

Examining the Relationship Between Gender Equality Attitudes, Gender Role Stress, and Fear of Being Evaluated Negatively

Kübra Özsat¹, Serdal Işıktas², Hülya Şenol³

¹MSc, Cyprus Health and Social Sciences University, Cyprus

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-2237-771X

Email: kubra.ozsat@kstu.edu.tr

²Assoc. Prof. Dr, Cyprus Health and Social Sciences University, Cyprus

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-7678-0494

Email: serdal.isiktas@kstu.edu.tr

³Asst. Prof. Dr, Cyprus Health and Social Sciences University, Cyprus

ORCID ID: 0000-0003-1701-8103

Email: hulya.senol@kstu.edu.tr

Abstract

The study aimed to examine the relationship between gender equality attitudes of female university students and their gender role stress and fear of being evaluated negatively. The universe of the study consists of female university students studying in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in the 2021-2022 academic year. 388 female university students selected by purposeful sampling method were included in the study. Demographic Information Form, Gender Equality Scale (GES), Female Gender Role Stress Scale (FGRSS), and The Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (BFNE) were used to collect data. In the study, it was found that there were no significant correlations between fear of being evaluated negatively and gender equality attitudes. There was a significant negative correlation between gender role stress and gender attitudes and there was a positive and significant correlation between gender role stress and fear of being evaluated negatively.

Keywords: Gender, gender equality, gender role stress, fear of negative evaluation

Introduction

While sex is defined as biological characteristics that characterize masculinity and femininity, gender is expressed as social roles attributed to genders (Jackson & Mohr, 2016). While gender (gender) characterizes the wishes and expectations of how women and men should behave and think in the society in which the individual is included, it is also psychologically related to how the individual evaluates and perceives herself/himself as a woman or a man (Nadal, 2019; Hogge & Blankenship, 2020). In this context, when the difference between sex and gender concepts is examined, it is clear that sex is a biological concept, while gender is a psychological and sociological concept (Skarpenes & Nilsen, 2014; Ferlatte et al., 2019). Although it is stated that gender roles negatively affect both men and women psychologically and socially, It is seen that female individuals are more affected by gender perceptions (Schrauf, 2017; D'Agata & Holden, 2018). It is stated that in societies where gender inequality is dominant, anxiety, fear of being evaluated negatively, and gender role stress are observed in female individuals who are exposed to this inequality (Sheehan & Dooley, 2013; Gimpelson & Treisman, 2018; Chan, Thompson & Yu, 2019). In this context, the aim of this study was to examine the gender equality attitudes of female university students, the effects of these attitudes on gender role stress, and the fear of being evaluated negatively. The subproblems of this study were the determination of the differences in individuals' gender equality attitudes, gender role stress, and fear of being evaluated negatively in terms of sociodemographic variables and the determination of the relationship between gender equality attitudes, gender role stress and fear of being evaluated negatively.

Method

In the study, the relational screening model, which is a quantitative research technique, the and cross-sectional research design, which is a descriptive research type, were used. The universe of the study consists of female university students studying in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in the 2021-2022 academic year. 388 female university students selected by purposeful sampling method were included in the study. Demographic Information Form, GES, FGRSS, and BFNE were used to collect data. The reliability of the responses of the participants to the Gender Equality Scale, the Women's Gender Role Stress Scale, and The Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (BFNE) were tested with the Cronbach Alpha test. The calculated alpha values were found to be 0.932 for the Gender Equality Scale, 0.988 for the Women's Gender Role

Stress Scale, and 0.802 for the Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale. The distribution of the participants according to their socio-demographic characteristics was determined by frequency analysis and descriptive statistics were used to evaluate the scale scores.

