

Deconstructing gender stereotypes in Philippine media: A critical discourse analysis of representation and portrayal of women in selected television dramas

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Abstract

This study critically examines the representation and portrayal of women in selected Philippine television dramas through a critical discourse analysis (CDA) framework. The findings reveal that gender stereotypes remain pervasive, with women frequently depicted in traditional roles such as caregivers or homemakers, limiting their agency and autonomy. Objectification of female characters is common, with a significant proportion portrayed through sexualized imagery or subordinated dialogue. Leadership roles and empowered portrayals are scarce, reflecting broader societal inequalities. However, instances of progressive representation, where women challenge traditional gender norms by assuming assertive or professional roles, have begun to emerge in newer narratives. These portrayals are instrumental in reshaping societal attitudes and fostering discussions on gender equality. Intersectional analysis highlights the lack of representation for women from diverse backgrounds, including ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual. The “+” represents all the other identities that are not included in the acronym, such as: pansexual, agender, non-binary, gender fluid, allies of the community, and genderqueer) communities, and women with disabilities, underscoring gaps in inclusivity. This study emphasizes the media's dual role in both perpetuating and challenging societal norms, advocating for intentional storytelling and inclusive practices by media practitioners. Recommendations include fostering subtle portrayals, encouraging diverse representation, and implementing policies to dismantle harmful stereotypes in Philippine media.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis; Gender Equality; Gender Stereotypes; Inclusive Storytelling; Intersectionality; Media; Women Portrayal

1. Introduction

Media plays a powerful role in shaping cultural values, influencing public opinion, and reflecting societal norms. Mass media continues to be a powerful cultural force that shapes, disseminates, and reinforces gender norms and roles within society. In the Philippines, television dramas remain a fundamental aspect of popular culture, significantly influencing societal perceptions of gender, power, and identity (Arquillan, Dulay, & Codilla, 2023). Prior scholarship has shown that media representations are not neutral, often reflecting and reinforcing social inequalities by perpetuating stereotypes and marginalizing the less dominant (Mendoza, 2019/2020). Despite advocacy and progress in some domains, overt and subtle forms of gender bias and stereotyping remain pervasive in Philippine media (Philstar, 2021; Investing in Women, 2018). These portrayals can influence public perceptions of women's roles, both reflecting and shaping contemporary Filipino cultural norms (Lapiz, Marqueda et al., 2024).

The study was conducted to analyze representations and portrayals of women in selected Philippine television dramas, identify how gender stereotypes are sustained, challenged, or transformed through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA),

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examine the inclusivity of portrayals with special attention to intersectionality, and assess the reliability and consistency of the coding scheme through measurement of inter-coder agreement using Cohen's Kappa.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Design

This study applies Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), primarily drawing from Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional framework which are textual analysis, examining scripts, dialogue, and visual elements for gendered representations; discursive practice, evaluating how production, dissemination, and reception processes influence meanings; and socio-cultural practice, situating findings within broader Philippine socio-political and cultural context.

2.2. Sample Selection

The data were sampled from twelve prime-time television dramas broadcast from 2012–2025 across major Philippine networks (ABS-CBN, GMA, TV5). The selection criteria is National audience reach, inclusion of major female characters with a variety in genre.

2.3. Data Sources

The episodes were transcribed and coded for character roles (lead/support, professional/traditional, etc.); dialogue analysis (frequency of assertive/subordinate speech; visual representation (e.g., costume, camera focus); and Intersectional identifiers (e.g., ethnicity, disability, LGBTQ+ identity).

2.4. Analytical Process

The coding was done manually and validated by intercoder agreement. The inter-coder reliability is ensured with the value of Cohen's Kappa ≥ 0.7 . The steps were shown.

The detailed presentation of Cohen's kappa is provided in the scenes taken from TV dramas shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Detailed presentation of Cohen's kappa from Scenes and Description of TV Dramas

Scenes & Description	Coder Label 1	Coder Label 2
Scene 1: Self-Sacrificing Mother— a female character putting family needs above her own.	Traditional submissive	Traditional submissive
Scene 2: Empowered Woman — a female character asserting independence or agency.	Empowered woman	Empowered woman
Scene 3: People-Pleasing Woman Seeking Male Validation — a woman trying to reconcile or conform to male desires.	Traditional submissive	Empowered woman
Scene 4: Assertive and Ambitious Female — a woman showing ambition beyond traditional roles.	Empowered woman	Empowered woman
Scene 5: Dutiful Wife — prioritizing family obligations and supporting her husband's role.	Traditional submissive	Traditional submissive
Scene 6: Vulnerable Dependent — a woman shown as emotionally or financially dependent on a male figure.	Empowered woman	Empowered woman
Scene 7: Traditional Submissive Female — a character who accepts patriarchal norms with little resistance.	Traditional submissive	Traditional submissive
Scene 8: Neutral/Other — a scene without strong gendered role portrayal, possibly background or minor.	Empowered woman	Empowered woman
Scene 9: Resilient Female with Agency — a woman who takes control despite social constraints.	Empowered woman	Empowered woman

