



Minority of Male Teachers in Kindergartens as a Result of Gender Stereotypes in Society

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Abstract

The phenomenon of the minimum number of male kindergarten teachers is increasingly visible in Indonesia, so that people increasingly think that kindergarten teachers are a woman's profession. This results in an imbalance of gender roles in Kindergarten. Discussion of gender-related issues in kindergarten is considered too commonplace and often escapes society's attention. The aim of this research is to describe and analyze gender stereotypes which result in a minority of male teachers in kindergarten. Not only that, this research also provides an alternative view of the role of a man as a teacher in kindergarten. This research is a literature study that uses a qualitative approach. The results of this research are stereotypes that grow and develop in society regarding male kindergarten teachers, including; firstly, kindergarten teachers are attached to feminine traits, while men are attached to masculine traits, secondly, the assumption is that male kindergarten teachers are "gay", thirdly, the kindergarten profession which is not financially promising is not suitable for men who are charged with the role of "backbone", fourth, men must have challenging work, while the profession of kindergarten teacher is a profession that is not challenging and has low risk.

Keywords: Minorities, Male Kindergarten Teachers, Gender Stereotypes

Introduction

Teachers are at the forefront of the educational process. In practice, teachers take a direct role in the teaching and learning process, from the lowest level to the highest level (Urbach et al., 2023, p. 23513). At the lower level, the teacher's role begins at the Kindergarten education level. Carrying out the profession as a teacher at this level is still often associated with gender issues (Maulana et al, 2020, p. 24). The gender issue that is still circulating in society today is that women dominate the kindergarten teacher profession, so that the number of male kindergarten teachers is relatively small and even rare in Indonesia.

Based on data from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology,

the number of kindergarten teachers in the last 3 years in Indonesia shows a significant comparison between the number of male and female teachers. The number of kindergarten teachers in the 2021/2022 school year is around 4,656 for male, and 255,702 for female kindergarten teachers. Then in the 2022/2023 school year, the number of male kindergarten teachers will still remain at around 4,656, while the number of female kindergarten teachers will increase to 258,905. The latest data for kindergarten teachers in the odd semester of the 2023/2024 academic year, there are 264,261 kindergarten teachers spread throughout Indonesia. This number consists of 4,705 male kindergarten teachers and 259,556 female kindergarten teachers (Kemendikbudristek, 2023). Based on this

data, although the number of male kindergarten teachers has increased slightly, the percentage of male kindergarten teachers is only around 1.8% of the number of female kindergarten teachers spread throughout Indonesia.

Referring to the data on the number of male and female kindergarten teachers, it can be said that the kindergarten teaching profession in Indonesia is dominated by women. This is considered a normal thing that occurs in society. Otherwise, it would be strange if the kindergarten teaching profession was dominated by men. This is because there is an assumption that there is a mismatch between the roles of kindergarten teachers and men. (Dianita, 2020, p. 88).

Stereotypes of women with labels of femininity and prioritizing feelings over rationality (Saguni, 2014, p. 196), are reasons for the suitability of women in teaching children in kindergarten over men. As explained in Chairun Nisa's research (2023), society views that it is unsuitable for men to be kindergarten teachers, this is because teaching kindergarten requires teachers who have a gentle and patient spirit, both of which are inherent in women. Apart from that, a man's level of patience is very low when dealing with a variety of small children at one time (Fadillah and Nur, 2023, p. 69). The stereotype of a patriarchal society is that men have a superior position, are respected and respected, while women are assigned the role of caring for the family, taking care of the house and caring for children. These stereotypes gain legitimacy from social norms and are socialized from generation to generation (Marlisa et al, 2020, p. 164). This seems to eliminate men's role in parenting (Riyaldi, 2016, p. 35).

The same thing was also expressed in research by Fatmawati et al (2023), the public stigma towards kindergarten education is closely related to caring for children, where this is more attached to the role of women who tend to have a motherly attitude and be close to children, so that men are considered incapable. and not suitable for carrying out the profession as a kindergarten teacher (Fatmawati et al, 2023, p. 2513). This fact became striking when various universities in Indonesia opened Early

Childhood Education study programs (PGPAUD/PIAUD/PGTK). Stereotypes given by society have resulted in reduced interest of men in taking Early Childhood Education study programs, so that male students are rarely found in these study programs (Marlisa et al, 2020, p. 163). The scarcity of male students in this study program has also resulted in a scarcity of male kindergarten teachers.

