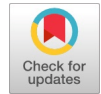


# A Framework for Innovating the Technological Startup in the Cordillera Region through an E-commerce Mobile Platform

Joan M. Peralta



**Abstract:** *The technological startup community is beginning to be recognized in solving various needs in the Cordillera region. However, these technological startups have limited growth because they encounter challenges such as financial concerns, limited market reach, lack of awareness of intellectual property rights, and inadequate digital infrastructure. Thus, the researcher proposed the development of an e-commerce mobile application that addresses the needs of startups. Through the use of data gathering techniques, the researcher was able to determine the design considerations in terms of the architecture framework and features of the e-commerce mobile application that addressed the problems encountered by startups in the Cordillera region. The use of the 4+1 view model illustrated the architecture framework of the e-commerce mobile platform for intended stakeholders by providing a logical view, process view, physical view, development view, and scenario view. The architecture framework was used to determine the features to be integrated into the proposed e-commerce mobile application to address the challenges of the technological startups of the Cordillera region.*

**Keywords:** *E-commerce, Mobile Platform, Technological Startup, 4+1 Architecture Framework*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Philippine startup ecosystem's progression presents significant potential to make a substantial contribution to national economic growth and development. Billones, et.al (2020) discussed that the Philippines boasts a rapidly growing startup ecosystem [1], fueled by a young and tech-savvy population, increasing internet penetration, and government initiatives promoting innovation [2]. Venture capital investment in Philippine startups specifically located in the National Capital Region has seen a sharp rise over the past few years, indicating growing investor confidence and opportunities for expansion [3]. The proliferation of startups is flourishing across various sectors, including fintech [4], e-commerce, logistics, agritech, and cleantech showcasing their extensive economic potential [5]. Filipino startups are increasingly gaining recognition on the global stage, winning awards and attracting international partnerships [6].

Nestled amidst the breathtaking landscapes and rich cultural heritage of the Cordillera region in the Philippines, a

vibrant, thriving spirit of entrepreneurship throbs within its communities. A fusion of traditional ingenuity and modern techniques creates unique and innovative products and services for many startups comprised of innovators fostering economic development. The spirit of communal cooperation fuels collaborative ventures and community-driven solutions that address local challenges. From sustainable farming initiatives to eco-tourism endeavors, startups through their technological innovations prioritize the well-being of their communities, promoting social inclusion and environmental responsibility [7]. For instance, the Agri-Robot for Crop Health in Insect Control or ARCHIE has been developed to help the farmers in Benguet [8]. Cordilleran innovators from Baguio City and Benguet develop innovative solutions using readily available material and expertise encouraging self-reliance and empowering communities to take charge of economic development [9][28]. Despite the region boasting an increasing spirit of entrepreneurship fueled by community, resilience, and innovation, there exists a limited growth of startups in the Cordillera. The researcher explores the distinct challenges faced by startups in the region, such as financial concerns [9], [10], limited market reach, lack of awareness of intellectual property rights and inadequate digital infrastructure [11]. Startups in the Cordillera region often struggle to obtain funding, which can lead to their being put on hold or terminated. Several factors contribute to their suspension or cessation, including the limited availability of venture capital [9], the perceived riskiness of startups [12], and the absence of a track record of successful exits [11], [13]. The National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) [12] emphasized that the lack of venture capital is the main culprit in the termination of most startups. Similar sentiment has been evident in the studies conducted by Alyobi, et.al (2020) [13], Hoegen, et.al (2018) [14], and Lerner, et.al (2020) [15]. Startups often experience a limited market reach remaining hidden gems to potential customers. Startups fail to tap into wider regional or national markets where their unique offerings could resonate with a broader audience [11]. The absence of effective digital footprints poses a challenge for startups to establish connections with their ideal customer segments [11]. Insufficient visibility of startups translates to limited brand recognition which presents a formidable obstacle for startups seeking to establish a foothold in their respective industries and entice new clientele. Without market access, startups struggle to generate revenue and gain traction, which hinders their ability to invest in building a stronger online presence and expanding their reach.

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The lack of access to mentorship and support adds to the challenges entrepreneurs are facing in the region. There is a limited pool of experienced mentors making it difficult for startups to get the guidance and support they need to succeed [11], [18].

