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The feminization and misrepresentation of public relations practitioners in Turkish tv dramas

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ABSTRACT

Among the roles scattered in the scenarios of the Turkish TV dramas, PR practitioners are ascribed various roles and stereotyped personal traits which are mainly represented by the female gender. They are designed and scripted as similar stereotypes that are negative characters with similar roles. This paper examines how female PR professionals have been portrayed in Turkish TV dramas. Using the approach of media framing from the perspective of gendered profession, this paper analyzes women in a variety of public relations roles in Turkish TV dramas produced between 1998 and 2020. A total of fifty-five PR female practitioners were identified in these fifty-one TV dramas. The results show that among the fifty-five (N = 55) PR practitioner characters, the majority were women (N = 52) and that the general tone of most of the characters was negative, profit-oriented and manipulative. Interestingly, the study also notes that the few (N = 3) PR characters portrayed as male were all portrayed as gay. This reinforces the idea that PR is portrayed as a feminized field. Misleading media portrayals of PR practitioners can have a negative impact on how people view the profession.

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Introduction

There are increasing number of female PR practitioners have been growing for a decade and female practitioners began to dominate the sector (Donnalyn Pompper and Taejin Jung 2013; Deborah Simorangkir 2011; Kate Fitch and Amanda Third 2010; Pauline Madaran and Miriam Catterall 2000). According to the results of “European Communication Monitor 2014 Research” conducted in 42 countries, the communication profession in Europe has become a female profession. This applies to Turkey as well. In 2005 while 69% of the PR professionals in Turkey were women, 73% of the Turkish Public Relations Association (TÜHİD) members were women (Burcu Öksüz and Serra Görpe 2014). In 2014, it was found that 76% of the members of the Corporate Communications Association of Turkey (KİD) are also women (KİD 2020). In 2020, when the chairman of the board of TÜHİD is a woman, the total number of female members is 155 (71.5%) and the total number of male members is 62 (28.5%) (TÜHİD 2020); when the chairman of KİD is a woman, the number of female members is 70 (79%) and the number of male members is 19 (21%) (KİD 2020).

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With regard to the feminization of the profession PR in Turkey, two basic issues stand out. The first is the predominant presence of female PR students in universities compared to male PR students; and consequently the increasing proportion of female employees in the PR sector. It can be said that the gender gap continues to prevail PR relevant stereotypes and images in the relevant school departments (Öksüz and Görpe 2014). Some of the earlier studies (Betty Farmer and Lisa Waugh 1999; DeAnna DeRosa and Dennis L. Wilcox 1989) indicated that there are differences between the perceptions and expectations of female and male PR students. Michael A. Mitrook (2005) concluded in his study of students that stereotypes still prevail in the PR industry and students find PR less attractive because of poor stereotypes.

The second issue is the feminization of PR discourse and its implications. Among the various definitions of feminization, Nanette Fondas (1997) points out that feminization is the attribution of the profession to women because of the demands associated with it. This definition unfortunately dominates the PR literature as well (Glen M. Broom 1982; James E. Grunig and Terrance T. Hunt 1984). This acuity draws on arguments that women are more suited to the role of technician (Simorangkir 2011) than manager because they are innately more talented than men in certain areas (Celia Davies 1996). For example, while the superior communication skills of a practitioner are attributed to women and perceived as a “feminine” trait, the “management” role is perceived as a more masculine job or “manly” (Elena Verlee 2012).

When considering female practitioners’ representations in media (Don Bates 1983; Jack Bernstein 1986; Linda Aldoory and Elizabeth Lance Toth 2001; Romy Fröhlich and Sonja B. Peters 2007; Pompper and Jung 2013) PR seems to be notably dominated by female professionals. Interestingly, females are usually portrayed neutrally or negatively in media representations. Although an increasing number of studies (Fröhlich and Peters 2007; James E. Grunig, Elizabeth L. Toth, and Linda Childers Hon 2000; Raven Everidge 2010; Verlee 2012) have concluded that positive and neutral portrayals began to outnumber the negative ones, the present study confirms the idea that PR profession is represented in a negative way in the Turkish media.