When observed in the field, in one district the number of male kindergarten teachers is only a few or almost non-existent. In Purbalingga Regency, in 2023 the number of male kindergarten teachers will only be three (Kemendikbudristek, 2023). The phenomenon of the scarcity of male kindergarten teachers as a result of society's perception of the suitability and different abilities of women in teaching children, as well as data that is directly proportional to the stereotypes given by society towards kindergarten teachers, is evidence of the existence of a gender gap between kindergarten teachers, boy and girl.

Another factor that gives rise to gender inequality in male and female kindergarten teachers is the emergence of male fear which is always closely associated with the crime of physical contact with children, or which is often labeled with the term pedophile (Eldred, 2022, p. 755 -756). It was said in research in South Africa that this labeling of men is increasing over the years, thus strengthening society's assumption that women are more appropriate in educating early childhood (Moosa and Bhana, 2020, p. 511-512).

The issue of gender inequality between men and women among kindergarten teachers is still often ignored. Theoretically, it is important to start planting gender equality education from the lowest levels of education, where the seeds of gender equality should begin to be planted (Fadillah and Nur, 2023, p. 66). The presence of male and female teachers at the kindergarten level is a form of complete figure for children, the feminine and masculine traits shown to children should be fulfilled by each individual based on gender (Warin, 2019, p. 294-295). This is deemed necessary because starting at the age of 3 years, children's development is in the stage of recognizing

gender roles which become part of their personality (Maulana et al, 2020, p. 28). Children during their development period spend 50 hours a week in a caring environment that is dominated by women, while children tend to have little positive contact with adult men. Meanwhile, female kindergarten teachers use more quiet activities in their teaching, while male kindergarten teachers use more physical activities (Rachman et al, 2022, p. 194). Therefore, it is necessary to balance the roles of female and male teachers in teaching children at an early age.

Various figures have shown the low participation of men in kindergarten education which has resulted in gender inequality in the kindergarten teaching profession. Meanwhile, children need a balance of gender roles in their development process. This related study has been carried out by many previous researchers. Dianita (2020) discusses the inequality that occurs among PAUD teachers in Indonesia, where women dominate this profession. However, this research does not show data per year to determine current inequality trends. Apart from that, there is research by Fatmawati (2023) which discusses the shift in gender stigma of PAUD teachers. In this research, the negative stigma attached to male teachers was caused by several factors such as parenting, salary and teacher welfare. The absence of research using data from the most recent school year makes this research capable of being an update and theoretical contribution in presenting the phenomenon of gender inequality among male teachers in Kindergarten.

Method

This type of research is library research. Library research is a type of research by collecting scientific papers or data related to the object of research or the process of collecting data that is library in nature. The process in this type of research includes reading, taking notes and processing materials related to collecting research data (Zed, 2008). In terms of research, scientific papers or literature sources related to kindergarten teachers and gender were collected. The

approach used in this research is descriptive qualitative. The use of a qualitative approach is because the data collected and the analysis is qualitative (Sugiyono, 2016, p. 14). The data sources in this research are personal documents, such as books and previous research. The data collection technique is carried out by identifying various books, news and scientific papers or other sources related to kindergarten teachers and gender, then collecting various materials and recording them, and finally analyzing the library data that has been obtained.

