



WOMEN IN THE PHILIPPINE C-SUITE: NATIONAL STUDY

MARCH 2021

PROJECT PARTNERS



The Makati Business Club is a non-stock, non-profit business association organized as a Forum for Constructive Ideas. The main thrust of MBC is to foster and promote the role of the business sector in addressing national economic, political, and social issues that affect the country's development.

MBC is composed of the largest and most dynamic corporations in the Philippines, represented by their CEOs and senior executives.



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Gender equality means good business



The European Union Delegation to the Philippines is one of 140 diplomatic missions that represent the EU across the globe. The Delegation has essentially been the information nerve centre in the Philippines, keeping EU headquarters in Brussels aware of local developments and serving as the natural point of contact between EU and Philippine officials.

UN Women is the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

WeEmpowerAsia is a UN Women programme funded by and in partnership with the European Union seeking to increase the number of women who lead and participate in business in China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. A key component of the programme is to mobilize private sector companies to become gender-responsive by committing to and implementing the Women's Empowerment Principles.



The Philippine Business Coalition for Women Empowerment was launched in March 2017 through a partnership between the Philippine Women's Economic Network, Inc. and Investing in Women, an initiative of the Australian Government. It is made up of influential businesses that are large employers who will take the appropriate steps to improve gender equity in their own workplaces and to influence businesses, both in their supply chains and other large businesses, and to also become better employers of women.

WOMEN IN THE PHILIPPINE C-SUITE: NATIONAL STUDY

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Special message by Ambassador Luc Véron, Head of Delegation of the European Union to the Philippines

Gender equality is at the core of European values and is enshrined in the European Union legal and political framework. The EU and its Member States are vigorously promoting gender equality in external relations, inter alia through the promotion of social and economic rights and the active participation of women in the economy. The new EU Gender Action Plan 2021-2025 has boosted this engagement. Launched in November 2020, it promotes equal opportunities, decent work, and equal pay for equal work for women and men.

Gender equality is good for the economy as a whole. Gender equality policies have a strong, positive impact on economic growth through an increased number of women in STEM education, a higher labor market participation by women and a lower gender pay gap.

A study undertaken by the European Institute for Gender equality on the economic benefits of gender equality in the European Union shows that, by 2050, improving gender equality would lead to an increase in EU GDP per capita by 6.1 to 9.6%. Improvements in gender equality would lead to an additional 10.5 million jobs in 2050, which would benefit both women and men.

Putting gender equality at the heart of the follow-up strategy of Europe 2020 will make the economic system more inclusive, enabling women to fulfil their full potential, and hence benefit women and society as a whole.

Gender equality is good for business. Increasing the representation of women in business leadership is critical. Companies with higher female representation at the most senior levels deliver better organizational and financial results.

It has been shown that gender diversity in the boardroom leads to innovative ideas, increased competitiveness and performance, and improved corporate governance. Also, more women in leadership positions signals that a company has a better grasp of the complexity of world markets and is therefore better prepared to compete globally.

The Philippine national study 'Women in the Philippine C-Suite' offers a comprehensive picture of gender diversity in companies and businesses in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. It will trigger a meaningful conversation on the role of gender equality in business competitiveness, recovery and innovation.

Globally, business has a stake and a responsibility in gender equality and women empowerment. Our times of change and recovery after the pandemic are a clear invitation for businesses to seize the moment, to rethink their practices and put gender inclusion at the center of their strategy.

AMBASSADOR LUC VÉRON
HEAD OF DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TO THE PHILIPPINES

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WOMEN IN THE PHILIPPINE C-SUITE: NATIONAL STUDY

MARCH 2021



**“There is a gap
between what
leaders think is going
on, what their people
are saying, and what
is happening on
the ground when it
comes to workplace
equality.”**

MARIXI CARLOS
MANAGING DIRECTOR
ACCENTURE INTELLIGENT
OPERATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES



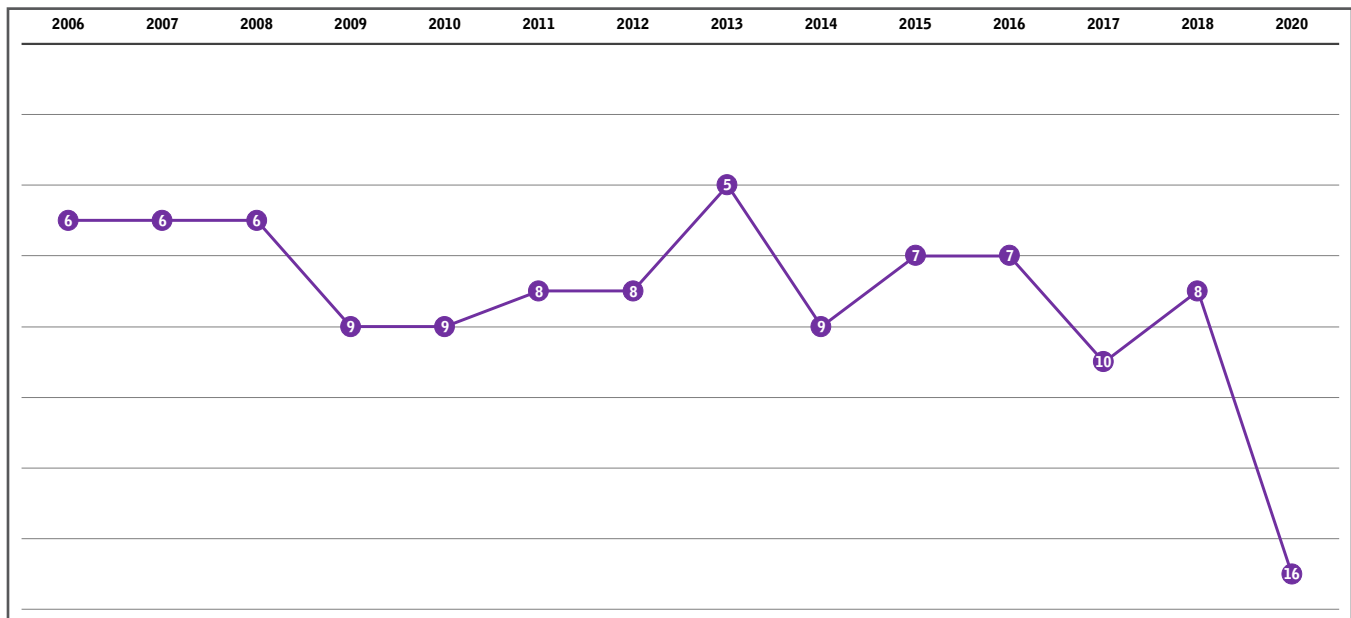


1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 GENDER GAP IN THE PHILIPPINES

The inclusion of gender equality as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs; UN, n.d.) is not only a fundamental human right but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Empowering girls and women has a positive impact not only for individuals and communities but also for the businesses that employ them. As of 2020, the Philippines has narrowed its overall gender gap by 78% in terms of economic participation, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment (Figure 1). The country ranks 16th of 153 countries according to the Global Gender Gap Report 2020 of the World Economic Forum. Notably, this ranking is the first time since 2006 when the Philippines has slipped below the top 10 spot.

The scores across the four dimensions measured in the Gender Gap Report has improved or remained stable across the last 14 years (Figure 2). The Philippines has attained the largest advancements in closing the gap between men and women in economic participation and opportunities. The Philippines is only one of four countries where women outnumber men in senior and leadership roles and professional and technical professions. However, the slipping of Philippines' ranking indicates that other countries have achieved greater strides in closing their respective gender gaps. The declining ranking can be attributed to low political empowerment, with female representation in the Cabinet and the House of Representatives both declining in the recent years.



SOURCE: WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM (2020)

FIGURE 1. GLOBAL GENDER GAP RANKING FOR THE PHILIPPINES, 2006–2020

One of the indicators of SDG Goal 5 is “to ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life” (UN, n.d.). Despite closing the gap in of economic participation, the women entrepreneurs in the Philippines continue to face a difficult road to success. The Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs 2020 report has measured the enablers and constraints of women’s progress as business owners across 58 world economies, representing nearly 80% of the world’s female labor force. This report also presents a similar decline in ranking for the Philippines, from 6th in 2019 to 16th in 2020. The ten-place drop is primarily caused by the scaled-back support for small

and medium enterprise (SME) initiatives, including the services to be accessed by female entrepreneurs. On a positive note, Filipino women have retained their strong lead as business leaders (51.4% of total) and professionals/technical workers (57.6% of total), and their entrepreneurial activity rate are high and even at par with men.

The Makati Business Club (MBC), in partnership with the Philippine Business Coalition for Women Empowerment (PBCWE), initiated a project in 2018–2019 to assess the state of gender diversity among top executives of corporations operating in the Philippines. The study entitled “Women in the Philippine C-Suite”

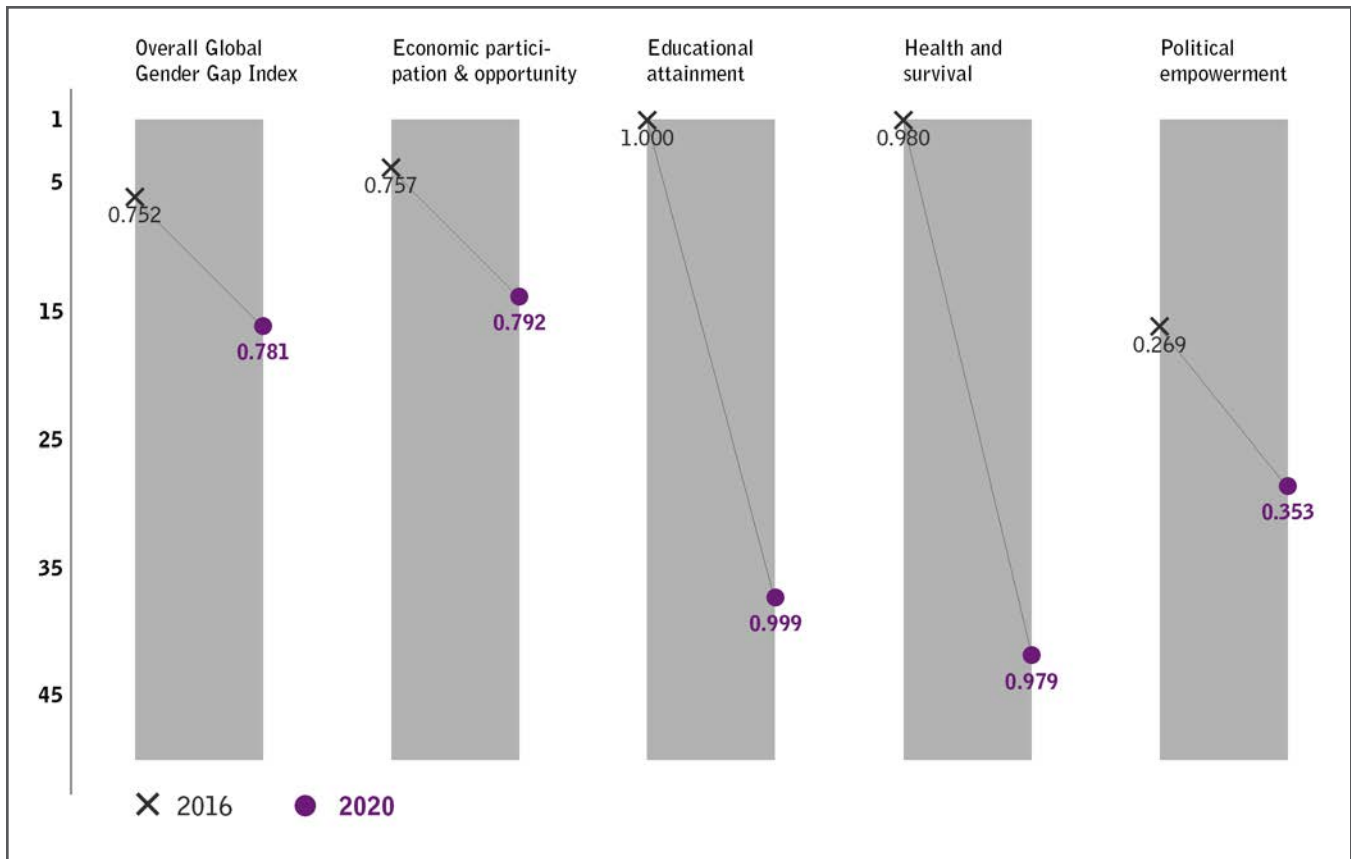


FIGURE 2. COMPARATIVE GENDER GAP SCORES FOR THE PHILIPPINES, 2006 vs. 2020

(MBC, 2019) confirmed that too few women (roughly 3%) occupy C-suite positions. The 2019 report has identified key bottlenecks that prevent women mid-managers from pursuing higher positions, which are also shaped either by company policies or personal situations. Furthermore, by studying both the male and female mid-managers' situations, priorities, and perceptions, the 2019 study found that both genders necessitated different support mechanisms to guide them

towards higher career paths. In the research, MBC has offered the "no policy fits all" argument when it comes to one's rise in the corporate ladder. The research also presented narratives to show the importance of gender diversity in the different companies' top management, including those related to driving innovation, inspiring employee productivity, and strengthening the financial position.

Two years has passed since MBC's 2019 study. Globally, the state of gender diversity in the private sector has remained the same. Most companies have moved too slowly on their gender inclusion targets according to the 2021 IBM global research on women, leadership, and missed opportunities. Few businesses have articulated the advancement of women as a strategic priority. This lack of corporate initiative, combined with the impact of COVID-19 in 2020, has led to the loss of even more women in the talent pipeline. Interestingly, organizations that implement concrete actions towards gender parity report about stronger financial performance, and most of them have even outperformed their competitors across different key metrics.

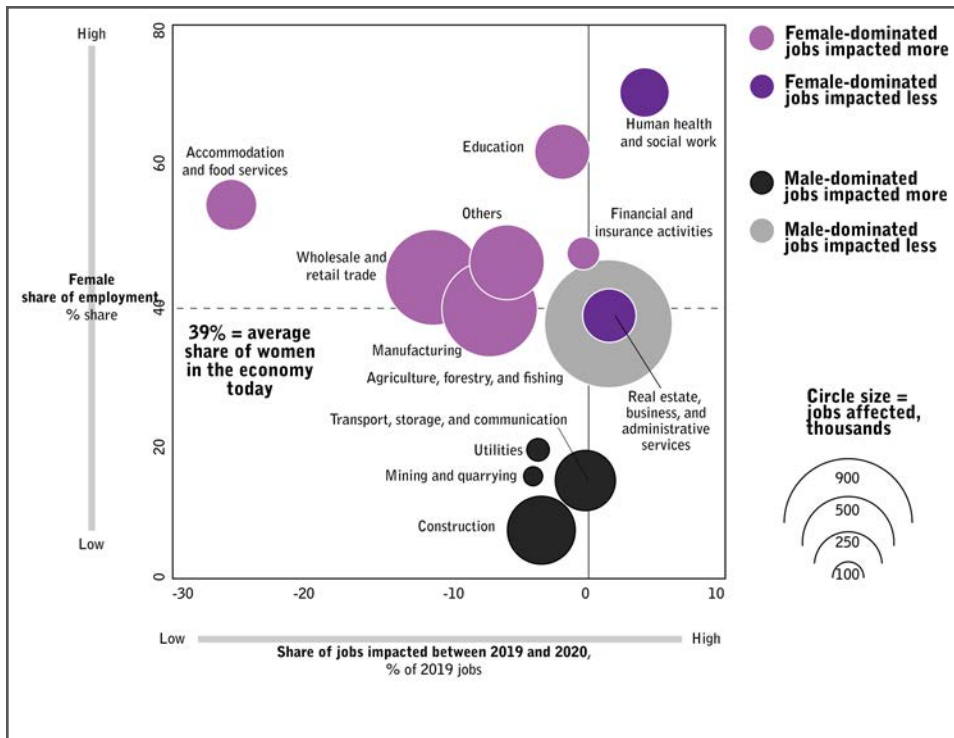
1.2 WOMEN IN A COVID-19 WORLD

The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in 2020, has completely altered the global landscape and disrupted that ways businesses are conducted. The private sector and their employees, suppliers, and customers and the communities where the firms operate have been all affected, creating a difficult time for many organizations, from big global corporations to SMEs. Moreover, women have become more vulnerable to COVID-19-related economic effects because of the persisting gender inequalities. Women represent a large proportion of frontline workers, and they are the most vulnerable individuals to contract the disease. Furthermore, despite efforts over the last several decades, women have continuously experienced gender gaps as they advance to the C-level positions. COVID-19 has further

exacerbated the burden of unpaid care work, which falls disproportionately on women, and it subjects them to time constraints in undertaking economically productive activities, including work (Chauhan, 2020). Women have also picked up the slack in handling increased childcare needs during the crisis (Djankov, 2020).

McKinsey Global Institute (2020) calculates women's jobs to be 1.8 times more vulnerable than men's jobs due to the gendered nature of most work (Figure 3), which has become more apparent because of the pandemic. Women's jobs comprise 39% of global employment; in terms of job losses, they account as high as 54% of the total loss, with most women working in such sectors as education, hospitality, and apparel, which have been badly hit by COVID-19.

The experiences of working women amidst COVID-19 has led to the realization that the glass ceiling is still firmly in place in most companies. The "Women in the Workplace" report published by McKinsey and Company and Lean In (2020) shows that many women are either planning to take a career break or exit the workforce. The reason: anxiety and burnout taking its toll. Although experienced by all employees, women in particular have the heavy burden of shouldering most of the household responsibilities, including childcare and homeschooling. Senior-level women are also more likely to feel greater pressure than men in similar positions, as they are often held to different standards at work. Deloitte's (2020) global survey finds that nearly 70% of women who have experienced negative changes in their work-life routines



SOURCE: MCKINSEY GLOBAL INSTITUTE (2020)

FIGURE 3. WORLD EMPLOYMENT IMPACT IN 2020 BY INDUSTRY

believe their career progression will slow down. As a result, the number of women will also likely decrease in the leadership pipeline. This scenario will send many companies backwards in their business results and gender inclusion metrics (Smyth, 2020).

