

Teacher Candidates' Gender Role Attitudes: Case of Adıyaman University

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to determine gender role attitudes of fourth-grade students using descriptive and cross-sectional analysis by applying a questionnaire and Gender Roles Attitude Scale developed by Zeyneloglu and Terzioglu. Participants used in the study are made up of 187 fourth-grade students at the Department of Elementary Education (namely Primary School Teacher Education, Elementary Mathematics Teacher Education, Social Sciences Teacher Education, and Science Teacher Education). The results reveal the egalitarian attitudes among students for the sub-dimensions named egalitarian gender role (mean score: 29.05), female gender role (mean score: 24.37), marriage gender role (mean score: 19.67), traditional gender role (mean score: 23.41) and male gender role (mean score 17.24). Average and median Gender Roles Attitude Scale scores of respondent students were found to differ according to the type of department, the high school that they graduated from, and the person effective in choosing the department of students.

Keywords: gender roles, attitude, teacher candidate.

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Öğretmen Adaylarının Toplumsal Cinsiyet Tutumu: Adıyaman Üniversitesi Örneği

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Öz

Bireyler toplumun belirlediği roller çerçevesinde kadın ya da erkek olmayı öğrenerek toplumsal cinsiyet kimliklerini oluşturmaktadır. Kadına ve erkeğe atfedilen cinsiyet rollerinin geleneksel ya da eşitlikçi yönde olması ülkelerin gelişmişlik düzeyi açısından önemli görülmektedir. Çocuk aile içinde toplumsal cinsiyetine uygun davranışları ebeveynlerin yönlendirmeleri ve rol modeli alınmasıyla oluşturmaktadır. Çocuğun okula başlamasıyla rol modeli olan ebeveynlerin yerini öğretmenler almaktadır. Bu durumda öğretmenler sadece teorik bilgi aktaran kişiler değil, tutum ve davranışları ile çocuklar için önemli bir rol modeli konumuna geçmektedirler. Bu çalışmada aileden sonra çocukların tutum ve davranışlarını etkileyeceği düşünülen ilköğretim bölümü son sınıf öğrencilerinin toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri ile ilgili tutumu ve toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri tutumunu etkileyen faktörlerin belirlenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Bu amaca yönelik olarak Adıyaman Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi İlköğretim Eğitimi Bölümünde eğitim gören 187 dördüncü sınıf öğrencisine Zeyneloğlu ve Terzioğlu tarafından geliştirilen Toplumsal Cinsiyet Rollerini Tutum Ölçeği uygulanmıştır. Araştırmada öğrencilerin eşitlikçi toplumsal cinsiyet rolü ve kadın toplumsal cinsiyet rolü, evlilikte toplumsal cinsiyet rolü, geleneksel toplumsal cinsiyet rolü ve erkek toplumsal cinsiyet rolü alt boyutlarına ilişkin eşitlikçi tutuma sahip oldukları belirlenmiştir. Öğrencilerin toplumsal cinsiyet rollerine ilişkin tutumları ile öğrenim gördüğü bölüm, mezun oldukları lise, okumakta olduğu bölümü seçmesinde etkili olan kişiler arasındaki farkın istatistiksel olarak anlamlı olduğu belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri, tutum, öğretmen adayı.

Introduction

Individuals belong to a society that they were born into. The society involves rules, customs, and values that bind people together and make the society exist. A person is born as a woman or man biologically, but upbringing within the framework is set by the society's varying gender roles. The term 'sex' refers to the biological differences between males and females, while 'gender' refers to the socially-determined personal, and psychological characteristics associated with being female or male, namely 'femininity' and 'masculinity'. Thus, gender is not constructed by biology; people construct it and this construction is shaped by historical, cultural and psychological processes as well (Basow, 1992). In a family, parents and parental attitudes towards gender-role have great effect on the early learning of these roles. Parents' attitudes and behaviours are the major determinants that affect a child's tendency to identify with a particular gender role (Eccles et al., 1993; Connell, 2003).

