



Linguistic Sexism in Memorandum Circulars of the Civil Service Commission: A Content Analysis

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Abstract

This study examines the presence of linguistic sexism in the memorandum circulars (MCs) issued by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) from 2005 to 2024, assessing adherence to non-sexist language policies mandated by MC No. 12, Series of 2005. Utilizing qualitative content analysis, the research systematically evaluated 452 MCs across five key categories: gender visibility, firstness, occupational role representation, activities, and character attributes. The methodology involved coding and quantifying gendered references within official government documents to determine patterns of linguistic bias. The findings reveal that while female representation in government discourse has increased in certain years, male-dominated language remains prevalent. Gender visibility analysis indicates fluctuating representation, with some years favoring female mentions but failing to achieve sustained gender balance. The analysis of firstness demonstrates a consistent prioritization of male references, reinforcing implicit gender hierarchies. Occupational role representation continues to reflect traditional gender stereotypes, with men disproportionately associated with leadership roles and women linked to caregiving and support positions. Additionally, activity-based mentions show a tendency to depict women in domestic or reproductive roles, while men are associated with decision-making and professional achievements. The examination of character attributes further highlights the reinforcement of gender norms, with women frequently described as "resilient" and "nurturing," whereas men are largely absent from emotional or caregiving descriptors. These findings underscore the persistence of linguistic sexism in CSC's MCs despite policy mandates for gender-neutral language. The study concludes with a proposed program to institutionalize non-sexist communication practices, ensuring a more inclusive and equitable approach to government discourse.

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1. Introduction

Language is more than a means of communication; it is a powerful instrument that shapes how individuals perceive the world and engage with society. It transmits cultural norms and values, influencing relationships, identities, and power structures. In the context of governance, language assumes a vital role, not only in disseminating information but also in reflecting the principles and ideals upheld by the state. Linguistic sexism—where language reinforces gender bias, traditional roles, or the exclusion of non-dominant genders—poses a significant concern, particularly in official government communication (Cameron, 2020; Sunderland, 2019) ^[9, 53]. Addressing such biases is essential to advancing gender equality and eliminating forms of institutional discrimination.

In the Philippines, the 1987 Constitution guarantees gender equality, and various laws and policies have been enacted to promote this right. One such policy is the Civil Service Commission's Memorandum Circular (MC) No. 12, Series of 2005, which mandates the use of non-sexist language in all official government communications (CSC, 2005). The directive promotes inclusive and gender-sensitive language to support equality across the bureaucracy. However, despite the issuance of this policy, gender-biased language remains visible in many government documents. Research has shown that policies alone are not always enough to shift deep-rooted linguistic habits, and male-centered language or stereotypes continue to affect how public communication is framed (Kemp, 2020; Hellinger & Bussmann, 2021) ^[33, 23].

While linguistic sexism has been extensively studied in various global and institutional contexts, limited attention has been paid to how Philippine government agencies, particularly the CSC, have complied with their own directives on non-sexist language. This study seeks to address that gap by analyzing selected CSC Memorandum Circulars issued after 2005 to determine whether linguistic sexism persists and to what extent the documents adhere to MC No. 12. Through a content analysis of these circulars, the research identifies patterns of language use, evaluates their alignment with non-sexist language principles, and proposes strategies to improve gender inclusivity in official communication.

Furthermore, this study is anchored in two key theoretical frameworks: Feminist Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Feminist Linguistics examines how language perpetuates patriarchal norms, emphasizing how linguistic choices—such as male-default terms—can marginalize women and non-dominant genders (Cameron, 2020; Hellinger & Bussmann, 2021) ^[10, 22]. In parallel, CDA offers a methodological lens for analyzing how language reinforces or challenges power relations within institutional discourse (Fairclough, 2013) ^[16]. By integrating these frameworks, the study critically assesses the CSC's memoranda and explores how language both reflects and reproduces gendered structures. This theoretical foundation supports the study's goal of fostering a more inclusive, equitable, and gender-sensitive approach to public sector communication.

Furthermore, to provide a systematic analysis of linguistic sexism, the study employed five distinct categories adapted from Porreca's (1984, as cited in Espeleta *et al.*, 2024) ^[15] framework and further enriched by Amini and Birjandi's (2012) ^[4] concepts. These categories, visually represented in the conceptual framework, are connected to the main analysis component (Box B) through directional arrows, each reflecting a specific dimension of sexist language. The first category is Gender Visibility, which examines the extent to which women and non-dominant genders are represented in language—both quantitatively and qualitatively. It considers the frequency of gendered terms, the use of masculine generics, and the balance of gender pronouns, emphasizing how invisibility perpetuates male-centric norms. The second category is Firstness, referring to the order in which genders appear in paired expressions (e.g., “he or she,” “Mr. and Mrs.”), which subtly conveys gender hierarchy and reinforces male precedence in language.

