

# Equal in Impact, Different in Style: A Gendered Exploration of Entrepreneurial Leadership at the Grassroots Level

Edna M. Valdez

Isabela State University-Roxas Campus, Roxas, Isabela, Philippines.

Received: 03 July 2025

Revised: 05 July 2025

Accepted: 07 July 2025

Published: 10 July 2025

**Abstract** - This study examined the personal entrepreneurial competencies (PECs) of grassroots organization leaders, with a particular focus on how gender and socio-demographic factors shape leadership performance and behavior. Using a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, the research combined quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews to provide a comprehensive understanding of entrepreneurial leadership at the community level. The findings reveal that entrepreneurial capabilities are widely present among grassroots leaders, with notable gendered expressions: women excelled in goal-setting and quality of outcomes, often reflecting strategic and collaborative leadership, while men demonstrated stronger tendencies in opportunity-seeking, risk-taking, and timeliness, indicating action-oriented, externally focused leadership. Despite these differences, both male and female leaders achieved outstanding performance ratings, affirming that effective leadership transcends gender when rooted in entrepreneurial competencies. Moreover, variables such as employment status, household income, and age significantly influenced the development and application of PECs, suggesting that life experience and socio-economic resources are critical enablers of entrepreneurial behavior in community contexts. These findings highlight the need for inclusive, competency-based leadership development programs that reflect the realities and strengths of grassroots leaders. By fostering PECs across diverse community settings, such programs can enhance organizational resilience, drive innovation, and amplify the role of grassroots leadership in advancing inclusive and sustainable development.

**Keywords** - Entrepreneurial leadership, Gender and Leadership, Grassroots Organizations and Leadership, Personal Entrepreneurial Competencies, Leadership Development.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurial leadership has become increasingly recognized as a vital driver of innovation, resilience, and inclusive development, particularly within grassroots organizations. These organizations typically small-scale, community-based, and mission-driven are often established to respond to local social, economic, or environmental challenges. In such contexts, leaders are not only administrators or facilitators but also agents of change who mobilize resources, engage stakeholders, and create sustainable impact. To perform these roles effectively, grassroots leaders must possess a range of personal entrepreneurial competencies (PECs), which are the individual characteristics, behaviors, and skills that enable entrepreneurial thinking and action. These include opportunity-seeking, goal-setting, information-seeking, risk-taking, systematic planning, and persistence [28] [25]. While PECs have been widely examined in the context of business entrepreneurship, their relevance and application in grassroots leadership especially in community-oriented, non-profit, and development-driven environments remain underexplored in academic literature. Much of the existing research on entrepreneurial competencies has centered around business founders, small and medium enterprises, and corporate managers [31], with relatively little emphasis on the competencies of leaders working in grassroots or community-based settings. Yet, grassroots leaders operate under conditions that arguably demand a heightened degree of entrepreneurial behavior. They face limited access to resources, institutional support, and formal training, requiring them to demonstrate creativity, adaptability, and initiative traits that align closely with entrepreneurial competencies [29]. However, conventional leadership training and development programs often overlook the entrepreneurial dimensions of community leadership. This oversight results in a mismatch between

the complex challenges grassroots leaders face and the support systems available to them. Also, research has been unable to focus on the effects of factors like gender, education levels and type of organization in the incidence and manifestation of PECs at grassroots levels of leadership. The importance of mitigating this gap is that this will enable the development of effective capacity-building strategies that address the needs and realities of local leaders.

This research aims at investigating individual entrepreneurial skills of leaders within grassroots organizations. The research should enhance a more detailed insight into the way of leadership performance on the level of a community by defining which competencies are the most dominant and evaluating their implementation in the practices of leadership. The research also seeks to establish that influence of demographic and contextual variables are on the manner of how the entrepreneurial competencies are exhibited among the grassroots leaders in terms of age, gender, experience, and organizational trends. The importance of this research is in the fact that it has the capability of providing both theoretical and practical contributions. In academic terms, it widens the scope of research on the topic of entrepreneurial leadership by setting PECs in a non-conventional yet quite relevant environment. In practice, it serves to guide the design of focused leadership initiatives and policy action to build the capacity of grassroots institutions to deliver on results of sustainable development [42]. This research contributes to a growing body of work that intersects entrepreneurship, leadership, and community development. While competencies such as emotional intelligence, resilience, and strategic thinking have been studied in various leadership contexts [6], there remains a lack of empirical data on how these and other entrepreneurial traits function in grassroots environments. This study addresses that gap by offering evidence-based insights into the personal attributes that make grassroots leaders effective change agents in their communities. In doing so, it also supports global development frameworks that emphasize the importance of local leadership in achieving inclusive and sustainable growth. The specific aims of this study are: (1) to identify the key personal entrepreneurial competencies exhibited by grassroots organization leaders; (2) to assess the performance to which the competencies are applied in the leadership roles; and (3) to analyze how demographic and organizational factors influence the presence and use of these competencies. Through these objectives, the study aims to contribute meaningful insights to leadership development, organizational sustainability, and community empowerment.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***A. Personal Entrepreneurial Competencies: Conceptual Foundations***

Entrepreneurial competencies are the factors that support the underlying features, conducts and attitudes which essentially guarantee that an individual runs and establishes an entrepreneurial task profitably [31]. And those are an opportunity recognition, persistence, self-confidence, risk-taking, systematic planning, and goal-setting [28] and elaborated by more recent researchers [22]. In the past five years, scholars have admonished the idea that it is necessary to make an attempt to contextualize these competencies in different settings, including the not-for-profit, informal, and grassroots sector, areas that are less relevant to traditional business metrics [4].