1.3 PROSPECTS OF BUSINESS RECOVERY IN THE PHILIPPINES

The Philippines experienced a series of disasters that compounded the effects of the pandemic. Devastating

earthquakes struck various areas in Mindanao from October to December 2019. Filipinos then witnessed the eruption of Taal Volcano in January 2020, resulting in an initial shortage of face masks. One of the harshest COVID-19 lockdowns began in mid-March, severely restricting mobility and business activities. Moreover, from October to November 2020, a series of tropical typhoons (Super Typhoon Goni, Typhoon Tokage, Typhoon Etai, and Typhoon Vamco) had continuously battered the Philippines in a span of 21 days, causing massive

flooding and destroying property and livelihood. Indeed, 2020 has been a grueling year for every Filipino.

The World Bank's "Philippine Economic Update for December 2020" projected the country's GDP to shrink by 8.1% in 2020, a more pessimistic view from the previous forecast of 6.9%, one of the sharpest contractions in the region. The growth contraction was projected to increase poverty in the short term, resulting in an additional 2.7 million poor Filipinos in 2020 (de Vera, 2020). This viewpoint is in line with the analysis of

Oxford Economics (2020) of long-COVID vulnerabilities in 162 economies. The Philippines scored the highest among emerging markets for indicators measuring economic and financial imbalance, structure of economy, labor market vulnerability, and decline in GDP growth (de Vera, 2020).

With vaccines in the pipeline for mid-2021 and the threat of COVID-19 eventually declining, business activities will likely gradually shift to a “new normal,” which may fast-track the country’s economic recovery. The strength of post-crisis business recovery lies in its responsiveness to the needs of both women and men. Incorporating gender-responsive business recovery across all industries can facilitate a more resilient and sustainable recovery and advance the reduction of gender inequality (World Bank, 2020).

1.4 WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES

The year 2020 marks the 10th anniversary of the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs; Figure 4), a set of principles offering guidance to businesses on how to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment in the workplace, marketplace, and community.

The WEPs can be regarded the primary vehicle for corporate delivery of gender equality mentioned in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the UN. Prescribing to the WEPs indicates commitment to the UN SDG at the highest levels of the company, and it also means working collaboratively with multiple

stakeholders as a means of fostering business practices to empower women (WEPs, 2020).

The WEPs provide a strong framework to empower women, and its adoption in the workplace can promote diversity and inclusion across different levels of the organization. The WEPs can also serve as an important resource for guiding the private sector in crafting gendered responses to help mitigate the effects of COVID-19 not only for the benefit of employees but also among stakeholders in the supply chain. The WEPs are accompanied by a Gender Gap Analysis Tool¹ that businesses can use to identify their strengths, gaps, and opportunities, hence helping to improve corporate performance with respect to gender equality.

1 The tool is available at <https://weps-gapanalysis.org/>



Principle 1

Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality



Principle 2

Treat all women and men fairly at work
— respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination



Principle 3

Ensure the health, safety, and well-being of all women and men workers



Principle 4

Promote education, training, and professional development for women



Principle 5

Implement enterprise development, supply chain, and marketing practices that empower women



Principle 6

Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy



Principle 7

Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality

SOURCE: <https://www.weps.org/>

FIGURE 4. THE WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PRINCIPLES (WEP)

“Ensuring a gender-inclusive workplace starts by building a collaborative, supportive, and respectful environment where everyone feels included and valued. Individuals can bring diverse ideas and experiences to the table that can help organizations innovate and grow. The workplace is safe to bring their authentic and whole selves to work, and where leaders, like us, cultivate an environment, enabling everyone to live every day better.”

RICHARD BATES
PRESIDENT AND CEO
MANULIFE PHILIPPINES





2. THE NATIONAL STUDY

2.1 STUDY OBJECTIVES

MBC, with funding from the European Union and support from partner organizations UN Women WeEmpowerAsia and PBCWE, has expanded the 2019 “Women in the Philippine C-Suite” study to companies and businesses operating outside Metro Manila. The current work aims to capture the state of gender diversity in companies and businesses in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

Bringing the discussion to the rest of the Philippines can help stakeholders to advance the conversation towards the role of gender equality in business recovery, regaining competitiveness, and increasing innovation in the current community quarantine setup and through the transition to a post-COVID-19 business setting. The national study utilized the data generated to draw plans and initiatives for preparing and maximizing the existing talent pool in the middle management level for key and leadership roles in the future. Furthermore, the current study can help to advocate changes in government and company policies, subsequently promoting a more gender inclusive business environment in the Philippines.

2.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How gender-diverse are the top corporations in the Philippines?
2. Why are we losing women as they rise to the top positions?

3. Are there any regional differences amongst companies in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao?
4. How has COVID-19 affected men and women both at home and at work?
5. How can companies promote gender diversity in the top management?
6. What can CEOs do to increase awareness on gender diversity and encourage positive action?

2.3 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The national study used the same framework and relevant indicators from the “Women in the Philippine C-Suite” study conducted by MBC in 2019. In the framework, four squeeze-in-the-pipeline factors (Figure 5) enable or hinder women from climbing the corporate ladder have been identified.

- **INDIVIDUAL ABILITY** refers to an individual’s confidence in her/his own strengths, credentials and ability to assert /believe in oneself when it comes to accomplishing work and taking on roles assigned, including leadership roles.
- **FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD** refer to the effect of the concerns of family members and other household members in the person’s ability to perform tasks at work and in her/his motivation to aspire for and take on higher roles and eventually succeed.

- **COMPANY CULTURE** refers to company policies and practices that impact a person’s ability to effectively perform the tasks and encourage the staff to aspire (or not to aspire) for leadership roles.
- **WIDER SOCIETY** refers to the perception on prevailing stereotypes, whether known or unknown, that impact the person’s decision and drive to aspire (or not to aspire) for leadership roles.

COVID-19 is included as an additional factor in the framework (Figure 5) because of the pandemic’s impact on the wider business environment. More important, companies will need to plan for the COVID-19’s repercussions in the workplace for the next several years. The impact of the global crisis on companies is widespread—from strategic direction to the ability to survive and thrive, which will cascade down to the firms’ talent pool management, business operations, and community relations. At the individual level, we use “crisis” to refer to the effect of COVID-19 on the respondents regardless as to whether they have been able to maintain the balance between their professional and personal lives given the new working arrangements.

The same mixed methods approach from MBC’s 2019 study was used to surface the answers for the research questions on gender diversity in Philippine corporations. For the secondary data gathering, a review of related



SOURCE: WOMEN IN THE PHILIPPINE C-SUITE STUDY (MBC, 2019), RE-ILLUSTRATED

FIGURE 5. FRAMEWORK ON THE WOMEN TALENT PIPELINE

literature was conducted to update the latest available information about gender diversity concerns. A new element of the current study is the literature review on the impact of COVID-19 on women.

- **QUANTITATIVE DATA** – A survey was administered to women and men mid-managers. The questions covered a wide range of topics on leadership aspirations and perceived factors that may affect the achievement of such aspirations. A section on COVID-19 was added to assess the respondents' perceptions on the effect of COVID-19 on their work and home lives.
- **QUALITATIVE DATA** – Key informant interviews were conducted with individuals who can share relevant insights into gender inclusion in the private sector and who can reveal information about their first-hand experiences pertaining to gender diversity issues. Questions related to gender and COVID-19 were added to reflect the most critical conversations that companies have today.

2.4 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The intent of the national study was to expand the groundwork by studying the state of gender diversity within Philippine corporations. The research scope was confined to the following parameters:

- **LOCATION** – The research focused primarily on private sector companies, either foreign or local, and registered as either a sole proprietorship or a corporation. Some companies outside of Metro Manila remained as single proprietorship despite its growth in size. Companies are either based in Luzon, Visayas, or Mindanao, which we refer hereafter as "regions." The top 1000 corporations and multinational enterprises with Philippine headquarters in the National Capital Region (NCR) and operates nationwide were also considered, but their respondents should be based outside of Metro Manila.
- **TARGET PARTICIPANTS** – The target survey participants included top-level, senior, and mid-managers. C-level executives, business owners, human resources managers, and mid-managers were tapped for the key informant interviews.
- **QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION** – All data collection activities were conducted remotely given the restrictions of the COVID-19 lockdown. The pandemic also made it difficult to contact the companies and for their representatives to agree to participate. Many companies were in survival mode and in the process of reorganization, which also made them wary to participate. The survey form was constructed using Google Form (<https://bit.ly/PHgendersurvey>), and a link was shared to the participants via e-mail through their respective company, chambers of commerce,

industry associations, and other similar networks. A Microsoft Word document containing the survey was also sent out via e-mail, but none of the respondents used this form type.

- **QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION** – The initial plan of data collection was to conduct separate focus group discussions with mid-managers from Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. However, the participants found it difficult to find a common time. Hence, key informant interviews were conducted with each manager, CEO, or business owner. This approach was more time consuming but was nonetheless proved to be the most appropriate approach given the current pandemic situation. All interviews were remotely conducted via Zoom video conferencing.
- **SAMPLING** – The selection of survey respondents was implemented through purposive and snowball sampling. Part of the study's intention was to secure an equal number of responses from women and men mid-managers and equal representation of respondents from Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. However, their active participation had been a major challenge despite the several calls and follow-ups made by the research team. In the end, more female responses were gathered than male responses, and more respondents from Mindanao compared with Luzon and Visayas answered the survey. Nevertheless, the total number of participants were deemed sufficient to perform the required analysis.

- **ANONYMITY** – Identifiers, such as individual and employer names, were not collected in the survey to ensure the complete anonymity of responses. Many of the interview participants also preferred to remain anonymous. Their names have been withheld or disguised to protect their identities.

“While we see substantial improvements in breaking gender stereotypes, it’s clear that there’s still important work to be done in promoting women empowerment in the workplace.”

COSETTE CANILAO
PRESIDENT AND CEO
ABOITIZ INFRACAPITAL, INC.





3. ANALYSES AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 RESPONDENT PROFILES

The national study has primarily targeted female and male mid-managers for the survey and the CEOs, business owners, top managers, and mid-managers for the key informant interviews.

The respondent demographics were disaggregated on the basis of gender and geographic region of employment. A total of 200 survey respondents answered the online survey, and 39 key informant interviews were conducted via Zoom. More women participated in the survey, and more than half of all respondents hailed from Mindanao. The respondents were employed by medium- and large-sized corporations across varied industries, such as manufacturing, banking and finance, information technology and business process outsourcing, retail and commercial, and utilities.

Approximately 12% of the respondents can be considered affiliated with one of three cultural groups identified in the survey. Ethnolinguistic classifications, such as Cebuano, Ilonggo, or Kapampangan, were not included due to the large number. More than half of the respondents are 31–40 years old at the time of the study, followed by 41–50 years old; they comprise the typical age brackets for mid-management positions. According to consulting firm Korn Ferry (n.d), millennials—those born between 1982 and 1996—have been rapidly ascending the corporate ladder and now hold managerial and even senior executive roles within their companies. Although

the majority of the respondents are or had been married and have children, a large proportion of the single women and men participants do not have children, echoing the emerging trend of increased marrying age and singlehood among the older age brackets (Hamedanchi, et al., 2020). More respondents have stayed in their companies for one to ten years, which is commensurate to their age

brackets. No difference in length of stay in the company based on gender was established in this study.

The corresponding details are shown in Figures 6–10 and Tables 1 and 2.

The number of respondents who had completed graduate

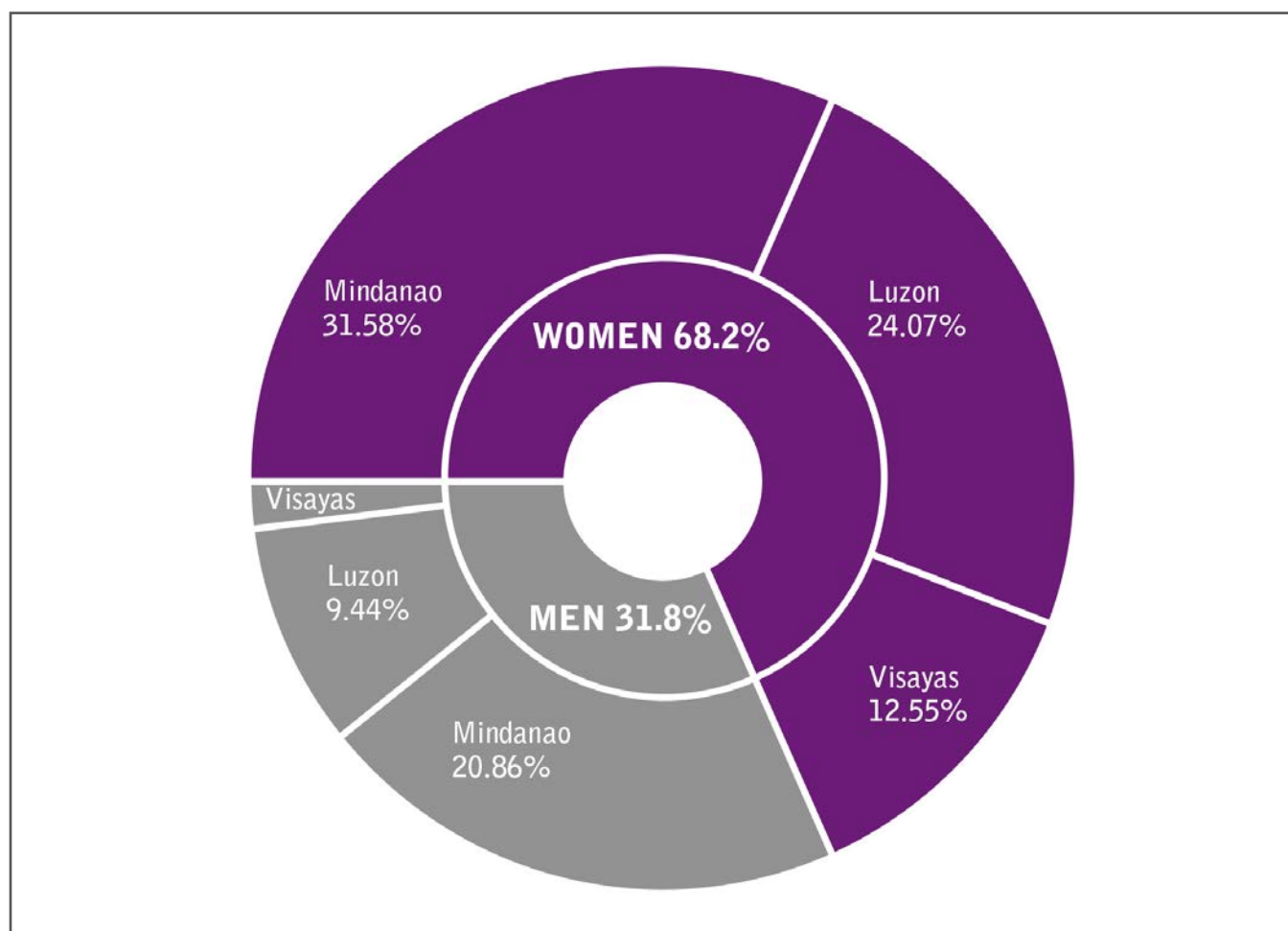


FIGURE 6. GENDER DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS (n=200)

TABLE 1. DISTRIBUTION OF KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

POSITION IN THE COMPANY	LUZON	VISAYAS	MINDANAO	TOTAL
CEO/C-Level/Business Owners	5	3	8	16
Mid-Managers	10	4	4	18
Human Resource Managers	3	0	2	5
TOTAL	18	7	14	39

TABLE 2. CULTURAL AFFILIATION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS (n=200)

GENDER	REGION	IP	MORO/ MUSLIM	MIXED RACE
MEN	Luzon	0%	0%	5%
	Visayas	0%	0%	33%
	Mindanao	2%	5%	5%
	Total Men	2%	3%	6%
WOMEN	Luzon	4%	0%	4%
	Visayas	4%	0%	16%
	Mindanao	2%	2%	10%
	Total Women	3%	1%	9%

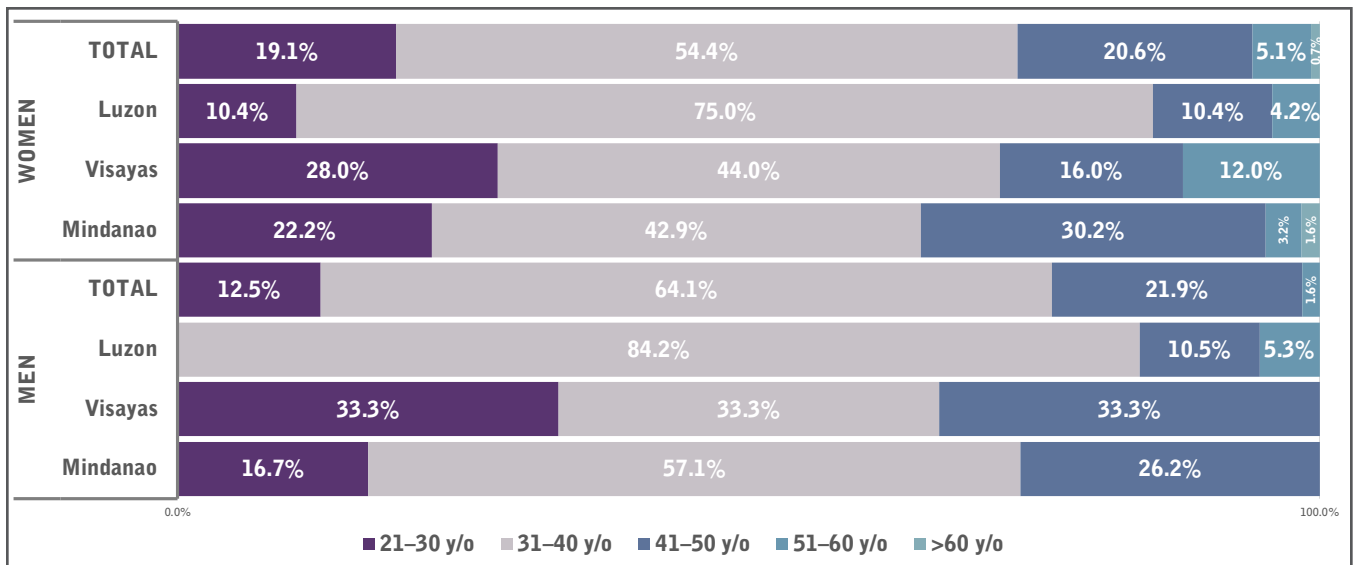


FIGURE 7. AGE DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS (n=200)

