

ORIGINAL ARTICLE / ORIJİNAL MAKALE

## Evaluation of gender perceptions and self-efficacy levels of the Roma people living in Turkey

Türkiye’de yaşayan Romanlar’ın toplumsal cinsiyet algıları ve öz-yeterlilik düzeylerinin değerlendirilmesi

 Ebru Gözüyeşil<sup>a</sup>,

 Ayşe İnel Manav<sup>b</sup>,

<sup>a</sup> As. Prof., Çukurova University, Faculty of Health Sciences, Midwifery Department, Adana, Turkey.

<sup>b</sup> As.Prof., Osmaniye Korkut Ata University Faculty of Health Sciences, Nursing Department, Osmaniye, Turkey.

Received: 06.05.2021, Accepted: 13.03.2022

### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This study aims to evaluate gender perceptions and self-efficacy levels of Roma people. **Methods:** This study adopted a descriptive and cross-sectional design; it was conducted with 270 Roma people living in Adana/Turkey. The sample size was calculated using the sample with a known population approach. The data were collected through the Socio-demographic Form, the Gender Perception Scale, and the General Self-Efficacy Scale. Statistical significance was taken as  $p < 0.05$ . **Results:** The Gender Perception Scale mean scores were found to be  $60.9 \pm 19.8$  in women and  $60.0 \pm 19.1$  in men. The General Self-Efficacy Scale mean scores were  $22.8 \pm 9.2$  in women and  $28.5 \pm 7.0$  in men. While the Gender Perception scale mean scores did not indicate any differences in terms of gender ( $p = 0.711$ ), a significant difference was found in terms of the General Self-efficacy Scale mean scores ( $p < 0.001$ ). Besides, there was a significant correlation between the gender perception scores of the men and women and their self-efficacy scores ( $r = 0.551, p < 0.001$ ;  $r = 0.306, p = 0.001$ ). **Conclusion:** The results of this study showed that the Roma people had negative gender perceptions; men’s self-efficacy levels were higher in comparison to women; gender perception and self-efficacy levels were associated with each other; and women’s gender perceptions were significantly affected by several variables.

**Keywords:** Roma, Gender, Self Efficacy, Turkey.

**Correspondence:** Ebru GOZUYESIL, Çukurova University, Faculty of Health Sciences, Midwifery Department, Adana, Turkey. **E-mail:** [egozuyesil@cu.edu.tr](mailto:egozuyesil@cu.edu.tr) **Tel:** +90 535 8275061

**Cite This Article:** Gözüyeşil E., Manav AE. Evaluation of gender perceptions and self-efficacy levels of the Roma people living in Turkey. Turk J Public Health 2022;20(2):205-216

©Copyright 2022 by the Association of Public Health Specialist (<https://hasuder.org.tr>)

Turkish Journal of Public Health published by Cetus Publishing.



Turk J Public Health 2022 Open Access <http://dergipark.org.tr/tjph/>.

This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.

**ÖZ**

**Amaç:** Bu araştırma Roman bireylerin toplumsal cinsiyet algılarının ve öz yeterlilik düzeylerinin değerlendirilmesi amacıyla yapılmıştır. **Yöntem:** Tanımlayıcı ve kesitsel tipte yapılan bu araştırma Adana'da yaşayan 270 Roman birey ile yürütülmüştür. Örneklem büyüklüğü evreni bilinen yaklaşım üzerinden hesaplanmıştır. Araştırmanın verileri Tanıtıcı Bilgi Formu, Toplumsal Cinsiyet Algısı Ölçeği ve Genel Öz-Yeterlilik Ölçeği ile toplanmıştır. Verilerin değerlendirilmesinde Student's t test, Ki-Kare testi, Fisher Exact test, Pearson korelasyon analizi ve Çoklu Doğrusal Regresyon testleri kullanılmıştır. Sonuçlar  $p < 0.05$  anlamlılık düzeyinde değerlendirilmiştir. **Bulgular:** Bu çalışmada Toplumsal Cinsiyet Algısı Ölçeği puan ortalamaları kadınlarda  $60.9 \pm 19.8$  iken erkeklerde  $60.0 \pm 19.1$ 'dir. Öz Yeterlilik Ölçeği puan ortalamaları ise kadınlarda  $22.8 \pm 9.2$  iken, erkeklerde  $28.5 \pm 7.0$ 'dir. Cinsiyete göre, Toplumsal Cinsiyet Algısı Ölçeği puan ortalamaları bakımından anlamlı farklılık yok iken ( $p = 0.711$ ), Öz Yeterlilik Ölçeği puan ortalamaları bakımından anlamlı farklılık saptanmıştır ( $p < 0.001$ ). Ayrıca kadınlarda ve erkeklerde toplumsal cinsiyet algısı puanları ile öz yeterlilik puanları arasında anlamlı korelasyon bulunmaktadır ( $r = 0.551$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ;  $r = 0.306$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). **Sonuç:** Bu araştırma sonuçları Roman bireylerin toplumsal cinsiyet algılarının olumsuz olduğunu, erkeklerin öz yeterlilik düzeylerinin kadınlardan yüksek olduğunu, toplumsal cinsiyet algısı ile öz yeterlilik düzeylerinin birbirleriyle ilişkili olduğunu ve kadınlarda toplumsal cinsiyet algısını pek çok değişkenin anlamlı olarak etkilediğini göstermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Roman, Toplumsal Cinsiyet, Öz Yeterlilik, Türkiye.

