Facebook Commentaries in Leni Robredo's Presidential Campaign: Sexism Illumination

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Sexism in social media sites has rarely been looked into and has been scarcely seen as a crucial subject to research studies, which is alarming to the desire to achieve an equal and just society. This study focused on the sexist rhetoric used in the commentaries on 2022 Presidentiable Leni Robredo to reveal how prevalent and existing sexism in the Philippines through language is. Comments are gathered from Facebook posts pertaining to Atty. Leni Robredo. The study employed a qualitativedescriptive research design, specifically content analysis, to analyze sexist words and phrases. The weight and capability of each word's sexism were compared when it is used to insult, degrade, and malign a woman to determine its level of sexism. The study revealed that deep-rooted gender biases and sexism through language are still highly functioning in society, as is observed and experienced online. Hostile sexism is the most pervasive level of sexism and hence contributes to widespread sexism in the country and is more commonly done by the majority of males than females. It is recommended that academe should promote unbiased gender language by making every term and phrase gender inclusive as an introduction lesson/subject) to avoid sexism.

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1. INTRODUCTION

"The best man for the job is a woman," claims former Vice-President of the Philippines, Leni Robredo, the only female presidential candidate in the May 2022 elections. Robredo has a difficult time winning over voters despite her stellar record of public service. Similar to numerous other female politicians who experienced offensive remarks (Haraldsson & Wängnerud, 2018; Tahsini & Duci, 2022), Atty. Leni Robredo has had to contend with lingering gender stereotypes and prejudices during her campaign and administration only because they are women. Even though more women are pursuing leadership positions, misogyny persists in many democratic cultures, with gender norms favoring men as leaders.

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Sexism is the term for prejudice or discrimination that stems from someone's sexual orientation or gender preference. It can result in a range of negative behaviors, such as hostile acts and expressions that discreetly support preconceived notions. Sexism, in all its manifestations, is harmful to society as a whole. Sexism affects people of all genders, although women are disproportionately affected. It also has less obvious negative effects on men (Leonard, 2021).

Furthermore, Leonard (2021) stated that actions, words, writing, gestures, laws, policies, traditions, and practices can all be used to communicate sexism. Triana et al. (2019), in multivariate analyses, found that women's disadvantaged psychological well-being had a negative association with workplace discrimination based on gender beliefs but not men's. Stepanikova et al. (2020) examined the effect of a road construct of "felt gender discrimination." They found out that for prevalent mental diseases like depression, women are affected two to three times more often than males. At the same time, Varadarajan (2020) studied the reform of Feminist language planning, the endeavor to alter how individuals, behaviors, and concepts are classified through language on an interpersonal and personal level.

Moreover, sexism has been studied in terms of its impact on the choices of the voters during elections. De Geus et al. (2022) found that sexist sentiments are held by 50% of people and are correlated with gender, education, religion, and authoritarian ideals. They demonstrate that sexism matters for political rivalry in situations where gender is not immediately apparent. Bäck et al. (2020) found that hostile sexism was less likely to support a female candidate and more likely to support a male candidate, while benevolent sexism revealed the opposite result. Winter (2022) found that hostile and benevolent sexist attitudes opposed female candidates with feminine leadership styles. These studies focused more on the sexist ideologies and attitudes of the respondents and not on language sexism.

In the Philippine context, sexism has been rarely studied. The rare studies include Sales et al. (2022), Fajardo & Buenaventura (2023), Macatangay et al. (2023), Rivera & Adriatico (2022), Evangelista (2017) and Tarrayo (2014), which found the prevalence of sexism in a different context which includes television advertisements, student publications, family setting, workplace, social media, and textbooks. This rare literature on sexism is alarming to the desire to achieve an equal and just society using language.

Based on the recently conducted research above, language sexism and sexism, in general, have been explored in terms of their harmful effects on both men and women, as well as the role that men can play in fighting and undermining it. However, in most curricula mentioned above, sexism in social media sites has rarely been investigated. It has been scarcely seen as a crucial subject to study and analyze, particularly in the Philippine setting. The researchers could cater to recent events and, prominently, the last Presidential election, where only one woman stood against a strong misogynistic and male-centered group of candidates. That said, social media comments and platforms have exhibited obscene amounts of Sexism toward Atty. Leni Robredo.

Hence, the researchers presumed that sexism against women is still highly existent and has permeated the linguistic system, which tends to prejudice former presidential candidate Atty. Leni Robredo and her candidacy for the highest office in the country by obscuring or ignoring her and promoting male dominance ideals simultaneously. Thus, this study aimed to reveal existing sexism reflected upon using words and phrases on Facebook commentaries about 2022 Presidentiable Atty. Leni Robredo. By analyzing selected

commentaries during her three-month-long campaign, the researchers can conclude how prevalent sexism is in the Philippines through language, which the researchers can reinforce a new process to avoid this type of behavior, which can be effective and celebratory for the women in the country.

