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Are you using a dating application? Perspectives on cyber matchmaking technology in Egypt

Monia Mohsen Mahmoud Fahmy

mfahmy@msa.edu.eg

Modern Sciences and Arts University

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ABSTRACT

Websites and applications that match and connect individuals for marriage purposes are commonly used in the Western world; the use of internet-mediated services itself becomes a verified means undertaking the mainstream one. The idea of arranged marriage is subject to various pressures; for example, the diminishing of social networks and high aggregate complexity in the choice of a marital partner. Due to the dramatic increase of internet usage, there has been a various propagation of online dating application that allow people to meet and date in a cyber world, which is a new finding of life agreement services that are increasingly replacing and penetrating other commercial matchmaking media. This socialization method has been viewed to be either a bless or a curse depending on individuals' opinions and experiences, due to, first, the tribulations that happens due to online dating and, second, the increase level of divorce rate among Egyptians. However, there have not been many previous investigations focusing on Egyptians and their usage of these applications. Cultural constraints, family and friends' perspectives are obstacles encountering using of such applications. Some stereotypes are undermining the usage of such applications as well. This study aims to discover the perception of online dating in the Egyptian society; it will employ descriptive statistics using quantitative research methodology which involves the use of questionnaires as the research instrument. This paper aims to report the methods and findings of a survey that will administer to a sample of 122 Egyptian adults, with same demographics and backgrounds. In addition, the paper will provide quantitatively generated insights into the major themes reported by our participants related to the common approaches to cyber marriage, the current role of media, and social perception regarding cyber matchmaking and inclusion in this cultural context.

1. Introduction:

The transformation and growth of the Internet have led to an increase in the utilization of technology in social activities. Online dating sites are popular among people who are looking for potential partners (Van De Wiele & Tong, 2014). Online dating has emerged as a transformative force, reshaping the landscape of modern romance and revolutionizing how individuals connect with potential partners. Online dating has not only disrupted more traditional ways of meeting romantic partners, its rise also comes at a time when norms and behaviors around marriage and cohabitation also are changing as more people delay marriage or choose to remain single. The term online dating refers to a shape of interpersonal relationship that mainly started on a computer-mediated communication service, that might or might not move to a more intimate communication channel; for example, it may transfer to telephone calls, texting or face-to-face interaction (Sprecher, 2009).

Internet users are trusting the new dating technology more and more and the stereotype regarding the meeting online seems to have worn off. This important shift has highlighted a broader debate on the impact of online dating on romantic relationships. On one hand, some people emphasized on the ease and efficiency of using these platforms to search for dates; moreover, they have also stressed on its ability to expand dating options beyond their traditional social circles. On the other hand, people are still concerned with its less flattering narrative about online dating, starting with scams and harassment to the idea that online dating sites and applications do facilitate superficial relationships rather than long term sustainable ones. This paradigm shift has not only expanded the possibilities for meeting new people but has also introduced novel challenges and opportunities in the quest for companionship.

Questions through a profile authenticity, the role of matching algorithms, and the impact on societal norms are just a few aspects that worth exploration. correspondingly, online dating is not just a tool to a certain goal, yet its a sociocultural matter that reflects broader shifts in how individuals seek relationship and intimacy in the digital age.

2. Literature Review:

Whether a person is looking for a long-term relationship, a spouse, or just a casual date, people have always found ways to present themselves in the best possible way to the potential partners. Online dating is the “practice of using dating sites to find a romantic partner” (Finkel et al., 2012, pp. 7). In contrast, mainstream traditional dating is a way to meet people whom are potential romantic partners in their everyday lives through a non-cyber practice; such as through social networks, face to face meeting (Finkel et al., 2012, pp. 7). The term is used on online dating, sometimes called Internet dating, to refer to the practice of using dating sites to find a romantic partner. Additionally, dating sites and apps refer to those platforms that mainly focus on offering the user opportunities to form a new romantic relationship that has the potential to become a dating, plus it might intensify to a long-term committed relationship, such as marriage. Starting from newspaper advertisement to teletext dating apps, to online dating sites, to matchmaking mobile apps; for example, Tinder (Ward, 2017), there are endless ways to connect with potential partners.

