Teacher Perceptions of Gender Stereotyping and how they Influence their Interactions with Boys and Girls in Early Childhood Education

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ABSTRACT

This study considers the ways in which early childhood teachers relate with boys and girls on the basis of gender stereotypes as a result of the existence of the scarcity of awareness about perceptions of gender stereotyping in preschools. A case study research design was adopted where data were collected using semi-structured interviews from a sample size consisting of 8 preschool teachers, drawn from both public and private schools within the Ayawaso West municipality in Accra, Ghana. The findings reveal that the preschool teachers engage in practices that promote gender equality in their classrooms but unconsciously perpetuate gender stereotyping due to some practices underpinned by gender stereotypes.

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Introduction

Like a family heirloom, gender stereotyping is passed on from one generation to the other through the agency known as socialization. Gender socialization is a complex process through which individuals learn and adopt gender-specific attitudes, roles, and identities within a particular societal context (Bettis & Ferry, 2016; Bettis et al., 2020). This process is ingrained in key social institutions such as the school system and the home, through which the mindsets and perceptions of young children are shaped with respect to masculine and feminine norms (Bettis & Ferry, 2016). The understanding or awareness of what it means to be male or female, gives birth to cognizance about gender roles and stereotypes and this is invariably dependent on the home as well as the ideas and ideals an individual acquires from school.

Many societies value educational institutions, yet schools have become hubs for repeatedly creating and perpetuating gender inequalities (Boateng, 2017; Boateng, & Gaulee, 2019), and gender stereotyping as one of the channels used for advancing these inequalities. Studies have indicated that children become aware of gender categorization and stereotypes from an early age of about three to six years, when they exhibit some gender stereotypes and biases, that become more entrenched as they get older (Canales et al., 2020; King et al., 2021). Many children who fall within these ages attend early childhood centers, which is a site where the children learn many concepts for the first time. It is therefore important to place much focus on preschool settings as they present various opportunities to teach children about gender awareness, equality and ways in which gender stereotyping can be addressed right from the formative years of schooling. It has also been proven that children who received center-based care at ages two to three manifest more gender-typing behavioral patterns (Bennet et al., 2020). Observational studies in Australia reveal that gender stereotypes are reinforced through certain practices, including the use of gendered language during activities such as play (Callahan & Nicholas, 2018). Similarly, children exhibit gendered preferences in activities and in the selection of toys (Ramdaeni et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2023). Collectively, these studies send a strong signal that early childhood centers hold the capacity to serve as production, reproduction, or regulation sites for gender stereotyping and this highlights the need for more interventions to promote gender equality, awareness, and inclusive practices from the earliest stages of education.

Preschoolers have the ability to perceive gender relations during interactions with their teachers and peers, indicating that it is important to address gender issues at the preschool level of education (Santos et al., 2020). Also, young children view the world through the lens of what they observe and learn at early childhood centers. The knowledge they acquire from their early years becomes a

guide that informs their decisions and dictates the expectations they have of themselves and others. In addition, the teachers also have gender-specific expectations and stereotypical views which influences their interactions with students (Malisz, 2021). This is capable of impacting the teaching practices of the teachers and future career choices or interests of their pupils (Hamel, 2021). The gender-stereotypical behaviors that teachers exhibit in their classrooms often lead to the reinforcement of traditional gender roles and norms (Silman et al., 2019). Gender stereotyping by teachers can adversely affect a child's well-being (Tang & Xu, 2022) and escalate the prevalence of existing inequalities and discrimination in educational institutions. Conversely, early childhood teachers can position themselves as game changers who create gender awareness, promote gender sensitivity, and encourage their pupils to deviate from traditional perceptions of gender stereotyping. Also, policies and programs can be implemented to ensure that gender biases, discrimination and stereotyping are addressed through teacher education, the use of gender-flexible pedagogy and the creation gender neutral spaces.

Teachers often do not perceive gender equity as particularly relevant to their personal or professional lives, despite acknowledging the presence of gender influences in the classroom (Monaghan, 2014). This disconnect between gender awareness and its perceived relevance highlights a significant gap in addressing gender stereotypes in early childhood education. Further studies need to be conducted in this area because addressing gender stereotypes in early childhood education can yield numerous long-term benefits for individuals, the educational system and society (King et al., 2021). This study was guided by the questions; *"How do early childhood teachers understand the term 'gender stereotype'?" and "how do early childhood teachers relate with boys and girls on the basis of gender stereotypes?"*.