The study's findings could contribute to UNESCO's fifth Sustainable Development Goal, gender equality. A key aspect of human dignity and a prerequisite for democratic systems is equal treatment of women and men. Equality must be achieved for a secure, prosperous, and sustainable world. Social harmony and sustainable growth are contingent upon women having a comparable voice in political and economic governance structures.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Unfairness or injustice rooted in an individual's sexual orientation or gender preference has been referred to as sexism. It could trigger an array of detrimental conduct involving acts of aggression and discretely solidifying critiques concerning preconceived notions. Sexism, in all its manifestations, is detrimental and undermines humanity. Males and females are impacted by sexism, but women are most severely affected. It also harms men, though less apparent (Leonard, 2021).

Language can be compared to a mirror image of society or "a method of assessment to evaluate the social views" in various societal contexts and historical eras. Along with social variables, cultural background, economic prosperity, and educational attainment, gender significantly impacts language use. It is crucial to remember how gender goes hand in hand with language; this is where language sexism, also referred to as linguistic sexism, comes into view. Speech that reinforces status disparities and gender preconceptions is called linguistic sexism.

Sexism is a kind of gender bias learned early in life – people are unaware of it. It is a linguistic habit that is challenging to break since it preserves social status and conventional values. Furthermore, sexist language is constantly seen in media, specifically in social media, i.e., Facebook, newspapers, textbooks, and many written and spoken works, proving the existence of language sexism. Although Filipino is commonly thought of as a genderneutral language, our dictionaries represent the outdated views that some sections of society still hold. There is still the patriarchal prescription for women to become mothers to fulfill the duty of their gender (Gender, Media and Language in the Philippines and Thailand: A Transnational Conversation).

Stepanikova et al. (2020) revealed that viewpoints on prejudices against women at work demonstrated a negative association with women's psychological state, while aggravated views toward sex are associated with women's natural physical capabilities. Gender inequality and health to investigate the relationship between a woman's mental health and the broad concept of "felt gender discrimination." The primary objective of the research was to uncover more about how the concept could possibly have an integral part in the gender disparity in the prevalence of common psychological conditions like depressive disorders, which affect women up to three times more frequently than men.

Most languages are apparently coined for men, and women are recurrently constrained in using terms originally meant for men. For instance, the suffix -ess is typically added to terms like manager and author to make them feminine. The absence of this vocabulary indicates how gendered power dynamics are always used to define female language compared to masculine language (Cameron, 2020).

Feminist language planning is the struggle and desire to modify how people perceive and use language in classifying entities, conducts, and beliefs ranging from personal and social perspectives. Political and grassroots organizations typically do this work. Although there has been some progress, it is becoming increasingly clear that, for the vast majority of women and girls worldwide, meaningful change has come about in an excruciatingly sluggish way. As it focuses on words and phrases used as a component of sexist actions online, this study first strongly emphasizes semantics (Varadarajan, 2020).

One of the critical areas that make up the subject of linguistics is semantics, which is described as the meaning of a word, phrase, sentence, or text. The meaning of a sentence is among its most crucial components. The structure of a word depends heavily on its meaning. The fundamental meaning principles of a language can indeed change throughout time. Semantics aims to understand why meaning is more nuanced than the simple sum of the words used to make a phrase (Kun, 2022).

Pérez-Sabater (2015) claims that because English takes lexical choices that are regarded as masculine in nature, it is sexist. According to this school of thought, linguistic portrayal is ethnocentric and no longer an accessible and neutral way of depicting the real world. The English language is sexist because it demonstrates men as the standard and women as a rare occurrence or as an afterthought. This is accurate since men are always considered superior in all forms of English, even when they represent men and women everywhere. According to Canh (2017), there is clear prejudice in language in classifications where there is a male element, which indicates a male-dominated position in society. Using the pronouns "he" or "his" is a prevalent instance of this. "Man" has been used as a term for "person" or "human being" since the Old English period in the evolution of English literature. Empirical evidence, as demonstrated in the academic literature, indicates that the term stays untouched to this day as it is still used for assertions for both males and females.

According to Willis and Jozkowski (2018), language affects how people perceive the world and themselves. Various languages have different functions for gender; linguistic sexism is an umbrella term for racial prejudice based on the social classification of gender. Putting masculine notions ahead of feminine notions on a regular basis qualifies as "male firstness." Language sexism should not be present in peer-reviewed research because academic writing has to be impartial. To determine the frequency of male firstness in academic writing, the researchers examined 862 newly published papers from 10 social science journals covering the fields of psychology, sexual orientation, and wellness, along with three additional fields of study. Women are portrayed in the media in many ways, including stereotypes that have persisted over time, such as that a woman is dumb, weak, incapable of doing a man's work, and that she belongs at home caring for the family. Such ideas persuade the audience to believe that women are such. Not only does the media portray stereotypes that hypersexualize a woman's body, implying that women are only valuable because of their bodies. Such messages affect women both physically and mentally. Sexism in the media is brutal to eradicate, but there are steps one could follow to lessen sexism, and women will have a better environment and equal opportunities.

