



# Parental Perceptions of Male Educators Working in Moroccan ECE: Stigma or Inclusion?

**Conference: 13th March 2025**

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## BACKGROUND

- The quality of childcare is usually promoted when children are introduced to different ways of monitoring, nurturing, and playing (Jensen, 1996 ; Rolfe, 2006).
- Research proposed that male educators boost play and physical activities in the kindergarten environment and greatly impact children's behaviors (Jeon & Zhai, 2021).
- The presence and contribution of men to ECE can challenge typical understandings of masculinity and femininity, and assist in providing appropriate role models for children (Aaltonen et al. 2022).

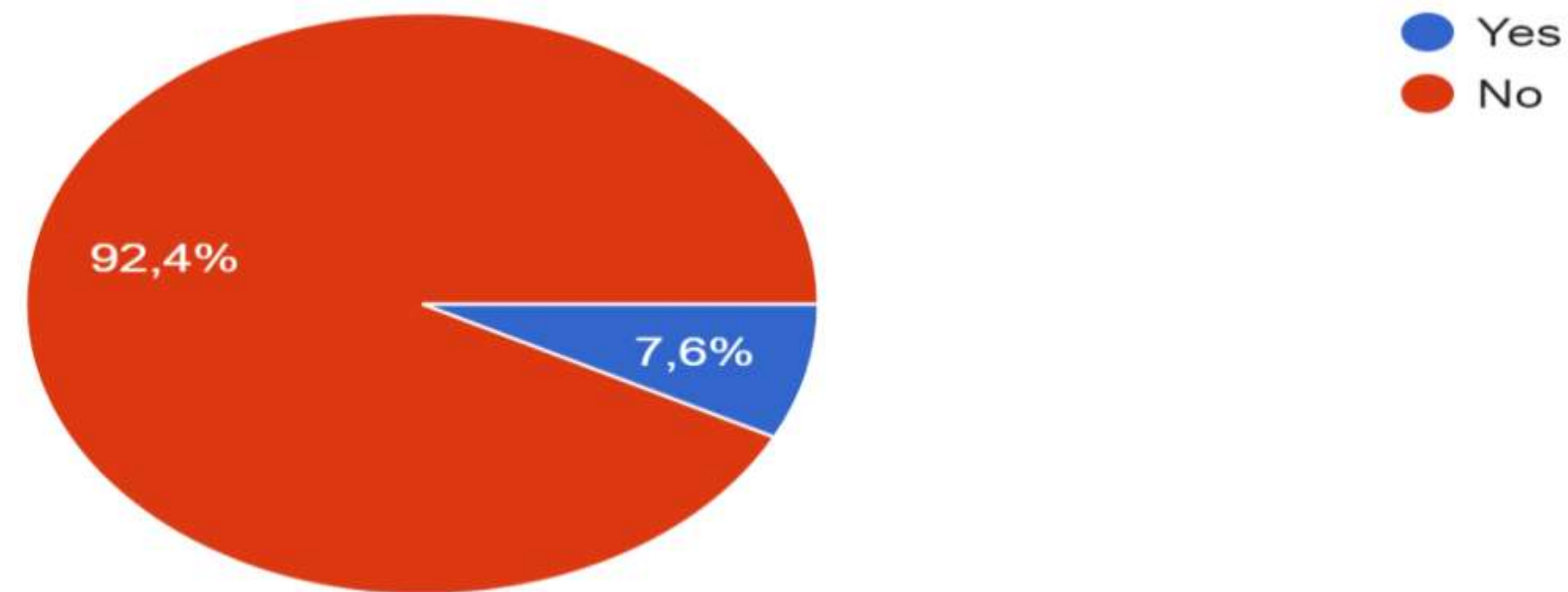
# RESEARCH OBJECTIVE, QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

- This study aimed to unveil the perceptions of Moroccan parents towards men taking care of their children, and the reasons behind their exclusion from ECE.
- This study aimed to answer the following questions:
  - 1- What are the attitudes of Moroccan parents towards male educators ?
  - 2- What are the reasons behind men's exclusion from Moroccan ECE ?
  - 3- To what extent the inclusion and recruitment of more men in Morocco is significant for children's gender development ?
- Parental perceptions may oscillate between negativity and positivity and vary based on various factors, such as geographical location, educational level, income, and social status.