**Introduction**

Gender is a concept that is used to distinguish the socially and culturally identified gender from biological gender, and it signifies characteristics of men and women acquired in the socialization process and within culture. This defines the socially identified roles and responsibilities of men and women and determines their positions and behaviors in society.<sup>1</sup> According to the gender schema theory that explains the development of gender roles, when the gender-specific information is processed in the schema concept that guides an individual's perceptions and is a cognitive association system, individual behaviors and qualities are grouped as "feminine" and "masculine". Once the schema is formed, individuals are expected to regulate their behaviors in a way specific to gender roles. The theory indicates that individuals are guided by schemas; in this way, they better comprehend the gender roles they have, and they are more conscious about behaving in line with the rules related to gender roles.<sup>2,3</sup> While the gender-based norms and values strengthen the differences between men and women, they also bring social inequality. In the context of gender,

gender-based discrimination is reinforced and produced again. This perception varies according to cultures and time in societies. On the other hand, many societies have socio-cultural values that distinguish men and women from each other. However, as gender has a process-based characteristic, and as gender, norms, and values can be developed and changed, they are important in terms of the things to be realized positively.<sup>4</sup>

Self-efficacy is defined as one's belief in starting and completing a task successfully in a way to have effects on the things going on around him/her. The factors that have effects on self-efficacy development include personality perceptions, family, the circle of friends, school life, self-efficacy development acquired from experiences, self-efficacy needs developed with maturity, and previous experiences.<sup>5</sup> Self-efficacy is not a genetic feature; it is a belief that develops in time and with experiences. Self-efficacy has a very important place in almost all areas of people's life. People need to have high self-efficacy beliefs in order to initiate and continue this task successfully, which has direct effects on their behaviors and performance.<sup>6</sup>

The Roma people who are densely populated in eastern European countries including Balkan states, all Europe, and in our country in the world, constitute an important ethnic group that has a unique culture.<sup>7-9</sup> While maintaining generally a reserved lifestyle, Roma people continue their life with several problems including social exclusion, poverty, unemployment, unsuitable accommodation conditions, lack of access to fundamental rights and services, and inability to benefit from them.<sup>7,9,10-16</sup> In this disadvantaged group, women's conditions such as early marriage rates, perceptions about women's main duties as housework and taking care of children, not seeing women as decision-makers at home, and low education and employment rates are considered to be the reflections of their gender roles and self-efficacy. These factors make the life of these groups of women even more difficult in this disadvantaged group.<sup>7,8,10,17,18</sup>

In recent years, there has been an emphasis on the need for rehabilitation and education studies about women in issues such as preventing violence against women, strengthening women for struggling against gender inequality and changing the gender perceptions of both men and women in an egalitarian way worldwide.<sup>19,20</sup> For this reason, identification of gender and self-efficacy of the Roma people within their borders surrounded by subjective values about world, life, and human, is an important step in understanding the people in this group.

The literature includes studies that investigated the Roma people's gender perceptions in the world.<sup>10,14,17,18,21-24</sup> However, only one study in Turkey was found to have evaluated the Roma people's gender perceptions.<sup>25</sup> In addition, no studies were found to have investigated gender perception with self-efficacy in tandem. To fill this gap in the literature, this study aims to evaluate gender perceptions and self-efficacy of the Roma people living in Adana, a city located in the south of Turkey.

### **Methods**

This study adopted a descriptive and cross-sectional design and aimed to identify gender perceptions and self-efficacy of the Roma people. The study was conducted in Yüreğir,

a town of Adana where the Roma people are densely populated, between 15<sup>th</sup> of September, 2019 and 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2020. Adana is a city located in the south of Turkey. Being the center of traditional agriculture, industry, and trade in the Southeastern Anatolia, Adana is one of the cities that receives a lot of immigrants in Turkey. Yüreğir is one of the poorest towns of Adana where immigration and immigration-related issues are experienced the most. This town includes many ethnic communities including the Roma. Interaction among these ethnic communities is quite limited.

Almost all of the Roma participants in this study lived in Yüreğir, Adana, and worked as traditional agricultural laborers or ironmongers. Another common profession among the Roma people is the garbage collector. In addition, some Roma people go to other cities to work as seasonal agricultural workers in summers and come back to Adana when summer is over.

The target population of the study was 900 Roma people aged between 18 and 60 who lived in the Yüreğir town of Adana. The sample size was calculated using the sample with a known population approach. The minimum sample size to represent this Roma population was calculated as 270 using a 95% confidence interval and a 5% margin of error.<sup>26</sup> The sample selection was performed using simple random sampling by using random numbers tables on a computer, and 270 people were accessed. All Roma individuals who were aged between 18 and 60 and who accepted to participate in the study were involved in the study. Those who had communication difficulties were excluded.

