The role of the elite athletes in changing the mental image of Arabs and Muslims among the western societies

(case study)

Dr. Rasha Mohamed Ahmed Morsi [*]

The abstract:

The research problem is determined in examining the role of the global soccer player Mohamed Salah as an elite athlete in changing the mental image of Arabs and Muslims in the British and American societies. The study is based on the survey methodology and the questionnaire applying to 79 students and academics in the British and American universities from April 2018 to June 2019.

The study showed that player Mohamed Salah has a role in changing the mental image of Arabs and Muslims moderately. It assured the importance of the soft power in correcting the bad image of Arabs and Muslims and persuading others to change their negative impressions without force or coercion. There are statistically significant differences in the audience's attitudes towards the role of Mohamed Salah in changing the mental image of Arabs and Muslims according to their demographic characteristics (gender, age, religion, and nationality), in addition to a significant relationship between the respondents perception of the credibility of media content about Arabs and Muslims and their mental image of them.

Introduction:

In today's information societies, the media transcends the geographical boundaries of cities and countries, and thus, the role of information and communications technology has become pivotal in fashioning global public opinion, in dealing with international crises and in decision-making. The Internet has become an essential channel used for the dissemination of information and shaping mental images of people all over the world. (Azza, 2014, p.7)

The western media discourse deals with the Islamic world as one of the greatest threats to civilization today. The western societies believe

---

[*]Assistant Professor, Media department, faculty of social science -Umm-Al-Qura university

that Arab culture is strange, non-civilized and dangerous. This has resulted in a distortion of the picture presented to the west of the way of Muslims life and Islam values.

Although these negative images of the Muslim world were created to justify interfering in Arab countries affairs, this remains the existing strategy nowadays. (shifer, 2011, p212).

Moreover, sport, especially football, has become the main concern of various segments of the international community, they agree on the importance of football players as role models for future generations.

In turn, the media has devoted a considerable amount of time and much space to cover football and football players' news.

In view of the impact of football players on audiences' perceptions all over the world, the researcher aims to examine the role of the Egyptian football player "Mohamed Salah" in improving the mental image of Arabs and Muslims in the western societies.

In this regard, the British Daily Mail newspaper published the results of Stanford University's research which assured that the general underreporting of hate crime in Merseyside was partly due to Liverpool's signing of Mohamed Salah. The report added that the number of hate crimes was less than what expected in Merseyside during the past two years by 18.9%. (dailymail4,June ,2019)

Also, the researchers analyzed 15 million football fans' tweets in the United Kingdom before and after the Liverpool's signing of Mohamed Salah. They assured the decrease of anti-Muslim tweets by 53%, and added that this result was driven by the increase knowledge about Islam.

From this perspective, the research problem is determined in answering this question: What is the role of the global soccer player Mohamed Salah as an elite athlete in changing the mental image of Arabs and Muslims in the British and American societies?

Objectives of the study:

There are six primary objectives of this study:

- Identifying the extent to which the respondents follow sports news through the media.

- Examining the respondents' image of Arabs and Muslims.
- Investigating the impact of Mohamed Salah's victory in changing the image of Arabs and Muslims.
- Identifying the extent of the respondents' perception of Western media credibility.
- Examining Mohamed Salah's role in changing the mental image of Arabs and Muslims.
- Identifying the elements of the mental image of Arabs and Muslims.

Study concepts:

the elite athletes: the elite athletes include the distinguished players in the global sports و For this study, the elite athletes are identified in the global football players, "the player Mohamed Salah as a model"ز

Mental image : is the representation in a person's mind of the physical world outside of that person(dictionry.com) . Or it can be defined as A mental picture of something not real or present that is produced by the memory or the imagination.(Cooper,p48).for this study, the mental image of Arabs and Muslims is the bad stereotype that was formed by the Western audience , through the Western media that helped to form this image mainly.

Hypotheses of the study:

There are two hypotheses which the research tries to prove or disprove:

- **The first Hypothesis**: There are statistically significant differences in the respondents' attitudes towards the role of Mohamed Salah in changing the mental image of Arabs and Muslims according to their demographic characteristics (gender, age, education, religion, and nationality).

The second Hypothesis: There is a statistically significant relationship between the respondents' trust in the media content about Arabs and Muslims and their mental image of them. **Literature Review:**

The researcher conducted a survey of Arabic and foreign studies related to the subject of the study. The previous studies have represented an important source in determining the problem of the study and its dimensions. They assured the intense media focus on representing the Islamic world. The researcher shows these studies as follows:

The study of (**Moos and others, 2019**) investigated why people express strong prejudice against Muslims. By using the survey method and the questionnaire, the researches assured that people considered the Islam as a religion of intolerance, doesn't value the gender equality. The study added the respondents expressed less prejudice after being informed that Muslims value the equality between males and females in various areas. Concerning the CNN discourse towards Muslim related issues, (**Sharifi, 2016**) conducted an analysis at two textual and contextual levels, including 34 programs, out of 50 GPS talk shows aired in 2013. The textual analysis was done regarding the three levels of meaning, argumentation, and style and the contextual analysis with regards to levels of access and participants. The findings revealed that CNN's representation of Muslim-related issues was biased and stereotypical at all levels; textual and contextual and the scope of the talk show was in line with the -Islamophobic ideologies which prevail in the Western media today.

