Egyptian TV Drama as a Social Marketing Campaign:

A focus on the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) Central Route Factors on Persuasive Messaging and Attitude Formation towards Social Issues

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Abstract

Purpose–The study assesses the impact of central route factors (content completeness, content currency & content accuracy) on persuasive messaging, leading to individuals' attitude formation towards social issues found in Egyptian TV drama.

Design/methodology/approach– This quantitative study had a descriptive purpose. During November 2024, 388 Egyptian TV drama viewers filled out a questionnaire online using a Google form; the link was posted on various social media pages that promote current TV drama in the market. Data were statistically analyzed using IBM SPSS and Smart PLS.

Findings– The study findings confirmed the significant relationship between content accuracy and persuasiveness. Likewise, results supported the significance of the effect of perceived persuasiveness on change in attitudes.

Practical implications– By integrating social issues into their narratives, Egyptian television drama has increasingly succeeded in highlighting the persuasive power of entertainment media in altering attitudes.

Originality/value– Studies on Egyptian TV drama consumption tend to focus on the overall impact of drama, such as effects on social reality or family concepts, rather than the specific mediating role of persuasive messages in central route processing. This study contributes new insights to the literature related to entertainment-education, how entertainment programming itself persuades, acting as mediators of the central route within a narrative context towards individuals' attitude formation.

Keywords: Attraction, Central Route, Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), Entertainment Media, Persuasive message, Egyptian TV Drama, Social Issues.

1. Introduction

Mass media is always regarded as a vital entertaining, informative and educational tool that taps into a wide range of political, social, cultural and economic issues (Al-Zoubi and Al-Zoubi, 2022). As mass media evolved, entertainment media also flourished, giving rise to the entertainment education theory (EE), which conveys persuasive messages through its different formats, leaving a positive impact on society (Mishra et al., 2023; Sayfo, 2024). It is widely acknowledged that Egyptian TV drama dominates the Arab media production (Matbouly, 2024; Statista, 2024).

As noted in prior studies, mass media content can exert a powerful impact on the viewers' attitudes and beliefs, leading to ongoing scholarly research (Abbas and Saleem, 2024). Across time, mass media have long been recognized for their persuasive role in transforming society's mindset, as they can promote behaviors and ideas that benefit individuals and society (Samir and Attia, 2025). TV dramas' impact gained considerable attention as a major knowledge source on social issues; as it was given credit for its power in driving positive and sustainable behavior and attitudinal change for the "greater good" (Bader,2025; Emenogu, 2025). Nevertheless, a gap remains in understanding the persuasive role of TV drama in causing attitudinal change when discussing significant social issues to serve social marketing purposes (Sayfo, 2024). Thus, this research seeks to address a notable gap by focusing specifically on the societal problems communicated through Egyptian TV drama as a means for social marketing; marketing that achieves social benefits, like public health, safety, women's empowerment and the environment.

Studies show that Middle Eastern media viewers have been consuming less news media, preferring instead to receive information through a narrative, entertaining format conveyed through TV drama (Hamed, 2025). This shift offered TV drama the opportunity to explore the chance to educate citizens about important social issues that need to be tackled in the community, so as to improve the community, particularly in Egypt (Sayfo, 2024). The entertainment education theory effectively addresses societal problems through persuasive messages, highlighting the need to further investigate its role in shaping viewers' attitudes and behaviors when watching Egyptian TV drama (Coren and Wang, 2024).

Egypt, despite ongoing economic reforms to boost development (Abbas and Saleem, 2024), faces many social challenges (Hamed, 2025). Social

marketing has been used in Egypt to address these issues, such as raising awareness for issues related to employment and economic empowerment and/or health, financial, and environmental issues, as well as for charitable fundraising and promoting vital social values in markets (Al-Zoubi and Al-Zoubi, 2022). However, broader social transformations are needed, and Egyptian TV drama can tackle this practical problem due to its ability to present vital social issues (Abdo, 2023; Sayfo, 2024). This was evident over the past years, as various issues concerning women's rights and health-related problems have been discussed in the Egyptian dramas intensively (Bahjat et al., 2023; Elsedawy, 2023). Similarly, Egyptian TV drama viewership is extremely high, especially during the holy month of Ramadan, with viewers dedicating significant daily time to these shows (Hamed, 2025). A study showed that a significant portion of participants (43.7%) watched dramas for 4-5 hours daily during Ramadan (Matbouly, 2024). Besides, scholars claimed that more research is needed in the Egyptian context to examine how the integration of Egyptian TV dramas and social marketing can more effectively contribute to societal improvements (Allam and Kaoud, 2022). Thus, this study reinforces the great importance of assessing Egyptian TV drama as a source of social marketing in Egypt.

In order to develop an effective and persuasive social message, prior studies have urged practitioners to use the Elaboration Likelihood model (ELM). Widely applied across disciplines like marketing, advertising and communication, the ELM emphasizes its prominence in altering attitudes and behaviors through persuasive messages (Liu and Zheng, 2024). The theory explains that ELM holds a dual-process of persuasion, explaining how attitudes form and change through the central route, which involves deep, thoughtful processing of message arguments, leading to strong and lasting attitude changes; and the peripheral route, which relies on superficial cues and cognitive shortcuts, resulting in weaker and more temporary attitude shifts (Hamed, 2025).

The ELM has been underutilized in examining the impact of persuasive messages within entertainment TV drama contexts, particularly concerning social issues (Hamed, 2025). This reflects the importance of this research in adopting the ELM as a persuasive model to investigate its effect on altering attitudes regarding the tackled social issues in Egyptian TV drama. Egyptian studies have employed the ELM in different areas of study, such as social media studies, advertising and

tourism (Ragab, 2022). Yet in the context of Egyptian TV drama, limited studies have assessed the integration between the Elaboration Likelihood Model and entertainment education (Hamed, 2025). Studies that exist in the literature claim that the central route is a significant path to create persuasive messages that impact consumer behavior (Sayfo, 2024). Thus, this study decided to focus on the impact of central route factors (content completeness, content currency and content accuracy) on persuasive messaging, leading to attitude formation towards social issues in Egyptian TV drama.