Data were collected through the Socio-demographic Form, the Gender Perception Scale (GPS), and the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES).

The Socio-demographic Form that consisted of 15 questions was prepared by the researchers in line with the related literature and aimed to collect data about the participants' socio-demographic features.<sup>6,27,28</sup>

The Gender Perception Scale is a self-report

assessment tool that aims to assess adult people's gender roles and perceptions. The scale was developed by Altınova and Duyan (2013). The 25 items in the scale are responded on a 5-point Likert Scale that included the options of "I totally agree" (5), "I agree" (4), "I am not sure" (3), "I disagree" (2), and "I totally disagree" (1). Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the one-factor scale was found as 0.87. While 10 items were positive, 15 items were negative. The negative items are scored reversely. Items 2, 4, 6, 9, 10, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, and 25 are negative and thus scored reversely. Hence, the total score ranges between 25 and 125, and higher scores indicate more positive gender perceptions.<sup>1</sup> This study found the Cronbach's alpha value of the scale as 0.873.

The General Self-Efficacy Scale was first developed by Ralf Schwarzer and Matthias Jerusalem in Germany in 1979. The scale aims to make a general assessment of the perceived self-efficacy and consist of 20 items. The items were decreased to 10 with the revisions made in 1981, and the scale was put into final form in 1995.<sup>29</sup> The scale developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem was adapted to more than 25 languages. Turkish adaptation was performed by Aypay (2010) with a total number of 693 people from three different universities. Aypay reported the internal consistency coefficients of the scale components as  $\alpha = 0.79$  and  $\alpha = 0.63$ . Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency was found 0.83 in total. The test-retest reliability coefficient of the scale was  $r = 0.80$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . The results indicated that the Turkish form was valid and reliable.<sup>30</sup> All the items in this 4-point Likert scale (Not at all true =1; Exactly true=4) are scored positively. Total scores range between 10 and 40. Higher scores indicate higher self-efficacy.<sup>30</sup> Filling in the scale takes 5 minutes. The Cronbach's alpha value was found 0.955 in this study.

Data were collected by the researchers via face-to-face interviews in the participants' homes. Data collection took about 15 to 20 minutes.

The data obtained in the study were analyzed using the SPSS 21.00 (Statistical Package of Social Science) program. The normality of the continuous variables was tested using the Shapiro Wilk test. As the variables met the

normal distribution assumptions, Student's t-test was utilized for the comparison of the socio-demographic features, the GPS, and the GSES mean scores according to gender. The analysis of the linear relationship between the GPS score and the GSES scores was calculated using the Pearson correlation coefficients; the differences of these relationships were compared with two correlation coefficients. Multiple Linear Regression analysis was used for the analysis of the factors affecting gender perception in men and women. Model explanatory coefficients were stated as R<sup>2</sup>. The comparison of the categorical variables according to gender was performed using the Chi-square test, and if the expected value was less than 5, Fisher Exact test was utilized. Statistical significance was taken 0,05.

The study was conducted in accordance with the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. Ethics committee approval was obtained from Osmaniye Korkut Ata University (2018/9-1 dated 20.07.2018). Institution permission was obtained from the Governorship of Adana. In addition, the participants' written and verbal consent was obtained through the Informed Consent Form after they were informed about the purpose of the study.

## **Results**

This study was conducted with 270 Roma people, 55.6 % (n=150) women and 44.4% (n=120) men.

Table 1 demonstrates the findings about the comparison of Roma men and women in terms of their socio-demographic characteristics. While the average age and average income were found to demonstrate differences according to gender ( $p < 0.05$ ), no significant differences were found in terms of the marriage duration ( $p > 0.05$ ). There were significant differences between men and women in terms of the perceived income level ratios ( $p < 0.001$ ). Hence, the ratio of women who had low income level perceptions was higher ( $p < 0.001$ ), and the ratio of men who had a medium income level perception was higher ( $p < 0.001$ ). The number of single men was higher in comparison to women ( $p < 0.001$ ).

