

The representation of anti-black racism in Egyptian movies

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With the flames of racial and ethnic discrimination glowing vehemently everywhere, the present study probes into the representation of color-based discrimination in Egyptian movies. It depicts the stereotypes and value judgments taken as norms characterizing black people in Egyptian movies. The paper's methodological approach is both qualitative and quantitative. Quantitatively, a structured questionnaire on Microsoft forms consisting of three questions that are related to Movie watching habits, stereotyping, and attitudes & future recommendations, was used to elicit 75 viewers' reactions toward the negative representation of black people in Egyptian movies. Qualitatively, the researchers analyzed some scenes that were extracted from six Egyptian movies. The quantitative findings showed that some of the participants have a typical stereotype about black people based on what they watch in the movies and recommended representing them in a better way in the future. The qualitative findings revealed inter-discoursal characteristics of racist discourse in Egyptian movies. The conclusions and recommendations call upon global media hubs and social media platforms to help combat and eradicate racism through banning the production of TV programs and shows that condone racist beliefs and practices.

Keywords: black people; discrimination; discourse; Egyptian movies.

1. Background of the study

Racism, which digs deep in history, reflects the deepest forms of dividedness, segregation, and difference between groups. It is associated with slavery, exploitation, low status, deprivation, and degradation. Racist political regimes are known to exercise apartheid, oppression, and persecution against other groups on the basis of a person's skin color. This results in gaps between people of different races and ethnicities in different domains, including educational achievement, job opportunities, human rights, health services, and so on. According to Blackburn (2008), such socially-imposed differences often result in inequalities. In view of the above, discriminatory practices are associated with a host of social, cultural, economic, and psychological factors which impact target groups. For example, negative racial stereotypes and traits are often strongly associated with blacks, and positive ones are associated with whites (Dovidio, Evans and Tyler 1986).

Racism in mass media and movies is typically identified as the misrepresentation of a certain race or ethnicity. It is manifested in various ways, either by promoting negative stereotypes of a certain race or ethnicity or by underrepresenting them in mass media or movies. While several races or ethnicities (e.g., Asian, Latin Americans, and Middle-Eastern) might be subject to racist representations in mass media and movies, in the context of this study, black people as a recognised race shall be the focus of the discussion.

In this regard, it is worth noting that racism against black people in mass media and movies is a long-dated practice. In such a long history of racism against black people, multiple racist practices, such as negative stereotypes of marking black characters as being violent, uneducated, and criminals, enforced the idea that black people are fundamentally dangerous or inferior to people of other races.

Unfortunately, as this particular race endured such racism in mainstream white media, the situation of portraying black people in mainstream Arab media was not different, disregarding the fact that a considerable proportion of Arabs are black. The impression that black people are unimportant or unworthy of attention is perpetuated by the fact that they are frequently not given prominent roles or are simply presented as supporting characters. Furthermore, instances of blackface, where non-black actors paint their faces in black, are featured in various 'comedy' Arab shows, a practice that once again perpetuates racism and mockery of a whole race that has its deep history.

The representation of black-skinned people in media has been a major concern in mainstream Arab media, especially Egyptian media. Several themes pertaining to black people in global media began to well up and be situated in normalized contexts. The myth of uncivilized, slow-witted, and sometimes intimidating black people is perhaps one of the most enduring themes that one might observe in the Egyptian media. These claims concur with what has been reported by Ferber (2004, 175) that the image of “the black is the cultural lens through which whites perceive blacks. This is an image that is apparent throughout white supremacist discourse.”

It is noteworthy that mass media, including movies, have been a powerful medium for framing stereotypes (Dibas, Rabab’ah, and Haider 2022; Haider and Al-Abbas 2022). Not only do they reflect and shape prejudices, but they also construct and perpetuate distorted images of reality that can be erroneously taken for granted as clichés (Georges and Farghal 2013; Farghal 2006). Moreover, the creation of one group deliberately defines another group in relation to its category in a binary relationship (Banjo and Jennings 2017).

A 2019 report issued by Aljazeera news network, published on their official website, draws the readers' attention to the insinuated, subtle racism against dark-skinned people in a number of Egyptian movies. These practices have been long overlooked by censors as well as viewers. The significance of

this work derives from its being a pioneering study that addresses an important issue for researchers in different disciplines, including sociology, social anthropology, social media discourse, and Black studies, to mention but a few. Furthermore, the current study will help challenge the stereotypical images associated with black people everywhere. It aims to achieve two main objectives. First, to show how black people are normally portrayed in Egyptian movies and the types of stereotypes that are usually formed and acquired by these movie viewers. Second to shed light on the viewers' movie-watching habits, acquired stereotypes, and attitudes concerning the representations of black people in Egyptian movies.

Despite its possible influence on societal attitudes and the maintenance of discriminatory ideas, the portrayal of anti-black racism in Egyptian movies has received little academic attention. Furthermore, even though racism against black people is a global problem, the backdrop of Egypt provides a distinctive prism through which this phenomenon can be evaluated, given the nation's historical and cultural importance in Africa. In order to better understand how anti-black racism is portrayed in Egyptian cinema, this study examines its expressions, underlying narratives, and ramifications in relation to a wider societal context.

Understanding how anti-black racism is portrayed in Egyptian cinema is important for both intellectual and social reasons. This piece of research aims to enhance critical discussions on media representation, racism, and the influence of visual narrative on public views by examining the cinematic portrayal of anti-black racism. In addition, it can also reflect on the past and present dynamics of racial relations in Egyptian society. By so doing, it sets up the stage to explore the underlying societal attitudes, biases, and power structures that underlie such representations. This information can be of great value to politicians, activists, and media experts working to promote a more inclusive and fair society, as well as serving as a basis for future academic research.

Despite the importance of the subject under investigation, there is a dearth of research on how anti-black racism is represented in Egyptian cinema. Although there have been numerous studies on racism and media representation, only a few studies have specifically looked into how anti-black racism is portrayed in Egyptian cinema. Most previous studies focused on different facets of Egyptian cinema, like gender roles, political themes, or historical storylines. Thus, a thorough investigation of the particular dynamics and manifestations of anti-black racism in Egyptian movies is needed.

By addressing this research gap, the present study seeks to advance the field of scholarship and launch a larger conversation about racism in the Egyptian media. It also stresses the importance of fighting racist ideology in local and international contexts, encouraging more inclusive narratives, and engaging critically with how race and racism are represented.

2. Literature review and theoretical framework

This section provides a discussion of Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2020) framework as well as the studies that examined the representations and stereotypes of black people in audiovisual content, such as movies, TV shows/series, and sitcoms.

Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2020) model hinges on the notion that communication is basically a multi-modal act where non-verbal communication is a key factor in understanding language, and the written language can only be understood when images, layout, typography, and color are taken into account. Aspects of non-verbal communication, including movies and television, have become multi-modal to influence writing, political life, popular culture, and mass media (Van Leeuwen 2011). The multi-modal framework is a true representation of the relationship between the macro-level, which represents the socio-political, ideological, and cultural aspects of multimodality, and the micro-level, which embraces the textual and discourse features of the multi-modal framework.

Kress (2009: 1) reported that “multimodality provides the framework necessary to bring all modes of meaning-making together under one unified theoretical roof. It locates communication in every day, covering topics and issues not usually discussed from traffic signs to mobile phones.” Kress and Van Leeuwen (2020: 1) believe that “reading images in their contemporary multi-modal settings is a must for students and scholars of communication, linguistics, design studies, media studies, and the arts.” By analogy, the multi-modal approach is compatible with Fairclough's (2001) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) multidisciplinary approach, which views language as a form of social practice, and that textual features can only be interpreted through understanding the ideological context.

Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2020) theoretical framework shares its multi-modal features with Fairclough's (2009) social approach and Van Dijk's (2008) socio-cognitive approach to critical discourse analysis. This multi-modal framework of discourse analysis integrates different approaches from diverse theoretical backgrounds, including the social, socio-semiotic, socio-cognitive, and socio-cultural approaches. This comprehensive model of multi-modal analysis is flexible enough to accommodate spoken, written, audiovisual, graphic, and audiovisual discourse. It is this kind of model that the current study will utilize in identifying the discourse functions at the macro-level and micro-level in the six Egyptian movies targeted in this study.

In his review of Kress's *Literacy in the New Media Age*, Dobson (2005) refers to the modes in which Kress (2003, 45) communicates the signs where he addresses the “time-based modes of speech, dance, gesture, action, and music, together with the space-based modes, such as image, sculpture, layout in architecture and streetscapes.” This combination of modes is at the core of Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2020) multi-modal framework. With the growing role of multi-media outlets, the multimodality

framework witnessed a boom through its applications in media-related studies. For example, TV satellite channels which have become accessible to large audiences globally, TV programs, talk shows, and movies have impacted people's ideological, socio-cultural, and political orientations. According to Gerbner *et al.* (2000), television was responsible for reflecting viewers' perception of one manifestation of social reality, namely racism. Despite the relentless efforts made to eradicate it or playdown its notorious effects on self, society, and the international community, racial and ethnic discrimination seem to be far from over. On the contrary, its manifestations are still markedly visible to often inflict damage and harm on black people's socio-economic status, self-esteem, ego, and psychological state.

Insomuch as globalization has been a blessing to make ends meet, eradicating physical boundaries through innovations in information and computer technology (ICT) and the Internet, news on color-based discrimination prejudice has been traveling so fast. This rapid exchange of information globally has led to staging waves of violence, resistance, rejection, and denunciation.

3. Racism in the Arab and Egyptian media

Racism in Egypt, notably racism directed towards black people, has longstanding origins and takes many different forms. The backdrop and experiences of racism in Egypt during the 1990s and 2000s were influenced by socio-cultural elements, colonial legacies, and Egypt's location as a North African nation with linkages to the Middle East and Africa.

In a number of contexts, including social interactions, employment, education, and media depictions, anti-black racism has been noted. There are many negative perceptions and prejudices about black people, and there have also been alleged discrimination and unfair treatment in terms of housing, job opportunities, and service access. Throughout Egypt's history, there have been instances of slavery and forced labor, which have fueled ongoing racial prejudices. Additionally, the idea of “colorism” has supported racist beliefs.

African refugees have experienced prejudice, including xenophobia and racial profiling. Activists, civil society groups, and individuals have tried to increase awareness of racism and combat anti-black racism over the years. It is noteworthy that depending on socio-economic class, and geographical region, black people's experiences in Egypt during the 1990s and 2000s may vary. It is important to look at scholarly writing, media reports, and first-hand stories in order to create a thorough understanding of racism towards black people in Egypt.

Historical, social, cultural, and political aspects can have an impact on the dissemination and approval of racist ideas, images, and tropes in Egypt and the Arab world. Racial stereotypes and hierarchies were spread by colonial powers, and they still have an impact on attitudes today. Racist

concepts and imagery from the colonial era, such as the presentation of white Europeans as superior and people of African origin as inferior, have had a long-lasting effect on racial perceptions.

Governments, institutions, and powerful individuals can either support or condemn racism depending on political and sociological circumstances. However, through policy adjustments, public awareness campaigns, and the establishment of legal frameworks, governments, activists, and organizations can fight to eradicate racism and promote equity and equality.

The spread of racial ideologies has been made possible by globalization, migration, and the tighter integration of cultures. It is high time to address the subject nuancedly and acknowledge that Egypt and the Arab world can have different views on racism.

Race, class, gender, and religion are just a few of the many aspects that overlap with power dynamics in Egypt. Whiteness interacts with various types of dominance and privilege, and historical and cultural contexts influence how whiteness and power are viewed. Egypt-specific elements, including socio-economic status, familial ties, and regional discrepancies, have an impact on power dynamics.

Al-Khamri (2018) stated that Afro/black Arabs and black African migrants are the targets of racial satire and disparaging language that reaches the TV screens of millions of Arab families. The media industry keeps injecting vile amounts of racism into its popular drama series, movies, and talk programs to produce degrading images of Afro/black-Arabs. Egyptian movies' depictions of black people mirror the racism and anti-black prejudice that are pervasive in Arabic-speaking countries. Al-Khamri (2018) also pointed out that black people are shown on television and in movies as having inferior jobs as doormen, housemaids, clowns, and servants to wealthy families. Black men and women are frequently portrayed as filthy and lethargic, and because of racism, their skin tone is ridiculed and thought to bring ill luck. Hassan (2020) attempted to characterize the language representation of the foreigner in traditional Egyptian movies from the 1920s to 1960s and assess the degree to which it is stereotypical. The researchers conducted a thorough analysis of dialogues involving actors and actresses who portray foreigners. The findings showed that stereotypes are not limited to linguistic representation but can also be observed in the foreign characters' names, occupations, and social standing.

Sabry (2021) acknowledged the lack of a phrase that describes racial discrimination and color prejudice in the Arab world and suggested the concept of anti-blackness to investigate prejudice based on race in Egypt. The researcher examined the historical, social, and cultural aspects that contributed to the emergence of anti-blackness by defining it as a multidimensional socio-cultural process. The study concludes that there is anti-blackness in Egyptian culture as a result of the historical

development of social stigma and cultural stereotypes around blackness. According to Al-Azraki (2021), in “white” Arab-dominated nations, black Arabs are underrepresented, mostly invisible, and barred from governmental, intellectual, and artistic organizations. In their study of Blackness in Arab transnational television comedy, Downing and Gamil (2021) came to the conclusion that while the region's TV comedy professionals do not actively promote anti-black agendas, they urgently need to reexamine established professional practices that ‘dehumanize’ Afro-Arabs.

4. Empirical studies

This research study investigates how black people are represented in Egyptian cinema and what features and qualities are attached to them. To the best of the researchers’ knowledge, few research studies have addressed this topic from this particular perspective in the Arab world. However, representations of black people in specific audiovisual programs, including movies, have been investigated across the Americas and Europe (George 2002, Mouka, Saridakis, and Fotopoulou 2015).

In a study that examined the movie *Precious*, representations of black people were deconstructed by Griffin (2014), who, from the standpoint of a black female feminist spectator, argues that this movie had perpetuated some images and stereotypes of black women, in particular, despite being about the suffering of a black girl. In her deconstructive analysis, Griffin provided a critique for the fantasy scenes which the protagonist, Claireece Precious Jones, imagined throughout the movie to help herself escape her bitter-lived reality of the verbal, physical, and sexual abuse she endured from her parents. These images, representations, and stereotypes, Griffin argues, satisfy the White supremacist patriarchal gaze and perceptions of what acceptable femininity is and what feminine beauty standards are. In this deconstruction, Griffin draws both the readers' and the audience's attention to the fantasies that relieved Precious whenever she experienced a tragedy, whether at home, where she lived with her abusive mother, or in the street. In these fantasies, Precious imagined herself in a physical, social, and financial status that she did not possess.