Two main questions are addressed in the current study: (RQ1) What are the significant central route factors that make a social message persuasive in Egyptian TV drama content? (RQ2) Does the perceived persuasiveness of Egyptian TV drama messages trigger alterations in attitudes towards the tackled social issues? Aligned with these research questions, two main research objectives are steered: (RO1) to recognize the significant central route factors that make a social message persuasive in Egyptian TV drama. (RO2) to recognize the impact of TV drama persuasive content as a trigger to attitude formation of Egyptian TV drama viewers towards social issues.

This research will offer a deeper insight into the underlying process of the ELM with its central persuasion route in relation to the entertainment media, specifically Egyptian TV drama. Also, there remains a pressing need for a deep understanding of the Arab media landscape. This research will fulfill a gap by integrating the ELM, the EE theory and the Social Marketing theory, providing a comprehensive framework for investigating the persuasive effect of media messages embedded in Egyptian TV drama to address societal problems, leading to changes in attitudes and behaviors, particularly by fostering the central route of processing.

2. Literature Review

Former studies signified the entertainment media's potential to foster greater understanding and compassion among individuals, ultimately shaping or altering perceptions and beliefs (Abbas and Saleem, 2024). Also, recent studies have highlighted a rising attention towards the use of entertainment media as a persuasive medium to promote social issues (McClaran, 2022; Coren and Wang, 2024). The following sections in the literature explain how social issues can be promoted in TV drama to have a significant impact in persuading viewers as well as allowing them

to form positive attitudes towards social issues to interconnected with the pursuit of a better society.

2.1 Entertainment Education Theory

While some scholars argue that entertainment media serve merely as a source of pleasure, others have increasingly recognized its potential to serve educational and societal purposes (Chartrand and Lazaro, 2025). This evolving perspective gave rise to entertainment education theory, which was developed by Miguel Sabido, also known as EE or edutainment (McClaran, 2022). Moreover, EE is a well-established persuasive communication approach that integrates educational content within an entertainment context, by using various entertainment media tools, including TV drama, movies, radio shows and community dialogues (Arshad et al.,2025). This confirms the primary aim of EE, which is to raise awareness towards the subject matter and influence viewers' attitudes and behaviors through persuasive and relatable media content (Arshad et al.,2025). While these referenced studies explored limited societal problems, such as health-related ones, children-related matters, and the environment through different media tools and portrayed issues in American TV dramas and movies and their influence on viewers' attitudes, they lacked consideration of Middle Eastern and Egyptian media and their related societal problems. Therefore, a deeper analysis was required to validate the effectiveness of Egyptian TV dramas as an entertainment media tool in integrating educational content to address broader critical social issues that are of high relevance to Egyptian society.

Researchers use EE in several contexts, such as narrative transportation, as it can reach a large viewer base (Kulik, 2023; Arshad et al., 2025). This reflects its power to influence more viewers as the narrative will get more exposure, which helps in reinforcing the communicated message, as viewers will encounter the narrative several times. However, Arshad et al., (2025) applied the theory in digital contexts, but the findings didn't extend to traditional media like TV drama. Prior studies showed that EE contributes substantial value across different fields, particularly in domains vital to societal well-being, including women's empowerment, health-related matters, domestic violence, gender equality, family planning, etc. (Hoffman et al., 2023). Since some of these mentioned social issues are vital to Egyptian society, it's an opportunity to embed educational content related to these problems within Egyptian TV drama. Developing countries rely heavily

on EE to address critical social issues and drive change (Hursting and Comello, 2021). This has been evident in several settings where EE has successfully tackled societal problems and taken corrective actions to discourage undesirable attitudes and behaviors (Al-Zoubi and Al-Zoubi, 2022). As Boamah (2020) conducted a meta-analysis of 48 healthy campaigns, reflecting a 9% increase in viewers adopting a healthy lifestyle after being exposed to media content. This confirms that viewers get influenced by entertainment media content when responding to the communicated message and thus changing attitudes and behaviors to desired ones.

As many Egyptian TV dramas started tapping into some of these social issues for their vitality, it's important to enrich this area of study through academic research. There are several examples from Egyptian TV dramas that addressed societal problems successfully, supporting the current study. For instance, *"Khaly Balak Min Zizi"* 2021 TV drama, the increased awareness of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) led to societal support, opened up conversations about the importance of mental health awareness and wider acceptance of the shadow teacher role in school, which was a concept introduced in this TV drama (Helal, 2021). Another example was *"Leeh Laa season 2"* 2021 TV drama, according to the Ministry of Social Solidarity, over 2,700 orphan custody requests were submitted shortly after watching this TV drama, marking the highest number of requests received by the ministry in 1 year (Egypt Independent, 2021). Furthermore, *"Hala Khasa"* 2024 TV drama is another successful example that raised awareness about the challenges faced by Autistic people, helped in breaking this taboo and reinforced inclusion within society, drawing on real autistic individuals for reference. Moreover, the series received remarkable recognition from viewers, critics and the Egyptian Autistic Society (Mahfouz, 2025).

