

## Relevant leadership factors among successful women executives: An exploratory study

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### Abstract

This study explores the experiences and characteristics of female executives within the Filipino context. Utilizing a mixed-method approach, quantitative data were collected through MS Forms, while qualitative insights were gathered via semi-structured interviews. Findings indicate that respondents possess varying experience levels, uphold strong gender equality values, recognize women's leadership capabilities, and prefer work-life integration. Factors influencing a leader's ability to inspire women include promotion, leadership skills, and maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Female executives face both internal and external challenges. Internal obstacles include societal success labels, self-doubt, overachievement, and health concerns, while external barriers involve communication styles, gender discrimination, heavy workloads, and transportation difficulties. Key leadership attributes include resilience, strategic networking, strong leadership skills, and effective work-life integration. Female executives are encouraged to adopt ambidextrous leadership approaches to navigate the complexities of their roles, foster innovation, and adapt to evolving business landscapes. This adaptability will help them overcome challenges, achieve success, and contribute meaningfully to organizational growth. While acknowledging study limitations, further research is recommended to enhance gender diversity in leadership and deepen understanding in this field.

**Keywords:** Women's leadership; Gender equality; Work-life integration; Filipina women leaders; Male-dominated industries

### 1. Introduction

The Philippines stands out in Asia as the country with the highest number of women in managerial positions, according to a recent International Labor Organization study. Additionally, it is the only Asian nation ranked among the top ten globally for having a significant percentage of women in leadership roles. The study highlights how traditional gender roles and societal norms across Asia may limit women's career opportunities (Kikuchi, 2015).

This research seeks to address a gap in the existing literature by examining the lived experiences of Filipina business leaders in male-dominated industries. It aims to understand how these women navigate such environments while shedding light on their unique perspectives and the challenges they encounter in their professional roles. By focusing on this particular group, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the experiences of Filipina executives in these sectors.

Women are often expected to be "nice," and when they exhibit traits traditionally associated with masculinity—such as decisiveness, assertiveness, and strong negotiation skills—they may be perceived as hostile or aggressive.

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Consequently, many women face a dilemma between being liked and being seen as competent, which can hinder their willingness to seek career advancement.

Leadership is highly individualized, with different leadership styles yielding varying degrees of success. Naidu and Van Der Walt (2005) pointed out that leadership is complex and spans diverse fields, including business, politics, and organizations. Experts in the field have differing views on its definition, and there is little consensus on its practical application. John Adair's well-known Leadership Concept (2007) suggests that effective leadership requires a balance between focusing on the mission, meeting team needs, and addressing individual concerns.

Strategic managers, meanwhile, are responsible for formulating and implementing business strategies to ensure their organizations' long-term sustainability (Ansoff & McDonnell, 1990; Thompson & Strickland, 1996). Their responsibilities include building competitive advantages, allocating resources, solving problems, fostering consensus, and achieving desired goals (Boyzatzis, 1993). However, not all strategic managers possess strong leadership qualities, and not all effective leaders excel in strategic management (Kotter, 1988, 1990; Mintzberg, 1973, 1975). Kotter (1990) emphasized that professional leadership plays a crucial role in shaping organizational culture, particularly in times of rapid change.

A study by Bet H. Roffrey (2020), titled *\*Strategic Leadership and Management in the Philippines: Dynamics of Gender and Culture\**, explored aspects of Filipino culture that influence organizational behavior. Despite this, there remains a significant research gap regarding the strategic leadership characteristics of Filipina businesswomen. Earlier works by Abdoolcarim (1993), Licunan (1992a, 1992b, 1992c), and Tapales (1985) documented the increasing visibility of women in leadership across public and private sectors in the Philippines. Additionally, researchers such as Andres (1981, 1985), Franco (1987), Gonzalez (1987), and Jonaco (1990) emphasized the role of *\*pakikisama\**—the Filipino preference for smooth interpersonal relationships (SIR)—over individualism in managerial and organizational settings. Roffrey (2020) noted that *\*pakikisama\** is crucial for maintaining *\*amor propio\** (self-respect) and avoiding *\*hiya\** (shame) in Filipino culture.

