

## The Male Teachers' Perceptions on Early Childhood Children's Education about Wellbeing

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### Abstract

The wellbeing of formal early childhood education teachers in Indonesia has been improving since the government issued a teacher certification program. The qualified teachers with an undergraduate degree of education could join the certification program for teachers. This research aims to reveal the meaning of wellbeing for male teachers of early childhood education. It applied survey and interview methods. The subjects consisted of 16 male teachers of early childhood education in Boyolali. The data were collected with Google Form. Then, it was continued by interviewing three male teachers. The data analysis was descriptive qualitative. The findings were the teaching experience for each different subject. The meaning of teaching is to motivate and to encourage the understanding of the teaching concept as a good deed. In this research, it referred to how the subjects perceived life as teachers and made it an everlasting deed to create a better generation for the country. There were 11 respondents who stated that being early childhood education teachers made them having well-being. Being early childhood education for the male teachers meant to have passion, values, and ideals. It could provide them various experiences such as being patient, providing excellent models as if they were the learners' parents, working while worshipping, contributing in the parenting field, and developing early childhood education.

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## INTRODUCTION

Being an early childhood education teacher for males is a rare phenomenon. Based on the American study, the numbers of male early childhood education teacher were only 5.2% (Athirah & Zubairi, 2015). The male early childhood education teachers in European countries have a percentage of 1-4% (Sumsion, 2005). In Turkey, the number of male early childhood education teachers is only 4 % (Demirkasımoğlu & Taşkın, 2019). On the other hand, in Hongkong, there were only 1.2% male teachers (Hoy & Tarter, 2014). This rare phenomenon also occurs in Indonesia. Based on the main data of the Primary Educator Data (Dapodik) in 2020, the number of male early childhood education teachers is 2.8%. It seems the world experiencing a crisis of male early childhood education teachers.

Several factors may influence this rarity. They are low income and status that cause this rarity (Jones, 2016). Another factor is the difficulty of the male early education teachers' career opportunities (W. Zhang, 2017). Gender also becomes a factor of the male teachers' minimum numbers (Sargent, 2005). The perception that teachers of early childhood education are identical to female teachers is something typical for people. Besides that, prestige also becomes the influential factor for a male to choose this career (Sum, Tamo & Talu, 2003).

Having a career in an early childhood education program is not easy for male teachers. An early childhood education teacher must have the skills to manage the course professionally. A professional teacher should manage the class in terms of learner, class, learning media, method selection, and program management based on the early childhood children's principal stages (Setiasih & Suminar, 2021). The early childhood education teachers must have excellent performance. Performance refers to how a teacher promotes and carries out his tasks and responsibilities based on the expectation and the applied objectives. It is an important aspect because performance deals directly with learning

activities. The teacher performance improves based on the learning experience (Utami, Latiana & Pranoto, 2020). Being a professional-male early childhood education teacher requires excellent performance and a lot of experience.

Teaching in early childhood education for males surely has hindrances and difficulties. The difficulties and hindrances are frequently experienced by the male teachers. The difficulties and hindrances were mostly from the superordinate due to the raising distrust toward the male teachers. Thus, they cannot employ male teachers because of commercial anxiety. Male educators in Turkey experienced difficulties such as being humiliated and insulted by their friends (Demirkasımoğlu & Taşkın, 2019). It was also found by (Mukhlis, 2019). He found that stakeholders of early childhood education assumed female teachers had better competence than male teachers. Stakeholders also perceived that males could participate in developing the learners' physical motors, arts, and gender roles for male learners. Thus, they can be the leader in the early childhood education institution.

The difficulties to master the whole competencies are also experienced by men. Male early childhood education teachers should master four teacher competencies. If the male teachers do not have any teaching competence, it will lead to a less excellent outcome for their learners. It is possible because early childhood children prefer social, personal, and teacher professional competencies (Kurniawati, Pranoto, Setiawan & Ahmadi, 2020). Those difficulties of being an early childhood education teacher make male teachers could not stay longer to work in an early childhood education program. Being a male early childhood education teacher may be a part-time or an escape from the difficulties to get a job. Thus, one day, they will resign their jobs when they obtain preferred jobs for them (Fu, 2012).