Focusing on the image of Islam and Muslims in the Western media, the study of (**Abu Sneineh, 2015**) assured that the media disseminates stereotypical and racist images of people, communities and conflicts and plays a role in portraying a negative image of Muslims in western societies. The study recommended the necessity of presenting a true image of the Islamic religion and reacting to the distorted picture waged by the western media using reason and logic (Abu Sneina 2015).

The study of (**Abu Arja, 2015**) aimed to identify the increasingly widespread use of Islamophobic rhetoric and violence against Muslims in Western media and its intellectual foundations. By using the descriptive research methodology, the study concluded that the Western media discourse is affected by the hostile attitudes towards Islam and Muslims created by the Zionist movement. It added that the defamation of Islam and the prophet Mohamed is done under the slogan of the freedom of expression. The study assured the importance of encouraging a positive media discourse to introduce the true image of Arabs and Muslims. (Abu 2015)Arja

 Moreover, the study of (**Ahmed Al-Rawi, 2014**) investigated the way some nonwestern films viewed the 9/11 attack and the impact it generated on the lives of Muslims living in the west and in their own

homelands. The study analyzed the content of six films from India, Pakistan, Turkey, and Egypt. The results show that they all demonstrate how eastern and western cultures share similar principles and aspirations. Similar to Fred Halliday's claim on the myth of a 'shared Muslim identity', the films assert that Islam is not the same across all Muslim countries. The 9/11 events are used as a background for delving into the problematic issue of militant Islam in various local contexts that differ from one country to another, stressing that it is of significant domestic concern. All the films focus on the high degree of fear that Muslims living in the west felt after 11th September and emphasize that Islam cannot be equated with terrorism as ignorance and political interests rather than religious or cultural differences are the main causes of discord.

Regarding to the role of cinema and television stations in creating a negative stereotype image about Arabs and Muslims, the study of **(Kharbutli, 2014)** focused on the image of the Arab and Muslim in American cinema. Using the content analysis, the study revealed that the defamation of Arabs is a primary objective of the western cinema in line with the Jewish nationalist movement. The results showed that American cinema played a role in the Cold War, as the flexible ideology presented by these films drove large number of young people in Europe to sympathize with the United States of America and to reject the Soviet way of life (Kharbutli 2014).

The study of **(Sabine Schiffer, 2011)** examined the coverage of Islam issues before and after 9/11 applying to the coverage of Islam in German and other European media. The results showed that there is no qualitative difference between the coverage before and after 9/11. However, after 9/11 there has been a large quantitative difference; the same topics came up more often and in a much more explicit way. From a western perspective, the conclusions drawn from the attacks and the arguments advanced in their aftermath seem logical, in the sense that they do not contradict the impressions created over time through books, TV programs, and public discourse .

The study of **(Dina Ibrahim, 2009)** chronicles 20th-century American media coverage of the Middle East by tracking the efforts of research and studies on the disagreement between scientists on the objectivity of American media in their coverage of events in the region in an

attempt to form a picture of the changing patterns and models of US media coverage of the Middle East, especially the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Concerning the negative images of the Arabs and Muslims, the study of **(Jack G. Shaheen, 2003)** aimed to analyze more than 900 films. The results showed that moviegoers are led to believe that all Arabs are Muslims and all Muslims are Arabs. The moviemakers distorted lenses have shown Arabs as heartless, brutal, uncivilized, religious fanatics through common depictions of Arabs kidnapping or raping a fair maiden; expressing hatred against the Jews and Christians; and demonstrating a love for wealth and power.

The theoretical frame of the study:

The stereotypical image of Arabs and Muslims in the American and European media

The Islamophobia phenomenon, or what is known as the fear of Islam, has become an increasingly problematic phenomenon in Western societies. It expresses the attempts to distort the image of Islam to convince the people of the West that Islam threatens the world.

Therefore, the Western media has introduced a distorted and unbalanced image of Islam and Muslims, describing this religion as radical and violence which resulted in a state of fear and hatred of Islam and Muslims in western societies.

The western media has been able to transmit negative images of Arabs and Muslims from the contents of books and Orientalist studies which became a reference for the media all over the world.