Understanding the notion of digital communication became important for success of the process in online dating. There are specific communication strategies employed in online dating; starting from crafting engaging profiles to effective messaging (Finkel et al., 2012). According to Huang, et al (2022), online dating services often distinguish by an edge which is its ability to provide their users with especially compatible matches, same with traditional main stream dating, online users are always worried with finding a compatible partner someone who matches their ideals, interests, and relationship goals. There are questions on the role of algorithms in shaping the trajectory of relationships remain central to ongoing research; Toma et al. (2008) highlighted the effectiveness of algorithmic matchmaking. It strives to matchmake partners, but there are challenges arise in capturing the difficulty of human attraction.

Dating applications and sites present a fresh new technological site for impression management. there has been a quite large researches on self-presentation and romance over the past ten years (Ellison et al , 2006). Online dating apps and websites always ask personal questions in addition to photos, but not all questions include personal information (Blackwell et al., 2015 and Gudelunas, 2012). Lately, applications like Tinder has been one of the most famous, that most

researchers are interesting in, as it respects more of the privacy issues (Ward, 2017).

Online dating offers great advantages, ethical concerns and challenges. Studies by Ellison and Boyd (2013) and others, examined issues like misrepresentation, privacy concerns, and the potential for discrimination within online dating platforms. Gibbs et al. (2006) assessed the presentation and structure of online dating profiles. This paper explored how users strategically present themselves, this includes self-presentation, selecting profile photo, and the impact of provided personal content on perceptions of others. Additionally, Goffman (1959) argued that online dating users attempt to regulate or guide others' perceptions by changing their appearance, photos, setting, and behavior.

In order to examine the potential consequences of meeting online for long-term relationships, Cacioppo et al. (2013) surveyed a sample of 19,131 adults to determine whether they meet online or offline; Also, he wanted to examine if this would affect had any bearing on the quality and stability of their marriages. As a result, he found that meeting online was associated with a slightly higher level of satisfaction among couples and a slightly lower likelihood of separation and divorce than meeting face to face. In another study, Rosenfeld (2017) observed that couples who met online were not more satisfied or less likely to terminate their relationships, but they did move more quickly to marriage. These results raise the intriguing possibility that the experience of meeting and communicating with a future spouse in online dating may have lasting effects on relationships

The societal impact of online dating, particularly its influence on traditional dating norms, has been explored by studies such as Rosenfeld and Thomas (2012). They investigated the societal impact of online dating, highlighting shifts in the dynamics of relationship formation and dissolution. Cultural considerations, such as the influence of online dating on traditional dating rituals, have become fundamental in understanding its broader value. Such investigations change how people meet, form relationships, and the broader implications for social structures.

In conclusion, the literature on online dating presents a rich tapestry of research spanning various disciplines. As technology continues to shape the way people connect, ongoing studies contribute to our

evolving understanding of the intricacies and impacts of online dating.

3. Research Problem:

Marriage is always a vital deliberate topic under investigation in Egypt. The new media technology is contributing to the aspect of marriage on a whole new level. Does it really contribute to the marriage efficiency? What is the perception of this using dating apps? With all the innovative media tools that emerge every day, will people shift from the mainstream arranged marriage to a new matchmaking media technology?

4. Aim of the study:

This study aims to discover the perception of online dating in the Egyptian society; it purposes to report the major themes covered by our participants related to the common approaches to cyber marriage, the current role of media, and social perception regarding cyber matchmaking and inclusion in this cultural context.

5. Theoretical Framework:

Theoretical paradigms is an vital aspect of research design. It helps to provide an interpretative framework for research in a way that best supports the aim of the study. Cohen et al. (2007) accentuated on the role of theory in research as being quite vital. This study employs the uses and gratifications (U&G) theory. Uses and Gratifications theory, Katz & Blumler (1974) has been widely cited in research on new and emerging technologies, including motivations for Internet use and social networking sites . under the active audience assumption, people are cognizant of their social and emotional needs, and they actively look for media to satisfy those needs. User-gratifications theory (U&G) recognizes the relationship between user intentions and user behavior, and argues that while user needs drive pleasure and received gratifications may affect user needs.

