

Art. #1910, 12 pages, <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v41n2a1910>

Recruitment and retention of male educators in preschools: Implications for teacher education policy and practices

Chinedu Ifedi Okeke  and Enock Nyanhoto 

School of Education Studies, Faculty of Education, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa
okekeco@ufs.ac.za

In the study reported on here we employed the interpretivist qualitative approach to explore the recruitment and retention of male educators in preschool centres. Purposive sampling was used to select 2 preschool owners, 2 principals, 4 preschool educators and 2 male educators in the Foundation Phase. Data were obtained by in-depth interviewing and were analysed thematically. Results showed no male educators in preschools in the education district where the study was conducted. Misinterpretation of cultural roles, stigma, fear and prejudice, low educator status within the preschool sector and a lack of male recruitment policies were found to be negatively affecting the recruitment of males into the preschool sector. A gender balance that ensures that both female and male educators are recruited within the preschool sector would appear to be congruent with the philosophical underpinnings of the Social Role Theory (SRT). The Departments of Education and Social Development should, therefore, embark on awareness campaigns to educate all stakeholders on the need for a gender balance within the preschool sector.

Keywords: male educators; preschools; recruitment; retention; South Africa

Introduction

The importance of male educators in preschools has been highlighted in various studies (Barkhuizen, 2014; Department of Social Development, Republic of South Africa [RSA], 2014; Mashiya, 2014; Rentzou & Ziganitidou, 2009; Richter, Chikovore & Makusha, 2010). Yet, the absence of male preschool educators persists. The question, therefore, revolves around why the preschool sector is not able to recruit and retain male preschool educators within the education district where the study was conducted. Notably, the National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy (RSA, 2015) has remained silent on the issue of gender equality among practitioners in the early years of the child. The absence of a clear policy that targets the recruitment of teachers, especially males, to preschools means that the teaching profession as well as teaching and learning at the preschool sector may be compromised. For instance, the Australian Government has long established the recruitment and selection of teaching staff in preschools that clearly highlights the imperativeness of gender equity (Government of South Australia, Department for Education, 2016).

Male preschool educators are increasingly becoming a necessity in schools across South Africa. Due to the dramatic departure from the traditional nuclear family structure, there is a corresponding need for male role models, not only in preschool, but also in other phases of teaching and learning. It is important to note that this collapse of the nuclear family precipitated the emergence of fatherhood structures as absent father, economic father, social father (aka father of the fatherless) and adolescent father (teenage *tata*) (Day, 2012; Khewu & Adu, 2015; Mackay, 2012; Okeke, 2017; Richter et al., 2010). We argue that children who happen to find themselves within these new fathering structures may not be experiencing adequate fathering to enable the formation of a father figure in their psyche. Koch and Farquhar (2015) argue that, although there is no systematic attempt being made to prevent men from attaining the same success as women in the preschool workplace, in practice, there are “glass doors”, which are not seen until they are walked into.

Social Role Theory

SRT holds that, regardless of early socialisation, men can learn behaviours, which are associated with the role of provider of care through participating in those social experiences that were once reserved for women (Biddle, 2013). This SRT was first proposed by Eagly (1987) who argued that most behavioural differences, which are attributed to males and females, are the consequence of cultural stereotypes concerning gender with respect to how males and females are believed to act and the resulting social roles, which are taught to young people. SRT explains that the inherent physical differences between men and women result in a division of labour in society. Thus, “members of a culture or society come to know the expected social role behaviours of social positions through socialisation, the context of an individual’s social experience; people come to know devalued social positions in the same way” (Blakely & Dziadosz, 2015:184).

SRT recognises the historical division in labour between women, who usually assume responsibilities at home, and men, who usually assume responsibilities outside of the home (Biddle, 2013; Diekman & Schneider, 2010; Eagly, 1987 cited by Moss, 2016). Gender roles pertain to the perceived differences, on the part of various societies and cultures, between the types of behaviour, which are expected from men and from women. This view is further supported by Taylor and Frankenberg (2009) who state that gendered cognitive schemas influence the expected roles of males and females. In addition, Petersen (2014:2) supports these views while

stating that “the status of being ‘male’ or ‘female’ may lead to the development of rigid role definitions and stereotypes for both men and women in society.”

Biddle (2013) explains that the SRT is a science, which is concerned with the study of behaviours that are characteristic of people in particular contexts and processes, which produce, explain, and are affected by those behaviours. Nevertheless, SRT holds that although one’s early socialisation may be devoid of certain necessary positive behaviours, by subsequent participation in such behaviours, which were the exclusive preserve for one gender (in the context of the study, female), men can acquire enough experiences to enable them to make meaningful contributions within those social roles. This is the view we adopted in conducting this research. We argued that by getting male educators to be involved in the preschool sector, even though they may lack the nurturing habits congruent with females’ social skills, such male educators will begin, albeit slowly, to learn these roles, if not effectively. Through this theoretical lens we were able to obtain meaningful data in relation to the recruitment and retention of male educators in preschools, with some implications for policy.

Empirical Discussions

Gender and male preschool educators

As a concept, gender refers to culturally defined and consciously constructed notions of maleness and femaleness, which runs contrary to the naturally and biologically defined notion of sex (Tannenbaum, Greaves & Graham, 2016; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2019). These processes are constructed through social interactions. For instance, these may relate to all the characteristics of men and women, which a particular society has determined and assigned each sex. Gender highlights women’s roles and responsibilities in relation to those of their male counterparts, and this has broader implications for how men and women may want to perceive their economic roles, say, within the preschool sector (Moses, Admiraal & Berry, 2016; Mukuna & Mutsotso, 2011). Thus, research on gender inequality within preschools emphasises the experiences of men against women in relation to their positions within the preschool centres (Carrington, Tymms & Merrell, 2008; Mathwasa, 2019; Mukuna & Mutsotso, 2011; Sayed & McDonald, 2017). It equally emphasises the need to raise the consciousness and status of men who care for children within preschools in an attempt to position them as equal partners with their female counterparts (Ravhuhali, Mashau, Lavhelani, Mudzielwana & Mulovhedzi, 2019; Rohrmann, 2020; Sayed & McDonald, 2017).