The third category, Occupational Role Representation, focuses on how genders are associated with particular professions or societal roles, revealing whether traditional stereotypes—such as men in leadership and women in

support roles—are maintained or challenged in official texts. Activities, the fourth category (Amini & Birjandi, 2012) ^[4], evaluates the actions assigned to different genders, analyzing whether women are depicted in passive or limited roles compared to men's portrayal in active or leadership-driven tasks. Finally, Character Attributes assesses the traits ascribed to individuals based on gender, such as the frequent portrayal of women as nurturing or emotional and men as decisive or capable. Together, these five categories offer a comprehensive lens through which the study identifies and critiques the presence of linguistic sexism in the Civil Service Commission's Memorandum Circulars.

Moreover, this study sought to explore how sexism is portrayed in the textual content of the Civil Service Commission's (CSC) Memorandum Circulars by examining specific linguistic patterns. It aimed to analyze the presence of sexism across the following categories: gender visibility, firstness, occupational role representation, and the types of activities associated with different genders. Additionally, the study investigated how character attributes within the circulars reflect gender bias. These attributes included aspects such as ability, age, emotionality or state of mind, environmentally descriptive and environmentally induced traits, intellect or education, normality or deviance, personality traits, physical appearance, physical state or condition, and rapport or reputation. Through this detailed examination, the study aimed to uncover both overt and subtle forms of linguistic sexism present in official government communication.

2. Methods

A qualitative content analysis was employed in this study, which is appropriate for examining the nuances of language and its social implications (Creswell, 2013) ^[12]. This method enabled a systematic review of recurring patterns and themes related to gender representation across five categories: gender visibility, firstness, occupational role representation, activities, and character attributes (Porreca, 1984, as cited in Espeleta *et al.*, 2024; Amini & Birjandi, 2012) ^[15, 4]. The study focused on 452 MCs issued from 2005 to 2024, aligning with the implementation of CSC Memorandum Circular No. 12, Series of 2005, which mandated the use of non-sexist language in government communication. These MCs were manually collected and reviewed, including all textual elements such as headings, body text, footnotes, resolutions, and attachments.

To analyze the data, the researcher employed a structured coding process for each of the five categories. Gender visibility was assessed by counting male and female references and labeling them sexist or non-sexist based on proportional representation. For firstness, the order of gendered mentions was tabulated to evaluate implied gender hierarchies. Occupational role representation was examined by listing professions linked to male and female figures to identify any bias. Activities were categorized by analyzing the actions associated with each gender, while character attributes were evaluated based on eleven descriptors drawn from Porreca's framework, such as ability, intellect, and emotionality. Each MC was ultimately labeled as either sexist or non-sexist depending on the balance across these five categories, forming the basis for recommendations to improve gender-sensitive language practices in CSC documents.

Ethical considerations were also strictly observed in this study.

All data came from publicly accessible MCs available on the CSC's official website, ensuring transparency and adherence to institutional protocols. The website required users to specify the purpose of access, and the researcher declared the intent as academic and research-based. No personal data were collected, and no individuals from the CSC were involved in the research, thereby maintaining confidentiality and respecting privacy. Additionally, the researcher upheld integrity and responsibility throughout the process by refraining from disclosing sensitive information and focusing solely on the language content of publicly available government documents. This ensured the research complied with ethical standards and supported the broader goal of promoting inclusive, non-discriminatory public communication.

3. Results and Discussions

The collected data were analyzed and interpreted to deepen the understanding of the study. The analysis and interpretation were structured according to the aforementioned research problems.

A. Gender Visibility

The data from Table 1 provides a year-by-year analysis of gender representation in the Civil Service Commission's (CSC) memorandum circulars (MCs) from 2005 to 2024. Findings indicate fluctuating trends in linguistic sexism, with certain years favoring male-dominated language ("Sexist M") and others favoring female representation ("Sexist F"). While the issuance of MC No. 12, Series of 2005, aimed to eliminate gender bias, early implementation did not reflect immediate compliance, as seen in 2005, which remained male-centered. In the following years, 2006 and 2007, female mentions increased, classifying these years as "Sexist F," suggesting a possible overcorrection in gender representation. However, from 2008 to 2015, male references consistently outnumbered female mentions, with 2013 showing the highest male visibility (275 mentions, 19.63%). The data demonstrate that gender representation in government communication has been inconsistent, with phases of male and female dominance rather than sustained inclusivity.