Though U&G was originally created to study and explain mass media phenomena, it has been used to explain how people use newer cyber technologies

(Joinson, 2008) and mobile technologies. One of the key differences between the early emphasis on mass media (e.g., television, newspaper, radio), and the shift towards new communication technologies, is the higher level of interactivity that these new applications offer to users (Ruggiero, 2000). In U&G's framework, interactivity is the level of control that individuals have over the communication process. For instance, users can contribute information to a system; a medium can respond to its users; and a medium can facilitate communication between users. So, the high level of interactivity in Internet and mobile communications technologies is not only in line with U&G's active audience assumption, but it extends that assumption — as interactivity grows, so too does the audience's control over the media, which provides them with a more 'immediate' path to gratification than they would receive from a traditional mass media system (Alonzo & Aiken, 2004).

Since the theory proposes that individuals actively select media for specific purposes and derive gratifications from their media choices, online dating is an aspect that could be applied to develop number of gratifications. Firstly, users often turn to online dating platforms to gather information about their potential partners. This serves to the aspect of seeking informational gratification within the theory. Individuals may desire to learn about the interests, values, and lifestyles of others in order to be informed with the decisions about potential partners (Gibbs et al., 2006). Secondly, the entertainment aspect plays a significant role in online dating. Usually, daters do engage with platforms not only with the explicit goal of finding a partner, but also for the enjoyment of browsing profiles, swiping through matches, and participating in playful interactions, which aligns with the factor of seeking entertainment gratification (Dhir et al., 2018). Thirdly, online dating platforms offer opportunities for social interaction and integration. Users may seek companionship, social validation, or a sense of belonging; which corresponds to the aspect of seeking social integration satisfaction, where individuals utilize online dating to connect with others and expand their social circles (Brooks, 2015). Fourthly, the platforms provide users with the opportunity to express and explore their identity, so by creating profiles, selecting photos, and interacting with others, individuals are able to satisfy their personal identity needs, using online dating as a means to shape and convey their self-concept to others (Ellison et al., 2011). Moreover, some users may turn

to online dating as a means of escapism, seeking a break from their daily routines or real-life stressors. This does apply with the gratification aspect of escapism, where individuals utilize online dating to temporarily detach themselves from the routines of their everyday lives (Ward, 2016). Lastly, many users engage with online dating platforms with the intention of establishing romantic relationships. This acts within the gratification factor of relationship formation, where individuals utilize these platforms as tools to initiate and cultivate connections with potential partners (Finkel et al., 2012).

6. Hypothesis:

H1: Individuals using dating apps are the more likely to find a potential partner that fits their criteria.

H2: Individuals using dating apps are more likely to be perceived as having a bad reputation.

H3: Individuals who are influenced by media are more likely to use dating apps.

7. Research Methodology:

This section explains in detail the methodology that was employed in achieving the stated research hypothesis. This paper purposes to understand the different Perspectives of Egyptians youth on cyber matchmaking technology in Egypt. Therefore, the study used a random sampling technique of 160 Egyptian males and females, who were recruited based on specific age and demographic criteria. Moreover, survey research method was employed as relevant documents obtained were qualitatively analyzed for convergence; also, relevant details were extracted using Inductive approach. Quantitative research in the form of questionnaire survey was conducted to meet the objectives of the research which is the perspective of the effect of cyber matchmaking media technology in Egypt.

