SJSU SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

SJSU Undergraduate Research Grants

Are we *Leaning In* Enough?: A Study of Women Leaders in Technology Industry

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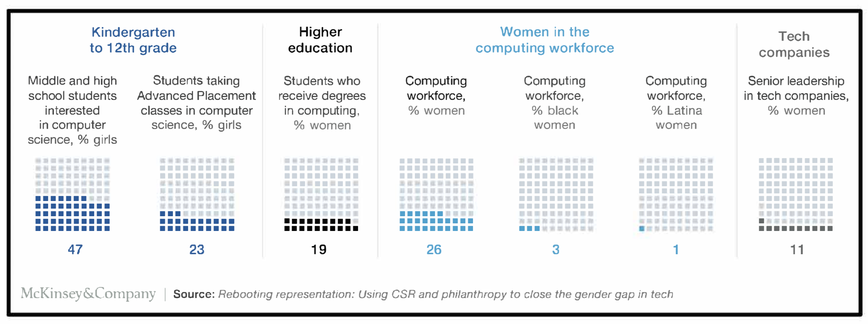
Abstract

In 1920 America granted women the constitutional right to vote. A century on, women still face frustrating barriers to equality. Gender equality is not just the right thing to do—it also makes good economic sense. Yet across the world, women are still a long way off from achieving gender parity with men (World Economic Forum, 2018). According to Pew Research, in 1997 there were a total of 2.1 million jobs in the tech industry and that number grew to 3.9 million by 2012. Further women comprise just 19 percent of bachelor's computer and information science degree recipients, and 26 percent of the computing workforce. However, its alarming that the situation is worse for underrepresented women of color wherein they comprise only around 4 percent of technical roles in tech companies and are almost completely absent at the senior leadership level, with zero black or Latina women CEOs of Fortune 500 tech companies (DeSilver,2014).

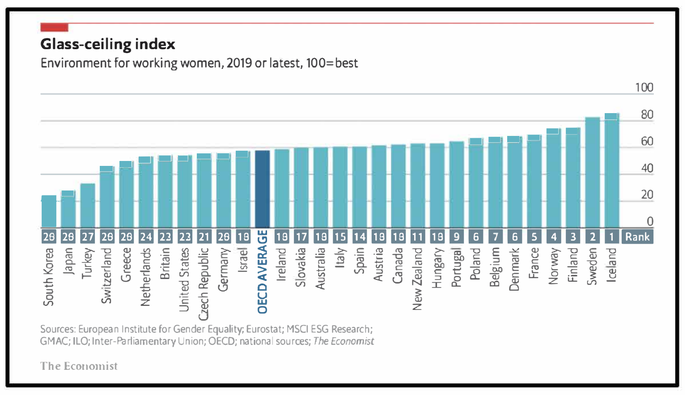
The gender gap in the US tech sector, a dominant player in Silicon Valley, is not a recent phenomenon; it has been a significant and consistent challenge for tech companies for many years. Thus, by conducting a study of women working in different leading tech-related positions in the Silicon Valley, we aim to learn about the various factors that impact the role of Women in Tech Leadership. To achieve this goal we conduct in-depth interviews of women leader in the Technology Industry .

Gender Gap in Technology



Only 11% of Senior Leadership in Tech Companies are Women.

Environment for Working Women



In 2019 Iceland tops the ranking followed by Norway and Sweden. However, United States ranks 22nd on this list.

Research Design

- **In-Depth Interviews**
- **Snowballing Approach**
- **Sample Research Questions**

  What motivated you to pursue a career within Technology?
  Are there any steps that you or your organization have taken to support and facilitate a gender-inclusive working environment?
  Are you currently or have you been involved in tech networking groups?
  In order to reach where you are now, did you face any challenges?
  How did you overcome these challenges?
  How does family/cultural background impact your career choices?
  Does being a minority in this industry impact your work? If yes, How?

Project Goals & Preliminary Findings

The goal of this applied research is to study women leaders in the tech industry both, that have been raised in the U.S. and those that have migrated to the U.S. The intent is to identify the key factors that help facilitate the growth and success of (domestic and migrant) women in the tech sector. We also aim to identify the challenges faced by these women as they pursue their careers towards leadership roles in their companies and strategies they use to overcome the hurdles they face.

Preliminary Findings:

- There are only a handful of studies that examine gender, race, migration, and/or class intersectionally (O'Keefe, 2013 and Ong, 2005) however, these do not provide a complete understating of the Tech Industry.
- On one hand, migration is an more important factor than race for women in leadership roles
- On the other hand, race/ethnicity is powerful in shaping how the tech industry values women tech workers.

Citations

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