ADDRESSING THE LACK OF MALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS:
FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE GRADE-LEVEL PREFERENCE

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Addressing the Lack of Male Elementary School Teachers: Factors that Influence Grade-Level Preference

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Abstract

MICHAEL DAVID PATRICK. ADDRESSING THE LACK OF MALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS: FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE GRADE-LEVEL PREFERENCE. (Under the direction of Dr. Constance Pearson) School of Education, November 2009. The purpose of this study was to determine which, if any, specific factors are deterring male teachers from pursuing elementary education. The number of male elementary teachers in America’s public school systems had continued to decline, and this survey sought to discover what specific factors had contributed to this. This study surveyed 231 male public school teachers from six different school districts in Tennessee, Georgia, and Missouri. Male participants recorded their viewpoints regarding male elementary teachers while at the same time they provided personal information concerning factors which contributed to their own personal grade level selection. Participants were surveyed to determine if colleges and universities were adequately encouraging male teachers to pursue elementary education. Several factors contributed to the male teachers’ preference for and selection of secondary education over elementary education, including subject matter, coaching opportunities, and job opportunities. Two major themes were discovered during the study: the age of students was the number one factor deterring male teachers from considering a career in elementary education, and financial incentives was the number one persuading factor that made men more likely to consider teaching in elementary education.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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To God be the Glory!
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife, Andrea, whose continual love, support, sacrifice and encouragement, helped to make this undertaking become a reality. You truly have been the foundation and strength for our family over the past two years, and I thank you for allowing me to reach this dream. I really am the most blessed man in the world to have you as my wife. I love you infinity!

To my son Carter, you have been both my joy and inspiration. Your love and laughter have taught me how to love unselfishly and how to smile through all circumstances of life. To my unborn son Cole, I love you dearly and eagerly await your birth!

I am eternally thankful for my family’s love, support, and sacrifice throughout this process.
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CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM

This dissertation provided a descriptive study as it related to male teachers and their opinions of male elementary teachers. This chapter provided an historical context for the study. Directly after the historical background, information regarding the problem and purpose of this study followed. Key definitions and research questions were also listed in this section of the dissertation.

During the research of studies and reports, this researcher was only able to find a single study or report in which a large group of male teachers was either interviewed or surveyed. This study was presented and discussed in this project. Small case studies involving no more than ten to fifteen teachers were recorded, but this only provided details in their personal feelings, and might not be representative of male teachers as a whole. These types of studies were qualitative in nature, and while they provided solid information, the number of respondents was limited.

This study hoped to give a voice to the male teachers themselves, which should provide specific information that led to grade level preference of male teachers. Once this type of information was acquired, critical analysis of these specific reasons and factors were completed. This type of analysis sought to open up a dialogue between the voices of male teachers and those who would listen to them. For the success of schools, it was important to listen to all teachers. In order to have male teachers who were successful teachers inside the classroom, it was imperative to listen to current male teachers.

Problem Statement

Male elementary teachers were needed in all levels of the educational system;
however the majority of males were choosing to pursue secondary education instead of elementary education. There were not adequate numbers of male elementary teachers employed as full time teachers in schools today.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine, which if any, specific factors are deterring male teachers from pursuing elementary education. This study provided strategic information to help colleges, school district human resource directors, and school administrators understand specific factors that contributed to the shortage of men in the elementary classrooms. This study allowed the male teachers’ voices to be heard through completed surveys by providing answers from those teachers who had chosen elementary education as a profession and also to those who had chosen secondary. It was important to analyze these types of results and answers to see what correlations were there between the two.

The number of male teachers had been on a consistent decline over the past several decades, and this researcher believed that it is important to address this issue and to reverse the trend. Additionally, this project explored factors that were currently deterring males from pursuing careers in elementary education. When these factors were discovered, recommendations could be made to enhance recruiting efforts by school systems and also by local colleges and universities. It also explored possible incentives that could encourage more males to become elementary teachers. The intention of this research was to suggest information which could be used to increase the number of male teachers in elementary school.
Professional Significance

Schools in America saw a decline in the number of male teachers in elementary schools. This decline provided a significant disadvantage to the elementary students today, especially those students who were males. It was important to bring light to this situation that had already received considerable attention in America, the United Kingdom and Australia. While the United Kingdom’s and Australia’s governments focused more on providing solutions to the problem than America had, it was not a topic that had gone unmentioned.

There were many theories that had countered each other on the significant role that males played in the lives of their male students. Some argued that male teachers had no greater impact, and sometimes had even less impact than female teachers. Men were stereotyped as individuals who lacked the nurturing and social skills to thrive in an elementary setting. This study placed the voice of concern and reason, not in hands of scholars, but instead in the male teachers themselves. These teachers who employed in a K-12 setting were asked their opinions of male elementary teachers, and whether they view there was a need for more male teachers in elementary. It was time to see what factors were contributing to males choosing their selected grade, and to see if there were any incentives that would possibly encourage more males to pursue teaching in an elementary school.

Most studies had focused on a small case study basis, choosing to interview and survey small numbers of male teachers. This researcher chose the different approach of interviewing those males who were elementary teachers, and those who were not with the
hopes of finding correlations and differences between the two. Answers would be provided to this hotly debated topic, and where better to find the answers than from the male teachers themselves. Hopefully, these surveyed male teachers will open up new avenues for discussion and a possible increase in the numbers of male elementary teachers. Only with new avenues explored and discussed, might there be a possibility for growth in education.

Research Questions

Answers to the following questions were sought during this study. The intent of these questions was to see which, if any, deterring factors were present for males when making their grade level preference selection. These factors were analyzed to provide solutions to encourage more males to enter elementary education as a career.

1. What factors or decisions led to the surveyed participant’s grade level selection?
2. Do male teachers feel more males are needed in elementary classrooms, and if so, why?
3. How are male elementary teachers viewed by other male teachers, either on the elementary or secondary level?
4. What factors led to former male elementary teachers now teaching at a different level?
5. Would male teachers who have not previously taught at the elementary level ever consider teaching there?
6. Are any incentives offered by the participants’ colleges or universities to
encourage males to choose elementary education?

7. What incentives, if offered by a school system or local university, would encourage male teachers to choose elementary education?

8. What, if any, incentives would encourage males who have not had previous experience at the elementary level, teach elementary school?

9. What, if any, are the common patterns from male teachers who have experience teaching elementary education, with other male teachers who do have elementary education experience?

10. What, if any, are the specific patterns from male teachers who do not have experience teaching elementary education with other male teachers who do not have elementary education teaching experience?

11. Are inexperienced male teachers more drawn to teaching elementary education, or are more experienced veteran male teachers drawn to teaching elementary education?

Definition of Terms

An administrator is a male or female holding the position of an educational leader in a school system or more specifically in an individual school. This person is generally responsible for making educational decisions that affect those in that system or school.

A certified teacher or teacher is a male or female who has earned a teaching certificate from a specific state, which entitles this individual to hold employment as a classroom teacher. Usually this person has received a college degree in the area of education.
A classroom is the room in a public school where a teacher instructs students in the learning process.

Discrimination is the act of treating someone differently or the unfair practice to an individual or group in society.

An elementary teacher is a certified teacher who holds employment as a classroom teacher in the grades of kindergarten through the fifth grade.

Feminization is the act of giving female characteristics and traits to male students inside the classroom environment.

A nonveteran teacher is a teacher who has 10 or fewer years, in a full time teaching capacity in a public school setting.

A salary is the financial compensation a teacher receives for being employed as a certified teacher.

A secondary teacher is a certified teacher who holds employment as a classroom teacher in the grades of sixth through the twelfth grade.

A stereotype is the act of having a pre-set idea or notion of something or someone. This word is often used with a negative connotation attached to it, and it is generally towards an individual or a group.

A veteran teacher is a teacher who has been working 11 or more years in a full-time teaching capacity in a public school setting.
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter provided a comprehensive review of the literature of related information for the purposes of this study. Printed materials, on-line journal articles, books, and other resources were used in compiling facts and information. While researching, several major areas of topics were highlighted, such as the feminization of schools, perceptions and stereotypes of male elementary teachers, job opportunities, and discrimination. Due to the nature of the topic, it is not an exhaustive study of all materials and resources; but instead, it provided valuable and relevant information in this area of research.

Depending on who was asked and what research was reviewed, there were a number of factors discussed and opinions given when it came to the lack of male teachers. Cushman (2005) shared the following statement from her research concerning male elementary teachers: “While the reasons for the decline in the number of males enrolling teacher education are complex and multi-faceted, four factors which have been identified as contributing to the decline are experiences and attitudes related to status, salary, working in a predominantly female environment, and physical contact with children” (p. 227). In this chapter these four factors, as well as others, were researched and discussed. This chapter also included important information, such as the historical context of the study. The historical context focused primarily on the Industrial Revolution and the insurgence of women into the workforce, more specifically into education. The decline of male teachers was reviewed in a large section to show a pattern in the educational system and the male teacher in today’s society. These factors contributed to
the purpose of this study.

Theoretical Framework

In any study it is important to have a theoretical framework or a foundation of ideas upon which a study is based. In this section of the study, the researcher provided the theoretical foundations, which were based on the premises that students needed positive male role models and that male elementary teachers were needed to provide and maintain a balanced educational system for students. This section did not discuss opposing views, in which theorists argued that more males in elementary education were not needed. It should be noted that while this section provided theories and research by many educational researchers, it was not an attempt at a full and comprehensive list of all theories related to this particular research.

Hansen & Mulholland (2005) stated the following gender specific theories, in regard to male teachers in elementary schools:

In academic literature, reasons advanced for there being urgency in recruiting more men into elementary teaching are varied: to restore to elementary teaching the gender balance and diversity reflected in the wider society to offer children a more balanced education through a recognition that women and men operate differently as classroom teachers; to provide elementary school children with male teachers who model learning as acceptable masculine activity and who work cooperatively and respectfully with women as equals; to have male teachers as substitute or surrogate fathers to increasing numbers of children from homes where the father is absent; and to help to break down traditional gender
stereotyping, particularly as expressed by boys. (p.120)

According to this paragraph, these theorists believed it was crucial to encourage more males to teach in elementary education due the following summarized beliefs: (a) effecting restoration of gender balance to reflect society was critical; (b) balancing education by providing teacher-gender diversity for students should be paramount; (c) demonstrating to students that learning was an acceptable masculine achievement while also showing cooperation and respect for female colleagues was essential; and (d) seeing male teachers as substitute fathers for single-parent children whose fathers were absent should be encouraged.

Martino and Kehloer (2006) discussed the theory that absent male role models were detriments to students in school. Martino and Kehloer (2006) quoted the following theory concerning male teachers in education: “Biddulph (1995) claims that the "absent father" is at the heart of the problems that boys are experiencing socially and educationally: Boys with no fathers, or with fathers who are not around much, are much more likely to be violent, to get into trouble, to do poorly in schools, and be a member of a teenage gang in adolescence” (p. 2). Male teachers often spend up to eight hours a day with their students, and in many cases, these male teachers offered the only positive influence in the students’ lives.

Holland (1996) believed that all males, and especially African-American boys, needed positive role models in their lives. Holland created a program for African-American boys called Project 2000; the intent of this project was to partner young African-American teenagers with positive male role models. The results of this program
were incredible. The large majority of African-American teenagers in the program went on to graduate high school; funding for this program eventually ran out. However, the results of the mentoring were cemented into the lives of those teenagers forever. Dr. Holland believed that positive male role models could have a significant impact on students; his theory proved to be accurate as was evident from the results of Project 2000.

The idea of elementary schools needing male teachers was not a new concept; it was a concern that had been discussed and debated for decades. In 1996, Brookhart & Loadman stated the shortage of male elementary teachers "poses a representational problem in an educational system that increasingly values diversity" (p. 207). The American educational system had placed a great value on educating all students equally. According to Brookhard & Loadman’s (1996) previous statement, it could be argued that by failing to have an equal number of male and female elementary teachers in the classroom, the educational system was failing to represent an accurate depiction of today’s society.

One of the arguments in constructing a balanced educational system was that both male and female students would have the same educational opportunities. Many would argue that having more female teachers slants the educational advancement towards the female students. Brown (2003) conducted a study in which teenagers in Canada had their writing skills analyzed. It was very evident from this study that boys lagged well behind the females when it came to writing composition skills. This writing deficiency in male students could be attributed to the shortage of male teachers in elementary schools, where initial writing stages were introduced. Certainly, it was impossible to know in this case if
the male students actually received the same level of instruction from their teachers. However, it was very evident that boys did not understand the same writing skills at the same rate as females in this study. Male teachers have the opportunity to be positive influential role models in the lives of students. Educational systems should continue to conduct research regarding the shortage of males in elementary education and should continue to review some of the more prevalent theorists in this field.

Male Elementary Teachers, Education’s Minority

The small minority of male elementary educators should be able to see the value and worth in the task at hand, educating elementary children. It was reported that in 1996, less than 15% of all teachers in elementary schools were male (Snyder & Hoffman, & Geddes, 1996). According to NEA (2004) that number had decreased to nine percent. “The percentage of male elementary teachers (nine percent) and male secondary teachers (35%) had fallen gradually since 1961 and now was at the lowest level in four decades” (Campos, p.1). If only nine percent of elementary teachers were males, from where was the balanced emotional support for students supposed to come? Schools should provide a well-rounded education to students; this type of education should provide students with an excellent academic environment and also a place of emotional stability.

It was very clear and evident that males were education’s minority. It was important to look at reasons that influenced the shortage. Perception played a role for decades in deterring males from teaching in the elementary school. Skelton (2001) cited a 1925 British government report that stated “for a man to spend his life teaching children of school age is to waste it in doing easy and not very valuable work he would not do if
he was fit to do anything else’’ (cited in Skelton p. 122). This supported the assumption that teaching elementary school was not of great value, and for a male to assume this role degraded himself by doing so.

National reports and studies seemed to be extremely influential on society, and it was clear by the statement that the British government at one point did not support male elementary teachers. When there was a lack of national support for a profession, male elementary teachers continued to decline. This had been the case with the male elementary teaching profession.

The Decline of Male Teachers

It was not difficult to see the declining trend of male teachers inside the classroom today. In a recent study by Johnson (2008), he researched historical statistics from the United States in 2006, and compiled the chart shown in Table 2.1, which showed the gradual decline of male teachers in the United States.