Conceptual Framework
Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)
The aim of this research is to explore early childhood teachers' understanding of the term 'gender stereotype' and how their gendered perceptions influence their interactions with boys and girls within their settings. The conceptual framework that was utilized was grounded in Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), which provided a comprehensive lens for examining the research questions. The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) was developed by Albert Bandura. It posits that individuals learn both through their personal experiences and by observing the actions of others and the outcomes produced by those actions (Bandura, 1986). The theory emphasizes that the three key components in behavior development are observational learning, reciprocal determinism and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986). In early childhood

education, SCT can be beneficial when studying how gender stereotypes are formed and reproduced. Observational Learning takes place when children observe their surroundings and often model the behaviors and attitudes that they have observed in significant adults such as their teachers, parents and those who are media figures. Patterns of gender stereotypes, be it norms or behaviors exhibited by any of these adults is then internalized and accepted by the children as the acceptable standard. Reciprocal Determinism transpires when the continuous interaction between the actions or practices of the teacher and the beliefs and attitudes of the child begins to shape and reinforce the child's internalized gender stereotypes. Self-Efficacy occurs when children form beliefs about their personal abilities and capabilities as a result of repeated stereotypical feedback received from their teachers. A child's belief about his or her self-efficacy has the potential to limit or expand his or her engagement and achievement in a particular area.

Gender Stereotype

Gender stereotypes are socially constructed perceptions about the attributes and behaviors associated with males and females (Jones, 2019). These gender stereotypes can affect various aspects of the society, including the establishment of gender roles as well as the proliferation of discrimination, and victimization (Jones, 2019; Peter & Pathak, 2023). Gender stereotypes are pervasive in different spheres of society and influence perceptions of masculinity, femininity, social roles, and professional opportunities (Koknova & Ovcharova, 2019). Depending on the context, gender stereotypes can serve diverse purposes such as being used as a means for the stratification of social classes, communicating cultural norms, and regulating behavior in societies (Koknova & Ovcharova, 2019). Various factors such as adult language, behavior and the type of teaching and learning resources available in a setting can influence gender stereotypes in early childhood education (Shi, 2023). These factors facilitate the application of gender stereotypes and biases by preschoolers in their daily lives. (King et al., 2021). The social and cultural environment also plays a significant role in shaping how children comprehend gender classifications. (King et al., 2021). It is primarily through environmental cues and social interactions with teachers, parents, and the media that preschool-aged children learn about and adopt concepts such as gender stereotyping and gender identity (Muasya & Muasya, 2020; Li, 2022). Gender stereotyping can have adverse effects on a child's sense of belonging, self-perception, ability beliefs and academic motivation (Master, 2021) which in turn can significantly impact the development and future opportunities of the individual.

Gender Stereotyping in Education

Gender bias in education is widespread, affecting various levels, from early

childhood to tertiary institutions (Su et al., 2021). Teachers often unconsciously but consistently uphold traditional gender stereotypes, resulting in different treatment of girls and boys despite the challenges these norms present (Swan, 2017; Meland & Kaltvedt, 2019). The gender stereotypes that teachers hold about students, can impact their academic outcomes and self-perceptions. For instance, teachers tend to have the notion that girls are more interested and have better learning outcomes in reading and language learning as compared to boys (Li et al., 2020). These stereotypes can negatively affect the self-concept of boys (Retelsdorf et al., 2015) and reiterating such stereotypes favoring girls in reading can widen the gender gap, resulting in the underachievement of boys in this area (Huang et al., 2023). In addition, most teachers believe that boys have a natural inclination towards STEM subjects, while girls have a preference for the humanities (Kletsina & Davidova, 2020), possibly because boys spend more time in the science areas of the classroom (Kumar et al., 2024). Such stereotypes influence the career advice teachers offer to their students. They encourage boys to venture into technical fields and urge girls to pursue service-oriented careers (Kletsina & Davidova, 2020). These scenarios highlight the need to address gender stereotyping in all levels of education in order to promote equal opportunities for all students.

This study sought to explore the influencing perceptions of early childhood teachers on gender stereotyping and how they affect their interactions with their male and female pupils.

