

The Meaning of Teaching for Early Childhood Teachers of Adult Male Teachers in Boyolali

Seno^{1,*}, Kusnulia Rosita²

¹ Tarbiyah Ihsanul Fikri College of Science, Magelang, Central Java, Indonesia

Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to determine the meaning of teaching for a male early childhood education educator. The life experiences of every male early childhood education educator are complex and unique, so the researcher chose this theme. In general, early childhood education educators in Indonesia are identical to the work of a woman, but some men still choose to work as early childhood education educators.

Methodology: Data collection techniques using in-depth interviews (In-Depth Interviews). Data analysis used interpretive case study analysis. The subjects in this study were 3 people who were male early childhood education educators in Boyolali Regency.

Results: The results of this study are the meaning of teaching for men who work as early childhood education educators is different. The main motivation for teaching early childhood education subjects is as a call to the soul to contribute to the intellectual development of the nation's children and as a charity. Subjects view welfare not only seen from the amount of salary received.

Applications/Originality/Value: Positively perceived experiences in this study were self-actualization, being a life teacher, being a charity field, and commitment. Experiences that are perceived negatively in this study are the emergence of conflicts caused by a lack of confidence or conflicts that come from external.

keywords: Teaching; early childhood education; teacher

Introduction Section

The quality of early childhood educational institutions in Indonesia advanced significantly. The numbers of early childhood educational institutions in recent three years increased significantly. In 2017, 238.000 early childhood education institutions were established. Some 6.000 early childhood education institutions belonged to the government while the remaining number of institutions belonged to a private party (Merdeka.com). The Central Data and Educational Statistics and Culture, in 2017, found a contrasting difference between male early-childhood education teachers and female early-childhood education teachers.

Factually, teaching in early childhood education has been shifting in many countries, such as Sweden (Sandberg & Pramling-Samuelsson, 2005) and Hongkong (Ho & Lam, 2014). Sandberg & Pramling-Samuelson mentioned that in 1970 Sweden introduced the quota system for male early childhood educators. In this period, the first male early childhood educator batch received recognition and status from the government. Ho & Tirky (2012) explained that the reformation of Hongkong early childhood educational institutions in 1997 made male youngsters interested to be early childhood educators. Unfortunately, the interest of male individuals to be early childhood educators received a negative stigma from the community. Most communities perceive that nurturing early childhood children is the job for females. In Indonesia, the quality of male teachers improved recently (Pusat Data dan Statistik Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2017; Yulindrasari, 2017).

Teachers have the role to develop the learners in achieving their life purposes based on the learners' interests and potentials (Zulkifli, Darmawan & Sutrisno, 2014). Working as a teacher is directly correlated to the community's necessity. Teachers are the determinant and failure factors of the efforts to improve education quality and innovation at the school level (Cintang, Setyowati, & Handayani, 2017). A qualified education requires qualified teachers to guide, motivate, and stimulate learners. The realization of qualified educators requires competence training. The Integrated Training Program based on Competence is important to improve teachers'

* Corresponding author: kusnuliarosita@gmail.com, cahpengging@gmail.com

competencies. Unfortunately, current training only deals with the cognitive aspect. Lin (2004) explains that female children are easier to obtain examples of their gender-based development at early childhood educational institutions. Unfortunately, this ease of access is not observable in male learners due to the female teacher number dominance at early childhood educational institutions. This situation makes female children meet the expectations of female teachers. Thus, female children could easily receive psychological empowerment, such as compliments and personality development (Utami, Latiana, & Pranoto, 2020). Other studies found that male teacher presences at early childhood educational institutions provided benefits for male children. Male teachers would highly involve male children in the learning process by promoting psychomotor activities (Besnard & Letarte, 2017).

The importance of providing male teachers deals with male behavioral examples to foster proportional behavioral development for male children (Jensen, 1996; Lin, 2004). Erden (2009) found that institutions managed by females, such as early childhood education institutions, made male children have social adaptive problems. For this reason, many researchers theorized the correlation between the male-model absence and the social adaptive problems of male children (Besnard & Letarte, 2017). Therefore, researchers assumed the roles of male teachers were important at early childhood educational institutions. Their roles were not only important for male children but also vital to realize gender role and responsibility equality which had been dominated by female teachers (Besnard & Letarte, 2017).

