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Brody, David & Xu, Yuwei (2024). **Young children's perspectives on teachers' gender: Cross-case analysis from nine Global North and South countries.** Paper presented on the 32nd Annual EECERA Conference, Brighton/United Kingdom, 5.9.2024.

This multinational study explores young children's perspectives on teachers' gender, situated in immediate and broader socio-cultural contexts. Existing research (e.g., Sumison, 2005; Harris & Barnes, 2009; Perkins et al., 2019) used children's drawings and narratives to understand their views on male and female teachers, but only in singlecountry contexts, ignoring diverse cultural constructions of gender that shape children's gender subjectivities. Our study employs a cross-cultural lens to understand children's culturally diverse gender perspectives. Theoretical concepts of child agency and power relations enable investigation of children (and adults) producing and/or challenging gender norms (Xu, 2020). Gender constructions are contextual, subject to gender performances (Butler, 1990). This case study paradigm used the qualitative Mosaic Approach (Moss and Clark, 2005) tapping children's perspectives with interviews, drawings, role-play, and photo-elicitation; complemented by parent and teacher interviews. Informed consent was obtained from participating adults and consent and ascent from children. Ethical approval was granted by Nottingham University. Nine cases represent a complex continuum of gender discourses, considering macro, meso, and microenvironments (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). More egalitarian attitudes were associated with gender-blind perspectives. In traditional environments, male teachers were associated with play and harsh discipline while females with pedagogical roles and softer discipline. No patterns were found regarding caring behaviors. Professional development encouraging open gender discussion could mitigate stereotypic perceptions, encouraging non-gendered roles in teaching and caregiving.

Keywords

gender, child perspective, cultural context, teaching roles, teacher gender

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