

Internalized Patriarchy and Career Ambition Among Filipina Gen Z Professionals

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Abstract. Gender inequality continues to affect women's career advancement, particularly through internalized sociocultural beliefs that shape professional aspirations. This study examined the relationship between internalized patriarchal beliefs and career ambition among Filipina Generation Z professionals in Metro Manila. Using a quantitative correlational research design, data were collected from 100 purposively selected respondents through standardized instruments, including the Gender Role Beliefs Scale (GRBS) and the Career Aspiration Scale (CAS). Descriptive statistics and Pearson product-moment correlation were utilized to analyze the data. Results revealed that respondents exhibited low levels of internalized patriarchal beliefs and high levels of career ambition, suggesting increasing alignment with egalitarian gender perspectives and strong professional motivation. Furthermore, a statistically significant but weak negative relationship ($r = -0.27$, $p = .006$) was found between internalized patriarchal beliefs and career ambition. This indicates that patriarchal beliefs modestly reduce career ambition. Although the relationship was modest, the findings highlight the role of internalized beliefs as a psychological factor influencing women's professional goals. The study concludes that Filipina Gen Z professionals demonstrate resilience and ambition despite lingering sociocultural influences. Implications support the development of gender-inclusive policies, psychological empowerment initiatives, and leadership programs that address both internal and external barriers, contributing to Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality).

Keywords: career ambition; Filipina professionals; gender inequality; internalized patriarchy; leadership aspirations

Introduction

Gender inequality remains a persistent global concern, particularly in relation to women's career advancement and leadership representation. Despite increased participation of women in professional sectors, it is still evident that there are disparities in terms of career progression and leadership opportunities across innumerable cultural contexts (Batista et al., 2025; Son Hing et al., 2023). Existing literature suggests that these inequalities are not solely structural but are also reinforced by internalized beliefs shaped by sociocultural norms (Schwabe, 2024). Internalized patriarchy is a form of prejudice against women. This exists in every level of society and daily experiences of women (Alvior et al., 2025). Moreover, it describes the process by which women unconsciously adopt societal beliefs that perpetuate gender inequality (Schwabe, 2024). As a psychological construct, it manifests through self-limiting beliefs, reduced self-efficacy, and diminished leadership aspirations, which significantly affects women's career trajectories (Desgrosseilliers & Stinson, 2023). These internalized beliefs shape how women perceive their capabilities and their readiness to pursue leadership roles, ultimately affecting their level of career ambition (McKinsey & Company, 2023).

In the Philippine context, gender norms continue to influence both domestic and professional roles of women. Filipino women are often expected to balance employment with caregiving responsibilities, reinforcing traditional expectations that may hinder career progression (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2022; Cruz et al., 2023). Additionally, these societal expectations are reflected in workplace dynamics, where gender stereotypes continue to shape hiring practices, occupational segregation, and access to leadership opportunities among Filipino women (Oxfam Pilipinas, 2021; Philippine Commission on Women, 2022). Furthermore, gender bias is not only externally imposed but also internalized by women themselves, leading to acceptance of patriarchal norms as natural social expectations (Rahmani, 2020). Cultural expectations significantly influence career preferences, with women gravitating toward caregiving roles rather than leadership-oriented professions.

(Fangqing, 2017). On a global scale, gender role socialization theories suggest that societal expectations significantly influence career choices and leadership aspirations. Women are commonly associated with communal traits, while leadership roles are often linked with agentic characteristics, creating a misalignment that may hinder women's pursuit of leadership positions (Galsanjigmed, 2023).

While existing studies have extensively examined structural and societal barriers, there remains a research gap in understanding the psychological dimension of internalized patriarchy and its direct influence on career ambition. Much of the current literature focuses on external constraints such as organizational policies, gender discrimination, and unequal access to opportunities; however, less attention has been given to how deeply ingrained societal norms are internalized by women and subsequently shape their self-perception, decision-making, and career trajectories. This gap is particularly evident among Filipina Generation Z professionals. This cohort represents a generation that is more exposed to progressive ideals yet still embedded within traditional cultural frameworks that continue to uphold traditional gender roles, such as expectations surrounding caregiving, modesty, and deference. This dual exposure creates a complex psychological landscape wherein progressive aspirations may coexist with internalized limitations, potentially leading to internal conflict, reduced career ambition, or hesitation in pursuing leadership positions. With this, there is a need to explore how internalized patriarchal beliefs function as an internal barrier that may either reinforce or counteract external opportunities available to women. Understanding this relationship is crucial in providing a more comprehensive view of gender inequality; one that integrates both structural and psychological dimensions.

