

INVESTIGATION OF PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF MALE EARLY  
CHILDHOOD TEACHERS

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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **INVESTIGATION OF PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF MALE EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS**

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The purpose of this study was to investigate parents' perceptions of male early childhood teachers. The participants of the study were 13 parents consisting of 11 females and 2 males living in Ankara, Turkey. For this study, a qualitative phenomenological study was conducted. The data of the study were collected through semi structured interviews. The interviews were completed in three months.

Findings of the study indicated that parents had negative and positive perceptions related with their children's male early childhood teachers at the beginning of the fall semester. As negative perceptions, participants stated that they had concerns related with male early childhood teachers including child abuse, male teachers' inability to handle children's self-care. Moreover, they were perceived to be unable in communication with girls, and because male teachers can not be a mother, they were perceived as disadvantageous in the perspective of parents. On the other hand, as positive perceptions, participants declared that male teachers had more control on children, and male teachers' not being a mother brings advantage to them. What's more, after they

began to know their children's male teachers, it was found that their perceptions of male teachers were based on male teachers' characteristics, their relationship with the teachers, advantages and disadvantages of not being a mother in terms of teachers, male teachers' skills, and development of children.

**Keywords:** early childhood education; male early childhood teachers; perceptions of parents

## ÖZ

### EBEVEYNLERİN ERKEK OKUL ÖNCESİ ÖĞRETMENLERİ İLE İLGİLİ ALGILARININ İNCELENMESİ

Gülçiçek, Turan

Yüksek Lisans, Okul Öncesi Öğretmenliği Bölümü

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Bu çalışmanın amacı ebeveynlerin erkek okul öncesi öğretmenleri ile ilgili algılarını incelemektir. Bu çalışmanın katılımcıları Ankara’da yaşayan 11’i kadın 2’si erkek toplam 13 veliden oluşmaktadır. Çalışma nitel araştırma yöntemi kapsamında bir olgubilim çalışması olarak yürütülmüştür. Çalışmanın verileri yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler aracılığıyla toplanmıştır. Görüşmeler üç ay içinde tamamlanmıştır.

Bu çalışmanın bulguları ebeveynlerin eğitim-öğretim yılının başında çocuklarının erkek okul öncesi öğretmenine yönelik olumlu ve olumsuz algıları olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Olumsuz algılar açısından, katılımcılar erkek öğretmenler ile ilgili olarak; çocuk istismarı, kız çocukları ile iletişim kuramama, çocukların öz-bakımı ile baş edememe gibi konularda endişeleri olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Ayrıca erkek öğretmenlerin anne olmama durumunu bir dezavantaj olarak görmüşlerdir. Olumlu algılar açısından, katılımcılar erkek öğretmenlerin çocuklar üzerinde daha fazla kontrolü olduğunu ve erkeklerin anne olmama durumunu onlar için bir avantaj olarak görmüşlerdir. Buna ek olarak, çocuklarının öğretmenini tanımaya başladıkça algılarının erkek öğretmenin özellikleri, öğretmenle olan ilişkileri, öğretmen açısından anne

olmama avantajları ve dezavantajları, erkek öğretmenlerin becerileri, ve çocukların gelişimine ilişkin olduğu bulunmuştur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Okul öncesi eğitimi, erkek okul öncesi öğretmenleri, ailelerin algıları

To my parents,  
And  
My fiancé, Merve Korkmaz



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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Biological and psychological differences between men and women are specified in descriptions of sex although gender attributes vary based on socio-cultural roles of men and women in the process of forming “masculine” and “feminine” identities (World Health Organization [WHO], 2013). Gender roles of men and women are predominant in society and emerge in various contexts, such as professions (Hee, 2007). Many qualifications are concerned with men or women and, hence, are named feminine or masculine (Hedlin & Åberg, 2013). In male-dominated communities, technical and knowledge-based occupations or jobs including exercise of authority based upon males’ rationality and aggressiveness are identified with males. Conversely, men are not considered to be suitable for occupations such as teaching and nursing. This arises from the caring and nurturing nature of these occupations, and caring and nurturing are regarded as socio-cultural responsibilities of women (Yang, 2015). To illustrate, in the field of education, people think that female teachers are appropriate for taking care of young children by virtue of the motherhood role of females and, thus, it is believed that males cannot handle the responsibility of taking care of children in preschools (Ho & Lam, 2013). There is an understanding that it is females who need to deal with the education of young children and take care of them since they are believed to have an ability to rear and take care of children (Hedlin & Åberg, 2013).

On the other hand, in early childhood education, children need male teachers as well as female teachers as adult role models (Akman, Taskin, Ozden, Okyay, & Cortu, 2014). However, in early childhood education, male teachers are represented very low when compared to the entire teaching field (Barnard et al., 2000).

It was indicated in the 2003 fact sheet reports by the National Education Association that the number of male teachers in early grades does not reflect the real world in which we live. Above all, according to Milloy (2003), children can not see a

true reflection of the world due to this very low representation (as cited in Owens, 2010). To illustrate, the ratio of male preschool teachers is 6% in Sweden, 3% in the U.S.A., less than 1% in New Zealand and 9% in Norway, which is the highest percentage in Europe (Sak, Sahin, & Sahin, 2012). According to the Ministry of National Education Statistics (2016), 5.3 % of preschool teachers are male in Turkey.

The scarcity of male teachers in early childhood education reduces young children's opportunity and possibility to interact with men and contributes to the persistence of the low number of male teachers (Bernard et al., 2000; Sealey 2010). That is, boys do not consider pursuing a career in early childhood education since they regard administrative or physical education positions more suitable for men (Rice & Goessling, 2005).

Some of the reasons underlying the underrepresentation of male teachers are being afraid of child abuse accusations and lack of male comradeship in the field (Bernard et al., 2000). On the other hand, Zabjek (2008) declared that it was low pay in occupations associated with child care that led to the scarcity of male teachers in this field (as cited in Anderson, 2014). Men are also believed to be inadequate in providing care and education to young children, and these beliefs function as the main obstacle for men to practice a profession in early childhood education (Cunningham & Watson, 2002). Thus, such are the reasons keeping males out of early childhood education field (Owens, 2010).

Males working in preschools as teachers raise fears and concerns among employers and parents in terms of gender identification and sexual orientation (Bernard et al., 2000). Molestation of children is the biggest obstacle for male early childhood teachers to get involved in the field (Sargent, 2004). Besides, it is asserted that male teachers are viewed by some people as having potentials similar to those of pedophiles and this image of male preschool teachers functions as an obstacle for those who would like to teach (Owens, 2010; Sargent 2013; Smith, 2004; Nontokozo, Kok, Luthuli, Xulu, & Mtshali, 2015). Accordingly, as parents, female teachers, and administrators are biased against male early childhood teachers, male teachers feel uncomfortable, and



these stereotypes pose an obstacle to the fair evaluation of male early childhood teachers' performances (Yang, 2015).

Research on male early childhood teachers indicates that they feel isolated from the school environment because they are not accepted and welcomed (Cooney & Bittner, 2001; Mills, Martino & Lingard, 2004). Male early childhood teachers in the field seek for ways to be appointed to administrator positions as they experience adaptation problems as teachers (Cunningham & Watson 2002). Sak (2005) reports that female teachers and school administration have negative attitudes towards male teachers. In addition, the rate of male early childhood teachers quitting their jobs in the first five years is twice that of female early childhood teachers (Foster & Newman, 2005).

In a study conducted with male pre-service early childhood teachers demonstrated that male pre-service teachers are not welcomed, especially by female parents, because having a male preschool teacher is unusual for them. Therefore, parents prefer female teachers, who are considered by nature to have the maternal affection to give to their children (İnan, Bayindir, Doğan-Temur, & Bartan, 2010).

Bernard et al. (2000) argue that male teachers contribute to children's development as much as female teachers do. Male and female teachers differ from each other in terms of personality traits and gender roles, so maintain a balance, young children should have experience with both genders (Sumsion, 2000). Owen (2003) suggests that children should not only see females assuming the role of a care-giver but also need to observe males in the same role in order to break the stereotype of ascribing the role of care giving to females. Sumsion (2005) asserts that allowing children to have experience with male early childhood teachers enables them to challenge the traditional and limiting conception of gender and enlarge children's options and opportunities because of male early childhood teachers' representation of the non-traditional masculinity. On the other hand, male teachers have been regarded as being essential to a child's development as a whole person (Kilgallon, Maloney, & Lock, 2008; Akman et al., 2014; Sakellariou & Rentzou 2007). Male teachers can contribute to children's development by being role models in their early years, which is the process of

developing gender identities and roles (Mills, Martino and Lingard 2004; Sumsion 2005). If children have male teachers in their early childhood period, they can modify their understanding of male teachers in that males need to not only be powerful, fearless, crude but also caring, gentle and thoughtful (Ho & Lam, 2013). In short, with regard to children, male teachers should play a part in early childhood education to portray positive male figures (Milloy, 2003; Yang, 2015; Sumsion, 2005; Jones, 2009).

Cameron & Moss (1998) assert that the increasing number of male teachers in early childhood education contributes to the society by outfacing prevailing ideologies concerned with gender roles and relationships. For instance, a school environment with a mixed gender workforce is an indicator of gender equity because women and men equally share the responsibility of caring for children, yet a school employing only women creates a misconception that only women are capable of caring for young children (as cited in Sumsion, 2005). In addition to this, Lyon, Quinn and Sumsion (2003) suggest that the higher the number of male teachers is, the higher the status of early childhood education and people in the field are (as cited in Sumsion, 2005).

On a more egalitarian basis, male teachers can be crucial in encouraging fathers to take a more active role in the education of their children and lessen the burden of mothers via sharing the responsibility of taking care of their children (Elicker, 2002). On the other hand, with the presence of male teachers, fathers can feel more relaxed in the preschool environment (Jones, 2009).

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Pleshette-Murphy (2008) state that male early childhood teachers should cope with a number of obstacles, one of which is fear of parents about male teachers' being a threat for young children due to possible incidences of sexual abuse and molestation. According to Petersen (2014), the media conveys a message to the public that having male teachers might be a warning signal for many parents.

In a study conducted by Ho & Lam (2013), it was indicated that parents have some concerns about how male early childhood teachers take physical care of children.

To illustrate, parents feel uncomfortable when male teachers are taking care of children while taking them to the toilet. Other parents declared that they would support the idea of male early childhood teachers' only in the teaching tasks. In short, parents' views vary with respect to teaching and care taking (Ho & Lam, 2013).

As for the capabilities of male early childhood teachers, many parents are sceptical about them, and some of the parents even request to have their children's classroom changed. They prefer to have their children in a classroom with a female early childhood teacher (Zhao & Zeng, 2010).

Rentzou & Ziganitidou (2009) found that parents' initial reactions were suspicion and fear when they found out that their children had male early childhood teachers. Furthermore, parents found it difficult to understand that male early childhood teachers existed in the field and that the education and care of their children were the jobs of those male early childhood teachers. However, the relationship between male early childhood teachers and those parents improved and became effective over time (Rentzou & Ziganitidou, 2009).

The healthy relationships between parents and teachers are associated with good academic performance and behavior of children (Minke, Sheridan, Kim, Ryoo, & Koziol, 2014; Santiago, Garbacz, Beattie, & Moore, 2016;). Nonetheless, parents' trust in their children's teacher and school is an important factor in establishing a positive parent-teacher relationship and in supporting children's outcomes (Santiago et al., 2016). In addition, Karakus and Savas (2012) assert that parents' trust in their children's teacher is positively associated with parent involvement, which is identified as being supportive of children's achievement. However, there are common suspicions and concerns of parents about their children's male early childhood teachers (Rentzou & Ziganitidou, 2009; Zhao & Zeng, 2010; Ho & Lam, 2013). Accordingly, this study aims to determine how Turkish parents perceive male early childhood teachers in order to identify whether they have suspicions, fears or concerns. In this inquiry, information was obtained from the parents whose children were taught by male early childhood teachers. Moreover, in this study, parents' perceptions at the beginning of the semester were

compared with their perceptions towards the end of the year to specify whether there was a difference.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

In order to gain an in-depth understanding of the perceptions of parents toward preschool teachers, this study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What were parents' perceptions of male preschool teachers at the beginning of the fall semester?
2. What were parents' perceptions of male preschool teachers at the end of the spring semester?

## **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to investigate parents' perceptions of male preschool teachers. In this study, parents whose children were taught by male preschool teachers were targeted in order to determine parents' initial perceptions at the beginning of the fall semester and their later perceptions at the end of the spring semester.

## **1.4 Significance of the Study**

Studies on male early childhood teachers mostly focus on the viewpoints of pre-service teachers, in-service teachers, administrators, and male teachers. For instance, Macdonald (2003), Spencer (2009), and Sealey (2010) examined the school administrators' perceptions of male early childhood teachers. On the other hand, Shackelford-Cohen (2003), Mossburg (2004), Cushman (2005), and Yang (2015) conducted research on male early childhood teachers. Nevertheless, there is limited research concerned with the perceptions of parents whose children are taught by male early childhood teachers, and to our knowledge, there is no research related with the perceptions of parents whose children are taught by male early childhood teachers in Turkey. Hence, this study will help to fill this gap in the literature. Moreover, different from previous studies, this study enables us to understand whether or not parents initial perceptions vary by the end of the semester.

In addition to contributing to the literature, the reason why parents were chosen as participants was that it is vital to have positive relationships between parents and teachers in the process of supporting children's achievements (Minke et al., 2014). Moreover, parents' trust in their children's teacher and school is an important factor in establishing positive parent-teacher relationships and in supporting children's outcomes (Santiago, Garbacz, Beattie, & Moore, 2016). However, various studies indicated that parents generally have suspicions and fears owing to having male early childhood teachers (Rentzou & Ziganitidou, 2009; Zhao & Zeng, 2010; Ho & Lam, 2013). Thus, this study enables us to recognize how Turkish parents perceive their children's male early childhood teacher, and findings of the study can guide policymakers, researchers, administrators, and educators for the further development of parent-male early childhood teacher relationships. In addition, findings of this inquiry can contribute to updating teacher training programs in the department of early childhood education in universities. That is, courses including parent-related topics, such as parent involvement, or gender-related courses may include the perception of parents toward male early childhood teachers. To be more precise, including the perception of parents whose children are taught by male early childhood teachers in courses like parent involvement can contribute to enriching the content of the courses, and it may also provide a guide towards how to increase the level of parent involvement in male early childhood teachers' classrooms. On the other hand, when gender-related courses in early childhood education include the perception of parents toward male early childhood teachers, it not only contributes to the content of the course but also helps to find a way to change parents' perceptions if they have negative perceptions towards male early childhood teachers.

Furthermore, this research is significant for male pre-service early childhood teachers to comprehend how they are perceived by parents, and it sheds light on the future phenomena that they will possibly encounter in the field.

## 1.5 Definition of Terms

The following list of definitions is provided to add clarity to the study.

*Early childhood education:* Early Childhood Education is a term that comprises education of children from birth to eight years old (NAEYC, 2009).

*Gender equity:* Specific measures must be designed to eliminate discrimination and inequalities between women and men, and to ensure equal opportunities. Gender equity leads to equality (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2003).

*Gender roles:* Gender roles describe appropriate behaviors of men and women (Prentice & Carranza, 2002).

*Perception:* Watanabe (1977) defines perception as “A mental image gained as a result of intuitive cognition, usually involving interpretation of past experience” (p. 20).

*Role model:* A person whose role is imitated by others (Sealey, 2010).

*Stereotype:* “It is an individual's set of beliefs about the characteristics or attributes of a group” (Judd & Park, 1993).

## 1.6 Limitations

The study has some limitations. Firstly, the gender of the researcher is a limitation. That is, the fact that the researcher from the early childhood education department is a male may have prevented the participants’ from expressing themselves freely. Participants may have answered questions that they did not actually intend to provide an answer for. Another limitation of the study is the research instrument. The survey instrument was developed by the researcher and it was used in this study for the first time. However, Olivas (2014) states that the credibility of a study is improved by using survey instruments that are administered in different environments. In order to eliminate this limitation, peer review and member checking procedures, which are elaborated on in the methodology part, were used to enhance the accuracy of the findings. Furthermore, the strategy of “check[ing] transcripts to make sure that they do

not contain obvious mistakes during transcription,” suggested by Gibbs (2007), and establishing inter-coder agreement, supported by Silverman (2005), were utilized to secure reliability. Another limitation of the study is that the data related to the first research question was collected at the beginning of the spring semester. To obtain more accurate responses from the participants, it should have done at the beginning of the fall semester because participants may not remember exactly how they perceived their children’s male early childhood teachers. The last limitation is that this research was conducted with the participants only in Ankara, the capital of Turkey. The quality of the study could possibly have been increased by including participants from different geographic areas of Turkey.

## **1.7 Summary**

The purpose of the study was to examine the perceptions of parents whose children were taught by male early childhood teachers. In this part, the organization of the chapters is presented. Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the study, including statement of the problem followed by research questions to add clarity to the purpose of the study. The purpose and significance of the study are also included in this chapter. Lastly, definition of terms and limitations of the study are provided in this part. Chapter 2 consists of a review of related literature about male early childhood teachers, including social perceptions of male teachers, particularly in early years. Chapter 3 specifies the research design and methodology of the study. Chapter 4 provides an explanation of the findings of the study. Finally, chapter 5 is comprised of the interpretation of the findings, conclusion, and recommendations for future research.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The study focuses on the perceptions of parents whose children are taught by male early childhood teachers. Furthermore, this inquiry aims to identify parents' perceptions of male early childhood teachers at the beginning of the fall semester and their perceptions at the end of the spring semester.

In order to provide foundation for this study, the literature review is comprised of six main areas: (1) Acker's (1992) theory of gendered organizations; (2) a discussion about gender roles in occupations, which investigates gender matters in occupations and in early childhood education field; (3) the scarcity of male teachers in early childhood education; (4) a review of social perceptions towards male teachers in early childhood education; (5) the impact of male early childhood teachers; (6) related international and national research about parents' perceptions toward male early childhood teachers.

#### **2.1 The Theory of Gendered Organizations**

Acker (1992) discussed four aspects of gendered organizations, which include the creation of gender divisions, the production of gender images, interaction between individuals, and internal mental work of individuals. First of all, standard organizational exercises create "gender patterning of jobs, wages and hierarchies, power and subordination" (p. 451). Cohn (1985) asserted that directors sometimes intentionally make decisions to recreate and change these patterns (as cited in Asker, 1992). Gender divisions can be produced by means of categorizing men and women as adequate or inadequate for some occupations. In addition, the development in technology might suggest a growing flexibility in gender divisions, but many times causes the maintenance of a high degree of male predominance. Besides, the intensity and type of gender divisions depend on the time period and the society. To illustrate, when women began to work in clerical jobs, offices of men and women were separated so that they would not have to encounter each other on the job, which led to extreme gender segregation (Cohn,



1985). Moreover, Acker (1992) stated that the growth of hierarchies, which can be characterized by inconsistencies in wages and power in every part of the organization, was supported by gender and sexuality.