Being an early childhood educator for male individuals is not an easy job. The job requires patience to educate the children properly. For male individuals, being early childhood educators require four competence masteries to be excellent and qualified early childhood educators. Sofa & Syamsiyati (2020:11) explain the competencies of early childhood teachers are correlated with the teaching quality of teachers. A qualified teacher must have four teacher competencies, such as pedagogy, personality, social, and professionalism to make the early childhood children enjoy learning together. Many studies showed early childhood children preferred male teachers in terms of personal, professional, and social competencies. Kurniawati (2020) also found that most learners at early childhood educational institutions in Semarang preferred male teachers to female teachers in terms of personal, social, and professional competencies.

Sumsion (2005) also found that female teachers at early childhood education institutions preferred to work with male teachers because they had excellent personalities and efficiency. The male teachers also did not like gossiping and were more flexible while working. Female and male teachers have specific superiorities. Their collaborations will improve the psychological development of early childhood children (Songtao, 2000). Lack of comprehensive understanding of the meaning of teaching influences job participation. For example, an individual that lacks this comprehension will also lack compassion as the basis to teach their learners. The life-meaning resources include creative values and attitudes that reflect the jobs.

The meaning of teaching may vary from one educator to another educator. In this research, the definition of teaching meaning is - a vital matter for the male individual with the profession of being an early childhood educator. In this perspective, the male teacher has great responsibilities that must be comprehended. Thus, the male teacher could maintain his patience, accurate decision-making toward a challenge, personal job participation as the creative values of life meaning, and sincere job principle (Putri, 2014). A male individual also has the role of a father in his job. This individual must work and carry out his role as a father by paying attention to his children's development. Higher participation frequency of a father to nurture his children led to higher moral quotient development of preschool-aged children (Gunawan, Utanto, & Maretta, 2017).

Being a male educator at an early childhood educational institution requires sincerity. This profession has a strong correlation with wellbeing because a male educator of early childhood education also expects better life earnings. Being an early childhood educator is different from other professions. In Indonesia, the numbers of male teachers at early childhood educational institutions are limited. Based on the primary data of education, Dapodik, issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Republic Indonesia, in the even semester of the academic year 2019/2020, male teachers at early childhood educational institutions in Indonesia were 3.272 individuals while female teachers at early childhood educational institutions were 108.760 individuals (Kemendikbud, 2020). This data shows that male teachers of early childhood educational institutions are only 2.9%, lower than the female teacher percentage, 91.7%. This phenomenon also occurs in various countries. In Europe, the percentage of male teachers at early childhood educational institutions is 1-4% (Sumsion, 2005).

In Boyolali, the data indicate an increased number of male teachers at early childhood educational institutions. Boyolali is a region of Central Java province with the third-highest rate of male teacher availability at early childhood educational institutions compared to other regions. Based on the Dapodik data, in the even semester of the academic year 2019/2020, the male educators and educational staff at early childhood educational institutions in Boyolali were 36 individuals. These individuals had various statuses, starting from junior until senior educators. Senior educators refer to male teachers that have been teaching for more than 25 years. On the other hand, junior teachers refer to male teachers with 1-5 years of service. Based on the employment statuses at early childhood educational institutions, these male teachers were grouped into two categories: the civil servant (PNS) and the permanent teacher of a foundation (GTY). From the educational statuses, some male teachers graduated with a bachelor's degree while some other teachers graduated from Senior High Schools. Based on marital statuses, some male educators were married while others were not married yet.