The wellbeing of a male early childhood education teacher should be fought for. A male early childhood education teacher should fulfill his necessity and his family's necessity to stay survive. Having a profession as a male early

childhood education requires sincerity and heartiness. A profession is closely related to wellbeing because having an expected profession will lead to better income. Having such a profession as an early childhood education teacher is different from other professions, in terms of wellbeing. Psychological wellbeing is strongly influenced by an individual's subjective feeling that comes from life experience evaluation. This feeling is such as the happiness of the individual. Everyone has different perspectives toward the experiences in their lives. Therefore, psychological wellbeing is a subjective matter. The subjective experience of a male early childhood education teacher triggers an interpretation of his life wellbeing.

The influential factors of an individual's life meaning are internal and external factors. The internal factors are such as mindset, personal concept, appreciation pattern, worship, and personality. The external factors are such as job, experience, family relationship, culture, and social environment. A study conducted by (Shaikh & Ghosh, 2010) showed that life worthiness is strongly correlated to social supports found in Hungarian people. The roles of family, friends, and government are important for male early childhood education teachers to define wellbeing.

The wellbeing of formal early childhood education teachers in Indonesia has been improving since the government issued a teacher certification program. The qualified teachers with an undergraduate degree of education could join the certification program for teachers. However, such a matter does not apply to non-formal ECE teachers. Non-formal ECE teachers (playgroup, daycare service, and typical ECE unit) cannot join the certification program because they are not included in the teacher and lecturer regulation. They must struggle to support their life. Many male early childhood education teachers in Indonesia are not certified yet. However, they keep struggling as early childhood education teachers although the earnings are very low.

Based on these phenomena, the researchers were interested to investigate how

those male ECE teachers defined their life wellbeing with the low wage they got. Every person perceives it differently.

### **Psychological wellbeing**

Every early childhood education teacher has a different experience specially to decide to take the path as the teacher. Their decision to be a male ECE teacher is an event and condition that has been experienced by an individual to row his professional career life in a school institution. In revealing the well-being meaning of a male ECE teacher, each of the research respondent's working experience and psychological wellbeing is revealed.

#### a. The definition Psychological Wellbeing

Well-being is an undefined feeling. It is a joyful or happy feeling. Shah and Marks (Dodge, 2012) stated that wellbeing is more than a happy feeling. Well-being is better developed by an individual. This individual will feel satisfied and could contribute to his society (Bartram, D., Boniwell, 2007) argue that wellbeing is a positive mental condition that could determine an individual's life quality. Well-being involves awareness of the strength and development of personality. It is based on an individual's interest until this individual feels involved in every activity he promotes.

Every individual has different perspectives toward the experiences in their lives. Therefore, psychological wellbeing is a subjective matter. An individual who sees a life positively will be always happy inside of himself.

#### b. The dimension of psychological wellbeing

Psychological wellbeing levels of individuals are determined by several aspects of wellbeing and Ryff (1989) states those six aspects and the definitions are as follows.

##### 1) Self-acceptance

This dimension deals with the main characteristics of positive psychology. This dimension measures the understanding level and an individual's acceptance toward himself (Ryff, 2014).

##### 2) Positive relations with others

The intimacy built by an individual with other people is the main meaning of this

dimension. An individual who could actualize himself is described as an individual with affection and strong empathy. However, this individual also has strong compassion, intimate friendship, and other features concerning fellow man.

### 3) Autonomy

An individual who could actualize himself is described as an independent individual. This individual is also not easily influenced by surrounding changes. Autonomy is an individual's belief that his thought and action are from himself. They are not determined by the other party outside of himself (Christopher, 1999).

### 4) Environmental mastery

An individual who could choose or change the surrounding environment based on his necessity has a healthy mental component. An individual's skills to regulate his life condition is the core of this dimension (Ryff, 2014).

### 5) Purpose of life

Mental health leads to the belief of an individual that this individual has meaning and certain objectives in his life. An individual could feel that his life has meanings, objectives, and goals (Ryff, 2014).

### 6) Personal growth

The optimum psychological function requires certain characteristics. It also requires self-potential development continuously. This personal development is shown with an individual's skills to use his potency (Ryff, 2014).

## The Psychological Wellbeing Factors

Many factors influence psychological well-being levels. They are:

#### a) Age

A study conducted by Ryff & Keyes (1995) found that age influenced psychological wellbeing.

#### b) Gender

Ryff found that pregnant women had higher scores than males in some psychological wellbeing dimensions (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

#### c) Personality

Many longitudinal studies and cross-sectional studies showed the contribution of personality factors toward psychological wellbeing.