Secondly, the production of images and symbols also reinforce gender divisions. The mass media, including television, movies and advertisements can be given as example agents that produce such images in our societies, but symbolic production can be observed in all kinds of organizations. That is, while men are portrayed with masculine and hegemonic images, women are depicted with feminine and gentle images. This reinforces the nature of gender roles in the society. Besides, successful managers are reflected as rational, strong, decisive, and organizations are defined with symbols of masculinity, including being competitive, goal-oriented, aggressive, lean and mean. However, they are rarely defined as being kind, caring, supportive and empathetic, which are regarded as symbols of femininity (Acker, 1992). In addition, the places where men and women are overrepresented vary by gender. In other words, administrative positions in many work organizations are withheld for men, but the occupations bearing images of nurturing care and affection are for women.

The third dimension which reproduces gendered organizations is interaction between individuals, “women and men, women and women, men and men, in the multiplicity of forms that enact dominance and subordination and create alliances and exclusions” (Acker, 1992, p.452). The occupations in which the opposite sex dominate make people feel isolated and lonely. In other words, men do not feel lonely and isolated in male dominated occupations, and women do not find themselves excluded in women dominated organizations.

Internal mental work of individuals is the last set of processes involved in the gendering of organizations since people deliberately build their comprehension of the “organization’s gendered structure of work and opportunity and the demands for gender-appropriate behaviors and attitudes” (p.452). When the hegemonic masculinity is demonstrated by men and feminine affection is performed by women, they display their correct gendered persona and gender-appropriate identities. Besides, women’s success in

the work relies on the degree of negotiation of their sexuality. That is, women from superior positions need to exhibit masculine characteristics so that they can make progress in their career development.

The gendered organizations mentioned in the theory are established on the notion of male dominance and hegemonic masculinity. Besides, Acker's (1992) theory of gendered organizations are based on the profession where male dominance prevails with feminist lens, but Acker (1992) also claimed that gendered processes permeate in all sorts of organizations; thus, it can be appropriate for professions in which there is a predominance of women.

## **2.2 Gender Roles in Occupations**

This study aims to investigate perceptions of parents whose children are taught by male early childhood teachers, which is one of the most discussed topics in gender issues in early childhood education. Therefore, including concepts associated with gender issues may be beneficial for providing a foundation for this study, so this part focuses on gender issues in the work environment and the field of early childhood education. To begin with the definition of gender roles, behaviors appropriate for men and women are described by gender roles (Prentice & Carranza, 2002). In addition, gender roles prescribe behaviors and professions that a specific gender is supposed to engage in (Fischer & Anderson, 2012). Fulfilling these gender roles leads to an anticipation of how men and women should have particular personality characteristics. To illustrate, men's gender role, which is being the breadwinner of the family, is related to being assertive and dominant. Conversely, there is an expected gender role of women, which is being the caregiver for children, and this gender role is connected with being affectionate and nurturing (Fischer & Anderson, 2012).

Abele (2003) contends that differentiating gender roles as feminine or masculine is also involved in developing an understanding of gender. While active and decisive traits are associated with masculinity, emotional and caring traits are attributed to femininity (Abele, 2003). Those gender roles of men and women are predominant in

society and are portrayed in different contexts such as occupations (Hee, 2007). Many qualifications are concerned with men or women and, hence, named feminine or masculine (Hedlin & Åberg, 2013). The notion of ascribing men and women to specific occupations by considering them as qualified or unqualified for those jobs in terms of their gender leads to gender divisions (Yang, 2015).

Ridgeway and Correll (2004) claim that gender division in the workplace occurs within occupations, and the society plays a role in that gender division. Kmec (2008) argues that men tend to be involved in prestigious professions, and there is an economic disparity in addition to physical differences in some professions. That is, male dominated occupations are more likely to provide a higher payment than do women dominated occupations, and thus, women canalize their career toward men-dominated occupations, but the vice versa for men is not the case (as cited in Sealey, 2010). The occupations that are dominated by women include caring professions, such as nursing, childcare and teaching, whereas men dominate science-related professions (Anderson, 2014).

Among the women dominated occupations, which are pre-primary and primary teaching, are gender segregated. To illustrate, female pre-primary or primary education teachers are 5.3 times more than male teachers in those fields of education (OECD, 2006).

Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD, 2006) reports state women work in 11 or fewer of the 110 major occupation groups classified by the International Labour Organisation. In terms of the teaching profession, it is among the top 10 “gender-biased” occupations on average in Europe and the United States. (p. 199)

### **2.3 The Scarcity of Male Teachers in Early Childhood Education**

Ho and Lam (2014) assert that female teachers dominated early childhood education, and that this situation has been a global phenomenon for a long time. To give examples from different countries, Farquhar, Cabik, Buckingham, Butler and Ballantyne (2006) found that male early childhood teachers constitute less than one percent of those working in early childhood education in New Zealand (as cited in Jones, 2009). In

Taiwan, the percentage of male pre-school teachers is 1.13 (Fu & Li, 2010). Furthermore, the percentage of male preschool teachers in Sweden is 6%, while it is 3% in the U.S.A., and 9% in Norway, which is the highest rate in Europe (Sak, Sahin, & Sahin, 2012). According to the Ministry of National Education Statistics (2016), 5.3 % of preschool teachers are male in Turkey. It can be concluded that the percentage of male early childhood teachers are similar all around the world (Su, 2017).

The scarcity of male teachers in early childhood education results from several factors according to Holm, Janairo, Jordan, and Wright (2008). Firstly, the stereotyping of males, who are depicted as sexual abusers and as being deprived of the qualities of caring and nurturing prevent men from being involved in early childhood education. Secondly, low pay also discourages men from working in early childhood education. Lastly, male early childhood teachers are not supported in the field and are thus isolated (Anderson, 2014).

Connell (2002) created a term that schools are organizations forming a ‘gender regime’ (p. 53). This means that gender norms in the organizations are maintained by these regimes. To illustrate, the notion that teaching in the field of early childhood education is more appropriate for female teachers than it is for male teachers is maintained by everyday practices in schools. Accordingly, male teachers can be perceived to be quite salient and exposed to considerable suspicion, both of which pose a problem for males to be involved in early childhood education (Mistry & Sood, 2013).

Furthermore, males are not prone to prefer careers in early childhood education due to the low status accompanying it, which derives from the consideration that teaching younger children is female work, and from discrimination against male teachers (Anliak & Beyazkurk, 2008). Another study, conducted by Cooney and Bittner (2001), investigated the emergent issues for males in early childhood education. It revealed that the important factors for males’ participation in early childhood education were cultural biases, perspectives of gender and low salaries.

Regarding all male teachers as role models for boys, which is the society's unrealistic and confusing expectation, pushes men aside from the field of early childhood education (Anderson, 2014). Besides, male teachers abstain from jobs including nurturing owing to misconceived views that male teachers are pedophiles when they seem too caring (Anderson, 2014). Furthermore, Jackson (2008) argues that males tend to stay away from the field of early childhood education since they are more subjected to scrutiny by parents and administrators, which carries a message for men that they are not competent enough to handle child care issues and it is unnatural for men to choose to teach young children. Zabjek (2008) agreed with the ideas related with the reasons attributed to the low number of male teachers, including the consideration of teaching as a woman's job, low pay and the consideration of men as potential sexual abusers (as cited in Anderson, 2014)

In parallel with the studies mentioned so far, low salaries, status of male teachers and issues related with children play a role in the shortage of male teachers (Cameron, 2006; Cushman 2007). Notwithstanding these factors, Cushman (2004) contended that diminishing the number of males working with children results from the male teachers' transition to administrative positions and teacher attrition. Moreover, Mulholland and Hansen (2003) discussed that male early childhood teachers' being exposed to doubts and isolation make them feel unsettled and eventually quit their jobs. In addition, the male teachers deciding to stay in the field handled the situation by seeking other males as support. Lastly, Mulholland and Hansen (2003) asserted that males studying in teaching programs are prone to consider the courses as gender-oriented, meaning that the courses seem to privilege females, who are more skilled than males in terms of writing and oral communication.

In conclusion, there is a scarcity of male teachers in early childhood classrooms (Cooney & Bittner, 2001). The very low percentage of male teachers is a common situation in many countries (Su, 2017). The factors resulting in the scarcity of male early childhood teachers are low salaries, low status, stereotypes and doubts about male teachers (Zabjek, 2008; Cameron, 2006; Cushman, 2007; Jackson, 2008; Anliak &

Beyazkurk, 2008; Mistry & Sood, 2013) lack of support in the field, issues regarding children, gender-oriented courses in teaching programs (Mulholland & Hansen, 2003), and being isolated (Anderson, 2014).

## **2.4 Social Perceptions towards Male Teachers**

In this chapter, studies examining perceptions towards male early childhood teachers, including perceptions of in-service and pre-service female teachers, administrators and male teachers were discussed. However, parents' perceptions of male early childhood teachers also need to be considered; hence, the next section is based on parents' perceptions.

Boyden (1997) examined the perceptions of 66 administrators in the Head Start programs about the role of male teachers. The results revealed that 89.3% of the administrators were in favor of supporting males to be teachers in early childhood education. In addition, a study by Bernard et al. (2000) reported that the male early childhood teachers were approved and supported by the parents. Moreover, Sak, Sahin, and Sahin (2012) examined the views of female pre-service early childhood teachers as regards their male colleagues in a state university in Turkey and the findings of the study showed that the majority of the participants supported the idea that there should be male teachers in early childhood education. However, there were some participants who were not supportive of male early childhood teachers. The participants who were against the idea of male teachers in early childhood education declared that male teachers were not appropriate for assuming the role of caregiving, and that a parent of a daughter should not approve of a male teacher. Moreover, Hedlin and Åberg (2013) conducted a research to investigate 20 pre-service early childhood teachers' thoughts with regard to hiring more male teachers in the field of early childhood education and the interview results showed that many of the participants (n=14) approved of male teachers' existence in the field of early childhood education. Related to this, a case study of a local kindergarten in Hong Kong conducted by Ho and Lam (2014) indicated that 23 of the total 28 participants were in favor of hiring male teachers.

Administrators in the Head Start programs stated the importance of male early childhood teachers with regard to providing a male role model for the children without a father figure in their homes (Boyden, 1997). Related to this, female pre-service teachers declared that male teachers become role models for children with single parent families (Russo & Feder, 2001). Besides, Sak, Sahin, and Sahin (2012) revealed that female pre-service teachers were of the opinion that male teachers contributed to children's socio-emotional skills by being a role model for them. Another study conducted with female pre-service teachers indicated that male teachers were required as a role model for children and that a high rate of divorce which results in the absence of the father in the lives of children can be compensated for with male teachers (Hedlin & Åberg, 2013). The last study investigating female pre-service teachers' views, conducted by Petersen (2014), found that male early childhood teachers can be a role model and a father figure for children with single parent families. Furthermore, the opinions of the kindergarten principle and the head teacher was that male early childhood teachers could be a positive role model for children. To illustrate, they believed that male teachers had better decision making and problem solving skills, which are good features of a role model for children (Ho & Lam, 2014).

Demirtaş, Demir, and Demir (2014) investigated the perceptions regarding male teachers in early childhood education and found that male early childhood teachers could be considered as a father figure for children with single parent families according to preschool teachers and administrators, but eight participants out of 29 participants stated that male teachers could not replace the father figure for these children.

It was reported that, from the perspective of the Head Start administrators, male early childhood teachers contributed to teaching with their different and unique approaches (Boyden, 1997). In addition, male pre-service teachers extend the discussion topics in the courses. In other respects, Russo and Feder (2001) reported that, according to female pre-service teachers, male early childhood teachers contributed to the school environment by providing a balance in gender. With regard to this, Hedlin and Åberg (2013) found that male early childhood teachers provide a gender-mixed atmosphere in

the work place. Lastly, Ho and Lam (2014) investigated the perspectives of school stakeholders and revealed that male teachers are needed for a balance in gender in the preschools, just as in the society.

To mention the stereotypes related with male early childhood teachers, Bernard et al. (2000) found that there were negative stereotypes of society and culture related with male teachers in early childhood education, and the danger of sexual abuse accusations caused males to refrain from working in the field of early childhood education. In addition to this, Russo and Feder (2001) investigated that male teachers were subjected to isolation, prejudices and comment by their female colleagues, and belittling. Rentzou and Ziganitidou (2009) revealed that female teachers exhibited doubtful, resistant and hesitant behaviors towards male teachers at the beginning of their interaction. Besides, Petersen (2014) examined the views of pre-service early childhood teachers and found that male teachers were not appropriate for early childhood education because they were insufficient in caring for young children. Also, the predominant view among the participants was that there was a connection between male early childhood teachers and the threat of sexual abuse.

To scrutinize the perceived differences between male and female teachers, Russo and Feder (2001) identified that male pre-service teachers were indecisive at the beginning of the practicum but they quickly got used to it. Besides, despite their popularity with children, they experienced difficulties in attracting children's attention and in having them listen to their instructions. One other study by Sak, Sahin, and Sahin (2012) revealed that male teachers were followers of changes in teaching, problem solving methods and activities. Other opinions of the female teachers were that male teachers handled discipline problems better than females, supporting creativity and physical activities. In addition, male teachers were viewed as less aggressive than female teachers, and they could produce more reasonable solutions for different matters. Besides, they claimed that male teachers' lack of sensitivity and maternal instincts made them more professional. Additionally, they were believed to be better communicators than female teachers. Moreover, Hedlin and Åberg (2013) found that males differed



from females in that they were physically stronger, which enabled them to lead different styles of play with children. That is, males were believed to be harsher, while females were more careful. Lastly, Demirtaş and Demir (2014) revealed that male teachers could get in contact easily with boys and they were more disciplined compared to female teachers.

## **2.5 Parents' Perceptions towards Male Preschool Teachers**

In this section, a review of international and national studies associated with parents' perceptions of male early childhood teachers are reported.

### **2.5.1 International Studies Associated with Parents' Perceptions of Male Early Childhood Teachers**

Rentzou and Ziganitidou (2009) investigated the social perceptions toward male teachers, including those of parents. For the data collection, male teachers ( $n=5$ ) were interviewed to examine parents' perceptions towards them. Participants expressed that there was a supportive relationship with children's parents. However, all of the participants declared that parents were surprised, doubtful and frightened at the beginning, which was a very difficult situation for men to deal. Two of the teachers declared that parents were not aware that male teachers in early childhood education existed and that men could work in jobs involving education and taking care of young children. Nevertheless, they stated that they had developed a positive relationship with parents over time.

Owens (2010) conducted a phenomenological study to examine the perceptions of parents whose children were taught by male early childhood educators. Data were collected through individual interviews consisting of open-ended questions developed by the researcher. The sample of the study was composed of 5 females and 1 male participants. The findings of the study revealed that the participants were in favor of male early childhood teachers, asserting that they were important for young children. The first reason was that male teachers were necessary as role models for the early years of children. Secondly, male teachers could be perceived as authority figures, and parents

with sons declared that the male teacher benefited from their disruptive behaviors and hyperactivity problems. The other reason was that male teachers contributed to children in terms of pedagogy and academic achievement since participants stated that their children academically progressed with male teachers. In addition, male teachers were perceived to have different positions in the classroom. The reasons were reported as follows: male teachers promote distinctive learning styles, and male teachers convey a different presentation. Besides, it was believed that a strong male impact was essential for young children and that children needed to be subjected to male and female teachers. The last reason for the necessity of male teachers in early childhood education was that there were some benefits of male teachers, such as influencing children's behaviors, establishing a positive relationship with adults, and other's views about the school, but the most crucial contribution of male teachers is to the children without a father figure around.

Another study, conducted by Rentzou (2011), investigated Greek parents' perceptions of male teachers in early childhood education. The study participants were 94 parents in total, composed of fathers ( $n=34$ ) and mothers ( $n=60$ ). Questionnaires were developed to obtain parents' perceptions about male early childhood educators. A Likert-based survey was conducted with those parents. To summarize the perception of the participants, although parents supported hiring more male early childhood teachers, they accepted that there were some obstacles for men. Child abuse accusations was one of the reasons for the parents in the study. They purported that parents were not encouraging and did not approve of male teachers in early childhood education in general. Moreover, they declared that recruiting male teachers was considered to be risky by administrators. Besides, parents thought that boys considered early childhood education as a woman's job because they had lived in a conventional society in Greece. Nevertheless, they declared that it was not an obstacle for men to be part of early childhood education since men were able to nurture children as much as their female counterparts could. The research findings also indicated that when male teachers demonstrated that they were appropriate for this career, the rejection that parents

displayed at the beginning changed. What's more, this study showed that some variables, such as age, education level and gender were influential on perceptions. That is, older, less educated and male parents were found to have more stereotyped perceptions towards male teachers in early childhood education. Besides, younger children parents' in this inquiry believed that male early childhood educators were not competent enough in nurturing as were female teachers. All in all, in general, participants of this study thought that males could work in traditional female jobs.

Ho and Lam (2014) investigated the opinions of parents about males' participation in early childhood education. The participants were 8 parents consisting of fathers ( $n=4$ ) and mothers ( $n=4$ ). The data were collected through semi-structured interviews. According to the findings of the study, five out of eight parents were proponents of recruiting male teachers in early childhood education. However, the three parents who were against recruiting male teachers stated their concerns about how male teacher could deal with children's self-care. To exemplify, one parent stated that she was annoyed by the idea of her child's being taken care of by male teachers in the toilet. Furthermore, five parents stated that they would approve of male teachers if the male teachers were not responsible for tasks other than teaching. With topics related to teaching or taking care of children, parents had different opinions about recruiting male teachers. Lastly, three fathers were in favor of recruiting male teachers and two mothers supported hiring male teachers.

Su (2017) studied the perceptions of Chinese and Taiwanese parents living in the United States. The study consisted of 55 parents, who were administered qualitative interviews. The first research question of this study was about whether male or female teachers provided more care to children. The results showed that, according to Chinese and Taiwanese parents, there was no difference between male and female teachers in terms of providing care to children., The second research question investigated whether male or female teachers were more sensitive to children's needs of learning. Parents participating in the study reported that male early childhood teachers were no different from their female colleagues with regard to being sensitive to the learning needs of

children. The third research question examined if male or female teachers were more aware of the physical needs of children. The results showed that male teachers were equal to female teachers in the level of their awareness to children's physical needs. The last research question of this study was whether male or female teachers were role models for the children. Chinese and Taiwanese parents perceived that male teachers were no different from female teachers and that both genders could be good role models for children.

### **2.5.2 National Studies Associated with Parents' Perceptions of Male Early Childhood Teachers**

Sak (2005) conducted a research about the opinions of parents regarding male early childhood teachers who teach their children. A questionnaire developed by the researcher was used to collect the data. The participants were from the Central Anatolia Region ( $n=132$ ) and the Eastern Anatolia Region ( $n=143$ ). The purpose of the study was to investigate the differences among the perceptions of the parents whose children were taught by male preschool teachers towards male pre-school teachers according to regional differences and demographic characteristics.