Given the distinct cultural and societal factors influencing leadership in the Philippines, it is essential to incorporate literature on Filipina leaders. This study seeks to deepen the understanding of how Filipino women navigate male-dominated industries, highlighting their experiences and challenges. By incorporating research that reflects the country's cultural nuances, the study aims to provide valuable insights into the leadership trajectories of Filipina executives and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of gender dynamics in the workplace.

This study aims to explore the challenges encountered by successful Filipino women executives, considering both organizational and societal influences, to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences and develop strategies for fostering gender equality and empowering women in leadership roles. Specifically, it seeks to identify the professional and personal traits that contribute to their success, examine the leadership characteristics that enable them to lead effectively and analyze the environmental and cultural factors within organizations that support their growth and career advancement.

### *Objectives of the study*

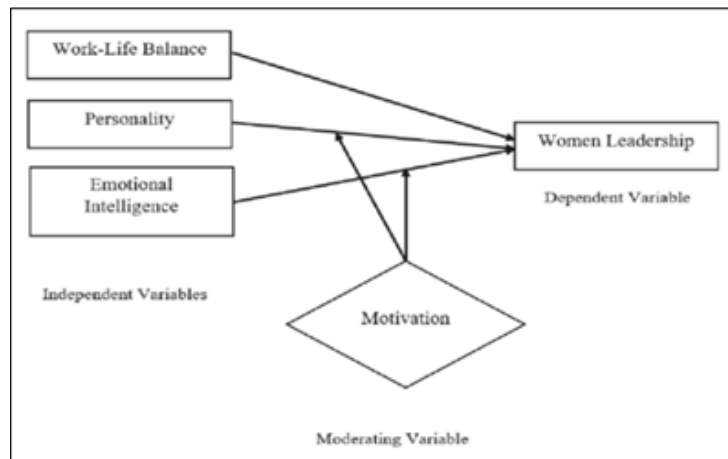
The main objective of this research is to investigate the factors contributing to the success of Filipino women executives in various sectors, aiming to gain insights into their achievements, the challenges they have overcome, and the implications of their success. By examining the experiences and strategies of Filipino women in executive positions, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of their journeys and shed light on the key elements that have propelled them to excel in their respective fields.

Specifically, this research aims to:

- Explore the strategies, resources, and support systems utilized by successful Filipino women executives to achieve their goals.
- Investigate the role of education, mentorship, networking, and work-life balance in the professional advancement of Filipino women executives.
- Assess the impact of cultural, societal, and organizational factors on the success of Filipino women executives.
- Analyze the implications of the achievements of Filipino women executives on gender equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace.
- Provide a framework of model indicating factors in the environment and culture of organizations interacting with each other supportive of the characteristics of women that will motivate and lead to career success

- Provide recommendations for organizations, policymakers, and individuals to foster an environment conducive to the success of Filipino women executives and promote gender parity in leadership positions.

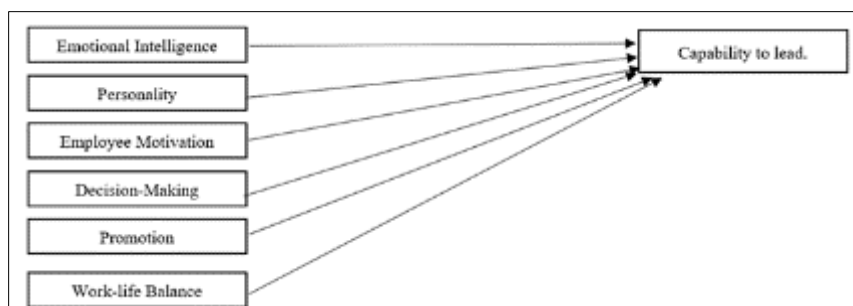
### 1.1. Conceptual framework



**Figure 1** Conceptual framework Hanim, Hamdan & Saraih, Umami Naiemah & Hamdan, Hanim. (2021)

This study aims to establish a conceptual framework for identifying key factors influencing women's leadership in the manufacturing sector, utilizing trait theory as its foundation. Key themes explored include women's leadership, work-life balance, personality, emotional intelligence, and motivation. Various electronic databases and online sources, such as Mendeley, Emerald Insight, JSTOR, ScienceDirect, ProQuest, and Wiley, were consulted for relevant literature. The study identifies two predictive factors that may act as moderators, and it discusses both its limitations and implications.

