“An exploration into the role of males working in the childcare setting and students attitudes towards this role”.

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Social Care Practice.

Submitted: 30th November 2017
Word Count: 5282
Declaration

I declare that this dissertation and the research involved in it are entirely the work of the author.

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Jamie Grennan  30/November/2017
Abstract

This research investigates the role of males working in the childcare setting and students attitudes towards this role. A quantitative method of research was used in the form of 20 questionnaires being distributed among participants. From this research, it was found that the majority of students would be comfortable with a male carrying out the role of childcare practitioner. It was also found that major obstacles such as the fear of sexual abuse accusations stand in the way of males working in this sector. It was concluded by the author that a programme should be implemented to educate society on the benefits of males working in the childcare sector. This should be followed up by a recruitment programme targeting males in second level education to get them on the path to becoming childcare practitioners.
Acknowledgments

The author wishes to thank:

- My thesis supervisor Ms. Fiona Walshe for her immense support, guidance and tuition throughout the whole process.
- My research project lecturer Dr. Vincent O’Connor for his advice and direction at each stage of the process.
- All the lecturing staff in the Department of Humanities in Athlone Institute of Technology for their knowledge and support over the last four years.
- The staff in the library for all their help throughout the process.
- All the A.I.T. students who participated in the study.
- My parents Michelle and Eamonn and my entire family for all their support and encouragement throughout the process and throughout my entire college life.
- My amazing friends Rachel and Leah for their helpfulness throughout the process along with all my other friends who have always been there to lend a hand and an ear when needed. Thank you!
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Chapter 1
Introduction

The aim of this research is to explore the role of males working in the childcare setting and students attitudes towards this role. To complete this study the author set out two objectives at the beginning of the assignment.

➢ To examine the evolution of the caring role in Ireland as it pertains to men and the importance of male role models in this sector.
➢ To examine the attitudes towards males working in the childcare sector and in particular the attitudes of A.I.T. students in relation to this.

Within chapter one the author explored the findings of other researchers who had carried out research into the area of males in childcare and attitudes in relation to this. The author also covers all the objectives in this information. Chapter two covers the authors’ method of research which is quantitative. This is followed by chapter three which evaluates and illustrates the authors’ findings from the questionnaire in a narrative and graphical form. In the subsequent chapter the author discusses his findings. Finally the author concludes his findings and makes recommendations.
Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The overall aim of this research project is to explore the role of males working in the childcare setting and students attitudes towards this role. With studies showing that males make up just 1% of the workforce in child care in Ireland, Dr. Michael Ungar (2011) believes that this is an important issue to address as experts believe that children need male and female role models in their formative years. This research project is broken down into two objectives. Firstly to examine the evolution of the caring role in Ireland as it pertains to men and the importance of male role models in this sector. Secondly, to examine the attitudes towards males working in the childcare sector and in particular the attitudes of A.I.T. students in relation to this.

2.2 History of caring in Ireland

The assumed role of the family and in particular women meant that childcare was taken for granted as something that would just happen in the context of the family and the home (Considine & Dukelow, 2009). Kennedy and Gallagher (1997) argue that modern social care practices developed out of serious deficiencies in the running of children’s centres. Social care was historically provided on behalf of the state by the Catholic Church. The Democratic Programme of the first Irish Dail acknowledged the concept of public responsibility for the care of children. It was intended to help parents in providing for their children rather than assuming the parental role entirely (Maguire, 2009). This marked the beginning of a more formal caring role.

