the research question, determining the categories, reading through the data to establish grounded categories, determining objective selection criteria, sorting the data, counting the entries to get descriptive statistics, considering the patterns in the light of literature review and finally offering an analysis for this data. (Berg, 2014)

There are two selected case studies. They were known in the media by the names "Mall Girl" and the "single mother" cases. Both cases can be considered as focused events that emerged online and helped to bring their topic into public agenda either through social media or traditional media. The "Mall Girl" occurred in October 2015, where a young Egyptian woman called Soumaya Ebied was harassed in a mall and when the police did not offer her help with her complaint against the harasser, she, "so she resorted to speaking herself. Ebied published a video of the incident, recorded by the mall's surveillance cameras" (Egypt Independent, 2017). The

content analysis on the specific issues of sexual harassment covered the timeframe from April 2015 till November 2015 to cover six months before the incident and one month after.

The other case study known as the “single mother” case started when an online activist called Hadeer Mekkaway posted on the first of January 2017 a photo with her newborn and told how her partner refused to acknowledge this baby after she was married secretly to him. Her partner asked her to get an abortion, but she decided to keep the baby and tell people about it on social media sparking a heated online discussion and a hashtag campaign called “#supporthadeer” where most of the discussions about her took place. The content analysis on the specific issues of undocumented marriage covered the timeframe from August 2016 till February 2017 to cover six months before the incident and one month after.

During watching the programs for conducting content analysis, the researcher coded the elements that identify framing theory and identified earlier. Every time these elements were materialized by choice of words, selection of guests or the accompanying reports were manifested, it was counted.

As for the analyzing the content before the time of these case studies, the topic of these cases which is sexual harassment and undocumented marriages were gauged to see if they were mentioned before these events surfaced on social media.

The content analysis of the social media content was conducted by using a tool called “CrowdAnalyzer,” Social Media Monitoring Platform and “The 1st Arabic Focused Internationally Recognized that uses groundbreaking technologies such as Proprietary Machine Learning, Artificial Intelligence, and Natural Language Processing to get computers to be as linguistically proficient as humans.”(crowdanalyzer.com,2018) . This tool analyze the volume of

the conversation, the profile of the contributors and the overall sentiment of these conversations. The sampled posts appear as soon as they mention the keywords which identify these case studies like the name of the two women, the hashtag used which are “Mall Girl” and “Support Hadeer”.

This tool was picked because of its accuracy in analyzing Arabic content, especially that with Egyptian dialect.

Case study selection criteria:

The selected cases studies are a manifestation of two topics that Egyptian women suffer from which is sexual harassment and undocumented marriage. Research from U.N. Women finds that 99.3 percent of women have suffered sexual harassment in Egypt. Slightly less (91.5 percent) have experienced unwelcome physical contact (UNWomen.org, 2013). In 2015, the Ministry of Solidarity published a paper about the number of undocumented marriages among college students which amounted to five hundred and fifty-two thousand cases out of five million registered students, (Al-Shrouk News, 2015). Based on these statistics, the importance of these issues is evident in the society and key to women’s agenda. The “Mall Girl” case is a manifestation for the sexual harassment Egyptian women suffer daily but also how the authorities are not cooperative when victims are filing complaints which made this case surface when the victim took it to social media to find her harasser. In the “Single mother” case, which is about undocumented marriages and the consequences resulting from it like registering children of these marriages are huge burdens for these women, but taking to social media even though it is stigmatized to be in that type of marriage which is secretive by nature made this a good case to look at.

In both cases, the moral evaluation and framing aspects are huge which will give the researcher enough content to examine both the agenda-setting aspect as well as the framing theory.

CHAPTER 4: Findings and discussion

4.1 Findings:

This section is divided into eight parts where each part answers one of the sub-research questions in an attempt to the answer the main research question which is “To what extent user-generated online content can influence the agenda of traditional media, namely TV through and how this content differed in framing and how it influenced the depiction of this content?”. The data collected are grouped, categorized and stated below the relevant RQ.

4.1.1. The agenda-building process of traditional Egyptian media, namely TV.

In the literature review, the agenda-building is defined as the “overall process of creating mass media agendas” (Berkowitz & Adams, 1990, p. 723). And the further research confirmed that “agenda building and agenda-setting are two phases of one integral process” (Kiousis & Wu, 2008, p. 71). Researchers on agenda building found that the news or agenda of talk-shows are greatly influenced by the sourced upon which the producers and journalists use like press releases, blog posts, public opinion and social mediBerger, 2001; Gans, 1980; Kaid, 1976; Kiousis, Mitrook, Wu, & Seltzer 2006; Salwen, 1988).

Therefore a question for the producers of the sampled talk-shows was about their sources when it comes to their daily or weekly agenda for their shows. All of the participants confirmed that they rely on more than source to build their content. One of the producers said

“we are like a radar, we use everything; newspapers, other TV shows, social media and even what we hear in the daily transportation” (Producer 1, July , 2017)

The interviewee answer gives insight on the sources that form the daily agenda of the show he is producing which includes several factors like other traditional media, social media and personal experiences. Another interviewee confirmed the diversity of resources but highlighted that:

“Daily newspapers and social media are the richest sources for us”. (Producer 2, July , 2017).

The interviewee pinpoints the major inputs to his show’s agenda .other traditional media are part of these inputs but also social media is identified as rich source for agenda setting which confirms the literature about the various sources feeding into the journalist agenda building but also the interviewee's answers made it clear how other media influence the Egyptian talk-shows.

4.1.2. The position of social media as component of the Egyptian traditional media agenda building

The answers of all of the interviewees confirmed that social media is quite a major component of their choice of topics for their talk-shows. One of the interviewed producers stated that:

“Everything happens on social media, the news gets reported there by regular citizens faster than news agencies. We as a team, including, the presenter resort to social media to gauge the public opinion and for inspiration about our next topic, especially in non-breaking or non- governmental events.” ((Producer 1, July , 2017)

This shows and confirms that social media act as a mirror to the public opinion and that producers and journalists as normal social media users gets influenced by the topics floating on these platforms.

4.1.3. The extent of the social media influence over the agenda-setting process of traditional media

Establishing that social media is a component of the agenda-building as explained by the answers of the producers was a step towards determining the impact of this influence. To examine this influence, the researcher asked the producers about how many times per episode, they rely on social media as a story source/inspiration. The answers varied regarding degree of reliance, but all fell within the category of “heavily depending on social media as story inspiration.” One of the participants answered that:

“There is no single episode that passes without having influenced by social media either for a report idea or for a theme for the whole episode, if the people are talking about metro tickets on social media, then we will on TV and will call the ministry of transportation for comments, cut this segment and post it separately on our Facebook page”.(*Producer 3, April , 2016*)

The producer explained in this answer the process in which and his team shape their daily segments of the show to make it more relevant to the existing online conversations. This answer shows that the producers of these shows perform what is called social media listening which is listening to different conversations happening on social media and that there is reciprocation for this relationship as these talk-shows feed into the social media conversations by cutting and posting concise parts of the episodes on their social media platforms.

The researcher also examined if only the volume were the determining factor for these producers to choose a particular social media story. All of the research participants confirmed that size is one major factor but not the only one.

“Viral posts and social media stories could be a fictional story or a bad poet, so volume here cannot be the only factor. So the story has to be suitable for the format of the program and the seriousness of the show and that it matters to a great sector for Egyptians. To be honest, it has to be also a hot topic to attract viewership when the episode is uploaded online”. (*Producer 1, July , 2017*)

The interviewee in this quote identified several factors that frames his choice of social media stories to highlight in his show and these factors includes; relevance, popularity of the topic as well as its potential of being more viral. This answer shows that the same rules of newsworthiness apply to these conversations but again that traditional media feeds back into the social media with content in a hope to get viral as well.

4.1.4. Acceptance of Egyptian traditional media namely TV to the same framing of the user-generated content in social media:

The agenda-setting theory is covered in earlier findings that proved the clear correlation between the agenda of social media and the agenda of the sampled talk-shows. But the difference between the framing of these topics remains an important part to be answered.

Case study 1- The Mall girl:

The Research question about the reciprocity of agenda setting and framing will be addressed via using quantitative content analysis for both social media and traditional media.

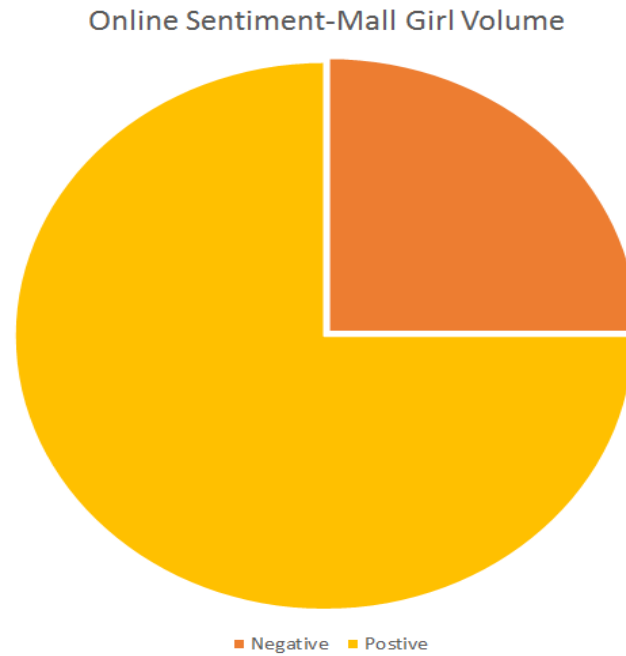
In case of the “Mall Girl” online volume of conversation, the video she posted featuring her attack in the mall got four hundred and eighty thousand (480,000) views, one thousand (1000)

comment, and five thousand (5000) share for the video. The post on her own profile on Facebook generated a conversation around the hashtag “Mall Girl” or “فتاة المول”, which received one million and seven hundred and seventy five (1,750,000) engagement from 25th of October till 26th of November 2015 on Facebook according to the data extracted by the tool used to analyze the social media conversations; “Crowd Analyzer”.

The same hashtag on Twitter received one hundred and twenty thousand (120,000) retweets, twelve thousand (12,000) comment and forty three million (43,000.000) reach for the hashtag mainly in Egypt based on “Crowd Analyzer” data extraction.

The online sentiment on this hashtag which is an indicator to framing on social media was quite sympathetic to the mall girl or Soumya, the girl who was harrassed and 25% of the online interaction was against her dealing with the harasser in the video and standing up for herself as shown in the below graph which is extracted via the Crowd Analyzer tool.

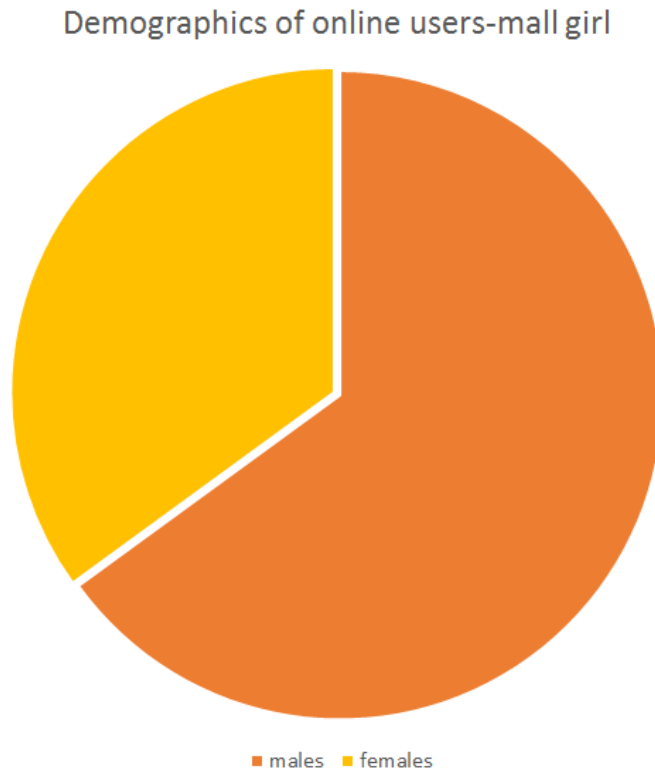
Figure 1. The online sentiment for the Mall Girl Hashtag.