Table 1: Visibility of Males and Females

Year	No. of MCs	Males		Females		Total		Description
		<i>f</i>	%	<i>F</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	
2005	8	28	2.00	23	1.45	51	1.71	<i>Sexist (M)</i>
2006	20	50	3.57	60	3.78	110	3.68	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2007	27	42	3.00	91	5.74	133	4.45	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2008	17	110	7.85	31	1.95	141	4.72	<i>Sexist (M)</i>
2009	31	106	7.57	79	4.98	185	6.19	<i>Sexist (M)</i>
2010	25	62	4.43	83	5.23	145	4.85	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2011	24	90	6.42	59	3.72	149	4.99	<i>Sexist (M)</i>
2012	24	58	4.14	51	3.22	109	3.65	<i>Sexist (M)</i>
2013	27	275	19.63	102	6.43	377	12.62	<i>Sexist (M)</i>
2014	30	98	7.00	86	5.42	184	6.16	<i>Sexist (M)</i>
2015	18	47	3.35	74	4.67	121	4.05	<i>Sexist (M)</i>
2016	29	61	4.35	120	7.57	181	6.06	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2017	35	62	4.43	151	9.52	213	7.13	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2018	23	46	3.28	101	6.37	147	4.92	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2019	26	78	5.57	123	7.76	201	6.73	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2020	25	14	1.00	38	2.40	52	1.74	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2021	20	93	6.64	247	15.57	340	11.38	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2022	15	20	1.43	21	1.32	41	1.37	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2023	11	13	0.93	4	0.25	17	0.57	<i>Sexist (M)</i>
2024	17	48	3.43	42	2.65	90	3.01	<i>Sexist (M)</i>
Total	452	1401	47	1586	53	2987	31	<i>Sexist (F)</i>

Note: *f* = Frequency; % = Percentage; (M) = males; (F) = females

From 2016 to 2021, female references became more prominent, with most years during this period classified as "Sexist F," reflecting a shift towards greater female representation. The peak occurred in 2021, with 247 female mentions (15.57%), though this classification suggests a potential overcorrection rather than balanced representation. In contrast, from 2022 to 2024, gendered references declined significantly, with 2023 recording the lowest figures, which may indicate a move toward gender-neutral language. However, scholars caution that reducing gendered references does not necessarily mean inclusivity, as it may lead to the erasure of representation rather than equitable visibility. The overall findings highlight the ongoing challenge of achieving consistent, gender-sensitive communication in CSC's MCs. While policy directives have influenced some improvements, the inconsistent application of non-sexist language suggests that further efforts are needed to ensure true inclusivity and balanced gender representation in government discourse.

On the other hand, the persistent use of gendered language in government documents underscores the need for gender-neutral terminology, as the frequent use of male-default terms such as "he," "his," and gendered occupational titles contributes to the linguistic invisibility of women. Even when female mentions surpassed male mentions in certain years, they were often linked to caregiving roles rather than leadership positions, reinforcing traditional gender norms. The analysis of CSC Memorandum Circulars (2005-2024) reveals that despite a near-equal distribution of male and female mentions, gender biases remain entrenched through the use of masculine generic constructions and the unequal association of roles and attributes. The continued presence of sexist language across all years highlights the necessity of a more structured and deliberate approach to implementing gender-fair communication in government policies. Achieving genuine gender equality in governance and public service requires a shift toward inclusive, non-discriminatory

language practices that eliminate systemic biases in official discourse.

Some examples of gender visibility cases found in the MCs include:

1. Memorandum Circular No. 8, s. 2006

"The preference rating in an examination shall be granted by the Commission at any time upon the request of the applicant and upon submission of the documents required by the Commission even if not declared in his application/ This preference rating, however, shall not apply to the Professional Board Examination for Teachers (PBET)"

In this example, "his" was used to reference the term "applicant", which can be a male or a female.

2. Memorandum Circular No. 4, s. 2009

Bad news sells, and the front pages and prime time news play to this marketing tune. "The evil that **men** do lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones," said the Bard, and so it is public servants. Good work is buried in the inside pages (if reported at all), and the deplorable fills Page 1. Hence, this e-newsletter giving much-deserved and oft-denied attention to the laudable exploits of our civil service.

In this example, it can be observed that the word "men" was used to pertain to general public.

Another factor contributing to the higher number of male mentions in the MCs is the use of words that symbolically represent gender (e.g., brotherhood, sorority, founding father, Father of Biology, Mother Nature) and terms that include the suffix -man/-men (e.g., countrymen, freshmen, best-man, mankind). The following are examples of such words found in the examined MCs:

1. Memorandum Circular No. 9, s. 2009

a) Hold at least one talk during a flag raising ceremony to be conducted by DENR officials or civil society advocates to discuss environmental issues and concerns in the country and what people can do in their respective workplaces, houses and communities to conserve energy and resources, reduce pollution, conserve flora and fauna and otherwise preserve **Mother Earth**;

2. Memorandum Circular No. 17, s. 2006

Student
Tradesman/Craftsman
Unemployed/Between Jobs
Others (specify on the 'Remarks' Field)

The highlighted masculine generic constructions, symbolic representations, and words containing the affix -man/-men, which appear in some of the MCs, contributed to the higher number of visible male mentions, ultimately making males more prominent than females, in the recent years.

B. Firstness

In Table 2, the analysis of firstness in CSC memorandum circulars (MCs) from 2005 to 2024 reveals a persistent pattern of male-first mentions, underscoring linguistic sexism in government communication. In the early years following the implementation of

MC No. 12, Series of 2005, which mandated non-sexist language, male-first mentions remained overwhelmingly dominant. For instance, in 2005, there were 82 instances of male-first mentions with no female-first mentions recorded. Although a slight decline was observed in 2006 and 2007, with some female-first mentions appearing, the percentage remained significantly low. This trend continued in the following years, with occasional fluctuations, but the overall data suggest that male references were consistently prioritized in official discourse. Notably, in 2013, one of the most male-biased years, there were 70 male-first mentions and no female-first mentions, reinforcing the notion that gender-neutral language policies were not systematically enforced.

