



MALE PARTICIPATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION (ECE): A STUDY ON FACTORS AND
SELF-EFFICACY

BY

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the degree of Master in Education

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the study is to investigate male's participation in ECE as well as their motivation and self-efficacy. The study employed a convenient sampling procedure and data were collected using an adapted questionnaire by Goh and Atputhasamy (2001) "Motives for Teaching" and "Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES)" by (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). A total of 100 male practitioners in ECE were identified from Kuala Lumpur and Selangor area completed the questionnaires from the Permata International Conference, 2016 at Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC). The data were analysed using frequencies, descriptive statistics-test, and Confirmatory Factor Analysis via AMOS version 22. The findings of this study revealed that the most dominant Motives for Teaching are *Service Condition*. In addition, it was found that there is a significant relationship between Motives for teaching and the practitioners' level of self-efficacy. This finding indicates that the factors that motivates male to participate in ECE is *Service condition* in which they are satisfied with the benefits and job scope of the profession as well as *Altruism* in which they believed in influencing other people's young lives. Hence, deeper and more extensive research needs to be carried out in order to understand the issues of male participation in ECE.

خلاصة البحث

يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة مشاركة الذكور في التعليم في مرحلة الحضانة ، كما يدرس دوافع مشاركتهم ومستوى كفاءتهم الذاتية . استخدمت الدراسة أسلوب العينة القصدية، وتم جمع البيانات باستخدام استبيان مقتبس من Goh and Atputhasamy (2001)، ومن مقياس الكفاءة الذاتية للمعلم (TSES). أجاب عن الاستبيان 100 أستاذ يعملون في حضانات حكومية بكوالمبور وسيلانجور. وقد تم تحليل البيانات باستخدام الترددات، اختبارات الإحصاءات الوصفية، وبرنامج التحليل الإحصائي (AMOS) إصدار 22. تدلّ نتائج البحث على أن أبرز ما يدفع الذكور للتدريس في مرحلة الحضانة يتمثل في ظروف العمل ، إضافة إلى ذلك، فقد وجد أن هناك علاقة كبيرة بين دوافع التدريس ومستوى الكفاءة الذاتية . كما تشير النتائج إلى أن العوامل التي تحفز الذكور على الانضمام إلى التدريس في مرحلة الحضانة تتمثل في ظروف العمل، حيث يشعرون بالرضا عن الامتيازات التي يتلقونها وعن نطاق الوظيفة المهنية، كما أن الإيثار يجعلهم يعتقدون بضرورة التأثير على الصغار. وبالتالي، لا يزال موضوع مشاركة الذكور في التدريس في الحضانة يحتاج إلى بحث معمق وأكثر شمولية.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Education.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Siti Sara Mohd Ariff

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This research is lovingly dedicated to my husband, Mohd Nazrul Azizi, my late father, Mohd Ariff Mohd Zain and my mother, Rohany Abd. Rahman and also my family, Mohd Uzaini, Siti Mariam, Mohd Hafizuddin ,Mohd Haikal ,Iliani, Shahira ,Fateh and Benjamin who have been always given me the endless support .Thank you so much and May Allah Bless them.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Abstract in Arabic	iii
Approval Page.....	iv
Declaration.....	v
Copyright Page.....	vi
Dedication	vii
Acknowledgements.....	vii
List of Tables	xii
List of Figures	xiii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Background of the Study	4
1.3 Statement of the Problem.....	8
1.4 Purpose of the Study	10
1.5 Research Objectives.....	11
1.6 Research Questions.....	11
1.7 Significance of the Study	11
1.8 Limitations of the Study.....	13
1.9 Operational Definitions of Terms	14
1.10 Chapter Summary	16
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	17
2.1 Introduction.....	17
2.2 Theoretical Framework.....	17
2.3 Conceptual Framework.....	20
2.4 History of Male in ECE	20
2.4.1 History of Male in Early Childhood Education in Malaysian Context.....	22
2.5 Literature on Male in Early Childhood Education.....	25
2.5.1 Islamic View of Male Participation in ECE	28
2.6 Gender Distribution of Male Participation in the Early Childhood Education	32
2.7 Summary of ‘Gender’ and ‘Masculinity’	33
2.8 Factors that Motivate Male to Participate in ECE	36
2.8.1 The Nature of Self-Efficacy in Early Childhood Education	42
2.9 Importance of male to participate in Early Childhood Education	44
2.9.1 Absence of Father’s Role / Figure	46
2.9.2 Role Models and Gender Differences.....	47
2.9.3 Equality of Balance Gender in this Field.....	49
2.10 Meta-Analysis of Literature Review.....	51
2.10.1 Motivating Factors of becoming teacher	51
2.10.2 Social Influence and Perceptions of Male Teachers in ECE	53
2.10.3 Teacher level of Self-Efficacy	56
2.10.4 Duality Roles of Teacher	57