Many startups in the Cordillera region are not aware of the importance of intellectual property protection which can lead to them losing out on potential revenue and investment. Additionally, the lack of access to legal and technical expertise can make it difficult for startups to protect their IP rights [14], [16]. These are some of the challenges faced by startups in the Cordillera region.

An e-commerce mobile platform could help address these challenges by providing startups with a digital platform to showcase their products and services [4]. Unlike physical stores, a mobile platform transcends geographical limitations and startups can reach customers across the region and beyond regardless of their location overcoming the challenges of remoteness and limited digital infrastructure [17], [19]. Users can access the platform anytime, anywhere, using their smartphones [20][27], eliminating the need for computers or fixed internet connections which increases customer engagement and simplifies transactions for both vendors and buyers [19].

This research paper explores the potential of an e-commerce mobile platform to serve as a catalyst for innovation in the technological ecosystem of the Cordillera region. Through the use of an e-commerce mobile platform, the researcher proposes a solution that empowers entrepreneurs by (a) expanding market access through connecting local startups with wider audiences; (b) bridging the digital divide through fostering digital literacy and providing a digital storefront to showcase their products and services; and (c) establishing a collaborative environment by fostering communication and transactions among startups, enablers, investors, mentors and stakeholders within the digital platform.

The Cordillera's entrepreneurial spirit aligns perfectly with the core principles of Sustainable Development Goal 9 by promoting innovative sustainable technologies [21][29][30][31], [24]. By nurturing a culture of innovation and collaboration [22], the e-commerce platform empowers communities to address local challenges and develop solutions that benefit the wider Filipino community. The e-commerce platform acts as a digital infrastructure [23], bridging the gap between Cordillera's entrepreneurs and regional and national markets, facilitating wider access to goods and services. By supporting local businesses and creating employment opportunities [25], the platform empowers individuals and communities by promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization.

With the abovementioned literature, the researcher proposed an e-commerce mobile application for innovating the technological startup ecosystem of the Cordillera region. In this research paper, the researcher aimed to determine the design considerations in terms of the architecture framework and features of the proposed e-commerce mobile platform that address the problems encountered by startups in the region.

## **II. RESEARCH METHOD**

This research paper employed a descriptive analysis approach to investigate the potential of an e-commerce mobile platform for innovating the Cordillera region's technological startup ecosystem. A case study research is a type of descriptive research that focuses on a single individual, group or event which involves collecting information on the subject through a variety of methods such as interviews and examination of documents [26].

Through the use of a literature review and a series of interviews, the researcher was able to gather data used in the study. A literature review from government and non-government organizations' reports documented by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Information Communications Technology (DICT), Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) in partnership with private organizations such as Gobi-Core Philippines Fund, Startup Village PH, and Impact Hub Manila about the technological startup ecosystem in the Philippines were analyzed to understand the current state of the technological startup ecosystem in the Cordillera region. This included studies and reports on challenges faced by startups not only in the region but nationwide. A series of interviews with a diverse group of stakeholders to gain deeper insights into challenges and opportunities related to the proposed e-commerce platform. This included local incubator-accelerators such as the University of the Cordilleras Innovation and Nurturing Space Technology and Business Incubator (UCIANS TBI) which provided insight into the local startup ecosystem and a detailed explanation of the processes a startup would go through from pitching to incubation stages. This helped in identifying processes to be automated and integrated into the e-commerce mobile platform. Another stakeholder interviewed were technology experts and developers from the Google Developer Group Baguio (GDG Baguio) to gather insights into the technical feasibility and functionalities of the platform, as well as, identifying salient features in the design and development of the e-commerce mobile application.

The researcher used the Scrum methods specifically the initiate and planning phases to identify the architecture framework in the design considerations of the proposed e-commerce mobile application. In the initiate phase, the project vision has been created, stakeholders have been identified, and a prioritized product backlog has been created. In the planning and estimate phase, user stories have been created, approved, estimated, and committed, as well as, sprint backlog has been created. Scrum is an iterative and incremental agile software development methodology in which the key principle is requirements volatility. Scrum is focused on user engagement in each phase of the methodology, responding to emerging requirements of the users and adapting to evolving technologies in the market. The Scrum phases involved in this research paper produced deliverables such as the architecture framework consisting of class, activity, deployment, package, and use case diagrams.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Through the data gathering techniques used, this research resulted in determining the design considerations in terms of identifying the architecture framework and relevant features of the e-commerce mobile application that would address the challenges faced by the startups in the Cordillera region.

