Comparison of Recognition between Male Teachers and Preliminary Male Teachers in the Department of Early Childhood Education in Community College and 4-Year University

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Abstract

Background/Objectives: The objective of this study is to identify the recognition of male teachers and preliminary male teachers in the department of early childhood education in community college and those in 4-year University. Methods/Statistical Analysis: For this, 4 students in the department of early childhood education in community college, 4 male teachers in community college, 4 students in the department of early childhood education in 4-year University, and 4 teachers in 4-year University have participated in the research. As for data collecting methods, in-depth interview, telephone interview, and email have been mostly utilized. Findings: As a result of research, there was no much difference in opinion from students and male teachers in the department of early childhood education in community college and those in 4-year University in terms of ‘motivation of entrance and college life,’ ‘teaching profession in kindergarten,’ and ‘expectation on the future’. However, the difference indicated that those from 4 year University had pride in their teaching positions. As for expectation in the future, all students and male teachers in the department of early childhood education in community college and 4-year University turned out to be under grave apprehensions about their future. Improvements/Applications: This study is meaningful in that results of the research were reflected on the education for teachers through investigation of awareness of male students and teachers in academic fields.

Keywords: Department of Early Childhood Education in Community College, Department of Early Childhood Education in 4-Year University, Kindergarten, Male Teachers for Children, Preliminary Male Teachers

1. Introduction

In the past, many of the jobs were divided into gender roles of men and women. However, as the boundary of gender role recent became collapsed, jobs have been equally taken by both men and women. For representative examples, the proportion of male nurses and cooks that were previously regarded as female jobs has been increasing. In certain areas, they ended up achieving a higher position than women. In addition, women have increasingly been involving in teaching professions that were previously been mostly occupied by men. The proportion of women in elementary school turned out to be 76.9% followed by 68.6% in middle school, and 50.1% in high school. Therefore, the proportion of female teachers in all elementary, middle, and high school turned out to be higher than the one of male teachers.

However, teachers in kindergarten have mostly been occupied by women in the beginning unlike other teaching professions. On the other hand, the number of male teachers in the field of early childhood education has been increasing due to the demand of them in the area, and the importance of male teachers has been increased. There were 835 male teachers in kindergartens as of 2015. Of course, this number only constituted 1.7% of the entire teachers compared to 50,145 female teachers but was high enough for people to remind of male teachers over female teachers with kindergartens.
In order to become male teachers in kindergarten, male students are required to apply for the department of early childhood education in the same manner with female students. The department of early childhood education in Korea is currently offered in 3-year community college and 4-year University. In additions, students from both 3-year community college and 4-year University receive the grade-2 instructor certificate. Even though students in 4-year universities are given 1 more year of learning and practicing, they become teachers in the kindergarten with the same certificates.

Hereupon, this study aims to identify motivation for entrance in the department of early childhood education, adjustment in the field of kindergarten, and recognition of the future of students and teachers in the department of early childhood education in community college and 4-year University who have applied in different areas of academia.

2. Research Method

2.1 Research Participants

Participants in this research included 4 current male students and 4 graduates in the department of early childhood education in 3-year community college in Daegu and 4 current male students and 4 graduates in the department of early childhood education in 4-year University in Gyeongbuk. Current students in the department of early childhood education in community college included 2 sophomores who have not served in military and 3 juniors who have served in military. In addition, teachers had an experience in teaching profession from 1 year to 4 years, and all of them served in military. There were 4 current students in the department of early childhood education in 4-year University who have all served in military. 1 of them was junior, and 3 of them were seniors. Teachers in 4-year University turned out to have teaching experience from 2 to 3 years, and all of them served in military. Firstly, general background of students in the research is shown in Table 1, and the one of teachers in the research is represented in Table 2.

2.2 Data Collection

This study has been conducted on total 16 subjects including 4 students and 4 teachers in the department of early childhood education in 3-year community college and 4 students and 4 teachers in the department of early childhood education in 4-year University. Prior to preceding this research, objective and purpose of this study have been explained to participants. After selecting the purposed cluster and general sampling for participants in the qualitative research and choosing participants in the study, data have been collected through 2 times of in-depth interview, telephone, and email from March to April, 2016.

2.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study was performed with a method developed by6. All the interview contents recorded while collecting the data were exhibited at the same time, and they were re-organized and analyzed with research text after reviewing the contents in each question. In the same manner with Ji-ryung Ahn, contents stated by research participants were classified to extract related topics, and extracted data were organized with related themes to classify them into category of sub-themes. Afterwards, they were classified into sub-topics related to each of the themes for data analysis.