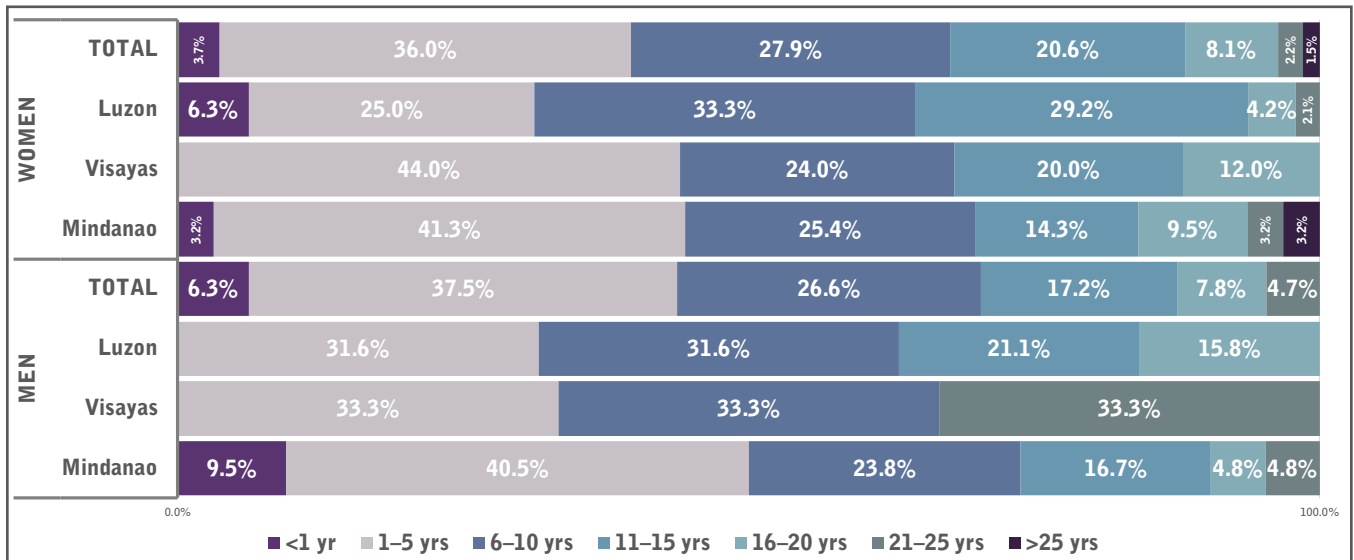


FIGURE 8. DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY TENURE IN THE COMPANY (n=200)

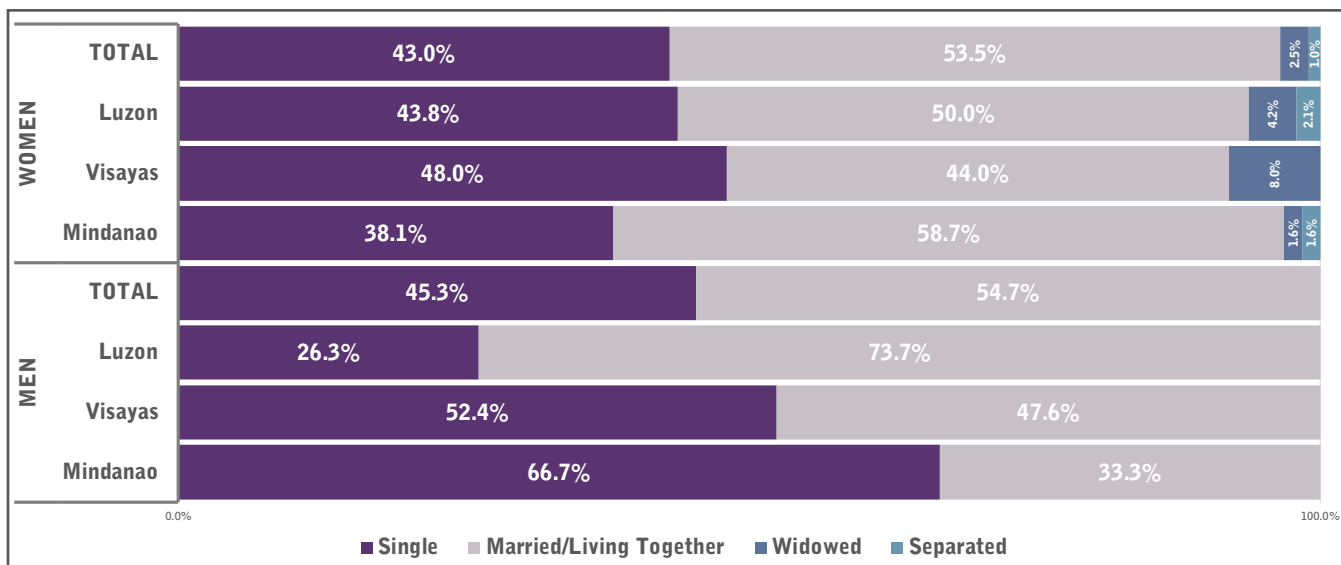


FIGURE 9. CIVIL STATUS DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS (n=200)

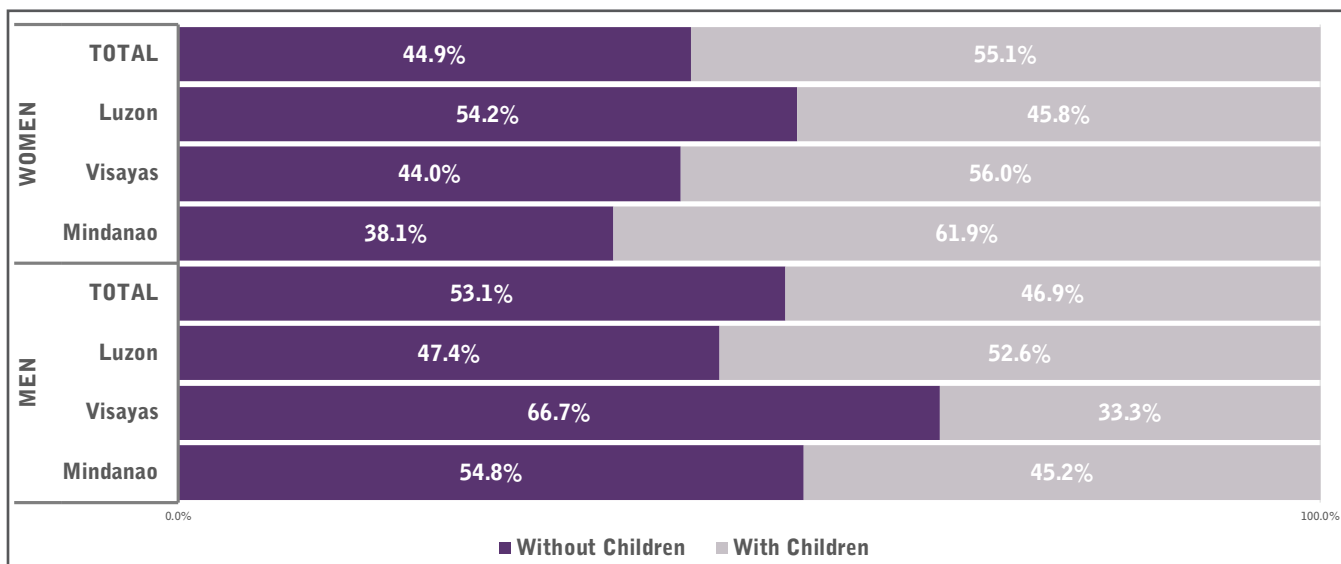


FIGURE 10. DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY CHILDREN (n=200)

studies are higher than the college graduates, with men edging the women by less than 1% (Figure 11). Nearly two-thirds of the respondents completed post-graduate leadership and management courses, with a 5% gap between men and women. Interestingly, slightly more women (67% vs. 66% men) were able to access company financing for the leadership and management and courses (Figures 12 and 13), suggesting that some companies have considered gender inclusion in their leadership development programs.

The spectrum of company representation was broad in terms of size (Figure 14). According to the 2019 List of Establishments provided by the Philippine Statistics Authority, more businesses have been registered in NCR and Luzon (Table 3) in 2019. Multinational enterprises often base their Philippine offices in NCR or Luzon but

operate nationwide, whereas companies based in the Visayas and Mindanao are largely homegrown (Figures 15 and 16).

The salaries of managers tend to be higher in Luzon compared with those in the rest of the Philippines (Figure 17). Managers in Mindanao receive relatively low salaries for similar positions, perhaps because of the more affordable cost of living in the region.

Most men (77%) directly report to the same gender as opposed to the scenario for women (46%) (Figure 18). Only 39% of the total respondents include a woman as an immediate supervisor, indicating a dearth of women with leadership roles among the companies that participated in the national study.

TABLE. 3. DISTRIBUTION OF ESTABLISHMENTS BY SIZE IN 2019

REGION	SMALL (10–99 TOTAL EMPLOYEES)	MEDIUM (100–199 TOTAL EMPLOYEES)	LARGE (200 AND OVER TOTAL EMPLOYEES)
NCR	32,164	1,803	1,994
Luzon	35,352	1,591	1,414
Visayas	16,136	693	744
Mindanao	16,284	678	609
PHILIPPINES	99,936	4,765	4,761

SOURCE: PHILIPPINE STATISTICS AUTHORITY (2019)

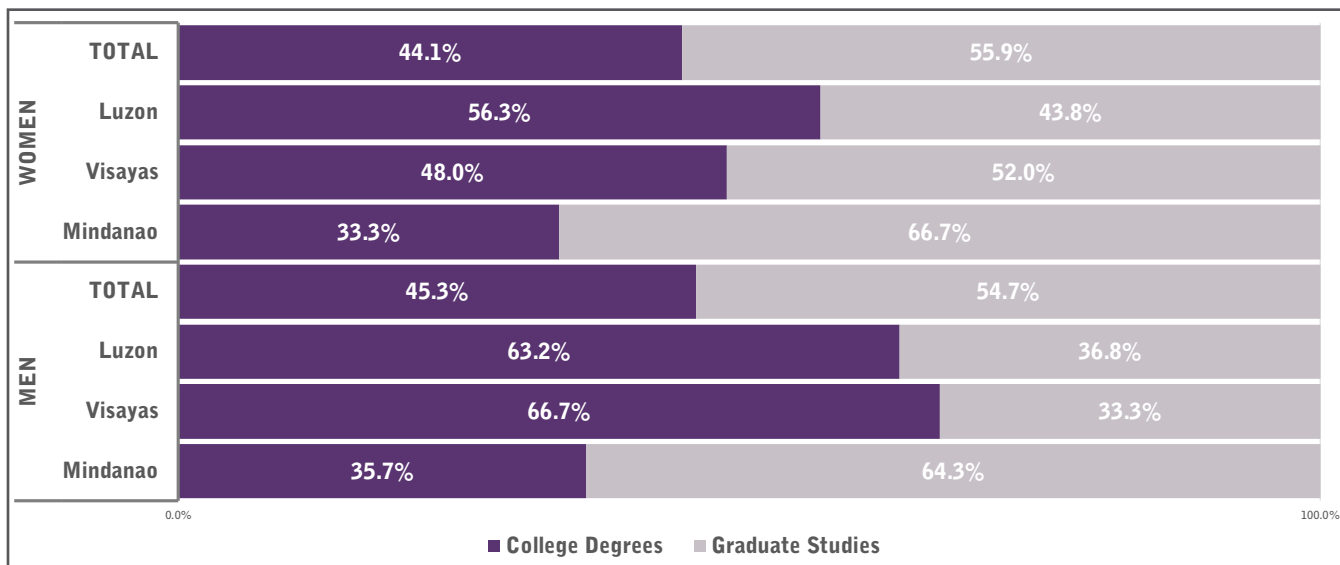


FIGURE 11. DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (n=200)

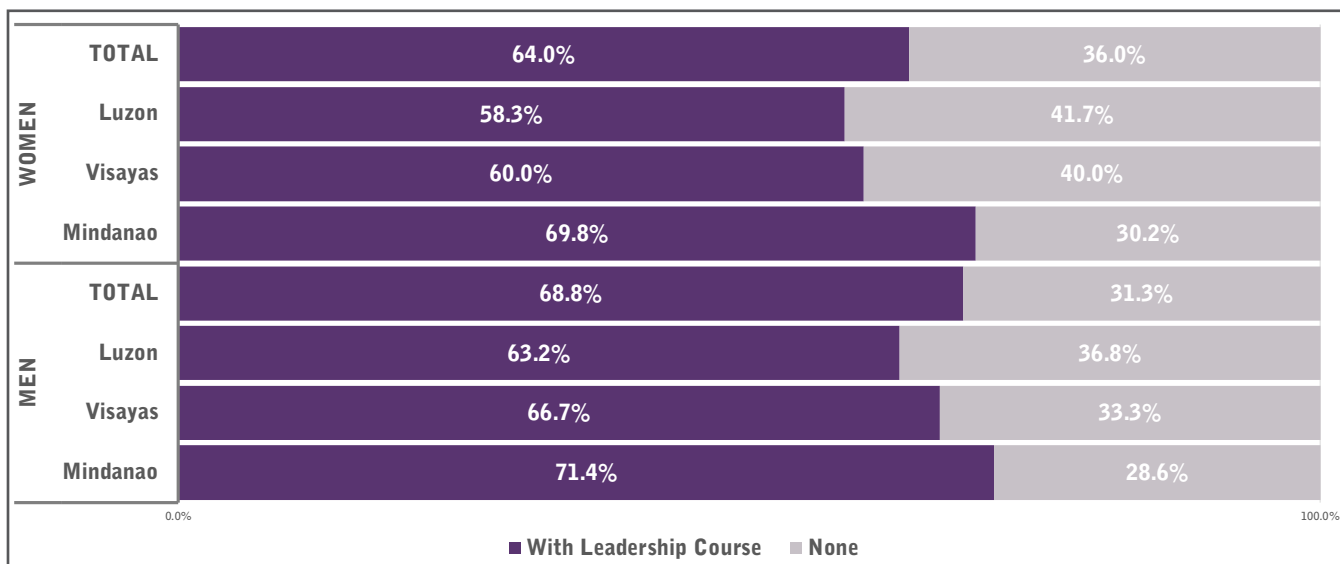


FIGURE 12. DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE TAKEN A LEADERSHIP COURSE (n=200)

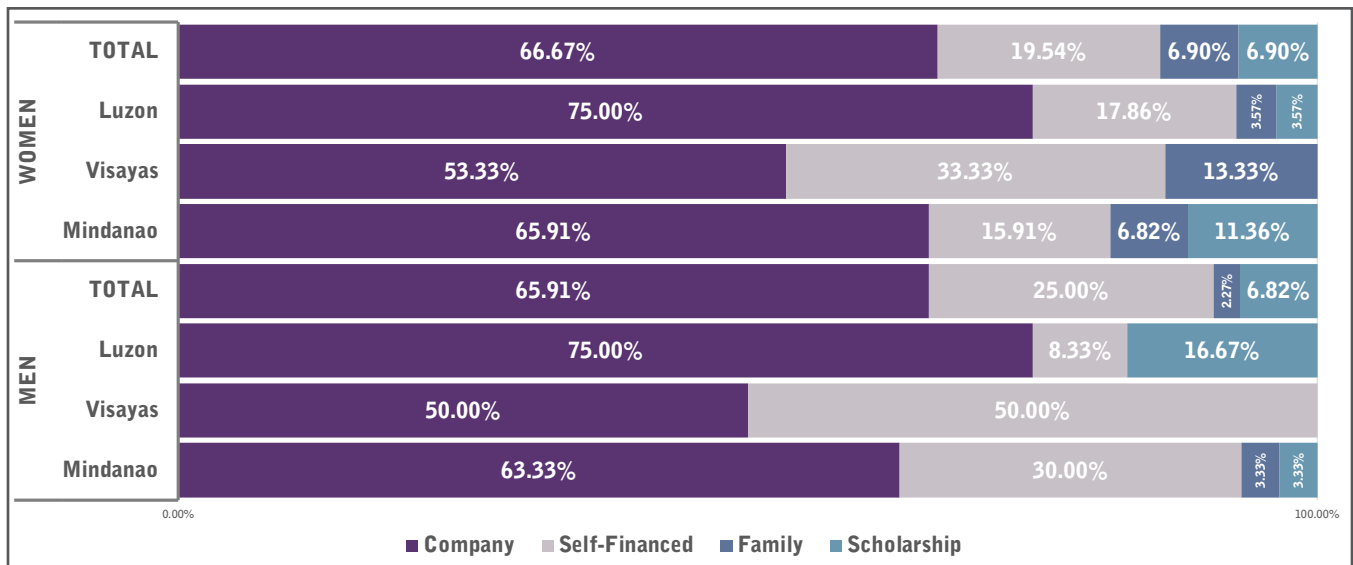


FIGURE 13. DISTRIBUTION LEADERSHIP COURSE PARTICIPANTS BY FUNDER (n=131/200)