Thus, this study aims to examine the relationship between internalized patriarchal beliefs and career ambition among Filipina Gen Z professionals. By doing so, this seeks to contribute to the growing body of literature that highlights the importance of addressing the internalized beliefs in achieving gender equity. Furthermore, this research aligns with the goals of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equity), which advocates the elimination of discrimination against women and the promotion of equal participation in leadership and decision-making. Through this lens, the study emphasizes the importance of empowering women not only through policy and opportunity, but also through the transformation of internalized perceptions that shape their aspirations and career outcomes.

The focus of this study is on the relationship between internalized patriarchal beliefs and career ambition among Filipina Generation Z professionals. The relevance of this study lies in understanding how societal expectations and internalized beliefs influence women's career aspirations, particularly in pursuing leadership roles, professional growth, and education advancement. Despite the increasing participation of women in the workforce, many still experience limitations in advancing their careers, which may not only be caused by external barriers but also by internalized beliefs shaped by culture and society.

The researcher was motivated to conduct this study after observing persistent traditional views on the role of women in the Philippines. Based on Social Weather Stations (SWS) survey, a significant number of Filipinos still hold conservative beliefs regarding women's roles, particularly within the family setting. Many respondents agreed with statements such as "a man's job is to earn money while a woman's job is to take care of the home and family", and that women primarily desire a home-centered life. These findings highlight that traditional gender norms remain deeply embedded in Filipino society, despite ongoing efforts toward gender equality. Through this, the study aims to examine how these societal beliefs may be internalized by women and how they influence their level of career ambition. The researchers believe that these norms, when internalized, may lead women to unconsciously limit their own aspirations, hesitate to pursue leadership roles, or prioritize socially expected roles over personal career goals. This emphasizes the importance of understanding not only external barriers but also the psychological factors that shape women's professional decisions.

Moreover, the researcher found interest in conducting this study because internalized patriarchy is often overlooked in discussions of gender inequality. While many studies focus on structural issues such as workplace discrimination and unequal opportunities, fewer studies explore how these societal expectations are internalized and affect women's self-perception and ambition. The researcher believes that bringing attention to this issue can help raise awareness and encourage women to challenge limiting beliefs. Furthermore, by addressing this gap, the study seeks to provide insights that may help human resource organizations and policymakers develop strategies that support women's empowerment and promote gender equality within the workplace and the society. Ultimately, this study emphasized the importance of empowering women not only by providing equal opportunities but also by addressing internalized beliefs that may hinder their full potential. Through increased awareness and understanding, this research hopes to contribute to the ongoing efforts in promoting gender-equality and strengthening women's participation in leader and decision-making in society.

Research Questions

This study aims to examine the relationship between internalized patriarchal beliefs and career ambition among Filipino Gen Z professionals. Specifically, it seeks the following questions:

1. What is the level of the internalized patriarchal beliefs among Filipina Gen Z professionals?
2. What is the level of career ambition and leadership aspirations of Filipina Gen Z professionals in terms of the following:
 - 2.1 Leadership Aspiration
 - 2.2 Achievement Motivation
 - 2.3 Educational Aspiration
3. Is there a significant relationship between internalized patriarchal beliefs and career ambitions among the Filipina Gen Z professionals?

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study focuses on examining the relationship between internalized patriarchal beliefs and career ambition among Filipina Generation Z professionals. Specifically, it investigates the level of internalized patriarchal beliefs and the degree of career ambition in terms of leadership aspiration, achievement motivation, and educational aspiration. The study employs a quantitative correlational design to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between these variables without establishing causality. The respondents are limited to Filipina professionals aged 24 to 29 years old who are currently employed and residing or working in Metro Manila. Data were collected through an online survey using standardized instruments, namely the Gender Role Beliefs Scale (GRBS) and the Career Aspiration Scale (CAS), to ensure reliable and valid measurement of the constructs under investigation. The study is delimited to a specific population and context, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other groups or regions. It excludes individuals who are male, unemployed, or outside the specified age range, as well as those not belonging to the Generation Z cohort. Furthermore, the research relies on self-reported data, which may be influenced by response bias or social desirability. The study also focuses solely on internalized patriarchal beliefs as a psychological factor, without examining other variables such as organizational support, socioeconomic status, or broader structural barriers that may influence career ambition. Lastly, due to its correlational design, the study only identifies associations between variables and does not establish causal relationships.