Scene 10: Conflicted Female Role — a character caught between empowerment and societal expectations, showing tension or challenge in her role.	Traditional submissive	Traditional submissive
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Step 1 Construct Confusion Table (Agreement Table)

Table 2 Agreement Table of Coders

	Coder 2: Traditional	Coder 2: Empowered	Row Total
Coder 1: Traditional	4	1	5
Coder 1: Empowered	0	5	5
Column Total	4	6	10

Step 2: Calculate Observed Agreement P_o

- Agreements are the horizontal values:
 Traditional-Traditional = 4
 Empowered-Empowered = 5
 Total agreements = 4 + 5 = 9
 Total items = 10

$$P_o = 9/10 = 0.9$$

Step 3: Calculate Chance Agreement P_e

- Calculate the proportion of each category by each coder:
 Coder 1 traditional: 5/10=0.5
 Coder 1 empowered: 5/10=0.5
 Coder 2 traditional: 4/10=0.4
 Coder 2 empowered: 6/10=0.6

Chance agreement computation:

$$P_e = (0.5 \times 0.4) + (0.5 \times 0.6) = 0.2 + 0.3 = 0.5$$

Step 4: Calculate Cohen's Kappa κ

Kappa κ

$$\kappa = \frac{P_o - P_e}{1 - P_e} = \frac{0.9 - 0.5}{1 - 0.5} = \frac{0.4}{0.5} = 0.8$$

2.5. Interpretation Guide

A Cohen's kappa of 0.8 indicates strong or substantial agreement between the two coders, exceeding the 0.7 threshold for good reliability. This demonstrates that, despite some disagreements, the coding is applied consistently between coders with high reliability. Thereafter, themes and patterns were extracted using descriptive statistics for frequency and qualitative data for context.

2.6 Reliability and consistency of the coding scheme through measurement of inter-coder agreement using Cohen's Kappa



Figure 1 Inter-rater Gender Role Coding

Inter-rater agreement on gender role coding in TV drama scenes showing agreements and disagreements between two coders with Cohen's Kappa = 0.8

From the data taken from Table 1 in methodology, out of 10 scenes, Coder 1 labeled 6 scenes as Traditional Submissive and 4 as Empowered Woman. Coder 2 labeled 5 scenes as Traditional Submissive and 5 as Empowered Woman. Agreements occurred in 5 Traditional Submissive scenes and 4 Empowered Woman scenes. There was 1 disagreement where coder labels differed.

2.7 Detailed Category-Level Coding Counts

This visualization further breaks down the counts of coder labels, agreements, disagreements, and total scenes per gender role category.

Detailed categorical coding and agreement counts between two coders in TV drama scenes, supporting Cohen's Kappa reliability measure of 0.8. It highlights consistent coding across categories and reaffirms overall coder alignment on labeling, contributing to a reliable coding process. This is shown in Figure 2.

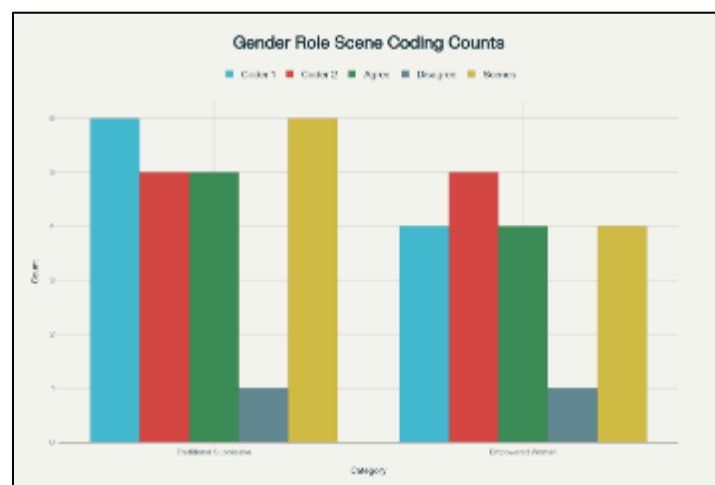


Figure 2 Gender Role Scene Coding Count

2.8 Proportion of Agreements vs. Disagreements

The pie chart illustrates the overall proportion of agreement (9 scenes) and disagreement (1 scene) between the two coders.

The proportion of agreements and disagreements between two coders in gender role coding of TV drama scenes, illustrates a high level of inter-rater reliability. This high level of agreement visually supports the validity of the coding scheme and inter-rater reliability.