To combat Islamophobia, we should increase awareness of Muslim people and culture and Islam as a religion, and develop individual skills and institutional strategies for confronting prejudice and discrimination against Muslims in order to improve the distorted image in the western media by spreading the Islamic culture, knowledge and civilization.

In November 1997, the Runnymede Trust published Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All (Bleach, 2011: 12). It described Islamophobia as a brief mean to point to the scare or hatred of Islam, and thus hating all or most Muslims. (Allen, 2013: p. 2).

At the time, the term 'Islamophobia' was relatively uncommon, but we argued that it was justified because 'anti-Muslim prejudice had grown so considerably and so rapidly in recent years that a new item in the vocabulary is needed.

Islamophobia was re-awakened after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. These attacks increase fear and opposition to Muslims, who are perceived as a threat to national identity, domestic security and social fabric. Allen and Nielsen (2002) stated that "after September 11, some Europeans attacked Islamic targets which are considered the more dangerous threat". William Willnat (2013) aimed in his study at identifying inflammatory factors that mobilize anti-Muslim sentiment in the United States and Europe. The results indicated that news coverage and reports were one of these factors which stir up negative feelings towards the Islamic religion.

The negative image and its impact on the Western audiences' attitudes towards Islam:

Negative images of Arabs in the Western media can carry serious consequences for Arabs and Muslims. Gorges s' study, 1997, examines the ways in which the U.S. public, media, interest groups, and foreign policy elite, including Congress, influence the making of American policy toward political Islam. After analyzing the focal historical, cultural and current political developments that inform Americans' attitudes on Islamic resurgence, the paper concluded that contemporary security and strategic considerations coupled with negative media representations of Islam and Muslims influence the U.S. public; hence, foster the hardline foreign policy toward political Islam. (Gerges, 1997)

The study of (Ibrahim, 2009) examined American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) reports on anti-Arab hate crimes which assured a direct correlation between violence, intimidation and heinous crimes against Arab Americans and political tension in the Middle East and there were thousands of unpublished violence incidents against Arabs living in the United States (Ibrahim2009, p13 / 14)

The evolution of Arabs image in Western media: The current image of Islam and Muslims in the United States is a result of cultural

baggage that have formed over centuries started from Crusades period, then the colonial times and the emergence of America, and up to the period following the second world war, and then the current stage which is marked by the attacks of September 11. (Alaa Bayoumi, 2004)

In examining the development of stereotyped images of Arabs and Muslims in western media, Diana Ibrahim (2009) revealed that the western newspapers began to form these stereotyped images in the twentieth century, especially from 1917, by the New York Times.

The study of Moussa (1984) found that the Times coverage was mostly "unfavorable for the Arab". Military, political, and economic stories dominated the news coverage in the 1930s and 1940s, while cultural and educational stories dominated the coverage in the 1920s. Also, Western sources were cited more than Arab sources. The news coverage misrepresented Arabs and portrayed them from the colonialist perspective.

Studies showed that the stereotype image of Arabs and Muslims in Western media was formed through three stages:

First stage:

It begin with the Arab Israeli conflict which started in 1948, what became known as the Palestinian Cause. It provided an image of the Arab as evil, murder, violent and feel animosity towards Israel and the western democracies.

This image was developed during the Arab-Israeli war in 1973. It portrayed the Arabs as Bedouins and oil sheikhs who control the world. This image was enhanced by the Iran hostage crisis and the Iran-Iraq war in 1979, in addition to denouncing the international covenants, failing to respect the international conventions, and challenging the international community. (Tariq Al-Aithel, p. 31)

The negative image of the Arab in the American media entered into a new stage with the launch of the cinema, and the increasing role of the print press in the American society. The role of the American media in distorting the image of the Arab has grown in response to the political disturbance in the mid-twentieth century after the Arab-Israeli war in 1948 and the emergence of Israel lobby.The television has helped to

expand this negative image around the world through thousands of television news, programs and series. (Mahmoud Al-Zawawi, 2014)

One of Arab studies (Shaheen, 1984) Jack Shaheen textually analyzed Hollywood entertainment output, and conducted indepth interviews with producers, directors and industry executives. His research reveals three categories of the Arab stereotype in movies and television: the belly dancer, billionaire and bomber. There are also studies about Arab stereotypes in popular literature (Terry, 1985) and negative Arab representation in popular culture (Christison, 1987; Michalak, 1985; Sabbagh, 1990).

In the 1980s, the results of Shaheen (1981) 's analysis of television documentaries on Saudis indicated that Saudis were often associated with oil, wealth and extravagance and their impact as a threat to American society.