Mukuna and Mutsotso (2011:1878) argue that gender plays a decisive role in the manner in which teachers perceive and define their roles within their profession. For instance, most societies define and ascribe differential roles based on gender. Ironically, most of the primary tasks of the preschool caregiver fall within the roles societally ascribed to women. It is, therefore, likely that men who venture into such roles may be perceived as performing the roles traditionally reserved for women. Mukuna and Mutsotso (2011) further argue that male educators in preschool centres may be perceived to be women because society has erroneously ascribed childcare responsibilities to women.

From the perspective of gender relations and of SRT, men working in a field, which is conventionally regarded as the sole preserve for women, are able to mount a challenge against gender stereotyping (Sevier & Ashcraft, 2009). It has also been suggested that if men become involved in the management of preschools, it would become relatively easy to attract male educators to work in the sector (Johannesen, 2010). Sak, Sahin and Sahin (2012) found that boys preferred to play with male teachers, which highlights the importance of having men in preschool settings. In addition, Sak et al. (2012) found that female preschool teachers believed that apart from being good disciplinarians and innovative problem solvers, men are also needed in the preschool sector for social and emotional skills, by serving as role models.

Importance of male educators in schools

Literature on fatherhood notes that there are considerably high numbers of fathers who play no part in the early lives of their children (Okeke, 2017). According to Rentzou (2017:202), “more male teachers would encourage more paternal involvement, make schools more father-friendly, and would encourage fathers to feel more comfortable about participating in (the preschool) settings.” As we have noted, absent fathers constitute one of the most significant factors that which affect preschools adversely (Mncanca, Okeke & Fletcher, 2016). The preschool sector in South Africa has experienced great difficulty in attracting and increasing the active participation of fathers in various early childhood development (ECD) initiatives (Khewu & Adu, 2015). Koch and Farquhar (2015) maintain that, in many countries, a low proportion of men working in preschool centres are accompanied by a correspondingly low presence of men and fathers in the upbringing of children. In many developing countries the duties of child rearing and providing education tend to be left completely to mothers and women, and this tendency is particularly prevalent in South Africa

(Day, 2012).

Earlier, Rolfe (2005), in his work, *Men in Childcare*, notes what benefits abound when male educators form part of the personnel in preschool centres. Rolfe (2005) notes that the presence of male educators in schools promotes more gender balance in the environment: males promote a more active, physical environment, while female educators foster a nurturing, calm and positive environment. Both male and female educators have different caring styles that can really be very beneficial, because participating children will be introduced to different styles of caring, playing and instructing (Rolfe, 2005). Joseph and Wright (2016) maintain that children at preschool centres where there is gender balance will experience a positive male role model, which is something they may not experience at home because, as we already know, some of the children may come from homes where the father is absent. In addition, Mackay (2012) maintains that early childhood is a crucial time for inculcating positive attitudes and behaviour with respect to gender. The active participation of men in preschools is beneficial for children, for the men themselves and for society as a whole.

Strategies to recruit and retain male educators in preschool centres

The challenges of low status, low salaries, perceptions of preschool teaching as women's job, potential complaints of child abuse and sexual harassment and a lack of male peer groups have been cited as major contributing factors to the lack of male educators in preschools (Drudy, 2008; Petersen & Pekter, 2011). Public recognition of outstanding male preschool educators and the presence of male lecturers in foundation phase undergraduate degrees should be used as strategies to attract males into the preschool sector (Rentzou, 2017; Skelton, 2009; Svodziwa & Raymond, 2016). The retention of quality educators is a problem in South African schools (Steyn, 2013) and is not only peculiar to preschools. This is mainly due to resignation, medical boarding, dismissal, emigration of highly trained professionals for greener pastures and restrictions related to self-development and lack of recognition for good performance (Adedeji & Olaniyan, 2011; Armstrong, 2009; Scullion & Collings, 2011; South African Council for Educators [SACE], 2010). Retention policies should be aimed at attracting new employees, satisfying the older generation of employees and motivating current employees to stay within the organisation (Barkhuizen, 2014). The issue of remuneration has an unfavourable effect upon graduate perceptions of working within the preschool sector (Joseph & Wright, 2016; Moloney, 2011; Rentzou & Ziganitidou, 2009; Wilson, 2011).

Another way to encourage male participation is to introduce a target for men in the preschool sector, as is the case with many European countries (Owen, 2012; Peeters, 2007). Improving the status of preschools has been found to have the potential to improve the recruitment and retention of male educators (Peeters, 2007). The provision of targeted training and scholarships, whereby courses are specifically designed by training institutions to attract male participation, is a strategy found in literature. For instance, male-only courses have proven successful in Scotland (Peeters, 2007). Scholarships for training could be offered to all men, as a strategy to recruit and retain male educators within the preschool sector. However, this would definitely require effective checks to ensure that funds are not diverted for non-training purposes.

Research by Jones (2009) has also shown that advertising, which focuses on male involvement in preschools, tends to promote the profession and reduce negative stereotyping. Advertising could range from including images of male role models on leaflets and posters as well as in television commercials. Furthermore, reviewing early childhood legislation to ensure that it offers equal rights and opportunities to both men and women, and that it safeguards both sexes and children, for example, by encouraging open-plan environments in the preschool settings, is important. This is because some women and parents are of the view that male teachers must not be left alone with children in classes (Joseph & Wright, 2016; Okeke, 2017). Jordan (2011) also suggests that more affirmative descriptions of men in child-caring roles are needed to rectify the current situation of a lack of male educators in the preschool sector. Imazeki and Goe (2009) suggest that urban and rural district schools should be more competitive when it comes to recruiting the best educators. A partnership between higher education institutions (HEIs) and preschools has been highlighted as a key strategy to better prepare teachers for both urban and rural preschool settings (Imazeki & Goe, 2009).

Rentzou (2017) suggests that policies should be put in place, not only for recruiting males to the preschool sector, but also for sustaining and for supporting males during their studies in HEIs. Rinke (2011) suggests that efforts towards recruitment must scrutinise prior educational experiences and examine prospective educators' planned approaches towards instruction, community participation, and professional growth. A plethora of studies has also linked commitment and retention to prior experience (see for example, Carter Andrews, 2009; Irizarry & Donaldson, 2012; Ronfeldt, Reininger & Kwok, 2013; Taylor & Frankenberg, 2009; Whipp & Geronime, 2015). In Ireland, Walshe (2012) suggests that developing

a specific programme aimed at enticing more men to enter the childcare profession is one of the strategies, in addition to developing a nationwide awareness of the positive benefits that men can bring to childcare services.