#### d) Culture

The cultural factor could influence psychological wellbeing. A study by Ryff & Keyes (1995) found some differences in some dimensions. The western cultured people obtained higher scores in several personal-oriented dimensions such as self-acceptance and autonomy.

#### e) Education

The educational level could influence the psychological wellbeing levels of individuals especially in their late adulthood (Ryff, 2014).

#### f) Social status

A study conducted by Ryff (1996) found that low-status individuals had poor health qualities and also psychological wellbeing.

#### g) Jobs

A working experience became a strong predictor to determine the psychological wellbeing quality, especially for individuals in their late adulthood (Ryff, 2014).

#### h) Physiological Condition

Physiological condition is an influential factor of psychological wellbeing.

#### f) Family Life

This factor consists of marital status, parents' roles, and past experiences of the family.

## METHOD

This research used survey and interview methods. Survey research used due to its benefit that it could be done for a large or small population. The data were taken with a questionnaire as the research instrument. The data represented the sample from the population so researchers could find the relative, distributive, and correlative events between sociological and psychological variables (Rusmadi, 2019). In addition to the applied survey method, this research is strengthened by a phenomenological approach.

A phenomenological approach was applied to reveal the meaning of male Early

Childhood Education. By implementing this approach, it would be able to elaborate the descriptions of the conscious experiences of an individual upon a certain phenomenon (Hasbiansyah, 2008). The applied analysis was Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). This analysis was very appropriate with the research objectives (Ananda, Kahija & Yohanis, 2018). The researchers considered the life experienced by the subjects were complex and unique. Thus, those made the researchers interested in both methods. This research aims to find out the phenomena beyond the decision-making of male early childhood education teachers. They should have been able to choose typical jobs taken by a male. However, the reality shows they choose a job as early childhood education teachers which is identical to female jobs.

The subjects were the male early childhood education program teachers in Boyolali, Central Java province. They had statuses as senior and junior educators coming either from civil servants or private educators. The researchers attempted to reveal 16-male ECE teachers' teaching experiences comprehensively in developing a meaningful relationship. This is phenomenological research to explore the teachers' experiences who had devoted their lives to teach.

The data collection techniques were survey and interview methods. The survey was used to obtain the answers to the prepared questions via Google Form. The form was prepared first so it could facilitate and accelerate the information access needed by the researchers from the respondents (Wulandari, Maswani & Husnul Khotimah, 2019). It was started by creating the proposed questions for the informants of the interview. The researchers used a semi-structured interview with open questions. The objective of this semi-structured interview is to find out the more open problems. The interviewees were asked to share their arguments and ideas. The researchers were also required to carefully listen to them and to note the given information from the information givers (Naziha, Maula & Sutisnawati, 2020).

This research used the frequency distribution analysis method. The researchers interpreted personally by having reference to the reality that they brought personal cultures, histories, and personal experiences in this research. The interpretation could be meaning from a comparison between the research results and information from the kinds of literature or theories.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The meanings of wellbeing for male early childhood education are varied. The meaning of wellbeing was influenced by the religiosity of every subject. The primary motivation of most subjects was the heart call to contribute to creating a brilliant generation. The concept of being an early childhood education teacher deals with comprehensive skill and competence in understanding the world by applying the adaptation, coordination, and curriculum and religiosity orientations. The finding was in line with Crisp & King (2017). They found that the teaching concept was part of life objectives.

Well-being is defined by the subjects as mental feeling and usefulness for the surrounding environment. The well-being of a teacher is not measured from the income aspect but also the mental tranquility, blessing, gift, ensured in terms of daily life needs, harmony, and health. An individual with proper wellbeing is happy although other individuals may perceive it differently. For example, an individual lives simply. The well-being experience in this research is defined as the subjects' successes to maintain their ideal ideology, value, and life objective.

The investigated wellbeing in this research was in line with Maulina (2019). Maulina (2019) found that wellbeing for early childhood education teachers referred to the feeling of better accomplishment of happiness and sufficiency to carry out their jobs. An early education childhood teacher with well-being could appear from compassion, acknowledgment, and support from the learners, teacher peers, and parents. The feeling of well-

being for those teachers would be stronger when they were feeling grateful once they reached their objectives and had a positive influence on the surroundings. The applied triangulation in this research was peer-research discussion. The condition to do this triangulation was - the peer researchers had to have the same topic as the current research. Besides that, the researchers also interviewed the wives of the teachers as the triangulation procedure. Triangulation could provide additional information about the teachers' wellbeing from different perspectives.