Johnson (2016) argues that black entertainment can best be studied from a social perspective as it contributes largely to group distinctions through social comparison. To illustrate, Boskin (1997) notes that ethnic entertainment involves stereotyping of both the in-group (those similar in race) and an out-group (those different in race), drawing cultural distinctions that define both groups as socially distant from each other. Representations of black people were also investigated by Weaver Jr. (2016), who analyzed 60 episodes of 15 different shows streamed via three main non-linear distribution platforms: Netflix, Hulu Plus, and Amazon Prime. The purpose of the analysis was to examine the portrayals of black people in these non-linear streaming platforms in comparison with those shown on

traditional television by employing the cultivation theory. The main finding of this study suggests that similar to the misrepresentations of black people perpetuated on traditional television, content streamed via these online platforms has, in great part, included such misrepresentations of black people. Of the 60 episodes analyzed in this study, 18 episodes contained 11 stereotypes of black people represented by 106 characters portrayed in these episodes. The three main stereotypes of black people were portraying blacks as inarticulate, criminal, and angry black women, respectively. However, the researcher attributes the reason that only 18 out of 60 episodes contained stereotypical images of African American people to the lack of both black characters and the creators (i.e., writers and executive producers) in these shows.

Chaney (2018) examined the portrayals of black female teens in a number of American movies and sitcoms. In the analysis of these portrayals, she compared the portrayal of the main character in the movie *Precious*, which is also the name of the leading black female adolescent character, against the portrayals of the other black female adolescent characters in the rest of the movies and sitcoms examined in her study. The findings of Chaney's study argue that *Precious* depicted a number of stereotypes related to black people in general and women in particular, which are not necessarily consistent with how black people/women were represented in the other movies and sitcoms. Stereotypes, such as black female teens being subjected to child abuse in contrast to white children, black mothers' being more abusive towards their children, black fathers' being less caring and rather "dysfunctional," and lack of resilience in poor black urban families, to mention a few, were all present in *Precious*.

Considering anti-blackness as a multi-modal socio-cultural act, Sabry (2021) discusses the hybrid combination of the historical and socio-cultural factors which contributed to stereotyping and consequently stigmatizing black-skinned people in Egyptian media. Sabry's conclusions were reached through using the multi-modal CDA approach to analyze a sample of the Egyptian media.

The present study attempts to provide answers to the following questions:

1. How do viewers react towards the negative representation of black people in Egyptian movies?
2. What are the stereotypical features attached to black people in Egyptian movies?

5. Methodology

In this study, the researchers analyze the data qualitatively and quantitatively. In the quantitative part, the responses of 75 Egyptian viewers were analyzed to a structured open-ended questionnaire, which comprises three constructs:

1. movie-watching habits,

2. stereotyping,
3. attitude and future recommendations.

In the qualitative part, we analyzed some scenes that were extracted from six Egyptian movies.

5.1. Quantitative part

The researchers designed a structured questionnaire on Microsoft forms. The questionnaire used in this study consisted of three questions that are related to movie watching habits, stereotyping, attitudes, and recommendations for future actions. Before administering the questionnaire, the researcher consulted a jury of three experts in the field for their feedback, and their comments were implemented accordingly.

The three open-ended questions are as follows:

- What movie genres do you like to watch most, and in which language? Why?
- What is the stereotype of black people in movies?
- What are your attitudes and future recommendations concerning the representation of black people in movies?

The viewers' responses were combined into three thematic categories.

The sample of the study consisted of 75 viewers. The researchers shared links to the scenes that were investigated in this study with their friends and students via WhatsApp and asked them to fill in a Microsoft form questionnaire that consisted of the three open-ended questions outlined above. They were also asked to share links with their relatives and colleagues. For convenience, the questionnaire and instructions were written in Arabic.

5.2. Qualitative part

This study examines the representations, images, and stereotypes pertinent to black people in six Egyptian movies that were screened in cinemas across the Arab world between 1998 and 2008.

No.	Title	Genre	Year	Duration	Producer	Director	Scriptwriter	Revenues
1	صعيدي في الجامعة الأمريكية <i>Ṣa'īdi fi-l-jāmi'a al-amrikiyya</i> ("Sa'eedi at the American University")	Comedy	1998	1h 58m	Medhat El-Adl	Saeed Hamed	Medhat El-Adl and Ahmad Sha'ban	27,000,000 EGP
2	أفريكانو <i>Afrīkānū</i> ("Africano")	Adventure/ Comedy	2001	1h 50m	Moonlighting Movies	Amro Arafa	Mohammad Amin	8,000,000 EGP
3	قلب جريء <i>Qalb jari'</i> ("Bold Heart")	Romance / Comedy	2002	1h 43m	Walid Al-Tabei	Mohamed El-Naggar	Ahmad Al-Bayyah	6,665,564 EGP
4	اللي بالي بالك <i>Alli bālī bālak</i> ("You Know Who")	Comedy/ Action	2003	1h 55m	El-Adl Production Company	Wael Ehsan	Sameh Ser Elkhatm and Nader Salaheddin	17,963,309 EGP
5	عيال حنّيبية <i>'iyāl ḥanībīyah</i> ("Young Lovers")	Comedy	2005	1h 56m	Unicorn/ Arab Screen	Magdy El-Hawary	Ahmed Abdullah	7,953,882 EGP
6	رمضان مبارك أبو العلمين حمودة <i>Ramaḍān Mabruk Abu al-'alamīn ḥammūda</i> (a proper name)	Comedy/ Family	2008	1h 45m	Good News for Movies	Wael Ehsan	Youssef Maati	23,000,000 EGP

Table 1. The investigated movies

These six movies were selected based on reviews of various Egyptian movies portraying black people derogatorily. Different online articles and blogs, as well as news outlets, cast light on the multiple

images of black people as portrayed in Egyptian cinema from the late 20th century to the early 21st century. The six movies selected for this study are examined as case studies to provide a detailed analysis and categorization of these representations and stereotypes in Egyptian cinema.

The choice of the six movies in this study was mainly based on the presence and portrayal of black people and how they are negatively represented in these movies; the theme that sustains and demonstrates the main argument of this study, namely, black people are represented negatively in the Arab mass media and movies. Moreover, compared to other Egyptian televised shows, these movies have financially grossed the highest profits. Regarding the offensive depictions of black people in these six movies, many stereotypes and racist images were detected. Such images of degradation and dehumanization were perpetuated in the movies *Sa'eedi at the American University* (1998) and in *Africano* (2001). Blackface was used in *Bold Heart* (2002). The underrepresentation of black characters is depicted in *You Know Who* (2003). Additionally, several racist jokes and remarks were present throughout *Young Lovers* (2005). Other examples of racism, mockery, and ridicule of darker-skinned/black characters were found in *Ramadan Mabrouk Abul-Alamein Hamouda* (2008).

5.3. Visual and contextual contents

The selected Egyptian movies' visual and contextual content have been closely examined as part of the study's qualitative analysis to yield insightful information about the clues and signs of anti-black racism. The researchers have carefully examined scenes that had been taken out of the movies to look for visual signals, speech, and narrative components that supported unfavorable stereotypes and prejudices against people of color. The portrayal of black characters' physical characteristics, such as skin tone, facial features, and hairstyles, have been investigated by researchers. The focus was on occasions where black characters were portrayed in a derogatory or caricatured way. In order to pinpoint the underlying ideas and themes connected to black characters, the contextual content of the scenes was also examined. Black people's conversations and interactions were carefully examined for any instances of disparaging language, dehumanization, or marginalization.

