

Attitude of Nursing Students in the Context of Societal Gender Equality: A Qualitative Study

Hemşirelik Öğrencilerinin Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliği Bağlamında Tutumları: Nitel Bir Çalışma

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The aim of the study was to determine what nursing students think in regard to societal gender equality.

Methods: Qualitative and phenomenological methods were used in the design of this study. A total of 30 nursing students were included in the study. Throughout this study, students' opinions on gender equality were evaluated, and questions were asked in this regard. And the interviews were held until data saturation was achieved. If new themes did not emerge as a result of 3 consecutive basic interviews, data saturation criteria were met. The MAXQDA qualitative data analysis program was used in the analysis of this study. The analysis steps of the study were carried out accordingly.

Results: In the study, the researchers identified 3 main themes and 5 subdimensions. In this regard, students were evaluated under the headings of main themes as follows: 1) interpretations of differences between genders and the effect of culture, 2) the effect of family attitude on gender equality, and 3) the attitude of the student toward the nursing profession in the context of gender equality. At article has five subthema and thats; a) The effect of the environment in which the student was born and raised on gender perception b) Student maintaining cultural myths c) The effect of the student's family on student's gender equality attitude d) Student maintaining sexist family myths e) The attitude and myths of the student towards the nursing profession in the context of gender equality.

Conclusion: The participants of the research maintained their traditional views on gender equality. The first-year nursing students included in the study also demonstrate this. For this reason, it is thought that nursing students should be given lessons in the context of gender equality, starting from the early stages of education.

Keywords: Equality, gender, nursing

ÖZ

Amaç: Araştırmanın amacı, hemşirelik öğrencilerinin toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği konusundaki tutumlarını belirlemektir.

Yöntemler: Bu çalışmanın tasarımında nitel ve fenomenolojik yöntemler kullanılmıştır. Çalışmaya 30 hemşirelik öğrencisi dahil edildi. Bu çalışma boyunca öğrencilerin toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği konusundaki görüşleri değerlendirilmiş ve bu doğrultuda sorular sorulmuştur. Görüşmeler, veri doygunluğu sağlanana kadar sürdürülmüştür. Ardışık üç temel görüşme sonucunda yeni temalar ortaya çıkmadıysa, veri doygunluğu kriterleri karşılanmıştır. Bu çalışmanın analizinde MAXQDA nitel veri analiz programı kullanılmıştır. Çalışmanın analiz basamakları buna göre gerçekleştirilmiştir.

Bulgular: Araştırmada araştırmacılar 3 ana tema ve 5 alt boyut belirlemiştir. Bu doğrultuda öğrenciler 1) Cinsiyetler arası farklılıkların yorumlanması ve kültürün etkisi, 2) Aile tutumunun cinsiyet eşitliğine etkisi, 3) Öğrencinin hemşireliğe yönelik tutumu ana temalar altında değerlendirilmiştir. Çalışmada beş adet subtema vardır bunlar; a) Öğrencinin Doğup-büyüdüğü ortamın cinsiyet algısı üzerindeki etkisi b) Öğrencinin kültüre ait mitleri taşıması c) Öğrencinin ailesinin, öğrencinin cinsiyet eşitliği tutumundaki etkisi d) Öğrencinin aileye ait cinsiyetçi mitleri taşıması e) Öğrencinin cinsiyet eşitliği bağlamında hemşirelik mesleği ile ilgili tutumu ve mitleridir.

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Sonuç: Hemşirelik birinci sınıf öğrencilerinin toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliğine ilişkin geleneksel düşünceye sahip olduğu belirlendi. Bu nedenle hemşirelik öğrencilerine eğitimin erken dönemlerinden başlayarak toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği bağlamında dersler verilmesi gerektiği düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Eşitlik, cinsiyet, hemşirelik

INTRODUCTION

The view on nurses in the developing and changing world has also begun to change in all societies. Today, it seems possible to meet health professionals from all gender definitions, as well as male and female nurses.¹ However, the struggle with gender roles continues in the developing world. For example, even among nurses, it is considered that male nurses are more suitable for managerial positions, mostly because nursing is considered a female profession.²⁻⁵ However, today, no gender difference is reported in terms of needs and desires in life. No comparison can be made between genders in terms of one being superior to the other on many vital issues such as working life, official institutions, family life, legal responsibilities, education, politics, health, and religion.⁶