According to the above table, during the late 1800’s, the number of male teachers were almost at an equal rate with female teachers. The lowest percentages of male teachers dropped to around 16% in the 1920’s and also in the 1960’s. According to NEA (2004), the current number of male teachers was currently over 24 %. Over 75% of teachers in the classrooms today were females, which clearly left the male voice and male teacher role models marginal at best.

Johnson (2008) provided a breakdown of the 10 top states where male teachers were currently employed. These data are shown in Table 2.2. It should be noted that no state in the southeastern region of the United States appeared in the top ten. Kansas was
Table 2.1

*The Gradual Decline of Male Teachers in the United States*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School year</th>
<th>Total teachers (in thousands)</th>
<th>Male teachers</th>
<th>Percentage of male teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>40.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>41.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>33.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>723</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>872</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>859</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>963</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>1,408</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>2,059</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>32.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>2,184</td>
<td>708</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>3,051</td>
<td>669</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ranked the state with the highest percentages of male teachers inside the classroom with a percentage of 33%.

In this research, no specific factors that led to the higher male teacher population in Kansas could be identified. Even these results should be discouraging, as two-thirds of
Table 2.2

*Percentage of Male Public School Teachers by State*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Percentage of male public school teachers, 2005-2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>28.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

teachers were still female. The national average for male teachers was significantly lower at 24%, which signified that several states were below the national average. This study provided clear evidence that more females were choosing education as a career than men were. Earlier in this chapter, there were overwhelming statistics that indicated more men chose secondary education over elementary education; therefore, with the statistic of only
24% male teachers in all combined grade levels, the male elementary teachers are unquestionably the minority.

Historical Background

*Early American Education*

To understand the importance of the study and the purpose for it, it was imperative to review the history of this problem. Teaching in America, during the 1600’s, predominately began as a young female’s occupation. It was a highly regarded position at its earliest conception in America. According to the National Women’s History Museum (2007), while addressing the role of the elementary teacher, it stated that “Teaching positions were entirely reserved for unmarried, native-born women. In general, female teachers worked for a few years in their late teens and early twenties before marrying and leaving the paid labor force” (p.1). These types of thought patterns or ideologies began to set the tone for educators in America. Men were raised with the understanding that teaching was for women and men were to be involved in more of labor-related positions or white-collar jobs. Stereotypes like this were often hard to break, and this one in education still remained firmly cemented in much of the elementary education culture.

The Industrial Revolution sent men to work at factories and in the labor yards for much of the day, which in turn placed the bulk of child-raising upon the females in the home. Because teaching was such a low-paid profession, it was not an option for men to consider, for they must support their families. In a 2008 research study by Johnson, he stated the following in response to the issue of the need for more male teachers: “As a recruitment tool for young men graduating high school, Phi Delta Kappa, a fraternal
association of 25,000 men in education, published in 1938, Teaching as a Man’s Job, encouraged young men to consider teaching as an important vocation while detailing the professional life of teachers” (p.150). For over 70 years in the American education system, scholars and educators had been calling for more men to pursue education, and yet the number of male teachers stayed at an all-time low. This was not a problem that surprised educators; however, the solution was one that seemed to confuse the masses.

**Comparative Research**

Cushman’s (2005) had been the only research found to be of a comparative study. Cushman (2005) surveyed over two hundred and fifty male primary teachers in order to gauge their perception and job satisfaction in elementary schools. The study was comparative in nature; it compared the two hundred and fifty male primary teachers and one-thousand college male freshmen. The intent of Cushman’s (2005) study was to determine “whether the attitudes and experiences of potential male applicants and practicing male teachers regarding primary school teaching as a career matched those commonly espoused through academic discourse and reported in the media” (p. 227-229). The survey produced an overwhelming ninety-three percent return ratio, and this return produced significant results. It concluded that there was a high level of similar responses among the surveyed participants. These participants were concerned about the low wages for teachers, status, and working with school aged children (Cushman, 2005).

Additionally, a new perception surfaced during this study, which included the male teacher’s viewpoint on working in a female-dominated profession. Male teachers began to express that they often felt uncomfortable for various reasons working with such
a large number of women in the workforce (Cushman, 2005). This was one of the first studies on record where male teachers vocalized their uneasiness working with females in the majority. This study was of great importance because of the foundation that it had helped establish the viewpoint of the male teacher. Much research had been done on a smaller scale, but the high number of participants helped bring validity to the study.

Levels of Education

It was not difficult to understand the reasons for the continual importance placed upon education in America. From politicians to parents, education was a consistent topic in homes and in the media. Lawmakers and school officials had continually tried to enhance the educational system. Due to these constant efforts toward improvement, critical importance and more stringent demands were placed upon the role of educators, which often led to higher levels of stress and anxiety. Depending on the grade level of education a teacher worked in, he or she faced different challenges and varying areas of stress and anxiety unique to his or her teaching level.

Education was primarily broken down into three major levels. The first level involved the elementary school, which was generally comprised of students in the grades of kindergarten through the fifth grade; the second level was secondary education, which combined students in grade seven through twelve. Lastly, higher education was utilized by many students, once they had completed high school or had earned a G.E.D.. Higher education was used for traditional college and university tracks and for other non-traditional methods, such as technological colleges. In the latter two areas, it was not uncommon to find male teachers or professors employed and facilitating in the learning
process. However, it became a rare occurrence to find male teachers in elementary schools today.

According to Cunningham and Watson (2002), there was a perception that male teachers were not nurturing enough for the younger age children. These researchers also stated in order to teach in elementary schools, male teachers had to overcome several barriers, which they would not face if they were to teach in secondary education.

According to Johnson (2008), “As early as 1869, for instance, roughly 39 percent of all elementary and secondary public school teachers were men. The relatively low percentages of men in the classroom have persisted, with 29 percent at the turn of the 20th century and a dismal 24 percent 50 years later” (p.1). According to these statistics, there was a decline in the amount of overall male teachers in education. If there were a continued decline in overall men in education, this would certainly impact the number of males that chose elementary education as careers.

In Loco Parentis

Educators were charged with many responsibilities in relation to their job. Many of these included tasks such as attending faculty meetings, creating and maintaining lesson plans, attending I.E.P. meetings, collaborating with other grade level and subject matter teachers, and creating daily instructional lessons for students that met federal and state standards. One of the more pressing responsibilities for teachers was not usually found on job descriptions, and that was the task of being a positive role model and example for students.

According to the Legal Dictionary (2009), the Latin definition of In Loco Parentis
simply translates to mean ‘in place of a parent,’ a person or institution that assumes parental rights and duties for a minor” (p. 1). This legal responsibility had been placed upon teachers to provide care and nurture to those students inside their classrooms. The term parent commonly referred to one’s mother and one’s father. If schools were to operate In Loco Parentis, a question some might ask was, how could schools truly serve in this manner if most of the elementary schools were predominately occupied by female teachers? Others would argue that teacher gender did not make a difference in terms of student learning and/or student performance in the classroom.

Unfortunately in many homes today, students did not always have their biological mothers and fathers living together. Studies and opinions differed on the consequences and effects that divorce had on children, with regards to situation and circumstances. Teachers often assumed many of the parental roles with their students during class. If there was a high rate of absentee fathers at home, where would these children go to receive positive adult male interaction?

Outside the United States Educational System

Other countries also realized the shortage of male elementary teachers and had begun gender-specific recruitment for those positions. The United Kingdom was a leader in this area for several years. According to Jones (2006), the United Kingdom government felt that the lack of males was having a negative impact on boys in elementary school. The government believed that these students suffered academically and also became less interested in school. Jones (2006) went on to describe the recruitment efforts from the government to encourage males to enter primary grades; one
of the incentives was a six thousand pound signing bonus. The Teacher and Training Agency, which was responsible for all training in the United Kingdom, sought to have an education system heterogeneously balanced faculty that mirrored society as a whole. (Teacher and Training Agency, 2000) Through this incentive and efforts of recruitment, the United Kingdom had seen a steady increase in the number of male teachers in primary grades.

England had been the source of several studies concerning males in elementary education, primarily for the large push the country made beginning in the 1990’s for specialized recruitment designated for male primary teachers. Smedley (2007) had several publications relating to her work, contributing in the understanding of male elementary teachers and the scrutiny they often faced. In the article she published in 2007 called “Learning to be a primary school teacher: reading one man's story,” she interviewed a man by the name of Terry. Terry was a male primary teacher who agreed to recount many of the personal experiences he encountered while teaching. One of the more interesting challenges he discussed was that of having to be concerned with false sexual allegations with students. He commented that female teachers were often allowed to have more appropriate physical contact than he was. He believed society limited much of what was considered appropriate for male teachers, which was drastically different from female teachers (Smedley, 2007).

During a research study by Mills, Haase, and Charlton (2007), they began to allude to the overwhelming push by some countries’ national governments to encourage males to become teachers. They stated
In Australia, these calls have found their way into policy documents and professional development materials and led to moves by the former federal government to change the Sex Discrimination Act to allow various employing authorities, and the then federal government, to offer scholarships to men who want to become primary teachers. (p. 72)

From this study, it was evident that Australia was the first country on record to provide this type of opportunity or scholarship incentive for male teachers.

_African Americans_

The lack of male mentors for young boys and young men was found quite often within the African American community. Holland (1996) believed that all males, and especially African-American boys, needed positive role models in their lives. He created a program called Project 2000, an after-school program for African-American teenagers. The design of this project was to assist young boys who did not have a male role model in their lives. Boys who entered this program increased their chances dramatically of graduating from high school (Holland, 2006). Unfortunately, after three years of this program, which had been financed from grants, the finances eventually were depleted, and as a result, left the students where they were before, with fewer positive role models. Grants for after-school mentoring programs, unfortunately, would never solve the growing deficiency of positive male role models.

_Family Environment and Students in School_

Divorce was something that affected thousands of lives every year, and children were not excluded from feeling the effects. In today’s society, the divorce rate could be
said to be between thirty and forty percent. According to David Crary (2007), the divorce rate dropped to the lowest rate since the 1970’s, which was now at 36%. Even though the rate of divorce was down, that was the equivalent of more than one out of three children inside a classroom who was from a broken home. Dykeman (2003) stated, “In general, children who have recently experienced a family dissolution have a more difficult time with academic and social expectations at school than children from intact families or established single-parent or blended families” (p. 1). Oftentimes, this situation left children without a positive male role model in their lives, and with the large amount of divorced families, the only male that was often in a child’s life was at school. Dykeman (2003) also stated:

The negative effects of parental divorce upon children depend upon many factors, including the age and sex of the child at the time of the marital dissolution, the amount of conflict within the family unit, and the degree of cooperation between the divorced or separated parents. Each of these factors, alone and in interaction with each other, influences the psychological health of the child and the ability of the child to do well at school. (p1)

Regardless of the situation, it is clear that effects of divorce on students is inevitable.

It was not uncommon to observe male teachers in middle and high schools, but in many schools it would be impossible to find a male elementary teacher in the building for the simple fact that they were not there. In American schools, fewer and fewer males were entering the ranks of teaching. Students would never experience having a male teacher until they reached middle school or high school. According to the United States
Census Department (2008), almost thirteen million children lived in a single-family home. Over ten million children of those families had only the mother in the home. According to Cushman (2007), boys would rather discuss personal problems and feelings with a male teacher than with a female. In many schools, this was impossible to do because there were no male teachers around, resulting in a problem that many schools systems simply had not been able to solve.

In a report published by Cunningham & Watson (2002), they stated that many children might never consider the profession of becoming a male teacher. Cunningham & Watson (2002) encouraged male teachers and guidance counselors to make students aware of this career option. If children lacked a male figure at home and in elementary school, they would continue to see elementary teachers as the role of a female.

Feminization of Schools

There were numerous suggestions and theories by researchers that schools today were actually victimizing the male students; in other words, these theorists were referring to feminizing male students (Martino & Meyenn, 2001). They also stated that schools often fostered a feministic approach, primarily due to all female teacher scenarios. Many suggested that this type of approach actually hindered and feminized the male students within the classroom. Males and females generally reacted and responded differently to situations inside and outside the classroom. These reactions, Martino & Meyenn (2001) would suggest, helped form the masculinity—or lack thereof—of male students inside the classrooms. If this argument was correct; and if this theory was to be compared to the small percentage of male teachers today, questions should be then raised about the
negative consequences of not having male teachers in the elementary setting. Theorists raised questions related to male students and their academic response to male teachers versus female teachers. There were no conclusive results to prove that male teachers were better teachers, or that students responded more positively to male teachers in academic environments.

Ashley (2003) began to research the effects on boys who had relationships with their teachers and the effects this had on feminization and academic success. The author originally had hypothesized there would be a direct correlation between the two, but after completing the study and analysis, found that boys who did not have a positive relationship with their teacher generally did poorly inside the classroom. Statistics were unable to prove a direct link between students who did well in the classroom and their relationship with their teachers (Ashley, 2003). It could be said that many male students might not always feel as comfortable with female teachers as they might with male teachers, but the study did not indicate which of the teachers were male and which were female.

Roulston and Mills (2000) focused on the feminization of curriculum in schools, in order to determine if the underachievement of male students was a direct result from the lack of male role models. This central focus was started by the following simplistic idea of underachievement of boys and their struggles in the world of academia:

The finger pointing which accompanies this notion of the underachieving boy often identifies single-parent families with a female head, and the feminization of the teaching profession, as causal factors of this underachievement. Central to the
argument is that boys are currently out of control because they are lacking suitable male role models. (p. 221-222)

They believed this was a primary reason in some countries for the re-vamped recruitment of male teachers for classrooms. Roulston and Mills (2000) also found that much of the subject matter in education had been feminized and thus deterred males from teaching in those areas. These researchers used the example of teaching music in schools; they found that if males were to take this role, they had to prove their masculinity (2000). Female music teachers were considered in their element and not out-of-place as male music teachers were. Mills, Martino, and Lingard (2004) believed that in English-speaking countries, the cries for more males in elementary education was due to the presumption that schools were becoming more feminized and boy students had a need to see male role models in schools, as discussed previously in the Feminization of Schools.

