



EVALUATION OF AWARENESS LEVELS OF FIVE YEAR OLD CHILDREN ON SOCIAL GENDER EQUALITY

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Abstract

The researches on the understanding of social gender stereotypes among children has so far been mainly focused on professions, game, toys and colors, which leaves out a wide range of fields of focus that could be studied. In this context, this research aims to examine whether 5-year-olds have social gender stereotypes in terms of professions, hobbies, games, toys, colors, emotions and tasks/chores and explore in which dimensions these stereotypes are more frequently observed. The participant group of this research consists of 91 children who attend an independent kindergarten in Izmir province. We choose to conduct our study in line with descriptive survey method; and for data collection, we utilize "Gender Stereotype Measurement Tool" designed by Şıvgın and "Gender Stereotype Child Interview Form" which was created by researched working in the field. The result indicated that children have stereotypical perceptions about gender regarding professions, roles, hobbies, emotions, attributions, colors, game and toys.

Keywords: Preschool Education, Gender, Social Gender, Social Gender Stereotypes.

1. Introduction

The multidimensional discussion of social values and sex stereotypes considering the needs of modern life; will contribute to the structuring of children's gender-related behaviors and rules in a manner that is sensitive to gender equality (Ceyhan, 2000, 195; SIECUS, 2017). Parents and educators are consciously or unconsciously transferring gender stereotypes to future generations in a variety of ways (Choflá, 2016, 16-17; Aina & Cameron, 2011; Aydilek Çiftçi, 2011; Wolter, Braun, & Hannover, 2015; EURYDICE, 2009, 89; Narahara, 1998). Although there have been many changes in gender roles in the last thirty years, the traditional approach for social gender and the discrimination continue, and a radical change in stereotypes has not been observed (Çelik, 2008; Şirvanlı Özen, 1992; Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991). Expecting women to be more responsive and helpful and to choose professions such as teaching and nursing, while expecting men to be stronger and more independent, and to prefer occupations such as engineering and piloting; are some of the stereotypes that are commonly observed (Bora, 2012; Çelik, 2008; Flax, 2005). In terms of gender characteristics, it is thought that these are unreal differences. Despite these differences imagined by society, every individual is born equal. There are men and women who are very emotional, emotionless, very strong or weak (Yaşın Dökmen, 2009, p.23). The literature shows conflicting views in explaining the differences between men and women as some claim they are social whereas others attempt to explain these differences in terms of genetics or biology. (Martin & Ruble, 2004; Martin, Ruble, & Szkrybalo, 2002; Lorber, 1993). However, it has recently become widespread that the differences between the two genders are related to psychosocial processes (skills, personality traits, education, professional opportunities, relationships, etc.) rather than biological processes. Since gender differences, which vary from culture to culture, are acquired, and learned in the process of socialization, the way children internalize important biological and gender-related concepts becomes important. (Yaşın Dökmen, 2009, 25; Çelik, 2008; Giddens 2008, 204; Flax, 2005; Lorber, 1993). In the process of structuring concepts and rules related to sexual development; the cultural structure a child lives in, the relationships with his/her friends, teachers and family, and his/her experiences are quite influential (Aydilek Çiftçi, 2011; Vasta, Haith, & Miller, 1992, 512). Nevertheless, the effects of gender stereotypes can be observed in the behaviors of parents from the moment they learn the sex of their babies. Later, parents move on to decide on the color of the baby's room (Yağan Güder, 2014; Pomerleau, Bolduc, Malcuit, & Cossette, 1990), clothing and toys according to baby's gender. Moreover, their attitudes towards the baby changes; if the crying baby is girl, she is thought to be "spoiled" whereas if the baby is a

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boy he is thought to be “aggressive”. Their attitudes also vary in the toys they purchase for the baby (dolls for girls and cars for boys) and in the style of communication they utilize with the baby (different tonations for sexes and different ways of addressing such as “my princess girl” or “my lion son”) (Bee & Boyd, 2009, 582; Yaşın Dökmen, 2009, 23; Çelik, 2008; Martin ff., 2002; Vasta ff., 1992; Newman & Newman, 1991). The main determinants in the acquisition of such stereotypes are not only parents, but also other elements of socialization such as teachers, adults, peers, and mass media (Şıvgın & Deniz, 2017; Aina & Cameron, 2011; Shaffer & Kipp, 2010, 534; Giddens, 2008, 207; Yaşın Dökmen, 2009, 133).