Literature Review

Internalized Patriarchy and Gender Norms

Internalized patriarchy, also referred to as internalized sexism, is a psychological process in which women unconsciously adopt to societal beliefs that reinforce gender inequality. Contemporary literature highlights that internalized patriarchal beliefs are developed through prolonged exposure to gendered socialization within family, education, and media environments. These beliefs influence how women perceive their roles, abilities, and potential in both personal and professional domains. Empirical studies provide strong evidence on the psychological impact of internalized gender norms. Bearman et al. (2020), emphasized that internalized sexism manifests in self-limiting beliefs and diminished agency among women. Similarly, Wang (2025) found that internalized gender norms can shape women's career preferences by limiting their perceived capabilities and acceptable roles. Barger (2021) further explained that gender status beliefs are deeply embedded in social structures, shaping expectations of competence and leadership based on gender. Recent literature emphasizes that women's career decisions are shaped not only by external structural barriers but also by internalized gender norms embedded within patriarchal systems. Contemporary studies highlight that women continue to engage in forms of "patriarchal bargaining", wherein they adapt to socially prescribed gender roles in order to navigate opportunities and maintain social acceptance within constrained environments (Baroy 2023; Khan 2025). These dynamics often manifest in subtle ways, such as prioritizing relational harmony, downplaying ambition, or conforming to expectations surrounding caregiving and modesty, even in professional settings. In the Philippine context, internalized patriarchy is reinforced by deeply embedded sociocultural values. Cruz et al. (2023) found that internalized misogyny among Filipina university students is significantly associated with experiences of sexism and traditional gender expectations. Additionally, the Philippine Commission on Women (2022) reported that gender stereotypes continue to influence women's roles in both private and public spheres, shaping perceptions of leadership and competence. Additionally, traditional gender roles persist in Filipino households, contributing to unequal labor participation and reinforcing internalized expectation among women (NEDA, 2021). Overall, these studies indicate that internalized patriarchy functions as a psychological mechanism shaping not only how women see themselves but also what they perceive as possible. However, while global studies emphasize general mechanisms of internalization, there remains limited research examining how these processes affect Filipina Gen Z professionals, a cohort simultaneously exposed to progressive ideals and traditional expectations. This gap underscores the need for the present study.

Cultural Expectations and Women's Career Development

Cultural expectations play a critical role in shaping women's career trajectories, particularly in societies where traditional gender roles remain influential. These expectations often dictate women's responsibilities in both domestic and professional settings, creating constraints on career advancement. According to Kee et al. (2020), societal norms significantly influence women's participation in the workforce, particularly in terms of career choice and advancement opportunities. Correspondingly, Kabeer (2020) emphasized that in developing economies, entrenched cultural norms surrounding family roles and caregiving responsibilities continue to shape women's access to economic opportunities and long-term development. In addition to this, Eagly and Heilman (2022), further explained that gender stereotypes influence perceptions of competence and leadership, often position women as less suitable for high-level roles. These cultural expectations are internalized and reproduced within organizational and societal structures. In the Philippines, cultural norms strongly shape women's career development. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (2022), Filipino women perform a disproportionate share of unpaid care work, even when employed full-time. This reinforces the expectation that women prioritize family responsibilities over career advancement. Furthermore, Oxfam Pilipinas (2020) also reported that Filipino women face a "double burden" of balancing paid work and unpaid domestic labor. In accordance with Manalo (2024), Filipina leaders experience tension between professional responsibilities and societal expectations, particularly in maintaining traditional gender roles. Moreover, the Philippine Commission on Women (2024) also reported that there is a persistent cultural norm that continues to limit women's participation in leadership and decision-making. These findings highlight that cultural expectations create structural and psychological constraints that influence women's career decisions and limit their opportunities for advancement, while existing literature documents these dynamics broadly, there is a limited exploration of how these cultural expectations interact with internalized patriarchy among Gen Z Filipina professionals that this study aims to address.