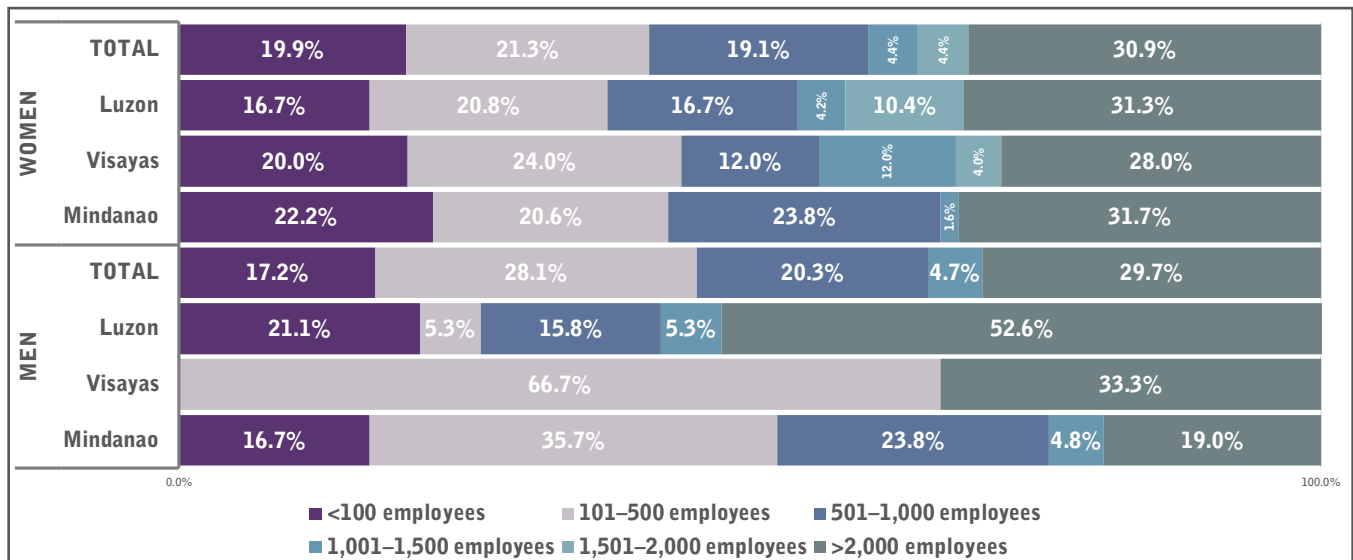


FIGURE 14. DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY COMPANY SIZE (n=200)

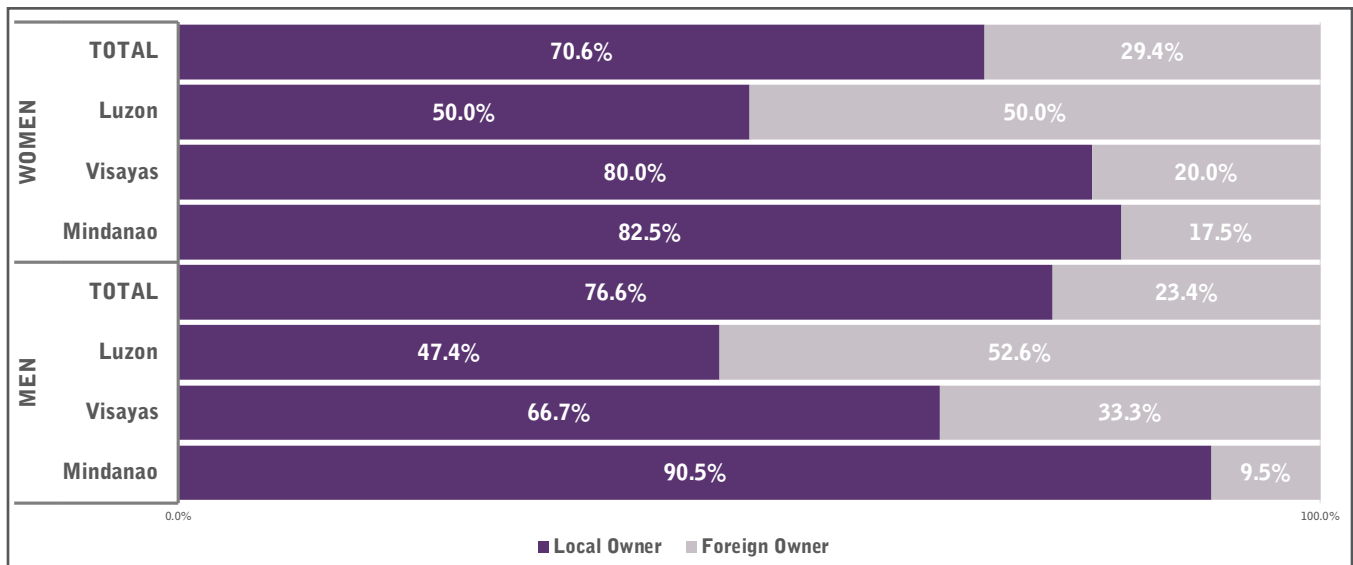


FIGURE 15. DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY COMPANY OWNERSHIP (n=200)

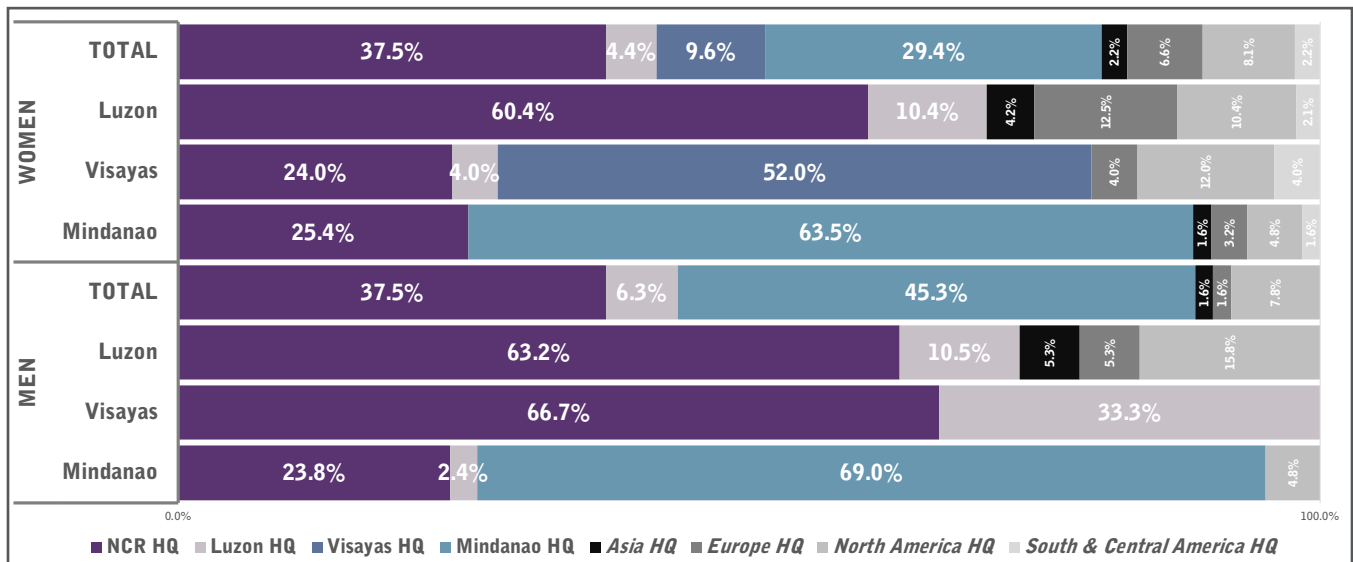


FIGURE 16. DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY HEADQUARTERS' LOCATION (n=200)

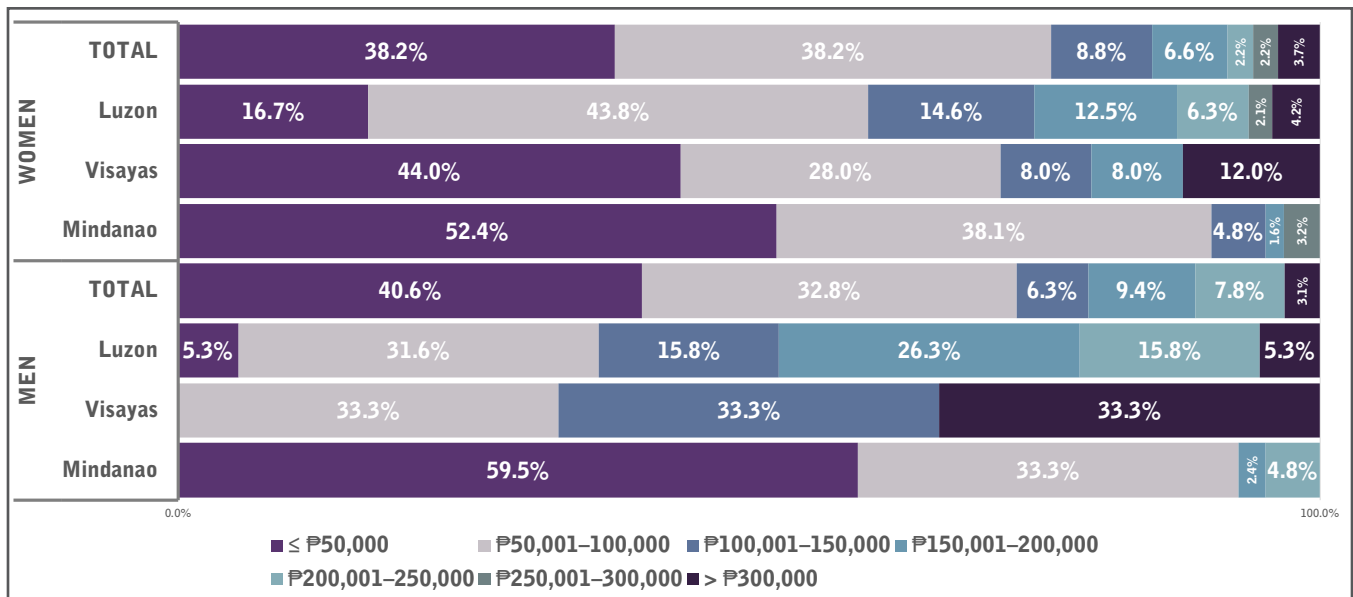


FIGURE 17. DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY MONTHLY SALARY (n=200)

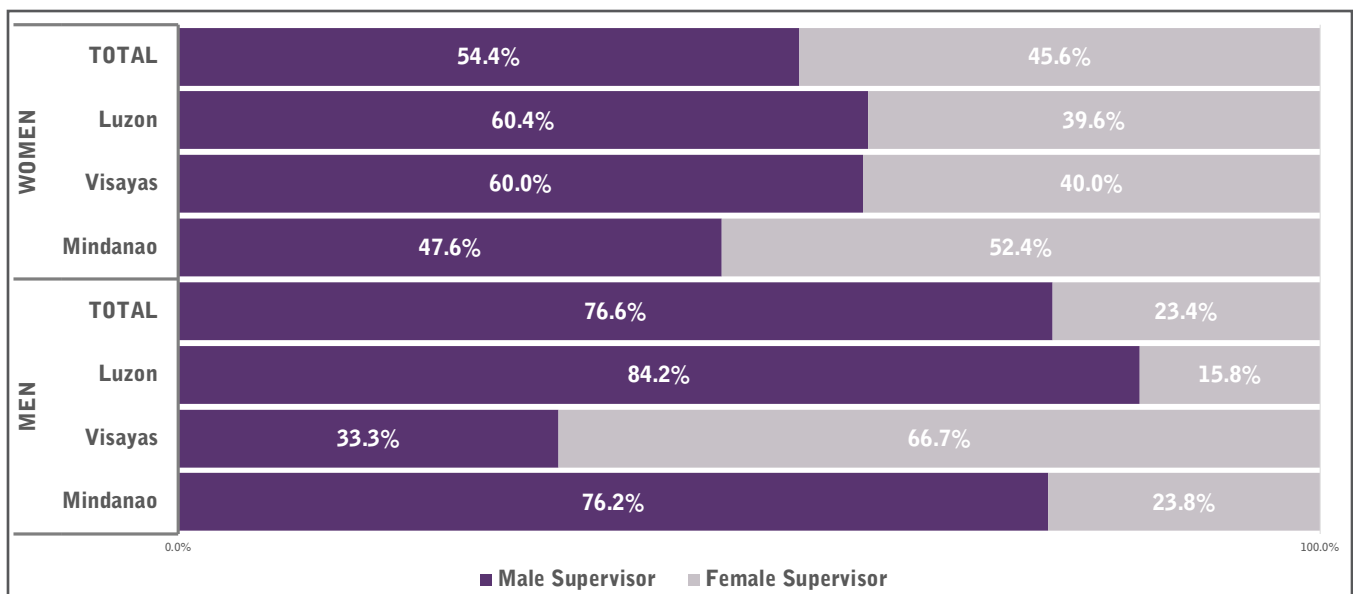


FIGURE 18. DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR (n=200)

3.2 THE FOUR SQUEEZE-IN-THE-PIPELINE FACTORS

3.2.1 Individual Abilities and Personal Perceptions

Regardless of gender and region, most respondents felt that they have the right skills and professional experience to lead and are neutral in their preference for a mentor. More women in the Visayas (88%), especially those with children, had reservations to prepare for a leadership role or take on new projects. Although 100% of the men and women in Luzon and Visayas are confident that

their leadership skills can help their respective company achieve its goals, an extremely small number of women (6%) and men (2%) in Mindanao disagree. The women (92%) and men (95%) respondents in Luzon say they can articulate their disagreement with their bosses and team members without fear of repercussion.

Interestingly, women in Mindanao (74%) are less confident to immediately take on a leadership roles compared with men (91%) from the same region despite having established wide networks (91%) and even if they comprise the largest proportion of graduate

TABLE 4. FOCAL SURVEY ITEMS ON INDIVIDUAL ABILITIES AND PERSONAL PERCEPTIONS

INDICATOR	WOMEN				MEN			
	TOTAL	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao	TOTAL	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao
Confidence to take on opportunities to prepare for a leadership role	94%	98%	88%	94%	97%	95%	100%	98%
Confidence that their leadership can help company reach goals	97%	100%	100%	94%	98%	100%	100%	98%
Confidence in articulating dissent to boss and colleagues	88%	92%	88%	84%	86%	95%	67%	84%
Confidence to immediately take on a leadership role	79%	85%	80%	73%	85%	74%	67%	91%
Confidence in reaching a top management position	79%	73%	79%	76%	84%	74%	100%	88%

degrees (67%) among all respondent groups. Women (74%) across the Philippines had fewer opportunities than men (82%) in accessing their respective company's leadership programs, although they believe that their current networks can open doors to move up the corporate ladder (86% women, 83% men).

Both men (100%) and women (96%) respondents from the Visayas have expressed confidence in reaching the top management positions should they want to, a wide gap from those working in Luzon (73% women, 74% men), perhaps because companies in Luzon are bigger in size and have more managers vying for the top leadership posts.

3.2.2 Family and Household Factors

Filipinos typically have close family ties; this was evident among the families of respondents, regardless of gender or region, motivating them to strive hard as they build their careers. Single respondents from Mindanao (98%) seem to be the most motivated to work for family reasons, suggesting that many unmarried respondents in this region are the breadwinners of their family. Compared with the other groups, fewer women (83%) in Luzon need income to provide for their families, implying that certain specific factors motivate them to work. An equal percentage of women and men (79%) view family as more important than career, implying that priorities tend to shift when a person becomes married

(90% married vs. 65% single) or has a child or children (94% vs. 63% with no children).

Unlike in other the regions, fewer respondents in Mindanao (67% women, 64% men) can make work adjustments in case of family emergency. Approximately 44% of both genders equally feel guilty if they cannot handle care work due to work or career, with 52% women in the Visayas particularly feeling remorseful about this scenario. Interestingly, the men in Visayas (100%) and Luzon (74%) are selective about their projects to be able to spend time with children. Despite this finding, nearly half of the respondents (49.3% women, 55% men) continue to craft long-term career goals, with the men in Luzon (63%) and women in Mindanao (56%) depicted as the ambitious among the groups.

Both genders (88%) equally say they can balance both their professional and personal lives, with women in Mindanao (94%) particularly emphatic about the work –life balance. In some metropolitan areas in the Philippines, such as Davao, General Santos City, and Cagayan de Oro City, the residents do not lose as much time commuting in traffic, thus giving them more time with the family.

The spouses of Luzon-based respondents tend to be more supportive of their partner's aspirations. However, more men (41%) than women (29%) consider role seniority, promotions, and pay deferential to be an issue

TABLE 5. FOCAL SURVEY ITEMS ON FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD FACTORS

INDICATOR	WOMEN				MEN			
	TOTAL	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao	TOTAL	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao
Needs the job for the income to provide for family	90%	83%	92%	95%	95%	95%	100%	95%
Makes work adjustments as the primary person responding to family emergencies	71%	75%	72%	67%	72%	84%	100%	64%
Feels guilty about not being able to handle care work due to work	44%	35%	52%	48%	44%	42%	33%	45%
Selective about their projects to spend more time with children	64%	63%	67%	60%	69%	74%	100%	64%
Continues to craft long-term goals despite responsibilities at home	49%	46%	40%	56%	55%	63%	33%	52%
Able to balance professional and personal life	88%	83%	80%	94%	88%	90%	100%	86%
Has a supportive spouse	86%	92%	80%	84%	88%	95%	100%	83%
Considers career progression indicators an issue between couples	29%	29%	32%	27%	41%	32%	33%	45%
Grew up in a traditional family setup	35%	40%	37%	24%	47%	47%	33%	48%

between couples. A reason may be that more men (47% vs. 35% women) grew up in traditional households. Only 41% of women and 47% of men plan to raise their children in the manner that they grew up, suggesting that the respondents' parenting styles have been shaped

by different factors experienced by their generation (44% of respondents aged 21–30 vs. 36% of those aged 41–50).