Results

Table 1. Distribution of female university students according to their socio-demographic characteristics

	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Family type		
Nuclear	310	80,10
Large	39	10,08
Broken	38	9,82
Sexual orientation		
Heterosexual	315	81,40
Bisexual	37	9,56
Homosexual	14	3,62
Other	21	5,43
Getting any psychological support		
Yes	116	29,97
No	271	70,03

The distribution of female university students participating in the research according to their socio-demographic characteristics is given in Table 1. When Table 1 is examined, it was seen that 80.10% of the participants had a nuclear family, 10.08% had a large family and 9.82% had a broken family. It was determined that 81.40% of the female university students included in the study expressed their sexual orientation as heterosexual, 9.56% as bisexual, and 3.62% as homosexual. It was determined that 29.97% of female university students received psychological support in the past or currently.

Table 2. GES, FGRSS, and BFNE scores of female university students

	n	\bar{x}	s	Min	Max
Accepting the superiority of men	387	9,95	4,16	8	40
Accepting that women are addicted to men	387	7,17	3,39	5	25
Female Gender Role Stress Scale	387	88,83	21,89	20	100
Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale	387	29,39	7,57	11	55

In Table 2. GES, FGRSS, and BFNE scores of female university students are presented. When Table 2. is examined, it is seen that female university students obtained an average score of $9,95 \pm 4,16$ from the subdimension of accepting superiority of men, $7,17 \pm 3,39$ from the subdimension of accepting that women are addicted to men. It was determined that the participants got an average of $88,83 \pm 21,89$ points from the FGRSS. It was determined that female university students included in the study got an average of $29,39 \pm 7,57$ points from the BFNE.

Table 3. Comparison of the GES, FGRSS, and BFNE scores of female university students according to their family type

	Family type	n	\bar{x}	s	M	SO	X ²	p	Difference
Accepting the superiority of men	Nuclear	310	9,48	3,15	8	183,75	18,209	0,000*	1-2
	Large	39	12,51	7,19	10	247,35			
	Broken	38	11,11	5,91	9	222,86			
Accepting that women are addicted to men	Nuclear	310	6,79	2,98	5	181,93	25,770	0,000*	1-2
	Large	39	9,38	4,69	8	265,24			
	Broken	38	7,97	4,00	7	219,34			
Gender Role Stress Scale	Nuclear	310	89,49	21,18	100	199,62	6,924	0,031*	1-2
	Large	39	87,05	22,37	97	154,63			
	Broken	38	85,26	26,81	100	188,58			
Negative Evaluation Fear Scale	Nuclear	310	29,66	7,55	31	198,44	4,634	0,099	
	Large	39	27,13	6,90	27	157,60			
	Broken	38	29,55	8,14	31	195,12			

* $p < 0,05$

The Kruskal-Wallis H test results regarding the comparison of the GES, FGRSS, and BFNE scores of female university students according to family type are presented in table 3. It was determined that there was a statistically significant difference between the scores of the female university students from the sub-dimensions of accepting the superiority of men, and accepting that women are addicted to men according to their family type ($p < 0.05$). The scores of the students with nuclear families obtained from the sub-dimensions of accepting the superiority of men, and accepting that women are addicted to men are lower than the scores of the students with large families. A statistically significant difference was found between the FGRSS scores of female university students according to their family type ($p < 0.05$). The FGRSS scores of the students with a nuclear family were higher than those with an extended family. It was observed that there was no statistically significant difference between the BFNE scores of female university students according to their family type. ($p > 0.05$).

Table 4. Comparison of the GES, FGRSS, and BFNE scores of female university students according to their sexual orientation