2.10.5 Gender Aptitude of Teacher.....	58
2.10.6 Challenges faced by male in ECE.....	59
2.10.7 Summary of Meta-Analysis of Literature Review.....	61
2.11 Hypothesized Model of the Study.....	61
2.12 Chapter Summary	63
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	64
3.1 Introduction.....	64
3.2 Research Design.....	64
3.3 The Population	65
3.4 Respondents of the Study.....	67
3.5 Instrumentation	67
3.6 Content Validation Process.....	71
3.7 Pilot Study.....	72
3.8 Results of the Pilot Test	74
3.9 Data Collection Procedures.....	74
3.10 Data Collection	75
3.11 Chapter Summary	76
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULT.....	76
4.1 Introduction.....	76
4.2 Analysis of the Results-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents	78
4.2.1 Analysis of the Age of Respondents.....	78
4.2.2 Analysis of the Length of Service of Respondents.....	79
4.2.3 Analysis of the Academic Background of Respondents.....	79
4.2.4 Analysis of the Service Place of Respondents.....	80
4.2.5 Analysis of Marital Status of Respondents.....	80
4.3 Variables Construct using the Principal Component Analysis (PCA).....	81
4.3.1 Confirming the Hypothesis 1	81
4.3.2 Confirming the Hypothesis 2.....	83
4.4 Convergent Validity and Discriminant Validity	85
4.3.1 Analyzing the mediating Variables (Hypothesized Model).....	87
4.3.2 Analysis of the Reliability of the Items of each Construct	90
4.3.3 Factorial Validity of each of the Construct by using the Measurement Invariance Method	93
4.5 Conclusion	93
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....	95
5.1 Introduction.....	95
5.2 Discussion of Findings.....	95
5.2.1 The Most Dominant Motives for Teaching from Male Preschool Teacher Perspectives	96
5.2.2 The Factors that Motivates male to Participate in ECE.....	98
5.2.3 Male practitioners in ECE level of Self-Efficacy	101
5.2.4 Direct Significant Relationship between Factors that Motivates Male to Participate in ECE and their Level of Self-Efficacy.....	103

5.3 The Implications of The Study	104
5.3.1 Theoretical Implications	104
5.3.2 Methodological Implications	106
5.3.3 Practical Implications.....	107
5.4 Delimitations of the Study	108
5.5 Recommendations to ECE Setting.....	109
5.6 Suggestions for Future Research	111
5.7 Conclusion	112
REFERENCES.....	114
APPENDIX A: THE QUESTIONNAIRE	131
APPENDIX B: TABLE OF SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW	134
APPENDIX C: APROVAL OF THE TOPIC	140
APPENDIX D: APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSAL	141
APPENDIX E: PERMISSION LETTER.....	142

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table No.</u>		<u>Page No.</u>
3.1	Number of Male Practitioners in ECE for this Sample	66
3.2	Four Motives for Teaching	69
3.3	The Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES)	71
3.4	Results of the Pre-Test: Reliability of the Factors that Motivates Male to Participate in ECE	73
4.1	Age Distribution of the Respondents	78
4.2	Length of Service Distribution of Respondents	79
4.3	Distribution of Academic Background of Respondents	79
4.4	Distribution of Service Place of Respondents	80
4.5	Distribution of Marital Status of Respondents	80
4.6	The KMO and Bartlett's Test for Service Condition Construct	81
4.7	Total Eigenvalues and Variance Explained for Service Condition Construct	82
4.8	Rotated Component Matrix for the Service Condition Constructs	82
4.9	The KMO and Bartlett's Test for Altruism Construct	84
4.10	Total Eigenvalues and Variance Explained for Altruism Construct	84
4.11	Rotated Component Matrix for the Altruism Constructs	85
4.12	Factor Loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	86
4.13	The Comparison Between Discriminant Validity Index Summary and AVE Value	87
4.14	Standardized Loadings and Squared Multiple Correlations Through the Hypothesized and Re-Specified Model	91

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure No.</u>		<u>Page No.</u>
2.1	Theoretical Framework of the Study	19
2.2	Conceptual Framework of the Study	20
2.3	Hypothesized Model of the Study	61
4.1	Hypothesized Model for the Factors that Motivates Male to Participate in ECE	88
4.2	Re-specified Model for the Factors that Motivates Male to Participate in ECE	90

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is currently transforming its education system to achieve a world class status. High-quality preschool education improves children's development and learning. Educators' plays an important role in promoting high quality early education and child care by examining the issues and challenges concerned. At the same time, efforts to increase the number of male teachers in infant, toddler, preschool, and primary classrooms deserve serious consideration.

