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CAREER ATTITUDES OF MEN IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

by

Mark John Anderson

A DISSERTATION

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The Graduate College in the University of Nebraska  
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements  
For the Degree of Doctor of Education  
Department of Educational Administration

Under the Supervision of Professor O. W. Kopp

Lincoln, Nebraska

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**TITLE**

"Career Attitudes of Men in Elementary Education"

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M.J.A.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION. . . . .	1
Purpose of the Study . . . . .	2
Significance of the Study. . . . .	3
Definition of Terms. . . . .	3
Delimitations of the Study . . . . .	4
Procedures . . . . .	4
Organization of the Remainder of the Study . . . . .	4
II. REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE . . . . .	6
III. METHOD AND PROCEDURE OF THE STUDY . . . . .	27
The Instrument . . . . .	27
Background information. . . . .	27
The attitude inventory. . . . .	28
The Likert technique. . . . .	28
Weighting of response . . . . .	28
Selection of the statements . . . . .	29
The Pilot Study. . . . .	31
The pilot group . . . . .	31
Sample Used in the Study . . . . .	31
Administration of the Instrument . . . . .	32
Statistical Procedures Used in the Study . . . . .	32
IV. SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, EDUCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL BACK- GROUND OF MALE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER EDUCATION GRADUATES. . . . .	34
Age of Male Elementary Teacher Education Graduates . .	36
Marital Status of Male Elementary Teacher Education Graduates . . . . .	37
Dependents of Male Elementary Teacher Education Graduates . . . . .	38
Education of Parents of Male Elementary Teacher Education Graduates . . . . .	39
Size of Parental Families. . . . .	41
Occupations of Fathers of Male Elementary Teacher Education Graduates . . . . .	41
Financial Status of Parental Home During Childhood . . . . .	44
Age at the Time of Entrance to Elementary Teacher Training. . . . .	46

CHAPTER	PAGE
Contributing Factors to Entering Elementary School Teacher Education. . . . .	46
Level of Education of Male Elementary Teacher Education Graduates . . . . .	49
Number of Years Experience of Male Elementary Teacher Education Graduates . . . . .	50
V. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA . . . . .	53
Response to Individual Statements. . . . .	53
Statistical Analysis of the Data . . . . .	54
Summary of the Analysis of the Data. . . . .	81
VI. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . .	84
Summary. . . . .	84
Conclusions. . . . .	85
Recommendations. . . . .	86
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	88
APPENDIX A - Elementary School Career Attitudes Inventory. . . .	93
APPENDIX B - Correspondence. . . . .	97
APPENDIX C - Instrument. . . . .	100



## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
I. Average Starting Salaries of Public School Teachers and Salaries in Private Industry. . . . .	23
II. Rank Order of $t$ Value for Statements Used in Pilot Study . . . . .	30
III. Number and Percentage of Categories That Make up the Total Sample of Male Elementary Teacher Education Graduates Used in the Study . . . . .	36
IV. Age of Male Elementary Teacher Education Graduates by Sample Category . . . . .	37
V. Marital Status of Male Elementary Teacher Education Graduates . . . . .	38
VI. Number of Dependents of Male Elementary Teacher Education Graduates . . . . .	39
VII. Formal Education of Parents of Male Elementary Teacher Education Graduates . . . . .	40
VIII. Number of Children in Parental Family . . . . .	42
IX. Occupations of Fathers of Male Elementary Teacher Education Graduates . . . . .	43
X. Financial Situation in the Home of Male Elementary Teacher Education Graduates During Childhood. . . . .	45
XI. Age of Male Elementary Teacher Education Graduates at Time of Entrance to Teacher Training. . . . .	47
XII. Factors Contributing to Male Elementary Teacher Education Graduates Entering Elementary School Teacher Training. . . . .	48
XIII. Level of Education Completed by Male Elementary Teacher Education Graduates . . . . .	50
XIV. Average Number of Years Teaching Experience of Male Elementary Teacher Education Graduates by Level . . . . .	51