Source: Author compilation based the analysis of hashtag users using “Crowd Analyzer” tool

This high number of negative reactions towards her, a victim of sexual harassment and was hit by her attacker when she talked to him, can be attributed to the fact that 65% of the online conversations about her was done by males as extracted by Crowd Analyzer tool as well but consistent with the data from the Arab social media report by Dubai School that stated that 70% of online users in Egypt are males.

Figure 2. The demographics of the online users commenting on the Mall Girl Hashtag.



Source: Author compilation based the analysis of hashtag users using “Crowd Analyzer” tool

The framing on the sampled Talk-shows for this case studies (Al Ahsera Masaan and Sabaya El Kher) was different than each other and different from the online trend.

In the theoretical framework, the researcher identified four aspects in which a framing can measure. These four aspects are; how the media defined the problem, the causal media interpretation, how they morally evaluate the issue and their suggested treatment.

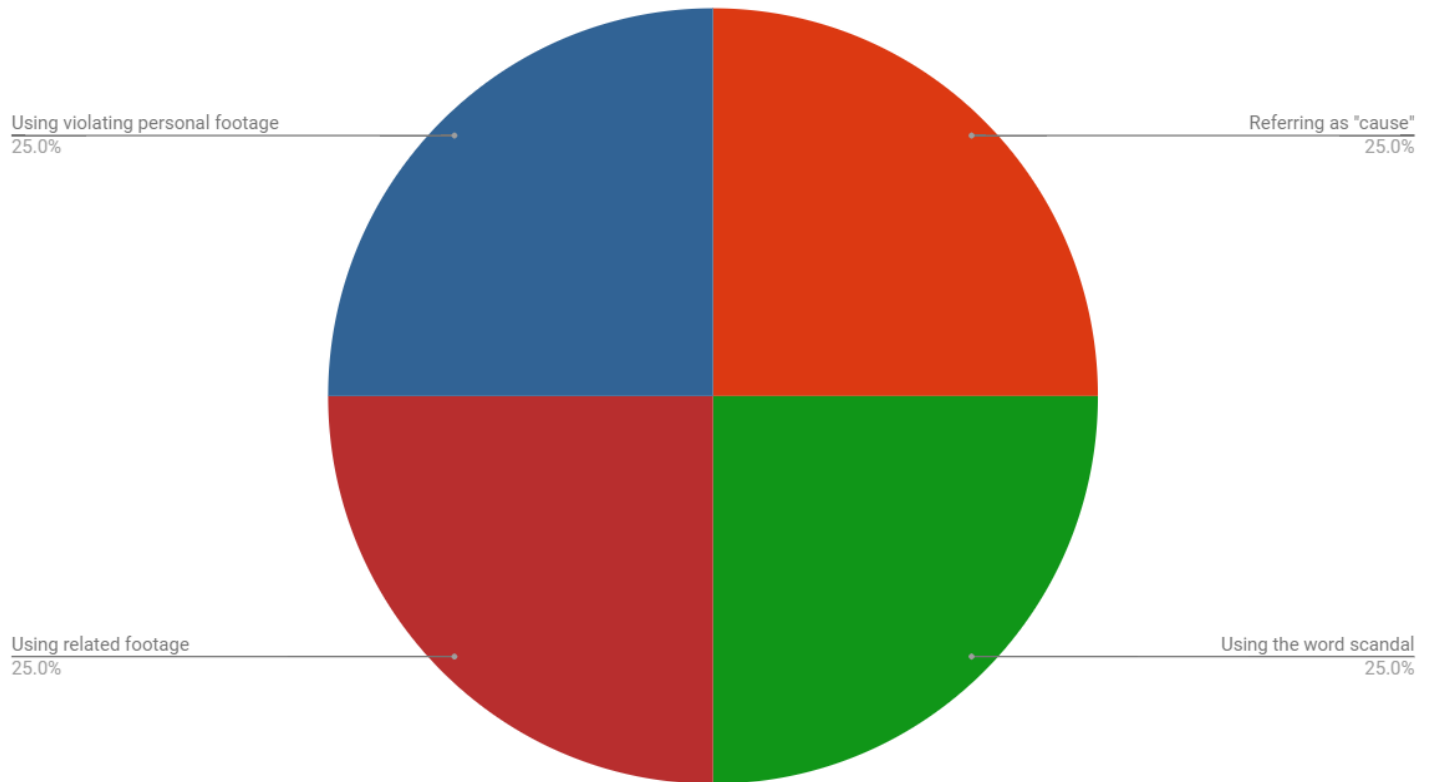
A. Problem Definition:

In the Al Ashera Masaan Talk Show, the problem definition was too neutral and sympathetic to the victim of the harassment in many cases. The presenter referred to her as the victim in almost half of the time. Even though women issue can be inviting to using sensational keywords

but in this case, the presenter used the word scandal to refer only to the act done against her not to describe her. The footage used by the presenter were related to the incident and demonstrating the attack against the young woman.

Figure 3. Problem Definition Indicator- Sabaya El Kher Talk-show- “Mall Girl” case study

Problem Definition- Sabaya El Kher- Mall girl



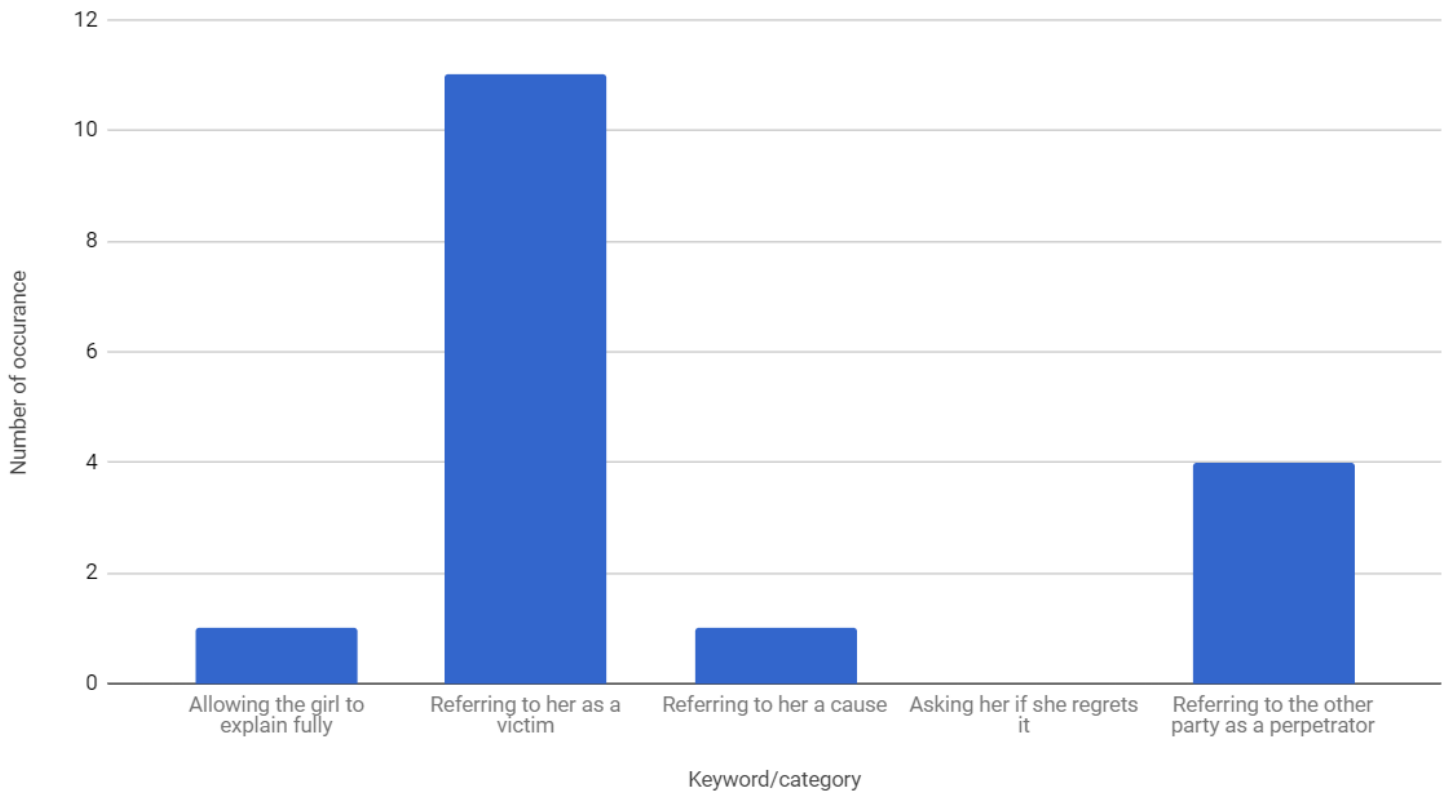
Source: Author Compilation based on a quantitative content analysis for “Sabaya El Kher” show.

For the Sabaya El Kher show, it was a completely different story, where the presenter only hosted the victim. The presenter gave th victim a chance to tell the story but then the presenter changed the narrative by accusing her of knowing the perpetrator. The presenter accused the victim of being part of the problem and went further by showing on screen footage that were on the victim’s personal phone and the show had no access to it except by stealing it from the phone

which they were keeping at the time according to the victim. The presenter also used sensational words to define the problem by using the word scandal to refer to the presumed relation between the victim and her perpetrator. The Youtube version of this episode was deleted after the victim sued the presenter for privacy violation and stealing the photos from her mobile. The victim did a follow-up episode with the same presenter where snippets from the previous episode were shown.

Figure 4. Causal interpretation Indicator- Al Ahsera Masaan Talk-show- “Mall Girl” case study

causal interpretation- Al Ashera Masaan -Mall Girl case



Source: Author compilation based on a quantitative content analysis for Al Ashera Masaan show.