3. Results of the Study

3.1 Motivation of Entrance and College Life

3.1.1 Motivation of Entrance

All the male teachers in the department of early childhood education in community college and 4-year University turned out that they selected early childhood education because they wanted to be a teacher in kindergarten or liked children from the past.

As for me, I am currently operating daycare center and have two older sisters. However, they did not major in early childhood education or child-care but applied in what they wanted to study and are currently working in the office. Therefore, I liked children but have applied in the early childhood education to maintain the family tradition above all.

(Interview with junior, male student G: 2016. 3. 21)

Since I was young, I had an opportunity to be with children as my mother and her sister operated kindergarten. When I was in college, I worked as an assistant in my mother’s kindergarten. Therefore, after graduating college,
I started working as a teacher in my mother’s kindergarten. It is demanding at some degree but is rewarding.

(Interview with teacher B from community college: 2016. 3. 26)

Male students and teachers responded that they liked children but tried to maintain the family tradition when their parents operated day-care center or kindergarten.

I wanted to teach children because I liked them so much. When I applied for college, I have applied in the early childhood education in all colleges. I still like to study. However, I do think that there is a different aspect from what I have expected.

(Interview with junior student F from 4-year University: 2016. 3. 22)

I liked children so much and wanted to teach them while watching many of the TV programs. Therefore, I have applied in the department of early childhood education. I believe that, if you truly like children, you need to be able to overcome all the adversities. Truly outstanding teacher is the one who loves children regardless of money. In addition, male teachers are physically stronger than female teachers. Therefore, children like them more.

(Interview with teacher A from community college: 2016. 3. 12)

It turned out those male students in the department of early childhood education loved children as much as female students did.

3.1.2 Recognition of Students from Community College and 4-year University on the Department of early Childhood Education

Since the department of early childhood education in our community college is relatively high ranked in the nation, I do not think that there would be any problem if it is not
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4-year University. After graduating, we all have the same certificate with those who attend 4-year University. Above all, we are able to have a job earlier than them that we can save time. I still have an idea about 4-year University, but I think that transferring or advancing to doctoral degree might be a great alternative.

(Interview with junior student D in community college: 2016. 4. 24)

When I applied for the college, I have not applied in community college but all applied in the department of early childhood education in 4-year University. This was because that Korean society still placed higher priority in 4-year University over community college, and this was highly required if I wanted to advance to graduate school. Therefore, I am satisfied with attending 4-year University.

(Interview with senior student H in 4-year University: April 5th)

Students choosing to attend the department of early childhood education in community college thought that name of school and personal ability were important, and they were also able to have a job faster. On the other hand, those who applied in 4-year University turned out to consider the department of early childhood education in community college but to end up applying in 4-year University since they needed to attend 4-year University when considering social awareness in reality.

3.1.3 College Life

When I prepared for textbook material exhibition, I thought that men think totally differently from women. Women seemed to share their own ideas and thoughts. It was difficult for me to realize how female students in my department had a different idea from me.

(Interview with sophomore student A in 3-year community college: March 26th)

It was not easy to study as a male student in the department of early childhood education. Especially, most of the assignments in the department of early childhood education were given in groups unlike in the high school. Many of the female students were reluctant to add me in the group even though they did not say it in person. I was not feeling easy with them, but female students had this fixed idea regarding male students to be less capable if outcome turned out not to be good or to be taken for granted if result came out to be good.

(Interview with junior student E in 4-year University: March 19th)

There were many of the mock classes, manufacturing of class materials, group assignments, and presentation in the department of early childhood education unlike other departments in the academic perspective. Therefore, there were many areas that students could not accomplish well by themselves. Male students, as a small group, suffered from much stress. At the same time, they had difficulty in maintaining seamless relationship with female students and also achieving the outcome in group assignments. Male students ended up being greatly frustrated by them while appealing an issue for adjustment.

3.2 Teaching Profession in the kindergarten

I worked as an assistant teacher in the past and am working as a full-time teacher now. However, I have not felt any difference from 4-year University. Of course, there is one teacher who graduated in 4-year University. However, most of the teachers in our kindergarten were from community college and were not concerned with which school teachers graduated from.

(Interview with teacher B from community college: April 30th)

It seems that teachers around me and parents did not care much on whether I graduated from 4-year University or 3-year community college. Instead of thinking about what school I graduated, I am still focusing more on how to lead a life as a teacher. However, it is still fact that I have a pride for graduating 4-year University over community college.