PECs are learned as opposed to being pre-existing characteristics that are intrinsically determined [39]. This statement bears serious consequences to leadership training in grass root institutions whereby little formal training is normally done about being an entrepreneur. Moreover, the flexibility and versatility of PECs allow forming them according to the circumstances such as the availability of resources, community norms, and institutional support. As such, it is necessary that we know how these competencies are played out in grassroots leaders operating in a setting that can be resource-limited in nature.

### ***B. Grassroots Organizations and the Role of Leadership***

The success of grassroots organizations, usually characterized by an up-bottom design and local focus, is based largely on the personal efforts of individual leaders in terms of initiative, innovation, and devotion [24]. Grassroots organizations rely on leaders that are able to mobilize volunteers, raise finances and act as advocates to ensure that marginalized groups get a voice in the society; unlike formal organizations which have strict hierarchies. This demands an entrepreneurial behavior that is very intense especially in recognizing opportunities, managing risk and mobilizing resources [8]. Most recent works emphasize the roles of grassroots

leaders that are increasingly operating based on an entrepreneurial approach to the sustainability of their organizations and to make a long-lasting difference in their community [2]. As an example of how this can happen, community based leaders in the developing world typically build social enterprises or pursue hybrid entrepreneurial forms which merge economic and social value creation [11]. Relative to this, the element of entrepreneurial capabilities take center stage as life-sustaining, adaptive, and innovation in the grass-root organisations.

### ***C. Gender and Entrepreneurial Competencies in Leadership***

Gender is a major factor in the development and unfolding of entrepreneurial competencies. There is research that indicates that men and women can have varying strengths in some PECs. Indicatively, one study reported that women leaders tend to exhibit greater skills in terms of relationship building, embody persistence, and ethical responsibility as compared to men being less risk-averse and supportive of dominance [18]. Such gendered variation in competencies may reflect on leadership styles and organizational results in the grassroots. Besides, there are societal values of exposure to resources and cultural beliefs that determine how entrepreneurial skills are developed between male and female population. Women leaders in grassroots organizations encounter other obstacles in most contexts, such as the lack of networks and capitals to access and subsequent influence on the level of entrepreneurial confidence and behaviors [16]. The same studies however indicated that under the same training and guidance level, women also excel to the same or even a greater degree in community leadership as their male counterparts [33]. Thus, the knowledge of gender patterns in PEC development is essential to elaborate inclusive leadership development programs.

### ***D. Contextual and Demographic Influences on PECs***

Contextual and demographic factors influence leadership competencies via education, age, experience, and the organizational environment, in addition to their influence of personality traits. The studies revealed that highly educated leaders, who have several years of leadership experience, are more likely to demonstrate high levels of strategic thinking and opportunities recognition [20]. Leaders in grassroots settings usually learn entrepreneurial skills mostly informally through employee practices, problem-solving, and peer learning processes and not necessarily through formal training [36]. This may further affect the ways of developing and implementing entrepreneurial competencies based on the size and scope of the grassroots organization. The leaders of smaller organizations founded within the communities might be required to multitask and demonstrate an increased number of abilities, whereas the leaders of larger organizations might work on long-term strategies and collaborations with the outer world [19]. The level of interaction between these variables and PECs will enhance the development of more specific interventions to make grassroots leadership effective.

### ***E. Gaps in the Literature and Theoretical Contribution***

Although the literature has a high number of resources regarding entrepreneurial competencies both in business and formal organizational settings, there is a to less attention on how the competencies can fit into the grassroots leadership. Evidence that is obtained in most recent researches focuses more on the economic or innovation aspects of corporate structures and leaves the social dynamics which define grassroots organizations [21]. This study aims to fill that gap by examining PECs through a community-oriented lens, contributing to both the theoretical understanding of entrepreneurial leadership and its practical application in non-traditional settings. There is limited empirical data on PECs amongst grass roots leaders especially in developing areas. Also missing is integrative research which considers the various factors of influence including gender, education and the organization of the study. The study helps fill this gap by utilizing the mixed-method to evaluate, compare, and situation the entrepreneurial skills of grass-roots organisation leaders and hence a more in-depth perception of leadership under community development settings.

## **III. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The present study had the descriptive-correlational research design and the sequential explanatory mixed-methods research design. The quantitative phase was aimed at determining the level of personal entrepreneurial competencies (PECs) of the leaders of the grassroots organization that predetermines the relationship between such competencies and the demographic variables, including gender, educational attainment, age, and the

experience of the leaders in the field of leadership and entrepreneurship. It also had a qualitative component where its interviews were semi-structured to give greater background and elaboration to the quantitative findings.