Despite the expansion of PR research focusing on the feminization of the PR profession worldwide (Aldoory and Toth 2001; Broom 1982; Bates 1983; Bernstein 1986; Christopher H. Spicer 1993; Carol Ames 2010; Donn James Tilson 2003; Emily S. Kinsky 2011; Frölich and Peters 2007; Jane Johnston 2010; Joe Saltzman 2012; Robert L. Bishop 1988; Julie K. Henderson 1998; Karen S. Miller 1999; Kevin L. Keenan 1996; Larry Tavcar 1993; Linda Childers Hon 1995; Mordecai Lee 2009), most studies still focus on Western nations. However, until now, no studies have been conducted on how Turkish media framed and portrayed PR professionals. In order to increase knowledge about the media portrayal of the profession in an international context, this study examined the media portrayal of Turkish PR practitioners.

Turkish TV dramas have become extremely popular in the last two decades, and PR practitioners are represented in these dramas. However, there are some worrying issues with these representations. An important observation in TV dramas was the high rate of feminization of the profession. In addition, women PR practitioners were depicted in scenes of misconduct. Some of the common female stereotypes were the “spin doctor”, “PR bunny” (always out partying, has no professional skills, just has a pretty face), and the “chick world”, which emphasizes the dominance of gender in the profession (Alex Wadlow

2008). As Jonathan Cohen and Gabriel Weimann (2000) noted, strong exposure to TV's recreated reality can lead to false perceptions of reality; media representations may be people's only source of information about their environment and culture, and perhaps about professions. Data on media consumption in Turkey presented by the Turkish State Statistics Organization (TÜİK) show that 77% of the population watches TV (TÜİK 2018).

Representations of women in the electronic and print media were studied using different dimensions (TV series, advertisements, talk shows and films) in Turkey (Dilek İmançer 2010; Ünlü and Aslan 2017; Seçil Bükler and Ayşe Kıran 1999; Sevilay Çelenk and Nilüfer Timisi 2000; Sevda Alankuş and Ayşe İnal 2000). Moreover, there are many studies on the portrayal of women in Turkish media in which the styles of portraying female characters are similar, although the nature of the dramas differs (Derya-Gül Ünlü and Pınar Aslan 2017; Ebru A. Ercan and Nagihan Çakar Bikiç 2019; Hıdır Polat 2019; İrem İnçeoğlu and Elif Akçalı 2018; Seçkin Özmen 2005; Saadet Zeynep V. Gürer and Mert Gürer 2020; Pelin E. Aytekin 2018). However, none has examined the portrayal of the professions.

This study aims to examine representations of PR practitioners in Turkish TV dramas and to show that these dramas frame the PR profession by gender. It is argued that PR and television portray the PR as a feminized sector and stereotype female practitioners. The author is aware that the research findings may not reflect the full picture of PR as a feminized sector in other Muslim countries. While conducting this research, it was found that the number of female PR professionals (both in universities and in the industry) is higher in some Muslim countries (Layla AlSaqr 2008; Mohamed Kirat 2006). However, none of them studied the representation of female PR professionals in TV dramas. In this study, the following research questions were addressed: (RQ1) How do Turkey's mainstream media represent PR practitioners through TV dramas? (RQ2) What types of gender portrayals are made salient? (RQ3) How are they framed? To answer the research questions, this study uses qualitative framing analysis to explore the media representation of PR practitioners that have appeared in TV dramas.

Literature review

For many (Dietram A. Scheufele 1999; Anna Maria Jönsson 2011; Geert Vandermeersche, Ronald Soetaert and Kris Rutten 2013; Michael J. Pfau, Mien Lawrence and Kirsten Garrow 1995; Philip Rayner, Peter Wall and Stephen Kruger 2001; Robert M. Entman 1993; Shanto Iyengar 1996; Shani Orgad 2014) the media is one of the most authoritative sources when it comes to getting information about the world. Dietram A. Scheufele (1999), Vandermeersche, Soetaert and Rutten (2013), Bishop (1988), Spicer (1993), and Henderson (1998) have found that the images conveyed by the media can influence perceptions of occupations. Framing theory also already assumes that media place a frame of reference around the thoughts of individual viewers (Erving Goffman 1974). It is claimed that there is a relationship between the framings in the content and the event stereotypes or framings in the viewer's mindset (Robert M. Entman 1991). Stuart Hall (1997) mentions that framing is particularly important in stereotyping "others" (women, refugees, different ethnic and cultural groups, etc.). While media stereotyping of a particular group, such as female PR practitioners, sets that professional group apart from the "others" by taking them through a different culture, it can, on the contrary, leave

very simple and catchy traces in the minds of those who are exposed to the content (Fadi Jaber 2016; William A. Gamson and Andre Modigliani 1989).