The Main and Sub Research Questions

The following main and sub research questions guided the study. The main research question was: What are the strategies to recruit and retain male educators in the preschool centres in the East London education district at present? Linked to the main research question, the following sub research questions were set:

- How is recruitment and retention of male educators done in preschools?
- What are the reasons for the low representation of male educators in preschools?
- How do preschools recruit and retain male educators in their schools?
- What are the challenges facing preschools in the recruitment and retention of male educators in preschools?
- What are the views of male educators concerning working in preschools?

Research Objectives

The research objectives that guided the study were to assess the recruitment and retention of educators in preschools; identify the reasons for the absence of male educators in preschools; and, establish strategies to recruit and retain male educators in preschool centres.

Research Methodology

Research Paradigm, Approach and Design

In this study we employed an interpretivist paradigm (Jonker & Pennink, 2010) based on the premise that the researchers needed to be in a position to understand the thinking and feelings of the participants and how they communicate. The main thrust of an interpretivist research approach is that the phenomena are observed from the inside, through the direct experience of the people who participate in the research study. Our role, therefore, was to establish, explain and decipher social reality through the eyes of the participants (Mack, 2010). This made the qualitative approach, which focuses on gaining an understanding of human behaviour and the explanations that govern it (Glenn, 2010; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), most appropriate for the purpose of this study. We employed a multiple case study design, which, according to Yin (2012:16), "... investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real world context", because it gave us access into the participants' real world, and to understand them within the context of their own subjective perceptions.

Participant Selection and Ethical Measures

The study was conducted in the East London education district in the Buffalo City metropolitan municipality. East London is the second largest industrial centre in the Eastern Cape. The study was conducted in this area because of the presence of so many preschools. Preschools in the East London area experience a chronic dearth of male practitioners. Yet, at the time of the study, no previous research that explored the scarcity of male educators at preschool centres in the East London education district had existed. Purposive sampling was used to select two preschool centres and one Foundation Phase school for the study. Purposive sampling was also used to select two preschool owners, two principals, four preschool educators, and two (one Grade R; one Grade 1) male educators in the Foundation Phase. We opted for the foundation phase educators because of our inability to identify any male educators in any of the preschool centres within the East London education district. However, participants were selected on the grounds that they have been working in the education sector related to the organisation of preschools and the Foundation Phase. We viewed the choice of sample as relevant as the participants possessed valuable information that would lead us to achieve the objectives of the study. Thus, we selected the two male Foundation Phase educators, since those male educators possessed adequate experience to credibly participate in the study, and because we thought that the participants had adequate experience on the topic of the research (Zink, 2012).

Ethical approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of one university in the Eastern Cape (Ref: OKEKE101SNYA01). Further clearance was also obtained from the municipality based in the education district, where the study took place. Participation in the study was voluntary and we clearly explained the aim of the study to the participants whose consent was then obtained. In reporting the outcome of the fieldwork, in order to protect the participants' identities, pseudonyms were used and the participants were referred to as P1 to P10, in line with the requirements for confidentiality and anonymity.

Data Collection Processes

In accordance with the guidelines provided by Creswell (2014) for such studies, we developed in-depth interview procedures. In the interviews we posed open-ended questions, which were intended to obtain participants' views on strategies to attract, recruit, and retain male educators in preschools. The interviews, which lasted between 40 and 60 minutes, were recorded with the approval of the participants. The date, venue, interviewer,

interviewee, questions asked and a final “thank you” proclamation to acknowledge the time spent by the interviewee during the interview were included as components of the research procedure (Creswell, 2014).

The following issues were explored during the course of the interviews:

- Participants’ views on how preschools recruit and retain male teachers;
- Participants were asked what gender they would prefer when recruiting educators and why;
- Participants were also asked about their knowledge of the ECD policy with regard to the recruitment of male preschool educators;
- There was also a question on the centre-specific recruitment policy and its relationship with gender balance;
- Participants’ views were sought on the possible factors causing the absence of male preschool educators at centres; and,
- Interview items also covered issues of possible intervention strategies to help encourage the recruitment and retention of male preschool educators.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research means methodological soundness and adequacy (Holloway & Wheeler 2013). A major characteristic of this demonstration is credibility, which refers to whether or not the perceptions of the participants in a qualitative research study of the events, phenomena or occurrences, which the study endeavours to investigate, match up with the researcher’s portrayal of them in his or her report. This criterion is used to enable an assessment being made on whether or not the researchers have accurately represented what the participants felt, thought, said or did (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtle, 2010). We ensured the credibility of our findings by using in-depth interviews that allowed the participants the freedom of expression on the issues being raised during the interview process. We also followed through our promises by conducting member checks on analysed texts and transcripts in order to improve data credibility (Creswell, 2014). We used a tape recorder in order to further improve the credibility of the outcome of the study.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data were analysed thematically. This refers to “the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data” (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017:3352). Following Creswell (2014), we transcribed, organised, and prepared the obtained data. Then we looked at all the data in order to get a general sense of the information and a prospect to reflect on its overall meaning, such as the imprint of the overall depth, credibility and use of the information. We coded the information into categories and labels, which were then used to generate a description of the people as well as

themes for analysis. In combination with the lenses of SRT, we were able to transcribe, synthesise, organise, analyse, and interpret the data. The outcome of these processes is presented below.

Results

The data collected were analysed thematically, leading to the emergent of four themes, which are discussed below.

Theme 1: The Non-Existence of Male Educators in Preschools

The question was posed to explore how preschools recruit and retain male teachers. The emerging theme was that there were no male preschool teachers in the education district. One female participant responded as follows: “*I have never come across a male preschool teacher. I have absolutely no experience in recruiting male preschool teachers at all. I would also really like to know if there is one elsewhere in South Africa*” (P1: female preschool owner). The same sentiment was echoed by P2 (female preschool principal): “*no experience at all. I can give a chance to one but it will be a huge gamble and a risk.*” P3 and P4 echoed the above sentiments.