Upholding that learning a language entails imbibing a culture, Tarayo (2014) investigated the underlying cause of sexism in six Philippine English-language early childhood educational materials. This review denotes the undermining sexism in the Philippines relating to our study about the long-standing language sexism that is continuously being observed. The study data show that while both sexes appear in the textbooks, males appear more frequently than females in the textbook illustrations. Males

come before girls more frequently in terms of "firstness," which could suggest that the textbooks favor men and are, therefore, sexist. Women also appear far less frequently in professional contexts than males do. Additionally, male vocations display a more extensive range, giving them more possibilities than females. However, women's career options are more constrained and less varied than those of men, with a few notable exceptions. Furthermore, all genders are given the same number of character traits. Females are frequently stereotyped as having "excellent" looks and being passive, whereas males exhibit hostility, dominance, and activity. Female hobbies and lifestyles are more prevalent than male ones in the textbooks under analysis. However, indoor occupations, such as housework, are more heavily populated by women.

Sexism has always been such a problem in the Philippines; hence, being physically seen and read on pages of books, textbooks, and the media can quickly be accumulated by the students utilized by prominent publications and institutions. Sales et al. (2022) found that television advertisements can be an avenue of sexist platforms. Fajardo & Buenaventura (2023) revealed the prevalence of sexism in student publications of Bulacan State University, Philippines through the dominant use of masculine pronouns. Macatangay et al. (2023) also found that sexism still existed, especially in the family setting, and daughters in the family received derogatory remarks and were called names due to their perceived gender. Rivera and Adriatico (2022) observed sexist language in the Facebook updates of the most popular female social networking personality in the Philippines. This prompted a suggestion that fair language be used on social media. Evangelista (2017) revealed that, despite the government's efforts to promote gender equality, women respondents faced gender prejudices in the workplace, particularly in the institution's rules and processes at the Higher Academic Institution in Catbalogan City, Samar, Philippines.

This non-stop sexist approach is keen to withstand its ground because it is passed on without being reprimanded. The researchers envisioned to establish a sexism-free community in Philippine society. This study is, therefore, feasible because previous studies that dealt with a similar topic, namely "sexism in the media and its impact on women," have dealt with it. Additionally, this study will investigate and delve deeper into additional semantic aspects that still need to be addressed.

3. METHOD

3.1 Research Design

This study utilized qualitative descriptive research. This would identify the sexist language in the commentaries from Facebook infographics and videos with a duration of not more than 3 minutes. The researchers aimed to reveal the sexist language of the 2022 Presidentiable Leni Robredo commentaries. By analysing a few selected commentaries during the three-month-long campaign period on Leni Robredo's candidacy, the researchers concluded how highly existing sexism through language was in the Philippines. By then, researchers can reinforce a new way process to avoid this type of behavior that is effective and celebratory for the women in the country.

Rather than any other type of analysis, content analysis was used in this work to identify the emergence of particular terms, ideas, or themes in every qualitative piece of data. Using this technique, the researchers can quantify and examine the presence, meanings, and connections between sexism and language. Content analysis will be utilized as a primary tool in gathering data. Following this, the data result from the in-depth analysis

was divulged as the basis for the researchers' required data to achieve the study product. The exhibition and categorization or leveling of sexist language, identified as benevolent, hostile, ambivalent, interpersonal, and internalized, is based on the study of Glick and Fiske (2001) and Leonard (2021).

3.2 Sources of Data

The desk research approach was utilized for the context of this study. As a result, both secondary and primary data were employed. The first-hand information was collected from the commentaries found on the social media platform, Facebook, Facebook infographics, and Facebook videos with a duration not exceeding 3 minutes. Secondary data sources included textbooks, prior research papers, publications available on websites, and interviews.

3.3 Data-Gathering Procedures and Analysis

The analytical data of the sexist language in the commentaries during Atty. Leni Robredo's three-month-long campaign period on Facebook underwent two phases. Phase 1: Exhibition of Sexism; Phase 2: Levelling of Sexist Language based on the study of Glick & Fiske (2001) and (Leonard, 2021).

Phase One: Exhibition of Sexism. The researchers identified the Facebook comments that exhibit sexism on both Facebook infographics and Facebook videos within the premise of vlogs and interviews with not more than a 3-minute duration. The researchers scanned and analyzed the different Facebook posts that may be coming from a personal Facebook account or pages if the post was about Presidential candidate Atty. Leni Robredo, the time stamp was from February, March, and April 2022. Phase Two: Levelling of Sexist Language. The comments were categorized according to the corresponding level of sexism. The researchers categorized the selected commentaries based on the curated chart supported with findings from previous research papers and other scholarly journals regarding the notion of sexism found on the web.

4. RESULTS

This section presents the sexist Facebook commentaries and their level of sexism.