	Sexual orientation	n	\bar{x}	s	M	SO	X ²	p	Difference
Accepting the superiority of men	Heterosexual	315	9,70	3,89	8	188,48	14,835	0,002*	1-4
	Bisexual	37	9,59	3,13	8	196,86			2-4
	Homosexual	14	12,07	7,77	8	191,32			3-4
	Other	21	12,81	5,22	11	273,50			
Accepting that women are addicted to men	Heterosexual	315	6,90	3,08	5	187,25	25,959	0,000*	1-4
	Bisexual	37	6,84	2,58	5	194,92			2-4
	Homosexual	14	8,00	5,87	5	179,21			
	Other	21	11,19	4,39	11	303,55			
Gender Role Stress Scale	Heterosexual	315	90,42	20,36	100	202,08	24,531	0,000*	1-4
	Bisexual	37	80,46	30,61	98	165,78			2-4
	Homosexual	14	96,43	7,84	100	228,07			3-4
	Other	21	74,71	24,43	80	99,76			2-3
Negative Evaluation Fear Scale	Heterosexual	315	29,59	7,24	31	196,84	6,150	0,105	
	Bisexual	37	26,14	8,51	29	154,38			
	Homosexual	14	29,36	7,54	31	193,32			
	Other	21	32,24	9,28	33	221,71			

* $p < 0,05$

Table 4 shows the results of the Kruskal-Wallis H test applied to compare the scores of the GES, FGRSS, and BFNE according to the sexual orientation of female university students. It was observed that there was a statistically significant difference between the scores of the female university students obtained from the sub-dimensions of accepting the superiority of men and accepting that women are addicted to men ($p < 0.05$). Students who define their sexual orientation as "other" had significantly higher scores from the GES in general and from the sub-dimensions of accepting the superiority of men and accepting that women are addicted to men. A statistically significant difference was found between the GES scores of female university students according to their sexual orientation ($p < 0.05$). The FGRSS scores of the students who defined their sexual orientation as "other" were found to be low. In addition, students with bisexual sexual orientation have lower FGRSS scores compared to homosexual students. It was determined that there was no statistically significant difference between the BFNE scores of female university students according to their sexual orientation ($p > 0.05$).

Table 5. Comparison of the GES, FGRSS, and BFNE scores of female university students according to received psychological support

	Getting psychological support	n	\bar{x}	s	M	SO	Z	p
Accepting the superiority of men	Yes	116	9,28	3,66	8	178,92	-1,979	0,048*
	No	271	10,23	4,34	8	200,46		
Accepting that women are addicted to men	Yes	116	6,55	2,95	5	172,50	-2,716	0,007*
	No	271	7,43	3,53	5	203,20		
Gender Role Stress Scale	Yes	116	91,63	20,23	100	218,18	-3,065	0,002*
	No	271	87,63	22,49	100	183,65		
Negative Evaluation Fear Scale	Yes	116	31,50	6,94	32	224,39	-3,501	0,000*
	No	271	28,49	7,65	30	180,99		

* $p < 0,05$

Table 5. shows the Mann-Whitney U test results regarding the comparison of the GES, FGRSS, and BFNE scores of female university students according to their past or present received any psychological support. It has been determined that there is a statistically significant difference between the scores of the female university students from the sub-dimensions of accepting the superiority of men and accepting that women are addicted to men according to any psychological support received. Students who received any psychological support in the past or present had higher scores from the GES in general and on the sub-dimensions of accepting the superiority of men and accepting that women are addicted to men. It was determined that there was a statistically significant difference between the FGRSS scores of female university students according to any psychological support that they received ($p < 0.05$). FGRSS scores of students who received any psychological support in the past or present were lower. It was determined that there was a statistically significant difference between the BFNE scores of female students according to any psychological support received in the past or present ($p < 0.05$). Students who received any psychological support in the past or present had higher BFNE scores.

Table 6. Correlations between female university students' scores on the GES, FGRSS, and BFNE

		Accepting the superiority of men	Accepting that women are addicted to men	Gender equality scale	Gender Role Stress Scale	Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale
Accepting the superiority of men	r	1	0,734	0,879	-0,568	-0,060
	p	.	0,000*	0,000*	0,000*	0,239
	N		387	387	387	387
Accepting that women are addicted to men	r		1	0,949	-0,580	-0,068
	p		.	0,000*	0,000*	0,185
	N			387	387	387
Gender Role Stress Scale	r				1	0,190
	p				.	0,000*
	N					387
Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale	r					1
	p					.
	N					