The descriptive element enabled profiles and quantification of the prevalence of PECs among the sample population whereas correlational element ascertain the statistical links of PECs and the background factors. To provide more comprehensive understanding of the research topic using the advantage of the richness of qualitative insights with the scope of quantitative research, mixed-methods design was chosen. It is an effective design that is appropriate to address complicated social practices at the level of grass doctrine including innovation and leadership that demands delicate but measureable attributes as well as the story situated grounds [10]. The respondents were the leaders of community-based as well as profit/non-profitable sectors who were running the grassroots organization. The purposive sampling that was used in selecting the leaders was based upon the following criteria: (1) forming one of the leadership positions in the organization (e.g. president, chairperson, coordinator etc.); (2) previously served the organization at least a year; (3) is representing organisations involved in local development, livelihoods, advocacy or service provision.

To conduct the quantitative stage, the information was collected with the help of a standardized survey questionnaire with references to Personal Entrepreneurial Competencies (PEC) framework [28], and, subsequently, adjusted to meet the leadership-related research needs [25]. The PEC indicators using PEC questionnaire were opportunity seeking, persistence, requirement of efficiency and quality, risk-taking as well as goal setting and subsequently self-confidence which were all measured on a 5-point Likert Scale (1 = never to 5 = always). The researcher used a semi-structured interview guide to examine the meaning, challenges, and contextual factors that resulted in the entrepreneurial behaviors of the respondents during the qualitative phase. The analysis of these data involved the inferential and descriptive statistics with the assistance of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 26.

## **IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***A. Basic Organization Information***

Heterogeneity of grassroots organizations in terms of structure, gender dynamics, capitalization and the area of engagement all testified by the organizational profile is a fact that may affect and/or be affected by the personal entrepreneurial competencies (PECs) of their leaders. As an example, more capitalized, or expansive sector organization, could have a leader who has greater goal-setting, opportunity-seeking, and resources mobilization skills [25]. On the same note, gender aspects of membership may influence leadership approach, risk taking, or (lack of) innovation ability.

The Form of Organization and Kind of Operation. The organizations which are represented in it match with each other and are organized in the form of associations, which indicates the communal and collective natures of grassroots in local development. Most of them (13 out of 20), however, are non-profit organizations, whereas 7 are profit-driven, implying a tendency toward hybrid nature of community-based enterprise models. This observation was consistent with the modern studies that revealed how grassroots organizations are slowly unifying social and entrepreneurial agendas to secure sustainability [12]. Registration and Plausibility of Institutions. The majority of the organizations are associated with established regulatory agencies such as Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE). The formal registration increases the degree of legitimacy, funding access and ability to undertake entrepreneurial endeavours [41]. A single organization, Damayan-Lanting however report shows as non-complete or pending registration, and it might have an impact on their stability of operation and access to institutional support. Gender Representation and Composition of Membership. The membership of the organizations is quite broad with some of the smaller associations such as Pakak-Toda (15 members) to big organizations such as Avance Isabelina (2,000 members). Interestingly, other organizations are all-male (e.g. Pakak-Toda, Toda-Max, Toda-Rizal), others, like SCA-Lanting and Damayan-Lanting, have large female representation with some female members even outnumbering men. The stem of this gender imbalance in certain organizations highlights the literature that exists on the gendered access to leadership and entrepreneurial position, especially in sectors

dominated by men, such as transportation [7]. Conversely, the fact that Female association membership is quite high in other associations demonstrates that women are being empowered as Community entrepreneurs [5].

**Capitalization.** Capitalization also shows significant variation with some entities having little to operate with (e.g., Damayan–Lanting: ₱6,860) and other having multi-million-peso operations (e.g., FCA–Lanting: ₱6,600,000). This gap implies that organizations vary in terms of organizational maturity, availability of funding sources and possibly leadership ability. According to literature, elements of entrepreneurship of the grassroots leaders make the mobilization of resources, economic growth, and scalability of enterprises [38]. Major Business Activity. The significance of the study in the sectoral engagement of the grassroots organizations as they are major business activities in the networking business enterprise is diverse. In particular, three organizations are in food processing, four in farming, nine in relief or damayan and four in service provision. It is the diversity of this sector that highlights the multi sectoral nature of the grass roots enterprise, how such organizations serve a wide range of community requirements it addresses, and local economic growth. The significant emphasis on damayan and service-oriented initiatives reflects the social mission at the heart of many grassroots organizations. These activities are a crucial part in enhancing community resilience, especially in marginalized or underserved areas, reinforcing the significance of social entrepreneurship as a means of inclusive development [40].