Table 1Sexist Facebook Commentaries

Facebook Infographics	Facebook Videos	
Words	Words	
Weak	Emosyonal [Emotional]	
Bobo [Stupid]	Pariwara [Careless]	
Lutang [Absent-Minded]	Bayaran [Sex Slave/Slut]	
Puppet	Pangit [Ugly]	
Napakatanga [very stupid]	Puppet	
Ambitious & Judgmental	Pinakamahina [Weakest]	
Desperada [Desperate]	Paepal [Fake]	
Sinungaling [Liar]	Saltik [Mentally III]	
Malandi [Flirty]	Bobo [Stupid]	
Putanginamo [Mother is Whore]	MADUMB [dumb]	

Phrases
"Babae para sa kama lang."
[women are for bed only]
"Walang alam sa pamamalakad"
[does not know about running a government]
"Walang alam sa pamomono"
[doesn't know about leadership]
"Baka ma-offend, babae eh & kasi babae"
[Might get offended, for she is a woman]
"Na paka sensitive self centered, napakalayo sa dunong ni"
[That is still sensitive, self-centered, and very far from wisdom]
"Pagtatawananat pagsasabihang boba, tanga, bugok, Bobita"
[laughing and saying stupid, stupid, stupid, fool]
"Lutang wla talaga sa kanyang isipan."
[Nothing really floated in her mind]
"Puppet, Lutang leader."
[Puppet, floating/dumb leader]
"Boba talaga"
[Really fool]
"SINUNGALING, MANDARAYA at Mapagkunwari."
[Liar, Cheater and Hypocrite]
"Nanalo ka lang naman dahil dinaya."

Table 1 presents the comments gathered from Facebook Infographics and Facebook Videos. The following phrases and words are categorized from the medium they were taken from. Ten words and nine phrases were gathered from commentaries under Facebook Infographics, and ten words and eleven phrases were gathered from commentaries under Facebook videos. "Desperado" (Desperate), "Malandi" (Flirty), weak, ambitious," and "bobo" (stupid) are some of the many sexist terms used in the comments about Atty. Leni Robredo.

Based on the results, the deep-rooted gender biases and sexism through language are still highly functioning in the Philippines, as Presidential candidate Atty. Leni Robredo observed and experienced online. Social media provides sexist language and narratives that had lain inactive in society a fresh beginning, undermining diversity and polite conversation norms as well as standardizing abuse and the lack of accountability of those who commit it. Although campaign sexism is not new, digital technology has made organizing, amplifying, and financing gendered disinformation efforts much more straightforward. While the consensus and online communities contend that sexism and

misogyny in society are apparent in the use of social media, this dismisses the way social media functions as a "behavioral adaptation structure," enabling users to engage in ways that they would not traditionally respond and manipulating users through the use of machine learning principles (Haraldsson & Wängnerud, 2018).

Table 2Sexism in Facebook Infographics' Comments

Level of Sexism	Words	Phrases	Frequency
1. Benevolent	Weak	"Mahina sa on-the-spot decision making kase mabilis lang siya madidiktahan."	4
		[strong leader, someone who has a mind of his own, fooled herself into running a position she does not deserve]	
2. Interpersonal	Bobo [Dumb] Lutang [Floating/Dumb] Puppet Napakatanga [Very Stupid]		4
3. Internalized	Ambitious & Judgmental Desperada [Desperate] Putanginamo [Whore]	NOT QUALIFIED TO LEAD THE COUNTRY	4
4. Ambivalent			
5. Hostile	Sinungaling [Liar] Malandi [Flirty]	"Got famous for her husband's tragic death (just like Cory)."	8
		"Don't need women to rule our country. We need a man to do it."	
		a woman busy carrying herself and her color selfishly	
		"wag lang babae" [not just a woman]	
		"Hindi talaga pwede na maging president ang mga babae"	
		[women cannot be a president]	

Table 2 lists the sexist comments found on Facebook posts on Atty. Leni Robredo during her campaign with the corresponding level of sexism. It identifies the sexist comments and levels of sexism they fall into. Words and phrases reflect a person's character and views. It can determine if a person is sexist or what they feel according to their statements online or offline.

Furthermore, the table above vividly shows that sexism occurs more prevalently on these levels: hostile, interpersonal, internalized, and benevolent sexism. It is also shown that sexism occurs barely on ambivalent sexism. The most glaring instance of sexism identified and listed is hostile, which contains eight comments, followed by benevolent, interpersonal, and internalized, with four comments each. 16 out of 20 sexist comments come from men, whereas women craft four sexist comments. The fact that males make up most sexist remarks compared to females illustrates how consistently prejudiced and biased against female males are. The genders are not assumed by the researchers but taken up from their Facebook profiles.

Hostile sexism is illuminated by the following extract below:

Extract 1: C9W1M

"Malandi¹ talaga² si³ Leni⁴ tulad⁵ ng⁶ mga⁷ anak⁸ nyang⁹ may¹⁰ scandal¹¹."

English Translation:

[Leni is really flirty like her daughters with scandal]

The derogatory word "malandi" (flirty) falls under hostile sexism. The contextual meaning of the expletive was motivated by a malicious intent utilized in naming Atty. Leni Robredo. During her campaign period, fabricated sex videos of Aika Robredo and Tricia Robredo, her daughters, circulated online. This was one of the most recent instances of inaccurate information masquerading as sexism and propagating through the internet. The researchers identify the comment as hostile since the whole context expresses antagonistic and aggressive views of Atty. Leni Robredo and her family are all women. The attack on her daughters is an effort to malign Atty. Leni Robredo's bid for the presidency.