Results and Discussion

Minority of Male Teachers in Kindergarten

Currently, the ratio of the number of male teachers to female teachers at the Kindergarten level is still clear. Based on data on the number of teachers recorded by the Ministry of Education and Culture, it shows that there are very large differences and illustrates the existence of a minority of male teachers in Indonesia. The following is data on the number of Kindergarten teachers in Indonesia for the last three years (Kemendikbudristek)

Table 1. Number of Kindergarten Teachers in the Last 3 Years

No.	School year	Semester	Male	Female
1.	2021/2022	Gasal	4.596	254.856
		Genap	4.656	255.702
2.	2022/2023	Gasal	4.668	257.948
		Genap	4.656	258.905
3.	2023/2024	Gasal	4.705	259.556

Based on the table above, the number of kindergarten teachers over the last three years in Indonesia shows an increase every year. However, from this table it can also be seen that every year there is a significant difference in the number of male and female kindergarten teachers. The average number of male teachers recorded in the Kemendikbudristek's basic data is only around 1.8% of the number of female kindergarten teachers.

The reality found in the surrounding environment also shows that there is a scarcity of male teachers in kindergarten. Although

sometimes there are, the number can be counted on the fingers of one hand, in fact the majority of kindergartens do not have a single male teacher in them. As happened in Purbalingga Regency and Banyumas Regency this year.

Table 2. Number of Kindergarten Teachers in 2 Regency

No.	Regency	Male	Female
1.	Purbalingga	3	465
2.	Banyumas	5	1.277

The data in table 2 above is directly proportional to the reality found in the surrounding environment. In one sub-district in Purbalingga and Banyumas Regencies there were almost no male kindergarten teachers. Based on the data presented, it is clear that there is a minority of male kindergarten teachers and clearly indicates that there is a gap between the number of male and female kindergarten teachers.

Gender Equality Concept

Secara bahasa, istilah gender berasal dari In English, "gender" means sex. Initially, the meaning of the word gender referred to the biological meaning that differentiated the male and female sexes. However, this understanding develops etymologically, the meaning of gender is related to the externally visible differences between male and female genders (Dianita, 2020, p. 92). This is similar to the definition of gender which is a concept that differentiates between men and women from a non-biological perspective (Arbain et al, 2017, p. 75).

According to WHO, the meaning of gender refers to roles, behaviors, activities, attributes and opportunities that are considered appropriate and inherent to men and women in society (www.who.int, accessed November 8, 2023).

Based on several definitions related to gender above, it can be concluded that gender is a distinction between men and women which is based on socio-cultural aspects, psychological aspects and non-biological aspects which allow for an exchange of roles and do not violate God's nature. The concept of

gender is emphasized on the aspects of masculinity or femininity carried by a person (Syafe'I et al, 2020, p. 246). For example, women are assumed to be gentle, emotional, motherly and so on, while men are assumed to be strong, rational and so on (Indriyani et al, 2022, p. 102).

Two theories related to gender formation, namely first, the nature theory which argues that differences in character formation in men and women are influenced by gender. This theory has the consequence that there is difficulty in changing the gender roles of men and women because they are natural. Just as the physical form of men who are large get rough work, while the physical form of women who are soft get work that suits their conditions. Second, the nurture theory which argues that differences in the characteristics of men and women occur as a result of social construction through the process of culturalization or socialization. This theory has the consequence that gender roles can change and become neutral. This is because gender roles originate from something that is formed by society (Mutawakkil, 2014, p. 71).

The term gender equality is often used in gender studies to indicate a fair distribution. Gender equality is interpreted as a situation where men and women are in the same position in obtaining their rights in all aspects of life. In this case, in the process of developing potential, the roles of men and women are not limited by stereotypes given by society (Sari and Ismail, 2021). Gender equality has been discussed in the monumental document, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, which states that humans are equal in dignity and rights without distinction by race or gender. Apart from that, Indonesia has also implemented UN conventions in the form of regulations and legislation as a struggle for gender equality (Tilaar H.A.R and Riant, 2016).

Indicators of gender equality include ownership of equal opportunities in accessing resources, equal participation in decision making in a particular community or organization, as well as optimal benefits received (Audina, 2022, p. 151). This indicator

is in line with the opinion which states that gender equality is realized in the form of no discrimination between women and men in having access to participate in various aspects of life (Syafe'i et al, 2020, p. 247). Not only that, equality also includes opportunities and similarities in the use of shared resources (Indriyani et al, 2022, p. 105).

