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Perceptions of service occupation stereotypes among American and Turkish millennials



Musa Pinar¹ , Coleeen Wilder¹ , Tulay Girard²  & Çiğdem Başfıncı³ 

¹ Valparaiso University, College of Business, Indiana, USA.

² Pennsylvania State University-Altoona Division of Business & Engineering, Altoona, USA

³ Trabzon University, Communication Faculty, Department of Public Relations and Advertising, Trabzon, Türkiye

Abstract

The service sector has consistently expanded within the global economy and has become a significant component of national economies. Advancements in the service sectors of national economies have generated new service-related jobs and professions, which have become a primary source of employment. While these job opportunities have provided employment for both men and women, a persistent issue is how these new roles are viewed through the lens of occupational stereotypes. In many high-status professions, men continue to dominate, whereas women tend to occupy lower-status roles, particularly in collectivist cultures. Gender discrimination in the workplace has emerged as a major obstacle to achieving the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals outlined in the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. Thus, suitable employment strategies for the fulfillment of positions with young labor, namely millennials, have gained importance in business settings. Different from other studies, this study investigated millennials' perceptions of service profession-status stereotyping by gender in Türkiye and the USA. Data were collected using a survey instrument from a convenience sample of Turkish and American millennials. This study provided insights about service-status stereotyping using seventeen different services. Results showed that for some service occupations, status stereotyping significantly exists among millennials.

Keywords

Millennials • Occupational stereotypes • Service occupations • Cross-country comparisons



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✉ Corresponding author: Musa Pinar Musa.pinar@valpo.edu



1. Introduction

Service industries have been continuously growing in the world economy (Poynter, 2000; Belt et al., 2002) and have become an important part of national economies. According to a Business Wire report (2022), the worldwide services employment market is anticipated to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 13 percent, from \$1,415.24 billion in 2021 to \$1,599.97 billion in 2022. It is projected to reach \$2,512.51 billion in 2026 at a CAGR of 11.9 percent. Moreover, research by Deloitte (Buckley and Majumdar, 2018) showed that the impact of services on economies has increased over time. Between 1980 and 2015, the market share of services in GDP increased from 61 to 76 percent in all income categories in developed countries and from 42 to 55 percent in developing countries (Buckley and Majumdar, 2018). In addition, the growth and importance of service sectors in global economies is evident by their share in world GDP as well as the GDP of national economies. For example, in 2021, while the service sector made up 64.4% of world GDP, the composition of service industries in national economies was 77.6% for the United States (USA), 73.1% for Japan, 69.3% for Germany, 71.5% for the United Kingdom, 70% for France (Statista, 2023), and 52.8% for Türkiye (The Global Economy, 2023). The developments in service sectors of national economies have created new service jobs and professions that have become a dominant source of employment in many countries (Belt et al., 2002; MacDonald & Sirianni, 1996; Poynter, 2000). While the growth in service industries created new service jobs, problems or issues such as occupational discrimination could pose challenges in meeting the new employment gender gap created by this sector. Although these job opportunities have created employment for both males and females, the ongoing question is how the new positions are perceived from the perspective of occupational stereotypes (Gottfredson, 1981). Some of the high-status occupations have still been dominated by men and low-status occupations have been dominated by women, especially in collectivist cultures. Occupational gender discrimination in employment has become one of the main challenges of accomplishing the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for sustainable development in the 2030 Agenda (Taheri, Güven Lisaniler & Payaslıoğlu, 2021).

Occupational stereotypes form the basis of occupational discrimination. Understanding occupational stereotypes has important implications for not only career choices and vocational preferences but also for more widespread societal outcomes such as occupational gender segregation. This has been a fundamental socioeconomic concern for numerous labor markets in the industrialized globe (He, Kang, Tse & Toh, 2019).

As one of the industries with the highest growth rate, gender segregation in the service industry is an important issue regarding the sustainable development goals in the contemporary world (UN General Assembly, 2015). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) report (DPE Fact Sheet, 2011), in 2009 women made up most of the American service industry. Their representation, for example, in various American industries was as follows: library and archive (78.2%), education (69.4%), accounting, bookkeeping, and payroll (62.7%), banking (63.8%), management (66%), health care and social assistance (79.3%), hospital (77%), and human resources (70.7%).

Another aspect of occupational discrimination is that it threatens the goal of sustainable development advocated by the United Nations (UN General Assembly, 2015). The majority of female employment is mainly characterized by part-time jobs with lower wages and lesser promotion opportunities. The over-representation of females in low-paid service positions explains 50 percent of the pay gap (Shauman, 2006; Blau & Kahn, 2017; García-Mainar, Montuenga, & García-Martín, 2018). According to a Pew Research Center study, in 2022 American women working both full-time and part-time earned an average of 82 percent of the wage/

salary of what men earned, and the earnings dropped to 79% among the women of ages 55-64. This pattern was the same over at least four decades (Kochhar, 2023). The gender pay gap is not exclusive to the USA; similar findings exist in the rest of the world, where empirical cross-country studies have consistently shown evidence of a gender wage gap (Garcia-Mainar et al., 2018).

The number of studies exploring occupational stereotypes in the service industry is relatively limited when compared to the acknowledged significance of the concept. As emphasized by Belt et al. (2002), as new service jobs emerged resulting from technological innovations and variations in economy and demography, the role of occupational stereotypes in occupational segregation remains unclear; thus, further research is needed. Moreover, because occupational stereotypes arise from role-based activities and characteristics, they are dynamic (Diekmann & Eagly, 2000). These general patterns and variations in service sectors can impact the perception of occupational stereotyping. To achieve the goal of sustainable development, occupational stereotypes in service industries, which are one of the most important globally impactful employment sources in the world, need to be closely examined. Therefore, research is needed to examine the evolving stereotypical perceptions for service occupations in relation to gender, status/prestige, and generational characteristics. This is particularly crucial for understanding the perspectives of millennials, who are projected to comprise approximately 75% of the workforce by 2025 (Bentley University, 2015) and will be an important factor for the future of the labor market. Their attitudes and beliefs will significantly shape the future labor market, potentially influencing: Gender representation in various service roles, perceived prestige of different occupations, and career choices and job satisfaction.