2.2 Elaboration Likelihood Model

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), developed by Richard Petty and John Cacioppo in the 1980s, is based on the understanding level of the viewers when processing the information presented in the message (Abbas et al., 2023; Winarsunu, 2024). The ELM focuses on how attitudinal change occurs through persuasive communication, towards certain objects or ideas (Mathur and Swami, 2023; Sanusi et al.,2025). Furthermore, ELM has been proven as a useful basis when tackling social issues through media presentations (Van Steenburg and Spears,

2022). Based on the ELM, it is claimed that viewers are persuaded by two main routes: the central route and the peripheral one (Sharifi et al., 2024). As for the central route, it refers to putting all the viewers' attention on the communicated message itself, focusing on all the related information and requiring more cognitive effort to get persuaded (Anubha, 2023). The second factor that impacts viewers is the peripheral route, which refers to assessing the message content based on simple and hidden cues that don't represent the actual content itself and require less mental effort (El Hedhli and Zourrig, 2023; Sharifi et al., 2024). Previous scholars imply following only one route while processing the communicated message, claiming that the viewer's response towards the message, whether derived from motivation or cognition, will have the same effect (Van Steenburg and Spears, 2022). Hence, the current research focuses solely on the central route of the ELM.

2.2.1 Central Route Factors

As mentioned above, the ELM states that processing information of the message content is done through 2 routes; the first persuasion route is known as the Central Route (El Hedhli and Zourrig, 2023; Wang et al.,2025). As identified by the ELM, when consumers process the information presented thoroughly, focusing on the details related to the issue or topic tackled, then a central route is followed (Sharifi et al., 2024). Consequently, changes in attitude and behavior occur after deep analysis of the message content and are expected to have a long-lasting effect (Anubha, 2023; Cheng et al., 2024). Prior studies emphasized that viewers who are influenced by the central route are high elaborators, as they are more likely to be interested in putting much effort into the message itself (Cho and Chiu, 2022; Liu and Zheng, 2024). The central route is based on the quality and strength of the argument in the message content (Anubha, 2023). Accordingly, studies confirmed that the key variable in the ELM model that describes the central route is the argument quality (Shariffadeen and Manaf, 2024; Sharifi et al., 2024). Consistent with Nelson et al., (2005), argument quality has been represented in many studies by three main dimensions, which are completeness, currency and accuracy (Haque et al., 2023).

Information completeness is one of the main elements of argument quality (Ding et al., 2025). In other words, information completeness focuses on the sufficiency and extensiveness of the information communicated through the message (Nguyen and Tang, 2024; Pratiwi et al., 2025). Moreover, attaining information completeness requires that all the information and details related to the product are to be given,

such as product use, functionality, information about the brand and price (Gao et al., 2021). Correspondingly, in a TV drama context, the media message content should provide all the information related to the tackled social issue, such as: clearly outlining the issue itself, or showing the symptoms if it's health health-related issue, or presenting the problems derived from this issue or how people should deal with it (Haque, 2023). In relevance to this study, information completeness refers to presenting all the detailed information of the communicated issue through the Egyptian TV drama content in a sufficient and extensive way.

The following variable to be considered as an essential element of argument quality is content currency (Ding et al., 2025). It is concerned with how trendy and up-to-date the information is in relevance to the product, as it should reflect the product's newest techniques and improvements (Pratiwi et al., 2025). Hence, TV drama communicated content should present a trending, up-to-date or latest issue that is of big interest or importance to society, to achieve information currency. This explains its significance as a determinant of information quality, as the timely, updated content enhances the quality of the argument (Rizal et al., 2022). Linking it to the current study, content currency refers to the extent to which the information related to the discussed social issue in Egyptian TV drama should be up to date.

The next constituent of argument quality is content accuracy (Moradi and Zihagh, 2022). This reflects the significance of providing correct and accurate information to avoid any misunderstandings concerning the communicated message (Le, 2023a). This was confirmed by previous researchers, as it was stated that accuracy is a crucial attribute that ensures that information is consistent and correctly mapped to the situation it denotes (Pratiwi et al., 2025). That's why all the information related to the product should be communicated clearly, reflecting the actual product information (Rizal et al., 2022). Hence, the received information will be trusted. In light of this study, content accuracy will present the extent to which the information related to the communicated issue in Egyptian TV drama is clear, correct and believable.

2.3 Perceived Persuasiveness

Earlier researchers defined persuasion as a symbolic process that aims to induce the viewers to amend their attitudes and beliefs towards a tackled issue (Sharifi et al., 2024). Other research defined persuasion as the practice of twisting facts and evidence in an attempt to persuade

viewers to change their minds and eventually their attitudes (Winarsunu, 2024). As per prior research, persuasion plays a vital role in communication, particularly when aiming to arouse attitudes towards certain issues, ideas and objects (El Hedhli and Zourrig, 2023). According to psychological literature, the individual's attitude is the mutual focus of persuasion (Winarsunu, 2024). Persuasion has been an essential construct across various disciplines, including psychology, marketing and communication (Braca and Dondio, 2023). This reveals the growing interest in studying the role of persuasion due to its conceptual diversity. This supports the significance of perceived persuasiveness in influencing viewers' attitudes towards the issues being addressed through the conveyed message (Oyibo and Morita, 2022; Ciocarlan et al., 2023). Some prior research investigated the narrative dimensions of persuasion and digital communication. Nevertheless, this research extends previous studies by examining how persuasion operates within Egyptian TV drama and how it alters viewers' attitudes towards the discussed social problems.

Moreover, perceived persuasiveness reflects the level of the viewers' assurance and trust in the communicated content through media platforms, when the message is convincing enough (Mardhatilah et al., 2023). In relevance to this study, perceived persuasiveness will reflect the degree to which the communicated media content presented in the TV drama is persuasive enough to believe it and cause attitudinal change. The ELM with its central route was adopted as the main theoretical framework of this study, as it measures the effect of central route factors (content completeness, content currency and content accuracy) on perceived persuasiveness towards the addressed social issues in entertainment media, particularly Egyptian TV drama.