The 1908 Children’s Act governed the law in relation to the care of children for the greater part of the twentieth century. One of the main areas that this Act covered was the protection of infant life. This had an impact on caring for children in Ireland as this area of the Act is about child minding (Kilkelly, 2008). Anyone looking after a child under the age of seven and receiving payment for it were now subject to the Act. According to the Act, a person had to inform the local authority within 48 hours that they were minding a child. Also under the Act, inspectors could visit the house and determine how many children could be cared for there (Kilkelly, 2008). They also had the authority to remove a child if there was concern for their safety (Kilkelly, 2008). The research found that there was little mention of the involvement of males in childcare at this point.
The Child Care Act 1991 is significantly different to the 1908 Act in many areas in relation to child care. The Child Care Act 1991 makes the welfare of the child as the principle guide in decision making in any court proceeding concerning a child (Gorry, 2013). Under this Act, as amended by the Child and Family Agency Act 2013, Tusla has a statutory duty to promote the welfare of children who are not receiving adequate care and protection (Gorry, 2013). Tusla is also required to provide child care and family support services under this amendment of the Act to try and prevent the need to take children into care (Gorry, 2013). This was an opportunity for the state to define the role of men in child care but this was not done here. Instead, this further separated males from being involved in child care as it was putting more safe guards in place which again led to men being viewed in a more negative slant in light of the abuse stories unfolding at the time. This issue will be explored further in this chapter.

The report by the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse, known as the Ryan Report, established in 2000 states that the number of children held in Irish Catholic Reformatory Institutions over a sixty year period was 35000 (CICA, 2009). The conclusion of the report, issued in May 2009, was that many children in these industrial schools had been subjected to physical, sexual and emotional abuse. A piece of literature examining the role of males in child care in the New Zealand context claims that the decline in male participation in childcare started following a sex abuse case which had an enormous negative effect on public perception of children’s safety in childcare settings (Farquhar, 2009). The study notes that this did not only have an effect on the attitudes to males in childcare but it also affected the personal confidence of males working in the area (Farquhar, 2009). It could be suggested that this effect of sex abuse cases was also seen in Ireland and can be attributed to the low rates of males in childcare.

2.3 Importance of male role models in childcare

It could be argued that the revelations of abuse which occurred in Irish industrial institutions has made it much more difficult for males to be involved in childcare on a professional level in Ireland today. One area of child care in Ireland where this is very evident is child care services delivered in crèches and pre-schools. An estimated 25000 work in the early childhood care and education sector in Ireland and only 1% is male (Wayman, 2016). In 1996, The European Commission Network on Childcare set a target for a male participation rate of 20% by 2020 (Wayman, 2016). With four years to go, Ireland is not on track to reach that target. However, this is not an issue that is only seen in Ireland. In Norway, a country which is often
praised for its gender equality, male staff make up just 10% of those employed in early childhood care (Wayman, 2016). This low rate is also seen in men caring for their own children. According to a report carried out by The Overseas Development Institute, just 7% of unpaid childcare in Ireland is done by men (Samman, et al., 2016).

In an article written by Childcare and Curriculum Advisor, Danny Lydon, the benefits that male practitioners bring to their role in childcare are discussed. These benefits include the different caring styles males bring to the profession which can impact the levels of challenging behaviour (Lydon, 2016). Another important benefit is that while preschools are accustomed to mothers over fathers, many women feel comfortable communicating with other women which can lead to fathers missing out on information or not feeling included whereas a male figure will support fathers in their involvement and understanding of their child’s care in the service (Lydon, 2016).

A study on fathers in Ireland by Ferguson and Hogan (2004) found that men who are denied an input into their children’s care often feel useless and irrelevant. This is being attributed to mothers being seen as the primary parent (Ferguson & Hogan, 2004). The presence of male practitioners in childcare settings may make fathers more comfortable to discuss their child and have a larger input into their care. For this to occur, people need to better understand the benefits that having males working in childcare can have on the children’s development and this will help people to have a more positive attitude in relation to males working in childcare and that is what is now going to be explored in this chapter.

2.4 Attitudes to males in child care

In a pilot project to promote men in child care in Ireland, the attitudes to male childcare workers are examined. The majority of respondents who work in the area felt that male childcare workers were a positive asset to the profession with 92.3% feeling this way (Fine-Davis, et al., 2005). The project also examine the attitudes of parents. While parents overall were of the opinion that male childcare workers act as positive role models for their children, 69.2% did not differentiate between the capacity of male and female workers (Fine-Davis, et al., 2005). Although this is positive for the position of men in child care, the attitudes of much of society towards men in child care remain negative.