2. Study objectives

To provide insights for what was missing in the literature, this study intends to examine whether occupational status stereotypes of service professions exist and if they are commonly shared among millennials in two culturally distinct countries, the USA and Türkiye. The overall relevant question examined in this study is whether perceptions of service profession status stereotyping are similar or different across cultures, as well as among genders within cultures or across cultures. Given that millennials are the most diverse of all the generations and likely to accept diversity and differences, millennials in the same culture or across cultures may have less or no occupational status stereotyping for service professions. The research objectives (ROs) of this study are to investigate whether:

1. Stereotyping related to service professions exists within the millennial generation based on gender (males and females combined) and country (Türkiye and USA combined).
2. Significant differences in stereotyping exist in millennials' perceptions of service professions (i.e., high, low, or neutral) across genders (male, female) and within each country (Türkiye, USA).
3. Service profession status stereotyping among millennials significantly differs by gender (males vs. females) and across cultures (Türkiye vs. USA).

In the following sections, a literature review on service stereotyping by gender and status and millennials characteristics and outlook are presented followed by the methodology, analysis, and results. Discussions are presented next, followed by limitations and suggestions for future research.

3. Literature review

3.1. Occupational stereotyping

At a theoretical level, Lippmann (1922) introduced the concept of stereotypes to the realm of social sciences (Kanahara, 2006). Allport (1954, p. 191) articulated a concise definition of stereotypes as “an exaggerated belief associated with a category whose function is to justify or rationalize our conduct in relation to that category.” Additionally, Allport described stereotyping as the act of making assumptions about an individual or situation based on prior experience or societal norms, as highlighted by Sargeant (2011). Moloto, Brink & Nel (2014) emphasized that, alongside age, gender and race, occupational stereotypes hold the most prevalent stereotypes, which is the focus of this study.

The concept of occupational stereotypes finds its origin in the 1950, with a definition offered by Stagner (1950), as a collection of traits or attributes with which individuals associate members of different occupations. Expanding on this, Lipton, O'Connor, Terry & Bellamy (1991) provided a more comprehensive understanding of occupational stereotyping. They characterized it as a preconceived attitude encompassing one's perceptions of an occupation, the individuals employed in that occupation, and about their own suitability for that occupation. Research on occupational stereotypes has revealed that the prevailing images associated with jobs are often more reflective of the people who hold those positions than the actual tasks and requirements of the jobs themselves (O'Dowd & Beardslee, 1960; Gottfredson, 1981; Glick Wilk, & Perrault, 1995).

Glick et al. (1995) emphasized two noteworthy and consistently observed findings regarding occupational stereotypes. First, they highlighted that people tend to perceive occupations similarly, irrespective of their educational level, social class, and lifestyles. Second, Gottfredson (1981) confirmed that individuals' spontaneous classifications of occupations are primarily influenced by two orthogonal dimensions: prestige and gender-type. This implies that when evaluating and classifying professions, people often consider the level of prestige associated with an occupation and its alignment with gender norms. In the context of this study, occupational stereotypes will be examined regarding prestige and differences will be investigated based on gender.

3.2. Theoretical background

In this study, the theoretical framework draws from three key theories: Symbolic Interaction Theory, the Theory of Circumscription and Compromise, and Social Role Theory. Symbolic interaction theory, originally developed by Mead (1934) and extended by Blumer (1969), serves as the primary theoretical foundation for this research. This theory proposes that meanings and thus social behavior are structured by society through the use of generalizations and interpretations (Basfirinci & Cilingir Uk, 2017). In essence, it suggests that the way we interpret the world and interact with it is influenced by shared symbols and societal constructs. As a part of symbolic interactionism, people have used stereotypes as an effective means in making judgments about occupations.

The theory of Circumscription and Compromise, proposed by Gottfredson (1981), offers insights into how individuals make career choices and decisions, particularly by considering the limitations and opportunities within their social and cultural context. As a stage-based development theory for the career choice of young people, Gottfredson (1981, 1996) argued that a young person often chose an occupation with which both the prestige and the gender matched her/his own socio-economic background and gender. As a result of the

theory of circumscription and compromise, popular occupational stereotypes contribute to the segregation in the market (Basfirinci Uk, Karaoglu& Onbas, 2019).

Social role theory, as outlined by Eagly (1987), contributes to the study by highlighting the role of gender in occupational stereotypes. This theory suggests that stereotypes about social groups are formed by observing group members in their typical social roles (Eagly & Steffen, 1984; Koenig & Eagly, 2014). Thus, occupational stereotypes may be formed when individuals observe occupation incumbents performing their typical occupational roles, and occupational stereotypes may be evaluated as a reflection of current occupational trends (He et al., 2019, p.2). At the most macro level, occupational stereotypes perpetuate gender segregation (Chesters, 2022).

Gender stereotypes have long been a focal point for researchers, particularly in the context of occupational sex segregation, which is either rooted in biological differences or those centered around gender ideologies (Webb, 2009). As Anker (1998) pointed out, gender theories provide insight into how gender stereotypes and cultural constraints play a pivotal role in determining the types of occupations that are considered appropriate for women. Gender stereotypes, as defined by Correll (2017), represent shared societal beliefs about how men and women should conduct themselves. In this regard, Estevez-Abe (2006) suggested that individuals with stereotypical attitudes toward gender roles tend to gravitate toward occupations that align with these gender norms. In this context, women who hold traditional gender role beliefs may prefer jobs in female-dominated fields, while men with similar beliefs may opt for male-dominated occupations. This highlights how occupational sex segregation can serve as a platform for individuals to enact traditional gender roles, as observed by Cech (2013).

The process of socialization plays a crucial role in shaping attitudes toward gender roles and perpetuating occupational sex segregation as noted by Chesters (2022). In this regard, socialization is the mechanism through which individuals acquire values, attitudes, and behaviors. It is during this process, often influenced by family and social networks, that cultural beliefs and values are transmitted to children, thereby molding their perceptions of gender roles and affecting their career choices (Carlson & Knoester, 2011; Cemalcilar, Jensen & Tosun, 2019). Finnegan et al. (2024) emphasized that the use of performance-related feedback as a strategy could be beneficial for overcoming spontaneous occupational stereotypes that arise when specific social role nouns and professional terms are read to the participants. They suggested that providing feedback based on actual performance is an effective approach to counteract the automatic triggering of job-related stereotypes. This strategy has been shown to reduce the prevalence of stereotype application in professional settings. Another study (Peng et al., 2024) examined the issues of occupational stigma faced by female employees in the tourism sector through the lens of Chinese female flight attendants and emphasized the role of patriarchal norms and organizational practices in this process. In their study, Ungureanu and Bertolotti (2024) offered a process-based perspective on occupations and stereotypes, highlighted the differences between dynamic and rigid stereotyping, proposed the concept of dynamic stereotyping, and examined the conditions that promote it. Through three large-scale surveys conducted in Austria, Dinhof and Willems (2024) documented the gender dominance of public sector professions (e.g., police officers, firefighters, politicians, nurses, and teachers) and presented significant findings for policymakers, recruiters, and employers aiming to reduce gender-related disadvantages in public sector employment.

