

The Perceptions of Young Adults Towards Social Gender Roles

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to provide an in-depth knowledge of the perspectives of young adults on gender roles. There is a lack of literature in the appropriate age classes.

Methods: The study is descriptive in nature and includes 473 students. This research was conducted using a questionnaire and the Social Gender Perception Scale (SGPS) to collect data.

Results: It was determined that 52.4% of the study participants were female and 47.6% were male. 63% of the participants were affiliated with the Faculty of Health Sciences, while the remainder were students from other faculties. The average SGPS score of the participants was 95.62 ± 18.17 , but this score varied based on socio-demographic variables. Specifically, being female, possessing an undergraduate degree or higher, studying in a health sciences faculty, and having a mother who completed primary school or higher were all linked to higher SGPS mean scores. Furthermore, statistical analysis revealed a significant difference between these groups ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusion: It is imperative that parents are provided with educational programs aimed at fostering knowledge of social gender roles and cultivating egalitarian attitudes and viewpoints. It is important to strategically design and execute research endeavours aimed at ascertaining the perspectives and attitudes of parents of young individuals with respect to societal gender roles.

Keywords: Social Gender, Social Gender Inequality, Social Gender Roles



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INTRODUCTION

Gender refers to the inherent physiological and biological attributes that humans possess from birth, distinguishing them as either male or female [1, 2]. The concept of social gender serves to differentiate between gender, which is influenced by social and cultural factors, and biological sex. It encompasses the socially constructed roles and obligations assigned to individuals based on their gender, which are shaped by the process of socialization and the cultural attributes associated with being male or female [3]. Hence, the idea of social gender pertains not to biological

distinctions, but rather to the societal perceptions, cognitions, and expectations about individuals' behaviour as either men or women [2, 4, 5]. The determination of social gender, in addition to the acquisition of gendered behaviours, is influenced by social and cultural factors, resulting in variations in its manifestations throughout different societies and throughout history [6, 7]. The process of socializing boys and girls into certain gender roles throughout their lives contributes to the understanding that social gender is a dynamic phenomenon. During the process known as "socialization" individuals continuously acquire

knowledge about societal norms and strive to conform to them throughout their lifespan [4, 7]. In essence, individuals conform to societal expectations on gender roles.

The phenomenon being referred to as “gender culture” encompasses all social evaluations pertaining to gender. Gender culture influences gender, gender roles, and social gender. It articulates, cautions, limits, and directs gender-related beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors [8]. In gender culture, “social gender roles” refers to the personality characteristics and behaviors that have historically been associated with and deemed appropriate for each gender. [9, 10]. In this context, gender roles dictate social obligations and expectations. People are born predominantly male or female, but their development within the context of gender norms is influenced by socialization [11, 12].

In contemporary culture, women show men affection and care. This is demonstrated by care and affection, submission to male authority, domestic duties, and childrearing. Conversely, men are typically associated with power and assume the responsibility of providing for the household and safeguarding the family unit [13]. In other societies, however, these examples may behave differently. In the Tibetan Mosuo community, women are the primary family leaders. The decisions regarding property, lineage, and employment are made by women. In numerous cultures, men are more passive than women, including the Minangkabau community of Indonesia, the Akan people of Ghana, the Bribri people of Costa Rica, and the Nagovisi community of South Bougainvillea, western New Guinea [7].

The varying societal expectations placed upon individuals based on their gender, as well as the corresponding beliefs held by society, contribute to the development of gender-specific behaviors in individuals. The existing body of research indicates that there are notable disparities in the societal expectations

and perceptions around gender roles, particularly in relation to employment, social interactions, marriage, and family dynamics [1, 5, 9]. Prior to accepting the parental position within the context of family life, individuals may demonstrate egalitarian behaviors with regard to gender roles. However, after assuming the role of parent, individuals may display more conservative behaviours [14]. The examination of the societal roles ascribed to individuals based on their gender within a predominantly traditional social structure is a crucial endeavour [5]. It is imperative to comprehend the implications of these roles on the younger generation, their individual interactions with society, and their lived experiences throughout this developmental process, while refraining from disregarding their significance [15]. According to scholarly literature, empirical findings indicate that young males tend to demonstrate a more conventional mindset [2, 13]. Research has indicated that there is a higher propensity among young individuals, both males and females, to emulate their parents as role models during the process of shaping their social gender roles [9]. According to Boehnke a separate study indicated that the offspring of parents with higher levels of education and employed mothers had a greater inclination towards egalitarian gender norms [16]. Consequently, it is crucial to emphasize the significance of parental influence [15] and family structure in the formation of social gender perception [9, 13]. According to a study conducted by Marks et al., there exists a notable disparity in gender role attitudes between parents and children among family units adhering to conventional family structures or traditional parenting styles [17]. The younger generation, who will assume the role of future parents, has significant obligations in fostering an egalitarian understanding of societal gender roles among their offspring. The allocation of tasks and obligations to girls and boys within the family unit is influenced by factors such as schooling and the social environment. Consequently, children acquire their social gender identity through these mechanisms [18].