TABLE	PAGE
XV. Opportunities for Promotion . . . . .	57
XVI. Financial Security. . . . .	58
XVII. Directing the Work of Others. . . . .	59
XVIII. Amount of Credit Received . . . . .	60
XIX. Earnings for a Man in Elementary School Teaching. . . . .	61
XX. Freedom to Make Decisions . . . . .	62
XXI. Recognition Received. . . . .	63
XXII. Male Elementary Teacher's Esteem in the Community . . . . .	64
XXIII. The Amount of Pressure for a Man in Elementary School Teaching . . . . .	65
XXIV. Opportunity to Make Friends . . . . .	66
XXV. Intellectual Stimulation of Activities in a Career in Elementary School Teaching . . . . .	67
XXVI. Opportunity to See Results of One's Work. . . . .	68
XXVII. Autonomy in One's Work. . . . .	69
XXVIII. Demands of Superiors. . . . .	70
XXIX. Carrying Out One's Own Ideas without Interference . . . . .	71
XXX. Variety of Activities . . . . .	72
XXXI. Opportunity for Renewal and Skill Improvement . . . . .	73
XXXII. Conflict with Co-Workers. . . . .	74
XXXIII. Opportunity to Use Skills, Aptitudes, and Abilities . . . . .	75
XXXIV. Opportunity to Assist in Policy Making. . . . .	76
XXXV. Feeling of Achievement. . . . .	77
XXXVI. Prospects for Improved Earnings . . . . .	78

TABLE	PAGE
XXXVII. Opportunity to Do Socially Significant Work . . . . .	79
XXXVIII. Being Looked up to by Fellow Teachers . . . . .	80
XXXIX. Helping Others Find Success and Happiness . . . . .	81

PREVIEW

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Since the turn of the century there has been a good deal of dialogue regarding the lack of male influence in the elementary school. Educators, parents, and laymen agree that the shortage of males in elementary school teaching is a major concern, and steps need to be taken to rectify the situation.

The examination of recent statistics available on a national level shows that approximately half of all classroom teachers instruct at the secondary level and the other half teach in the elementary schools. Of all these classroom teachers, regardless of level, only 34.5 per cent are men. The imbalance greatly increases when classified by sex at the two levels, and it's found that over 80 per cent of these men are teaching at the secondary level.<sup>1</sup> During the 1969-70 school year only 15.4 per cent of the teachers in the public elementary schools were men.<sup>2</sup>

This small number of men in elementary school teaching has encouraged educators, psychologists, parents, and laymen to speculate on the need for more men in this field. As far back as 1908, G. Stanley Hall warned educators that a faculty made up predominantly

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<sup>1</sup>Rodney N. Tolbert, "Should You Employ That Male Elementary Teacher?" The National Elementary Principal, XLIII (February, 1969), 41.

<sup>2</sup>Mildred S. Biedenkapp and Jacob D. Goering, "How Masculine Are Male Elementary Teachers?" Phi Delta Kappan, LIII (October, 1971), 115.

of female teachers would contribute to the maladjustment of the young male learner.<sup>3</sup> Within this context, John Sternig, in 1954, stated, "Men are as important in the school lives of children as they are at home."<sup>4</sup>

More recently, Milgram testifies that male role models are essential to the healthy growth and development of the young child.<sup>5</sup>

If the opinion is accepted that a greater number of men are needed as teachers in our elementary schools, it seems to follow that educators find out more about why there are so few men currently in the field.

Trow's suggestions seem appropriate at this point. He suggests that if we are to know anything about the nature of the educational system, we must know something about the people who work within it; their backgrounds, how they are recruited, through what paths they come to teaching, and what attitudes and values they hold.<sup>6</sup>

#### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to investigate the attitudes of male elementary teacher education graduates toward a career in

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<sup>3</sup>G. Stanley Hall, "Feminization in School and Home," The World Is Work, XVI (May, 1908), 10237-44.

<sup>4</sup>John Sternig, "Father in the Home; Men in the School," The Nation's Schools, LVV (November, 1954), 51.

<sup>5</sup>Joel I. Milgram, "Sources of Manpower for the Preschool Classroom," Childhood Education, XLVIII (January, 1972), 187.

<sup>6</sup>Martin Trow, "Survey Research and Education," Survey Research in the Social Sciences, ed. Charles Y. Glock (New York: Russel Sage Foundations, 1967), p. 350.

elementary school teaching, and to determine whether there were any significant attitudinal differences among the five sample categories that made up the total sample; specifically, teachers, teacher-principals, principals, college instructors, and non-persisters.