Rogers (2005) described the early formation of feminization in our schools. She generally described the early reports and studies that tracked women’s role into the workforce during the Industrial Revolution. Rogers stated:

These studies traced similar developments throughout the western world, notably the way the emergence of a “domestic ideology” in the nineteenth century, granted women a certain degree of authority in the education of children, opening the teaching profession to women with a certain level of education themselves. As a result, teaching at the elementary level in particular experienced a process of feminization. (p.2)

Mills, Haase, & Charlton (2007) stated that “The effects of a lack of male role models are
sometimes described as producing in boys an alienation from school, leading to low retention rates and poor academic results” (p.73). This statement was in response to the overwhelming viewpoint from Australia’s government and the media’s perception on the effects of the lack of male teachers. In their research they stated this extremely powerful and accurate statement with male teachers today:

Prospective and new male primary teachers cannot avoid the effects of such messages. As Sumsion (2000) notes, men who enter the teaching profession, particularly early childhood teachers, are likely to be sought after by employers, to receive praise from their colleagues for contributing traits traditionally considered masculine; to encounter expectations that they fulfill normative gender roles; to perceive some social exclusion by female colleagues; to be acutely aware of the risk of allegations of child sexual abuse. Consequently, while male teachers are likely to perceive themselves as valuable, they may also feel that they are under surveillance from suspicious eyes. (p.74)

This statement provides a sense of validation and trepidation for male elementary teachers. It states that male elementary teachers would be highly sought out, but with this attention, the expectations were far greater; and it explained some of the uncomfortable situations that often occurred with male teachers. To enter a profession knowing there would be a higher level of scrutiny placed upon that individual than on his female counterpart can be a strong deterrent for male teachers.

Universities and Colleges

Colleges, universities, and school systems shared a similar goal concerning
education. It was important to provide the best educational environment possible for all students. Colleges and universities strove to ensure their faculty had the highest credentials possible, and that they had a wide range of educational and theoretical backgrounds. School systems also believed that their teachers should also be highly qualified, and that those teachers should provide a well-rounded educational experience for their students. That well-rounded education, especially elementary education, included the impact of male teachers in the classroom.

The vast majority of universities and colleges were failing to adequately encourage males to enter teaching as a profession. Many factors served as deterrents for men who were contemplating education as a profession. It was vital for administrators of colleges and universities to begin to address this issue. Only a few colleges and universities were currently offering incentives for males to enter education.

One of the better-known male teacher programs that were being utilized by Clemson University was Call Me Mister (Clemson University, 2009). Call Me Mister was a program that twelve universities and colleges were currently implementing to encourage African-American males to pursue education. This program offered tuition reimbursement, academic support, and a cohort system that offers social and cultural support (Clemson University, 2008). Many states were offering provisional certificates for males in certain critical shortage fields, such as math and science. At this point, it appeared that there were no specific incentives for male elementary teachers other than Call Me Mister. It was important for school systems and universities to begin to reach out and entice males to enter the profession as elementary educators.
Another university had taken on the call to actively recruit more males into the classroom. Missouri University formed a fellowship of not only male teachers, but it was specifically designed for male elementary teachers. This program was called Mizzou’s Men for Excellence in Elementary Teaching (MMEET). This group has an open membership policy to all men who were currently in undergraduate or graduate programs in education as well as to first-year teachers (MMEET, 2009). The purpose of the program was to encourage highly-qualified men to enter elementary education, and to make them aware of various issues that males experienced while teaching elementary school. (MMEET, 2009).

**Opportunities for Men**

Newspapers frequently offered headlines and articles referring to issues related to schools and their problems on a daily and weekly basis. Even though this had been a discussion for years, people often times viewed this as a new problem, or one that had not been around for many years. Lewis, Butcher, and Donnan (1999) stated otherwise:

> The profession of teaching has traditionally been regarded as a suitable career for women and as less suitable for men. Since the end of the Second World War the male primary school teacher has been variously regarded as morally suspect out of place, or someone who should be actively dissuaded from making such a career choice (Levine, 1977). (p. 124)

It could be suggested that men were not being sought out for elementary positions as women were. According to the survey completed by Center for Early Childhood Leadership (2004), the majority of administrators polled believed it was important for
men to teach at the elementary level. However, only 39% of these administrators admitted to actively recruiting males. If males were not being presented the opportunity to interview for these open positions, then it was important to research preventative measures to ensure against this lack of motivation to interview males. Some preventative measures could include requiring that all elementary administrators interview highly-qualified male applicants for those positions.

Contributing factors

Discrimination

Discrimination was a word that brought many things to mind. Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary defined discrimination as “To distinguish by discerning or exposing differences or to distinguish from one another.” Education was not lacking in discrimination either; whether it was through race, age, or sex, discrimination found a root in this nation’s educational system. Females, minorities, and even male elementary teachers often faced discrimination on a consistent basis. Zeringo and Baldwin-LeClair (2001) were clearly pointing out that a male teacher in elementary education might face discrimination from teachers, parents, and even students. For decades elementary schools had been disproportionately populated by female teachers. Zeringo and Baldwin-LeClair (2001) suggested discrimination against male teachers stems from disproportionately female population, and that female teachers might not always feel that male teachers were nurturing enough, or that they were as qualified as females.

Often gender discrimination could actually prevent a male from fulfilling his job description. Cooney & Bittner (2001), faculty members at the University of Wyoming,
began this type of research study in 1998. The intention of the study was to understand
the feelings and thoughts of males in primary education concerning emergent issues they
encountered. The goals of this project were listed in the following passage:

1) To study emergent issues experienced by male students enrolled in our
elementary/early childhood program; 2) to provide a support network among
males in our program currently or males who have already ready graduated from
the program; and 3) to dialogue with other teacher education programs in the
country about our findings childhood. (p. 77)

Their research was comprised of interviewing, surveying, and videotaping current
primary education students and teachers for their analysis. All of the men who were
interviewed came up with six central emergent issues. These issues were not all given the
same ranking by each individual, but they included the following: “Low salaries, family
and other influences on entering the field, teaching beyond the basics, improving pre-
service education, recruitment of males into the field, and advantages/disadvantages of
being males in a field, and dominated by females” (p. 78). When asked what would be an
effective recruitment tool for getting more males in elementary education, several
suggested that one male teacher was already assigned to each grade, so the new teachers
could have someone with whom they could relate (Cooney & Bitner 2001).

Female-Dominated Profession

Foster and Newman (2005) completed a research study on how male elementary
teachers cope in predominately female atmospheres. They stated, “The ‘quintessentially
feminine domain’ of primary teaching (Carrington, 2001, p. 4) can be seen as presenting
men with an alternative set of behaviors where the daily routines and educational practices favor women” (p. 342). This predominately female environment could become a challenge for males who might try to change their thinking and organizing skills to accommodate the female methods of thinking, behaving, and organizing. This effort could serve as a source of frustration for many males who were contemplating elementary education.

Foster and Newman (2005) also stated how male elementary teachers were viewed in this quote: “Male primary teachers have been described as: ‘unusual, ambitious, odd and deviant’ (Skelton, 2001, p. 1); ‘unambitious, effeminate or worse’ (Lords Hansard, 1998); ‘wimps or perverts’; ‘heroes and sportsmen’ (Sumsion, 2000, p. 130) and ‘homosexuals, pedophiles or principals in waiting’ (King, 2000, p. 3)” (p. 343).

Lewis, Butcher, and Donnan (1999) stated

The profession of teaching has traditionally been regarded as a suitable career for women and as less suitable for men. Since the end of the Second World War the male primary school teacher has been variously regarded as morally suspect, out of place, or someone who should be actively dissuaded from making such a career choice. It is significant that similar negative beliefs have recently reappeared in the media focus on child sexual abuse and child protection issues. (p.1)

These types of allegations and negative beliefs have contributed to the decline of male elementary teachers (Lewis, Butcher, Donnan, 1999).

Elina Lahelma (2000) completed a qualitative study to determine the significance of male teachers in Finland; she was prompted to research this point by the growing
discussions of the need for more male teachers. What she found was that even female students were not as concerned with having male teachers, but that both male and female students agreed that male students needed male teachers inside the classroom. Lahelma (2000) also gave a brief research chronological statement regarding this:

Female numerical dominance of teaching has been regarded as a problem in various countries in the nineteenth century, as well as today. Arguing for the need for more male teachers in schools is often united with concern about boys’ problems in schools or with boys’ need of male models. This discussion has also been linked to the worries about boys’ under achievement, which is not a new discussion either, but raised, for example, by the philosopher John Locke already in the late seventeenth century. (p. 173)

In a previous study completed by Cushman (2005), she interviewed male teachers in order to determine their thoughts and feelings on working in education. Something she noted was that male teachers became frustrated with co-workers who assumed they were hired based solely on their gender, regardless of their professional achievements or work ethic. Cushman (2005) also recorded that male teachers became frustrated with regular meetings that were held, and the men teachers felt the meeting where there was a majority of male teachers in the meeting ran differently, than the meetings where men were in the minority. The male respondents believed meetings with more male teachers ran more effectively and were less-likely to become unfocused with emotions (Cushman, 2005). These types of activities and perceptions by the male teachers could become a source of frustration to the male and the female teachers who were nearby.
For many men across the world, there was a special bond they shared with their biological mothers. This bond was not a bond that could be compared to or replaced by another female. In Cushman’s study, the majority of males were reported to having older women teachers attempt to “mother” them inside the workforce (2005). Interestingly, the men in this study seemed to be amused by this type of activity; all men certainly would not feel this way. It could lead to the assumption that women had helped foster the stereotypes of male teachers that currently existed. Regardless of who was fostering the stereotypes, it was clearly evident from this study that male teachers had strong and passionate views of their roles as teachers, and the environment they worked in.

Salaries

Educators were well known as being underpaid in America. For most men, it was important to be financial providers for their families. Teaching and high salaries were two concepts that were rarely mentioned in the same sentence. Berge (2004) cited a report by Thornton & Bricheno (2006), which stated that low salaries were a hindrance to males who were contemplating education as a profession. In a recent study completed by Barbara Pytel (2008), it was reported that the average teacher’s raise during 2007 was at 2.9 percent, while inflation rose at a rate of 3.9 percent. Although teachers had higher degrees, more training in many cases, and more demands placed upon them than other professions, the financial compensation associated with teaching was anemic. If more males were to contemplate education as a profession, something financially should be done to entice them. If salaries truly play a part in males entering education as a profession, it should be important for colleges and universities to initiate incentives to
encourage them to enroll, and for school systems to continually fund financial incentives for male elementary teachers.

Thoughts of Administrators

Cushman (2006) surveyed and interviewed administrators as to their feelings on male elementary teachers. This study, like many of the others, was completed outside of the United States, this one in Australia. Cushman (2006) believed that it was the general assumptions of most principals or administrators to directly favor male elementary applicants over females, given the gender-unbalanced staffs in schools. She believed factors for the decline of males in elementary education were as listed in the following statement: “The reasons why the numbers have dropped are universally accepted as closely linked to the status and salary of teachers (Thornton & Bricheno, 2000), the perceived feminization of schools (Carrington, 2002), and issues to do with highly-publicized cases of child abuse (Cushman, 2005)” (p. 38). This line of thinking followed very closely with other research studies in this particular field.

She concluded in this study that eighty-four percent of administrators polled believed a gender-balanced staff was a high priority for them (Cushman, 2006). Interestingly in the study, even though such a high percentage of principals felt it was important, thirty-seven percent of the administrators said they would not interview an applicant just because he was male, and another twenty-seven percent were unlikely to interview the applicant if he was a male. Only five percent said they would definitely interview a male applicant for an open position. This was clearly a contradiction in what they considered balanced versus their actions to correct the unbalanced ratio. Principals
frequently gave interviews for applicants who had greater teaching experience and also those with a higher education (Cushman, 2006). If males were not given the opportunity to earn experience and employment, it seemed to make the challenge of gaining that experience all the more difficult. Something should be done to correct this trend.

The Voice of the Male Elementary Teacher

Mulholland & Hansen (2003) completed a study interviewing sixteen recent Australian University male college graduates, who planned to pursue a career in primary education. For most of those recent graduates, primary education was not their original choice as a career. Several of them were majoring in other areas and decided to change their majors to education. During their study, they found several factors that appeared to have a commonality among them. The first factor was that each of these male graduates had support from their parental figures for pursuing primary education. Several of their fathers even encouraged their sons to pursue education, due to dissatisfaction with their own career path. Fathers encouraged these students to consider education because the time off during summers and holidays would be beneficial to family life (Mulholland & Hansen, 2003).

Mulholland & Hansen (2003) also stated that during their research, they found “Evidence that all of the participants were motivated to continue with the degree or had their initial positive feelings towards working with children confirmed by experience with children during school-based placement” (p. 216). Interestingly, only two of the sixteen teachers were reported as being encouraged by other teachers to pursue primary education during their collegiate experience. Most of the males were also quoted as
saying they felt uncomfortable or awkward during their classes, and felt as if they were being singled out due to being in the vast minority. In an overwhelming majority of those males interviewed, they all believed the purpose of teaching was not just about academics, but it was about inspiring students and building relationships with those students. These same males also believed that male teachers were more concerned with building this type of relationships than female teachers were, and that female teachers were more conscientious about lesson planning and following guidelines. This point was one that was sure to be argued with by many female teachers, but it would be difficult to find an educator who does not believe more males are needed to build relationships with students.

Decourse (1999) completed a study in which he interviewed first-year male teachers and observed hours of videotape from these observations. What was discovered during this research was that most males actually felt they had higher expectations for success placed upon them, their opportunity for career advancement was greater than that of females, and also their classroom experiences were completely different from that of female teachers. Many males seem to experience similar feelings as these. Many males in elementary education soon left the classroom for administrative positions, although statistics in this area seemed to be lacking.