The effects of stereotypical perceptions on children are seen in various aspects (ability, self-perception, play and toy preferences, activities, friendship associations, academic competences, social interactions) (Berk, 2013, 503; Eccles, Jacobs, & Harold, 1990; Şıvgın, 2015; Aydılek Çiftçi, 2011; Todor, 2010). Some traditional stereotypes are predicted to lead to inequalities in the formation of gender perception in children. This can lead to children behaving in line with stereotypes and expectations, and in contrast with the information, preferences, emotions, and abilities they have (Aina & Cameron, 2011; Bee & Boyd, 2009, p.580; Martin & Ruble, 2004). If parents or educators believe that there are gender-related differences in their abilities, children also become prone to make preferences in line with these beliefs (Eccles ff. 1990). In other words, when children believe that competence in sports, like parents, is related to gender, they shape their preferences for sports accordingly (Bee & Boyd, 2009, 580). A child’s self-esteem is also sensitive to gender stereotypes and gender roles (Polce-Lynch, Myers, Kliewer, & Kilmartin, 2001). Dohnt and Tiggemeann found that the girls aged between five and eight, suffered from dissatisfaction with their physical self and showed low self-esteem as they perceived, through various experiences, the social perception of being physically weak. Researchers claim that girls find themselves more and more inadequate as they internalize these negative cultural messages. In addition, the messages and feedbacks children receive from the adults such as “Girls are weak in mathematics but better at language and art, boys are good at mathematics and science, but weak at reading” can lower their performance and harm their interests. At this point, children can, unfortunately, associate their failures with the insufficiency of their abilities (as cited in Berk, 2013, p.487; Berk, 2013, 503; Eccles ff., 1990; Wolter ff., 2015). Internalization of the perception and behaviors of parents and educators who hold traditional prejudices by children, may lead to the acquisition of stereotypes for gender inequality and to proliferation of such stereotypes in society. The effect of restrictive viewpoints of adults can be reflected in many aspects such as children's games, toys, hobbies, friendships (Berk, 2013, 503; Baran, 1995; Çelik, 2008; Şıvgın and Deniz, 2017). Accordingly, researchers explain that in early childhood, children rapidly structure their perception of gender stereotypes, and tend to adhere tightly to these beliefs (Berk, 2013; Banse, Gawronski, Rebetez, Gutt, & Morton, 2010). Moreover, as a general characteristic of this period, children are observed to frequently exaggerate certain behavioral marks related to gender and make serious effort to implement the gender roles (Craig & Baucum, 2002, 283; as cited in Feldman, 2003, p.261; Newman & Newman, 1991, 290). An example to this can be seen as children in this period distinguish between “those who are like me and those who aren’t,” and they prefer children who look like them, often acting negatively towards other children (Bee & Boyd, 2009, 575). From a broader perspective, it can be said that forming schemes or strict rules about gender roles is a natural process of sexual development in children. Playing with children from the same sex also contributes to learning gender-appropriate behaviors (as cited in Bee & Boyd, 2009, 578; Martin & Ruble, 2004; Berk, 2013, 390). Furthermore, the fact that they are typical members of their own gender and that they can freely explore gender alternatives, indicate that children are in harmony and trust with themselves; which can be evaluated as a sign of good psychological state (Berk, 2013, 505; Egan & Perry, 2001). Cognitive development psychologists also argue that children are motivated to adopt behaviors that are consistent with their genders, interests, and values in their sexual development processes (as cited in Craig & Baucum, 2002). Most importantly, adults and educators should be sensitive to the needs of children for them to feel that they are both typical and suited to their sexes, while being respectful to their freedom of exploring other genders. (Egan & Perry, 2001). Children who feel the pressure of strong gender stereotype are generally observed to be anxious (Berk, 2013, 505). Thus it becomes important that adults who have a critical role in children’s lives, provide an environment which reduces gender stereotypes and is compatible with both their beliefs and values, and with the needs of modern life, without discrimination (Şıvgın and Deniz, 2017). This way, children can be supported to develop viewpoints which enable them to choose activities, professions and hobbies to improve their talents freely, independently from stereotypes. In US culture, the level of self-esteem was found to be higher for both boys and girls, when children behaved independently of gender roles (Bee & Boyd, 2009, 588). Herewith, many girls’ interests shifted from cooking and sewing to a wide range of areas such as sports, science projects and firefighting



or astronomy, which are traditionally associated with boys. However, parents are observed to have less tolerance for male children. The higher likelihood of men being ridiculed and rejected by both peers and adults can cause a higher tendency in boys to choose and be more loyal to masculine interests (Berk, 2013, 505; Liben & Bigler, 2006).