I have no idea at all but recruitment issues I mostly leave it to my boss (P3: female preschool principal).

I do recruitment with my principal as a panel but strangely enough, we have never seen a male applying ... (P4: female preschool educator).

Participants 1, 2, 3 and 4 were preschool owner, principals and educator, respectively. It is evident that these participants had no experience in recruiting male educators. It can be argued that men are not showing interest in applying or submitting their curriculum vitae (CVs) for recruitment; it may also be argued that, even when men do submit their CVs, the principals and owners of preschools who took part in this study ignored them. Interestingly, a number of subthemes emerged: preference for female educators and no specific male recruitment policy in preschools. Probing further, participants were asked what gender they preferred when recruiting and why. Without any scruples, P1 noted that a “*pre-school teacher must have a natural empathy toward little ones and my experience tells me that males do not have this characteristic.*”

The above sentiments appear to be congruent with the belief that women are the best nurturers by nature; a view, which seemed to be supported by P2: “*We prefer females because some of them are mothers and they know how to handle kids and little babies.*”

P3 responded as follows:

I will prefer a female teacher, as they know and have been trained, equipped with a qualification. This makes it easy for them to cope with this area. Females have an added advantage over men

because taking care of babies to them comes naturally.

It is important to note that participants' views resonate through the somewhat hypothetical belief that women are best suited for preschool teaching, as they are good with children, and most men seem not to have the right qualities to do the job. However, it would appear that the cultural norms of gender stereotypes, where responsibilities of raising children are delegated to women, play a major part in this perception. The second theme is discussed below.

Theme 2: Factors Contributing to Low Male Representation as Preschool Educators

All the participants were unanimous about the fact that culture was an issue deserving attention. Participants' opinions were sought on what prevented male educators from being involved in early childhood care and education. The following are some of their responses.

The culture we live in and the stigma attached to men being involved in the care of children is the main reason why men shy away from this sector (P2).

Traditional prejudice that keeps the male teacher at a distance where the issues with regards to children's 'upraising' is concerned. Changing nappies, carrying and feeding kids might be some of the challenges for men (P3).

Teaching in preschool is equated to purely raising up a child and in our Black culture, that is the role performed by women, we believe children are raised by their mothers and not fathers (P5: female preschool educator).

Preschool teaching is basically caregiving, a duty which men can't perform effectively (P6: female preschool educator).

Culture defines roles and expectations for males and females and these seem to affect the recruitment of males as preschool educators. Involving males in preschools would expose them to an experience that they had never expected to be involved in in their societies. This is noted in P7's comment (female preschool educator) that "*very few men have experience or knowledge of playing, interacting and nurturing children. Our society does not expect or train men for such. Hence, it becomes very difficult for male educators to now look for employment in preschool teaching.*" What was then clear from the participants' responses was that men are never encouraged by society to become preschool educators because of the collective and shared belief that, unlike females, males are not capable of nurturing children.

All the participants noted that prejudice, fear, and stigmatisation were additional reasons why males avoided teaching in preschools. For instance, while P2 noted that the "*issues of child abuse are on the increase including some instances where biological fathers' abuse own children*", P3 exclaimed that "*parents of little ones do not trust*

strange men around their kids, especially due to a perception that male teachers could somehow be a threat to little ones." However, one of the male participants in the study dispiritedly expressed as follows:

Male teachers are treated differently to female teachers, yet we are in the same set up. The way a man is expected to show affection, love and care to kids must be different to female teacher. I am teaching at an all-boys school but I am told not to hug kids. Kids genuinely come to you and want to give you a good-bye hug on their way out; do you know how painful and it hurts for someone to try to make it into something nasty? (P8: Grade 1 male educator)

Another male participant, P9 (Grade R educator), echoed the above sentiment: "*men are not coming to this area ... So I think men feel that there is no market for them and they rather don't even try training to be a preschool teacher.*" All participants mentioned that males were associated with abuse. A contributing factor to this might be the rate of child abuse in which men constitute the majority of perpetrators. This scenario appears to be playing into the hands of recruiters, in that they become too afraid of recommending any male preschool educators.

Two other subthemes that emerged as contributing factors to low male preschool representation as educators were the issues of low status of the preschool teaching career and poor salaries. P1, whose view was supported by other participants, commented that "*we are not really paid much in terms of salaries in this sector. As such, most men as breadwinners they always look for better paying jobs and avoid being a preschool teacher.*" Low remuneration has a positive relationship with gender distribution, with male educators preferring other professions, while females opted for preschools. This means that only a few male educators would be willing to join the profession, hence the disparity. We further asked the participants whether they were proud of their profession. The following are responses from the two male participants in the study:

It very difficult to say it out loudly that I am a male Grade 1 teacher. I have often sometimes been laughed at by my relatives and very close friends (P8).

When we gather as a family, I discovered that people have a low perception of my job. This actually impacts negatively on me and taking into account that I am a man and you know us men and our egos. (P9)

P8 and P9 (male Grade R and 1 educators) outlined that they were proud of their work but cannot openly state it out when with family or friends. This explains further that for men teaching in lower Grades is frowned upon, and this may be the reason why the males tried not to be as open as they should, for fear of being looked down upon.

Theme 3: Benefits of Male Involvement in Caring for Young Children

The data analysis shows that the majority of the participants strongly felt the need to involve males in the preschool sector, because they could act as role models. Here are some of the excerpts:

Males are needed indeed; they can be role models to those children who feel neglected at home (P1).

Some kids don't have males that they can look up to from the community and families they are coming from. Having a male preschool teacher can come in handy (P3).

Certainly having males in preschools as teachers is of paramount importance. There is lack of proper role models in our nation. I have been in schools where many of the children come from single-parent families and have no real male role models. These children benefit greatly from having that male influence on their life. (P9)

We really need male teachers. They act as role models unto the kids. It's a pity many parents in South Africa seem to think that due to the current state of abuse in the country their children are not secure and safe nearby male teachers. (P10: preschool female educator)

Despite some of the ill feelings about the presence of males within this sector, participants still believed that males had the capacity to act as role models to the children. Additionally, the majority of the participants believed that male educators could indeed act as substitute fathers to some of the kids who seemed to lack father figures from their communities and families. Below are some of their responses:

Male teachers could come in handy. There is a lack of father figures in many families. Some children miss or don't even know what it is to have a father. So the male teacher can cater for that gap (P1).

