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## “Do I Have To Hire Female Drivers Too?” A Puv/Pub Operator Asks

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### **Abstract:**

*Driving is the controlled operation and movement of a motor vehicle, including cars, motorcycles, trucks, and buses. Various types of drivers include transit drivers, school bus drivers, among others. In the Philippines where a female group constitutes a bigger population than the male group, driving is a lucrative job. Certainly even in other countries, if one is adept at driving, this means a huge amount of money if utilized with patience and diligence. Despite This is a male dominated profession; rarely do we find women drivers in control of public utility vehicles . It is in this light that the researcher would like to look into the insights, perceptions and the real reasons why public utility vehicle operators do not hire women as drivers. Results of this study will provide empirical data that might be beneficial for future plans favorable to women who appear discriminated in this kind of profession. This aims to: identify the criteria set by the PUB/PUV operators in the recruitment and the selection of their drivers; elicit some insights from operators and drivers on the dominance of males in driving as a profession; craft viable recommendations which aim at genderizing the driving profession. The researcher employed qualitative research method with narrative inquiry as to design. Narrative inquiry weaves together a sequence of events usually from just one or two individuals to form a cohesive story. Conversational partners gave their reasons in hiring male drivers: culture; physical endurance and agility; conservativeness; types of vehicles driven; absence of law requiring them to hire female drivers; and social security and welfare. The reality that rarely do we find female drivers of public utility buses/vehicles is attributed to our culture and physical endurance/agility. Public utility vehicles are not equipped with GPS and most of them are non-power steering. Most of the conversational partners said that the government must require bus operators such that a certain percentage of their driver employees should be females. Lectures and trainings on Automotive Technology where males and female participants are encouraged to attend has to be conducted. Upgrading these buses/vehicles has to be strictly implemented.*

**Keywords:** Gender development, Culture, Education, Technology, Equality; Sensitivity

### **Introduction**

Driving is the controlled operation and movement of a motor vehicle, including cars, motorcycles, trucks, and buses. Permission to drive on public highways is granted based on a set of conditions being met and drivers are required to follow the established road and traffic laws in the location they are driving. Professional driving can be a challenging but rewarding career choice.

Professional drivers are those who make a living out of driving. This could mean driving a taxi, jeepney, tricycle, bus, cargo truck, or being a chauffeur. To be able to do that, one will have to get a Professional Driver's license

In many jurisdiction, bus drivers must have a special license above a regular driver's license. Bus drivers typically drive their vehicles between bus stations or stops. They often drop off and pick up passengers on a predetermined route schedule. In Britain, coach driver or a coach captain is used for drivers on privately booked long-distance routes, tours and school trips.

There are various type of bus drivers, including transit drivers, school bus drivers, and tour bus drivers. Bus drivers may work for a city, public, school boards, and private enterprises such as charter companies which

run four buses.

In Australia, bus and coach drivers need a driver's license for a class of vehicle they drive. In New Zealand on the other hand the other hand bus and coach drivers require either a class 2 or class 4 heavy vehicle license corresponding to the weight and number of axles of their vehicle.

In Ilocos Sur, Philippines where a female group constitutes a bigger population than the male group, driving is a lucrative job. Certainly even in other countries, if one is adept is driving, this means a huge amount of money if utilized with patience and diligence.

Despite of this, it is very obvious that this is a male dominated profession. While there are women drivers, rarely do we find them in control of public utility vehicles, they drive their private cars instead.

Everyone has the right regardless of sex, religious affiliation, cultural affiliation, among others. This is literally construed that all of us have the same opportunities in life, say getting a job, pursuing course of our interest, availing social services provided by either the government or the private sector.