Each culture has its own rules for genders, and these structures change over time. Thus, it is crucial for children to establish a dynamic balance between themselves and the environment, in harmony with the needs of modern times, when also displaying stereotypical behaviors of their gender in terms of traditions. (Ünal, 1973). Therefore, raising children who are highly sensitive to different genders, highly aware of gender equality and who have advanced social skills, in a way that is free of restrictive stereotypes, is an extremely valuable achievement. Since traditional gender stereotypes affect children in different ways in every aspect of life, more extensive research should be conducted in this area and traditional patterns of children's judgments should be examined from different perspectives. It is argued that children already develop gender stereotypes regarding activities and professions when they come to age of five (Berk, 2013). Researches aimed at examining the gender stereotypes of children are often based on professions, games, toys or colors; and there is a need to investigate the stereotypes related to other dimensions. Hereby, the purpose of this research is; to examine whether 5 years old children have gender stereotypes in the dimensions of occupations, hobbies, games, toys, colors, emotions, attributes and tasks/chores, and in what dimensions these judgments are more frequent. A multidimensional examination of the gender stereotypes of children will contribute to the literature, answering whether they need to be aware of gender equality.

2. Method

2.1. Research model

In this study, descriptive survey research was used to investigate gender stereotypes of 5-year-olds in different dimensions (games, toys, tasks/chores, professions, emotions, colors, hobbies and attributions). Christensen, Johnson and Turner (2015) explained survey research as a method where individuals are interviewed about their attitudes, activities and opinions about a topic.

2.2. Study group

The universe of the research consists of preschool children in primary schools in İzmir. The school where the study was conducted is among the schools that children of middle-class families attend. A study group was formed with an appropriate sampling method based on willingness and volunteering. The study was carried out in a total of five 5-year-olds classes of an independent kindergarten affiliated to the Karşıyaka district of İzmir. Voluntary involvement of children in the study was considered essential, and seven children who didn't want to participate and had trouble completing the interview were not included within this study. A total of 91 children from 5-year-olds classes constituted the study group. The children who exhibited typical development and who were allowed by their parents to participate in the study were included.

2.3. Data collection tools

2.3.1. Gender stereotype measurement tool

"Gender Stereotype Measurement Tool" was developed by Şıvgın (2017) to determine the gender stereotypes of children regarding tasks, professions, toys and games. The measurement tool consists of 4 sub-dimensions and a total of 43 items.

In the first dimension of the form, there are questions to determine gender stereotypes of children regarding tasks (babysitting, cooking, paying bills, washing dishes, driving, cleaning, ironing, repairing, greeting guests). In the second dimension, there are questions regarding professions (preschool teacher, police officer, nurse, soldier, cook, driver, secretary, pilot, carpenter, flight attendant, engineer, dancer, firefighter, janitor, salesperson, teacher, waiter/waitress). In the third dimension, there are questions regarding toys (stuffed toys, car, truck, rope, bicycle, playing house toys, repair tools, robot, toy soldier and doll). In the fourth dimension there are questions regarding games (hopscotch, jumping rope, swinging, playing marbles, boxing, basketball, and chess).

In the measurement tool, the items in each dimension have three options for their answers. These answers are "Woman", "Man" and "Woman and Man" for the categories "tasks/chores" and "professions"; "Girl", "Boy" and "Girl and Boy" for toys and games categories. While the answers "Man", "Woman" or "Girl", "Boy" reflect the gender stereotypes of children; "Man and Woman" or "Girl and Boy" doesn't indicate gender stereotypes. Total scores can be obtained by giving "0" points to "Woman" and "Man" answers and



"1" to "Woman and Man" answers for each item. The low scores indicate gender stereotypes while high scores reflect androgenic character (Şıvgın, 2017).

