Primary School Third Grade Students' Views on Gender Roles

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ABSTRACT

The problem of this research is to determine the third-grade students' views on gender. In this study, the phenomenology design, one of the qualitative research designs, was used. Research participants of Turkey in the same grade level from elementary school in the public school within the state depends on a city in Central Anatolia constitute studying 18 children. Data were collected through semi-structured interview questions created by the researcher and for which expert opinions were obtained. The researcher carried data collection out visiting three schools. In this study, which examines primary school third-grade students' opinions on gender perceptions, a "continuous situation comparison" was made. The study determined that children make choices suitable for their gender in their game preferences. Another finding of the study is that children think that professions that require more strength and endurance are specific to men. As a result of the research, families should be role models for their children to develop a positive gender perception and stay away from behaviors that support gender discrimination.

Keywords: Gender, primary school, third grade, profession.

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Introduction

Men and women are biologically different beings. However, beyond biological differences, many cultures attribute different roles and behaviors to individuals due to gender. These differences, which develop in society and with social pressure, are shaped by culture, family and society. The presentation of gender roles is essential in shaping children's gender thoughts. Gender indicates socially determined roles, behaviors, activities, and qualities deemed appropriate by the society for men and women (World Health Organization, 2014). Gender is a cultural category and describes the shared beliefs of a particular culture about what is masculine and what is feminine. It is possible to call this body of beliefs as gender ideology (Kellner, 2007). Gender, which cannot be explained by biological sex, has a meaning associated with social class, politics, patriarchy, and the mode of production in society (Savcı, 1999). Women's roles turn into stereotypes, such as being submissive and men's roles being dominant. These gender roles start in early childhood and continue until adolescence (Eagly, Wood, and Diekman, 2000). The concept of gender, which refers to the social positions and personal characteristics that members of the society attribute to being a woman or a man, is a dimension of social organization that shapes how we communicate with others and how we think about ourselves (Macionis, 2012). Educational institutions, on the one hand, help to reflect and transfer sexual role stereotypes through teacher attitudes and program approaches; on the other hand, by separating the areas suitable for girls in terms of type, duration, essence, prevent them from participating in economic life equally and effectively (Tezcan, 2017).

Gender roles include personality traits and culturally-appropriate behaviors for men and women in society, which are often transformed into stereotypes by society (Basow, 1992). Gender roles differ among societies according to time and place and shaped according to the culture inhabited (Trommsdorff and Iwawaki, 1989). According to Butler (2009), gender is a mechanism by which masculine and feminine concepts are produced and naturalized.

With the active participation of women in business life, men and women's differentiated roles traditionally based on family structure seem to have given way to gender roles based on sharing (Chodorow, 1978). The social life sphere is divided into two social spheres (public and private spheres) where men and women do different jobs based on a gender-based division of labor, which cannot be attributed to the sexes' different biological characteristics (Rendall, 1999). In this division of labor, men's actions are considered more valuable than women's actions (Chodorow, 1989; Wajcman, 1991). In the public sphere where women exist little, men dominate. It is defined as the decision-making area in most societies (MacKenzie and Wajcman, 1985). Those who see gender roles as important in the workplace have different expectations from men and women working for the same job. (Eagly and Karau, 2002). However, women take part in the private sphere defined for them. The major task is determined as motherhood and housework (Chodorow, 1978). This area is stereotypically inferior. Even if motherhood is blessed with eloquence, this brings both economic weakness and dependency on the "breadwinner" man (MacKenzie and Wajcman, 1985). According to Bourdieu (2014), the inequality dimension of the relationship between men and women is realized and reproduced through society's values, practices, habits, and beliefs. We can encounter gender discrimination in almost all countries of the world. However, its violence and indicators differ (Pratto and Walker, 2004). The qualities that are equivalent to the concept of 'femininity' in society are qualities related to femininity at first hand rather than an equal, independent, and unique

individual. A woman, who is thought to represent femininity, is primarily attributed to "wife," "mother," or "a member of the family" (Bingöl, 2014).

Gender-based inequalities can be encountered in many areas such as human dignity, economic distribution, benefiting from educational opportunities and opportunities, social roles, and division of labor (Sezal, 2017). Working both at home and outside required the woman to work a couple of hours. Today, within the framework of social changes, the idea that raising children with housework belongs only to women and economic activities only to men has lost its validity. Education may prepare women to contribute to all kinds of public duties and men equally and effectively (Tezcan, 2017). Therefore, it should be seen as the most effective way to ensure that men and women, who have the same educational abilities, skills, and needs, share the responsibilities and powers traditionally given to them (Tan, 1979).

