



## Research Article

# The Role of Male Teachers' Participation within the Preschool Levels of Education

Husam Helmi Alharahsheh<sup>1\*</sup>, Abraham Pius<sup>2</sup> and Imad Guenane<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lecturer in Business Management at University of Wales Trinity Saint David - London and Senior visiting lecturer across several UK and international Higher Education Institutions

<sup>2</sup>Senior Lecturer in Business Management and other related fields, Consultancy. Arden University and Manchester Metropolitan University United Kingdom - London

<sup>3</sup>Head of Faculty / Dean of Business and Hospitality Management London College of Contemporary Art, United Kingdom

### \*Corresponding Author

Husam Helmi Alharahsheh

Email: h.alharahsheh@uwtsd.ac.uk

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**Abstract:** This paper is aimed to explore the role of male teachers and their participation within the preschool levels. However, the paper was not focused on a particular country. Nevertheless, different examples were used from different countries to support key arguments presented. Furthermore, to answer and satisfy the focus of the paper the paper provided the following: First, the increasing role male teachers have at the preschool levels of education. Second, depth to understand key oppositions and challenges faced by male teachers at the preschool levels. The paper followed a systematic literature review process, and primarily supported by secondary research through inclusion and consideration of different peer reviewed academic papers relating to the subject. The search strategy for the paper has clearly identified key databases used for the search as well as inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure high levels of accuracy and currency in the research. Therefore, the research has only included sources that are relevant to the research focus as indicated above. Based on the systematic literature review applied key considerations and insights were communicated at the end of the research. The research concluded that It is clear male teachers were being increasingly accepted within the preschool of education due to the added value they provide to the process of learning and teaching at such as early stage of education. However, they were being challenged in many cases and experiences as indicated in the research.

**Keywords:** Male teachers, genders, preschool, education.

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## INTRODUCTION

The topic of teacher involvement at the preschool level based on gender is under researched considering key challenges faced within the sector. This paper aims to explore the role of male teachers and their participation within the preschool levels. However, the paper will not be focused on a particular country. Nevertheless, different examples will be used from different countries to support key arguments presented. In the light of this focus the paper then will provide an understanding of the changing role of male teachers within the preschool levels, and also will provide reflection of key oppositions and challenges encountered by male teachers at the preschool levels.

According to several researchers in the field (Ahmed *et al.*, 2018; Eisenhauer and Pratt, 2010; Fu and Li, 2010) that male teachers at the preschool levels were a minority, and in some cases male teachers have counted less than 3% at national levels. However, schools at all levels including the preschool levels of education are expected to maintain fair promotion of key social and democratic values such as equality (Johnson, 2008). Furthermore, this also can be concerning as students from both genders would not have the opportunity to capture learning from teachers that represent all genders in the real world outside the

school environment. Therefore, this challenge of connecting students to reality in terms of genders' representation and having the views of different individuals can further develop into a more significant matter if not addressed.

Considering the above, the paper is providing insights to these key oppositions and challenges to enable deeper understanding, and also to consider key solutions that would enhance balance in gender representation.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

**The Main Question Of The Review Is Developed As The Following:**

- What is the role of male teacher's participation at the preschool levels of education?

**The Focus Of The Given Main Review Question Is Aimed To Explore The Following:**

- The changing role of male teachers at the preschool level of education.
- Oppositions and challenges faced by male teachers at preschool education.

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## Search Strategy

The first stage of the searching process started with identification of relevant academic papers using online library resources of Greenwich University and University of Wales Trinity Saint David given the access the author has due to engagement with studies and employment. The generic focus of

the search was on papers broadly concerned with male teachers participating in preschool levels of education.

The author has identified appropriate electronic sources from two higher education institutions as indicated above.

**Table 1: List of electronic data basis used in the search (EBSCO Host)**

Electronic data basis (EBSCO host)
Academic Search Premier
ERIC
Educational Source
Child Development & Adolescent studies
Education Abstracts (H W Wilson)
MEDLINE
PsycARTICLES
SPORTDiscuss with Full Text
Humanities Source
Teacher Reference Center
Educational Administration Abstracts
British Education Index
Business Source Complete
Religion and Philosophy Collection
Regional Business News
Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts

Source: (Developed by author).

## Development of Search Strategy

In order to ensure that all the searches conducted are reliable and accurate, a search strategy was considered. Main Keywords were considered based on the search question as given in the table below.

**Table 2: Keywords used**

Keyword 1	Keyword 2	Keyword 3
Male	Teachers	Preschool
Men		Young Children

Source: (Developed by author).