Once the child begins school, the teacher becomes one of the most significant people other than the parents. Through the socialization process via education both in family and at school, children learn how to develop identity and individuality as a girl or a boy. Therefore, educational institution through schooling plays crucial roles. School is one of the important institutions that reproduce gender role in terms of getting settled in femininity and masculinity role. Given the very important functions of the teacher in sociological and educational development of children; they were selected to be the subjects of this study. Teachers do not only educate, but also transmit the values, norms, and traditions shared in a society. They directly influence how, what and how much students learn as well as how they interact with each other and the people around them.

As soon as students perceive their own existence and social structure and culture, after the education in the family, they learn sexist cultural values (Staggenborg, 1998; Guimond, Chatard, Martinot, Crisp, & Redersdorff, 2006; Warrington & Younger, 2000). Therefore, gender inequality will continue to be an issue of debate in the society. Particularly, the primary level of education is very important during socialization. Dominant sexist values in the primary education system are taught by teachers and internalized by students (Mahaffy & Ward, 2002; Chartschlaa, 2004; Buchman, Diprete, & McDaniel, 2007; Erden, 2009). Teachers who determine the culture of the schools are persons performing educational activities as role models. Thus their attitudes and expressions on children make a lasting impression on the relevance of gender differences and roles in the society. Consequently, teachers transfer traditional gender role from generation to generation (Gray & Leith, 2004; Cushman, 2010; Tatar & Emmanuel, 2010). Determining teachers' gender role attitudes is generally very important for the next generation --particularly within the context of women.

Determining teachers' gender role attitudes is important in terms of reproduction of sexism in the educational period (Zaman, 2007). The development of gender role should be in cooperation of all sectors and

disciplines (Connell, 2003; WHO, 2010). Studies on gender role attitudes are considered important within the teacher's perspective. This study was carried out to determine fourth grade students' gender role attitudes in the Department of Elementary Education in Adiyaman, Turkey. The aim of this study is to determine gender role attitudes of students and the factors that influence these attitudes. The specific research questions include: Does the fourth grade university students of Elementary Education Department have egalitarian or traditional gender role attitudes?, What are the factors that influencing gender role attitudes of Elementary Education Department fourth grade students?

Method of the Study

Survey Sample

In order to conform to the aim of this study, a descriptive cross-sectional sample for students of Elementary Education Department of Adiyaman University (2011-2012 academic years) was selected. It was carried out as a descriptive cross-sectional study on the purpose of determining gender role attitudes of the students. The sample size consisted of 205 (102 female, 103 male) fourth grade students from different programs which include Elementary Education Department of Adiyaman University in Turkey which include Primary School, Elementary Mathematics, Social Sciences and Science Teacher Education Programs. As at the time of study, about 18 students from the sample however declined to participate in the survey. As a result a total of 187 students (95 female, 92 male) participated in the study. From our sampled data, about half of the students were studying Primary School Teacher Education; more than half of students ages are ranged from 23 to 25; more than one quarter siblings of the students in the range 4-6; more than half of students graduated from a general high school; more than one quarter of students were born in town; almost half of the parents had arranged marriages without knowing each other beforehand; more than half of the students stated that the person effective in choosing their department was themselves, and nearly half of the students stated that they made this choice because their scores were sufficient for the department (See Table 2); half of the students were female; nearly all of the students were single; more than three quarter of students had an elementary family; more than one quarter of mother was illiteracy; almost three quarter of students lived in a dormitory (Table 3).

Instruments, Data Collection and Analysis of the Study

The Personal Characteristics Questionnaire and The Gender Roles Attitude Scale are used to collect the data. Personal Characteristics Questionnaire is made up of two parts. In the first part, personal characteristics of students and parents such as age, marital status and place of birth are recorded. Also, primary and secondary school completion, type of high school individual graduated from, places of residence, number of the siblings, types of family structures, levels of education and parental occupation were equally recorded.