For this reason, any kinds of education can be given to children, whether at home or school, are essential in creating a social order based on gender equality. First of all, it is considered essential to ensure gender equality in education. The aim of this research is to determine how third-grade students' views of gender. Within the major problem, the following questions were sought in the study.

- ✓ How are third-grade students' choice of friends in terms of gender?
- ✓ What are the game choices of third-grade students?
- ✓ What are the opinions of third-grade students about professions?
- ✓ What are the responsibilities of third-grade students at home?

Method

The research model, study group, data collection tools, data collection, and analysis are included under this heading.

Research Model

In this study, phenomenology design, one of the qualitative research designs, was used. Phenomenology focuses on phenomena that are defined and recognized in terms of the experiences of individuals or a particular group but cannot have a detailed and in-depth understanding (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2016). Since the study aimed to reveal the participants' perceptions and experiences, descriptive phenomenology approach was used (Ersoy, 2018). It aims to describe individuals' experiences with different experiences in phenomenological research (Creswell, 2019). In phenomenological studies, it is revealed that the participants feel, think and perceptions about their experiences in their lives and how they construct them and create a state of consciousness (Patton, 2002).

Study Group

The study group of the research consists of 18 students studying in the third grade of primary school. The study participants were determined by the maximum diversity sampling method, one of the purposeful sampling methods. In purposeful sampling, researchers purposefully select individuals to learn about the primary phenomenon or understand it (Creswell, 2019). Maximum diversity sampling defines as the determination of similar and different situations regarding the problem studied in the universe and the study of these situations (Büyüköztürk et al. 2012). The study group consists of third-grade students from three schls whose socioeconomic and sociocultural levels are low, medium, and high. Interviews were conducted with a total of 18 participants, three girls and three boys from all levels.

Data Collection Tool

Data were collected through semi-structured interview questions deveoped by the researcher and expert opinions were obtained. The form includes questions such as: "Which game do you like to play the most? Why is that?" Regarding the professions that children think to be specific to men and what their domestic responsibilities there are questions such as: "Are there any professions that only men can do? Why is that? Since you are a boy or a girl, are there any jobs/things at home that are expected from you in particular?".

Data Collection

The data were collected by the researcher visiting three schools. All interviews were collected by signing a parent consent form from each participant's parent. The data were recorded in the researchers' mobile phone with the parents' permission. The records were later deciphered and signed by the parents.

Data Analysis

In this study, "continuous situation comparison" has been made. In continuous situation comparison, contrasting situations can be selected and compared, or differences in similar situations can be determined. Variation in terms of the words used can be examined with the analysis. For a situation, it is examined how it changes and diversifies among events or situations (Glesne, 2020). The researcher made the first coding independently and analyzed the data. In the analysis, the answers of the participants were read. Codes that were thought to be similar were noted, and then they were combined. Each research question was tabulated with it, and frequencies were included, too. Samples from participants' statements are given below the tables. Participants were coded as K for girls, E for boys; and to express their socio-economic status, each student was numbered by indicating the letters D for low socio-economic level, O for middle and Y for high. For example, the KD1 code was given for the first female student from low socio-economic level.

The validity and reliability were ensured in the study. Preparing the semi-structured interview form by taking expert opinion, voluntary participation of the participants and recording with their permission are the criteria of credibility. Transferring the data faithfully to its nature and choosing the maximum diversity sampling method met the criteria of transferability. To meet the approvability criteria, the researcher first made her evaluations, and then an interview transcript was sent to an education management expert and asked to code. Then, by comparing the codes, it was examined whether the judgments and results coincided. Data analysis was completed with consensus on non-overlapping results.

Results

Regarding the first sub-problem, students were asked to name their favorite friends. ED1, ED2, ED3, EO1, EO2, EO3, EY1, EY2, EY3 gave the names of 3 male students. Third-grade students enjoy making friends from both genders. This situation cannot be evaluated only with social gender roles. In middle childhood, the friendship between girls and boys is based on gender. During this period, girls establish friendships with their gender and boys with their own (Berk, 2013). It can be said that the social development characteristics of the age group are also useful in choosing friends. In middle childhood, girls often get together to talk. Boys come together for activities such as sports or competitions (Berk, 2013).