# METHOD

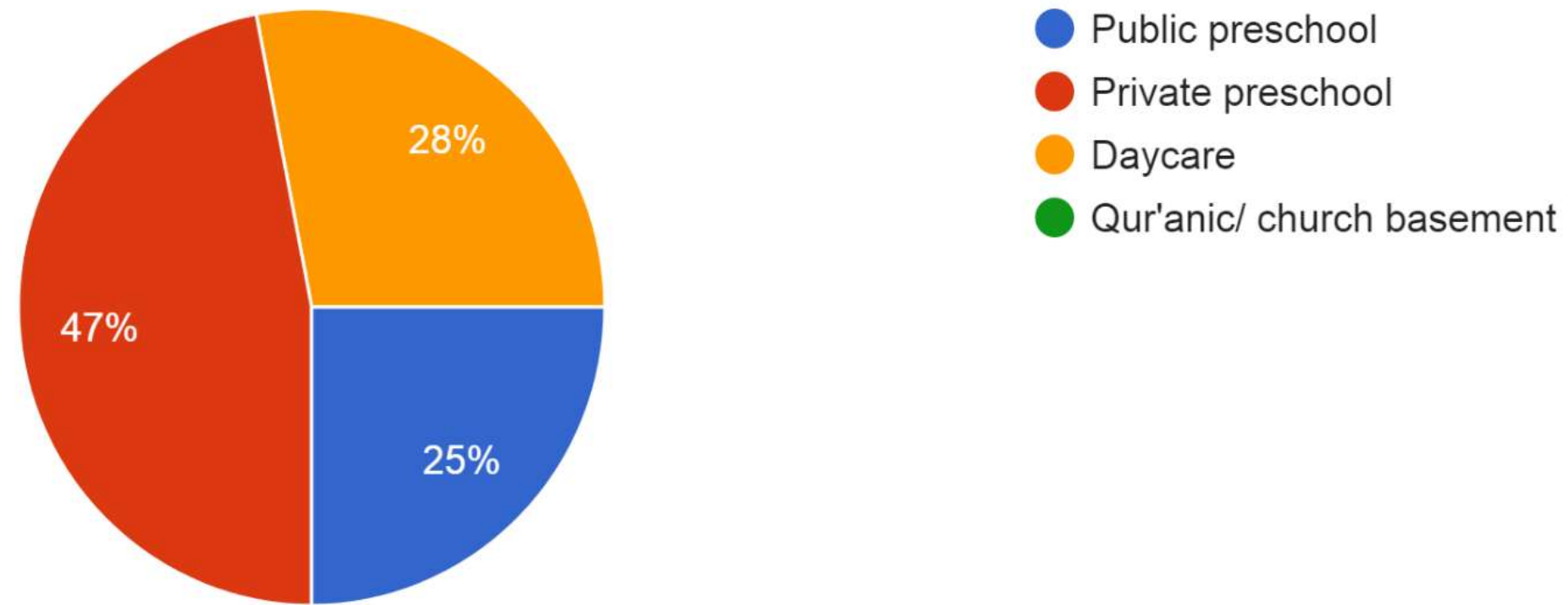
PARTICIPANTS	INSTRUMENT
Moroccan parents (n= 132)	Questionnaire
<b>Gender:</b> Mothers (86.4 %) Fathers (13.6%)	
<b>Educational level:</b> <b>University degree</b> (38.6 %) Baccalaureate (25%) Vocational training degree(19.7%) High school degree (9.1%) Secondary degree (7.6 %)	
<b>Income:</b> <b>Between 1.801 and 2.700 €</b> (36.4%) Between 1.100 and 1.800 € (28%) Between 2.701 and 3.900 (15.2 %) less than 1.100 € (12.1%) More than 3.901 € ( 8.3 %)	

*Figure 1: Men currently teaching in ECE centers in Morocco*



- The percentage of male educators in Moroccan ECE is still low despite the exerted efforts to increase their participation in early grades due to similar challenges they encounter worldwide (Sak et al. 2018).
- This overrepresentation of females is related to the fact that they are still seen as the most appropriate to provide education and nurturance to children.

Figure 2: Types of *ECE centers in Morocco*



- Private ECE centers are widely spread and accessible in Morocco.
- Parents who stated that male educators teach their children usually belong to public institutions. This is due to the recent efforts of the Moroccan Ministry of National Education, Preschool, and Sports to include more men in ECE.

**Table 1: Perceptions towards men in Moroccan ECE centers**

	Male educators help children to put on and remove clothes (jackets, pants, shoes, etc.)	Male educators change diapers.	Male educators assist children in the bathroom.	Male educators plan physical activities such as dancing and movements, sports, and naps.	Male educators prepare snacks and feed children during mealtimes.
Agree	3.79%	1.52%	0.76%	9.85%	29.55%
Disagree	74.24%	61.36%	60.61%	63.64%	40.91%
Neutral	3.79%	1.52%	2.27%	12.88%	23.48%
Strongly agree	0%	0%	0%	0.76%	1.52%
Strongly disagree	18.18%	35.61%	36.36%	12.88%	4.55%

*Figure 3: Reasons behind men's exclusion from Moroccan ECE centers*



- There is a public panic about males being preschool and daycare educators. Eidevald et al. (2018) emphasized that men are usually accused of sexual abuse when providing education to young children, notably in situations of changing diapers, and helping with dressing and naps.



## *The significance of men in children's gender development*

"I do not think that children at this age are capable of understanding gender roles. The roles parents play at home may directly influence how boys and girls perceive and adopt these roles".

"Including more male educators in ECE would be beneficial, as children need male role models in the classroom. However, I also assume that integrating them remains challenging as a result of the persistent social repression and gender-related biases in society".

- Perceptions towards men ECE are varied and ambivalent (**Sak et al. 2018; Rohrman & Emilsen, 2015; Rohrman 2016**).

## *The significance of men in children's gender development*

The absence of men, may affect boys more than girls. For instance , if a man is absent from both, home and school, this could lead to behavioral issues and deviant acts in the future.

Children in their early years need a nurturing environment to help them adjust and feel safe at school. Men may lack the necessary emotional skills to deal with preschoolers. Yet, their increased presence can also assist boys and girls in understanding gender roles in society.

## CONCLUSION

Despite global efforts to encourage more men to join early childhood education, parents, regardless of their gender, educational level, income, or social status, still hold different and contradictory attitudes towards male educators. This is mainly associated with strong social and cultural norms that question the role of men in this field, making it difficult for them to fit into traditional gender expectations. Furthermore, even with some progress, the stigma against male educators remains, reflecting how deeply stereotypical beliefs are rooted in Moroccan society.

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