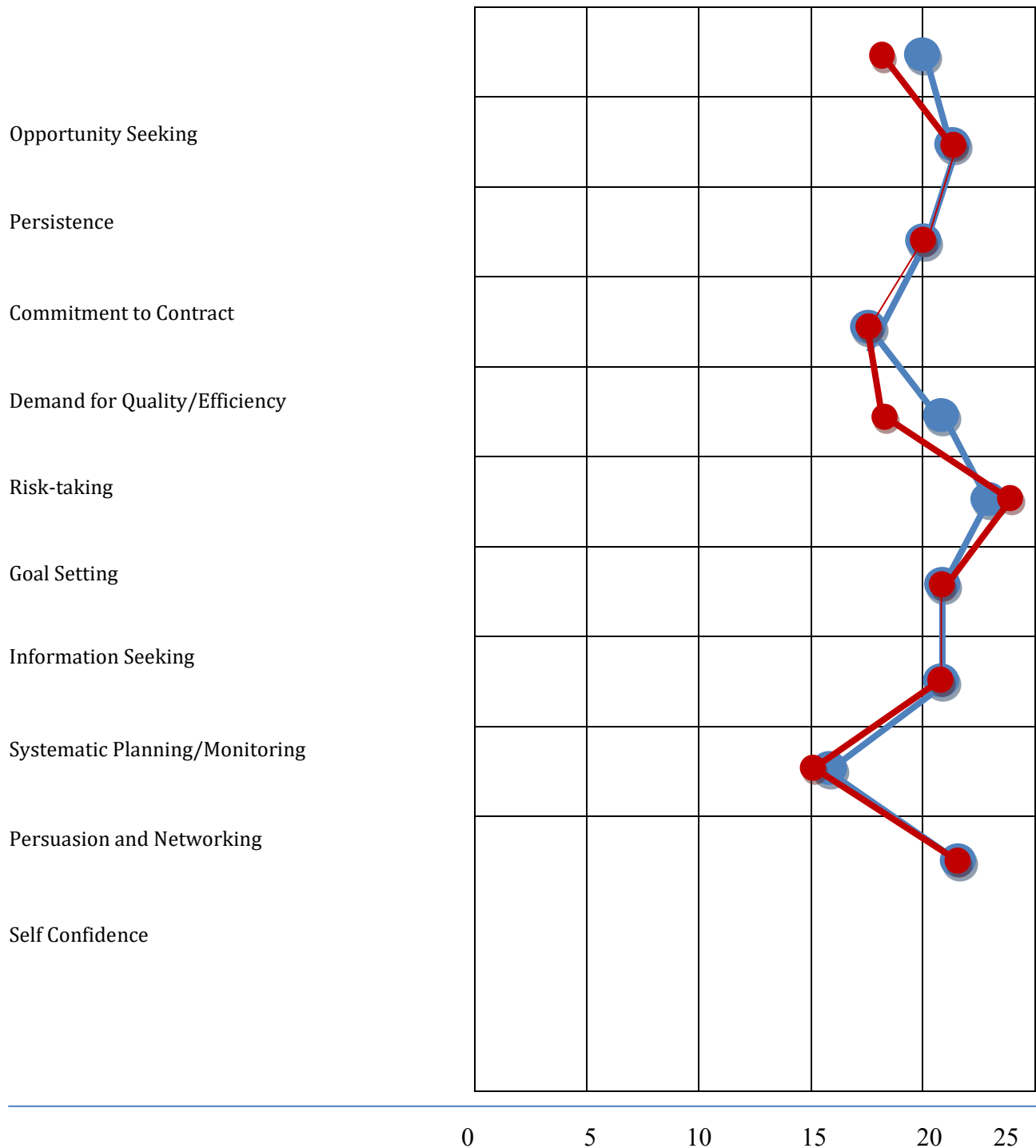
### ***B. Entrepreneurial Competency Profiles of Men and Women Leaders***

Figure 1 illustrates the Personal Entrepreneurial Competency (PEC) profiles of leaders, both men and women, in grassroots organizations across eleven competency domains. The red line represents female leaders, while the blue line represents male leaders. A close examination reveals both similarities and slight variations in the manifestation of PECs by gender, indicating a nuanced distribution of entrepreneurial traits between male and female grassroots leaders. The PEC profile chart demonstrates that male and female leaders possess strong entrepreneurial competencies, with minor variations that highlight gender-specific strengths. While men tend to exhibit slightly higher tendencies toward opportunity-seeking, risk-taking, and networking/persuasion, women demonstrate more pronounced strength in goal-setting. These findings support the broader literature on entrepreneurial competencies, suggesting that gender does not necessarily determine entrepreneurial effectiveness but rather informs different approaches to leadership and innovation [30].

In the areas of persistence and confidence, both male and female leaders scored highly, reflecting strong entrepreneurial tendencies common to effective leadership regardless of gender. This is consistent with the results of [25], emphasizing that these competencies are foundational to successful entrepreneurial behavior. Notably, female leaders slightly outperformed their male counterparts in goal setting. Female executives frequently include their staff in the goal-setting process [35]. Additionally, it was noted that women typically establish more strategic and realistic goals [17].