When the producer of this show was asked about the change of narrative even though there was almost consensus between the online and traditional media about the position of young woman

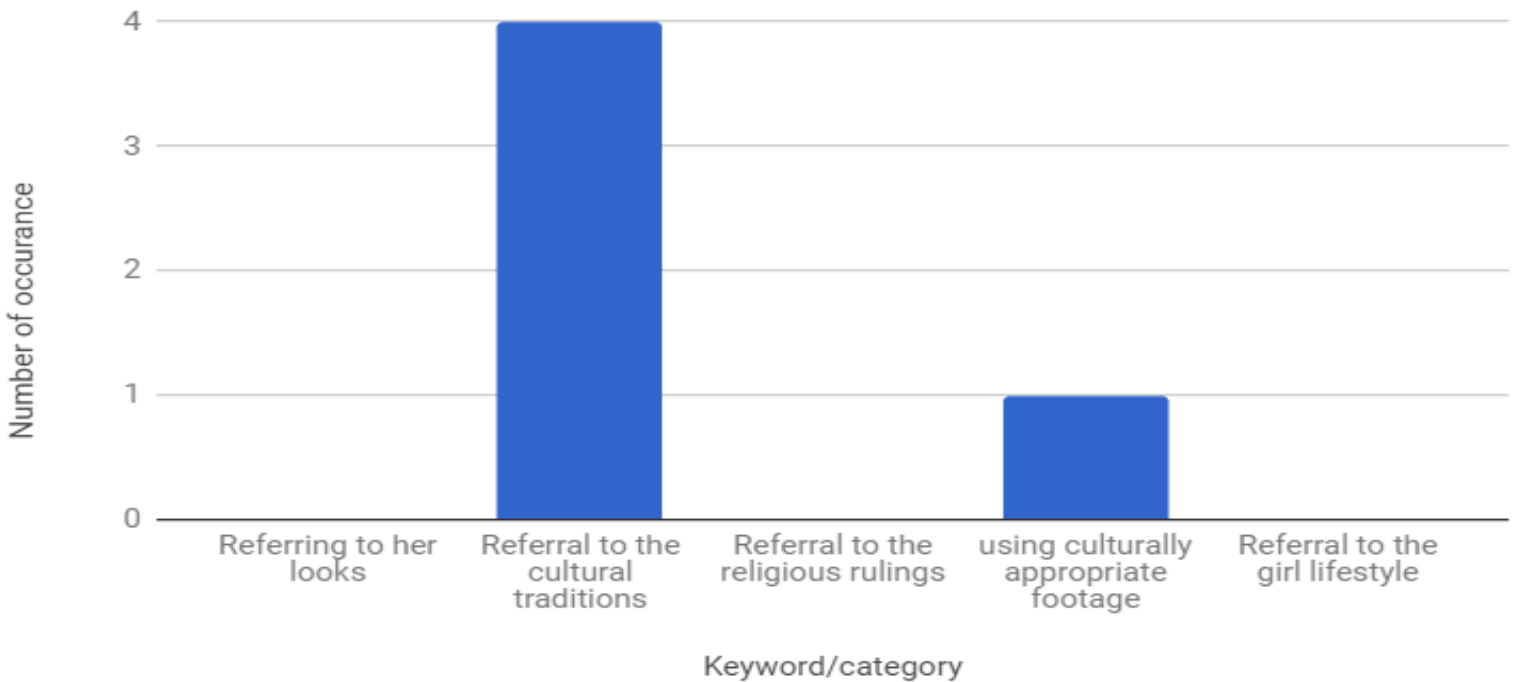
as a victim, he said that this was “extra investigation” into the matter, and the personal footage were received upon consent which the victim argue against.

B. Causal interpretation:

In Al Ashera Masaan Talkshow, the presenter steered away from blaming the victim and asking if she regretted any of her actions and made it clear who is at fault in the situation.

Figure 5. Moral Evaluation Indicator- Al Ahsera Masaan Talk-show- “Mall Girl” case study

Moral Evaluation-AL Ashera Masaan-Mall girl



Source: Author compilation based on a quantitative content analysis for Al Ashera Masaan show.

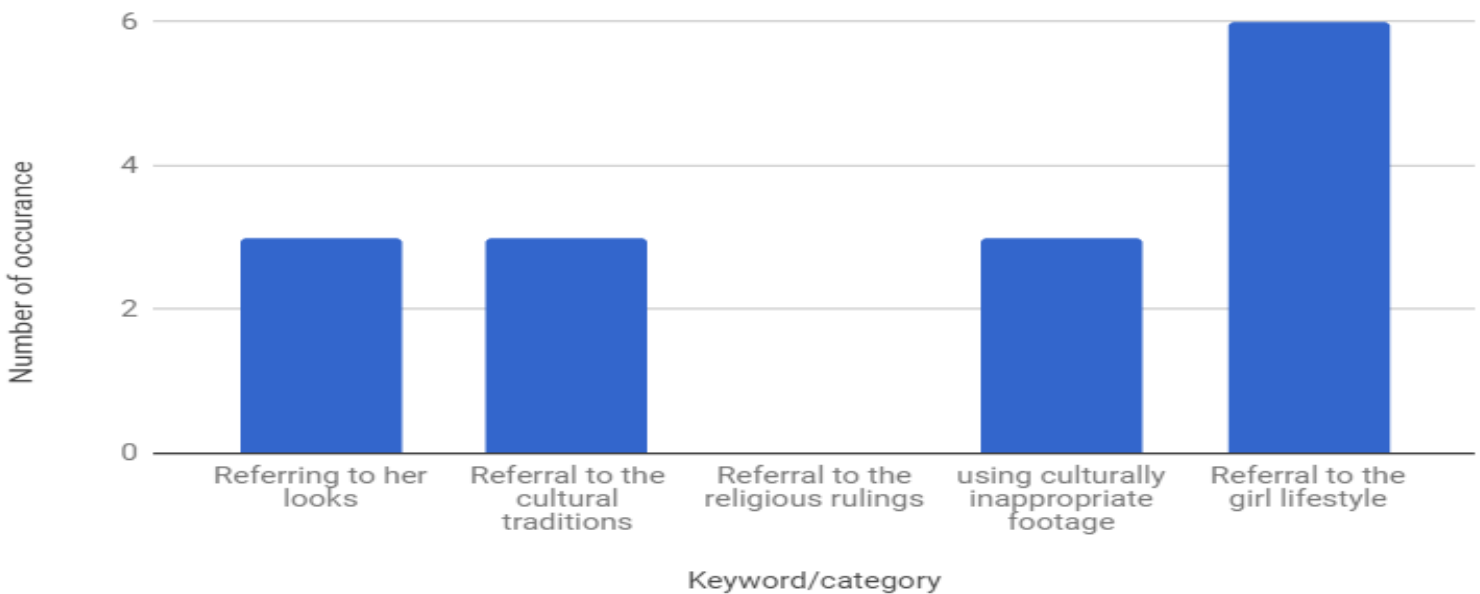
On the other hand, the presenter identified the victim as the cause of this problem in 100% of the case and showed personal photos of her on the beach while presenting it as photos with the perpetrator which was not true and the presenter later apologized and said she was “mislead to believe so” (Al Nahar, 2016).

C. Moral Evaluation:

In Al Ashera Masaan talkshow, the language was again sympathetic in alignment with the social media overall sentiment. The presenter only referred to the cultural values in the context of condemning the perpetrator acts.

Figure 6. Moral Evaluation Indicator- Sabaya El Kher Talk-show- “Mall Girl” case study

Sabaya El Kher- Mall Girl- Moral Evaluation



Source: Author compilation based on a quantitative content analysis for Sabaya El Kher show.

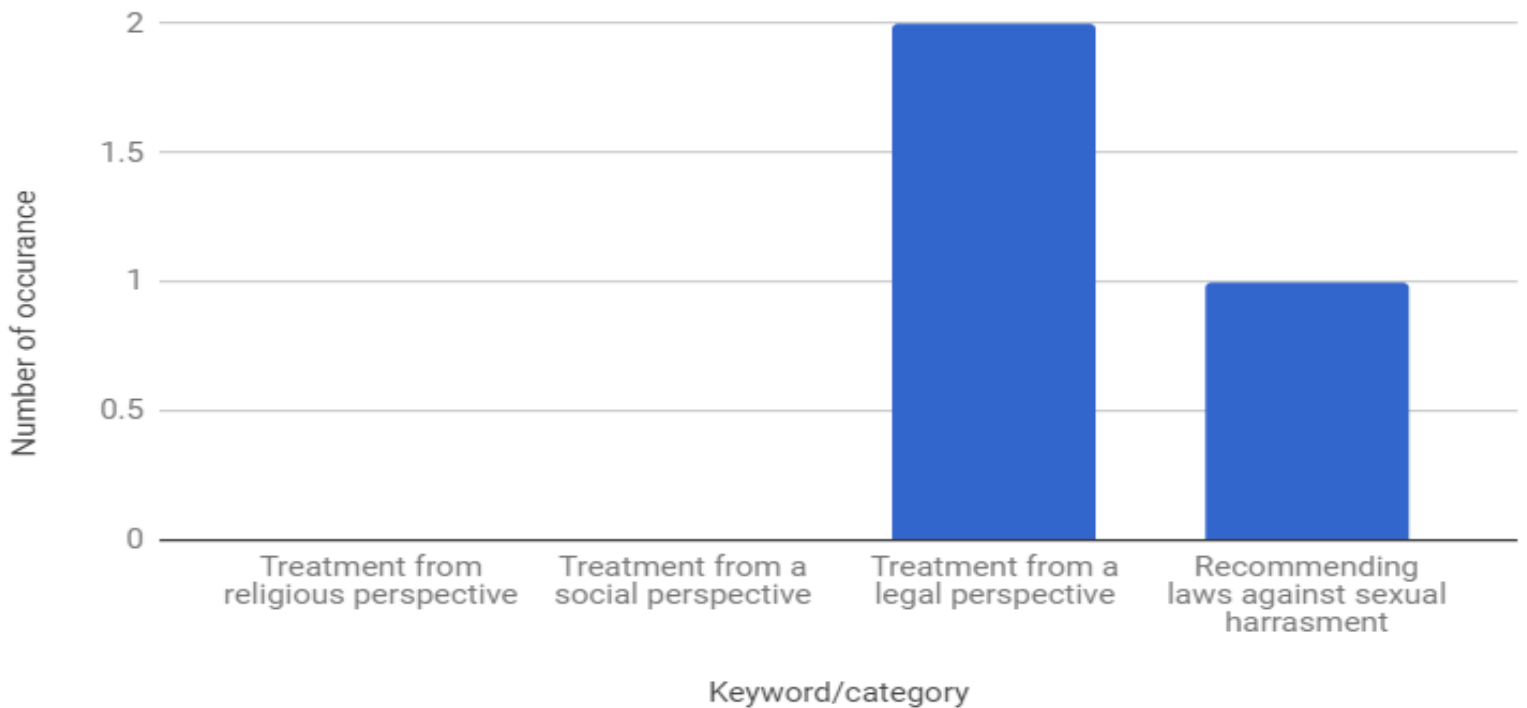
For the Sabaya El Kher show, the moral evaluation for quite high. The presenter kept referring to her beach photos that have nothing with the incident. The presenter also referred to additional footage to “expose” the victim but never actually showed them. (Al Nahar, 2016).

D- Treatment and Recommendation

The recommendations suggested by the presenter in Al Ashera Masaan with consistent with the moral evaluation where he did not suggest any religious or social related solutions but focused only on the legal ones by suggesting strengthening the anti-sexual harassment laws.

Figure 7. Treatment/Recommendation Indicator- Al Ahsera Masaan Talk-show- “Mall Girl” case study

Treatment-Al Ashera Masaan- Mall girl.



Source: Author compilation based on a quantitative content analysis for Al Ashera Masaan show.

The Sabaya El Kher show was not solution oriented from the first place but rather focused on the details of the stories and the victim’s personal life so no treatment or recommendations were suggested.