The indicators of wellbeing are not limited to rewards and incentives as shown by Massalim (2019). The research found that the rewards for early childhood education teachers were such as certification. The research claimed that it was the influential indicator of the teachers' performance. However, it referred to the feeling of gratitude and joy of becoming a teacher.

The efforts done by the teachers to fulfill their well-being were by loving and educating the learners. These feelings were the realization of wellbeing fulfillment for the teachers. The other efforts to support the family's wellbeing were by giving attention, managing the time, and supporting the family-life needs.

Competence and skills were important to be fulfilled so they could reach the learning

goals. An individual's motivation to select a certain role in his environment is based on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The intrinsic factors are such as passion, ideal, and faithful value. Meanwhile, the extrinsic factors are such as salary, career opportunity, distance, and time allotment. Being a teacher, as a profession, greatly contributes to education quality. Therefore, every teacher, included the ECE teachers, should meet the core competencies and other supportive skills. A dedicated teacher is a teacher who always devotes his life for the sake of educational interest and to make learning activities running successfully. A successful teacher is a successful teacher in teaching and learning.

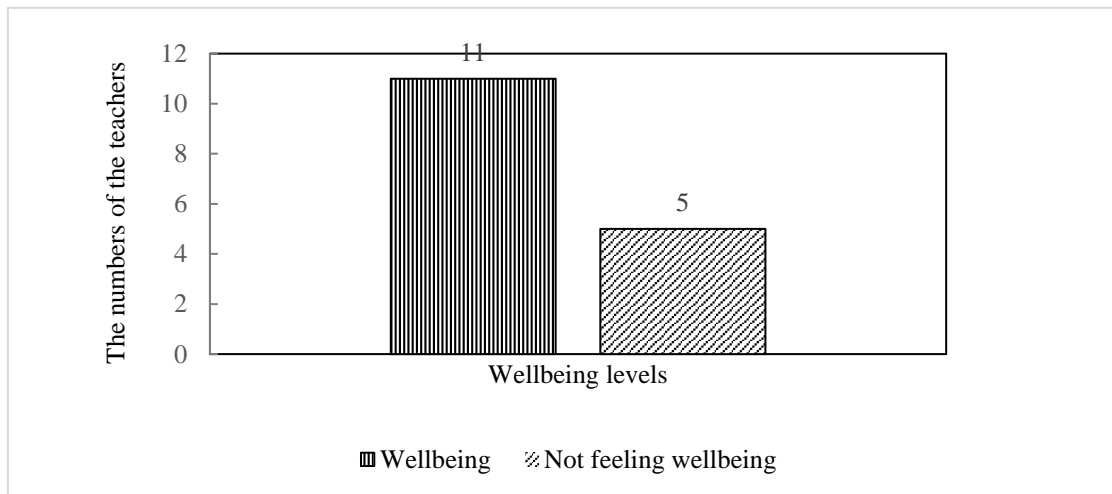
There were 16 respondents consisting of male ECE teachers in Boyolali, Central Java participated in this research. The ages of the teachers were between 27 - 60 years old. Their average work of service was varied from 1 year until 38 years. 15 teachers are moslem, and 1 teacher is a Protestant Christian. 2 teachers were civil servants, and the others were private teachers. There were 12 people answered that becoming ECE teachers were their main profession and four people did not answer. Table 1 shows subject qualification.

**Table 1.** The Research Subject Qualification

Subjects	Years of Service	Statuses	Education	Age	Religion
1	5	Private	Bachelor of Early Childhood Education	40	Moslem
2	4	Private	Senior High School	48	Moslem
3	7	Private	S1	30	Moslem
4	17	Private	S1	38	Moslem
5	19	Private	Bachelor of Early Childhood Education	38	Moslem
6	13	Private	S1	40	Moslem
7	12	Private	Bachelor of Early Childhood Education	34	Moslem
8	5	Private	S1	32	Moslem
9	38	Civil Servant	S1	60	Moslem
10	21	Civil Servant	S1	51	Moslem
11	2	Private	S1	34	Moslem
12	11	Private	S1	28	Moslem
13	1	Private	S1	27	Christian
14	16	Private	Bachelor	47	Moslem
15	25	Civil Servant	Bachelor	52	Moslem
16	3	Private	Bachelor	37	Christian

From 16 respondents, the survey showed that the meaning of wellbeing for the teachers obtained a percentage of 68.8% that the respondents stated they were wellbeing. On the

other hand, a percentage of 31.3% of respondents did not mention. Figure 1 shows the well-being levels of the teachers



**Figure 1.** The wellbeing graphic of the male teachers

The graphic shows 11 respondents from 16 respondents admitted they felt well-being as the early childhood education teachers.