3.2.3 Company Culture

The majority of respondents work for companies with leadership development programs (94%). Such initiatives can be attributed to an organizational culture that retain talents by focusing on employees' personal growth and development (94%). The respondents in Mindanao (90%) say they trust that their company will look after their welfare and those of their families.

Nearly half of the respondents (56%), with more men from Luzon (68%) and Visayas (67%), find it difficult to manage flexible hours, which imply much longer hours at work, especially within the context of COVID-19. More men and women in the Visayas (43%) dislike having a

work setup located away from the home for a significant amount of time, which may be explained by the inter-island travel often required in the region, which differ from the land travels in Luzon and Mindanao.

Both genders (60% women, 63% men) say they will understand if a company promotes a colleague who consider work as the top priority. Majority of them believe that gender equality policies are important for organizational performance (95%), and support programs extending beyond the workplace and those that can help to ease the care work are important to the employees' well-being (74% women, 67% men). However, the actual implementation of such policies seems to be lacking based on the responses. Even

TABLE 6. FOCAL SURVEY ITEMS ON COMPANY CULTURE

INDICATOR	WOMEN				MEN			
	TOTAL	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao	TOTAL	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao
Flexible hours resulting in more and longer work	54%	54%	52%	56%	61%	68%	67%	57%
Feels bad when being away from home long due to work trips	27%	15%	40%	30%	30%	26%	67%	29%
Availability of childcare facilities at work	21%	15%	16%	29%	25%	21%	33%	26%
Availability of support programs for employees	54%	52%	56%	56%	64%	68%	33%	64%
Company looks after welfare of employees and their families	84%	79%	80%	89%	88%	84%	67%	91%

if more than half of respondents (57%) agree that their company have programs for employee support, basic facilities, such as those for childcare, are lacking according to 61% of the parent-respondents.

3.2.4 Wider Society

Although both genders equally prefer to spend more time for one's self and the family, the difference is stark between the respondents working in Luzon (69% women, 95% men), with marriage and children as the determining factor. The difference is slight with respect to managing the household and career regardless of the region, but men (67% vs. 30%) found it more difficult to adapt to such setup.

Even if 80% of respondents felt it is time for the society to accommodate role reversals when it comes to managing households, the respondents in Visayas and Mindanao are two times more likely to be entrenched in the notion of women providing the care work and men overseeing the financial support. The same belief extends to the workplace, with almost double of the respondents from outside of Luzon agreeing that traditional roles are still expected by their companies. Furthermore, although slightly more men think that their gender gives them better chances to attain the leadership post, the difference is quite small (34% vs. 30%), as most of them (96%) believe that leadership roles should be given on the basis of merit.

TABLE 7. FOCAL SURVEY ITEMS ON WIDER SOCIETY

INDICATOR	WOMEN				MEN			
	TOTAL	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao	TOTAL	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao
Preference to spend more time for family	74%	69%	76%	78%	80%	95%	100%	71%
Finds it challenging to manage career and household	74%	75%	68%	75%	67%	68%	100%	64%
Believes in traditional roles in the family	35%	21%	44%	41%	44%	16%	33%	57%
Believes that companies still expect traditional roles for men and women	40%	29%	48%	44%	34%	26%	33%	43%

3.3 IMPACT OF COVID-19

The women respondents in Luzon (42%) believe that COVID-19 has a much larger impact on the female gender, a stark contrast to the perception of men in the same region (16%). The disproportionate effects of COVID-19 can be clearly illustrated by 10% of the women respondents (vs. 2% men) sharing that they have experienced demotion or decreased work hours because of household duties during the COVID-19 lockdown, while 21% of women (vs. 14% men) have experienced pay reduction. Majority of the female respondents

belong to the food service, tourism and hospitality, and retail industries, which have been hardest hit by the crisis. Despite all of these findings, men (69%) are more concerned than women (56%) about job security. Both genders are pragmatic about the possibilities of promotion because of the crisis brought by COVID-19.

From a regional perspective, more managers in the Visayas have experienced reduced work hours due to the lockdown (11%) or pay cuts (25%) compared with their Luzon or Mindanao counterparts, and most of them have experienced job insecurity (75%). The women (71%

TABLE 8. FOCAL SURVEY ITEMS ON COVID-19

INDICATOR	WOMEN				MEN			
	TOTAL	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao	TOTAL	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao
Believes that COVID-19 has a larger impact on women	34%	42%	32%	29%	20%	16%	33%	21%
Experienced a demotion or reduced hours	10%	6%	12%	11.1%	2%	0%	0%	2%
Experienced reduced pay	21%	15%	28%	22%	14%	16%	0%	18%
Concerns about job security	56%	54%	72%	51%	69%	68%	100%	67%
Distractions prevent working efficiently from home.	47%	44%	40%	52%	45%	42%	67%	45%
Experiences increased household responsibilities	51%	52%	60%	46%	41%	53%	33%	36%
Takes longer to accomplish household tasks	37%	40%	40%	33%	41%	37%	67%	41%
Has help managing the home while working remotely	71%	67%	76%	71%	58%	74%	67%	50%

vs. 66% men) respondents view their company's gender inclusion policies to be helpful in adapting to the "new normal" and consequently feel safer to return to work (77% women, 69% men). This finding is validated by a number of interviewees agreeing that their company has become more mindful of the health and safety of their workforce to help better prepare for similar future situations. All of the companies have revised their organizational policies to protect the most vulnerable employees during COVID-19, such as pregnant women and employees with disabilities and health issues. The companies based in the southern part of Mindanao are

already conscious about infrastructure safety, as the region has been plagued by a series of earthquakes in the last quarter of 2019, and the changes to health protocols due to COVID-19 have been added to the risk management plans.

Women (61%) superseded men (58%), but only by a small margin, in preferring work-from-home arrangements for the post-pandemic scenario. At the managerial level, some of the respondents do not view remote work as a good setup. Distractions at home, unstable home Internet connections, and lack of space have prevented

TABLE 9. COMPARISON OF HOURS SPENT ON CARE WORK PRE- AND DURING COVID-19

GENDER	REGION	LESS THAN 2 HOURS		2-3 HOURS		4-5 HOURS		6-7 HOURS		8-9 HOURS		MORE THAN 9 HOURS	
		Pre-COVID	COVID	Pre-COVID	COVID	Pre-COVID	COVID	Pre-COVID	COVID	Pre-COVID	COVID	Pre-COVID	COVID
MEN	Luzon	53%	21%	21%	32%	11%	32%	11%	5%	0%	0%	5%	11%
	Visayas	67%	33%	33%	0%	0%	67%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Mindanao	29%	17%	38%	31%	26%	33%	5%	10%	2%	5%	0%	5%
	TOTAL	38%	19%	33%	30%	20%	34%	6%	8%	2%	3%	2%	6%
WOMEN	Luzon	38%	21%	42%	23%	19%	23%	0%	21%	2%	8%	0%	4%
	Visayas	40%	28%	32%	12%	16%	20%	4%	28%	4%	4%	4%	8%
	Mindanao	29%	13%	41%	29%	24%	30%	5%	19%	2%	2%	0%	8%
	TOTAL	34%	18%	40%	24%	21%	26%	3%	21%	2%	4%	1%	7%

the respondents from working efficiently. Accordingly, the respondents with children have encountered more distractions at home (52% vs. 40% without children).

Not only has COVID-19 increased the amount of care work responsibilities among women (51% vs. 41% men), it has also led to longer time needed to accomplish household tasks for both genders (37% women, 41% men). In the past, over a third of men and women only took less than two hours to complete their tasks; the number has since shrunk to less than 20%. A third of the women respondents have reported that it now took more than six hours to accomplish their tasks compared with only 6% of them prior COVID-19.

More women (71% vs. 58% men) say that they receive help in managing the household while working at home.

However, the picture differs among married respondents. More than half of the women respondents (53%) are married; among them, only 43% say that their spouse helps them at home. By contrast, all married men acknowledge they have received help from their wife in managing the household. This finding is corroborated by the research conducted by the IZA Institute of Labor Economics (2020). In the report, women spend more time doing housework tasks during the pandemic as opposed to the pre-COVID scenario. The increasing amount of housework of women have not been contingent upon changes in their partners' working arrangements. This scenario differs from the men's experiences in which the time spent on housework nearly remained constant, as their female partners took over the added burden at home. This imbalance in workload has led to exhaustion and burnout among women.

TABLE 10. PERSONS HELPING WITH HOUSEHOLD DUTIES AND CARE WORK

GENDER	REGION	SPOUSE	HELPER	PARENTS	SIBLINGS	OLDER CHILDREN	NO ONE
MEN	Luzon	48%	31%	26%	12%	5%	17%
	Visayas	67%	33%	0%	0%	33%	33%
	Mindanao	74%	32%	26%	16%	5%	5%
	TOTAL	56%	31%	25%	13%	6%	14%
WOMEN	Luzon	52%	30%	30%	24%	16%	8%
	Visayas	24%	40%	44%	28%	8%	12%
	Mindanao	42%	31%	21%	19%	10%	13%
	TOTAL	43%	32%	29%	23%	13%	10%



“I never looked at being a woman as a limitation. It’s how I was raised. Furthermore, it never occurred to me that being a woman in business is a limitation and that’s what I tell people.”

OLIVE PUENTESPINA
FOUNDER AND MANAGING DIRECTOR
CHEESEMAKER
MALAGOS FOOD INC.

3.4 CONVERSATIONS WITH CEOs, C-LEVEL EXECUTIVES, AND BUSINESS OWNERS

The insights shared herein have been gleaned from the interviews with CEOs, C-level executives, and business owners. Each of the interviewees shared their personal experience in climbing the corporate ladder or starting their own business. The interviewees also shared how they initiated policies and programs that have empower women not simply in the workplace but also at home and in the community.

Most of the interviewees represent women breaking the glass ceiling in the last few years. Changes in global trends and education have enabled women to participate in higher levels of decision making alongside men. However, the women interviewees admit that such scenarios tend to be sector-specific, with women holding top positions mostly in the banking, tourism and hospitality, healthcare, and services industries. The private sector as a whole remains to be predominantly led by men; most women in top-level positions run the companies that they created.

3.4.1 Transformative Education as a Key to Changing Societal Norms and Individual Development

The interviewees candidly shared some of the struggles they encountered in the early days of their careers. Gender stereotypes have predisposed the selection of courses in tertiary education, which then has limited



“Women are breaking the glass ceiling and making decisions side by side with men. Times have changed and the influences from the global arena and education helped women participate to a higher level. I thrive in the industry because I am committed, I love what I do, and I am creative.”

JOJI ILAGAN BIAN
CHAIR
JIB GROUP OF COMPANIES

the roles that women can hold in the private sector. Education, therefore, is a critical avenue for teaching gender equality and changing the perceptions on gendered roles.

Joji Ilagan-Bian of the JIB Group of Companies highlighted the importance of education in laying the foundation for gender equality in the workplace. Her schools focus on personality development, leadership, and soft skills as a means of empowering students to speak for themselves. She launched the Young Global Women Leaders, training Grade 10 to 12 students from public schools to become more confident and empowered young adults.

Disadvantaged women in rural areas usually view early marriage as a way out of poverty, and this perception has shaped how Olive Puentespina of Malagos Food Inc. (see p. 41) leads her cheese-making business. She hires women who were elementary and high school graduates and those of indigenous heritage to give them opportunities to provide for their families. These women start at entry-level positions and, with training, many of them are able to demonstrate the potential to move up to more skilled positions. As part of her goal to empower women, Olive also educates her staff on female reproductive health, reminding them about their rights as individuals, thus helping to raise awareness on the appropriate behavior towards women. She also supports employees who want to finish their education even if work and school schedules are sometimes conflicting.

3.4.2 Motivations to Ascend the Ladder May Vary, but Internal Drive Should Be Present

The answers varied when participants were asked about their motivation to excel in their chosen fields. Some needed to assist the parents with household expenses, such as to send siblings to schools. Some of the women interviewees have always dreamed of starting their own business and are currently working hard to make their dreams a reality. The desire to contribute to the growth of the company is generally anchored in the shared belief on business philosophy and values of the firm. A participant found joy and meaning in making people's lives better through the spaces she design. Another participant wanted to leave a lasting legacy to the family business. The interviewees found meaning and purpose in the work they do, making the sacrifices to get to the top worth all of their effort.

Michelle Alarcon of Z-Lift Solutions underscored the importance of internal motivation of women. Her company is comprised of 70% women, many of whom are professionally and personally driven to excel in the technology sphere. Michelle also spends time as a volunteer at the For the Women Foundation to teach artificial intelligence and data science to women who have not worked in industry or intend to return to the workforce. Intrinsic determination is one of the criteria for selection to the program in view of facilitating high-quality standards at work. Overcoming lack of skills as a barrier to entry allows more women to achieve fulfilling careers in a stereotypically male-dominated sector.



“I did not actively seek to be promoted. I simply did my best because I love my job.”

MIRASOL TIW
CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER
DAVAO DOCTORS HOSPITAL

HOW CAN YOUR COMPANY ENSURE THAT GENDER INCLUSION TARGETS ARE MET AND WOMEN BUILD RESILIENCE DURING TIMES OF CRISIS?

Maintaining Physical and Mental Well-Being

Focus on employees and their wellness. Leaders can reach out and empathize with their employees even on an online platform. – JOJI ILAGAN BIAN, JIB Group of Companies

Company culture should be centered on the welfare of the employees and their families. Teaching financial literacy can encourage employees to better budget their expenses and save for a rainy day. – CHERRY AL-AG, Al-ag Group of Companies

The COVID-19 situation made us more conscious of people rather than processes. It has also taught us to really work together as a team to come up with several solutions just to make sure that we can survive this pandemic. We take time to call our employees, check on how they are coping and make sure that the benefits are continued even if we're not opening classes. We want our workforce to be able to maintain their well-being so we're more conscious about taking breaks and de-stressing. – JEANETTE FABUL-FOULC, PHINMA Education

Building Strong Relationships Despite Working Remotely

Businesses right now are just trying to survive. The focus should be on helping each other on both professional and personal matters. Improving relationships amongst team members even as they work remotely will help them become more resilient. – JACKIE TAN SY, Suelas

A flexible work arrangement is one of the advantages of being in the tech industry. Companies should also consider generational differences in coping mechanisms when designing activities that promote well-being and teamwork. – MICHELLE ALARCON, Z-Lift Solutions

Planning for Resiliency

Include women in developing business continuity plans and implement resiliency training. Companies who had initiatives for women cushioned the impact to them and their families. – DOMINICA CHUA, Ramon Aboitiz Foundation Inc.

Businesses should have foresight and always be prepared to see opportunities whenever there are unforeseen events. – JULIE SASIN, Biosite Medical Instruments Inc.

By adding resiliency to the strategic business plan, companies will have a plan to explore new markets in case the current market is lost. Diversify the product line so you can have a way to expand and hire more people, including women. – OLIVE PUENTESPINA, Malagos Food Inc.

Most people will have a career shift at least once in their life. For Jeannette Fabul-Foulc, COO of the international Division of PHINMA Education, the shift from banking to the education industry was not easy, but she was determined to be successful in her new role. The right mindset and attitude were her key success factors. She did not say “no” immediately even though she knew that education differed from the focus of her previous job. She learned about the industry by attending seminars, enrolling in short courses, and reading books to upskill herself. It took time for Jeannette to meet the learning curve, but she was able to accomplish it. PHINMA Education’s belief that Jeannette would do well in the position motivated her to try and give her best.

3.4.3 Family is Both an Enabler and a Barrier to Career Advancement

Work–life balance is a concept to mean being skilled in setting priorities and successfully managing one’s time to get all of the tasks done. Everyone only has 24 hours a day. Successful people are expected to know how to manage energy and focus on accomplishing tasks and wellness. Adding “me time” to the schedule is crucial for rest and recharge. For the women interviewees, supportive husbands and family members enable them to rise to the top, with the support going beyond moral and emotional encouragement.

Couples need to have real and honest conversations about dividing the workload at home. While all of the women interviewees have felt guilty to a certain extent

in prioritizing work and missing time with family, this was assuaged by the knowledge that the spouse can actively help to complete chores and home-school the children. Raising children to be independent has enabled one of the women entrepreneurs to develop the business while the children were growing up. She decided to build the warehouse for her business near the children’s school to lessen her commute time.

For Jackie Tan Sy, co-owner of Suelas, knowledge in entrepreneurship has provided a pathway to balance career and family. As a new mother, the flexibility allows her to raise her daughter while working from home. However, she acknowledged that there is a knowledge gap in entrepreneurship in the country’s education system, and she had to learn most of the skills while on the job. It was a conscious decision to hire an all-female team because of their ability to personally relate to their product: women’s footwear.

Many of the interviewed CEOs and business owners agree that even though both men and women have been negatively affected by COVID-19, the women carry a heavier load, especially at home. Some of their female employees became the sole family breadwinner because a husband had lost his job. In terms of the crisis’ impact, women feel more stressed in managing the household because the boundaries between career and home management have become blurred. Many of the employees had reached emotional and physical exhaustion, considering they also had to take care of the children and assist them in homeschooling

while simultaneously doing work-related tasks. This finding from the interview supports the survey results in which more than 50% of the women respondents have experienced increased care work. More women reportedly have experienced domestic violence during the pandemic. These firsthand insights validate the initial information gleaned from the published studies.

As a supplier of diagnostic equipment used in COVID-19 laboratories, Julie Ann Sasin, co-owner of Biosite Medical Instruments Inc., recognizes the hard work and sacrifice of her employees to fulfill a variety of orders around the country. In view of following the health protocols, the employees were housed near the office, suggesting they are unable to go home for a few months. While a few of the housed employees eventually opted to resign from work to join their respective family during the COVID-19 lockdown, most of them stayed because they know how vital their work is during times of crisis. It was tough for the employees to be away from home, especially since children have begun their homeschooling, but they were able to rearrange their daily affairs. Most of the women employees rely on extended family support to keep their households going. Julie made sure they continuously celebrate small wins at work to keep her employees' morale high.

