

# Sex Discrimination in Job Ads

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**D**o Filipino employers discriminate between male and female job applicants? It is difficult to answer this question with certainty. A rigorous study will entail costly observation of a sufficient number of firms while they process job applications. Tracing changes in hiring practices over long periods, looking specifically at whether or not there are evident changes in firms' treatment of job applicants on the basis of the latter's sex, is an even more difficult and costly exercise. For reasons of economy, this paper examines the question of pre-employment sex discrimination using readily available data: newspaper advertisements for job openings.

For purposes of this paper, job ads specifying the sex of prospective applicants are deemed discriminatory, while those that do not, or indicate that both males and females may apply, are considered nondiscriminatory.

The main source of data for this paper is the classified ads section of the Sunday edition of the *Manila Bulletin*, which is generally known to publish the most number of job ads among the major Philippine newspapers. The study covers all the Sundays of the years 1975, 1985 and 1995.

The study covers the following occupations: (1) accountants, accounting clerks, or bookkeepers; (2) cashiers; (3) cooks or bakers; (4) drivers; (5) engineers; (6) household helpers (maids, gardeners, housekeepers, 'yaya'); (7) managers; (8) mechanics; (9) messengers; (10) nurses; (11) office secretary; (12) sales workers (sales persons, shop assistants, management trainees); (13) security guards; (14) supervisors or foremen; (15) teachers; (16) waiters or bartenders; and (17) weavers, embroidery workers, or 'mananahi'.

Discriminatory and nondiscriminatory ads are counted for each of these occupations. Discriminatory ads are further classified into "male-preferred" and "female-preferred". The greater the share of discriminatory

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ads to the total for a given occupation, the greater is discrimination, as the term is used in this paper.

The basic statistical methods used in this paper are the computation of proportions and analysis of variance to test for similarity of proportions across three time periods.

The numerical results of this study are presented in the tables below, which were derived from **Appendix 1**.

**Table 1** shows the ratio of discriminatory ads—those that specify *either* male or female applicants, that is the numbers under “Disc.” (Discriminatory) refer to the sum of ads specifying male applicants and those specifying female ones—to the total for each occupation for each of the years covered by the study. The last three rows show the corresponding figures for all occupations.

For the 17 occupations taken together, there was a dramatic decline in the ratio of discriminatory ads from 1975 to 1985, from more than half to less than four in ten. This declined further to just slightly over one-third in 1995 (see “All Occupations” row).

The decline in discriminatory ads in 1985 was due to the halving of the ratio of male-preferred ads, whose number even went down as the number of total ads went up. In other words, between 1975 and 1985, there has been both *a relative and an absolute fall in ad placers’ preference for male applicants*.

The fall in the share of female-preferred ads to total is much less dramatic, resulting in female-preferred ads outnumbering male-preferred ones in 1985. Overall, there has been a *reversal* of sex preference in job ads since 1975, from male to female. From a 27%-to-23% advantage for males in 1975, the ratios turned to the females’ advantage in 1985 and 1995: 23%-to-14% and 20%-to-14%, respectively.

Except for teachers, whose share of discriminatory ads slightly went up, there was from 1975 to 1985 a decline in the ratio of discriminatory ads to total for all other occupations. In 1995, there were seven occupations (2, 4, 5, 6, 11, 13, and 14) whose discriminatory ad ratios went up relative to 1985. The decline in the corresponding ratios for the 10 other occupations made up for this, resulting in a lightly lower overall ratio of discriminatory ads compared to 1985.

The changes in the per-occupation ratios of discriminatory ads to total ads over two decades can be seen more clearly in **Table 2**, where the ratios for 1985 and 1995 are divided by the corresponding ratios for 1975. A resulting “ratio of ratios” that is less (more) than one means a decrease (increase) in the ratio of discriminatory ads to the total for the occupation relative to the corresponding ratio in 1975. Only one