Paul Grainge (2003) also explains how audience perception can be influenced and reformed by movies and television in popular culture. Grainge's idea was supported in the discourse by Foucault. He argues that film and TV can be very powerful components to "reprogram" popular memory (Michel Foucault 1975, 25). According to Michel Foucault (2003), having a say over cultural representations is important for maintaining power. Films and TV dramas provide the framework for such struggles. These structures are important to maintain the power of the existing system and to preserve the existing culture. In popular products like TV dramas, there are representations and messages that are sometimes implicit and sometimes explicitly in line with the demands of the dominant ideology. Many studies (Angela McRobbie 2004; Alexander Dhoest 2016; Beth A. Wielde and David Schultz 2017; Carolyn Garrett Cline, Elizabeth L. Toth, Judy Valensky Turk, Lynne Masel Walters, Nancy Johnson, and Hank Smith 1986; Christopher Rivera 2014; David L. Robb 2004; Elizabeth L. Toth and Carolyn Garrett Cline 1989; Hernan Vera and Andrew M. Gordon 2003; Fröhlich and Peters 2007; Johnston 2010; Linda Aldoory, Hua Jiang, Elizabeth L. Toth, and Bey-Ling Sha 2008; Linda K. Fuller 1995; Mordecai Lee 2001; Mordecai Lee 2004; Sulaiman Arti 2007; Smaranda Stefanovici 2007; Yahya R. Kamalipour 1997) have found that many diverse groups—including women, LGBT, Afro-American, Middle Easterns are misrepresented on screen. In the production of TV dramas, it is evident that producers, directors or scriptwriters are influenced by the cultural processes of the society in which they live and construct products that consciously or unconsciously reflect the values of the society in which they live (Seda Aktaş 2018).

Misrepresentations of the profession by distorted characters on TV dramas

There are many studies on how professions are framed by gender. Studies on marketing profession (Chris Lee 1994; Lee 2004; Miriam Catterall, Pauline Maclaran and Lorna Stevens 1999; Madaran and Catterall 2000; Pfau, Lawrence and Garrow 1995; Sharon G. Aufer 2004), studies on attorneyship profession (Carrie Menkel-Meadow 1986); saleswomen (Leslie M. Dawson 1992), nursing profession (Aufer 2004; Patricia Duncan and A. Anne 1992), advertising sector (Keenan 1996; Mats Alvesson 1998), and PR profession getting feminized (Diane S. Krider and Peter G. Ross 1997) can be exemplified. The studies generally focus on occupational groups (Lee 1994) and the results emphasise that there is a direct correlation between the portrayal of occupational groups on TV and viewers' perceptions.

There are earlier studies on the PR profession and the media representations of its practitioners (Ames 2010; Broom 1982; Bishop 1988; Carolyn Cline 1982; Coy Callison 2001; Hon 1995; Henderson 1998; Johnston 2010; Keenan 1996; Kinsky 2011; Lee 2009; Miller 1999; Saltzman 2012; Spicer 1993; Tavcar 1993; Tilson 2003). These are not limited to movies or dramas. There are also previous studies on how PR was framed in textbooks (Cline 1982), how PR is portrayed in TV news programs (Joseph R. Dominick 1984; Keenan 1996), how PR phrase was portrayed in newspapers and magazines (Spicer 1993). According to the findings, PR has been portrayed in the textbooks, TV news and newspapers through extremely negative framing with biased content. Few studies (Gül Coşkun

Değirmen and Özgür Yalçın 2020; Hasan Gürkan 2012) were found on the portrayal of the PR profession in the media. Unfortunately, no study was found on the portrayal of the PR profession in the Turkish media.

Methodology

Representations are communicated to the audience with the choice of characters, venue, tone, story structures, arguments, visual images, texts, metaphors, word choice, descriptions, etc. (William A. Gamson and Kathryn E. Lasch 1983) and they help to establish media frames. Analysis of such variables can reveal information that is more or less salient by presentation or repetition—and thus shed light on the influence of human consciousness on the transmission of information (Entman 1993). Based on these variables, as well as drawing on theories of media representation studies, this study addresses the following research questions regarding the feminization of PR practitioners and their media representations: (RQ1) How do Turkey’s mainstream media represent PR practitioners through TV dramas? (RQ2) What types of gender portrayals are made salient? (RQ3) How are they framed?