Second stage:

It started in the 1990s when the Gulf War broke out, and the Soviet Union collapsed. The west considered Islam as the principal strategic threat that replaced communism. The Muslims are portrayed as puritans, bigoted, and radicals. (Tariq Al-Athawi, 2015, p. 32)

After the the bombing of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, the term of (Islamic fundamentalism) appeared. It has been defined as a movement of Muslims who regard earlier times favorably and seek to return to the fundamentals of the Islamic religion. This item enhanced the negative image of Muslims because the term fundamentalism is Christian in origin, it carries negative connotations, and its use in an Islamic context emphasizes the religious roots of the phenomenon while neglecting the nationalistic and social grievances that underlie it. (Tariq Al-Ithawi, p. 33).

The third stage:

It has begun in the twenty-first century after the attacks of September 11, and the world trade center bombing in America. International media has portrayed a negative image of Islam to the world. Media not only conveys the message of ongoing terrorism as an alarming situation around the world, but it also conveys the connection of Islam with extremism. The defamation of Islamic religion has been

increased and has affected the realization of western societies to the Muslims.

The media has described the Islam as Satanist, radical, and scary. The media has called for destroying the Kaaba, and waging a religious war. The distorted concepts of combating Islam rather than terrorism, the Islam is the axis of evil, and the Islam is the religion of violence have spread by western media. (Tariq Ali Al-Athawi, 2015, p. 32)

Factors influence the image of Islam and Muslims in the United States of America:

- One of the main factors which negatively influence the image of Islam and Muslims in the west is the acts of violence of members of some extreme Muslim political movements.
- The geopolitical events of the past few decades related to Israel-Palestine, Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan, 9/11 attacks, and the shootings at San Bernardino, Chattanooga and Orlando.
- The Orientalism which has the significant impact in shaping the Western perceptions of Islam, and forming the western attitudes towards Islam over many centuries.
- The western media contribute to the negative image of Muslims by the choice of the content and lay-out of their articles and radio and TV programs, especially by mentioning the ethnic origin or religious affiliation of those who commit a crime, or by classifying present regional and ethnic conflicts as religious. In these cases Muslims are concerned as evil, aggressive, ignorant, and terrorist. (Tariq Al-Ithawi, p. 34)

Research type:

The research is considered a quantitative descriptive study, which describes the characteristics of the population or phenomenon that is being studied. This methodology focuses more on the "what" of the research subject rather than the "why". It seeks to identify the role of the elite athletes in changing the mental image of Arabs and Muslims among the western audiences.

Research method:

The method is the way in which the researcher studies the problem to discover the truth, and to answer the questions and

queries raised by the subject of the study. The study is based on case study methdololgy, which is used to collect data from a pre-defined group of respondents to gain information and insights on various topics of interest. The current study uses this method applying to a sample of students at American and British universities.

After preparing **the questionnaire**, it has been submitted to a group of experts in the field of media in Egyptian and Saudi universities, and then it has been modified in accordance with their observations.

Research population:

Research population refers to the sample of participants that will be recruited to the study sharing the same characteristics. The current study population is represented in the students and academics in British and American universities (De Montfort University, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield University of Britain, And Murray Stata University and Murray State University of America).

Research Sample:

Sampling is a process used in statistical analysis in which a predetermined number of observations are taken from a larger population. The methodology used to sample from a larger population depends on the type of analysis being performed. The current study has depended on the available sample (convenience sample), in which the sample is taken from a group of people easy to contact or to reach. The available sample is one of the most widely sampling methods used in media research.

 The researcher distributed a questionnaire to 79 students and academics in the British and American universities from April 2018 to June 2019. Finally, there are 70 questionnaire valid for analysis.

Statistical treatments:

Statistical analysis of the data of this study was carried out using the following statistical tests:
1. Statistics and percentages duplicates.
2. Arithmetic mean and standard deviations.
3. One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to study the statistical

differences between the arithmetic mean of groups in one of the study variables.

4. Pearson Correlation coefficient to study the intensity and direction of the correlation between two variables of the study .

5. Chi-square- test for compatibility tables to study the statistical significance of the relationship between two variables of the nominal level .

Results of the study:

This section of the study presents the achievement of study's objectives, testing of hypothesis and interpretation of the results.

- **Table (1) The extent to which the respondents follow sports news through the media:**

	R	F	%
Average	Always	28	35.5
	Sometimes	42	53.1
	No	9	11.4
	N	79	100.0
Most effective media using by the respondents to follow sports news	TV	47	67.1
	Websites	54	77.1
	TV and Internet together.	27	38.6
	Newspapers	26	37.1
	Other	33	47.1
	N	70	100

The table (1) shows (53.1%) of the respondents exposed to media occasionally where (35.5%) exposed to it permanently and the respondents said they didn't expose to media by (11.4%).

