

Title: **Breaking the Glass Ceiling?: A Case Study of Challenges and Successes of Women Leadership Positions in the Philippine Technology Startup Ecosystem (PTSE)**

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Abstract

Despite an increasing number of women entrepreneurs in the Philippines, the technology startup ecosystem is still dominated by men. There is a lack of research focusing on the experiences of women in leadership positions within the Philippine technology startup ecosystem (PTSE), and this study seeks to fill that void. This research can offer insights that can guide the development of policies and programs to support the advancement of women in leadership roles within the PTSE by obtaining an understanding of the difficulties faced by women in leadership positions within the PTSE and the methods they have used to overcome those difficulties. By understanding the challenges experienced by women in leadership roles within the PTSE, initiatives, strategies, and approaches that can enhance the environment for women in leadership positions in Philippine technology startups can be developed. This study can also advance our understanding of how gender dynamics may differ in various social, cultural, and economic contexts when it comes to entrepreneurship and leadership. This can also serve as a valuable case study for future studies in this field by providing a thorough understanding of the experiences of women leaders in technology startups in the Philippines. The study's findings will be used to devise a framework for promoting the development of an environment that would allow women to fully participate in the ecosystem of technology startups. The study will adopt a case study approach in order to understand the challenges encountered by women in leadership roles within the PTSE and the strategies they have employed to overcome them. A purposeful selection of women executives from Philippine-based digital startups will make up the sample.

Background of the Research Problem

Although the ecosystem of technological startups is a key contributor to economic growth, creativity, and job creation, men continue to predominate in this field. Women are still underrepresented in executive positions at technology startups, despite the fact that there are more female entrepreneurs in the world than ever before (Kirchhoff, 2018). According to research, businesses that have more women in leadership positions generally have better financial results (Catalyst, 2016). This is crucial given that technology startups are now major forces behind economic expansion, innovation, and job creation (European Commission, 2018). However, there is a problem that has to be solved about the absence of women in leadership roles in the technological startup market (Kirchhoff, 2018). By promoting and supporting women to participate and assume leadership roles in the ecosystem of technology startups, there is a high possibility of stimulating economic growth as well as job creation in the Philippines.

In addition, research has revealed that women entrepreneurs experience distinct difficulties and hindrances in comparison to their male counterparts, such as difficulties in accessing capital and networks (Amit, 2019), difficulties in balancing work and family obligations (Wang, 2018), and societal stereotypes (Eagly, 2019). Cultural and socioeconomic considerations that may affect women's experiences and perceptions of leadership in the Philippines further exacerbate these impediments (Pido, 2020). Women's capacity to fully participate in the workforce, for instance, may be hampered by traditional gender roles and the social and cultural expectation that women should put their caregiving/reproductive responsibilities before their jobs (Pido, 2020). By paving the way for a clear understanding of these difficulties, we can help create measures, initiatives, approaches, and strategies for supporting women entrepreneurs and promoting gender equality in the workplace.

Furthermore, there is a significant gap between men and women in terms of representation and diversity. The ecosystem for technological startups in the Philippines is growing rapidly, but this expansion has not been accompanied by an increase in the proportion of women in leadership positions. Only 9% of tech startups in the Philippines have female co-founders, and only 4% have female CEOs, according to a study by Pido (2020). There is a concern with the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in the Philippine ecosystem for technology startups. With this study, we can develop strategies to promote gender diversity and inclusivity in the industry by exploring the experiences of women leaders in this field in order to better understand the challenges and difficulties they encounter.

Moreover, while much study has been done on the subject of female entrepreneurship and leadership, less has been done on the particular context of the Philippines' technological startup environment and how it impacts the experiences of female leaders (Pido, 2020). Therefore, this study intends to close this gap by offering a deeper understanding of the experiences of women leaders in Philippine technology startups and how they deal with the challenges associated with holding a leadership position as a woman in a field that is predominantly male.