For demand for quality/efficiency, information seeking, and systematic planning/monitoring, scores were similar across genders, reflecting a shared commitment to high standards and strategic orientation. It indicates that structured thinking and information-driven decision-making are widely practiced across leadership roles. Sánchez (2012) underscores the role of these competencies in enabling long-term strategic thinking and adaptive leadership in complex environments, which are especially relevant in grassroots contexts characterized by limited resources and shifting community needs [39]. A more distinct difference appears in risk-taking, where male leaders slightly edged female leaders. This observation echoes longstanding literature indicating that men often demonstrate higher risk tolerance in entrepreneurial settings [32]. Nonetheless, the narrowing gap in this domain may signal a shift, as women leaders in grassroots contexts increasingly take bold initiatives despite structural and cultural constraints [5]. In contrast, women leaders reported higher scores in goal-setting, often driven by their deep connection to community needs and participatory leadership style. Research shows that women in grassroots roles excel at setting inclusive, clear, and achievable goals that reflect local priorities. For example, Cornwall and Edwards (2010) highlight how women's leadership in grassroots movements fosters collective empowerment through collaborative goal-setting [9]. Furthermore, women's participation in local decision-making results in more efficient and responsible goal-setting procedures [26]. These studies confirm

that women's grassroots leadership uniquely supports goal-oriented progress that is both strategic and community-centered.



**Figure 1. PEC Profile Sheet of Men and Women Leaders**

Legend: Red= Female; Blue= Male

### **C. Performance Review of Men and Women Leaders**

Leadership performance across genders has been widely studied. It was found that while men and women may lead differently, both are equally effective [13]. Decomposition by sex of performance evaluation of association leaders on the dimensions of quality, effectiveness, efficiency, and timeliness provides fleeting information concerning leadership perceptions and gender issues in organizational environments. Both the male and female



leaders have been rated to have performed exceptionally well in general, however, the dissected data highlight indications of differences in certain performance sets.

**Quality of Leadership.** The performance of female leaders was even a bit better than that of male leaders in a sense of quality, which means that there was high level of the quality of work output, attention to details, and the compliance of the professional standards. This finding can be aligned with the previous research that women should pay more attention to relationship-building, collaborations, and thoroughness in leadership patterns [13] [14]. The properties help to increase the perceived quality, especially when the stakeholder involvement and elaborate work functioning is vital.

**Effectiveness.** The effectiveness of male leaders was rated even a bit higher and it typically includes strategic decision making, goal achievement, and impact orientation. This corroborates with the research findings which indicate that men are usually considered more decisive and assertive traits, which have conventionally attested to successful leadership [34]. The narrow gap, however, means that the genders are almost equal in the effectiveness of their leadership performance, and it thus disputes the previous presumptions of male superiority in the outcomes of leadership.

**Efficiency.** The most apparent disparity comes along in the form of efficiency as male leaders ranked 0.20 points higher. Efficiency refers to the optimum utilization of resources, time and people. The finding may be affected by the gendered stereotyping of leaders where male leaders are perceived as more results-oriented and less participatory than female leaders who are understood to be more process-oriented and participatory [43]. Moreover, since organizational and structural barriers (such as limited resource or initiative decision-making accessibility) may be present, they have an unintentional impact on their apparent efficacy as well [15]. Regarding this gap, it is crucial to consider it, not as predetermined inefficiency of female leadership but instead as a function of situational advantages and disadvantages and systemic discriminations.

**Timeliness.** On the attribute of timeliness, there is the biggest difference in rates with men showing a margin of 0.46 points better. This finding means that male leaders are more time conscious and focused. It can be attributed to one stereotype; that men are more task-oriented and less relational in their leadership and this can lead to faster decision making and action [37]. Conversely, collaborative leadership style adopted by women, though it is good in building consensus, is likely to be viewed as slow, which will influence evaluations of timeliness. It is also instructive to think about the fact that organizational cultures tend to reward speed and discourage deliberation, thus supporting the gendered norms of an ideal conduct of a leader.

Both the male leader (average = 4.56) and the female leader (average = 4.39) also perform at the outstanding level even though a lag has been noted in some regions. This verifies that gender does not define whether a person can be a leader or not but that the attitudes towards leadership behaviors are subject to evaluation in regard to societal and organizational perceptions. The findings are in line with the view that leadership effectiveness is more complex than it has been construed and that gender inclusive assessment models are needed.

#### ***D. Socioeconomic Influences on Entrepreneurial Leadership in Grassroots Contexts***

Employment status, household income, and age play important roles in shaping key entrepreneurial competencies among grassroots leaders, particularly in opportunity recognition, risk-taking, and persistence. The lack of significant results in other variables does not diminish their contextual relevance but demonstrates how complex and multifaceted entrepreneurial activity is, especially in grassroots or marginalized contexts.

**Age.** Age showed a significant but weak positive correlation with Risk-Taking (RT) ( $\tau = 0.339$ ,  $p = 0.047$ ). This suggests that as grassroots leaders age, they tend to exhibit more willingness to take risks, possibly reflecting greater experience or confidence over time. This aligns with Lechner and Gudmundsson (2014), who argued that older entrepreneurs often possess more experiential knowledge, enabling better decision-making in uncertain environments [23]. However, age did not significantly correlate with other PECs, indicating that age may influence only certain facets of entrepreneurial behavior.