As embodied in RA 9710 otherwise known as The Magna Carta for Women, Sec 2 Declaration of Policy- Recognizing that the economic, political, and sociocultural realities affect women's current condition, the state affirms the role of women in nation building and ensures the substantive equality of men and women. It shall promote empowerment of women and pursue equal opportunities for women and men and ensure equal access to resources and to development results and outcome. Further, the State realizes that the equality of men and women entails the abolition of unequal structures and practices that perpetuate discrimination and inequality. To realize this, the State shall endeavor to develop plans, policies, programs, measures, and mechanisms to address discrimination and inequality, in the economic, political, social, and cultural life of women and men.

Gender roles in society means we're expected to act, speak, dress, groom and conduct ourselves based upon our assigned sex. For example, girls and women are generally expected to dress in typically feminine ways and be polite, accommodating and nurturing. Men are generally expected to be strong aggressive and bold

Every society, ethnic group and culture has gender role expectations, but they can be very different from group to group. They can also change in the same society over time.

A stereotype is a widely accepted judgement or bias about a person or group – even though it is overly simplified and not always accurate. Stereotypes about gender can cause unequal and unfair treatment because of a person's gender. This is called sexism

These are four basic kinds of gender stereotypes:

- Personality traits- For example, women are often expected to be accommodating and emotional, while men are usually expected to be self-confident and aggressive.
- Domestic behaviors- For example , some people expect that women will take care of their children, cook and clean the home, while men take care of finances, work on the car, and do home repairs.
- Occupations- Some people are quick to assume that teachers and nurses are women and that pilots, doctors and engineers are men.
- Physical Appearance- For example, women are expected to be thin and graceful, while men are expected to be tall and muscular. Men and women are also expected to dress and groom in ways that are stereotypical to their gender (Men wearing pants and shorts hairstyles, women wearing dresses and make up.

Gender sensitivity is the ability to judiciously recognize the roles played by both men and women in the society. Sexual orientation and gender identity and expression cover sexual desires, feelings, practices, and identification. Sexual orientation can be towards people of the same or different sexes. Gender identity and expression refers to the complex relationship between sex and gender, referring to a person's expression in relation to social categories of masculinity of femininity.

Despite the laws crafted aimed at protecting women's rights, there is still a very huge space for discrimination. One very palpable phenomenon is the very insignificant number of women drivers for

public utility buses/vehicles. It is believed that women are as skillful drivers as men. This is being the case, why do we rarely find women drivers in PUB's/PUV's.

It has often been a running joke that women are stereotypically bad drivers, but according to the latest research, that is not the case. Recent studies, carried out by insurance company its women. i.e. have shown that women in Ireland are in fact safer drivers than men.

The study used a “smart driver tool to analyze the driving habits of a number of Irish motorists over a six-month period. The habits it focused on were over- accelerating, hard-braking and cornering and results discovered that women were, on the whole, a lot safer than men when behind the wheel. 69 % of all men in the study were shown to be guilty of over accelerating compared with just 62% of women.

Leyson (2001) asserts that traditional gender roles are strongly influenced by “centuries of Islamic culture, Chinese mores, and 425 years of deep-rooted Spanish Catholic traditions. Southern islands, mostly dominated by Muslims, regarded feminine behavior as “dependent, inferior, passive, and obedient women”. In traditional Chinese society, women were obedient to the father and elder brothers when young, to the husband when married and to their sons when widowed. Spaniards taught us that a traditional colonial Filipina was supposed to reach marriage in a virginal state. She was expected to take care of domestic tasks, go to church, bear and educate children, and support her man in his endeavors.

Lapus (1973) distinguished Filipinas as “Maria Clara”, a character in *Noli Me Tangere* a novel by Dr. Jose Rizal, in her book “A Study of Psychopathology”. Filipinas generally strive to portray the Maria Clara image of a woman who is shy, demure, modest, self-effacing, loyal to the end.

Hays (2008) suggests that women in the Philippines or so called as “Filipinas” are traditionally responsible for planting and household chores and child care although men have participated some in these duties. Their role of a woman in many ways is defined by Catholicism. The present-day Filipinas are now more assertive and a growing women's right movement is in action.