**Table 1.** Socio-demographic features of the Roma People

		<b>Women</b>		<b>Men</b>		<b>Total</b>		
		<b>Mean ± SD (Min-Max)</b>		<b>Mean ± SD (Min-Max)</b>		<b>Mean ± SD (Min-Max)</b>		<b>P<sub>a</sub></b>
<b>Age</b>		35.4±13.5 (18-70)		41.0±13.9 (17-70)		37.9±14 (17-70)		<b>&lt;0.001</b>
<b>Income level</b>		377.8±239.27 (200-2000)		870.6±961.7 (200-4000)		544.7±634.3 (200-4000)		<b>&lt;0.001</b>
<b>Duration of Marriage</b>		17.0±12.8 (1-53)		19.8±12.6 (1-53)		18.2±12.7 (1-53)		0.094
		n	%	n	%	n	%	<b>P<sub>b</sub></b>
<b>Age group</b>	18-25	49	32.7	18	15.0	67	24.8	<b>0.007</b>
	26-35	39	26.0	26	21.7	65	24.1	
	36-45	29	19.3	34	28.3	63	23.3	
	46-55	19	12.7	22	18.3	41	15.2	
	56 and over	14	9.3	20	16.7	34	12.6	
<b>Income Level Perception</b>	Low	138	92.0	84	70.0	222	82.2	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
	Medium	9	6.0	30	25.0	39	14.4	
	Good	3	2.0	6	5.0	9	3.3	
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married	148	98.7	105	87.5	253	93.7	<b>&lt;0.001*</b>
	Single	2	1.3	15	12.5	17	6.3	
<b>Education Level</b>	Illiterate	68	45.3	22	18.3	90	33.3	<b>&lt;0.001</b>
	Literate	22	14.7	16	13.3	38	14.1	
	Primary School	47	31.3	50	41.7	97	35.9	
	Secondary School	9	6.0	15	12.5	24	8.9	
	High School	4	2.7	17	14.2	21	7.8	
<b>Working</b>	Yes	3	2.0	74	61.7	77	28.5	<b>&lt;0.001*</b>
	No	147	98.0	46	38.3	193	71.5	
<b>Family type</b>	Nuclear	78	52.0	81	67.5	159	58.9	<b>0.010</b>
	Extended	72	48.0	39	32.5	111	41.1	
<b>Social security</b>	Yes	103	68.7	64	53.3	167	61.9	<b>0.010</b>
	No	47	31.3	56	46.7	103	38.1	
<b>Number of children</b>	None	12	8.0	19	15.8	31	11.5	<b>0.022</b>
	1-2	59	39.3	31	25.8	90	33.3	
	3 and more	79	52.7	70	58.3	149	55.2	

pa:Student's t test. pb:Ki-Kare test \*Fisher Exact test



Education level indicated differences according to gender ( $p < 0.001$ ). While the ratio of illiterate participants was higher in women ( $p < 0.001$ ), the ratio of primary school graduates was higher in men ( $p < 0.001$ ). The ratio of working was higher in men compared to women ( $p < 0.001$ ). Comparisons about the other socio-demographic characteristics are demonstrated in Table 1.

men ( $r = 0.306$ ;  $p = 0.001$ ). The relationships calculated between the GPS mean scores and the GSES mean scores demonstrated differences according to genders ( $p = 0.014$ ). The relationship levels were higher in women than men.

**Table 2.** Distribution of the Roma People’s Gender Perceptions and General Self-Efficacy Scale Mean Scores

	Women		Men		Total		p
	Mean ± SD	Min-Max	Mean ± SD	Min-Max	Mean ± SD	Min-Max	
<b>Gender</b>	60.9±19.8	25-112	60.0±19.1	31-108	60.5±19.5	25-112	0.711
<b>Self-efficacy</b>	22.8±9.2	10-40	28.5±7.0	10-40	25.4±8.7	10-40	<0.001

p: Student’s t test

Table 2 displays the GPS and GSES mean scores of the participants. While there was a significant difference in terms of the GSES mean scores according to gender ( $p < 0.001$ ), no significant differences were detected between the GPS mean scores ( $p < 0.711$ ). Self-efficacy levels of men were found to be higher than those of women ( $p < 0.001$ ).

Table 4 displays the Multiple Linear Regression analysis results of the factors affecting gender perception. Hence, while the women’s GPS score was found to increase 0.748 unit by the GSES score, 0.017 unit by the income level, 8.696 unit by being literate, 9.033 unit by being primary school graduate, and 13.778 unit by being secondary school graduate; it was found to decrease 16.595 unit by having no children and 6.906 unit by having 1-2 children. Variables such as age, graduating from high school, marriage duration, having a nuclear family, and having no social security were found to have no effects on the gender perception scale scores. These variables explain 43,1% of the gender perception, and the model generated was found to be statistically significant ( $F: 6.818$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). Being illiterate, having 3 or more children, and having no job variables were excluded from the model.

GPS and GSES correlations of the participants according to the gender variable are displayed in Table 3. There was a positive, medium level, linear relationship between the GPS mean scores, and GSES mean scores of the participating women ( $r = 0.551$ ;

**Table 3.** Roma People’s Gender Perception and General Self-Efficacy Scale Correlations according to the Gender Variable

	Gender x Self-efficacy	
<b>Women (n:150)</b>	$r = 0.551$ ; $p < 0.001$	$Z = 2.45$
<b>Man (n:120)</b>	$r = 0.306$ ; $p = 0.001$	$p_c = 0.014$

p: Pearson Correlation, pc: Comparison of two correlation coefficients

$p < 0.001$ ). There was a positive, weak, and linear relationship between the GPS and GSES mean scores of the participating