A substantial body of research that investigates the effects of occupational stereotypes. One of the earliest studies in the field belongs to Shinar (1975). She classified 129 occupations regarding masculine and feminine traits without industry classifications. White, Kruczek, Brown & White (1989), in a notable replication

and extension of Shinar's (1975) original work, confirmed her findings about occupational gender stereotypes. Some of the prior studies of service occupation stereotyping also focused on examining perceptions of gender-related stereotyping of occupations (Panek, Rush & Greenawalt, 1977; Gatton, DuBois & Faley, 1999). For instance, Belt *et al.*, (2002) citing Bradley, Erickson, Stephenson & Williams's (2000) study, stated that gender stereotyping existed across cultures (i.e., Ireland, UK and Netherlands) for women employed in call centers. Among the reasons, were that men were perceived as highly competitive and individualistic while women were naturally inclined towards listening and communication skills (Belt *et al.*, 2002). Prior studies (England, 2010; Crawley, 2014; Rudman & Phelan, 2010) showed that men seemed to be reluctant to enter female-dominated occupations, while women often conform to roles associated with traditional gender roles. This tendency contributes to the perpetuation of occupational sex segregation and related stereotypes. Moreover, Hadjar and Aeschlimann (2015) argued that occupational sex segregation reinforced stereotypes based on beliefs that men and women have different 'natural' abilities. As a result, this can contribute to the perception of economic inequality as a 'natural' outcome of labor market engagement, rather than a socially constructed phenomenon.

Oswald (2003) conducted a study to investigate how various occupations were rated along two distinct dimensions: a gender-based dimensions and a prestige/status dimension. Using twenty-five occupational titles, her results showed that high or low prestige occupations were associated with either gender. When considering the overall perception of occupations, those perceived as predominantly associated with men were also viewed as higher in prestige compared to occupations seen as primarily associated with women. Oswald (2003) also found that occupations were assigned different prestige, which she stated, was consistent with prior research (Croxtan, Van Rensselaer, Dutton, & Ellis, 1989; Glick *et al.*, 1995). Oswald (2003, p. 958) also indicated an existence of gender based occupational stereotyping in a subtle form, "such that jobs that are associated with men are rated higher in prestige than those jobs associated with women, and this holds true for both high and low-status jobs". Several other studies, such as those conducted by Glick *et al.*, (1995), Kulik (1998) and Pinar, Schiffel, Strasser & Stück (2013), have also confirmed the existence of occupational stereotypes related to service professions, particularly concerning prestige and status, in addition to gender-related attributes associated with specific job roles.

A study conducted by Pinar, Filipek, & Karaatli (2016) examined service occupation stereotypes among millennials (American and international students). Their research revealed that respondents, who were millennials, perceived certain service occupations as low-status and others as high-status. This observation serves as evidence of the existence of service occupation status stereotyping. Importantly, this finding aligns with previous research, as referenced by Baunach (2002) and Pinar *et al.* (2013). Their findings of non-significant differences of low-status and high-status by gender and by nationality suggested that similar service-status stereotyping existed among both genders and across-cultures. These findings regarding the perceptions of service occupation status stereotyping could have significant implications for employment opportunities and service quality for firms, as well as the satisfaction and success of millennials with their service occupations. Moreover, given that millennials will be an important factor for the future of the working environment (Bentley University, 2015), their perceptions of service status stereotypes could have important implications for businesses regarding employment and service quality. Therefore, it is essential to investigate millennials' perceptions of service occupation-status stereotyping of services across different cultures, namely Türkiye and the USA.

3.3. Millennials and their outlook

Several recent studies that have examined millennials found that they are typically recognized for their acceptance of diversity (Daukas, 2013). Partly because of their highly inclusive culture in cognitive diversity and partly because they promote inclusion and engagement in business settings (Deloitte US, 2016). According to Smith and Turner (2015) in a report by Deloitte US (2016), millennials fostered collaboration in diverse groups where different ideas come together. Millennials are to be accustomed to diversity more than older generations and have redefined the concept of diversity. A survey of millennials from 29 countries (Deloitte, 2016) showed that, universally, millennials believed in an inclusive working culture and a strong commitment to equality. They did not define diversity as a mixture of people from different races, religions, or genders, but rather a mixture of different thoughts, ideas, experiences, perspectives, and opinions (Smith & Turner, 2015).

Besides the fact that millennials stand out as a generation of cultural diversity, equality, and inclusiveness, they will be in power to design the future work environment (Smith & Turner, 2015). Moreover, because new service occupations have been created in global economies that could be different from traditional occupations and the entrance of millennials to these employment markets, it is logical and important to examine millennials' perceptions of these new service occupations concerning potential status stereotypes.

However, to date, very limited research has been conducted with respect to exploring whether occupational status stereotypes of service professions exists and if it is commonly shared among millennials in two culturally distinct countries, the USA and Türkiye, where employees play a significant role in the service industries of these countries. To the best of the authors' knowledge, this is the first study that investigates millennials' occupational status and gender stereotypes of service professions in a cross-cultural context. For this study, the USA and Türkiye were selected because firstly the service sector has a very important share in the economies of both countries and has a growth trend. Second, the USA and Türkiye not only represent historically different cultural and geopolitical regions, but also differ from each other with more quantitative measures of Hofstede's cultural dimensions (1980, 2001) and McCrae and Terracciano's (2005) personality factors (Basfirinci & Mitra, 2015, p.241). Third, such a comparison between Türkiye and the USA has not been conducted previously. Therefore, the findings of this study could provide some insights regarding the existence or non-existence, as well as differences or similarities of occupational stereotypes among millennials of the countries.

4. Methodology¹

Change the first sentence as: To address the research objectives (ROs), the first step involved developing an online survey instrument that included a comprehensive list of service occupations spanning a diverse range of service industries commonly found both in the USA and Türkiye. Because the study's main objective was to examine the perceptions of service-occupation status stereotyping, initial feedback was obtained from several faculty members to ensure that the list included occupations that were perceived as high-status, low-status, or neither. Seventeen service occupations emerged and were used for the study. The survey instrument and occupations included are presented in Appendix 1. Respondents were asked to evaluate the perceived status (or prestige) of these occupations on a 5-point scale ranging from -2 =

¹Note: Because this study was designed based on a survey that provided data for more than one study, the methodology may be similar to that presented in a different paper.

definitely low-status, 0 = neither low nor high-status to +2 = definitely high-status. According to Burns and Veek (2020), Stapel scale is correspondingly used as measurement scale in studies which relies on positive and negative numbers, typically ranging from +5 to -5. In this study, a revised version of Stapel scale is used, which ranges from -2 to +2.