The results of the study showed that there were differences between the perceptions of the participants from the Central Anatolia Region and of those from the Eastern Anatolia Region in terms of the following issues: whether or not male teachers could do this job, whether they thought of changing their child's classroom, whether the teacher could get on well with children, whether the male teacher would cause children to have school phobia, whether male teachers' qualifications were suitable for doing this job, whether they developed an acceptance of the male teachers over time, whether male teachers worked devotedly to make themselves accepted by the parents, whether male teachers' personality characteristics were appropriate for doing this job, and whether the teacher's gender was important for the parents. In addition, it was found that the perceptions of parents with a son differed from those of parents with a daughter with regard to the following issues: whether male teachers were able to work in early childhood education, whether fathers became interested in their children's education as

much as mothers;, whether it was good for mothers to see a male teacher taking care of children, whether they observed positive changes in their children after their children were taught by a male teacher, and whether only the female teachers should work in the field of early childhood education.

In terms of the education level, there were differences between the perceptions of parents with respect to adaptation to male teachers over time, expectance of female teachers, a positive development in parents' opinions in time, and the belief that only female teachers should work in early childhood education.

A study conducted by Akman et al. (2014) examined parents' views on recruiting male teachers in Turkish preschools. Purposeful sampling procedure was utilized in this research, and the sample group included both mothers ( $n=207$ ) and fathers ( $n=139$ ). A questionnaire was used to collect the data. The results of the study showed that teachers' gender was not important for 59.2% of the parents. In addition, when they were asked about their gender preference of their child's teacher, 46.8% of the parents opted for female preschool teachers. The reasons underlying their preferences were that 10.4% of the parents' viewed early childhood education as a female job; 22.5% thought that female preschool teachers were better than male teachers; 5.2% had not encountered a male preschool teacher before so they did not have any an idea about how men could do this job; 4.9% of the parents did not believe that male teachers could be good role models as female teachers, and 3.8% of the parents believed that male teachers should work in primary schools.

47.7% of the parents opted for male teachers. However, 52.3% of the parents declared that if their children had been in nursery classrooms, they would not have preferred male teachers. To elaborate on the reasons for their male teacher preference, 26.3% of them expressed that the gender of the teacher was not important as long as the teacher provided a good education for their children. Furthermore, 7.8% of the parents who preferred male teachers believed that male teachers could be a good role model for boys; they were also considered to be more disciplined and authoritarian by 4.3% of the parents; 2.9% of the parents believed that female teachers were more capricious and less

temperate compared to male teachers. Besides, 1.2% of them stated that have a male teacher contributed to the relationship between girls and their fathers; 3.5% of the parents stated that their children liked male teachers very much; 1.2% of them believed that male teachers rarely took time off from work; and lastly, 1.2% of the parents were of the belief that male teachers were more social and open to new ideas.

The reasons why parents did not opt for male teachers were as follows: 25.7% did not believe that male teachers could do this job better than female teachers; 14.2% of them saw men as impatient and less caring; 5.5% of them had not encountered a male teacher before; 4.6% of the parents believed that female teachers got along better with children.

## **2.6 Impact of Male Early Childhood Teachers**

The discussion concerned with recruiting male teachers in the field of early childhood education is composed of three main arguments concentrating on supposed advantages for the field of early childhood education, the society and children (Sumsion, 2005). The first argument centers on presumed advantages of increasing the number of male early childhood teachers, one of which is increasing the status of early childhood education and people within the field (Lyons, Quinn, & Sumsion, 2003); Another benefit, according to Jensen (1998), is developing the dynamics and interrelationships of staff in the workplace (as cited in Sumsion, 2005).

The second argument is that if more male teachers are included in the early childhood education, it will contribute to the society by minimizing assumptions related to gender roles and responsibilities (Sumsion, 2005). In addition, Johnson (2008) argues that the inadequate number of male teachers is a significant problem because gender segregation in the field violates egalitarian values that are supposed to be supported by schools, and when gender imbalance is maintained, the predominance of females in the teaching profession and the prevalence of males in administrative positions remain. As a result, the degenerated idea that children are to be managed by women and women by men is maintained (Johnson, 2008).

The last argument is associated with the benefits of male teachers for the children themselves. There is a strong notion about the requirement of male teachers due to their being positive male figures for children (Sumsion, 2005). Also, Wardle (2004) argues that children need to learn to deal with their emotions, how to have friends, what is acceptable and not acceptable in social situations, and how to act in different circumstances and hence, they need to have a positive role model. Early childhood education is a field that provides children with these opportunities; children can take their teachers as a role model in terms of their actions and interactions on the basis of their behaviors, but it is more difficult for boys due to the predominance of females in early childhood education (Berger, 2003). Despite the remarkable role model of females for boys, they require same-gendered role models regardless of whether it is at home or in schools (Wadsworth-Hendrix, 2016).

Dee (2006) asserted that male teachers' different styles, voice and their presence in the classroom impact boys in that they respond better to the teacher, and boys particularly display a higher level of achievement when they are taught by male teachers. Conversely, Lawson (2009) claimed that there was limited evidence indicating the impact of a teacher's gender on students' achievements, and there is very limited research with respect to the relationship between male early childhood teachers and the academic development of boys from different families. In addition, a study conducted by Lawson (2009) revealed that there was no significant effect of a teacher's gender on the cognitive development of boys in preschools. On the other hand, DiCarlo, Baumgartner, Ota, and Jenkins (2015) objected to this argument, claiming that in early childhood education, boys are apt to learn in kinesthetic learning style; thus, they need many big muscle movements and engagement in rough plays. However, in many of the public schools, children are supposed to keep quiet, so this learning style of boys is not prevalent within those schools (Wadsworth-Hendrix, 2016).

d'Arcy (2004) contended that male teachers differ from their female counterparts in terms of interacting with children in communication and relationship, which means that children need to experience gender diversity. Besides, male teachers bring their own

experiences to children and they contribute to activities with a male perspective. Furthermore, the collaboration of male and female teachers in school environments enables children to socialize with the opposite gender and the presence of male teachers allows boys to discover their caring nature, which helps to alter the standpoint of male inclusion in caring (d'Arcy, 2004).

The other impacts of male teachers on children themselves are enabling children to learn to respect both genders equally (Nelson 2008), supporting gender equity in the field because involving male and female teachers provides a gender balance for children, which would promote the beginning of their successful integration into societies, and foster their gender awareness.

In terms of the male early childhood educators' impact on the father's involvement, Cooney and Bitner, (2001) claimed that the presence of male early childhood teachers created a positive atmosphere for fathers and it positively influenced their level of involvement. Elicker (2002) confirmed that the more male teachers there were, the more active fathers were in education. Furthermore, with male early childhood teachers, fathers to get involved in their children's education more actively because male early childhood teachers make fathers feel relaxed (Jones, 2009). In other words, male teachers in early childhood education indicate that males can also take responsibility in children's lives and those teachers encourage fathers to be more active in their children's education (Ozturk, 2012).

## **2.7 Summary**

This chapter focused on five main topics, including (1) a discussion about gender roles in occupations, investigating gender matters in occupations and in the field of early childhood education; (2) the scarcity of male teachers in early childhood education; (3) a review of social perceptions towards male teachers in early childhood education; (4) the impact of male early childhood teachers; (5) related international and national research about parents' perceptions toward male early childhood teachers.



Chapter three contains details about the research methodology, including the research questions, the design of the study, the participants, instrumentation and data collection procedures, data analysis, trustworthiness of the study, role of the researcher, ethical considerations, and limitations.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This part provides information about the methodology of the study, including research questions, the design of the study, the participants, instrumentation and data collection procedures, data analysis, the trustworthiness of the study, the role of the researcher, ethical considerations, and limitations.

#### **3.2 Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to investigate parents' perceptions toward male preschool teachers. In order to gain in-depth understanding of the perceptions of parents toward preschool teachers, this study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What were parents' perceptions of male preschool teachers at the beginning of the fall semester?
2. What were parents' perceptions of male preschool teachers at the end of the spring semester?

#### **3.3 The Design of the Study**

Qualitative phenomenological research was conducted in the current study. In qualitative research, the researcher attempts to thoroughly examine the research environment to acquire plenty of narrative portraits and in-depth understanding related with ways of perception and how participants perceive things within the given context (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). In addition, Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2013) state that a researcher investigating a variety of perceptions and a reaction to a specific phenomenon is conducting a phenomenological study. The phenomenological research study is a general design focusing on how different individuals experience a specific phenomenon (Clark & Creswell, 2010). Gay et al. (2009) assert that a phenomenological

study is best used to acquire specific participants' experiences, perspective and concepts about an activity. That is, in phenomenological studies, the researcher strives to uncover any specific or general meaning and its fundamental nature by interviewing individuals who experienced a phenomenon under inquiry (Benskin, 2015). Subsequently, the researcher determines and defines aspects of individuals' perceptions and reactions to their experiences in detail. As for the data collection procedure, data are gathered through in-depth interviews. Thus, examining parents' perceptions toward male preschool teachers was the focus of the present phenomenological study. In-depth interviews allowed the researcher to inquire parents' perceptions toward male preschool teachers.

### **3.4 Participants**

The participants of this study consisted of parents (N=13) whose children were taught by male preschool teachers in two public schools in Ankara. The purposive sampling procedure was employed as the sampling method. Since, as stated by Creswell (2007), qualitative researchers frequently utilize purposive sampling for selection of individuals and sites in qualitative research in order to purposefully notify a comprehension of the research problem and the phenomenon experienced. According to Edmonson and Irby (2008), purposive sampling is used by the researchers interested in a specific criterion since a few cases can be selected for that study (as cited in Spencer, 2009).

The researcher had one specific criterion for selecting the participants as the sample of the study. Being a parent of a child who was taught by male preschool teachers was the only criterion accepted because the main purpose of this study was to examine parents' initial and subsequent perceptions of male preschool teachers. Therefore, those parents who had experience with male preschool teachers were considered to be more effective for this study when compared with parents having no experience with male preschool teachers.

There are different opinions associated with appropriate sample size for a qualitative study. To exemplify, Creswell (2013) argues that sample size for phenomenological research is somewhere between three to ten participants. On the other hand, Polkinghorne (1989) claimed that proper sample size should range between 5-25 participants for phenomenological studies. However, Patton (2002) states that qualitative studies do not have strict rules with regard to number of participants. In this study, voluntary participation forms were distributed to parents with the help of teachers. Subsequently, the 13 parents who returned their forms to the researcher participated in the study.

### **3.5 Pilot Study**

A pilot study was conducted with the purpose of making preliminary decisions on the testing efficiency of the interview questions. Merriam (2009) claims that pilot interviews are very critical for testing the interview questions and conducting good interviews since the interviewer needs practice in asking effective and appropriate questions. The pilot study is also useful in terms of the clarity of the questions. The sample of the pilot study in the present study consisted of mothers (N=4) whose children were 48-60 months old from a public school in Ankara/Turkey. Prior to the pilot study, the researcher contacted the teacher to inform him about the study. Subsequently, four mothers accepting to be a part of the study were interviewed.

Conducting the pilot study provided the researcher with several advantages. As a result of the pilot study, some of the interview questions were revised and the ambiguities in the questions were eliminated so that the parents could understand the questions and express themselves comfortably. After conducting the interviews, the researcher recognized that follow-up questions should be asked to obtain detailed responses from the participants because follow-up questions provide affective information (Merriam, 2009). That is, participants were not willingly to answer each question thoroughly. Thus, their answers were insufficient and very short to derive any meaning out of them. For instance, in order to obtain parents' perceptions of their children's male preschool teachers, the researcher asked the question "*Have you had a*

*situation where you thought you were lucky to have a male teacher?” as a follow-up question of “Can you give an example of a case where having a male teacher for your child is beneficial for your child?” Moreover, the pilot study enabled the researcher to comprehend that warm-up questions should be asked to the participants in order to make them feel more comfortable about the interview process.*

### **3.6 Instrumentation and Data Collection**

The study was conducted over a period of three months. The data were collected from January 2017 to April 2017 through face to face in-depth interviews (see Appendix A) since as stated by Fetterman (1998), the most important data collection technique for a qualitative research is interviewing. Similarly, Cresswell (2007) states that the process of data collection in phenomenological studies includes mainly in-depth interviews. Before collecting the data of the present study, the required official permissions from both the Applied Ethics Research Center of a public university in Ankara (see Appendix B) and the Turkish Ministry of National Education (See Appendix C) were acquired. After receiving the necessary permissions, the researcher visited the selected schools to inform the school administration and male teachers about the nature of the study. Permissions were also obtained from the school administration and teachers to carry out the study in their schools. Moreover, the teachers’ support was requested to encourage parents to participate in the study. With teachers’ support, consent forms (see Appendix D) were distributed to the parents. Each of the parents agreeing to participate in the study signed the consent forms and they were contacted for a convenient time and place for the interviews. Afterwards, the interviews were conducted in the kindergarten’s cafeteria, teachers’ lounge, the school playground and a cafe which were the only silent and appropriate places to implement the interview process. Fraenkel et al. (2013) state that a recording device is considered an essential part of any qualitative researcher’s equipment since a recording device never turns a deaf ear to what participants mention. Therefore, the participants were asked if the researcher could audio-tape the interviews and they were reminded that pseudonyms will be used instead of their real names. They were also told that the information which they provided would only be used for

scientific purposes. All the participants agreed to be audio-taped. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. Firstly, the participants were asked a number of closed-ended questions to collect their critical demographic information, such as their level of education, their age, their own pre-school experiences, the gender of their former teachers. In the interview protocol, there were 12 open-ended questions (see Appendix A) so as to enable participants to respond naturally and openly based on their own understanding and perspective for structural and textural definition (Creswell, 2012). The questions were prepared based on a detailed literature review. That is, similar studies on perceptions toward male teachers were examined to arrive at interview questions. Subsequently, those questions were sent to four experts in the Department of Early Childhood Education at Middle East Technical University and Yüzüncü Yıl University. Then, revisions were made based on the opinions of the experts. The first two questions functioned as warm-up questions and were related to parents' perceptions about their ideal teacher and their initial perceptions toward male teachers at the beginning of school semester. The next 10 questions were related to their present perceptions toward male teachers. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes.

Table 1 The sample questions of the main issues related to the semi-structured interview protocol

Main Issues	Example Questions
Initial Perceptions	What did you think when you found out that your child had a male teacher? What was your reaction?
Present Perceptions	What do you think about your child's male teacher? Does the teacher's being male or female affect your communication with the teacher? How? What are the strengths and weaknesses of having a male preschool teacher? How do male teachers influence the development of boys and girls?

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

The data analysis procedure used by qualitative researchers is different from that of quantitative researchers. Unlike quantitative data, qualitative data are not straightforward and needs considerable thinking and endeavor (Hee, 2007). Glesne (2011) states that qualitative researchers organize what has been seen, heard and read. In addition, qualitative data analysis is a continuing process from the beginning to the end of data collection and, most importantly, data are analyzed in tandem with data collection (Denzin, 2001; Merriam, 2009). Similarly, Fraenkel et al. (2013) state that qualitative researchers analyze data continuously and comparatively by reducing and retrieving large amounts of written information.

In the data analysis process, Creswell (2007) recommends three strategies to qualitative researchers. The first is to begin with the preparation and organization of the transcription of the data for analysis. Categorizing the data into themes by means of coding and condensing the codes is the second step. The last strategy is presenting the data in tables, figures or within text. Hence, based on the above-mentioned strategies, the researcher transcribed the audio recordings in an attempt to organize and prepare the collected data. Afterwards, by virtue of the data analysis process being intertwined with data collection, participants' transcripts were examined and the initial codes were searched to reduce the data at the conclusion of each interview. Coding, which is a classifying strategy, underlines relationships of similarity and provides the basis for specifying themes and patterns in the interview transcripts (Maxwell, 2013). Coding is defined in qualitative research by Strauss and Corbin (1998) "as [an] analytic process through which data are fractured, conceptualized, integrated to form theory". Codes are considered as labels ascribing meaning to mass data, and the coder elicits the main idea revealed by a sentence or paragraph in the process of coding (Fraenkel et al., 2013). Within the coding process, McMillan and Schumacher (2006) suggest some steps in analyzing the data, which are separating data into different groups, creating codes from the data, clarifying a coding system, making categories through coded topics, and revealing major patterns from categories by organizing and grouping categories for

patterns and creating visual presentations of how the entire data fit together (as cited in Spencer, 2010). Taking these steps and strategies into consideration, the two coders mentioned earlier analyzed the data of the present study. Firstly, the two coders separately read and examined verbatim transcripts and more important statements, sentences and key phrases that were considered to be significant were determined with an attempt to set patterns, potential categories and themes related to the content of the study. Then, the two coders came together and contrasted the codes to reveal whether there was differences or disagreements between the codes. Finally, they discussed identical and possible themes.

In the preparation, organization and analysis of the data, two types of qualitative data analysis software, ATLAS.ti 8 and Nvivo 11, were utilized. Making use of the qualitative data analysis software enabled the researcher to organize the data and analyze them in an organized filing system. It also facilitates the location of any material, such as phrases or statements in the data by means of the “find” command (Creswell, 2007; Fraenkel et al., 2013; Merriam, 2009). Furthermore, researchers can assign codes instead of manual coding as the former method is faster and more efficient (Creswell, 2013). Lastly, qualitative data analysis software enables researchers to visualize the relationship among codes with their “concept mapping feature” (Creswell, 2007). Accordingly, the researcher used the qualitative data analysis software mentioned above in order to save time and labor.

### **3.8 Trustworthiness of the Study**

In order to make a qualitative study trustworthy, there are certain procedures recommended by experts. To illustrate, Merriam (2009) declares that validity and reliability are concerns which can be approached by way of paying careful attention to conceptualizing the study and to the way in which data are collected, analyzed, interpreted and how the results are presented. As a result, validity and reliability issues were considered for this research and particular strategies were conducted to increase the credibility of the study.



### **3.8.1 Validity**

Miller and Creswell (2000) identified eight strategies for the accuracy of the findings which are frequently used by qualitative researchers. Those strategies are prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field, triangulation, peer review or debriefing, negative case analysis, clarifying researcher bias, member checking, rich-thick description, and external audits. In this study, peer review and member checking procedures were used to ensure the accuracy of the findings. In peer review, individuals who are knowledgeable about the topic and methodology review the manuscript and make comments. However, this review includes scanning some of the raw data and evaluating whether the results are reasonable based on the data with the assistance of a colleague familiar with the study or a reviewer new to the topic (Creswell, 2013; Fraenkel, et al., 2013; Merriam, 2009). In this research, the reviewer was a doctoral candidate from elementary education. Member checking was utilized for the validation in this study. In member checking, the researcher takes the preliminary analysis, descriptions or themes back to the participants so that the participants judge the accuracy and credibility of the research report (Creswell, 2013; Creswell, 2007; Fraenkel et al., 2013; Merriam, 2009). Nevertheless, Creswell (2013) states that the researcher should be mindful not to take back the raw data to the participants; instead, it should contain major findings, themes, or the case analysis. Hence, the researcher of the present study made contact with the participants again for the accuracy of the main findings and themes. Firstly, the process was explained to the participants and they were asked to check whether the findings and themes coincided with their statements.