Adding to the above the indicators of framing, the presenter of Sabaya El Kher said in a segment of her show commenting on the “Mall Girl” case is that she “could not go with the flow and accept that she is a victim just because the social media said so.” (Al Nahar, 2016). This

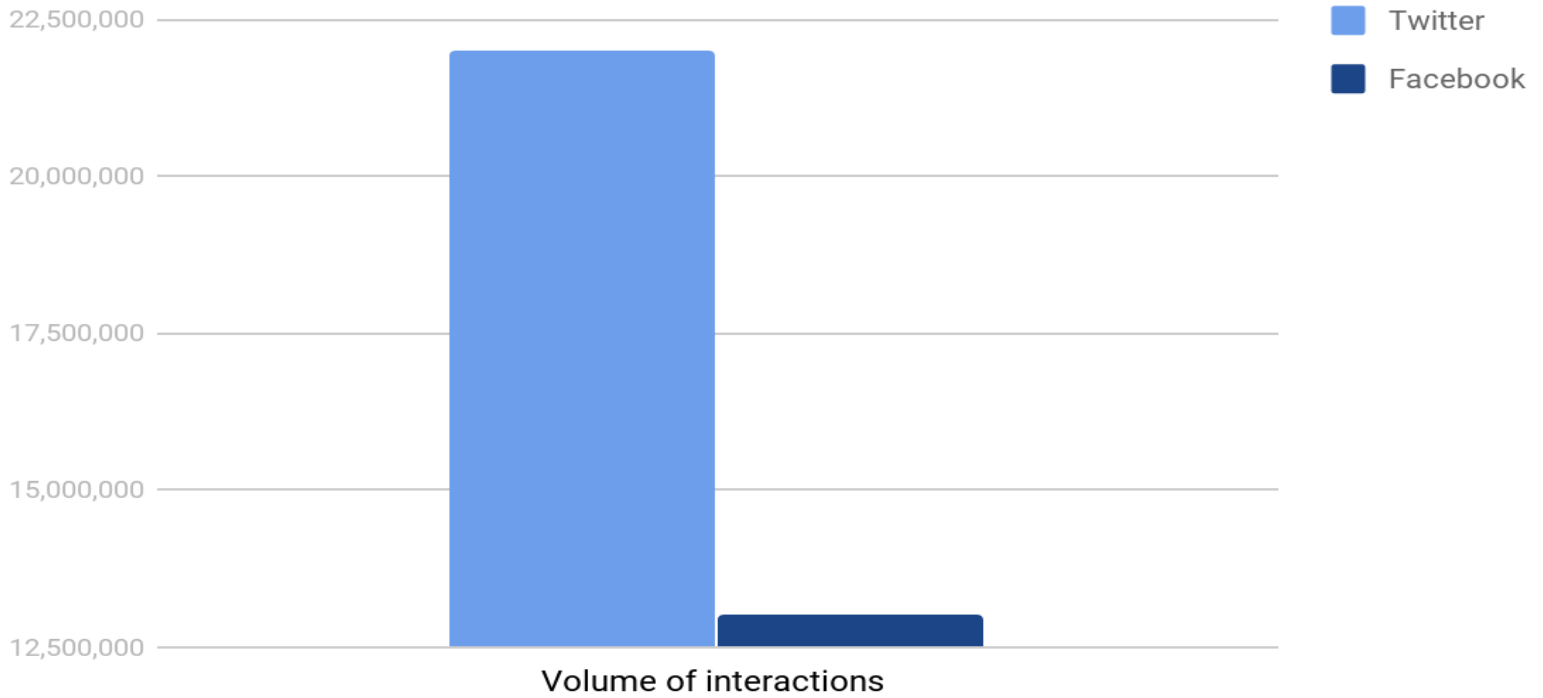
choice of going against the overall online sentiment initiated an online campaign against the presenter herself calling for advertisers to boycott her show as a response to her violating the privacy of the victim. The online backlash campaign was initiated with an Egyptian comedian Bassem Youssef on who has a fan base on ten million on Twitter and two million on Facebook where he called for advertisers to stop sponsoring the show and he will instead give them free mentions to boost their visibility. He used the hashtag “إعلانك_عندنا” or “we will advertise you” to rally for this idea. The hashtag received fifteen million entry which ended with the advertisers pulling out their ads and the channel to stop the whole program for one year.

Case study 2: The single mother

This case study involves an online activist, with a base of eighty-eight thousand followers, named Hadeer Mekkawy who posted on her profile a photo with her newborn on 1st of January 2017. The text with this photo is what stirred the conversation. She told her story with her secret undocumented marriage with a partner who refuses to acknowledge the baby and asked her to get an abortion, an option she refused. Hadeer explained the details of her problem including the name of her partner in the post. The original post which received thousand of interaction was removed by Facebook after it was reported inappropriate by hundreds of social media users. However, this sparked two hashtags that we originally initiated to support Hadeer case, “#supporthadeer” and “#single_mother.” The two hashtags received twenty million interactions of Twitter thirteen million interaction on Facebook according to the data extracted by Crowd Analyzer tool.

Figure 8. The volume of the online conversation on Facebook & Twitter about the “Hadeer Mekkawy” case study

Volume of interactions for support hadeer hashtag

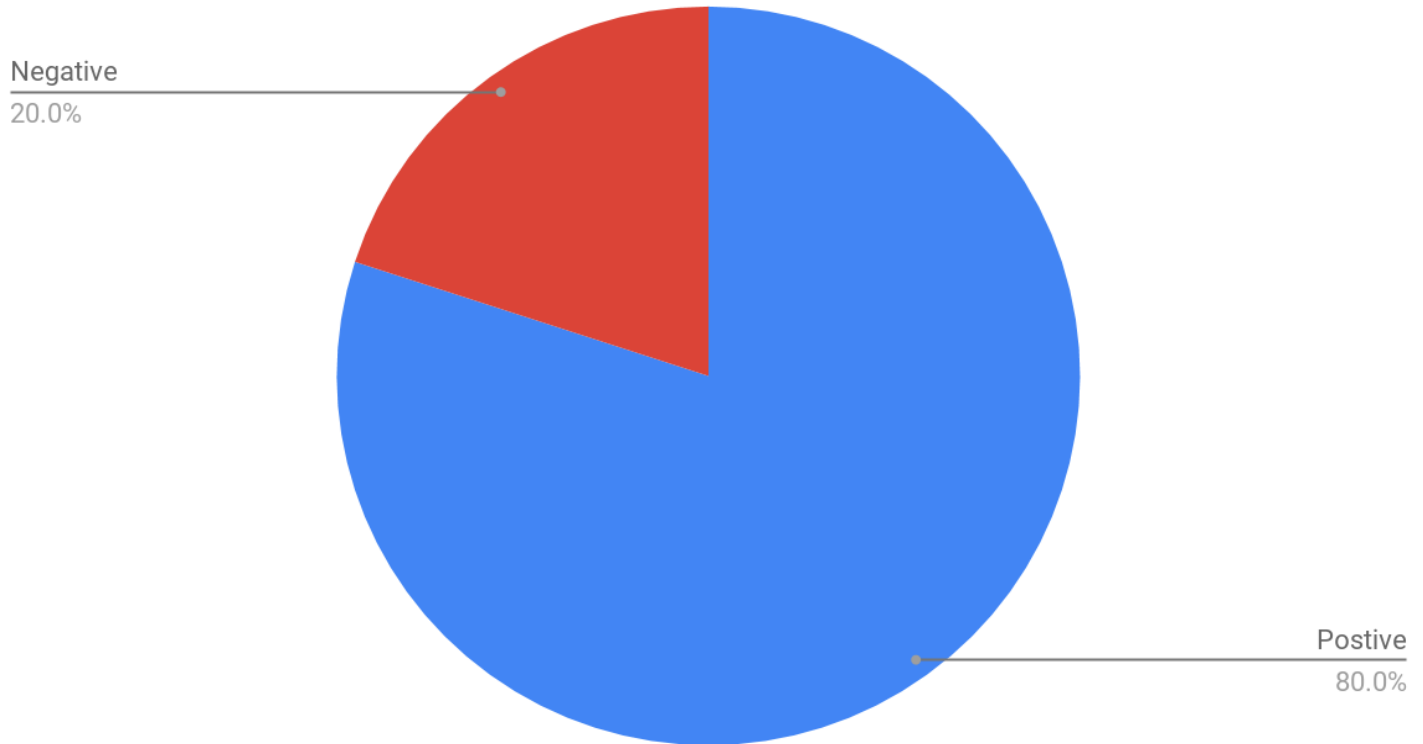


Source: Author compilation of number of users of the hashtag using “CrowdAnalyzer” tool

Contrary to the “Mall Girl” Hashtag, the online sentiment for Hadeer was quite negative even though the hashtags were originally supportive but 80% of the interactions were negative while only 20% were supportive. Users of the hashtag posted a nude picture that they claimed it is attributed to the girl, some threat to rape and kill her while others called for her trial.

Figure 9. The online sentiment for the “Support Hadeer” Hashtag.

Online sentiment towards support hadeer hashtag

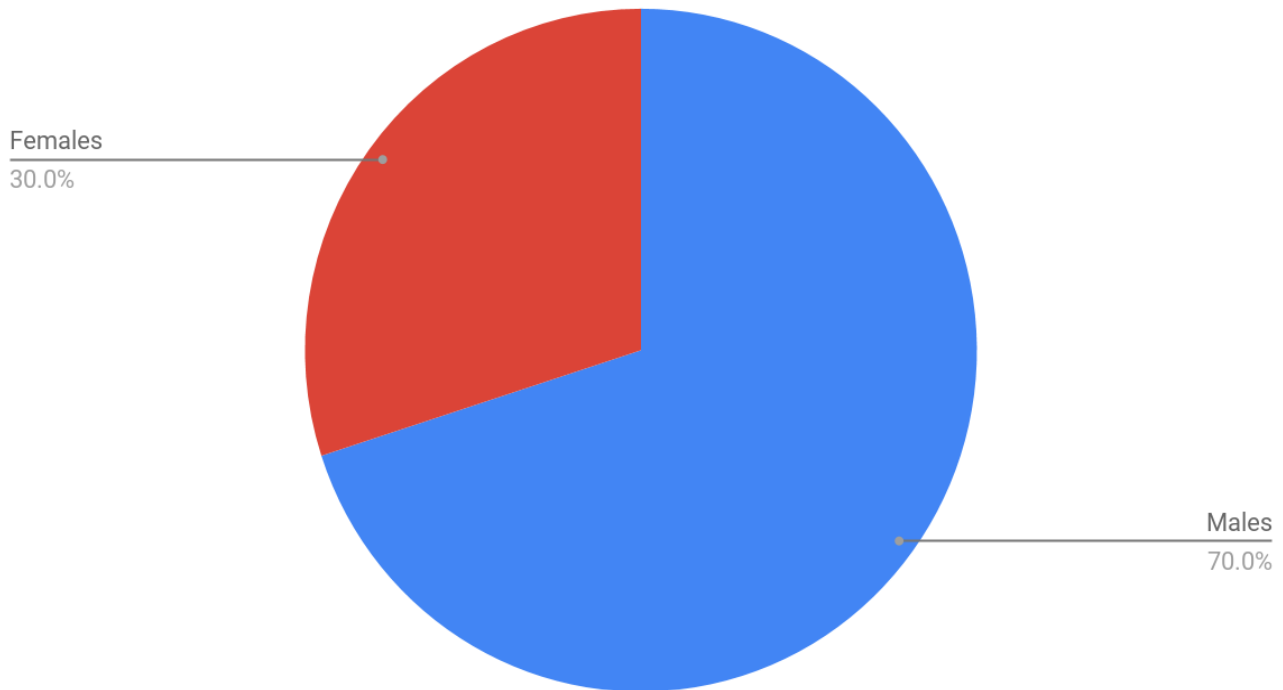


Source: Author compilation of the online sentiment of the engagement of users of the hashtag using “CrowdAnalyzer” tool

Again, this could be attributed to the fact most of the engaged persons on this hashtag were males as the data extracted by Crowd Analyzer showed.

Figure 10. Gender breakdown of the engaged users for the “Support Hadeer” Hashtag.