A stronger disciplinary hand is lacking in many families in terms of the father figure. So having a male preschool educator can assist in terms of maintaining discipline and fatherly care (P3).

Whenever I do parents interviews and kids, I always sense it and know it that some parents are grateful their kids have a father figure at school (P8).

The nuclear family is fast disintegrating in South Africa. Many fathers are not present in their children's lives and education. Most kids are isolated by such a set up. Having a male teacher that they can associate with, play soccer with, especially boys, will be a great thing for them. Male preschool teachers can indeed fill up for that gap we have in South Africa. (P9)

The male educator plays an important role, especially in South Africa, where most men seem to be absent from the lives and education of their children. Most kids are desperately in need of a father figure that they can relate to. Apparently, the majority of the participants strongly felt that having male preschool educators could actually assist in closing that gap. Participants also noted that male educators could be of immense benefit in preschools, as they could assist in outdoor activities

such as sports, especially soccer and rugby for the boys, and by providing security during trips.

Theme 4: Strategies for Attracting Men into the Preschool Sector

We sought participants' views on possible strategies that could assist in the recruitment and retention of male educators in preschools. All participants stated that there was a need for advertising and awareness campaigns to educate parents and the community on the importance of having male preschool educators. Awareness campaigns were also highlighted as a catalyst to the issue of stigma, fear, and prejudice. The following are some of the participants' responses:

Advertising is the best strategy because people lack knowledge about the importance of having male teachers (P1).

Parents need to be made aware of the benefits of having male teachers (P2).

Issue of stigma and prejudice can only be dealt with if the parents and community is educated (P3). The government and responsible departments needs to embark on massive education to enlighten the nation on the issue of having male educators (P4).

Society, community and parents need information. They need to be educated. In the end, they will encourage their own children to pursue this career (P9).

This means that awareness and advertising are powerful tools to counter the negative perceptions that parents and the community may have about male preschool educators. On the other hand, males also need to be educated so that they can know their role and importance in the lives of the children, if they are to become preschool educators. This is what P8 meant when he said that "fellow men need to be made aware of the importance and contributions they can make unto the lives of small kids." He further noted that ignorance kills.

People need to be educated and using us the existing male teachers who are already in the field to talk to potential students in universities about pursuing teaching in the Foundation Phase can assist (P8).

The need for improvement in salaries, working conditions and status of preschools educators was unanimously supported by participants as powerful strategies to recruit and retain male preschool educators.

Most men consider themselves breadwinners. Hence, they need more money. Salary increases in the sector can help in them joining us (P2).

Good remuneration and proper working conditions is a better strategy to attract more males (P3).

The status of preschools and salaries needs to be improved if men are to be attracted (P4).

Yes, the salary matter needs a lot of consideration for the preschool sector to attract more male professionals (P8).

A better salary and remuneration system needs to be put in place (P9).

Since men are seen and mostly regarded as breadwinners, low status and low salary were considered as reasons why men shy away from the preschool profession. Hence, salary increase was overwhelmingly brought to the fore as a strategy to recruit and retain male educators. Disparity in salaries was quoted as another reason for the low representation of males as preschool educators. Bursaries, particularly for males to train as preschool educators, emerged as a strong strategy from the interviews. According to P3, *“men must be provided with funding opportunities to pursue a degree specifically in this area, and giving men bursaries to study and pursue a degree in early education will help cater for the gap”* (P3). Funding initiatives at national, district and university levels aimed at males only was suggested as a strategy to recruit and retain males in colleges and universities as this is where the low representations appears to take root before manifesting in the workplace.

Discussion

The central focus of this study was the desire to understand how preschools recruit and retain male educators in preschool centres within one of the Eastern Cape’s education districts. It emerged that there were no male preschool educators in the education district involved in this study. We also consulted the District Preschool Association, which confirmed that, at the time of this study, no details of male educators existed in their database. All the participating principals and owners of preschools who were asked about their recruitment policies and experiences regarding recruitment stated that they had never at any time recruited or encountered even a CV of a male candidate interested in preschool teaching. This would seemingly be in agreement with Eagly’s (1987) SRT in which the historical division of labour between women’s responsibilities at home and outside the home is recognised (see also Moss, 2016; Mukuna & Mutsotso, 2011). These earlier researchers argue that it was very rare to find men looking for, or submitting a CV in a female dominated profession.

A general lack of knowledge of what the National Integrated ECD policy of 2015 and its components state, emerged strongly as a subtheme. The majority of participants in this study were not even aware of the new ECD policy. Surprisingly, educators, principals, and preschool owners were not aware of a policy that governs the area in which they operate. A lack of knowledge of existing policy makes its implementation a big struggle (Sumsion, 2000). In addition, even if the participants or stakeholders had known about the new ECD policy, this would not have addressed the issue of the shortage of male educators and recruitment, as no mention of the measures to be taken was made in the policy document. Research

findings indicate that culture was one of the leading factors contributing to the low representation of male preschool educators. Most of the participants confessed that it was unheard of, especially in the African culture, since it is perceived as unnatural for men to take up jobs to nurture and care for babies. In an African setting, the impact of cultural factors related to the role of women in childrearing also discourages men from teaching in preschools (Mukuna & Mutsotso, 2011; Petersen & Petker, 2011). From the SRT perspective, this is not surprising given that the preschool centres are part of the larger society in which gender roles are perceived to be different for men and women. In virtually all participants’ responses, fear, prejudice, and stigma were cited as reasons contributing to the low representation of males in preschool teaching. These findings are supported in literature (see Drudy, 2008; Petersen, 2014).

The participants noted that male involvement in preschools can bring some benefits. However, there was no consensus in terms of what kind of benefits. Notwithstanding, participants noted that men at preschools can serve as good role models. Bandura (1986) argues that the importance of the role model plays a large part in the socialisation process, as people learn about others’ attitudes, values and beliefs and, eventually, come into their own by noticing and living through the behaviour of others. However, research cautions about discussions on men as role models, as this can often be problematic, unrealistic and challenging (Rentzou & Ziganitidou, 2009). According to Skelton (2009), the discourse on role models may lead to perceptions that pupils should be gender harmonised with teachers or that boys should be taught in single-sex schools with strong male role models. McCormack and Brownhill (2014) also postulate that being a role model was an innate and natural thing and not something that could be forced, learned or assumed, simply because one has become a male educator.