In the second part, factors influencing gender role attitudes of students such as marriage types of the parents, parents' role in students teaching profession choice and student's reasoning of teaching profession choice were recorded in association with the literature (Zeyneloglu, 2008; Atış, 2010). The Gender Roles Attitude Scale was developed by Zeyneloglu and Terzioglu, including 38 items and five subscales. There are eight items in each of the 'egalitarian gender role', 'female gender role', 'marriage gender role', 'traditional gender role' subscales, and six items in the 'male gender role' subscale. Responses to the Gender Roles Attitude Scale used in the study were evaluated based on the total scores given to each item. The students' egalitarian attitude statements regarding gender role were scored as 5 points for 'completely agree,' 4 points for 'agree,' 3 points for 'undecided,' 2 points for 'disagree,' and 1 point for 'absolutely disagree.' The traditional attitude statements regarding gender role were scored in the opposite way to the positive sentences: 1 point for 'completely agree,' 2 points for 'agree,' 3 points for 'undecided,' 4 points for 'disagree,' and 5 points for 'absolutely disagree.' The highest possible score on the scale was 190 and the lowest score was 38. The higher scores on the scale indicate that the students have more egalitarian attitudes towards gender role and the lower scores show that the students' attitudes are more traditional. Egalitarian gender role (items numbered 4, 8, 12, 13, 18, 20, 22, 27), female gender role (items numbered 1, 5, 16, 19, 21, 29, 31, 37), marriage gender role (items numbered 2, 6, 9, 10, 14, 15, 26, 36), traditional gender role (items numbered 3, 7, 11, 17, 23, 24, 25, 32) subscales and six items in the male gender role (items numbered 28, 30, 33, 34, 35, 38) subscale were investigated. The instrument's total Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient was found to be 0.92 (Zeyneloglu & Terzioglu, 2011).

Students provided written informed consent before they participated in the study. Before starting a course in the first 20 minutes, verbal permission was taken from the faculty staff and then data collection tools were distributed to students. Before the data collection forms were filled, the researcher provided information to the students about the aim and method of the study. The students individually completed the instrument that took approximately 20 minutes to complete. Official and ethical approval and permission to conduct the study was obtained from the University Research Ethics Committee. Students provided written informed consent before participating to the study.

In the evaluation of the data, SPSS programme (Statistical Package for Social Science) 17.0 were used. Descriptive characteristics of the students are independent variables and Gender Roles Attitude Scale scores are the dependent variables. Whether there is a significant difference among scores was tested on $\alpha=0.05$ significance level. Evaluation of attitude scores for the students on whether they show a normal distribution was made by the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. They were found to show a normal distribution. Descriptive statistical methods were used in the evaluation of research findings (percentage, mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values). The scores were evaluated by using t-test (independent samples t-test) and Oneway Anova test.

Findings of the Study

The scores of Gender Role Attitude Scale range between 190 (maximum) and 40 (minimum), higher scores indicating more egalitarian belief about gender roles. This value indicates that students have traditional attitudes towards gender role. A total mean score of Gender Roles Attitude Scale was 113.77 ± 21.23 . The minimum score of students on the Gender Role Attitude Scale was 86, while the maximum score was 142. The results indicate that students have egalitarian attitudes towards gender role (Table 1).

Sub-dimension Egalitarian Gender Role statements include; 'Decision to have a child should be made by both spouses in a marriage', 'Assets should be shared equally when spouses divorce', 'Equal wage should be paid to the women and men in professional life', 'Domestic work should be shared equally between spouses in the family'. The score of Egalitarian Gender Role range between 40 (maximum) and 8 (minimum), higher scores indicating more egalitarian attitudes about gender roles. Students' average score of egalitarian gender role sub-dimension is 29.05. It indicates that the students have egalitarian attitudes towards egalitarian gender roles (Table 1).