Nurses play an important role on the basis of gender equality in regard to the equal provision of health care. Likewise, nursing students constitute a very important part in terms of internalizing the content of the education, which they received before joining the profession on the basis of gender and providing equal care services.⁷ As a result of a study conducted in a classroom in China where only male nursing students studied, it was stated that receiving education with male students only harms the idea of gender equality for students.⁸ In a study evaluating the opinions of female nursing students about feminism in Korea, consistent and persistent attitudes of female students on gender equality were reported.⁹ In a study conducted in Turkey, it was stated that nursing students demonstrated an egalitarian attitude according to gender in terms of care services and that this would help to improve gender equality.¹⁰ It has been stated that midwifery and nursing students have intervention programs based on gender roles in patient education and care and are prepared by considering gender equality.¹¹ The literature shows us that nursing education, nursing students, and nursing interventions are carried out on the basis of gender equality. This situation in Turkey and in the world shows that the nursing profession and education has a global and egalitarian perspective. Today, it is seen that the concept of gender equality among nursing students in Turkey approaches the desired common thought. It is reported that this situation is reinforced by the entry of male nursing students into the profession. Within this context, male nursing students started to be accepted to universities in Turkey in 2007.¹²⁻¹⁴

Gender equality attitudes of nursing students in the classroom and working environment emerge as an important issue in regard to not only their academic processes but also providing the best care to the individual they provide care to. Although it is acknowledged among nursing students in Turkey that nursing is not a profession that provides better care for a certain gender,¹⁵ there is not enough study on this subject. In a study comparing Korean and Turkish nursing students, it was revealed that male nursing students behaved more sexist than female nursing students in both cultures.¹⁶ In another study comparing Pakistani and Turkish students, it was reported that family, family education, and culture were effective factors contributing to students' sexist

attitudes toward each other in both groups.¹⁵ For this reason, a wide range of individual and environmental reasons affect nursing students. Nursing education has an educational and professional vision that changes the understanding and quality of care with a non-sexist attitude. Literature⁷⁻⁹ reports that the culture created by the home and close social environment and the culture in which the person lives are very effective on gender attitudes. It is especially difficult to assess the impact of students' social environments, as the studies were conducted with students in advanced years (third and fourth) or nursing professionals in nursing education.

However, first-year students can evaluate the "effect of gender in care/professionalism" in light of their traditional environment. This study tried to reveal how first-year nursing students reflect their gender attitudes toward professionalism under the influence of their social environment. Thus, in the literature,⁷⁻¹⁶ it is seen that students in advanced years (third and fourth) and nursing professionals, who are heavily involved, will be able to provide an opportunity to compare with the results of gender perception /professionalism. These comparison results will provide us with ideas about both the effect of nursing education on individuals and the development of professional nursing attitudes.

This study was designed to make it possible for students to be evaluated socially, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Since gender equality attitudes would not be determined by a single variable, a phenomenological design was used for the study.

The aim of the study was to determine what nursing students think in regard to societal gender equality.

METHODS

Study Design

Qualitative and phenomenological methods were used in the design of this study. It was thought that this would be the best method to determine the opinions of nursing students about gender equality, which is the aim of the study. For the study, consolidated criteria were used to report qualitative research with 32 items.¹⁶ In 2007, Tong et al¹⁷ was the first to compile this 32-item checklist into a comprehensive list of 76 items from 22 checklists. This list is divided into 3 main themes: (i) research team and reflection, (ii) study design, and (iii) data analysis and reporting. Ambiguous items and repetitive ones—those with a wide range of evaluations and those that could not be evaluated quickly—were excluded. Özden et al¹⁸ adapted this to Turkish in 2022.

