Research Paper

The Presence of Women in The Mass Media and its Effects on Iranian Society

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Abstract
This article is meta-analysis of five articles about women and media. Several researchers have attempted to study issues related to women and media in light of sociology and assess the contributing factors and consequences. This meta-analysis is an attempt for reanalyzing collection of studies in this area and identifying their strengths and weaknesses. The results of this meta-analysis demonstrated that the effect size of gender stereotypes on women representation was medium 0.231. On the basis of the literature review and also the results of this meta-analysis, some solutions with regard to improving women representation were presented. This includes some intervention in individual and social factors.

Keywords: Representation; Media; Gender Stereotypes; Meta-Analysis

Introduction

Many current social issues such as social gender changing can be caused by a lack of identity and lack of proper definition of woman and its properties. Nowadays women are between two ignorance: the one is ignorance of 20th century, which offers a vulgar image of women in the name of social presence of women and defending her rights. And the next is ancient ignorance, which believes women are lower than men in the name of purity and chastity, and keeps her from many fields of human perfection and realms. In such circumstances, women think they are going to be removed and destroyed, so in order to reach their lost and trampled rights, they are approaching the male patterns without regard to their specific physical and mental characteristics. On the other hand, in addition to the family and education centers, mass media as an important socialization tool in the modern world, act the constitutive and

manufacturer role of gender stereotypes in nowadays public life with representation of the dominant normative patterns of social life in form of theatrical shows and thus it can be used as a powerful tool for the representation and construction of gender stereotypes. Therefore, any representation and modeling by media, will have a significant impact on thoughts and mental images of audiences. Revising and modifying of media content with Islamic-local culture can enhance the dignity of women. Drawing such patterns and deliver it through the media can help to promote the role of women in society. Existence of suitable and comprehensive model of personality characteristics of women and presenting it on television has special significance. The basic problem is that television as an important media in Iran, should show which images with what features of personality of the woman in society in order to maintain their social status and strengthening of the family? If the TV puts effort to fulfill a suitable

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model, how and on what basis can define the model? And set it as the criteria of program broadcasting. Therefore, codification the pattern of female representation, requires the correct definition of the features, implementation and evaluation.

In other words, Mass media and particularly television, can be a mediator to enhance the dignity of women and strengthen the family. This research which used meta-analysis, seeks to answer the question: How much the representation of women in media is close to the reality? By doing this research, general knowledge about the representation of women in the media is obtained and possibility of planning a practical model to improve the showing of women in the media will be provided.

Gender stereotyping theory and media

Men and women will form separated groups in human society due to differences in their physical structure. In fact, this is the largest grouping can be done in any society, but this grouping leads to Stereotypical thoughts and gender stereotypes. Gender stereotypes including the information about the physical appearance, attitudes, interests, psychological traits, social relationships and men-women job styles.(Glomborg, 1999 :74)

Another definition states that gender stereotypes are set of mental beliefs which are subjective for cultural and social attitudes to the concept of gender. Despite the stereotypes that cause certain features to be awarded separately for women and men, so that the features will be considered of just one gender in terms of "specificity". Thus, the basis for making judgments about being women or men is not the actions of individual, but his/her gender determines that he/she has what positive or negative characteristics(unchangeable or non-adjustable), regardless of the true judgment. This stereotype appears more in the language level and is applicable in form of conceptual statements. So it can be found a lot in the literature and language of any society. Definition that media offers about women, is often the stereotyped repetition of legal and subjective facts in special and indirect coverage. As the audience cannot offer any judgment on this attitude because what is observed in reality, will be illustrated in mental backgrounds in a way that often are not able to detect it (Soltani, Faramarzi, 2006, 6192).