3.4.4 Changing Corporate Culture Begins with Those in the Top Leadership Position

According to the women interviewees, companies in the past were hesitant to hire women because managers in charge of hiring were already anticipating future maternity leaves and emergency leaves for family-related issues. Women tend to be assigned jobs that stagnate after a few years or have vague career paths to the top leadership posts. It also took more work and a few more years for female employees to establish their credibility in their chosen profession or industry. Furthermore, as experienced by women in the technology sector, age—not gender—is another source of discrimination.

Cherry Al-ag runs wellness spas and travel and tourism businesses, employing mostly women, for the Al-ag Group of Companies. Many of their businesses were not allowed to operate during the COVID-19 lockdown. Searching for new sources of revenue, the company pivoted and retooled massage therapists and travel agents to become professional cleaners, a much-in-demand service during the pandemic. They also assisted employees in accessing capital to become micro-entrepreneurs so they can establish sari-sari stores in their own homes.

Cherrie Atilano, founding farmer of Agrea Agricultural Systems International, Inc., manages her team based on the following three business principles: (1) No drama. Communicate problems directly to the person involved. (2) No silos. Encourage a culture of collaborative community in the team when accomplishing tasks. (3) No surprises. Always be transparent to teammates.



“There are plenty of women who would forgo promotions to put their families first. This deters women from rising as fast as she could.”

CHERRY AL-AG

CO-OWNER

AL-AG GROUP OF COMPANIES

Many times, a woman representative is needed to start the dialogue on gender equality in the workplace. There were no specific policies for working mothers when Dominica Chua began working for Ramon Aboitiz Foundation, Inc. As the President and COO of the company, Dominica was able to implement several policies related to gender equality.

3.4.5 Women Entrepreneurs Are Constrained by the External Environment

Starting a business can be fraught with challenges. Compliance to government lending institutions is extremely low among women-led MSMEs. Women also need marketing support for their valuable ideas and mentoring for the different aspects of running a business. While all entrepreneurs desire such kinds of support systems, several of the interviewed business owners assert that their male colleagues have broader networks and have an easier time accessing resources. The study findings also show that women do not necessarily reap the benefits of building broad social networks in the same way that men do.

Women who reached the top positions had access to two different types of connections: wide networks, such as membership in business organizations, and an inner circle of trusted women who can share private gender-specific information (Yang, et al., 2019).



“Businesses need to reevaluate their business, values and practices. Empowering people will work as long as there’s a similar value system between the company and its employees.”

JOY MARTINEZ ONOZAWA
PRINCIPAL
MLMO ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING

3.5 INSIGHTS FROM MID-MANAGERS

3.5.1 Gender Stereotypes Persist in the Workplace

The traditional expectations on men and women’s roles have evolved over time, which is likely spurred by the necessity of having dual incomes to provide for the family’s needs. This condition has also enabled women to become economically empowered and excel in their career.

In many companies, experience and mastery in one’s field give a person the authority over a particular aspect of a business. For instance, fellow higher-management individuals in an energy company have learned to follow Malou’s¹ recommendations on pollution control, as she is the most knowledgeable person in environmental management systems in the firm.

However, some respondents also feel that an invisible barrier to the top leadership positions continues to exist, a scenario likely caused by the constraint of family and child-rearing duties. Consequently, women are likely to have less opportunities to prove their professional capability. Such cases have also triggered anxiety among women, fearing they will be judged for considering work as less of a priority, further causing them to work late night after the children go to sleep.

1 Names and companies have been disguised to protect the anonymity of the respondents.

Some of the women interviewees are also challenged by a working environment in which they have to communicate with colleagues/clients from other countries whose cultures are not used to women leading the business and instead prefer to negotiate with men. "I was once chastised for walking ahead of a client from a country where women walked several steps behind men," recalled Anne, a property development project manager.

All of the women interviewees battled stereotyping as they climbed the corporate ladder. Although they have the right set of skills, competency, and capacity to manage people in line with the leadership roles, they are also set back by being too mindful in showing stereotyped behavior that could be taken against them as female leaders. "Babae kasi (because she's a woman)," can still be heard in the workplace at times, blaming a person's gender when a company action is mishandled. The women respondents feel it is important to be open and honest in asserting one's limitations and to ask for assistance from colleagues when needed.

3.5.2 Competing Priorities Hinder Career Advancement

At the surface level, the desire to climb the corporate ladder generally rests on a person's motivation and ambition. Deeper insights reveal several challenges that have prevented women from forwarding their careers.

The definition of success differs from person to person. Some highly educated, high-achieving women have

dreamed of becoming homemakers. Owing to the limited child-bearing years, many of the women interviewees did not want to take additional work responsibility because it would take away quality time from the family and young children. However, as the interviewees explain, letting go of the higher positions do not mean that a woman is less successful; it only signifies that an aspect of life other than career is more highly valued. Some of the women interviewees changed jobs after starting a family despite being on track for promotion. Shorter commutes, better or more flexible hours, less responsibilities, and fewer business trips were some of the reasons cited for changing jobs. A respondent cited an assessment of her company depicting a disproportionate number of first-time mothers who have left their firm within 12 months after returning from a maternity leave, a stark contrast to the situation of first-time fathers. The burden of competing priorities and the low capability to overcome problems at work generally dissuade the new mothers from pursuing their careers. Some of them even fear demotion or being outpaced by peers once they return to the workforce after a career break.

A number of unmarried respondents feel they were able to advance more quickly to the higher positions because of competing priorities. "I'm pretty available anytime, anywhere for work," affirmed Maria, a human resource executive of a nationwide retail company. Single mid-managers acknowledge that they have the benefit of laser-sharp focus while at work, an aspect that gives them purpose and fulfillment. Despite this scenario, a number of respondents still veer away from

the top position because they do not want the level of accountability, responsibility, and stress usually attached to a CEO's work.

The work of higher-level managers is generally viewed as "likely to fail" compared with the less cumbersome responsibilities of slightly lower positions—a safer zone for most women. Furthermore, even if a person is single and has less responsibilities, the work may demand more time and effort than what they could give. The concept of competing priorities is not only limited to marriage and familial duties but also includes time for one's self to nurture a personal passion. A mid-manager interviewee candidly confessed that having time to enjoy life was more worthy than career advancement and was unwilling to let work intrude into her personal time. Companies should be proactive in taking care of the employees who exert effort to ensure that work and home life are balanced. Crossing boundaries between work and personal time are likely to foster resentment and dissatisfaction and may cause employees to leave the company.

3.5.3 Generational Differences Manifest in Career Progression and Management Styles

Apart from gender as an influencing factor of career advancement, human resource managers have also noticed that age also affects career progression—a view from the younger generations. In the past, employees paid their dues and took time to prove themselves. They likely waited for managers to lay down the career path



“Since I became a mother, my time for work decreased significantly for the benefit of my preschooler. Luckily, my decision to join the business sector has given me time flexibility. The downside though is that my passion for continuous learning and working part-time in the academe had to take a back seat.”

EUCKENE SHAYNE DOLINO
VICE PRESIDENT
S&E BUILDING SOLUTIONS INC.

options and tell them if they were ready for promotion. By contrast, today's millennials and generation Zs are highly motivated to become managers as fast as they can. They are more assertive and have a deeper desire to take on leadership roles at a much faster pace. However, according to the interviewees, being vocal about one's motivation does not always equate to readiness.

Generational difference is not a new concept and will always be present in any organization. When Maria was younger, she experienced conflict with her older boss. "If you become too noticeable, some older colleagues will feel threatened by your presence and attempt to curtail your growth. At the end of the day, I'll always be who I am, and I'll always speak my mind. I simply have to prove my worth." Companies need to bridge generational differences in values and working styles to enable teams to effectively communicate and collaborate.

3.5.4 Company Culture is Crucial to Employee Engagement and Retention

Multinational enterprises are defined by a certain global culture and identity, but their country offices are usually given the opportunity to drive their respective focus based on the local context. Some organizations made their hierarchical structures flatter, allowing voices to be better heard, further giving employees the feeling that their opinions are valued. The organizational culture of relatively small companies is primarily reflective of the owner's value system.

For Anna, a senior manager of a family-owned pharmaceutical company, the owners treat employees as extended family members. The culture is relationship-driven, allowing the employees to foster deep ties and loyalty. "You're considered new even if you've been there ten years because many people stay with the company until they retire."

Some progressive companies recognize the different needs of their employees and fine-tune their benefit packages to reflect the diversity. For instance, the health benefits of a business process outsourcing company have extended beyond traditional families and now include LGBTQ families and non-traditional partnerships.

Internal networks are also formed to allow employees with the same interest or concern to engage with each other and be open with the challenges they face in the workplace and life in general.

3.5.5 Company Flexibility Holistically Supports the Employees' Needs

Employee vary in terms of contexts and needs, and workplace flexibility is a recognition that multiple ways can get the work done despite the differences. With technology as a significant enabler, the respondents cite flexi-time, remote work, and four-day workweeks as examples of flexibility in the workplace. While larger and progressive companies have these options successfully built into their work policies, many businesses have left such schemes ambiguous and open to the interpretation

of the immediate superior. The interviewees shared that bosses who have gone through similar experiences and struggles of balancing work and family life are generally more understanding and flexible in allowing employees to take time off from work to attend to family concerns. Flexibility also means recognizing that women have a particular biological nature, such as going through pregnancy and having monthly periods, which should not be a limiting factor in realizing their career potential. Companies can provide solutions that can work around such cases.

Disruptions in career advancement usually coincide with changes in life stages and personal milestones. According to the interviewees, such changes made them more introspective in reflecting on both professional and personal goals. In one of the participating companies of this study, its employees can go on a career break to spend more time as a new parent, take care of a sick family member, pursue graduate studies, set up a business, or even live in another country. The number of years in service resumes once the employee returns to work. "I took two years off to study and that career break made me realize that I really wanted to go back and continue to work for my company," according to Bernadette, a manager at a consumer goods company.

3.5.6 Leadership Programs and Mentorship Prepares Employees for More Responsibility

The interviewed mid-managers were motivated to stay with the company when their career paths had been clearly structured; they knew first hand what was required from them to reach the next level. Employees appreciate if training programs and assessments are laid out in a transparent manner, consequently lessening the subjectivity and ambiguity of promotion decisions. In this manner, the employees can also better assess whether they need to give more time and effort to the required work. Control and stability in the direction of their careers are important to the employees.

In the interviews, some mid-managers shared they hesitated when first offered a higher position because they felt they lacked the skills needed to accomplish the job. For others, training was offered so they can develop their confidence to take on the new role. So-called cookie-cutter programs are ineffective with respect to training programs that have been customized for an individual who is lined up for promotion.

The respondents cited mentoring of senior leaders as extremely helpful in growing into a new role. In the case of first-time mothers, being mentored by experienced ones has given them the confidence to balance both the demands of work and motherhood.



“Maintaining physical and mental health is important during the COVID-19 crisis. Keeping sane is necessary when balancing longer working hours and the homeschooling of kids.”

ANNE AÑOS-ORDOÑA
GENERAL MANAGER, INFINIT CARE
VENTURE BUILDER, IO LABS

3.5.7 Coping with the Effects of COVID-19

The mid-managers feel that both men and women have been equally affected by COVID-19 and, especially their well-being and mental health. The pandemic was an unexpected shock and has persisted over an extended period. The employees who physically reported to work feared they would contract the virus. Some of them also minimized their work time at the office. For those who worked from home, including most of the respondents of this study, balancing work and home life became extremely difficult because of the same physical work-home space.

A typical day during the COVID-19 lockdown meant that household responsibilities would continuously compete for attention. As for work, the workload increased, and online meetings were tightly scheduled. They could only get through work tasks in the evening because “the entire day was filled with meetings.” Family members, specifically the children who needed parental guidance during virtual classes, were highly impacted by the adults’ work life. Many women had to carry the additional task of being the children’s temporary teachers at home. Meanwhile, the men had to provide even more economically and offer mental health support to the family. These findings generally validate the persisting gender stereotypes in the Philippine society.

An interview said: “You’re at home but you’re working, the corporate phone’s ringing, the work laptop is open. Your child is online with his teacher on the other side of

the room and you are worrying about the connectivity issues. Then, you have to find time to do household chores in between work tasks. You are also thinking about the risk of family members getting COVID-19. You're looking after the household budget and that can be difficult if the economic status of the family changed. It's a lot and it's life-changing."

3.5.8 Regional Similarities and Differences

Most respondents saw little to no regional differences in the empowerment of women working in major cities across the Philippines. Their experiences and challenges of working in a corporate environment and living in an urban area were similar, which may be explained by the respondents being in the same situation at the time of the interviews—that is, many are working from home because of the COVID-19 lockdown. The differences can be observed among respondents based in suburban environments and rural areas where traditional norms and limited educational and economic opportunities have continued to guide the roles of men and women. Women living in Metro Manila are usually viewed as more assertive given the faster pace of life, but it does not imply that women in the provinces are less empowered.

In many occasions, language (e.g., softer Ilonggo versus Cebuano staccato) seemed to facilitate the regional impressions of women belonging to different parts of the country. None of the respondents mentioned religion and ethnicity as a differentiating factor of empowerment.

3.5.9 Investing in Women

There is beauty in diversity, and the inputs and perspectives gathered from both women and men widens the ideal pool of talents. Recruiting or promoting the right person for the position will never be a bad investment. Some conglomerates hire at scale. If organizations do not invest in women and do not give them equal opportunities, the companies will not be able to fill the hundreds or thousands of job openings each month.

Businesses are about people, and actions that make people feel valued will yield returns for the company. Women bring with them gender-specific attributes that can help balance a predominantly male-led company or industry. A workplace becomes more interactive when it has both women and men sharing thoughts and solutions regarding a certain business matter. Industry players must ensure an equal proportion of women and men, or at least women who are in key positions, so female representatives can voice out their opinion on industry matters. This approach is the right thing to do.

3.6 BEST CORPORATE PRACTICES IN HANDLING GENDER DIVERSITY

As part of its efforts to attain diversity and empowerment, Coca-Cola Philippines has developed a 50–50 gender parity roadmap to guide its business operations. Equal representation in the leadership team can help to illustrate the gender equality commitment at the highest level. The company created a career pathway for women to thrive in non-traditional roles, such as truck drivers and forklift operators, and develop capacities to lead the way as plant managers. Coca-Cola also empowers women along its value chain through the Star Program, which has opened opportunities to more than 200,000 women to explore micro-entrepreneurship as sari-sari store retailers. The company ceased its commercial advertising in 2020 and diverted the funds to support COVID-19 relief efforts, including the ReSTART program, which helps sari-sari store owners to restart their business and operate safely towards the “next normal.”

The Executive Committee of Manulife Philippines maintains a 50% female representation to ensure that women have an equal say in the decision making. The company has invested heavily in training and growth opportunities for its insurance advisors, 71% of whom are women. The company also supports the growth of its Global Women’s Alliance, an employee-led women’s group that encourages the recruitment, development, and advancement of women throughout the organization.



“Women can have a powerful voice. As we invest in women, we also invest in the families, in the communities. Furthermore, that multiplier factor is something that we’ve seen within our value chain. As strong as our business is, the community is stronger.”

JONAH DE LUMEN-PERNIA
DIRECTOR
PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND SUSTAINABILITY
COCA-COLA PHILIPPINES

Shell's annual People Survey allows the company to continue the dialogue between leadership and employees on critical issues faced by the organization and measure its progress annually. Shell's organizations in the Philippines periodically score higher or are at par with the top quartile-benchmarked companies in most sections. By monitoring the key diversity and inclusion metrics, Shell is able to develop a two-tier global leadership program to accelerate the volume of women entering its talent pipeline. Shell Pilipinas has also developed potential leaders through its Women's Career Development program and helped women with senior leadership roles to build networks and access mentoring through the Senior Women Connect program. Shell engages its consumers to drive out gender stereotypes through the "Women! Drive the Future" campaign.

Nestlé Philippines provides a distinctly supportive and nurturing environment for new parents through its Nestlé Global Parental Support Policy, which recognizes all forms of family set-ups: biological or adoptive parents, same-sex partners, single parents, and legal guardians. The company has extended the maternity leave policy by Philippine standards from 15 weeks to 18 weeks of fully paid leave for the primary caregiver and 4 weeks for the secondary caregiver. Along with the inclusive parental policies, Nestlé promotes employment protection and non-discrimination, looks after the health of pregnant women and new mothers, establishes a conducive work environment for breastfeeding mothers, and allows access employees to flexible work arrangements. This family-friendly policy is anchored on Nestlé's shared

value approach of making a positive difference while contributing to the company's continued success.

SM Investments Corporation (SMIC) demonstrates its commitment to promote a culture of good governance by promoting fairness and meritocracy by means of appraisal and promotion systems. Women comprise almost two-thirds of SMIC's workforce, and they outnumber men by nearly two-to-one in the middle and senior management positions. Metrics are tracked and reported regularly in the company's annual sustainability report. As for its commitment to gender equality and inclusive work environment, SMIC is one of two Filipino-owned corporations included in the 2020 Bloomberg Gender Equality Index report.

In 2019, Aboitiz Group conducted a total rewards benchmarking study to ensure that its compensation and benefits can be implemented consistently regardless of age or gender. The A-Club Program was subsequently created to promote work-life balance and strengthen connections among team members. The Aboitiz Women's Club, one of the company's recognized clubs, promotes women empowerment across the different business units and organizes activities to develop women professionally and grow their networks. Aboitiz Group also has a customized mentoring program in which employees can self-direct their learning and development by choosing from a pool of internal mentors to facilitate cross-functional and cross-unit learning. These initiatives allow women to thrive in their careers, with several business units (corporate, banking, and financial services



“Women are always the first to plant, the first to grow, the first to harvest, but the last and the least to eat. We want to change that fable.”