In 2016, Andrea Leadsom, one of the contenders for leadership of the UK Conservative Party, made the comment that men should not be hired to look after young children because of the risk that they might be paedophiles (Stone, 2016). She followed the comment up by stating to
child care managers that the odds are stacked against them if they employ a man in a child care role (Stone, 2016). When influential figures in society have attitudes such as this, it could be suggested that it filters down through the population and enforces the negative attitudes of people towards males in childcare. This is an area which lacks research on in Ireland.

In a study conducted by Sue Smedley (2007), she discusses a participants apprehensions on being a male teacher due to the fear of physical contact with children. The participant discusses how he wants to prevent any possibility that the contact he makes with young children could be construed as inappropriately sexual (Smedley, 2007). She identifies the perception of both the caring, sensitive, ‘new man’ and the dangerous, perverted, predatory man (Smedley, 2007). It can be assumed that the latter is a factor which influences the attitudes of people in relation to males working in childcare.

2.5 Conclusion

A review of the literature suggests that the role of men in child care has changed dramatically in the last century. However, it is clear that there is still an issue with the attitudes of society towards men working with children in a caring role. Share and Lalor (2013) argued that “men certainly need to take more responsibility for caring roles”. The research examined would agree with this statement, showing Ireland to have the lowest rates of men working with children in a caring role in Europe.

Therefore, the current study is necessary to examine the caring role in Ireland as it pertains to men and the importance of males as role models in the childcare sector and to examine the attitudes towards males working in the childcare sector and in particular the attitudes of A.I.T. students in relation to this.
Chapter 3
Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the author will describe in detail the research method chosen for this study. The aim of this research is to gather primary data on the evolution of the caring role in Ireland in relation to men and on student’s attitudes to males working with children in a caring role. The methodology section will be laid out as follows; the different methods of research will be clearly defined and the proposed method will then be outlined along with justification for this choice. Following this the process, sample group, ethical issues and limitations will also be discussed.

3.2 Methods of Research

There are broadly two types of research methodology that researchers tend to use; quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative approach focuses on describing a phenomenon across a larger number of participants which allows the possibility of summarising characteristics across groups (Rhodes, 2014). This research is usually carried out using structured and predetermined questions. According to Dr. Rahman (2016), an advantage of quantitative research is that the findings are likely to be generalised by a whole group because it involves a larger sample. This is why the author chose this method of research.

A qualitative method of research places an emphasis on quality, attempting to gather high quality information rather than relatively large amounts. This is generally done through interviews, open-ended questions or focus groups (Rhodes, 2014). Although the questions that are asked are also predesigned, there is no formal questionnaire distributed and additional areas of investigation can be covered (Castellan, 2010). The author chose not to use this method of research due to the time constraints of getting the research completed.

3.3 Proposed Method

The researcher proposes to use a quantitative method of research in order to collect data for this project in the form of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was chosen as it is a quick and efficient way to undertake research and given the short space of time to complete the research it appears the ideal approach for gathering the information needed. The completion of the questionnaire will be at the participant’s agreement and the anonymous nature assures that the
respondents will answer as honestly as possible. When the data has been quantified it can be used to illustrate the findings graphically.

3.4 Process

The questionnaire is designed based on the different objectives of the research project. Twenty questionnaires are to be distributed to A.I.T. students with an aim to gather and discuss data found from the participant’s responses. The distribution of the questionnaires will take place in the main canteen to allow a spread in the types of students and disciplines who respond. The participants will be explained the purpose of the study by the author. The participants will be asked to complete a consent form and return to the researcher before completing the questionnaire.

3.5 Pilot Questionnaire

It was necessary to complete a pilot questionnaire and three friends, all A.I.T. students, were requested to complete the questionnaire giving constructive criticism. This also represented an additional anti-bias safeguard. According to Vanora Hundley (2001), a pilot study is beneficial as it develops and tests the adequacy of the research method. The results from the pilot questionnaires were analysed in the same way as intended for the final twenty questionnaires. The respondents gave feedback on suggested improvements for the questionnaire. The questionnaire was redesigned taking these improvements into account. The enhanced questionnaire was then given to the thesis supervisor for approval.