Methodology

Case study research design was adopted for the study and the research settings as well as the participants were selected using purposive sampling. A sample size of eight (8) preschool who teach children between the ages of two and six years participated in this study. Semi-structured interviews were utilized for data collection and a semi-structured interview protocol was used as a guide to ensure that the interview process was focused on gathering data relevant to the research questions. To ensure the triangulation of interview data, all the authors of this paper undertook the interviews, in essence, investigator triangulation. The structure of the interviews was such that there were probes in between the main questions. The important details given by participants during the interview were noted down in addition to audiotaping, as a means of recording, tracking, and storing the data.

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. It was considered appropriate for this study because it enabled the researcher to capture meanings of aspects of the data (Saldana, 2014) in order to answer the research questions of the study. Data analysis commenced with the transcription of individual interviews.

The researcher then read through the transcripts several times in order to become familiar with and reflect on the information gathered. This was followed by the assignment of codes (descriptions) to portions of the data. The language used in labelling at this stage was based on the initial words used by the participants during the interview (Cresswell, 2012). Similar codes were then grouped together to form sub-themes and the sub-themes were further categorized into themes which were relevant to the research question.

Trustworthiness of this research was ensured by using the four (4) main criteria suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), namely: credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability. Credibility ensures that, the findings of the research mirror the original information and perspectives given by the participants as well as the accurate meaning of the views expressed by participants (Anney, 2014). Member checking was used to ascertain the level of accuracy of the qualitative findings and varying opinions as well as its related evidence have been included in the report of findings so as to enhance the credibility of the study. Dependability is the means by which the researcher ensures that the findings of the research could be replicated using the same procedure of data collection among a similar sample, within a similar context (Anney, 2014). Dependability in this research was achieved by strict adherence to the interview guide during data collection. As well as the use of an audit trail which aid other researchers and external reviewers to determine the level of dependability of this study. Confirmability determines the extent to which the findings of the research reflect the views of the participants and not the opinions of the researcher. Confirmability of this research was attained by using probes to seek clarification of the information provided by participants. Participants were also granted the opportunity ascertain whether the transcribed data represented their views and experiences. In addition, reflexivity was employed by the researcher in considering and bracketing any preconceptions so as to ensure that the perspectives of participants was not altered in any way.

Transferability refers to the extent to which the outcome or research findings fit into a similar setting or context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability in this study was ensured by the provision of a comprehensive description of all the processes and methods utilized in conducting the research. The demographic information of participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Information of Participants

Pseudonym	Teacher's Sex	Teacher's Nationality	Teacher's Class(es) at the time of	Teaching Experience	Setting / Pseudonym of setting

			the study and ages of pupils they teach		
P 1	Male	Ghanaian	Pre-K3, Pre-K4, K (3-6 years)	5 years	Site A
P 2	Female	American	Pre-K3, Pre-K4, K (3-6 years)	8 years	Site A
P 3	Female	Ghanaian	Pre-K4 (4-5 years)	18 years	Site A
P 4	Female	Ghanaian	K (5- 6 years)	8 years	Site A
P 5	Female	Ghanaian	KG 1 (4-6 years)	22 years	Site B
P 6	Female	Ghanaian	KG 2 (5-7 years)	10 years	Site B
P 7	Female	Ghanaian	KG 1 (4-5 years)	12 years	Site B
P 8	Female	Ghanaian	KG 2 (5-6) years	15 years	Site B

The data analysis involved reading the field notes and transcribing the audio recordings of the interviews verbatim. This was followed by organizing the data in a systematic manner through coding of the data. The codes generated from the data were reviewed severally, and the codes with some significant similarities were categorized to form sub-themes. The sub-themes were further reviewed such that interrelated sub-themes were grouped together to form broader themes which were relevant to the research questions of the study. The themes identified are as follows:

1. Teachers' understanding of the term 'gender stereotyping.'
2. Teachers relating with boys and girls on the basis of gender stereotypes.

Findings and Discussion

Teachers' understanding of the term 'gender stereotyping'

The theme teachers' understanding of the term 'gender stereotyping' describes the

meanings teachers attached to their comprehension of the term 'gender stereotyping.' The subthemes that emerged from the data are understanding of gender roles and behavior and perception of discrimination and restrictions.