### **3.8.2 Reliability**

Qualitative reliability concerns the consistency of the researcher's approach with different projects and different researchers (Gibbs, 2007). In other words, it is the extent to which research results can be repeated (Merriam, 2009). There are several ways to ensure the reliability of a study. The first strategy that was used in the present study was "check[ing] transcripts to make sure that they do not contain obvious mistakes during transcription" (Gibbs, 2007). Secondly, inter-coder agreement was utilized. The inter-

coder agreement, supported by Silverman (2005), involves the analysis of the interview data by multiple coders (as cited in Creswell, 2007). In addition, inter-coder agreement, it is expected to have stable responses to multiple coders of data sets (Creswell, 2007). Consequently, arriving at a consensus in themes and coding is crucial. Thus, to ensure reliability in the present study, transcripts were initially read by different researchers. The first coder was the researcher and the second coder was a doctoral candidate in the department of elementary education. They read and coded transcripts separately. Then, they came together to discuss the themes and codes. For the analysis of reliability, Campbell, Quincy, Osserman, and Pedersen (2012) proposed an inter-coder formula in which the number of coding agreements is divided by the total number of agreements and disagreements. Briefly, the formula is as follows:

$$\text{Reliability} = \frac{\text{Number of agreements}}{(\text{total number of agreements} + \text{disagreements})}$$

As a result, the inter-coder reliability was calculated as .91.

### **3.9 The Role of the Researcher**

Moustakas (1994) focuses on the conception that researchers suspend their personal experiences as far as possible in order to have a fresh standpoint toward the phenomenon under investigation. Furthermore, Creswell (2013) claims that “the qualitative researcher as the primary data collection instrument necessitates the identification of personal values, assumptions and biases at the outset of the study.” Hereby, the researcher attempted to bracket his personal experiences and be objective to the experiences of the participants. The researcher’s primary role is to be an interviewer in the process of data collection. Creswell (2013) suggests some procedures for conducting an appropriate interview, which are adhering to the questions during the interview, not exceeding the time specified in advance, being respectful and kind to the participant, and not posing too many questions and suggestions. The researcher attempted to adhere to those procedures during the interview protocol.

Another role of the researcher in the current study was to analyze the data. An elaborative part of this role involved the component of the data analysis mentioned above. Accordingly, the researcher bracketed his own experiences so as to empathize with the participants and approach the data from the perspective of the participants to the highest scope as much as possible.

### **3.10 Ethical Considerations**

The importance of ethical considerations in a qualitative research design is discussed by most authors and there is agreement that qualitative researchers should respect participants' rights, needs, values and demands (Creswell, 2013). Besides, interviewing, as a method of data collection in a qualitative research design, brings with it both benefits and risks to the participants whether the interview is structured or semi-structured (Merriam, 2009). Participants of a study may feel that interview questions disturb their privacy, humiliate them and they may respond to questions in a way that they never intended. Creswell (2013) suggests some principals to protect participants' rights: 1) the research aims will be shared in writing and verbally with the participants, 2) an informant consent form will be received from the participants, 3) Institutional Review Board will be obtained 4) information about data collection devices and activities will be given to the participants, 5) verbatim transcriptions, reports and interpretations will be available to be shared with informants, 6) the participants' rights, wishes and interests will be the priority, and 7) participant anonymity will be provided. Accordingly, the required ethical measures were taken for the present study. First of all, the required official permissions were obtained from the Applied Ethics Research Center, Middle East Technical University (see Appendix B) and the Turkish Ministry of National Education (See Appendix C). The purpose of the study was shared with the parents verbally and in writing by means of an informed consent form. Informed consent forms were distributed to parents with the collaboration of teachers. Parents were informed about the data collection procedure. After the transcriptions of the interviews and the preliminary analysis of the data, the rudimentary themes and findings were shared with the parents. It was mentioned to the parents that they could withdraw from

the study anytime. Lastly, parents were informed that pseudonyms were used instead of their real names and the information that they provided would be used only for scientific purposes.

### **3.11 Limitations**

Some limitations as regards the present study are worth mentioning. Firstly, the researcher was a male from the department of early childhood education. This may have influenced the participants, causing them to express themselves negatively, and they might have hesitated to respond to the questions honestly. That is, they may have responded to the questions with information that they had not intended to reveal. In addition, the research was limited by the research instrument. Using survey instruments conducted in different environments improves the credibility of the survey content (Olivas, 2014). However, the survey instrument utilized in this study was developed by the researcher, and its validity and reliability were not tested by other researchers.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The data collection procedure in this study took approximately three months, from January to April in 2017. Firstly, the male teachers were contacted in order to reach the parents in their classrooms. There were three male early childhood teachers from two schools. Then, teachers were informed about the study and were asked to deliver the voluntary participation forms to the parents. Then, the researcher got in contact with the parents who accepted to voluntarily participate in the study in order to determine a convenient time and place for the interviews. The interviews were conducted as a data collection method in different places, including the cafeteria of the school, teachers' lounge, the school playground and a cafe. This section initially presents the demographic information of the participants. Subsequently, the findings of the study are presented in association with each research question. The findings are arranged according to the categories emerging from the codes. Each category is introduced in conjunction with the codes one by one. The sections of the interview transcripts corresponding to the related code are also presented.

#### **4.2 Demographic Information of the Participants**

Firstly, pseudonyms were used instead of real names of parents, male early childhood teachers and kindergartens to conceal the real identities of the participants and places. There were 13 parents in total, so pseudonyms from P1 to P13 were used instead of their real names. Six parents, all females, had children enrolled in Mr. Ali's classroom. Four parents, two males and two females, had children enrolled in Mr. Mustafa's classroom. Lastly, three parents, all females, had children enrolled in Mr. Ahmet's classroom. Mr. Ali worked in Star Kindergarten, and Mr. Mustafa and Mr. Ahmet both worked in Moon Kindergarten. Demographic data collected at the beginning of the interviews indicated that the parents' ages ranged between 25 and 45 years. Six

parents were high-school graduates, while the other six were university graduates, and one parent held a master's degree. Nine boys and four girls were taught by those male early childhood teachers. Eleven parents reported that their children's former early childhood teacher was female, and two parents said that this year was their first year in the early childhood education, so they did not have a former teacher.

Table 2

*Demographic Data of the Study Participants*

Participant	Teacher	Occupation	Gender	Age	Education Level	The Gender of the Child's Former Teacher	Child's Gender
P1	Mr. Mustafa	Purchasing Manager	Male	43	Bachelor's Degree	Female	Boy
P2	Mr. Ali	Advertiser	Female	30	Bachelor's Degree	Female	Boy
P3	Mr. Ahmet	Photographer	Female	30	Bachelor's Degree	Female	Boy
P4	Mr. Ali	Housewife	Female	28	High School Graduate	Female	Boy
P5	Mr. Mustafa	Public Relations Specialist	Female	45	Bachelor's Degree	Female	Boy
P6	Mr. Ali	Bank Employee	Female	30	Bachelor's Degree	No former teacher	Boy
P7	Mr. Mustafa	Housewife	Female	26	High School	Female	Girl

Table 2 (Cont'd)

P8	Mr. Ali	Nurse	Female	32	Graduate Bachelor's Degree	Female	Girl
P9	Mr. Ali	Housewife	Female	36	High School Graduate	Female	Boy
P10	Mr. Mustafa	Teacher	Male	38	Master's Degree	Female	Girl
P11	Mr. Ahmet	Accountant	Female	26	High School Graduate	No Former Teacher	Boy
P12	Mr. Ahmet	Housewife	Female	38	High School Graduate	Female	Boy
P13	Mr. Ali	Housewife	Female	27	High School Graduate	Female	Girl

The findings of the study are presented in association with each research question.

#### 4.3 Research Question 1: What were parents' perceptions of male preschool teachers at the beginning of fall semester?

After the demographic data were collected, the participants were asked questions, such as *What did you think at the beginning of the semester when you found out that your children had a male early childhood teacher?* The responses of the participants were grouped under the title of positive and negative perceptions (Table 3).

Table 3

##### Initial Perceptions of Parents

Positive Perceptions	Negative Perceptions
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Table 3 (Cont'd)

Themes	Themes
Control on children	Inadequacy in self-care skills of children
Table 3 (Cont'd)	
Advantage of not being a mother	Inability to communicate with girls
	Disadvantage of not being a mother
	Child Abuse

**4.3.1 Category 1 Negative Perceptions:** Parents expressed their initial perception when they learned that their children had a male early childhood teacher. In addition, all parents declared that they did not have a chance to choose their teacher because the school administration was the decision maker. Some parents also said that they had negative thoughts about their children's male teacher.

**4.3.1.1 Inadequacy in self-care skills of children:** Some parents thought that male early childhood teachers were inadequate in self-care skills of children, and they thought that their children's male teacher could not handle those issues. P12 stated her opinion by saying,

I thought when I first learned that my child was going to have a male teacher that he (Mr. Ahmet) could not deal with my child's self-care issues. I thought that female teachers were more careful than male teachers in this area, so I thought they would be inadequate.

P11 expressed her opinion regarding the issue as follows:

When I first learned of it, actually I had some concerns like how my child was going to go to toilet, how the teacher would deal with that situation. I thought a male teacher would abstain from self-care issues of children and males would not be able to take care of my child.

**4.3.1.2 Inability to communicate with girls:** Another negative perception of parents is that male teacher can not communicate with girls in the classroom. P1, who was a father of a female child, said,



Naturally I had some concerns, especially when you are a father of a female child. I worried that the teacher would not be able to communicate with my daughter in the classroom.

**4.3.1.3 Disadvantage of not being a mother:** Parents see male teachers' not being a mother as a disadvantage for them. Because they are not a mother, male teachers are believed to be impatient.

**4.3.1.3.1 Being impatient:** P9, who has a son,

Males do not take care of children. For instance, they do not spend much time in the home with children, so this makes them impatient. Female teachers may approach children in a different way because of having maternal instincts. Before I met with a male early childhood teacher, I thought that male teachers did not care about children and that they were impatient.

**4.3.1.4 Child Abuse:** One of the most repeatedly mentioned issues by parents was child abuse. It constitutes a greatest concern for those parents. P6, who is a mother of a male child, has said the following:

I wanted my child to have a male teacher, but I cannot ignore that I had concerns about it. Child abuse was the issue triggering my fears. It does not matter whether I have a son or daughter. This situation can happen to boys as well. I thought child abuse was much less frequent in female teachers' classrooms than in male teachers'.

P7 expressed her opinions about the same issue, saying

It's the first time I met with a male teacher in early childhood education, so I found it odd to speak honestly. We did not choose our teacher; it was the school administration's decision, so I asked around about that teacher. The matter making me worried was the child abuse issue. I thought of whether my child would have trouble in the classroom and if it happened how I would face with this matter.

P8, whose child was taught by Mr. Ali stated,

At the beginning, I worried a lot. We hear about male teachers' sexually abusing girls, but there is no escape from that. Even if my child does not meet a male early childhood teacher now, she will meet one in elementary or high school somehow. Therefore, this was the issue making me worried because it is a very

critical psychological problem. The teacher does not show his actual intent when you are with the teacher but when you are gone, you cannot be sure what happens in the classroom. The female teacher may also abuse my child, but I can eradicate that from my child's mind, but the other one can influence and ruin my child's future.

P5 expressed her opinions related with how the same behavior could be perceived differently because of the teacher's gender by saying,

The child abuse issue came to my mind first. When a female teacher kisses the child in the classroom, it looks normal. However, if a male teacher kisses a child, it is weird, so I thought of that first.

**4.3.2 Category 2 Positive Perceptions:** On the other hand, a child's having a male early childhood teacher is perceived positively by some parents. They thought that it was a chance to have a male early childhood teacher for their children.

**4.3.2.1 Control on children:** Male early childhood teachers were perceived to have more control on children than female teachers do. P1, who is the father of a male child, said,

It was good to have a male early childhood teacher because our child is a little bit hyperactive, so I thought that a female teacher could not control him in the classroom. Actually, it is the same in the home. Fathers have more control on their children.

**4.3.2.2 Advantage of not being a mother:** Parents stated that male early childhood teachers' not being a mother provides an advantage for them. According to them, teachers' being a mother limits the time that they devote to their occupation.

**4.3.2.2.1 Continuity:** Parents responded that there was continuity in male early childhood teachers' classrooms. P3 shared her initial thoughts as follows:

We thought we were lucky when we first learned about it because I was afraid of the teacher's being a mother. They usually take maternity leave for a long time. If it were a female teacher, I would think the teacher would constantly change.

P4 described what she felt when she learned the gender of the teacher,

I was very happy when I learned that my child had a male teacher because female teachers give birth and they need to take care of their own children all the time. To give an example, last year's teacher was leaving for breast-feeding around 11 a.m. and children were able to make activities after 10 a.m. because of breakfast and other things, so no education took place last year. Thus, I was very happy to have a male teacher. I thought at least he would not take maternity and breast-feeding leaves.

#### 4.4 Research Question 2: What are parents' perceptions of male preschool teachers at the end of the spring semester?

After the participants were asked questions in order to determine their perceptions at the beginning of the school year, the researcher asked questions to identify their later perceptions towards the end of the year.

Table 4

Subsequent Perceptions of Parents

Categories	Codes
Male Teachers' Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being patient and calm</li> <li>• Minimizing interference of personal problems</li> <li>• Being insensitive to children's feelings</li> <li>• Being disciplined</li> </ul>
Parent-teacher relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitator in communication with fathers</li> <li>• Healthy communication with parents</li> <li>• Obstacle in relationship with mothers</li> </ul>
Advantages of not being a mother	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allocating more time to children</li> <li>• Focusing on the job</li> </ul>

Table 4 (Cont'd)

Teacher Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good at social activities</li> <li>• Good at problem solving</li> <li>• Successful in classroom management</li> <li>• Inadequate in music and art activities</li> </ul>
Development of Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefit to girls' communication skills</li> <li>• Role model for boys</li> <li>• Inadequacy in self-care skills of children</li> </ul>
Disadvantage of not being a mother	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of maternal instincts</li> </ul>

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Table 4 presents the major codes that emerged for the second research question.

After the interviews were all transcribed, the researcher read each interview to obtain a holistic delineation of the collected data. Then, the data were coded to by the researcher and inter-coder. Subsequently, the codes were grouped under six main categories. Those categories were male teachers' characteristics, parent-teacher relationships, advantages of not being a mother, teacher skills, development of children and disadvantages of not being a mother.

#### 4.4.1 Male Teachers' Characteristics

All of the parents stated that they were pleased to have male early childhood teachers in general. They declared that their experience with a male teacher occurred when they were in communication with their children's male teacher and involved in

classroom environment. According to the parents in the study, most of the personal features of their children's male teachers are essential for an ideal teacher.

**4.4.1.1 Being patient and calm:** Parents stated that male early childhood teachers were patient and calm, and they believed that this was a feature that an ideal early childhood teacher must have. That is, dealing with many young children in the classroom necessitates being patient and calm. P6 expressed her opinion as follows:

As I said before, male early childhood teachers are more patient and they can stay calm in some situations. I think that Mr. Ali is very patient and I am satisfied with that situation.

P9 shared her former and later opinions about male early childhood teachers as follows:

I am really pleased that my child has Mr. Ali. I used to think that male early childhood teachers were impatient but I do not think that way now. Mr. Ali is really patient. I did not even see him getting angry.

P8 expressed similar opinions:

Male teachers can keep calm in situations. I mean they do not act impulsively and they act patiently. They are patient with children's requests and questions. For example, if a child wants to go to the toilet ten times, he does not get angry and lets him go. Female teachers are more impatient. They are more annoyed by children's requests. Female teachers can easily get angry when the children are bored because they think that they cannot keep the children in the classroom, but Mr. Ali understands that situation and stays calm.

P2 said,

I think that male teachers are a little bit more patient and it is very important for me because if you are doing this job, you need to be patient with children. Also, I saw that male teachers can keep calm in the classroom.

P13 explained how her child's male teacher stays calm,

As I said, I am very pleased to have a teacher like Mr. Ali. Before that, we did not have any experience with preschools but in terms of early childhood and elementary education, it seems that male teachers are more patient compared with female teachers, especially with my child because he is a hyperactive and naughty kid. Even if he sits at the table for five minutes, he wants to stand up after that time. However, we haven't got any complaints about this situation because the teacher stays calm and is patient with it.

**4.4.1.2 Minimizing interference of personal problems:** Parents believe that male teachers to be try to minimize the interference of their personal problems with the school environment. They think that it is not good to carry personal matters into the school environment for the benefit of their children.

P1 shared the following:

Males do not gossip and when they have a problem, they leave it where the problem occurs but women do not, they always want to talk about it. Men leave the subject there. If female teachers have a problem with their husband or school administration, they reflect that onto the school environment and children. I can say for every profession that men repress their problems. They do not carry them into other places. Because female teachers are more emotional, they reflect their problems onto the work environment. Females seem to want to talk about their problems.

P6 had a similar response:

Women are more likely to reflect their problems onto work. Because they are emotional, their troubles may affect their job. If they are unhappy that day, they can reflect on it, become angrier and more nervous throughout the day.

P7 declared her experience

Mr. Mustafa lost his father a couple of months ago. After he took a one-week leave, we had a theater activity, but he conducted it so beautifully that we were really surprised. He danced with the children. He did not watch them from a distance. I stopped looking at the kids and started watching him. He was really upset for sure but he hid his sorrow. He did not reflect his sorrow onto the classroom environment. It was really good. I mean this is an occupation and you cannot carry your problems into the school environment. I have seen many teachers bringing their problems to school. This may affect children's entire life. No one has the right to do that. Unfortunately, this is what I see in female teachers.

P9 asserted,

If you have a problem in your private life, you cannot carry it to school and reflect it onto the children. You cannot make up an excuse that you are depressed. The former female teacher was doing that. My child was affected too much like the other children in the classroom. It is the same in the home; you get angry with your husband but you take out your anger on your child. Males are not doing that; they hide their feelings. So does my son.

P8 explained her idea by giving an example:

I am really grateful that my daughter has a male early childhood teacher. I think that male teachers are doing their jobs better because they do not bring their personal problems or problems in the home to the school environment. It may be because they are less aware of the problems in the home, but they do not carry them into school. I want to give an example; our former teacher could not get along well with her husband but she was reflecting that situation onto the children too much.

P2 shared her previous experiences:

My son's former teacher was divorced from her husband. After the school started, she reflected it onto the children too much. She was raising her voice to the children; she did not care about the children and she was really aggressive. Men are not like that. They can hide their emotions, unlike women. Women are more emotional, so they may reluctantly carry their problems everywhere and reflect it onto the children.

**4.4.1.3 Being insensitive to children's feelings:** Male teachers may remain insensitive to children's feelings. In other words, male teachers might not notice children who are depressed at that moment as much as female early childhood teachers. P2 states her opinions as follows:

I think that it is better to hug a female teacher when children are looking for someone to hug. I mean when a child falls down and starts crying, it is better for that child to hug a female teacher in order to calm. A male teacher may have difficulty in calming down a crying child. Also, a female teacher can notice a depressed child earlier than a male teacher. I guess a male teacher might remain insensitive to children's feelings.