*Table 1*  
Ratio of Discriminatory Ads to Total

	1975			1985			1995		
	Total	Disc.*	Share	Total	Disc.*	Share	Total	Disc.*	Share
1. Accountant	2,136	1,115	0.522	2,584	963	0.373	15,259	5,604	0.367
2. Cashier	155	88	0.568	614	198	0.322	1,310	623	0.476
3. Cook	348	255	0.733	1,016	450	0.443	2,387	872	0.365
4. Driver	564	416	0.738	870	408	0.469	3,165	1,761	0.556
5. Engineer	1,835	516	0.281	2,098	357	0.170	12,653	2,482	0.196
6. H. Helper	524	455	0.868	1,107	620	0.560	1,245	951	0.764
7. Manager	942	309	0.328	1,616	388	0.240	8,135	1,671	0.205
8. Mechanic	558	256	0.459	1,250	334	0.267	2,340	605	0.259
9. Messenger	104	73	0.702	76	41	0.539	671	323	0.481
10. Nurse	156	77	0.494	639	258	0.404	1,407	561	0.399
11. Off. Sec.	1,355	822	0.607	1,426	775	0.543	6,922	3,896	0.563
12. Sales	1,424	649	0.456	1,850	736	0.398	6,668	2,320	0.348
13. Sec. Guard	69	55	0.797	53	19	0.358	101	39	0.386
14. Supervisor	747	271	0.363	1,610	346	0.215	6,915	1,725	0.249
15. Teacher	153	56	0.366	276	105	0.380	1,159	220	0.190
16. Waiter	200	164	0.820	585	332	0.568	1,465	689	0.470
17. Weaver	394	304	0.772	762	503	0.660	664	311	0.468
<b>All Occ'pns</b>	<b>11,664</b>	<b>5,881</b>	<b>0.504</b>	<b>18,432</b>	<b>6,833</b>	<b>0.371</b>	<b>72,466</b>	<b>24,653</b>	<b>0.340</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>2,706</b>	<b>0.232</b>		<b>4,202</b>	<b>0.228</b>		<b>14,471</b>	<b>0.200</b>	
<b>Male</b>	<b>3,175</b>	<b>0.272</b>		<b>2,631</b>	<b>0.143</b>		<b>10,182</b>	<b>0.141</b>	

\* Disc.: Discriminatory

Table 2  
"Ratio of ratios"

	1985/1975	1995/1975
Accountant	0.71	0.70
Cashier	0.57	0.84
Driver	0.64	0.75
Engineer	0.61	0.70
Household Helper	0.65	0.88
Manager	0.73	0.63
Mechanic	0.58	0.56
Messenger	0.77	0.69
Nurse	0.82	0.81
Office Secretary	0.90	0.93
Sales	0.87	0.76
Security Guard	0.45	0.48
Supervisor	0.59	0.69
Teacher	1.04	0.52
Waiter	0.69	0.57
Weaver	0.86	0.61
<b>All Occupations</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>0.67</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>0.98</b>	<b>0.86</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>0.52</b>	<b>0.52</b>

occupation (teachers) has a ratio of more than one for 1985. For 1995, some of these "ratios of ratios" are lower (higher) than the corresponding figures for 1985, indicating decreases (increases) in the share of discriminatory ads in 1995, relative to 1985, for the relevant occupations. Again, the dramatic overall decline in male preference can be seen in the male overall "ratio of ratio" being less than one in 1985 and in its further decline in 1995.

Table 3 shows that household helpers were consistently high (1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup>) in the rankings, while supervisors, managers and engineers were consistently low. Some occupations had their ranks consistently declining (cooks), consistently rising (office secretary, messengers), V-shaped (declining, rising: security guards, drivers, cashiers), and inverted-V shaped (rising, declining: weavers, mechanics, sales, teachers).

Table 4 presents the share of discriminatory ads separately for males and females. The following observations can be made for the individual occupations:<sup>1</sup>

*Accountant.* Female-preference went up from 21% (1975) to 31% (1985 and 1995); male-preference went down dramatically from 31%

<sup>1</sup> Fe(male)-preference" refers to the share of (fe)male-preferred ads to total; if dominance of preference for one sex over preference for the other is meant, it will be stated explicitly.

Table 3

## Ranking occupations by highest to lowest share of discriminatory ads

Rank	1975	1985	1995
1	H' hold Helper	0.868 Weavers	0.660 H'hold Helpers
2	Waiter	0.820 Waiters	0.568 Office Secretary
3	Security Guard	0.797 H'hold Helpers	0.560 Drivers
4	Weaver	0.772 Office Secretary	0.543 Messengers
5	Driver	0.738 Messengers	0.539 Cashiers
6	Cook	0.733 Drivers	0.469 Waiters
7	Messenger	0.702 Cooks	0.443 Weavers
8	Office Secretary	0.607 Nurses	0.404 Nurses
9	Cashier	0.568 Sales	0.398 Security Guards
10	Accountant	0.522 Teachers	0.380 Accountants
11	Nurse	0.494 Accountants	0.373 Cooks
12	Mechanic	0.459 Security Guards	0.358 Sales
13	Sale	0.456 Cashiers	0.322 Mechanics
14	Teacher	0.366 Mechanics	0.267 Supervisors/
15	Supervisor	0.363 Managers	0.240 Managers
16	Manager	0.328 Supervisors/	0.215 Engineers
17	Engineer	0.281 Engineers	0.170 Teachers
	All Occupations	0.504	0.371

to 7% and 6%. The result was a clear reversal in sex-preference in favor of female accountants.