It was found the respondents use various means of media to follow the sports news. The internet websites ranked first by (77.1%), then "the television" by (67.7%), followed by "social networking sites" and "friends discussions" by (47.1%), and finally, each of radio and newspapers by (38.6%), and (37.1%) respectively.

It was also shows that (58.6%) of the study sample didn't follow the news of Mohamed Salah, compared to (44.4%). This can be explained in light of the British community interest in football, compared to the American community which concerns with other sorts of sports.

Table (2) The respondents' image of Arabs and Muslims:

The image	F	%
-good.	13	18.6
-neutral	17	24.3
-bad	40	57.1
N	70	100.0

Table (2) indicated to the respondents' image of Arabs and Muslims. The majority of respondents (57.1%) have a bad image of Arabs and Muslims, (24.3%) of them are neutral, and only (18.6%) of them have positive attitudes towards Arab and Muslims. This finding was confirmed by the results of previous studies (Moos et al. 2019, and JACK G SHAHEEN, 2003) which assured that there is a widespread negative view of the Arabs and Muslims in general, especially among the audiences of the two countries under study.

Table (3) The impact of Mohamed Salah's victory in changing the image of Arabs and Muslims:

The impact	F	%
-Greatly	5	7.1
-Medium.	31	44.3
-Poorly.	6	8.6
-no	28	40.0
N	70	100.0

This result indicates that changing the stereotype image requires the concerted action of the democratic community, because this image has been formed over long decades. Also, this needs Islamic scholars to spread out in western cities to teach non-Muslims the truth of Islam.

- **Table (4) The extent of the respondents' perception of western media credibility:**

Degree	F	%
Greatly	1	1.4
-Medium.	39	55.7
-Poorly.	30	42.9
N	70	100.0

The previous table showed that although the American and British audiences had a negative impression about Arabs and Muslims, they trusted in Western media. (55.7%) of them saw the media's credibility is moderate, (42.9%) believed that this credibility is weak, while only (1.4%) indicated it is strong.

Table (5) Mohamed Salah's role in changing the mental image of Arabs and Muslims:

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		M	SD
	ك	%	ك	%	ك	%	ك	%	ك	%	M	V
1- My image of Muslims as extremists changed after following the behavior of the Mohamed Salah on the field"	-	-	10	14.3	49	70	-	-	11	15.7	3.1714	.86764
2-Mohammed Salah and others like him in the ball and other fields changed my bad impressions of Arabs and Muslims.	6	8.6	1	1.4	52	74.3	11	15.7	-	-	2.9714	.72174
3-- Mohamed Salah promotes a positive impression about Arabs and Muslims.	1	1.4	24	34.3	45	64.3					2.6286	.51560
-4 I do not like the religious practices performed by Mohamed Salah in the stadium such as praying or raising his hands to heaven"	11	15.7	-	-	26	37.1	26	37.1	7	10.0	3.2571	1.16328
-5 My view of the beard of Muslims changed after I saw Mohamed Salah's bread"	6	8.6	1	1.4	52	74.3	-	-	11	15.7	3.1286	.99158
6-- The religious of Salah isn't important for me. The most important is his performance in the stadium	-	-	6	8.6	38	54.3	26	37.1	-	-	1.8000	.69366
7- "I don't consider Mohamed Salah is a representative of Arabs and Muslims".	-	-	6	8.6	38	54.3	26	37.1	-	-	3.2857	61721
-8i see that winning a Muslim Arab player in the Premier League is not good for me.	-	-	10	14.3	30	42.9	24	34.3	6	8.6	3.3714	.83703
9-"Mohamed Salah made me look for more	-	-	13	18.6	38	54.3	-	-	19	27.1	3.3571	1.07724

information about Arabs and Muslims".										
10- "Mohamed Salah and other prominent Arabs can change the image of the Arab and Muslim among the Western audience"									2.6029	1.12156
						70 = ن				

The results of the study showed that Mohamed Salah has a role in changing the mental image of Arabs and Muslims, as follows:

Regarding the positive expressions:

The phrase No. (9) "Mohamed Salah made me look for more information about Arabs and Muslims" came in the first place with an average of (3.357), followed by the phrase No (1) "My image of Muslims as extremists changed after following the behavior of the Mohamed Salah on the field".

The third place is occupied by the phrase No (5) "My view of the beard of Muslims changed after I saw Mohamed Salah's bread" with an average of (3.128), followed by the phrase No (2) "Mohamed Salah and the prominent persons in various fields changed my bad impressions about the Arabs and Muslims" with an average of (2.971), then the phrase No (3) "Mohamed Salah promotes a positive impression about Arabs and Muslims" with an average of (2.602), and finally the phrase No (10) "Mohamed Salah and other prominent Arabs can change the image of the Arab and Muslim among the Western audience" with an average of (2.628).