Sex. No statistically significant association was found between sex and any PEC variable, although moderate effect sizes were observed in Commitment to Contract (CC,  $V = 0.536$ ), Demand for Quality and Efficiency (DQE,  $V = 0.775$ ), and Persuasion and Networking (PN,  $V = 0.745$ ). These suggest some gender-based tendencies, although not statistically confirmed in this sample. Studies have noted disparities in entrepreneurial self-efficacy by gender and social capital development, but this result suggests gender parity in competencies in grassroots settings [44].

Household size. No significant correlation was found between household size and any PEC, with all  $p$ -values well above 0.05. This indicates that the size of a household does not directly impact the development or display of entrepreneurial skills. However, it was found that household size could indirectly affect entrepreneurial motivation through time constraints and financial obligations [1], suggesting that while household size may shape the broader entrepreneurial environment, it may not predict individual PEC traits. Household income. Household income exhibited a strong positive correlation with Persistence (P) ( $\tau = 0.456$ ,  $p = 0.010$ ), establishing that leaders from higher-income households tend to demonstrate greater perseverance. This may be due to a more secure personal economic base, allowing sustained engagement in entrepreneurial activity even during challenging times. It supports findings that financial stability fosters persistence and long-term entrepreneurial orientation [45].

Employment status. Employment status was significantly associated with Opportunity-seeking (OS) ( $V = 0.78$ ,  $p = 0.033$ ) and Risk-Taking (RT) ( $p = 0.029$ ). These findings suggest that employed individuals may have greater access to networks, resources, or role models that encourage opportunity recognition and risk-taking behavior. Exposure to employed environments often enhances access to market information and entrepreneurial awareness, boosting proactive tendencies [3]. Civil status. No significant associations were observed between civil status and any PEC. The effect sizes were generally low (e.g.,  $V = 0.369$  for OS), indicating a weak or negligible influence. This finding challenges common stereotypes that single or married individuals differ in entrepreneurial drive. It is supported by researchers who found limited evidence that marital status consistently predicts entrepreneurial success or behavior [46].

Educational background. While no significant correlation was observed, there was a moderately negative correlation between educational background and Opportunity-Seeking (OS) ( $\tau = -0.252$ ) and Self-Confidence (SC) ( $\tau = -0.237$ ). These values, though not statistically significant, may imply that individuals with lower formal education in grassroots contexts compensate through real-life experience, leading to entrepreneurial confidence and initiative. Some studies partially supported and highlighted how experiential learning is crucial for business outside of the classroom [27]. The findings suggest that entrepreneurial development programs targeting grassroots leaders may benefit from tailoring interventions based on participants' economic status and employment background. Furthermore, these findings encourage more inclusive competency-based training regardless of gender or formal education level, reaffirming the potential of grassroots leaders to drive local development through entrepreneurship.

## V. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the entrepreneurial competency profiles and leadership performance of male and female grassroots association leaders, with a focus on whether gender differences manifest in measurable ways. At its core, the research sought to understand how personal entrepreneurial competencies (PECs) and perceived leadership outcomes are affected not only by personal characteristics but also by the broader context of gender expectations and socio-demographic factors. The findings reveal a compelling narrative: both men and women possess strong entrepreneurial capabilities, yet their expressions of leadership diverge subtly but meaningfully along gendered lines. Women demonstrated stronger competency in goal-setting and quality of leadership, often associated with strategic thinking, relational leadership, and a strong sense of accountability. These traits emphasize collaboration, clarity of vision, and commitment to high standards, often associated with inclusive and participatory leadership styles. Men, on the other hand, showed higher tendencies in opportunity-seeking, risk-taking, and networking/persuasion, typically linked with decisiveness, analytic initiative, and social influence traits associated with assertive, externally focused



leadership styles. These results echo the evolving literature suggesting that while entrepreneurial success is not determined by gender, the strategies employed by leaders often reflect different strengths rooted in social and cultural conditioning.

Performance wise, both men and women leaders have shown an exceptional rating which emphasized the common high quality in grass roots leadership. However, slight differences of individual capacities became apparent, with men being more effective, efficient and timely, and women being a bit more effective in quality. These trends indicate that men leaders can be more strongly linked with the task oriented behaviours and timeliness and women leaders are more identified with the quality and depth of the outputs. The significance of such differences is that they do not indicate superiority but just different perceptions on the styles of leadership and this underscores the polyvalent aspect of a good leadership.

Socio-demographic variables also had a significant impact on developing entrepreneurial skills. Notably, employment status, household income, and age were significantly correlated with opportunity-seeking, risk-taking, and persistence, indicating that access to economic and social resources can directly influence leadership behavior. In contrast, factors such as sex, age, civil status, and education showed little to no significant relationship with PECs, challenging traditional assumptions and pointing instead to the importance of context, experience, and opportunity in cultivating entrepreneurial talent. Taken together, these insights suggest that while gendered norms continue to shape how leadership is performed and perceived, grassroots leaders regardless of gender are capable of achieving high-impact outcomes when supported by the right conditions.