In the test-retest technique, reliability was calculated as .82 for all items. KR-20 reliability coefficient was calculated in addition to the test re-test technique for the reliability of the measurement tool, whose range was validated in the scope of literature and expert opinions. According to the pre-test scores, the KR-20 reliability coefficient calculated as .73, and according to the posttest scores it is .98 (Şıvgın, 2017).

2.3.2. Gender stereotypes child interview form

Gender Stereotypes Child Interview Form is a form created by researches that explore whether children have stereotypes about hobbies, colors, emotions and attributions. Prior to the formation of the questions in the form, the literature was scanned, and draft images and related pictures were prepared in the light of the literature. These were presented to two experts in the field of clinical psychology and pre-school education, and it was finalized according to the feedback from the experts. The form consists of four parts. In the first part, there are 14 questions and 14 visuals regarding hobbies: riding, knitting, football, making a cake, camping, growing flowers, parachuting, making jewelry, fishing, sewing, climbing, painting, lifting barbells and doing ballet. In the second part, there are 11 questions and 11 visuals regarding emotions: fear, crying, excitement, courage, shyness, impatience, anger, worrying, happiness, feeling successful and feeling unsuccessful. In the third part, there are 7 questions and 7 visuals regarding colors: red, orange, blue, purple, green, pink and black. These 7 colors were chosen as they are found to be stereotypical in Buldurlu, Elibol and Kılıç's 2006 "Material Use in Preschool Children's Toys and Color Preferences of 4-6 Year Olds" study. In the fourth part, there are 12 questions consisting of attributions which are prepared based on "Gender Stereotypes Scale" that was adapted to Turkish by Şırvan Özen (1992): belligerent, weak, adventurous, untidy, talkative, joker, kind, though, complainer, confident, soft-hearted and dependent.

For each question in the form, there are visuals of "Woman" "Man" "Woman and Man". Children are asked to answer the questions by choosing one of these visuals. The interviews were conducted individually and lasted about 20 minutes. Pilot studies were carried out with 10 children before the actual applications to evaluate the functionality of the questions in the form.

2.4. Data collection process

The necessary permits were obtained from the Ministry of National Education for the independent kindergarten which constituted the study group of this study. Once the permits were received, the kindergarten manager and teachers were informed about the purpose and the scope of the study. Parental consent forms were sent to the children's parents. In this context, the study was carried out with children participating voluntarily. Individual interviews were held in line with the aforementioned means of data collection, in a quiet environment in the institution where children receive their education. During the interviews, the researchers recorded the data by taking notes. The interviews with children lasted about 20 minutes without any intervention or leading by the researchers.

2.5. Analysis of the Data

The data obtained using "Gender Stereotype Measurement Tool" and "Gender Stereotypes Child Interview Form" were transferred to the SPSS 15.0 package program. The data were analyzed, percent and frequency calculations were made with descriptive statistics, and the findings were reported.

3. Results

This study explores gender stereotypes of 5-year-olds on different dimensions (games, toys, tasks/jobs, professions, emotions, colors, hobbies and attributions) and, in this chapter, its results in relation to Gender Stereotypes Measurement Tool and Gender Stereotypes Child Interview Form are presented in detail.

3.1. Findings related to Gender Stereotypes Measurement Tool

Table 1: Gender role perceptions of children regarding tasks (n: 91)

Tasks/Chores	W		M		W-M	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Babysitting	59	64,8	3	3,3	29	31,9
Cooking	76	83,5	3	3,3	12	13,2
Paying bills	5	5,5	71	78,0	15	16,5
Washing dishes	85	93,4	1	1,1	5	5,5
Driving	1	1,1	72	79,1	18	19,8
Cleaning	82	90,1	2	2,2	7	7,7
Ironing	81	89,0	4	4,4	6	6,6



Repairs	1	1,1	87	95,6	3	3,3
Greeting guests	70	76,9	5	5,5	16	17,6

W: Woman M: Man W-M: Woman and Man

Table 1 shows that 93% of the children considered washing the dishes as a duty of women, this percentage is 90,1% for cleaning, 89% for ironing, 83,5% for cooking, 76,9% for greeting guests and 64,8% for babysitting. On the other hand, 95,6% of the children thought that repairs are men's duty, this percentage is %79,1 for driving and %78 for paying bills.

In terms of tasks, 31,9% of the children stated that babysitting is a task for both women and men; while this percentage is 19,8% for driving and 17,6% for greeting guests, these percentages are significantly low compared to those of "Man" and "Woman."