This methodology is consistent with well-known approaches in social and occupational status research, including Powlishta (2000), who utilized a similar scale to measure status across different gender categories. The 5-point status perception scale ranging from -2 to 2 is based on well-established methods for measuring status perceptions across various domains. The use of bipolar scales, particularly those with two polar opposites, is common in status perception research. For instance, studies such as Belk & Snell, (1986) and Muzzatti, & Agnoli (2007) have effectively employed similar scales to assess status perceptions, which have been validated and widely accepted in the field.

The survey instrument was initially prepared in English. As the study was extended to Türkiye, it was translated into Turkish and then back into English to minimize translation errors. This two-step translation process, as suggested by Ball, McCulloch, Frantz, Geringer & Minor (2002), is a recognized method for ensuring linguistic and conceptual equivalence between the two language versions. The survey instrument underwent pretesting in both English and Turkish with respondents who resembled the target population. This step was crucial in refining the wording and understanding of the survey questions and confirming the service occupation status classifications by respondents. It allowed for the incorporation of feedback and adjustments, enhancing the overall quality of the survey.

All of these preliminary steps helped to establish the face validity for the constructs in the survey (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005). The survey also included essential demographic questions, such as gender, age and student class year (i.e., freshman, sophomore, junior, senior). Convenience sampling was used to administer the final survey to American and Turkish university/college students who belonged to the millennial generation. Excluding international students from each country and focusing on respondents from the two countries of interest ensured that the participants represented their respective cultures. This approach helps maintain the homogeneity of the sample, which is important for the study's objectives. The study successfully collected a total of 462 usable surveys, with 44% of the respondents from the USA and 56% from Türkiye. This distribution allows for a meaningful cross-cultural comparison while accommodating the focus on millennials. About 52% of the respondents were female and 48% were male. The average age of the respondents was reported as 22, which aligns with the generational criteria for millennials.

5. Results

The R01 aimed to examine the existence of service profession status stereotyping among millennials overall, and overall levels based on gender and country. A one sample t-test was performed for each occupation to determine if mean scores were significantly different from zero. Table 1 presents mean values for perceived status ratings of various service professions for each level of analysis. Mean values were sorted from high to low based on ratings for the overall population. Positive values indicate that the service was perceived as a high-status (prestige) profession while negative values were associated with a low-status. A value of zero indicated that a profession was viewed as neither high-status nor low-status; these professions therefore were considered status neutral.

At the overall level, *real estate agents* were the only status neutral profession; the observed mean value of 0.08 was not statistically different from zero ($p = 0.055$). Respondents were next examined based on gender overall. Female (USA and Türkiye combined) perceptions were consistent with those of the overall population ($p = 0.646$). Males (USA and Türkiye combined) however, perceived *bank tellers* ($p = 0.054$) and *flight attendants* ($p = 0.092$) as status neutral. An examination across countries showed different results. American respondents perceived *flight attendants* as the only status neutral profession ($p = 0.204$); this perception was consistent, in part, with the overall male population. Finally, Turkish respondents perceived *call center representatives* to be the only status neutral profession ($p = 0.076$).

Table 1
One Sample T-Test Sorted by Overall Ratings

	Overall		Females		Males		Türkiye		USA	
	Mean	p-val	Mean	p-val	Mean	p-val	Mean	p-val	Mean	p-val
Doctor	1.65	.00	1.61	.00	1.70	.00	1.50	.00	1.83	.00
Dentist	1.57	.00	1.50	.00	1.65	.00	1.47	.00	1.70	.00
Professor	1.52	.00	1.49	.00	1.55	.00	1.64	.00	1.37	.00
Lawyer	1.41	.00	1.38	.00	1.43	.00	1.22	.00	1.63	.00
Politician	1.08	.00	1.11	.00	1.04	.00	.98	.00	1.20	.00
Nurse	.86	.00	.85	.00	.88	.00	.70	.00	1.06	.00
Teacher	.80	.00	.80	.00	.79	.00	1.01	.00	.53	.00
Police	.49	.00	.49	.00	.49	.00	.41	.00	.59	.00
Pharmacist	.45	.00	.35	.00	.56	.00	-.22	.00	1.27	.00
Bank Teller	.18	.00	.25	.00	.10	.05*	.13	.01	.24	.00
Flight Attendant	.13	.00	.15	.02	.10	.09*	.30	.00	-.08	.20*
Real Estate Agent	.08	.06*	.03	.65*	.14	.02	-.15	.01	.36	.00
Hotel Receptionist	-.38	.00	-.45	.00	-.30	.00	-.29	.00	-.49	.00
Call Center	-.41	.00	-.36	.00	-.46	.00	-.10	.08*	-.78	.00
Cell-phone Rep	-.42	.00	-.41	.00	-.43	.00	-.43	.00	-.42	.00
Coffee Server	-.77	.00	-.78	.00	-.75	.00	-.76	.00	-.77	.00
Fast-food Server	-1.12	.00	-1.10	.00	-1.15	.00	-.85	.00	-1.46	.00

Note: *Difference is **not** statistically significant from zero

Scale: -2=very low-status, -1=low-status, 0=neutral, 1=high-status, 2=very high-status

The RO2 aimed to determine whether significant differences existed in millennials' perceptions of high, low, or neutral (status) stereotyping based on gender (male or female) and country (Türkiye vs. USA). One-sample t-tests were performed to test the mean differences. This examination looked at each gender's perception differences within each country. Table 2 shows the results. For the USA, there were no differences between the perceived status scores at the overall country level with those for each gender. For example, all professions rated as high-status (positive values) for the USA were also rated as high-status by males and females. All professions rated as low-status (negative values) for the USA were also rated as low-status by both males and females. *Flight attendants* were the only profession consistently rated as neutral.

The results for Türkiye were mixed. As with their American counterparts, all professions rated as high-status (positive values) at the country level were also rated as high-status by males and females. Similarly,

all professions rated as low-status (negative values) were also rated as low-status by both males and females. Turkish male and female respondents were consistent with their country as a whole in their ranking of *call center representatives* as a status neutral profession. Males, however, also rated *bank tellers*, *flight attendants*, *pharmacists*, *hotel receptionists*, and *real estate agents* as status neutral professions; these ratings were not consistent with their country as a whole.