Gender of engaged users- Hadeer case



Source: Author compilation of the online sentiment of the engagement of users of the hashtag using “CrowdAnalyzer” tool

For the framing of the three sampled talk-shows, the data showed the following:

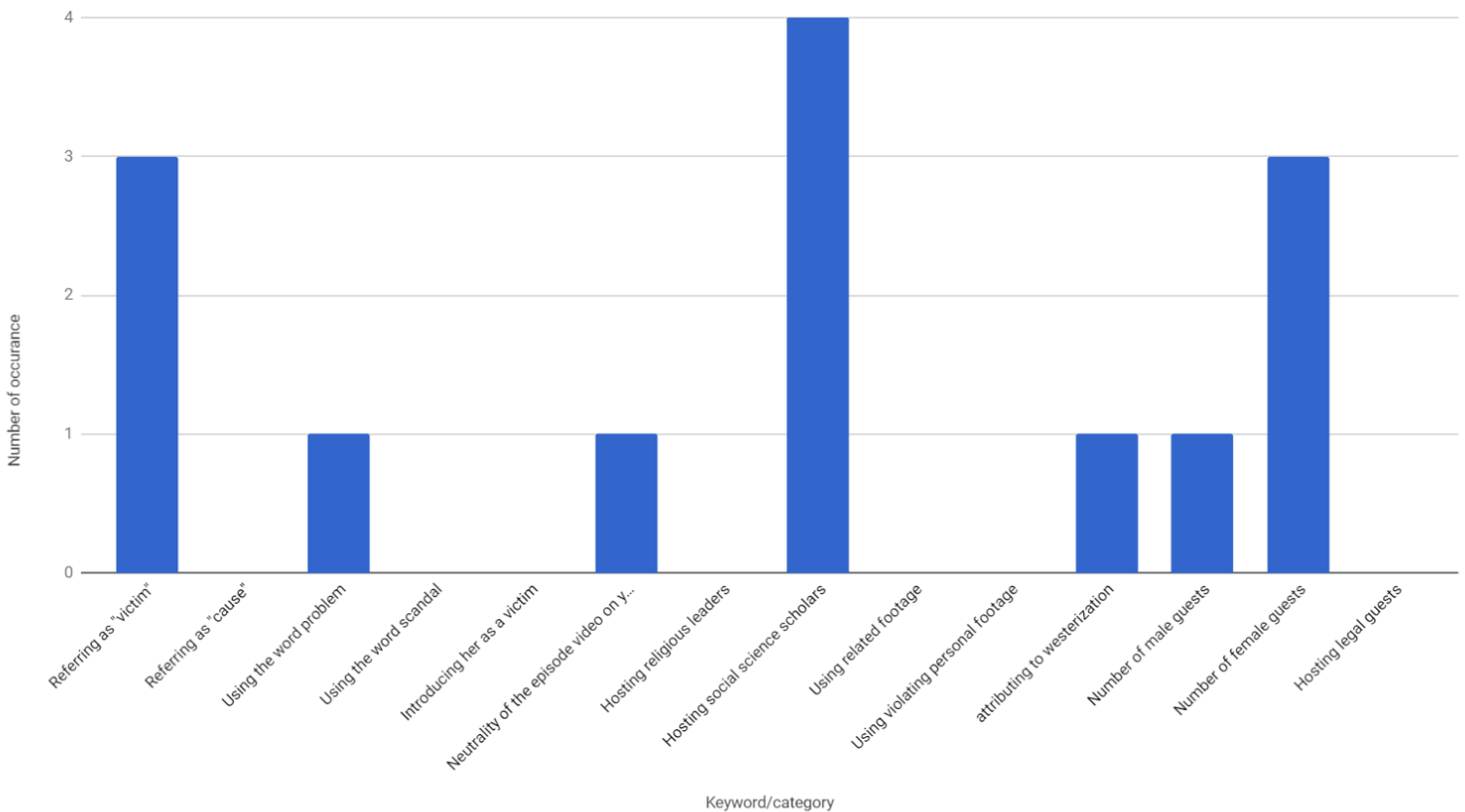
A. Problem definition:

The problem definition varied in the three shows as only one show which is Hona Al Assema hosted the girl herself to tell the story, while Al Ashera Masaan show previewed a previous interview with her on another political topic. In the previous interview she was veiled unlike her current status and was part of an opposition group which framed her in a certain image. The presenter also hosted religious leaders to comment on both her look and her portrayal of the problem. Sabaya El Kher show also did not host the girl but only chose a video from a regular fan

user that she could not trace the video back to his original profile and then commented with supporting comments to the ideas he presented.. The video featured a very emotional young man who condemns the supporting hashtag for Hadeer saying that cultural restrictions were the only thing that characterized Egyptians.

Figure 11: Problem Definition Indicator- Hona Al Assema- “Support Hadeer” Hashtag.

Problem Definition Indicator- Hona Al Assema- Hadeer Case

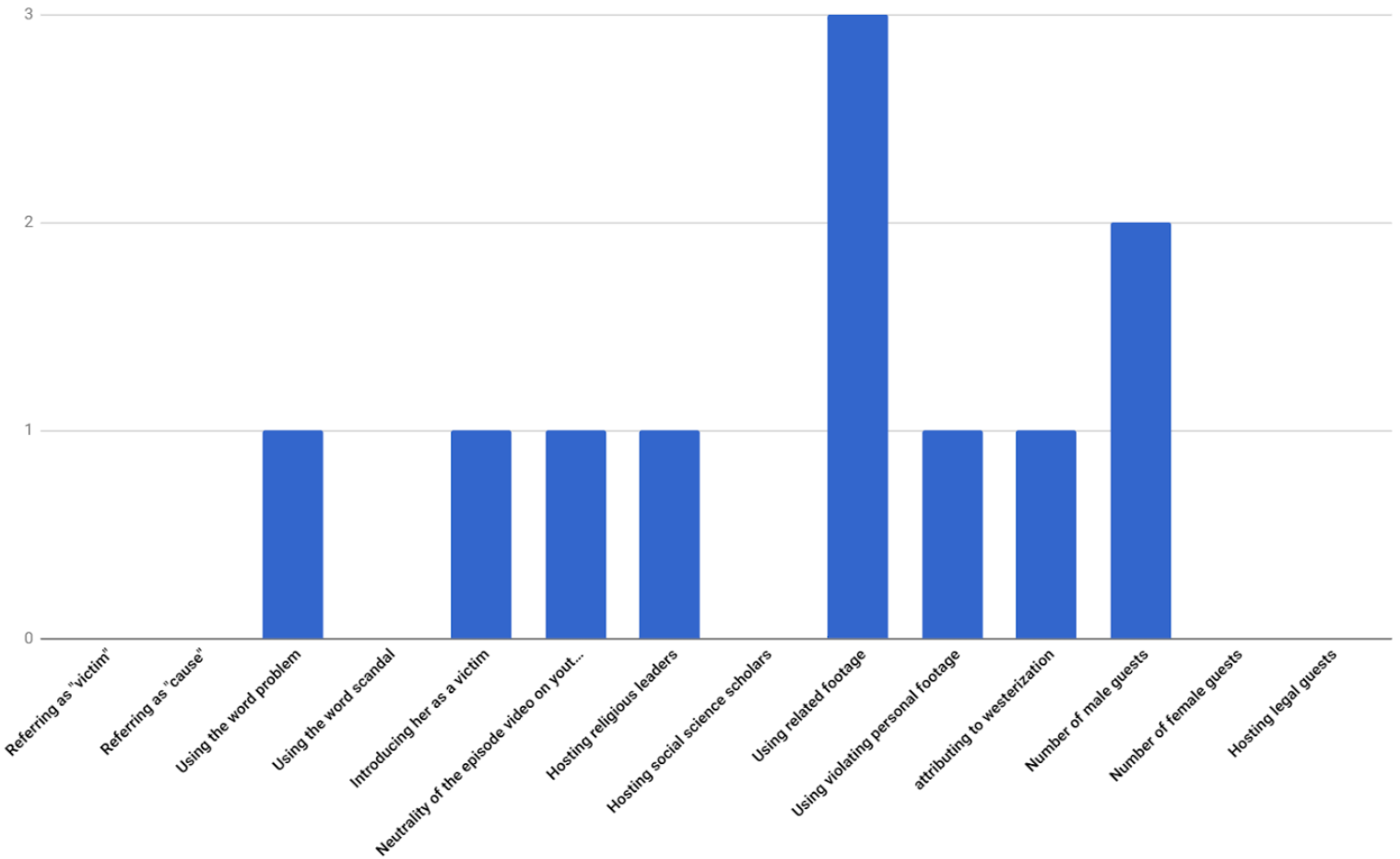


Source: Author compilation based on a quantitative content analysis for the Hona Al Assema show

Hona Al Assema was one of the most neutral definers for the problem by hosting the girl, using descriptive youtube title for the segment, refraining from assigning responsibilities to any party and confining the issue to its social aspects only.

Figure 12. Problem Definition Indicator- Al Ashera Masaan- “Support Hadeer” Hashtag.

Problem Definition Indicator- Al Ashera Masaan- Hadeer Case

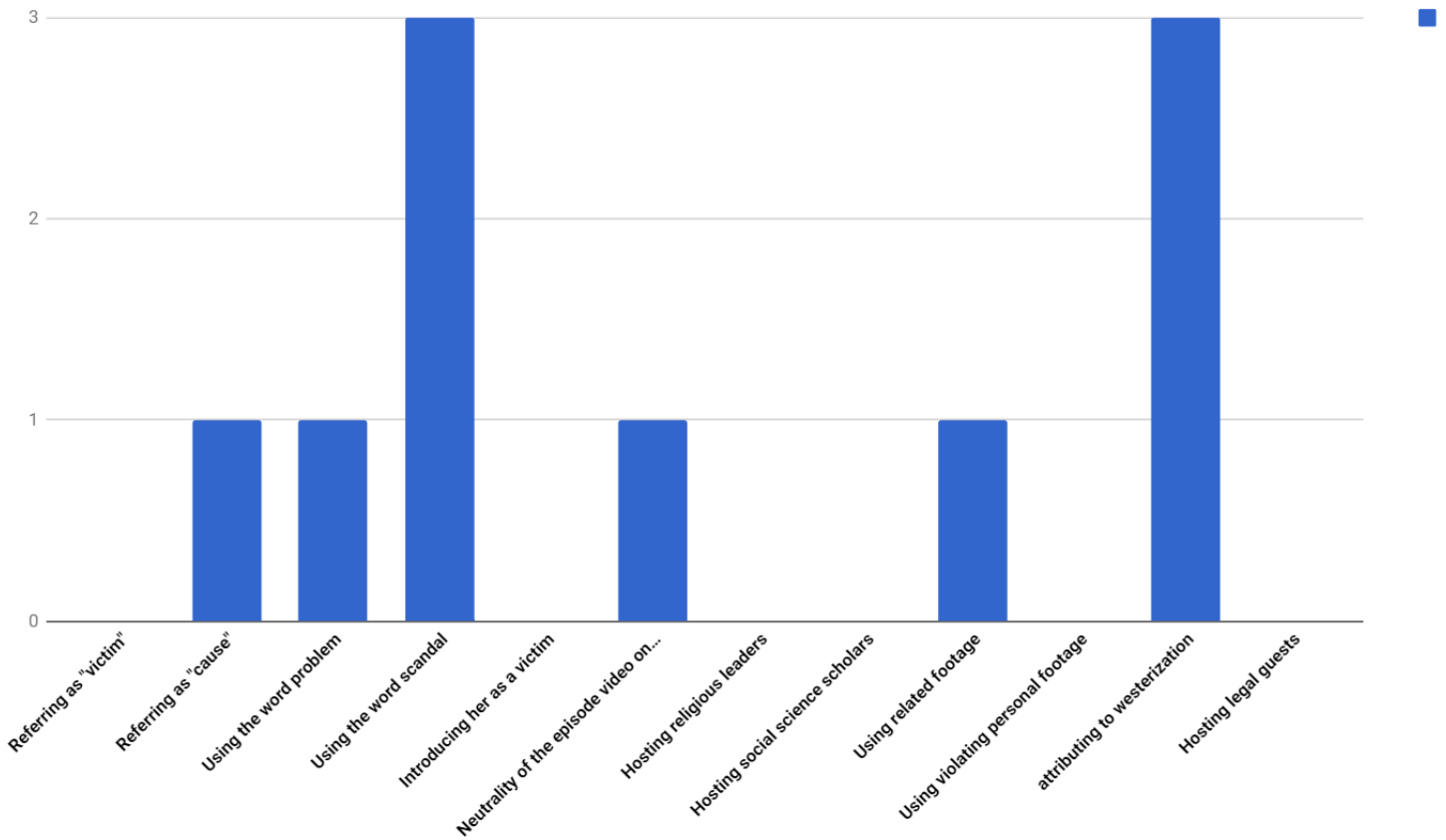


Source: Author compilation based on a quantitative content analysis for Al Ashera Masaan show

As for Al Ashera Masaan definition for the problem, the presenter did not host the girl while giving the space to religious leaders and the mainly male guests to define the problem and attribute it to westernization effects.