The meanings of wellbeing for all respondents were varied, such as the balance between job and reward, sufficiency of inner and outer aspects, mental and physical tranquility, family-life sufficiency, prospered and peaceful

conditions of human life, an appropriate and better status between based on the promoted job, the minimum regional salary, measurement of feeling grateful for every human and the ways of every human to use the earning, a grateful feeling of them prospered, healthy, and comfortable individuals. This profession provides a great contribution toward education

quality. Therefore, every teacher, included the ECE teachers, should meet the core competencies and other supportive skills. An excellent teacher is a successful teacher in teaching and learning. A successful teacher is a teacher who could prepare his learners to reach the objectives based on the curriculum. To bring the learners to reach the objectives, the teachers should have various skills or professional clarification. By having those skills, the teachers could promote their roles. Those are based on the analyzed wellbeing dimensions.

### **Self-acceptance**

It was found that most of the respondents answered that their jobs were noble and valuable jobs. They promoted by believing it as worship and social care to educate the next generation of the nation. 2 respondents answered that they took the job because they had been instructed by the superordinate. One of the respondents argued that the surrounding environment was comfortable. Teaching at Early Childhood Education program should be based on sincerity to worship and to educate the next generation.

The obtained experiences to be a teacher were varied. A similar thing could be seen in the research results. From 16 respondents, they showed different experiences. The emerging experiences were such as a learning medium, a person to provide convenience and happiness, a happy feeling while seeing the learners smiling, a medium to socialize with various people, an opportunity to understand the children's characteristics, an opportunity to enrich the learners' knowledge, and an opportunity to be patient and control their emotions.

Every teacher was motivated beyond his reason to be a teacher. There were several reasons that made the respondents keeping survive to be a teacher. They were such as giving understanding about the importance of early childhood education, a dreamed ideal, a social care realization toward the education world development especially religion and character, a chance to learn sincerely and patiently, a passion, a noble and valuable job, a responsibility realization to educate early

children happily without being forced, and pride to be able to educate, an interest for the world of children, and a worship realization to Allah the Almighty. Every person has his motivation in choosing and taking a certain profession. Intrinsic motivation and the contribution to other individuals' lives are the main factors to be a teacher (Saban, 2003). Besides that, the reason an individual chose and kept to be a teacher was that he had a teacher role model (Aksu, Demir, Dologlu, & Yildirim, 2010).

### **The positive correlation with other people**

In creating a positive relationship with other people, 16 respondents answered that they could manage their time well and proportionally for the sake of their careers and families. Such communication should be always connected so all parties could accept and understand the current condition of the male ECE teachers.

Their business as teachers sometimes required them to manage their time between their careers and families. Here are the research results of how an individual managed his time for his family and career. It was done by creating a schedule so that his family schedule and his job schedule did not overlap each other. Proper communication with family was also built so when there was a time-consuming job would not cause any interruption. Another way was to settle the job immediately. To be able to manage the times properly between their jobs and families, the key was to be disciplined. Discipline is useful to educate employees to obey and adhere to the regulation, procedures, and policies. Thus, the performance will be better.

### **Autonomy**

Every person has different potency in developing his profession. The results showed 16 respondents attempted to develop learning models, had responsibility for their main jobs, developed themselves, and joined the training. Many things could be done to develop the opportunity for the sake of the teachers' careers. It was such as joining certain training to get a competence certificate.



### **Environmental mastery**

The relationship among the teachers at schools should be kept. A conducive environment could support a conducive learning process. A working environment is a working process in which an interaction occurs with a certain pattern. Inside of the interaction, every individual has his own characteristics or specific values about the organization. This organization is strongly bound with the surrounding environment where the humans are its central. The results from 16 respondents about how to keep the peer relationship were such as done by having coordination with the stakeholders, to keep proper communication with the stakeholders, to cooperate, promoting a briefing, a family gathering program, and a recitation, to create a joyful learning environment, to promote interaction among educators, to behave kindly and politely, and to promote parenting activity to keep proper communication with the parents.