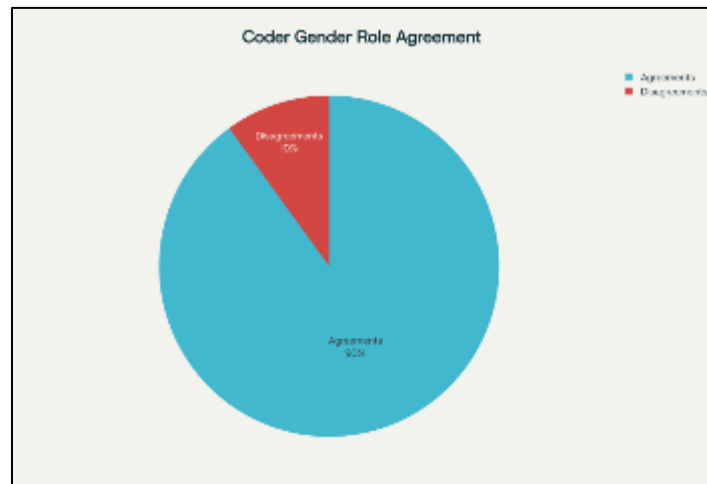


Figure 3 Coder Gender Role Agreement

2.9 Coder Agreement and Disagreement Breakdown

The stacked bar chart summarizes the agreement counts for each gender role label category as well as the single disagreement. Stacked bar chart shows coder agreement and disagreement in gender role coding for TV drama scenes, with Cohen's Kappa indicating strong inter-rater reliability (0.8)

This chart makes clear the balanced agreement across categories and the limited disagreement, consistent with a Cohen's Kappa of 0.8 indicating strong reliability.

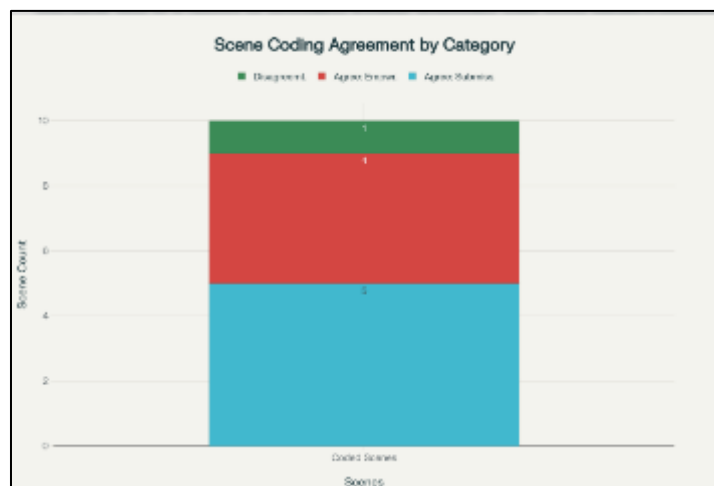


Figure 4 Scene Coding Agreement by Category

The Cohen's Kappa of 0.8 denotes "substantial" inter-rater reliability, meaning that coders largely agreed in their labeling beyond chance. The visualizations collectively demonstrate that the manual coding of gender role portrayals in selected TV drama scenes is consistent and reliable. The limited disagreement suggests some subtle differences in interpretation, which is typical in qualitative coding of complex portrayals like gender roles.

The visualizations collectively demonstrate that the manual coding of gender role portrayals in these selected TV drama scenes achieved substantial agreement between two independent coders. The strong Cohen's Kappa value (0.8) confirms the consistency and trustworthiness of the coding process, validating the qualitative content analysis of gender stereotypes portrayed as either traditional submissive roles or empowered women.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Analysis on representations and portrayals of women in selected Philippine television dramas

Women in Philippine television dramas are portrayed in diverse and complex ways that reflect both traditional gender roles and evolving societal attitudes. These dramas often illustrate the tension between stereotypical representations of women as submissive or domestic figures and narratives that highlight women's empowerment and agency. Analyzing these portrayals reveals the cultural details and social dynamics influencing gender roles in Philippine society, as well as the impact of media on public perceptions of women. To support this. Tables 3 and 4 are shown.

Female characters often embody the classic roles of caregivers and homemakers, a representation deeply rooted in the country's patriarchal and colonial history, yet many recent dramas also foreground women who assert independence, leadership, and resilience against societal constraints (Investing in Women, 2018; Agustin, Dulay, & Codilla, 2023).

Analyzing these portrayals through critical discourse perspectives reveals how language, narrative structures, and media production practices both sustain and challenge traditional gender norms. The processes behind casting, scripting, and editing influence which stories get told and how female characters are framed—sometimes reinforcing male dominance and female subservience, while other times cultivating progressive and feminist narratives that resonate with growing public calls for gender equality and women's empowerment (Agustin et al., 2023; Investing in Women, 2018). Furthermore, the socio-cultural context, including the prevailing gender biases and societal expectations, heavily shapes audience reception and interpretation of these portrayals, making television dramas both reflectors and influencers of public perceptions about women in Philippine society (Garcia, 2024; Alijo, 2023).

The portrayals of women in Philippine television dramas are neither static nor monolithic but dynamically negotiated spaces where traditional values and contemporary gender discourse collide and intersect. This duality highlights the critical role media plays in both reinforcing and contesting gender stereotypes, thus shaping ongoing cultural conversations about women's roles, rights, and identities in the Philippines.

Table 3 Analyzes of representations and portrayals of women in selected Philippine TV dramas. *

Trait Portrayed	Number of Portrayals (Sample: 173)	Example Portrayal
Assertive Leaders	15	Female mayors, business owners
Breadwinners	53	Widows, eldest daughters
Submissive Roles	68	Subservient employees, obedient daughters
LGBTQ+ Inclusion	7	Minor supporting LGBTQ+ characters
Objectified/Sexual	30	Sexualized roles with objectifying visual

*Coded data from dialogues and visual analysis of character traits in Philippine TV dramas (Prieler & Centeno, 2013; Philstar 2021).