Gender Stereotypes of Male Kindergarten Teachers

The problem that Indonesia still frequently faces is gender inequality. The Global Gender Gap Index 2022 reports research results showing that Indonesia received a score of 0.70 and was ranked 92nd out of 146 countries. Indonesia is lagging behind several neighboring countries such as the Philippines which is ranked 19th, Laos which is ranked 53rd, and continues with Singapore which is ranked 49th and Thailand which is ranked 79th (World Economic Forum, 2022).

One of the causes of the phenomenon of gender inequality in Indonesia is stereotypes. According to the KBBI, stereotypes are defined as a conception related to the nature of a group based on subjective and inaccurate prejudices. Lippman in his book explains almost the same thing that stereotypes are people's views of the world that are colored by various prejudices that are transmitted from generation to generation (Dianita, 2020, p. 94-95).

Stereotypes can be positive or negative prejudices against women and men. Stereotypes in gender studies are often understood as a form of classification regarding behavior that is suitable for men or women. This is the reason why a person or group of people behaves discriminatorily towards men and women, which ultimately tends to lead to negative labeling. Issues that are often associated with gender are the type of profession and restrictions on men's or women's activities in society (Indriyani et al., 2022, p. 104).

Kindergarten teachers are a profession that is not free from stereotypical patterns.

Various stereotypes are given to male kindergarten teachers, which is one of the causes of the minority of male teachers in kindergarten. One of the stereotypes that society gives to male kindergarten teachers is related to gender. The image of a kindergarten teacher is closely attached to the figure of a woman. The low number of male kindergarten teachers can be caused by women's social status and cultural masculinity (Maulana et al, 2020, p. 25).

Based on research data conducted by Sandi and Achmad Hidir (2021) shows the low interest of students in majoring in Early Childhood Education or similar at the University of Riau, this is proven by data for the last 8 years which shows that every year, male students are only around in the number one or two, and the highest number in 2013 found to be male students was 4 people. Meanwhile, the average number of female students is in the range of 80-100 students (Sandi and Achmad, 2021, p. 58). Apart from that, in the PGRA department at UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang in 2019 there were only 2 male students (Mukhlis, 2019).

The low number of male students in the TK/PAUD teaching profession is often associated with gender stereotypes regarding this profession. Stereotypes that are widespread in society about male kindergarten teachers include; Firstly, the profession of kindergarten teacher is inherent in feminine traits such as those related to raising children. Women are gentle, motherly and so on, so men are considered unsuitable for the profession of babysitter. This is in accordance with several previous studies, where educational institutions and parents still think that women are the right figures in caring for children, especially in teaching in kindergarten (Fadillah and Nur, 2023, p. 69). This assumption continues to be rooted from generation to generation in society. As a result, society finds it difficult to accept when faced with the condition that men also want to work in children's environments (Dianita, 2020, p. 97).

The feminine image that is attached to women and refers to their role as kindergarten teachers, such as singing and dancing activities

in teaching children must be accompanied by flexible and graceful movements. This character in society is very attached to women. In fact, there are men who can do such things when required to professionally adapt to the required character, but still maintain their masculine nature when outside (Dianita, 2020, p. 96).

Second, the stereotype that often arises for male kindergarten teachers is the view that men who are kindergarten teachers are considered "gay". This assumption arises because some male kindergarten teachers look handsome. (Maulana, 2020, p. 26). Several cases of sexual abuse of kindergarten children emerged in Indonesia in 2014, such as a case of sexual abuse of a student at an international school in Jakarta (Awaludin in www.news.okezone.com). Apart from that, in 2019 there was another case of molestation of a kindergarten student in Mojokerto which was carried out by one of the educators (www.merdeka.com).

The rise in cases of harassment and sexual abuse committed by male teachers has also raised parents' concerns if their children are exposed to men in kindergarten. As a result, there is a perception of the unsuitability of male teachers in kindergarten. This is confirmed by the results of research which states that the stereotype that is growing in society about male kindergarten teachers are pedophiles, homosexuals or other people who are not considered to be real men (Sak, 2015; Atika and Purnamasari, 2019, p. 85).