Sub-dimension Female Gender Role statements include; 'The future wife of a man should be a virgin', 'A woman should be able to go out by herself at night', 'A woman should experience sexual encounter after they are married', 'A woman's basic task is motherhood' and so on. The score of Female Gender Role range between 40 (maximum) and 8 (minimum), higher scores indicating a more egalitarian attitudes about gender roles. Students' average score in the female gender role sub-dimension (24.37) indicates that the students have fairly egalitarian attitudes towards female gender role (Table 1).

Sub-dimension 'Marriage Gender Role' statements include; 'Every wish of the man should be realized at home', 'Contraception in marriages should be responsibility of the woman only', 'Husband cheating on a wife should be regarded as normal', 'A woman should reject sexual encounter in marriages if she does not desire it' and so on. The score of Marriage Gender Role range between 40 (maximum) and 8 (minimum). Students' average score in the marriage gender role sub-dimension (19.67) indicates that the students have traditional attitudes towards marriage gender role (Table 1).

Sub-dimension Traditional Gender Role statements include; 'Girls should be dressed in pink while boys should be dressed in blue', 'Profession implemented by woman and man should be different', 'Woman should not work if the economic situation of the man is adequate', 'A man's main task in the house is breadwinning'. The score of Traditional Gender Role range between 40 (maximum) and 8 (minimum). Students' average score in the traditional gender role sub-dimension (23.41) indicate that the students have traditional attitudes towards traditional gender role (Table 1).

Sub-dimension Male Gender Role statements include; 'Man should decide on how to use family income', 'A man should beat up his wife if necessary', 'Education level of the man should be higher than woman in marriages', 'Men should be employed in high status professions'. The score of Male Gender Role

range between 30 (maximum) and 6 (minimum). Students' average scores in the male gender roles sub-dimension (17.24) indicate that the students have traditional attitudes towards male gender role (See Table 1).

Table. 1. Distribution of Average Scores of Gender Role attitude Scale and Sub-Dimensions

Sub-Dimensions of the Scale	N	Mean \pm Sd	Min-Max
Egalitarian Gender Role	187	29.05 \pm 6.8	8- 40
Female Gender Role	187	24.37 \pm 4.9	20- 28
Marriage Gender Role	187	19.67 \pm 6.8	12- 36
Traditional Gender Role	187	23.41 \pm 6.7	8- 40
Male Gender Role	187	17.24 \pm 6.4	6- 30
Total Score	187	113.77 \pm 21.23	86- 142

Differences by Department: the Determinants

The findings show that average scores of students from the Department of Elementary Mathematics Teacher Education were found statistically significant and higher than the Departments of Primary School Teacher Education and Social Sciences Teacher Education. As a result of the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), the difference between the mean scores of the Gender Role Attitude Scale was found to be significant ($F = 7.033$; $p = 0.000 < 0.05$). As a result of complementary post-hoc analysis to determine the sources of differences, the gender scores of students in Department of Elementary Mathematics Teacher Education are higher than the gender score of Department of Primary School Teacher Education and Social Sciences Teacher Education. Students who graduated from Anatolian high school and high school of science were found statistically significant and higher than those of ones from private schools, general, vocational and technical high schools. As a result of complementary post-hoc analysis to determine the sources of differences, the gender scores of students who graduated from Anatolian high schools and Science high schools were found to be higher than those of ones from private, special, regular and vocational high schools (See Table 2). High schools such as private, special, regular and vocational high schools do not accept their students with examinations, so whoever wants to study in these schools can enter without taking any exam.

The person who is more effective in choosing the students' department was found statistically significant. The complementary post-hoc analysis applied to investigate the sources of differences. It shows that the gender scores of students' own choices therefore greater than their mother's and father's choices (See Table 2). Within the age range of 23-25 years, students' mean scores are found to be higher than those of 20-22 years of age and 26 years or older. Students who live or was born in the city had more egalitarian gender role attitudes than ones from the town and the village; students whose parents had an arranged marriage was found more egalitarian than those whose parents

had other types of marriages and students' choice is considered due to the ease of finding a job (Table 2).