These questions were examined using a frame analysis. A specific unit analysis tool was adapted from (Philip Arthur Kalisch and Beatrice J. Kalisch 1987) to evaluate the characters in dramas.

Sampling

A convenience sampling methodology (Robert Wall Emerson 2015) was used to identify drama series. 51 dramas were collected from “Diziler.com”, which presents a directory of all Turkish dramas ever produced. From 1998 to 2020, 55 characters from 51 dramas were identified where PR practitioners were either major or minor characters. A total of 1794 original TV dramas were retrieved from the initial search in January 2020. The synopsis of each TV dramas was carefully read. After extracting historical dramas from the list (N = 102), 1692 TV dramas were left. 51 TV dramas were identified where PR practitioners were performed. Among 51 dramas, 55 PR professional characters were identified. While selecting the sample, the author first employed Miller’s (1999) definition to determine whether characters in the dramas were PR professionals or not. The characters were identified according to (1) how they defined themselves, (2) how others identified them, and (3) their job descriptions, such as a PR manager, PR specialist, press agent, etc. Some characters that had a very short screen time were not included in the study.

Coding

Once a PR character was identified, the below variables were coded for it. Researcher used a frame analysis, and took detailed notes during each Tv drama to analyze: (1) the moral character of the PR practitioner (2) the interactions with other characters, (3) the attitudes of the characters toward others (4) framing PR duties. Researcher used a coding sheet with media representation categories: *Demography* (sex, marital status, parenting, age), *Physical characteristics* (well-groomed, young looking, tall or short, appearance, visual image, Life style (secular or conservative, style, domestic life or

not), *Area of PR Practice* (media relations, crisis communications, event management, employee relations, etc.), *Professional traits of PR characters* (situational contexts in which PR characters appeared, attitudes and behaviours to others, and professional role conduct) and *Character and Personality traits* from Miller's (1999) and Saltzman's (2012) frames to evaluate the overall aspects of PR professionals characters. As a coding procedure, the researcher chose more than one archetype, but had to categorize and explain each choice by providing accurate examples of how the character displayed each archetype. It was represented in the coding sheet with open-ended questions, such as "What does the character do in the drama for her/his profession?" "What kind of PR practice does the PR specialist play in the dramas?" "Does the character manage PR practices throughout the plot?" "If yes, how?".

Following Miller's (1999) archetypal characterization of PR in fiction as "ditzy, obsequious, cynical, manipulative, money-minded, isolated, accomplished, and unfulfilled", Saltzman's (2012) archetypal characteristic of "using sexuality" was added to the scale. Miller (1999, 8–11) introduced 8 archetypes, Saltzman (2012) introduced one archetype in the portrayals of PR professionals. (1) Ditzzy (Shallow, there is no need for intellectuality, effervescent, baggy, silly); (2) Obsequious (Doing anything to please their managers, having no principles, no ethical consideration); (3) Cynical (Sarcastic, angry, edgy, contemptuous, mordacious); (4) Manipulative (Ruthless, deceptive, and predatory, lying and cheating for personal career and on behalf of clients); (5) Money-minded (Material, profit driven); (6) Isolated (Unable to communicate with peers and co-workers; described as pathetic, naive, anxious) (7) Accomplished (Confident, capable, successful, professional); (8) Unfulfilled (Unhappy with their jobs, tired, discontented) and (9) Using sexuality (Saltzman 2012) (Being a sex bomb, performing sexual harassment, using femininity, wearing provocative clothing).

Findings and discussion

Gender

In contrast to Miller's (1999) and Lee's (2001) results, the 55 PR practitioners analysed in this study are female (95%, N = 52), whereas Miller (1999) and Lee (2001) reported respectively that 75% and 90% of depicted characters were men. Among 20 movies, Lee (2001) found that only two of the professionals were female, representing 10% of his sample. In the present study, very few (5%, N = 3) had male PR characters. Moreover, all these male practitioners were represented by gay characters. Simorangkir (2011) noted the same problem in her study conducted in Indonesia. This imbalance not only highlights that the profession is a female profession, but also indicates the lack of male PR practitioners.