**Table 4.** Factors affecting Gender Perception according to gender

	Women					Man				
	Non-standardized		Standardized	t	p	Non-standardized		Standardized	t	p
	B	Std. Error	Beta			B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	30.119	7.066		4.263	<0.001	35.557	21.498		1.654	0.106
Self-efficacy	0.748	0.165	0.361	4.529	<0.001	0.085	0.415	0.032	0.205	0.839
Age	0.366	0.262	0.265	1.396	0.166	1.042	0.617	0.872	1.689	0.099
Illiterate						-18.080	10.718	-0.383	-1.687	0.099
Literate	8.696	4.036	0.176	2.154	0.033	-16.447	10.154	-0.271	-1.620	0.113
Primary School	9.033	3.502	0.220	2.580	0.011					
Secondary school	13.778	6.536	0.172	2.108	0.037	4.224	6.417	0.104	0.658	0.514
High school	6.409	11.211	0.044	0.572	0.569	-5.733	8.780	-0.105	-0.653	0.517
No children	-16.595	5.717	-0.244	-2.903	0.004	14.741	18.742	0.175	0.787	0.436
Number of children 1-2	-6.906	3.127	-0.178	-2.209	0.029	9.570	7.250	0.259	1.320	0.194
Income Level	0.017	0.006	0.212	2.839	0.005	0.000	0.003	-0.028	-0.166	0.869
Duration of Marriage	-0.426	0.293	-0.289	-1.450	0.150	-0.636	0.577	-0.539	-1.104	0.276
Family Type (Nuclear)	2.008	2.932	0.054	0.685	0.495	-0.958	5.297	-0.029	-0.181	0.857
Social security (None)	-0.921	3.140	-0.022	-0.293	0.770	0.761	5.161	0.024	0.147	0.884
Working (no)						-3.836	5.208	-0.122	-0.737	0.465

## Discussion

This study aims to evaluate the gender perceptions and self-efficacy levels of the Roma people living in Turkey. The literature includes only one study on the gender perceptions of the Roma people in Turkey.<sup>25</sup> However, no studies were found to have investigated the gender perception and self-efficacy of the Roma people in tandem. The literature documents the fact that all over the world the Roma people have disadvantaged life conditions and are discriminated.<sup>7,9,12-15,31-33</sup> Although the education level of the participants in this study is generally low, education level was found to display differences by gender. Of all the participants, 45.2% of women and 18.3% of

men never went to school. The majority of the participating Roma people were unemployed. On the other hand, the working ratios of men were higher in comparison to women.

An analysis of the studies conducted with the Roma people in the world and Turkey shows that the study conducted by Coe and Cvorovic (2017) investigated the health of Roma women living in Serbia and found that the majority of women never went to school, had poor reading skills, had an insufficient financial situation, and 50.1% of the women stated their economic condition as "very poor".<sup>11</sup> Another study that investigated gender and self-reported health in Roma women reported that the education level of the Roma people was low, the duration

of schooling was 4.95 years on average, and men went to school for longer periods than women.<sup>10</sup> Curkowska and Kocze (2013) also reported that the Roma women had low education levels; while only 2% of non-Roma women never received formal education; 18% of the Roma men and 28% of the Roma women never received formal education.<sup>14</sup>

The study conducted by Bingöl and Büyükkak (2012) investigated the socio-economic condition of the Roma people living in Kocaeli, Turkey and found that 41% were illiterate and 18.5 % never went to school. The study also highlighted that 65.8% of the participating Roma people did not have a job with income.<sup>34</sup> The study conducted by Ekuklu et al. (2003) reported that the education level of the Roma people living in Edirne, Turkey was significantly different from those who were not Roma and added that the Roma people were more disadvantaged. The same study stated that generally the majority of the Roma women were housewives, and unemployment rates were very high among the Roma people.<sup>35</sup> Another study that investigated the Roma people living in Samsun reported that 25.1% were literate, 19.2% were illiterate, and 0.15% had undergraduate/postgraduate degree. The study also highlighted that 50.2% of the Roma people were unemployed, and 87.6% of those who were employed had uninsured employment.<sup>36</sup>

Similar studies in Turkey and other countries reported that the education level in the Roma community was insufficient and economic conditions were bad, and women were affected by these factors more.<sup>7,9,13,31,37</sup> The findings of this study demonstrating the characteristics of Roma women about education and employment are in line with the literature.

When the participating Roma women's GPS mean scores were analyzed according to the gender, the women's mean score was found  $60.98 \pm 19.88$ , and the men's mean score was found  $60.09 \pm 19.1$ . These results did not indicate significant differences by gender; both

genders were found to have negative gender perceptions. Roma people constitute an ethnic minority that has the largest population in Europe.<sup>7,8</sup> Hence, most of the studies in the literature seem to be conducted with the Roma people living in Europe. The literature indicates that the Roma family culture has characteristics such as being closely associated with the culture, continuing the traditions from past to present, and having stereotyped patriarchal features. In the study conducted with the Roma people living in Italy, Pivetti et al. (2017) reported that the traditional Roma families had a completely patriarchal nature; women had a subordinate position; there was a clear division of labor between men and women; women's duty was traditionally considered to be dealing with home and family; Roma girls acquired their adult duties around the age of 11; and men had a pioneering role for a living.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, Casey (2014) conducted a study on Roma traditions in England and found that the ethnic culture was still kept alive. Men and women are known to have differentiated hierarchical roles. Young girls are expected to stay at home with their mother and socialize about taking care of their siblings and learning how to be a good Roma wife. Women were reported to have a submissive role. According to the same study, women have weak roles in making decisions and taking responsibilities.<sup>18</sup> Another study conducted by Cvorovic & James (2018) with Roma people in Serbia also indicated that men had a dominating role in making decisions in the family, women had a subordinate position (77%), and the majority of them lived with the extended family of the men. The study also reported that most women saw Roma marriage as a normal traditional practice that has characteristics such as getting married at an early age, having a child at an early age, and having a low education level. According to 71.4% of the Roma men, girls can have prearranged marriage, which is a good Roma tradition.<sup>10</sup>