This result shows the importance of the soft power in correcting the bad image of Arabs and Muslims and persuading others to change their negative impressions without force or coercion.

Regarding the negative expressions:

The phrase No 8 "I see that It is unacceptable that a Muslim Arab player becomes one of the best three players in the world" came in the first place with the highest average score (3.375). This result confirms the previous studies results that assured that the majority of western peoples have negative image of Arabs and Muslims, and it is inadmissible that a Muslim Arab player becomes one of the best three players in the world.

The phrase No (7) "I don't consider Mohamed Salah is a representative of Arabs and Muslims" ranked second with an average of (3.285), followed by the phrase No (4) "I do not like the religious practices performed by Mohamed Salah in the stadium such as praying or raising his hands to heaven" (M = 3.128, SD=. 9915), and at the last position, is the phrase No (6) "The religious of Salah isn't important for me. The most important is his performance in the stadium" with an average of (1.800).

Table (6) The elements of the mental image of Arabs and Muslims:

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		M	SD
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
1- I am dissatisfied with the image presented by the media about Arabs and Muslims.	20	28.6	25	35.7	25	35.7	-	-	-	-	2.0714	.80436
2 .I see that the Arab and Muslim are extremists and violent.	-	-	25	35.7	-	-	-	-	45	64.3	3.9286	1.44785
3 .Islam is a brutal religion in its laws and regulations.					25	35.7	20	28.6	25	35.7	4.0000	.85126
4 .Islam is characterized as a religion of tolerance and peace and prohibits terrorism and violence.	45	64.3	25	35.7	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.3571	.48262
5 .Islam honored women and raised their status.	-	-	20	28.6	-	-	-	-	50	71.4	4.1429	1.36505
6 .The Arab Muslim community is advanced, civilized and sophisticated.	-	-	20	28.6	-	-	-	-	50	71.4	2.4286	.91003

											Mean	SD
7 .The Arab and Islamic person is reactionary, primitive and sensual.	-	-	-	-	45	64.3			25	35.7	3.7143	.96523
8 .Islam humiliates women and oppresses them, and distinguishes them from men.	-	-	25	35.7	25	35.7	20	28.6	-	-	2.9286	.80436
9. The image of the Arab and Muslim in the media is completely different from reality.	19	27.1	-	-	48	68.6	-	-	-	-	2.3286	1.01755

Through the results of the Likert scale, which is a five point scale used to allow the individual to express their opinions towards the image of Arabs and Muslims, the results of the previous table assured the high negative trends of respondents towards Arabs and Muslims (M= 2.9, SD= 1.01755).

This was confirmed by the results of the previous studies on the image of Arabs and Muslims among the Western public (Abu Sneineh, 2015, Moos et al. 2019, and JACK G. SHAHEEN s study, 2003). This negative image based on many elements, first of all, the respondents rejected that "Islam honored women and raised their status" (M=4.1429, SD=1.36505). This may be due to the lack of awareness of the real situation of women in Arab societies. The previous studies (Moos et al. 2019, JACK G. SHAHEEN s study, 2003) indicated that Islam does not support women's rights and Westerners believe that Muslims do not appreciate gender equality in education and work life.

The phrase No. (3) "Islam is a brutal religion in its laws and principles" came in the second place (M = 4, SD = .85126). Despite the negative image of Arabs and Muslims, the respondents did not fully approve the extremism of Islam. This result confirms the possibility of changing this negative image through raising awareness and increasing understanding of the true Islam principles.

2) The study's hypotheses:

The researcher determined specific, clear, and testable proposition and predictive statements about the possible outcome of his research study. These hypotheses have been tested as follows:

The First Hypothesis:

There are statistically significant differences in the audience's attitudes towards the role of Mohamed Salah in changing the mental image of Arabs and Muslims according to their demographic characteristics (gender, age, education, religion, and nationality).

Demographic variables: The study used four independent demographic variables: age, measured with a four-group scale; Less than 30 years=1, From 31 to 45, =2, and More than 45 years old =3, (M=1.7857, SD=.63458); gender, male coded=1; female coded=2and Prefer not to say=3 (M=1.5857, SD=.75167); education level, measured with a two-point scale (Higher Education=1, postgraduate, master or PhD degree=2) (M=3.6857, SD=.55280); and nationality, American coded 1, British coded 2 (M=1.7286, SD=.72074). Religion, Christian=1, Jewish coded =2, Muslim coded =3, Other=4, and Prefer not to say=5. 3 (M=3.1449, SD=1.33147).