Table 2

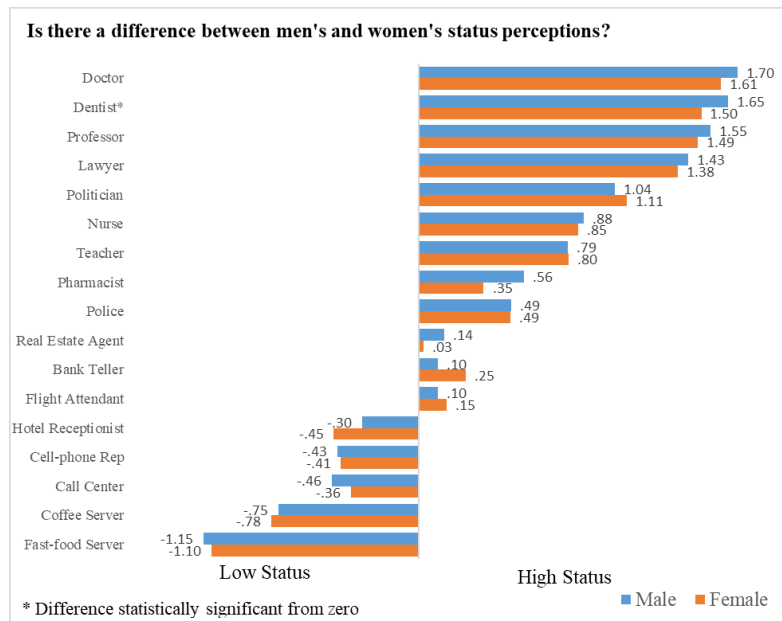
Comparison of Status Stereotyping among each Gender within Each Country

	USA						Türkiye					
	All		Female		Male		All		Female		Male	
	Mean	p-val	Mean	p-val	Mean	p-val	Mean	p-val	Mean	p-val	Mean	p-val
Doctor	1.83	.00	1.77	.00	1.87	.00	1.50	.00	1.51	.00	1.49	.00
Dentist	1.70	.00	1.62	.00	1.76	.00	1.47	.00	1.43	.00	1.52	.00
Lawyer	1.63	.00	1.69	.00	1.59	.00	1.22	.00	1.19	.00	1.25	.00
Professor	1.37	.00	1.26	.00	1.45	.00	1.64	.00	1.62	.00	1.66	.00
Pharmacist	1.27	.00	1.33	.00	1.22	.00	-.22	.00	-.23	.01	-.20	.08*
Politician	1.20	.00	1.16	.00	1.24	.00	.98	.00	1.08	.00	.82	.00
Nurse	1.06	.00	1.05	.00	1.06	.00	.70	.00	.73	.00	.66	.00
Police	.59	.00	.52	.00	.65	.00	.41	.00	.47	.00	.32	.01
Teacher	.53	.00	.41	.00	.62	.00	1.01	.00	1.03	.00	.99	.00
Real Estate Agent	.36	.00	.37	.00	.35	.00	-.15	.01	-.18	.01	-.12	.21*
Bank Teller	.24	.00	.32	.00	.17	.01	.13	.01	.21	.00	.02	.80*
Flight Attendant	-.08	.20*	-.11	.28*	-.05	.48*	.30	.00	.31	.00	.28	.00
Cell-phone Rep	-.42	.00	-.31	.00	-.50	.00	-.43	.00	-.48	.00	-.36	.00
Hotel Receptionist	-.49	.00	-.59	.00	-.42	.00	-.29	.00	-.37	.00	-.17	.06*
Coffee Server	-.77	.00	-.75	.00	-.79	.00	-.76	.00	-.81	.00	-.69	.00
Call Center	-.78	.00	-.77	.00	-.79	.00	-.10	.08*	-.12	.10*	-.08	.40*
Fast-food Server	-1.46	.00	-1.45	.00	-1.46	.00	-.85	.00	-.90	.00	-.78	.00

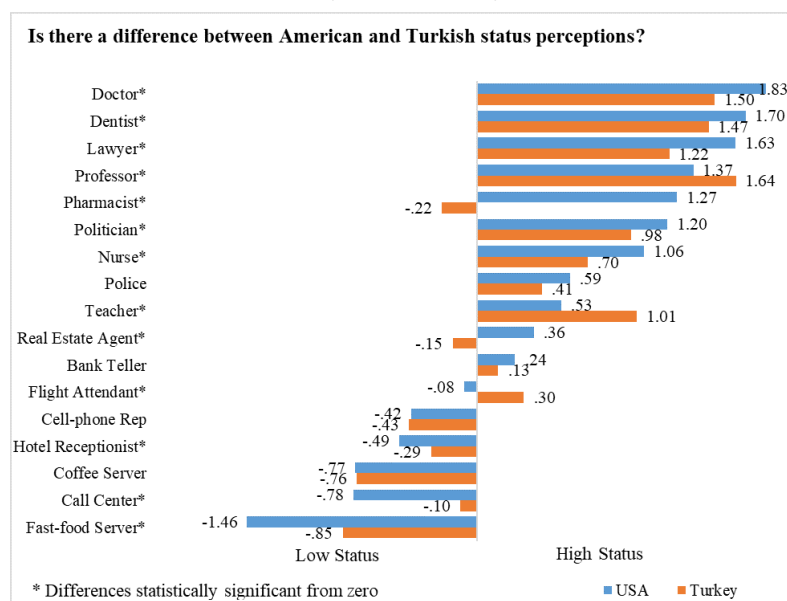
Note: *Difference is **not** statistically significant from zero

Scale: -2=very low-status, -1=low-status, 0=neutral, 1=high-status, 2=very high-status

The RO3 aimed to investigate whether service profession status stereotyping among millennials differed by gender (males vs. females) and by country (Türkiye vs. USA). In other words, the question of whether the observed differences in mean status values between genders and countries were statistically significant was tested using two-sample independent t-tests. Professions with statistically significant differences were compared on two dimensions: scale (magnitude) and direction. Professions exhibiting a change in direction moved from high to low-status or vice versa. Gender differences were examined first. The only statistically significant difference between female and male status perceptions ($p = 0.044$) was for *dentists*. Both groups rated dentists as a high-status profession – no change in direction. However, males were significantly stronger in their convictions than females – a difference in scale (magnitude). The observed differences for all other professions were not statistically significant from zero. Results are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1*Two Sample T-test, Means Sorted by Gender*