Its importance can be argued from multiple perspectives, one of which is the need for gender balance in early childhood programs. There is a small number of male educators in early years in Malaysia. It can be seen that a situation of female educators dominated this field for a long time. Number of female in learning institution is remarkably huge compared to male. The rising number of female in formal education system influenced the rate of their involvement in the workforce and lead to the segregation of gender in occupation (Noor Rahamah, 2006). She also stated that the number of female graduates at the undergraduate level is high in the field of humanities, economy, business and management compared to the number of male graduates in the field of engineering, architecture, property management, town and regional place. Through this, it was seen that female conquer the field of ECE but still, the percentage of male in the field of ECE is relatively low compared to other manly job such as mechanics, automotive related and entrepreneur.

This gender imbalance is not peculiar to Malaysia but also occur around the world as a global trend. It is an acceptable fact that ECE have been associated as women profession. More than a quarter century before, it is known that the number of men teaching in the field of ECE has not changed much as neither have the reasons why men do not teach (Nelson, 2002). Men make up 5.2 per cent of what the U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics (2005) classifies as child care workers, 2.3 per cent of preschool and kindergarten teachers, and 17.8 per cent of elementary and middle school teachers. The shortage of men teachers in ECE and elementary education is similar in other industrialized countries. For example, 2.5 per cent of early childhood caregivers in Sweden are men, and men teach only 6.1 per cent of Sweden's preschool classes (Cooney & Bittner, 2001).

In Malaysian context, an increasing emphasis has been given to ECE to support children as lifelong learners by improving the standards of teachers in this field. In an effort to do so, Malaysia's educational policies are quite supportive in terms of early childhood education and care since Datin Paduka Sri Rosmah Mansor, the wife of our Prime Minister, YAB Datuk Seri Haji Mohd Najib bin Tun Haji Abdul Razak, has established the "Program Permata Negara" that emphasizes on care and early education programs to children that offers alternative approaches in the field of special care and early education for children under the age of 4. This approach emphasizes building capacity to stimulate children's minds by using explore, experiment and experience (experimentation, exploration and experiential) in game or fun learning. It is an approach that is appropriate and fun for children following the techniques applied upbringing and education is a natural fit with the nature of the child. She believes that every child born in this blessed land of Malaysia is a jewel for the country and if nurtured, taught and properly sharpened will shine light on the

glories of the future. With improved teaching approach, teachers are expected to improve their teaching instructions and learning would be very effective for the children.

Understanding this scenario, the government through higher learning institutions has taken a proper strategy to overcome such situations. Nowadays, ECE has become a centre of intention of government educational policy. ECE not only becomes female first choice of education but as well as their counter parts. The numbers of males taking ECE courses keep increasing over the years. However, this trend stills not enough to accommodate the demands for male practitioners,

Male teachers in Malaysia are going the way of the dinosaur. Educationists predict that male teachers will be extinct in 20 years' time if the decline in the number of men in the teaching profession is not checked (Koh Lay Chin, 2009).

A number of reports have shown that several factors that limits the male to participate in ECE, such as low wages, stereotypical views from society and low status of profession. Unfortunately, there is relatively little research conducted on the relationship of factors that motivates male to participate in ECE and their level of self-efficacy in Early Childhood Education (ECE) sector in Malaysia. Hence, this research aims to examine the relationship between Motives for Teaching and level of self-efficacy among male in ECE.

The first chapter of this paper will elaborate the background of the study, details of the statement of the problem, discusses the significance of the study, and defines specific terms relating to the study.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Early childhood education (ECE) are to be considered most suitable for the female in this field compared to male and this has been in practice for many years. However, the emergence of ECE formally has brought new ideas and dimension in early year's education. The traditional way to raise the children has significantly changed since male has shown their interest in this field. ECE is no longer a female's forte.

In order for a professional field to be considered as gendered, at least 85% of the members have to be of the same sex and the work itself must be instilled with gendered meanings and defined in gendered terms (Sargent, 2005). In the Malaysian context, there are a small number of male educators in ECE sector where the obvious majority of the educators in ECE field are female. The number of males increases steadily since there are many higher learning institutions offering this programme. In this case, it is not only Malaysia but also in England whereby, a mere 2 per cent of male practitioners work in early years (DfES Research Digest, 2002).