* $p < 0,05$

Table 6. shows the Spearman test scores of female university students from the GES, FGRSS, and BFNE. It has been determined that there are negative and statistically significant correlations between the scores of the students on the FGRSS and the scores they get from the sub-dimensions of accepting the superiority of men and accepting that women are addicted to men ($p < 0.05$). It was determined that there were positive and statistically significant correlations between the FGRSS and BFNE scores of the students ($p < 0.05$). It was determined that there was no significant correlation between the scores of the BFNE and the scores they received from the GES in general and from the sub-dimensions of accepting the superiority of men and accepting that women are addicted to men ($p > 0.05$).

Table 7. GES and FGRSS scores of female university students predict their BFNE scores

	Std.		Standardized	t	p	F	R2
	B	S.E.	Beta				
Constant	24,439	2,127		11,491	0,000*	5,078	0,026
Gender equality scale	0,001	0,055	0,001	0,018	0,986	0,007*	0,021
Gender Role Stress Scale	0,056	0,018	0,161	3,059	0,002*		

It was determined that the model in which the GES and FGRSS scores of female university students shown in Table 7 predicted the BFNE scores was statistically significant and the variance explained in the model was 2.6%. It was determined that the GES scores of female university students did not significantly predict the BFNE ($\beta = 0.001; p > 0.05$). It was determined that the FGRSS scores of female university students predicted the BFNE scores in a statistically significant and positive direction ($\beta = 0.161; p < 0.05$).

Results, Conclusions, and Recommendations

In the study, it was found that there were no significant correlations between fear of being evaluated negatively and gender equality attitudes. There was a significant negative correlation between gender role

stress and gender attitudes and there was a positive and significant correlation between gender role stress and fear of being evaluated negatively. When the studies on this subject in the literature are examined, it is seen that the results of the past studies are similar to the results of this study (Benuto, Casas, Gonzalez & Newlands, 2020; Kessler, Rahn & Klapproth, 2019; Nguyen & Angelique, 2017; Bafiti, Viou & Tarasis, 2019; Rodgers & O'Connor, 2017). In this study, it was found that scores of students with nuclear families from the subdimensions of accepting the superiority of men and accepting that women are dependent on men are lower than those of large and broken families; but their gender role stress scores are higher. In the study, however, it was concluded that the level of fear of negative evaluation did not differ according to family type. However, in the study, it was concluded that individuals who received psychological support had higher scores obtained from the subdimensions of accepting the superiority of men and accepting that women are dependent on men, while their gender role stress scores are lower than those of other individuals. Findings from this study are consistent with the literature (Yee, Ceballo & Diaz, 2020; Donovan & Barnes, 2020; Abdollahi, Hosseinian, Beh-Pajoo, & Carlbring, 2017; Blanchard & Farber, 2016; Filice & Meyer, 2018; Sadika, Wiebe, Morrison & Morrison, 2020).

Finally, while it was determined that the sexual orientation variable was not related to the fear of being evaluated negatively, it was revealed that there was a significant difference between sexual orientation and gender attitudes and role stress. According to this difference, the egalitarian attitudes and role stresses of individuals who define their sexual orientation as 'other' are lower than other groups. However, the gender role stress scores of individuals with bisexual orientation are lower than those of homosexuals. When the relevant literature is examined, it has been determined that there are results that support the findings of this study (Kealy & Rice, 2020; Watson, Grossman & Russell, 2019; Tzur Bitan & Abayed, 2020). Especially in traditional and patriarchal societies, it is seen that women are more negatively affected. In this context, to raise awareness of gender equality in individuals at a young age, adding a gender equality course to the primary school curriculum of the Ministry of National Education and providing training on this subject in public education centers will be beneficial in terms of raising awareness of gender equality. In order to determine the negative effects of gender attitudes on individuals, it is essential to carry out seminars, training programs and guidance services on the subject.

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