Table 2. Average Scores of Gender Role Attitude Scale by Students' Characteristics

Students Selected Characteristics	n	%	Mean±Sd*	F	p
Programs					
Elementary Mathematics Teacher Education	32	17.1	126.84±17.25	7.033	0.000
Science Teacher Education	30	16.0	118.53±26.51		
Primary School Teacher	94	50.3	109.37±20.25		
Social Sciences Teacher	31	16.6	109.00±15.78		
Age					
23-25 years	101	54.0	115.05±23.91	0.469	0.627
20-22 years	72	38.5	112.62±17.03		
Over 26	14	7.5	110.35±20.97		
Number of siblings					
7-9	56	29.9	117.60±17.59	1.666	0.176
10-12	20	10.7	117.05±19.80		
4-6	69	36.9	112.87±23.09		
1-3	42	22.5	108.57±22.59		
Graduated high school**					
Anatolian, Science and Private Vocational	44	23.5	122.09±17.17	4.602	0.011
Vocational	14	7.5	112.14±17.64		
General	129	69.0	111.10±22.21		
The place of birth					
City	67	35.8	116.88±24.34	2.494	0.085
Town	73	39.0	114.57±18.48		
Village	47	25.1	108.08±19.77		
The longest place living in					
City	77	41.2	115.09±23.37	0.317	0.728
Village	41	21.9	113.80±24.47		
Town	69	36.9	112.27±16.32		
Marriage type of the parents					
Arranged marriage	89	47.6	116.23±21.76	1.218	0.305
Dating	28	15.0	112.39±17.71		
Semi-Arranged	65	34.8	111.98±19.95		
(Berdel) Bride exchange	5	2.7	100.80±40.73		
Department choice influencer***					
Father	20	10.7	126.60±22.77	5.986	0.000
Mother	20	10.7	126.15±15.87		
Teacher	18	9.7	119.33±13.42		
Own Choice	120	64	109.15±21.56		
Siblings	9	4.9	108.11±11.81		
Motive of the department choice					
Job availability	22	11.8	118.68±17.51	0.966	0.410
Family preference	12	6.4	118.66±13.51		
Entrance exam grade	82	43.9	114.00±23.94		
Personal choice	71	38.0	111.15±19.90		

* The data has distributed normally (Mean value has been used).

F= Oneway Anova

Test

**Private high school and college variables have combined.

*** All (n=11) variable has withdrawn from "The influencer in department choice" variable.

In this study gender role scores of male students were found to be higher than female students; single students were found to be higher than married students; students who have 7-9 siblings were found to be higher than those who have 1-3 siblings; students who grew up in large families were found more egalitarian than those who grew up in a nuclear family; students who live alone or with friends are more egalitarian than those who live in dormitories or with their families; students with illiterate mothers have more traditional gender role attitudes than students with literate mothers (Table 3).

Table 3. Average Scores in the Gender Role Attitude Scale by Students' Characteristics

Students Selected Characteristics	n	%	Mean±Sd*	t	p
Sex					
Male	92	50.8	115.48±20.12	-1.090	0.277
Female	95	49.2	112.10±22.25		
Marital status					
Single	181	96.8	113.91±21.39	0.519	0.604
Married	6	3.2	109.33±16.50		
Family Type**					
Extended	31	16.6	119.06±16.95	-1.648	0.101
Nuclear	153	81.8	112.35±21.34		
Type of Residence ***					
Dormitory	52	72.2	114.30±20.26	0.214	0.831
Home	135	27.8	113.56±21.67		
Mother's education ****					
Illiterate	60	32.1	115.76±16.93	0.883	0.378
Literate	127	67.9	112.82±22.99		

* The data is normally distributed (Mean value has been used). t= Independent Samples t-Test

** Fragmented family variable (n=3) is not included in the analysis.

*** State dormitory and private dormitory variables have been combined as dormitory; at home alone, at home with friends, at home with relatives and at home with family have combined as home. At home with grandparents and at orphanage variables are not included in the analysis.