In the eyes of hostile sexism, women are a group that competes with men for social dominance. Strongly anti-sexist individuals feel that women are subordinate to men and, therefore, incompetent and undeserving of positions of authority. Because of this, they are antagonistic to women who reject the positions they have been given within the patriarchy and see calls for gender equality as an attempt to usurp men's authority and impose domination over them Gothreau et al. (2022). Likewise, Leonard (2021) stated that hostile sexism existed when women were perceived as devious, controlling, equipped to use enticement to subjugate men, and in need of constant rectification. Hence, the term *Malandi* (flirty) and other samples reflected on the table have been used to express an aggressive and threatening attitude towards Leni Robredo and have viewed her as capable of doing seductive acts, manipulative, competing with men for dominance, categorizing them as hostile.

Internalized sexism is illuminated by the following extract below:

Extract 2:C6W3&5F

"Leni¹ is² **ambitious**³ and⁴ **judgmental**⁵ and⁶ etc.⁷ BBM⁸ has⁹ a¹⁰ lot¹¹ of¹² platforms¹³ and¹⁴ has¹⁵ a¹⁶ vision¹⁷."

In context, this comment falls into the internalized level of sexism. The internalized level of sexism is notably said by a woman herself. This happens when women embrace discriminatory statements they hear about other women and oneself all through their entire lives. A woman enacts internalized sexism-driven behaviors to preserve the system of sexism, albeit often in unconscious ways, towards their fellow women, Atty. Leni Robredo.

Furthermore, the extracts and some other internal sexism reflected in the table expressed that men are always better than women in many aspects. Leonard (2021) stated that internalized sexism refers to an individual's or women's self-perceived sexism and stereotypes of the competence of men over women, which leads to incompetence, self-doubt, powerlessness, and shame. Likewise, Rosida et al. (2022) explained that the sexist behaviors and viewpoints that women embrace toward one another and themselves are known as internalized sexism. Hence, being ambitious and judgemental, as commented by a woman to a fellow woman, is categorized as internal sexism.

Interpersonal sexism is illuminated by the following extract below:

Extract 3:C2W1M:

"Bobo¹ pa² rin³ naman⁴ sya⁵ kahit⁶ memorize⁷ ang⁸ speech⁹ bobo¹⁰." English Translation: [She is still dumb despite memorizing her speech, Dumb.]

The researchers could spot the terms "bobo" (dumb), "lutang" (afloat), puppet, and "napakatanga" (very stupid) as sexist and identified as interpersonal. Her performance was vilified on the internet before her announcement that she was a presidential candidate. She has been derogatorily labeled as "lugaw" (literally porridge but used as a local jargon for lightweight), "lutang" (literally floating but connotes slow-wittedness), and dumb (a play on Madam and dumb). The brand "lugaw" was caused by her early in the pandemic provision of porridge to frontlines while operating on a tight budget. At the same time, edited interviews revealed "lutang" and "dumb," portraying her as a simpleton.

These terminologies are created solely to bully Atty. Leni Robredo. Many misogynistic people posted lengthy accusations toward Robredo even though her office obtained the highest possible grade from the Commission on Audit for three years running, implying that her office is utilizing public funds adequately. They called her incompetent even though her record of accomplishment says otherwise. Hence, the words "bobo" (stupid), "lutang '(afloat), puppet, and "napakatanga" (very stupid) are categorized as interpersonal sexism as the comment focuses on Atty. Leni is based on assumptions about her sex or gender. Leonard (2021) stated that interpersonal sexism includes making offensive remarks regarding a person's looks and talking down to someone because of a gender stereotype.

Benevolent sexism is illuminated by the following extract below:

Extract 4: C1W22M:

"Hindi¹⁵ tayo¹⁶ papayag¹⁷ na¹⁸ hawakan¹⁹ ng²⁰ isang²¹ **weak²²** leader²³." English Translation [We will never allow a weak leader to hold a position]

The context of the comment views Atty. Leni Robredo, or women in general, are stereotypically weak creatures in restricted roles. Atty. Leni Robredo, being a woman, is seen as weak and powerless. This reek of sexism plagues our society. Her calmness, collectedness, and formality are attributed to female attributes and should not be seen as a weakness. This comment suggests that in a paternalistic concept, women are more social, adaptable, caring, naive, and fragile than men. It negatively affects women's social positions because it states that since women are frail, men must protect them. Even though Atty. Leni Robredo may feel good about it, but conventional stereotypes and male superiority are its foundations. The man as the provider should handle matters, specifically politics, and the woman as his dependent, who should just be submissive. The consequences of this mindset are often damaging not only to Atty. Leni Robredo but to all women. This is parallel to the ideas of Leonard (2021), who stated that benevolent sexism views women as innocent, pure, caring, and fragile, which are considered weak. Likewise, Glick & Fiske (2001), contended that sexism is a skeptical form of prejudice in which hatred towards

women who strive to subvert male authority coexists with respect for women who carry out the roles that the patriarchal system assigns them—wives, mothers, and housewives in need of safeguards from men.