Also, according to "Visibility helps pipeline of Filipino women in tech, leaders say" (2022), many Filipino women are interested in establishing tech startups and are actively looking for possibilities to work in the sector, but frequently encounter entry-level challenges such as a lack of funding, networks, and mentorship. As mentioned by Partin (2022), one of the most significant challenges that women in technology face is a lack of role models, which frequently results in the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions, making it harder for them to advance in their careers and achieve their goals. Even if there has been a significant increase in the number of women working in the technology industry, there are still considerably fewer women in these positions than there should be. The lack of female role models in the industry makes it harder for young women to envision themselves in similar positions and to pursue careers in technology (Women in Tech, n.d.). Having visible and accessible role models for women in technology leadership positions can also help to attract and retain more women in the field, as well as inspire the next generation of female leaders. This is not to mention societal stereotypes and cultural factors that might also impede women's capacity to fully participate in the technological startup ecosystem. Hence, it is crucial to ensure the visibility as well as the accessibility of the pipeline of talented women leaders in the technology industry. It is argued in a study by McKinsey (2018) that companies in the top quartile for gender diversity are 15% more likely to generate financial returns above their respective national industry medians. Another study by Hunt, Laursen, & Lewis (2007) demonstrated that a more diversified workforce fosters better innovation and judgment.

The lack of representation of women in leadership positions in the technology industry has been identified as a significant problem. It is the purpose of this research to investigate the representation of women in leadership positions in the Philippine technology industry, as well as to identify the barriers and challenges that women face in this field, with the goal of developing a supportive framework for the creation of a conducive environment for women's full participation in the technology startup ecosystem.

Research Objective

The research aims to understand the current state of women's representation in leadership positions in the Philippine technology startup ecosystem, as well as the barriers and challenges that women face, and to propose a framework that can promote a more inclusive and equitable technology startup ecosystem. The findings of this study are expected to provide insightful information about the representation of women in leadership roles in the Philippine technology sector and to contribute to the development of a more inclusive and equitable ecosystem for technology startups.

The answers to the following research questions will provide a clear gauge of the progress made in achieving the objectives of the study:

1. How are women currently represented in leadership positions in the Philippine technology startup ecosystem (PTSE)?

2. What are the demographics and levels of participation of women in the PTSE?
3. What are the success factors and barriers that women in PTSE leadership positions experience?
4. How can a supportive framework for creating a welcoming environment for women's full participation in the technology startup ecosystem be developed?
5. How can the study's findings be applied to the development of non-formal continuing education and degree programs?
6. What is the current level of funding, networks, and mentorship available to women in the Philippines' technology startup ecosystem?
7. How do cultural and societal factors influence the representation of women in leadership positions in technology startups in the Philippines?
8. What are the perceived and observed barriers to women's participation in technology startups in the Philippines?

Analytical Framework and Methodology

A combination of qualitative and quantitative research (mixed) methods will be utilized as an analytical framework for this research. The study will investigate the participation of women in leadership roles in the Philippine ecosystem for technology startups using a case study approach. This approach will permit a thorough analysis of the difficulties and challenges faced by women in this industry, as well as the success factors that have allowed some of them to get over these obstacles and take on leadership roles.

Surveys and statistical analysis will be used to collect data on the current representation of women in leadership positions in the Philippines' technology startup ecosystem, as well as to describe the demographics and extent of involvement of women in the industry. This information will be gathered through online surveys distributed to a sample of women working in Philippine technology startups.

On the other hand, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) will be used to gather data on the barriers and challenges faced by women in the technology startup ecosystem, as well as the success factors that have allowed some women to overcome these barriers and achieve leadership positions. Interviews will be conducted with a sample of women working in Philippine technology startups, as well as industry experts, policymakers, and educators.

The data obtained will be analyzed and interpreted using autoethnographic method in order to identify patterns and themes. The findings will be used to develop a supportive framework for creating a favorable environment for women's full participation in the technology startup ecosystem. The findings will also be applied to non-formal continuing education and degree program course development.

It is noteworthy that this research is a case study, which is a qualitative research design that allows for an in-depth exploration of a specific phenomenon in a specific context. The study will

Budget Requirement

Particulars	UPOU	UoL
	Amount (PhP)	
A. Personnel Services (PS)		
1. Research Staff (time spent by staff for this project – 150 hours)	-	1,005,000
B. MOOE		
1. Contracted Service	50,000	-
2. Travel Expenses	10,000	-
3. Supplies	10,000	-
4. Communication	10,000	-
5. Miscellaneous/Sundries	10,000	-
C. Indirect Cost (10%-15% of PS and MOOE)	10,000	-
TOTAL	100,00000	1,005,000

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