3.6 Participants

The participants for this research project will be A.I.T. students from various disciplines. This sample was considered most appropriate so as to get an overall view of students on the issue being researched. A covering letter will be given to the participants stating the purpose of the research. Participants will be given time to read the letter and sign if they wish to participate.

3.7 Ethical Issues

The author was conscious of the ethical issues in relation to the research and participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Informed consent will be acquired from the participants in the cover letter which they will be asked to sign. Ethical standards require that researchers not put participants in a situation where they might be at risk of harm as a result of participation (Trochim, 2006). When creating the questionnaire, the author was conscious of
the wording of the questions being asked due to the sensitive nature being discussed in the research. The participants will also be informed they can withdraw from the research at any point if they wish. They will also be assured that all data collected from them will be destroyed on 30th September 2018.

3.8 Limitations

Certain limitations existed in the carrying out of this research study. One of these limitations is that only twenty questionnaires were allowed to be handed out and this is a relatively small number to base concrete results on. The research is also limited by students not being allowed to survey individuals or organisations outside of the institute. The time in which to carry out the research is also limited in this research project due to the submission date.

3.9 Conclusion

While a qualitative approach may have given richer data and led to a useful discussion and debate on this topic, the time constraint meant that a questionnaire seemed to be the better option. After extensive library research and consideration of the methodological solutions relating to males working with children in a caring role and student’s views in particular, it can be concluded that the quantitative method will enable the author to fully attain the initial aim and objectives of the study. The research will benefit from the anonymity that the questionnaire offers. A mixed methods approach would be the most suitable if the study was to be developed.
Chapter 4

Results

4.1 Introduction

In this section, the author will present the results from the twenty respondents. The findings are in relation to the two objectives of the study:

1. To examine the evolution of the caring role in Ireland as it pertains to men and the importance of male role models in this sector.
2. To examine the attitudes towards males working in the childcare sector and in particular the attitudes of A.I.T. students in relation to this.

4.2 Demographic Results

65% (n=13) of respondents were female and 35% (n=7) were male. 15% (n=3) were under the age of 20, 70% (n=14) were between the ages of 20-25, 5% (n=1) were between the ages of 26-30 and 10% (n=2) were between the ages of 31-40. It was also found 10% (n=2) studied Biotechnology, 5% (n=1) studied Engineering, 20% (n=4) studied Business Sport and Rec, 50% (n=10) studied Social Care, 15% (n=3) studied General Nursing.

4.3 Objective 1: To examine the evolution of the caring role in Ireland as it pertains to men and the importance of male role models in this sector.

Question 4 asked participants did they agree with the statement that women are viewed as the primary care giver in relation to children.

Figure 4.1
35% (n=7) of respondents strongly agreed, 50% (n=10) agreed with the statement and 15% (n=3) were neutral.

**Question 5** asked participants if they knew anyone personally who is working as a childminder or in a crèche who is male.

95% (n=19) of participants do not personally know a male who is working in the area. 5% (n=1) do personally know a male working in the area.

**Question 6** asked participants was there a male role model involved in caring for them as a child (such as father, brother, grandfather, childcare practitioner, etc.).

![Pie Chart](image)

55% (n=11) said that there was a male role model very involved, 20% (n=4) said that there was a male involved, 15% (n=3) were neutral and 10% (n=2) said that a male role model was not very involved.

**Question 7** asked participants did they agree with the statement that it is important for there to be male role models involved in the childcare sector.
60% of participants (n=12) strongly agreed with the statement, 35% (n=7) agreed and 5% (n=1) disagreed with the statement.

**Question 8 asked participants to rank a set of skills which males bring to childcare from most to least important.**

35% (n=7) felt that the diverse range of perspectives and ideas on caring for children was the most important, 25% (n=5) felt that being role models for children was the most important skill males bring to the area, 15% (n=3) said that challenging gender stereotypes was the most important, 15% (n=3) felt that fathers finding it easier to relate to male staff was the most important and 10% (n=2) said that bringing more play, active movement and rough and tumble was the most important.