Overall, key insights into how anti-black racism is maintained in Egyptian movies are provided through the analysis of visual and contextual components. Finding specific instances of conversation, visual clues, and scenarios that support harmful stereotypes and contribute to the derogatory portrayal of black people is helpful. Understanding these cues and signs makes it possible to provide specific solutions and suggestions for the sector to address and correct these harmful depictions.

6. Research findings and discussion

This section discusses the research findings based on the quantitative and qualitative analyses. These findings derive from the three-category questionnaire shared by the 75 participants. The researchers review the findings according to the multi-modal analysis of the scenes extracted from the six movies targeted in this study.

6.1. Quantitative analysis

The researchers examined the participants' responses to the three questions and listed similar responses under thematic categories. The demographic information of the participants is included in Table 2. below.

Variable	Category	Counts	Percent
Gender	Males	32	42.7%
	Females	43	57.3%
	Total	75	100%
Age	18-24	25	33.3%
	25-30	30	40%
	30+	20	26.7%
	Total	75	100%
Education	High school or less	8	10.6%
	BA/BSc	54	72%
	MA or above	13	17.4%
	Total	75	100%

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for the demographic variables

The demographic variables included three categories: gender, age, and education. The 75 participants were of different age groups; 33.3% of them were between 18 and 24 years old, 40% of the participants were between 25 and 30, and the rest, 26.7%, were 30 years old and above. Further, 42.7% of the participants were males, while 57.3% were females. In terms of education, only 10.6% of the study sample had only the Secondary Education Certificate or less, while the majority of 72% had an undergraduate degree, and 17.4% of them had a postgraduate degree.

6.1.1. Movie watching habits

Responses to the “Movie watching habits” question of the questionnaire shed light on the preferences and viewing practices of viewers, which can assist in contextualizing their views on how black people are portrayed in Egyptian movies. By examining the data, we found trends in genre preferences and linguistic preferences as well. Understanding these preferences can give us insights for analyzing the viewers' representational attitudes gathered from the questionnaire results outlined below.

This section aimed to collect responses about the participants' habits, whether they frequently watch Arabic or non-Arabic movies, and which movie genre they prefer watching most. In reply to the first question about their movie-watching habits, 90% of the participants stated that they watch movies and series in their free time. 65% of them stated that they watch Egyptian movies because they are accessible via different means of mass media. 80% of them reported that they prefer watching Egyptian comedy movies because they trigger humor. 35% of the participants stated that they like watching non-Arabic movies, especially English, with 60% of them watching action movies.

6.1.2. Stereotyping

The researchers found recurrent themes and patterns on how viewers see the representation of black people in Egyptian movies by examining the responses to the “stereotype” question. The classification and analysis of these preconceptions in the broader context of racial stereotypes in media would be helpful.

Question 2. aimed to elicit responses about whether the participants have a typical stereotype about black people based on what they watch in the movies. 30% of the participants stated that stereotyping black actors is featured in Egyptian movies. Egyptian movies seem to be subjective and not objective when addressing issues relating to black people compared to English movies. They claimed that watching movies has influenced how they act in some real-life situations. This claim that a number of participants made in relation to how such racist content might influence them confirms what Gerbner *et al.* (2002) discussed in terms of how what is shown on screen shapes and influences viewers' perceptions of reality. 50% of the participants stated that Egyptian Comedy movies do not take into consideration black people's feelings compared to English movies. The majority of the participants stated that stereotyping black actors is featured in Egyptian movies. 70 % of the participants said that black people do not take star roles in Egyptian movies and that black actors in Egyptian movies play the role of naive, uneducated, working-class people.

6.1.3. Attitudes and recommendations

The question on “attitude and future recommendations” gives viewers a chance to share their individual attitudes and thoughts about how black people are portrayed in Egyptian movies. The variety of attitudes ranging from favorable to negative, and the specific suggestions they provided can be determined by looking at their responses. These perceptions can help in understanding the demands of moviegoers for more inclusive and equitable representations in Egyptian cinema.

The third question aimed to collect data about the participants' attitudes towards the representation of black people in the movies and whether they recommend representing them more appropriately in the future. 50% of the participants said that they do not enjoy watching scenes that make fun of other people. 30% of them stated that teasing black people in Egyptian movies influenced their attitudes towards them. 40% of the participants think that teasing black people in some Egyptian movies diminished their sense of belonging and social inclusion.

Most participants suggested that decision-makers in the Arab world should urge stakeholders in the moviemaking industry in the Arab world to respect all groups in the society and enforce deterrent punishment on violators. They also suggested that Arab censorship commissions should remove the scenes which are offensive to black people before approving the movies for broadcast. They recommended that Arabic media and streaming platforms be more objective in selecting movies to air.

6.2. Quantitative analysis

This section examines the representations of black people in a multi-modal form of art—movies. In order to identify these representations, several scenes extracted from the six Egyptian movies under study were analysed in terms of the multiple modals at work in audiovisual material, namely movies. Therefore, the scenes have been analysed by considering the visual, verbal, and contextual aspects.

6.2.1. *Sa'eedi at the American University*

In the 1998 movie, *Sa'eedi at the American University*, the presence of black people is very small; however, the presence of harmful and offensive content is extreme. The representation of black people in the movie takes form in the character Samara, a prostitute who is mocked for her race. In a blatant hatred case, the movie's sole black woman is degraded, oversexualized, and dehumanized. The movie further spreads damaging stereotypes that affect the minority that is arguably the most susceptible to discrimination. The movie's main character belittles her through racism, colorism, and texturism. He

treats her racial features, such as her dark complexion and coarse 4-c hair, as flaws and a source of shame. He mocks and abuses her to reassure his sense of superiority over the others that he, his society and culture, view her as. The movie portrays these scenes as a lighthearted comedy as it does not see the affected group as deserving of sympathy and lacks the capacity to acknowledge the real-life consequences of its offenses. Table 3. shows some examples extracted from the movie.

No.	Time	Scene (original)	Translation
1	14:12	يقول محمد هنيدي لفتاة الليل السوداء وتطفى النور ليه ما انتي مضلمة خلقة	Mohamed Henedi asks the black prostitute, “what are you switching the lights off for? You're already dark.”
2	14:35	يقول محمد هنيدي لفتاة الليل السوداء أنا مش شايفلك ايد من رجل من راس يخر بيتك	Mohamed Henedi tells the black prostitute, “I’m unable to see your hand, leg, or head...bloody woman.”
3	14:41	يقول محمد هنيدي لفتاة الليل السوداء تصدقى يابيت كل الناس شافت الليلة الحمراء, أنا الوحيد اللي شفت الليلة السوداء	Mohamed Henedi tells the black prostitute, “Could you believe it, girl? Everyone lived a red night, except for me, who lived a black one.”
4	15:00	يقول محمد هنيدي لفتاة الليل السوداء استغفر الله العظيم الولية ماتت من وشك الاسود	Mohamed Henedi tells the black prostitute, “I beg forgiveness from Allah. The woman died because of your black face.”
5	1:28:03	يقول محمد هنيدي لفتاة الليل السوداء بقولك ايه ... هنا مفيش طفى نور ... انا مش شايفك وليلتك زى وشك بالطبط ... خلقة	Mohamed Henedi tells the black prostitute, “Listen, girl. Don't tell me to turn off the lights here. I can barely see you...or else your night will be as black/dark as your face.”
6	1:28:45	يقول محمد هنيدي لفتاة الليل السوداء فى اشارة الى شعرها ايه يابيت السلك ده هلا يخر بيتك	Mohamed Henedi mocks the black prostitute's hair, “What is this? Steel wool? You bloody girl!”
7	1:29:00	يقول محمد هنيدي فى اشارة الى فتاة الليل السوداء طب والفحمية دى	Mohamed Henedi referring to the black prostitute, “How about this piece of charcoal?”