- **Women's Leadership:** The ability of women to lead and influence within an organization, regardless of their hierarchical position, encompassing roles from frontline management to executive levels.
- **Work-Life Balance:** The ability to effectively juggle professional and personal responsibilities, a challenge often amplified for women leaders due to societal expectations to succeed in both domains.
- **Personality:** A set of enduring characteristics that define an individual's uniqueness, including traits such as extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness to experience, and neuroticism, all of which influence leadership style and decision-making.
- **Emotional Intelligence:** The capability to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions while also perceiving and responding to the emotions of others, fostering strong relationships and a positive workplace environment.
- **Motivation:** The internal drive and determination to accomplish goals, enabling leaders to set clear objectives and inspire their teams toward success.



**Figure 2** Operational framework

This framework introduces the capability to lead as a key variable essential for achieving a company's strategic goals. It examines how women's work-life balance, emotional intelligence, personality traits, and leadership styles— independent variables—affect their motivation as the dependent variable. Organizational culture and environmental

factors serve as moderating influences, shaping the experiences and opportunities available to women leaders. While organizational culture establishes norms and expectations that impact how female leaders are perceived and supported, environmental factors such as industry trends and societal pressures define the challenges and opportunities they face. Work-life balance plays a crucial role in motivation, as women often juggle professional and personal responsibilities under societal expectations. Emotional intelligence fosters strong relationships and a positive work environment, further enhancing motivation, while personality traits influence leadership styles and drive women's success. Understanding these complex dynamics is vital for organizations aiming to empower women in leadership. By analyzing these interactions, this study seeks to provide insights and recommendations for fostering an inclusive and supportive leadership environment for women.

## 1.2. Hypotheses

- **Ho1.** Promotion does not impact women's capacity to lead
- **Ho2.** Work-life balance does not impact women's capacity to lead
- **Ho3.** Emotional intelligence does not impact women's capacity to lead
- **Ho4.** Personality does not impact women's capacity to lead
- **Ho5.** Employee Motivation does not impact women's capacity to lead
- **Ho6.** Decision Making does not impact women's capacity to lead

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## 2. Methodology

This study adopts an exploratory research design to gain a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between organizational culture, environmental factors, women's characteristics, and motivation in leadership roles. The exploratory approach allows for a comprehensive examination of these elements without the constraints of predefined assumptions or a strict focus on description or causality. A descriptive research design was considered insufficient, as it only provides a general overview of variables without delving into the underlying dynamics. Since the study aims to uncover patterns, themes, and relationships among multiple factors, an exploratory approach was deemed the most suitable.

An explanatory (causal) research design was also ruled out because it primarily seeks to establish cause-and-effect relationships through rigorous experimental control and variable manipulation. In the context of this research, such methods may not be practical or ethical. Instead, the study focuses on identifying correlations and generating hypotheses for future research. By employing an exploratory design, the research aims to uncover insights into the experiences and challenges of women executives in leadership positions.

The research design integrates both quantitative and qualitative components. The quantitative aspect involves collecting demographic and professional data from participants through an online survey conducted via Microsoft Forms (MS Forms). This platform facilitates efficient data collection and enables statistical analysis. Meanwhile, the qualitative component consists of semi-structured interviews with accomplished Filipino women executives from various industries. Thematic analysis will be applied to interview transcripts to identify key themes and patterns, ensuring the findings align with the study's objectives.

The study's respondents include professionals holding leadership roles within the manufacturing industry in Metro Manila. Participants come from a range of positions, including Director of Rewards/Events and Promotions – Casino Marketing, Recruitment Manager, Director of Business Development, Senior Executive Assistant, Assistant Vice President, four Principal Engineers, and a Marketing Executive. Their selection is based on their relevance to the research objectives and their established leadership experience. By involving professionals from diverse roles and backgrounds, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the characteristics, experiences, and leadership qualities of successful Filipino women executives. Their insights will contribute valuable knowledge about leadership dynamics in male-dominated industries, offering a deeper exploration of the factors that influence their career trajectories and professional success.