CHERRIE ATILANO

PRESIDENT AND CEO
AGREA AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS
INTERNATIONAL, INC.

and food line service) at near-gender parity at the level of Assistant Vice President positions and higher.

A model of a young, female-led, and inclusive agribusiness company, Agrea Agricultural Systems International, Inc. focuses on empowering and training women in the farming value chain. The COVID-19 lockdown has limited the mobility of people and disrupted the food supply chain, leading to the ideation of the AGREA Rescue Kitchen, which converts excess produce supply from around the country into value-added products that are then sold to consumers in Metro Manila. Agrea also spearheaded the Move Food Initiative, an online fresh produce ordering platform that allows food to move at both the producers and consumers' end. Agrea's response to the COVID-19 crisis has enabled suppliers, many of whom are women, to earn income that can be used to sustain families and weather the pandemic.

“Achieving gender balance in team composition, creating a working environment that is conducive to a diverse workforce and ensuring inclusive leadership will improve our overall employee engagement, ensure we have the best talent, underpin the effectiveness of our policies and enhance our capability to better serve our customers.”

CESAR ROMERO

PRESIDENT AND CEO
PILIPINAS SHELL PETROLEUM
CORPORATION
COUNTRY CHAIRMAN
SHELL COMPANIES IN THE PHILIPPINES





4. CONCLUSIONS

As a country, the Philippines is usually highly ranked in closing the gender gap, especially in the private sector where women outnumber men in leadership roles. While this may be true for the lower- to middle-management positions, fewer women are able to transition to the executive level and C-suite positions. The proportion of women leaders also tend to be greater in certain industries, such as tourism and hospitality, retail, private education, and a number of manufacturing sectors, but the numbers are few in the male-dominated professions and sectors. This trend indicates that the private sector still needs to address the gendered predisposition of jobs and industries in order for the skills and abilities of women to be fully utilized and, more important, for them to advance their careers regardless of the sector they belong.

Combinations of the squeeze-in-the-pipeline factors (individual, family, company culture, and wider community) hinders the career advancement of women in the private sector. Gender stereotypes rooted in sociocultural norms depicting the roles of men and women have a cascading effect, influencing not only self-esteem and confidence in oneself but also the interaction between people at work. Many companies espouse the fair treatment of employees, with progressive companies taking positive actions that benefit all employees. However, some women still feel that unwritten rules create a glass ceiling for them. The fear of being judged for taking time off work to attend to family matters lingers, with the perception that it will affect the assigning of roles, the opening up



of opportunities, and the employees' competition for promotion.

Competing priorities and the resultant time poverty seem to be the most influential barriers of women in climbing the corporate ladder once they reach a certain age and life stage. Even though men and women both craft long-term plans for their professional careers, more women end up stepping back due to competing priorities. However, there are exceptions to this generalization, as there are also men who have begun to step up at home, carefully selecting projects at work so they are able to spend more time with family.



The women interviewees from Mindanao shared that they are able to successfully balance their professional and personal lives because of the assistance of house helpers or family members, including parents and siblings, who pitch in the household tasks. The pace of life in the southern part of the Philippines is also somewhat slower, and commutes in major cities are shorter compared with highly urbanized areas in Luzon and Visayas. On this note, companies



should realize that employees experience different contexts and apply varying approaches to work flexibility, but the main agenda is mainly to complete their work targets without sacrificing other priorities. However, flexibility in the workplace needs to be carefully managed, as it may lead to longer hours at work or higher work volume.

Differences exist in the extent of gender diversity and inclusion programs applied by companies, and the deviations generally depend on firm size. Multinational enterprises and large corporations have explicit policies on gender equality that manifest throughout the organization and well-developed programs that adhere to global best practices and standards. These companies recognize the presence of gender gaps at work and have specific programs, including women leadership programs, mentoring, and women networks, to increase the participation of women in higher-level positions. Support programs that go beyond the workplace, such as experienced mothers mentoring new ones, are also exemplary.

As for the smaller firms (i.e., SMEs), most of them have identified meritocracy as their primary policy for retaining talents in their organization. While this approach is not negative, it fails to address the persistent issues rooted in gender stereotyping. A relatively small firm also tends to manifest the personal value system of its founder or owner, which is uncommon in large corporations, and SMEs have also fostered an organizational culture that is prominently family-based.

This kind of organization takes a look at the employees' well-being more holistically and initiates programs that go beyond the workplace. A number of female founders also make it their personal advocacy to provide more opportunities to economically empower women.

The common attitudes, perceptions, and experiences of respondents based in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao include women having less opportunities for growth and development compared with men. Most interviewees do not consider geographic region and culture as limiting factors of women empowerment. The women in Luzon are as empowered as the women in Visayas and Mindanao.

The interplay of the different squeeze-in-the-pipeline factors results in variances that are gender-based on the one hand and region-based on the other hand. For example, in Luzon, both genders appear to be more confident in their abilities and can assert differing opinions more easily compared with the mid-managers from Visayas and Mindanao. In Mindanao, the women respondents seem to be less confident in immediately taking on leadership roles despite having established wide networks and finished graduate degrees. The differences in responses, which may either be based on gender or geographical location as previously mentioned, indicate that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to fostering gender equality and inclusion at work. This finding is also prominent in MBC's study in 2019. Companies that operate in different regions may consider this insight when designing nationwide inclusion programs.



The global COVID-19 health crisis has impacted the work-life circumstances of both men and women. The experiences of mid-managers, top executives, and business owners in the Philippines mirror what is happening globally, as shown in the extant literature. While anxiety and burnout are experienced by all employees, women in particular have the heavier burden of shouldering most of the household responsibilities, including childcare and homeschooling. Similarly, women in more senior leadership roles also feel greater pressure than their male counterparts because they are often held to different standards at work and at home. Women are now caught in a situation in which they have to ensure effective time management and crisis management in the midst of personal and work-related pressure. Many women have reported problems on demotion, reduced work hours because of family or home duties, or pay cut. Unlike most men who tend to have lesser responsibilities at home, women are expected to complete time-consuming household tasks on top of their equally important jobs. For many women, the tasks took more time to complete since the COVID-19 lockdown. Furthermore, all married male survey respondents agree that their spouse has helped them with the household duties, but the same insight cannot be said by married women. For some households, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a darker situation at home, as some women have suffered domestic violence during the lockdown. This toll can halt career progression for the women, and some of them may even decide to take a career break or leave the workforce.

Companies should acknowledge the changing workplace landscape by taking a proactive stance in helping employees find a better work-life balance to prevent anxiety and burnout. Gender-responsive plans can protect the talent pipeline and ensure that both men and women can make career decisions based on their choices and not forced by circumstances.

“We have 80,000 MSMEs in our supply chain. Our merchandisers work with communities and engage them on how to improve their products. We give them access to capital, and more importantly, access to having a market. We encourage people to buy local so that we can assist and promote growth in communities.”

LIZANNE UYCHACO
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT
SM INVESTMENTS CORPORATION



5. RECOMMENDATIONS

COVID-19 has threatened to undo decades of progress in gender equality in the workplace. The pandemic highlighted and even exacerbated existing imbalances between men and women when it comes to balancing work and care responsibilities. Many women are considering stepping back or leaving work altogether, decreasing the amount of talent in the pipeline. Private sector recovery from COVID-19 must ensure that women are not left behind in terms of career progression. Rebuilding the Philippine economy is the most opportune time for businesses to rethink their existing business philosophies and integrate gender inclusion mechanisms as a priority.

Several key actions aligned to the WEPs should be taken by companies at different levels to foster inclusion not only in the workplace but along the organization's value chain and the community-at-large. The seven WEPs that can serve as action guides are as follows:

WEP 1. Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality

WEP 2. Treat all women and men fairly at work — respect and support human rights and nondiscrimination

WEP 3. Ensure the health, safety, and well-being of all women and men workers

WEP 4. Promote education, training, and professional development for women

WEP 5. Implement enterprise development, supply chain, and marketing practices that empower women

WEP 6. Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy

WEP 7. Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality



5.1 INCREASE FEMALE REPRESENTATION IN THE BOARD (WEP 1)

Female representation at the board level is one of the first steps towards greater diversity of perspectives and viewpoints in the corporate leadership. While companies are required by the country's Securities and Exchange Commission to report on board diversity, the quotas on board representation have not been made compulsory. Many of the interviewed respondents remarked that it is high time for companies to consciously include qualified women in the board and make them part of the decision-making process. All board members should be qualified to take on the oversight role to prevent the inclusion of women as token members to fill quotas. Improving female representation in the board should be rationalized as necessary for a diverse board covering a broader range of strengths and expertise. Differing viewpoints allow board members to challenge each other, thus improving the quality of decision making, especially when complex issues are to be decided.



5.2 ARTICULATE COMMITMENT TO ENTERPRISE-WIDE GENDER TARGETS (WEP 1 AND WEP 7)

C-suite leaders set the tone for taking equality and diversity seriously by publicly articulating and pledging to enterprise-wide gender parity goals. This aspect includes recognizing that women have a harder time advancing towards senior positions, whether due to lower confidence in their abilities or competing priorities at home. Making gender parity at all levels of the corporate ladder a strategic priority signals that the company is committed to making gender equality a reality in the company. CEOs should consider how business strategies—and COVID-19 recovery activities—affect men and women differently. CEOs can start conversations with company leaders and challenge them to initiate broader actions, such as revising corporate policies, standard operating procedures, and codes of conduct. Women's voices in planning and decision making can only be heard if the CEOs have women in their pool of executives. This point emphasizes the importance of advancing women to top leadership positions.

There is a need to monitor diversity-related indicators alongside conventional performance metrics to determine progress in achieving these gender targets. The inclusion of top-level gender indicators in performance dashboards is a mechanism for institutionalizing inclusion within the organization.



5.3 COMMUNICATE WELL DURING THE TRANSITION TO RECOVERY (WEP 1)

CEOs need to manage and convey information to stakeholders with transparency to show that leadership is taking action. Acknowledge that it is important for employees to know what is going on because they are naturally anxious about the future of the business and the future of their own careers within the company. They are also exhausted from the drastic changes and increased load, both at work and at home. The workforce needs to be able to trust their top leaders in order for them to continue performing well on the job. Communication should be a two-way approach, with CEOs listening to employees through town halls, surveys, and other channels before making decisions that will have a significant impact on the lives of the workforce.



5.4 ALIGN TALENT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES TO ORGANIZATIONAL GENDER GOALS AND TARGETS (WEP 2)

Various studies indicate women can be disproportionately affected by COVID-19 through unemployment, demotion, and decrease in salaries. The survey and interviews have also shown that women have experienced an increased amount of care work during the pandemic, which sometimes forces working women to resign from their positions. To ensure fair treatment to both men and women at work, companies need to closely monitor gender-disaggregated attrition and promotion/hiring data while restructuring the business operations. Human resource managers need to create interventions if gender imbalances are present, including deliberately recruiting and promoting qualified women after the COVID-19 crisis to maintain gender parity targets and prevent loss of talent within the organization.



5.5 BUILD A SUPPORTIVE ECOSYSTEM FOR FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS (WEP 2)

There is no one size-fits-all solution towards work, and employees have to be actively engaged to figure out what works for them and the company. Flexible working arrangements necessitate finding new ways of collaborating that works for everyone despite the generational differences. Depending on the circumstances, some employees prefer to work in an office because they do not have a conducive work environment at home. Those employees who prefer to work remotely often need to manage their work time around home care responsibilities. Meanwhile, other respondents prefer to have something in between these two schemes. A flexible work arrangement is part of the long-term reality for companies, with more than two thirds of respondents stating that they are selective of work-related projects so they can spend more time at home. Consult the employees on what works for them; they should be part of the process of creating these arrangements to be as inclusive as possible. Men and women have to be clear with what they want in order for these arrangements to be responsive to their needs. Results-based evaluation and appraisal mechanisms should be reconfigured to ensure fairness among all employees. For employees who are able to deliver their tasks, the evaluation should be based on the quality of the output rather than reporting to work on a fixed

schedule or the amount of time spent logged into the system.

The abrupt shift to remote work in the past year showed the downside of flexible working arrangements. Many employees found it difficult to separate work and personal time and feel that they need to be reachable at all hours of the day. Businesses need to re-establish boundaries between work and personal hours by setting clear policies and guidelines for meetings, communication, and employee availability. Such a scheme will be helpful for employees with parental duties or who are caring for family members, whether children, elderly, or individuals with special needs. Leaders must communicate their support and set an example by taking advantage of the flexible work option themselves. This approach can help to dispel worries about choosing flexible work options and the fear of stagnating career advancement.

Flexible work arrangements also require building a conducive working environment at home. Those employees working remotely will need to spend for Internet connection or upgrades and additional electricity costs. Companies need to support remote workers by providing the necessary tools and subsidies to be productive. This support will enable employees to freely choose to work from home without the added burden of paying for the indirect costs.



5.6 ADAPT COMPANY POLICIES AND BENEFITS TO DISPEL GENDER STEREOTYPING (WEP 2)

Our study results show that gender stereotyping persists at work. Companies have to act as enablers of changing social norms by educating employees on the importance of men equally sharing in household and care responsibilities. Encourage and reinforce this behavior by proactively adjusting policies and benefits to be more family friendly. Examples include improving leave policies to accommodate increased paternity leaves or parental leaves for both caregivers, as well as eliminating the differentiation between primary and secondary caregivers. Employees with care duties, whether towards a child or elderly family member, shall benefit from additional paid leaves. The provision of post-natal and childcare facilities and support can ease the burden of many working parents.

The survey and interviews also showed certain regional and cultural differences based on the experiences of men and women. These differences have to be considered by implementers in designing diversity and inclusion programs. Companies with Philippine-wide operations need to allow regional offices to adapt these programs to the local context. Re-evaluating existing diversity and inclusion programs will allow executives to see which programs can work and those that may fail. Divert company resources to programs with the high impact on the “next normal” scenario.



5.7 DEVELOP MORE STRINGENT HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS AS EMPLOYEES RETURN TO THE WORKPLACE (WEP 3)

Businesses play a key role in protecting the well-being of their employees. Workforce health and safety have now become paramount in a COVID world and have to be included in strategic planning exercises. The pandemic has underscored the importance of occupational health and safety protocols as many companies are starting to return to the workplace. These protocols should be agile enough for companies to be able to quickly respond to future crises. Information is also crucial, and keeping employees educated through an up-to-date online portal can allay fears and prevent misinformation from spreading.

Companies need to re-evaluate current company health benefits and expand coverage to take into account new health issues that have risen because of the pandemic. Interventions to ensure that everyone will be able to return to work as safely as possible should be inclusive. Such plans may include company-sponsored vaccines for the workforce and allowing employees to buy vaccines for their families. Programs that address the specific concerns of vulnerable employees (e.g., pregnant women, women who has recently given birth, and people with underlying health conditions) can show to employees that the company recognizes the differing impacts of COVID-19 on individuals.



5.8 ADDRESS MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH ISSUES BOTH AT WORK AND AT HOME (WEP 3)

Protecting the employees' mental health and well-being is one of the major challenges companies have faced with the shift to remote work. Incidents have been well-documented in research studies and reports and subsequently validated by the survey and interviews. Job stress from increased work responsibilities and job insecurity, coping with an abrupt shift to a digital work environment, dealing with more care work duties at home, and safeguarding everyone from contracting COVID-19 can overwhelm employees. Now more than ever, companies need to implement wellness programs that holistically look after the well-being of the employees. Establish employee assistance programs on mental health to equip employees with the right tools to build resilience. Peer groups that meet online can provide a venue for employees to safely share what they are going through with others in similar circumstances. It is also important to train managers and team leaders to check in with subordinates and create safe spaces for employees during work-related activities.

Acknowledge that things are different, and promote a culture that "it's okay not to be okay." Managers should show candor regarding their own vulnerabilities to connect with their subordinates. This scheme can help to remove the stigma about talking about mental health in the office. Leaders have to verbalize that it is

okay to start work earlier or later to accommodate the needs of the household or take a mental health day to disconnect from work and recharge. Companies should encourage employees to take up hobbies to break the monotony of their changed routine. Some interviewees also stated their companies have started to organize online activities, such as yoga and movie nights, to relax and build camaraderie at the same time.

Addressing gender-based violence is also critical with many employees still working remotely. Some of them may face increased risk from problematic family members and house mates. Online abuse from colleagues is also possible. Develop supportive policies and procedures to guide employees on taking action when experiencing gender-based violence both at work and at home.



5.9 COLLABORATE WITH EMPLOYEES ON INDIVIDUALIZED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS (WEP 4)

Employees have different circumstances at home and hold varying levels of ambition and career goals. Companies have to be more mindful of providing learning opportunities, especially during this time when more than half of survey respondents have felt exhausted by longer and more monotonous work hours. Webinars and learning modules may be viewed negatively by overburdened employees if not timed correctly. Professional development programs are more meaningful if they are purposively fit to match both company needs and employee aspirations for career growth. The respondents and interviewees of this study were motivated to stay with the company because their career paths had a clear structure. Talent managers and direct supervisors need to have candid conversations with employees to co-design individualized professional development plans. Schemes can include identifying the factors and concerns that prevent the employee from pursuing opportunities and achieving long-term career goals. Co-creating professional development plans increases employee buy-in towards their own development.



5.10 EXPLORE DIFFERENT PLATFORMS FOR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT (WEP 4)

Current workplace learning programs need to be adapted to a post-COVID-19 workplace. Access to these programs should be equally provided to men and women to address the survey insight that fewer women across the Philippines are able to access their company's leadership programs. Technology plays a key role in professional development programs, and companies need to continue evaluating and training their workforce despite being unable to hold face-to-face seminars and workshops. This scenario puts employees with limited technical skills at a disadvantage. Addressing the technological competency divide among employees needs to be one of the priority development areas of organizations.