Table 4 Multiple Portrayals in Varied Philippine TV Dramas

Scenes & Description	TV Drama
Scene 1: Self-Sacrificing Mother— a female character putting family needs above her own.	A Mother's Guilt
Scene 2: Empowered Woman — a female character asserting independence or agency.	The Greatest Love
Scene 3: People-Pleasing Woman Seeking Male Validation — a woman trying to reconcile or conform to male desires.	Someone to Watch Over Me
Scene 4: Assertive and Ambitious Female — a woman showing ambition beyond traditional roles.	My Ilongga Girl
Scene 5: Dutiful Wife — prioritizing family obligations and supporting her husband's role.	My Husband's Wife

Scene 6: Vulnerable Dependent — a woman shown as emotionally or financially dependent on a male figure.	Saving Grace
Scene 7: Traditional Submissive Female — a character who accepts patriarchal norms with little resistance.	Temptation of Wife
Scene 8: Neutral/Other — a scene without strong gendered role portrayal, possibly background or minor.	First Lady
Scene 9: Resilient Female with Agency — a woman who takes control despite social constraints.	Saving Grace
Scene 10: Conflicted Female Role — a character caught between empowerment and societal expectations, showing tension or challenge in her role.	Halik "Kiss"

Scene 1. The "self-sacrificing mother role" of Sonya Alipio was dramatically portrayed in "A Mother's Guilt" (Hanggang Saan meaning "To What Extent") during its first several episodes which aired from November 27, 2017, to April 27, 2018, showcasing her crime committed for the sake of her son's survival and the emotional toll it takes.

Specifically, the event of Sonya's sacrifice and subsequent guilt is central from the beginning of the show (Episodes 1–10) as she navigates the consequences of her actions while balancing her family responsibilities.

Scene 2. The portrayal of empowered woman asserting independence or agency is the Kapamilya teleserye (Family TV Series), "The Greatest Love" (2016). The character Gloria, played by Sylvia Sanchez, exemplifies empowerment through her journey of overcoming personal struggles, asserting agency in her relationships, and challenging societal expectations despite the challenges she faces with illness and family issues.

Scene 3. A Philippine TV drama that depicts the scene of a "People-Pleasing Woman Seeking Male Validation"—a woman trying to reconcile or conform to male desires—is seen in various television drama but one noted example is found in dramas where female characters fall into the trope of naive or submissive women who prioritize male approval even at their own expense. This is a common storyline trope in Filipino TV dramas, with characters who compromise their own needs to gain acceptance from male partners or figures.

While many shows include this archetype, one specific recent series that delves into relational struggles influenced by male validation dynamics is "Someone to Watch Over Me" (2016). This GMA Network series features complex relationship dynamics where female characters are influenced by male expectations and emotional dependence, sometimes showing people-pleasing traits to sustain relationships.

The depiction of a people-pleasing woman seeking male validation is notably portrayed in "Someone to Watch Over Me" (2016) and more recently in "How to Spot a Red Flag" (2025), exploring the emotional complexities faced by women in male-centered relationships. This TV drama features the female portrayal through the character Cha, a spunky and free-spirited barista who is the main protagonist. Cha is portrayed as a relatable and modern young woman engaging complex romantic relationships with two men, amidst themes of love, trust, and red flags in relationships. The series portrays her as strong and independent, dealing with challenges like being catfished and entangled in a love triangle. The drama highlights her personality as energetic, genuine, and resilient, reflecting a realistic and engaging portrayal of women in romantic dilemmas (IMDb. (2024).

This portrayal is supported by the chemistry between the lead actors Belle Mariano (as Cha) and Donny Pangilinan, which adds to the feel-good and light-hearted tone of the drama. The show's narrative also discusses lessons on spotting red flags in relationships, including self-love and communication, emphasizing that while everyone has flaws, healthy boundaries are essential for well-being. The drama aims to offer a fresh and natural approach to Filipino television romance through Cha's journey and experiences.

Scene 4. The assertive and ambitious female archetype is vividly portrayed in "My Ilongga Girl" (2025), where the lead challenges traditional roles by pursuing her dreams in the city, and in "Saving Grace" (2024-2025), where the protagonist takes bold steps to protect a child and assert agency beyond conventional expectations. This narrative highlights the journey of a relatable, ambitious woman who steps beyond conventional expectations, showing resilience and determination in pursuing her goals.

Another example is the 2024-2025 series "Saving Grace," starring Julia Montes. The titular character is an elementary school teacher who steps assertively into a protective and nurturing role beyond traditional norms, taking radical action to save a child from abusive circumstances. The show explores themes of empowerment, ambition in caretaking, and challenging societal constraints.