Population and Sample of the Study

Within the scope of the study, the participants were selected from a university in the middle of Turkey. Since the study will be conducted with first-year students, students who took the same courses and were in the same class were selected. In sample selection, the communication levels of the students and their clear self-expression were also evaluated^{19,20} for the quality of the data from the qualitative study. For this reason, in Figure 1,

it is seen that 18 students were excluded from the study sample because they revealed deficiencies in the study data, and 3 students could not provide sufficient information. The fact that the students forming the sample come from different social environments (cities) and different life dynamics (city, town, or village) can enable evaluation within a “heterogeneous group”^{19,20}, which is one of the most important reasons for choosing qualitative research. The sample was considered to include at least 10% of the population size. However, during the study period, some issues became the determinants of the participants. About 30 nursing students were included in the study (Figure 1). Throughout this study, students’ opinions on gender equality were evaluated, and questions were asked in this regard. And the interviews were held until data saturation was achieved. If new themes did not emerge as a result of 3 consecutive basic interviews, data saturation criteria were met. As the students continued the interviews as shown in the flow diagram (Figure 1), they did not want to continue working because of their private life or school activities (such as sports team work). Although it was aimed at reaching all the students in the class, which is the whole universe, while planning the study, the study was completed with n = 30 (Table 1).

Data Collection

Two forms were created considering the sample and the aim of the study. The first form consisted of 7 questions in relation to age, gender, marital status, place of residence, family type, economic status, and other sociodemographic data. Then, the second form contained semistructured interview questions from which qualitative data would be collected. The second form was created to collect data on student thoughts in regard to gender equality

(Table 2). The second form consisted of open-ended questions. For the second form, opinions were received from 3 experts who had done studies on the field. After the data were obtained in the first interview, the study proceeded with the second interview plan. At the time and place provided to the students, a second interview took place. The third interview plan was performed in the same way. All interviews were voice-recorded with the permission of the participants. This enabled the reevaluation of the data. A quiet, well-ventilated, physically appropriate room or classroom where in-depth interviews could be conducted was chosen. The interviews were conducted in a classroom or room of the faculty. Each interview lasted 30-50 minutes.

Rigor

In the study, 4 basic criteria were determined to ensure details in terms of reliability, confirmability, and transferability.²¹ In order to ensure reliability, the researcher tried to maintain a long-term relationship with the nursing students participating in the study and to create a friendly relationship environment with mutual trust. The researcher had long and important experience in nursing education. The researcher explained to the nursing students that they could express themselves freely and that each opinion was very valuable and important. All interviews were conducted by a single researcher. Repetitive listening to the recordings, comparisons, and peer control during data analysis helped ensure the reliability of the findings. Three experts who were experienced in qualitative research were present in the coding and theme development process, both controlled and comparative. Codes were determined using MAXQDA, a qualitative analysis program.⁴⁰⁻⁴² The codes that appear in the program are determined under