A second purpose was to identify selected social, economic, educational, and professional characteristics of the sample categories of male elementary school teacher education graduates used in the study.

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It was anticipated that the study would provide information that may assist departments of elementary education in institutions of higher education in identifying prospective male teacher education candidates, assist male students in selecting a major field of study in the field of education, and assist school districts in structuring programs which may lead to more satisfying careers in elementary teaching for men.

#### DEFINITION OF TERMS

Career attitude. A career attitude in this study is the tendency to react toward or against an environmental factor which thereby becomes a positive or negative value toward elementary school teaching.

Sample category. A sample category in the study is any one of the sub-groups that make up the total sample of male elementary teacher education graduates; specifically, teachers, teacher-principals,

principals, college instructors, and non-persisters.

Non-persisters. The non-persisters in the study is the sample category of male elementary teacher education graduates who never entered the field or those who did enter but have since left the field of education.

#### DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study was based on data obtained from a sample of men identified from departmental, alumni, and placement office records of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and the University of Wisconsin-Superior, as graduates of a four-year teacher education program in elementary education.

#### PROCEDURES

The study consisted of two basic phases, each of which involved several successive steps. The first phase was concerned with studying occupational research, attitudes, teacher characteristics, techniques of measuring attitudes, and developing an attitude inventory to be used in the study. The second phase required administering the improved inventory to a sample of male elementary teacher education graduates and evaluating the obtained data.

#### ORGANIZATION OF THE REMAINDER OF THE STUDY

The content of Chapter II includes a review of the literature pertinent to the problems and attitudes of men in elementary school teaching which may have a bearing on the small number of men who enter

and remain in the profession.

Chapter III is devoted to the method and procedures used in the study.

In Chapter IV a profile of the social, educational, economic, and professional composition of the sample categories that made up the total sample of male elementary teacher education graduates is presented.

Presented in Chapter V is the analysis of the data and presentation of the findings pertaining to the attitudes of male elementary teacher education graduates toward a career in elementary school teaching.

Chapter VI includes a summary, conclusions and recommendations of the investigator based on the analysis of the findings.

PREVIEW



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

In a national survey of men teachers conducted by Mason, Dressel, and Bain, it was determined that once men have entered the teaching profession, it was unlikely that they would remain in the classroom for any significant length of time. Only 29 per cent of the men in teaching expected to teach continuously until retirement. The most frequently expressed ambition of the men was to continue in the field of education until retirement but move from classroom teaching into some other area of education eventually. In all, 51 per cent of the men made this choice. Another 19 per cent expected to leave education for another occupation.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, most men do not see teaching as a terminal occupation or career, but as a stepping stone to some other occupation, either in or out of education.

There is no question that dissatisfactions exist with aspects of any given career. No position, regardless of its level is free from aggravation. However, as one examines the literature, it appears that teaching may have greater frustrations than many other professions. Educators, administrators, public school officials, and others directly concerned with the teaching profession need to

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<sup>1</sup>Ward S. Mason, Robert J. Dressel, and Robert K. Bain, "Sex Role and the Career Orientation of Beginning Teachers," Harvard Educational Review, XXIX (Fall, 1959), 374.

examine the critical areas of discontent so that a more favorable relationship can be developed for the benefit of teachers and students.

Because so few men enter and remain in the field of elementary school teaching, it has been the major purpose of this study to identify those factors that may have a significant effect on this condition. One of the major clues to the process of entrance and persistence in an occupational area are the attitudes which people hold toward it. What are the important things that people hope to find or to evade in an occupation.

The literature holds some basic assumptions regarding the attitudes and concerns men have about careers in teaching. Several studies, one in industry and others in education, have direct bearing upon attitudes and areas of discontent relating to occupations in general and teaching in particular. A study in industry by Herzberg found that five factors tended to be job satisfiers and eleven factors tended to be job dissatisfiers. Potential job satisfiers were in the areas of: achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, and advancement. Job dissatisfiers were in the areas of: salary, possibility of growth, interpersonal relations with subordinates, superiors, and peers, status, supervision, company policy and administration, working conditions, personal life, and job security.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Frederick Herzberg, Bernard Mauser, and Barbara Snyderman, The Motivation to Work (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1959), pp. 44-49.