As mentioned earlier, two basic issues stand out regarding the shortage of male professionals in Turkey. The first is the overwhelming presence of female PR students (69%) in universities compared to male students and the increasing proportion (74%) of female employees in the PR sector (Kamile Elmasoğlu 2015). The second issue is the feminization of PR discourse. Among the various definitions of PR roles, women are thought to play the role of technician (Simorangkir 2011) rather than manager. For example, the superior communication skills of a PR practitioner are attributed to women and perceived as a "feminine" trait (Verlee 2012). Similarly, in this study, it was

observed that PR practitioners are more represented in the technical roles in Turkish TV dramas.

Marital status

The findings show that PR practitioners are most frequently shown as single (89%, N = 49), while only six are assigned a married role. Johnston (2010) found in her study that all women in the nine series/films were single; two were divorced and all were single parents.

Parentage

Most of the PR practitioners have no children. Perhaps this can be interpreted as their desire not to have a child in order to succeed in business life. It must also be noted that practitioners with children (N = 9) are single parents.

Life style

Although the percentage of practitioners living with a family is slightly higher (16%) than the ones who are married (11%) and who have children (9%), the overall image of the life style assigned to PR practitioners in Turkish TV dramas is modern. Modern is a style used in Turkey for the segment of society that embraces modern values; implying better educated masses with an upper middle-high income level, secular and Western approach to life. Findings elicit that TV images reinforce this “modern lifestyle” status quo.

Archetypes in portrayals of PR practitioners

In Table 1, it can be seen that the names of some Tv dramas (Binbir Gece, Güllerin Savaşı, Yasak Elma and Leke) are written twice. The reason for this is that there are two PR practitioners found in each of these dramas. Following Miller’s (1999) and Saltzman’s (2012) definitions, 41 characters (74.5%) were coded as manipulative and 41 as cynical. One of the most negative archetypes of Miller was manipulative, which described characters as ones “who lie and cheat on behalf of their clients” (Ames 2010, 168). Miller (1999, 9) defined the cynical archetype as “sarcastic, angry, contemptuous, edgy and driven”.

The PR character in the TV drama “Babil (Babylon)” gains power and wealth by seducing a married CEO. She is young, good looking, single, wears fancy and sexy clothes, lives alone, she is angry, cynical and in love with her ex-boyfriend who’s also a married man. The CEO’s wife constantly humiliates her for being her husband’s mistress; however, she carelessly pushes the CEO away from his wife and children with many manipulations. She constantly lies on behalf of the CEO in front of the media. She uses misleading information and figures, gives false promises, amplifies positive things and hides negative ones.

In “İlişki Durumu Karışık (It’s Complicated)”, there is a young female PR agent who’s a single-mom living alone. She is rich, and owner of a PR company; treats her employees contemptuously. She manages TV stars’ PR crises by manipulating the press with fake news and organizes fake CSR campaigns to get media impressions. She offers expensive gifts to journalists with misleading information.

This research also shows that among 55 characters, 40 characters (72.7%) were coded as the “using sex” archetype. These characters seduced men to achieve their goals (for both personal and corporate goals). Miller (1999, 15) also found female characters had often

Table 1. Archetypes in portrayals of PR practitioners.

Number of Professionals	PR Archetypes	Title of the Tv Series	Year	Sex of the PR Practitioner	Miller's Characterization									Saltzman's Characterization	
					Ditzy 1	Obsequious 2	Cynical 3	Manipulative 4	Money-minded 5	Isolated 6	Accomplished 7	Unfulfilled 8	Using sex 9		
1	Eyvah Kızım Büyüdü		1998	F	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
2	Aşkım Aşkım		2001	F	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
3	Dadı		2001	F	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
4	Çocuklar Duymasın		2002	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
5	Asmalı Konak		2002	F	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
6	Bir İstanbul Masalı		2003	M	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
7	Avrupa Yakası		2004	F	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
8	Yağmur Zamanı		2004	F	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
9	Yine de Aşığım		2005	F	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0
10	Beyaz Gelinlik		2005	F	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
11	İhlamlar Altında		2005	F	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
12	Doktorlar		2006	F	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
13	İki Aile		2006	F	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
14	Binbir Gece		2006	F	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
15	Binbir Gece		2006	F	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
16	Yemin		2007	F	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
17	Kavak Yelleri		2007	F	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
18	Senden Başka		2007	F	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
19	Ezel		2009	F	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
20	Adını Feriha Koydum		2011	F	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
21	Bir Ömür Yetmez		2011	F	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1
22	Türk'ün Uzaıyla İmtihani		2012	F	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
23	Yalan Dünya Benim Hala		2012	F	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
24	Umutum Var		2013	F	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1
25	İntikam		2013	F	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1
26	Medcezir		2013	F	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0
27	Bugünün Saraylısı		2013	F	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1

(Continued)

Table 1. (Continued).