While some years, such as 2014 and 2015, showed a temporary decline in male-first mentions, female-first mentions did not proportionally increase, suggesting that the decrease was not necessarily indicative of greater inclusivity. A peak in male-first mentions was observed in 2017, with 95 instances (15.78%), the highest percentage recorded in the dataset. Conversely, a drastic drop occurred in 2018, with only one male-first mention and none for females, suggesting an attempt to neutralize gendered language. However, in the following years, male-first mentions continued to resurface, with a resurgence in 2020 and 2021, despite a small increase in female-first mentions in 2021. The inconsistencies in firstness across different years reflect the challenges in fully implementing non-sexist language reforms within government communication.

Between 2022 and 2024, male-first mentions declined further, reaching their lowest levels in 2023 (only three instances). However, the absence of female-first mentions in 2023 and 2024 indicates that gender balance has yet to be achieved. Overall, male-first mentions from 2005 to 2024 totaled 602 (98%), while female-first mentions accounted for only 12 instances (2%), highlighting the entrenched nature of male-centered language in government documents. Despite some improvements, the findings demonstrate that linguistic bias remains a significant issue, reinforcing the need for continued advocacy and structured efforts to promote non-sexist and gender-inclusive communication in government policies and official discourse.

Conversely, the analysis highlights the linguistic reinforcement of male dominance in CSC MCs. The systematic prioritization of male references reflects a traditional, hierarchical approach to language use, where men are positioned as the default or more important figures in official discourse. This pattern is evident in the frequent male-first ordering of paired gendered terms such as "he or she," "men and women," and "Mr. and Mrs.," which implicitly position males as the primary or more significant subjects.

In line with this, the following are the examples of paired gendered words found in some of the MCs:

1. Memorandum Circular No. 5, s. 2007

The Commission continues to enjoin all government agencies to strengthen efforts in recognizing **men and women** who have made a difference in rendering public service. The Commission also encourages individuals or organizations with extensive knowledge of the outstanding performance or exemplary behavior of an official, employee or group/team to nominate such official, employee or group/team by submitting said nomination to the nominee's office, provincial or regional PRAISE (Program on Awards and Incentive for Service Excellence) Committee. Qualified individuals or group of

2. Memorandum Circular No. 8, s. 2010

"1.2 If the respondent dies before **he/she** could explain **his/her** side through an answer to the formal charge, the administrative case shall be dismissed on account of the death of the respondent as **he/she** cannot be deemed to have been accorded the opportunity to be heard which is a basic element of due process.

The highlighted gendered paired words that appear in some of the MCs contributed to the higher number of male-first mentions, ultimately making male first-mentions more prominent than female first-mentions.

Table 2: Gender Firstness of Males and Females

Year	No. of MCs	Males		Females		Total		Description
		<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	
2005	8	82	13.62	0	0.00	82	13.36	Sexist (M)
2006	20	20	3.32	4	33.33	24	3.91	Sexist (M)
2007	27	22	3.65	1	8.33	23	3.75	Sexist (M)
2008	17	28	4.65	0	0.00	28	4.56	Sexist (M)
2009	31	27	4.49	1	8.33	28	4.56	Sexist (M)
2010	25	28	4.65	0	0.00	28	4.56	Sexist (M)
2011	24	67	11.13	1	8.33	68	11.07	Sexist (M)
2012	24	21	3.49	1	8.33	22	3.58	Sexist (M)
2013	27	70	11.63	0	0.00	70	11.40	Sexist (M)
2014	30	16	2.66	0	0.00	16	2.61	Sexist (M)
2015	18	4	0.66	0	0.00	4	0.65	Sexist (M)
2016	29	25	4.15	1	8.33	26	4.23	Sexist (M)
2017	35	95	15.78	0	0.00	95	15.47	Sexist (M)
2018	23	1	0.17	0	0.00	1	0.16	Sexist (M)
2019	26	12	1.99	0	0.00	12	1.95	Sexist (M)
2020	25	32	5.32	0	0.00	32	5.21	Sexist (M)
2021	20	28	4.65	3	25.00	31	5.05	Sexist (M)
2022	15	8	1.33	0	0.00	8	1.30	Sexist (M)
2023	11	3	0.50	0	0.00	3	0.49	Sexist (M)
2024	17	13	2.16	0	0.00	13	2.12	Sexist (M)
Total	452	602	98	12	2	614	46	Sexist (M)
Note: <i>f</i> = Frequency; % = Percentage; (M) = males; (F) = females								

In conclusion, the analysis of gender firstness in CSC Memorandum Circulars from 2005 to 2024 reveals a strong and persistent male-first bias, with male mentions overwhelmingly outnumbering female mentions in initial references. This pattern reflects deeply embedded gender hierarchies in government communication, where men are consistently positioned as the primary figures, while women remain largely invisible. Addressing this issue requires deliberate efforts to implement gender-inclusive language policies, challenge traditional male-default constructions, and actively promote gender equity in official discourse. So, with regard to firstness, sexism is portrayed in the imbalanced number of male and female first-mentions

C. Occupational Role Representations

Table 3 provides a detailed year-by-year examination of how males and females were represented in occupational roles within the Civil Service Commission's (CSC) memorandum circulars (MCs) from 2005 to 2024. The classification of each year as either Sexist (M) or Sexist (F) highlights fluctuating biases in gender representation, with some years favoring male occupational roles and others favoring female roles.