Sergiovanni undertook a study in education, based on Herzberg's in industry, to determine whether or not factors reported by teachers would distribute themselves into satisfaction and dissatisfaction categories, and if so, would the factors resulting in satisfaction be concerned with the work itself, and would the factors resulting in dissatisfaction be concerned with the environment of their work? Unlike Herzberg's study, Sergiovanni found that teachers are concerned with achievement, recognition, and responsibility more significantly than with advancement or work itself.<sup>3</sup>

Within this general framework, the major area of discontent for male elementary school teachers appears to be the lack of prestige, status, or professional image.<sup>4</sup> There is a nagging suspicion that the status of the career teacher is not high enough and that this condition has a deleterious effect upon the profession's attraction and holding power. The strong feelings that the role of the teacher in the community is less respected now than in the past is a problem for those trying to attract and retain qualified young people into teaching, particularly men in elementary school teaching.

In Chandler's words, men contemplating teaching as an occupation could possibly encounter early discouragement. He points out that public distrust of teachers and the tendency of communities to

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<sup>3</sup>Thomas J. Sergiovanni, "Factors Which Affect Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction of Teachers," The Journal of Educational Administration, V (May, 1967), 79.

<sup>4</sup>Mildred S. Biedenkapp and Jacob D. Goering, "How Masculine Are Male Elementary Teachers?" Phi Delta Kappan, LIII (October, 1971), 115.

give them stereotypes that belittle and ridicule, have persisted down through the ages. Teachers have been pictured in the past as men of mind who had no taste for hard work.<sup>5</sup>

Derleth felt that the social position of teachers was far below that which the dignity and importance of the profession merited. He added that teachers in other parts of the world enjoyed far greater status than those in the United States.<sup>6</sup>

Buck, in his study of male elementary teachers, supports this attitude. He states:

Certainly it is unlikely that the public image of a profession does not have some effect upon both the people in the profession and those contemplating entering it. During the past decade a substantial number of teachers have left teaching for other work. Economic factors and poor working conditions have been advanced as chief causes. But the prevailing image of the teacher, as part of that complex we call "teacher status in the community" may be equally important. Is there not a possibility that many left teaching because they felt oppressed in the teaching role, believing the public considered them, among other unattractive things, as some sort of a third-sexed creature? We know that individuals are not always aware of their own motivations, and teachers who leave the profession may not really know why they do so. They simply choose the most comfortable rationalization. Perhaps they prefer to ignore the unconscious distaste they feel for the role society has set for them.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Bobby J. Chandler, Education and the Teacher (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1962), p. 267.

<sup>6</sup>August Derleth, "Social Position of the Teacher," Wisconsin Journal of Education, XCVI (November, 1963), 7.

<sup>7</sup>Benjamin A. Buck, "Teaching Success of Male Elementary Teachers," The Teachers College Journal, XXXV (March, 1964), 194.

In a study of male teachers and ex-teachers by Thorndike and Hagan, less than one-third of those studied mentioned respect by the community as a source of satisfaction of being a teacher.<sup>8</sup>

A study of occupational values of college students by Rosenberg used a sample of 2,758 Cornell University students to rate a set of ten values as criteria for "an ideal job or career."<sup>9</sup> Comparable data were obtained for beginning teachers in a study by Mason, Dressel, and Bain. In comparing the data of the male Cornell students with beginning male teachers on the value statement: "Teaching will give me social status and prestige," a mere twenty-five per cent of the students reacted positively and only thirty-one per cent of the beginning male teachers felt positive about the value statement. Each group consisted of over two thousand members.<sup>10</sup>

Rogers reports that in studying forty men in elementary school teaching, a majority of men find their status in the community satisfactory. However, about forty per cent, a considerable minority, have some doubts about the question. Rogers adds, that in about the same ratio, elementary men are divided as to whether the community

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<sup>8</sup>Robert L. Thorndike and Elizabeth Hagen, "Men Teachers and Ex-Teachers: Some Attitudes and Traits," Teachers College Record, LXII (January, 1961), 313.

<sup>9</sup>Morris Rosenberg, Occupations and Values (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1957).