Administrators should attempt to hire the most qualified individuals in schools, but it should also be important to look for those individuals who would help provide a balanced education for the students. Hiring individuals of different cultural backgrounds, race, and gender should be essential criteria for today’s administrators. The rate of males
entering elementary education seemed to have decreased and currently appeared to be at an all time low. Recruitment efforts from colleges, universities, and school systems should increase in order to change the current imbalance of males in elementary education.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Previous research was studied and analyzed in order to determine which method would be the most effective format for data-gathering purposes. This chapter outlined the specific purpose of the methodology, provided information on the specific instrumentation used, as well as explained the validation process of the research methods. It also described the data distribution and collection process that was used, as well as provided the results of the data analysis. This study analyzed male teachers’ opinions and thoughts towards males who teach elementary school and also analyzed specific reasons they chose to—or chose not to—teach in an elementary setting. Additional questions sought to see if any incentives could be used to persuade more male teachers to choose elementary teaching as a career path. Males who had experience teaching in elementary school were asked specific questions to gauge their level of satisfaction and to understand their specific reasons for choosing to teach at the elementary level. Previous studies focused on administrators’ thoughts, thoughts of female teachers, viewpoints of students, and male teachers on a miniscule level. This study attempted to broaden the latter viewpoint and provided a basis for future research in this area.

Research Design

Survey research was the design choice for this study. According to Fowler (2002), the purpose of survey research is to, “Identify principles about the design collection, processing, and analysis” (p.30). Other methods of research and design were considered for this study. “However, there is no better method of research than the sample survey process for determining, with a known level of accuracy, information
about large populations” (Rea & Parker, p.3). The task of surveying all male teachers in
the United States was clearly too large of a task for any individual; however a sample
population could be attained through local survey research. Rea & Parker (1997) stated,
“The foremost advantage of the sample survey technique is the ability to generalize about
an entire population by drawing inferences based on data drawn from a small portion of
that population” (p.5). Inferences were obtained through this researcher’s specific survey
research on male teachers.

Surveys have many advantages and some disadvantages as they pertain to
research. According to Rea & Parker (1997), surveys are cost effective; they allow for a
quick glimpse of the whole population, anonymity to the individual surveyed, and ample
time for completion. Some of the disadvantages Rea & Parker (1997) discussed are: bias
in sample due to not having 100% return ratio, lack of interview involvement, and
generally lower response rates (p.6). It is impossible for any survey to be without flaws.
According to Fowler (2002), “All surveys involve some type of compromise of ideal
protocol” (p.33). Although various types of methodology could have been used in this
study, the lack of responses from male teachers warranted survey research.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine which, if any, specific factors
contributed to male teachers and factors which influenced their grade level preference.
This survey attempted to find specific factors for males choosing secondary education
over elementary education. The methodology of this study was that of survey research.
Previous research provided many different answers to this problem statement although
most of the methodology differed significantly from this study. Other survey research focused on smaller numbers of male teachers and also used more of a qualitative format in order to analyze male teachers. According to Fowler (2008), “The purpose of the survey is to produce statistics, that is, quantitative or numerical descriptions about some aspects of the study population” (p.1). Through the use of a survey, the researcher was able to gather important information that had been used in determining factors for males selecting their current grade level.

Validation and Instrumentation

In order to answer the research questions, it was deemed necessary by the researcher to use a survey that would probe more specifically into grade level choices for male teachers. No survey was located that was appropriate for this study, thus the researcher created a specific survey that was utilized in the data gathering process. This survey was validated by three male educational experts, each who currently served in the field of education. Each of these experts validated the survey by agreeing that the design format and questions in the survey would provide answers to the research questions being used in this study. Experts were provided research questions, problem statement, and purpose statement for assistance with validation purposes. During the validation process, one expert suggested to provide an open ended response question as the last question on the survey. Once this change was added by the researcher, the survey was sent again to the same panel of experts who validated survey. Survey was not altered from this point forward.

Participants
Male Teacher Survey

1. How many years have you taught? (Circle)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0-5</th>
<th>6-10</th>
<th>11-15</th>
<th>16-20</th>
<th>21+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

2. In what grade levels do you have teaching experience? (Circle all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>K-5</th>
<th>6-8</th>
<th>9-12</th>
<th>College or University level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

3. How many years were spent in an elementary school? (Circle)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1-5</th>
<th>6-10</th>
<th>11-15</th>
<th>16-20</th>
<th>21+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4. If you have taught in elementary and are currently not, why? (Circle all that apply)
   a. Administration opportunity.
   b. Prefer teaching older students.
   c. Desire to work with a more gender-balanced staff/faculty.
   d. Other? Please list. __________________________

5. What decisions led you to teach in your current grade level? (Circle all that apply)
   a. Employment or advancement opportunity.
   b. Age of students.
   c. Coaching opportunity.
   d. Subject Matter.
   e. Other. (Please list) __________________________

6. Would you consider teaching at the elementary level? (Circle) Yes No

7. If No, why not? (Circle all that apply)
   a. Student’s age.
   b. Predominate female environment.
   c. Fearful of false accusations.
   d. Other. (Please List) __________________________

8. What is your view of men who teach in elementary education? (Circle all that apply)
   a. More nurturing.
   b. Less masculine.
   c. Higher patience levels.
   d. Better communicators.
   e. Other. (Please List) __________________________

9. During your college education, did you take any elementary education courses? (Circle) Yes No

10. If yes, did these courses influence your view on becoming an elementary teacher? (Circle)
    Yes No

11. Did your college offer any incentives for males to enter elementary education?
    Yes No

12. If yes, did these incentives persuade you to enter elementary education? (Circle)
    Yes No
Figure 3.1 shows the survey that was given to the participants. Participants in this study were classified and determined by gender and whether they served currently as full-time employees in a current public school system. Only male teachers were asked to participate in this survey. These male teachers were employed in elementary, middle, or high schools as full-time teachers. Over 15 school systems were contacted and 6 of those agreed to allow their male teachers to participate in this study. The participating school systems were Hamilton County Schools in Chattanooga, Tennessee; Bradley County Schools in Cleveland, Tennessee; Lumpkin County Schools, in Lumpkin, Georgia; Banks County Schools in Homer, Georgia; Hall County Schools in Gainesville, Georgia; and Midway School District R-1 in Cleveland, Missouri.

Either superintendents, human resource directors, system level curriculum instructors or principals were the individuals responsible for granting permission for the study and were responsible for the distribution and delivery of the surveys. Surveys were distributed to Hamilton County Schools through the local school system mailing system,
while the others were distributed through the United States Postal Services. Midway School District R-1 was distributed to the superintendent, the rest were distributed through the permission of the superintendent via school principals and human resource directors. Of the 550 surveys that were distributed, 231 surveys were completed and returned for use in this study. The return ratio was calculated at 42%. The initial return goal of the survey was set at 100 surveys, but due to personal contact and prior relationships with several of the school system personnel, a much higher return amount was achieved.

Figure 3.2 provides a statistical breakdown of the participants in the grade levels in which they had experience teaching. Although there were only 231 participants in the study, many of the male participants in this study had experience teaching more than one grade level area, and thus the reason for the higher totals at each of the levels. The graph and the information below provided a glimpse of the individuals and their experience levels in education. Additionally, Table 3.1 provides a numerical and statistical breakdown for each male participant and their grade level experience.
Figure 3.2. Levels of education taught by male participants.

Table 3.1

Levels of Education Taught by Male Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>K-5</th>
<th>Grades 6-8</th>
<th>Grades 9-12</th>
<th>Higher education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23.38%</td>
<td>51.95%</td>
<td>74.89%</td>
<td>11.69%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These statistics showed that the majority of respondents had experience teaching in secondary education, while at least one-fourth of all participants had experience teaching at the elementary level. It should be noted that all participants in the elementary level might not be currently serving as elementary teachers.

Data Distribution and Collection

In order to ensure validity of the surveys, all surveys were delivered and collected
in the same manner. Surveys were mailed to the designated school system contact persons. These individuals were responsible for delivering and ensuring confidentiality for all completed surveys. Each administrator informed each of the male teachers that participation was strictly on a voluntary basis. Surveys were typically completed in faculty meetings, grade-level meetings, and occasionally delivered to teacher mailboxes located at their given school. Surveys were completed and returned to the administrators, who collected all surveys, both complete and incomplete, and promptly returned them to the researcher for data analysis. Surveys were distributed and collected solely during the spring 2009 semester.

Data Analysis

Several programs were used, including Crystal Reports and Microsoft Excel for data analysis. This combination of statistical software allowed the researcher to run cross-tabulation reports from various questions in the survey. Microsoft Excel was also used to organize data and to record individual responses from the male participants. SPSS software was also used on a secondary level to calculate results for a small amount of the questions. It was important in the analysis of the study to understand the pattern and tendencies associated with male teacher grade level selection.

During the analysis process, it was important to address and study any patterns that developed. The following research questions were asked and answered during this part of the study:

1. What factors or decisions led to the surveyed participant’s grade level selection?
2. Do male teachers feel more males are needed in elementary classrooms, and if so, why?

3. How are male elementary teachers viewed by other male teachers, either on the elementary or secondary level?

4. What factors led to former male elementary teachers now teaching at a different level?

5. Would male teachers who have not previously taught at the elementary level ever consider teaching there?

6. Are any incentives offered by the participants’ colleges or universities to encourage males to choose elementary education?

7. What incentives, if offered by a school system or local university, would encourage male teachers to choose elementary education?

8. What, if any, incentives would encourage males who have not had previous experience at the elementary level, teach elementary school?

9. What, if any, are the common patterns from male teachers who have experience teaching elementary education, with other male teachers who also have elementary education experience?

10. Are years of teaching experience an indicators of male teacher grade level preference selection?

The answers to the above questions provided valuable insight into specific patterns and to factors that contributed to the decision making of grade level selection of male teachers in this study. In order to calculate information in this study, it was
imperative to run cross-tabulation reports from male teachers who had experience teaching in elementary schools with all other questions, and those male teachers who had not had experience teaching in elementary school with all other questions. This type of analysis provided answers to determine if any specific patterns were detected between either group of individuals. Neither the age of the male teacher nor his ethnicity was taken into account, as both were intentionally excluded from the survey itself. The focus was on male teachers in general and not that of a specific race or age group. However, years of experience was identified as a specific target area in the study, due to many current educators who have changed careers to pursue education.
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS

The foremost purpose of this study was to determine why more males had not chosen education as a career, and to see which, if any, specific factors had influenced this decision. Surveys were distributed to 231 male teachers in the 6 school systems which were previously described. These male teachers were certified teachers, employed in full-time positions in public schools. The focus of the analysis was to allow the male teachers’ responses to be communicated in a systematic format. The only method for data collection was that of a constructed survey, which originated with this researcher. In this chapter, results of all completed surveys were analyzed and discussed in order to determine which specific patterns could be identified as determining factors in grade level selection.

This chapter was broken down into several major category headings which were organized by the previously stated research questions. Each research question was then explained by the overall statistical result for each question. This is directly followed by the breakdown of the question into three major categories: (a) Male teachers who had experience teaching in elementary schools, (b) Male teachers who do not have experience teaching in elementary schools, and (c) Male teachers’ answers broken down by their years of teaching experience. It was important to identify any correlations between males who had experience teaching elementary education with other males who had the same experience, in order to determine any patterns. Those patterns should provide answers which could have an effect on the increase of male elementary teachers by offering valuable insight to other males who might consider teaching in the same field. Teachers’
answers from males, who had never taught in elementary classrooms, were cross-referenced with the other questions in the survey to identify similar patterns.

The last category was based upon years of teaching experience of the participants. Those answers were cross-referenced with the other survey questions to determine if any common factors were present with teachers who had 0-5 years experience, 6-10 years experience, 11-15 years experience, 16-20 years experience, and 20 or more years of full time teaching experience. In all other previous research on this topic, age was not a determining factor and, therefore, was not an influential element within those statistical findings. This research of this study chose to follow in the same format and methodology and not seek the participants’ ages. It was deemed important by the researcher to understand if beginning teachers or veteran teachers were more likely to pursue elementary education as a career, thus the reason for the separate breakdown of years of experience.

Table 4.1 provides an introductory breakdown of the participants surveyed. Data from this figure will be used throughout this chapter, and thus should be used as a basic description of the male teachers who were surveyed. It should be noted that some questions were allowed multiple responses and thus accounts for higher totals in areas. The intent of the questions listed below was to establish which, if any, deterrents were present for males when making their selection for grade level preference. These factors were analyzed to provide solutions and insight which would hopefully encourage more males to enter elementary education as a career.
Table 4.1

*General Description of the Surveyed Male Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Previously offered incentives</th>
<th>Would consider elementary education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males with elementary experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current elementary teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former elementary teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary education courses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-5 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21+ years</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following research questions are discussed in this chapter, along with results from the survey questions below.

1. What factors or decisions led to the surveyed participant’s grade level selection?

2. Do male teachers feel more males are needed in elementary classrooms, and if
so, why?

3. How are male elementary teachers viewed by other male teachers, either on the elementary or secondary level?

4. What factors led to former male elementary teachers now teaching at a different level?

5. Would male teachers who have not previously taught at the elementary level ever consider teaching there?

6. Are any incentives offered by the participants’ colleges or universities to encourage males to choose elementary education?

7. What incentives, if offered by a school system or local university, would encourage male teachers to choose elementary education?

8. What, if any, incentives would encourage males who have not had previous experience at the elementary level, teach elementary school?

9. What, if any, are the common patterns from male teachers who have experience teaching elementary education, with other male teachers who also have elementary education experience?

10. Are years of teaching experience an indicator of male teacher grade-level preference selection?

For each of the research questions presented in this chapter, the results of the data from the surveys are presented with the assistance of descriptive methods as well as numerical percentages and any determined patterns.
Survey Analysis

This section is divided according to the order in which the research questions were stated. Each question is listed and followed directly by statistical results from the surveys. Charts and graphs are used to provide visual illustration to the reader and to enhance understanding of the results. The total number of male teacher respondents is 231. For many of the questions on the survey (see Appendix II), multiple responses were allowed, which allowed the questions to have a higher amount of responses than actual participants. Due to the nature of the questions provided on the survey to the male participants, the researcher deemed it necessary to allow for more than one reason, factor, or option for the questions. This type of questioning allowed for a more detailed response from each participant.

Q #1: What factors or decisions led to the surveyed participant’s grade level selection?

Of the 231 male teachers who completed the survey, this question yielded a total of 442 responses. This question allowed for multiple responses per participant. For most of the participants, there was more than one specific factor which led to their selection of grade levels. This question also provided an option to the participants to select *other*, and to provide their own distinct reason as well. Figure 4.1 showed motivating factors for grade level selection from all male teachers. Table 4.2 provided a statistical breakdown of the responses provided by the participants.