These findings show a very high level of gender stereotypes on daily tasks of women and men. Children exhibit the strongest stereotypical labelling in cleaning and repairs tasks.

Table 2: Gender role perceptions of children regarding professions (n: 91)

Professions	W		M		W-M	
	F	%	f	%	F	%
Preschool Teacher	33	36,3	6	6,6	52	57,1
Police officer	1	1,1	62	68,1	28	30,8
Nurse	71	78	1	1,1	19	20,9
Soldier	-	-	83	91,2	8	8,8
Cook	49	53,8	23	25,3	19	20,9
Driver	3	3,3	87	95,6	1	1,1
Secretary	38	41,8	30	33	23	25,3
Pilot	3	3,3	79	86,8	9	9,9
Carpenter	9	9,9	69	75,8	13	14,3
Flight attendant	40	44	37	40,7	14	15,4
Engineer	21	23,1	53	58,2	17	18,7
Dancer	63	69,2	13	14,3	15	16,5
Firefighter	3	3,3	80	87,9	8	8,8
Janitor	68	74,7	11	12,1	12	13,3
Salesperson	9	9,9	57	62,6	25	27,5
Teacher	36	39,6	10	11	45	49,5
Waiter/ress	19	20,9	49	53,8	23	25,3

W: Woman M: Man W-M: Woman and Man

As it can be seen in Table 2, 95,6% of the children stated that occupations that required driving are for men, this percentage is 91.2% for military occupations, 87.9% for firefighter, 86.8% for pilots, 75.8% for carpenter, 68.1% for police officer, 62.6% for salesperson, 58.2% for engineer, and 53.8% for waiter. %78 of the children stated that "nurse" is a female profession, and this percentage is %74,7 for cleaning occupations, %69,2 for dancer, %53,8 for cooks and %41,8 for secretaries.

The percentages of those who stated that flight attendance is a profession for both women and men are close to each other (W: %44, E:40,7). In terms of professions, 57,1% of the children stated that preschool teaching is a profession for both women and men, this percentage was 49,5% for teachers, and these percentages are significantly low compared to those of "Man" and "Woman."

Findings related to professions show that children have stereotypes about professions and the strongest of them being driver and soldier professions.

Table 3: Gender role perceptions of children regarding toys (n: 91)

Toys	W		M		W-M	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Stuffed toys	40	44	9	9,9	42	46,2
Car	-	-	85	93,4	6	6,6
Truck	2	2,2	83	91,2	6	6,6
Jumping rope	48	52,7	11	12,1	32	35,2
Bicycle	8	8,8	24	26,4	59	64,8



Playing house	70	76,9	6	6,6	15	16,5
Repairing tools	3	3,3	83	91,2	5	5,5
Robot	2	2,2	79	86,8	10	11
Doll	83	91,2	2	2,2	6	6,6
Toy soldiers	2	2,2	81	89	8	8,8

W: Woman M: Man W-M: Woman and Man

Table 3 of toys dimension show that 91,2% of the children think doll is a girls' toy, this percentage was %76,9 for play house toys and 57,7% for rope. Additionally, 93,4% of the children stated that a toy car is a boys' toy, this percentage was %91,2 for truck and repairing tools, 89% for toy soldiers, 86,8% for robots. The toys that were considered to be for both boys and girls were bicycle with a percentage of 64,8%, and stuffed toys with 46,2%.

These findings show that children have given answers that imply gender inequality regarding toys. The strongest stereotypes in terms of toys were about cars and dolls.

Table 4. Gender role perceptions of children regarding games (n: 91)

Games	W		M		W-M	
	F	%	f	%	F	%
Hopscotch	35	38,5	9	9,9	47	51,6
Jumping rope	37	51,6	10	11	34	37,4
Swinging	16	17,6	14	15,4	61	67
Playing marbles	7	7,7	46	50,5	38	41,8
Boxing	6	6,6	74	81,3	11	12,1
Basketball	3	3,3	73	80,2	15	16,5
Chess	12	13,2	15	16,5	64	70,3

W: Woman M: Man W-M: Woman and Man

The findings on games, the last subdimension of the measurement tool, show that 81,3% of the children think boxing is for men, this percentage is %80,2 for basketball and 50,5% for playing marbles; 51,6% of the children stated that jumping rope is a girls' game. The games that were considered to be for boys and girls were chess with a percentage of 70,3%, swinging (67%) and hopscotch (%51,6).