The analysis of occupational role representation in CSC memorandum circulars (MCs) from 2005 to 2024 reveals fluctuating gender biases, with certain years favoring female mentions and others reinforcing male dominance. In the early years, particularly from 2005 to 2007, female occupational roles were more frequently mentioned, leading to a Sexist (F) classification. However, this increase in female mentions does not necessarily indicate progress in gender inclusivity, as the nature of the roles attributed to women remains a

crucial factor. By 2008, the trend shifted, with male occupational mentions surpassing female ones for the first time. This pattern continued in subsequent years, with male occupational roles becoming more prominent from 2009 to 2015, reinforcing traditional gender norms in government communication. The predominance of male representation in leadership positions during this period suggests a return to entrenched gendered language patterns.

Between 2016 and 2021, female occupational mentions surged again, with 2017 recording the highest percentage of female mentions (11.40%). This period, largely classified as Sexist (F), indicates an effort to improve female visibility in government discourse. However, as noted by Sunderland (2019) ^[53], an increase in female representation does not necessarily equate to gender equality, particularly if the roles assigned to women remain stereotypical or secondary to male leadership positions. By 2022, the trend once again shifted toward male dominance, with occupational role representation favoring men in 2023 and 2024. The year 2024, in particular, exhibited a stark male bias, suggesting that despite temporary gains in female representation, male-centric professional discourse remains deeply embedded in government communication.

Over the entire 2005–2024 period, female mentions (53%) slightly outnumbered male mentions (47%), leading to an overall Sexist (F) classification. However, this does not reflect a steady progression toward gender inclusivity, as different years alternated between male and female dominance rather than maintaining a balanced representation. Additionally, the distribution of specific occupational roles reinforces these findings. Leadership titles such as

"Chairman," "Commissioner," and "Director" were predominantly associated with men, while female mentions were often linked to positions such as "Chairperson" or "employee." This pattern highlights the continued presence

of a professional hierarchy where male figures are more frequently positioned in authoritative roles, further emphasizing the need for a more consistent and balanced approach to gender representation in government discourse.

Table 3: Occupational Role Representations Associated to Males and Females

Year	No. of MCs	Males		Females		Total		Description
		<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	
2005	8	10	1.34	15	1.78	25	1.58	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2006	20	25	3.36	50	5.94	75	4.73	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2007	27	24	3.22	81	9.62	105	6.62	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2008	17	24	3.22	21	2.49	45	2.84	<i>Sexist (M)</i>
2009	31	56	7.52	41	4.87	97	6.11	<i>Sexist (M)</i>
2010	25	54	7.25	29	3.44	83	5.23	<i>Sexist (M)</i>
2011	24	61	8.19	31	3.68	92	5.80	<i>Sexist (M)</i>
2012	24	39	5.23	23	2.73	62	3.91	<i>Sexist (M)</i>
2013	27	68	9.13	36	4.28	104	6.55	<i>Sexist (M)</i>
2014	30	67	8.99	31	3.68	98	6.18	<i>Sexist (M)</i>
2015	18	31	4.16	24	2.85	55	3.47	<i>Sexist (M)</i>
2016	29	26	3.49	58	6.89	84	5.29	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2017	35	47	6.31	96	11.40	143	9.01	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2018	23	32	4.30	56	6.65	88	5.55	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2019	26	21	2.82	68	8.08	89	5.61	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2020	25	5	0.67	33	3.92	38	2.39	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2021	20	42	5.64	84	9.98	126	7.94	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2022	15	26	3.49	24	2.85	50	3.15	<i>Sexist (M)</i>
2023	11	23	3.09	5	0.59	28	1.76	<i>Sexist (M)</i>
2024	17	64	8.59	36	4.28	100	6.30	<i>Sexist (M)</i>
Total	452	745	47	842	53	1587	33	<i>Sexist (F)</i>

Note: *f* = Frequency; % = Percentage; (M) = males; (F) = females

In line with this, the following are the examples of occupational roles associated to males and females found in some of the MCs:

1. Memorandum Circular No. 15, s. 2006

"a. Any woman employee in the government service regardless of employment status, who is a victim of violence as defined under Section 3 of the Act.

"b. Any woman employee whose child is a victim of violence as defined therein and whose age is below eighteen (18) or above eighteen (18) but unable to take care of himself/herself.

2. Memorandum Circular No. 4, s. 2009

THE FIRST time she had to deliver a baby, Wenifreda Soto, a public midwife in Nabua, Camarines Sur, had to brave a strong typhoon and wade through floodwaters in the middle of the night.