Males with elementary educational experience had responses which were analyzed through a cross-tabulation report. The 54 males, who acknowledged having
experience as an elementary teachers, who answered the question produced a total of 94

![Bar chart showing motivations for teaching in current grade level.](image)

*Figure 4.1. Motivations for teaching in current grade level.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number of Teachers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment opportunity</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>16.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of students</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>25.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>19.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject matter</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>33.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4.2  
Factors That Influenced Grade Level Decisions*

total responses, because they were allowed multiple responses. Of those 94 responses,
28.72% stated that they chose their current grade level due to the age of students, while 22.34% chose their current grade level because of employment opportunity. Additionally, 23.4% of those men selected subject matter or content area as their primary reason, while another 18.08% marked coaching opportunities as the reason for their choice. The last 7.44% of the males with elementary experience chose other. Figure 4.2 and Table 4.3 provide an illustration of the above statistics.

**Figure 4.2.** Years of experience by factors that influenced grade level decisions.

**Table 4.3**

*Males With Elementary Experience: Factors That Influenced Grade Level Selection*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment opportunity</th>
<th>Age of students</th>
<th>Coaching opportunity</th>
<th>Subject area</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q #2: Do male teachers feel more males are needed in elementary classrooms, and if so why?

There were a total of 221 out of 231 responses to this particular survey question, which provided male teachers an opportunity to voice their opinions on whether they believed there was a need for more male elementary teachers. This was a yes or no question, with an open-response second question for the individuals to provide more detailed responses. A detailed response allowed the participants, with no leading or guiding from the survey, to add their own thoughts and feelings towards this particular area. Of the 221 completed surveys, 172 of all answers indicated yes, more male teachers were needed in elementary education while only 35 respondents believed “more male elementary teachers were not needed.” Of the 231 respondents, 24 opted not to complete this question, and it was left with no written response. Figure 4.3 provides a graphic of their responses in percentages.
Figure 4.3. Are more men needed inside elementary classrooms?

As shown above, it clearly illustrated that even male teachers believed that more men are needed in elementary classrooms today. Only a small percentage of 15, believed that men elementary teachers were not needed, and 10% failed to answer the question.

This question also provided an opportunity for participants to voice their own individual response to explain why they believed or did not believe more male elementary teachers were needed (Appendix A). Of the 172 respondents who said yes, they believed more male elementary teachers are needed, 147 actually provided reasons for their answers. Of the 147 written responses, an overwhelming number of 111 believed that male teachers provided a positive male role-model and influence for students. This positive impact was not specified as whether referred to male students or female students, but it was described in a more general response to students as a whole.

Additionally, 28 of the 172 yes responses indicated that students needed to have more gender-balanced elementary experience. Several of these respondents’ answers indicated that predominately female environments were not always positive for students. Also, five of the 172 yes answers believed that male teachers were needed in elementary schools to assist with school and student discipline issues. Two respondents believed that male elementary teachers helped with acclimating students for middle and high school experiences, in schools where a higher number of male teachers were employed, as previously stated in Chapter 2. The other single response indicated that male teachers were simply better teachers and thus should be used more in all areas of teaching. Figure 4.4 provides an illustration of the statistics listed in this paragraph.
When the question was posed to male teachers with elementary educational experience, 47 of the 54 teachers responded that a greater number of male elementary teachers were needed. The majority of those, 37 of 47, stated that male teachers were needed to be positive role models in elementary schools. Interestingly enough, six male teachers with experience in elementary schools stated that more male teachers were not needed inside the classroom. They felt that women made as equal an impact as male teachers. Table 4.4 provides a comparison of answers to this research question from male teachers who had previous elementary experience.

Table 4.4

*Elementary Male Teachers’ Decisions: Why Men Are Needed*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Balance</th>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Role model</th>
<th>Superior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Q #3: How are male elementary teachers viewed by other male teachers, either on the elementary or secondary level?

The intent of this question was to determine if male teachers, whether on secondary or elementary level, viewed male elementary teachers differently. It was previously stated in Chapter 2, that there were often stereotypes associated with male elementary teachers, often times being viewed as more feminine. All 231 respondents answered the question, and additionally were provided the opportunity to make multiple responses. The total number of responses from the 231 male teachers was 389. Each participant had the opportunity to choose his viewpoint of male elementary teachers. There were five given responses, and one response was labeled other, which allowed the respondents the option to write in their own authentic answer. The five provided answers on this question were as followed: (a) good nurturing skills, (b) less masculine, (c) higher patience levels, (d) better communicators, and (e) more masculine. The chart below provided an illustration of the recorded responses.

Table 4.5 clearly shows that male teachers believed that male elementary teachers had good nurturing skills, as indicated by the almost 33% responses, while another 31% believe that male elementary teachers had higher patience levels than other male teachers. This question did not provide the participants a chance to expound upon any of their answers but instead chose to focus on simple responses. It should be noted that only 12 of the 389 total responses to this question, believed that male elementary teachers were less masculine; which contradicted findings of previous studies from other researchers, which
were cited in Chapter 2.

Of the 55 other responses, only 25 of them actually provided a reason. The

Table 4.5

*Male Teachers’ Viewpoint of Male Elementary Teachers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Nurturing</th>
<th>Less masculine</th>
<th>Patience</th>
<th>Better communicators</th>
<th>More masculine</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>skills</td>
<td>levels</td>
<td>communicators</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.90%</td>
<td>3.10%</td>
<td>31.61%</td>
<td>10.81%</td>
<td>1.02%</td>
<td>14.13%</td>
<td>6.42%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

majority of those reasons focused on male elementary teachers being excellent role models for their students. The other response, which yielded a significant response, was that of 42 male teachers, who believed that males who taught elementary education were actually better communicators than males who taught secondary education.

Table 4.6 provides a statistical summation of responses by those male teachers who had previous experience as elementary teachers. Two major themes arose from this figure; males with elementary education experience saw themselves as being more nurturing and having higher patience levels than other male teachers in secondary education. Figure 4.5 provided an examination of the answers offered in this research question. The results were broken down by years of experience for each teacher.

From this figure, male teachers clearly indicated that they viewed male elementary teachers as being more nurturing towards students and also having higher
levels of patience. According to Figure 4.5 the majority of male teachers who participated in this survey agreed that male elementary teachers had higher patience levels and were more nurturing than male teachers in secondary education.

Figure 4.5. Male teachers’ viewpoint of male elementary teachers: Years of experience.

Table 4.6

Elementary Male Teachers’ Viewpoint of Male Elementary Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>More</th>
<th>Less</th>
<th>Higher</th>
<th>Better</th>
<th>More</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nurturing</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masculine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>patience levels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>communicators</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masculine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q#4: What factors led to former male elementary teachers now teaching at a different level?

This question sought to determine any factors that could lead to a higher rate of male elementary teacher retention. This question focused on only those male teachers who had previously taught elementary school and were no longer employed in elementary schools as teachers. This question ruled out all current male elementary teachers from the equations and statistics, assuming all participants responded accordingly. Over 71% of the 231 male participants did not respond to this survey question. The number of respondents to this question was 68, and the total number of responses totaled at 75. Participants were left with the option once again of selecting multiple responses, thus accounting for the extra responses from the participants.

Each male teacher was provided with the opportunity to state his reason for no longer teaching in elementary school. There were four given answers, and one marked other, in which the teachers were afforded the opportunity to write their own answers. The four written responses were: (a) employment or advancement opportunity, (b) age of students, (c) coaching opportunity, (d) and subject matter. Table 4.7 depicts an illustration of the responses.

The table demonstrates that the majority of respondents preferred working with older students. Only five of the former elementary school teachers believed that working in a more gender-balanced environment was a reason to change positions. Of the 12 other responses, there was a central theme, which was job availability or job opportunity in the teachers’ fields. Only one respondent left elementary education for an
administrative position. It should also be noted that since no current elementary teacher was given the option to respond to this question, it was unclear from this particular question whether current male elementary teachers preferred students of a younger age, as opposed to their secondary male teachers.

Table 4.7 presents a breakdown on males with previous elementary educational experience, who were no longer teaching in elementary education.

Table 4.7

*Former Male Elementary Teachers Speak Out*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrative opportunity</th>
<th>Older students</th>
<th>Gender-balanced staff</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>No response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.33%</td>
<td>69.33%</td>
<td>6.66%</td>
<td>22.66%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.6 was categorized by years of experience in order to determine if certain ages of teachers were drawn away from elementary education.
Figure 4.6. Years of experience: Former male elementary teachers speak out.

The results of this data chart clearly illustrated that teachers, regardless of years of experience, left elementary education in order to teach an older group of students. The other factor was marked *other*, which provided a variety of answers, most indicating job opportunity, as the cause for leaving the elementary school.

**Q#5:** Would male teachers who have not previously taught at the elementary level ever consider teaching there?

This research question combined two separate questions on the survey. The first question sought to discover if any male participants would consider teaching at the elementary level. Then if they selected *no* to the response, they were to answer the next question by providing a reason. Of the 231 total respondents, 142 stated they would not consider teaching elementary education. According to this statistic, that left a total of 89 male teachers who either were currently teaching elementary grade levels or would consider teaching in an elementary school.
These 142 respondents who would not consider teaching in elementary schools were given the opportunity to circle more than one response to the following question, in which they provided a reason or reasons for their previous response of no, concerning their consideration of teaching in an elementary school. The following responses were provided for the surveyed teachers: (a) students’ ages, (b) fearful of false accusations, (c) predominately female environment, and (d) other, which left them an opportunity to write in their own response.

As a part of the survey, participants were asked to give some background of their teaching employment history. Participants were asked to circle all areas in which they had previous full-time teaching experience. They were provided the choice of elementary, middle, and high school as well as college or university experience. Of the 231 applicants, 54 selected they either were currently teaching elementary education, or had previously done so. This left a total of 177 male teachers, who selected they had not previously had teaching experience in an elementary school. Figure 4.7 gives a continued breakdown of each of the above statistics.
Figure 4.7. Males considering elementary education.

Of the 54 who had elementary experience, 31 of them would consider teaching in an elementary school again while 20 would not. Only three of the males who acknowledged having elementary education experience did not respond to this particular question. Of the 177 surveyed teachers who previously stated they had never taught in an elementary school, 30 admitted that they would consider teaching on the elementary level while 145 of them said they would not consider it. Only two of the 177 failed to respond to this question. It should be noted that the majority of males, who participated in this survey had never taught elementary education, and they stated they would not be interested in teaching it.
Additionally, as part of this research question, it was important to the researcher to understand what specific reasons served as deterrents for males who had never taught elementary school from considering teaching in those grade levels. Figure 4.8 of the surveyed secondary school teachers provides a breakdown of specific reasons why they would not consider teaching in an elementary school.

![Figure 4.8. Deterring factors against teaching in elementary school.](image)

There were three given responses, which were stated earlier, as well as one response marked *other*. Each participant was given the opportunity to select more than one response, thus accounting for the higher number of responses. Table 4.8 provides a more detailed analysis of responses to this research question.

Table 4.8 *Continued Breakdown: Deterring Factors Against Teaching in Elementary School*
From the figure and table, it is clearly evident that the majority of male teachers stated that they were not interested in teaching students of elementary school age children. Although it should be noted that of the teachers who selected *other* as a response, they provided many different written answers, the majority of which could be grouped together to form several themes. The majority of these male teachers, who said they would not consider teaching elementary school, stated that subject area and coaching were major influencing factors. Several indicated they were not interested in teaching the same students all day or in teaching all subjects. Those respondents also indicated that they were more interested in departmentalized teaching, which involved teaching only one subject or in a particular area, such as art, band, or American history.

The next statistic discovered for this research question related to males with elementary educational experience. Almost half of the 54 participants who previously had experience in elementary education, 20 stated they would not consider teaching elementary education again. Thirty-one of these individuals stated they would consider teaching again while three participants failed to respond to the question. Of the 20 who stated they would not consider teaching elementary education again, 13 stated the reason cited was due to the age of students.

Table 4.9 provides an analysis broken down by male teachers’ years of
experience. In every category of years of experience, it was clear that regardless of years of experience more male teachers would not consider teaching elementary education than would. It should also be noted that teachers having between 0-5 years experience and 6-10 years experience were the most likely to consider teaching elementary. Additionally, it should be noted that the majority of respondents who answered this question were in the same two experience categories, which could account for the higher number of yes responses.

Table 4.9

*Years of Experience: Males Considering Elementary Education*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of experience</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Blank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21+</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q #6. Did the participants’ colleges or universities require them to take elementary education courses, and if so, did these courses influence the male teachers’ grade level selections?

The intent of this question was to find out if male teachers in all grade levels were being exposed, during their college education, to elementary education courses. Of the positive responses of men who had been exposed to elementary curriculum, it would then
be determined whether those courses had any positive or negative influence on their selection. For the researcher, it was not important to discover which universities had required male teachers to take elementary educational courses since many of the respondents could have received education from a large number of colleges and universities. Although this type of information might prove valuable for future research, it was not pertinent to this study. Questions 9 and 10 on the male teacher survey (See Appendix A), were combined to produce the results for this particular research question.

Of the 231 applicants who completed this question, 52.38% recorded \textit{yes}, they had previously taken elementary education courses during college. Male respondents, who chose \textit{no}, they had not previously taken elementary education courses, were recorded at 47.62%. That result left almost half of the current teachers who participated in this survey acknowledging they had never had or been required to take an elementary educational course. The following statistic was recorded for question number 10 on the survey. Of the 121 male respondents who acknowledged taking a collegiate course in elementary education, 24.79 % (30) of those males acknowledged those courses influenced their view on becoming an elementary teacher, while 74.38 % (90) stated the college courses which they completed had no influence on their view of becoming an elementary teacher. Only .83% (1) failed to respond to this question, after completing the previous question in the survey. Figure 4.9 provides an illustration of the respondents’ answers.
Figure 4.9. Elementary education courses: Are they enticing male teachers?

