

Before Queens became Queens

Known for its mystic beauty, Philippines build with it the glamour of Filipina allure and sophisticated grace. The splendor of every Filipina beauty contender always reaches the top and is reflected in the shimmering crowns they wear above their heads. We see that they are confident inside out, but behind the stage, they are the women with heels, trying to reach their dreams with feet burdened by criticisms. The qualitative study entitled “Chasing Dreams in Heels: Struggles and Insights of Female Student Beauty Contenders” aims to identify these denunciations and in response, their coping mechanisms to these negative insights to call them as ‘Queens with Crowns of Gold’.

“I can hear the voices and feel the pressure and stress that beauty contenders experience because I am also like them, a beauty contender that dreams to wear a crown”, stated Jamyla Diane Ampis, a Grade 12 senior high school student beauty which is also one of the researchers of the study. Together with her co-researchers, Gene Alner Gemperoso, Gwyn Lacre, Prince Reynald Abandan and Precious Mae Mistula, they search for the other beauties and let them sing their hearts out on what they can share about their personal experiences towards becoming stewards of precious stones.

Beauty pageants have given women a stage to express and burst out their beauty to the crowd, but being a beauty contender is not as easy as it seems backstage. Student beauty contenders describe their experiences as hard, a long step journey towards learning and needs strengths and hopes. These struggles enable them to face the challenges with confidence and become stronger towards their staircases as women with power.

Fear. Criticisms make them feel afraid of the crowd. They become afraid to be judged by the society; from how they walk, talk, dress and communicate with people. Because of fear, instead of being queens that empower women in the society, they tend to think that they are imperfect anymore and without confidence to aim even higher. This burden on their heels becomes a weakness as they face the stage of their career.

Keeping up with Beauty Standards. As the society see them in different angles, they try to set their standards to what they see. Afraid to be mediated, they turn themselves into something else just to let the crowd see what they need to see, even though it means that they have to hide their true faces behind the masks of standards of the society.

Rigid Preparation. Before stepping to the crowd, they have their own struggles outside the arena of beauty. To think that they are also students, and like any other, they also try to manage and balance their time between chasing their dreams and maintaining good posture at school, posture that define their future as professionals. Their preparations before the pageants versus their academic status made a heavy burden beneath their feet, where they have to hurdle it with confidence and grace.

These challenges that beauty contenders faced give them the hopes to take a step higher. They take their own heels as part of who they are as queens, that behind those tiny gossips they hear and the criticisms always stabbed behind their back, they still have the splendor to shine on top through being true to themselves, with the support of their loved ones and being optimistic to what they do. That is why they so call themselves ‘Queens’, because they can sit on their own throne with poise and confidence, looking at themselves as pure diamonds in the rough.

“As a beauty contender, I can say that I am a Queen because I am who I am. I always ignore their hate speeches; they’re not new to me. As long as I am confident to shine and show to the crowd that I am a Filipina with true beauty, I can call myself as ‘Queen with Flying Colors’,” noted from Miss Jamyla Diane Ampis as she hold the title as Binibining Sangguniang Kabataan 2018 and the Mutya ng Sta. Cruz 2018, truly exceptional.

Filipina beauties are always unique in their own kind of way. We can see that these women who aspire themselves as the new face of innovation and as a platform of empowerment take their step towards reaching their dreams. They are not perfect, we all know that, but as a Filipino, we should be proud that we have these glamorous faces in front of us, representing as victors as they tell their success stories to the crowd, out and proud.