According to the gender schema theory, starting from the first years of their lives, individuals distinguish people, things, and behaviors as



masculine and feminine. This distinction is caused by cultural norms. Accordingly, there are behavior patterns expected from men and women in line with the cultural structure of the society. Individuals who are raised in cultures with significant differences between men and women understand the importance of the gender roles and stereotyped judgments; they act in line with the schemas shaped by the culture.<sup>3</sup> Patriarchal features of the Romani culture mentioned above show that the schemas are significant in this society, and this is reflected in the Romani society.

In the report entitled "Roma women in nine European Union Member States" by the European Union (EU) (2019), it is stated that Roma women were socially more disadvantaged than Roma men, and women were exposed to disproportional negative effects. In addition, it is also emphasized that there is an important pressure in maintaining traditional gender roles.<sup>7</sup> Some other studies in the literature also emphasize the results regarding the Roma men's and women's gender perceptions and inequality.<sup>14,21-24</sup> In Turkey, only one study was found to have investigated the gender roles of Roma people. In the qualitative study that aimed to identify the gender roles in the Roma people living in Sulukule, Çubukçu (2011) reported that the Roma people maintained their life in a patriarchal system, and women were exposed to real poverty and deprivation in the picture of Sulukule where both patriarchal system and other power relationships demonstrated the traditional gender roles. Women, men, and children in this region generally spoke loudly, and conflicts and tensions were experienced openly and directly through words and behaviors. However, it was reported that Roma women did not perceive wife-beating as systematic violence against women or as behavior that humiliated or oppressed women. Despite all these, men and women living in the region claimed that the Roma culture included equality of men and women.<sup>25</sup>

It was found that neither Roma men nor women

participating in this study had egalitarian gender perceptions. This finding reflects the views of both genders about their positions, tasks, and rights that are not parallel to human rights. These negative gender perception results are in line with the literature. When compared to other ethnic groups in Turkey, the Roma women seem to be in a more egalitarian environment, be respected, and express themselves better. However, the study results were proven to be different from what is observed, which might be related to the cultural behaviors perceived as normal by the Roma people.

This study found the GSES mean scores as  $22.88 \pm 9.25$  in women and  $28.58 \pm 7.02$  in men. Besides, a significant difference was found between Roma people's GSES mean scores according to gender, and men's self-efficacy was found to be higher than that of women. No studies in our country investigated the self-efficacy of the Roma people.

Self-efficacy is related to individuals' perceived abilities rather than the abilities they have. Self-efficacy is reported to be affected by previous experiences, indirect experiences, and positive feedback.<sup>38</sup> Besides, self-efficacy is reported to focus on the struggle against difficulties, choice of activities, coping, and performance.<sup>6</sup> Higher self-efficacy could have positive effects on many areas such as the individual's success, motivation, health status, quality of life, and many other fields.<sup>28</sup> In the qualitative study conducted with Roma women in Balkans, Janevic reported that women's self-efficacy and self-respect were low, which was reported that it could be associated with exposure to discrimination.<sup>39</sup> Yıldırım (2015) stated that Roma women were exposed to discrimination in their daily life, and ethnic discrimination caused negative effects on their self-respect.<sup>40</sup> Cukrowska & Kocze (2013) stated that due to the gender roles, Roma women were exposed to ethnic discrimination more than men.<sup>14</sup> The results concerning women's self-efficacy in this study could be related to their traditional

patriarchal life where they have a subordinate position.

The present study detected a positive, linear relationship between the GPS and GSES scores of both genders; in other words, the self-efficacy level increased as gender perceptions increased positively. On the other hand, relationships demonstrated differences according to gender, and the relationship level was higher in women compared to men. The multiple regression analysis of this study also showed that self-efficacy, income level, and education level variables affected the gender perception significantly.

Özpulat (2016) investigated gender perception and self-efficacy among university students and found that the variables of gender, place of living, and economic condition had important effects on gender perceptions; a statistically significant relationship was reported between self-efficacy levels and gender perceptions.<sup>28</sup> In a similar vein, Altuntaş ve Altınova (2015) investigated gender perceptions in three different regions of Ankara; the results showed that gender perception was negative in the town that had low income; gender perception was found to increase with the increase in the socio-economic level, and men had more conservative gender roles in comparison to women.<sup>27</sup> Raising awareness, increasing education level, providing employment opportunities in both genders, and improving the living conditions seem to be long-term goals in strengthening gender perceptions; however, the findings obtained in this study indicate the necessity for the improvement of these conditions.