To determine the effectiveness of elementary education collegiate courses and their influence on male teacher candidates, the researcher ran a cross-tabulation report for those teachers who had experience inside an elementary classroom. Those results showed that 47 of the 54 male teachers, who took college courses in elementary education, stated those courses directly influenced their view or decision regarding whether to pursue a career in elementary education or not. The other seven indicated that the courses did not influence their view on becoming an elementary teacher.

Q#7: Are any incentives offered by the participants’ colleges or universities to encourage males to choose elementary education? If so, did these incentives persuade them to enter elementary education?

The statistics to this particular research question were derived from questions 11-13 on the survey. As previously discussed in Chapter 2, very few colleges and
universities were providing scholarship assistance to encourage males to pursue elementary education. These questions were formatted in a way in which the applicants were asked to select a yes or no answer for each question.

The purpose was to determine if more colleges offered either financial assistance, encouragement or other incentives to encourage male students to choose elementary education. If colleges were offering these incentives, this question sought to determine if the incentives were successful in their attempts. Lastly, the researcher sought to determine if colleges and universities offered incentives to male students, and if these incentives would have encouraged more males to pursue elementary education.

Interestingly enough, only 5.19% (12) of all male teachers who completed this survey were offered some form of incentive for males to pursue elementary education. An overwhelming 91.77% (212) stated their college did not offer incentives while 3.03% (7) failed to respond to the question. Surprisingly, of the 12 male teachers who attended colleges that offered incentives to male elementary students, only four of them stated the offered incentives persuaded them to pursue elementary education.

It should also be noted that there was no positive correlation between respondents who went to colleges which offered incentives for elementary education and those who entered elementary education. Only 33% were persuaded to enter elementary education while the remaining 67% were not influenced. It was not known the exact extent of the incentive nor what type of incentive was offered. This unknown quality of the incentive must be taken into account by the researcher while analyzing this particular question. It should also be noted that it is unknown whether incentives were offered to all male
teachers or just those pursuing elementary education.

Additionally, the following question probed to see if incentives would have been offered, would it have made the male teachers more likely to consider elementary education. The results were gathered from the 212 respondents who indicated their colleges did not offer incentives to pursue elementary education. Of the 212, 61 of these stated that if incentives would have been offered, they would have been more likely to teach elementary education. While 24 of those respondents failed to answer the question; and 127 stated that even if incentives were offered, they still would not consider teaching elementary education. Figure 4.10 provides a statistical breakdown of this information.

![Figure 4.10. Effectiveness of incentives.](image)

Only three of the 54 male teachers with elementary educational experience attended colleges or universities that offered incentives for males to pursue elementary education. The three male teachers who attended universities where incentives were offered all indicated that the incentives did not encourage or persuade them to pursue
elementary education. However, 20 of these 54 male teachers indicated they would have been more likely to consider a career in elementary education, had incentives been offered.

Question 13, on the applicants’ survey (See Appendix A), posed the question to all male teachers that if incentives had been offered by their college or university, would they have been more likely to consider elementary education. Figure 4.11 provides a detailed breakdown of their responses, as it relates to their years of experience.

![Graph showing effectiveness of incentives by years of experience]

**Figure 4.11.** Effectiveness of incentives: Years of experience.

Q #8: What incentives, if offered by a school system or local university, would encourage male teachers to choose elementary education?

If colleges or school systems provided incentives for male teachers, would this possibly have encouraged more males to consider elementary education? If so, what incentives would prove to be enticing enough to male teachers? This discussion regarding
possible incentives for a male teacher was one of the essential foundations for this study, and one in which special attention was paid by the researcher.

This question allowed the participants to select multiple responses. Of the 231 completed surveys, 84 males opted not to respond to this question, leaving 147 male teachers who did respond. These 147 male teachers produced a total of 264 responses. The three answers provided for the respondents were: (a) scholarships for male elementary majors (b) pre-set job interviews with school districts upon graduation (c) loan forgiveness programs, and the last option was again marked (d) other, which allowed for individual responses. These responses were more clearly labeled and discussed in the following paragraphs. Table 4.10 provides a detailed graph of responses given to this particular question.

Table 4.10

*Male Teachers Speak out on Incentives: Complete Numbers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholarship for Male Elementary Majors</th>
<th>Pre-set Job Interviews</th>
<th>Loan Forgiveness Programs</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>No Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scholarship</td>
<td>Pre-set</td>
<td>Loan forgiveness</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>No response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40.69%</td>
<td>16.45%</td>
<td>48.48%</td>
<td>8.66%</td>
<td>36.36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.10 offers a visual illustration of the respondents’ descriptive responses. It should be noted that the intent of the question was to find out which of these incentives would make the male teachers more likely to consider elementary education. Of the 147 male teachers, 94 stated that if scholarships for male elementary majors had been offered,
that would have made them more likely to consider teaching elementary education.

Thirty-eight respondents stated that pre-set interviews with local school systems upon graduation would have made them more likely to consider that career path while 112 stated that some form of a loan forgiveness program would have been essential to them. Of the 20 other responses, 10 of them stated that being paid higher salaries or monetary supplements would make them more likely to consider elementary education. It should be noted that 216 of the 264 total responses towards this question directly related to some form of financial incentive for male elementary teachers.

    Again, experienced male elementary teachers’ answers were separated using a cross-tabulation report. Their answers regarding what incentives would have made them more likely to pursue elementary education are recorded in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{lcccc}
\textbf{Scholarship} & \textbf{Pre-Set} & \textbf{Loan} & \textbf{Other} & \textbf{Total} \\
offers & interview & forgiveness & & \\
\hline
27 & 10 & 32 & 2 & 71 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

The figure above clearly indicates that incentives with additional financial bonuses were the number one and two persuading factors for men. These were 38% for scholarship offers and 45% for loan forgiveness. Ten other male teachers (14%) with elementary experience indicated they would like pre-set job interviews with school systems upon graduation. The same results were discovered as related to males and their years of teaching experience. Loan forgiveness and scholarship offers were the two leading
indicators that would have made male teachers more likely to consider elementary education as indicated in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12

*Male Teachers Speak out on Incentives: Experience Breakdown*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of experience</th>
<th>Scholarship</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Loans</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21+</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q#9 What, if any, are the common patterns of male teachers who have experience teaching elementary education with other male teachers who also have elementary education experience?

There were a few common patterns that were discovered while answers were analyzed. Male elementary teachers, as a whole, believed that males who taught elementary education were more nurturing and had higher patience levels. They also believed that financial incentives would play a persuading role in their grade level selection. Of the male teachers with elementary experience, who were no longer teaching there, over half agreed that age of students was their primary reason for leaving.

Another common pattern of males with elementary educational experience related to colleges or universities. While it was unknown the specific colleges or universities
attended by each of the individuals, it was indicated that the majority of the colleges or universities attended by the participants did not offer incentives for them to pursue elementary education. However, half of those surveyed stated that it would have made them even more likely to consider a career in education. It should be noted that not all male teachers with elementary educational experience are currently teaching in that field.

Q #10 Are years of teaching experience an indicator of male teacher grade level preference selection?

Teaching experience of male teachers was not deemed to be any major indicator on the participants who completed the survey. Of the 231 teachers who completed this survey, teachers who had 21+ years of experience accounted for more teaching experience in every area. Contrasting the idea that teachers with more years of experience have taught in more grade levels, teachers with 0-5 years experience recorded the second most in almost all categories. With teachers of all ages across the board, subject matter was the number one factor for grade level selection; the second major factor was the age of the students which they taught.

There were no indicating factors in this question that separated the veteran teachers from the non-veteran teachers. In each research question studied and analyzed, the researcher found no distinct differences that were disproportional from veteran to non-veteran teachers. In most research questions, teachers typically responded in similar patterns, which left no indication of distinct differences in grade level selection. Table 4.13 shows a statistical breakdown by years of teaching experience, as it relates to grade level teaching experience across different grade levels.
Table 4.13

*Years of Experience: Grade Level Selection*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of experience</th>
<th>K-5</th>
<th>6-8</th>
<th>9-12</th>
<th>Higher ed.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21+ years</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

This chapter is comprised of six major sections: (a) introduction (b) methodology (c) results from surveys (d) implications (e) limitations, and (f) recommendations. The initial part of this chapter provides a brief summary of the earlier chapters of this research, followed by the implications and limitations of the research and the researcher’s recommendations, which conclude the study.

Elementary education should be considered one of the most important instructional periods in the developmental process of a student. During the elementary education years, students learn to read, write, and develop a basic mathematics foundation. Chapter 1 clearly indicated that elementary education was predominately a female-dominated profession. According to Campos (2006) and a published report by NEA (2004), only about 9% of all elementary teachers were male. The numbers of overall male teachers has been in decline over the past several decades.

This study surveyed 231 male teachers who were currently employed as full-time, certified teachers in public schools. Male teachers from 6 different school districts were surveyed during the spring 2009 semester in order to gauge those teachers’ individual opinions regarding their own personal grade-level selection, and their collective views of male elementary teachers. Due to the continual decline of male elementary teachers, the researcher sought to discover any current factors or indicators which could serve as a means to encourage the increase in the number of male elementary teachers. Many studies have been completed on this topic, but most have focused on interviewing and
surveying administrators while other studies have chosen to focus on a small sample population of male teachers, which included typically no more than 10 teachers. Since Cushman’s research (2005) was closer in similarity to this researcher’s study than other studies which were done, her research was therefore used more frequently to compare and contrast data with this researcher’s study. Cushman’s (2005) study involved the research of over 250 male primary teachers and over 1,000 college education students. The intent of this writer was also to focus on a large number of male teachers as Cushman did, but specifically those working in all grade levels, not just primary education, in order to see what factors were present in the male teachers’ grade-level selection.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to understand which, if any, specific factors contributed to male teachers’ grade-level selection. It was the intent of this researcher to discover any indicators from male teachers as to why more males are not pursuing elementary education as a career. The researcher was unable to find an exact or similar study which researched such a high number of male teachers’ opinions and views regarding male elementary teachers. It was important to allow the male teachers to have their voices heard, considering they were responsible for choosing their current grade level.

It was the intent of this researcher to provide local colleges, universities, school systems, and male teachers with insight, which could be used to increase the number of male elementary teachers. At the time of this study, male elementary teachers were found
to be in the minority in the overall educational environment. Additionally, this study sought to understand why male elementary teachers chose elementary education and to determine which factors caused former male elementary teachers to pursue secondary education rather than continue in elementary education.

Survey Instrumentation

A suitable survey could not be found by the researcher during the planning stages of this study; therefore, an original survey was constructed by this researcher. The survey was guided by the research questions stated in this dissertation. To ensure validity of the survey, the researcher contacted three experts in the field of education to validate the survey. Each of these experts validated the survey by agreeing that the design, format and questions in the survey would provide answers to the questions being sought in this study.

Participants

Male teachers from six different school systems throughout three different states participated in this survey. The teachers were required to be full-time teachers in either elementary or secondary education. The male participants taught in the following six school districts: Hamilton County Schools in Chattanooga, Tennessee; Bradley County Schools in Cleveland, Tennessee; Lumpkin County Schools, in Lumpkin, Georgia; Banks County Schools in Homer, Georgia; Hall County Schools in Gainesville, Georgia; and Midway School District R-1 in Cleveland, Missouri.

Participants responded, on a voluntary basis to each survey that was distributed by their administrators. The male participants completed each survey and then returned their
responses to their administrators, who, in turn, promptly forwarded all surveys to this researcher for analysis. The total number of respondents was 231 and the total number of surveys distributed was 550.

Restatement of the Research Questions

The following research questions guided this research study and were answered in Chapter 4: Data Analysis:

1. What factors or decisions led to the surveyed participant’s grade level selection?
2. Do male teachers feel more males are needed in elementary classrooms, and if so, why?
3. How are male elementary teachers viewed by other male teachers, either on the elementary or secondary level?
4. What factors led to former male elementary teachers now teaching at a different level?
5. Would male teachers who have not previously taught at the elementary level ever consider teaching there?
6. Are any incentives offered by the participants’ colleges or universities to encourage males to choose elementary education?
7. What incentives, if offered by a school system or local university, would encourage male teachers to choose elementary education?
8. What, if any, incentives would encourage males who have not had previous experience at the elementary level, teach elementary school?
9. What, if any, are the common patterns from male teachers who have experience teaching elementary education with other male teachers who do have elementary education experience?

10. Are years of teaching experience an indicator of male teacher grade-level preference selection?

Methodology

School administrators and central office personnel, who were from the participating systems, were contacted for permission to distribute surveys. After permission was granted, either verbally or in written form, surveys were delivered through the mail to each individual administrator. Each administrator and central office personnel served as the initial contact person and distributor of surveys for that particular system. Surveys were distributed to all male teachers within each system and school. The method of delivery within the school systems varied, from distributing to local school administrators, or central office personnel distributing the surveys themselves. Pre-paid postage return envelopes were distributed to each designated school system contact person, which served as the survey return method for the researcher.

The total number of respondents who completed the survey totaled 231, and 319 not completed by full-time public school male teachers. Surveys were distributed to and collected from these individuals during the spring 2009 school semester. Surveys were collected during a two-month period and were promptly returned to the researcher for data analysis. Once surveys were collected, data entry and initial analysis were completed by a statistician at a local university. Two major methods were used in data analysis,
Microsoft Excel and Crystal Reports. The majority of statistics was entered and tabulated using Microsoft Excel. Cross-tabulation reports were run through Crystal Reports and through Microsoft Excel.

It was deemed necessary by the researcher to determine which specific factors caused male teachers to choose secondary education instead of elementary education. In addition to those findings, it was important to understand the viewpoint of all male teachers, who participated in this survey, towards elementary education. Teachers, who had previous elementary experience, had answers analyzed against all other participants and against all other questions in the survey. Additional information was gained by comparing veteran teachers and non-veteran teachers to determine if there were noticeable trends.

Discussion

Comparative Results

Data was organized according to the research questions stated in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 and earlier in this chapter. Cushman’s study was the only comparative study that was found during the course of this study; thus this study’s findings were compared and contrasted with Cushman’s results. Cushman (2005) stated the following from her studies on male elementary teachers: “While the reasons for the decline in the number of males enrolling in teacher education are complex and multi-faceted, four factors which have been identified as contributing to the decline are experiences and attitudes related to status, salary, working in a predominantly female environment, and physical contact with children” (p. 227). Smedley (2007) also stated that male teachers often feared false
accusations from elementary students or their parents. The participating male teachers in this study contradicted Smedley’s reports and findings. Of the deterring factors dissuading males from elementary education, only 11 teachers stated that fear of false accusations was a deterring factor for them. Status and physical contact with children were not evaluated or analyzed during the course of this study, thus were eliminated from discussions below.