*Cashier.* Female-preference fluctuated, but was consistently higher than male-preference, which went down.

*Cooks.* Female-preference consistently went down; male-preference was rather stable, and overtook female-preference by 1985.

*Driver.* Male-preference, while declining, was dominant over the whole period.

*Engineer.* Female-preference went up slightly; male-preference went down by about a third, but dominated female-preference.

*Household Helper.* Male-preference, consistently much lower than female-preference, went down. Female-preference fluctuated but remained at very high levels.

*Manager.* Male-preference went down by more than half, but continued to be higher than female-preference.

*Mechanic.* "Female applicants not wanted", the ads could have announced. Male-preference, though, was declining.

*Messenger.* Another male-dominated job, although male-wanted ads went down to less than half of total.

*Nurse.* Females dominated, but not to the same extent as males did for the jobs of mechanic and messenger. Preference for either male or female was declining.

Table 4  
 Proportion of female and male ads to total per occupation

	1975		1985		1995	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
1 Accountant	20.83	31.37	30.50	6.77	30.98	5.75
2 Cashier	48.39	8.39	31.27	0.98	44.43	3.13
3 Cook	48.85	24.43	23.82	20.47	12.82	23.71
4 Driver	0.71	73.05	5.29	41.61	1.17	54.47
5 Engineer	0.27	27.85	1.29	15.73	2.13	17.48
6 H'hold Helper	74.62	12.21	48.51	7.50	70.44	5.94
7 Manager	3.50	29.30	10.21	13.80	6.80	13.74
8 Mechanic	0.00	45.88	0.16	26.56	0.00	25.85
9 Messenger	0.96	69.23	5.26	48.68	2.98	45.16
10 Nurse	43.59	5.77	32.39	7.98	36.03	3.84
11 Office Secretary	56.90	3.76	49.30	5.05	54.55	17.34
12 Sales Worker	18.33	27.25	26.59	13.19	20.56	14.23
13 Security Guard	2.90	76.81	5.66	30.19	2.97	35.64
14 Supervisor	3.88	32.40	5.53	15.96	8.08	16.86
15 Teacher	24.84	11.76	6.16	31.88	16.57	2.41
16 Waiter	65.50	16.50	41.37	15.38	27.99	19.04
17 Weaver	71.57	5.58	58.53	7.48	42.32	4.52
<b>All Occupations</b>	<b>23.20</b>	<b>27.22</b>	<b>22.80</b>	<b>14.27</b>	<b>19.97</b>	<b>14.05</b>

*Office Secretary.* Increasing male-preference was not enough to overturn the dominant preference for females.

*Sales worker.* There was a reversal in preference toward favoring females.

*Security Guard.* Although male-preference was halved, females continued to lag behind males.

*Supervisor.* Females narrowed the gap in favor of male applicants.

*Teacher.* Seesawing dominance of the sexes.

*Waiter.* General decline in sex-discrimination, but females still dominated.

*Weaver.* This remained largely a woman's job over the period.

From the above, the following patterns emerge:

*Reversals in patterns of discrimination.* This is true of accountants, sale workers and cooks.

*Persistence of sex preference in several occupations.* Females continued to be preferred as cashiers, household helpers, office secretaries, nurses, teachers, waiters, and weavers. Males, on the other hand, dominated as drivers, engineers, managers, mechanics, messengers, security guards, and supervisors.

## Stable preferences

Appendix 2 presents the results of the analysis of variance tests (at the 0.5 level) against the proportions indicating discrimination by sex over the three periods for all the selected occupations. The following occupations showed very low and stable levels of preference over time for the sex indicated:

1. cooks: male
2. mechanics: female
3. messengers: female
4. security guards: female
5. waiters: male
6. weavers: male

## Conclusion

Based on the declining overall proportion of advertisements indicating sex preference for the seventeen occupations selected for this study, we may speak of decreasing pre-employment sex discrimination between 1975 and 1995. This does not mean, however, that sex discrimination has declined or been eliminated for each of the occupations. Some occupations exhibited persistence in putting out discriminatory ads in favor of one or the other sex, while others showed reversals in the sex favored by employers. There are occupations that appear to have remained more or less "exclusively (fe)male", although the level of "traditional" sex preference for some of these occupations has gone down over two decades.

While the results of this study raise hopes that sex discrimination in hiring employees is on a downward trend generally, studies still have to be done about the actual hiring practices of employers. Nondiscriminatory job ads do not guarantee that applicants will not be discriminated against on the basis of their sex when they actually apply for jobs. It is important to verify whether or not the implicit message of neutrality and fairness in job ads that do not specify the sex of applicants is sustained by actual hiring procedures.