A. Architecture Framework

The researcher identified the 4+1 view model to present the architecture framework of the proposed e-commerce mobile application from different perspectives of the stakeholders. The view model provided multiple views that addressed the concerns of the stakeholders with the corresponding features of the proposed e-commerce mobile application. The view model provided essential views such as the logical, development, process, and physical views of the application. The view model is extended by adding one more view called the scenario view for end-users of the proposed mobile application. This is coherent with the other views and is utilized to illustrate the architecture of the mobile application serving as “plus one” view resulting to a 4+1 view model. Fig. 1 describes the software architecture using five concurrent views.

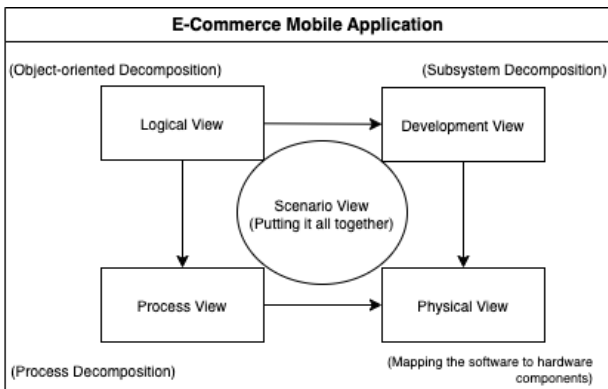


Fig. 1. The 4+1 View Model Presents the Architecture Framework of the E-Commerce Mobile Application

The logical view describes the object component, considering the functional requirements, of the proposed mobile application. This view shows that the startup person-in-charge object is the core functionality of the e-commerce mobile application. The startup person-in-charge object interacts with specific objects for specific functionality. The startup person-in-charge object is able to create, update, and delete one or more product-service objects, as well as, create one or more pitch deck objects. The startup person-in-charge object is able to apply for one or more commercialization initiatives from one or more enabler objects. The enabler object extends to either an incubator-accelerator or an angel investor who views and evaluates one or multiple pitch deck objects for commercialization. The startup person-in-charge is able to apply for one incubation program from one enabler object at a time, while the enabler can assess one or more startup objects for an incubation program.

The process view describes the activities of the proposed mobile application, capturing the concurrency and synchronization aspects of the software design. The activity diagram in fig. 2, considering non-functional requirements, shows the workflow of the commercialization and incubation

processes for the startup person-in-charge communicating with an enabler through the use of the e-commerce mobile application.

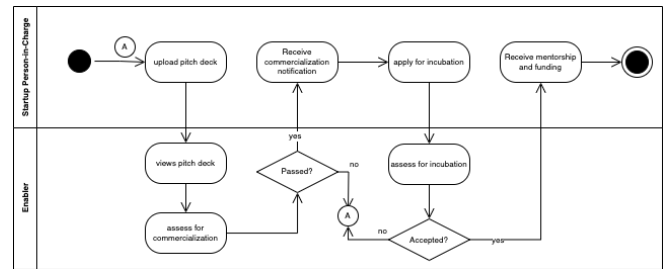


Fig. 2. The Activity Diagram Shows the Commercialization and Incubation Processes in the E-Commerce Mobile Application

The development view describes the static organization or structure of the mobile application in its development environment considering the software module organization and constraint of tools. This view is illustrated from a programmer’s point of view showing the building block views of the mobile application wherein the mobile application and its components interact with the Firebase console and Google cloud server through its respective application program interfaces. Data collection through storage and retrieving operations happens with these connection interfaces.

The physical view describes the mapping of the software onto hardware components reflecting its distributed aspect considering non-functional requirements regarding underlying hardware. The deployment diagram in fig. 3 shows the installation, configuration, and deployment of the proposed e-commerce mobile application. The mobile Android device is the host for the e-commerce app and the application can run on Android operating system platforms. The components within the e-commerce mobile application provided intended functionalities and interaction with the Google server. The Google server is comprised of the Google Cloud console and Firebase console.

