

Discrimination on males in early childhood jobs education essay



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A complaint on the newspaper brought up the issue on stereotyping of male preschool teachers. The main cause of such situation is due to public stigma whereby early childhood profession is commonly known in public as a female profession. This trend will become chain effect and affect the future generations if measures are not implemented to eliminate stereotyping. The awareness is to promote equal treatment to the male preschool teachers rather than increase the male teachers' ratio in preschools.

Analytical factsheet on prejudice and discrimination on males in early childhood jobs

It was in 1970s when the first male preschool teacher was employed (Sandberg & Samuelsson, 2005). According to Teo (2010), there was a presence of stereotyping regarding the employment of male preschool teachers and some qualified males preschool teachers find it to be difficult to obtain employment in preschools despite having no gender requirement specified in the industry. Teo (2010) argued that some male preschool teachers were not even given a chance for interview despite being fully qualified. Sumsion (2000) mentioned that although there was an increase in male preschool teachers over the years, early childhood was still being looked upon as women's profession. According to Sandberg and Pramling (2005), only 6% of the preschool teachers in Sweden were males and perhaps even lesser in other countries such as Singapore. This paper will explore the reason to the stereotyping and methods to eliminate the stereotyping.

There are many reasons leading to the stereotype of male teachers in the early childhood education. One of the main reasons is due to stigma. Social norms and traditions created a public stigma for male preschool teachers. The early childhood education existed to nurture and care for the younger children, thus it was looked upon as a female profession (King, 1998). This is due to the common norm that females are supposed to be more caring and knowledgeable in taking care of young children compared to males.

According to King (1998), the public's perception of men working in preschool was mostly homosexual. This perception is due to the public's expectation that all males are masculine while all female are feminine, and therefore only females are appropriate for a caregiving profession such as the early childhood education. This public stigma have indirectly caused men to hesitate in interviewing jobs in preschool or caused the preschool to refuse acceptance in male employee. As a result of the stigma, preschool had to consider the acceptance level of the children and parents before employing male preschool teacher (King, 1998). This formed the unwritten requirement that only females can be a preschool school.

This situation is a concern as stereotyping of male preschool teachers will lead to more male preschool teachers being unemployed and cause discouragement to males pursuing early childhood as profession. As it is very natural for women to be working in the early childhood profession, people tends to overlook the fact that men are equally competent in becoming preschool teachers. This stereotyping is not visible to most people, but it definitely existed, whether consciously or subconsciously. This trend will not only affect the people now, but also the future generations. Levitch and

Gable (2005) stated that preschoolers can learn how to stereotype gender through observation and imitation of their surroundings. The norm will continue if more preschoolers are being nurtured in a female populated environment as they will be brought up thinking that only females can nurture young children. Therefore, it is necessary to prevent this trend from continuing and measures should be implemented to help males enter the non-traditional role.

There is slight increase in signs and cases of acceptance in male preschool teachers. Sumsion (2000) argued that sometimes, it was the differences in physical and mental differences of male preschool teachers that made them important in the early childhood profession, and it was essential for young children to receive nurturing from both genders. Male preschool teachers will provide a male role model to the young children, especially the boys. It was claimed that with male preschool teachers, young children learnt not to stereotype gender roles and presume certain gender professions such as early childhood education (Bailey, 1983; Clyde, 1995; Farquhar, 1997). According to Sumsion (2000), male preschool teachers with parenthood status were more acceptable among parents as they find it more logical for male teacher with a child of his own to have the intention of nurturing other young children. This however, reflects more on the parents' concerns about the teaching and nurturing capability of the male preschool teachers, rather than a gender concern (Sumsion, 2000).

There are many solutions to stop or reduce the stereotyping. According to Chiong (2010), the People's Action Party Community Foundation (PCF) provided scholarships to both male and female polytechnic students <https://assignbuster.com/discrimination-on-males-in-early-childhood-jobs-education-essay/>

studying in Diploma in Early Childhood Education, which will encourage more males to pursue a career in Early Childhood Education. With PCF providing a head start, more preschools should be encouraged to provide scholarships programs to male students in early childhood education. This measure can help to reassure the males that the public stigma is not affecting their studying and career opportunity in the early childhood profession. According to Sumsion (2000), parents' prejudice and disapproval were the important factors why preschools did not employ male preschool teachers. Therefore, consistent communications between parents and male preschool teachers is very important in fostering trust from the parents to the preschool teachers. Parents should also be encouraged to visit the preschool and observe the male preschool teachers at work before determining their competence and giving the judgement.

In conclusion, stereotyping of male preschool teachers should be eliminated. The stereotyping might not be as obvious as discrimination and prejudice on other groups such as different races or homosexuality, but it is definitely occurring to most males seeking a career in the early childhood profession. It should be brought to the public's attention as it will not only affect us directly, but also the future generations. Male preschool teachers should be regarded as important assets to the preschoolers, especially the boys, as role models for them to follow. Male preschool teachers will also expose the preschoolers to things from different perspectives. The public should provide the male preschool teachers a chance to prove their competence and ability before deciding that males should not be involve in the early childhood education. The public should not be bias against the male preschool teachers

just because they are working in a non-traditional profession. The awareness message carried out is not to increase the percentage ratio of male preschool teachers, but to remove the stereotyping and prejudice to male preschool teachers. This is to ensure that male preschool teachers are able to receive employment and work in a conducive environment whereby everyone will treat them equally.