<sup>10</sup>Mason, Dressel and Bain, op. cit., p. 381.

finds the male elementary teacher a little peculiar.<sup>11</sup>

In an analysis of supply and demand of male elementary teachers in California, Spivey found 26.4 per cent of school district personnel directors agreed, "The lack of prestige in being a male teacher" was very important to the problem of a male elementary teacher shortage and 47.1 per cent believed it to be an important factor. Out of the total sample studied, 74.3 per cent believed the statement affected male teacher shortage in the elementary schools of California.<sup>12</sup>

Also studying factors relating to supply and demand of male elementary teachers, O'Brien found that although teaching at the elementary level is thought of as a job worthy of a man, the image of such a male carries with it a very definite negative social stereotype that characterizes him as being somewhat odd.<sup>13</sup>

Men teaching in elementary school testify that the uncomplimentary stereotype prevails. When asked why there are so few men in elementary education, the answer is: "Too little prestige and too little salary."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Dorothy Rogers, "A Study of the Reaction of Forty Men to Teaching in the Elementary School," The Journal of Educational Sociology, XXVII (September, 1953), 31.

<sup>12</sup>William Ben Spivey, "An Analysis of the Supply and Demand of the Male Elementary Teacher" (unpublished Master's thesis, California State College-Long Beach, 1970).

<sup>13</sup>James Richard O'Brien, "A Study of Selected Factors Involved in the Supply and Demand for Male Elementary Classroom Teachers in Saint Louis County Missouri" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, St. Louis University, 1968).

<sup>14</sup>Lee Triplett, "Elementary Education--A Man's World," Education Digest, XXXIV (January, 1969), 26.

A recent research project regarding the putative effeminate image of male elementary school teachers acknowledges that in spite of the professionally recognized benefits of having men in elementary classrooms, the social stereotype discourages men from entering elementary education.<sup>15</sup>

Brown issues extremely candid remarks when identifying the state of affairs regarding the status and image of the male elementary teacher. He states:

Although the number of men in elementary teaching seems to have increased in recent years, enormous obstacles stand in the way of significant gains. Among these is the fact that it takes some degree either of social ignorance or of personal courage for a man to enter teaching at the elementary school level. For a manly man it is to spit in the face of a strong societal stereotype. This stereotype is a familiar one. It goes somewhat as follows: No man becomes an elementary school teacher unless he can do little else. The elementary school provides a refuge from masculine competition, a retreat from hairy-chestedness. It is a peaceful haven where one can idle away the daylight hours teaching simple and obvious things to little people who, because of their small dimensions, provide a minimal threat to one of gentle, tender or timorous nature. Actually, the stereotype suggests, these men teachers are very little different from their female counterparts.<sup>16</sup>

Additional evidence that teaching in the elementary school is a feminine profession comes from Bagford.

One of the stereotypes that stubbornly remains as part of the American scene is that of the elementary school

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<sup>15</sup>Biedenkapp and Goering, loc. cit.

<sup>16</sup>George I. Brown, "Recruiting More Men for Elementary Teaching," Phi Delta Kappan, XLI (April, 1960), 294.

teacher. When a person thinks of a teacher, he automatically pictures a woman, usually an older woman, and quite commonly, an older, unmarried woman. To see an example of the extent to which this feminine image is ingrained in our collective subconscious minds, one merely needs to observe the manner in which people speak about teachers; almost always, they are referred to by the feminine pronoun she.<sup>17</sup>

In 1969, a questionnaire was sent out to parents in Oakland, California, with this question, "What is a teacher?" The study revealed that the most consistent image of a teacher as seen by those who answered the question was that a teacher was a woman.

"WHAT IS A TEACHER?"<sup>18</sup>

<u>Image</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>
Girl	6
Governess	1
Instructress	1
Lady	35
Man	5
Master	1
Old Maid	28
Wiseman	1
Woman	109
Young Woman	2

In a study of opinions of administrators working with male elementary teachers, by Peterson, reasons given for men not entering elementary school teaching included: (1) "That the public identified it as a woman's job." (2) "The lack of male associates in the school building." and (3) "The reluctance of males to work in a female

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<sup>17</sup> Jack Bagford, "Quality Teachers for Our Elementary Schools," The Journal of Teacher Education, XVII (Fall, 1966), 308.

<sup>18</sup> L. F. Lowery, "Study of Attitudes of Parents Toward Teachers," Journal of Educational Research, LXII (January, 1969), 227-28.