The U.S Library of Congress states that women have enjoyed greater equality in Philippine society than other Southeast Asian countries. Furthermore, in the early 1990s women were found in more than a proportionate share of many share of many professions although they predominated 91% in domestic services, 59.4 % in technical and professional positions and 57.9% in sales. Women were also preferred in assembly-type factory work. The availability of the types of employment in which women predominated probably explains why about two-thirds of the rural to urban migrants were female.

According to the Philippine Statistics authority, two in five wage and salary workers are women. There were approximately 38.5 million employed persons in the country in October 2013. Of the total employed, 57.6 percent or 22.2 million were wage and salary workers. Of this number, 8.3 million or 37.5 percent were women while 13.9 million or 62.5 percent were men.

In the Southeast Asian region, working and the workplace is gender-neutral. In fact, Philippine ranks ninth in the world for gender equity where women are given opportunity to participate politics, to have multiple seats on company boards and so on. According to Asian Development Bank, on average 70 percent less than men to be in the labor force.

Ong (2016) claims that public transportation has been long dominated by men and it is rare to witness women driving jeeps, taxis or bus and asserted the efficiency of women drivers as safer than men. Similarly, Virola (2009) argues that male drivers outnumber female drivers five to one.

Grab PH reports that the number of women driving for Grab in Southeast Asia increased by 230 percent. That means tens of thousands of women who have become empowered to pursue fulfilling and flexible work that suits their lifestyles.

The Philippines is one of the countries that have adopted the Gender and Development policy for some years now. It has since become a vital part of the gender mainstreaming strategy of the government. The GAD policy can be an effective catalyst in making government really work for women and men and their communities. Integrating gender concerns in development programs and projects helps in the clarification of priority goals in agencies as well as communities, -Gender Responsive Governance at Work.

It is in this light that the researcher would like to look into the insights, perceptions and the real reasons why public utility vehicle operators do not hire women as drivers. Results of this study will provide empirical data that might be beneficial for future plans favorable to women who appear discriminated in this kind of profession.

### **Objectives**

This research undertaking aims to:

1. Identify the criteria set by the PUB/PUV operators in the recruitment and the selection of their drivers;
2. Elicit some insights from operators and drivers on the dominance of males in driving as a profession;
3. Craft viable recommendations which aim at genderizing the driving profession.

### **Methodology Research Design**

The researcher employed qualitative research method with narrative inquiry as to design. Narrative inquiry weaves together a sequence of events usually from just one or two individuals to form a cohesive story. The researcher had to reach out the participants just to obtain the data. He prepared an interview guide to ensure a successful interview process.

### **Participants of the study**

Target participants were five owners/ operators of bus lines/ van lines with at least 5 existing functional units: mini buses, jeepneys, vans, tricycles, and taxis. LTFRB- approved routes of the vehicles of the operators is requirement furthermore they can either be male and female regardless of age at the time of data gathering Routes can be (Laoag- Vigan Vice versa) Vigan- Candon and Vice versa Vigan- San Fernando and Vice versa and Vigan Baguio and Vice versa.

In the selection of the participants, age, income, family structure, among others were disregarded. The fundamental consideration was for the participants to have a public utility vehicle/s.

### **Instrumentation and Data-gathering procedure**

The researcher is the main instrument of data collection or the tool of discovery. It is because of extreme curiosity that compels the researcher to conduct this study thereby it inevitably affected data gathering. Consequently, it requires him to be vigilant and circumspect about the questions asked especially emerging ones and the use of open-ended questions. The researcher asked permission from the Key Informants to video record the interviews. He will explain the purposes of the interview, his personal information, and other confidentiality-related issues at the start of each interview. They are given the assurance that their identities as research participants would not be disclosed.

### **Data Analysis**

To analyze the data elicited from the key informants, the researcher utilized data explication through text reading, aggregating and finalization of common themes for presentation and the point of analysis will be the interview transcripts that that are made. While qualitative researches consider reliability, qualitative studies use validity through credibility, transferability and confirmability (Creswell,2014).