In Table 1, students were asked what their favorite games are within the scope of the second research question. Students' views are presented in the table.

Table 1. Students' favorite games

Game	Frequency	Percent	Student
Football	7	%39	ED1,ED2,EO2,EO3,EY1,EY2,EY3
Hide and seek	4	%22	KD3, ED3,KO3,EY2
Computer games	4	%22	KY1, KY3, EY2, EY3
House keeping	3	%16	KD2, KO2, KY3
Car race	3	%16	ED1,EO2,EY1,
Skipping rope	3	%16	KD1,KO3, KY2,
Chase	2	%11	KD1,ED1,
Bike race	2	%11	EO1,EY2
Hopscotch	1	%6	KD1,
Mandala	1	%6	KY3

As seen in Table 1, it is seen that the game that males like to play the most is football (f = 7). Both males with low socio-economic status and high status stated that they liked football very much. Again, girls with low socio-economic and high socio-economic status expressed games such as housekeeping (f = 3) and skipping rope (f = 3). Other games mentioned by males are car racing (f = 3) and bicycle racing (f = 2). Both girls and boys stated video games. However, the remarkable point here is that children with a high socio-economic level expressed opinions about computer games (f = 4; KY1, KY3, EY2, EY3). The opinions of the participants on this issue are as follows;

My favorite game with my friends is soccer. We often play games with the kids in the apartment on weekends. It is enjoyable. I also love racing toy cars with my brother. Since we cannot play ball at home, we play car racing at home. (EO2)

Even though my mother says I have grown up, I still love playing house. I love dressing up my babies and making clothes for them. We play very fun with "E." "E" is my friend from the apartment. I wish we could play every day even if we do not have homework. (KY3)

Table 2 presents the professions that only men do, according to student views.

Table 2. Student views on male-spesific occupations

Profession	Frequency	Percent	Student
Driver	9	%50	KD1, KD2, KD3, ED1, ED2, KO3, EO1, EO3, EY3
Mechanic	8	%44	KD1, ED2, KO1, EO1, KY2, EO1, EY1, EY3
Plumber	4	%22	KO2, EO1, EO3, KY2
Construction master	4	%22	KO1, KO2, EO1, EY1
Gas station worker	3	%16	KD1, EO2, KY3

Profession	Frequency	Percent	Student
Electrician	2	%11	K2, EO2, EY3
Miner	2	%11	KY1, EY2
Butcher	2	%11	KD2, ED3
Delivery	2	%11	KO3, EY1
Manager	1	%6	KD1
Greengrocer	1	%6	KD2
Pilot	1	%6	EO1
Commander	1	%6	EO1
Racer	1	%6	EO2

When Table 2 is examined, the professions that both male students and female students stated as male-specific professions are: driver (f = 9), mechanic (f = 8), construction master (f = 4), plumber (f = 4), gas station worker (f = 3), electrician (f = 2), miner (f = 2) and butcher (f = 2). Cargo man (f = 1) manager (f = 1), greengrocer (f = 1), pilot (f = 1), commander (f = 1) and racer (f = 1) are also specified as male-oriented professions. It is observed that students with different socioeconomic levels have determined professions such as driver, repairman, construction worker, gas shop, electrician, miner and butcher specifically for men. The opinions of the participants are as follows;

There are many professions that only men do. For example, I have never seen a woman as a car mechanic, truck driver, gas station worker or manager. Truck drivers go a long way, women can't go that long. If they go and have children at home, they both miss them and they cannot meet their needs by themselves (KD1).

Driver, gas station worker, plumber, builder, repairman (EO1).

Table 3 presents the professions of both men and women according to student views.

Table 3. Professions of both men and women

Profession	Frequency	Percent	Student
Doctor	14	%78	KD1,KD2,KD3,ED1,ED2,KO1,KO2,KO3,EO1,EO2, EO3,KY1,KY2,KY3
Teacher	8	%44	KD1,KD2,KD3,ED1,ED2, ED3,KY2,KY3
Banker	5	%28	KO3, EO2,KY3,EY1,EY2
Engineer	5	%28	EO2,EO3,KY1,EY2,EY3
The deputy director	4	%22	KO1, EO2, EY1,EY3,
Security	2	%11	KO1, EY1
Police	2	%11	EO1, EO2,
Officer	2	%11	KY2, EY3,
Judge	1	%6	EO3
Prosecutor	1	%6	EO3
Lawyer	1	%6	EO3