Workplace Gender Bias and Structural Barriers

Despite increasing female participation in workforce, gender bias and structural barriers remain pervasive in professional environments. These barriers manifest through discriminatory practices, unequal opportunities, and systemic inequalities that hinder women's career progression. Trinkenreich et al. (2022) identified multiple barriers to women's advancement, including limited access to mentorship, gender bias in evaluation, and organizational cultures that favor male leadership. Furthermore, despite progress in gender equality, women remain underrepresented in leadership positions globally, particularly in senior management and executive roles (World Economic Forum, 2023). In the Philippine setting, workplace gender bias continues to be a significant concern. According to Post et al., (2022), found that gender inequality in leadership and career advancement persists globally and within the Philippines context, with women facing barriers such as limited access to leadership roles, work-life balance constraints, and enduring cultural expectation. Furthermore, Manalo (2024) reported that Filipina leaders face gender-based challenges, including higher performance expectations and work-life balance pressures. The Philippine Commission on Women (2024) also highlighted that women remain underrepresented in decision-making positions across sectors. Data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (2023) further indicate persistent gender disparities in employment and leadership roles. These findings suggest that structural barriers in the Philippines These findings suggest that workplace environments continue to reinforce gender inequality through both structural and cultural mechanisms, limiting women's career advancement. Although, there is a limited exploration of how internalized beliefs interact with these structural constraints. This highlights a critical gap: understanding how internalized patriarchy may amplify or mediate the effects of workplace barriers, particularly among Filipina Gen Z professionals.

Psychological Factors Influencing Career Ambition

Career ambition is influenced not only by external conditions but also by internal psychological factors such as self-efficacy, motivation, and identity. These factors play a crucial role in shaping women's career aspirations and persistence. In addition, Trinkenreich et al. (2022) identified impostor syndrome and stereotype threat as key psychological barriers that undermine women's confidence and performance. Furthermore, Khan (2025) emphasized that gender stereotypes influence women's career decision-making processes, often leading to self-limiting choices. These findings align with Social Cognitive Theory, which posits that behavior is shaped by the interaction of personal beliefs, environment factors, and observed experiences. In the Philippine context, psychological factors are similarly influential. Cruz et al., (2023) found that internalized misogyny is associated with lower self-esteem and confidence among Filipina students. Additionally, Manalo (2024) reported that societal expectations and work-life pressures negatively affect women's motivation and career ambition. The Philippine Commission on Women (2022) also emphasized that gender stereotypes influence women's self-perception and participation in leadership roles. These

internalized beliefs, combined external barriers, contribute to reduced career ambition among Filipino women. Overall, the literature demonstrates that psychological factors serve as critical mediators between societal influences and career outcomes, shaping women's aspirations and professional trajectories. However, there is limited research exploring how internalized patriarchy, cultural expectations, and structural barriers interact simultaneously to influence career ambition among Filipina Gen Z professionals.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationship between internalized patriarchal beliefs and career ambition among Filipina Gen Z professionals. This design was deemed appropriate as it allows the researcher to determine the degree and direction of association between variables without manipulation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Correlational research is particularly suitable for studies that aim to explore relationships among naturally occurring variables, allowing for statistical analysis of patterns and associations (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2019).

Sampling Design

A non-probability purposive sampling technique was utilized to select respondents who met the inclusion criteria. Purposive sampling is appropriate for studies that require participants with specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives (Etikan et al., 2016). Participants were included if they were Filipina, within the specified age range from 24 to 29 years old and are currently employed. Individuals who were male, unemployed, or outside the age range were excluded from the study.

Research Locale

The study was conducted in Metro Manila, Philippines, a highly urbanized region considered the country's primary economic and professional hub. Metro Manila was selected as the research locale due to its concentration of diverse industries, employment opportunities, and working professionals, making it an appropriate setting for examining the career aspirations of Filipina Generation Z employees. The respondents consisted of Filipina professionals aged 24 to 29 years old who were either residing or currently working in the area. Data collection was carried out through an online survey distributed via digital platforms such as social media and professional networks, allowing access to participants from various occupational sectors within the metropolitan context.

Research Participants

The study was conducted purely online. The population of the study consisted of Filipina professionals aged 24 to 29 years old belonging to Generation Z and currently employed in various industries and are residing or working in Metro Manila. The sample size was determined based on established methodical and statistical guidelines for correlational research. According to Creswell (2014), a minimum of 100 participants is generally sufficient for a quantitative correlational study to ensure reliable results. In addition, Cohen (1992), recommends that a sample size of at least 85 respondents is adequate to detect a medium effect size ($r = .30$) at a 0.05 level of significance with 80% statistical power. In consideration of these recommendations, the study aimed to recruit at least 100 respondents to ensure sufficient statistical reliability, validity, generalizability of the findings.