Simultaneously, according to Scottish Executive (2005), 'nearly all' the practitioners are female. In addition, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) stated that 97 per cent of teachers in pre-K programs are women; the same figure was reported in a Centre for the Child Care Workforce study (Park-Jadotte, Golin, & Gault, 2002). It is clear that in choosing to become early years' teachers, men are positioned in a context which is numerically dominated by women. It is important to consider the gender mix in this profession by understanding the significance of the existence of males in childcare.

This gender imbalance is not only happening in Malaysia, but also around the world, and it can be perceived as a global phenomenon. It is undeniably true that ECE has been familiar and also a stigma as a women's exclusive profession. According to

Martin (1999) as cited in Browne (2004), government had given the opportunities for women by giving trainings to work with young children. The training courses were followed by Pestalozzi an principles where it concerns upon children's learning where children should learn through activity and through things which it is believed that mothers were better suited than men in early childhood education (Kamm, 1965).

It can be seen that the idea of mothers' roles in educating children, women have the potential to imply the nature roles in preschool or education centre. However, these roles are subjective and it is appeared that 'maternal' care is a key to work with children. Margaret McMillan, a pioneer of nursery as cited in Anning (1997) agreed and perceived similar idea about preschool setting was basically to provide the maternal care. Thus, across the many years ECE developed and people started to aware the importance of having male practitioners in children development. Because of this awareness, few researchers had discussed about the presence of men in early years but impact towards children's learning in early years remains unknown.

Gender Issues in ECE

Childhood is the key period of the development of roles of different genders. It is also a very important period to develop children's gender-cognition and to learn behaviours of different genders (Chung, 2006). It can be seen that male plays an important role to participate in ECE in which it could be viewed as essential in order to meet children's needs, since male are considered to be positive role models for young children (Rentzou and Ziganitidou, 2009). Male teachers would be also recognized by children as their first man after their father.

With the participation of males in ECE field, it would help children to acquire certain skills with the guide of male teachers in certain area such as swimming,

gardening, self-defence and football. According to National Survey with Childcare Services in Ireland (2011), it was found that nearly 90% of respondents agreed that more male childcare workers should be employed in Ireland to provide positive role models have a mixed gendered approach and have a positive influence on the children, especially in single parent families. Besides, male in ECE could focus more on outdoor play and provide different types of caring from males and females especially for the young boys' in the care centre.

Since early 1980, male participation in the field of ECE has been accepted by the society because it is considered as a token of ground breaking the stereotypes in behaviour and play with children. However, there are some parents who began to be suspicious of male teachers and the opposition to fill the post by male started when the issue of sexual abuse of children arises (Farquhar, 1997).

In fact, A British paedophile who preyed on Malaysian children in an impoverished part of Kuala Lumpur, Richard Huckle admitted committing the offences against victims aged between six months and 12 years between 2006 and 2014 (BBC News, 2016). Confronted with his nine years crime, he wanted to be seen as an English teacher and philanthropist in poor Christian communities, admitted an unprecedented 71 offences, including rapes, against young children (McVeigh, 2016). The sad part regarding this is that, some of the 23 children identified in the charges were abused for years, including one from the age of three until 10.

Another notorious pedophile, William Vahey, who was one of the most beloved teachers in the world of international schools, served the children of diplomats, well-off Americans and local elites. He was one of the most prolific pedophiles (1972-2012) who upset the international schools' community, where

parents were told their children may have been victims, while administrators tried to close loopholes exposed by Vahey's abuses.

It was reported that he was often the first to arrive in the morning, and the last to leave. He managed student trips to exotic places and at bedtime gave out cookies and milk. He laced the cookies with sleeping pills enough to leave the boys unconscious as he touched them and posed them for nude photographs (USA Today, 2014). Serious considerations should be taken since it is certainly disturbing that a person like Vahey would be left unsupervised and obviously not tracked for over 45 years. Most troubling is that how any system can could allow this to happen? Thus, awareness on the parents and teachers' part is critical so that safety is assured and children protected from this type of criminal. As such, a very thorough selection procedure must be employed in order to ensure that selected male teachers for ECE are free from any mental illness and crimes.

Further, parents could not accept the presence of male teachers in the field of ECE as this career is perceived as not compatible with the character of a man. Male teachers in ECE have received negative response in a survey. According to the Local Survey with Parents in Ireland (2012), the less positive responses quoted from the respondents where it is believed that 'it is a risk too great to take to prevent sexual abuse', 'it would feel uncomfortable with a man minding the children in changing nappies where it is believed that women should do it' and 'it would feel uncomfortable because woman are more understanding'.

This indirectly led to the lacking of male teacher career in this field were largely ignored and received no response. In fact, the issue of male sexuality does not become the focus in the field of education (Jensen, 1996). Male teachers and female teachers should work with parents to raise and teach children (Docking, 1990).