Hence, the word "weak" and other examples reflected in the table are categorized as benevolent sexism with the belief that women are inherently weaker and more sensitive, as the comment suggests about Atty. Leni Robredo. With this, online abuse is inevitable for politicians, but female politicians are attacked more. Take Atty. Leni Robredo, for example, is disproportionately attacked online and targeted by disinformation campaigns on scales not experienced by her fellow presidentiables, all of whom are men. Since entering the national politics arena, she has been diminished and jeopardized in politics that involve dehumanizing and discriminatory language and portrayals, which have affected her more than those of men. Not only is this particularly harmful to female candidates, but it also affects female voters and the entire electorate process.

Table 3Sexism in Facebook Videos' comments

Levels of Sexism	Words	Phrases	Frequency
1. Benevolent	Emosyonal [Emotional] Pariwara [Careless]	"Walang alam sa pamamalakad" [idiot in running a government]	5
		"Walang alam sa pamomono" [idiot in leading]	
		"Baka ma-offend, babae eh & kasi babae." [Might get offended, for she is a woman.]	
2. Interpersonal	Saltik [Mentally ill] Bobo [Dumb] MADUMB [dumb]	"lutang wla talaga sa kanyang isipan" [Absent minded]	6
		"Puppet, Lutang leader" [Puppet, Floating/absent-minded leader]	
		"Boba talaga" [Really dumb]	
3. Internalized	Puppet	"Na paka sensitive self centered, napakalayo sa dunong ni." [Very self-centered, very far from wisdom.]	3
		"Pagtatawanan at pagsasabihang boba, tanga, bugok, Bobita." [She will be laughed at and be told dumb, dumb, and dumb]	
4. Ambivalent	Pangit [Ugly]		1
5. Hostile	Bayaran [Slut] Pinakamahina [Weakest] Paepal [Pretentious]	"babae para sa kama lang." [women are for bed only]	6
		"SINUNGALING, MANDARAYA at Mapagkunwari" [Liar, cheater, and pretender]	
		"Nanalo ka lang naman dahil dinaya." [You won because you cheated]	

People express agreement and disagreement in comments on Facebook postings using phrases that give a greater understanding of the context of what they are communicating. The researchers collated and examined the comments by examining the phrases underneath numerous Facebook posts about Atty. Leni Robredo during her run for the presidency. Table 3 vividly illustrates that sexism occurs more prevalently in hostile and interpersonal sexism, with six comments. This is followed by benevolent sexism with five comments and internalized sexism with 3. It is also shown that sexism occurs barely on ambivalent sexism. 17 out of 20 sexist comments come from men, whereas women made three sexist comments. The fact that males make up most sexist remarks compared to females illustrates how consistently prejudiced and biased against female males are. The genders are not assumed by the researchers but taken up from their Facebook profiles. Based on the result above, the study has found that hostile sexism has been constantly experienced and displayed on social media; hence, the usage of aggressive and foul wordings and phrases towards women and even men. The most pervasive level of sexism contributing to widespread sexism in the country is hostile sexism.

Hostile sexism is illuminated by the following extracts below:

Extract 5: C3W3M

"Leni1 lugaw2 bayaran3."

English Translation:

[Leni of little substance/lightweight, slut]

Extract 6: C1P14-19M

"Eh¹ dalawang² babae³ na⁴ naging⁵ president⁶ natin² diba³. Unaց sa¹o, yan¹¹ ang¹² sinasabing¹³, **ang¹⁴ babae¹⁵ para¹⁶ sa¹¹ kama¹³ lang¹**9."

English Translation:

[We had two women presidents; women are for bed only.]

The phrase "ang babae para sa kama lang" (women are for bed only) and naming Atty. Leni Robredo's "Bayaran" (slut) are both identified as hostile sexism. When women refuse these gender conventions, men see them as a threat to their position of superiority. The context of these two comments attempts to defend conventional assumptions about gender, the superiority of men, and men's use of women as sexual props by disparaging Atty. Leni Robredo. As soon as she enters what is socially perceived as a male domain, where men's behavior is accepted or even rewarded, she is labeled as belonging to a certain category and is publicly shamed. Thus, it should come as no surprise that slut-shaming's main purpose is to control female sexuality. Brandt (2011) stated that hostile sexism portrays women's forceful and conflicting perspectives as unjustly contesting men's advancements in society. Likewise, Hammond et al. (2018) categorize hostile sexism as an ideology that portrays women as being weak, overly emotional, and trying to use males for political benefit. In addition, according to Leonard (2021), hostile sexism exists when people perceive women as cunning, deceptive, capable of seducing men, and in need of being put in her place.

Hence, the phrase "ang babae para sa kama lang" (women are for bed only) and the term "bayaran" (slut) are categorized as a hostile level of sexism as it depicts a man

maintaining male dominance by mocking girls and women who choose to work in historically male-dominated fields being made fun of or criticized for doing so as what the phrase says about Atty. Leni Robredo.

Interpersonal sexism is illuminated by the following extracts below:

Extract 7: C5P1-6;9-15F:

"Na¹ paka² sensitive³, meron⁴ pala⁵ ganon⁶, tao⁻ Sya8 sya9 pala¹0. Self¹¹ centered¹², napakalayo¹³ sa¹⁴ dunong¹⁵ ni¹⁶ senator¹⁻ grace¹8 poe19 n²0 loren²¹ legarda²²."