The highlighted occupational roles that appear in some of the MCs contributed to the higher number of female occupational roles, making it slightly prominent than male occupational roles.

Overall, the analysis of occupational role representations in MCs from 2005 to 2024 reveals a shift from an initially

female-skewed but still sexist representation to a predominantly male-skewed pattern in later years, highlighting the persistent challenge of achieving gender-neutral language in government communication. Sexism in this category is evident not only in the unequal number of roles assigned to each gender but also in the types of roles attributed to men and women, which often reinforce traditional stereotypes. To address this issue, efforts should focus on ensuring balanced representation by eliminating gender biases in professional attributions and promoting non-stereotypical roles for both sexes. This aligns with CSC's mandate under MC No. 12, Series of 2005, which calls for non-sexist language in official communication. Reducing or eliminating sexism in occupational role representation requires an intentional approach where both men and women are equally associated with leadership and high-paying positions, as well as lower-paying and subordinate roles, to foster true inclusivity in government discourse.

D. Activities

Table 4 provides insights into the gendered distribution of activity-based references in the Civil Service Commission's (CSC) memorandum circulars (MCs). The dataset, spanning only two years—2009 and 2015—highlights the limited frequency of activity mentions and the existing disparities in how male and female activities are represented.

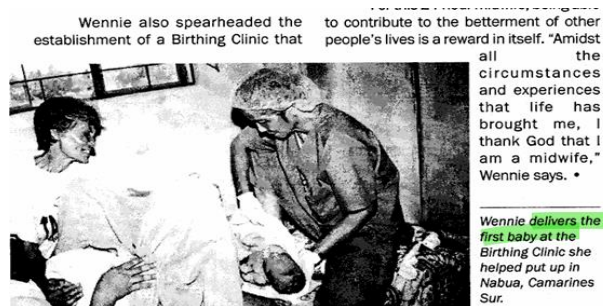
Table 4: Activities Associated to Males and Females

Year	No. of MCs	Males		Females		Total		Description
		<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	
2009	31	1	100.00	1	33.33	2	50.00	<i>Non-Sexist</i>
2015	18	0	0.00	2	66.67	2	50.00	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
Total	49	1	25	3	75	4	50	<i>Sexist (F)</i>

Note: *f* = Frequency; % = Percentage; (M) = males; (F) = females

The analysis of activity mentions in CSC MCs from 2009 and 2015 reveals a limited but gendered distribution of roles, reinforcing traditional stereotypes. In 2009, male and female activities were equally mentioned, classifying the year as Non-Sexist, yet the nature of these activities—men involved in recognition-based tasks like "examines medal" and women in caregiving roles like "deliver a baby"—highlights entrenched gender norms. By 2015, the classification shifted to Sexist (F), with only female activities recorded, both related to "breastfeeding," further reinforcing the association of women with motherhood while excluding men from caregiving or professional roles. Across both years, female mentions accounted for 75% of activity references, but the overall scarcity of activity-based mentions in government communication suggests a lack of gender-inclusive narratives. More critically, the types of activities assigned to each gender reflect traditional occupational roles, where men are linked to formal achievements while women are confined to caregiving responsibilities, underscoring the need for a more balanced and inclusive representation of activities in official discourse. Here are the mentions seen in the MCs:

1. Memorandum Circular No. 4, s. 2009 (female activity)



2. Memorandum Circular No. 4, s. 2009 (male activity)

MEDAL MAN, FROILAN C. ROQUE, Refinery Officer IV, Banko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Dilliman, Quezon City, examines medals produced from the Bar Folding Jig and Big Sunburst Fixture, both innovative equipment that he designed. His inventions generated large savings for the BSP when it produced medals for dignitaries who attended the 2007 ASEAN Summit. Roque likewise introduced innovations in the design of the 'Weighing Scale Platform' which has made the process of gold refining more efficient. On September 19, 2008, he received the CSC Pagasa Award from President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo at Malacañang Palace.

3. Memorandum Circular No. 12, s. 2015

Section 10, Rule III of the IRR of RA 10028 provides that health and non-health facilities, establishments or institutions, including public places, shall establish Lactation Stations which shall be accessible to **breastfeeding women**. Lactation stations shall be adequately provided with the necessary equipment and facilities and other items, the standards of which shall be defined by the Department of Health. Lactation Stations shall be clean, well-ventilated, comfortable and free from contaminants and hazardous substances, and shall ensure privacy for the **women to express their milk and/or in appropriate cases, breastfeed their child**.

Moving forward, addressing linguistic biases in activity representation requires a more inclusive approach to describing roles and functions within government discourse. Ensuring balanced representation of both male and female activities—without reinforcing traditional stereotypes—can contribute to a more equitable and gender-sensitive communication framework within the CSC's memorandum circulars.

Thus, with regard to activities, sexism was portrayed by the imbalanced number of activities associated to both males and females and by the kind of activities also associated to them.