Though Survey research is one of the oldest methods for data gathering, it is to this date one of the most frequently used technique for gathering information and data in the field of social sciences (Babbie and Rubin, 2008). Moreover, it helps the researcher to collect information at a relatively low cost. Furthermore, it is a quantitative method that helps the researcher run statistical tests and analysis

(Wimmer, 2012). To reach an answer for the above mentioned hypothesis it was vital to use questionnaires, which allowed the researchers to focus on both the qualitative and quantitative issues, address specific research issues as the researcher controlled the research design to get their needs, it also enabled the researchers have more control over how the information was collected and decide on some requirements such as size of the project, time frame and goal. Finally, in order to get a specific trusted answer, SPSS was the measuring tool used for analysis.

analyzed using SPSS version 21.0. the data used in evaluating people's opinions about Online Information was obtained from Egyptian females and males aging 21-25 and 26-35 of population. Convenience sampling which is a type of non-probability sampling as choosing this population was based on the judgment of the researchers and this method was used in the selection of respondents so as to have easy access to them, It was used to reach the targeted population quickly and moreover in this study, sampling for proportionality was not the main concern. Random sampling which is a probabilistic method of sampling was now used in the selection of respondents.

Participants filled out the questionnaire online by clicking on a link that was distributed via the researcher's network. the respondents were informed about the purpose of the research, the estimated duration which was 7-12 minutes, their anonymity and the possibility to stop at every moment, as they had to sign agreement for their consent. The survey was divided into four sections with three types of questions;

1. Section A: Filtering general questions on the topic
2. Section B: Various approaches on online dating
3. Section C: Role of media in online dating
4. Section D: Social perception regarding online dating
5. Section E: Demographic profile of respondents

8. Results:

Responses were analyzed in order to identify overall frequency of response, as well as to identify underlying factor structure. Survey was distributed in from 1st to 10th of January 2024, and the Following part is the most significant results of the research study. The results were collected from 115 valid

survey distributed online via an online link, they survey was distributed equally on males and females, yet the majority of valid survey were females.

Gender:					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	93	80.9	80.9	80.9
	Male	22	19.1	19.1	100.0
Total		115	100.0	100.0	

When respondents were asked to answer if they had ever used a dating site or app 98% of the respondents agreed that they have never used a dating app or site; furthermore, they have also agreed that they have never used there online social media platforms as mean for online dating.

1. Have you ever used an online dating site or dating app?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	YES	17	14.8	14.8	14.8
	NO	98	85.2	85.2	100.0
Total		115	100.0	100.0	

4. Have you ever used your privates social media accounts as a platform for online dating?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	YES	20	17.4	20.0	20.0
	NO	80	69.6	80.0	100.0
	Total	100	87.0	100.0	
Missing	System	15	13.0		
Total		115	100.0		

The little percentage who has used dating apps or sites agreed that the experience is neutral, yet they second large percentage agreed that their experience with these apps and sites are negative.

3. What is your experience with dating apps or sites?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Positive	1	.9	5.0	5.0
	Negative	8	7.0	40.0	45.0
	Neutral	11	9.6	55.0	100.0
	Total	20	17.4	100.0	
Missing	System	95	82.6		
Total		115	100.0		

Respondents did agree that online dating and website are an effective way to meet people in Egypt; in addition, they confirmed that is more effective that the traditional or mainstream way.

Online dating is an effective way to meet people in Egypt

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	AGREE	45	39.1	39.1	39.1
	NEUTRAL	23	20.0	20.0	59.1
	DISAGREE	11	9.6	9.6	68.7
	Strongly DISAGREE	36	31.3	31.3	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Online dating is more effective than traditional dating

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	AGREE	47	40.9	40.9	40.9
	NEUTRAL	26	22.6	22.6	63.5
	DISAGREE	10	8.7	8.7	72.2
	Strongly DISAGREE	32	27.8	27.8	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Proportionately, respondents agreed and strongly disagreed on the idea of long-term relationship and online dating apps and sites. They have shown equal responses that online dating is used by people who are seeking long term relationships.

Online dating is used by people that seek long term relationships

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	AGREE	35	30.4	30.4	30.4
	NEUTRAL	33	28.7	28.7	59.1
	DISAGREE	12	10.4	10.4	69.6
	Strongly DISAGREE	35	30.4	30.4	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

When moving to the media part, participants have disagreed that the media encourages and supports the idea of online dating; through which they have responded on both questions majorly by negative.