**** The literate variable is consisted of primary school, secondary school, high school and university variables.

Discussion and Recommendations

There is an existing pattern of gender inequality where we observed men's predominant control of economic assets, political power, and authority. Such inequality and men's control of power limits women opportunity to lay claims and the implementation of justice (Connell, 2003). According to masculine perspective, educational institutions are one of the most important institutions that should be examined (Buchmann et al., 2007). Gender role attitudes of teachers are essential due to the fact that teachers provide the continuation of the existing structure and indeed are the key resource persons in gender equality. Therefore, teachers' gender role attitudes should be adopted and internalized to be a cogent platform for gender equality. This is primary due to the adverse effects of gender inequality on women's physical and psychological

health and status (WHO, 2010). Despite the major developments and governments' agreements about women's status, institutions that have male-dominated attitudes should be changed in accordance with the egalitarian role. Further studies on gender equality are essential to help bridge the gap (Cushman, 2010; Tatar & Emmanuel, 2010; Erden, 2009). Also, cooperation with universities and institutions are important to achieve such equality.

In this study, students' gender role attitudes were found egalitarian. However studies on gender role attitudes of teachers and teacher candidates mostly observed traditional role attitudes (Chartschlaa, 2004; Zaman, 2007; Erden, 2009; Cushman, 2010; Tatar and Emmanuel, 2010). Also from this study one of the factors influencing students' attitudes towards gender role was the type of the department. Scores of students from the Department of Elementary Mathematics Teacher Education were found to be higher than the Departments of Primary School Teacher Education and Social Sciences Teacher Education. According to these findings, students of Elementary Mathematics Teacher Education had more egalitarian attitudes on gender role than students of Primary School Teacher Education and Social Sciences Teacher Education. According to the study of Duffy et al., (2001) students of elementary mathematics teacher education program and classroom teacher education program in the United Kingdom had traditional gender role. Zeyneloglu's study (2008) found university students of nursing schools in Ankara, Turkey have more egalitarian gender role attitudes.

This study showed that students who graduated from Anatolian and Science high schools have gender role attitudes that are more egalitarian than those from private, special, regular and vocational high schools. Different studies found that type of high school/university that students graduated from equally have effects on attitudes towards egalitarian gender role (Trommsdorff & Iwawaki, 1989; Katsurada & Sugihara, 1999; Mahaffy & Ward, 2002). Zeyneloglu's study determined that students who graduated Anatolian or Science high schools are more egalitarian about gender role than those from another type of high schools (2008). The results obtained from this research show that student graduating from high schools that requiring higher entrance exam scores and the students where parents have higher levels of education have more egalitarian attitudes towards gender roles. The author believes that additional research is needed to examine the relationship between gender role attitudes and the type of high school.

The literature reveals that in accordance with the traditional gender role, teacher, nursing, midwifery, steward and hairdressing professions were preferred by women because of traditional roles. The main reasons for choosing teaching profession are personal choice or wishes of the parents, having sufficient central exam scores for the department, and more paid leave opportunities (Warrington & Younger, 2000). The results obtained from this research showed that teaching profession is not a profession of willingly selected, but can be said to be a preferred profession because of the demand of the family. In this study, the mean scores of students who chose the profession with the influence of the parents are found more egalitarian than ones who

based their decisions on their own. Parents, in general, serve as a major influence in their children's career decision-making (Keller & Whiston, 2008). Investigation of the determinants of having egalitarian gender role attitudes in teachers is important since they have an important role in the construction of gender roles.

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