According to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), our country exhibits both legal regulations that adhere closely to international standards and instances of discrimination, infringement, and violent practices that are deemed entirely unacceptable in contemporary societies. According to Savaş; Turkey’s position in the “Social Gender Inequality Index” was 64th out of 188 nations, while in the “Global Gender Gap Index” it placed 131st out of 144 countries [7]. However, it is worth noting that Turkey

Main Points;

- This study aims to enhance the understanding of gender roles among young individuals.
- It is important to strategically design and execute research endeavors aimed at ascertaining the perspectives and attitudes of families of young individuals pertaining to gender roles.

did not attain the expected level of achievement in these rankings. It is imperative that all stakeholders exert concerted efforts to enhance the social and economic status of women within our nation, with a particular focus on addressing and ameliorating adverse indicators. In comparison to other member nations of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Turkey is required to exert more endeavors in order to enhance women's employment rates and establish a state of gender equality [19]. When examining OECD nations, it is seen that the disparity in wages between males and females is most pronounced in Korea, with a margin of 34.6%. Conversely, Romania has the lowest wage gap at 1.5%. According to the OECD (2017), the rate in Turkey is at 6.9% [20].

Based on the aforementioned data, an examination of scientific literature pertaining to social gender, gender culture, and gender equality reveals that the establishment of parity between men and women is widely regarded as the primary catalyst for constructing a society that is sustainable, equitable, and contemporary in nature. Given the scarcity of existing research pertaining to the specific age cohorts under consideration, the primary objective of this study was to enhance understanding and knowledge regarding the experiences and characteristics of young individuals. Furthermore, acquiring data from this study will provide a valuable contribution to the existing body of literature.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sample

The investigation was conducted at the Hasan Kalyoncu University. In addition, data was collected from student dorms on the university campus, all of whom were at least 18 years of age and did not have any known communication impairments. Students from the faculties of health sciences, architecture, engineering, law, science and literature, space and aviation, visual arts, economics, and administrative sciences were included in the study. The sample size was determined using the "G. Power-3.1.9.2" program, which yielded an 80% power level. The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of baseline student characteristics, such as age, gender, and educational level, on SGPS mean scores. Moreover, the student t-test was employed for statistical analysis. When the effect size is 0.34, the alpha level is 0.05%, and the theoretical power is 80%, 235 students were determined to be the sample size for the study. The research sample consisted of 473 students, which represents 72.35 percent of the total population.

Procedure

The data for this study were collected using a questionnaire comprised of the Introductory Features Form and the Gender Perception Scale, which was devised based on a comprehensive evaluation of the pertinent literature. The sociodemographic factors were restricted in scope and centered on the scale responses from students. The survey questionnaire includes inquiries regarding gender, marital status, educational attainment of the respondent's mother, personal educational attainment, and department affiliation. The study incorporated two research inquiries.

Question 1: Does a correlation exist between the socio-demographic features of students and their SGPS scores?

Question 2: Does a correlation exist between students' perspectives on social gender and the Social Gender Perception Scale (SGPS)?

Prior to commencing the study, requisite authorizations were acquired from the Ethics Committee for Non-Interventional Research at Hasan Kalyoncu University Faculty of Health Sciences (Date: 16.12.2020, Decision No: 2020/111), as well as from the Chief Physician of the Research and Application Hospital where the study was conducted. All study participants were provided with information on the research, and their consent was gained by written or verbal means. Additionally, participants were advised of their right to withdraw from the study at any point. The research conducted in this study followed the ethical principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki.

Measures

Introductory Features Form

The researchers have prepared an Introductory Features Form that includes elements pertaining to the sociodemographic features of the participants, such as age and gender, as well as their perspectives on social gender.

Social Gender Perception Scale (SGPS)

The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of the SGPS, as developed by Altinova and Duyan, is reported to be 0.87 [4]. The scale, comprising a comprehensive set of 25 elements, does not incorporate any subscales. The questions on the scale were assessed using a 5-point Likert Scale, which included the response options of "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Neither Agree Nor Disagree," "Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree." The upper

limit of the scoring scale for pupils is 125, while the lower limit is 25. Elevated scores derived from the scale signify that the student possesses an egalitarian stance on social gender roles, whilst diminished scores suggest a propensity for traditional attitudes towards social gender roles. The items on the Perception Scale that were oriented in a negative direction were subjected to reverse scoring throughout the evaluation process. The aforementioned items include numbers 2, 4, 6, 9, 10, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, and 25.