Media encourages the idea of online dating

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	AGREE	27	23.5	23.5	23.5
	NEUTRAL	31	27.0	27.0	50.4
	DISAGREE	34	29.6	29.6	80.0
	Strongly DISAGREE	23	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Media supports the idea of online dating

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	AGREE	23	20.0	20.0	20.0
	NEUTRAL	27	23.5	23.5	43.5
	DISAGREE	41	35.7	35.7	79.1
	Strongly DISAGREE	24	20.9	20.9	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Participants where asked if they find the media represents the dating apps as a platform for hookups, and their users desperate, they disagreed on both questions.

Media represents online dating as a platform for hookups

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	AGREE	11	9.6	9.6	9.6
	NEUTRAL	25	21.7	21.7	31.3
	DISAGREE	47	40.9	40.9	72.2
	Strongly DISAGREE	32	27.8	27.8	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Media portrays the online dating users as desperate

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	AGREE	22	19.1	19.1	19.1
	NEUTRAL	29	25.2	25.2	44.3
	DISAGREE	43	37.4	37.4	81.7
	Strongly DISAGREE	21	18.3	18.3	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

The respondents were asked some questions on their perspective of online dating. They agreed that

online dating apps and sites are not culturally accepted, they majorly answered strongly disagree.

I feel that online dating is culturally accepted

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	AGREE	36	31.3	31.3	31.3
	NEUTRAL	26	22.6	22.6	53.9
	DISAGREE	14	12.2	12.2	66.1
	Strongly DISAGREE	39	33.9	33.9	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

Respondents were neutral of their view of people using dating apps or sites, the second highest percentage for each answer was that they agreed on the provided statement.

I feel that users who use online dating are desperate

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	AGREE	31	27.0	27.0	27.0
	NEUTRAL	35	30.4	30.4	57.4
	DISAGREE	21	18.3	18.3	75.7
	Strongly DISAGREE	28	24.3	24.3	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

I have a poitive view of people who use online dating apps

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	AGREE	20	17.4	17.4	17.4
	NEUTRAL	62	53.9	53.9	71.3
	DISAGREE	16	13.9	13.9	85.2
	Strongly DISAGREE	17	14.8	14.8	100.0
	Total	115	100.0	100.0	

9. Analysis:

This section is the analysis of the results of the quantitative methodology, which is the questionnaires. The data will be presented and analyed through the hypothesis presented in the paper.

- H1: Individuals using dating apps are the more likely to find a potential partner that fits their criteria

Correlations

		1. Have you ever used an online dating site or dating app?	onlinedating
1. Have you ever used an online dating site or dating app?	Pearson Correlation	1	.010
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.912
	N	115	115
onlinedating	Pearson Correlation	.010	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.912	
	N	115	115

The null hypothesis: There is no relationship between Individuals using dating apps and the finding of a potential partner that fits their criteria. For the researcher to test the above hypothesis, the researcher used Pearson Correlation method, which concluded that when comparing the results of the two variables (dating apps and find a potential partner that fits their criteria), the results showed a statistical insignificance at $P \leq 0.05$; which means that there is a positive relationship. Consequently, the null hypothesis is accepted and the research hypothesis is rejected, there is no relationship between Individuals using dating apps and the finding of a potential partner that fits their criteria.

- H2: Individuals using dating apps are more likely to be perceived as having a bad reputation.

Correlations

		1. Have you ever used an online dating site or dating app?	Reputation
1. Have you ever used an online dating site or dating app?	Pearson Correlation	1	-.033
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.726
	N	115	115
Reputation	Pearson Correlation	-.033	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.726	
	N	115	115

The null hypothesis: There is no relation between individuals using dating apps and the perception as having a bad reputation. For the researcher to test the above hypothesis, the researcher used Pearson Correlations method, which concluded that when comparing the results of the two variables (dating apps and perception as having a bad reputation), the results showed a statistical insignificance at $P \leq 0.05$; which means that there is a positive relationship. Consequently, the null hypothesis is accepted and the research hypothesis is rejected: There is no relation between individuals using dating apps and the perception as having a bad reputation.