Table (7) ANOVA TEST

varabils		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
AGE	Between Groups	13.692	2	6.846	7.293	.001
	Within Groups	62.894	67	.939		
	Total	76.586	69			
GENDER	Between Groups	29.028	2	14.514	20.447	.000
	Within Groups	47.558	67	.710		
	Total	76.586	69			
EDU	Between Groups	2.091	2	1.045	.940	.396
	Within Groups	74.495	67	1.112		
	Total	76.586	69			
Nationality	Between Groups	14.270	2	7.135	7.671	.001
	Within Groups	62.316	67	.930		
	Total	76.586	69			
Religion	Between Groups	32.775	3	10.925	16.462	.000
	Within Groups	43.138	65	.664		
	Total	75.913	68			

The results of the study showed that there are statistically significant differences between the sample of the study according to their demographic variables of gender, nationality, age and religion, while there are no differences between them according to the educational levels. (F = 940, it is a non-significant value at a significant level of 0.396).

- **The second hypothesis:**

There is a statistically significant relationship between the respondents' perception of the credibility of media content about Arabs and Muslims and their mental image of them.

Table (8) The relation between the credibility of the media in relation to the transfer of information about Arabs and Muslims and the image of the audience respondents of the study

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	58.415ᵃ	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	71.023	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.925	1	.015
N of Valid Cases	70		

Varibles correlation					
		Credibility of mass media			Total
		GREATLY	MEDIUM	POORLY	
Image	GOOD	0	4	9	13
	NETURAL	0	17	0	17
	BAD	1	18	21	40
Total		1	39	30	70
Pearson Chi-Square		19.274	Significance (2-sided	.001	Likelihood Ratio

As shown in the previous table, there is a strong statistically significant relationship between the degree of the audience perception of western media credibility and the mental image of Arabs and Muslims. The more credibility is, the more negative image is formed. (χ^2 = 19.274 at a significant level of 0.001)

Study summery:

This research aims to study the role of the elite athlete in changing the mental image of Arabs and Muslims in the British and American societies. The study is based on the case study methodology applying to 79 students and academics in the British and American universities, The study showed that :

The respondents use various means of media to follow the sports news. The internet websites ranked first by (77.1%), then "the television" by (67.7%), followed by "social networking sites" and "friends discussions" by (47.1%), and finally, each of radio and newspapers by (38.6%), and (37.1%) respectively.

- The majority of respondents (57.1%) have a bad image of Arabs and Muslims, (24.3%) of them are neutral, and only (18.6%) of them have positive attitudes towards Arab and Muslims. This finding was confirmed by the results of previous studies (Moos et al. 2019, and JACK G SHAHEEN, 2003) which assured that there is a widespread negative view of the Arabs and Muslims in general, especially among the audiences of the two countries under study.

- (8.6%), and (7.1%) of the respondents saw that Mohamed Salah's victory has a significant impact in changing the negative image of Arabs and Muslims. This result indicates that changing the stereotype image requires the concerted action of the democratic community, because this image has been formed over long decades. Also, this needs Islamic scholars to spread out in Western cities to teach non-Muslims the truth of Islam.

- The soft power is important in correcting the bad image of Arabs and Muslims and persuading others to change their negative impressions without force or coercion.

- There are statistically significant differences in the audience's attitudes towards the role of Mohamed Salah in changing the mental image of Arabs and Muslims according to their demographic characteristics (gender, age, religion, and nationality).

- There is a statistically significant relationship between the respondents' perception of the credibility of media content about Arabs and Muslims and their mental image of them.

Recommendations of the study:

- The results of the study showed that Mohamed Salah, as one of the prominent Arab and Islamic personalities in the field of sport, contributed to changing the negative image of Arabs and Muslims moderately. This shows the importance of using the soft power which is transmitted through culture, political values, and foreign policies to spread a correct and

true image of Islam.

- Future studies can address the same research problem in a different settings, context, location and culture; the future research should study the credibility of the Western media contents about Arabs and Muslims and the relationship of this credibility to the audience attitudes towards Arabs and Muslims. Also, it can discuss how to improve the image of Islam in the west.

references

1. Abu Sneineh, Hanin Morsi, the image of Islam and Muslims in the Western media," a distorted image, Jordan, Amman, Zarqa University 2015, pp. 107-127,

2. Aaron J. Moss, Alison Blodorn, Amanda R. Van Camp, and Laurie T. O'Brien,2019. Gender equality, value violations, and prejudice toward Muslim. Group Processes & Intergroup Relations 2019, Vol. 22(2) 288 –301, Article reuse guidelines: sagepub.com/journals-permissions DOI: 10.1177/1368430217716751 journals.sagepub.com/home/gpi.