Earlier studies proved that information completeness affects perceived persuasiveness (Gao et al., 2021). At the same time, several empirical studies proved the positive relationship between information completeness and perceived persuasiveness (Chang et al., 2020a; Rizal et al., 2022). In relevance to this, former scholars stated that content completeness reflects the extent to which consumers will be persuaded to change their attitude when they feel that the provided content is comprehensive enough (Nguyen and Tang, 2024). For the TV drama content to be considered complete, it should provide all the details concerning the discussed social issue presented in the TV drama, so that the viewer can have a complete picture related to the subject matter. Hence, the viewer will be persuaded, and attitudes can be altered. The

current study proposes that achieving "content completeness" in entertainment media content in Egyptian TV drama requires assembling the right mix of audio, video, and text content to help in providing complete information regarding the discussed matter, leading to perceived persuasiveness, which will eventually alter viewers' attitudes. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 emerged: *There is a significant relationship between content completeness and perceived persuasiveness of Egyptian TV drama.*

Former research proved that content currency can have an effect on perceived persuasiveness, leading to a change in attitude (Wang et al., 2022). Correspondingly, past research verified the positive relation between content currency and perceived persuasiveness (Gao et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2022). Scholars proved that content currency is related to the extent to which the communicated information is updated and trendy (Haque et al., 2023). Previous studies emphasized the importance of content currency in a media communication setting (John and De'Villiers, 2020). This is consistent with the current study, as the more the communicated content in the Egyptian TV drama tackles a novel and recent issue, the more the viewer will relate to it and be persuaded, which might cause alterations in attitude. Therefore, further investigations concerning content currency and perceived persuasiveness are needed (Le, 2023). Thus, Hypothesis 2 was developed: *There is a significant relationship between content currency and perceived persuasiveness of Egyptian TV drama.*

Prior studies proved that accuracy is another element of the argument quality that acts as a central route variable in ELM studies (Ding et al., 2025). Moreover, several empirical studies examined the positive relationship between information accuracy and perceived persuasiveness (Chang et al., 2020a). Various studies expressed content accuracy as the extent to which the content is correct and exact when presented (Le, 2023a). Scholars stated that when the viewer recognizes the communicated message as accurate and precise, the tendency to believe the message becomes higher and eventually reinforces persuasion; as a result, an alteration in attitudes will occur (Chang et al., 2020a). The current study proposes that the content accuracy allows viewers to believe the content and consider the content in their rationalization in life; thus, leading to perceived persuasiveness, which eventually alters viewers' attitudes. Thus, Hypothesis 3 was developed: *There is a significant relationship between content accuracy and perceived persuasiveness of Egyptian TV drama.*

2.4 Attitudinal Change

According to Herbert Spencer (1862), attitude formation towards a certain behavior is suggested to stem from a blend of beliefs and the assessments of their outcomes (Cho and Chiu, 2022). Some research described attitude as a psychological phenomenon that results from the individuals' beliefs and feelings towards a particular object or topic, which can cause specific actions (Bakanauskas et al., 2020). In light of prior research, attitude is an integral part of psychology that has been investigated in several disciplines such as consumer psychology and marketing sciences (Hursting and Comello, 2021). Attitude focuses on giving explanations on the cognitive process that drives consumers' behavior and assessing habits, values and other related factors that can influence the consumer behavior (Bakanauskas et al., 2020). By understanding these attitudes, communication messages can be tailored to be more persuasive and better resonate with the viewers. The communication presented in the media has a remarkable role in shaping viewers' attitudes towards objects, individuals or even ideas (El Hedhli and Zourrig, 2023). This emphasizes that attitudes can be altered over time when exposed to new ideas or objects, which can lead to creating favorable or unfavorable attitudes towards the specific communicated aspect (Anubha, 2023).

Across time, numerous empirical studies have demonstrated the significant influence of perceived persuasiveness on attitudinal change, emphasizing the noteworthy positive relationship between both variables (Mardhatilah et al., 2023; Sharifi et al., 2024). Empirical evidence from ELM studies has consistently substantiated the effectiveness of perceived persuasiveness (Gao et al., 2021; Rizal et al., 2022). Likewise, various studies have investigated perceived persuasiveness as a dependent variable in relevance to ELM studies. Other studies have tested the mediating effect of perceived persuasiveness (Kim and Pennington-Gray, 2025). Change in attitude occurs when persuasion is inherent in the communicated media message (Liu and Zheng, 2024). Several studies in the context of ELM have identified attitudinal change as a major dependent variable (Wang et al., 2022). In relevance to the current study, Egyptian TV viewers who are persuaded by Egyptian TV drama addressing social issues are more likely to exhibit alterations in attitudes. Thus, hypothesis 4 emerged: *There is a significant relationship between perceived persuasiveness and attitudinal change towards addressed social issues in Egyptian TV drama.*

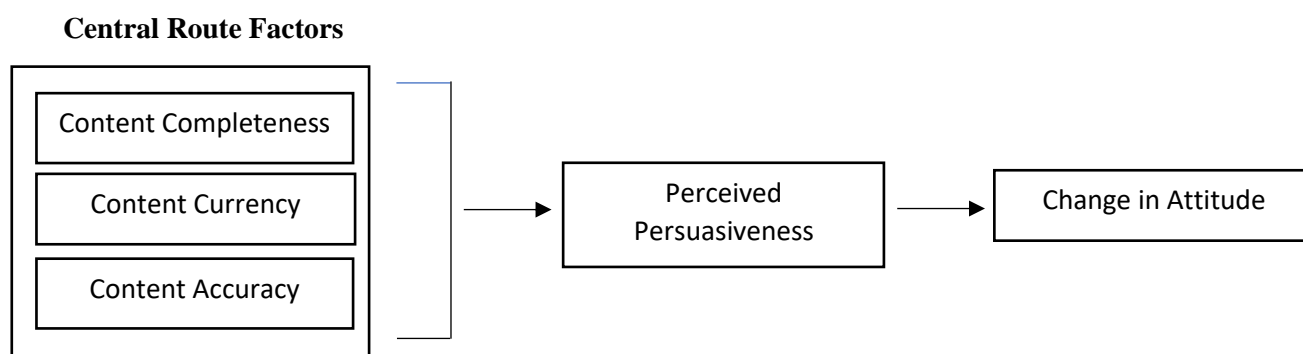Figure 1 displays the proposed conceptual framework of the current study.