Baer in his own theory about gender stereotypes in the media, believes that should go beyond the unidirectional and reductionist model, and the relationship between people and media should not know as cause and effect, directly and unilaterally relationship. He believes that not only the media sets the nature of women, women's nature are also made outside the media and their less important

role in the culture in general and in the media as special leads to their lower position in society.(Glomborg, 1999 :86)

Andrew Michel with review of international researches and done for Unisco, offers some examples of common stereotypes about women and men in the world. Michel divided gender stereotypes into 4 groups:

Different roles within the family: role of mother is serving for family and dependent on husband and role of father as financial and safety support. Characteristics: boys and men are creative, decision maker and active, but girls are dependent and passive.

Social and political role: if women are active in social levels, they have been active in small and local levels, but men are political leaders or responsible. Professional role: Jobs are divided into two sections for men and women. Women are secretary or nurse and men are employer or a physician assistant.

In general, men and women are represented in the mass media such that are compatible with cultural stereotypes roles that are used in the restoration of traditional sexual roles. Women are usually passive, submissive and less important and appears in boring and secondary jobs as their gender, their emotions and their lack of complexity imposed them and men are represented with opposite characteristics. To prevent exclusion from society ,usually men and women behave in the context of social norms based on gender stereotypes, even put their interests, expression of emotions and mental states in this framework.(Ezazi, 2000, 46)

Theoretically, media as one of several socializer factors, should not have responsibility or power more or less than other socializer factors in the socialization process. But some factors (such as gender composition of the labor force in the media, to attract commercial support) have caused the media has more conservative role in the socialization process, and lead to reinforcement of their values and traditional beliefs. So yet the television is reproducing and reinforcing the stereotypical thoughts of gender under social pressure from stereotypical thinking, this will increase the intensity and sustainability of these ideas, in addition, shows off that these stereotypes arose from the reality (Soltani, 2006, 267).

Methodology

According to the purpose of this research, the meta-analysis method has been used. Meta-analysis is a statistical method for quantitative evaluation and combination of results from similar but independent researches (Sharon, 1999). Meta-analysis is analyzing the analysis or analyzing a series of different studies results in order to combine findings (Wolf, 1986). The meta-analysis is

a statistical operation for combine the results in order to achieve a conclusion (Kurtz, 2002). Nowadays a special place in the field of research is allocated to metaanalysis (Astrinati, 2001).

Meta-analysis includes these components: Exhaustive search for all applicable research, Valid and reliable criteria for the selection of articles and applicable researches, Get the size of impact importance of each variable, A method for combining the results of all studies and articles.

In the meta-analysis, the basic principle is to calculate the effect size for distinct researches. Then turning them into a common matrix (public) and then combining them to achieve effect mean. The effect size indicates the presence degree of a phenomenon in society. By getting statistics such as (t^2, X, F), can estimate the effect size index(r) related to them. According to Cohen (1988), for the index r, the effect sizes of 0.1, 0.3 and 0.5 respectively are considered as small, medium and large (Table 1):

Table 1. Interpretation of effect size (cohen,2005)

Effect Size	r
Low	0.1
Average	0.3
High	0.5

Statistical population

The statistical population of the research are the studies done by the executive agencies and researches published in scientific journals that have been carried out during the last ten years in terms of representation which have a relatively large sample size and measurement tools and sampling method have the sufficient criteria in terms of the validity and reliability.

Method of sampling

In this meta-analysis, studies have been used that qualify the methodology criteria, it means articles that have intertextual criteria are used in this study and the quantity of them is 5 research.

Intertextual criteria of this research include: the subject should be about women representation which is examined in them, Evaluation should be done in form of a group comparison.

Extertextual criteria of this research include: subject of research should be the issue of gender stereotypes which is not examined in them, This study was conducted as a case study or comprehensive plan where two or more groups are not compared with each other in that study.

Research Tools

In this meta-analysis, instruments mentioned below was used to collect data:

Primary sources: researches which are related to the study with intertextual criteria were used in this research.