5. Character Attributes

Table 5 presents data from selected years between 2006 and

2024, highlighting gender disparities in the representation of occupational roles within the Civil Service Commission's (CSC) memorandum circulars (MCs). The classification of each year as Sexist (M) or Sexist (F) reflects how gendered language influences professional role visibility in government communication.

The analysis of occupational role representation in CSC MCs from 2006 to 2021 reveals fluctuating gender biases, with certain years favoring female mentions while others showed an absence of male occupational roles. Early years such as 2006, 2008, and 2012 recorded no male occupational mentions, with only a single female mention in each year, leading to a Sexist (F) classification. By 2010, female mentions increased to five (12.20%), reinforcing the female-skewed classification, though the nature of these roles remains unclear in terms of their authority or status. A surge in female mentions occurred in 2014, where 10 references (24.39%) were recorded without any male mentions, making it the most female-biased year in the dataset. However, in 2015, male mentions appeared for the first time, suggesting a minor attempt at balance, though female mentions still outnumbered them. The year 2016 marked a rare shift to Sexist (M) classification, as male mentions (25%) surpassed female mentions, though this trend was reversed again in 2017, when female mentions peaked at nine (21.95%) with no male representation.

From 2019 to 2021, the dataset continued to show female-dominant occupational role mentions, though 2021 recorded an anomaly, with male mentions reaching their highest percentage (62.50%), despite the year still being classified as Sexist (F) overall. In the final years, 2023 and 2024, occupational role mentions became increasingly scarce, with only one female mention each year and no male mentions, underscoring a broader issue—the diminishing presence of occupational role references in government discourse. Additionally, the dataset reveals a notable absence of male character attributes, reinforcing a gender bias in representation. The lack of explicitly defined male attributes implies that masculinity is treated as neutral or the default, whereas female attributes are explicitly marked, often in ways that highlight vulnerability or biological roles. This pattern suggests that while occupational role representation fluctuates, underlying biases in gendered language remain deeply ingrained in government communication.

Here are some examples of the character attributes associated to females:

1. Memorandum Circular No. 1, s. 2010

To inspire and increase understanding of microentrepreneurs, partners from government agencies, non-government organizations, academe and the private sector on microenterprise development, government programs and services that response to the issues and concerns of the **Filipino women**, including but not limited to **women's rights, environment, family and work life balance**;

2. Memorandum Circular No. 12, s. 2008

The office or agency shall institute hotline numbers, short message service, information communication technology, or other mechanisms by which the clients may adequately express their complaints, comments or suggestions. It may also institute one-stop shops or walk-in service counters. Special lanes may be established for **pregnant women**, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities.

The highlighted character attributes present in certain MCs

contributed to the higher frequency of female character attributes, making them more prominent than male character attributes.

Table 5: Character Attributes Associated to Males and Females

Year	No. of MCs	Males		Females		Total		Description
		<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	
2006	20	0	0.00	1	2.44	1	2.04	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2008	17	0	0.00	1	2.44	1	2.04	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2010	25	0	0.00	5	12.20	5	10.20	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2012	24	0	0.00	1	2.44	1	2.04	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2013	27	0	0.00	1	2.44	1	2.04	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2014	30	0	0.00	10	24.39	10	20.41	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2015	18	1	12.50	2	4.88	3	6.12	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2016	29	2	25.00	0	0.00	2	4.08	<i>Sexist (M)</i>
2017	35	0	0.00	9	21.95	9	18.37	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2019	26	0	0.00	1	2.44	1	2.04	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2020	25	0	0.00	2	4.88	2	4.08	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2021	20	5	62.50	6	14.63	11	22.45	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2023	11	0	0.00	1	2.44	1	2.04	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
2024	17	0	0.00	1	2.44	1	2.04	<i>Sexist (F)</i>
Total	324	8	16	41	84	49	14	<i>Sexist (F)</i>

Note: *f* = Frequency; % = Percentage; (M) = males; (F) = females

Overall, the total number of mentions from 2006 to 2024 includes 41 female references (84%) and only 8 male references (16%), classifying the dataset as Sexist (F). While this may indicate increased visibility for women in occupational roles, the fluctuating pattern of representation and the overall low frequency of mentions suggest that gender balance in professional discourse remains inconsistent. Future efforts should focus on integrating occupational roles more consistently and ensuring that representations of both male and female professionals are

equitable and free from stereotypical framing.

On the other hand, in line with the categories of character attributes associated to both sexes, Table 6 provides insights into how males and females are described in government discourse, highlighting implicit gender biases in how individuals are framed in official language. The categorization reveals a clear distinction between the attributes associated with women and men, reinforcing traditional gender roles and societal expectations.