Table 3. Examples from *Sa'eedi at the American University*

(source: <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x8ggfik>)

In 1., Henedi criticizes Samara’s dark skin tone, berating her for turning off the lights when she “should know better” since she has dark skin. Colorism branches from racism and a white ideal. Unlike racism which discriminates between different races, colorism creates a hierarchy even within the same race where the closeness to whiteness equates with better perception and position. This bias is prominent in Egypt and its media. Black women are affected by racism and colorism in their daily lives, especially by the hands of men who have created a divide between darker skin tones and femininity and

desirability, creating a dehumanized and masculinized stereotype that also associates dark skin with uncleanliness and aggressiveness. The de-sexualization and dehumanization of black women continue in 2., where he claims her body is indistinguishable. In 3., he further drives this point of undesirability by proclaiming that it is impossible to find romance with a black woman, even in pretense; since most people do not expect or hope for true love when hiring a prostitute, Henedi still makes a point of the absurdity of a romance with someone of her complexion while implying the superiority of lighter-skinned woman. He connotes her black skin with the metaphorical negativity of a “black night.” In the context of love, “red nights” can imply passion, intensity, and desire. The color red is often associated with strong emotions and a “red night” is here meant to be a romantic one.

In 4., Henedi shows that his dehumanization is more than just objectification; Samara’s blackness does not only make her unattractive but is a source of harm and a bad omen. He states that her existence with black skin is so awful; it is deadly. He even pretends to consult God and beg for forgiveness; jokes involving religion are often seen as taboo in the Arab world but are still used to jab at this character's blackness.

Example 5. repeats the jokes and, in turn, repeats and emphasizes the racism and colorism they convey. In addition, in this example, Henedi makes the correlation between her skin tone and the negativity of the unromantic night explicit.

In 6., racism progresses past skin and into other features of Samara's race. Henedi criticizes her coarse hair. Texturism favors hair that is straight and soft above other textures; hair textures are labeled through 1A to 4c, with 1A being straight hair and 4C being the tightest curl type which is most often seen on black individuals. The preference for hair types at the beginning of the spectrum stems from racism and Eurocentric beauty standards. In addition to black women being historically shamed for their natural hair and protective styles, they have been stigmatized as unfeminine, dirty, and unprofessional. This has led black women to straighten their hair with heat and even chemical relaxers that can cause pain and irritate the scalp to fit society's biased ideals and standards. Furthermore, his insults progressively become more directly hostile and less jokey, and he curses at her above racism.

Example 7., once again, shows his dehumanization of this black woman as he compares her to an object, this object being a piece of coal nonetheless, which is looked down on as worthless and not attractive in any form, therefore, portraying black women as insignificant and unlovable for a final time.

The movie and character constantly rely on negative stereotypes to further bring down a minority group maintaining the status quo by cementing the gap between the main male character with lighter skin and proximity to whiteness and the group belittled due to race and gender, black women.

6.2.2. *Africano*

Moving on to the year 2001, with the movie *Africano* the North African Egyptians further distance themselves from South Africans. The movie revolves around two light-skinned Egyptian men moving to South Africa as they inherit a safari park. As soon as they arrive, the movie emphasizes the unsafety and uncivilization of the foreign land and its inhabitants; the characters do not feel secure until they reach a casino filled with white patrons. The characters do not waste a second upon seeing a group of black people before making sarcastic comments about their skin color. Racism in this movie is not limited to colorist remarks; once the duo reaches the park, they discover that the attractions do not include dangerous wild animals such as large felines, but it still contains other wildlife. The issue arises with the introduction of the non-animal attraction, a tribe of Africans dressed in more traditional garments in comparison to the outfits comprised of pants and shirts that have been shown so far in the movie. The duo's guide explains how this group, which is comprised of different ages and genders, making it seem more like a tribe or family than a group of employees, was hired by the main character's uncle (a light-skinned Egyptian) to provide hospitality and share their “foods” and “traditions.” This exoticizes and commodifies these African people and their culture and is eerily similar to the concept of “human zoos.” Table 4. shows some examples extracted from the movie.

No.	Time	Scene (original)	Translation
1	25:03	يكون احمد السقا و احمد عيد في ملهى ليلي بجنوب أفريقيا وعندما يمر مجموعة من أصحاب البشرة السمراء أحمد عيد: هي الكهريا قاطعة جوا وال ايه؟	Ahmad Al-Saqa and Ahmed Eid are hanging out at a night club in South Africa when they are passed by a group of colored/dark-skinned people at whom Eid comments, “is there a power cut/blackout inside or what?”
2	37:08	يدخل بكر على أحمد السقا وأحمد عيد كي يوقظهم بكر: د. بدر, سيد wake up . أحمد عيد (باديا عليه علامات الهلع (: احنا هنصطح بوشك ده كل يوم وال ايه؟	Bakar enters the bedroom to wake up Ahmad Al-Saqa and Ahmed Eid. Bakar says, “dr Badr, Mr Esam, wake up.” Ahmed Eid responds panickingly, “are we going to start our mornings with a face like yours or what?”

Table 4. Examples from *Africano* (sources: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BDr5TGpXvls>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2DqPR38fTkw>)

In 1., Eid and Al-Saqa pass by a group of black people in a club, the two do not interact directly with the group, nor does the group interact with them. Still, despite the lack of communication and interaction

between the Egyptian protagonists and these people, Eid jests, “Is there a power outage in here or what?” insinuating that their skin color is absurd, subhuman, and a basis for mockery. Additionally, these characters can hardly be classified as such; they have no lines, do not reappear later in the movie, and contribute nothing to the plot. Their existence in the movie is no more than a backdrop for this racist comment disguised as a joke.

Example 2. equates blackness to misfortune in a similar manner to the previous movie, where both protagonists criticize the black characters' faces simply due to their color. The character Bakar acts mainly as the protagonists' tour guide but also performs other services for them. The movie is set in South Africa, and yet black Africans are still given roles of servitude to the lighter Egyptians. This stems from deep-rooted stereotypes and prejudices against black people in Egyptian culture, which places Egyptians on a pedestal above what they have deemed the lower class of darker-skinned laborers.

Although the movie takes place in an African country, there are no significant roles for any African character.

6.2.3. *Bold Heart*

Despite moving forward in time to the year 2002, the content of the movie *Bold Heart* progresses backwards to the era of minstrel shows. Blackface is grossly common in Egyptian cinema, which is problematic on its own as blackface stemmed from slavery, racism, and segregation, and created ridiculing caricatures of black people that pushed cruel, harmful, and dehumanizing stereotypes and later stood as a barrier that blocked black people from representing themselves in movie and TV. Blackface helped push and create negative perceptions of black people that were used to justify their mistreatment since these generalizations portrayed them as a primitive and subhuman monolith. Table 5. shows an example extracted from the movie.

Time	Scene (original)	Translation
12:53	أحمد عيد يحقق حلمه ليعمل كمثل بالسينما. يختار المخرج ٤ ممثلين كي يعملوا معه منهم أحمد عيد. يخبره المخرج أنه عليه أن يدهن لون بشرته يرد عليه . بالأسود كي يقوم بدور عبد أحمد عيد: عبيد ايه يا أستاذ؟ طموحي اكبر المخرج: مالهم العبيد؟ . من كدة بكتير مش عاجبك تدهن أسود؟ طب ما أنا أسود . أحمد عيد: ربنا يزيدك سواد يا أستاذ .	Ahmed Eid achieves his dream of becoming a movie actor. The director chooses four actors, including Eid, to perform in the movie. The director tells Eid that the latter needs to paint his face black to perform the character of a slave. Eid responds, “what? Slaves, sir? My ambition is way higher than this.” The director replies, “what's wrong with slaves? You don't like painting your skin black? I am black!” Eid, “May Allah make you even blacker, sir?”