Based on the preliminary survey about the male educators at early childhood educational institutions in Boyolali, the researchers found 69% of male teachers had reached excellent wellbeing although they were paid low salaries. The researchers distributed the survey via Google Forms. Sixteen male educators joined this survey. They were aged between 27 and 60 years old with years of service from 1 until 38 years. Fourteen male teachers were Muslims while two educators were Protestant. Two educators were civil servants while the others were private teachers. Twelve educators were early childhood education institution teachers as the main job while the other educators did not perceive the job as the primary job. For the aspect of financial wellbeing, eleven early childhood teachers admitted they had excellent financial wellbeing while the others did not. Of eleven teachers that admitted to having excellent financial wellbeing, 4 teachers received salaries lower than Rp. 500.000, below the minimum regional wage. Six teachers explained that their salaries had reached the minimum regional wage. Then, a teacher explained that the earnings from the job were adequate for his life.

The preliminary survey results on the field were contradictory with some previous studies that low earning and career difficulties made male individuals not interested to be teachers at early childhood educational institutions, for example (Jones, 2016) and (W. Zhang, 2017). Based on the theory of influential factors of the profession, higher career opportunities and higher financial rewards make individuals choose certain professions. Current researchers believed that all male teachers at early childhood educational institutions encountered various problems while teaching or dealing with their financial wellbeing. The background gap and status difference among male teachers at early childhood education institutions in Boyolali also influenced the profession selections. Therefore, in this research, the researchers revealed how male teachers defined their jobs as early childhood educators in Boyolali. The researchers expected the results to contribute and provide a recommendation for Educational Institutions in Boyolali to make related financial wellbeing decisions for male educators at early childhood education institutions in Boyolali.

Research Method

This qualitative research used a study case perspective. The qualitative research described the research subject's experience holistically by describing the findings with words and using language. The researchers did this technique in a specific-scientific context with the scientific method (Moleong, 2012). In this research, the researchers attempted to reveal the teaching experience of male educators at early childhood education institutions comprehensively by developing meaningful relationships. The researchers applied the study case method to explore the teaching experience of the subjects that devoted their lives to teaching.

The research site of the current research was Boyolali, Central Java province. Boyolali is a city in the Surakarta region. The research period was promoted from February 2020 until December 2020. The researchers took the data source from the male educators at early childhood education institutions in Boyolali. The educators had senior and junior teaching statuses and two categories of employment: civil servants and private teachers. The

researchers revealed the teaching experience of the male teachers comprehensively by developing a meaningful relationship. The researchers applied the study case method to explore the teaching experience of the subjects that devoted their lives to teaching. The researchers formulated the research subject criteria based on the research objective to reveal. Here were the research subject criteria of the research:

- a. Senior male teachers at early childhood education institutions with more than 25 years of service.
- b. Junior male teachers at early childhood education institutions with 1 to 5 years of service.
- c. Male teachers with civil servant status.
- d. Male teachers with permanent status of a foundation.

The applied research instruments included a form sheet to record the data and an audio recorder. The data collecting technique was an in-depth interview. The data analysis technique in this research was the study case technique.

Determining the Research Subject

The researchers determined the subjects based on the information of the subject candidates. The researchers used the predetermined criteria for the subject candidates, the male teachers, at early childhood educational institutions in Boyolali. Then, the researchers asked for their willingness to join the research by providing informed consent for the subjects as proof of participation. In the research, the researchers encountered difficulties to find male educators that met the research criteria.

The Descriptions of the Research Subjects

The first subject was NS, 35 years old. This subject was a civil servant with the functionary rank of IIa to IIb. NS has been working for 25 years old. NS became a civil servant 6 years ago after devoting his time to teaching as an honorary teacher at Public Kindergarten Pembina, Boyolali. NS was married to BA in 1992 and has been having 4 children. The first child is AF, married and having a child. The second child is IF, married. The third child is IS, a child with specific needs. Currently, she is going to the Extraordinary School of Primary Level in Boyolali. The fourth child is MHM, 8 years old, going to primary school. NS was born in Ngawi, East Java. After marrying BA, NS moved to Cabean Kunti, Cepogo, and Boyolali.

The second subject was named SK. SK was an educator at an early childhood educational institution at Pertiwi Samiran II Kindergarten. SK has been working since 2008. SK is the first child, living in Gebyok, Selo village, Selo district, Boyolali regency. SK was not married at that time. He was 34 years old. While working as an early childhood educator, SK also actively participated in Selo village government, such as in Village-Owned Enterprises (BUMDES) and Ballot Functionary (PPS). After finishing his job as a Ballot Functionary, SK became the Election Supervising Functionary, Panwas.