Research Instrument

The study utilized standardized instruments to measure the variables. Internalized patriarchal beliefs were measured using an adapted version of the Gender Role Beliefs Scale (GRBS) developed by Kerr and Holden (1996). This instrument assesses individuals' endorsement of traditional gender roles and patriarchal norms, including beliefs related to male authority, leadership preference, and women's roles in the family and workplace. The GRBS is widely used in gender studies to examine attitudes toward gender roles and has been recognized as a reliable measure of patriarchal ideology (Kerr & Holden, 1996). Career ambitions were measured using the Career Aspiration Scale developed by Gray and O'Brien (2007). This instrument evaluates career ambition across three domains: leadership aspiration, achievement motivation, educational aspiration. It has been extensively utilized in research to assess individuals' long term career goals and motivation for professional advancement (Gray & O'Brien, 2007). Both instruments have demonstrated acceptable levels of reliability and validity in previous studies. The Gender Role Beliefs Scale (GRBS) has shown good internal consistency in prior research, indicating its reliability in measuring internalized gender-related beliefs (Kerr & Holden, 1996). Meanwhile, the Career Aspiration Scale demonstrated Cronbach's alpha values between .76

and .85 across its subscale, indicating acceptable to good internal consistency (Gray & O'Brien, 2007). Cronbach's alpha is widely used measure of reliability that assesses the internal consistency of a scale, with values above .70 considered acceptable (Taber, 2018). The validity has been established though prior empirical use in psychological and gender studies, supporting their appropriateness for measuring the constructs in this study.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection was conducted through a structure online survey. The researcher first prepared the instruments by compiling the standardized questionnaires into an online format using Google Forms, ensuring clarity of instruction and proper organization of items. The online survey includes the demographic profile of the respondent, such as their age, along with other relevant characteristics necessary for the study. Prior to data collection necessary permissions were secured, and an informed consent form was integrated at the beginning of the survey. This form outlined the purpose of the study, participants rights', confidentiality measures, and the voluntary nature of participation. For participant recruitment and survey distribution, the survey link was embedded in the publication material caption to allow easy access for interested respondents. The publication material and the survey link were disseminated through social media platforms, particularly Facebook and Instagram, which are widely used by the target population of Filipina Gen Z professionals. The researcher also utilized personal and professional networks to expand the reach and visibility of the recruitment material. Screening questions were included at the beginning of the survey to ensure that only eligible participants were included in the study. These questions verified whether respondents met the inclusion criteria. Data collection was within specified period, which respondents voluntarily complete the questionnaire. Participants were thanked for their participation and reassured that their responses would remain strictly confidential. After the data collection, responses were reviewed to ensure completeness and accuracy. Incomplete, duplicate, or invalid responses were removed prior to analysis. The finalized dataset was then securely stored ad encoded, with access limited only to the research for statistical analysis. This was then discarded after the study was completed.

Results and Discussions

Research Question 1: What is the level of the internalized patriarchal beliefs among Filipina Gen Z professionals?

Table 1. Internalized Patriarchal Beliefs among Filipina Gen Z Professionals

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Internalized Patriarchal Beliefs	24.21	6.19	Low

Table 1 presents the average mean score and standard deviation for Internalized Patriarchal Beliefs among Filipina Gen Z Professionals. The respondents obtained a mean score of 24.21 (SD = 6.19), indicating a low level of internalized patriarchal beliefs. This finding suggests that the respondents generally do not strongly endorse traditional beliefs that puts women in subordinate roles or that limits themselves in leadership and career advancement. This result supports the notions that younger generations of Filipino women are increasingly exposed to more egalitarian perspectives regarding gender roles. According to Bearman et. al. (2020), internalized sexism manifests through self-limiting beliefs and reduced agency among women. The relatively low level of internalized patriarchal beliefs among respondents suggests that these self-limiting beliefs may be less prevalent among Filipina Gen Z professionals. In addition, Wang (2025) argued that internalized gender norms shape women's perception of their capabilities and acceptable social roles. The low level of internalized patriarchal beliefs found in the present study may indicate that respondents are less likely to perceive themselves as restricted by traditional gender expectations. Although, patriarchal beliefs remain embedded within the society of the Filipinos, as reported by Philippines Commissions on Women (2022) and NEDA (2021), the present findings indicates that the respondents generally reject traditional assumptions regarding women's roles in leadership, employment, and decision-making. This may reflect changing social attitudes, increased educational opportunities, and greater visibility of women in professional and leadership positions.