It was also noted that having men in preschools, could be beneficial, as they can take up the role as father figure. Mathwasa and Okeke (2016) note that a high percentage of men are either not actively involved in, or are absent from the lives of their children regarding their early educational activities. Given this scenario, the plight of countless children who are obliged to grow up without the presence of a father figure in their lives, makes the presence of male educators in preschools more imperative (Mashiya, 2014; Petersen, 2014).

A lack of policies aimed at recruiting male educators has also been noted. For instance, in central and northern Europe, a number of policies have been implemented with the objective of raising the number of men in preschools (Walshe, 2012; Wilson, 2011). However, this element is still

lacking in the education district where this study was conducted, and perhaps in the whole of the RSA. Awareness programmes for parents and communities, improvement in salary, working conditions and status of preschools, and bursaries for males to train as preschool educators all emerged as effective strategies to enhance the participation of males in preschool teaching and learning. This view is supported by Walshe (2012) who proposes that developing a nationwide awareness campaign on the positive benefits that men can bring to childcare services through their increased involvement in the profession, is essential.

Improved salaries of preschool educators was a contentious issue, however, the finding concurs with the view that it is the duty of the Department of Education to develop attractive reward and remuneration practices, which will retain a talented pool of schoolteachers (Armstrong, 2009; SACE, 2010). There was also consensus on the strategy of providing bursaries for males to train as preschool educators. This strategy was earlier promoted in a study by Jordan (2011) who states that scholarships for training should be offered to all men, regardless of income or ethnicity as a strategy to recruit and retain male educators within the preschool sector.

There were a few limitations to this study. Firstly, it should be noted that the interviews had to be done after hours and at the end of the day when the participants were not busy and were no longer occupied with teaching and caring for children. Although we had planned for this, we thought that the late hour of the interviews, when the participants were mostly tired, might have affected aspects of the data in terms of the quality of information obtained. Secondly, the study was limited to only one education district, and generalisation of the sample to the population is thereby discouraged.

Thirdly, we had difficulties in identifying male educators in preschools within the education district where the study was conducted. This meant that we relied on the opinion of the two male Foundation Phase (Grades R and 1) educators for data on the dearth of male preschool educators at preschool centres within the education district where the study was conducted. The limitation here is the fact that we failed to obtain first-hand knowledge of the experiences of males who actually worked in preschool centres. As a result, readers are cautioned to be mindful of this limitation as they interpret and make use of the findings of this study.

Further research in this area is of the utmost importance. The main aim of this study was to explore the strategies used to recruit and retain male educators in the preschool centres in the East London education district. Given this, only the opinions of preschool owners, principals,

preschool educators and two Foundation Phase educators were obtained. However, we are of the view that obtaining the opinion of the parents would be relevant in the efforts towards understanding the non-participation of male educators in preschools. Therefore, it would be useful for future researchers to explore the opinions of parents.

Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- 1) The Departments of Basic Education and Social Development should embark on a nationwide awareness campaign to educate all concerned on the need and importance of having males as educators in preschools;
- 2) Establishing a friendly funding policy to support all registered preschools to enable them to recruit and retain male as well as female educators;
- 3) The Department of Basic Education should provide bursaries to males who are keen and capable of pursuing studies in preschool teaching qualifications;
- 4) Institutions like universities and further education and training colleges should employ male lecturers and instructors to teach early childhood courses.

Acknowledgement

An earlier version of this article was presented at the 26th International Conference on Learning in Belfast, United Kingdom, from 24 to 26 July 2019. We would like to thank delegates who attended the presentation for their invaluable comments, which influenced the revision of this article.

Authors' Contributions

Chinedu I. Okeke wrote the manuscript while Enock Nyanhoto conducted the interviews and analysed the data. The final manuscript was reviewed by Chinedu I. Okeke.

Notes

- i. Published under a Creative Commons Attribution Licence.
- ii. DATES: Received: 5 August 2019; Revised: 25 January 2020; Accepted: 14 March 2020; Published: 31 May 2021.

References

- Adedeji SO & Olaniyan O 2011. *Improving the conditions of teachers and teaching in rural schools across African countries*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa. Available at https://teachertaskforce.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/improving_conditions.pdf. Accessed 17 April 2021.
- Armstrong P 2009. *Teacher pay in South Africa: How attractive is the teaching profession?* (Stellenbosch Economic Working Papers: 04/09). Matieland, South Africa: Department of Economics and the Bureau for Economic Research, University of Stellenbosch. Available at <https://resep.sun.ac.za/wp->