To ensure a diverse and representative sample, the study employs a combination of purposive and snowball sampling methods. Snowball sampling is used as an initial step, where a small group of key informants—successful women executives—are identified, and they then refer other qualified participants. This method helps reach individuals who may not be easily accessible but possess valuable insights into the research topic. Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental or selective sampling, follows snowball sampling to ensure the inclusion of participants based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. Selection criteria include expertise and experience in the manufacturing sector, accessibility and willingness to participate, organizational diversity, and representation of Filipino women

executives. This approach ensures that the selected respondents not only meet the study's research goals but also contribute to a diverse dataset that reflects various perspectives within the industry.

Two primary data collection methods are used: Likert-scale questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The Likert-scale questionnaire gathers quantitative data by asking participants to rate their level of agreement with specific statements. This structured approach allows for statistical analysis of participants' attitudes, perceptions, and leadership experiences. Meanwhile, semi-structured interviews provide qualitative insights by allowing respondents to share their perspectives in an open-ended manner while still maintaining a guided structure. This approach enables the researcher to explore leadership experiences in depth while allowing flexibility for respondents to discuss issues that may not have been anticipated. The combination of these methods ensures a well-rounded understanding of the research subject.

Data collection is conducted through MS Forms, where participants receive a survey link to complete at their convenience. Responses are automatically recorded, minimizing errors and streamlining data processing. The data is exported in structured formats (e.g., Excel or CSV) for further analysis, with careful data cleaning to remove inconsistencies and outliers. Preprocessing techniques such as transformation or normalization are applied to prepare the data for statistical evaluation. For qualitative analysis, interview transcripts undergo thematic coding, where key concepts are identified and grouped into emerging themes. This process ensures consistency and relevance to the research objectives. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, and participant anonymity, are strictly followed throughout the research process. Participants' privacy is protected, and their contributions are acknowledged with respect.

### 3. Results and Discussion

This section focuses on presenting and analyzing the collected data while addressing the research questions outlined in the study. These questions examine the professional and personal attributes of successful Filipino women executives that have contributed to their achievements, their leadership characteristics, and strategies for fostering an environment that supports their success while promoting gender equality in leadership roles. Through an in-depth analysis of data gathered from a diverse group of respondents, provide meaningful insights and recommendations for enhancing the success of Filipino women executives.

#### 3.1. Personal and Professional Characteristics of the Respondents

**Table 1** Profile of Respondents

	N	%
How long have you been working as a female senior executive		
Less than 1 year	2	9.1
1yr-3yrs.	4	18.2
3yrs-5yrs.	6	27.3
5yrs and more	10	45.5
Age Group		
25-34	8	36.4
35-44	8	36.4
45-54	4	18.2
55-64	2	9.1

The tenure of female senior executives among the respondents varied, reflecting a mix of experienced and relatively new leaders. A significant portion (45.5%) had been in their roles for five years or more, demonstrating a high level of expertise and industry knowledge. Meanwhile, 27.3% had held their positions for three to five years, representing a substantial group with moderate experience. Additionally, 18.2% had a tenure of one to three years, indicating a smaller but noteworthy segment of relatively new senior executives. Only 9.1% had been in their roles for less than a year,

suggesting that a small fraction were in the early stages of their leadership careers. These findings highlight the diverse range of leadership experience among the respondents, encompassing both seasoned executives and emerging leaders.

**Table 2** Factors Leading to Women's Capacity to Lead

	Mean	SD	Interpretation
[Promotion] Women in the profession you work in have a difficult time getting promoted.	2.86	1.08	Somewhat disagree
[Work-life balance] You can maintain a balance between the demands of corporate work and personal life responsibilities as an individual.	5.55	1.87	Agree
[Emotional intelligence] There is a perception that men are superior to women in the workplace.	2.09	1.27	Disagree
[Capability to lead] Resistance is encountered when leading men.	3.14	1.70	Somewhat disagree
[Personality] Do you consider that there is a significant difference in the style of leadership between men and women	5.91	1.19	Agree
[Personality] Do you think female leaders have the same qualities as their male colleagues in terms of leadership style	5.64	1.71	Agree
[Employee Motivation} Do you believe that men and women should be treated equally in the workplace	6.68	1.29	Strongly agree
[Decision Making] Do you believe the company/organization should have more female leaders	5.59	1.59	Agree
Overall	5.77		Agree

