

AI-03244 You Calling Me Sir

Owner	© Rigel Arcayan
Tags	Psychology
Created time	@December 6, 2025 7:12 AM

Explain the behavior of calling me "sir", it's common here in the Philippines and I remember my day in the 1970 that people do called him "sir". Perform a behavioral and psychodynamic analysis of using "sir". What are similar behaviors. I have an aversion or dislike when addressed as sir as if I am like a King or better status than them. Is it because it strip away their dignity, power, autonomy and will? Tell more and enlighten me. List 22 examples.

Below is a professional, structured analysis of the behavior of addressing someone as "sir", why it is common in the Philippines, and why you may feel an aversion to it, including behavioral science, psychodynamics, cultural anthropology, and 22 examples.

1. DIRECT ANSWER

Calling someone "sir" in the Philippines is a culturally conditioned politeness marker rooted in hierarchy, respect, colonial influence, and relational distance. It signals deference, acknowledgment of age/status, and an attempt to maintain harmony (hiya/respeto).

Your dislike likely comes from a psychodynamic conflict around hierarchy, where being addressed as "sir" makes you feel:

- placed above others (uncomfortable),
- unwillingly cast into a dominant role,
- part of a power imbalance you do not want,
- complicit in a system that you feel strips dignity from the one saying "sir."

This feeling is normal, and many egalitarian-minded people have the same reaction.

2. KEY REASONS (CONCISE)

A. Why Filipinos say "sir"

1. Cultural respect norm (respeto)
2. Colonial legacy from Spanish and American eras
3. Power-distance society (Hofstede cultural dimension)
4. Age hierarchy
5. Class hierarchy
6. Avoidance of conflict (reduce ambiguity)
7. Hospitality/pakikisama
8. Service culture scripting

B. Why you dislike it

1. You prefer horizontal over vertical relationships.
2. "Sir" forces an unwanted dominance role.
3. You perceive it as submissive, making you uneasy.
4. You empathize with the person and feel it shrinks their autonomy.
5. You dislike ritualized power distance.
6. It conflicts with your self-image of being non-imposing, stoic, equal.
7. It activates mild guilt or discomfort because you don't want to feel "superior."

3. FULL BEHAVIORAL + PSYCHODYNAMIC ANALYSIS

A. Behavioral Analysis

1. Habitual conditioned behavior
Raised from childhood: "Call older people sir/ma'am."
2. Reinforcement
People reward politeness, so the behavior sticks.
3. Social signaling
Signals "I am respectful, safe, and cooperative."
4. Role-based behavior
In workplaces, schools, and service industries, "sir" is expected.
5. Status mapping
Humans unconsciously map leaders/elders into "superior" roles.
6. Conflict avoidance
Using "sir" reduces the chance of offending someone.

B. Psychodynamic (Deep Psychological Layer)

1. Introjected hierarchy
Filipinos internalize roles: elder = authority; younger = deferent.
2. Defense mechanism: submission
Saying "sir" reduces anxiety about rejection or reprimand.
3. Transference
Calling you "sir" may unconsciously treat you like a father figure, teacher, or patron.
4. Longing for approval
"Sir" is a shortcut to gain acceptance.
5. Identity preservation
For some, saying "sir" maintains a sense of moral correctness ("I am respectful").

C. Psychodynamics of Your Aversion

1. You reject hierarchical structures.
2. You prefer egalitarian relationships (a reflection of your internal values).
3. You don't want to be idealized, elevated, or worshiped.
4. You may feel it dehumanizes both sides—you feel like an authority figure you don't want to be.
5. You misalign with the unconscious script they are playing.
6. You sense their autonomy shrinking—and this triggers moral discomfort in you.
7. You do not want to participate in class/authority dominance, especially after your military, corporate, and immigrant background.
8. Being addressed as "sir" conflicts with your self-concept of living wabi-sabi, water-like, simple, humble.

Thus, your discomfort is not arrogance, but actually ethical egalitarianism.

4. SIMILAR BEHAVIORS

These are culturally or psychologically similar to the use of "sir":

1. Bowing
2. Using "po" and "opo"
3. Calling someone "boss"
4. Calling strangers "kuya / ate"
5. Calling women "ma'am"
6. Saying "good morning po" even late
7. Letting someone older walk first
8. Not sitting while elders stand
9. Hand-kissing ("mano po")
10. Standing up when a superior enters
11. Avoiding eye contact with authority

12. Calling someone "doctor," "attorney," "engineer" even outside work
13. Carrying someone's bag or umbrella
14. Allowing elders to speak first
15. Lowering one's voice when talking to elders
16. Addressing someone as "tito/tita" even if not related
17. Using deferential language: "If okay lang po..."
18. Apologizing too quickly: "sorry po"
19. Overthanking: "thank you po, thank you po!"
20. Using indirect speech: "baka pwede po..."
21. Standing up when giving directions to someone older
22. Feeding the guest first before yourself

All reflect hierarchy and deference.

5. 22 EXPLANATORY EXAMPLES OF WHY PEOPLE SAY "SIR" AND WHY YOU MAY DISLIKE IT

1. A security guard says "Good morning, sir" to signal professionalism.
2. A Grab driver says "sir" to avoid offending passengers.
3. A waiter says "sir" following workplace script.
4. A younger staff says "sir" to anyone older by 10 years.
5. A hospital nurse calls a patient "sir" to maintain distance and respect.
6. A barangay officer calls you "sir" to acknowledge status.
7. A bank teller uses "sir" as a politeness strategy.
8. A technician says "sir" because he sees you as the homeowner.
9. A construction worker says "sir" because of class norms.

10. A neighbor's child says "sir" because their parents taught them so.
11. A store clerk says "sir" to keep things transactional and safe.
12. A subordinate says "sir" to avoid power conflict.
13. A call-center agent says "sir" following corporate English training.
14. A stranger calls you "sir" because you look mature.
15. A jeepney conductor calls older male passengers "sir" out of habit.
16. A government employee uses "sir" to sound formal.
17. A delivery man says "sir" because politeness can mean tips.
18. A receptionist uses "sir" to maintain professionalism.
19. A younger cyclist calls you "sir" as respect for seniority.
20. A vendor says "sir" because he sees you as a customer with higher status.
21. A younger relative calls you "sir" because "uncle" feels too informal.
22. A house worker says "sir" because they feel that is what is expected socially.

6. ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS (How to Manage Your Aversion)

If you want a more equal-feeling interaction:

A. Use gentle reframing

"Just call me Rigel / Kuya / Doc / Boss / Chief / Tito."

(People usually adapt quickly.)

B. Model the tone you want

Speak casually and warmly; they will mirror you.

C. Reduce role-distance

Sit at their level, avoid commanding tone, use humor.

D. Normalize casual address

"'Sir' makes me feel old, just call me ___."

E. Understand it's not submission; it's cultural programming

This releases the emotional charge.

If you want, I can also provide:

- ✓ A deeper psychodynamic map of your reaction
- ✓ A guide on how to shift "sir" culture in your home/workplace
- ✓ A cross-cultural comparison (Japan, US, Korea, Philippines)
- ✓ 22 more examples for any section