Number of PR Professionals	PR of the Tv Series	Title of the Tv Series	Year	Sex of the PR Practitioner	Miller's Characterization									Saltzman's Characterization	
					Ditzy 1	Obsequious 2	Cynical 3	Manipulative 4	Money-minded 5	Isolated 6	Accomplished 7	Unfulfilled 8	Using sex 9		
28		Kayıp	2013	F	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0
29		Kara Para Aşk	2014	F	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
30		Küçük Ağa	2014	F	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
31		Güllerin Savaşı	2014	F	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
32		Güllerin Savaşı	2014	M	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0
33		Kiralık Aşk	2015	F	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
34		Kara Sevda	2015	F	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
35		İlişki Durumu	2015	F	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
36		Karışık	2015	M	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
37		Poyraz Karayel	2015	M	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
38		İnadına Aşk	2016	F	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
39		Hayatımın Aşkı	2016	F	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
40		Seviyor Sevmiyor	2016	F	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
41		Bu Şehir Arkandan Gelecek	2017	F	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1
42		Siyah İnci	2017	F	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
43		Siyah Beyaz Aşk	2017	F	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
44		Dolunay	2017	F	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
45		Fi	2017	F	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
46		İstanbul Gelin	2017	F	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
47		Kanatsız Kuşlar	2017	F	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
48		Çocuklar Duymasın	2017	F	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
49		Jet Sosyete	2018	F	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1
50		Yasak Elma	2018	F	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
51		Yasak Elma	2018	F	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
52		Erkenci Kuş	2018	F	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
53		Leke	2019	F	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
54		Leke	2019	F	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1
55		Afili Aşk	2019	F	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
55		Babil	2020	F	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1
Count Scale					31	39	41	41	41	37	35	16	39	40	
Percentage of Scale					56,4%	70,9%	74,5%	74,5%	74,5%	67,3%	63,6%	29,1%	70,9%	72,7%	

slept with their employees or employers. Although some of them were portrayed positively, they often had used sex to advance in their careers.

In “Leke (Stain)”, there are two female PR practitioners. They are young, sexy, good looking, they live in the same flat and work in the same company. The company is an event company called PR Agency. In fact it was an escort girls service provider and all the girls working at this agency present themselves as PR practitioners. When the major character of the drama was arrested by the police for prostitution, she was asked what her profession was and she replied saying that she was doing PR.

In “Güllerin Savaşı (The War of the Roses)”, a single, seductive, jealous sister who constantly lies works at the reception desk in a hospital. She seduces the nephew of the owner of the hospital to accomplish her career plan. She believed she would be promoted because she had a relationship with the hospital owner’s nephew. She told her sister that because of her intimate affair with him, she would use this issue as an opportunity to get promoted.

Unfortunately, the one and only positive archetype “accomplished” was the least frequent (N = 16, 29.1%) type that was found.

In “Dolunay (Fullmoon)”, the young, sexy, cruel and manipulating woman who envies her brother gets him killed, and inherits his fortune. After taking over the company through inheritance, she announces herself as a PR manager. She responds to those who objected to her by saying, “Hey come on, I am announcing myself as a PR manager, I am not saying that I’ll be a finance manager! I’ll just amuse myself by doing harmless PR activities!”

In light of the above findings and the literature, there are a few points to discuss regarding the feminization of the PR profession:

- PR profession is represented by women via TV dramas: PR practitioners are women in an overwhelming proportion. Moreover, in some scenes of the dramas, it was found that there are some preferences in job postings for hiring PR practitioners, such as “female”, “has strong communication skills”, “has no travel barriers”, “personable”, “cheerful”, “young”, “presentable”. No standard characteristic that distinguishes expertise or is required of managers, such as “analytical thinking, strategy formation, or management skills bearing” is found in even a single scene.