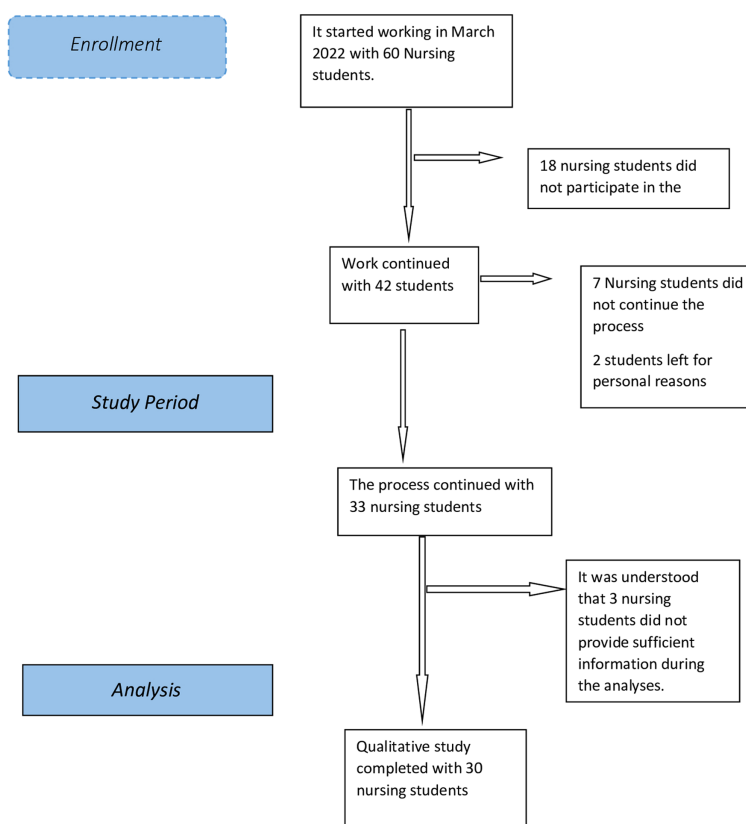


Figure 1. Flow Diagram of the Study

Table 1. Descriptive Characteristics of the Participants

Participants	Age	Marital Status	Living Place	Working Status	Family Type	Family Income	Course Level	Place of Birth/Growing Up
F1	20	Single	Village	NW	Wide	Average	1	Aydin
F2	19	Single	Big city	NW	Core	Average	1	Ankara
F3	19	Single	City	NW	Wide	Low	1	Yozgat
F4	19	Single	City	NW	Core	Low	1	Osmaniye
F5	20	Single	City	NW	Core	Average	1	Samsun
M6	20	Single	City	NW	Core	Average	1	Tokat
F7	20	Single	City	NW	Core	Average	1	Samsun
F8	21	Single	Village	NW	Wide	Average	1	Adana
F9	19	Single	City	NW	Core	Average	1	Adana
M10	19	Single	City	NW	Core	Average	1	Tokat
F11	18	Single	Big city	NW	Core	Average	1	İstanbul
F12	19	Single	City	NW	Wide	Average	1	Malatya
M13	19	Single	City	NW	Wide	Low	1	Elazığ
F14	19	Single	City	NW	Core	Average	1	Tokat
F15	19	Single	City	W	Core	Average	1	Tokat
M16	19	Single	Village	NW	Wide	Low	1	Antalya
F17	21	Single	City	NW	Core	Average	1	Amasya
F18	20	Single	City	NW	Core	Average	1	Tokat
F19	20	Single	Village	NW	Wide	Low	1	Tokat
M20	22	Single	City	NW	Wide	Low	1	Samsun
F21	20	Single	City	NW	Core	Average	1	Sivas
F22	22	Single	City	NW	Core	Average	1	Sivas
F23	19	Single	Village	NW	Wide	Low	1	Erzincan
M24	19	Single	Big City	NW	Wide	Average	1	İzmir
M25	19	Single	City	NW	Core	Average	1	Tokat
M26	19	Single	Village	NW	Core	Low	1	Adana
F27	21	Single	City	NW	Core	Average	1	Kayseri
F28	19	Single	City	NW	Core	Average	1	Konya
M29	21	Single	City	NW	Core	Average	1	Sivas
F30	20	Single	Big City	NW	Core	Average	1	İzmir

F, female; M, male; NW, not working; W, working.

the main codes. Experts were also asked to write the “explanation” part, which is a feature of the program, independently. This part was carefully read by the researcher, and this part helped in selecting the examples in the findings part.^{22,23} The findings of the study are presented descriptively.

In addition, the consolidated criteria for qualitative research reporting checklist²⁴ was used to ensure that the study report was transparent and reliable. Preinterviews were conducted prior to the research, and the experts were constantly consulted. This increased the validity and reliability of this study. Nevertheless, due to the fact that all statements cannot be included in the representation of data, as in all qualitative studies, the most important and generally reflective data were tried to be presented.

Statistical Analysis

The data obtained from the interviews were evaluated by content analysis method. Qualitative content analysis is a method that aims to define and evaluate emerging phenomena related to the subject by dividing them into main subjects and themes.^{25,26}

The analysis was carried out as follows:

1. Transcription of audio files for transcoding with MAXQDA. Having the opportunity to read at this stage also made it easier for all experts to return to texts again and again.
2. The texts deciphered in MAXQDA were read repeatedly by all researchers.
3. The resulting expressions were formulated.
4. The subcategories and main categories were classified. (This is done by clustering, as MAXQDA allows.)
5. Last but not least, the relationship between alt codes and themes (with MAXQDA) was analyzed.^{22,27,29-31}

Ethical Approval

Ethical consent for the study was obtained with permission from Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee (Date: February 27, 2022, Number: 01-42). Prior to obtaining this permission, written research permission was obtained from the school of nursing students where the study would be conducted. Participants were informed

Table 2. Semistructured, Open-ended Questions Used in the Interview

Subject	Main Questions
Gender perceptions of nursing students	In what aspects do the genders differ?
Gender perceptions of nursing students in family life	How would you rate the gender equality attitude in your family?
	What is the effect of gender equality attitude in your family on your gender equality attitude?
Gender perceptions of nursing students' cultures	How would you evaluate gender equality in the context of the cultural dynamics you grew up in and learned?
	How did this attitude affect you?
Gender attitude of nursing students in professional life	How would you describe the difference in care between genders?

verbally, and the Declaration of Helsinki was read to each of them. Informed consent was obtained.