Statistical Analysis

The data gathered in the study was subjected to statistical analysis using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows 22.0 software in a computerized setting. The conformity of the measurement values acquired in the context of the study was assessed using the “Shapiro-Wilk Test”. Descriptive statistics for continuous numeric variables were represented using the mean ± standard deviation and the median (interquartile range (IQR) within a 95% confidence interval. Categorical variables were represented using numbers (n) and percentages (%). The independent samples t-test was employed to assess the differences between two distinct groups and compare the scale’s average scores. In the context of statistical decision-making, a p-value equal to or less than 0.05 was deemed to possess statistical significance.

RESULTS

In the study, it was found that 52.4% of the participants were identified as female, while 47.6% were identified as male. The average age for female students was determined to be 21.42±2.47, but for male students, it was 22.28±1.82. A majority of the participants (63%) in our research study are enrolled in the Faculty of Health Sciences, while the remaining minority (37%) are pursuing their studies in faculties outside of the aforementioned field. Mothers of participants had elementary or lower education in 74.4% of cases, and secondary or higher education in 29.6% of cases (Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of Sociodemographic Characteristics of Young People (N=473)

Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Female	248	52.4
Male	225	47.6
Marital status		
Married	10	2.1
Single	463	97.9
Educational status		
Associate degree	28	5.9
Graduate degree and higher	445	94.1
Department		
Health-related faculties	298	63.0
Other faculties	175	37.0
Mother’s educational status		
Elementary school and lower	333	70.4
Higher than elementary school	140	29.6
Total	473	100.0

The average SGPS of the students involved in the study was determined to be 95.62±18.17. The scale’s minimum and highest results are 39 and 125, respectively (Table 2).

Table 3 presents a comparison of the sociodemographic features of the students and the mean scores on the SGPS. The analysis revealed a statistically significant association between educational status, gender, department of study, maternal education level, and scale scores (p=0.001 for all variables). Based on the findings, it was concluded that female students studying at the health sciences faculty, who possess a bachelor’s degree or above, and whose maternal education level exceeds elementary education, had higher mean scores in the SGPS..

Table 4 displays a comparison of the participants’ perspectives on social gender and their corresponding SGPS mean scores. The results of the study indicated that students who had a favorable view towards each item exhibited significantly higher mean scores on the scale (p<0.05 for all).

Table 2. Social Gender Perception Scale Mean Scores (N=473)

Groups	$\bar{X} \pm Ss$	Min-Max Score Obtained from the scale	Min-Max Score That can be obtained from the scale
Gender	Female student	105.55±13.09	25-125
	Male student	84.68±16.66	

Table 3. Comparison of Social Gender Perception Scale Mean Scores by Sociodemographic Characteristics of Young People (N=473)

Sociodemographic Characteristics and Groups	Social Gender Perception Scale Mean Scores and Test			
	n (%)	$\bar{X} \pm Ss$	t	p
Gender				
Female	248 (52.4)	105.55±13.09	15.041	0.001*
Male	225 (47.6)	84.68±16.66		
Educational status				
Associate degree	28 (5.9)	81.89±16.53	4.191	0.001*
Graduate degree and higher	445 (94.1)	96.48±17.94		
Department				
Health-related faculties	298 (63.0)	101.76±15.83	10.676	0.001*
Other faculties	175 (37.0)	85.16±17.14		
Mother's educational status				
Primary school and lower	333 (70.4)	92.91±18.19	5.138	0.001*
Higher than primary school	140 (29.6)	102.07±16.49		

* $p < .01$

Upon examining the gender-based comparison of students' perspectives on gender, it was observed that male students tended to hold a more conventional viewpoint, as seen in Table 5.

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to examine the perceptions of university students about the influence of social gender and explore potential variations in this connection based on certain demographic factors.

In the present study, the Social Gender Perception Scale was utilized to assess the aggregate score achieved by individuals in the young age group. The acquired scores were found to vary between 39 and 125, with a mean score of 95.62 and a standard deviation of 18.17. There exist several research that have yielded comparable findings to those presented in our study [9, 21]. This study aimed to examine the relationship between sociodemographic factors and social gender perception levels among young individuals. Consistent with previous research findings [2, 5], it was observed that female students enrolled in health sciences programs, with a bachelor's degree or higher, and whose mothers had attained an education level beyond primary education, exhibited higher mean scores on the social gender perception scale [22].