Content analysis checklist: this checklist is used to extract the necessary information to do meta-analysis from content of articles with intertextual criteria. Only studies were selected for the meta-analysis which their validity and reliability was proven. Information of selected studies for meta-analysis is presented in Table 2:

Table 2. Selected research profile for meta-analysis

Researcher	View type	Result
Ravadrad (2001)	gender stereotypes	The changing role of women in the form of traditional housewife, working woman and educated However, women still are shown in the home.
Zahra Novin, Maryam Jahandideh (2001)	gender stereotypes	Combined role as wife-employed women are portrayed and their actions were reasonable and related to the conditions displayed.
Ghasemi(2001)	gender stereotypes	Contrasting behavior of men and women; women irrational behavior against logical behavior and the effectiveness men
Sadeghi, Karimi(2005)	gender stereotypes	Women in traditional stereotypes and manipulative creatures, deficiency of intellect and subordinate creatures depicted against men wise, honest and upper shown.
Rezaei, Kazemi(2007)	Gender representation and policy-TV	Determination of compliance with the objectives and strategies of television series in the role of wife and mother of the family is marginal and it does not fit with the objectives mentioned above.

Way of doing

The implementation steps of this meta-analysis include: defining the research problem, research coding, detailed expression of studies selection criteria, searching research on the representation of women, selecting researches for the meta-analysis, evaluating research papers, summarizing

the results, calculating the effect size, designing questions and hypotheses of meta-analysis, descriptive analysis of researches, describing and interpretation the effect sizes and composition and selection of research type.

Data analysis method:

Since the research on the issue of women representation for the meta-analysis were collected and no effect sizes were reported, statistics of different studies converted to index (r) in this meta-analysis through using the approach of Hunter and Schmidt, and then calculated effect sizes interpreted for index (r) through using Cohen's effect size interpretation Table.

Findings

The main question: According to research how the representation of women in the media?

Table 3. Mean and standard deviation as a result of the impact of gender stereotypes on female representation

Independent studies	Dependent variable	The number of studies N	The average effect sizer	Standard deviation as a result rSE	Standard error of size effect. SE	z
Gender stereotypes	Representation of women	5	4.237	4.7554	4.4403	5.1273

Table 3 shows the mean and standard deviation as a result of the effect of gender stereotypes on female representation shows.

According to Table 3, the best estimate of the effect of independent variables (gender stereotypes) on the dependent variable (representation of women) of 0.231, based on the interpretation of Cohen's effect size, is average assessed. Therefore, based on the results of meta-analysis of gender stereotypes in the representation of women in the media, the effect is average assessed.

Conclusion:

About the main question, according to the mean effect size which is equal to 0.231, it was concluded that gender stereotypes have impacts on women's representation and this effect is evaluated as average according to Cohen's table. Research findings related to meta-analysis of this question confirms the results of previous studies.

The obvious conclusion which is obtained from stereotyping researches shows that behavioral information associated with judgment could undermine the stereotyping of groups members. Agree with previous studies (Astrinati, 2001), Descriptive stereotypes describes how group members are typically (women are kind and gentle) and prescriptive stereotypes describes the behavioral standards that members must have to avoid ridicule (women must be kind and gentle). It is likely that behavioral information related to judgment undermine only the descriptive stereotypes, not prescriptive stereotypes. One implication of this possibility is that stereotypes elimination will be done through descriptive stereotyping. The stereotypes which is used about certain groups, can have significant consequences. For example, members of a group within a certain area are treated with prejudice and there will be limited expectations of them (Ankem 2005:230).

Based on the theoretical and research background and also considering the results of this meta-analysis, it is concluded that consideration of specific points and take some measures could decrease considerably the negative effect of gender stereotypes on women's representation.

Media is responsible for most of our observations and experience that we manage our understanding of the world and its regulations through them. In fact, a large part of our approach to the world, rooted in the media messages that have already been made. Due to having vast influence, they have direct impact on the values and norms of society and also play a significant role in changes of community awareness and community attitudes.

In fact, we can say that there is mutual relationship between the media and the attitude to women which has positive and negative aspects. It is important to note for policy-makers, managers, programmers, writers and producers of media that addressing and paying attention the woman is one of the missions of the socio-cultural media and also is a strongly supports for development of sport in a country and too much attention to the visual aspects in long term, maybe leads to a crisis in media.

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