Research Question 2: What is the level of career ambition and leadership aspirations of Filipina Gen Z professionals in terms of leadership aspiration, achievement motivation, and educational aspiration?

Table 2. Level of Career Ambition among Filipina Gen Z Professionals

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Career Ambition	45.47	6..68	High

Table 2 presents the average mean score and standard deviation for Career Ambition among Filipina Gen Z professionals. The respondents obtained a mean score of 45.47 (SD = 6.68), indicating a high level of career ambition. This suggests that Filipina Gen Z professionals possess strong motivational factors that supports their pursuit of career advancement. The findings also support the argument of Social Cognitive Theory, which posits that personal beliefs influence goal setting and behavior. Despite the existence of workplace gender bias and structural barriers identified by Trikenreich et al. (2022) and the World Economic Forum (2023), the respondents demonstrated a strong desire to succeed professional and attain leader positions. Furthermore, the findings contrast with traditional cultural expectations that encourage women to prioritize domestic responsibilities over professional advancement. According to Kabeer (2020) and Kee et al. (2020), cultural norms continue to shape women's participation in economic and professional activities. However, the high level of career ambition among respondents suggests that many Filipinas gen z professional are actively pursuing career development despite these societal expectations. This finding is likewise supported by Manalo (2024), who observed that Filipino women continue to navigate tensions between professional aspirations and traditional gender-role expectations. The high level of ambition demonstrated by respondents indicates a growing commitment among Filipina Gen Z professionals to achieve career success and leadership opportunities.

Research Question 3: Is there a significant relationship between internalized patriarchal beliefs and career ambitions among the Filipina Gen Z professionals?

Table 3. Relationship between Internalized Patriarchal Beliefs and Career Ambition among Filipina Gen Z Professionals

Variable	Pearson r	p-value	Interpretation
Internalized Patriarchal Beliefs and Career Ambition	-0.27	0.006	Weak Negative Relationship

The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant negative relationship between internalized patriarchal beliefs and career ambition among Filipina Gen Z professionals, $r = -0.27$, and $p = 0.006$. The result indicates that as internalized patriarchal beliefs increase, career ambition tend to decrease. Thus, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant relationship between internalized patriarchal beliefs and career ambition was rejected. The negative correlation suggests that higher levels of internalized patriarchal beliefs are associated with lower levels of career ambition. Although, the magnitude of the relationship is weak, the finding indicates that internalized patriarchal beliefs may function as a psychologist factor influencing women's aspirations for career advancement, leadership attainment, and professional achievement. From a psychological perspective, this finding is understood through the framework of Social Cognitive Theory, which shows that individuals' beliefs about themselves and their environment influence their motivation, goals, and behaviors. Internalized Patriarchal beliefs represent cognitive schemas that are developed through prolonged exposure to gendered socialization processes. When women internalize societal messages that portray leadership, authority, and career success as predominantly masculine domains, these beliefs may influence their self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and career-related decision making. The present finding supports the work of Bearman et al. (2020), who argued that internalized sexism manifests through self-limiting cognitions that diminish women's perceived agency and autonomy. Likewise, Wang (2025) found that internalized gender norms influence women's career preferences by shaping perceptions of competence and acceptable gender roles. The negative association observed in the present study suggests that respondents who more strongly endorse patriarchal beliefs may be less likely to envisions themselves occupying leadership positions or pursuing ambitious trajectories. The findings also provide empirical support for the concept of patriarchal bargaining discussed by Baroy (2023) and Khan (2025). According to this, women may unconsciously adjust their aspirations and behaviors to align with socially prescribed gender expectations in exchange for social acceptance. Such adaptations may manifest as reduced pursuit of leadership opportunities, lower professional aspiration, or greater prioritization of traditionally feminine roles over career advancement. Furthermore, in the Philippine context, according to Cruz et al. (2023), reported that internalized misogyny among Filipina women is associated with lower self-esteem and diminished confidence. These psychological processes may partially explain the inverse relationship observed between Internalized patriarchal beliefs and career ambition. Additionally, reports from Philippine Commission on Women (2022, 2024), indicate that persistent gender stereotypes continue to influence women's self-