Table 4. Comparison of Young People's Views on Social Gender with the Scale Mean Score (N=473)

Participants' Views	Social Gender Perception Scale Mean Scores and Test			
	n (%)	$\bar{X} \pm Ss$	t	p
The most important role of the woman is to cook for her family.				
Yes	88 (18.6)	81.68±17.00	8.561	0.001*
No	385 (81.4)	98.81±16.90		
A man should have the last word on decisions at home.				
Yes	89 (18.8)	81.24±16.26	8.953	0.001*
No	384 (81.2)	98.95±16.94		
Marriage prevents a woman from working.				
Yes	47 (9.9)	78.96±20.33	6.945	0.001*
No	426 (90.1)	97.46±16.97		
A woman having a baby boy increases her value.				
Yes	27 (5.7)	90.56±16.85	1.493	0.136
No	446 (94.3)	95.93±18.22		

Working women can spare enough time for their children.				
Yes	262 (55.4)	103.17±15.39	11.351	0.001*
No	211 (44.6)	86.24±16.99		
The most important task of a man is to support his home.				
Yes	187 (39.5)	88.07±16.99	7.741	0.001*
No	286 (60.5)	100.55±17.23		
Women can succeed in management and politics.				
Yes	430 (90.9)	97.99±16.45	9.841	0.001*
No	43 (9.1)	71.91±17.76		
If women are pregnant, men should be preferred in job applications.				
Yes	53 (11.2)	74.74±15.39	9.714	0.001*
No	420 (88.8)	98.25±16.75		
The woman must tolerate violence to protect her family.				
Yes	23 (4.9)	84.57±15.13	3.016	0.003*
No	450 (95.1)	96.18±18.15		
Men should also do household chores such as laundry, dishes, cleaning.				
Yes	440 (93.0)	97.15±17.29	7.021	0.001*
No	33 (7.0)	75.21±17.59		
Only a man should provide for a family.				
Yes	32 (6.8)	67.00±13.61	10.177	0.001*
No	441 (93.2)	97.70±16.65		
Girls should be given as much freedom as boys.				
Yes	379 (80.1)	100.11±16.00	12.419	0.001*
No	94 (19.9)	77.51±14.92		
If a woman can't have children, a man should remarry.				
Yes	28 (5.9)	81.96±13.13	4.169	0.001*
No	445 (94.1)	96.48±18.11		
Everything the man says at home must be done.				
Yes	20 (4.2)	74.50±18.65	5.470	0.001*
No	453 (95.8)	96.55±17.60		
A woman should be able to oppose her husband if necessary.				
Yes	413 (87.3)	98.26±16.71	8.964	0.001*
No	60 (12.7)	77.43±17.54		
The saying: "A woman without a husband is like a house without an owner." is true.				
Yes	87 (18.4)	78.30±15.70	11.023	0.001*
No	386 (81.6)	99.52±16.33		

* $p < .01$

Table 5. Comparison of Gender Perspectives among Young Individuals (N=473)

Participants' Views	Social Gender Perception Scale Mean Scores and Test			
	Female Student	Male Student		
	n (%)	n (%)	t	p
A man should have the last word on decisions at home.				
Yes	16 (6.5)	73 (32.4)	52.177	0.001*
No	232 (93.5)	152 (67.6)		
Marriage prevents a woman from working.				
Yes	12 (4.8)	35 (15.6)	15.140	0.001*
No	236 (95.2)	190 (84.4)		
Women can succeed in management and politics.				
Yes	243 (98.0)	187 (83.1)	31.575	0.001*
No	5 (2.0)	38 (16.9)		
If women are pregnant, men should be preferred in business applications.				
Yes	8 (3.2)	45 (20.0)	33.362	0.001*
No	240 (96.8)	180 (80.0)		

In terms of participant gender, it was shown that female students ($M=95.84\pm 11.54$) exhibited significantly higher scores in social gender perception compared to male students ($M=72.09\pm 14.18$). ($p=0,001$). Numerous research undertaken within our nation have consistently revealed that female students exhibit greater levels of gender role attitudes or perceptions compared to their male counterparts [23-27]. The study conducted by Özpulat examined a sample of 247 university students and found that female students exhibited higher gender perception ratings in comparison to their male counterparts [21]. Seçkin and Tural conducted a study to investigate the attitudes of classroom teacher candidates towards social gender roles [28]. The findings revealed that female teacher candidates exhibited significantly more egalitarian attitudes towards social gender roles compared to their male counterparts. A research conducted by Kodan Çetinkaya at Ataturk University including 207 students yielded comparable findings, indicating that female students had a greater inclination towards egalitarianism [11]. The observed tendency of girls to exhibit a more egalitarian mindset [29] can be attributed to their heightened exposure to the adverse effects of gender inequality within societal and familial contexts, hence motivating their desire for equitable standing alongside males. The aforementioned discovery provides a partial explanation for the persistence of conventional beliefs among males, as well as their reluctance to embrace gender equality and concerns about potential losses in an egalitarian society [30].