## VI. REFERENCES

1. M.Y. Arafat, I. Saleem, A.K. Dwivedi, and A. Khan, "Determinants of Agricultural Entrepreneurship: A GEM Data-Based Study," *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, pp. 345–370, vol. 16, no. 1, 2020. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
2. O.E. Arejiogbe, C.L. Moses, O.P. Salau, O.O. Onayemi, S.A. Agada, A.E. Dada, and O.T. Obisesan, "Bolstering the Impact of Social Entrepreneurship and Poverty Alleviation for Sustainable Development in Nigeria," *Sustainability*, pp. 6673, vol. 15, no. 8, 2023. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
3. P. Arenius and M. Minniti, "Perceptual Variables and Nascent Entrepreneurship," *Small Business Economics*, pp. 233–247, vol. 24, no. 3, 2005. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
4. T. Baker and R.E. Nelson, "Creating Something from Nothing: Resource Construction through Entrepreneurial Bricolage," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, pp. 329–366, vol. 50, no. 3, 2005. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
5. B.L. Bastian, Y.M. Sidani, and Y. El Amine, "Women Entrepreneurship in the Middle East and North Africa: A Review of Knowledge Areas and Research Gaps," *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, pp. 8–29, vol. 34, no. 1, 2019. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
6. R.E. Boyatzis, "Competencies in the 21st century," *Journal of Management Development*, pp. 5–12, vol. 27, no. 1, 2008. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
7. C.G. Brush, L.F. Edelman, T.S. Manolova, and F. Welter, "A Gendered Look at Entrepreneurship Ecosystems," *Small Business Economics*, pp. 393–408, vol. 53, no. 2, 2019. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
8. C. Chetkovich and F. Kunreuther, "Changing the World from the Bottom Up: Leadership in Grassroots Social-Change Organizations (Center for Public Leadership Working Paper Series No. 04-02)," Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government, 2004. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
9. A. Cornwall and J. Edwards, "Introduction: Negotiating Empowerment," *IDS Bulletin*, pp. 1–9, vol. 41, no. 2, 2010. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
10. J.W. Creswell and V.L. Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (3rd ed.), SAGE Publications, 2018. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
11. B. Doherty, H. Haugh, and F. Lyon, "Social Enterprises as Hybrid Organizations: A Review and Research Agenda," *International Journal of Management Reviews*, pp. 417–436, vol. 16, no. 4, 2014. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
12. F. Dufays and B. Huybrechts, "Where do Hybrids Come from? Entrepreneurial Team Heterogeneity as an Avenue for the Emergence of Hybrid Organizations," *International Small Business Journal*, pp. 777–796, vol. 34, no. 6, 2015. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
13. A.H. Eagly and L.L. Carli, "The Female Leadership Advantage: An Evaluation of the Evidence," *The Leadership Quarterly*, pp. 807–834, vol. 14, no. 6, 2003. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)

