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## FILIPINO WOMEN BROADCASTERS: PASSION, POWER AND PRESTIGE

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**Abstract:** This paper has examined the vital role of women in the broadcasting industry in the Philippines, specifically in the television. As such, media broadcasting world has been dominated by male TV personalities. The biased portrayals of women in media have not been extensively studied in the past few years. It is in this premise that this paper has dwelt into examining the crucial and yet value-laden role of women. In many studies (Lemish & Chava, 1999; Tidhar, 1988; Tidhar & Lemish, 1993a), women appear less than men; they are also frequently younger and often framed in traditional occupations.

Moreover, the paper has investigated three TV personalities. Part of the criteria for selecting these women include that they have been in the TV industry for more than two decades. Second, they are seen on Philippine TV delivering news program. Third, they came from the top three competing TV networks. Furthermore, the study has looked into their educational background, work exposure, duration of work and their awards, recognitions and achievements.

These findings revealed that in the Philippine context women have played a critical role in shaping the way Filipinos' way of thinking. It is for this reason that the presence of women broadcasters have been very influential; they have been seen, observed, and manifested a deep sense of devotion to work, commitment and hard work. They were not only pictured as lowly individuals with heavy make-up but rather as newsworthy individuals. That is to say that their credibility was very high as supported by their scholastic records and media awards, achievements and recognitions. It is then significant to say that they are regarded as credible and influential in the shaping and in further evolving Philippine society.

**Keywords:** *Women broadcaster, Philippine women, news and public affairs, and role of women*

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**Introduction:** Women depiction in media has never been considered as equal to that of men. For instance in Israel, Azmon (1997) has presented that despite the myth of the Israeli pioneer woman, the female soldier, and the legend of the former Prime Minister Golda Meir, the culture still emphasizes women's role in bearing and raising children as their essential mission in a national struggle for independence, security, and continuity of the Jewish people, which brought these women in the private sphere. On a similar stance in the Philippines, historically, when the husbands would walk along the road, women were then required to bring their baggage or luggage as opposed to the presence of men.

With these situations, the pivotal roles of women were seen as dynamic and just in the context of Philippine society. For one, Philippines have produced women presidents in the persons of Corazon Cojuangco Aquino and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. They have served the country through restoring independence and economic prosperity.

Having these accounts, it is within this premise that the study has investigated three women broadcasters in the Philippine TV industry. Part of the criteria for selecting these women include that they have been in the TV industry for more than two decades. Second, they are seen on Philippine TV delivering news program. Third, they came from the top three competing TV networks. Furthermore, the study has looked into their educational background, media

work exposure, duration of work and their awards, recognitions and achievements.

It is hoped that this study would shed light on the role of women in shaping people's mind. In addition to that, the study looked into their credentials if this has a good bearing on their image. And in how their image has made an impact to the Philippine society as a whole.

**Review of Related Literature:** In many studies it was revealed that women received less visual exposure and were interrupted more. In comparison with men, women appeared less, were younger and were assigned to lower status. In this stance, women were portrayed in their traditional roles as "nurturing care givers," employed strategies of emotional evocation as well as relating their own personal experiences, thus fusing the public and private spheres (Lemish & Tidhar, 1999).

In the same manner, media has presented women as less logical, ambitious, active, aggressive, and independent than men but more emotional, romantic, dependent and vulnerable (Ariel, 1988; First, 1998; Lemish, 1997). On the infrequent occasions when a more "liberal" model that portrays women as more like men replaces the traditional picture, the uniqueness of feminine work styles, values and experiences are still ignored (Lemish & Tidhar, 1999; Lemish & Tidhar, 1991).

More so, Mansap & Wellmanee (2010) disclosed that women have been increasingly accepted to be involved in the "public sphere, their duties to tend

to their “domestic sphere” including tending to the motherly and wifely roles are still expected and given first priority. While Melan (1989) presented in her study said that Malaysian women journalists are still facing a lot of difficulties and frustrations in entering the media world.

More studies have shown that women were assigned the “emotional work” both in media and in daily life, they, rather than men, are expected and have the right to express in public vulnerable emotions such as sadness and fear. In this light, Mazali (1997) lamented that through these expressions they also reflect men’s emotions, expressing of which are prohibited in the normative world of militaristic masculinity.

**Methods and Materials:** This study has utilized a descriptive type of research. In this research, secondary data was used in the form of biographical data of or background of these subjects, which in this case involved the selected women TV broadcasters. They came from the Philippines’ top three competing TV networks. Further, the study has made use of

internet data from which the vital background of the respondents were collected, retrieved and analyzed.

From these data, they were categorized according to the needs of the study. Such as their educational background, media exposure, and awards, recognitions and distinctions.

**Limitations of the Study:** This study has focused only in determining the valuable contribution and the depicted roles of these women to the Philippine society. Thus, the study is limited to the three identified TV broadcasters who have manifested for at least two decades in the media industry and have received numerous distinctions and accolades in the Philippines and in the international distinctions. Most of the data were obtained from online sources and from personal communication of the researcher and the subjects under study. Their personal lives and psychological dimensions are not covered in this present investigation.

**Data Analyses and Interpretation:** This section presents the gathered data and the interpretation of this valuable information.