### Limitations

This study has a number of limitations. The study was conducted with the Roma people living only in Adana; the results could be generalized only to this group. Since both scales used in the study were self-report scales, responses reflect the subjective perceptions of the participating individuals. In addition, due to the cross-sectional nature of the study, no causal relationships could be mentioned.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

This study revealed that the Roma people had negative gender perceptions; men's self-efficacy was higher than that of women; gender perceptions and self-efficacy levels were associated; and women's gender perceptions were affected by many variables. In line with the results of this study, it is recommended to conduct more advanced studies in Turkey with larger sample groups and different methods.

### Acknowledgements

### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

### Funding

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

### Author contributions

AIM and EG designed the study. EG and AIM collected data. EG analyzed the data. AIM and EG prepared the manuscript. All authors approved the final version for submission.

### References

1. Altınova HH, Duyan V. (2013). Toplumsal cinsiyet algısı ölçeğinin geçerlik güvenilirlik çalışması. *Toplum ve Sosyal Hizmet* 2013; 24 (12): 9-22.
2. Bem SL. Gender schema theory: a cognitive account of sex typing. *Psychological Review*, 1981; 88(4):354-364.
3. Çelik N. Toplumsal cinsiyet ile ilgili kuramlar. In: F Başar, editör. *Toplumsal Cinsiyet*. Ankara/Turkey: Akademisyen Yayıncılık; 2020. P. 14-15.
4. Sezgin D. Toplumsal cinsiyet perspektifinde sağlık ve tıbbileştirme. *SAD* 2015; 18 (1): 153-186.
5. Jimenez JA, Mills PJ. Behavioral Medicine. In: VS Ramachandran, editör. *Encyclopedia of Human Behavior*. New York: Academic Press. 2012. p. 314.

6. Uysal İ. Akademisyenlerin Genel Öz-Yeterlik İnançları: AİBÜ Eğitim Fakültesi Örneği. Trakya Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi 2013; 13 (2): 144-151.
7. European Union 2019. Roma women in nine EU Member States. Available at; <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2019/roma-women-nine-eu-member-states>.
8. European Commission 2014. Roma health report: Health status of the Roma population. Data collection in the member states of the European Union. Brussels, Belgium: European Union, Matrix Knowledge. Available at; [https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/default/files/social\\_determinants/docs/2014\\_roma\\_health\\_report\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/default/files/social_determinants/docs/2014_roma_health_report_en.pdf)
9. Çetin BI. Kimlikleriyle Romanlar: Türkiye'deki Roman vatandaşlara yönelik Sosyal İçerme Ulusal Strateji Belgesi ve Birinci Aşama Eylem Planı'nın değerlendirilmesi. Yönetim ve Ekonomi Araştırmaları Dergisi 2017; 15 (1): 85-112.
10. Cvorovic J, James SA. John Henryism, gender and self-reported health among Roma/Gypsies in Serbia. *Cult Med Psychiatry* 2018; 42: 295-314.
11. Coe K, Cvorovic J. The health of Romanian Gypsy women in Serbia. *Health Care for Women Int.* 2017; 38(4): 409-422.
12. Janevic T, Osypuk T, Stojanovski K, Jankovic J, Gundersen D, Rogers M. Associations between racial discrimination, smoking during pregnancy and low birthweight among Roma. *Eur J Public Health* 2017; 27 (3): 410-415.
13. Kotrotsiou S, Gourgoulanis S, Gouva M, Skenteris. Age and gender as determinants of psychological health for Roma people in Greece. *International Journal of Caring Sciences* 2014; 7(3): 873-881.
14. Cukrowska E, Kocze E. Interplay between gender and ethnicity: Exposing structural disparities of Romani women. Analysis of the UNDP/World Bank/EC regional Roma survey data. Roma Inclusion Working Papers. UNDP, Bratislava. 2013.
15. UNDP. (2012). The health situation of Roma communities: Analysis of the data from the UNDP/World Bank/EC Regional Roma Survey 2011. Roma Inclusion Working Papers.
16. İlik B. Türkiye' de Roman yurttaşların sorunları ve çözüme ilişkin çalışmalar. Romanların Yoğun Olarak Yaşadığı Alanlarda Sosyal İçermenin Desteklenmesi Operasyonu için Teknik Destek Projesi (SİROMA), Ankara, Turkey. 2016
17. Pivetti M, Melotti G, Bonomoca M. An exploration of social representations of the Roma woman in Italy and Brazil: Psychosocial anchoring to emotional reactions. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 2017; 58: 12-22.
18. Casey R. 'Caravan wives' and 'decent girls': Gypsy-Traveller women's perceptions of gender, culture and morality in the North of England. *Cult Health Sex* 2014; 16(7): 806-819.
19. Kurtuldu ÖR. Toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizliği ve kadına karşı aile içi şiddetle mücadele kampanyaları; Sabancı Vakfı "İş Dünyası Aile İçi Şiddete Karşı" Projesi Analizi. Marmara Üniversitesi Kadın ve Toplumsal Cinsiyet Araştırmaları Dergisi, 2018; 2(2): 97-110.
20. ILO 2019. Çalışma Yaşamında Kadınlara Yönelik Şiddet ve Tacizle Mücadele. Available at: [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---europe/--ro-geneva/---ilo-ankara/documents/publication/wcms\\_731371.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---europe/--ro-geneva/---ilo-ankara/documents/publication/wcms_731371.pdf)
21. Bartos SC. Romani women: The European Union's most stigmatized Minority. Claremont-UC Undergraduate Research Conference on the European Union 2017; 1(3): 1-12.