Understanding of Gender Roles and Behavior

Understanding of gender roles and behavior describes how the teachers related their understanding of the term 'gender stereotype' to gender roles and stereotypical patterns of behavior associated with boys and girls. One participant shared that:

> *"It is about the attributes and characteristics of the children. For instance, when they are given   roles, how they behave to accomplish the roles."* [**P1**]

Another participant defined the term 'gender stereotype' in terms of the patterns of behavior assigned to specific genders and ages:

> *"I will say it is the way that children of a particular age and gender behave."* [**P8**]

The views of the participants suggest that characteristics and attributes form an intrinsic aspect of gender roles and stereotypes. It is also evident that gendered expectations determine the gender roles associated with children of a particular gender. Courting gendered expectations of children can have several implications for classroom practice and lead teachers to unconsciously perpetuate gender stereotypes in their settings. These findings align with studies positing that the biased perceptions of teachers have the potential of influencing teacher-student interactions. A typical example was observed in the grading practices of teachers where math teachers awarded higher scores to boys and language teachers favored the girls more (Martinez, 2022), due to the gender stereotype associated with high achievement level of boys in math and heightened performance of girls in language activities. Such stereotypical assessments can have long-term consequences, including the determination of high school graduation rates, college enrollment, subject selection, and future career prospects (Martinez, 2022) of students. Similarly, teachers who uphold these traditional gender roles negatively impact the reading motivation and skills of boys (Wolter et al., 2015). Hence, boys exposed to teachers with strong gendered perceptions about reading develop lower self-efficacy for reading while girls remain unaffected (Retelsdorf et al., 2015). To address such issues, teachers ought to practice mindfulness and engage in continuous self-reflection in order to identify and address their own gendered biases so as to employ gender neutrality in their practice. Also, professional development and teacher education should include training teachers to utilize gender-neutral language, resources and practices to promote gender equality

Perception of Discrimination and Restrictions:

Perception of Discrimination and Restrictions encompasses the opinions of the teachers about gender stereotypes leading to discrimination and restrictions in accessing opportunities. In relation to this, a teacher from the private school mentioned that:

> *"I think it is discrimination between boys and girls. Saying that one group can do some things that the other cannot do."* [**P4**].

This particular participant from the public school was of the view that discrimination against women and girls is a by-product of gender stereotyping:

> *"Whenever I hear this term, I think about discrimination, especially against women or girls."* [**P5**]

The findings revealed that participants believe that gender stereotyping leads to the imposition of gender-ased restrictions and gender discrimination. Studies have shown that gender-based restrictions and discrimination manifest in diverse forms in schools, including gender-typed practices such as gendered rules, dress codes, and seating arrangements (Thasniya, 2022). Furthermore, girls suffer from discrimination in the classroom as most teacher-student interactions favor male students, with females receiving less attention and opportunities to participate (Benattabou et al., 2021). This kind of discrimination constitutes a 'hidden curriculum,' that serves to reinforce gender roles and negatively impact academic performance. It is therefore crucial to create more awareness among both teaching and non-teaching staff about gender discrimination to enable educational staff to employ gender sensitivity in their practices. The implementation of policies and practices that promote the creation of a more equitable learning environment for all students can also be adopted to counteract gender discrimination arising from gender stereotyping.

Teachers relating with boys and girls on the basis of gender stereotypes

Teachers relating with boys and girls on the basis of gender stereotypes is a theme that refers to the extent to which gender stereotypes influences teacher-pupil interactions as well as the practices of the teachers within the early childhood settings. The sub-themes that emerged from the data are practices promoting equality and practices underpinned by gender stereotypes.

Practices Promoting Equality

Practices promoting equality represents actions that exemplify the teacher's awareness of gender stereotyping as well as the practices adopted by the teachers with the aim of promoting gender equality among the boys and girls they teach. All the participants in both the public and private schools objected to relating with the preschoolers on the basis of gender stereotypes and gave examples of how the boys and girls are treated equally within their settings:

> *"The children are given equal opportunities. For instance, the children rotate for who becomes the weekly class leader, prayer person and lead student for some activities. They rotate for all these things so there's no particular selection between girls and boys".* **[P1]**

Likewise, another participant suggested:

> *"In our seating arrangement, we ensure that on every table, there is a balance between the boys and the girls in terms of numbers if possible. I try to make sure there is equal representation on each table."* **[P5]**