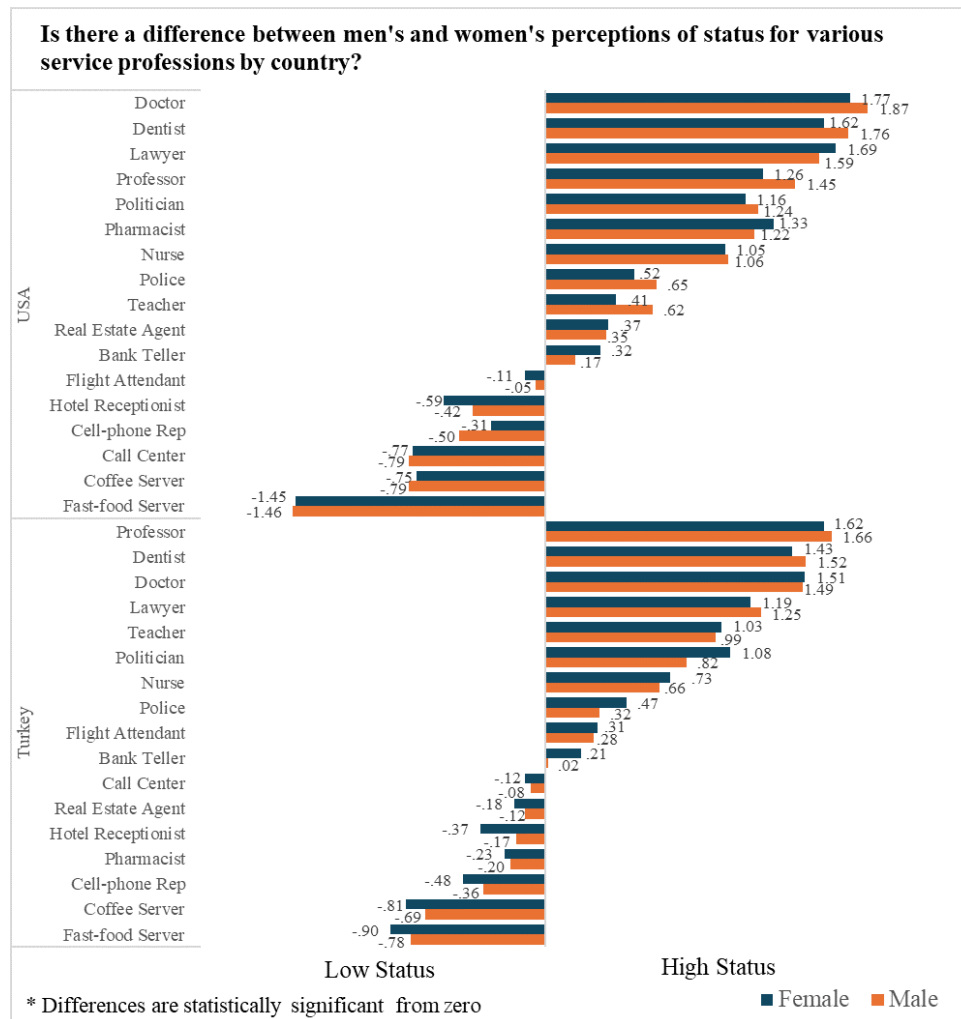
Findings based on comparisons between countries showed more differences than similarities. Differences between American and Turkish perceptions were not statistically significant from zero ($p > .05$) for *police, bank tellers, cell-phone representatives, and coffee servers*. Differences for all other professions were statistically significant ($p \leq 0.05$). The results also showed that American millennials' perceptions of high-status occupations (i.e., *doctors, dentists, lawyers, politicians, nurses*) were higher than Turkish counterparts. Turkish millennials perceived *professors, teachers, and flight attendants* as high-status (or prestige) occupation more than their American counterparts. It is interesting to note that *pharmacists and real estate agents* were perceived as low-status occupations by Turkish millennials. Results are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2*Two Sample T-test, Means Sorted Country (USA vs. Türkiye)*

The RO3 investigated differences of status perceptions across cultures by comparing genders and cultures together. The first analysis looked at differences between genders within each country. None of the observed differences were found to be statistically significant from zero ($p>.05$). These non-differences indicate that regardless of gender, millennials in both countries have similar perceptions regarding occupational status of the services included in the study. Results are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Two Sample T-test Comparisons for Male vs Female within Each Country



6. Discussions

This study aimed to examine millennials' perceptions of service profession-status stereotyping by gender in Türkiye and the USA. The primary objective was to determine whether service profession stereotypes existed such that services were perceived as high-status, low-status, or neutral. The analyses were conducted on a) all respondents, b) male versus female respondents, c) American versus Turkish respondents, and d) gender within each country (or interactions between country and gender). The results for all respondents showed an existence of service profession-status stereotypes as sorted by gender and country in Table 3.

Table 3 summarizes the findings on service profession status stereotypes for the mean values of overall sample, all females, all males, Turkey, and the USA. The table is organized in descending order, from professions perceived as having the highest status to those with the lowest. Of the seventeen service professions evaluated, eleven were perceived as high-status, five as low-status, and one as status-neutral. Mean value scores indicated that professions such as doctor, dentist, lawyer, politician, and teacher were regarded as having the highest status, whereas fast-food servers and coffee servers were perceived as having the lowest status. These results provide clear evidence of status-based stereotypes associated with service professions and align with prior research in the field (e.g., Belt et al., 2002; Croxton et al., 1989; Glick et al., 1995; Moloto et al., 2014; Oswald, 2003; Pinar et al., 2013, 2016).