These findings show that children have gender stereotypes for games, but these are weaker than other dimensions. The games which children think the most stereotypically are boxing and basketball.

3.2. Findings Related to Gender Stereotypes Child Interview Form

Table 5: Gender role perceptions of children regarding hobbies (n: 91)

Hobbies	W		M		W-M	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Riding	7	7,7	42	46,2	42	46,2
Knitting	86	94,5	1	1,1	4	4,4
Football	1	1,1	84	92,3	6	6,6
Making cake	75	82,4	4	4,4	12	13,2
Camping	6	6,6	38	41,8	47	51,6
Growing flowers	54	59,3	6	6,6	31	34,1
Parachuting	4	4,4	61	67	26	28,6
Designing jewelry	66	72,5	13	14,3	12	13,2
Fishing	3	3,3	65	71,4	23	25,3
Sewing	72	79,1	8	8,8	11	12,1
Climbing	2	2,2	64	70,3	25	27,5
Painting	30	33	7	7,7	54	59,3
Lifting barbells	2	2,2	77	84,6	12	13,2
Doing ballet	77	84,6	3	3,3	11	12,1

W: Woman M: Man W-M: Woman and Man

Table 5 shows that 94,5% of the children stated that knitting is a hobby for women, this percentage is %86,6 for doing ballet, 72,5% for making jewelry and 59,3% for growing flowers. 93,4% of the children attributed football to men, this percentage is %84,6 for lifting barbells, 71,4% for fishing, 70,3% for climbing and 67% for parachuting. 46,2% of the children attributed riding to men while another 46,2 attributed it to both women and men. Lastly, 59,3% of the children expressed that painting can be done by both women and men, and 51,6% expressed the same for camping.



These findings reflect the gender stereotypes of children regarding hobbies. The strongest of these stereotypes have been found to be about knitting and football.

Table 6: Gender role perceptions of children regarding emotions (n: 91)

Emotions	W		M		W-M	
	f	%	f	%	F	%
Fear	40	44	10	11	41	45,1
Crying	33	36,3	17	18,7	41	45,1
Excitement	23	25,3	16	17,6	52	57,1
Courage	13	14,3	58	63,7	20	22
Shyness	29	31,9	23	25,3	39	42,9
Impatience	30	33	22	24,2	39	42,9
Anger	17	18,7	40	44	34	37,4
Worrying	41	45,1	16	17,6	34	37,4
Happiness	32	35,2	12	13,2	47	51,6
Feeling successful/being proud of oneself	18	19,8	29	31,9	44	48,4
Disappointment	31	34,1	21	23,1	39	42,9

W: Woman M: Man W-M: Woman and Man

As seen in Table 6, 63,7% of the children attributed courage and 44% attributed anger to men; and 45,1% attributed worrying to women. 45,1% of the children attributed crying to both women and men, this percentage is 57,1% for excitement, 51,6% for happiness, 48,4% for feeling successful/being proud of oneself, and 42,9% for shyness, impatience and disappointment. Lastly, 44% of the children attributed fear to women and 45,1% attributed it to both women and men.

Although there is no significant difference between the percentages of "Woman", "Man", "Woman and Man" answers, it appears that children hold stereotypes in this dimension.

Table 7: Gender role perceptions of children regarding colors (n: 91)

Colors	W		M		W-M	
	f	%	F	%	F	%
Pink	82	90,1	1	1,1	8	8,8
Blue	1	1,1	79	86,8	11	12,1
Orange	13	14,3	44	48,4	34	37,4
Black	4	4,4	63	69,2	24	26,4
Red	34	37,4	33	36,3	24	26,4
Green	6	6,6	50	54,9	35	38,5
Purple	75	82,4	4	4,4	12	13,2

W: Woman M: Man W-M: Woman and Man

Table 7 shows that 90.1% of the children attributed pink and 82.4% attributed purple to women; while 86.8% attributed blue, 69.2% black, 54.9% green and 48.4% orange to men. There was little difference among the attributions for red color, 37.4% attributed red to women, 36.3% to men and 26.4% to both women and men. In general, children attribute colors to either women or men; it is seen that the percentages of both woman and man responses are very low.