Central Route Factors

Figure 1 Proposed Conceptual Framework

3. Research Methods

This study followed a descriptive research approach, using a quantitative methodological approach that aims to systematically describe the characteristics of a population, situation, or phenomenon and test the variables' correlational relationships. Quantitative data were collected using electronic self-administered questionnaires. The questionnaire was created on Google Forms. The link to the form was shared via WhatsApp, Facebook and face-to-face distribution.

The questionnaire contained three main sections. Section one illustrates the ethical procedure of research as it explains the purpose of the research, why the participant is chosen to partake in the study, how to fill in the questionnaire, and that confidentiality is taken into consideration. Section two asks socio-demographic questions, like age, gender, income, occupation, etc. The final section assessed the research variables, the central route factors, the persuasiveness of the message, as well as the attitude formation towards the social issues presented in the TV drama. These scales were taken from prior studies and adapted to fit the context of the current study. Table 2 illustrates the scale items for each variable measurement and the reference from which the scale came.

The questionnaire was created in both English and Arabic language. Back translation was used to confirm the accuracy of the language conversion. A pilot test was then conducted to confirm the accuracy of the questionnaire; to test and refine the questionnaire instruments and procedures on a small scale (50 participants took part) before a large-

scale study was conducted, ultimately saving time, money, and resources by identifying potential flaws, logistical issues, and participant confusion that could derail the main research. In the pilot test, the researchers conducted the reliability and validity analysis to ensure the questionnaire produced accurate results, making the research trustworthy and useful for drawing conclusions and informing decisions.

The studied population of this research were Egyptian TV drama viewers who consume TV drama via either traditional TV or streaming services such as Watch It, Shahid and Netflix. The population of this study were youth and young adults, particularly those aged between 18 to 39. This age group represent a vital force within society, as they encounter various challenges and tend to be more receptive to changes in their attitudes and behaviors for the improvement of society more than older ones (Omar et al., 2016; Dumper et al., 2024).

Non-probability sampling techniques encompass several types, including snowball sampling, which refers to the progressive expansion of the sample, which concludes upon reaching a target sample size (Parker et al., 2020). It is commonly used when the population is hidden, not easily reachable or has no clear population list (Parker et al., 2020). In quantitative research, the snowball sampling method has been frequently applied within social sciences, and it has been utilized in social marketing and ELM studies (John and De'Villiers, 2020; Khalife, 2023). Accordingly, this study will adopt the snowball sampling technique as well as the referral sampling technique. It refers to a non-probability sampling method used to recruit online respondents by placing survey invitations (links) in the "flow" of internet traffic, such as on social media, to intercept people as they engage in other online activities. It's called "snowball" sampling because researchers essentially "dip into" the river of internet users, "catching" passersby for a survey, reflecting the progressive expansion of the sample (Sharma, 2017).

Regarding the sample size, the KMT table states that determining the appropriate sample size is related to the targeted population. If the population is more than 1,000,000, then the proper sample size is 384 (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Memon et al., 2020). Since latest results from CAPMAS (2025), showed that Egypt's population reached 108,068,012 million Egyptians. Likewise, Egyptian youth and young adults constitute a substantial share of Egypt's population, representing around 40,000,000 to 60,000,000 Egyptians. Consequently, based on the

KMT table, the sample size in the current study shouldn't be less than 384.

The current study relied on two data analysis tools. The first was IBM SPSS, which was utilized to identify the occurrence of any outliers in the dataset. Following this, the research conducted normality tests, then multicollinearity tests, followed by the common method bias test and finally descriptive frequency analysis was performed. The second data analysis tool used was Smart PLS. The model measurement was evaluated by conducting convergent validity, discriminant validity and reliability tests. Afterwards, the structural model ran further investigations to examine the significance of the proposed hypothesis, the path coefficients' relevance and the R^2. Finally, the mediation analysis was conducted.

4. Results

Frequency distributions reflect all the personal data and the diversification of the selected population, providing deeper insights about the respondent demographic profile (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). It was observed that the highest percentage of respondents were females (67.2%), who lived in Giza (35.2%). The most common age group was from 30 to 34 years-representing millennials (30.7%). The majority of respondents were single (55.5%), with a bachelor's degree (52.6%) and employed (64.8%). The most common income level was between 10,000 and 20,000 (23.2%). Likewise, the majority of respondents had no children (68.2%). The findings of the present study are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Characteristic		Frequency (N=384)	Percent %	Demographic Characteristic		Frequency (N=384)	Percent %
Gender	Female	258	67.2	Occupation	Student	100	26
	Male	126	32.8		Employed	249	64.8
Age	18-24	113	29.4		Unemployed	28	7.3
	25-29	83	21.6		Other	7	1.9
	30-34	118	30.7	Income Level	Less than 5,000	77	20.1
	35-39	70	18.2		5,000 less than 10,000	66	17.2
Marital Status	Single	213	55.5		10,000 less than 20,000	89	23.2
	Married	162	42.2		20,000 less than 30,000	51	13.3
	Divorced	8	2.1		30,000 less than 40,000	43	11.2
	Widowed	1	0.3		Above 40,000	58	15.1
Highest Educational Level Reached	High School	43	11.2	Number Of Children	None	263	68.5
	Bachelor	202	52.6		1	62	16.1
	Post Graduate Studies	124	32.3		2	50	13
	Other	15	3.9		More Than 2	9	2.3
City Of Residence	Cairo	111	28.9				
	Giza	135	35.2				
	Alexandria	119	31				
	Port Said	11	2.9				
	Suez	0	0				
	Other	8	2.2				