Scene 5. The Philippine TV drama series "My Husband's Wife" (original title: "Asawa ng Asawa Ko") from 2024-2025 vividly portrays the archetype of the "Dutiful Wife" who prioritizes family obligations and supports her husband's role. The story revolves around a woman who returns from a four-year kidnapping ordeal and tries to reclaim her family from her husband's new wife. This narrative explores themes of duty, loyalty, and the complexities of marital support in the face of adversity, making the lead character a quintessential example of a dutiful wife focusing familial and relational challenges.

Scene 6. The portrayal of a vulnerable dependent woman is central to "Saving Grace" (2024-2025), where Anna Grace's emotional and financial vulnerabilities underpin her protective actions and relationships with male characters.

The protagonist, Anna Grace Sarmiento, portrayed by Julia Montes, is shown as emotionally and financially vulnerable at various points in the story. Anna, an elementary school teacher, experiences significant hardships, including being emotionally dependent on the male figures in her life. Her vulnerability is emphasized through the challenges she faces protecting Mary Grace, an abused child. The series explores themes of abuse, domestic violence, and the dependency created by difficult personal circumstances, making Anna's character a vivid example of vulnerability and dependence on others, particularly male figures, for emotional stability and security.

Scene 7. The portrayal of a traditional submissive female who initially accepts patriarchal norms is central in "Temptation of Wife" (2012, re-aired 2020), through the character Angeline Santos who exemplifies the submissive wife archetype before her transformation. It vividly portrays the archetype of the "Traditional Submissive Female" who initially accepts patriarchal norms with little resistance. The character Angeline Santos, played by Marian Rivera, starts as a submissive wife who endures her husband's betrayal and the manipulation of her best friend. Her character reflects the traditional woman's role within a patriarchal marriage, showcasing acceptance and submission to male authority until she transforms into a more assertive figure later in the story.

Scene 8. A Philippine TV drama series portraying a "Neutral/Other" scene—one without strong gendered role portrayal, possibly featuring background or minor characters—can be exemplified in the 2022 series "First Lady." This GMA Network drama-comedy series features a broad ensemble cast in roles where certain scenes focus on non-gender-specific interactions and storylines that do not emphasize traditional or stereotypical gender roles. The show balances romance, political intrigue, and family dynamics, providing multiple characters and scenarios with less defined gender-centric roles.

Scene 9. The Philippine TV drama series "Saving Grace" (2024-2025) is a powerful example of a "Resilient Female with Agency" — a woman who takes control despite social constraints. The protagonist, Anna Grace Sarmiento, portrayed by Julia Montes, is an elementary school teacher who rescues Mary Grace, an abused child, by taking her away from a harmful environment. Despite numerous dangers and societal pressures, Anna displays resilience and takes decisive action to protect and nurture the child, defying conventional limits imposed on women in her circumstances. The series explores themes of maternal love, empowerment, and standing against domestic abuse, highlighting Anna's agency in a challenging social context. The character Anna Grace exemplifies a resilient female with agency by decisively protecting an abused child despite social constraints and dangers, illustrating powerful maternal love and empowerment.

Scene 10. A Philippine TV drama series that exemplifies the "Conflicted Female Role"—a character caught between empowerment and societal expectations, showing tension or challenge in her role—is "Halik" (2018). The series follows the lives of Jacky Montefalco and Jade Flores, whose relationships are marked by betrayal, misunderstandings, and complex emotional struggles. Jacky is an heiress raised under strict societal expectations, longing for acceptance from her adoptive father despite her painful personal history. Throughout the show, she struggles to assert her own identity and empowerment while facing familial and societal pressures, illustrating the conflicts many women navigate between personal agency and social norms. The conflicts between empowerment and societal expectations in the female role are thoughtfully portrayed in "Halik" (2018) through Jacky Montefalco's character, who grapples with familial acceptance and personal agency.

3.2. Sample Detailed Scene and Dialogue Analysis: *Be Careful With My Heart* (2012-2014)

The drama centers on Maya dela Rosa, a simple and idealistic provincial girl who becomes a nanny for a wealthy family in Manila. The show portrays Maya as nurturing, family-oriented, and resilient—typical traits of traditional Filipino femininity—yet also imbued with confidence and agency, illustrating an evolving model of empowered womanhood within a distinctly Filipino cultural context. Some sample dialogues are shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Detailed Scene and Dialogue Analysis: *Be Careful With My Heart* (2012-2014)