**Question 9 asked participants if they felt there was a gap in the presence of a male providing the care during their childhood and also asked them, if yes, to explain what difference they felt a male could have brought to their care.**

65% (n=13) of respondents said that there was not a gap while 35% (n=7) felt that there was a gap. Of this 35%, some of the differences they stated that the presence of a male could have made included “a male could have thought me different things” and “It would have made it easier to have relationships with men”.

**4.4 Objective 2: To examine the attitudes towards males working in the childcare sector and in particular the attitudes of A.I.T. students in relation to this.**
Question 10 asked participants if they currently had a child enrolled in childcare and, if yes, are there any male practitioners in the service.

90% (n=18) of participants said that they did not have a child enrolled in childcare. 10% (n=2) did have a child enrolled in childcare currently. Of this 10%, there was no presence of a male practitioner.

Question 11 asked participants did they agree with the statement that men who choose a career caring for children face many obstacles.

Figure 4.4

25% (n=5) of participants said that they strongly agreed with the statement, 50% (n=10) agreed and 25% (n=5) remained neutral.

Question 12 asked participants what obstacles do males wishing to work in childcare encounter.

The most popular type of obstacle was the fear that they might sexually abuse children. Other answers included the fear of false accusations and also how there are little or no male co-workers for support in the area.

Question 13 asked participants how comfortable they are with a male practitioner being involved in the care of children.
50% (n=10) said they are very comfortable, 40% (n=8) were comfortable, 5% (n=1) felt slightly conflicted and 5% (n=1) were uncomfortable.

**Question 14 asked if they thought it would benefit children to have a gender balanced environment in childcare services.**

90% (n=18) felt this would benefit children, 5% (n=1) did not think this would benefit and 5% (n=1) were unsure whether this would benefit children.

**Question 15 asked to what extent recent inquiry reports into child abuse (such as Ryan Report) have led to males working with children being viewed in a negative light.**

10% (n=2) strongly agreed with the statement, 55% (n=11) agreed, 30% (n=6) remained neutral and 5% (n=1) disagreed with the statement.
Question 16 asked participants if they thought there is a greater risk of children being abused by a male childcare practitioner than a female childcare practitioner.

70% (n=14) did not agree, 25% (n=5) were unsure and 5% (n=1) felt there was a greater risk.

Question 17 asked participants who are male if they would ever consider a career as a childcare practitioner.

60% (n=12) responded to the question as not a male. 15% (n=3) said they would consider a career in childcare, 15% (n=3) were unsure and 10% (n=2) said they would not consider this career.

Question 18 asked participants if they agreed that more male childcare practitioners should be employed in Ireland.

70% (n=14) of participants strongly agreed while 5% (n=1) disagreed with the statement.

Question 19 asked participants if they had any other comments regarding males working in the childcare sector.

This question received a wide range of answers. “Males provide role models especially for children who may have absent fathers” and stating that “more must be done to show the benefit of males working with children”. In a negative slant, one participant said “women can be better carers”.

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Chapter 5
Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the significance of the results from the previous chapter. The objectives form the relevant headings for the discussion. The results of this research project are related to the findings of others discussed in the literature review.

5.2 Objective 1: To examine the evolution of the caring role in Ireland as it pertains to men and the importance of male role models in this sector.

Question 4 asked participants if they agreed that women are traditionally viewed as the primary care giver in relation to children. 85% agreed with this statement. This result supports Considine’s and Dukelow’s view that the assumed role of the family and in particular women meant that childcare was taken for granted as something that would just happen in the context of the family and the home and usually by women (Considine & Dukelow, 2009). It can be assumed that this view is what led to women predominantly assuming the role of child minder and is when males began to be separated from the care of their children. This may also have had an impact on the professional side of childcare with less males pursing teaching and other careers that involved caring for children.

Question 5 asked participants if they knew anyone personally who is working in childcare or in a crèche who is male. 95% of participants did not know of a male working in the area of childcare. These results are similar to the national statistics in relation to males working in childcare which state that just 1% of the workforce in Ireland in childcare is male. Dr. Ungar addressed these findings as an important issue to concentrate on as experts believe that children need male and female role models in their formative years (Ungar, 2011). These low rate of male staffing levels need to urgently be addressed so that children can get the benefit to their development of having role models of both sexes in their early years. This may be seen as a long term solution to the issue as the presence of males in childcare may inspire boys to want to become childcare practitioners and enter the workforce when they grow up.