Table 3*Summary of Service Profession Status Stereotyping by Overall, Gender & Country*

Overall	Mean	Females	Mean	Males	Mean	Türkiye	Mean	USA	Mean
Very High Status		Very High Status		Very High Status		Very High Status		Very High Status	
Doctor	1.65	Doctor	1.61	Doctor	1.70	Professor	1.64	Doctor	1.83
Dentist	1.57	Dentist	1.50	Dentist	1.65	Doctor	1.50	Dentist	1.70
Professor	1.52	Professor	1.49	Professor	1.55	Dentist	1.47	Lawyer	1.63
Lawyer	1.41	Lawyer	1.38	Lawyer	1.43	Lawyer	1.22	Professor	1.37
Politician	1.08	Politician	1.11	Politician	1.04	Teacher	1.01	Pharmacist	1.27
High Status		High Status		High Status		High Status		Politician	1.20
Nurse	.86	Nurse	.85	Nurse	.88	Politician	.98	Nurse	1.06
Teacher	.80	Teacher	.80	Teacher	.79	Nurse	.70	High Status	
Police	.49	Police	.49	Pharmacist	.56	Police	.41	Police	.59
Pharmacist	.45	Pharmacist	.35	Police	.49	Flight Attendant	.30	Teacher	.53
Bank Teller	.18	Bank Teller	.25	Real Estate Agent	.14	Bank Teller	.13	Real Estate Agent	.36
Flight Attendant	.13	Flight Attendant	.15	Neutral		Neutral		Bank Teller	.24
Neutral		Neutral		Bank Teller	.10	Call Center	-.10	Neutral	
Real Estate Agent	.08	Real Estate Agent	.03	Flight Attendant	.10	Low Status		Flight Attendant	-.08
Low Status		Low Status		Low Status		Real Estate Agent	-.15	Low Status	
Hotel Receptionist	-.38	Call Center	-.36	Hotel Receptionist	-.30	Pharmacist	-.22	Cell-phone Rep	-.42
Call Center	-.41	Cell-phone Rep	-.41	Cell-phone Rep	-.43	Hotel Receptionist	-.29	Hotel Receptionist	-.49
Cell-phone Rep	-.42	Hotel Receptionist	-.45	Call Center	-.46	Cell-phone Rep	-.43	Coffee Server	-.77
Coffee Server	-.77	Coffee Server	-.78	Coffee Server	-.75	Coffee Server	-.76	Call Center	-.78
Very Low Status		Very Low Status		Very Low Status		Fast-food Server	-.85	Very Low Status	
Fast-food Server	-1.12	Fast-food Server	-1.10	Fast-food Server	-1.15			Fast-food Server	-1.46

The results for gender and country showed similar and consistent patterns for service profession-status stereotyping compared to overall ratings with some exceptions. More specifically, service professions

perceived as high-status, low-status, or neutral status by all millennials were also perceived as high-status service professions by each gender and by each country. These patterns were relevant for highest and lowest status service professions. For example, doctors, dentists, professors, lawyers, and politicians were perceived to be the highest status service professions, whereas fast-food servers were perceived to be the lowest service status by millennials overall, by male and female millennials, and by millennials in each country. As shown in Table 3, there were some exceptions for these stereotype classifications. For example, males (USA and Turkish) perceived bank tellers and flight attendants as status neutral. Again, these findings confirmed the existence of occupational status stereotypes for service professions among millennials regardless of their gender and country (Oswald, 2003).

The overall results for the USA were compared to a 2012 NORC study (Smith, Tom & Son, 2014) shown in **Table 4**. The NORC study ratings were evaluated using a scale from one to nine and included a total of 860 occupations. Occupations matching professions from the current research were extracted for comparison purposes. Each profession/occupation was sorted according to their relative rankings. Results from both studies showed some consistencies for classifications of service professions as high or low-status. For example, in both studies, physician/doctor was regarded as the highest status service, while bank teller and flight attendants were perceived as lowest status service professions.

Table 4
Occupational Status from Prior & Current Research

NORC 2012 Study		Current Research (USA)	
Occupation	Mean	Profession	Mean
Physician	7.6	Doctor	1.83
College Professor	6.9	Dentist	1.70
Dentist	6.7	Lawyer	1.63
Pharmacist	6.7	Professor	1.37
Registered Nurse	6.5	Pharmacist	1.27
Lawyer	6.4	Nurse	1.06
High School Teacher	6.1	Police	0.59
Police Officer	5.9	Teacher	0.53
Real Estate Agent	4.9	Real Estate Agent	0.36
Flight Attendant	4.6	Bank Teller	0.24
Bank Teller	4.2	Flight Attendant	-0.08

NORC Study uses a 9-point scale, 1=lowest to 9=highest

Current Research uses a 5-point scale -2=lowest to +2 highest.

In summary, the results of this study provided insights about service occupational stereotyping among millennials in Türkiye and the USA. Specifically, the study showed the existence of service profession status stereotypes such that some services were perceived as high-status (prestige), low-status, or status neutral among millennials across genders and across countries. The study showed that occupational status stereotyping among millennials was somewhat surprising because it was believed they were the most diverse and inclusive generation (Daukas, 2013; Smith & Turner, 2015). However, our findings were also in line with those of Gottfredson (1981) and Glick et al. (1995), which claimed that people seem to perceive occupations similarly regardless of their educational level, ethnic group, area of residence, social class and lifestyles.

Regarding the theoretical connection between the findings and the core theories, social role theory is confirmed by the finding that some service occupations were perceived as higher-status than others. For example, doctors, dentists, professors, and lawyers were regarded as high-status service occupations, whereas fast-food servers, coffee servers, and call center representatives were perceived as the lowest status service occupations. The study observed that similar service-status stereotypes existed among both genders and across cultures. This observation is consistent with the literature. For example, Glick *et al.* (1995) emphasized that people tend to perceive occupations similarly, irrespective of their educational level, social class, and lifestyles.

With regard to Hofstede's cultural dimensions, Türkiye has a high-power distance, while the USA has a low-power distance. This dimension of Hofstede's cultural dimension theory explains why Turkish millennials perceive certain professions such as professors, teachers, and flight attendants as high-status compared to their American counterparts. The high-power distance in Türkiye emphasizes authority, status, titles, and respect for the elderly. Traditionally, teachers, professors, and flight attendants were regarded as respectable, high-status jobs. The millennials in Türkiye grew up in that traditional environment and perceived those jobs as high-status. On the other hand, the USA has a low-power distance, emphasizing independence, equality, and challenging authority. Traditionally, the jobs that require independence and challenging authority, such as real estate agents and pharmacists, were regarded as high-status. That tradition continues among millennials in the USA, who perceive those jobs as high-status.

These results could have employment and service quality implications for companies in attracting the right employees for the job, which was especially true for low-status service professions. Since fast-food services, coffee servers, and call center were perceived to be the lowest service professions, they could have major challenges to attract personnel for these services, let alone finding high quality personnel. Given the critical role of personnel for service quality, customer satisfaction, and loyalty (Zeithaml, Bitner & Gremler, 2013; Zeithaml, Parasuraman, & Berry, 1990), this could be a real concern for low-status service occupations. Moreover, once employed, companies could have different sets of challenges to motivate and keep employees in low-status service professions. At the same time, there could be fierce competition for high-status service professions. The findings found herein could also create challenges for global companies that operate in different cultures where service profession status stereotyping could be different in each culture. These differences require an understanding of the service profession stereotypes in each culture.