Third, the stereotype that men are the backbone of the household. Kindergarten teachers are a profession that is not yet in the promising category from a financial perspective. In most regions in Indonesia, kindergarten teacher salaries are still far from meeting minimum wage standards. This low salary causes men to be reluctant to become kindergarten teachers. Meanwhile, women in Indonesian culture are not charged with being the backbone, so low wages are not a major problem for women. This reason also fosters the assumption that women are synonymous with low wages (Dianita, 2020, p. 97-98).

Fourth, the stereotype that men are suitable for jobs that are challenging and carry great risks. Kindergarten teachers are considered a low-risk profession and belong to the traditional sector. Because it is considered low risk, a kindergarten teacher does not need special and high level skills, which is considered to be more likely for women (Dianita, 2020, 98).

Some of the gender stereotypes attached to kindergarten teachers above have developed from generation to generation in society and we cannot deny them. This gender perception persists for quite a long period of time. In the past, children had perceptions of their teachers, which were then strengthened by the perceptions of teachers and their parents. This stereotype that society gives to male kindergarten teachers also influences men in taking up this profession and causes a small number of male students to take the kindergarten teacher study program. The small number of Kindergarten Teacher Education students or similar influences the number in Indonesia.

The Role of Male Teachers in Kindergarten

Discussing the role of male teachers begins with an understanding of the role of parents (men and women) in the family. In childhood, education first comes from the family. So that both men and women have their own functions and responsibilities that complement and complement each other. This means that the educational role is not borne only by mothers or fathers alone. Therefore, it is necessary to instill the concept of partnership parenting in the family to create harmonious roles for mothers and fathers. (Dianita, 2020, p. 100). When both share care, it will have a strong or large impact on the child's development (Pruett and Marsha, 2009). Refers to the role of mother and father in the family, so that there should be representation of the father's role in children's education, not just the role of the mother. This serves to help children project the role of a father in the family.

Apart from that, having male teachers in kindergarten also prevents the growth of gender stereotypes towards male teachers in kindergarten. The importance of gender roles, which must be instilled from an early age, is closely related to the development and formation of children's personality patterns in adulthood. Therefore, any correct information related to gender roles must be instilled from the start so that it is stored in the child's long-term memory (Santrock, 1995).

Male kindergarten teachers are not only an embodiment of balanced gender roles, but also function to dispel negative stereotypes for male kindergarten teachers that continue to develop in society. Several research results state that men have personalities who are able to design and practice games, which are children's favorite things and their world. Not only that, games also play a role in children's psychological development (Heikkila, 2019; Mukhlis, 2019). Then, men in carrying out their role as kindergarten teachers tend to benefit boys. This is because male teachers tend to involve children through psychomotor activities (Maulana, 2020, p. 28).

Education is the key to realizing gender justice. Because education is a place where people transfer their norms, knowledge and abilities (Indarni, 2012). Therefore, the government feels it is necessary to address the welfare of kindergarten teachers and to remove the negative stereotypes attached to male kindergarten teachers. Improving welfare is an effort that must be carried out from the top level down to the basic level to achieve a balance in the roles of men and women.

Conclusion

A number of data prove the minority of male kindergarten teachers, starting from statistical data from the Ministry of Education and Culture, and research data in the field. This minority is also supported by the small number of male students taking PGPAUD and similar study programs. One of the reasons for the scarcity of male teachers in kindergarten is the existence of stereotypes towards men which tend to be negative. The stereotypes that are

developing include that the kindergarten teacher profession is more attached to femininity such as caring for children, then men who become kindergarten teachers are considered "gay", apart from that the kindergarten teacher profession for men as the backbone is financially unpromising, and finally there is an assumption that men are more suited to professions that are challenging, while kindergarten teachers are a low-risk profession. Of the many negative stereotypes given by society, men play a role in the process of raising and developing children. The presence of male teachers in kindergartens is able to provide a projection of father figures in schools, as well as prevent the stereotype that there are only "mother teachers" in kindergartens. From a teaching perspective, men are considered skilled in designing games, which are children's world, so they are very beneficial for children's motoric development. The important role of men in children's education requires all parties to always foster gender equality in the education sector, especially in kindergarten education.

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Author’s Profile

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