The third subject was named ANA. ANA is a male child of a spouse MY-SY. MY and SY managed an educational institution to teach the children reading Al-Qur'an, TPA, and a Play Group named Labiba Maulida. Since the institutions needed more teacher recruits, SY asked ANA to be the teacher in Labiba Maulida Play Group. ANA is the only male child in the family. He has two sisters. At that time, he was working at Labiba Maulida Play Group behind his parents' house. ANA was 26 years old and lived with his parents. In 2020, ANA was married to DN that worked as an Islamic Primary School Teacher, at *Madrasah Ibtidaiyyah* (MI).

Results

The process of defining the meaning involved grouping the psychological meaning results and the promoted horizontalization process. The textual descriptions consisted of the statements and the utterances spoken by the original subjects based on the horizontalization process. The researchers described the results structurally, starting by interpreting the results of the original subject statements. The obtained unit of meaning consisted of textual and structural descriptions. Then, the researchers revealed the psychological meaning structurally.

Table 1 the Units of Meaning and Psychological Meaning

No	The Units of Meaning	Psychological Meaning	Subjects
1	Being an early childhood educator is a life choice of the subjects.	Self-acceptance	1, 2, 3
2	Being an early childhood should not be measured based on the earned wage but instead the happiness, the teacher's meaning.	Self-acceptance	1, 2, 3
3	An influential factor in being an early childhood teacher is - loving children.	Self-acceptance	2
4	- Being financially wellbeing or prosperous is relative. - Feeling sufficient with the obtained wage or salary - Feeling relieved to receive the wage or salary (3) - Feeling grateful to be an early childhood teacher (3)	Self-acceptance	1, 2, 3
5	- The financial wellbeing or prosperity between civil servant teachers and private teachers is different. - Recognizing the risk of being an early childhood educator (3)	Self-acceptance	1,2,3
6	Having responsibilities (teaching and managing the classroom)	Life purpose	1,2, 3
7	- Career and family are two important matters. - Providing life support for the family	Life purpose	1, 2
8	Improving the career by having better education and training	Personal development	1
9	The patience of being an honorary teacher turned into the miracle of being a civil servant	Personal development	1
10	- Creating excellent communication with the environment - Creating an excellent relationships with other people - Learning together to plan the learning (coordination) - Promoting fluent communication	Creating a positive relationship with other individuals	1, 2, 3
11	- Being a useful individual - Seeking only heaven in the life-after (3)	Life purpose	1,2,3
12	Solving problems	Being autonomous	1
13	- The motivation for being an early childhood educator (loving the children) - Raising family schools (3)	Life purpose	1,2, 3
14	- Receiving support from families - Managing time between families and careers	Life purpose	1, 2, 3
15	- Feeling grateful for the earned salaries - Being a success in the world and the world after	Spirituality	1, 2,3
16	- Obtaining experience as a teacher - Keeping to be excellent educators - Preparing the early childhood children to enroll in preliminary schools (3) - Solving problems of the learners (3) - Being excellent examples (3) - Solving the problems of the children	Environmental mastery	1,2, 3

	- Respecting all people		
17	- Having opportunities to improve the career - Receiving professional incentives - Having the experience to be a teacher at Al-Qur'an education institution (3) - Having the ideas to develop the kindergarten (3)	Personal development	1,2, 3
19	Initially, being an early childhood educator was due to other individuals' encouragement	Life purpose	2,3
20	The government must improve the prosperity of the teachers	Hopes	1,2
21	- Having side jobs besides being early childhood educators	Personal development	2,3
22	- Someone must have skills - Art field contribution (2) - Teaching with various methods (3)	Personal development	1,2,3
23	- Feeling confused to manage the time between careers and communities - Having hindrances while teaching - Lack of financial management (2) - Having IT weaknesses (3)	Personal conflicts	2,3
24	- No force from the subjects' parents - Having the capability to adapt - Being aware of teaching theories - Having principles and encountering different arguments (3)	Being autonomous	1, 2, 3
25	- Experiencing different arguments in teams and being capable to solve the arguments - Encountering all challenges - Solving all problems	Solving problems	1, 2, 3
27	Marriage was the most memorable matter Family is the reason to survive	Life purpose	3