- content/uploads/2017/10/wp-04-2009.pdf. Accessed 22 April 2021.
- Bandura A 1986. *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Barkhuizen N 2014. Exploring the importance of rewards as a talent management tool for Generation Y employees. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(27):1100–1105. <https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n27p1100>
- Biddle BJ 2013. *Role theory: Expectations, identities, and behaviors*. New York, NY: Academic Press.
- Blakely TJ & Dziadosz GM 2015. Social role theory and social role valorization for care management practice. *Care Management Journals*, 16(4):184–187. <https://doi.org/10.1891/1521-0987.16.4.184>
- Carrington B, Tymms P & Merrell C 2008. Role models, school improvement and the ‘gender gap’ - do men bring out the best in boys and women the best in girls? *British Educational Research Journal*, 34(3):315–327. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01411920701532202>
- Carter Andrews DJ 2009. “The hardest thing to turn from”: The effects of service-learning on preparing urban educators. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 42(3):272–293. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10665680903060261>
- Creswell JW 2014. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Day C 2012. New lives of teachers. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 39(1):7–26.
- Department of Social Development, Republic of South Africa 2014. *Audit of early childhood development (ECD) centres. National report*. Pretoria: Author. Available at <https://ilifalabantwana.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/ECDAuditNationalReport20140731ReviewedFINALVersionES11.pdf>. Accessed 18 April 2021.
- Diekman AB & Schneider MC 2010. A social role theory perspective on gender gaps in political attitudes. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 34(4):486–497. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.2010.01598.x>
- Drudy S 2008. Gender balance/gender bias: The teaching profession and the impact of feminisation. *Gender and Education*, 20(4):309–323. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540250802190156>
- Eagly AH 1987. *Sex differences in social behaviour: A social-role interpretation*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Glenn JC 2010. *Handbook of research methods*. Jaipur, India: Oxford Books.
- Government of South Australia, Department for Education 2016. *Recruitment and selection of teaching staff in preschools procedure*. Adelaide: Author. Available at https://www.education.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/recruitment_teaching_preschools_procedure.pdf. Accessed 22 January 2019.
- Holloway I & Wheeler S 2013. *Qualitative research in nursing and healthcare* (3rd ed). Chichester, England: John Wiley & Sons.
- Imazeki J & Goe L 2009. *The distribution of highly qualified, experienced teachers: Challenges and opportunities* (TQ Research & Policy Brief). Washington, DC: National Comprehensive Centre for Teacher Quality. Available at <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED520728.pdf>. Accessed 24 August 2018.
- Irizarry J & Donaldson ML 2012. Teach for América: The Latinization of U.S. schools and the critical shortage of Latina/o teachers. *American Educational Research Journal*, 49(1):155–194. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831211434764>
- Johannesen N 2010. *Status of gender equality work in Norwegian Kindergartens – New kindergartens in old tracks*. Paper presented at the OMEP (Organisation Mondiale pour l’Education Préscolaire) World Congress, Göteborg, Schweden, 11-13 August. Available at http://www.sigggender.eu/forschung/OMEP_2010_Johannesen.pdf. Accessed 19 April 2021.
- Jones J 2009. Briefing paper: Men in early childhood education. *New Zealand Journal of Teachers’ Work*, 6(1):28–34.
- Jonker J & Pennink B 2010. *The essence of research methodology: A concise guide for master’s and PhD students in management science*. Heidelberg, Germany: Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-540-71659-4>
- Jordan JC 2011. Why do men choose to teach early childhood education? A study in interpretive interactionism. PhD thesis. Birmingham, AL: The University of Alabama at Birmingham.
- Joseph S & Wright Z 2016. Men as early childhood educators: Experiences and perspectives of two male prospective teachers. *Journal of Education and Human Development*, 5(1):213–219. <https://doi.org/10.15640/jehd.v5n1a22>
- Khewu N & Adu EO 2015. Black fathers’ involvement in the early education of their children and associated factors: South African context. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 42(1-2):1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09718923.2015.11893388>
- Koch B & Farquhar S 2015. Breaking through the glass doors: Men working in early childhood education and care with particular reference to research and experience in Austria and New Zealand. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 23(3):380–391. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2015.1043812>
- Lodico MG, Spaulding DT & Voegtke KH 2010. *Methods in educational research: From theory to practice* (2nd ed). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mack L 2010. The philosophical underpinnings of educational research. *Polyglossia*, 19:5–11. Available at https://secure.apu.ac.jp/rcaps/uploads/fckeditor/publications/polyglossia/Polyglossia_V19_Lindsay.pdf. Accessed 13 April 2021.
- Mackay N 2012. Male educators in early childhood care and education in Johannesburg: Lived experiences and policy issues. MA Social Development thesis. Johannesburg, South Africa: University of the Witwatersrand. Available at <http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/handle/10539/11589>. Accessed 13 April 2021.
- Maguire M & Delahunt B 2017. Doing a thematic analysis: a practical, step-by-step guide for learning and teaching scholars. *Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 8(3):3351–3364. Available at <https://ojs.aishe.org/index.php/aishe-j/article/view/335/553>. Accessed 12 April 2021.

- Mashiya N 2014. Becoming a (male) foundation phase teacher: A need in South African schools. *South African Journal of Childhood Education*, 4(3):24–36. Available at <http://www.scielo.org.za/pdf/sajce/v4n3/03.pdf>. Accessed 12 April 2021.
- Mathwasa J 2019. Stakeholders' views on the participation of male educators in pre-schools: Implications for policy and practice. *Journal of Human Ecology*, 65(1-3):65–74. <https://doi.org/10.31901/24566608.2019/65.1-3.3141>
- Mathwasa J & Okeke CIO 2016. Educators' perspectives on fathers' participation in the early childhood education of their children. *International Journal of Educational Sciences*, 13(2):172–185. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09751122.2016.11890451>
- McCormack O & Brownhill S 2014. 'Moving away from the caring': Exploring the views of in-service and pre-service male teachers about the concept of the male teacher as a role model at an early childhood and post-primary level. *International Journal of Academic Research in Education and Review*, 2(4):82–96. <https://doi.org/10.14662/IJARER2014.017>
- Merriam SB & Tisdell EJ 2016. *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mncanca M, Okeke CIO & Fletcher R 2016. Black fathers' participation in early childhood development in South Africa: What do we know? *Journal of Social Sciences*, 46(3):202–213. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09718923.2016.11893528>
- Moloney M 2011. Locating quality in early childhood care and education discourse in Ireland: Pre-school and infant classrooms as a crucible of learning and development. PhD thesis. Limerick, Ireland: University of Limerick. Available at <https://micuat.enovation.ie/bitstream/handle/10395/1928/Moloney%20M.%282011%29%20Locating%20Quality%20in%20Early%20Childhood%20Care%20and%20Education%20Discourse%20in%20Ireland%3a%20Pre-school%20and%20Infant%20Classrooms%20as%20a%20Crucible%20for%20Learning%20and%20Development%28PhD%20Thesis%29.pdf?sequence=2&isAllowed=y>. Accessed 11 April 2021.
- Moses I, Admiraal WF & Berry AK 2016. Gender and gender role differences in student-teachers' commitment to teaching. *Social Psychology of Education*, 19:475–492. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-016-9340-3>
- Moss S 2016. *Social role theory*. Available at <https://www.sicotests.com/psyarticle.asp?id=77>. Accessed 15 September 2016.
- Mukuna TE & Mutsotso SN 2011. Gender inequalities in early childhood development education teaching profession in Kenya. *Educational Research*, 2(13):1876–1885. Available at <https://www.interestjournals.org/articles/gender-inequalities-in-early-childhood-development-education-teaching-profession-in-kenya.pdf>. Accessed 11 April 2021.
- Okeke CIO 2017. Crises impacting South African men's participation in early socio-education development of children and possible useful interventions. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 48(4):476–487. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0081246317729572>
- Owen KJ 2012. Assessing the impact: The value of men as caregivers in early care and education. PhD dissertation. San Diego, CA: San Diego State University.
- Peeters J 2007. Including men in early childhood education: Insights from the European experience. *New Zealand Research in Early Childhood Education*, 10:15–24.
- Petersen N 2014. The 'good', the 'bad' and the 'ugly'? Views on male teachers in foundation phase education. *South African Journal of Education*, 34(1):Art. # 772, 13 pages. <https://doi.org/10.15700/201412120926>
- Petersen NF & Petker G 2011. Foundation phase teaching as a career choice: Building the nation where it is needed. *Education as Change*, 15(sup1):S49–S61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16823206.2011.643622>
- Ravhuhali F, Mashau TS, Lavhelani PN, Mudzielwana NP & Mulovhedzi S 2019. Demystifying foundation phase teaching: Male student teachers' motivation to enrol for B.Ed. degree in foundation phase at a rural university. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 33(6):283–299.
- Rentzou K 2017. Mapping gender segregation in pre-primary and primary education in Cyprus. *The Journal of Men's Studies*, 25(2):198–219. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1060826516658765>
- Rentzou K & Ziganitidou K 2009. Greek male early childhood educators: Self and societal perceptions towards their chosen profession. *Early Years*, 29(3):271–279. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09575140903286359>
- Republic of South Africa 2015. *National integrated early childhood development policy*. Pretoria: Government Printers. Available at https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201610/national-integrated-ecd-policy-web-version-final-01-08-2016a.pdf. Accessed 18 April 2021.
- Richter L, Chikovore J & Makusha T 2010. The status of fatherhood and fathering in South Africa. *Childhood Education*, 86(6):360–365. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00094056.2010.10523170>
- Rinke CR 2011. Career trajectories of urban teachers: A continuum of perspectives, participation, and plans shaping retention in the educational system. *Urban Education*, 46(4):639–662. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085911399790>
- Rohrmann T 2020. Men as promoters of change in ECEC? An international overview. *Early Years*, 40(1):5–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09575146.2019.1626807>
- Rolfe H 2005. *Men in childcare*. Manchester, England: Equal Opportunities Commission.
- Ronfeldt M, Reininger M & Kwok A 2013. Recruitment or preparation? Investigating the effects of teacher characteristics and student teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 64(4):319–337. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487113488143>
- Sak R, Sahin IK & Sahin BK 2012. Views of female pre-service teachers about male teaching colleagues. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 47:586–593.