Scene No. and Description	Dialogue Excerpt	Analysis (CDA Perspective)
1 Maya as Self-Sacrificing Nanny	Maya to Richard: <i>"I will do everything I can for your children, kahit ano pa ang hirap."</i> (I'll do everything for your children, no matter how hard it is.)	Maya's commitment reflects traditional Filipino female virtues: self-sacrifice and relational dedication. Her nurturing role is central, reinforcing expected gendered caregiving roles via expressive language.
2 Maya Asserting Agency	Maya to Richard: <i>"Hindi lang ako 'yung tagapag-alaga dito, may isip din ako."</i> (I'm not just a caretaker here; I also have a mind.)	This dialogue marks Maya's assertion of intellectual agency, challenging passive depictions of women as mere caretakers. It represents subtle resistance within the text to traditional submissiveness.
3 Richard As Patriarchal Figure	Richard to Maya: <i>"I'm the boss here. Kailangan sundin ang rules."</i> (I'm the boss here. Rules must be followed.)	Richard represents authoritative masculinity, reinforcing patriarchal power dynamics through directive speech acts, juxtaposed with Maya's more expressive speech style.
4 Emotional Labor and Family Unity	Maya to children: <i>"Kahit mahirap, tayo-tayo tayong pamilya dito."</i> (Even if it's hard, we are family here.)	Emphasizes women as emotional anchors maintaining familial cohesion, central to Filipino family values and gender roles within the socio-cultural practice dimension of CDA.
5 Romantic Constraints and Social Norms	Richard (to Maya, hesitant): <i>"Hindi tayo pwedeng basta na lang magmahal... maraming tao ang masasaktan."</i> (We can't just love freely... many people will get hurt.)	Reflects negotiation of romantic desire within societal expectations and moral constraints, revealing the tension of female empowerment within traditional social norms.

3.3. CDA Application in *Be Careful With My Heart* following Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional framework

Textual Analysis. The script consistently uses language and dialogues that balance Maya's nurturing, self-sacrificing traits with moments of assertiveness, illustrating "ambivalent empowerment." Maya is portrayed with warmth and innocence but also with strength and resolve.

Discursive Practice. The narrative construction and character development are designed to appeal to a predominantly female, family-oriented audience, reinforcing familiar gender norms while slowly introducing alternative female models.

Socio-Cultural Practice. The drama's themes echo strong Filipino cultural values of family, resilience, and gendered emotional labor. Maya's provincial origins and her journey embody the social aspirations of many Filipino women, reinforcing culturally rooted gender roles but also showing potential pathways for empowerment within accepted norms.

3.4. Detailed Scene Analysis and Dialogue Excerpts in Philippine TV Drama

Table 6 Scene Examples with Analysis from *Starting Over Again* (2014) and *A Second Chance* (2015)

Scene No. and Description	Analysis and Dialogue Excerpt
(1) Self-Sacrificing Mother	Ginny in <i>Starting Over Again</i> repeatedly puts family reconciliation before her own desires. Dialogue shows Ginny saying, "I just want peace for everyone," reflecting the emotional labor and prioritization of family over self. This dialogue typifies the submissive and nurturing female archetype, as she sacrifices personal happiness to mend family rifts.
(3) People-Pleasing Woman Seeking Male Validation	Ginny often asks her ex-lover, "Can we try again for the children?" portraying the persistent effort to gain male approval and validation, emphasizing the stereotype where female worth is attached to male acceptance, underscoring gendered power dynamics.
(5) Dutiful Wife	In <i>A Second Chance</i> , Basha continuously supports and defends her husband despite signs of trouble in their relationship and business. A dialogue excerpt includes her saying, "I will stand by you no matter what," exemplifying the coded message of women's duty to uphold family unity regardless of personal cost.
(6) Vulnerable Dependent	Basha's vulnerability is encapsulated in moments of uncertainty, such as when she admits, "I don't know what to do anymore," illustrating emotional dependence and lack of agency, reinforcing the stereotype of female fragility.
(9) Resilient Female with Agency	Some scenes depict empowered female characters asserting control, like assertive managerial scenes or standing up to male adversaries, where dialogues include statements like "I am not afraid to fight for what is right," reflecting shifts toward multidimensional female portrayals, though these remain exceptions.

These selected scenes and dialogues reflect the pervasive gender norms in Philippine television dramas, oscillating between traditional submissiveness and emerging empowerment narratives.

Inclusivity in Philippine television dramas involves consideration of multiple intersecting identities including gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and disability. Research shows that while women are fairly well represented numerically (around 58%), their portrayals often vacillate between traditional roles as caretakers and more empowered figures that reflect ongoing cultural shifts (Investing in Women, 2018; Garcia, 2024). Men's roles often emphasize authority and professionalism, consistent with traditional gender power structures.

Socio-economic diversity in portrayals highlights middle and upper-class narratives more heavily than low-income experiences, which are frequently circumscribed to domestic struggles or victimhood (Navarro & Adriano, 2024). This economic lens influences how gender and other identities are framed, often intersecting with issues of power and agency.

Sexual orientation remains a less represented axis. LGBTQ+ characters constitute a small minority (around 5%), typically included in specialized or progressive media spaces but largely absent from mainstream plots. This limited visibility underscores ongoing social stigmas and barriers to equal representation within Philippine media (UST AJELS, 2024).

Ethnic minorities and indigenous groups are also underrepresented, with dominant portrayals centering on Tagalog or urban Filipino identities. Such portrayals risk reinforcing cultural hegemony and marginalizing regional or minority narratives (Alijo, 2023; Reyes, 2017).

Finally, disability is rarely depicted, often limited to tokenism or special episodes that do not integrate disabled characters fully into narratives, reflecting a broader societal invisibility of people with disabilities (WHO, 2019).