- If the PR practitioner is a man, then he is absolutely gay: Findings showed that the number of male PR practitioner (N = 3) was insufficient. But perhaps that is the most interesting part of the results, because they were all represented as gay. It is quite challenging that even though the profession is feminized, few male characters are represented as “gay”. The researcher comes across the same results in a study conducted in Indonesia (Simorangkir 2011). Strictly speaking no other studies are found in the literature where male professionals in PR profession are presented as gays except for the one written by Simorangkir; however, the fact that both of the countries mainly belong to the Muslim culture requires the situation to be examined on the basis of religion and culture. This situation will reinforce the feminization of PR profession.

- Trivialization of PR profession in Turkish dramas: The PR practitioners in the dramas are displayed in unacceptable conducts -with respect to professional ethics and occupational practices- and while abusing their duties as they execute their professions. Such presentation of the profession is rather wrong and distant from its correct definition.

- Presentation of PR practitioners as reprobate females: The evil woman characters in the dramas working as PR practitioners, wearing indecent and flashy clothes, seducing

married men, having sex with men for money, establishing intimate unprofessional relations with media employees, manipulating media easily and lying freely to the public and their environment. Moreover, in the 2019 drama called “Leke (Dishonor)”, the female owner of the PR agency was actually running an escort agency. There were two female PR practitioner characters and they were actually the escort girls in the scenes.

Additionally, when searching the gender of directors, findings show that male (N = 36) and female (N = 15) directors of each TV dramas in this study stereotype the PR profession in a similar fashion. The profession can suffer not only from externally created stereotypes written by the scriptwriters, but also from the reproduction of stereotypes by directors. Since the script writers or directors cannot be separated from the society they live in, their works reflect their society (Aktaş 2018).

- Appearance is important: The fact that appearance, i.e., being beautiful, slim, young is of primary importance is predominantly emphasized. Female PR characters have been predominantly described as “slim and good looking”. A study states that good cloths and appearance will be extremely effective on the job interviews and even on promotions (Fröhlich and Peters 2007). Larissa A. Grunig, Elizabeth L. Toth and Linda Childers Hon (2001) call it “lookism”. Actually, lookism is a kind of hidden issue in the research.

As well as lookism “ageism” is another important genderist perception. Ageism is considered as a global trend in the cinema and television industry (Anne E. Lincoln and Michael Patrick Allen 2004; Martha M. Lauzen and David M. Dozier 2005) and the same can be said for Turkey. A study on the representation of women in TV dramas in Turkey (Çelenk and Timisi 2000) found that 66% of the female characters were between the ages of 18–30 and the older characters remained at 10%. The present findings showed that the ages of the PR practitioners are always young. Probably they are stereotyped on the bases of their age as being young.

- The technician roles assigned to women based on the functions of PR are mainly presented: It has been observed that PR profession in Turkish dramas is represented by rather colourful, entertaining and glamorous parties, receptions, openings and meetings. It is observed that the functions such as crisis communication, social responsibility, government relations and lobbying (Dan L. Lattimore, Otis Baskin, Suzette T. Heiman, and Elizabeth L. Toth 2009; Dennis L. Wilcox and Glen T. Cameron 2009; Fraser P. Seitel 2011; Ralph Tench and Liz Yeomans 2006) which predominantly bear strategic and management skills are not presented

Conclusion

This study can conclude that the portrayals of PR professionals comprise of clichéd characters (e.g., PR bunny, evil, spin doctor, sex bomb, mistress), with serious distortions of actual PR practice, and far from positive portrayals. The vast majority of female characters constantly release false information, produce fake news, manipulate the news media, use sexuality to gain publicity, and spinning. In contrast to Lee (2001) and Ames (2010), but consistent with Spicer’s (1993), Miller (1999), Fröhlich and Peters (2007), Johnston (2010), Simorangkir (2011), Saltzman (2012), and Katerina Tsetsura, Joshua Bentley and Taylor Newcomb (2015), it is not surprising to find that PR is also represented negatively through inaccurate and negative representations of PR professionals in Turkish TV dramas.