- <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.06.700>
- Sayed Y & McDonald Z 2017. Motivation to become a Foundation Phase teacher in South Africa. *South African Journal of Childhood Education*, 7(1):a548. <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v7i1.548>
- Scullion H & Collings DG (eds.) 2011. *Global talent management*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Sevier B & Ashcraft C 2009. Be careful what you ask for: Exploring the confusion around and usefulness of the male teacher as male role model discourse. *Men and Masculinities*, 11(5):533–557. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X07302290>
- Skelton C 2009. Failing to get men into primary teaching: A feminist critique. *Journal of Education Policy*, 24(1):39–54. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02680930802412677>
- South African Council for Educators 2010. *A review of teacher demand and supply: Identifying research gaps and the role of SACE*. Centurion, South Africa: Author. Available at https://sace.org.za/assets/documents/uploads/sace_29250-2016-08-31-A%20review%20on%20teacher%20demand%20and%20supply%20in%20South%20Africa.pdf. Accessed 20 April 2021.
- Steyn T 2013. Professional and organizational socialization during leadership succession of a school principal: A narrative inquiry using visual ethnography. *South African Journal of Education*, 33(2):Art. #702, 17 pages. <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v33n2a702>
- Sumsion J 2000. Negotiating otherness: A male early childhood educator's gender positioning. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 8(2):129–140. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669760050046174>
- Svodziwa M & Raymond C 2016. Perceptions and attitudes of students and lecturers on female students enrolment in the Early Childhood Development program in Bulawayo. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, 3(1):208–213. Available at https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Mathew-Svodziwa/publication/290937908_Perceptions_and_Attitudes_of_Students_and_Lecturers_on_Female_Students_Enrolment_in_the_Early_Childhood_Development_Program_in_Bulawayo/links/569cc0e708aecee4e087d92a/Perceptions-and-Attitudes-of-Students-and-Lecturers-on-Female-Students-Enrolment-in-the-Early-Childhood-Development-Program-in-Bulawayo.pdf. Accessed 8 March 2021.
- Tannenbaum C, Greaves L & Graham ID 2016. Why sex and gender matter in implementation research. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 16:145. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-016-0247-7>
- Taylor A & Frankenberg E 2009. Exploring urban commitment of graduates from an urban-focused teacher education program. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 42(3):327–346. <https://doi-org.uplib.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/10665680903032344>
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 2019. *Global Education Monitoring Report. Gender report: Building bridges for gender equality*. Paris, France: Author. Available at <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000368753>. Accessed 20 April 2021.
- Walshe D 2012. An exploration into the involvement of men in ECCE settings in Ireland. In B McTaggart & P Share (eds). *Conference proceedings*. Sligo, Ireland: Big Fish Press. Available at <https://research.thea.ie/bitstream/handle/20.500.12065/561/Our%20children%20our%20future%2011%20conference%20proceedings.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>. Accessed 20 April 2021.
- Whipp JL & Geronime L 2015. Experiences that predict early career teacher commitment to and retention in high-poverty urban schools. *Urban Education*, 52(7):799–828. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085915574531>
- Wilson EAL 2011. Where have all the men gone? A look into men in early childhood education. M.A.Ed. thesis. Arcata, CA: Humboldt State University. Available at <http://humboldt-dspace.calstate.edu/bitstream/handle/10211.3/121548/Entire%20document%20-%20final%2011-14.pdf?sequence=1>. Accessed 20 April 2021.
- Yin RK 2012. *Applications of case study research* (3rd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Zink RC 2012. Sampling methodology: Implications for drawing conclusions from clinical research findings. In PG Supino & JS Borer (eds). *Principles of research methodology: A guide for clinical investigators*. New York, NY: Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-3360-6>