Credibility is ensured by asking similar questions presented differently in in- depth interviews to establish consistent responses.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Bus operators were interviewed in order to obtain relevant information in relation to their sex preferences. A lot of questions were asked for the researcher to elicit without coercion the real reason for hiring drivers particularly focusing on their sex.

The following are disclosed and they are arranged according to themes.

### **A. CULTURE**

All the participants said that when they posted advertisements for the hiring of drivers, only males went to apply despite the non-indication of a sex preference.. It is posited that when females would apply,

operators would decline their application as this has become a culture that when it comes to public utility vehicle driving, it is always males. As participant 1 mentioned, “We are used to employing male drivers and it is very obvious that even other places in our country, I never saw any female driver of a public utility vehicle.” Participant 3 said that driving is for both sexes. Females according to him should drive private vehicles not for PUVs/PUVs. One of the participants stated that females are home managers while men are breadwinners, therefore, he said that if a female applies for the job, it will be a big NO.

Leyson (2001) asserts that traditional gender roles are strongly influenced by centuries of Islamic culture, Chinese mores, and 425 years of deep rooted Spanish Catholic traditions.

### **B. PHYSICAL ENDURANCE AND AGILITY**

“Driving entails physical endurance.” This is the common statement of the participants in this research. They said that when the vehicle is in trouble where basic servicing is need, men drivers can be relied upon in comparison with females. One operator also said that when the vehicle tire blows out, it is quite difficult if a driver is female as it is quite heavy for her to carry. Lapus (1973) distinguished Filipinas as “Maria Clara

### **C. CONSERVATIVENESS**

Amazingly, two of the conversational partners said that they are quite skeptical if the driver is female and the conductor is male, an illicit relationship may loom. Besides, they mentioned it would be quite demoralizing for a woman serving as a driver and the man as a conductor. One said he will never allow his wife or his daughter to be a driver of a public utility vehicle. When asked about his reason, he said, “the nature of the job does not fit a woman especially in the Philippine setting.”

### **D. TYPE OF VEHICLE DRIVEN IN THE PHILIPPINES**

One theme that is also identified based on the statements of the conversational partners is the vehicle type used as public utility. It happens that two operators interviewed are females they worked abroad for years. According to them, they observed there are female taxi drivers, bus drivers and other types of public utility vehicles. When they were asked if it is also possible here in the Philippines, they said that it is also possible provided the vehicle is power steering. “It is easier for a female to drive this type,” one of them explained. One of them, however, said that if there is a need for her to hire drivers, her sex preference is male.

### **E. ABSENCE OF A LAW MANDATING BUS/PUV OPERATORS TO ALSO HIRE FEMALE. DRIVER EMPOLYEES**

A conversational partner said that for as long as there is no law that requires operators to also hire female drivers, he will stick hiring males. He further explained that so far no females have ever tried to apply. On the other hand, one candidly said that he would accept females on condition that she would be willing to undergo rigid training with a professional driver’s license . If she is trained, she can develop her confidence to drive.

### **SOCIAL SECURITY AND WELFARE**

In other countries according to a conversational partner, there are female drivers of public utility buses and vehicles because of the security provided like the presence of a camera installed in the units driven. Likewise several units are equipped with Global Positioning System (GPS). In addition to these gadgets, police visibility is strengthened as evidenced by the strategic establishment of police outposts which are contiguous with one another.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The reality that rarely do we find female drivers of public utility buses/vehicles is attributed to our culture and physical endurance/agility. Public utility vehicles are not equipped with GPS and most of them are non-power steering.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Most of the conversational partners said that the government must require bus operators such that a certain

percentage of their driver employees should be females. Lectures and trainings on Automotive Technology where males and female participants are encouraged to attend has to be conducted. Upgrading these buses/vehicles has to be strictly implemented.

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