


# Chapter 5

## Voices of Mothers as Teacher Leaders in Higher Education Within an Islamic Context: Pathways to Gender–Sensitive Educational Leadership

**Julasmin S. Kassim**

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-4200-3867>

*Mindanao State University - Tawi-Tawi College of Technology and  
Oceanography, Bongao, Philippines*

**Bonjovi H. Hajan**

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2911-5824>

*Mindanao State University - Tawi-Tawi College of Technology and  
Oceanography, Bongao, Philippines*

**Shielamar J. Judan**

*Mindanao State University - Tawi-Tawi College of Technology and  
Oceanography, Bongao, Philippines*

**Warda H. Hadjirul**

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-4454-3004>

*Mindanao State University - Tawi-Tawi College of Technology and  
Oceanography, Bongao, Philippines*

**Radzma J. Julhiji**

*Mindanao State University - Tawi-Tawi College of Technology and  
Oceanography, Bongao, Philippines*

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Notwithstanding advances on gender and development, women's plights for gender equality in educational leadership remain an oblivion. In Islamic contexts, mothers as teacher leaders are not exempt from this issue. In this chapter, the authors explore the reasons for hesitation among Muslim mothers in educational leadership and their strategies for overcoming these problems. To this end, they conducted a qualitative research study involving 11 Muslim mothers as teacher leaders in a state university in the southern Philippines. Through thematic analysis of interview transcripts, the study reveals that despite challenges like work-family conflict, psychological barriers, cultural expectations, and institutional biases, mothers employ strategic time management, resilience, skill development, and advocacy. The chapter concludes with actionable insights into gender-sensitive educational leadership, paving the way to creating an inclusive and empowering space for Muslim mothers as leaders in higher education.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

There is a burgeoning global push for advancing gender equality in all aspects of society. This effort is inherently entrenched in the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, Gender Equality, which advocates for championing gender equality and empowering all women and girls (United Nations, 2015). This international mandate acknowledges that gender equality is a fundamental human right and an imperative for achieving all other SDGs. Research shows that the gender and development (GAD) initiatives have been in place since the 1970s, with increasing attention to gender equality in global development agendas (Wong, 2012). These initiatives have paved the ways for the establishment of several frameworks for gender analysis and measurement to address these GAD-related issues (Rengasamy, 2012). For instance, the international bill of rights of women on Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was implemented by the United Nations on 3 September 1981 to advocate for the reproductive rights of women and target culture and tradition as influential forces shaping gender roles and family relations. Another is the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, agreed upon during the 4th World Conference on women in 1995. This is a landmark document for advancing women's rights and gender equality worldwide. Recent scholarship has also offered novel theoretical frameworks and methodologies for examining how gender and feminism intersect with development processes, exploring the gendered effects of globalization across diverse geographical contexts (Badola et al., 2016). More recently, GAD has been applied in various sectoral contexts,

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