Table 5. Examples from *Bold Heart* (source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqI6QJ6oKSg>)

The portrayal of blackface in this movie is particularly unsettling. The main character is shocked and disappointed when he is told he must do blackface for the role he would cast. However, his issue is not with the morality of this deed but stems from his belief that playing a black character is beneath him. The character in question being a slave who is meant to undergo gruesome torture. To make matters worse, the term “slave” is used interchangeably with the term “black person” in the scene.

The scene begins with the main character standing among other aspiring actors who are presented to a black movie director who is choosing the cast for his movie. At first, Eid is ecstatic when he hears he has been chosen for the part but quickly becomes disappointed and slighted upon learning what the role entails. The director exclaims that Eid and the other actors he selected are to be painted black to play the role of slaves who will be tortured. Aside from the promotion of blackface, it equates slavery to blackness by having the need for the slave characters to be black and not any other race. Despite many trying to deny the correlation between slavery and race in the history of Egypt and the Arab world, these connotations remain to this day, where it is common to hear black people referred to with the Arabic word for slaves. This equivalence is present in this same scene when the director replies, “What’s wrong with slaves? You don’t like painting your skin black? I am black!”

Aside from the movie and scene's approval of blackface, the sole black character actually played by a black actor is a caricature with exaggerated movement, body language, and speech style.

6.2.4. *You Know Who*

The 2003 movie *You Know Who* is yet another comedy movie that uses racist and colorist remarks and stereotypes in an attempt to spark humor. This movie, too, follows a lighter-skinned Egyptian cast with

minimal appearances of black characters who do not play a significant role in the movie. The most relevant contribution to their addition to the movie is being the butt of a joke based on their race and skin color. Table 6. shows an extract from the movie.

Time	Scene (original)	Translation
1:07:45	(محمد سعد ينتحل شخصية الضابط المتوفى ويعيش في منزله) محمد سعد بانتظار ابنته الصغيرة للقائها بعد غياب طويل. تدخل فتاة صغيرة سوداء وتجري باتجاه محمد سعد الذي يعانقها وهو يقول: "حبيبة بابا.. حبيبة بابا اللي كانت.. مضلمة الدنيا." وبينما يعانقها بقوة ويغمرها بقبلاته، يلاحظ استغراب الفتاة من تصرفه فيسأل زوجته: "هي ما بتتردش ليه؟ خرسا ولا ايه؟" فترد زوجته قائلة: "دي مش بنتنا يا رياض؟" محمد سعد: "أومال بنت مين دي؟" زوجته: "دي بنت الشغالة بتاعة ماما." محمد سعد: "والله؟! معلش يعني.. ما أنا برضت قلت يعني إنت بيضا وأنا أبيض.. إزاي نخلف صباح العجوة ده؟"	(Mohamed Saad is impersonating Riyad, a dead officer, and lives in his house) Mohamed Saad is waiting to see his daughter, who has been away for a long time. A black girl enters the room running towards him; as he's hugging her, he says, "Daddy's lovely girl... daddy's lovely girl... who's darkened the place." While cuddling and showering her with his kisses, he notices her shock at his behavior, so he asks his wife, "why isn't she saying anything? Is she mute or what?" His wife responds, "this is not our daughter, Riyad." Mohamed Saad asks, "then whose daughter is she?" His wife answers, "this is my mother's servant's daughter." Mohamed Saad explains, "Oh really! It's alright... I actually pondered that you're fair, and I'm fair...how would we give birth to such a date (indicating that the girl is as dark as dates)."

Table 6. From *You Know Who*

(source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wVhCv94MoV4&t=163s>)

The comedy in this scene, like the rest of the movie, revolves around the imbecility of the main character, Saad, and his attempts to impersonate and pass as a serious and intimidating deceased officer, Riyad. In this scene, Saad fails to identify Riyad's daughter and mistakes a little black girl for her instead. The joke in this scene is that children inherit their race from their parents genetically, and since genes for darker skin are more dominant, it is very unlikely for lighter-skinned parents to have a darker child, let alone one of an entirely different race which they do not share DNA with. The problem with this joke comes from the nuances and context, as the joke in and of itself is not necessarily offensive. Similar jokes have even been made and enjoyed by black people. The phrase "the girl is as dark as dates" is a simile that compares the darkness of a girl's complexion to the color of dates. In this

context, “dark” refers to the girl’s skin tone or complexion, while “dates” refers to the fruit of the palm trees, known for its dark brown color. It is important to note that describing someone’s skin tone as “dark” can be subjective and culturally influenced. Different cultures may have varying perceptions and preferences regarding skin tones.

When Saad is under the false belief that the black girl is his pretend daughter, he hugs and smothers her, but this attitude changes when he is informed this is not his daughter. And even while he is showering the girl with kisses, he makes negative remarks regarding her color, saying she “darkened his world,” a play on the phrase of endearment, “lighten my world,” which simply means bringing joy to someone and is unrelated to appearance. But he still made the phrase revolve around skin color as if it is a negative reflection of emotion and spirit. The phrases “darkened his world” and “lighten my world” are contrasting metaphorical expressions that convey opposite emotional experiences. “Darkened his world” suggests that someone’s world or life has become gloomy and miserable. On the other hand, “lighten my world” indicates hope and relief.

It is logical not to feel the same love for a stranger as you would with your daughter, but what is concerning is his warmth towards the girl vanishing and immediately being replaced with malice when he learns she is not his. This once again paints black people as outsiders or subhumans that only deserve respect and kindness if they are connected and related to the individual personally. This is especially hurtful as young black girls are often denied their right of having their girlhood and childness acknowledged.

Additionally, Saad refers to the girl’s race by calling her a date in a disrespectful tone. Comparing black skin tones to foods has historically been used and seen as a form of objectification that limits black people, women particularly, to commodities that white and non-black people can use and enjoy.

Furthermore, the black characters in this movie once again play the role of servants fulfilling the stereotype that they cannot be more than that. The joke would have had the same effect if the girl had not been the daughter of the maid and, alternatively, the daughter of a friend or neighbor, but once again, black people are limited to the role of servitude.

6.2.5. *Young Lovers*

Yet another movie containing problematic and racist tropes passed off as comedy. The movie contains jokes that are made at the expense of black people through the use of stereotypes, objectification, racist and colorist remarks, and even black face as well. Table 7. shows some examples extracted from the movie.