Table 6: Categories of Character Attributes Associated to Males and Females

Categories	Females	Males
Ability	with disabilities	
Age	teenage	
Emotionality/State of Mind	battered	
Environmentally Descriptive	Filipino	
	Muslim	
	indigenous	
Environmentally Induced	victim of VAW	
Personality Traits	strong	
	resilient	
	inspiring	
	empowered	
Physical State/Condition	lactating	
	pregnant	
Rapport/Reputation	beneficiaries	married
	leaders	single
	married	advocate
	agents of change	

The analysis of character attributes in government discourse reveals significant gender biases in how individuals are described. Women are exclusively labeled as "with disabilities," suggesting that female disability is more frequently acknowledged, potentially in the context of welfare programs, while men are entirely absent from this category. Similarly, the age category assigns "teenage" only to females, indicating that young women are more commonly referenced in discussions related to education and protection, reinforcing the notion that gendered discourse focuses more on female vulnerability than male development. The

emotionality/state of mind category also reflects this bias, as women are associated with the term "battered," reinforcing a victimhood narrative, while male emotional struggles remain unacknowledged. Additionally, under the environmentally descriptive category, only women are assigned terms such as "Filipino," "Muslim," and "indigenous," suggesting that their ethnic, national, and religious identities require explicit recognition, whereas men are implicitly regarded as the default representatives of these groups. Furthermore, in the environmentally induced category, only women are labeled as "victim of VAW (Violence Against Women),"

highlighting the reality of gender-based violence but failing to acknowledge that men can also be victims.

Additional gender disparities emerge in the portrayal of personality traits, physical conditions, and social roles. Women are exclusively described as "strong," "resilient," "inspiring," and "empowered," which, while positive, suggests that female strength is treated as an exception rather than a given, whereas male strength is assumed and left unmarked. Similarly, women are the only ones described by their physical state, with terms like "lactating" and "pregnant," reinforcing their identity in relation to motherhood, while men's physical conditions are not mentioned. In the rapport/reputation category, women are identified as "beneficiaries," "leaders," "agents of change," and "advocates," while men are only described by their marital status as "married" or "single." Although leadership terms for women suggest recognition of their contributions, the emphasis on them as beneficiaries reinforces a dependency narrative. Overall, the findings indicate that women are often portrayed as young, emotionally vulnerable, and defined by reproductive roles, while men are more frequently associated with ethnicity, nationality, or marital status. To address these linguistic biases, a more balanced and inclusive approach to character attributes in government communication is necessary to ensure equitable representation of both genders beyond traditional stereotypes.

4. Conclusions

The study concludes that linguistic sexism remains prevalent in the CSC's MCs despite the adoption of gender-sensitive language policies. The findings highlight inconsistencies in the application of CSC Memorandum Circular No. 12, Series of 2005, suggesting that the directive has not been fully implemented across all official communications. The continued use of male-centric language, gender-stereotyped occupational roles, and the prioritization of male references in official documents indicate systemic linguistic biases that may contribute to reinforcing gender inequalities in public administration.

Moreover, the study underscores the critical role language plays in shaping perceptions of gender roles in government institutions. Language influences how individuals perceive authority, leadership, and capability, and when government-issued documents perpetuate gender biases, they contribute to the normalization of these inequalities in broader society. The study also suggests that while some progress has been made in gender-sensitive language use, its implementation remains inconsistent, and further measures are needed to ensure that official communications are truly inclusive.

5. Recommendations

To address the persistent issue of linguistic sexism in CSC MCs and government communications, the study recommends several concrete actions:

1. Establishment of a Gender-Sensitive Language Review Committee – The Civil Service Commission (CSC) should create a Gender-Sensitive Language Review Committee to oversee the implementation of non-sexist language policies. This committee will regularly review government issuances, identify sexist language, and recommend revisions to ensure alignment with inclusive standards.
2. Strengthening the Implementation of CSC Memorandum

Circular No. 12, Series of 2005 – The CSC should update and reinforce MC No. 12, s. 2005 by providing clearer guidelines and concrete examples of gender-sensitive language. Stronger monitoring systems and accountability measures must also be implemented to ensure consistent compliance.

3. Training and Capacity-Building Programs – The CSC should conduct regular training sessions for government employees to raise awareness on linguistic sexism and promote inclusive language practices. These programs should use interactive methods to build practical skills and foster a culture of inclusivity in official communication.
4. Revision of Existing Memorandum Circulars – Previously issued MCs should be reviewed and revised to remove sexist language and align with non-sexist language standards. The Gender-Sensitive Language Review Committee should oversee this process and establish a standardized protocol for future revisions.
5. Promotion of Inclusive Terminology and Gender-Neutral Alternatives – The CSC should develop and disseminate a list of standardized gender-neutral terms for government agencies to use. This effort should be supported by awareness campaigns promoting inclusive terminology in official documents.
6. Collaboration with Other Government Agencies – The CSC should work closely with agencies like the CHR and PCW to ensure unified adoption of gender-sensitive language policies across the public sector. Joint training and shared policy development will help institutionalize inclusivity in government communication.
7. Public Awareness and Advocacy – The CSC should launch public campaigns to educate both government employees and citizens on the importance of non-sexist language. Events, online platforms, and educational materials can be used to spread awareness and encourage widespread adoption.

Further Research and Continuous Assessment – The CSC should support continuous research on linguistic sexism across various government documents beyond its MCs. Regular assessments and data-driven policy updates will ensure lasting progress toward gender-fair governance.

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