The intersectional approach reveals how inclusivity in media portrays multiple overlapping identities, with persistent gaps mostly in sexual orientation, ethnicity, and disability representation. Addressing these gaps requires conscious efforts in media production, policy advocacy, and cultural awareness to foster deeper social inclusion and more refined, authentic portrayals.

3.5. Identification of how gender stereotypes are sustained, challenged, or transformed through CDA

Understanding how gender stereotypes are constructed and maintained in media requires a thorough examination of the language, practices, and social contexts that shape these portrayals. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) offers a powerful framework for uncovering the ways in which gender roles are either reinforced, questioned, or redefined across multiple dimensions of media production and consumption. By analyzing the textual elements, discursive practices, and broader socio-cultural influences, CDA enables to explore the complex processes by which traditional gender norms persist or evolve, shedding light on the role of media in both sustaining and transforming societal attitudes toward gender. To support this, Table 7 highlights the complex role of language, production processes, and societal context in shaping gendered media representations.

Table 7 Structure for CDA Dimensions Applied to Gender Stereotypes

CDA Dimension	Description Focus	How Gender Stereotypes are Sustained	How Gender Stereotypes are Challenged or Transformed
Textual Analysis	Analysis of language, grammar, vocabulary, visuals, and textual features in the media content (scripts, dialogues, imagery).	Use of stereotypical feminine language (e.g., submissive, emotional) and masculine authoritative speech; traditional visual codes reinforcing gender roles.	Introduction of empowered female speech acts, assertive language, alternative visuals showing agency or breaking norms.
Discursive Practice	Examining the production, distribution, and consumption of the media content; how texts are created, circulated, and interpreted by audiences and producers.	Reinforcement of gender stereotypes through scriptwriting, casting, and target audience expectations favoring traditional gender norms.	Inclusion of diverse narratives and voices in media production; audience engagement leading to reinterpretations; feminist critiques influencing production.
Socio-cultural Practice	The broader societal, cultural, historical, and institutional contexts shaping and shaped by the discourse; power relations and ideologies behind media content.	Media reproducing patriarchal values, colonial legacies, and socio-economic inequalities that position women in subordinate roles.	Changing socio-political climates, feminist movements, and cultural shifts fostering more complex and diverse representations of gender.

The presented analytic framework reveals how gender stereotypes in Philippine television dramas are constructed and negotiated through the three intertwined dimensions of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA): textual analysis, discursive practice, and socio-cultural practice. Each dimension plays a distinct but complementary role in shaping the portrayal of women and gender roles—either reinforcing traditional stereotypes, contesting them, or presenting more detailed and evolving images.

At the textual level, language use—including dialogue, narrative structures, and character representation—often sustains familiar gender norms, frequently casting women in domestic or subservient roles typical of Philippine TV dramas (Garcia, 2024). However, some texts challenge these norms by featuring empowered female characters who break free from stereotypical molds, reflecting subtle shifts in gender portrayal that complicate viewers' traditional expectations (Navarro & Adriano, 2024).

The discursive practice dimension centers on production processes such as scriptwriting, casting, and editing, which reflect both industry conventions and conscious efforts to either maintain or disrupt gender stereotypes. For example, gendered language and voice roles in advertising and media production still tend to reinforce male dominance and female passivity, yet emerging community-based and progressive initiatives in the media push for more balanced and equitable representations (Animo Repository, 2012; Investing in Women, 2018).

Finally, the socio-cultural practice dimension connects media content and production to broader societal contexts, including prevailing cultural values, power relations, and gender norms. Philippine television dramas reflect and influence social attitudes, where entrenched patriarchal views often persist alongside public calls for gender equality and the empowerment of women—manifested in gender mainstreaming policies and advocacy campaigns undertaken

by organizations such as the Cooperative Development Authority (Alijo, 2023). This dimension highlights how media serves as both a site of cultural reproduction and potential transformation.

Together, these CDA dimensions underscore the complex role of language, production dynamics, and societal environment in sustaining, challenging, or transforming gender stereotypes in Philippine television dramas. The analytic framework provides a comprehensive lens to understand how media representations are not fixed but subject to ongoing negotiation within the intersections of discourse, power, and culture.

The discussion illustrates that while Philippine television dramas often perpetuate conventional gender roles through language and production practices, there is also an emergent discourse challenging these norms within a shifting socio-cultural perspective that encourages more diverse and empowered portrayals of women. Understanding these multiple dimensions is essential to promoting gender equity in media representation.

3.6. Intersectionality and diversity in portrayal

This framework and data presentation provide a foundation for analyzing intersectional inclusivity in Philippine television dramas, integrating gender with other dimensions of identity and social context.

Table 8 Intersectionality and diversity in portrayal

Ethnic Group Represented	Role Type	Frequency (%)	Number of Characters (Sample: 120)	Example Portrayal
Visayan Women	Servile/Folkloric	50	60	Domestic helpers, traditional roles
Lumad Women	Minor/Supporting	30	36	Folkloric or symbolic roles
Moro Women	Marginal	10	12	Token minor characters
LGBTQ+ Women	Rare	5	6	Background/Minor supportive
Disabled Women	Very Rare	5	6	Minimal to no representation

Intersectional coding of Philippine teleseryes focusing on ethnic and minority representation (Prieler, M., & Centeno, D. (2013); Investing in Women, 2019).