Question 6 asked participants if there was a male role model involved in caring for them as a child. 75% stated that there was a male role model involved in some way in their care. This figure conflicts with that of a study carried out by The Overseas Development Committee which found that just 7% of unpaid childcare in Ireland is done by men (Samman, et al., 2016).
The discrepancy may be explained by the participant’s definition of care and also by them possibly not wanting to reflect on their male role models in a negative light by not being involved in their care. It may also be attributed to the wording of the question. Participants may have been unsure about what was being asked.

Questions 7 and 8 examined the importance of there being a male role model present for children in this sector. As the graph in the previous chapter shows, 95% of participants agreed in some way that it is important for there to be a male role model present. When discussing what males bring to childcare, participants felt that men brought a diverse range of perspectives on caring for children. These results support the views of childcare and Curriculum Advisor, Danny Lydon. In an article where he discusses the benefits that male practitioners bring to their role in childcare, Lydon (2016) claims that one of the greatest benefits is the different caring styles males bring to the profession which can impact the levels of challenging behaviour. This shows that the general consensus among people is that there are clear benefits to males working in childcare and it can now be seen that having a male working in the area would have a major impact on the children’s learning and development as it is agreed that males would bring a different style of care to the profession.

This claim can also be supported by a study conducted by Fergus and Hogan (2004) which found that the presence of male practitioners in childcare settings may make fathers more comfortable to discuss their child and have a larger input into their care. A greater input by fathers will also have a major impact on their children’s learning and development and this may only come around with a male practitioner present who a father may feel more comfortable speaking about the child’s care with.

5.3 Objective 2: To examine the attitudes towards males working in the childcare sector and in particular the attitudes of A.I.T. students in relation to this.

Questions 11 and 12 examined the obstacles which males wishing to work in childcare encounter. 75% of participants agreed in some way that males who chose a career caring for children face many obstacles. According to participants, the most popular type of obstacle was the fear that they might sexually abuse children. The literature would suggest that influential figures in society are somewhat to blame for these fears still being present. In 2016, Andrea Leadsom, one of the contenders for leadership of the UK Conservative Party, made the comment that men should not be hired to look after young children because of the risk that they might be paedophiles (Stone, 2016). It could be suggested that comments such as this being
made by a person of such high authority enforces this fear that male practitioners may sexually abuse children and thus creates further obstacles for males wishing to work in this sector.

Question 13 asked participants how comfortable they are with a male practitioner being involved in the care of children. 90% of participants claimed that they were in some way comfortable with a male practitioner being involved in childcare. These results are similar to those of a pilot project to promote men in childcare in Ireland. The majority of respondents in this study who work in the area felt that male childcare workers were a positive asset to the profession with 92.3% feeling this way (Fine-Davis, et al., 2005). These findings are significant as they show that the vast majority of people are comfortable with males carrying out childcare and this only furthers the point that there should be more males working in the sector as people are comfortable with their presence as well as the benefits they bring. Although these findings are based on those who work in the area, it can be assumed that these results would be similar with the general population. The author is unable to compare the results found with similar surveys undertaken as there is currently none available looking at how comfortable people are with males working in the childcare sector.

Question 17 asked participants who are male if they would ever consider a career as a childcare practitioner. Of the 40% of males who participated, 15% said that they would consider a career in childcare. This relatively low figure could be explained by participant’s apprehensions on being a male teacher due to the fear of physical contact with children. In a study conducted by Sue Smedley (2007), she discusses these apprehensions. In an interview with her participants, one discusses how he wants to prevent any possibility that the contact he makes with young children could be construed as inappropriately sexual. It can be assumed that these apprehensions would be a significant factor in these males choosing not to have a career in childcare. It seems that this is an area which needs to be tackled in order to entice more males to enter the childcare sector. It could be assumed that the feelings expressed here are rooted in a culture of fear which appears to have become present in the sector. Males may fear that they will be accused of inappropriate behaviour. This may also be enforced by society viewing childcare as a woman’s role.