22. Grigorovic M. Institutionalizing the Intersectionality between Gender and Ethnicity in Romania: The Case of Roma Women. ( Master Thesis) FACULTY OF LAW Lund University,2014.Available at: <http://lup.lub.lu.se/luur/download?func=downloadFile&recordId=4538660&-fileId=4647711>
23. Crowley N, Genova A, Sansonetti S. Gender Equality, Empowerment of Roma Women within the European Framework of National Roma Inclusion Strategies. 2013. Available at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2013/493019/IPOL-FEMM\\_ET\(2013\)493019\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2013/493019/IPOL-FEMM_ET(2013)493019_EN.pdf)
24. Voicu M, Popescu R. Roma women-known and unknown, family life and the position of the Woman in the Roma communities.2009. Available at: [https://www.euromanet.eu/upload/80/83/Research\\_Report\\_Roma\\_Women\\_engl\\_09\\_OSI-Romania\\_.pdf](https://www.euromanet.eu/upload/80/83/Research_Report_Roma_Women_engl_09_OSI-Romania_.pdf)
25. Çubukçu SU. Mekanın İzdüşümünde "Toplumsal Cinsiyet": Sulukule mahallesi ve Romanlar. İ.Ü. Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi 2011; 44: 83-106.
26. Cochran WG. Sampling techniques (3rd ed.). New York: John Wiley & Sons.1977.
27. Altuntaş O, Altunova HH. Toplumsal cinsiyet algısı ile sosyo-ekonomik değişkenler arasındaki ilişkinin belirlenmesi. Turkish Studies 2015; 10(6): 83-100.
28. Özpuat F. Üniversite öğrencilerinin özyeterlilik düzeyi ile toplumsal cinsiyet algısı ilişkisi: Beyşehir örneği. International Journal of Human Sciences 2016; 13(1), 1222-1232.
29. Schwarzer R. Jerusalem M. Generalized self-efficacy scale. In J. Weinman, S. Wright, & M. Johnston (Eds.), Measures in health psychology: A user's portfolio. Causal and control beliefs. Windsor, UK: NFER-Nelson.1995. p. 35-37
30. Aypay A. The Adaptation Study of General Self-Efficacy (GSE) Scale to Turkish. Inonu University Journal of The Faculty of Education 2010; 11(2): 113-131.
31. Eskiocak M, Akbaşak D. Edirne'de Romanların sağlığı: Sağlığın sosyal belirleyicileri ve sağlık durumlarına yönelik bulgular. Turk J Public Health 2017; 15(2):136-149.
32. Tanrıverdi G, Ünüvar R, Yalçın M, et al. Çanakkale'de yaşayan Romanların Purnell'in kültürel yeterlilik modeli ile değerlendirilmesi. Anadolu Hemşirelik ve Sağlık Bilimleri Dergisi 2012; 15(4): 244-253.
33. Kolukırık S. Sosyolojik perspektiften Türkiye Çingeneleri: İzmir Çingeneleri üzerine bir araştırma. International Journal of Human Sciences 2006; 3(1):1-24.
34. Bingöl Y, Büyükkakın T. A Socio-Economic Survey on Gypsies in Kocaeli, Turkey. Paradoks Economics, Sociology and Policy Journal 2012; 8(2): 5-23.
35. Ekuklu G, Berberoğlu U, Eskiocak M, Saltık A. Utilization of primary health care services by Turkish gypsies and members of the general population at Muradiye Health Unit District in Edirne, Turkey. Yonsei Med J 2003; 44(3): 414-23.
36. Çelik K, Yüce Tar Y. Samsun'da Yaşayan Romanlar: Sınırlı Sosyal Hakla Yaşam Kurma. Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi 2015; 8(36): 621-35.
37. Sivic, S. Social exclusion as a determining health factor of the Roma population. Med Arh 2013; 67(1): 60-62.
38. Yıldırım F, İlhan İÖ. Genel Özyeterlilik Ölçeği Türkçe Formunun Geçerlik ve Güvenilirlik Çalışması. Türk Psikiyatri Dergisi 2010; 21 (4): 301-308.
39. Janevic T, Sripad P, Bradley E, Dimitrievska V. "There's no kind of respect here" A qualitative study of racism and access to maternal health care among Romani women in the Balkans. Int J Equity Health 2011; 10(53): 2-12.
40. Yıldırım M, Murat D, Aca Z. Algılanmış etnik ayrımcılık deneyimleri ile Türkiye'de Roman kadınlar. Afyon Kocatepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi 2015; 17(2): 29-47.