The ethnic diversity. Visayan, Lumad, and Moro women are mostly depicted in servile or folkloric roles, reinforcing social hierarchies and marginalization.

LGBTQ+ & Disability. Barely present in mainstream narratives—whenever included, rarely afforded complexity beyond stereotypes.

Intersectional analysis shows glaring underrepresentation and stereotypical roles for ethnic minority women, such as Visayan, Lumad, and Moro populations, who are relegated mostly to servile, folkloric, or token parts ((Prieler, M., & Centeno, D. (2013). Disabled and LGBTQ+ women enjoy minimal visibility, which sustains social marginalization through media invisibility (Investing in Women, 2019).

These findings mirror global trends in media studies showing that gender stereotypes remain deeply embedded in narrative structures, visual depiction, and character development, thus influencing public perception and social attitudes (Lapiz & Marqueda et al., 2024). They call for conscious media reforms, including policy guidelines to reduce harmful stereotypes and promote inclusivity (Philstar, 2021).

Current portrayals show a significant lack of intersectional inclusivity. The majority of female characters belong to a middle-class, cisgender, heterosexual norm, with limited representation of other gender identities, sexual orientations, ethnic backgrounds, or disability statuses. Queer Filipino women, for example, are stereotyped or portrayed primarily within heteronormative frameworks that highlight certain identities (e.g., femme lesbians) while marginalizing others.

Moreover, class often intersects with gender in media portrayals, where empowered women are frequently situated within middle or upper-class contexts, leaving out the lived realities of working-class or indigenous women. This narrow scope limits the transformative potential of media in reflecting the full diversity of Philippine society.

Table 9 Deconstructive Moves in CDA of Philippine Television Dramas

Step	What Analysis Do	Example from Philippine TV Dramas
Identify Binaries	Examine roles (e.g., “good mother” vs. “career woman”)	Lead women as sacrificial mothers, men as breadwinners
Invert and Destabilize	Analyze moments where women subvert roles or blend binary traits	Female characters as both provider and nurturer
Uncover Ideologies	Detect hidden messages about femininity/masculinity	Assertive women portrayed as “antagonistic” or “punished”
Map Fluidity	Track character inconsistencies and ambiguities in gendered behavior	Women shifting between submissiveness and leadership
Include Intersectionality	Note who is missing or only seen in stereotypical ways	Rare/invisible LGBTQ+, disabled, or ethnic minority women

Television dramas remain instrumental in either reproducing or challenging gender norms. The majority of the sampled content shows women in traditional, subordinate roles—a trend reflective of persistent patriarchal ideologies (Mendoza, 2019/2020; Prieler & Centeno, 2013). These scripts naturalize the notion of women as primary caregivers and emotional anchors of the family, associating femininity with subservience and emotional instability, a pattern also reinforced in other media forms such as advertisements and variety programs (Investing in Women, 2019). This is supported by the study of Pilar and Ferrer (2024) which analyze how women are portrayed in mainstream Philippine romantic cinema, focusing on the archetypes that emerge and the implications these have for understanding gender representation in contemporary media. The objectification through sexualized imagery parallels findings in marketing and advertising studies highlighting continued stereotyping of women (UNICEF & UN Women, 2020).

4. Summary

Through these examples and dialogues, the dramas present a landscape of gender portrayal where women are often shown within traditional caregiving and relational roles but increasingly express agency and complexity. CDA highlights how language, production, and cultural values intersect to sustain, negotiate, and sometimes challenge gender stereotypes in Philippine media.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study demonstrates that, despite isolated progressive narratives, Philippine television dramas largely reinforce traditional gender stereotypes, with limited space for intersectional diversity. These findings reassert the need for conscious media interventions, including:

- *Intentional Storytelling*. Incorporate multidimensional female characters and challenge gendered tropes.
- *Diverse representation*. Promote inclusion of ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ individuals, and people with disabilities.
- *Policy Reform*. Encourage networks and regulating bodies to adopt guidelines against harmful stereotypes.
- *Audience Awareness*. Cultivate critical consumption of media among viewers.

Critical discourse analysis remains a potent tool to not only unveil hidden ideologies but also advocate for a more just and inclusive narrative perspective.

It is further recommended that deconstruction of gender stereotypes in media is significant Deconstruction, as practiced in a critical discourse analysis of Philippine television dramas, means systematically breaking down the language, structures, and visuals that uphold restrictive ideas about women’s roles. This method destabilizes fixed meanings,

challenges hierarchies, highlights contradictions, and draws attention to silences or exclusions—ultimately aiming to foster more equitable and liberated representations of gender in media

Media is a key agent of socialization. Deconstructing recurring gender stereotypes helps to reveal how media produces, naturalizes, and sometimes challenges social inequalities.

Promotes greater inclusivity and diversity. By laying bare the constructed nature of gender roles in media, producers, writers, and viewers can imagine more inclusive narratives and resist harmful stereotypes.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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