**4.4.1.4 Being disciplined:** Parents think that male early childhood teachers discipline children more effectively than do their female counterparts. Based on their comparison with their children's female teachers in the previous years, male teachers can better maintain the discipline in their classrooms. P2, whose child was taught by a female teacher in the previous year, said,

Usually, male early childhood teachers can discipline children more quickly than do female teachers. They may be more tough-looking than female teachers. Children may hang onto every word of their male teachers, unlike with female teachers.

P1 described his observation in the home environment:

In my opinion, male teachers seem more disciplined. Children in that age group are very active so male teachers can be stronger than female teachers in maintaining the discipline in the classroom. My child refrains from me more than his mother in the home. The male figure in the classroom is like the father figure in the home. I think this is the most important superiority of male teachers.

#### **4.4.2 Parent Teacher Relationships**

One category that emerged from the codes is parent teacher relationships. Parents mostly stated that they convey a positive relationship with their children's male teachers. In addition to this, they think that there should be a healthy communication between the teachers and themselves. On the other hand, two fathers in the study think that they feel more comfortable in communicating with male teachers because of their gender. However, that is not the case for three mothers in the study. They said that the teacher's being a male creates a barrier to being in contact with the teacher.

**4.4.2.1 Healthy communication with parents:** Parents believe that they have a healthy communication with their children's male teachers. Moreover, they described their communication as positive and open with the teachers.

P6 described the communication between her and the teacher as follows:

I am the one who is in communication with our teacher and we have good communication. I can speak to the teacher on the phone. Some female teachers may not want to give their phone numbers. I can easily get in contact with Mr. Ali. When I call him, I can reach him anytime. When I want to meet him, he always responds positively. We have not had a problem with him in communication. I can talk to him everything about my child without any hesitation.

P7 elaborated on her communication with the teacher:

Teacher informs us about in-class activities. When I have any problem or complaint, I can share them with him. I can call him and text him at times he is available. When I share my problem with him, he listens to me and pays attention to what I say. To be honest, I tried not to bother him at the beginning of the year because our teacher is a male but his behaviors changed my perception and we have a good dialogue with him now. He includes us in his own schedule. I am in contact with the teacher more than the father is in contact with the teacher. I can



share anything about my child. I do not have any hesitation since he is the guide here. He is the only one who can help me, so I prefer to talk to him first instead of the administration. Also, I want to keep in contact with him in the following years because it enables the teacher to become aware of his deficiencies.

P8 compared male and female early childhood teachers in terms of communication with the parents:

I would say that talking to male teachers is easier because female teachers may tend to misunderstand the situations. When you say something, they misunderstand that and try to defend themselves. For instance, when you say to a teacher that she forgot to put my child's water bottle into her bag, she immediately becomes self-defensive, but male teachers listen to you first and then respond to you.

P11 expressed her opinion in the following way:

Some are not happy with the female teachers here. They say that our teacher shares everything with us. I guess it is harder to ask questions to female teachers. I think that male teachers' communication skills are better.

P4 compared the female teacher in the previous year in terms of communication:

To compare it with last year, we had almost no contact [last year]. When the problem came up, she contacted us like when my child fell to the ground or injured himself but we contacted Mr. Ali much more this year. Communication with the teacher is very crucial especially for the child. I am in more contact with the teacher than the father is contact with the teacher. I can have a talk with Mr. Ali all about my child without any hesitation. He can meet with the parents anytime. I can call him in the evening whenever I want. We could not talk to female teachers after school because she had children and needed to take care of them.

**4.4.2.2 Being a facilitator in communication with fathers:** Two fathers in the study said that they felt more comfortable in communicating with male early childhood teachers. Moreover, the teacher's being male increased their relationship with the teacher and they said that they were more in contact with the teacher compared to their spouses. The following account exemplifies this:

It is more comfortable to speak with male teachers for sure because I am male. As a father, I am in more contact with the teacher this year. Man to man conversation is easier and I feel more relaxed. I am participating in parents' meetings and I have not missed any parent involvement activity. When I take my child to school and pick him up, I talk to the teacher. We have an above average

level of communication with the teacher. I can talk to him on the phone. If my son has a problem or there is a problem in the home, we share it with our teacher (P1).

P10, who is a father, described his healthy communication with her daughter's male teacher:

I am in more contact with the teacher this year. My wife gets in touch [with the teacher] less than I do. In many ways, he prefers to talk to me. If it is needed, he tries to reach me so I see that male teachers get along with fathers and female teachers get along with mothers. I keep in touch with him outside the school as well. I think I get on well with male teachers. I have a healthy communication with him. Whenever he wants me to come to school, I go to school. Almost all parents attend the parents' meetings. I can talk to him all about my child. There has been nothing that we could not talk about so far.

**4.4.2.3 Obstacle in relationship with mothers:** Although most of the parents convey a positive relationship with their children's male early childhood teachers, those teachers' gender hinders some of the parents' relationship with them. Those mothers said that they did not feel close to male teachers and relaxed in communicating with them.

P5 reported why male early childhood teachers could be an obstacle in her relationship with them:

Last year, I had a really close relationship with the female teacher. I cooperated with her. I was helping her in preparation of the activities but when your child has a male teacher, there should be a distance between you and him. You think about whether other people are going to say something about that.

P12 explained her interaction with the former female teacher and the present male teacher:

I was participating in our former female teacher's class activities more. I do not have much interaction with the teacher this year. When the teacher is female, I feel more relaxed and feel close to her. For instance, I used to speak to her on the phone.

P13 clarified why she was in less contact with the male teacher:

My husband is in more contact with the teacher this year compared to the previous year. I talk to the teacher but if the conversation is too long, I refer him to my husband because there is a man to man relationship between them so I try to remain in the background. However, it was the opposite last year. Because the teacher was a female, I was in more contact with the teacher. I could call her late in the evening but my husband could not since it could be misunderstood.

#### **4.4.3 Advantages of not Being a Mother**

According to the participants of the study, a teacher's being a mother is a disadvantage for female teachers. They think that female teachers have more domestic responsibilities than do male teachers. Therefore, male teachers can allocate more time to their jobs and they can focus on their jobs more than female teachers can, which creates an advantage for those male early childhood teachers.

**4.4.3.1 Allocation of more time to children:** The issue specified by one of the parents is allocation of more time to children. That is, female teachers' responsibilities create a barrier in allocating time for teaching.

One of the positive sides of male early childhood teachers is that they do not give birth and so, they do not have maternity leave. Unlike male teachers, female teachers take time off frequently when their children become sick. (P8)

**4.4.3.2 Focus on the job:** Male teachers are perceived by the parents in the study to have fewer responsibilities in their home environment and this makes male early childhood teachers focus more on their jobs.

Female teachers need to deal with many things in the home. If a problem occurs at home or their children become sick, they cannot concentrate on their jobs. Those things occupy their minds, but male teachers do not have to deal with these kinds of things. (P3)

P4 mentioned female and male teachers' responsibilities out of the school as follows:

A male early childhood teacher can pay attention to their children after school time. Female teachers have more responsibilities in their homes. They have to deal with many things, such as cleaning their houses, making food and taking care of the children, so they come to school back without having a rest, so this

makes them less beneficial for children in the school. Thus, male teachers have got the edge over female teachers in this respect.

P7 shared her own experiences with the former female teacher:

Male early childhood teachers can concentrate on their jobs for a long time. They do not think about what to cook for dinner. They give their full attention to their jobs. I can say that based on my experience with female teachers in previous years. Our former teacher's child became sick and she said that her child had a fever. In those times, I could see that this situation occupied her mind considerably.

#### **4.4.4 Teacher Skills**

The category of teacher skills is composed of the perceived skills male teachers in the eyes of parents. Almost all of the parents are satisfied with male teachers' skills as an early childhood educator. They expressed that male early childhood teachers pay attention to social activities carried out in the classroom and male teachers are perceived to be successful in classroom management. They believe that these kinds of skills are really beneficial for their children's development and learning. In addition, parents think that male teachers are good at solving the problems occurring in the classroom and they are perceived to be good at discipline children. However, male teachers are taught to have some deficiencies in some educational activities.

**4.4.4.1 Being good at social activities:** Parents think that their male teachers are good at social activities. By social activities, they mean things like drama activities and presentations carried out by children.

Male early childhood teachers are good at social activities. Our teacher prepares extra-curricular activities for children like drama activities. He pays extra attention to special days. He never skips those days. (P1)

P9 noted his observation of Mr. Ali by saying,

He pays extra attention to the activities on special days. He plays an important role in children's participation in those social activities because it is important for children to show themselves.

P8 stated,

I am very happy for my child to have Mr. Ali. He's made something that I have never seen for two years. Children played drama games in front of many people. They made some presentations. I like this aspect of the teacher.

P10 shared his opinions about the male teacher's skills as follows:

Our teacher organizes a demonstration almost every month. In the near future, he will organize a demonstration on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April. In this sense, I think that he has improved himself in terms of social activities.

**4.4.4.2 Being good at problem solving:** When a problem arises, parents think that male teachers are better than their female colleagues in solving that problem. When parents mention a problem to female teachers, they try to ignore and get rid of it according to some parents. However, male early childhood teachers assume an active role in the solution of their problems. P8 expressed her opinion about the issue as follows:

Male teachers are better than female teachers at solving the problems occurring in the classroom. When a problem comes up, they try to solve it on their own. They do not include the parents in the situation. If a child cries in the classroom, they do not think that it is the parents' responsibility and they try to deal with it in their own ways. I agree with them because the problems occurring in the school are the responsibility of the teacher. Mr. Ali handles the problems on his own. He shares it with us only if the problem is very serious. To give an example, in our class, there are three children with different kinds of disabilities, but we have never heard of any complaint from our teacher. Although there is only one disabled child in the other classrooms, other parents say that their teachers frequently complain about those children to the parents.

P11 cited Mr. Ahmet's response when she shared a problem of her child,

My child had a problem with his nails being cut but thanks to our teacher, we do not have that problem anymore. If I had told that to a female teacher, she would probably have told me to solve it on my own in the home, but Mr. Ahmet said "Don't worry about that. I can talk to him."

**4.4.4.3 Being successful in classroom management:** Male early childhood teachers are perceived to be skilled in classroom management. Parents think that male teachers can handle the classroom management issues well.

I think that male early childhood teachers are successful in classroom management. I do not have scientific data about that but I can say that male

teachers manage the classroom very well due to my own experiences in my school. I was in my child's classroom for a parent involvement activity about an experiment. I felt that some boys were bad-tempered compared with girls. I could not make the children talk although I am a teacher but the teacher dealt with that situation very well. He made children talk, glanced at them, and called them by their names. At that moment, I recognized that children listened to their teacher and they cared about what their teacher said. He was not yelling at children but he made the classroom environment conducive to the activity. (P10)

P2 made an analogy between home and school environments:

Because children are more spoilt by female teachers, they do not care too much about female teachers. It is the same in the home. When the father asks the child to stop, s/he stops quickly, but when the mother says the same thing, it would not be that easy.

P3 said,

Female teachers may not be so effective in the classroom. Due to classroom management skills, I guess they cannot address the whole classroom.

**4.4.4.4 Being inadequate in music and art activities:** While some of the parents in the study stated that male early childhood teachers are good at social activities, problem solving and classroom management issues, they are also perceived to be insufficient in music and art activities.

It seems to me that my child's teacher does not sing the songs so willingly with the children. I guess he thinks that singing is a necessity of that job so he has to do that and he looks reluctant. Also, in activities like creating something with different materials or painting, they do not make enough effort. They do not act as children do. (P8)

P10 shared his opinion based on his own experience in his work environment:

I see that male teachers make less effort in some activities compared to female teachers. I have seen that female teachers spend much more time in specific activities. At one occasion, I had to leave my child to the teacher in my own school and she made children create gifts for mother's day. I had never seen something like that and it was great. There were very interesting gifts and all of them were created by the children themselves. I think female teachers are more successful in these kinds of issues, especially if they have a vocational school

background. Another issue is nursery rhymes. For me, male teachers are not that good. They pretend they like singing with the children but I do not think they seem sincere.

#### **4.4.5 Development of Children**

Another category is how male early childhood teachers are perceived by parents in terms of their children's development. According to parents in the study, male early childhood teachers have both positive and negative aspects in terms of children's development. That is, although some parents think that male teachers contribute to girls' communication skills and they can be role models for boys, they are perceived to be inadequate in the development of children's self-care skills.

**4.4.5.1 Benefit to girls' children's communication skills:** Parents think that male teachers can be beneficial for girls' communication skills. Male early childhood teachers are perceived to be helpful for girls who have difficulty getting in contact with boys in the classroom. Besides, those children can learn how to treat the opposite gender. Thus, parents stated that they were pleased with the male early childhood teachers who provided girls with that benefit.

Having a male early childhood teacher can be good for girls who are distant towards boys and cannot get along with them. A male teacher can be beneficial in that way. (P6)

P13 said,

It is very nice to have male teachers in these years. Because early childhood education is more entertaining than the following years, girls communicate better with their teachers.

P4 talked about her plans,

Girls may learn how to talk to boys and male adults from their male teachers. For this reason, I am considering to have my younger daughter be taught by male early childhood teacher.

P11 mentioned her teacher's role in a problem that occurred at the beginning of school year,

Our teacher communicates very well with the girls in the classroom. At the beginning, I saw that some girls did not want to play with boys. They all play together now. The teacher played a very crucial role in this respect. He helped them to overcome this problem.

P7 described an event that she experienced as follows:

I want to give an example; my daughter was disturbed by some boys in the classroom. I asked her to share that with the teacher. Then, he told her to solve the problems by herself. If she could not do that, he wanted her to ask him for help. That is to say, the teacher told her to solve her own problems and this helped my child to improve her communication with boys in the classroom. She used to tell me or the teacher, but she is [now] trying to solve it on her own.

P2 stated a contribution of male early childhood teachers to girls' communication skills:

As a positive side of male teachers, girls easily make contact with the opposite gender. When they talk to male teachers in the classroom, they learn that they can talk to other people in that way.

P8 stated,

Girls learn how to behave toward men and how to talk to men out of the school.

**4.4.5.2 Being a role model for boys:** This code was the most reported reason of male early childhood teachers' contribution to children's development. They also stated that male teachers had a positive effect on their sons' behaviors. Interacting with a positive male figure in the classroom is an opportunity for their children to take a role model. On the other hand, parents who have a daughter in those classrooms also think that male early childhood teachers act as male role models for boys.

After having a male teacher, my son became more respectful. There is a difference between his attitudes before and after having a male teacher. The teacher changed some habits of my son. He learned that he needs to change his clothes and he learned bedtime. He was using the tablet too much but now we can control that. I can say that I found my assistant (Mr. Mustafa). I guess my child takes him as a role model. I can see that when we talk with my child in the home. Also, he is already saying what the teacher is doing in the classroom. I would say that my son imitates some behaviors of the teacher. (P1)

P11 explained his observation of her son as follows:



My son really loves his teacher. He repeats in the home what the teacher said in the classroom. He acts like his teacher in the home. He repeats his words in the home. I guess that he sees him as a role model.

P12 outlined her own situation of how her child's teacher could be role model for her son:

My husband is abroad so I take care of my son. In this regard, it was very beneficial to have a male early childhood teacher. He is a role model for our son and he filled the gap of his father.

P4 said,

Because my child is a boy, he sees his teacher as a role model. He compares his teacher with his father. Out of the school, he always talks about his teacher to other people and what his teacher is doing in the classroom and what his teachers said. I think male teachers are very helpful for boys.

P13 explained how a male teacher could be a role model for boys:

These years are the time to take a role model for our children, so male early childhood teachers can be a great role model, especially for boys. As you know, it is said that the first five years are very critical for children. That is why male teachers are so influential for children.

P3 mentioned male teachers' role in shaping children's perspective,

Boys can take their teachers as role models. Our teacher has an important place for my child. He really cares for his teacher. The last thing he wants is to upset his teacher. Besides, the teacher may prevent children from growing up with some prejudices. I mean children can see that male teachers can do this job as well as female teachers.

P9 talked about the effect of the male teacher on her son:

My son, he became more patient and calm compared to the past. He became more thoughtful. His teacher became a role model for him. Therefore, boys see their male teachers as role models much more than others. They try to do what their teachers say, so my child is more genial and calm now. Lastly, my child talks about his teacher in the home all the time and he draws picture of his teacher.

P6 pointed out the changes in the behaviors of her son:

The male teachers can be a role model for boys. They can learn from their teachers about how an adult male is supposed to behave. I recognized that some of my son's behaviors have changed in time. I mean he is doing something his teacher says so. To give an example, I did not press the issue of brushing teeth. I was thinking that he would get used to brushing his teeth in time. Sometimes, he was brushing his teeth and sometimes not. Now, he is brushing his teeth before going to bed because his teacher says so. He is washing his hands since his teacher taught that.

P8 mentioned the contribution of male teachers to children with single parent families:

They [male teachers] can be role models for boys. They can see their teacher as an example of a father role. For instance, according to children, teachers are calm, instructive and patient. This can affect them about what kind of people they need to be. In addition, male early childhood teachers provide an advantage for children with single parent families. They can learn from male teachers the things that they can learn from their fathers, like what kind of fathers they need to be.

P10 said,

It depends on the teacher, but I think that male early childhood teachers can be a role model for children. The teachers who are trying to improve themselves can be a good model for children.

**4.4.5.3 Inadequacy in the development of self-care skills of children:** Parents think that male early childhood teachers are not so thoughtful in self-care issues of children as much as female teachers are. They are thought to be ineligible in handling issues regarding toilet, nourishment, and changing clothes.

Male teachers may have trouble in matters like taking children to the toilet or when children are eating or drinking something. I mean they might have difficulty in self-care issues since mothers usually deal with these kinds of things. Besides, the number of children is too many in the classroom so it can be difficult for male teachers. (P1)

P12 said,

I think that male teachers are more careless in self-care issues of children.

P2 shared her ideas about male teachers' inadequacies:

Male early childhood teachers are inconsiderate, unlike female teachers. In early childhood, children have needs like going to the toilet, nourishment. A female teacher can manage these issues better. Male teachers may be weak in changing children's clothes. To give an example, our former teacher changed my child's clothes right after they got dirty, but this year it is possible for him to come home dirty. I guess the teacher does not care or cannot handle this issue.

P6 shared her experiences as follows:

In self-care issues of children, male early childhood teachers are thoughtless when compared to female teachers. In the first day of school, children did not put on their snoozies and they entered the classroom with their shoes. They did some activities on the ground. I guess men do not think much of these sorts of things but female teachers do not allow that.

P8 expressed her opinion associated with the development of self-care skills of children:

Male early childhood teachers may be weak or abstain from self-care issues of children. If a child's undershirt appears, they may forget to tuck the child's undershirt in his trousers or they may not want to do that. I think that they can handle these issues just like female teachers.

#### **4.4.6 Disadvantage of not Being a Mother**

Parents think that female teachers have a natural advantage of being a mother. That is, female teachers have maternal instincts which creates an advantage for them. By means of that, they know how to deal with children better and become more considerate.

**4.4.6.1 Lack of maternal instinct:** Male early childhood teachers lack maternal instincts by their nature and parents consider this as a disadvantage of male teachers. Therefore, they think that children having female teachers are under the wings of their teachers.