Companies may maximize existing online platforms, such as Coursera, EdX, LinkedIn Learn, and Skills Share, for general learning; they offer a wide variety of professional courses and issue verified certificates. Reserve time and money in creating specific modules that cannot be addressed by external providers. Employees also need to access an information repository from a company-hosted online knowledge platform for quick learning. There are a number of free collaboration and social networking tools that SMEs can use while being mindful of data privacy laws. Online communities of practices and online brown bag sessions will also allow employees to learn from one another.



5.11 PROVIDE A FORMAL MENTORING PROGRAM (WEP 4)

Mentors act as sounding boards for concerns. Mentoring and coaching can help employees to lessen anxiety at work and plan how they can continue to do good work and contribute meaningfully to business performance. Mentoring is also a means for helping women gain confidence to take on leadership roles and reach the top position, as highlighted in the survey and interviews. Now is a good time for companies to establish formal mentoring and coaching programs if they do not have one. Provide equal opportunities for men and women to build connections and exchange key knowledge. Senior leaders will also benefit from coaching as they navigate new ways of leading teams. Many interview respondents have suggested pairing women who have experienced similar struggles so that the mentor will be empathetic and can give invaluable advice. For instance, a mentor who is a mother is able to relate to the dilemmas faced by a new mother. A respondent remarked that it is important for women to find their “tribe” and be surrounded by people who believe in their abilities. Mentorship and networking programs have a multiplier effect, and they enable women to empower other women. These programs are already present in larger corporations and replicable to a smaller scale in SMEs.



5.12 ASSIST STRUGGLING BUSINESSES ALONG THE SUPPLY CHAIN TO ACCELERATE RECOVERY (WEP 5)

Gender equality in supply chains are linked to improving business continuity and resilience. Empowering women along the supply chain increases the pool of supply chain actors. Such an action enables women to participate in the economy and generate jobs for others. Charting an inclusive path towards business recovery requires companies to unlock the supply chain and evaluate gender gaps in its different activities. These gaps present opportunities to develop more inclusive supply chain practices and involve more women as producers, distributors, retailers, or customers. Design corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs to equip women with the necessary skills to participate in business activities within the supply chains. In this regard, the provision of startup capital coupled with continuous training and mentorship can help to remove some of the barriers to women.

COVID-19 has severely impacted the MSME sector, with many small businesses failing to survive the strict lockdowns and corresponding loss of customers. Many of MSMEs these are owned by women. Corporations should consciously make the effort to do business with struggling local entrepreneurs and encourage other large companies to do so as well. Companies with resources should take it further by providing suppliers

with access to working capital and favorable payback terms through a revolving credit facility. In this manner, their own supply chain can be stabilized and protected.

The pandemic has also accelerated the transition to a digital economy, with many of the interviewed entrepreneurs shifting to online platforms. This digitization has excluded many small businesses without access to e-commerce. Gender inequality is also experienced in the digital economy, with more women micro- and small entrepreneurs unable to access online services due to a lack of awareness, technological skills, and the right equipment. Improving infrastructure and providing access to digital services to MSMEs can foster inclusion in the supply chains.



5.13 DESIGN CSR PROGRAMS TO BE GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE (WEP 6)

Many survey respondents think that traditional roles of men and women are still expected at home and at work. The path towards gender parity requires a change in social norms and traditional beliefs that enable gender stereotypes to persist in society, including the workplace. All sectors need to work together to address the systemic issues related to gender inequality, such as protecting maternal and child health, promoting the right family values, and keeping girls in school. Corporate initiatives that contribute to the SDGs should be crafted using a gendered lens to ensure that both men and women are considered.

Companies must champion gender equality with the community-at-large through CSR programs. Partnering with civil society organizations and interest groups scale these programs a wider reach. Promoting the actions and achievements of male and female role models is inspirational to young people as they transition from school to the workforce. Advocacies centered on promoting equal contribution between men and women in household duties and care work can dispel some of the unpaid roles that subsume women. Companies need to take action through programs that educate men and women on their rights, prevent abuse and violence at home, and assist in the recovery from trauma because it is the right thing to do.



5.14 INCLUDE AND REPORT GENDER AS A STRATEGIC INDICATOR (WEP 7)

The results of the national study have shown that the gender gap in the workplace manifest in the form of opportunities and career advancement. In the commitment to enterprise-wide gender parity, companies should use gender as a strategic indicator. This scheme means investing in gender equality across the value chain when reporting company performance. This scheme can mobilize companies to develop measurable gender indicators for business activities related to governance, workplace, suppliers and business partners, customers, and community engagement.

Activities that collect workforce data, such as employee engagement surveys, should be reviewed for gender sensitivity. The results should always be disaggregated and entail different demographic characteristics to analyze the perceptions across gender, regional locations, age brackets, and family sizes. Companies need to take a look at gender-disaggregated data and identify measures to protect vulnerable employees, retain people who may be overburdened by life, and figure out what works in the “new normal” as part of business recovery from COVID-19.



There is a business case. Eighty percent of our shoppers are women that look after their families. For us not to understand women means we are missing out on major opportunities. We also have to reflect that diversity internally in our organization to shape our mindsets and portfolios.

KAIS MARZOUKI
CHAIRMAN AND CEO
NESTLÉ PHILIPPINES

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ANNEXES

(1) ONLINE SURVEY TOOL

**(2) GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR KEY INFORMANT
INTERVIEWS**

ONLINE SURVEY TOOL

Factors That Affect Leadership Participation and Aspiration of Middle Managers in the Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Good day!

The Gender Diversity in Philippine C-Suite project of UN Women and Makati Business Club, MBC, in partnership with the Philippine Business Coalition for Women Empowerment (PBCWE) aims to assess the state of gender diversity in top executive ranks in corporations operating in the Philippines. This expands the coverage of a previous similar study to capture the state of gender diversity in companies and businesses in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

The research project will utilize the data generated to draw plans and initiatives to prepare and maximize existing talent pool in the middle management level for key and leadership roles in the future. It will also help us advocate for changes in government and company policies promoting a more gender inclusive business environment in the Philippines.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

We invite you to answer a 15 to 20-minute survey related to your personal experiences as a middle manager in your organization.

Your answers to this survey will be strictly confidential and protected. We also recognize that your individual views do not necessarily translate to the views of your company. None of your answers as an individual will be disclosed or given to any other party. Responses will be reviewed as patterns and trends across the population rather than of individual people. Your identities will never be revealed and will only be used for statistical and qualitative research. No information will be released from the study that could identify any individuals or companies.

You are prohibited from making use of or copying this survey or disclosing the contents to any other person that is neither part of the study nor asked to be part of.

SURVEY LINK

If you agree to participate in the study, please click on the link to access the survey

<https://bit.ly/PHgendersurvey>

Thank you very much!

Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Age Range: ☐ 21-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41-50 ☐ 51-60 ☐ Above 60

[illegible]

☐ Indigenous Peoples (IP) ☐ Moro / Muslim

☐ Mixed Race (e.g. Filipino American) ☐ No, I do not identify with any of these Groups

If yes, who paid for it? ☐ Company ☐ Self-financed ☐ Family
 ☐ Scholarship ☐ Other _____

☐ Below 100 ☐ 101-500 ☐ 501-1,000

☐ 1,001 – 1,500 ☐ 1,501 – 2,000 ☐ More than 2,000

<input type="checkbox"/> Vice President or higher	<input type="checkbox"/> Assistant Vice President
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Partner	<input type="checkbox"/> Junior Partner
<input type="checkbox"/> Director	<input type="checkbox"/> Assistant / Associate Director
<input type="checkbox"/> General Manager	<input type="checkbox"/> Regional Manager
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Manager	<input type="checkbox"/> Manager
<input type="checkbox"/> Junior / Assistant Manager	<input type="checkbox"/> Unit / Department Head / Supervisor
<input type="checkbox"/> Assistant Unit / Assistant Department Head / Assistant Supervisor	

Monthly Salary Range in Philippine Pesos:

- ☐ 50,000 and below ☐ 50,001 – 100,000 ☐ 100,001 – 150,000
☐ 150,001 – 200,000 ☐ 200,001 – 250,000 ☐ 250,001 – 300,000
☐ Above 300,000

Length of stay in the company:

- ☐ Less than a year ☐ 1 – 5 years ☐ 6 – 10 years
☐ 11 – 15 years ☐ 16 – 20 years ☐ 20 – 25 years
☐ More than 25 years

Main business / industry of the company:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing | <input type="checkbox"/> Food Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Agribusiness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> IT / BPO | <input type="checkbox"/> Banking and finance | <input type="checkbox"/> Tourism and Hospitality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Retail and commercial | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Real estate | <input type="checkbox"/> Construction | <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Media | <input type="checkbox"/> Automotive and Transportation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | | |

Company Ownership:

- ☐ Foreign ☐ Local

Head Office Location (City, Country):

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Philippines – Metro Manila / NCR | <input type="checkbox"/> Philippines – Rest of Luzon |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Philippines – Visayas | <input type="checkbox"/> Philippines – Mindanao |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asia (Other than the Philippines) | <input type="checkbox"/> Africa |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Australia / Oceania | <input type="checkbox"/> Europe |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Middle East | <input type="checkbox"/> North America |
| <input type="checkbox"/> South and Central America | |

Immediate Supervisor:

- ☐ Male ☐ Female

Instructions: For each of the questions below, indicate your response to the statements by ticking the appropriate box whether you Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (DA), Neither agree nor disagree (N), Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA).

A. Individual Capabilities

This part refers to respondents' confidence in his/her own strengths, credentials and ability to assert /belief in oneself when it comes to accomplishing work and taking on roles assigned, including leadership roles. Leadership role refers to the position given to steer the team towards a direction that the company would need to go, further its goals, grow and sustain it.

	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. I know I have the right background, education, and experience to be eligible for a leadership role in my company.					
2. I would feel confident if my company will give me room to explore different ways to lead and manage a team.					
3. I will take on available opportunities to prepare for a leadership role without any reservation.					
4. I am confident that my leadership skills can help my unit / department /company achieve its goals.					
5. I can articulate my dissent/disagreement to my boss and other members of my team without any problem.					
6. I am always excited to take on new projects that would challenge me and allow me to learn new management skills.					
7. I can take on any leadership role that my company will offer right now without any hesitation.					
8. I get full support and encouragement when I openly discuss my plans with my immediate supervisor.					
9. I have access to our company's program for aspiring leaders.					

10. My current personal network/s allow/s me to hone my leadership skills or give me access to different opportunities to move up the ladder.					
11. I think having a sponsor or mentor is important in moving up the ladder.					
12. I am much comfortable working and discussing with a female than a male mentor.					
13. I believe I can be part of the top management of our company should I want to.					

B. Family/ Household Factors

This part refers to impact/effect of family members (immediate/extended) and other household tasks/concerns in the person's ability to perform duties/tasks at work, and also in the motivation to aspire for and take on higher roles and succeed.

	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. I need this job because I need the income for myself and my family.					
2. My family is the reason I work hard and strive to achieve my goals and aspirations.					
3. My family is my priority over my career aspirations or personal ambitions.					
4. I am primarily responsible in handling household and family emergencies/issues and would usually make work adjustments to attend to it.					
5. I often feel embarrassed when requesting for work adjustments because of family and household issues and emergencies.					
6. I feel guilty when I am unable to handle household duties and chores due to work.					

7. Employees with young children should choose their projects carefully so they can leave work on time and spend enough time with their children.					
8. My partner/spouse/family supports my pursuit of professional and personal development goals and plans.					
9. Role seniority, promotions and pay differential are still common issues between couples.					
10. Household chores and other responsibilities at home drain my energy to think of longer-term plans to actively pursue my career goals.					
11. I know I can balance my work and family responsibilities to achieve my career aspiration with enough help back home and support from my company.					
12. I grew up in a traditional family set up where my father worked and provided for our needs while my mother looked after us.					
13. Should I decide to have a family, I would prefer to raise my children in the same manner that I grew up with.					
14. I would be bolder and do things I am passionate about regardless of the role and pay if I only had myself to consider.					

C. Company Culture

This part refers to company policies and practices that impact one's ability to perform tasks effectively and encourage staff to aspire (or not to) for leadership roles.

	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. My company provides access to training opportunities and programs for interested employees looking to take on leadership roles.					
2. I believe that companies retain and grow their talents if they take time to help employees draw their career and personal development goals and plans.					
3. Flexible hours mean that I end up working more and longer compared to having a fixed work schedule.					
4. I feel bad when my company assigns me to distant places for project/s because it requires me to be away from home for long.					
5. I will totally understand if my company promotes someone who has work as the top priority to take on and lead new projects over me.					
6. My company has available facilities for childcare that employees could access if and when needed.					
7. My company has a program in place to support the different needs and responsibilities of employees.					
8. Programs and initiatives to help ease care and household work burden of employees are really important for me.					
9. I will really work hard and do my part to contribute to the company's growth because I feel assured that it looks after my welfare and that of my family's.					
10. I believe gender equality policies and programs are important to companies promoting inclusive business practices to achieving growth and success.					

D. Community/Wider Society

This part refers to perception on prevailing stereotypes whether known or unknown that affect/impact employees' decision and drive to aspire (or not) for leadership roles

	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. I think employees would rather spend more time for themselves and family than at work if given enough resources and opportunity.					
2. It is always a challenge to manage a household and career at the same time in our current society.					
3. 'Mothers will always be mothers; their priority will always be to provide care for their family' and 'Fathers will always be fathers; their priority will always be to provide financial support for their family'.					
4. Traditional roles for men and women are still expected in this day and age by a lot of companies and institutions.					
5. I think men in the Philippines have better chances of taking on leadership roles than women.					
6. Society should also start getting used to men managing households while the women are taking on top roles in different companies.					
7. Top leadership roles should be given to those who worked hard and are deserving, whether male or female.					

E. COVID-19

This part refers to respondents' perception on the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic to them and whether they are able to maintain the balance between their professional and personal lives.

	SD	D	N	A	SA
1. I am currently working full-time in my role without any demotion or reduction in hours.					
2. I am currently making the same salary as I was before the pandemic started.					
3. I think COVID-19 generally has a larger impact on women in the workplace compared to men.					
4. It took me longer to complete my work tasks for the day because there were distractions while I worked from home.					
5. My household and/or childcare responsibilities increased when we were placed on community quarantine in March.					
6. It takes me more hours to complete household chores and taking care of the children and / or elderly due to COVID-19.					
7. Other people help in managing household chores and care work while I am working from home.					
8. I worry about job security and whether my company is resilient enough to survive the pandemic.					
9. I expect less chances for promotion as my company recovers from the effects of COVID-19.					
10. My company's gender-inclusive policies helped me quickly adapt to the changes in my work caused by COVID-19.					

11. I feel safe to report back to the office because of the safety protocols that were put in place by my company.					
12. If given the chance, I would prefer the work from home arrangement in the future as it allows me to balance work with my household and/or childcare duties.					

Who helps you with the household chores and care work while you are working? (Check all that apply).

- ☐ My spouse / partner ☐ Our helper
☐ My parent/s ☐ My siblings
☐ My older child / children ☐ No one is helping me

Please estimate the amount of time each day that you spend on housework and taking care of people at home BEFORE COVID-19.

- ☐ Less than 2 hours ☐ 2 – 3 hours ☐ 4 – 5 hours
☐ 6 – 7 hours ☐ 8 – 9 hours ☐ More than 9 hours

Now, please estimate the amount of time each day that you spend on housework and taking care of people at home ONCE COVID-19 HAPPENED and we went into COMMUNITY QUARANTINE.

- ☐ Less than 2 hours ☐ 2 – 3 hours ☐ 4 – 5 hours
☐ 6 – 7 hours ☐ 8 – 9 hours ☐ More than 9 hours

Thank you very much for your time!

GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Context of women's work and labor participation

1. What can you say about the labor participation of women in the private sector? Do you think we have enough? Why / why not?
2. What do you think are the main barriers/facilitating factors for women joining the labor force?
3. And once they have joined the labor force, what do you think are the main barriers/facilitating factors for women advancing in their organizations or industries?

From Personal Experience

1. Recalling your entry to the labor force, was that smooth/challenging for you? Why/why not?
2. Do you think there is a difference now for younger generation? Men vs Women?
3. Going from one level to the next, how was the experience for you?
4. Was there a time when you wanted to leave/quit/rest? What was the main reason for that? What made you stay/come back?
5. What was the main motivation/turning point that made you push, aim and reach for the top post?

Family/Household Issues

1. What concerns linked to managing households affected your work mostly?
2. How did you address it? What was the role of your family/household? (who in the household?)
3. Is your company flexible and understanding enough to let you attend to your household duties? In what ways? How about the other way around?

Company Culture

1. In the company/ies you have worked for, what made the most impression when it comes to looking after its employees? Why?
2. What do you think should companies focus on to sustain its talents especially women middle managers and get them to the top?
3. How difficult or easy could that be?

Wider community/society

1. To what extent does culture play a role in how women are viewed by society? Does regional culture (being Kapampangan, Ilocano, Ilonggo, Cebuano, Davaoeno, Mindanawon, etc.) affect the empowerment of women?
2. In your opinion, is the education system able to prepare 'quality' human resource pool to fill up labour and future top management requirements regardless of gender?
3. Are we ready for non-traditional roles for men and women in the work force?
4. Women leaders vs men leaders – who do you think will have an easier time? Why/why not?
5. If you were given a "magic hand" in setting up pathway/s for women's leadership, what would you change or where will you start? Why?

On Entrepreneurship

1. What are the challenges unique to female business owners?
2. What kind of support do women need to be able to successfully start and run a business?

Leading in a COVID-19 World

1. To what extent has COVID-19 and the ensuing enhanced community quarantine affected women in your organization? What were the biggest challenges working women faced during this period, especially for women with leadership roles in your company? Are these impacts different to that experienced by male leaders?
2. Were there instances that having gender-friendly or gender-inclusive policies within your organization mitigated the impact of COVID-19 to women or helped women adapt faster to the changes in the working environment?
3. Moving forward, how can your company better prepare so that women in the private sector will build resilience during times of crisis?



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