Figure 13. Problem Definition Indicator- Sabaya El Kher- “Support Hadeer” Hashtag.

Problem Definition Indicator- Sabaya El Kher- Hadeer Case



Source: Author Compilation based on a quantitative content analysis for Sabaya El Kher show

Sabaya El Kher show focused on the cultural aspect and how “foreign” is such practice of announcing children from secret and undocumented marriages and taking the child documentation problem into the public

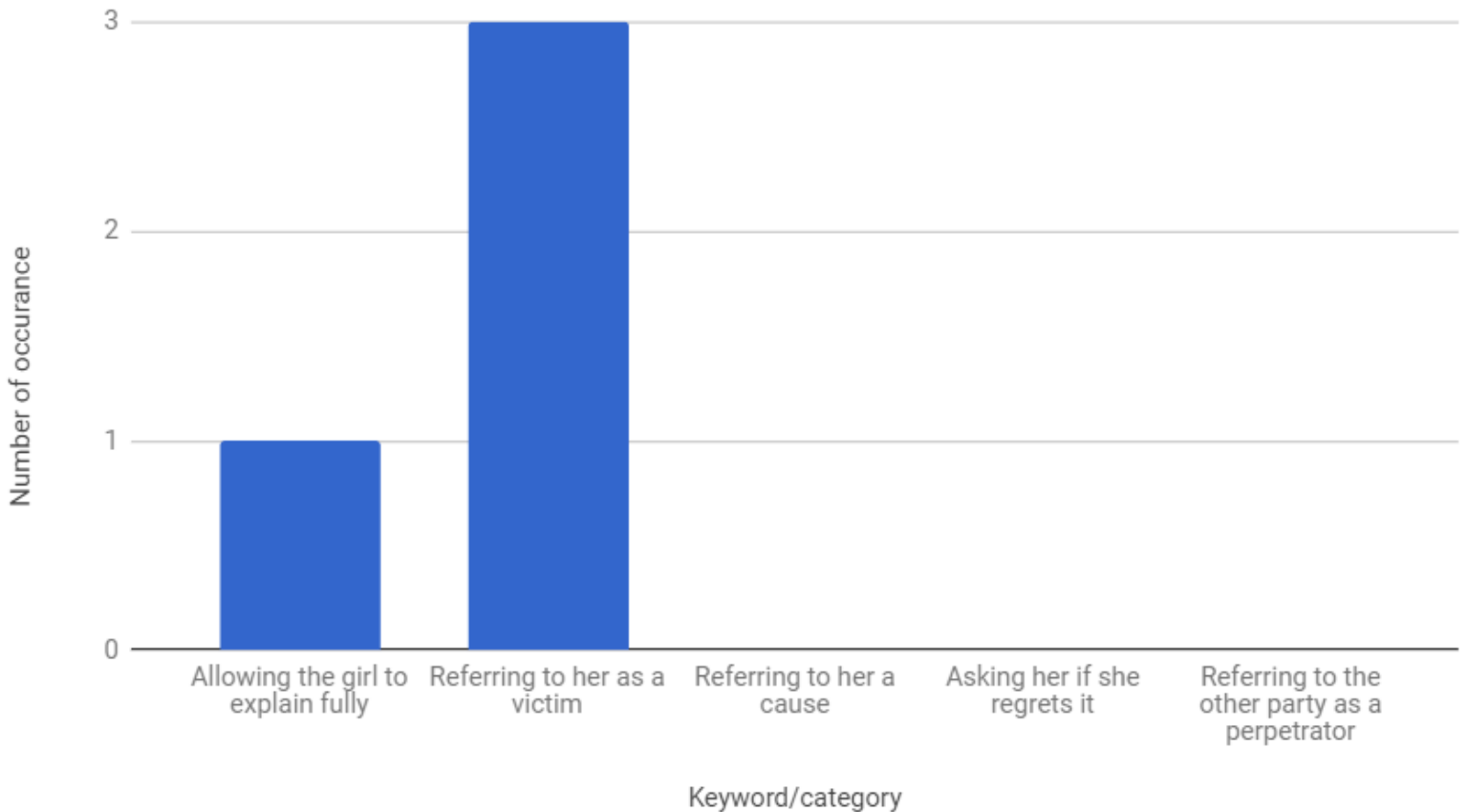
B. Causal Interpretation

Both Sabaya El Kher and Al Ashera Masaan agreed on attributing the sole cause of the problem is Hadeer and dubbed her as a violator of social norms and religious habits without much regard to the problem of documenting children resulting from these informal marriages.

However, Hona Al Assema show gave the space to Hadeer to explain her point of view as well as referred to her as a victim of outdated social laws.

Figure 14. Causal interpretation Indicator- Hona Al Assema - “Support Hadeer” Hashtag.

Hona Al Assema- Causal Interpretation- Hadeer case

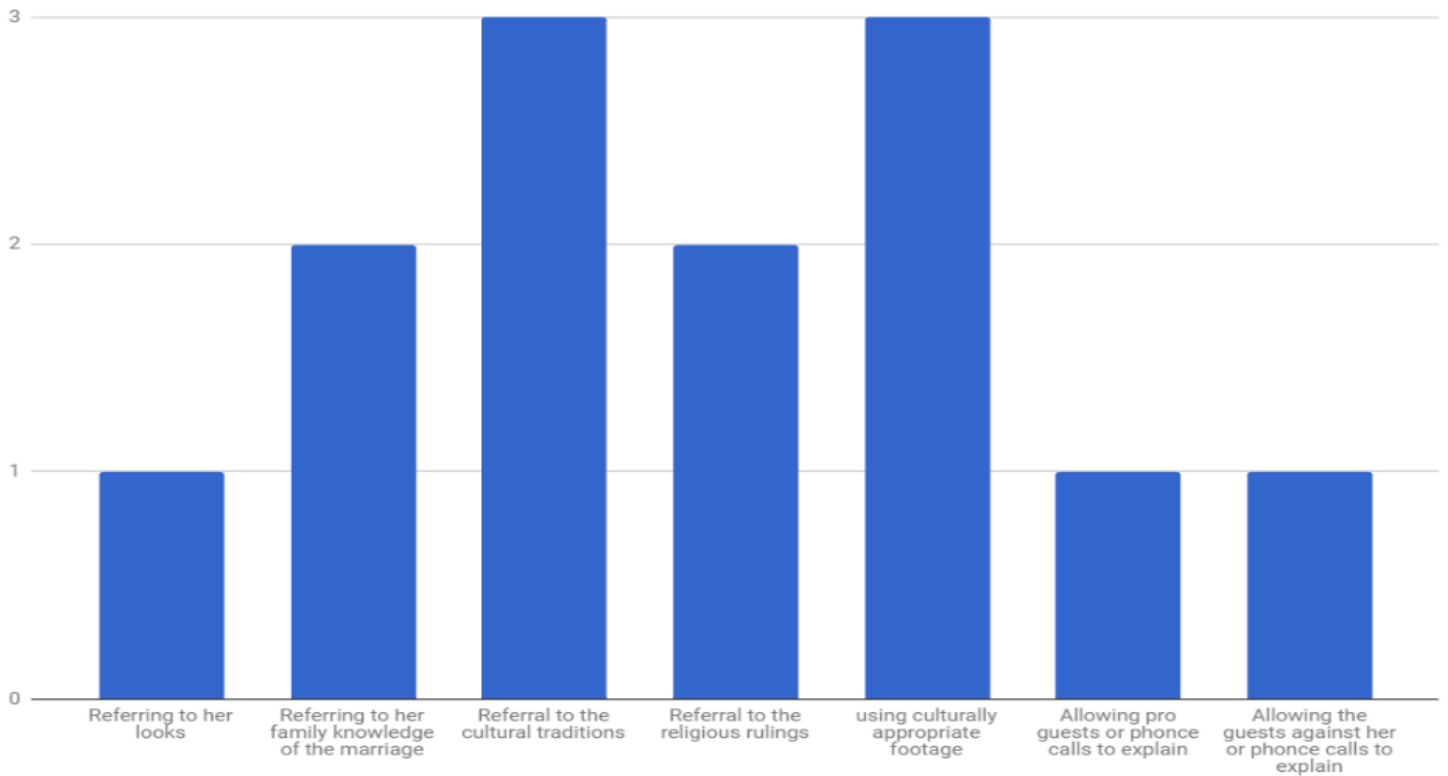


Source: Author compilation based on a quantitative content analysis for Hona Al Assema show.

C. Moral evaluation

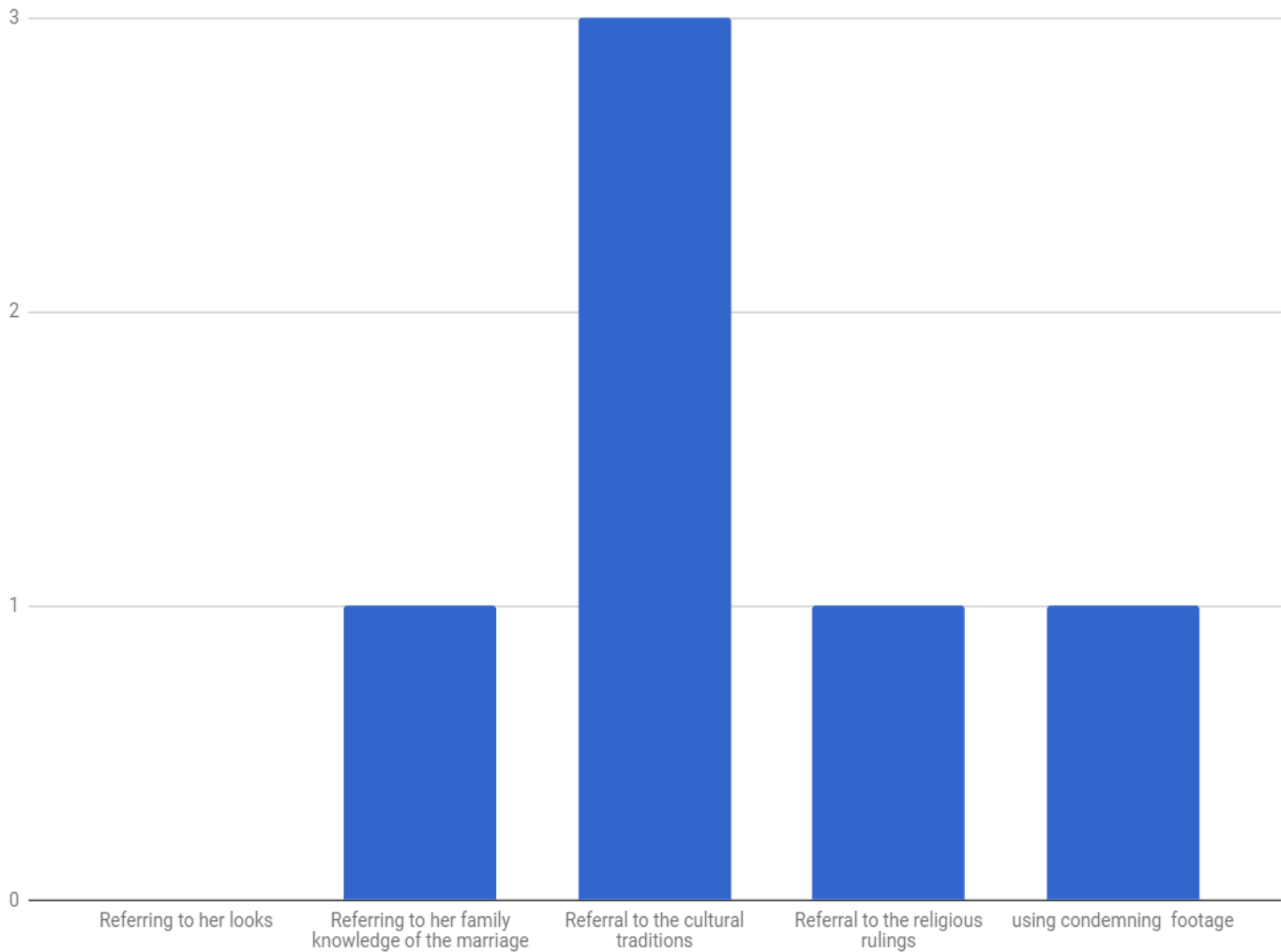
Based on the causal interpretation, the moral evaluation for Hadeer case was very visible in both Sabaya El Kher show and Al Ashera Masaan which is manifested by hosting religious leaders over social ones, referring to her looks as well as using photos from her private facebook profile to draw questions about what kind of moral she stands for.