Source: the current study analysis

To assess the measurement model, the researcher evaluated two types of validity: beginning with convergent validity and subsequently examining discriminant validity. Furthermore, reliability tests were conducted, which included both Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. The first step to assess validity is measuring the convergent validity. Starting with the outer loadings of this study, each variable's statements were evaluated as part of the convergent validity tests. Some statements were excluded from the following variables: content accuracy and change in attitude variables for their weak loadings. As for the Average variance Extracted (AVE), it reflects the extent to which a construct explains the variation in an item (Hair et al., 2017). Table 2 presents the AVE values for the current research variables, which confirmed the convergent validity of the study's variables, as all values were above 0.5.

Scholars agreed on several measures to assess discriminant validity, including cross-loadings, Fornell-Larcker criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. According to the results, it was revealed that the cross-loadings of all the variables were higher than those of the other variables, which reflected the adequacy of the model to link each variable with its indicators. This was validated by the results from the HTMT ratio and Fornell-Larcker criterion, which established the distinctiveness of each variable with respect to its own indicators and in comparison to other constructs. Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability were used to evaluate the reliability of the current study. According to the findings, the values for both tests surpassed 0.7, which falls within the acceptable range, indicating internal consistency for all the model's variables. Hence, the reliability of all the variables was confirmed. Table 2 displays the reliability analysis results.

Table 2 Research Variables' Scale items, Validity and Reliability analysis

Variable	Items in the scale	Item	Outer Loading	Average Variance Extracted AVE	Cronbach Alpha
Content Completeness **Scale Source:** (Nelson et al., 2005).	This TV drama content provides me with a complete set of information.	Comp1	0.866	0.729	0.814
	This TV drama content produces comprehensive information.	Comp2	0.872		
	This TV drama content provides me with all the information I need.	Comp3	0.822		
Content Currency	This TV drama content provides me with the most recent information.	Currency1	0.883		

Variable	Items in the scale	Item	Outer Loading	Average Variance Extracted AVE	Cronbach Alpha
Scale Source: (Nelson et al., 2005).	This TV drama content produces the most current information.	Currency2	0.867	0.717	0.804
	The information from this TV drama content is always up to date.	Currency3	0.788		
Content Accuracy **Scale Source:** (Chen, 2010).	This TV drama content is an accurate source of information to me.	Acc1	0.761	0.677	0.759
	This TV drama content is clear	Acc3	0.889		
	This TV drama content is easy to understand	Acc4	0.814		
Perceived Persuasiveness **Scale Source:** (Chang et al., 2020a).	I consider this TV drama content to be convincing.	PP1	0.789	0.699	0.854
	I consider this TV drama content to be believable.	PP2	0.831		
	I consider this TV drama content to be trustworthy.	PP3	0.820		
	This TV drama content changed my impression toward the discussed social issue.	PP4	0.753		
Change In Attitude **Scale Source:** (Hower et al., 2019).	I thought it was good that the (social issue) was taking place.	Attitude1	0.895	0.777	0.857
	I was open to consider "social issue".	Attitude2	0.882		
	I believed that the talking about "social issue" will benefit the society".	Attitude3	0.868		

Source: the current study analysis

The hypothesis testing was then conducted to measure the relationship between central route factors and perceived persuasiveness, and then testing its effect on the change in attitude. Table 3 presents the path coefficients, T-statistics and P-values of the hypothesized relationships of the study. The findings revealed that the effect of content completeness on change in attitude was insignificant, where (Coefficient=0.099, t= 1.455, p=0.149). Also, the indirect effect of content completeness on change in attitude through the PP was found to be insignificant (Coefficient =0.058, t=1.474, p=0.141). This reflects that the relationship between content completeness on change in attitude, even with the presence of PP, is insignificant. As for the direct effect of content currency on change in attitude, it was found to be insignificant (coefficient = 0.015, t=0.305, p=0.760). With the inclusion of PP, the indirect effect of content currency on change in attitude was also insignificant, where (Coefficient=0.009, t= 0.307, p=0.759). This reveals

that PP didn't function as a mediator between content currency and change in attitude. Moving forward to the direct effect of content accuracy on change in attitude, which was found to be significant, as (coefficient= 0.248, t=3.383 and p=0.001). With the enclosure of PP, the indirect effect of content accuracy on change in attitude was also significant, where (coefficient= 0.146, t=3.297 and p=0.001). This shows that the relationship between content accuracy and change in attitude is partially mediated by perceived persuasiveness, reflecting complementary mediation.

Table 3 Path Coefficients, T-statistics, & P-values of the Hypothesized Relationships

Hypothesis		Path Coefficient	T-Statistics	P - Value	Results
H1: There's a significant relationship between content completeness and perceived persuasiveness.	**Completeness** ⟶ **PP**	0.009	1.455	0.149	**Rejected**
H2: There's a significant relationship between content currency and perceived persuasiveness.	**Currency** ⟶ **PP**	0.015	0.305	0.760	**Rejected**
H3: There's a significant relationship between content accuracy and perceived persuasiveness.	**Accuracy** ⟶ **PP**	0.248	3.383	0.001	**Accepted**
H4: There is a significant relationship between perceived persuasiveness and attitudinal change towards addressed social issues in Egyptian TV drama.	**PP** ⟶ **Change in attitude**	0.588	15.296	0.000	**Accepted**