No.	Time	Scene (original)	Translation
1	10:58	حمادة هلال يقابل سليمان عيد في الردهة بين شقتيهما. حمادة هلال: "أستاذ نصر.. أهلاً.. إزيك يا أستاذ نصر؟ عامل إيه؟ (مستنشفاً رائحة عطر سليمان عيد) يا سلام يا أستاذ نصر، طول عمري بشم منك ريحة حلوة قوي." سليمان عيد (ضاحكاً): "هو يبقى سواد وريحة وحشة كمان!"	Hamada Helal runs into his neighbour Suleiman Eid in the lobby between their apartments. Hamada Helal greets Eid, "Mr. Nasr...hello...how are you, Mr. Nasr? How are you doing? (sniffing Mr. Nasr's perfume) Oh, Mr. Nasr, you always smell nice." Suleiman Eid (laughing), "I wouldn't tolerate blackness and a bad smell together."
2	57:10	يذهب حمادة هلال مع أصدقائه لمنزل جاره الأسود سليمان عيد، يقول أحد الأصدقاء: "هي الشقة اتحرقت ولا إيه؟" في إشارة منه إلى الصور المعلقة لأفراد عائلة سليمان عيد ذوو البشرة السوداء. وبعدها يسأل أحدهم سليمان عيد عا إذا كان قد حمض الصور قبل تعليقها ليرد سليمان عيد بأنه حمضها 3 مرات ولكنها لا تزال داكنة اللون في إشارة منهم على اللون الداكن لتلك الصور ومن فيها.	Hamadah Helal and his friends go to his black neighbor's house. One friend asks, "has this flat been on fire?" (Referring to the photos of Eid's black family members). Another one asks Eid if he has developed the photos before hanging them (referring to how dark the people in the photos look), to which Eid replied that he had developed them three times, but they are still dark.

Table 7. Examples from *Young Lovers*

(sources: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=647bZz-yBIY&t=2041s>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=647bZz-yBIY&t=2041s>)

The examples given highlight instances of derogatory stereotypes and racial slurs directed at black people. It is critical to understand and accept the damage that such words can inflict. In an inclusive and fair community, racism promotes prejudice, dehumanization, and marginalization, all of which are unacceptable.

In 1., Helal's character runs into his "Sudanese" neighbor, "Mr. Nasr," played by the non-black Egyptian actor Soliman Eid wearing blackface. The role of the black character in this movie is made up of racist stereotypes and is the result of racist writing, casting, and directing, created by non-black Egyptians to intentionally mock the other.

In the scene, Helal compliments his neighbor Nasr's scent after invading his personal space, treating him like an object and sniffing him for some time. In response, Nasr replies, "I wouldn't tolerate blackness and a bad smell together." This is to suggest that having a good scent is a must because he cannot have too many "flaws;" as if having dark skin is a fault that one must compensate for in other areas. Associating unfavorable traits with blacks through the remark "I wouldn't tolerate

blackness and a bad smell together,” is racist and discriminatory. It leads to the devaluation of black people based on their skin tone and fosters negative stereotypes.

Example 2. is another instance where noncharacters are the victims of ridicule for their race and color. Helal makes colorist remarks regarding a family photo in Nasr’s house, disrespecting him and “his” race in his own house. The joke is once again the racist overused cliché insinuating black skin is its color due to being burnt. This example is of a racist joke spreading the offensive myth that black skin is either abnormal or the result of burning. Furthermore, the statement that the photo was edited implies that dark skin is not regarded as natural or acceptable. These ideas are extremely insulting and help stigmatize and marginalize those with a dark complexion.

In these movies, black people are constantly objectified, mocked, and ridiculed without ever being given a respectable, significant, nuanced, or fleshed-out role. Blackness is repeatedly treated as a defect. These perpetuations of stereotypes help deny black people of their individuality and depth. It is imperative to vehemently oppose and denounce such racist remarks, expressions, and stereotypes. A more tolerant and egalitarian society that celebrates the diversity and dignity of all people, regardless of their race or ethnicity, can be fostered by promoting inclusion, respect, and understanding.

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6.2.6. *Ramadan Mabrouk Abul-Alamein Hamouda*

In the year 2008, a discussion in the movie, *Ramadan Mabrouk Abul-Alamein Hamouda*, shows how Egyptians still look down on black and darker-skinned people as lesser others. A character describes their shock and apparent dismay at the discovery that a Lebanese person could have dark skin. The characters go on to make jokes on how the person could have “acquired” his skin tone rationalizing it by saying he must have gotten burnt in the war as if having dark skin is unnatural and could only be caused by a tragic event. Table 8. shows an extract from the movie.

Time	Scene	Translation
1:17:49	<p>- يدخل الي الشقة مدير اعمال زوجة رمضان المغنية برفقة فرقة موسيقية بحضور والدة رمضان.</p> <p>-يشعر رمضان بالارتباك ويحاول أن يتدارك الأمر عند سؤال أمه عن الرجل</p> <p>رمضان: ده الاستاذ أيمن الأطرش.</p> <p>ابن خالك العروسة من لبنان</p> <p>- الأم: لبنان! هم هناك مش كلهم بيض؟</p> <p>-رمضان: ابوا بس بعيد عنك يا أمي</p> <p>الراجل ده ساكن في الحنة اللي قامت فيها الحرب.</p> <p>-الأم: اتحرق يعني ابوا.-رمضان: اه اتحرق.</p>	<p>The agent and the musical band who work for Ramadan’s wife enter Ramadan’s apartment while his mother is present.</p> <p>Ramadan feels restless and tries to conceal the truth when his mother asks about the man with the band.</p> <p>Ramadan responds to his mother, “This is my wife's cousin from Lebanon.”</p> <p>The mother, “Oh God, Lebanon! Aren't they all fair in Lebanon?!”</p> <p>Ramadan: “Yes, he is, but you can say he lives in the area affected by war.”</p> <p>-The mother exclaims, “I suppose he was burnt!” —</p> <p>Ramadan responds, “Yes, he was burnt.”</p>

Table 8. From *Ramadan Mabrouk Abul-Alamein Hamouda*

(source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xJis1a_Usrw)

This scene is a clear case of colorism in one racial group as lighter-skinned Arabs mock another with darker skin. This example of colorism shows how these remarks can be made casually without appearing antagonistic. Ramadan's mother makes the first colorist remark in a cheerful voice in a manner that could be perceived as an innocent question. Even if the colorist remark was not expressed as an attack or even if it was not intended to offend, the damage is still caused. This is because whiteness and proximity to it are treated as an ideal. Therefore, everything else is automatically inferior, which helps uphold biased Eurocentric beauty standards and white supremacy, negatively affecting anyone who does not fit these prejudiced ideals.

The mother and son continue their discussion by attempting to rationalize how a Lebanese person could have dark skin and come to the conclusion that being involved in a tragic accident is more believable than naturally possessing darker skin due to genetics. They do this by claiming he must have been burnt, this is supposed to be a comedic remark, but it is no more than an overdone racist cliché. This not only implies that having dark skin is abnormal but separates those who do have it as outsiders that do not come from or belong in their communities.

6.3. Connecting the qualitative and quantitative parts

A thorough and clear understanding of the representation of anti-black racism in Egyptian movies is realized by tying together the findings of the survey concerning moviegoers’ attitudes toward racism and the analysis of the textual dialogic content of the six movies. The quantitative questionnaire results

provided insight into the opinions and reactions of viewers to the derogatory depictions of black people in movies. It was clear that some participants had preconceived notions about black people based on the media they consume, underscoring the role of media in forming beliefs. Participants strongly advocated for greater truthful and positive coverage of black people in the media going forward.

The qualitative examination of the textual dialogic content of the chosen Egyptian movies enhanced our understanding of the stereotypes and value judgments that characterize black people in movies, complementing the findings of the quantitative analysis. The analysis of the movie sequences provided a subtle exploration of the inter-discoursal elements of racial discourse that are pervasive in Egyptian cinema. The researchers were able to pinpoint the occasions in which black people were subjected to disparaging or stereotyped representations by studying dialogues, characterizations, and themes.