### **The objectives of life**

For 16 respondents had various meanings about teaching. A respondent stated that teaching was an internalizing process for the learners. 7 respondents stated that teaching was a science transfer process that should be adjusted with the curriculum. A respondent stated that teaching was a potential development for learners. 2 respondents stated that teaching was about devotion for the future. 3 respondents stated that working as worship. 2 respondents stated that teaching was being an educator to share knowledge. For active learning, science is a personal experience that is organized and fostered through the learning process instead of a teacher. A teaching process is an effort to create an environment so that learners could obtain more knowledge by actively involved in the learning (Wibowo, 2016).

### **Personal growth**

As an ECE teacher, skills to analyze a problem are required when the teacher decides whether the learning program is in line or not. Here are the results of 16 respondents about an individual's consideration in making decisions.

They are objectivity, consideration, a suggestion from the parents and seniors, problem identification, information collection, possible prediction, decision making and evaluation, discussion to decide something, and calculation of various risk possibilities. An individual's skills to decide something would develop as the matureness and experience of an individual grow.

An individual's motivation to choose any job such as a doctor, a teacher, or other job is based on intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The intrinsic factors are such as passion, ideal, and faithful value. Meanwhile, the extrinsic factors are such as salary, career opportunity, distance, and time allotment. The motivation to work is a motor for an individual's eagerness to work and to cooperate, to effectively work, and to be integrated with any power and effort to reach satisfaction.

The art to be an ECE teacher should always grow. An individual should be able to face various problems whether they are beneficial or less beneficial. For example, when there is an absent student, a teacher should ensure the student's condition by contacting his parents, promote home visits, and coordinate with other teachers to share the task and to communicate with the students' parents.

The processes of the subjects were different. Most subjects needed time and family supports. The concept of being an early childhood education teacher deals with comprehensive skill and competence in understanding the world by applying the adaptation, coordination, and curriculum and religiosity orientations. Every teacher has a different understanding to define his profession. Many respondents perceived the experience positively and negatively. The positively perceived experience was such as self-actualization, being a life teacher, having everlasting charity, and commitment. The negatively perceived experience was such as conflicts due to lack of trust or external conflicts.

The decision-making to be an early childhood education teacher was influenced by two factors: internal and external factors. The

internal factor consisted of heart-call, the dreamed ideals, and the everlasting charity of the afterlife. The external factor consisted of the plan to be a civil servant, career opportunity for personal development, and network expansion. The decision-making to be the male early childhood education teachers was rarely found in many regencies in Indonesia. It was influenced by many factors. The subjects' motivations were such as to create a brilliant generation, excellent role models, feeling in love with early childhood education, and obtain opportunities for having everlasting charity. These were the reasons why they remained to be the teachers. It was supported by (Zhang & Wang, 2018).

They found that the ideals had important roles to maintain the five motivations of male early childhood education teachers and to remain to be the teachers professionally. They also found how the teachers kept their teaching motivation when there were differences between what they had expected and what they wanted to be, and what roles they took as the kindergarten teachers. In this research, the subjects showed that they decided on their job after considering and observing carefully.

The other factors were family supports. Their family argued that this job was a noble job. The family understood that being the early childhood education teachers had to have patience. The family also realized that it was important to have side jobs to support the family's financial state. The families of the subjects were aware that wellbeing could not be only obtained from a great amount of income but also tranquility, harmony, and mental and physical health.

Being an ECE teacher or having other professions should be totally actualized. Something promoted totally would have a better influence on both the individual, other people, and the environment. The meanings of wellbeing for the male teachers were also varied. However, every subject had similarities. They perceived well-being was not only the great amount of salary. Well-being is also referred to

as a self-acceptance feeling while receiving the salary.

The new novelty of this research was the well-being of the male teachers was influenced by the religiosity values. Well-being is seen from how the subjects are grateful for what God gives to them.

## CONCLUSION

The well-being of male ECE teachers was relative. Every individual has a different interpretation of wellbeing. Well-being is not always measured by income they get. Having the opportunity to worship, share times with the family, develop, interact with the environment, be useful for other people, and be able to solve problems was the realization of valuable wellbeing. All professions require skills and competencies. According to respondents' opinion, a successful teacher is a teacher who could prepare their learners to reach the learning objectives based on the curriculum

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