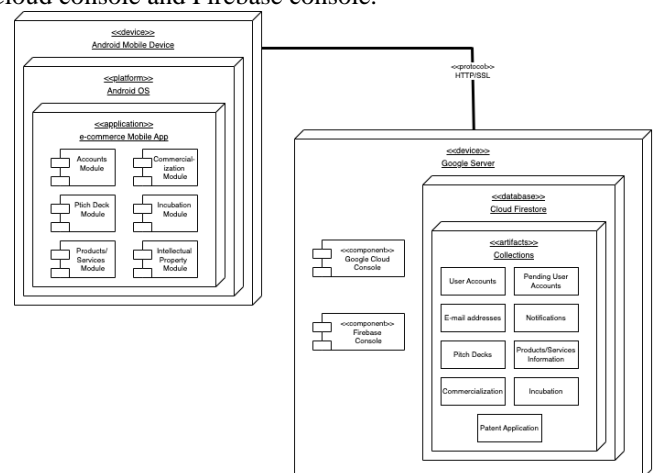


Fig. 3. The Deployment Diagram Shows the Mobile Device Interaction with the Google Server



The scenario view describes that the design is complete by validating and illustrating the system’s consistency. The use case diagram in fig. 4 shows the main actors with their corresponding actions in the e-commerce mobile application. The startup person-in-charge is able to manage startup company accounts including creating, editing, and deleting startup company information; manage their pitch deck including uploading and deleting a video pitch; and manage products-services information. The startup person-in-charge

is able to apply for incubation, as well as, view information property rights information and apply for patents. On the other hand, the enabler who can either be an incubator-accelerator or an angel investor can view the pitch deck, assess the commercialization potential of the product-service of the startup company, review the application for incubation, and assist in the patent application of the startup company.



Fig. 4. The Use Case Diagram Shows the Actors and their Corresponding Actions in the E-Commerce Mobile Application

**B. Features of the Proposed E-commerce Mobile Application**

From the architecture framework, the features were identified to address the challenges of the startups in the Cordillera region such as user account management, product-service management, commercialization management, incubation management, and information property awareness.

*User account management.* This feature allows a startup person-in-charge to manage their user accounts by creating an account that can create, edit, and delete their startup company information. This shall serve as security measures to the application by providing access to specific users.

*Commercialization management.* This feature allows the startup person-in-charge to manage their product or service information including creating, updating, and deleting product-service information. This feature enables the startup person-in-charge to manage their pitch deck including uploading a pitch deck showing the minimum viable product they intend to offer to customers and eventually attracts interest from prospective enablers who can be an incubator-accelerator or an angel investor. This feature provides an enabler, who is either an incubator-accelerator or

an angel investor, a platform to assess the pitch deck of a startup company for commercialization purposes. If the pitch deck passes the given criteria, the startup company will receive mentorship and funding from the enabler.

*Incubation management.* This feature allows the startup person-in-charge to apply for an incubation program which includes mentorship and funding from reputable enablers such as incubator-accelerators and angel investors. After careful assessment of the application for incubation, the enablers either accept or deny the incubation request. If the request has been accepted, the startup shall receive mentorship and funding from the enablers.

*Information Property (IP) management.* This feature allows the startup person-in-charge to know existing policies and guidelines about Information Property (IP) Rights to protect the product or service offered by the startup company. This also allows the startup person-in-charge to ask for assistance from enablers for a patent application to the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOPIL).



IV. CONCLUSION

The use of the 4+1 view model, providing a logical view, a process view, a development view, a physical view, and a scenario view, illustrated the architecture framework for the design consideration of the proposed e-commerce mobile application. This view model represented multiple views specifically targeting the intended viewer as an end-user, developer, project manager, or system engineer. The features that were identified from the design consideration and shall be integrated into the development of the proposed e-commerce mobile application were able to address the challenges of the startup technological community in the Cordillera region such as providing a digital mobile platform to showcase their products and services, pitching their minimum viable product for commercialization purposes to the enablers to be able to reach market access, requesting incubation program from enablers to access mentorship and funding, and asking for assistance in protecting their product through Intellectual Property (IP) awareness and patent application. The identified architecture framework and features of the e-commerce mobile application will be utilized as the backbone in the development of the e-commerce mobile application and will be extended to further study on the usability of the mobile application to intended stakeholders.

DECLARATION STATEMENT

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Ethical Approval and Consent to Participate	No, the article does not require ethical approval and consent to participate with evidence.
Availability of Data and Material	Not relevant.
Authors Contributions	I am only the sole author of the article.

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