From the researchers' vantage point of view, the current study has created a more comprehensive picture of the representation of anti-black racism in Egyptian movies by fusing the results of the questionnaire with the examination of textual dialogic material. Not only does it show the opinions and responses of viewers, but it also gives specific examples of how these unfavorable portrayals appear in conversations and storylines in movies. The resulting conclusions highlight the critical need for a reform in the movie industry in order to dispel prejudice, fight discrimination, and advance more truthful and inclusive images of black people on the screen.

Furthermore, the relationship between viewer perceptions and textual analysis demonstrates how media consumption, audience reception, and the persistence of stereotypes are intertwined. It highlights the need for media professionals and filmmakers to critically assess their work, curb prejudice, and help build a more just and inclusive society. The results underscore the importance of media literacy, diversity in representation, and the influence of movies on viewers' attitudes and perceptions.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

This study examined how anti-black racism was portrayed in Egyptian movies with the goal of illuminating the stereotypes, value judgments, and disparaging depictions of people of color. The study evaluated scenes from six Egyptian movies and looked at viewer reactions using a mix of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The results give implications for eradicating racism and fostering more inclusive portrayals in Egyptian cinema as well as insights into the prevalence of racial biases in the media.

Examining several scenes extracted from the six Egyptian movies by considering the visual, verbal, and contextual aspects revealed that bias is somehow prominent in Egypt and its media. Sometimes, the movies and characters constantly rely on negative stereotypes to bring down black people. The presence of black people in the movies is no more than a backdrop for this racist comment disguised as a joke. Sometimes, the protagonists criticize the black characters' faces simply due to their color.

In the quantitative part, and drawing on the results of the questionnaire, the researchers provided a thorough analysis of viewers' responses and insightful viewpoints on the unfavorable portrayal of black people in Egyptian movies. Understanding the genres and languages that viewers have experienced revealed information and insights about how they have been exposed to various cinematic influences. Insights into the main storylines and portrayals in the sector were gained by examining how audiences perceive stereotypes related to black people in Egyptian movies.

In view of the above, we can explain the prejudices and misunderstandings prevalent in movie depictions by pointing out typical stereotypes, such as roles restricted to slavery, criminality, or exoticization. Examining viewers' feelings about how black people are portrayed in movies revealed their level of sensitivity and understanding of racial issues in the media. A call for more inclusive and fair representations can be seen in the identification of positive attitudes and recommendations, such as supporting accurate and nuanced portrayals or increasing diversity. The possible influence of media representations on social attitudes and behaviors is suggested by viewers' perceptions of the influence of movies on real-life behavior. When these observations are put together and examined, they help to provide a thorough knowledge of how audiences interpret the derogatory portrayal of black people in Egyptian movies. They can contribute to broader conversations on overcoming racism and fostering diversity in the movie industry as well as providing novel ideas for future advancements in representation.

Responses to the three open-ended research questions on the movie watching habits, the stereotype of black people in movies, and their attitudes and future recommendations concerning the representation of black people in the investigated movies revealed some interesting findings. First, Egyptian movies, especially comedy series, are watched frequently by viewers since they are accessible via different mass media platforms. Second, Egyptian movies seem to be subjective and not objective when addressing issues relating to black people; this has relatively influenced how they act in some real-life situations. Third, it is recommended that decision-makers in the Arab world should warn stakeholders in the moviemaking industry in the Arab world to respect the rights of all groups in society and ban all scenes which are offensive to minority groups, including black people.

Responses to the questionnaire's three questions on the movie watching habits, the stereotype of black people in movies, and their attitudes and future recommendations concerning the representation of black people in the investigated movies have revealed some interesting findings. First, Egyptian movies, especially comedy, are watched heavily by viewers since they are accessible via different means of mass media. Second, Egyptian movies seem to be subjective and not objective when addressing issues relating to black people. Third, it is recommended that decision-makers warn stakeholders in the movie industry in the Arab world to respect the rights of all social and minority groups by officially banning scenes that are offensive to any of these groups.

The rationale for conducting this significant study is the rise of the global awareness of racial discrimination and how it is being officially combatted worldwide, on the one hand, and the rise of hate speech and multiple forms of discrimination, including that based on race, on the other. Furthermore, having selected and examined these six Egyptian movies from abundant Arabic audiovisual materials that portrayed black people in different ways and the scarcity of studies examining this issue in the Arab world indicate that there is still a long way to go in terms of racial discrimination in the Arab world. More awareness needs to be raised across various forms of media regarding the issue of discrimination based on skin color so that subtle discriminatory practices, such as a scene in a comedy movie, would not peacefully pass the censors' scissors nor the viewers' criticism and condemnation.

The responses to the questionnaire indicate that viewers of such movies, and whether they are aware of the seriousness of scenes that portray black people negatively or not, seem to be influenced to a certain extent by the discriminatory ideas and stereotypes in terms of their own impression of black people in their communities. However, having raised this issue (in the questionnaire) to the respondents has encouraged them to fathom the scale of the issue, the thing that led them to suggest solutions that would ultimately result in minimizing racist portrayals of black people in audiovisual content, particularly movies.

Although the international community has adopted and ratified a convention in 1965 that commits to eradicating all forms of racial discrimination, unfortunately, many people are still enduring various forms of racial discrimination worldwide. Despite the fact that the law per se, in several parts of the world, has been amended to eliminate the racial differences in various domains, it is evident that people of different and certain races are still enduring racism nowadays, yet in less formal situations. In other words, while the law may not be discriminatory, social practices and prejudices still are.

In the fight against racism that is practiced among people as social beings, various social movements have been launched worldwide. Such movements are launched in response to hate speech

and discrimination, which in some cases may lead to armed conflicts and wars. It goes without saying that although several races, ethnicities, and certain faiths or religious doctrines experience discrimination, black people are on top of the list of those subjected to racism based on skin colour – the long history of slavery might be the best evidence of the blatant discrimination that black people lived for centuries.

Given the limitations of the present study focusing on anti-black racism in Egyptian movies, its implications are far-reaching. However, as a pioneering study on this issue in the Arab world, the researchers believe that it will prove significant to researchers in social anthropology, sociolinguistics, and social media discourse.

Despite the useful knowledge and insights this study has provided, there are several restrictions that must be recognized. The study's emphasis on certain Egyptian movies may not adequately represent the range of movies made in the nation, and the sample size of 75 viewers may not be fully representative of the entire population. Furthermore, the use of self-reported impressions and responses includes a subjective component that may affect the accuracy of the results.

Several suggestions might be made to address the issue of anti-black racism in Egyptian movies in light of the study's findings. Prior to creating characters and plotlines, authors, directors, and filmmakers must critically assess their own prejudices and address prevalent stereotypes. Black people's views and experiences can be authentically portrayed in movies if there is greater diversity and inclusivity in the filmmaking community. In order to inform budding filmmakers about the implications of their work, movie schools and institutions should include courses or workshops on media literacy and cultural sensitivity.

The implications of this study go beyond Egyptian cinema. The inaccurate portrayal of black people in the media fosters negative stereotypes and contributes to the marginalization of black communities. Egyptian filmmakers may support a larger worldwide movement for inclusivity by addressing and correcting these stereotypes. The study also emphasizes the significance of media control and the function of social media platforms in eradicating racist attitudes and behaviors. Global media powerhouses should accept responsibility by enforcing rules and limitations on material that supports racial discrimination.

In conclusion, this study emphasizes the urgent need for a critical analysis of the portrayal of anti-black racism in Egyptian movies. The research findings demonstrate how the media contributes to shaping viewers' perspectives and calls for a change in how black people are portrayed. Egyptian filmmakers and international media platforms can help eradicate racism by spreading equity, combating stereotypes, supporting diversity, and arguing for more inclusive storylines.

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