Figure 15. Moral Evaluation Indicator- Al Ahsera Masaan Talk-show- “Support Hadeer” Hashtag



Source: Author compilation based on a quantitative content analysis for Al Ashera Masaan show.

Figure 16. Moral Evaluation Indicator- Sabya El Kher- “Support Hadeer” Hashtag



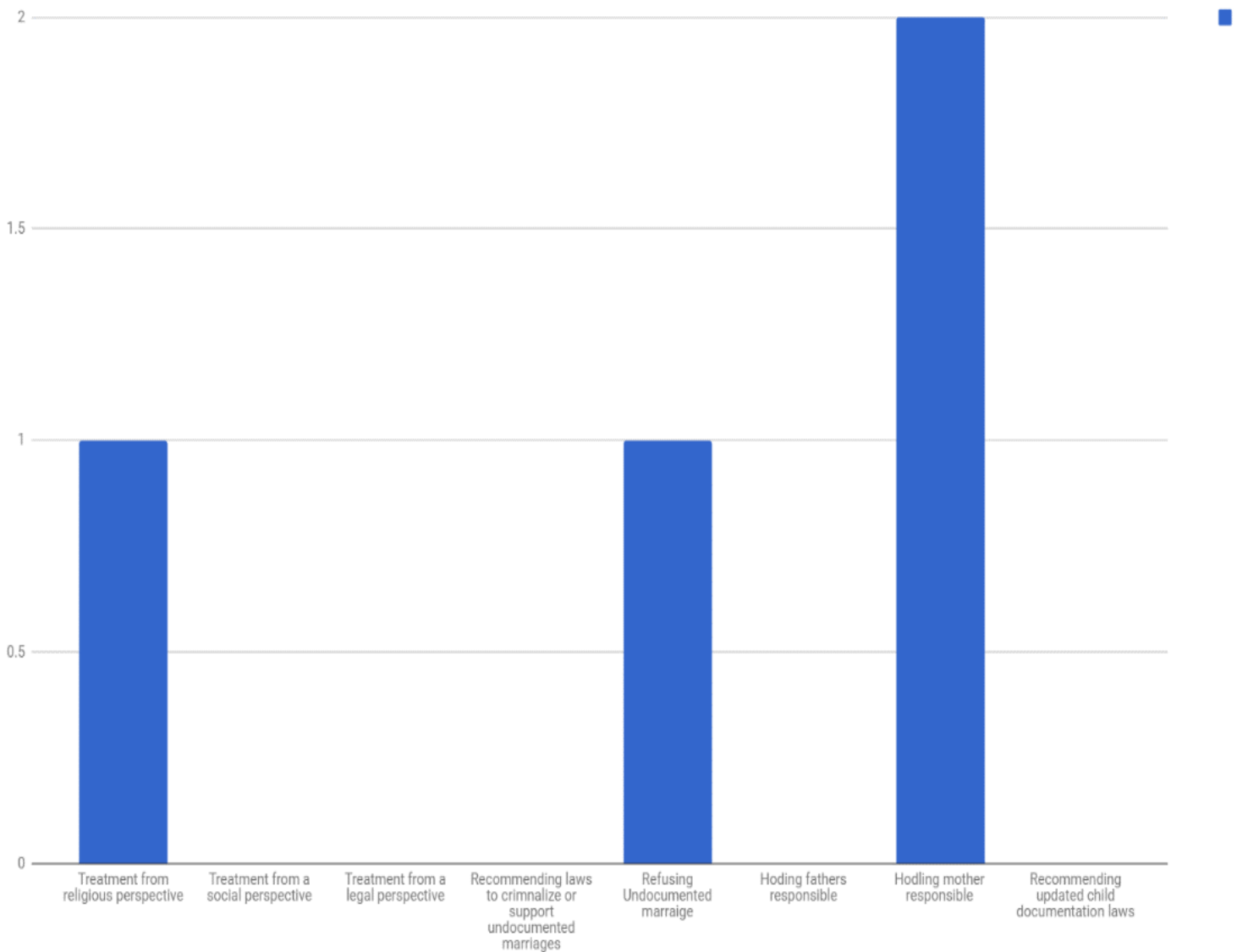
Source: Author compilation based on a quantitative content analysis for Sabya El Kher show.

As for Hona Al Assema framing for the moral evaluation, the presenter stuck to the social aspect of the case and the need for the more updated law to secure the rights of women and children in this type of marriages. The presenter also refrained from including any referrals to Hadeer’s look or lifestyle.

D. Treatment and Recommendations

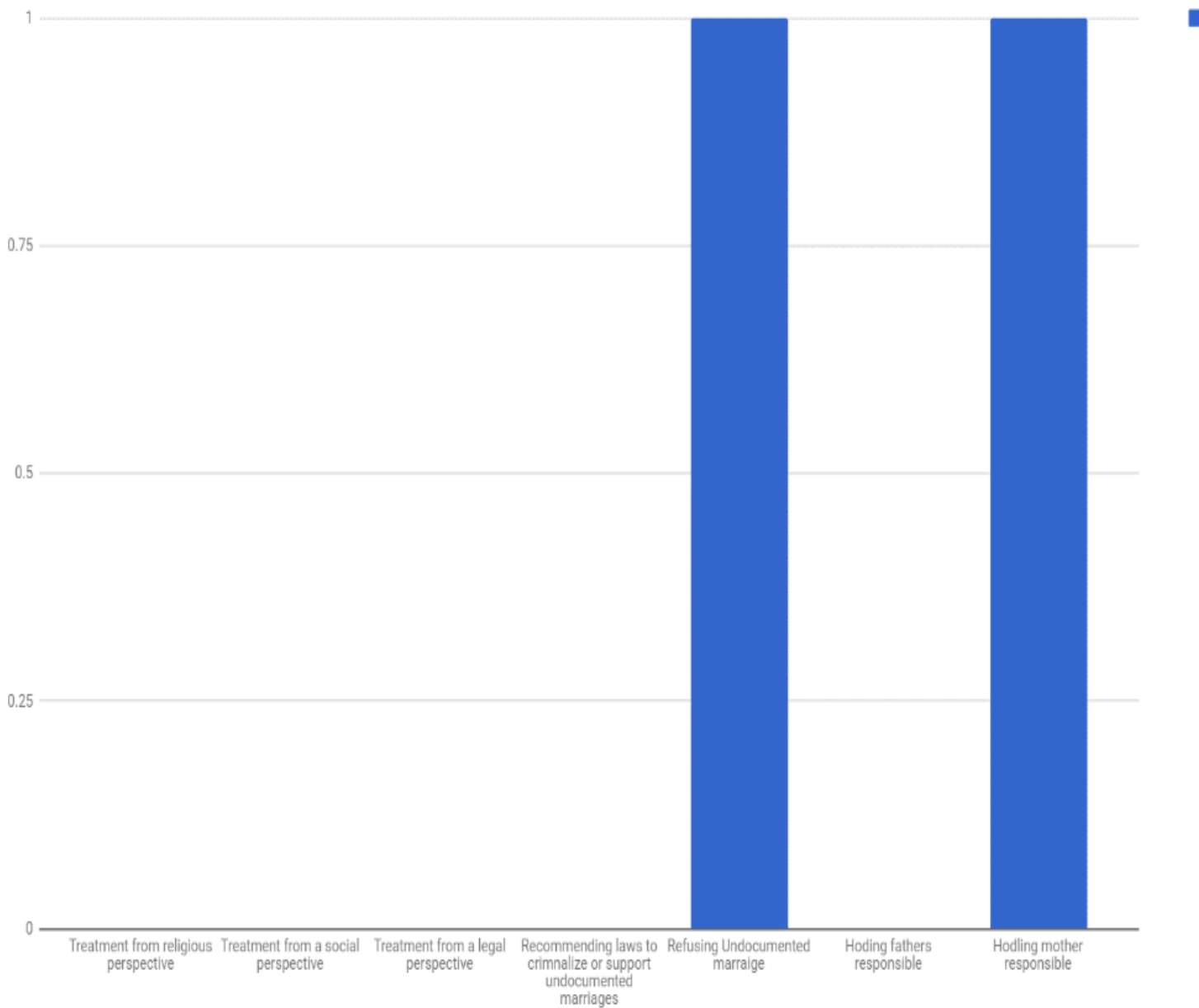
Both Sabaya El Kher and Al Ahsera Maasan again agreed that the solution is religious one by prohibiting this type of marriage after holding the mother, Hadeer in that case, the responsibility for any consequences.

Figure 17. Treatment/Recommendation Indicator- Al Ahsera Masaan - “Support Hadeer” Hashtag



Source: Author compilation based on a quantitative content analysis for Al Ashera Masaan show.

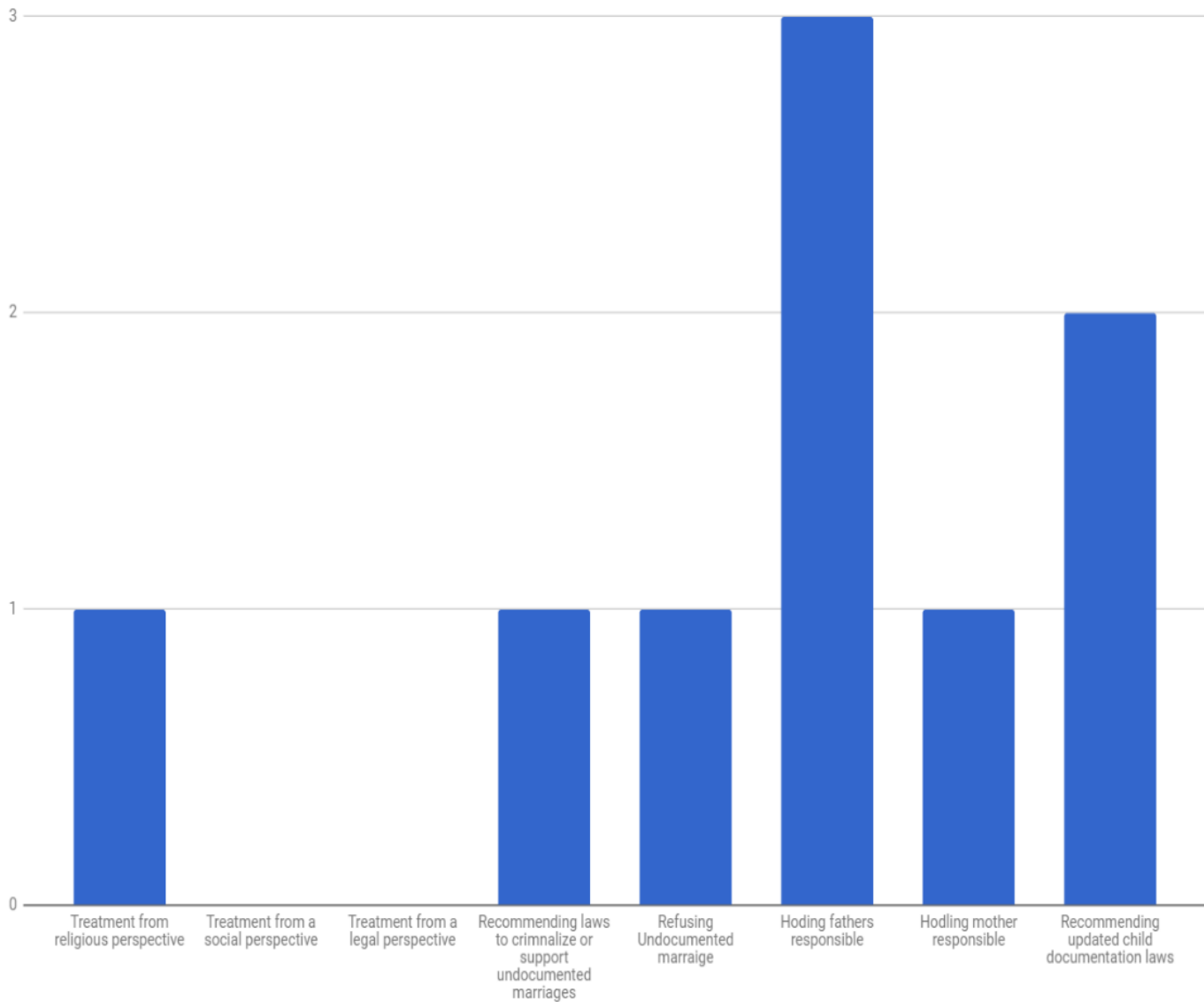
Figure 18. Treatment/Recommendation Indicator-Sabaya El Kher - “Support Hadeer” Hashtag



Source: Author compilation based on a quantitative content analysis for Sabaya El Kher show.