P2 expressed her opinions regarding male teachers' weakness in terms of maternal instincts:

We are female and we have maternal instincts, so female teachers are stronger than male teachers in terms of education. Female teachers know how and when to interfere with children better because of their instincts.

P7 said,

I think that the strongest part of female teachers is that they are more nurturing due to their instincts, which make them more thoughtful in matters related with children.

P6 shared her opinion as follows:

Arising from their maternal instincts, their approach might be different. When a child starts to sweat, a female teacher tries to change his/her clothes as soon as possible. If a child wets his arms while washing his hands, a female teacher would try to dry his arms. They can notice earlier whether a child has a fever or not. However, a male early childhood teacher cannot notice these on account of not having maternal instincts.

P5 expressed similar opinions:

Male teachers are less nurturing, so female teachers seem like they are taking children under their wings. Males do not have instincts, so they keep their distance with children.

P1 mentioned the advantage of female teachers in comparison with male teachers:

Female teachers have a natural advantage of being female. They have maternal instincts, which take them a step further.

#### **4.5 Summary**

Chapter 4 presented the findings of the data of the study. First, the section included demographic information of the participants. Then followed the findings associated with each research question. The findings were arranged according to the categories that emerged from the codes. Each of the categories was introduced in conjunction with the codes one by one. Sections of interview transcripts corresponding to the related code were also presented.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter begins with the summary of the study. In the second section, findings are discussed in association with existing literature. The third section focuses on implications and recommendations for further studies.

#### **5.1 Summary of the Study**

The main purpose of this phenomenological study was to investigate parents' perceptions of male preschool teachers. In this study, parents whose children were taught by male preschool teachers were targeted in order to determine parents' initial perceptions at the beginning of the year and their later perceptions towards the end of the year. The participants of the study consisted of mothers ( $n=11$ ) and fathers ( $n=2$ ) whose children were taught by male preschool teachers from two public schools in Ankara/Turkey. In-depth interviews were administered with parents in order to collect the data. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. Firstly, a number of closed-ended questions were asked to participants to collect their critical demographic information, such as their education level, their age, their own pre-school experiences, and the gender of their former teachers. In the interview protocol, there were 12 open-ended questions so as to naturally and openly obtain participants' responses from their own understanding and perspective for structural and textural definition. The data were analyzed by two coders. Firstly, two coders separately read and examined the verbatim transcripts and more important statements, sentences and key phrases that were considered significant were determined with an attempt to set patterns, potential categories and themes related to the content of the study. Subsequently, the two coders got together and contrasted the codes to reveal, if any, the significant differences and disagreements among the codes. Finally, they discussed identical and possible themes.

## **5.2 Discussion of the Findings**

### **5.2.1 Parents' initial perceptions of male preschool teachers at the beginning of fall semester**

Parents declared that they had some negative perceptions about their children's male preschool teachers at the beginning of the school year. Related to this, Rentzou (2011) found that parents tended to reject their children's male teachers at the beginning of the school year. The rationale behind this thought might be that considering early childhood education as a woman's job and Mistry and Sood (2015) stated that the media gives a useless message for the recruitment of more male teachers into early childhood education, and parents who have not encountered male early childhood teachers may be influenced by those messages.

Furthermore, one of the most reported negative perceptions of the participants is the child abuse issue. Child abuse is the greatest concern for those parents. This finding supports that of a previous research by Bryan (2004) that men working with children are believed to sexually abuse them. Anderson (2014) added that there are misconceived views that male teachers are pedophiles when they seem too caring. Su (2017) mentions the impact of the media which draws attention to and contains more cases of male teachers' sexual abuse of children than those of female teachers across the world. Besides, Petersen (2014) argued that the media also conveys a negative message to people that having a male teacher is a warning signal for the parents. Therefore, parents' perceptions related with child abuse may arise from how the media portrays male teachers.

In addition, participants in the study stated that their children's male teachers are not able to handle children's self-care skills. This finding was aligned with the findings of a study by Ho and Lam (2014), which indicated that parents had some concerns related with how male teachers dealt with self-care of children. Besides, Johnson (2008) added that male teachers are considered as incompetent in coping with child care issues. The results of a study conducted by Demirtaş, Demir, and Demir (2014) confirmed that one of the negative aspects of male teachers is their having problems in self-care issues

of children. Fischer and Anderson (2012) asserted that being a caregiver for children relates to the gender role of women in contrast with men's gender role which is being the breadwinner of the family. As a consequence, parents' consideration of male early childhood teachers as inadequate in self-care skills of children may be explained by the gender role of men because male teachers' perceived gender roles do not fit with self-care skills of children.

One of the participants who was a father of a girl worried that the male teacher could not communicate well with his daughter. This finding contradicts with that reported by Wadsworth-Hendrix (2016), who found that male early childhood teachers have a positive and close relationship with all children regardless of their gender. Moreover, d'Arcy (2004) argued that when male teachers are in cooperation with female teachers, it helps children to socialize with the opposite gender. Further research is needed in order to identify the possible reasons underlying that concern.

Parents stated that not being a mother is disadvantageous male teachers. To illustrate, male teachers were considered to be impatient due to not being a mother. This result complied with the finding reported in a study by Hee (2007) in that there are stereotypic assumptions depicting men as impatient and non-nurturing. This consideration might result from attributing early childhood education to a woman's job because Sargent (2005) asserted that job functions and positions in early childhood education are associated with those of the mother and mothering, which supports the image of childcare and teaching as women's work.

Despite parents' negative perceptions of male early childhood teachers, they have also positive perceptions. Some of them believed that having a male teacher is a chance for their children. Male teachers' having more control on children and not being a mother are perceived positively by those parents.

The findings of the study revealed that not being a mother is advantageous for male teachers from the perspective of parents. Moreover, they believed that becoming a mother limits the time and continuity in female teachers' classroom because female

teachers generally take maternity or breast-feeding leave. This finding was consistent with the study of Akman et al. (2014) asserting that male early childhood teachers rarely take time off from their work. Fischer and Anderson (2012) contended that biological factors, especially procreate functions might confine specific behaviors and cause gender-typed characteristics and gender roles. To illustrate, women give birth to a child that needs to be breastfed. This hinders them to be away from their children; hence, women are more likely to perform childcare tasks but men are more likely to be involved in jobs out of home (Wood & Eagly, 2002). Accordingly, because biological factors and childcare tasks are considered as the responsibility of women, participants in the study may be of the opinion that those responsibilities are disadvantageous for women.

Moreover, one of the participants believed that male early childhood teachers have more control on children. This finding is in agreement with that reported in a study by Owens (2010) that male teachers were perceived as authority figures and they helped their children's disruptive behaviors and hyperactivity problems. In addition, Akman et al. (2014) confirmed that male early childhood teachers were considered more authoritarian than female teachers. With regard to this, Sargent (2001) asserted that if masculinity prevailed in male teachers' teaching by being in more control and assuming an authoritarian style, those teachers' caring skills would be questioned by people. This finding may be explained by the participants in the study that masculine traits of male early childhood teachers are associated with being in more control and authoritarian.

### **5.2.2 Parents' perceptions of male preschool teachers at the end of spring semester**

The data revealed that there were perceptions of parents associated with male teachers' characteristics, which include being patient and calm, being less reflective of problems, being sensitive to children's feelings and being disciplined. The first finding—being patient and calm—actually contradicts with the findings of previous research. For instance, Peng (2005) found that male teachers are less patient than their female colleagues (As cited in Ho & Lam, 2014). In addition, Zhao and Zeng (2010) asserted that females were more appropriate for nurturing young children since they were more



patient than male teachers. Lastly, Akman et al. (2014) reported that, according to participants of the study, men were less patient than women. These findings may be explained by means of a study by Yang (2015) reporting that knowledge-based or technical occupations, or jobs including exercise of authority based upon males' rationality and aggressiveness are identified with males. Because being patient and calm seems contradictory with aggressiveness, male teachers might be regarded as impatient according to these studies. However, the issue of whether male teachers are more patient requires further research in order to explain the reasons underlying these perceptions.

The second finding under the category of male teachers' characteristics is less interference of personal problems. Ho and Lam (2014) argued that men innately differ from women in terms of personality traits. To illustrate, women are more careful and gentle than men. On the other hand, Sumsion (2000) found that female teachers opt for male teachers to work with because they do not tend to gossip and have an easy-going nature. These studies indicate that there are differences between male and female teachers with regard to personal features. Therefore, less interference of personal problems perceived as male teachers' personal traits by parents might be seen as those teachers' personal features. The third finding in this category is that male teachers were perceived to be insensitive to children's feelings. That is, it was found that male teachers could not notice children's feelings as well as female teachers could, and male teachers were perceived as incapable of soothing a crying child. In parallel with this finding, Demirtaş, Demir, and Demir (2014) found that male teachers were considered to lack affection and care less about children. With respect to this, Fischer and Anderson (2012) purported that being affectionate is the gender role of women. Similarly, Prentice and Carranza (2002) stated that soothing hurt feelings and being affectionate are characteristics of femininity, not masculinity. As a result, because being affectionate and handling emotions are not linked with masculinity, parents might think that male teachers remain insensitive to their children's feelings.

The last finding related with male teachers' characteristics is being disciplined. More precisely, male teachers were perceived to maintain discipline in the classroom

better than their female counterparts. This finding was consistent with that revealed in the research of Akman et al. (2014) that parents who preferred male teachers believed that male teachers are more disciplined and authoritarian. Additionally, Sak, Sahin, and Sahin (2012) found that male teachers were considered to handle discipline problems better than female teachers. Hedlin and Åberg (2013) contended that while care is associated to femininity, discipline is linked to masculinity in the teaching field. Prentice and Carranza (2002) identified masculinity characteristics as being assertive, dominant, and forceful. Maintaining discipline in the classroom may be regarded as men's job and males who reflect masculine traits might be perceived to maintain discipline in the classroom better than females.

Another major category of the present study is related with parent-teacher relationships, which include facilitating communication with fathers, establishing a healthy communication with parents, and posing an obstacle in relationship with mothers. The first finding of the study— facilitating the communication with fathers— was in alignment with the finding of a study by Cooney and Bitner (2001) because they claimed that the presence of male early childhood teachers creates a positive atmosphere for fathers and it influences their level of involvement positively. Elicker (2002) confirmed that the more male teachers there are, the more active fathers become in education. Furthermore, with male early childhood teachers, fathers to get involved in their children's education more actively because male early childhood teachers make fathers feel relaxed (Jones, 2009). In other words, male teachers in early childhood education indicate that males can also take responsibility in children's lives and those teachers encourage fathers to be more active in their children's education (Ozturk, 2012). Anliak and Beyazkurk, (2008) asserted that discrimination against male teachers prevented men from becoming involved in the field of early childhood education. Consequently, the underlying reason why male early childhood teachers become facilitators in communication with fathers may be that fathers might not feel that they belong in the preschool environment where the female dominance prevails because as

Jones (2009) stated, when fathers see male early childhood teachers, they feel comfortable.

Another finding of the study is that male early childhood teachers provide a healthy communication with parents. This finding is partly in agreement with the results of the study Rentzou and Ziganitidou (2009) reporting that there is a supportive relationship between children's parents and male early childhood teachers. Furthermore, this finding is partially aligned with the result of the study conducted by Owens (2010) that the relationship between parents and male early childhood teachers is positive. Related to this, Santiago et al. (2016) argued that parents' trust in their children's teacher and school is an important factor in positive parent-teacher relationships. It may be inferred that parents in this study trusted their children's male early childhood teachers, which might result in a healthy communication between the two parties.

The third and last finding in the category of parent-teacher relationships is that the gender of male teachers pose an obstacle in their relationship with mothers. With this finding, this study diverges from previous studies related to parents' perceptions of male early childhood teachers. To the best of our knowledge, male teachers do not impede the relationship with mothers. The reason behind this notion may arise from the conservative structure of the neighborhood where the study was conducted because one of the mothers stated that when she learned that her children had a male early childhood teacher, she thought of keeping a distance from the male teacher due to the possibility of other people's judgemental discourses in that region.

Moreover, the data indicated that not being a mother is advantageous for male teachers. They think that female teachers have more domestic responsibilities than male teachers. Therefore, male teachers can allocate more time to their jobs and they can focus on their jobs more than female teachers do. The first advantage according to the participants is that male teachers allocate more time to their jobs because male teachers do not give birth and they do not have to take care of their children as much as mothers, which prevents male teachers from taking time off from work frequently. This finding is consistent with the findings of a study by Akman et al. (2014) reporting that

male teachers are believed to seldom take time off from work. With respect to this, Fischer and Anderson (2012) stated that the division of labor allows men to perform the tasks needed away from home, and this division of labor also requires women deal with childcare tasks. Herewith, this finding may indicate that women's responsibilities associated with childcare tasks are more than those of men, which makes it difficult for those women to be away from their children for long durations.

The second advantage is that male teachers can focus on their jobs more than female teachers. Participants declared that male teachers have fewer domestic responsibilities, such as taking care of children, cooking, or house cleaning than their female counterparts, which enables male teachers to focus on their job more. As far as we know based on the literature, this finding differs from the findings of previous studies. An analysis by Collinson and Hearn (2005) indicated that in many societies, men and women are responsible for different domestic tasks, which are usually performed by women, including taking care of children, shopping, cooking and washing (as cited in Yang, 2015). Therefore, it would be reasonable to argue that the domestic responsibilities of women lead participants to think that female teachers focus less on their jobs.

One another category is the perceived skills of male early childhood teachers consisting of being good at social activities, problem solving skills, and being successful in classroom management. However, they were considered to be inadequate in music and art activities. The first finding related with teacher skills was partially consistent with the results of a study by Akman et al. (2014) reporting that male teachers are more social than female teachers. Secondly, male teachers were perceived to be good at problem solving skills. This finding is supported by the findings of Ho and Lam (2014) that male teachers are considered to have better problem solving skills. This finding might arise from masculine traits. That is, problem solving skills may be attributed to masculine traits and because of this attribution, male teachers might be perceived to have better problem solving skills. Another finding is that male teachers are successful in classroom management. This finding was relatively consistent with the results of a

study by Owens (2014) reporting that male early childhood teachers can be perceived as authority figures. Besides, Luginbill (2016) found that male teachers were perceived to provide authority and deal with disciplining students and behavior management more effectively than female teachers. Lastly, the data revealed that male teachers were inadequate in terms of music and art activities in the eyes of parents. To the best of our knowledge, there is no such finding in the literature. This finding may result from a common belief argued by Anderson (2014) that men dominate science related professions, so music and art activities may not seem like science related, which might cause parents to think that males are inadequate in these topics.

Another category is how parents perceive male early childhood teachers in terms of their children's development. According to parents in the study, male early childhood teachers have both positive and negative aspects in terms of children's development. That is, although some parents think that male teachers contribute to girls' communication skills and they can be role models for boys, they are perceived to be inadequate in the development of children's self-care skills. Firstly, to benefit girls' communication skills is the first aspect of this major finding. Despite the focus on male early childhood teachers' impact on boys, there is no finding related with male teachers' effect on girls' communication skills. This might result from the pervasive benefits of male teachers to boys, so girls might be ignored. The other finding is that male early childhood teachers can be role models for boys. This finding was supported by findings of previous studies by Boyden (1997), Russo and Feder (2001), Owens (2010), Sak, Sahin, and Sahin (2012), Hedlin and Åberg (2013), Petersen (2014), Akman et al. (2014), Ho and Lam (2014), and Su (2017). The potential explanation of this finding is that the observed changes in children's behaviors might lead parents to think that male teachers can be role models for their children. To illustrate, participants mentioned how their children's behaviors changed after having a male teacher, and they also talked about what their children said about their male teacher. Lastly, male teachers are perceived to be inadequate in development of children's self-care skills. An analysis by Demirtaş, Demir, and Demir (2014) indicated that male teachers are thought to have

problems in self-care issues of children. In addition, the findings of a study by Ho and Lam (2014) supported that parents had some concerns about how male teachers could deal with self-care of children. One of the reasons underlying this particular perception might result from the stereotypes of depicting men as sexual abusers. The idea of dealing with children's self-care might annoy the participants and they may think that male teachers cannot cope with self-care issues of children. Another explanation behind this notion may arise from the gender role of men because Fischer and Anderson (2012) asserted that being a caregiver for children relates to the gender role of women in contrast with men's gender role, which is being the breadwinner of the family.

The last category of the data revealed that male teachers lack maternal instincts, which is disadvantageous for men. This finding was relatively consistent with the findings of a study by Sak, Sahin, and Sahin (2012) stating that male teachers were claimed to lack maternal instincts. This consideration might be explained with the notion that early childhood education is a woman's job because Sargent (2005) asserted that job functions and positions in early childhood education are linked to the mother and mothering, which supports the image of childcare and teaching as women's work.

### **5.3 Implications and Recommendations for Further Studies**

This phenomenological study contributes to literature on perceptions of parents whose children are taught by male early childhood teachers because there is very limited research on parents' perceptions of male early childhood teachers in the world and particularly in Turkey. In addition, by means of in-depth interviews, this study sheds light on how male early childhood teachers are perceived by parents in detail. That is, this study enabled parents to freely express their perceptions about their children's male early childhood teachers. With the open-ended interviews, parents were provided an opportunity to describe how they perceived their children's male teachers and the reasons behind their perceptions. Moreover, parents in this study could compare their children's former female teachers with the male teachers. As a result of this, they mentioned their perceptions of male teachers related with male teachers' characteristics,

teaching skills, the areas that they are deficient in compared to female early childhood teachers.

One of the aim of this study was to identify whether Turkish parents had any concerns, fears or suspicions associated with male early childhood teachers and parents were found to have negative perceptions of their children's male teachers before they get to know them. More precisely, the negative perceptions at the beginning of the year were mostly related with the gender of those male teachers, not their teaching skills. This indicated that parents had some stereotypes about male early childhood teachers, including child abuse and inadequacy in self-care skills of children which can be named as concern, fear or suspicions of the parents. In addition, as Sargent (2005) asserted, job functions and positions in early childhood education are associated with the mother and mothering, which supports the image of childcare and teaching as women's work. This assertion was supported by the findings of this study that participants' being mother or not being mother had their advantages and disadvantages for early childhood teachers. In addition, according to the findings of the study, stereotypical assumptions about males prevailed in that male teachers were considered to have more control on children. As Owens (2010) stated, that male teachers can be perceived as authority figures. Besides, when issues associated with parents' perceptions are scrutinized in detail, it could be observed that a remarkable number of parents had stereotypical perceptions in terms of gender roles. In other words, while the participants ascribed discipline, problem-solving skills and management skills to male teachers, they attributed the ability to handle self-care of children, being sensitive to children's feelings, and being adequate in music and art activities to female teachers.

Another implication of this study is the need to include the perceptions of parents whose children are taught by male early childhood teachers into teacher training programs. In other words, especially male pre-service teachers need to be informed about how they are perceived by parents. Thus, seminars or courses might be provided to pre-service teachers. These courses or seminars could help pre-service teachers, especially male pre-service teachers, to prepare themselves in light of these perceptions.