The respondents' perceptions and beliefs about gender equality and leadership characteristics indicate strong support for workplace inclusivity. They overwhelmingly agreed that men and women should be treated equally in the workplace ( $M=6.68$ ,  $SD=1.29$ ), reflecting a high level of endorsement for gender equality. Additionally, they acknowledged differences in leadership styles between men and women ( $M=5.91$ ,  $SD=1.19$ ), demonstrating awareness of diverse leadership approaches. They also agreed that female leaders possess the same qualities as their male counterparts ( $M=5.64$ ,  $SD=1.71$ ), reinforcing confidence in women's leadership capabilities. Furthermore, respondents expressed support for increasing female representation in leadership roles ( $M=5.59$ ,  $SD=1.59$ ), highlighting the importance of gender diversity and inclusion. Despite the challenges of executive roles, they agreed that they can still balance corporate responsibilities with personal life ( $M=5.55$ ,  $SD=1.87$ ).

Conversely, respondents somewhat disagreed with the idea that women in their profession struggle to get promoted ( $M=2.86$ ,  $SD=1.08$ ), suggesting a perception of equal career advancement opportunities. They also somewhat disagreed that they face resistance when leading men ( $M=3.14$ ,  $SD=1.70$ ), implying that leadership interactions are generally smooth, regardless of gender.

Lastly, they strongly disagreed with the belief that men are superior to women in the workplace ( $M=2.09$ ,  $SD=1.27$ ), rejecting gender-based hierarchies and reinforcing the notion of equality. These findings highlight the importance of fostering gender equality, acknowledging diverse leadership styles, and creating an inclusive environment that empowers female executives.

**Table 3** Relationship of Factors Associated with Capability to Lead

	Spearman r	p-value	Decision	Conclusion
Promotion	0.471	0.0270	Reject null	Significant
Work-life balance	-0.615	0.0023	Reject null	Significant
Emotional intelligence	0.354	0.1065	Accept null	Not significant
Personality	-0.037	0.8719	Accept null	Not significant

Employee Motivation	0.345	0.1156	Accept null	Not significant
Decision Making	0.183	0.4141	Accept null	Not significant

The results indicate a significant relationship between promotion opportunities and the capability to lead. Specifically, Spearman's rank correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) of 0.471 suggests that the easier it is for women to get promoted, the less resistance they encounter when leading men. Additionally, work-life balance plays a crucial role, as shown by Spearman's  $r$  of -0.615, indicating that the better women manage their work and personal lives, the less resistance they face in leadership roles.

However, other factors such as emotional intelligence, personality, employee motivation, and decision-making were found to have no significant association with the capability to lead. These findings suggest that while leadership capability is influenced by career progression and work-life balance, other personal and organizational attributes may not directly impact a woman's ability to lead effectively.

### 3.2. Results of Qualitative Data on Factors of Women Leadership

The collected data is analyzed through a thematic analysis approach. Transcripts from the interviews are carefully reviewed and coded to identify recurring themes, patterns, and unique insights related to the research objectives. The analysis focuses on uncovering the factors that have contributed to the success of Filipino women executives and the barriers they have overcome. The combination of snowball and purposive sampling allows for the identification of both commonalities and variations in their experiences.

- **Familiarization:** The researcher read and reread the transcripts to gain a comprehensive understanding of the data and identified emerging themes.
- **Coding:** Initial codes were generated by identifying meaningful units of text related to the research questions.
- **Theme Development:** The researcher reviewed the codes and grouped them into potential themes.
- **Theme Refinement:** The themes were refined by checking their coherence and relevance to the research questions.
- **Theme Definition:** The final themes were defined and named, capturing the essence of the underlying concepts.

#### 3.2.1. Qualitative Findings for Relative Factors of Challenges or Difficulties of Women Leadership

The challenges experienced by women executives have two (2) main themes namely external and internal. The respondents discuss various external barriers such as conflicting communication styles, gender discrimination, heavy workloads, transportation issues, and unexpected events. Additionally, they mention internal barriers such as being called successful, confidence, overachieving, and sickness.