- H2: Individuals who are influenced by media are more likely to use dating apps.

Correlations

		1. Have you ever used an online dating site or dating app?	Media
1. Have you ever used an online dating site or dating app?	Pearson Correlation	1	.043
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.649
	N	115	115
Media	Pearson Correlation	.043	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.649	
	N	115	115

The null hypothesis: There is no relationship between individuals who are influenced by media and using dating apps. For the researcher to test the above hypothesis, the researcher used Pearson Correlations method, which concluded that when comparing the results of the two variables (media and use dating apps), the results showed a statistical insignificance at $P \leq 0.05$; which means that there is a positive relationship. Consequently, the null hypothesis is accepted and the research hypothesis is rejected: There is no relationship between individuals who are influenced by media and using dating apps.

10. Discussion and Conclusion:

It has been well established in research papers about the important of dating before marriage. The initiation of the internet has transformed the dating landscape, providing individuals with huge access to potential partners. The literature on online dating reflects a multidisciplinary approach across various studies. Physical dating and online dating have been highlighted as means of dating among singles. From the reviewed literatures there is a synergy with our research study that online dating may lead to a sustainable long-term marriage. This study examined different point of views of online dating relationships and their effect on marriage. The results demonstrated the enduring effect of online dating by chances to its successes. Though online dating might continue to displace traditional ways of meeting, more agreements will be needed to understand its implications for traditional relationships.

Respondents who answered the question of their experience with dating apps they either answered negative or neutral. Egyptians are starting to understand the importance of online dating websites and apps, which corresponds with uses and gratifications theory that many users engage with online dating platforms with the intention of establishing romantic relationships. This acts within the gratification factor of relationship formation, where individuals utilize these platforms as tools to initiate and cultivate connections with potential partners. Moreover, they are trying to accept it as mean that is taking over the traditional one. online dating platforms offer opportunities for social interaction and integration. As according to the uses and gratification theory, users may seek companionship, social validation, or a sense of belonging; which corresponds

to the aspect of seeking social integration satisfaction, where individuals utilize online dating to connect with others and expand their social circles. Since the uses and gratification theory confirmed the gratification aspect of escapism that some, users may turn to online dating as a means of escapism, seeking a break from their daily routines or real-life stressors. where individuals utilize online dating to temporarily detach themselves from the routines of their everyday, participants of this paper agreed that they have never used dating app or site and they are not willing to use it in the future. Besides, they approved that online dating apps and sites are still not culturally accepted. Though, it wasn't a large percentage, it is been found that some of the respondents have used the online dating apps and they had positive feedback from their side. The role on media in supporting and encouraging the use of online dating is still weak, the media doesn't give the impression that online dating apps and sites are successful means to use for a long sustainable means for relationships and marriage. Furthermore, both the Egyptians and Egyptian media they don't view users as desperate which is still a good thing to account, that the media is not misrepresenting cyber dating.

The study has answered all proposed hypothesis and beyond. Moreover, it did reveal the perceptions of online dating in Egypt. All research hypotheses have been refuted and all the null hypotheses have been accepted. It is now apparent that there are different approaches to cyber marriage, the media play a weak role in promoting and supporting cyber marriage through online dating in Egypt. Still, the social perception regarding cyber matchmaking and inclusion in this cultural context is negative, people are not fully aware and accepting the idea of online dating in Egypt. As a result, understanding these various uses and gratifications enables platforms to customize their features and functionalities to cater to the diverse needs of their users. besides, it does serve as contribution to a broader understanding of the social implications of online dating. There are some limitations of this current research that should be mentioned. The majority of answers were from females, so this research cannot be generalized on both genders. Furthermore, due to the time constraints, only 122 surveys were distributed, still cannot be generalized on all Egyptians. As recommendation for future research, with more available resources, large number of questionnaires should be distributed on Egyptians from both genders. Also, a triangulation

technique will be effective with this topic to be able to validate the answers by, for example, interviews, then, questionnaires and validate finally with focus groups.

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