RESULTS

About 70% of the students interviewed within the scope of the study were female. Out of that, 30% of them had an extended family structure. All of them were not employed and were single. The ages of the students varied between 18 and 22. In the study, 3 main themes and 5 subcategories were developed. These main themes were determined as follows: 1) interpretations of differences between genders and the effect of culture; 2) the effect of family attitude on gender equality; 3) the attitude of the student toward their colleagues in the context of gender equality (Table 3). In Table 1, the sociodemographic data of the nursing students participating in the study are listed.

Interpretations of Differences Between Genders and Influence of Culture

Nursing students still maintain the ideas of the culture in which they were born and raised. Myths belonging to culture on the basis of gender equality also affect their perception of gender equality.

The Effect of the Environment in Which the Student was Born and Raised on Gender Perception

Both the culture and the environment they lived in manifested themselves in students' perceptions of gender roles and superiority.³⁰⁻³² A wide range of students from the east and west of Turkey participated in the study population, consisting of students living in Turkey who were born and raised here. However,

Table 3. Main Themes and Subcategories Developed in the Study

Main Themes	Subcategories
Interpretations of differences between genders and the influence of culture	The effect of the environment in which the student was born and raised on gender perception
	Student maintaining cultural myths
The effect of family attitudes on gender equality	The effect of the student's family on the student's gender equality attitude
	Student maintaining sexist family myths
The attitude of the student toward the nursing profession in the context of gender equality	The attitude and myths of the student toward the nursing profession in the context of gender equality

although they were raised in different subcultures, it was determined that they had the same cultural myths in regard to gender equality.

I didn't use to help if a girlfriend fell in the neighborhood and got hurt because I thought that they would get angry because I was a male. I couldn't go into the neighborhood with my girlfriends from school. There were cafes around the school, and it was thought that the boys sitting there were waiting to meet girls, so I could never go and sit there with my friends. One day, when we went to see a movie boys/girls together, one of our acquaintances saw me on the road and called me and said, "If you don't want me to tell your mother, don't do such things again." In the conversations of relatives at home, such situations (which are okay to me) were always condemned. Actually, I think women might be more careful. After all, these are the things that are talked about a lot. Where we live, everyone cares about this. But I don't understand why they make men so restricted...(M25)

For example, my elder sister was a nurse, sometimes she used to arrive at exactly 12:00 late at night, all the neighbors told my father, "If your daughter were really a nurse, she wouldn't arrive that late." Supposing that we should keep an eye on her. Because she may have been lying to us. She had a childhood friend (male) from the neighborhood, they got engaged to others at the same time. He wandered around freely because he was a man, but my sister took us with her when she went out. In fact, if I had a daughter, I wouldn't want her to go out too much, as well. When girls go out a lot, something necessarily happens to them. I don't want it because I'm scared, and I also grew up like that...(F12)

Student Maintaining Cultural Myths

Students have not yet taken any of the courses related to "gender equality, psychiatric nursing, and communication," which are in their curriculum throughout their education. They largely maintain the myths of society. Especially the myths of women about their social, emotional, sexual, and economic lives continue in light of the myths of society. At this point, no gender discrimination was observed.

Of course, when I come to the neighborhood late, I am responsible for most of the problems that would happen to me In fact, people who divorce their husbands are not welcomed in our place. Usually, when women get divorced and come home, I heard from the people in my neighborhood that other men want to meet or talk to them. My grandfather didn't send my mother too to midwifery school in the past. Most of the girls who went to school there married men their parents didn't want. Women should be a little more careful, I'm afraid. After all, we're not going to change this situation. All these years it went like that, people don't change at 1 night. On the other hand, maybe this kind of treatment protects women. It may prevent them from getting hurt (F5).