Expressions implying gender equality in children's perceptions of gender roles towards colors, in general, have very low percentages (see table 7, section K-E). It is also concluded that children have the highest level of stereotypes about the pink and blue color in this dimension.



Table 8: Gender role perceptions of children regarding attributions (n: 91)

Attributions	W		M		W-M	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Belligerent	5	5,5	56	61,5	30	33
Weak	65	71,4	14	15,4	12	13,2
Adventurous	11	12,1	40	44	40	44
Untidy	14	15,4	42	46,2	35	38,5
Talkative	30	33	31	34,1	30	33
Joker	25	27,5	34	37,4	32	35,2
Kind	58	63,7	14	15,4	19	20,9
Tough	13	14,3	56	61,5	22	24,2
Complainer	26	28,6	23	25,3	42	46,2
Confident	21	23,1	26	28,6	44	48,4
Soft-hearted	49	53,8	16	17,6	26	28,6
Asking someone else for help	32	35,2	15	16,5	44	48,4

W: Woman M: Man W-M: Woman and Man

As indicated in Table 8, 71,4% of the children attributed weakness to women, this percentage was %63,7 for kindness and %53,8 for soft-heartedness; %61,5 of them attributed belligerent and %46,2 attributed untidiness to men. 48,4% of the children attributed confident and needy and %46,2 attributed complainer to both women and men. There is not a significant difference between the percentages of adventurous and joker, some of the children attributed it to men while some attributed it to both women and men. Similarly, there is little difference between the percentages of talkativeness, as 33% of children attributed it to women, 34,1% to men and 33% to both women and men.

These findings show that children generally hold gender stereotypes about attributions. In this dimension, the attributions that children have the highest level of stereotypical judgments are "weak" and "belligerent".

4. Discussion

Children's ability to empathize, to behave responsibly and internalize attitudes and behaviors towards gender equality are effective elements in their socioemotional and sexual developments (as cited in Divrengi, Aktan, 2010, p.16). Social cognitive theory advocates that children make or choose their own environment. Children can create environments that play a solid role in gender norms by playing only with the children of their own sex and sticking to social gender roles, or they can act within a flexible commitment to the gender roles by creating more egalitarian environments and activities with their peers of their own sex and the opposite sex (Martin ff., 2002). On the other hand, it is claimed that children who are constantly exposed to the discriminatory regulations of the sexist roles first in the family and then in other social environments, can act in ways which they personally do not approve of with an instinct to fit in, hence internalize and spread this discrimination (Kılıç, Beyazova, Durmuş, Soran, 2013). To achieve this, children must be educated in an environment that is free of traditional gender expectations and where everyone is aware of equal opportunities; it is emphasized that these environments should provide opportunities for children to develop their own identities, discover their strengths and interests (EURYDICE, 2009, p.113)..

This study was conducted to evaluate the gender stereotypes of 5-year-olds. In this study, children's perceptions of stereotypes about gender roles appeared in all sub-dimensions (roles, professions, colors, hobbies, game and toy preferences, emotions and attributions). There are many other studies overlapping with the findings of this research within the literature which state that children have gender stereotypes regarding their preferences of colors, professions, artistic/sportive activities and hobbies, games/toys and



the ways they express their feelings. (Şirvanlı Özen, 1992; Elibol et al., 2006; Aydılek Çiftçi, 2011; Şıvgın, 2015). In general, the results of this research suggests that adults who contribute to the formation and internalization of gender stereotypes in children, need to revise their prejudices. Adults should offer children an egalitarian point of view in various areas like hobbies, emotions, and jobs, present them opportunities to explore themselves in line with their interests and talents, and teach that differences are in fact richness; hence, positive advancements can be achieved in children's viewpoints towards gender differences. (Baran, 1995; Çelik, 2008; as cited in Papalia, Olds, & Feldman, 2004; Shaffer & Kipp, 2010; Vasta ff., 1992). In the literature, it is described as a fairly normal sexual development process when children start to form ideas about gender roles in this group of age, and they are motivated intrinsically in the acquisition of values, interests and behaviors that are consistent with their genders and that they play their gender roles in harmony with the society (Berk, 2013, p.390; as cited in Bee & Boyd, 2009, p.578; Martin & Ruble, 2004). However, there is no discussion about which of these views on social gender can contribute to the development of positive attitudes and perspectives in children's sexual development processes. In fact, every culture has different stereotypes of gender equality, and discusses a common universal view. The improvement of discriminatory gender stereotypes in Turkey in a way that answers the needs of modern life and contributes to structure of social gender and enabling children to develop these in early ages; will contribute to children's internalization of gender equality. The literature emphasizes the importance of the programs in preschool education which will teach that differences are good things, and discriminatory behaviors and thoughts are not. (Divrenği and Aktan, 2010; Levy, 1996; Yağan Güder and Güler Yıldız, 2016).