*Appendix 1.*  
**Discriminatory Ads for Selected Occupations: 1975, 1985, and 1995**  
 (Based on Manila Bulletin's Sunday Advertisements)

Selected Occupations	1975			1985			1995		
	No.	Percent	Std. Dev.	No.	Percent	Std. Dev.	No.	Percent	Std. Dev.
	1. Accountants, Acctg. Clerks, Bookkeepers Female Male	2,136 445 670	20.83 31.37	.4062 .4641	2,584 788 175	30.50 6.77	.4605 .2513	15,259 4,727 877	30.98 5.75
2. Cashiers Female Male	155 75 13	48.39 8.39	.5014 .2781	614 192 6	31.27 0.98	.4640 .0984	1,310 582 41	44.43 3.13	.4971 .1742
3. Cooks/Bakers Female Male	348 170 85	48.85 24.43	.5006 .4303	1,016 242 208	23.82 20.47	.4262 .4037	2,387 306 566	12.82 23.71	.3344 .4254
4. Drivers Female Male	564 4 412	0.71 73.05	.0839 .4441	870 46 362	5.29 41.61	.2239 .4932	3,165 37 1,724	1.17 54.47	.1075 .4981
5. Engineers Female Male	1,835 5 511	0.27 27.85	.0521 .4484	2,098 27 330	1.29 15.73	.1127 .3642	12,653 270 2,212	2.13 17.48	.1445 .3798
6. Household Helps, Maid, Gardeners, Housekeepers, 'Yaya'	524 391 64	74.62 12.21	.4356 .3278	1,107 537 83	48.51 7.50	.5000 .2635	1,245 877 74	70.44 5.94	.4565 .2365
7. Managers Female Male	942 33 276	3.50 29.30	.1840 .4554	1,616 165 223	10.21 13.80	.3029 .3450	8,135 553 1,118	6.80 13.74	.2517 .3443



Selected Occupations	1975			1985			1995		
	No.	Percent	Std. Dev.	No.	Percent	Std. Dev.	No.	Percent	Std. Dev.
8. Mechanics	558			1,250			2,340		
Female	0			2	0.16	.0399	0		
Male	256	45.88	.4987	332	26.56	.4418	605	25.85	.4379
9. Messengers	104			76			671		
Female	1	0.96	.0980	4	5.26	.2248	20	2.98	.1702
Male	72	69.23	.4638	37	48.68	.5031	303	45.16	.4980
10. Nurses	156			639			1,407		
Female	68	43.59	.4975	207	32.39	.4683	507	36.03	.4803
Male	9	5.77	.2339	51	7.98	.2712	54	3.84	.1922
11. Office									
Secretary	1,355			1,426			6,922		
Female	771	56.90	.4954	703	49.30	.5001	3,776	54.55	.4980
Male	51	3.76	.1904	72	5.05	.2190	120	17.34	.1305
12. Sales, Sales Person, Shop Assts., Mgt. Trainees									
Female	1,424			1,850			6,668		
Male	261	18.33	.3870	492	26.59	.4420	1,371	20.56	.4042
13. Security Guards	388	27.25	.4454	244	13.19	.3385	949	14.23	.3494
Female	69			53			101		
Male	2	2.90	.1690	3	5.66	.2333	3	2.97	.1706
14. Supervisors/Foremen	53	76.81	.4251	16	30.19	.4635	36	35.64	.4813
Female	747			1,610			6,915		
Male	29	3.88	.1933	89	5.53	.2283	559	8.08	.2726
15. Teachers	242	32.40	.4683	257	15.96	.3664	1,166	16.86	.3744
Female	153			276			1,159		
Male	38	24.84	.4335	17	6.16	.4669	192	16.57	.3719
16. Waiters/Bartenders	18	11.76	.3232	88	31.88	.2409	28	2.41	.1536
Female	200			585			1,465		
Male	131	65.50	.4766	242	41.37	.4929	410	27.99	.4491
17. Weavers/Embroidery Workers	33	16.50	.3721	90	15.38	.3611	279	19.04	.3928
Female	394			762			664		
Male	282	71.57	.4516	446	58.53	.4930	281	42.32	.4944
Female	22	5.58	.2299	57	7.48	.2632	30	4.52	.2079
Male									

Appendix 2.