The Effect of Family Attitude on Gender Equality

The family begins to be effective in the context of gender equality as soon as we are born. It is even speculated that some gender roles are transferred to the baby through voices in the womb.³³ It was found that nursing students in the study were also affected by their families' gender perceptions.

My mother never made any complaint when my brother arrived late when he was around 20 years old, but if I was late, she would become quickly agitated. In fact, many times she came to the market on the corner of our house and waited for me. For example, when my brother goes out with his girlfriend, he comes home late at night, but he is only told that he is very late. When I'm late, their voices get louder very often, and they don't just get louder; sometimes my father gets really angry and slapped me a few times. But still, one shouldn't upset their family. We see what happens to women. If mom and dad weren't like that, maybe I'd be more hurt. Apart from my brother, after all, he is a man, so it may be offending if he was hit, what would happen if they slap you sometimes, it's your family in the end... They want my well-being as their daughter (F21).

I had a serious fight with my father once at home because I had a boyfriend. We're 2 sisters, and we don't really have a problem. I mean, we don't always have boyfriends like other girls. I've been with the same boyfriend for 4 years. Moreover, sometimes when we fight, he pushes me and/or insults, but do we have to switch lovers every single day? But I still can't ingratiate with my father. He's always thinking, "Girls don't have boyfriends." For example, if I were a man, it's okay, I know. But when it's a daughter, we have to act like this. I won't upset them, of course, but if I have a daughter, I'll never mistreat her. I'm not gonna tell her she shouldn't have a boyfriend. It's good to have a lover from the opposite sex, actually. What else, she goes and does worse things? Have a relationship with a girlfriend? For example, if my father had a son and he said that, I'm sure he would never see him. He would have disowned (F28).

Student Maintaining Family Myths

Students maintain some erroneous thoughts specific to their families' cultures. The fact that the roles assigned to women and men in the changing world are disadvantageous for women is almost a part of common family structures.

It is unacceptable for us that a man does not earn money or work. If I don't work and my wife maintains the house economically, I can't accept it. And a woman should not have such a power... Me and her can work together, I have girlfriends in class, to be honest. But I've never met a family in which a man did not work. My parents would be against it, first of all. They would warn me (M29).

Women inevitably understand housework better. What can I know about stuffing grape leaves ... But every girl who lived in Turkey must have stuffed. Men aren't like that. How many times has a mother called a boy who is playing outside to stuff vegetables? That's the way it is. And it goes like that.... (M26)

The attitude of the student toward the nursing profession in the context of gender equality

Even if nursing students with traditional gender attitudes prefer the nursing profession, they approach nursing traditionally in terms of gender equality.

Nursing is a job that women have been doing since the past. It's not easy to take care of. In fact, I don't think it's appropriate for a man to provide care. Recently, there have been male nurses in our country, but I think it is due to the fact that some male patients prefer male nurses. In fact, I think female nurses probably do not want male nurses to provide

care, as well. I don't want a male nurse to give me an injection too; his treatment can be quite heavy (F2).

I think it is important for men to be involved in some service work of nursing. Generally, female nurses may not be able to withstand heavy lifting or some other type of heavy work. Also, it may not be safe for female nurses to be on duty alone in large hospitals (M20).

DISCUSSION

Throughout history, the world has witnessed that women are not employed in many cultures; it is a gender with minority rights in cultures; they are not paid equally even if they do equal work; there are social myths that restrict their social lives; and many social actions (which provide autonomy for men) are not deemed appropriate for women.³⁴⁻³⁷ While studies conducted in Turkey emphasized the effect of culture on the perception of gender equality, they also noted the positive attitudes of nursing students toward gender equality.^{8,11} However, in our study, culture contains important myths on the basis of gender equality. For example, students' attitudes such as "I would not allow my daughter" reveal the effect of culture on gender equality significantly.

Switzerland is considered the most developed country in the world in terms of gender equality. Yet they state that women have more roles and responsibilities in ensuring domestic maintenance.³⁷ According to a study conducted in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, women are discriminated against in all areas of social life. Men's superiority is observed in all economic, social, educational, and autonomous fields of activity.³⁵ In a study conducted with nursing students in Turkey, it was emphasized that the myths of students who had negative thoughts about sexuality/gender were also high with respect to these matters.³⁸ Nursing students in our study generally maintained gender myths in their culture. It is thought that the fact that the students included in the study were in their first year of the course was effective in this regard. Students who leave their living environment for the first time and continue their academic lives in a distant place need to take courses within their academic education to realize their cultural myths. However, as seen in other studies,^{35,37,38} culture seems to be quite effective on the thoughts regarding gender equality.