Cushman (2005) stated that salary was a major contributing factor to the decline of male teachers in elementary education. Berge (2004), Thorton & Bricheno (2000), and Cooney & Bittner (2001) all agreed in their findings that males often did not choose education or elementary education due to low salaries. This study contradicted Cushman’s (2005) findings with one research question and supported it with another. When male teachers were asked if incentives would have been offered, would they have been more likely to consider teaching elementary education, the results were interesting. Of the 231 participants, 127 indicated it would not make them more likely to consider elementary education while an additional 24 failed to respond to the question. Only 20 of the 54 male teachers with elementary education experience indicated that incentives would have made them more likely to pursue elementary education.

On the contrary, of the male teachers, when asked what specific incentives would have made them more likely to pursue elementary education, 206 total responses stated that scholarships or loan forgiveness programs would have encouraged them to pursue elementary education. These results agreed with Cushman’s (2005) findings, which indicated salary or financial incentives were a major contributing factor in the decline of
male elementary teachers.

Cushman (2005), as quoted earlier in this chapter, stated that working in a predominately female environment also served as a major deterring factor for males who were considering elementary education. Foster & Newman (2005) also stated that male teachers in their study believed that working in a predominately female environment was a detriment to the recruitment of male elementary teachers. Hansen & Mullholland (2005) argued also that a more gender-balanced staff was important for the educational system. However, in this researcher’s finding, of the 177 male teachers who had not previously had experience in elementary education, only 11 responded that working in a predominately female environment was a concern. Of the 54 male elementary teachers, only 20 responded to this question and only five stated that working in a predominately female environment served as a deterring factor.

Findings

Two major themes appeared during the analysis of the surveys for this researcher’s study, money as an incentive and the age of students. Money, whether through loan forgiveness, financial incentives, or scholarships was a primary issue for males who might consider elementary education. Only 61 of the males surveyed in this study responded they would consider choosing elementary education as a career. Of these 61, only 31 of these male teachers currently had experience in elementary education, leaving an additional 30 males with only secondary teaching experience who would possibly consider teaching in an elementary school. Money or financial incentives were indicated as one of the major elements or persuasive factors for these men to consider
elementary education.

The second factor which contributed to the decline of male elementary teachers was the teachers’ preferential age of students. Of the 54 male teachers with elementary experience, 20 stated they would not consider teaching elementary education again. Sixty-five percent of the male teachers with elementary education experience selected age of students as the number one contributing factor. The total responses from all teachers who selected they would not consider teaching in elementary school, 102 selected ages of students. Age of students was the number one deterring factor for male teachers not choosing elementary education. From the data analysis, only a small number of male teachers who had not taught elementary education would consider teaching in that arena while the majority of male teachers would not consider teaching in the elementary school.

Several trends were discovered during the analysis of the data. According to the surveys, male teachers did not believe that the elementary education courses they took actively or effectively encouraged them to pursue elementary education. This response was also confirmed by teachers who had teaching experience in elementary education. Additionally, it should be noted that not all teachers were required by their respective universities or colleges to enroll in elementary education courses. This statistic directly impacted the ability of male teachers to respond effectively regarding their experiences or views of elementary education classes.

Regardless of whether the survey was broken down by age or experience of male teachers with or without elementary experience it was clear that the only incentives that
would have had real effective on males pursuing elementary education were financial. Financial incentives, whether student scholarships or loan forgiveness programs, were the number one selected responses from all male participants. It was also very evident that even though this could have encouraged more males to pursue elementary education, only two of the male teachers actually attended universities where incentives were offered. Clemson (2009) was one of a few schools found during this study to offer financial incentives, which helped increase their number of male elementary teachers.

School systems and universities did not effectively encourage the male participants in this study to pursue or even consider teaching elementary education. It became apparent that not all male teachers are even willing to consider teaching in an elementary school. However, it was also discovered that male teachers who had not previously taught in an elementary school would consider it, if financial incentives were made available. The financial burden would then be placed upon colleges, universities, school systems, and individual state departments.

The majority of male participants strongly believed that more male teachers were needed in elementary classrooms, although most were not willing to consider teaching in that area themselves. Holland (2006), Cunningham & Watson (2002), and Mullholland & Hansen (2003) all believed that male elementary teachers were needed for positive role models. An overwhelming majority of the respondents stated that male teachers were needed to be positive role models in the lives of elementary students. 172 of the 231 believed that more male elementary teachers were needed; the most common response indicated was positive male role models for students. This statistic reported previous
researchers and their findings. They believed that male elementary teachers had higher patience levels and were more nurturing. This coincided with the majority of teachers’ viewpoints of not desiring to teach elementary education because of the age of students. Elementary students by nature require more personal attention from the teacher, due to their age.

Implications

The two dominant themes from this research study were related to money and age of students. Many men were typically considered to be the main financial providers for their families, so it was not a surprise to find that the respondents selected financial reasons as a persuading factor for considering elementary education. Males, who could often feel the pressure of providing financial stability for their families would, out of necessity, see the incentives of scholarship assistance, loan forgiveness, or other financial offerings clearly as a marker by which to increase the number of male elementary teachers. Of the 147 male teachers who responded to the survey question regarding the types of incentives that would make them more likely to consider education, the total number of responses due to multiple responses by participants was 264. Of the 264 total responses, 206 were related to financial incentives. Clearly, from this statistic, money was a large motivating factor for male teachers.

In contrast to the above paragraph, although money was a persuading factor, the age of students for the majority of male teachers served as a greater determining factor in their grade level selection. These male participants believed strongly enough that age of student was their major deciding factor, that it actually outweighed their desire for
financial incentives. Male teachers in this study believed that male elementary teachers were more nurturing and had higher patience levels since the elementary level related to younger aged children. Age of students was the number one factor as it related to male teachers’ grade level selection process.

Although it should be noted that the majority of respondents had never taken an elementary education course, it could also be assumed that they had never spent time in an elementary classroom. This provided further implications that colleges and universities were not providing a balanced educational experience for their students, by not requiring them to take at least one elementary course, and/or have observation hours or an internship in an elementary classroom.

Limitations

In every study, there are limitations that are found; the same could be said of this survey research study. There were a few limitations that need to be addressed while considering this study. An initial limitation of the study was in the sample population of male teachers. School systems were not selected at random; they were either selected due to proximity to the researcher or initiated through prior personal relationships between the school office personnel and the researcher. With the exception of the Midway R-1 School District in Cleveland, Missouri, the school systems chosen were from Tennessee and Georgia, two states located in the same geographical area. This directly affected the random sampling of the participants in the study. To achieve a more valid study, it would be important to randomly select school systems through various states, in all regions across the United States of America.
Although 231 respondents were surveyed, to assume this study was a direct representation of all male teachers in the United States would be an incorrect assumption. In order to have a complete and comprehensive survey research study, it would need to be conducted on a much larger scale, incorporating higher numbers of male teachers in wider socio-economic and geographical regions. Not all male teachers in the selected school systems responded or completed the survey; thus it was impossible to have comprehensive results from all male teachers. This study merely served as a sample study on a large educational issue.

The final limitation would be in the area of demographics. While conducting the study, the researcher opted not to include the age, ethnicity, and educational background of those surveyed. Those elements could have provided additional information in the data analysis section. Age of male participants could have been used to determine additional patterns, as it related to male teachers and their grade-level selection preference. The same would have been used for the ethnicity of each male who participated in the study. This extra data would have shown the exact demographics for the study and would have provided an additional base line for future research in this area.

Recommendations

*Recommendations for Universities*

Universities have mission statements and goals, which illustrates what they hope to achieve and accomplish in their pursuit of providing quality education for their students. Universities are separated into large academic areas or colleges, which, in turn, set more departmentalized goals that are aligned with the university. However, while
universities have within their grasp a wealth of mission statements and goals, it became obvious to this researcher that the goals of many universities might not be all inclusive and that their goals could be improved. During the course of this study, it became apparent that very few colleges and universities were addressing the male teacher shortage in elementary education by offering any incentives for male teachers to pursue elementary education. Only 12 of the 231 participants acknowledged attending a university that offered incentives for male elementary teachers. However, only 4 of these stated the incentives were effective in their efforts.

Clemson University and twelve other universities offered financial incentives, one being a program called Call Me Mister. Call Me Mister was a program in which twelve universities and colleges had currently implemented to encourage African-American males to pursue post-secondary education. This program offered tuition reimbursement, academic support, and a cohort system that provided social and cultural support (Clemson University, 2008). As colleges and universities made strides toward training teachers, that training, in turn, should improve the educational system as a whole. Universities and colleges should be taking a proactive role in encouraging male education majors to pursue elementary education by offering tuition discounts or additional financial assistance.

Missouri University created a program called Mizzou’s Men for Excellence in Elementary Teaching (MMEET). The intent of this program was to create a fellowship and support group for future and current male elementary teachers (MMEET, 2009). This group of men met regularly to discuss problems or experiences as a male elementary
teacher with other men who were either experiencing similar problems, or who might experience them in the future. Training alone was not enough; it was important to add a support system for these positive role models for the elementary students. Male teachers are clearly the minority in elementary schools today. NEA (2004) reported the current number of male elementary teachers was at nine percent. Universities should offer emotional and physical support to their former students, whom they trained to educate others, or the effects could be detrimental for the future of male elementary teachers.

**Recommendations for School Systems, Schools, and Administrators**

School systems, schools, and administrators have many responsibilities placed upon them. One of their responsibilities is hiring quality teachers who would be able to engage, inspire, educate, and encourage their students. Both male and female teachers are charged with this responsibility once they are hired by a system, placed in a school, and put under the direction of an administrator.

The teaching profession could be competitive in terms of the job market. Many schools have a long waiting list of teachers or prospective employees who show a strong desire to work in that particular school or school system. Each year thousands of education majors and graduate students seek employment in school systems. Often, teachers are limited to and for which subjects they could apply. Teaching certificates, which issued by state educational departments usually, dictate the particular field or fields in which an individual is qualified to teach. Depending on the particular state issuing the teaching certificate, elementary certificates are typically given an endorsement for individuals to teach kindergarten through fifth grade, kindergarten
through eighth grade, third grade through fifth grade, or a fourth grade through eighth grade. That classification of endorsements means an individual is only allowed to teach any grade that falls within that specific certification.

Male teachers who earn one of the above mentioned certificates have the opportunity to teach in either elementary or middle school, depending on the certificate. According to the statistics in this study, the majority of male teachers chose to teach in middle school over high school. It was unknown whether these middle school teachers actually interviewed at elementary schools or even applied for positions in elementary schools.

Martino & Meyenn (2001) stated that schools often foster a feministic approach, primarily due to all female teacher scenarios, and thus hinder and contribute to the feminization of the male elementary students. Mills, Haase, & Charlton (2007) stated that “The effects of a lack of male role models are sometimes described as producing in boys an alienation from school, leading to low retention rates and poor academic results” (p.73). An objective of this study was to show the male teachers’ responses to the alarming low rate of male elementary teachers and to determine if these male teachers believed male elementary teachers actually had a positive effect on elementary students. This report was successful in that attempt, as an overwhelming rate of 75% agreed that more males were needed in elementary classrooms.

A report published by Cunningham & Watson (2002) stated that many boys might never consider the profession of becoming teachers. Cunningham & Watson (2002) encouraged male teachers and guidance counselors to make students aware of this
career option. If students never realized that becoming a male elementary teacher was an option, the decline of male elementary teachers would continue. School systems, schools, and administrators had this burden placed upon them, and as a whole they have failed to acknowledge this.

School systems, schools, and administrators should actively seek out qualified male teachers for elementary positions, due to the low number of male teachers currently serving in these positions. It was acknowledged to be important for the welfare of schools and students today. A study completed by The Center for Early Childhood Leadership (2004) surveyed current school administrators concerning their opinions and hiring practices of male elementary teachers. It was very clear that the majority of administrators polled believed it was important for men to teach at the elementary level. However, only 39% of those administrators admitted to actively recruiting males.

If school officials truly believed that it was important to have a balanced staff, but yet were failing to act upon that, one could question the validity of one of the statements by the administrators. Many of the same administrators surveyed admitted to believing that women were better candidates for elementary positions and often would not interview male teachers. This type of decision-making could be classified as reverse discrimination against men. Cushman (2006) completed a similar study, and her results indicated that only five percent of the administrators surveyed stated they would definitely interview a male candidate; however, 84% stated they believed males in elementary education were important. This type of decision making from administrators added to the difficulty potential male elementary teachers often face. Many could
question if male elementary candidates were even getting an opportunity to interview, much less teach in an elementary school. If this proved true, it could be an additional factor that has led to a continual decline of male elementary teachers.

School systems have a unique opportunity to increase the number of male elementary teachers more than any other group. School systems typically offer employment fairs and attend local universities with the intent of interviewing and hiring the best and brightest upcoming college graduates. With that notion, male participants were asked in the completed survey if the incentives of a pre-set interview upon graduation would make them more likely to consider elementary education. Of the 268 total responses given to this question, 38 responded that pre-set interviews would have made them more likely to consider elementary education as a career. In the world where competition for jobs is at a premium, and male elementary teachers are at a minimum, this type of innovative hiring process could prove to increase the low numbers of male elementary teachers.

School systems could partner with local universities to arrange pre-set interviews with all graduating male education students. This would allow for much of the typical waiting process to be eliminated for the male teacher, and it would allow local school systems an opportunity to keep qualified male elementary teachers in their school systems. School systems would not or should not be required to hire male teachers based upon gender alone, but instead this simply would provide an opportunity for all vested constituents.
Recommendations for Male Teachers

Male teachers share a vital role of responsibility, as it relates to their individual employment decisions. Male teachers have the decision whether to apply or not to apply at specific schools and for which specific positions to apply. However, since they do not have the opportunity to hire themselves for the position for which they are interviewing, this placement is determined by school systems and administrators.