Given that examining services regarding occupational status stereotypes is an important way to understand the development of an economy and society (Turkcan, 2022, p.74), the macro level implications of this research need to be mentioned. First, it is known that occupational discrimination is the most common type of gender discrimination, and the emergence of gender discrimination operates through the perceived status of occupations. Accordingly, as a second implication, in the entire workforce women workers are at the bottom layer and work in the low-prestige, low-paid female dominated jobs (Garcia Mainar *et al.*, 2018), and the persistence of occupational sex segregation is a global phenomenon that relegates women into lower-paid, lower-status jobs (Chesters, 2022). Despite the fact that recently the gender composition of occupations has been shifting and higher-status occupations have been approaching gender parity, in lower-status occupations gender segregation has still been persistent (McKetta Prins, Bates, Platt & Keyes, 2021; Preston, 1999; Jarman, Blackburn, & Racko, 2012). Although women are volunteering for high-status jobs, they face intense competition for these jobs that are surrounded by men. The same is not true for low-status jobs. Men's demand for low-status occupations is much lower than that of women for higher-status occupations.

In this context, as a third implication, the findings of this research reveal that there are deep-rooted perceptions of status regarding occupations in the service sector. This occupational status stereotyping may contribute to gendered trends in the future. In other words, since more women are employed in low prestige jobs, it is predicted that gender discrimination will be more intense especially in low prestige professions. For this reason, based on some of the differences between Türkiye and the USA, each country needs to analyze their own perceptions of occupational status and make policy regulatory decisions on a national basis to ensure gender equality in the workforce. In summary, considering the share of the service sector in the world economy, the nexus between service sectors and occupational status stereotypes is an important and unfortunately underestimated phenomenon. Reducing inequalities in the distribution of income in the economy and gender segregation service sector needs to be carefully examined for occupational stereotypes. This could also contribute to the United Nations' (2021) Sustainable Development that suggests the elimination of the gender gap in labor force participation as one of the major challenges in achieving Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Consequently, the study found that millennials in Türkiye and the USA have stereotypes about service occupations, with some occupations being perceived as low-status and others as high-status. This could lead to difficulties in attracting and retaining employees for low-status service occupations, such as fast-food servers, coffee servers, and call center representatives. Businesses may need to develop strategies to address these stereotypes and make these jobs more appealing to millennials. One approach could be to emphasize the valuable skills and experience that can be gained in these roles. Another strategy could be to offer competitive salaries and benefit packages. Policymakers could also consider interventions to help reduce gender-based occupational stereotyping in Türkiye and the USA. Educational campaigns could be launched to promote the value of all service occupations, regardless of gender. Additionally, policies could be implemented to ensure that men and women have equal access to opportunities in all service sectors. By addressing these issues, businesses and policymakers can work together to create a more diverse and inclusive service sector workforce.

7. Limitations of the study and future research

This study provided insights about service-status stereotyping using seventeen different services. However, the results and conclusions must be put in the context of the potential limitations of the study and directions for future research. The first limitation is that this study examined only occupational stereotyping of service professions and did not include service profession-gender stereotyping. Future research could also include gender stereotyping to examine the existence of relationships between gender occupational stereotyping and service profession status stereotyping.

The second limitation is that it included only university students as participants. While they represent potential future customers and employees, their limited experience may affect their ability to fully capture service profession status stereotyping. Although millennials were the intended focus of this research, it is important to acknowledge that university students may not fully represent the broader millennial workforce. Future research should consider a broader, more diverse sample to provide additional perspectives on this topic and enhance the generalizability of the findings. In addition, because university students have not had full-time jobs, their perceptions reflect "unbiased" perceptions of service occupation stereotypes. This could be important for the HR departments of companies when recruiting college graduates, as the HR departments know the new graduates' perceptions of the service occupation stereotypes.

Future studies could be conducted with millennials who are students and those who are working to compare if the two groups have different perceptions of service occupation stereotypes. This comparison could reveal whether work experience had any effects on the perception of occupation stereotypes.

The third limitation is that the study covered only service professions. We suggest that a future study be conducted to include manufacturing professions for a more holistic approach to occupational status stereotyping. Finally, the study was conducted in two countries. We recommend the inclusion of more countries from different regions of the world to better understand the role of millennials' culture on service gender orientation as well as service-status stereotyping.

Despite these limitations, the findings of the study provided significant insights into service-status stereotyping within a culture and across two cultures and offered some relevant managerial implications.x"



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Author Details

Musa Pinar (Prof. Dr.)

¹ Valparaiso University, College of Business, Indiana, USA.

 0000-0002-8900-9313 ✉ Musa.pinar@valpo.edu

Coleeen Wilder (Asst. Prof. Dr.)

¹ Valparaiso University, College of Business, Indiana, USA.

 0000-0002-7938-2480 ✉ Coleen.Wilder@valpo.edu

Tulay Girard (Prof. Dr.)

² Pennsylvania State University-Altoona Division of Business & Engineering, Altoona, USA

 0000-0002-5891-146X ✉ tug1@psu.edu

Çiğdem Başfıncı (Prof. Dr.)

³ Trabzon University, Communication Faculty, Department of Public Relations and Advertising, Trabzon, Türkiye

 0000-0003-1194-9804 ✉ cbasfirci@trabzon.edu.tr

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Appendix

Table 1

Survey Instrument for Service Status Stereotype

Based on your opinion, please rate each of the following services on a scale from -2 = definitely low-status service to 2 = definitely high-status service .					
	Definitely Low-status	Low-status	Neither low nor High-status	High-status	Definitely high-status
Bank teller	-2	-1	0	1	2
Coffee shop server	-2	-1	0	1	2
Fast-food server	-2	-1	0	1	2
Cell-phone service representative	-2	-1	0	1	2
Pharmacist	-2	-1	0	1	2
Doctor	-2	-1	0	1	2
Dentist	-2	-1	0	1	2
Professor	-2	-1	0	1	2
Nurse	-2	-1	0	1	2
Politician	-2	-1	0	1	2
Customer call center	-2	-1	0	1	2
Police	-2	-1	0	1	2
Lawyer	-2	-1	0	1	2
Teacher	-2	-1	0	1	2
Flight attendant	-2	-1	0	1	2
Real estate agent	-2	-1	0	1	2
Hotel receptionist	-2	-1	0	1	2

Demographics Questions: These questions will be used only for classification purposes.

Your Gender is: Female ____ Male ____

Your Age: _____

Your classification is: Freshman ____ Sophomore ____ Junior ____ Senior ____