As for Hona Al Assema show, the presenter was solution oriented looking at the problem from both religious, legal and social perspective and called for law that respect all stakeholders in this part of marriage.

Figure 19. Treatment/Recommendation Indicator-Hona Al Assema - “Support Hadeer” Hashtag



Source: Author compilation based on a quantitative content analysis

4.2 Discussion:

4.2.1. The uniqueness of women issues when it comes to framing

The variety of topics on social media that can due to its volume be picked up by the traditional Egyptian media is huge. But if we were to group topics by theme, women issues can be controversial as seen in the analysis of the online sentiment for two social issues concerning women, either sexual harassment or undocumented marriages. The support for one issue is huge versus the opposition for another is very vivid. When the research participants asked for about the uniqueness of women issues when preparing the talk-shows episodes. One participant stated that “we do not intentionally portray it in a particular manner, but women issues vary but they achieve high viewership because men and women would like to say their opinions about it. And if it included a sexual perspective, it becomes societal not just only women-related”. This indicates that women issues that emerge from online conversations are attractive for traditional Egyptian media, not only for the volume of the conversation about it on social media but because they can be easily turned into a more attractive content for traffic and reciprocated conversation.

4.2.2. The reflection of sexual harassment and undocumented marriage on traditional Egyptian media before the focusing events on social media:

The researcher conducted a content analysis for six months of the daily episodes for the three sampled talk shows and undocumented was not mentioned at all in any of the three shows in this timeframe. However, Hona Al Assema show did a segment on sexual harassment inside universities in June 2015, four months before the “mall girl” incident and following the news of arresting a university professor accused of sexually harassing his students.

When the research participants were asked about these two topics and their reflection in their shows, one participant stated that “these social phenomena have been around forever, people are tired of hearing about sexual harassment unless something big happens and nothing happened in the time before “mall girl.” This shows that focusing events play an important role in bringing some long-lasting phenomena onto the surface of both social media agenda and consequently the traditional media agenda.

4.2.3. Factors that make online content more likely to be featured on traditional media:

The research participants when asked about any unique factors that will make them consider a social-media-originated story for their traditional talk-shows. All of them confirmed that volume is a big factor but also the relevance of the topic and the format of the talk shows but also the overall channel policy. One participant stated that “if the post or social media story is viral, we usually cover but also the presenter here in Egypt has a big say on what to choose and what to leave out. If the presenter is pro a certain idea and the social media story proves otherwise, then we won't take it if the presenter said so which makes our job hard sometime.” This goes back to the journalist's ideological orientation, and organizational pressure can impact framing of particular issue.

CHAPTER 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 conclusions:

In this chapter, the researcher will analyze the data from both the content analysis and the in-depth interviews in the light of three concepts which are the agenda-setting and agenda-building, framing between social and traditional media and the factors that qualify social media stories to be featured in traditional media.

Agenda-setting and Agenda-building:

The analyzed data confirms the diversity of sources shaping the Egyptian traditional media agenda and that these sources include other traditional media like newspapers, personal experiences of the producers, government statement and more recently social media.

The interviewees confirmed that the role of social media in shaping their daily agenda is increasing every day. One of the participants said that “we all see the big story on social media which makes everyone working on the show a producer by pitching that story.” That means that if the story is big enough, many team members will be seeing this social media content and will make it go through the process of assessment to be featured on traditional media. All of the sampled channels have social media teams “who are mainly responsible for managing the program social platforms, cutting the episodes into shorter segments and writing catchy titles to attract users to view it” as stated by one of the participants. This shows how the TV channels are assigning greater values to the social platforms to promote their content but also a search box for trending topics and “alternative for public opinions polls” as explained by one of the research participants. This, however, did not translate into dedicated social media researchers to actually

draw public opinion trends from the platforms. Instead the reliance is on the personal profiles, viral posts and trending hashtags on Twitter.

The six-month analysis of the sampled talk-shows showed that there was hardly any mention of the topics of the case studies in their episodes until the two case studies took place in October 2015 and January 2017. This highlights the importance of a focusing event which is “a sudden event that can generate attention to the public problems or issues, particularly issues and problems that are actually or potentially harmful” (Birkland, 2011, P. 101). Sexual harassment and undocumented marriages fulfil the definition criteria as being “actually harmful”, yet it took a focusing event to bring them to the surface on social media to generate a huge volume of conversation which pressures the traditional media to pick it as they “can no longer ignore it” as put by one of the research participants.

5.1.1. Framing between social media and traditional media:

The analyzed data showed that the traditional media usually follows the online sentiment of social media on the certain topics they chose to portray. The case study of the “Mall Girl” also showed what happens within these strong online communities when the traditional media goes flagrantly against the online sentiment where online users organized themselves to stop the talk-shows from screening for almost a year. However, the case is more difficult when the online sentiment differs from the hashtag being used to express this sentiment. In the case of “Support Hadeer,” the hashtag was initially to support Hadeer’s stance, but most of the engagement on this hashtag was against Hadeer Mekkawy and went to the extent of internet bullying and shaming. The framing of traditional media remains relatively easier and more accurate as the volume of content is not as great as social media that amounts to millions of entries, so the human analysis

is still possible. Comparing the case studies' framing on both traditional media and social media clarify how traditional media go with the flow of the online sentiment to be part of the online conversation.

Women-related issues though offers a new challenge in framing as additional societal, cultural and religious frames are added to view the issue which weighs down the conversation. The analyzed data shows that most of the discussion is about details like the dress code of the women instead of being solution-oriented to the harmful phenomena in both case studies.

5.1.2. Factors that make online content more likely to be featured on traditional media:

Volume and virality of online conversations remain a key determining factor for the “relevance” of a social media story and its qualification as a news story as shown by the answers of participating producers and by the volume of conversations of the case studies that surpassed 10 million each. However, as stated by the participants and by the examining the nature of case studies, the potential for making the talks-show segment sensational or viral on its own is also a key factor. Producers of the show care about having their show segments going viral as well and this happens “when the social media story picked is viral itself” as stated by one participant.

Women-related topics fall into that category that can go viral because of the involvement of a sexual perspective to it. The study also showed that not only traditional media listen to social media but also vice versa and that there is a form of online solidarity with topics that have a general unified online sentiment when the traditional media goes against it. This manifested in the online campaign asking sponsors of Sabaya El Kher Show to withdraw their ads from the show as the presenter not only criminalized the victim but also violated her privacy by using

personal photos to add a moral frame to her lifestyle that she did not approve. The analysis also showed that these talk-shows rely on social media for story inspiration but the

5.2. Recommendations:

The original research question was aiming to examine to what extent user-generated online content can influence the agenda of traditional media, namely TV and if this content differed in framing. The analyzed data showed that social media indeed is a strong component in the setting the agenda of the sampled talk-shows and that trending topics on social media in relation to women issues can force themselves into being traditional news stories based on their volume online but also because they can turn into sensational topics due to the involvement of the sexual aspect to it. This was evident in the two shows Sabaya El Kher and Al Ashera Massaan in the undocumented marriage case study. This weakens the real useful discussions that the Egyptian society should be having about the problem facing its women. When one of the sampled show, Hona Al Assesma, stayed away from such strong moral evaluation frames, the treatment and recommendations were consolidated to turn these focusing events into a more constructive social dialogues. Therefore, the need for less sensational media tackling women issue can lead to better media advocacy for harmful phenomena like sexual harassment.

There is a confirmation of the in-depth interviews that social media is an influential component in agenda-building and that is an alternative “public opinion poll” as explained by one participant. However, this dependence is not systematic or scientific as there are not social media listening or research departments that accurately gauge the public opinions on the different topics or their accurate sentiment by capitalizing on professional social media listening tool as all of the

participants confirmed that neither their shows nor the entire channel use such tool. The lack of understanding for the real online sentiment was vivid in Sabaya El Kher show when she was quite emotional condemning the “huge online support” for Hadeer Mekkawy case because of the hashtag “#supporthadeer” even though by using sophisticated tools like Crowd Analyzer or even by analyzing a random sample of these entries to the hashtag, one can realize that the online sentiment is quite the opposite to a harmful extent even. Therefore, the researcher recommends further research on the need for using scientific approaches when analyzing the social media content to gauge the right sentiment, map the cloud of topics that interest different segments and to tailor content for these needs.

The role of workforce diversity in constructing better news stories from social media content is also a domain needs to be further looked as all the producers interviewed were males so women-related issues that are not highly sexualized might not be a priority when they chose topics for daily agenda.

Finally, the study came across the reciprocity of conversation between traditional media and social media when Sabaya El Kher show picked up the “Mall Girl” social media story but the show’s framing of the topic went against the online sentiment, cyberactivism brought down the show for almost a year. However, this form of interaction was initiated by an influential social media user and previous show host with millions of fan base, so the role of “social media influencers” in giving weight to already viral stories need to be further examined.

Appendix [1]

Interviews' list of questions

1. What is your gender?
2. Do you have a twitter account? How often do you use it?
3. Do you have a Facebook account? How often do you use it?
4. How do you choose you daily topics for the program?
5. How can you determine if the public opinion is pro or against a certain topic you chose for your show?
6. Do you think that hosting political and religious opinions influence the choice of topics and how they are discussed
7. Does the program has a social media account?
8. Who handle the program social platforms?
9. Who gauge the comments on your social media platforms?
10. What is your reply policy to comments on your social media platforms?
11. How do you name your videos you upload to YouTube? Is it based on trends or the actual content of these videos?
12. How do you determine the newsworthy story?
13. Do you monitor other media outlets to get your story?
14. How many times per episode, do you rely on social media as a story source/inspiration.?
15. Why did you choose the “Mall Girl” to be your show?
16. Why did you choose Hadeer Mekkawy story to be on your show
17. Do you or your channel use any social media listening tools?
18. Does the presenter get to choose or refuse topics for agenda of the show?
19. what your role in this TV show print publication?
20. what is your main source of news gathering

21. What is the percentages of social media originated story in your show?
22. How can you verify news stories coming from social media?
23. What was the most effective or booming news story coming from social media you have ever reported?
24. How social media improved or harmed your show?
25. What is your show and medium strategy on social media?
26. What does the social media team in your medium actually do?

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