5.4 Evaluation of Method

The use of questionnaires proved successful in the author’s opinion as it gathered the required information from the target group. It encouraged their participation in this sensitive topic as confidentiality was guaranteed and agreed upon. It could be said that a focus group may have
gained a deeper insight into student’s attitudes in relation to males working in childcare and could have explored the root of those attitudes further.
Chapter 6

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this research imply that although there is a high percentage of A.I.T. students who feel that more male childcare practitioners should be employed in Ireland, there is a need to address the obstacles which prevent them from joining the sector. In an informal conversation with the manager of a preschool service, the author discovered that they would find a male childcare practitioner a huge benefit to their service but are unable to recruit a male due to the apprehensions males have about working in the sector. While the author found out about students attitudes on this, it is imperative that there is future research done on a wider scale to get a broader sense of societies attitudes and on what supports can be introduced for males wishing to pursue this career.

The author would recommend a programme to first tackle the negative attitudes of society about males working in childcare. This programme would educate them on the benefits which males bring to the service and the difference it can make to a child’s development. This should be followed up by a programme to recruit more males to get us on par with the European Commission Network’s target of male participation in childcare at 20%. This programme should include targeting students in the secondary school system to put them on a path to pursuing a career as a male childcare practitioner in Ireland.
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Appendix 1

Questionnaire Cover Letter

Dear Student,

My name is Jamie Grennan. I am a final-year student at Athlone Institute of Technology completing a degree in Social Care Practice. As part of my course, I must complete an empirical research project. I have chosen to examine males working in childcare and students attitudes in relation to this. The research is being supervised by a lecturer in the Department of Humanities.

I would be extremely grateful if you would participate in the research. Participation is entirely voluntary, confidential and participants are free to withdraw from the process at any point, if they wish.

The information I gather will be used only for my thesis. No names or identifying characteristics will be used. The anonymity of all participants will be preserved at all times.

All completed questionnaires will be destroyed on 30th September 2018. Information supplied will be held in strictest confidence and all participants will remain entirely anonymous.

Completion of the questionnaire should take no longer than 10 minutes.

Thank you very much for your time and assistance

Yours Faithfully,

Jamie Grennan
Appendix 2
Pilot Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to examine student’s attitudes towards males working in the childcare sector in Ireland. Please attempt to answer all the questions honestly and please tick all the boxes provided. All information provided by you will be treated in the strictest confidentiality and remain entirely anonymous.

1. Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

2. Age: under 20 ☐ 20-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41-50 ☐ 50+ ☐

3. Course: ______________________________________________________

4. Year of study: __________________________________________________

Objective 1: To examine the evolution of the caring role in Ireland as it pertains to men and the importance of male role models in this sector.

5. To what extent do you agree with the statement that women are viewed as the primary care giver in relation to children?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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6. Did you attend a childcare facility before beginning primary school?

Yes ☐ No ☐

7. Were there any males employed in the childcare facility?
8. To what extent was there a male role model involved in caring for you as a child?

Yes ☐  No ☐  Did Not Attend ☐

Very involved ☐
Somewhat involved ☐
Neutral ☐
Not very involved ☐
Not at all involved ☐

9. To what extent do you agree with the statement that it is important for there to be male role models involved in the childcare sector?

Strongly Agree ☐  Agree ☐  Neutral ☐  Disagree ☐  Strongly Disagree ☐

10. In your opinion, are there any skills or qualities that men can bring to a role in childcare which women cannot?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

11. “Men bring more play, active movement, entertainment and rough and tumble to the way they interact with children”. To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Strongly Agree ☐  Agree ☐  Neutral ☐  Disagree ☐  Strongly Disagree ☐

12. Looking back on your own care as a child, do you feel that there was a gap in the presence of a male providing the care? If yes, please explain what difference you think that they could have brought to your care.

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
Objective 2: To examine the attitudes towards males working in the childcare sector and in particular the attitudes of A.I.T. students in relation to this.