- **Conflicting Communication Styles:** Managing opposing communication styles, according to the women executives is a problem in their work as a conduit between multiple stakeholders. They address this barrier by ensuring accurate, up-to-date, and fast information dissemination. See sample statement/s below:

"Being an executive assistant, I need to act as a link and point of contact among the executives, stakeholders, clients, colleagues, and employees. Managing conflicting communication styles is a challenge. I handled this by ensuring that all information is accurate, up-to-date, and disseminated on time."

- **Gender Discrimination:** They acknowledge that gender discrimination exists in the workplace. Despite this, they retain a good attitude and express their worries. They like the presence of female and male corporate leaders who encourage equality in their organizations. See sample statement/s:

"It's not uncommon to experience discrimination because of gender. I always remind myself to look on the good side. I communicate my concerns. Good thing, that the business leaders in our organization are all genders. They help promote equality in the workplace."

- **Heavy Workload:** They recognize the tremendous workload and the necessity to work long hours and manage special assignments. They underline the need to automate operations as a solution for managing the demands of their job. See sample statement/s:

"Working long hours and taking special projects. Automating workflows is the solution."

- **Unexpected Events:** Unexpected events, such as volcanic eruptions and pandemics, create interruptions to well-planned campaigns. They emphasize the need to have contingency plans, be quick to execute alternative techniques and be open to trial and error in such situations to make sound decisions. See sample statement/s:

"As a marketing executive, unexpected events disrupt well-planned campaigns like volcanic eruptions and pandemics. Having contingency plans, being quick to implement plan B, and not being afraid to do trial and error is crucial in arriving at the right decision."

**Balancing Personal Life:** This is especially important for working mothers in the business sector. It is common for women to struggle with balancing family duties with a successful profession. To overcome this obstacle, participants emphasize the significance of focusing on work, which sometimes necessitates extra time and effort to complete tasks.

Based on the provided sample statements, one executive assistant highlighted the challenge of managing conflicting communication styles, stating, "Being an executive assistant, I need to act as a link and point of contact among the executives, stakeholders, clients, colleagues, and employees. Also, managing conflicting 'communication styles' is a challenge. I handled this main task by ensuring that all information is accurate, up-to-date, and disseminated on time." Another important aspect discussed is the need for work-life balance, with a focus on managing heavy workloads. As one participant stated, "Working long hours and taking special projects. Automate workflows is the solution." However, it is recognized that balancing personal life can be demanding, as expressed by the statement, "Sometimes being a working mother in the corporate world is a challenge. It's not uncommon to experience discrimination because of gender. Personally, I always remind myself to always look on the good side. I communicate my concerns." The presence of supportive business leaders from diverse genders was also highlighted, as they help promote equality in the workplace. In conclusion, proper time management and open communication are crucial in achieving work-life balance and addressing the challenges faced by women executives.

The intrinsic barriers identified in the study include:

- **Being Called Successful:** The phrase underlines that being labeled successful is an inherent barrier because it implies continual learning, the quest for new aspirations, and personal progress. It emphasizes the significance of striving for continuous self-improvement and fulfillment rather than settling with past accomplishments.

"Being called successful because you never stop learning, you never stop having a dream. Once you're able to achieve something, go look for another. It's how you grow; it's how you fulfill your soul."

- **Confidence:** According to the statement, confidence is a substantial intrinsic obstacle. It emphasizes the significance of having a mentor who believed in and trusted the respondent, which resulted in the development of self-confidence. This suggests that developing and sustaining confidence is essential for overcoming obstacles and attaining success.

"It was my confidence in myself. One of my superiors mentored me and helped build my confidence by trusting and believing in me."

- **Overachieving:** This can be viewed as a personal trait or inclination that may result in more strain and stress, negatively compromising work-life balance and well-being.
- **Sickness:** The statement indicates that sickness was an inherent barrier for the respondent. It describes a personal experience in which illness proved to be a substantial impediment to accomplishing educational objectives. This demonstrates how health concerns can stymie growth and have a significant impact on one's career development.

These statements highlight the main theme of barriers and the associated subthemes. The respondents discuss various external barriers such as conflicting communication styles, gender discrimination, heavy workloads, transportation issues, and unexpected events. Additionally, they mention internal barriers such as being called successful, confidence, overachieving, and sickness.