perceptions and participation in leadership positions, reinforcing traditional expectation regarding women's roles in society.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were strictly observed throughout the study. Participation was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to data collection. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured by not collecting personally identifiable information. All data gathered were used solely for academic purposes and were handled with strict confidentiality. This study complied with the provisions of the Data Privacy Act R.A. No. 11073, that ensures the protection of personal data and the privacy rights of individuals in research. Data collected were processed in accordance with the principles of transparency, legitimate purpose, and proportionality (National Privacy Commission, 2016). Furthermore, the study ensured that no psychological harm or discomfort was inflicted upon the participants.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between internalized patriarchal beliefs and career ambition among Filipina Gen Z professional residing or working in Metro Manila. Specifically, it sought to determine the level of internalized patriarchal beliefs, the level of career ambition and leadership aspirations, and whether a significant relationship exists between the two variables. The finding revealed that Filipina Gen Z professional generally exhibited a low level of internalized patriarchal beliefs, suggesting that most respondents do not strongly endorse traditional gender-role expectation that position women in subordinate roles or limit their participation in leadership and professional advancement. In contrast to this, the respondents demonstrated a high level of career ambition, indication strong aspirations toward, professional success, leadership attainment, educational advancement, and continuous personal development. Furthermore, the study found a statistically significant negative relationship between internalized patriarchal beliefs and career ambition. However, the relationship was weak in magnitude, the findings suggest that higher levels of internalized patriarchal beliefs are associated with lower levels of career ambition among Filipina Gen Z professionals. This implies that internalized gender norms may continue to influence women's perceptions of their professional capabilities and aspirations, even within a generation that is increasingly exposed to gender-equitable values and opportunities. Moreover, in the psychological perspective, the findings supported the existing literature suggesting that internalized societal beliefs function as cognitive and motivational factors that shape career-related attitudes and behaviors. Consistent with Societal Cognitive Theory, the results indicate that internalized patriarchal beliefs may affect women's self-perceptions, expectation, and career aspirations. However, the weak strength of the relationship also suggests that career ambition is influenced by multiple psychological, social, cultural, and organizational factors beyond internalized patriarchy alone. To sum this up, this study concludes that while internalized patriarchal beliefs remain a relevant psychological factor in understanding women's career development, Filipina Gen Z professionals generally demonstrate high levels of ambition despite the persistence of traditional gender norms. The findings contribute to the growing body of research on gender, career development, and internalized social beliefs by providing empirical evidence from the Philippine Context. Moreover, the study highlights the importance of fostering gender-equitable environment that encourage women to pursue leadership roles, professional advancement, and long-term aspirations free from limiting gender-based expectations.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, several recommendations are proposed. First Filipina Gen Z professionals are encouraged to continuously develop self-awareness regarding internalized patriarchal beliefs and how these beliefs may influence their career aspirations, leadership goals, and professional decision-making. Organization and employers are likewise to encouraged to foster gender-inclusive workplace environments that support women's professional growth and leadership development. This may be achieved through the implementation of gender-sensitive policies, equitable promotion practices, leadership training programs, and mentorship opportunities that empower women to pursue higher-level positions. Organization should also regularly assess workplace culture to identify and assess gender biases that may hinder women's career advancement and leadership participation. Educational institutions may contribute to the promotion of career ambition among young women by integrating gender equality, leadership development, and career empowerment initiatives into academic programs. Colleges and Universities are encouraged to provide career counseling, leadership workshops, and professional development opportunities that equip female students and young professionals with the skills and confidence necessary to pursue ambitious career goals and leadership roles. Mental health professional, psychologists, and counselors may

also play an important role in addressing the psychological effects of internalized patriarchal beliefs. Interventions aimed at enhancing self-efficacy, self-esteem, resilience, and career confidence may assist women in overcoming internalized gender stereotypes that could negatively affect their aspiration and professional development. Psychoeducational programs may further support women in challenging restrictive societal expectations. Lastly, future researchers are encouraged to expand upon the findings of the present study by examining additional variables that may influence career ambition among women, such as self-efficacy, leadership self-concept, and perceived organizational support, mentorship experiences, and socioeconomic status, and work-life balance. Moreover, a qualitative and mixed method approaches are recommended for this study to gain a deeper understand of how Filipina professionals experience, interpret, and navigate internalized patriarchal beliefs within their personal and professional lives. Such investigations may provide richer insights into the complex psychological and sociocultural factors that shape women's career development and leadership aspirations.

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