Discussion

The teaching experience for the subjects was varied. The meaning of teaching included motivation and the understanding of teaching concepts as good deeds. The subjects had teaching motivation from various considerations, including the religious understanding of teaching as long-lasting deeds and the heart call. Professional teachers have excellent characteristics and performance productivity based on their expertise. Teachers received empowerment and training from the government or private institutions to improve the quality of their education (Massalim, 2019).

Male educators at early childhood educational institutions were limited but they provided positive impacts. The male teachers brought positive development to the children (Maulana, kurniati, & Yulindrasari, 2020). The male teachers perceived the job, being early childhood educators, as a noble job because not all men wanted to take the opportunity. Male teachers could provide for the psychomotor needs of the children during the learning process (Hayati, Siron, & Hermawati, 2021). Being an early childhood educator required responsibilities and maturity.

Currently, Indonesia needs teachers with an excellent and positive mentality to apply new strategies, promote critical thinking skills, break myths, apply creative learning, and prevent the culture of punishment.

Creative and innovative teachers could inspire and motivate the learners while teaching and devoting their effort to better educational advancement (Alfina, 2016).

The other factor of being an early childhood educator for male teachers was family support. Their families supported the male teachers to take noble jobs. The families were aware of the job that required patience. The families also knew that they had to have side jobs to run their family economic matters. The families also knew that wellbeing or prosperity was not only about high earning but also living in peace and harmony with their families and having excellent mental and physical health. Hayati (2015) also found the same result on male teachers' competencies at the Kindergarten level.

Most teachers perceived teaching activities as long-lasting deeds, *amal jariyah*, to realize a better generation for the future development of the country. Thus, they considered the job not only based on the successful and economic aspects, such as receiving professional incentives and having better employment status to be a civil servant but also based on the life-after vision, the *amal jariyah*. The learning objectives of early childhood educational institution is to realize young generations with excellent characters and feats. In this research, all subjects defined their professions as male teachers at early childhood educational institutions as the job to realize their learners in achieving success and happiness, both in the world and in life-after. They also perceived the job as a noble job.

Teaching did not only deal with having higher salaries but the heart call and compassion for the children. Puspitasari & Masykur (2018) also found that early childhood educators that could successfully define their jobs had the excellent motivation to carry out their jobs. They also respected all obtained experiences and could avoid life's emptiness. Early childhood educators perceived teaching early childhood children as a vital job compared to the obtained salaries. When the teacher could define their jobs, they performed with excellent professionalism as the demands of every teacher.

The meanings of teaching at an early childhood education institution included feeling convenient and having an opportunity to optimize personal potential. Schultz (1995) also found the influential factors of life meaning (teaching and prosperity meaning), such as internal and external factors. In this case, the internal factor included mindset, attitude, self-concept, comprehension, worship, and personality. The external factors included jobs, experience, family relationships, culture, and social environment (Yuslam, Setiani, & Srail, 2017).

Conclusion

From the discussion, the researchers concluded that the influential factors of being early childhood educators were capability, destiny, religiosity, emotional intimacy with children, adaptive skill, family support, wife support, personality, collaboration, and material need fulfillment. These factors supported the individuals to decide to be early childhood educators. The subjects believed that the job was noble and brought them long-lasting deeds, *amal jariyah*. The attached religiosity of the subjects included the religious and divine values internalizations. Besides that, the religious attitudes of the subjects developed and progressed along with their maturity.

The meaning of teaching might vary due to the influences of religiosity attitudes of the subjects. The teaching motivation for every subject was also different. However, all subjects perceived the job as the job with life-after orientation, *amal jariyah*. The important motivation for the subjects was the heart call to make the children literate. They also had motivation upon the job as long-lasting deeds, *amal jariyah*, even when they passed away.