### 3.2.2. Qualitative Findings for Relative Factors of Women Leadership

Resilience and perseverance in the face of challenges

- **Overcoming Gender Biases:** Successful Filipino women executives demonstrated exceptional resilience in the face of gender biases prevalent in their respective industries. They persevered through stereotypes, biases, and



discriminatory practices, pushing boundaries and challenging societal expectations. Some of them mentioned that

"Yes. It's all about respect. Men and Women are different. There are things that women can do, but most men can't, and vice versa. We should learn from each other.", "Knowing how to deal with men for me is an asset." "As a woman executive, I have encountered gender biases and stereotypes in the workplace. I have had to challenge these biases by proving my capabilities, asserting my ideas, and breaking through the glass ceiling." "Being a woman in the corporate world, I am no stranger to facing gender discrimination and biases."

This outcome is consistent with Heilman & Okimoto's finding that said, "Our research demonstrates that women may face double standards in the workplace, being penalized for success at tasks traditionally associated with men, contributing to gender disparities in evaluation and promotion." (2007)

- **Embracing Challenges:** These women exhibited a determination to take on challenging assignments and projects, not shying away from opportunities that required them to step out of their comfort zones. They viewed challenges as opportunities for growth and development. Some mentioned

"Comparisons and Competitions are two situations that you don't want to get in. But once experienced, just take deep breaths. You don't need to prove anything or make an extra effort. Remember that you only have yourself to prove what you're capable of." "Addressing the challenges and biases associated with being a woman in a male-dominated industry." "Develop a growth mindset to embrace challenges and pursue ongoing learning and development." "Developing resilience and bouncing back from challenges." "Improving oneself, demonstrating in a good way that you can overcome challenges."

This outcome is consistent with Williams & Dempsey's finding that said, "that women need to be much savvier than men to get ahead in high-powered careers, and remain there, and compare it to walking a tightrope".

Leadership Qualities and Active Involvement of Filipino Women Executives in various sectors of business.

- **Collaborative Approach:** Collaboration and teamwork are integral components of the leadership style embraced by Filipino women executives. They prioritize building strong relationships, fostering open communication, and empowering their team members. Some mentioned

"Participative and authoritative leadership. I adjust depending on the situation and my team members." "Believe in constant brainstorming and collaborative decision-making." "Ever since I became a department head/manager, my style is open-door management." "I'm a friend to all of them, that's why during crunch time or deadlines we are always on the same page, wanting the same thing."

This outcome is consistent with Acosta, de Guzman & Lagarto (2019) finding that said, "Filipino women leaders actively promote a participative and inclusive work culture, where all team members are encouraged to contribute and share their ideas."

Building Strong Relationships and Effective Networking

Building Supportive Networks: Filipino women executives recognized the value of establishing networks, both within and outside their organizations. They actively sought out mentors, sponsors, and peer networks that provided guidance, support, and opportunities for growth. See sample statements below

"Promoting inclusion by providing equal access to groups and networks is essential for empowering women and fostering professional growth." "Support in the organization should always be present. Inclusion in groups and networks." "Connections. Building a name and being known for it is the best form of branding. Being a woman is already given, but for them to remember who you are and what you can offer is like opening doors to a whole lot more." "Regularly network to expand professional connections and opportunities." "Fostering strong interpersonal connections and effective networking skills." "Throughout my career, I have actively cultivated a strong support network."

This outcome is consistent with Timberlake, finding that said, "Although the number of women entering the workforce has increased steadily over the past half-century and progress has been made towards achieving economic equality with men, statistics show that women continue to struggle in terms of career advancement, as well as the level of pay and status achieved lag behind the men." The article entitled "Social Capital and gender in the Workplace" argues that women are hampered in their pursuit of career advancement and the benefits that come with it because of their lack of

access to social capital, a valuable organizational asset and source of knowledge, resources, and networks essential to career development and Maturation.