- Focused on male teachers within the context of preschool level of education.
- Focused on discussing key discussions, trends, challenges and oppositions towards male teachers within the context of preschool of education.
- Were published in the last five decades.

## Exclusion Criteria

- Research not presented in the English language.
- Were based on single person's opinion.
- Did not focus on male teachers within the context of preschool of education.
- Focus on students from other levels such as primary schools, Secondary schools, Further Education and Higher Education.
- Papers were only focused on students rather than teachers with particular reference to male teachers.

## Inclusion Criteria

- Research papers were presented in English language.
- Based on published and unpublished research worldwide.

## Review of Papers

	The changing role of men at the reschool level of education	Oppositions and challenges faced by male teachers at preschool education	Opposing views: There is no change of the perception of male teacher acceptance at preschool levels of teaching
<b>Ahmed et al.,(2018)</b>	Despite the minor representation of male teachers at the preschool level in Jordan, the study concluded that male teachers add to the value of preschool level of education as both males and females contribute to the diversity of students' learning experience, and males are not perceived by females and students as more controlling than other teachers during extracurricular activities such as trips. Male teachers provide several key advantages to students learning experience such as different approach as well as more well-rounded education.	A key challenge faced by male teachers is that they are perceived differently from female teachers in several cases such as the perception of being more controlling of children during extracurricular activities.	The study suggested that there is less acceptance of male teachers in the perception of females especially in older category groups of females in comparison with younger age groups such as 19 to 29 years old. The general perception is that this profession is still female dominated profession. However, ongoing support from females in community would contribute to the reduction of the stereotype.
<b>Cameron (2006)</b>	Given the consideration of the perception that the profession is mainly dominated by females, men can provide young children with reference to boys a unique experience by being a positive role model.	One of the key challenges facing men in preschool levels of education is that there is no focus on reflection process to address any gender differences such as men's roles and experiences. Instead, meetings were mainly about ongoing planning and practical	Despite the notion that both genders have the sameness in terms of being equal at the level of preschool education. However, it is argued that there is an underlying division of genders existing in childcare work. Males are expected to perform the stereotypical activities when it comes

		<p>arrangements, and argued that critical discussion and reflection should be in place to enhance professionalism by taking into consideration the contributions of males and females regarding the sense of sameness and highlighting key differences between each other.</p> <p>Other key challenge that males still hold the minority gender status within early childhood education, and work with this age groups is still viewed as a substitution of the availability of their mothers. However, males are still not fully clear about their position following this ideology.</p>	<p>to their work within early childhood professions such as outdoor play, and males that have been attracted to such profession may have decided that being a male in terms of expectation is not perceived and rather they are interested to do similar activities as other genders. Therefore, the confusion of their position and what is expected of them is clear.</p>
<b>Eisenhauer and Pratt (2010)</b>	<p>Despite the general stereotypes about male teachers, the study suggested that male teachers can be as thoughtful and effective as other female teachers by having key common traits such as being able to participate and understand children's' curiosity, and ability to respect lifelong learning. Male Teachers and other professionals in early childhood education can contribute to the enhancement of inclusive learning environments.</p>		<p>The research suggests that male participation and contribution to the process of young person's life in the USA is not considered as priority by the country given the historical reforms of education.</p>
<b>Fu and Li (2010)</b>	<p>Due to the underrepresentation of male teachers in preschool levels of education, it is argued that the presence of male teachers in these levels contribute to the development of the learning process for children at early stages, and also provide in depth interactions different from the ones they have with other female teachers such as promotions of inclusive learning environment and promotion of male children's self-understanding and conception.</p>	<p>Low pay and general public expectation of having males to perform their male duties in the community are viewed as the key oppositions and challenges of having male teachers in preschool education.</p>	<p>Male teachers in Taiwan are continuing to face the stereotype and perception of the general public that they need to meet their traditional expectations as men, making it difficult to be part of preschool education professions as it is more perceived as feminine profession, and in some cases are viewed as disadvantaged minority.</p>
<b>Heikkilä and Hellman (2017)</b>			<p>It is argued that the role of being a teacher at a preschool level of education is viewed as more feminine work area, and male teachers can be challenged by their masculinities.</p>
<b>Johnson (2010)</b>		<p>Despite the acceptance of surrounding female colleagues and parents of children of having a male teacher around at the preschool level of education, there is a concern being raised leading to extreme cases where families pulled their children out of the class expressing dissatisfaction due to the general stereotype of male's abilities to teach at the preschool level of education as well as the negative perception of having a male trying to nurture, and had some doubts that male teacher may be unable to foster the right learning environment at this level of education.</p>	<p>Due to the negative attitude and stereotype of parents associated with their reactions and behaviour a male teacher may feel unwelcomed at the level of preschool education.</p>
<b>Olsen and Smeplass (2018)</b>	<p>There is a common understanding that men are adding a unique value to the process of preschool levels due to the unique educational resources they can provide and for the sake of gender equality within the labour market. These promotions of gender equality with the preschool level between females and males despite the generic view that it is female dominant role, it would help</p>		