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study applied the ELM with its central route, consisting of three sub-variables in the Egyptian TV drama context. Eventually, it measured the impact of perceived persuasiveness as a mediator factor on the change in attitude. Remarkably, two out of the four proposed hypotheses confirmed empirical support. Thus, various significant conclusions were derived from the results. To initiate the discussion, H1 intended to measure the significant relationship between content completeness and perceived persuasiveness. In opposition to the study's hypothesis, content completeness didn't show a statistically significant relationship or effect on perceived persuasiveness. This also contradicts the previous empirical studies of Chang et al., (2020), Gao et al., (2021),

and Rizal et al., (2022). In contrast, some studies have demonstrated that content completeness may not hold significant relevance in specific contexts, such as health-related matters (Le, 2023). Moving forward to H2, where it proposes that content currency has a significant relationship with perceived persuasiveness. Contrary to the researcher's expectations, content currency didn't confirm its significant relationship with perceived persuasiveness. This finding opposed the prior empirical study of John and De'Villiers (2020), Gao et al., (2021), Wang et al., (2022) and Le (2023). Then H3, which tests the significant relationship between content accuracy and perceived persuasiveness. In contrast to Gao et al., (2021) empirical study where there was an insignificant relationship between content accuracy and perceived persuasiveness. Yet, aligned with many prior studies like Chang et al., (2020), Rizal et al., (2022) and Le (2023), confirming the noteworthy relationship which supports the hypothesis. This is also consistent with the current study's findings of the introductory questions, where content accuracy had the highest rating in terms of what helps in addressing social issues effectively in Egyptian TV drama. Finally, these research outcomes achieved the research objective: (RO1) to recognize the significant central route factors that make a social message persuasive.

For research objective: (RO2) To recognize the impact of TV drama persuasive content as a trigger to attitude formation of Egyptian TV drama viewers towards social issues, hypothesis four was assessed. The results of the study confirmed the proposed hypothesis, as it validated the significant relationship between both variables. The findings are in agreement with earlier research undertaken by Chang et al., (2020b) and Pillai al., (2022).

5.1 Research Contribution

This study contributes to the academic literature by offering more insights and empirically supporting theories. Firstly, this study adds to the theory, as it confirmed that Egyptian youth and young adults' TV drama viewers are influenced by the accuracy of the presented content, as a central route factor. Accordingly, it simultaneously provided empirical validation of the ELM by identifying the most significant central route factor, particularly content accuracy, confirming the extension of the ELM's applicability across other contexts. Moreover, this study has provided empirical support for the entertainment education theory, validating the effectiveness of using Egyptian TV

drama as an entertainment-based media tool for embedding educational content related to important social issues. Furthermore, the current study broadens the application of social marketing theory within Egyptian TV drama. Sequentially, the findings further indicate that perceived persuasiveness can have a notable influence on the attitudinal change of Egyptian TV viewers towards social issues. Additionally, this research contributed academically to the scarce body of research in the Egyptian context by integrating the ELM model with EE theory, along with social marketing, within the context of Egyptian TV drama is a distinctive combination that hasn't been investigated considerably in Egypt.

5.2 Research Implications

This study has generated several research implications. Primarily, the recent research outcomes underscore the importance of content accuracy concerning perceived persuasiveness. It reveals that Egyptian TV dramas that convey precise and correct information about the social issue being addressed can successfully persuade Egyptian TV viewers. This implies that when the communicated content in the Egyptian TV drama is accurate, TV viewers are more likely to find it credible, thus increasing its persuasive effectiveness. On the other hand, if the Egyptian TV drama conveys false or misleading content about the social issue being discussed, then the viewer will be disengaged from the Egyptian TV drama. Adding to this, the accessibility of diverse media platforms and second-screening enables viewers to verify the accuracy of content with relative ease. Besides, binge-watching allows viewers to watch multiple episodes consecutively, facilitating their ability to assess the accuracy of events in the Egyptian TV dramas. This is particularly relevant to the nature of the Egyptian TV viewer, as there is always a strong emphasis on verifying the accuracy of information and often expressing concern over any discrepancies.

Consistent with various studies, this research revealed a significant relationship between perceived persuasiveness and attitudinal change towards tackled social issues within the context of Egyptian TV drama. This outcome may be attributed to a range of factors, starting with the crucial role of media in conveying ideas, exposing viewers to diverse life experiences and influencing attitudes. Besides, viewers who are highly convinced and motivated by the media content presented demonstrate greater openness to changes in attitude. Moreover, given their emotional nature, Egyptian TV viewers are more likely to empathize with the tackled social issues, which can increase the effectiveness of persuasive

messages and support attitudinal change. Finally, age is a factor, as youth and young adults tend to be more susceptible to persuasion when being exposed to messages in TV drama and may exhibit a greater tendency for attitudinal change towards the tackled social issues as a result.

In contrast to former studies, this research established an insignificant relationship between content completeness and perceived persuasiveness. Several potential reasons may have led to this result; in an entertainment context, viewers may not require a comprehensive set of information from the TV drama, as they often prioritize the quality rather than the quantity of the information presented. Similarly, TV dramas, being narrative-driven, don't necessarily provide exhaustive details concerning the tackled social issue; instead, TV dramas typically emphasize key concepts that need to be addressed by exposing viewers to a broad range of relevant, vital content without necessarily offering complete details. Moreover, the reason behind this could be that Egyptian TV viewers can concentrate only on the essential content presented in the Egyptian TV drama, while relying on different media platforms and second screening for a more comprehensive understanding of the tackled social issue. This implies that thorough and complete content alone may not effectively persuade Egyptian TV viewers when addressing social issues.