Consequently, it also reveals that PR practitioners are mainly presented as females in Turkish Tv dramas. In the Turkish Tv dramas PR profession isn't only feminized but also downgraded by all the negative scenes and roles it was represented with. When the ability of the TV dramas shapes the perceptions and opinions of individuals and societies, it is generally assumed by the public opinion that there isn't much need to have the relevant education to conduct that profession; being a beautiful, attractive and sexy woman, having a free and liberating life perception and leading a life free from ethical values, would suffice. Thus, it may directly affect both the perception of PR sector and its sub-sectors and the academic dimension involved, for sure. Unfortunately, in job advertisements, the required qualities for PR related positions still include "preferably female", "has no obstacles to travel", "has driver's licence", "not over 30 years old", "presentable", etc. Those who include these preferences in job postings are certainly the employers. Their perception of the PR profession and its practitioners parallels the characters created in the dramas. It should not be ignored that the characters they see in the dramas have a definite role in forming this specific perception.

Turkey as a polarized (Muslim vs secular) country, the representation of women in the media is very controversial area. Women are mostly positioned as "the housewife" that incorporates the good, selfless and mother. "The career woman" incorporates the characteristic of being well-groomed, as well as some male gender traits, such as strength, ambition, dominance, egotism. "The vamp woman" is the materialistic, sex object (Nuran Hortacsu and Elvan Melek Ertürk 2003). Images of women in both electronic and print media (Alankuş and İnal 2000; Bükler and Kıran 1999; Çelenk and Timisi 2000; İmançer 2010) were studied through different dimensions (TV series, advertisements, talk-shows and movies) in Turkey. Findings showed that while these studies portrayed women as independent, trying to stand on their own two feet and fight for their rights, they generally foregrounded the dominant image of women in the context of family, marriage, and the passive spectacle of the sex and violence object. "The career woman" represents the values of gender equality, is successful, professionally qualified and settled outside the home. The increase in the number of career women both in business on a sectoral basis and in the TV representations may seem very promising at first glance in a country like Turkey when viewed from the perspective of the "woman". However, the research findings provide us with sensitive warnings against the extreme genderist perspective. According to religious ideology, a woman's career is likely to conflict with her primary role as mother and housewife, and working outside the home is not tolerated (Hortaçsu and Erturk 2003). But when comparing two polarizing groups, the vamp is not the ideal type for both secular ideology and religious ideology in Turkey. In the representations of TV, PR is labeled as a "woman's profession." Secondly, most of these women are young, vamp, sexy, materialistic, slim, single, without children, free, have boyfriends or are mistresses and live alone, far from the family concept. None of these women are middle-aged, of standard weight, married, have children, and have family ties. It is unclear whether they are educated or not. Thus, this definition can necessarily explain how these female PR practitioners are presented to the public on Turkish TV. If viewers constantly see this representation, a professional image can be created in their minds that is quite risky. Managers, media, parents and students may accept the offered profession with the premonition that it has the same/similar reflection in real life.

Perhaps the most questionable part is the young people who want to be PR practitioners in the future. They may have the assumption that simply being a young and beautiful woman with an attractive appearance is enough, rather than having the appropriate education. Since the representation of strategic functions of PR is almost non-existent, it can lead to wrong professional decisions. Important functions such as issue framing, analytical thinking, lobbying, crisis communication are not included in the representations. A general impression may be created that the profession does not require strategy and intelligence, but is mainly practised by party girls. This impression will definitely hurt the PR professionals who do their job properly in real life. Consequently, PR practitioners, while unable to change the perception of the Turkish TV industry at the moment, are able to understand and reflect that these misrepresentations are not accurate. Of course, movies, TV dramas are fiction and differ from reality, but reality can also be socially constructed through the reproduction of stereotypes and negative representations seen in TV series and movies. These findings are also discouraging because they show that negative stereotypes of PR practitioners persist in TV dramas. Finally, to combat negative portrayals of PR in TV dramas, practitioners may be advised to work with the TÜHİD and other professional communications associations to approach directors and screenwriters about preventing misrepresentations of the profession. Drawing attention to the positive efforts of PR practitioners in TV dramas can help prevent negative perceptions.

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Compliance with ethical standards

The author of this manuscript hereby declare that she has no financial or personal relationship with a third party whose interests could be positively or negatively influenced by the manuscript's

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Ethical approval

All institutional and ethical guidelines for the research were followed.

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This article does not contain any studies with human or animal subjects.

Methodology

It is a single study which is not split up into several parts to increase the quantity of submissions.

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