

MASTER'S THESIS

Living up to your [self]stereotypes?: a study of Hong Kong female journalists

Ng, Fung Sheung Isabella

Date of Award:
2004

[Link to publication](#)

General rights

Copyright and intellectual property rights for the publications made accessible in HKBU Scholars are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners. In addition to the restrictions prescribed by the Copyright Ordinance of Hong Kong, all users and readers must also observe the following terms of use:

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from HKBU Scholars for the purpose of private study or research
- Users cannot further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- To share publications in HKBU Scholars with others, users are welcome to freely distribute the permanent URL assigned to the publication

Living up to Your [self]stereotypes? -
A study of Hong Kong Female Journalists

NG Fung Sheung, Isabella

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Philosophy

Principal Supervisor: Dr. GUO Steve Z.S.

Hong Kong Baptist University

August 2004

Abstract

This study examines whether Hong Kong female journalists are led by gender role stereotypes to believe that they are less capable than their male counterparts. If so, what makes them think so. By integrating co-orientation theory and the concept of stereotypes, this thesis will examine whether there is such a phenomenon going on and intend to look at what makes male journalists become dominant in the upper-echelon of the media industry.

It is worthwhile to ask questions about the role of gender in Hong Kong journalism and whether the dominance of male journalists has something to do with the distribution of female journalists mainly at the frontline. As the study is more on how the journalists perceive each other and themselves, it focuses mainly on whether stereotypes on journalists are embedded to form a norm within the industry. The study, in itself, also opens up a possible relationship between stereotypes and male dominance in the upper echelon of journalism industry. It is not an answer but definitely a good beginning to question whether or not this stereotype has directly affected women's opportunities in promotion.

A survey, accompanied by in-depth interviews and case-studies have been used in order to address the above questions. A total of 352 questionnaires have been used and case-studies are selected to address some of the research questions that goes beyond the capacity of the quantitative findings could do.

Results from the survey reveal that despite a large proportion of journalists regarding both sexes are of equal ability, there is a striking number of female journalists who believe they are less able than male, and there is a striking number of male journalists who believe they are more able than female. Results from the survey also show that there is a significant relationship between gender and their perception of ability. Both quantitative and qualitative results suggest there are stereotypes exist among both male and female journalists in journalism industry.

Table of Contents

Declaration	i
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Foreword – The frog prince and the princess of the east	iv
Table of Contents	v
List of Figures	vii
List of Tables and Graphs	viii
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Purpose of the Study	3
1.3 Outline of the Thesis	6
Chapter 2 Co-orientation Model	10
2.1 Co-orientation – A Paradigmatic Study	10
2.2 An Integrated Model of Co-orientation and Stereotypes	14
2.3 Co-orientation Model and its Application	16
Chapter 3 Stereotypes	20
3.1 Stereotypes – their Definition and Functions	20
3.1.1 Few Characteristics of Stereotypes	21
3.2 Stereotypes of Women	24
3.3 Stereotypes of Chinese Women	28
3.4 Stereotypes on Journalists	35
3.5 Stereotypes on Female Journalists	36
Chapter 4 Journalism and Journalists – East Meets West	39
4.1 Journalism in the West	39
4.1.1 Newspaper Development in the West – The Birth of Journalism	39
4.1.2 Journalists in the West	40
4.1.3 Female Journalists in the West	41
4.2 Journalists in Hong Kong	46
4.2.1 Newspaper Development and Journalism in Hong Kong – The Early Days	46
4.2.2 Journalists in Hong Kong – The Angel with a Halo or The Devil incarnate?	47
4.2.3 Female Journalists in Hong Kong	48
4.3 Research Questions and Hypotheses	51
4.3.1 Research Questions	51
4.3.2 Hypotheses	52

Chapter 5 Research Design and Phases of Analysis	54
5.1 Research Methods Overview	54
5.2 Scope of Study	55
5.3 Research Methods in this Study	62
5.3.1 Survey	56
5.3.2 In-depth Interview	58
5.3.3 Case Study	59
5.4 Stages of Analysis	61
5.4.1 The Preliminary Stage of Analysis	61
5.4.2 The Second Stage of Analysis	63
5.4.3 The Final Stage of Analysis	64
Chapter 6 Findings	65
6.1 Overview of the Quantitative Findings	65
6.2 Findings Regarding the Hypotheses	70
6.3 Miscellaneous Quantitative Findings	77
6.3.1 Media Consumption and its Relationships with Influences upon the Respondents	77
6.3.2 Media Effects on Journalists	77
6.3.3 Male and Female Journalists' Willingness in taking Dangerous Assignments	78
6.3.4 Age and Perception of Ability	79
6.4 Qualitative Findings	80
6.5 Qualitative Findings Regarding the Research Questions	81
Chapter 7 Discussion	99
7.1 Overview – the Characteristics of Male and Female Journalists – What They Think?	99
7.2 Stereotypes – What and Where?	103
7.3 Effects of Media on Gender Stereotypes – A Hype?	104
7.4 Thou Shalt Not Touch – Is Gender Issue a Taboo?	105
Chapter 8 Conclusion	108
Chapter 9 Recommendation	111
References	115
Appendix	122
CV	157