(Interview with teacher G from 4-year University: March 31st)

Anyone would regarded the department of early childhood education as a field of job for women. Seeing as how people are not familiar with female soldiers in military and also how women managed household affairs and took care of children, while men earned incomes, I believe that these perspectives were taken for granted. Another uneasy perspective is that I was asked ‘why I worked as a teacher in kindergarten’ and told how disqualified I was even though I did not have any uncomfortable moment when I was in college. At that moment, I was very irritated. Since I had pride and passion about what I did, I have not had any moment when I was ashamed of what
I did for work. I am still mad at such perspectives and stories but am happy about what I am doing right now. I still believe that my current perspective about male teachers in kindergartens would not be changed in the future. What I do want to tell those small groups of male students who are studying for the early childhood education is that they need not to give up against negative attention from others if they are really proud of a position of infant teacher.

(Interview with teacher C from 3-year community college: April 21st)

Teachers in kindergartens all responded that they did not feel any difference between male teachers from community college and those from 4-year University. Teachers did not realize particular difference between community college and 4-year University as most of the female teachers were from community college or 4-year University. However, male teachers in kindergartens turned out to have pride as they graduated 4-year University.

Parents responded that they did not care whether teachers graduated community college or 4-year University. However, they were cautious on male teachers in terms of sex problem in society including physical contact or restroom usage and hence still had socially fixed thought.

3.3 Expectation on the Future

My family is managing the kindergarten, and I am working as a teacher in the kindergarten. Therefore, I believe that I am maintaining the family tradition. However, I do not believe that I will do well only on a position of infant teachers as others are required.

(Interview with teacher B from community college: 2016. 3. 26)

After coming back from the practice, I changed my mind. In the past, I wanted to apply for private kindergartens since I loved children. However, after coming back from practice at an annex kindergarten, I realized I needed to prepare for employment examination, and I have already started studying for it. It seems to be difficult for me to support myself only with salary from private kindergartens.

(Interview with student H from 4-year University: April 14th)

I will research for the development of early childhood education since I love children so much instead of working as a teacher in the kindergarten. In the future, I am planning to establish the business of kids cafe. I would not work as a teacher in the kindergarten.

(Interview with student C in community college: April 28th)

Male teachers graduating from the department of early childhood education in community college and 4-year University turned out to have a positive outlook on their future. Above all, teachers in the kindergarten have been treated better compared to the past. However, they still suffered from low salary and stereotype in society. Therefore, teachers from 4-year University wanted to advance to graduate school to study more for early childhood education and involve in more specialized work related to early childhood education. However, if their parents managed the kindergarten, they expected to be a chairperson and develop the kindergarten further regardless of whether they graduated community college or 4-year University.

4. Conclusion

The number of male students and teachers in the department and field of early childhood education is low. However, this is not unfamiliar anymore. Therefore, it is recommended to be concerned with and support them for the development of early childhood education. Hereupon, this study has performed the research on current students as well as preliminary infant teachers in community college and 4-year University and teachers from community college and 4-year University to examine the field of early childhood education.

There were three topics in this study; ‘motivation of entrance and college life,’ ‘teaching profession in the kindergarten,’ and ‘expectation on the future.’ As for motivation of entrance, all the students and teachers in community college and 4-year University turned out to be a teacher in the kindergarten or to love children as shown in the research by. Students and teachers from community college have chosen to attend community college because of high rank of school and early employment. On the other hand, students and teachers from 4-year University turned out to attend 4-year University since current society still placed higher priority in 4-year University. However, all the students and teachers from community college and 4-year University had a difficult time in college as a small group. As for ‘teaching pro-
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profession in the kindergarten,’ all the male teachers from community college and 4-year University did not realize any difference. However, those from 4-year University relatively had higher confidence for work. There was not much discriminative recognition of parents. However, social prejudice still existed. Lastly, ‘expectation on the future’ was not overall bright10. However, there was a difference depending on the personal circumstances of teachers. There were cases that teachers preferred to prepare for certification examination or business such as kids cafe or to maintain the kindergarten or day-care center as a family tradition from their parents. Role of male teachers is expected to be further expanded in the early childhood education, and it is also recommended to consider teachers in other academic fields. This study is meaningful in that results of the research were reflected on the education for teachers through investigation of awareness of male students and teachers in academic fields.

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