Likewise, in distinction from other studies, the current study demonstrated an insignificant relationship between content currency and perceived persuasiveness. The underlying reasons for this finding could be associated with: trending and hot topics tend to be short-lived, fade quickly and often change rapidly, so relying on them to influence viewers' attitudes through persuasion may be insufficient. Relatively, the social issue under discussion doesn't necessarily have to be new; it can also encompass ongoing and persistent social issues that require the viewers' attention, and it may align with current trends. Also, when these problems are tackled, they may become trendy in certain situations. In relevance to this, many TV dramas often present conflicts and challenges that transcend certain time periods, making them relatable and suitable across all eras. It is essential to present certain social issues in the Egyptian TV drama, focusing on their importance rather than their trendiness. In summary, it suggests that Egyptian TV viewers aren't persuaded solely by trendy social issues. This is especially noticeable in several Egyptian TV dramas such as "Khaly Balak Min Zziz, Taht El-Wessaya, Hala Khasa, Leh La2-Part 2", which didn't

simply reflect prevailing trends but actively contributed to the creation of new ones by tapping into these societal problems. In doing so, they stimulated Egyptian TV viewers to speak up and share their personal stories related to the issue presented.

5.3 Research Recommendations

This research proposed several recommendations for the effective embedding of persuasive messages within Egyptian TV drama. Marketing and media practitioners should focus on improving the accuracy of the communicated information concerning the social issue being addressed. This would be done by directing more resources and personnel to gather precise data about the tackled social issue, ensuring its accuracy is embedded in the Egyptian TV drama. Scriptwriters should consult subject matter experts during the script development phase, for instance, consulting psychologists for mental health-related topics such as "Hala Khasa", lawyers, legal experts and religious counselors if needed, such as in "Taht El-Wessaya", "Leh la2, part 2", respectively. Moreover, fact-checked narratives and embedding real-life case studies within the entertainment content can help ensure the accuracy of the message. Also, collaborations with governmental institutions (such as ministries) and independent institutions (National Council for Women) could be done to facilitate obtaining accurate information from trusted sources and effectively conveying it through Egyptian TV drama using persuasive messages. By incorporating content accuracy into Egyptian TV drama, institutions and practitioners can effectively promote critical social issues, influencing viewers' attitudes.

Furthermore, marketers and media practitioners should focus on tailoring persuasive messages to successfully alter viewers' attitudes through offering convincing content that adapts to the needs of the targeted population (Egyptian youth and young adults' TV drama viewers), which was demonstrated through "Khali Balak Min Zizi". Last but not least, collected data revealed that the most recalled and influential Egyptian TV dramas addressing social issues were: "Taht El-Wessaya", "Hala khasa", "Khali Balak Miz Zizi", "Leh La2, Part 2" and "A3la Nesbet Moshahda". This can help practitioners by referring to these TV dramas as real examples that reflect the successful utilization of entertainment education. Additionally, it will assist practitioners, ministries and institutions in selecting the vital social issues that need to be addressed, as the research indicated that health-

related matters, education, mental health awareness, bullying, poverty, and women's empowerment are the most significant social issues that should be highlighted in Egyptian TV drama. Accordingly, more focus will be directed towards these issues to be effectively presented in the upcoming Egyptian TV dramas. Moving forward, practitioners should invest more in on-demand platforms, particularly Shahid and Watch-IT, as they are the most consumed by Egyptian TV viewers.

5.4 Research Limitations and Recommendations for Future Studies

Various limitations were identified in the present study. To start with, the data employed a cross-sectional design, which limited the ability to observe the occurrence of any change in the preferences of the viewers. Also, a quantitative approach was selected by the study through self-administered questionnaires. Furthermore, the study didn't focus on a specific social issue presented in a certain Egyptian TV drama. So, this restricted the studying of a main social issue thoroughly. Additionally, this study targeted youth and young adults aged 18 to 39, who consume Egyptian TV drama. Yet, this may have limited the variation in the study, as results can't be applied to other age groups. Besides, the current study focused solely on the central route factor of the ELM, ignoring the peripheral route. Ultimately, the research investigated various significant central route factors, thereby omitting other variables that could hold comparable significance to the context of the study.

For future research, the study could extend the time horizon by adopting a longitudinal study. This may enrich the findings, as it will take into account the changes that evolve in the Egyptian TV viewers' attitudes, preferences and taste when being exposed to persuasive messages within Egyptian TV drama. Moreover, a mixed method approach (through conducting interviews and focus groups, along with questionnaires and content analysis) could be followed to gain more observations and understanding of conveying social issues through persuasive messages in Egyptian TV drama. This is because several recent studies have adopted the mixed-methods approach to provide a more holistic understanding of the area of study. Additionally, further research may focus on other age groups, which facilitates conducting comparative analysis between different age groups, which will help in associating the changes in attitudes among different age groups when being persuaded by Egyptian TV drama messages. Thereafter, future studies may focus

on conducting separate case studies, tackling specific social issues such as mental awareness, education, healthcare, bullying and women's empowerment. To elaborate more, upcoming studies can focus on mental awareness as a major social issue by examining Egyptian TV dramas that tackle this specific issue, like Hala khasa and Khaly Balak Min Zizi, thereby providing deeper insights that can help in assessing the impact of Egyptian TV drama on the viewers' attitudes towards mental awareness.

Then, viewership patterns like second screening and binge-watching behaviors may be areas of interest to be explored as moderating variables in upcoming research, as they can have a noteworthy effect in entertainment education studies, and they can affect viewers' processing and response to TV drama as a social marketing tool. Although second screening strengthens the connection between TV drama exposure and the related responses, it is a source of distraction that may limit retention and understanding of the communicated social issues in the TV drama. Also, binge watching is characterized by impulsive overconsumption and heightened narrative immersion. Further research may study more central factors that are relevant to the Egyptian TV drama, such as personal relevance. Lastly, future research could develop a conceptual model that examines both routes of persuasion, the central route and the peripheral route, with factors such as source attractiveness, source trustworthiness and co-viewer involvement.

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