The results of this study showed that 75% of all men who participated believed that a greater number of male elementary teachers were needed in the classroom. These same male teachers overwhelmingly responded that positive role models were needed for elementary students. However, it should be noted only 54 males who participated in this study actually had elementary educational experience as a certified teacher. This finding left 177 male teachers who had never taught in an elementary classroom, but yet many stated that male teachers were needed. Their reasons for choosing secondary education included subject matter and age of students. The researcher questioned the rationale for their statement. It was a difficult task to comprehend how an educator could state they disliked an age group of students that they had never taught.

A small number of male teachers who had never taught elementary education stated they would be willing to consider teaching on the elementary level. These individuals should be encouraged to pursue this career path or at the very least have the opportunity to shadow elementary teachers for periods of time to confirm their interest. Male elementary teachers, such as found at MMEET (2009) sought out each other to find solidarity with each other. Male elementary teachers should form similar organizations
within their own school systems and universities. Meetings and organizations, such as those mentioned, would continue to enhance the stability of male elementary teachers, with the hopes of recruiting more men into the profession.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study focused on the voice of male teachers, their views on male elementary teachers, and, specifically, on factors that influenced their grade level selection. Future research on this topic could initially be expanded to a larger population sample, with a greater number of school systems and participating states. Additional studies could include demographic information such as ethnicity, educational background, and age of participants.

The researcher recommends that research be completed in the area of the employment process as it relates to the areas of hiring and interviewing of male teachers for elementary positions. Information could be acquired to determine the number of qualified male applicants who applied for elementary teaching positions but who did not interview. Additionally, information could be gained from male elementary candidates who interviewed for open positions and yet were not hired for those positions. This information would allow a statistical baseline for school system and administrator hiring practices. Once this information was obtained and analyzed, recommendations could be made to increase the overall awareness of the male elementary employment process. That data, in turn, would hopefully create more interviewing opportunities for qualified elementary male applicants and a greater hiring rate.

Research could be conducted in the area of elementary male teacher retention
rates and specific factors that led to males leaving elementary education. This area was briefly analyzed in this study; but the focus was not on retaining current male elementary teachers, but instead on increasing that number. School systems and universities could use the results to offer proper training and workshops geared to increase retention rates.

Lastly, the researcher recommends that all college-of-education students, including males, who are enrolled in teacher educational programs be required, as part of their academic program to shadow, observe, or intern in an elementary school for a designated period of time. Many of the males who participated in this survey acknowledged they had never taken elementary education courses during their college education. Related research could then be conducted to determine if this practice affected men’s interest in elementary education. Research could be conducted among colleges and universities to see which ones were currently offering incentives for male elementary teachers, and which programs required their education students to either enroll in elementary classes or to shadow, observe or intern at elementary schools.

Conclusion

The intent of this study sought specific factors that contributed to male teachers and their grade-level preference selection, and more specifically, focused on the lack of male elementary teachers. It was evident that there was a shortage of male elementary teachers; this was not a problem that had recently occurred nor was it a problem that would quickly disappear. However, until school systems, schools, universities, colleges, and especially male teachers take action to address and to eliminate this problem, schools might never provide a balanced education for students. Society has placed many
stereotypes upon the role of a male elementary teacher. Male elementary teachers can often be perceived as more nurturing, more effeminate, and less respected than other male teachers. These stereotypes have played a significant role in the decrease of male elementary teachers.

The educational system, as a whole, must take responsibility for the shortage of male elementary teachers and take drastic measure to counter the decline of male elementary teachers. Scholarship incentives, loan- forgiveness programs, pre-set job interviews, and other incentives should be set in place to encourage men to pursue elementary education. Without incentives or swift resolutions, male teachers will continue to be the minority in elementary education. Discussing the problem has only provided awareness of this situation, and this awareness has not yet yielded adequate results. More males are desperately needed in elementary education; America’s students urgently need positive male role models.
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APPENDIX A:

MALE TEACHER RESPONSES:

OPEN ENDED SURVEY QUESTION #15
Male Teacher Responses:
Open Ended Survey Question #15

1. I think it's great for young boys and girls to have positive male role models in their lives.
2. Many children do not have a positive male role model in their lives and they should not have to wait until they are teenagers to have one.
3. It makes for a good balance for the children and has a bit of different influence on the children.
4. Many students do not have a "father" at home. Male teachers can be that "positive" role model.
5. Many children need males in their life that may be absent because of divorce, jail, etc.
6. Positive role models when many dads are missing from the home.
7. Males are having less and less impact on their children now days because they're absent from the home. But it doesn't take away from the fact that children still need appropriate male influences in their lives.
8. Positive male role models for young boys and girls.
9. With the divorce rate what it is, many students do not have a positive male influence which is most needed in early stages of life.
10. I think more male teachers are needed at all levels, for far too many kids don't have a good male role model in their lives these days.
11. I don't think the gender of the teacher is important.
12. There are students who could use good male role models in their lives.
13. I think positive male role modes are important to have in school, no matter the age level of students. While I think it is good to have several male elementary teachers, I don't think number matters as long as students get a chance to interact with positive male role models at school.
14. Young children need positive male role models.
15. It would provide a male role model too many students who do not have one to look up to.
16. I think if there were more male elementary teachers, students would get a better variety of teaching styles.
17. It would probably be good for young male students to be around male teachers, because some don't have fathers at home.
18. For role models for young males.
19. Young students, especially those without a father at home are in desperate need of positive role models.
20. The absence of father figures has become very common these days. More male teachers may help to fill this void in many children's lives.
21. Elementary education seems to be functioning quite well as is.
22. Boys need more male role models.
23. We need more male teachers in secondary.
24. It is good to have positive male role models in the lives of children of all ages.
25. Because there is a lack of male role models for some students and male teachers can provide this.
26. Children need more males in their lives, especially since we have an abundance of single parent families.
27. More and more children are coming from broken homes where there are no fathers and children especially boys need a positive male influence.
28. Many children are lacking positive male role models in the home.
29. It would add some diversity to the curriculum and possibly some additional classroom discipline.
30. I do not believe that it matters whether or not the teacher is male or female. What matters is their ability to teach their students!
31. Male influences are needed at all levels of education. For some students, this may be one of the few positive male role models in their life.
32. Students need positive male role models to help influence their lives.
33. To acclimate elementary students to male teachers for future interactions in middle and high school.
34. Due to the lack of male parents and role models
35. As the breakdown of family continues, more children will benefit from a male figure to set positive role models.
36. A lot of students need a male figure in their lives.
37. I don't feel that it makes a difference.
38. We need more good male figures and role models for our youth especially male youth.
39. A lot of kids need good male role models starting at an early age.
40. For the purpose of role models especially for those students without father figures at home.
41. role models
42. Positive male role models are often absent in students' lives.
43. Many students from divided homes need a father figure.
44. In most cases, single parent families only have a female figure and the male is not in the picture. Children need a positive male role model in their life. Boys need to be taught how to be a gentleman. Males also serve as great disciplinary teachers-students respect them on a different level than some female teachers.
45. Boys need a strong, masculine role model.
46. Boys need to be dealt with in a more assertive manner at an earlier age.
47. Male role models are needed in the current society - too many families with no male.
48. Children, especially at this age need not necessarily a strong male image, but a positive, nurturing one.
49. Positive male role models are necessary at that age level.
50. Kids need male role models.
51. I know several male elementary teachers-but, the balance of males and females still seems unbalanced.
A male presence is important for any school. I think there are a lot of young men who don't have a positive role model. This makes a big difference later in life. This is one thing I see after being in both. Elementary students need male authority figures in their life and there are not many there—not even principals. Statistically, many children grow up without a male role model; an equivalent mix of males/females in elem. Ed. would benefit all students (in the long and short term). Make better teachers for both girls and boys.

I think more elementary kids need exposure to male teachers because so many kids have a pre-conceived fear of male teachers. They need to know how to work with male teachers before middle/high school. All job situations need balance. The students need to come in contact with different gender role models at a young age. Some students do not have male role models at home so sometimes this is their only experience with that. Lots of kids come from fatherless homes. It gives these children good role models. Need more role models. The male role model is diminishing in our society and this could help that problem. Elementary students need positive role models before they reach middle grades. Too, having a male teacher in an earlier grade, I think, lessens the apprehension they have when going to middle school. Too many homes are absent a male influence. Lots of kids need more males around. There will always be a smaller percentage of males teaching on the elementary level. This is probably related to the male preoccupation with earning power or the negative connotation for males that accompanies teaching elementary grades. There are a good number of students w/o a father in the home. Students need as many positive role models as possible. More kids today are coming from single parent homes that have no role models. The male role model at school is important because of the male figure in the family is becoming more extinct. Early intervention with a positive male role model could help to influence more children positively. Male role models are needed of every school as many children do not receive this at home. It would also serve well in mentoring roles between teachers. I believe of a man wants to teach elementary they should. Incentives are not a reason to teach. You must enjoy it or do not teach. Need male role models.
There is a need for more male role models among young people.

Young male students look at male teachers as role models. They would be good examples for young boys. Young boys today need a male influence.

I feel that if an individual can excel in a certain environment, he or she should work in that environment. Also, I believe that young children do need more positive male role models in early life.

The male needs to be ever-present in young people's lives due to the apparent erosion of the role he plays in society.

Students could benefit from having a male role model within a classroom environment. Some students may not have a male role model to look up to.

Too many matrifocal families in today's society.

Students need more balanced nurturing. There are situations that only male students feel comfortable talking to another male. This also should include male counselors. Not just at elementary level, but all levels of education.

I feel as though it helps with discipline. I had a male elementary teacher and he was one of the best teachers I had in my formative years.

Some children need a positive male role model and some don't see one until a teacher in middle or high school.

I was a reading recovery teacher, less than .01% of reading specialists are men.

Students answer and learn different to sex of teachers.

Positive role models.

I feel they are needed to increase the nurturing and cultivating of the students at that grade level.

The majority of households are lacking male role models; they are needed so bad.

Young males in elementary need a mix of female as well as positive male role models to fill the void from most of their homes.

With the degradation of the family, more male teachers are needed to give an example of a Godly man.

More male influence on the students would be positive in my opinion.

A lot of kids are without fathers and need a male influence.

Good, strong male role models for elementary students.

Children need a male role model in their lives.

It would help provide needed male role models prior to teenage years. Possibly before it is too late.

Men teach boys to be men.

I think elementary age children benefit from more nurturing personalities; usually women.

More male influences for young children who might not otherwise get them.

I feel more male teachers are needed in general.

More role models would be helpful.

If someone has a predisposition about not teaching K-5, then they shouldn't go with it.
103. We need more male teachers in general! This would help our male students.
104. Male elementary teachers become a role model for students in a different way to assist the female teacher.
105. There is probably a need, but a male teacher must be patient & nurturing. I chose not to teach elementary because kids that age are too 'whiny' and cry too easily.
106. Young men need to see male role model figures at an early age.
107. I feel that elementary education is a field where nurturing is a predominant need. Women by nature are more apt to serve in such a capacity whereas males fixate themselves within higher grade levels to meet the demands of discipline and fulfill authoritative roles.
108. More are needed in elementary & middle school because a male can have an influence on students that a female can't & vice versa.
109. Students shouldn't go straight to middle school having had 6 female teachers in elementary school. Not being sexist at all, but there needs to be more men in younger grades today with society.
110. I loved the male teachers I had as a kid.
111. Most males are not touchy feely type people; we cannot mother students.
112. Because of home situations, students may not be exposed to a male role model.
113. Many students have no father at home. They need male role models.
114. Too many hens in the house. Children need males to model and lead.
115. More demand for male role models at early age.
116. Young male students need positive male role models.
117. Good role models.
118. The main reason there is not more male teachers is that teacher pay sucks and most men are still the main breadwinner of their families and can get a lot better pay in another job field.
119. Good role models for boys
120. Especially lower Ed needs nurturers, more a mother role and strength of women. Perhaps 4-5 grade when subject matter becomes more specific and discipline becomes more physically threatening.
121. father figure
122. Positive male role models are needed.
123. The female teachers serve as surrogate mothers; young kids still need that nurturing.
124. I believe the students need positive male role models at an early age.
125. Stronger presence.
126. I believe males are needed in all grade levels. The more males provide more models for students. The males bring different experiences and perspectives to the classroom.
127. The students need to see more positive male figures at earlier ages. Especially in inner-city schools with lower socio-economic backgrounds where the male is less likely to be in the home.
Elementary male teachers are needed because so many homes have only the mother in them and they need a positive male role model.

For students to see and understand male role models. Students who have had little or no experience with men tend to be more critical of men in authoritative positions.

Nurturing is a female trait. Child molesters will move into those positions.

I believe more exposure to male role models at an early age is a good thing.

Boys are in school also; they need young men status soon. Only men could offer that.

Most elementary schools only have a few, if any, males & kids certainly need male influences in their lives.

Women are better suited to the age group; especially early years.

Some students in the elementary grades need a positive male influence in their life.

The kids need a positive male role model but as for me I have always wanted to be at the secondary level.

More positive role models for male students.

Young children need good male role models.

As role models for the young men who don't have a male influence.

I don't think gender matter as much as skill and character.

More positive roll models needed.

More teachers in general are needed in the classroom.

Young people often need a male role model to emulate & relate to.

Role models/authority figures.

More are needed in some role at elementary schools, but not necessarily in the classroom teaching only 20-30 students.

Boys need more male role models.

Balance of role models at earlier age.

Less male role models at home. Therefore, more are needed in the elementary classroom.

Provide a balanced influence.

I think students need exposure to both sexes and the different view points that both offer.

Students need both male and female mentors during their elementary years for a well rounded education.

To balance the male-female ratio out.

I fear change.

Always good to have solid male role models.

It helps having a male in the classroom for discipline.

Too many boys are missing male role models in today's society.

The influence of the father is missing in the lives of far too many children.

Young children need to be exposed to nurturing male role models.

Depends on the character of the individual, males could, if willing, provide solid discipline to many of our young students.
positive male role models
All schools should accurately reflect the society at large,
There aren't many.
Male teachers would be great role models.
All students need exposure to masculine and feminine influences.
male role models
There are many students who have no male influence in their lives until they reach high school.
Increasing the number of qualified males will help change a negative stigma.