	to promote gender equality for the favour of females in other sectors where males are the majority.		
<b>Milgram and Sciarra (1974)</b>	Male teachers at the preschool level of education are a rare commodity and they are sought after with an increasing interest to getting them as part of schools' teams.	Male teachers in the preschool levels of teaching experience challenges and difficulties such as being the only one at the whole school and differences of their perception in terms of talents when comparing between their own perception of themselves with female colleagues' perception of them.	Their acceptance at the preschool education level is viewed as intellectual acceptance rather than being full acceptance as in several cases it lacks several elements such as sincerity, common understanding and friendliness leading to the feeling of being discriminated against or in not blocking completely of their entrance in the field of preschool levels of education.
<b>Riley <i>et al.</i>, (1985)</b>	Having a male teacher at school as well as a father at home is viewed as positive influence on the development children at the early childhood education stage through further understanding and clarity for the children about self-concept. Male teachers at the preschool levels of education for both boys and girls, would provide a role model and teach children that males should interact in female related activities. This would eventually contribute to the creation and development of non-sexist educational environments at the preschool levels of education.		
<b>Sisson and Iverson (2014)</b>			It is argued that the teacher profession within the preschool level of education is viewed as women dominated profession, this has been supported by research indicating that around 98% of teachers at this level are females and only 2% of teachers are males. Furthermore, this is viewed as part of the professional identity for the job.
<b>Tufan (2018)</b>			Research suggested that there is still some doubts and concerns over male teachers involvement at the preschool levels due to several reasons summarised such as sexual abuse, moral panic and power relations.
<b>White (2010)</b>		Key challenges male teachers faced at the preschool level of teaching were based on their roles as fathers and teachers in terms of finding the distinction between both, and the perceived view of the possible support education providers can provide to ensure their integration into the process at the training phase.	

Source: (Developed by Author).

### Synthesis and Findings

While the articles included as part of this review agree that male teachers were having an emerging and increasing role at the preschool level of education with consideration that it is still being mainly female dominated, it is very crucial to realize this increasing role of males as teachers within the preschool levels of education is being opposed and challenged from different perspectives. In most cases males were challenged by the stereotyping of being more controlling and unable to understand the needs of children given the perception that this level of education is viewed as an extended motherhood (Ahmed *et al.*, 2018; Fu & Li, 2010). Male teachers were challenged by the confusion of their position and what is expected of them (Cameron, 2006). In some cases, male participation and contribution to the process of young person's life was not considered as a priority by the state given the historical reforms of the educational system (Eisenhauer and Pratt, 2010). Male teachers were challenged by their masculinities and ability to

perform female perceived roles (Heikkilä and Hellman, 2017). Negative reactions and doubts that male teacher may be unable to foster the right learning environment at this level of education (Johnson, 2010). Males were challenged and opposed by having an intellectual acceptance rather than full acceptance associated with negative reactions and behaviour from others leading to the feeling of being discriminated against or in not blocking completely of their entrance in the field of preschool levels of education (Milgram and Sciarra, 1974). The profession identity was viewed as female and male teachers were the minority in their schools (Sisson and Iverson, 2014). Male teachers were challenged and opposed by expressed concerns and doubts regarding sexual abuse, moral panic and power relations (Turfan, 2018). Other challenges were present for male teachers such as the difficulty of some teachers to have the distinction between being a father and a teacher, and the need to understand how they can be supported by education providers during the training stage to ensure their integration process (White, 2010).

## CONCLUSION

It is clear throughout the review that across the academic papers male teachers were being increasingly accepted and demanded within the preschool of education. However, they were being challenged in many cases and experiences as indicated in the research.

The review also indicated several key oppositions to the idea of male integration of male teachers at the preschool levels of education generated by males themselves due to their masculinities, females as the other gender and the feeling that this profession was mainly dominated by them, and the wider public including local communities and families given the doubts and concerns they had regarding male teachers' abilities and behaviour leading to negative reactions and perceptions towards male teachers at this level of education. The selection of this topic was considered based on a previous experience of the author of researching into the topic. However, this systematic review was further developed and gathered deep insights and arguments from each of the papers included in the review.

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