English Translation:

[Very sensitive, does it exist? She is also human and self-centered, very far from the wisdom of senator Grace Poe and Loren Legarda.]

Extract 8: C8P16-18M:

"Puppet¹⁶, Lutang¹⁷ leader¹⁸ they¹⁹ can²⁰ easily²¹ play²² around²³ to²⁴ be²⁵ relevant²⁶." English Translation:

[puppet, floating/absent-minded leader they can easily play around.]

The comments containing the terms "bobo" (stupid), "dumb," "lugaw" (lightweight), puppet, and "lutang" (floating absent-minded) leader have the same context and fall into interpersonal sexism. These terminologies are the crafted terms utilized against Atty. Leni Robredo during her campaign for president. The people opposed to her running for the presidency have branded her with these terms and judged her based on the spliced videos seen on Facebook. Her critics frequently purposefully quote her out of context to make Robredo seem ignorant. To shame her by detailing what they perceived to be her absurd views, other people copied and pasted the same message. The phrases "pagtatawanan pagsasabihang boba, tanga, bugok, bobita," (She will be laughed at, and be told dumb, dumb, and dumb). "lugaw wla talaga sa kanyang isipan (lightweight, always absentminded)," "puppet, lutang (absent-minded) leader" are the crafted terms utilized against Atty. Leni Robredo.

The people opposed to her running for the presidency have branded her with these terms and judged her based on the spliced videos seen on Facebook. When someone communicates their prejudices or prejudicial attitudes to a woman in an interpersonal setting, whether verbally or nonverbally, it is considered interpersonal sexism. This has also been referred to as gender microaggressions or everyday sexism, which are instances of interpersonal discrimination that happen in daily life and are considered to be slights and insults directed towards women (Lewis, 2018). Hence, the phrases "Na paka sensitive, meron pala ganon, tao sya Sya pala self-centred napakalayo sa dunong ni senator grace poe n loren Legarda" (Very sensitive, does it exist? She is also a human, self-centered, very far from the wisdom of senator Grace Poe and Loren Legarda) and "puppet," "lutang" (absent-minded) leader" are categorized as interpersonal sexism as the comment talks down on Atty. Leni is based on assumptions about her sex or gender.

Benevolent sexism is illuminated by the following extracts below:

Extract 9: **C4P1-5;29-30M**:

"Baka¹ ma²-offend³, **babae⁴ eh⁵**. . . Gusto²⁰ na²¹ namin²² mag²³–[argue²⁴], kaya²⁵ lang²⁶ nahiya²² kami²² **kasi²⁵ babae³⁰**."

English Translation:

[might get offended, we wanted to argue, but are hesitant for she is a woman]

The phrases "baka ma-offend, babae eh" (might get offended) and "babae kasi" (for she is a woman) are deeply rooted in Benevolent sexism. This statement not only pertains to Atty. Leni Robredo implies that all women are quick to get hurt and offended. The use of such sexist language demonstrates that neither she nor the other contenders regard her as a comparable candidate. This stereotype of the "emotional and weak" woman is used by male rivals to cast doubt on Atty Robredo's qualifications and undermine her platform. This hides the sexist beliefs under a chivalry cover. Men have historically been able to acquire self-confidence by thinking they are superior to women due to unfavorable perceptions of them. This notion is supported by Becker and Swim (2012) who stated that benevolent sexism legitimizes and maintains discrimination based on gender, weakens women's resistance to prejudice, preserves discrimination based on gender, and adopts stereotyped worldviews. This has been men's strategy to stay superior to women. Therefore, the phrases "baka ma-offend, babae eh" (might get offended) and "babae kasi" (for she is a woman) are categorized as benevolent sexism with the belief that women are inherently weaker and more sensitive than what the comment suggests about Atty. Leni Robredo.

5. DISCUSSION

Generally, this phenomenon of language sexism towards a female political candidate is reflected in Tahsini & Duci (2022), who found that despite the terrible personal and political repercussions, women in politics and women parliamentarians have grown so numb to being the subjects of online resent and gendered-driven inaccurate information that they are now beginning to embrace it as a natural consequence of their involvement in politics. Likewise, Van Der Pas & Aaldering (2020) stated that women who engage in politics are given lesser attention and are only given attention based on stereotypes and their physical appearance, which solidifies the bias that politics is only for men. Furthermore, this is true in the study of Rivera and Adriatico (2022), who found that sexism through language and emoticons was evident in the Facebook commentaries of a famous social media influencer. Victims of online enmity, assault, and deceit, women in politics are frequently depicted as foolish, unreliable, and unduly sexual through fabricated narratives and images.

Approximately 42% of female lawmakers worldwide reported having come across incredibly degrading pictures of themselves circulated via social media, online harassment, and gendered inaccurate information campaigns. The term deceptive or inaccurate information and images against women political leaders, media professionals, and female public figures refer to such campaigns, which propagate narratives that frequently take advantage of discrimination against women and sexist assumptions encompassing the roles played by women. These kinds of campaigns have been used against female political activists and candidates to change public opinion of female politicians' past performance to obtain immediate political advantage and deter women from pursuing political careers

(Haraldsson & Wängnerud, 2018). This implies that gender equality and respect for women are still not achieved, as women are continuously subject to derogatory language and treatment until today.