In this study, when the 8 sub-dimensions were examined in detail, remarkable results were obtained especially in the sub-dimensions of professions and tasks. The study showed that children attribute professions that require courage and physical strength such as driver, pilot, firefighter, carpenter, soldier and police officer to men, and think that men hold a larger space compared to women in various professions; while they state that professions that require visual aesthetics such as nurse, janitor, dancer and cook are for women. It also has been found that children attribute traditional chores such as washing dishes, cleaning, ironing and cooking to women, while they mostly attribute tasks related to house management such as repairing things and paying bills to men. In another research conducted by Yağan Güder and Güler Yıldız (2016) that overlapped with these findings, children attributed a larger number of occupation options to men. Also, some children expressed that women can't do certain jobs, but they can help men, regarding the professions which they thought appropriate for both genders. Thus, it is concluded that children attribute house chores and responsibilities to women, acting from a traditional point of view.

The fact that children have an opinion on which gender is superior to the other in terms of professions, and that they refer most of the chores as women's responsibilities, puts a set of responsibilities to families, educators, press institutions and NGO's. (Şıvgın and Deniz, 2017; Yaşın Dökmen, 2009, p.61; Vatandaş, 2007). In order to tell children that gender is not a limiting factor in their career options; various projects should be conducted, showing businesswomen in Turkey employing thousands of people, highly popular male cooks competing with world-class chefs, record-breaking female divers, and male ballets that change the stereotype that ballet is a women's art. A diversity of opportunities should be provided for children to frequently interact with people with different professions, to observe their experiences, and to see how these people realize their goals in terms of their abilities and interests. As a matter of fact, a finding obtained from this research supports this view. In this research, children often referred to the teaching profession as a profession that both women and men can do. The most basic reason for this is that both male and female pre-school teachers work in the institution where the research was conducted. In fact, this finding was not supported in Şıvgın's (2015) research; 95% of the children attributed teaching and 100% of them attributed preschool teaching to women only. The view that the experiences can change gender stereotypes is also foregrounded in the study carried out by Karabekmez, Yıldırım, Özyılmaz Akamca, Ellez and Bulut Üner (2018). Researchers have found that children determine their approaches about professions through their social environments. Similarly, it is thought that the experiences of children in terms of domestic roles and responsibilities are influential in these outcomes. According to Vatandaş (2007), the research shows that despite the woman participating in life outside the home more, the division of labor within the house still preserves the traditional structure. From infancy, adults can support children to gain awareness by considering gender equality in their actions and serving as a model. For children to encounter examples of cooperative division of house responsibilities, teachers should give equal responsibilities to all children, especially in cleaning/preparation times.



Another sub-dimension that draws attention in this study is the attributes. Children characterized girls mostly as weak, kind and soft-hearted while they characterized boys as belligerent, adventurous etc. This finding was also revealed in the research conducted by Yağan Güder in 2014. Children attributed negative qualities such as “weak”, “coward” to women, while they attributed positive qualities such as “brave”, “attentive” and “strong” to men. Bem (1981) also notes that the gender schema guides children, and they learn to assess their competences as an individual with the help of this gender schema. At the same time, children match their personal characteristics, behaviors, preferences, and attitudes with the example models.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, children have stereotypical perceptions about gender in all sub-dimensions: professions, tasks, hobbies, emotions, attributions, colors, games and toys. Thus, it is deemed necessary to raise awareness of children about gender equality. It is crucial that children learn society-acceptable data along with the cultural and universal values. It is also essential that they transfer these values and data to their social lives, with respect to differences. Lastly, it is of utter importance for children to be in an education system or program where they can live in harmony with individuals of different characteristics. (Yağan Güder, 2014). Only this way children can question the gender stereotypes (why they cannot do their profession, role, hobby etc.) and can believe that anyone can do any job, hobby, task etc. after receiving necessary training.

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