13. Do you have a child currently enrolled in childcare?
   Yes ☐    No ☐
   If yes, are there any male practitioners in the service? ____________________________

14. To what extent do you agree with the statement that men who choose a career caring for children face many obstacles?
   Strongly Agree ☐    Agree ☐    Neutral ☐    Disagree ☐    Strongly Disagree ☐

15. In your opinion, what obstacles do males wishing to work in childcare encounter?
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________

16. How comfortable would you be with a male practitioner being involved in your child’s care?
   Very Comfortable ☐    Comfortable ☐    Neutral ☐    Uncomfortable ☐    Very Uncomfortable ☐

17. Do you think it would benefit children to have a gender balanced (both male and female staff) environment in childcare services?
   Yes ☐    No ☐    Unsure ☐

18. To what extent do you agree that recent inquiry reports into child abuse (such as Ryan Report) have led to males working with children being viewed in a negative light?
   Strongly Agree ☐    Agree ☐    Neutral ☐    Disagree ☐    Strongly Disagree ☐
19. Do you think that there is a greater risk of children being abused by a male childcare practitioner than a female childcare practitioner?

Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure ☐

20. Do you agree that more male childcare practitioners should be employed in Ireland?

Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

Thank you for your time in completing this questionnaire!
Appendix 3

Final Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to examine student’s attitudes towards males working in the childcare sector in Ireland. Please attempt to answer all the questions honestly and please tick all the boxes provided. All information provided by you will be treated in the strictest confidence and remain entirely anonymous.

1. Gender: Male □ Female □

2. Age: under 20 □
   20-25 □
   26-30 □
   31-40 □
   41-50 □
   50+ □

3. Course: _______________________________________________________

4. To what extent do you agree with the statement that women are viewed as the primary care giver in relation to children?
   Strongly Agree □ Agree □ Neutral □ Disagree □ Strongly Disagree □

5. Do you know anyone personally who is working as a childminder or in a crèche who is male?
   Yes □ No □
6. To what extent was there a male role model involved in caring for you as a child? (Father, brother, grandfather, childcare practitioner, etc.)

- Very involved
- Somewhat involved
- Neutral
- Not very involved
- Not at all involved

7. To what extent do you agree with the statement that it is important for there to be male role models involved in the childcare sector?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

8. Please rank how important you feel that these skills which males bring to childcare are (5=least important, 1=most important)

- They challenge gender stereotypes
- They become role models for the children
- They bring a diverse range of perspectives and ideas on caring for children
- They bring more play, active movement and rough and tumble
- Fathers may find male staff easier to relate to

9. Looking back on your own care as a child, do you feel that there was a gap in the presence of a male providing the care? If yes, please explain what difference you think that they could have brought to your care.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

35
10. Do you have a child currently enrolled in childcare?
   Yes ☐   No ☐

   If yes, are there any male practitioners in the service? ______________________

11. To what extent do you agree with the statement that men who choose a career caring for children face many obstacles?

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12. In your opinion, what obstacles do males wishing to work in childcare encounter?

   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________
   _______________________________________________________________________  

13. How comfortable are you with a male practitioner being involved in the care of children?

   Very Comfortable  Comfortable  Slightly Conflicted  Uncomfortable  Very Uncomfortable
   ☐                   ☐            ☐                        ☐                         ☐                

14. Do you think it would benefit children to have a gender balanced (both male and female staff) environment in childcare services?

   Yes ☐   No ☐   Unsure ☐

15. To what extent do you agree that recent inquiry reports into child abuse (such as Ryan Report which investigates abuse of children in the past) have led to males working with children being viewed in a negative light?

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16. Do you think that there is a greater risk of children being abused by a male childcare practitioner than a female childcare practitioner?

   Yes ☐   No ☐   Unsure ☐
17. If you are a male, would you ever consider a career as a childcare practitioner?
   Yes ☐    No ☐       Unsure ☐    Not a male ☐

18. Do you agree that more male childcare practitioners should be employed in Ireland?
   Strongly Agree ☐   Agree ☐    Neutral ☐    Disagree ☐    Strongly Disagree ☐

19. Any other comments regarding males working in the childcare sector?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Thank you for your time!!