Similarly, a different participant made the assertion that:

> *"We let them do things together. We don't separate boys from girls so that, in their minds they know that whatever boys can do girls can also do same."* **[P6]**

The findings emphasized the gender awareness of the teachers and their attempts to incorporate practices that foster equality between girls and boys in their daily routines in the classroom. The practices geared at advancing gender equality included the provision of equal opportunities in the distribution of leadership positions and participation in classroom activities. In addition, the teachers utilized their gender awareness in developing seating plans in the classroom by ensuring equal representation of boys and girls on each table. The boys and girls were also encouraged to do things together. This was done to develop the self-efficacy of the children and engender within them the belief that both boys and girls have the same capabilities and can equally be high achievers in any chosen activity or field. These findings are in tandem with earlier research indicating that early childhood education centers act as a platform for challenging gender stereotypes (Xu et al., 2020). Hence, the development of educational content such as those contained in textbooks and activity books can be used to champion an agenda that promotes gender equality (Rakhmawati et al., 2022). Teachers must also be provided with the requisite training, resources, and support to create inclusive environments that teach and foster gender equality right from the formative years of children.

Practices Underpinned by Gender Stereotypes

Practices Underpinned by Gender Stereotypes describes the practices of teachers which are based on gender stereotypes. Some of the experiences shared by the participants highlighted gendered practices, even though all the participants from both the private and public schools professed relating with the boys and girls on equal terms, devoid of gender stereotyping. For instance, teachers showed gender biases by associating certain colours with boys and other colours with girls:

> *"one day, we were into the colour pink, the boys had to paint using pink*

but the other teachers didn't like it and wanted the boys to use blue. As a result, they wouldn't allow the boys to send their work home. I think they felt that the parents would be unhappy with the work because of the pink. Children hear and observe some of these things from their teachers and they don't really understand the reasons, but the boys as result began to believe that they can't paint using pink anymore because they are males. And this happened simply because the children trust what their teachers say." **[P2]**

The teachers in the aforementioned scenario, engendered the perception that pink is a colour suitable for girls while blue is for boys. Furthermore, the parents were not given a chance to see the artwork because of the biases held by the teachers. After observing and hearing their teachers, the boys internalized the stereotypical belief that pink is for girls and blue for boys. Therefore, illustrating that the traditional gender stereotype behaviour exhibited by preschool children is not natural but rather, children learn to conform to the gender expectations of their teachers in the preschool setting (Swan, 2017). These findings also mirror research that indicates that gender-color associations, particularly "pink for girls" and "blue for boys," persist in various societies (Jonauskaitė et al., 2018). In contrast, a cultural difference exists in Chinese societies, where pink is deemed a 'gendered' color, while blue is not (Li et al., 2021). Gender color associations in Early Childhood Education (ECE) can reinforce stereotypical notions and limit the creativity and self-expression of students. To address these stereotypes, teachers should ensure that the educational materials, resources and play items used in their settings are gender neutral and equally appealing to both boys and girls. Educators also ought to include a wide variety of colors in activities, learning areas and toys. This will expose the children to a diverse and inclusive learning environment in which they can freely explore their interests without the constraints of gendered color norms.

Teachers also uphold stereotypical beliefs concerning the capabilities and interests of their pupils as seen below:

"When it comes to artwork or colouring for instance, you see the girls doing fine, detailed work where they take their time to do a good job, whereas the boys just rush through. For them, the most important part is to be done. When this happens, I try to give the boys some incentives. I do tell them, if you are able to use bright colours and take your time to do your work very well, you will get a chance to play a computer game, which the boys really like." **[P3]**

The findings demonstrate that the teacher has a gendered perception that girls excel more than the boys in art activities. The teacher, therefore provided an incentive for the boys who put in a good effort and provided none for the girls.