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#### 4. Seamless Work-Life Integration

- **Balancing Personal and Professional Commitments:** Filipino women executives emphasized the importance of achieving work-life integration. They shared strategies such as setting boundaries, prioritizing self-care, and cultivating support systems to effectively manage the demands of their careers and personal lives. Some mentioned

"Barrier: Balancing personal life. Focus on work no matter what. Sometimes you need to devote extra time just to accomplish work." "Family, Business vs. Career." "Proper time management." "I belong to an institution that is flexible to my needs as a mother, therefore the motherhood concept is not a barrier in my career." "Achieving a work-life balance has been a constant challenge in my career. I have learned to prioritize my commitments, set boundaries, and make time for both my professional and personal responsibilities." "As a working mother in the corporate world, I often face the challenge of balancing my professional and personal responsibilities." "I always remind myself to maintain a positive outlook and find silver linings in difficult situations." "One way I handle these challenges is by effectively communicating my concerns and needs to my superiors and colleagues."

This outcome is consistent with Maria Victoria C. Buendia's finding that said, work-life integration is seen as a way for Filipino women executives to inspire and empower other women in their organizations. In her article "Achieving Work-Life Integration: Insights from Filipina Business Executives," author Maria Victoria C. Buendia emphasizes that when women leaders prioritize work-life integration and set an example, they encourage their colleagues and subordinates to do the same. This fosters a culture of support and understanding within the organization, benefiting not only women executives but all employees striving for work-life balance.

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#### 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research study sheds light on the personal and professional characteristics of successful women executives and the relevant factors on women leadership in terms of crisis most especially in male-dominated industries.

- Women executives in this study exhibited diverse experience levels and traits, including a strong belief in gender equality, understanding of diverse leadership styles, recognition of women's competency in leadership roles, commitment to promoting gender diversity and inclusion, effective work-life balance, and preference for seamless leadership relationships.
- The study revealed that factors impacting leadership capacity included a significant correlation between promotion and leadership skills, indicating that easier advancement led to reduced opposition when leading men. Additionally, maintaining a balanced work-life integration was crucial in minimizing resistance when leading men.
- External challenges faced by women executives encompassed contradictory communication styles, gender discrimination, heavy workloads, transportation difficulties, and unforeseen events, while internal obstacles involved being labeled successful, lacking confidence, exhibiting overachieving tendencies, and dealing with health issues.
- Relevant leadership factors among successful women executives encompassed resilience and perseverance in adversity, demonstrating leadership qualities and active participation, fostering strong relationships and effective networking, and integrating work-life demands.
- It is critical to acknowledge the study's limitations. To begin, the sample size was small, which may have an impact on the findings' generalizability. Second, the study relied on self-reported data, which can bring biases and mistakes. Furthermore, the study concentrated primarily on the experiences and opinions of the selected respondents, rather than thoroughly analyzing contextual impacts, and considering a larger spectrum of stakeholder perspectives.

#### *Recommendations*

Based on these findings, organizations and individuals can take specific actions to support and empower women executives:

- For Women in Executive Roles: Continuously develop personal and professional characteristics, maintain resilience, actively participate, build strong relationships, and strive for work-life integration to enhance leadership effectiveness while encouraging and supporting the development of relevant leadership factors through programs, mentoring, and networking opportunities.
- For Organizations and Employers: Foster inclusive work environments, implement policies addressing challenges faced by women executives, provide support for work-life balance, and promote gender equality and career advancement by implementing workplace rules and practices that combat gender discrimination and create a friendly and inclusive atmosphere for women to thrive and contribute to their full potential.
- For Policy Makers and Advocacy Groups: Advocate for gender equality policies, combat discrimination, and support initiatives that address external barriers faced by women executives, while providing assistance with work-life balance and promoting family-friendly policies and flexible work arrangements to acknowledge and address the specific challenges women executives face.
- For the Academic Community: Conduct further research to explore contextual impacts and stakeholder perspectives, investigate additional factors influencing women executives' effectiveness, and address the limitations of the study by undertaking larger-scale research with a broader spectrum of opinions to provide a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and issues faced by female leaders.
- For Future Researchers: Build upon this study with longitudinal research, explore intersectionality, examine women executives' experiences in different industries and crises, and contribute to the existing knowledge by conducting comprehensive studies that encompass a wide range of variables and perspectives to inform future initiatives, regulations, and practices that empower women executives and promote gender diversity and inclusion.

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## Compliance with ethical standards

### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest.

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