There are few studies that describe how male teachers can face situations that are not familiar to them in fulfilling their responsibilities in teaching and learning processes in preschool. One of the most important attributes influencing male teachers in carrying out his duties as a preschool teacher is self-efficacy. The meaning of self-efficacy is a judgment of a person of its ability to handle and implement the measures required to achieve a certain level of achievement (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy beliefs can provide the basis of human motivation, a good life and personal achievement. This is because, with this belief, people believed that every action will turn out as expected.

Preschool teachers have unique task because the daily workload on is not focused on the task of teaching only (Katz & Goffin, 1990; Laursen & Collins, 1999; Raco & Spodek, 1993; Spodek 1978). As a teacher of ECE, they play a complex role in various dimensions (Spodek, 1978). Could this task be undertaken by a male teacher where the preschool environment is synonym with female teachers? Are male practitioners in ECE able to perform both roles?

With that background, it is only appropriate that a study on factors and their level of self-efficacy and its relationship with the issue concerned be carried out. The focus of this study is on the factors that motivate male to participate in ECE and their level of self-efficacy from the male perspectives and its relationship between both in the sector.

1.3 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The teaching profession in ECE has been long dominated by women, whether in the East and West. Low social status is the reason why relatively few men choose teaching (Drudy et al., 2005, cited in Ho & Lam, 2014). Male teachers experience

difficulties and mistrust of their choice due to social pressures. It is seen that taking care of children is the responsibility of women and men should not get involved.

There is a cultural bias against male participation in ECE. Working in a profession that is identified as a female profession is a major barrier for men to enter or remain in the field of ECE. For male in ECE, this could lead be detrimental to their self-esteem and job satisfaction.

According to Johnson (2008), the increasing rate of absent fathers and difficulties for boys to develop a healthy masculinity against a preponderance of women teachers need to be justified by having more male teachers in the early years. This shows that the importance of male to be involved in the ECE need to be addressed by all parties especially government and higher institution. Moreover, Skelton (2003) highlighted that the needs for male teacher in the early years is to counter act the 'feminisation' of primary schooling. The assumptions underpinning such a strategy are based on sex role socialization theories which have been superseded by more sophisticated and complex understanding of gender identities. There are very few kindergartens employing male teachers. There is none of the research that has been debated on the impacts towards children in the future and if this trend will continue and not well explored to examine the factors leading to this situation.

It is believed that the findings from this study will help to overcome the issues and problems in male to participate in ECE in Malaysia, and at the same time will enrich the body of knowledge in the area of ECE.

1.4 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to determine if there is any relationship between factors that motivate male to participate in ECE from the viewpoint of practitioners as determined by the Motives for teaching survey and teacher level of self-efficacy. In order to gain an understanding if there is any relationship between factors that motivates male to participate in ECE and their level of self-efficacy, several variables have been identified by the research questions reflecting the purpose of the study: (a) demographic of respondents, i.e. age, length of service, academic background and marital status, (b) factors that motivates male to participate in ECE (based on the Motives for teaching), and (c) levels of self-efficacy (based on the Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES)).

Although research has been done in encouraging male to participate in ECE, the study of raising the male to participate in ECE through factors and level of self-efficacy has yet to be carried out. This study seeks to examine male participation in ECE from practitioners' perspectives and its relationship between factors and their level of self-efficacy. It is hoped that this research may fill in knowledge gaps by providing information on male participation in ECE that may affect the learning process of the children. There are few existing studies established such perspective in this area. The Goh and Atputhasamy's theory of four motive factors and three teacher beliefs in level of self-efficacy based on the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale contributed to the study's framework.

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objective serves as a reference framework for ensuring the implementation of the study run smoothly and systematically. The objectives for this study are:

1. To identify factors that motivates male to participate in ECE.
2. To examine the level of self-efficacy among male practitioners in ECE.
3. To examine the relationship between the ECE practitioners 'motivation and self-efficacy.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study is focused on a number of important questions based on the objectives outlined. Information from this study will provide preliminary foundation to design future studies and intervention programmes for this target group. Thus, the research questions of this study are as the following:

1. What are the factors that motivates male to participate in ECE?
2. What is the level self-efficacy among male practitioners in ECE?
3. What are the relationship between the ECE practitioners' motivation and self-efficacy?

These three research questions were used as a framework and basis in data analysis and the discussion of the findings.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The number of males who participate in ECE in Malaysia is increasing. Related study has been done on the barriers and challenges of male to participate in ECE but rarely the male practitioners are assessed on the four motives for teaching and their level of