**Analysis of Variance of Proportion of Discriminatory Ads  
by Sex for Selected Occupations  
1975, 1985 and 1995**

**1. Accountants/Accounting Clerks/Bookkeepers**

		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
MALE	Between Groups	2	61.998	854.363	.000
	Within Groups	19976	.073		
	Total	19978			
FEMALE	Between Groups	2	9.708	45.587	.000
	Within Groups	19976	0.208		
	Total	19978			

**2. Cashiers**

		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
MALE	Between Groups	2	.350	12.632	.000
	Within Groups	2076	.028		
	Total	2078			
FEMALE	Between Groups	2	4.096	17.209	
	Within Groups	2076	.238		
	Total	2078			

**3. Cooks/Bakers**

		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
MALE	Between Groups	2	.418	2.371	.094
	Within Groups	3748	.176		
	Total	3750			
FEMALE	Between Groups	2	21.239	147.942	.000
	Within Groups	3748	.144		
	Total	3750			

**4. Drivers**

		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
MALE	Between Groups	2	16.924	70.244	.000
	Within Groups	4596	.241		
	Total	4598			
FEMALE	Between Groups	2	.624	34.079	.000
	Within Groups	4596	.018		
	Total	4598			

**5. Engineers**

		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
MALE	Between Groups	2	9.470	63.528	.000
	Within Groups	16583	.149		
	Total	16585			
FEMALE	Between Groups	2	.312	17.479	.000
	Within Groups	16583	.018		
	Total	16585			

**6. Household Helps/ Maids/ Gardeners/ Housekeepers/ 'Yaya'**

		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
MALE	Between Groups	2	.728	10.326	.000
	Within Groups	2873	.071		
	Total	2875			
FEMALE	Between Groups	2	18.598	84.148	.000
	Within Groups	2873	.221		
	Total	2875			

**7. Managers**

		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
MALE	Between Groups	2	10.382	82.104	.000
	Within Groups	10690	.126		
	Total	10692			
FEMALE	Between Groups	2	1.425	21.906	.000
	Within Groups	10690	.065		
	Total	10692			

**8. Mechanics**

		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
MALE	Between Groups	2	9.466	47.217	.000
	Within Groups	4145	.200		
	Total	4147			
FEMALE	Between Groups	2	.001	2.320	.098
	Within Groups	4145	.000		
	Total	4147			

**9. Messengers**

		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
MALE	Between Groups	2	2.610	10.674	.000
	Within Groups	848	.244		
	Total	850			
FEMALE	Between Groups	2	.041	1.435	.239
	Within Groups	848	.029		
	Total	850			

## 10. Nurses.

		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
MALE	Between Groups	2	.380	7.787	.000
	Within Groups	2199	.049		
	Total	2201			
FEMALE	Between Groups	2	.839	3.669	.026
	Within Groups	2199	.229		
	Total	2201			

## 11. Office Secretaries

		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
MALE	Between Groups	2	.775	31.931	.000
	Within Groups	9700	.024		
	Total	9702			
FEMALE	Between Groups	2	2.245	9.056	.000
	Within Groups	9700	.248		
	Total	9702			

## 12. Sales/ Sales Persons/ Shop Assistants/ Management Trainees

		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
MALE	Between Groups	2	10.775	81.871	.000
	Within Groups	9939	.132		
	Total	9941			
FEMALE	Between Groups	2	3.402	20.325	.000
	Within Groups	9939	.167		
	Total	9941			

## 13. Security Guards

		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
MALE	Between Groups	2	4.466	21.073	.000
	Within Groups	220	.212		
	Total	222			
FEMALE	Between Groups	2	.015	.428	.652
	Within Groups	220	.035		
	Total	222			

## 14. Supervisors/ Foremen

		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
MALE	Between Groups	2	8.522	58.556	.000
	Within Groups	9269	.146		
	Total	9271			
FEMALE	Between Groups	2	.902	13.354	.000
	Within Groups	9269	.068		
	Total	9271			

## 15. Teachers

		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
MALE	Between Groups	2	.671	17.975	.000
	Within Groups	1585	.037		
	Total	1587			
FEMALE	Between Groups	2	2.811	17.917	.000
	Within Groups	1585	.157		
	Total	1587			

## 16. Waiters/ Bartenders

		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
MALE	Between Groups	2	.300	2.049	.129
	Within Groups	2247	.147		
	Total	2249			
FEMALE	Between Groups	2	14.087	65.626	.000
	Within Groups	2247	.215		
	Total	2249			

## 17. Weavers/ Embroidery Workers/ 'Mananahi'

		df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
MALE	Between Groups	2	.160	2.842	.000
	Within Groups	1817	.056		
	Total	1819			
FEMALE	Between Groups	2	11.207	47.667	.000
	Within Groups	1817	.235		
	Total	1819			