**Table 1 below summarizes the educational background of the selected women broadcasters.**

Table 1 presents that the educational background and preparation of these women into the media work. As it can be gleaned it will be noted that they are all capacitated and worthy to be in the media profession for their background are all in the communication related degree programs.

Newscaster	Baccalaureate Degree	Post Graduate
1.) Korina Sanchez-Roxas	Communication Arts, Maryknoll College, Philippines  Investigative Journalism	Master’s Degree in Journalism, Ateneo de Manila Post Graduate Short Courses, United States Embassy Thomas Jefferson Third-level French language course, Alliance Francaise de Manille
2.) Maria Jessie Aspiras Soho	BA Mass Communication, University of the Philippines, Diliman	(None/No available data)
3.) Luisita (Luchi) Cruz -Valdes	Broadcast Communication, University of the Philippines, Diliman	MA Communication, University of the Philippines, Diliman

This implies that they are very much able and possesses wide background on their work and their educational degrees have prepared them to be well-rounded in the media sector industry. While it is not necessary to complete post graduate studies, but it can be understood that two of them have attained a higher degree of education by enrolling herself in a foreign language class and in a foreign scholarship program, which will enable her to be more

competitive and well-verse in the media relations job. While the other one may have not attained this higher degree of learning may be attributed to the heavy demands of media work.

Furthermore, the data above would suggest that these personalities are not only equipped with their work but possessed the necessary skills and attributes required in their media profession.



**Table 3 Awards, Recognitions/Achievements**

Newscaster	Notable Awards, Recognitions, & Achievements	Year
1) Korina Sanchez-Roxas	Best Magazine Host for TV Best Magazine Program, <i>Rated K</i> Program Host, <i>Gawad Kamalayan Natatanging Magasin</i> Best Talk Show, ANC's <i>Up Close and Personal</i> Outstanding Radio Anchor Finalist Citation for Magazine	2015 2015 2014 2014 2013 2012
2.) Maria Jessica Aspiras Soho	Digest's Most Trusted News Presenter, <i>State of the Nation with Jessica Soho</i> Best TV Public Affairs Program Host, <i>Kapuso Mo, Jessica Soho</i> Best Magazine Show Host, <i>Kapuso Mo, Jessica Soho</i> Best Female Newscaster, <i>State of the Nation with Jessica Soho</i> Best Female News Anchor of the Year, <i>State of the Nation with Jessica Soho</i> Best News Program Female Anchor, <i>State of the Nation with Jessica Soho</i> Best News Anchor, <i>State of the Nation with Jessica Soho</i> Female News Host, <i>State of the Nation with Jessica Soho</i> Best Female News Anchor, <i>State of the Nation with Jessica Soho</i> Best News Anchor, <i>State of the Nation with Jessica Soho</i> Best Investigative Program Host, <i>Brigada</i> Digest's Most Trusted News Presenter, <i>State of the Nation with Jessica Soho</i> Best Television Female News Program Anchor, <i>State of the Nation with Jessica Soho</i> Best Television Magazine Program Host, <i>Kapuso Mo, Jessica Soho</i> Students' Choice of Magazine Program Host, <i>Jessica Soho</i> Students' Choice for News Program Host, <i>State of the Nation with Jessica Soho</i> Best Female Newscaster, <i>State of the Nation with Jessica Soho</i> (for a comprehensive list of her awards, please check - <a href="http://en.wikipilipinas.org/index.php/Jessica_Soho">http://en.wikipilipinas.org/index.php/Jessica_Soho</a> )	2015 2015 2015 2015 2015 2015 2015 2015 2015 2015 2015 2015 2014 2014 2014 2014 2014 2014
3.) Luchi Cruz-Valdes	Most Outstanding Broadcaster and Asian Media Award Outstanding Mass Media Broadcaster of the Year Best Female News Anchor <i>KaDoroy</i> Broadcaster of the Year Best News Program Best News Anchor Best Public Affairs Program Outstanding Achievement in Broadcast Media Outstanding Female TV Host & Radio Broadcaster Outstanding Alumna for Broadcast Journalism Best Public Affairs Program Host Outstanding News Magazine Host Titus Brandsma Award for Excellence Best Host for Educational Program Highly Commended Feature	2013 2011 2011 2011 2011 2011 2011 2001 2000 2001 2000 1989-1998 1995 1994 1993 1990

The above data would only show that these women are of superior quality. This means that they have already accomplished much in their career in the TV broadcasting scene. Moreover, they have attained much as to be compared their male counterparts (though not seen and covered in this study) yet their records by face value will tell. This data also suggest that they have already hold power, prestige and position in the media industry, which would be credited not only to their longevity of service but will only prove their worth and asset.

**Conclusion:** As a whole, this study has found out that female domination in TV industry in the Philippines is dominant. As compared to other South East Asian Nations and even in Asia, Filipino women broadcasters may be regarded as superior in their educational attainment, media work exposure and awards, recognitions, and achievements. The latter criteria or factor has identified them to be at par with their Asian neighbors for they have coveted recognitions not only in the Philippines but in the international award giving bodies as well. This implies that they serve as good emulation among their ranks and with that their way of manifesting themselves as a good model in the TV broadcasting field.

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