Our research findings indicate that students enrolled in health-related faculties exhibit a higher degree of egalitarianism in their attitudes regarding social gender roles compared to students from other faculties. Previous research has found that students enrolled in the health department have a more egalitarian perspective towards gender roles [2, 31-33]. This outcome might be attributed to the fact that individuals enrolled in health-related faculties are likely to assume roles in delivering healthcare services to the community in the forthcoming years.

Furthermore, our study involved a comparison between the perspectives of young individuals on social gender perception and the mean scores obtained from a standardized scale. The study revealed that the average scores of the younger individuals who expressed a favorable viewpoint for each item were significantly elevated. Hence, although this outcome is deemed favorable for our research, the findings that elucidate participants' perspectives on social gender beyond the established parameters have augmented the importance of our study. The findings presented in this study are limited in scope and pertain exclusively to the context of this research. It is argued that women ought to strive for social and economic autonomy beyond the confines of their domestic responsibilities. In our study, an examination was conducted to assess the social gender perspective of young individuals, with a specific focus on comparing these perceptions based on gender. The findings

revealed that males tended to have more traditional viewpoints in relation to propositions about social life. According to our research findings, male students exhibited a conventional perspective while considering the statements “The primary responsibility of women is to prepare meals for their families” and “Men should possess ultimate decision-making authority within the household.” A research was done to ascertain the perspectives of male students regarding gender roles. According to a study conducted by Adana et al. there is evidence to suggest that males who hold traditional views of gender roles, namely believing that women should primarily engage in domestic duties, bear children, and provide care for senior family members, tend to disapprove of their wives pursuing employment opportunities [34]. Furthermore, these individuals exhibit a lack of belief in gender equality. The findings of this study indicate that societal perceptions regarding male dominance remain pervasive, as males continue to occupy more conventional roles. It is evident that the inclusion of qualitative group research is important in order to yield more favorable outcomes pertaining to this particular topic. When examining the influence of parents on their children’s attitudes, it becomes evident that a significant level of maternal education can result in increased engagement in professional pursuits and improved exemplification of gender roles, as supported by Antill et al. and Davis & Greenstein [30, 35]. Moreover, it is crucial to incorporate themes that underscore the significance of women’s education via media coverage. Furthermore, it is imperative to highlight the need of modifying some professional designations that explicitly state gender, such as replacing “businessman” with “businessperson” and “man of science” with “scientist.” This emphasis should be communicated through the media as a means to address and mitigate gender imbalance.

Limitations

Due to the presence of diverse cultural structures across its areas, Turkey may only be accurately generalized within regions that share comparable cultural characteristics.

CONCLUSIONS

Consequently, it is important to design and execute research endeavors aimed at elucidating the perspectives and attitudes held by the families of young individuals with relation to gender roles. It is important to ensure that parents are provided with educational programs aimed at raising understanding about societal gender roles and fostering egalitarian attitudes and viewpoints. The panels pertaining to social gender should be

encouraged to acknowledge the influence of societal norms on their conventional viewpoints, and to adopt an egalitarian standpoint. It is imperative to address the societal gender prejudices that hinder girls’ access to education and are deeply ingrained in our collective consciousness. Furthermore, it is imperative that the curriculum throughout all levels of the education system, ranging from basic schools to university education, incorporates course materials pertaining to societal gender equality. In order to modify the prevailing conventional mindset among male students, particularly those residing in student dorms within institutions, it is proposed that they be allocated responsibilities pertaining to educational endeavors, such as participation in conferences and panels. Peer education initiatives can be organized to involve male pupils in the process. It is important to promote the formation of organizations or student communities that focus on social gender equality and actively involve male students in these initiatives.

Informed Consent: Informed consent document was obtained from the study participants.

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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Ethical Approval: Hasan Kalyoncu University Faculty of Health Sciences Ethics Committee for Non-Interventional Research (Date: 16.12.2020, Decision No: 2020/111).

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This study has established that males exhibit a greater propensity for adhering to conventional ideas. Encouraging the involvement of male students in activities that promote gender equality is crucial for altering their adherence to conventional ideas.

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