Furthermore, both male and female pre-service teachers can improve themselves in the areas in which they are perceived to be deficient in.

This inquiry provides glance related with perceptions towards male preschool teachers from the perspective of parents whose children are taught by male preschool teachers. Further research might be conducted to reveal the perspectives of male early childhood teachers towards parents' perceptions of themselves. Moreover, the involvement of school administrators could be ensured as well so as to identify their experiences concerned with parents' perceptions. In addition, observations could be made of the parent involvement activities and parent-teacher meetings in order to determine whether parents reflect their perceptions of male early childhood teachers. It is also recommended that a study be conducted with the parents whose children are taught by female teachers in order to comprehend whether or not it was the experiences with male early childhood teachers that affected the perceptions.



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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Size göre ideal okul öncesi öğretmeni nasıl olmalıdır?
2. Çocuğunuzun öğretmeninin erkek olduğunu ilk öğrendiğinizde ne düşündünüz? Tepkiniz nasıldı?
3. Şu an çocuğunuzun erkek öğretmeni olması konusunda ne düşünüyorsunuz?
4. Çocuğunuzun öğretmeninin kadın veya erkek olması sizin öğretmenle iletişiminizi etkiler mi? Evetse nasıl etkiler?
5. Sizce erkek okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin güçlü olduğu noktalar var mıdır? Varsa nelerdir?
6. Erkek okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin zayıf olduğu noktalar var mıdır? Varsa nelerdir?
7. Sizce kadın okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin güçlü olduğu noktalar var mıdır? Varsa nelerdir?
8. Sizce kadın okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin zayıf olduğu noktalar var mıdır? Varsa nelerdir?
9. Öğretmenin erkek olması kız çocuklarının gelişimini nasıl etkiler?
10. Öğretmenin erkek olması erkek çocuklarının gelişimini nasıl etkiler?
11. Çocuğunuzun erkek öğretmeninin olmasının çocuğunuz için faydalı olduğunu düşündüğünüz bir duruma örnek verebilir misiniz?
12. Keşke çocuğumun kadın öğretmeni olsaydı dediğiniz bir durum oldu mu? Örnek verebilir misiniz?

## APPENDIX B: ETHICAL PERMISSIONS

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ  
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER



ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ  
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www.ueam.metu.edu.tr

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderilen: Doç.Dr. Feyza TANTEKİN ERDEN

Okul Öncesi Öğretmenliği

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın : Doç.Dr. Feyza TANTEKİN ERDEN;

Danışmanlığını yaptığınız yüksek lisans öğrencisi Turan GÜLÇİÇEK'in "Ebeveynlerin erkek okul öncesi öğretmenleriyle ilgili algılarının incelenmesi" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek gerekli onay **2016-EGT-143** protokol numarası ve **24.10.2016-18.06.2017** tarihleri arasında geçerli olmak üzere verilmiştir

Bilgilerinize saygılarımızla sunarız.

Prof. Dr. Canan SÜMER

İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başkanı

Prof. Dr. Meliha ALTUNİŞİK

İAEK Üyesi

Prof. Dr. Mehmet UTKU

İAEK Üyesi

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Pınar KAYGAN

İAEK Üyesi

Prof. Dr. Ayhan SOL

İAEK Üyesi

Prof. Dr. Ayhan Gürbüz DEMİR

İAEK Üyesi

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Emre SELÇUK

İAEK Üyesi

## APPENDIX C: PERMISSION FROM MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION



T.C.  
ANKARA VALİLİĞİ  
Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü

8706

Sayı : 14588481-605.99-E.11003346  
Konu : Araştırma İzni

19.07.2017

ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİNE  
(Öğrenci İşleri Daire Başkanlığı)

İlgi: a) MEB Yenilik ve Eğitim Teknolojileri Genel Müdürlüğünün 2012/13 nolu Genelgesi.  
b) 19.04.2017 Tarih ve 2021 sayılı yazınız.

Enstitünüz Temel Eğitim Anabilim Dalı Okul Öncesi Eğitimi Yüksek Lisans öğrencisi Turan GÜLÇİÇEK'in "Ebeveynlerin Erkek Okul Öncesi Öğretmenleriyle İlgili Algılarının İncelenmesi" kapsamında uygulama talebi Müdürlüğümüzce uygun görülmüş ve uygulamanın yapılacağı İlçe Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğüne bilgi verilmiştir.

Görüşme formunun (4 sayfa) araştırmacı tarafından uygulama yapılacak sayıda çoğaltılması ve çalışmanın bitiminde bir örneğinin (cd ortamında) Müdürlüğümüz Strateji Geliştirme (1) Şubesine gönderilmesini rica ederim.

Vefa BARDAKCI  
Vali a.  
Milli Eğitim Müdürü

24-07-2017- 11615

Güvenli Elektronik İmza ile  
Aslı ile Aynıdır.

19 Temmuz 2017

Konya yolu Başkent Öğretmen Evi arkası Beşevler ANKARA  
e-posta: istatistik06@meb.gov.tr

Ayrıntılı bilgi için  
Tel: (0 312) 221 02 17/135-134

Bu evim güvenli elektronik imza ile imzalanmıştır. <https://evraksorgu.meb.gov.tr> adresinden c156-357c-3fef-8568-eb6a koda ile teyit edilebilir.

## APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM

Bu çalışma, Arş. Gör. Turan Gülçiçek tarafından ‘Ebeveynlerin erkek okul öncesi öğretmenleriyle ilgili algılarının incelenmesi’ amacıyla düzenlenmiştir. Çalışmaya katılım tamamıyla gönüllülük temelinde olmalıdır. Mülakatda, sizden kimlik belirleyici hiçbir bilgi istenmemektedir. Cevaplarınız gizli tutulacak ve sadece araştırmacılar tarafından değerlendirilecektir. Elde edilecek bilgiler bilimsel yayınlarda kullanılacaktır.

Mülakat kişisel rahatsızlık verecek sorular içermemektedir. Ancak, katılım sırasında sorularda ki yargılardan ya da herhangi başka bir nedenden ötürü kendinizi rahatsız hissederseniz cevaplama işini yarıda bırakmakta serbestsiniz. Böyle bir durumda mülakatı uygulayan kişiye, mülakatı tamamlamaya devam etmek istemediğinizi söylemeniz yeterli olacaktır. Mülakat sonunda, bu çalışma ile ilgili sorularınız varsa cevaplanacaktır.

Bu çalışmaya katıldığınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederiz. Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak için, Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi Okul Öncesi Öğretmenliği Bölümü Araştırma Görevlisi Turan Gülçiçek (Oda: EFA-29; Tel:0507 952 1201; E-posta: gturan@metu.edu.tr) ile iletişime geçebilirsiniz.

***Bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum ve istediğim zaman yarıda bırakabileceğimi biliyorum. Verdiğim bilgilerin bilimsel amaçlı yayınlarda kullanılmasını kabul ediyorum.*** (Formu doldurduktan sonra uygulayıcıya geri veriniz).

İsim

Tarih

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Telefon numaranız (Mülakat zamanını belirlemek için):

## APPENDIX E: TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET

### Giriş

Erkekler ve kadınlar arasında ki biyolojik ve psikolojik farklılıklar cinsiyetin tanımında belirtilirken, toplumsal cinsiyet özellikleri erkeksi ve kadınsı kimlikleri oluşturma sürecinde erkeklerin ve kadınların sosyo-kültürel rollerine göre değişiklik göstermektedir (Dünya Sağlık Örgütü [WHO], 2013). Erkeklerin ve kadınların cinsiyet rolleri toplumda hakim olmakla beraber meslekler gibi çeşitli içeriklerde de ortaya çıkmaktadır (Hee, 2007). Örneğin, kadınların annelik rolünden dolayı küçük çocuklar ile ilgilenme konularında daha uygun oldukları düşünülmekte ve bunun sonucu olarak erkeklerin anaokullarında küçük çocuklarla ilgilenme gibi sorumluluklarla baş edemeyeceği düşünülmektedir (Ho & Lam, 2013).

Okul öncesi eğitiminde çocukların yetişkin rol modeli olarak kadın öğretmenlere olduğu kadar erkek öğretmenlere de ihtiyacı vardır (Akman, Taskin, Ozden, Okyay, & Cortu, 2014). Fakat okul öncesi eğitiminde erkek öğretmenler bütün eğitim alanı ile kıyaslandığında çok az bir şekilde temsil edilmektedir. (Barnard vd., 2000). Örneklendirmek gerekirse, erkek okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin oranı İsveç’de %6, ABD’de %3, Yeni Zelanda’da %1’in altında, Avrupa’da en yüksek orana sahip Norveç’de %9’dur (Sak, Sahin, & Sahin, 2012). Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı’nın 2016 yılında ki istatistiklerine göre ise Türkiye’de %5.3’dür.

Erkek okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin sayısının az olmasının sebeplerinden biri, erkek öğretmenlerin küçük çocukların eğitimi ve bakımı konusunda yetersiz kalacakları görüşüdür. (Cunningham & Watson, 2002). Buna ek olarak, çocuk istismarı suçlamalarına maruz kalma korkusu ve alanda ki erkek öğretmenlerin azlığı diğer sebepler arasındadır. (Bernard vd., 2000). Bununla alakalı olarak, Pleshette-Murphy (2008) erkek okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin, ailelerin erkek öğretmenleri olası cinsel istismar ve taciz vakalarından dolayı tehdit olarak görmesi gibi bir çok engelle baş



etmesi gerektiğini ifade etmiştir. Ho ve Lam (2014) velilerin erkek öğretmenin çocukların öz-bakımı ile ilgili konularda ve çocuklarının erkek öğretmen tarafından tuvalete götürülmesi fikri ile ilgili endişeleri olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Erkek okul öncesi öğretmenin kabiliyetleri konusunda ise çoğu velilerin şüpheli oldukları ve çocuklarının sınıfını kadın öğretmenin sınıfı ile değiştirmeyi düşündüklerini ifade edilmiştir (Zhao & Zeng, 2010).

Rentzou ve Ziganitidou (2009) velilerin çocuklarının öğretmenin erkek olduğunu öğrendiklerinde ilk tepkilerinin korku ve şüphe olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Diğer taraftan öğretmenler ve veliler arasında ki sağlıklı ilişkinin çocukların akademik performansı ve davranışları ile ilişkili olduğu bir çok araştırmacı tarafından ortaya konmuştur (Minke, Sheridan, Kim, Ryoo, & Koziol, 2014; Santiago, Garbacz, Beattie, & Moore, 2016). Bununla beraber, velilerin öğretmene ve okula olan güveni öğretmen-veli arasında ki sağlıklı ilişki için önemli bir faktördür (Santiago vd., 2016). Buna ek olarak, Karakus ve Savas'a göre (2012) velilerin çocuklarının öğretmenine olan güveni ve aile katılımları arasında olumlu bir ilişki vardır. Fakat erkek okul öncesi öğretmenleri ile ilgili yaygın olan kuşku ve endişeler mevcuttur (Rentzou & Ziganitidou, 2009; Zhao & Zeng, 2010; Ho & Lam, 2014). Dolayısıyla bu çalışma Türkiye'de ki velilerin erkek okul öncesi öğretmenlerine yönelik kuşkularının, korkularının veya endişelerinin olup olmadığını saptamayı amaçlamıştır. Son olarak bu çalışmada, velilerin eğitim-öğretim yılı başında ki algıları ile yıl sonuna doğru olan algıları arasında fark olup olmadığına bakılmıştır.

### **Çalışmanın Önemi**

Erkek okul öncesi öğretmenleri ile ilgili yapılan çalışmalar çoğunlukla öğretmen adaylarının, öğretmenlerin, okul yöneticilerinin ve erkek öğretmenlerin bakış açıları üzerinedir. Örneğin Macdonald (2003), Spencer (2009), ve Sealey (2010) okul yöneticilerinin erkek öğretmenler ile ilgili algılarını incelemişlerdir. Diğer taraftan Shackelford-Cohen (2003), Mossburg (2004), Cushman (2005), ve Yang (2015) erkek okul öncesi öğretmenleri üzerine araştırmalar yürütmüşlerdir. Ancak alan yazında çocuğunun öğretmeni erkek okul öncesi öğretmeni olan velilerin bu öğretmenlere yönelik

algıları ile ilgili çok kısıtlı araştırma bulunmaktadır. Böylelikle bu araştırmanın alan yazında ki boşluğu doldurmasına katkı sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir. Ayrıca önceki araştırmalardan farklı olarak, bu çalışma velilerin önceki ve sonraki algıları arasında bir fark olup olmadığı konusunda bilgi verecektir.

Alan yazına katkıda bulunmasının yanısıra, velilerin katılımcı olarak seçilmesinin sebeplerinden biri de Minke vd., (2014) tarafından belirtildiği gibi veliler ve öğretmenler arasında olumlu bir ilişkinin çocukların başarısı için kritik bir öneme sahip olmasıdır. Buna ek olarak, velilerin çocuklarının öğretmenine ve okuluna olan güveni pozitif yönde bir öğretmen-veli ilişkisi ve çocukların kazanımları için önemli bir role sahiptir (Santiago, Garbacz, Beattie, & Moore, 2016). Fakat, bir çok araştırma velilerin erkek öğretmene yönelik kuşkularının ve endişelerinin olduğunu ortaya koymuştur (Rentzou & Ziganitidou, 2009; Zhao & Zeng, 2010; Ho & Lam, 2014). Buradan hareketle, bu çalışma Türkiye’de ki velilerin erkek okul öncesi öğretmenini nasıl algıladıkları hakkında bize fikir vermektedir ve bu çalışmanın bulguları politika yapıcılara, araştırmacılara, okul yöneticilerine ve eğitimcilere veli-erkek öğretmen arasında ki ilişkilerin daha da geliştirilmesi için rehberlik edebilecektir. Bunun dışında, bu çalışmanın bulguları eğitim fakültelerinin okul öncesi öğretmenliği bölümlerinin güncellenmesine katkıda bulunabilir. Şöyle ki, aileleri ve cinsiyet konularını içeren dersler ailelerin erkek okul öncesi öğretmenleri ile algılarını içerebilir. Daha açık olmak gerekirse, aile katılımı gibi derslerin içeriğine katkı sağlamasının yanı sıra erkek öğretmenlerin sınıfında ki velilerin katılımlarının daha da arttırılması için bu araştırma bir rehber olabilir. Cinsiyet konularını içeren derslerde ise hem içeriğe katkı sağlayabilir, hem de velilerin erkek okul öncesi öğretmenlerine yönelik algıları olumsuz ise bu algıların değiştirilmesi için yardımcı olabilir.

Son olarak, bu araştırma erkek okul öncesi öğretmeni adaylarına veliler tarafından nasıl algılandıkları hakkında fikir vermektedir ve gelecekte karşılaşacakları durumlar hakkında ışık tutmaktadır.

### **Çalışmanın Amacı**

Bu olgubilim çalışmasının amacı ebeveynlerin erkek okul öncesi öğretmenleri ile ilgili algılarını incelemektir. Çalışmada, eğitim-öğretim yılı başında ki ve yıl sonuna doğru algıları belirleyebilmek için çocuğunun okul öncesi öğretmeni erkek olan veliler hedeflenmiştir.

### **Araştırma Soruları**

Mevcut çalışmanın iki araştırma sorusu bulunmaktadır. Bu araştırma soruları aşağıda verilmiştir:

1. Ebeveynlerin eğitim-öğretim yılının başında erkek okul öncesi öğretmenleri ile ilgili önyargılı algıları nelerdir?
2. Ebeveynlerin eğitim-öğretim yılının sonuna doğru erkek okul öncesi öğretmenleri ile ilgili algıları nelerdir?

## **YÖNTEM**

### **Çalışma Deseni**

Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2013) çeşitli algıları ve belirli bir olayla ilgili tepkileri araştıran bir araştırmacının bir olgubilim çalışması yürüttüğünü ifade etmişlerdir. Bu yüzden ebeveynlerin erkek okul öncesi öğretmenleri ile ilgili algılarını incelemek bir olgubilim çalışmasıdır. Ayrıca, veri toplama yöntemi olarak derinlemesine görüşme aracılığı ile veriler toplanmıştır.

### **Katılımcılar**

Bu olgubilim çalışmasına çocuğunun öğretmeni erkek okul öncesi öğretmeni olan toplam on üç veli katılmıştır. Örneklem seçim yöntemi olarak amaçlı örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Buna ek olarak, katılımcıların gerçek isimleri kullanılmayarak P1’den P13’e kadar takma isimler verilmiştir. Erkek öğretmenlerin de gerçek isimlerinin yerine Ali, Ahmet ve Mustafa takma adları kullanılmıştır.

## **Veri Toplama Araçları**

Çalışmanın verileri üç aylık bir zaman diliminde toplanmıştır. İlk olarak araştırmacı seçilen okulları ziyaret ettikten sonra okul yönetimi ve erkek öğretmenleri çalışma hakkında bilgilendirmiştir. Daha sonra bu öğretmenlerden ve okul yönetiminden gerekli izinler alınmıştır. Gönüllü katılım formları öğretmenlerin yardımı ile velilere dağıtılmıştır ve olumlu dönüş yapanlar ile görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Görüşmeler öğretmenler odasında, okul yemekhanesinde ve okul dışında ki bir kafede gerçekleştirilmiştir. Görüşmelerde ilk önce katılımcıların eğitim seviyesi, yaşı ve önceki öğretmenin cinsiyetine yönelik kapalı uçlu sorular sorulmuştur. Daha sonra ebeveynlerin algılarına yönelik on iki açık uçlu soru sorulmuştur. Görüşme soruları detaylı bir literatür taramasından sonra uzman görüşü alınarak araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilmiştir. Görüşmeler katılımcıların rızası ile ses kaydı alınarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Her bir görüşme ortalama 30-40 dakika sürmüştür.

## **Veri Analizi**

Bu çalışmada ebeveynlerden elde edilen veriler araştırma sorularına göre kodlanıp kategorilere ayrılmıştır. Araştırmacı ve ilköğretim bölümünde ki bir doktora öğrencisi ayrı ayrı verileri kodladıktan sonra özdeş ve özdeş olmayan temalar ve kategorileri belirlemek için bir araya gelmiştir. Kodlar ve kategoriler üzerine tartıştıktan sonra şu anki halini almıştır. Veri analizi süresince Nvivo 11 ve ATLAS.ti 8 nitel veri analiz programlarından yararlanılmıştır.

## **BULGULAR ve TARTIŞMA**

### **Katılımcıların Kişisel Bilgileri**

Altı kadın katılımcı Ali öğretmenin sınıfında ki çocukların, iki kadın ve iki erkek katılımcı olmak üzere 4 katılımcı Mustafa öğretmenin sınıfında ki çocukların ve 3 kadın katılımcı Ahmet öğretmenin sınıfında ki çocukların velileri olarak çalışmaya katılmıştır.