14. A.H. Eagly, M.C. Johannesen-Schmidt, and M.L. van Engen, "Transformational, Transactional, and Laissez-Faire Leadership Styles: A Meta-Analysis Comparing Women and Men," *Psychological Bulletin*, pp. 569–591, vol. 129, no. 4, 2003. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
15. R.J. Ely, H. Ibarra, and D.M. Kolb, "Taking Gender into Account: Theory and Design for Women's Leadership Development Programs," *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, pp. 474–493, vol. 10, no. 3, 2011. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
16. S.M. Ghouse, G. McElwee, and J. Meaton, "Barriers to Rural Women Entrepreneurs in Oman," *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, pp. 998–1016, vol. 23, no. 6, 2017. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
17. V.K. Gupta, D.B. Turban, S.A. Wasti, and A. Sikdar, "The Role of Gender Stereotypes in Perceptions of Entrepreneurs and Intentions to become an Entrepreneur," *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, pp. 397–417, vol. 33, no. 2, 2009. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
18. C. Henry, L. Foss, and H. Ahl, "Gender and Entrepreneurship Research: A Review of Methodological Approaches," *International Small Business Journal: Researching Entrepreneurship*, pp. 217–241, vol. 34, no. 3, 2016. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
19. A.S. Ibidunni, O.M. Ogundana, and A. Okonkwo, "Entrepreneurial Competencies and the Performance of Informal SMEs: The Contingent Role of Business Environment," *Journal of African Business*, pp. 468–490, vol. 22, no. 4, 2021. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
20. R. Kabir and M.T.T. Thai, "Informal Institutions and Leadership Behavior in a Developing Country: A Comparison between Rural and Urban Areas," *Journal of Business Research*, pp. 544–556, vol. 132, 2021. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
21. S. Kraus, M. Breier, and S. Dasí-Rodríguez, "The Art of Crafting a Systematic Literature Review in Entrepreneurship Research," *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, pp. 1023–1042, vol. 16, no. 3, 2020. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
22. E. Kyndt and H. Baert, "Entrepreneurial Competencies: Assessment and Predictive Value for Entrepreneurship," *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, pp. 13–25, vol. 90, 2015. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
23. C.M. Lechner and S.V. Gudmundsson, "Entrepreneurial Orientation, Firm Strategy and Small Firm Performance," *International Small Business Journal*, pp. 36–60, vol. 32, no. 1, 2014. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
24. W. Majee, L. Goodman, J. Reed Adams, and K. Keller, "The We-Lead Model for Bridging the Low-Income Community Leadership Skills-Practice Gap," *Journal of Community Practice*, pp. 126–137, vol. 25, no. 1, 2017. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
25. T.W.Y. Man, T. Lau, and K.F. Chan, "The Competitiveness of Small and Medium Enterprises: A Conceptualization with Focus on Entrepreneurial Competencies," *Journal of Business Venturing*, pp. 123–142, vol. 17, no. 2, 2002. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
26. G. Mansuri and V. Rao, *Localizing Development: Does Participation Work?*, World Bank, 2013. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
27. B.C. Martin, J.J. McNally, and M.J. Kay, "Examining the Formation of Human Capital in Entrepreneurship: A Meta-Analysis of Entrepreneurship Education Outcomes," *Journal of Business Venturing*, pp. 211–224, vol. 28, no. 2, 2013. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
28. D.C. McClelland, "Characteristics of Successful Entrepreneurs," *The Journal of Creative Behavior*, pp. 219–233, vol. 21, no. 3, 1987. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
29. C. McLaughlin and J. Kunk-Czaplicki, "Leadership: Theory and Practice by Peter G. Northouse," *Journal of College Student Development*, pp. 260–261, vol. 61, no. 2, 2020. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
30. S. Mitchelmore and J. Rowley, "Entrepreneurial Competencies of Women Entrepreneurs Pursuing Business growth," *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, pp. 125–142, vol. 20, no. 1, 2013. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
31. S. Mitchelmore and J. Rowley, "Entrepreneurial Competencies: A Literature Review and Development Agenda," *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*, pp. 92–111, vol. 16, no. 2, 2010. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
32. M. Malmström, J. Johansson, and J. Wincent, "Gender Stereotypes and Venture Support Decisions: How Governmental Venture Capitalists Socially Construct Entrepreneurs' Potential," *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, pp. 833–860, vol. 41, no. 5, 2017. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
33. N. Ojong and V.B. Ojong, "Women Entrepreneurs in Africa: Navigating Institutional and Cultural Barriers," *South African Journal of Business Management*, vol. 52, no. 1, Article a2972, 2021.
34. G.N. Powell, *Women and Men in Management* (3rd ed.), Sage Publications, 2008. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
35. J.L. Prime, N.M. Carter, and T.M. Welbourne, "Women 'Take Care,' Men 'Take Charge': Managers' Stereotypic Perceptions of Women and Men Leaders," *The Psychologist-Manager Journal*, pp. 25–49, vol. 12, no. 1, 2009. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)

36. V. Ratten and P. Jones, "Entrepreneurship and Management Education: Exploring Trends and Gaps," *The International Journal of Management Education*, Article 100431, vol. 19, no. 1, 2021. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
37. C.L. Ridgeway, *Framed by Gender: How Gender Inequality Persists in the Modern World*, Oxford University Press, 2011. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
38. J. Sanchez, "The Impact of an Entrepreneurship Education Program on Entrepreneurial Competencies and Intention," *Journal of Small Business Management*, pp. 447–465, vol. 51, no. 3, 2013. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
39. J.C. Sánchez, "The Influence of Entrepreneurial Competencies on Small Firm Performance," *Revista Latinoamericana de Psicología*, pp. 165–177, vol. 44, no. 2, 2012. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
40. C. Seelos and J. Mair, *Innovation and Scaling for Impact: How Effective Social Enterprises do it*, Stanford University Press, 2017. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
41. B.R. Smith and C.E. Stevens, "Different Types of Social Entrepreneurship: The Role of Geography and Embeddedness on the Measurement and Scaling of Social Value," *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, pp. 575–598, vol. 22, no. 6, 2010. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
42. United Nations Development Programme, Human development report 2021/2022: Uncertain times, unsettled lives, UNDP, 2022. [Publisher Link](#)
43. C.J. Vinkenburg, M.L. van Engen, A.H. Eagly, and M.C. Johannesen-Schmidt, "An Exploration of Stereotypical Beliefs about Leadership Styles: Is Transformational Leadership a Route to Women's Promotion?" *The Leadership Quarterly*, pp. 10–21, vol. 22, no. 1, 2011. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
44. F. Wilson, J. Kickul, and D. Marlino, "Gender, Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy, and Entrepreneurial Career Intentions: Implications for Entrepreneurship Education," *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, pp. 387–406, vol. 31, no. 3, 2007. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
45. S.R. Xavier, D. Kelley, J. Kew, M. Herrington, and A. Vorderwülbecke, Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2012 Global Report, Global Entrepreneurship Research Association, 2013. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)
46. P.V.D. Zwan, I. Verheul, and R. Thurik, "The Entrepreneurial Ladder, Gender, and Regional Development," *Small Business Economics*, pp. 627–643, vol. 39, no. 3, 2012. [Google Scholar](#) | [Publisher Link](#)