Acknowledgement

Thanks to all research subjects to help with this research promotion.

References

- Alfina, A. (2016). Guru Humanis Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini (PAUD). *Jurnal CARE (Children Advisory Research and Education)*, 3(3), 58-66.
- Besnard, T., & Letarte, M. J. (2017). Effect of Male and Female Early Childhood Education Teacher's Educational Practices on Children's Social Adaptation.

- Cintang, N., Setyowati, D. L., & Handayani, S. S. D. (2017). Perception of primary school teachers towards the implementation of project-based learning. *Journal of Primary Education*, 6(2), 81-93.
- Erden, S., Ozgun, O., & Ciftci, M. A. (2011). "I am a man, but I am a preschool education teacher": Self- and social-perception of male preschool teachers. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 15, 3199–3204. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.04.271>.
- Gunawan, D., Utanto, Y., & Maretta, Y. A. (2017). An analysis of Indonesian teachers' reasoning in resolving moral dilemmas. *Man In India*, 97(2), 829-841.
- Hayati. (2015). *Studi Deskriptif Kompetensi Pedagogik Guru Taman Kanak-kanak Laki-laki di Kota Semarang*.
- Hayati, M., Siron, Y., & Hermawati, E. (2021). Strategi Lembaga Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini dalam Melibatkan Guru Laki-Laki. *Golden Age: Jurnal Ilmiah Tumbuh Kembang Anak Usia Dini*, 6(1), 11-24.
- Kurniawati, Y., Pranoto, S., Setiawan, D., & Ahmadi, F. (2020). Young Student ' s Perspective of Male Teacher : A Case Study of Semarang City , Indonesia. *Iset*. <https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.29-6-2019.2290437>.
- Massalim, S. Z. (2019). Pengaruh kesejahteraan guru terhadap kinerja guru PAUD di Kp.Cibadak Kayumanis Bogor. *Jurnal Pendidikan Luar Sekolah*, 13(2), 62. <https://doi.org/10.32832/jpls.v13i2.2650>
- Maulana, R. A., Kurniati, E., & Yulindrasari, H. (2020). Apa Yang Menyebabkan Rendahnya Keberadaan Guru Laki-Laki Di Paud?. *Jurnal Ilmiah Visi*, 15(1), 23-32.
- Moleong, L. 2007. (2007). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*.
- Moleong, L. J. (2001). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*. Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Puspitarani, P., & Masykur, A. M. (2020). Makna menjadi guru Taman Kanak-kanak (Sebuah studi kualitatif fenomenologis). *Jurnal Empati*, 7(1), 308-314.
- Putri, R. D. (2019). Budaya Adil Gender pada Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini Melalui Permainan Peran. *Jurnal Wahana Konseling*, 2(2), 74–83.
- Schultz, D. (1991). *Psikologi pertumbuhan, model-model kepribadian sehat*. Kanisius.
- Shofa, M. F., & Syamsiyati, R. N. (2020). Analisis kompetensi pendidik PAUD pada alumni program studi PIAUD FIT IAIN Surakarta. *Jurnal Pendidikan Anak*, 9(1), 9–19.
- Sumsion, J. (2005). Male teachers in early childhood education: Issues and case study. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 20(1), 109–123. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2005.01.001>
- Utami, D.R.F., Latiana, L. & Pranoto, Y.K.S. (2020). A Study on the Influence of Personality and Social Competencies on the Performance of Kindergarten Teachers Based on the Principal's s Assessment. *Journal of Primary Education*, 11, 92–98.
- Yuslam, Y., Setiani, R. E., & Sari, A. K. (2017). Studi Tentang Kompetensi Guru PAUD Berkualifikasi Akademik Sarjana PG-PAUD Dan NonPG-PAUD di PAUD Istiqomah Sambas Purbalingga. *Al-Athfal: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak*, 3(2), 151-168.
- Zulkifli, M., Darmawan, A., & Sutrisno, E. (2014). Motivasi Kerja, Sertifikasi, Kesejahteraan dan Kinerja Guru. *Persona: Jurnal Psikologi Indonesia*, 3(02).