Tablo-1 Ebeveynlerin Kişisel Bilgileri

Katılımcı	Öğretmen	Meslek	Cinsiyet	Yaş	Eğitim Seviyesi	Önceki Öğretmenin Cinsiyeti	Çocuğun Cinsiyeti
P1	Mustafa	Satın Alma Müdürü	Erkek	43	Üniversite Mezunu	Kadın	Erkek
P2	Ali	Reklamcı	Kadın	30	Üniversite Mezunu	Kadın	Erkek
P3	Ahmet	Fotoğrafçı	Kadın	30	Üniversite Mezunu	Kadın	Erkek
P4	Ali	Ev Hanımı	Kadın	28	Lise Mezunu	Kadın	Erkek
P5	Mustafa	Halka İlişkiler Uzmanı	Kadın	45	Üniversite Mezunu	Kadın	Erkek
P6	Ali	Bankacı	Kadın	30	Üniversite Mezunu	Önceki Öğretmeni Yok	Erkek
P7	Mustafa	Ev Hanımı	Kadın	26	Lise Mezunu	Kadın	Kız
P8	Ali	Hemşire	Kadın	32	Üniversite Mezunu	Kadın	Kız
P9	Ali	Ev Hanımı	Kadın	36	Lise Mezunu	Kadın	Erkek
P10	Mustafa	Öğretmen	Erkek	38	Yüksek Lisans Mezunu	Kadın	Kız

Tablo-1 (Cont'd)

P11	Ahmet	Muhasebeci	Kadın	26	Lise Mezunu	Önceki Öğretmeni Yok	Erkek
P12	Ahmet	Ev Hanımı	Kadın	38	Lise Mezunu	Kadın	Erkek
P13	Ali	Ev Hanımı	Kadın	27	Lise Mezunu	Kadın	Kadın

**Araştırma Sorusu 1: Ebeveynlerin eğitim-öğretim yılının başında erkek okul öncesi öğretmenleri ile ilgili önyargılı algıları nelerdir?**

Table 2 Başlangıçta ki Algılar

Olumlu Algılar	Olumsuz Algılar
Temalar	Temalar
Çocuklar üzerinde ki kontrol	Çocukların öz-bakım becerileri üzerinde ki yetersizlik
Anne olmama dezavantajı	Kız çocukları ile iletişim kuramama
	Anne olmama dezavantajı
	Çocuk İstismarı

Bu çalışma bazı ebeveynlerin çocuklarının öğretmeninin erkek olduğunu ilk öğrendiklerinde olumsuz algılara sahip olduklarını ortaya koymuştur. Bunlardan ilki, erkek okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocukların öz-bakımı ile ilgili konularda yetersiz kalacağı ve bu konularla baş edemeyeceği düşünülmüştür. Ayrıca erkek öğretmenlerin kız çocukları ile iletişim kurmakta zorlanacağı ifade edilmiştir. Bazı katılımcılar ise

erkek öğretmenlerin anne olmama durumunu bir dezavantaj olarak görüp, bu öğretmenlerin daha sabırsız olacaklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Olumsuz algılara yönelik olarak en çok dile getirilen durum çocuk istismarı olmuştur. Çocuk istismarı konusu bu ebeveynler için ciddi derecede bir endişe kaynağı olmuştur. Bu durum alan yazında bulunan çalışmalarla da desteklenmektedir. Rentzou (2011) dönemin başında velilerin erkek okul öncesi öğretmenlerini reddetme eğiliminde olduklarını tespit etmiştir. Buna ek olarak, Ho and Lam (2014) velilerin çocuklarının öz-bakım konularında erkek öğretmenler ile ilgili endişeleri olduğunu saptamıştır. Mistry and Sood (2015) bu olumsuz algıların sebebi olarak medyanın erkek öğretmenler ile ilgili topluma verdiği olumsuz mesajları göstermiştir. Dolayısıyla erkek okul öncesi öğretmeni ile ilk defa karşılaşan bu velilerin olumsuz algılara sahip olmasının medyanın etkisinden kaynaklandığı söylenebilir.

Olumlu algılardan bahsetmek gerekirse, erkek öğretmenler bazı veliler tarafından bir şans olarak görülmüştür çünkü erkek okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocuklar üzerinde daha fazla kontrolü oldukları ifade edilmiştir. Anne olmama durumu bir dezavantaj olarak görülmesine rağmen, bu durum bazı veliler tarafından bir avantaj olarak görülmüştür. Şöyle ki, öğretmenin anne olmasının işe ayırdığı süreyi kısıtlayacağı ve devamlılığının erkek öğretmenler kadar olamayacağı ifade edilmiştir çünkü kadın öğretmenler genellikle doğum iznine ayrıldıkları ve çocukları ile ilgilendikleri için sık sık izin aldıkları ifade edilmiştir. Erkek öğretmenlerin çocuklar üzerinde daha fazla kontrole sahip oldukları ile ilgili bulgular önceki araştırmalarla da desteklenmektedir. Örneğin, Owens (2010) erkek öğretmenlerin veliler tarafından otorite figürü olarak görüldüklerini ortaya koymuştur. Erkek öğretmenlerin daha az izne ayrıldıklarını ve doğum izni gibi bir durumlarının olmadığı ile ilgili olarak, Akman vd. (2014) erkek okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin daha az izne ayrıldıklarını iddia etmişlerdir.

**Araştırma Sorusu 2: Ebeveynlerin eğitim-öğretim yılının sonuna doğru erkek okul öncesi öğretmenleri ile ilgili algıları nelerdir?**

Tablo-3 Yıl Sonuna Doğru Algılar

Kategori	Kod
Erkek	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sabırlı ve sakin olma</li> </ul>
Öğretmenin Kişisel Özellikleri	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kişisel problemlerin asgari seviyede yansıtılması</li> <li>• Çocukların hislerine duyarsız olma</li> <li>• Disiplinli olma</li> </ul>
Öğretmen-Veli İlişkisi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baba ile iletişimi kolaşlaştırma</li> <li>• Velilerle sağlıklı bir iletişimi olma</li> <li>• Anneler ile ilişkide bir engel olma</li> </ul>
Anne Olmama Avantajı	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sınıfında ki çocuklara daha fazla zaman ayırma</li> <li>• İşine konsantre olma</li> </ul>
Öğretmen Becerileri	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sosyal etkinliklerde iyi olma</li> <li>• Problem çözmede iyi olma</li> <li>• Sınıf yönetiminde başarılı olma</li> <li>• Müzik ve sanat etkinliklerinde yetersiz kalma</li> </ul>
Çocukların Gelişimi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kız çocukların iletişim becerilerine faydalı olma</li> <li>• Erkek öğrenciler için rol model olma</li> <li>• Çocukların öz-bakım becerileri üzerinde ki yetersizlik</li> </ul>



Tablo-3 (Cont'd)

Anne Olmama	• Annelik içgüdüğü noksanlığı
Dezavantajı	

Velilerin eğitim-öğretim yılının sonuna doğru çocuklarının erkek okul öncesi öğretmenleri ile ilgili algıları erkek öğretmenin kişisel özellikleri, öğretmen-veli ilişkisi, anne olmama avantajı, öğretmen becerileri, çocukların gelişim alanları ve anne olmama dezavantajı başlıkları altında gruplanmıştır. Erkek öğretmenin kişisel özellikleri ile ilgili olarak sabırlı ve sakin oldukları bazı veliler tarafından ifade edilmiştir. Bu bulgu Zhao and Zeng (2010) tarafından yürütülen çalışma ile çelişmektedir çünkü kadın öğretmenlerin erkek öğretmenlerden daha fazla sabırlı oldukları ve bu yüzden çocuk yetiştirmek için daha uygun oldukları ileri sürülmüştür. Akman vd. (2014) erkek öğretmenlerin kadın öğretmenlere kıyasla daha az sabırlı oldukları savını desteklemektedirler. Bu çalışmada bir diğer kişisel özellik olarak erkek öğretmenlerin kişisel problemlerini asgari düzeyde yansıttıkları ifade edilmiştir. Bununla ilgili olarak Ho and Lam (2014) erkeklerin ve kadınların kişilik özellikleri açısından doğuştan farklılık gösterdiklerini belirtmiştir. Bunun yanısıra, erkek öğretmenlerin çocukların hislerine karşı duyarsız kaldıkları ifade edilmiştir. Demirtaş, Demir, ve Demir (2014) erkek öğretmenlerde şevkat eksikliği olduğunu ve çocuklara daha az ilgi gösterdiklerini iddia etmişlerdir. Buna istinaden Prentice and Carranza (2002) duyguları incinmiş birisini yatıştırmanın kadınsı özelliklerden biri olduğunu erkeksi özellik olmadığını belirtmiştir. Sonuç itibarıyla şevkatli olma ve duygularla başa çıkma kadınsı özelliklerden olduğu için veliler erkek okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocukların hislerine karşı duyarsız kalmasını bu sebeplerden ötürü ifade etmiş olabilirler. Son olarak veliler tarafından erkek okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin disiplinli oldukları ortaya konulmuştur. Bu bulgu Akman vd. (2014) tarafından da desteklenmiştir çünkü erkek okul öncesi öğretmenini tercih eden veliler erkek öğretmenlerin daha disiplinli ve daha otoriter olduklarını dile getirmişlerdir. Ayrıca Sak, Sahin, ve Sahin (2012) erkek öğretmenlerin disiplin problemleri ile kadın öğretmenlerden daha iyi baş ettikleri şeklinde

düşünüldüğünü ifade etmişlerdir. Hedlin ve Åberg'e göre (2013) disiplin erkeksilikle ilişkilendirmiştir. Velilerin sınıf içinde ki disiplini sağlamayı bir erkek işi olarak görmüş olması bu sebepten kaynaklanıyor olabilir.

Velilerin erkek öğretmenler ile ilgili algılarına yönelik başka bir kategori öğretmen-veli başlığı altında oluşturulmuştur. Veliler erkek okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin baba ile iletişimde kolaylaştırıcı bir faktör olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Bu durum alan yazında bulunan araştırmalarda da desteklenmektedir. Erkek öğretmenlerin varlığı babalar için pozitif bir ortam yarattığı ve sebepten ötürü aile katılım etkinliklerine katılımlarının da arttığı ortaya konulmuştur (Cooney & Bitner 2001; Elicker, 2002). Bunu yanı sıra bu çalışmada erkek okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin velilerle sağlıklı bir iletişimi oldukları saptanmıştır. Bu bulgu kısmi olarak Rentzou and Ziganitidou (2009) tarafından da desteklenmektedir çünkü veliler ve erkek okul öncesi öğretmenleri arasında birbirini destekleyici bir ilişkinin olduğu rapor edilmiştir. Benzer olarak Owens (2010) veliler ile erkek okul öncesi öğretmenleri arasında ki ilişkinin olumlu olduğunu belirtmektedir. Bu kategori içinde ki son bulgu erkek öğretmenlerin cinsiyetinin çocukların anneleri ile ilişki açısından bir engel teşkil etmesidir. Bu bulgu alan yazında ki çalışmalardan bu yönüyle farklılık göstermektedir ve bunun sebebi olarak bir veli yaşadıkları bölgenin muhafazakar bir bölge olmasından dolayı erkek öğretmenlerin cinsiyetinin kadın velilerle ilişki bakımından bir engel teşkil edeceğini söylemiştir.

Bir diğer kategori ise velilerin erkek öğretmenlerin anne olmama durumunu bir avantaj olarak görmesidir. Erkek öğretmenlerin ev ile ilgili daha az sorumlulukları olmasından dolayı sınıfta ki çocuklara daha fazla zaman ayırabileceklerini ve işlerine daha kolay odaklanacaklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Ayrıca veliler erkek öğretmenlerin doğum yapma gibi bir durumlarının olmaması ve çocukları ile kadın öğretmenler kadar ilgilenmek zorunda olmadıkları için işlerinden daha az izin aldıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Bu bulgu Akman vd. (2014) tarafından yürütülen çalışmanın bulguları ile tutarlılık göstermiştir. Şöyle ki, erkek öğretmenlerin işlerinden nadiren izin aldıkları ifade edilmiştir. Buna ilişkin olarak Fischer ve Anderson'a göre (2012) iş bölümü erkeklerin evden uzakta çalışmalarına imkan verirken, kadınların çocuk bakımı gibi görevlerle

uğraşmasını gerekli kılmıştır. Velilere göre erkek okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin bir diğer avantajı ise işlerine daha kolay odaklanabilmeleridir. Bu bulgu ile bu araştırma önceki çalışmalardan farklılık göstermektedir. Erkeklerin ev işleri ile ilgili daha az sorumluluklarının olması, velilerin erkek öğretmenlerin işlerine daha kolay odaklanabileceği şeklinde düşünmesine sebep olmuş olabilir.

Bu çalışmada velilerin erkek okul öncesi öğretmenleri ile ilgili algılarının öğretmen becerileri üzerine olduğu saptanmıştır. İlk olarak erkek öğretmenlerin sosyal etkinliklerde iyi oldukları ifade edilmiştir. Bununla alakalı olarak, Akman vd. (2014) erkek öğretmenlerin kadın öğretmenlerden daha sosyal olduklarını rapor etmişlerdir. İkinci olarak bu çalışmada, erkek öğretmenlerin problem çözme becerilerinin iyi olduğu ortaya konmuştur. Ho ve Lam (2014) bununla ilgili olarak erkek öğretmenlerin daha iyi problem çözme becerileri olduğunu iddia etmişlerdir. Bunun sebebi olarak problem çözme becerilerinin erkeksi özelliklere atfetme gösterilebilir. Üçüncü olarak erkek öğretmenlerin sınıf yönetiminde başarılı oldukları yönünde bir algı vardır. Ayrıca erkek öğretmenlerin otoriteyi sağlamada, öğrencileri disipline etme ve davranış yönetimi konularında kadın öğretmenlerden daha etkili olduğu algılanmaktadır (Luginbill, 2016). Son olarak, velilerin bakış açısına göre erkek öğretmenlerin müzik ve sanat etkinliklerinde yetersiz oldukları ifade edilmiştir. Bilgimiz dahilinde alan yazında böyle bir bulguya ulaşılamamıştır fakat erkek öğretmenlerin bu şekilde algılanmasının sebebi olarak müzik ve sanat etkinliklerinin çok fazla bilimle alakalı olduklarının düşünülmemesi olabilir çünkü Anderson (2014) bilim ve teknikle ilgili işlerde erkeklerin egemen olduğunu ifade etmiştir.

Bir diğer kategori ise erkek öğretmene yönelik algıların çocukların gelişimi ile ilgili olmasıdır. Veliler erkek okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocuklarının gelişimi için hem olumlu hem de olumsuz yönlerinin olabileceğini belirtmişlerdir. Buna göre veliler ilk olarak erkek öğretmenlerin kız çocuklarının iletişim becerilerine faydalı olacaklarını düşünmüşlerdir. Alan yazında erkek öğretmenlerin erkek çocuklarının gelişimine yönelik etkileri ile ilgili bir çok bulgu olmasına rağmen, kız çocukları ile ilgili herhangi bir bulguya rastlanılmamıştır. Bunun dışında erkek öğretmenlerin sınıfta ki erkek

öğrenciler için rol model olabilecekleri veliler tarafından ifade edilmiştir. Bu durum alan yazında bulunan bir çok çalışma ile de desteklenmektedir (Boyden, 1997; Russo ve Feder, 2001; Owens, 2010; Sak, Sahin, ve Sahin, 2012; Hedlin ve Åberg, 2013; Petersen, 2014; Akman vd. 2014; Ho ve Lam, 2014; ve Su, 2017). Velilerin çocuklarında gözlemlediği davranışlar bu şekilde düşünmelerine yol açmış olabilir. Çünkü bazı katılımcılar erkek öğretmenlerden sonra çocuklarında ki davranışların nasıl değiştiğinden ve çocuklarının öğretmenleri hakkında konuştuklarından bahsetmişlerdir. Erkek öğretmenlerin kız çocuklarının iletişim becerilerine faydalı olması ve erkek öğrenciler için rol model olması dışında, veliler erkek öğretmenlerin çocukların öz-bakım becerileri üzerinde bir yetersizliklerinin olduğunu ifade etmişlerdir. Demirtaş, Demir, ve Demir (2014) tarafından yürütülen çalışmada erkek öğretmenlerin çocukların öz-bakım konularında sorunlar yaşayacağı düşünülmüştür. Ayrıca erkek öğretmenlerin çocukların öz- bakım konuları ile nasıl baş edecekleri konusunda veliler endişe duymaktadırlar (Ho & Lam, 2014). Erkekleri potansiyel tacizci olarak tasvir eden basmakalıp inanışlar bu endişelerin sebebi olarak gösterilebilir. Ek olarak, bu fikrin arkasında yatan başka bir sebep olarak da erkeklere atfedilen cinsiyet rolü olabilir çünkü Fischer ve Anderson' a göre (2012) ailenin geçimini sağlama görevi erkeklerle ilişkilendirilirken, çocukların bakımı kadınların görevi olarak ilişkilendirilmiştir.

Velilerin erkek okul öncesi öğretmenlerine yönelik algıları son olarak anne olmama dezavantajı başlığı altında sınıflandırılmıştır. Erkek öğretmenlerin annelik içgüdüğü olmaması onlar için bir dezavantaj yaratmakta olduğu algılanmaktadır. Sak, Sahin, ve Sahin (2012) erkek öğretmenlerin annelik içgüdüğünden yoksun olduğu iddia edildiğini ifade etmiştir. Sargent (2005) konuyla ilgili olarak okul öncesi eğitimde pozisyonların annelikle ilişkilendirildiğini ve bu durumunda çocuk bakımının ve öğretmenliğin kadın işi olarak görülmesi fikrini desteklediğini ifade etmiştir.

### **İleri ki Çalışmalara Yönelik Öneriler**

Bu araştırma da veriler sadece velilerden araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilen yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme soruları ile toplanmıştır. Erkek okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin kendilerine yönelik algılarıyla ilgili bakış açılarını içeren ileri ki araştırmalar yapılabilir.

Ayrıca okul yöneticileri de velilerin erkek okul öncesi öğretmenlerine yönelik algılarıyla ilgili çalışmalara dahil edilebilirler. Bu yöneticilerin okulda ki deneyimleri de erkek öğretmen ile ilgili algıları anlamada faydalı olabilir. Bunun dışında aile katılım etkinliklerinde ve veli toplantılarında velilerin erkek öğretmene yönelik algılarını davranışlarına yansıtıp yansıtmadıklarına bakmak için gözlemler yapılabilir. Bir başka çalışma, erkek öğretmen ile olan tecrübelerin öğretmene yönelik algıları etkileyip etkilemediğine bakmak için çocuğu kadın okul öncesi öğretmeni tarafından eğitim alan velilerle yapılabilir.

## APPENDIX D: TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

### **ENSTİTÜ**

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü

☐

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

☒

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü

☐

Enformatik Enstitüsü

☐

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü

☐

### **YAZARIN**

Soyadı : Gülçiçek

Adı : Turan

Bölümü : Okul Öncesi Öğretmenliği

**TEZİN ADI** (İngilizce) : Investigation of Parents' Perceptions of Male Early Childhood Teachers

**TEZİN TÜRÜ** : Yüksek Lisans

☒

Doktora

☐

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.

☐

2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.

☐

3. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz.

☒

**TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ:**