Additionally, the teacher's reward of choice was something that was more appealing to the boys than the girls. It is also evident that the incentive was consciously selected based on the stereotype that boys find computer games more interesting than girls. These findings corroborate other studies suggesting that there exist gender differences in art-related activities among children, where girls generally outperform boys in fine motor control associated with art activities including drawing and handicrafts (Matarma et al., 2020). Other studies also show that boys are consistently more interested in and spend more time playing video games compared to girls (Tatlı, 2018; Leonhardt & Overå, 2021). This can be linked to the interest that males have in fields like computer science and other STEM programs. Such stereotypes can negatively impact the interest, sense of belonging and self-efficacy that boys and girls have in various subject areas. For instance, experimental evidence proves that stating gender stereotypes related to an activity can significantly reduce a girl's level of interest and participation in the activity (Master et al., 2021). Teachers must therefore avoid imposing their personal gendered beliefs on their students in order to foster an inclusive and equitable learning environment. This approach will ensure that both boys and girls will have the opportunity to explore and develop their interests and abilities free from the limitations posed by gender stereotypes, thereby enabling all children to reach their full potential. Another participant, utilized her knowledge of gender stereotypes in planning learning activities;

> *"At this very young age, the boys are more playful and the girls are serious. It's like the boys love it more when they are doing activity-based learning like jumping, running around and all that. It doesn't matter if it is indoors or outdoors, you see them getting more involved. The girls usually sit down and are more attentive. For instance, in a phonics lesson I can say that give me a word that starts with 'a' immediately, the girls will give me an answer but if I say that move around the classroom and touch something with the sound 'a' it's more likely that the boys will be more interested in such an activity than the first one."* **[P4]**

The teacher's comments illustrate gender biases about the performance of girls and boys at the preschool level. This gendered perception can lead to having higher expectations of the girls than the boys. The findings correlate with studies that imply that girls generally outperform boys in different developmental areas during the preschool years such as demonstrating superior fine motor skills at ages two to three and five to six (Peyre et al., 2019). Analogously, girls also develop early literacy skills, school readiness, and exhibit fewer behavior problems (Brandlistuen et al., 2020). Nevertheless, it is imperative for early childhood teachers to focus on

the individual strengths and capabilities of their pupils so as to foster nurturing and supportive learning spaces that allows each child to thrive. The teacher also included physical activities in her lesson plan in order to sustain the interest of the boys. This was done on the basis that boys enjoy physical activities more than girls yet the research about gender differences in physical activity among children at the preschool level denotes mixed findings. Some studies report no significant differences between boys and girls (Martínez-Bello et al., 2023), and others suggest that boys engage in more vigorous physical activity than girls (Woodfield et al., 2021). Interestingly, the factors influencing physical activity levels in young children include learning contexts such as role play, the type of activity, and nature of the setting (Woodfield et al., 2021) rather than being related to any specific gender stereotype. Teachers should therefore ensure that their lesson plans integrate practices, activities, and curriculum innovations that promote inclusivity and gender equity, thereby creating a learning environment where all students are supported and valued regardless of their gender. By including different equitable teaching strategies, educators can promote the dismantling of gender stereotypes and empower all students to be confident to participate fully in all classroom activities.

Conclusion

The principal concern of this study was to examine the effect of dramatization as a learning tool on reducing learners' anxiety about the French language. Through a questionnaire and interview, the nature of the anxiety experienced by Ghanaian learners was established, and the overall effect of drama on their oral competence and public speech was demonstrated. The findings suggest that language anxiety is a phenomenon experienced by many Ghanaian learners of French in its varied forms, namely: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and negative evaluation. The intervention, which consisted of using drama as a learning activity, also recorded positive impacts such as improvement in speech, better control of anxiety, and high self-esteem in spontaneous conversations in the French language, among other benefits.

Conclusion

This study sought to investigate how early childhood educators understand the term gender stereotype as well as the manner in which they relate with the boys and girls on the basis of their gender. The findings evinced that preschool teachers believe that the term gender stereotype is akin to the establishment of gender roles which brings about gender discrimination and the imposition of various forms of gender related restrictions. The teachers also indicated that preschool teachers

engage in some practices deliberately aimed at promoting gender equality among their pupils yet they unconsciously perpetuate gender stereotyping through practices underpinned by gender stereotypes. The implications of this study for early childhood education are profound, as it highlights the need for continuous reflexivity from teachers as well as training to ensure that educators are aware of and actively working to dismantle gender biases in their settings. By understanding these dynamics, early childhood educators can create more inclusive and equitable classroom environments that support the development of all children. Further research may focus on the role of school leadership in the perpetuation of gender stereotyping within the school system as well as investigating the effect of gender stereotyping on the achievement levels of preschool children in specific subjects and areas of development.

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