One of the best examples of the existence of gender inequality is Atty. Leni Robredo has been subjected to disinformation, trolls, and political internet bashing; they have called her a "lutang, lugaw," (absent-minded, lightweight) and loser with no supporting evidence and only pure resentment. Notably, no other candidate has drawn as much hate from online communities for two reasons: they are not a threat according to the polls, and they are "more qualified"—that is, they are men. Many continue to doubt Robredo's abilities despite her ostensible expertise and the encouragement of younger generations; the majority of these doubts are based on Robredo's gender identity, indicating a shockingly persistent misogynistic ideology and culture across the country. The notion of choices is constrained by the societal stigma, which states what is suitable for women and what is not. This limits the contribution of women to society.

The dominant use of hostile sexism is reflected in the study of Bäck et al. (2020), which found that hostile sexism was less inclined to endorse a woman in politics. This is likewise reflected in (Winter, 2022), which found that hostile sexist attitudes opposed female candidates with feminine leadership styles. Studies have also revealed that hostile sexism is used against women who desire power in politics and had strongly influenced results against a female candidate (Bracic et al., 2018; Cassese & Barnes, 2019; Schaffner, 2020). Thus, this implies that hostile sexism has been manifested and utilized to defame and derogate a female candidate in the name of Leni Robredo. Furthermore, this implies that Filipino people still perceive females as an inferior sex compared to males.

The phenomenon of internal sexism is reflected in (Rosida et al., 2022), who found Pick Me Girl on TikTok exposes the concepts of different standards of female attractiveness, female rivalry for men's attention, female self-objectification, and female humiliation of other females that leads to internalized sexism causes women to belittle, despise, and undermine other women's values. In the Philippine setting, this implies that even women who call for equality are still imprisoned by a sexist mentality that men are the superior sex over them, which makes the advocacy of gender equality more challenging. This once again calls for further education through information-driven actions to create a society that has no gender stereotypes.

The phenomenon of benevolent sexism is reflected in the study of Bäck et al. (2020), which found that benevolent sexism was less likely to support a female candidate. This is likewise reflected in Winter (2022), which found that benevolent sexist attitudes opposed female candidates with feminine leadership styles. Fakhri, Buchori, and Irdianti (2023) support this phenomenon, as they found that adolescent girls conform to the stereotypes and norms of women. One way to conform to these norms is to keep their appearance pleasant, protected, and not bullied (Lee, 2018). This is another implication that women in the Philippines are still considered as the women of the patriarchal system whose role is mainly to take care of their husbands and the family, for they are perceived as the weaker sex. Furthermore, this implies that the influence of the patriarchal mentality remains in the Filipino mentality considering women as inferior and not deserving to hold positions in the society despite efforts of women group for gender equality.

Overall, sexism still exists in the Philippines, as seen on the Facebook commentaries of Presidentiable Atty. During her three-month-long campaign, Leni Robredo's comments are identified as hostile sexism – the highest and the worst level bearing the worst negative

impact on women's mental health. Hostile sexism, as the most severe of all the levels, attacks women who resist the conventional definition of womanhood or who disapprove of the role models or stereotypes associated with it. Examples of such behaviors include being called sexist names, receiving unfair treatment from others, and facing discrimination merely because they are women.

Additionally, no alternative words or phrases can be used to replace the terminologies used against Atty. Leni Robredo, those comments should not be said to anyone in general. Further, speaking out against sexism can help reduce gender inequality, and knowing how to respond to everyday sexism can make women feel more secure in their interpersonal interactions. The researchers hope to lessen the prevalence of sexism in homes, neighborhoods, and communities by increasing awareness of its pervasive nature and the harmful impacts of sexist language, comments, beliefs, and behaviors. This will help to strengthen the impact of women so that the country can become a place where all genders can thrive equally.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, hostile sexism is the most prevalent level of sexism utilized in the Facebook commentaries of Atty. Leni Robredo during her three-month-long campaign period followed by interpersonal sexism, benevolent sexism, and internalized sexism. Only one comment is considered ambivalent sexism, and no comment is placed under institutional sexism. It has also been revealed that most sexist comments come from the male demographic. It can be concluded that sexism has been used as a language to derogate and devastate women in the Philippines. This is an implication that gender bias is still alive and present in Philippine society as many Filipinos consider women a weaker sex. Hence, it is recommended that non-biased gender language by making every term and phrase gender inclusive as an introduction lesson/subject to build students' inability to tell what the appropriate usage of specific terms is to avoid sexism should be promoted in and by the academe to foster equality among genders. Further investigations on language sexism in social media are further recommended.

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Authors' Contribution

Ailyn Capuyan, Mark Paul Capuyan, and Percky Daffodil Jayme worked on the project and the main conceptual ideas, wrote the manuscript, and worked on almost all of the analysis. Joemar T. Minoza and Rogela A. Flores helped conceptualize the paper, analyze the data, and proofread the manuscript.

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