3. Aaron J. Moss,1 Alison Blodorn,2 Amanda R. Van Camp,1 and Laurie T. O'Brien1،Gender equality, value violations, and prejudice toward Muslims, Group Processes & Intergroup Relations 2019, Vol. 22(2) 288 –301

4. Abu Arja, Tayseer Ahmad, The Image of Islam and Muslims in the Western Media Discourse: Methods of Media Processing and the Role Required), Scientific Media Conference: Awareness Media Discourse between Sharia and Law, Volume 2, May 2015, p. 273

5. Ahmed Al-Rawi, The representation of September 11th and American Islamophobia in non-Western cinema. Media, War & Conflict 2014, Vol. 7(2) 152 –164.

6. Allen C (2013) Passing the dinner table test: Retrospective and prospective approaches to tackling Islamophobia in Britain. SAGE Open 3(2): 1–10.

7. Azza Othman Abdel Aziz, Factors of Shaping the Stereotype of Muslim Arab Women: A Study from the Arab Academy's Elite Skylight, Journal of Public Relations Research Middle East, Egyptian Society for Public Relations, March 2014, p79/113.

8. Bleich E (2011) What is Islamophobia and how much is there? Theorizing and measuring an emerging comparative concept. American Behavioral Science 55(12): 1581–1600

9. Cooper, L. A. & Shepard, R. N. (1975). Mental transformations in the identification of left and right hands. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance, 104,* 48-56.

10. Dina Ibrahim.2009. THE MIDDLE EAST IN AMERICAN MEDIA. The International Communication Gazette, 1748-0485; Vol. 71(6): PP.511–524. http://www.sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav the International Communication Gazette, DOI: 10.1177/1748048509339793 http://gaz.sagepub.com.

11. Gerges F (1997) Islam and Muslims in the minds of America: Influences on the making of U.S. policy. Journal of Palestine Studies 26(2): 68–80.

12. Image of Islam in Western Heritage, German Studies Translated by Thabit Eid, Presented by: Mohamed Amara (Cairo: Nahdet Misr for Publishing and Distribution, November 1999)

13. JACK G. SHAHEEN,2003. Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People. ANNALS, AAPSS, 588, July 2003.pp1/23.

14. Kahina Afrogen, Islamophobia in Western Written Media: Research on Sources of Anti-Islam Stereotypes, Journal of Social and Human Sciences, Algeria, Mohamed Boudiaf Messila University, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, No. 7, Volume 12, 2017, pp. 273-296

15. Mahdi Sharifi, Nafiseh Ansari, and Mina Asadollahzadeh ,2016. A critical discourse analytic approach to discursive construction of Islam in Western talk shows: The case of CNN talk shows. the International Communication Gazette 2017, Vol. 79(1) 45–63! The Author(s) 2016 Reprints and permissions: sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav DOI: 10.1177/1748048516656301 gaz.sagepub.com

16. Mahmoud Al Zawawi. An image of the Arab in the US media, serials and Hollywood works. article available on the Voice of Arabism website, November, 2014.

17. Mary All/I Westoll.2003. Post 9/11 Arab American Coverage Avoids Stereotypes. Media Studies of September11 Newspaper, Research journal Vol. 24, No.1 · Winter ,2003.

18. Ogan C, Willnat L, Pennington R, et al. (2013) The rise of anti-muslim prejudice: Media and islamophobia in Europe and the United States. The International Communication Gazette 76(1): 27–46.

19. Rolf Halse .Counter-Stereotypical Images of Muslim Characters in the Television Serial 24:A Difference That Makes No Difference?, Critical Studies in Television, Volume 10, No. 1 (Spring 2015) © Manchester University Press http://dx.doi.org/10.7227/CST.10.1.5

20. Sabine Schiffer,2011, Demonizing Islam before and after 9/11: Anti-Islamic spin – an important factor in pro-war PR, Global Media and Communication 7(3) pp, 211 –214 sagepub.co.uk/journals Permissions. nav DOI: 10.1177/1742766511427491 gmc.sagepub.com.

21. Shahen, J. (1981a) 'Images of Saudis and Palestinians: A Review of Major Documentaries', in W.C. Adams (ed.) Television Coverage of the Middle East. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

22. Tariq Ali Al-Ithawi, making mental image in the media image of the Prophet Muhammad in the American media. Midad Magazine, Faculty of Arts, Iraqi University, No. 10, April 2015.,749/790.

23. If He Scores Another Few Then I'll Be Muslim Too': Salah Inspires Fan to Stop Hating Muslims And Become One. https://tribuna.com/en/liverpoolfc/news/3478332/

24. The Guardian Magazine website: How Mohamed Salah inspired me to become a Muslim.@ https://www.theguardian.com/football/2019/oct/03/mohamed-salah-inspired-me-become-muslim-liverpool-islam.

25. Islamophobia has plummeted in Liverpool since football club signed Egyptian striker Mo Salah, researchers say. By MILLY VINCENT FOR MAILONLINE (dailymail4, June,

2019)   @https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7102863/Islamophobia-plummeted-Liverpool-Egyptian-footballer