According to the results of a study conducted in Australia in 2018, when women and men get married, they start to behave more traditionally about gender equality. Especially parents with daughters demonstrate more traditional gender attitudes than others.³⁹ According to a study conducted in India in 2019, it was reported that parents have more influence on children than their peers in regard to gender equality.⁴⁰ In a study examining the gender attitudes of boys in America in 2021, it was emphasized that boys are more especially affected by their mother's gender attitudes.⁴¹ In a study conducted in America examining the "first daughter" hypothesis in the literature, it was stated that the first child being a girl can lead to a better development of the gender equality attitude of fathers.⁴² The families of all the students who participated in this study demonstrated traditional attitudes. In particular, students of the female gender were affected by the traditional attitudes of their families in many ways (in terms of social inequalities between genders). Both male and female students seemed to be under the influence of traditional male and female attitudes. They seemed to be vulnerable to maintaining the gender-specific attitudes of their families through generations. This may be partly explained by the fact that the students

had not yet received peer education and academic gender equality education, as they were in their first year of the course.

Nurses can play a pioneering role in clinics in terms of gender equality. Nursing education also seems to have an academic curriculum that can teach gender equality to students. Nurses need to take on this responsibility in order to improve the state of health and ensure the quality of care.⁴³ While emphasizing the maternal aspect of nursing, underlooking that it is a professional profession can form the basis of sexist behaviors in the nursing profession. However, care includes critical professional interventions that everyone needs at the same level. The fact that the profession has a scientific aspect shows that neither colleagues nor the individual given care should be classified as male or female.⁴⁴ In this study, nursing students who were at the beginning of their academic education made a complete gender discrimination in professional sense. According to Prosen in 2022, the sexist attitudes of professionals who fulfill the nursing profession continue both during their education and professional lives. It even states that the duties that male and female nurses will perform in their professional lives on the basis of gender are also limited. She states that this situation will cause the classification of nursing roles according to the traditional or gender perception of the roles.⁴⁵ In a study conducted with nursing students in Turkey, a low level correlation was found between students' gender perceptions and their professional autonomy. In this low-correlation study, they emphasize that the sample being nursing students will not provide "a real professional/professional experience."⁴⁶ According to Liu et al 2019, due to the reluctant attitudes of male students in the care role of nurses, it is necessary to bring gender perception to nursing students on the basis of equality. It is said that this is the most important way to develop the nurse's most important role, especially in male nursing students.⁴⁷ As can be seen, studies⁴⁵⁻⁴⁷ show that traditional gender attitudes and gender roles are also effective in nursing roles. For the "best care for all" principle of the nursing profession, roles should be created on the basis of gender equality.

Limitations

Although it is thought that it is important to compare the selection of first-year nursing students with other studies conducted in the literature with the later (third, fourth) years in the study, the inclusion of only first-year nursing students in the study limits the study.

In addition, the ratio of the number of male students to the number of female students in the study is seen as 1:3 (Table 1). Although this situation is the same as the proportion of the population, the presence of more female participants in a gender study is another limitation of the study. By continuing the study in the following years of nursing education, how nursing education changes the sexist attitudes of nursing students toward the nursing profession can be evaluated. The effectiveness of gender equality-themed courses in the curriculum for nursing students can also be evaluated. Various strategies can be developed, such as arranging some topics with more examples and interactions. Nursing students are deeply affected by both the culture they come from and their families in regard to gender equality. This effect can change not only their social lives but also their professional perspectives. Supportive practices can be developed for students to touch and interact with the patient more.

Ethics Committee Approval: Ethics committee approval was received for this study from the ethics committee of Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University (Date: February 27, 2022, Number: 01-42).

Informed Consent: Written consent was obtained from participants in this study.

Peer-review: Externally peer-reviewed.

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Hasta Onamı: Bu çalışmaya katılan tüm katılımcılardan yazılı hasta onamı alınmıştır.

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