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

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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.
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