Cashier	1	%6	KY1,
Architect	1	%6	EY1,
Secretary	1	%6	EY2
Hairdresser	1	%6	KO2

When Table 3 is examined, it is seen that both male students and female students expressed most as the professions of both men and women as doctor (f = 14), teacher (f = 8), banker (f = 5), engineer (f = 5) and deputy director (f = 4). The occupations which are doctor and teacher expressed by students draw attention to high socioeconomic-level, middle and low students. However, students expressing their opinions as bankers, engineers, deputy directors, security, police officers, judges, prosecutors, lawyers, cashiers, architects, secretaries, hairdressers are at medium and high socioeconomic levels. The opinions of the participants are as follows;

Both men and women can also be teachers, doctors, engineers, judges, prosecutors, lawyers. We see it in the movies. It already exists around us. EO3

Table 4 presents the opinions of the students about the jobs they help at home.

Table 4. Students helping roles at home

İşler	Frequency	Percent	Student
House cleaning	5	%28	KD3,KO1,KY1,KY2, EY2
Car Cleaning	1	%6	ED1
Cooking	3	%17	KD1,KO1,KO3,
Repairing	4	%22	ED2,ED3,EO1, EY1
Shopping	2	%11	KD2, ED3
I don't help	3	%3	KY3,EY2, EY3

When Table 4 is examined, the students expressed their helping role as home cleaning (f = 4; KD3, KO1, KY1, KY2, EY2), car cleaning (f = 1; ED1), cooking (f = 3; KD1, KO1, KO3), repairing (f = 4; ED2, ED3, EO1, EY1), shopping (f = 2; KD2, ED3). When the table is examined, it is seen that only female students stated the jobs attributed to women such as cooking and cleaning. It was determined that only male students stated the jobs attributed to men, such as repairing and car cleaning. The opinions of the participants on this issue are as follows;

.. I am helping my mother. When my mother cleans the house, I clean dust too. I am help collecting the table. I am tidying around. (KD1)

We are cleaning our car with my father. Sometimes I bring repair materials when there is repair work at home. It is my duty to buy bread at home. (ED3)

There is not much work for me to help at home. I usually study. I do my homework. My mom says "Just do your homework, we do not want anything else from you" (EY2)

Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

Gender is the role created by the cultural and social values of women and men. In World Economic Forum's education, economic participation, political representation, and health data generated by the 2020 Gender Bias Index Turkey is located on 130th of 153 countries. Children learn by observing family members, teachers, relatives, friends, parents or reinforcing the behavior he/she learned.

In the study, it was determined that students generally prefer friends from both genders. However, in Güder's (2014) study, children generally stated their preferences far from a sexist attitude in their friend preferences. This finding contradicts the current research. Güder's study does not support the research finding because it may be related to the study group. While examining the opinions of preschool children on gender roles in Güder's study, the study group of the present study is primary school third-grade students, and it is thought that they do not support the findings of the study because they are in a different periods of social development.

The study determined that children make choices suitable for their gender in their game preferences. The findings of the study conducted by Güder (2014) support the findings of the current study. Boys come together for activities such as sports or competitions (Berk, 2013). Football is the most preferred game for males and that can be considered as getting together with sports and competitions.

The similarity of socioeconomic level views in the students' answers to the question about what professions specific to men are is a striking result. In Özdemir's (2006) study, which examined the stereotypes of preschool children regarding gender characteristics, children stated that the characteristics of being healthy and challenging were the characteristics of males. In Sanday's (1994) study, it was found that the opinions of the participants were technically and physically inadequate. The current research finding is that children think that professions that require more strength and endurance are specific to men.

The opinions expressed as domestic affairs are similar in that they stem from the traditional family structure when evaluated in terms of socioeconomic level and student genders. In the study of Menekşe (2019), it was concluded that students have a more egalitarian attitude in distributing housework work living in families with different socioeconomic levels and this finding is not in line with the current research findings. In the Güder study on children (2014), it was concluded that children perceive the domestic duties and responsibilities of women and men traditionally, wihich supports the present research findings. It is thought that the students' perception of the same family responsibilities at the high socioeconomic level and low socioeconomic level stems from the fact that the study was carried out in central Anatolia and that the people living in this region live in a traditional family structure. To Berk (2013) tasks such as preparing food, cleaning, and baby care were given to girls, while boys are given responsibilities such as front gardening and going a little further from home. However, non-traditional child-rearing practices lead to a decrease in social gender role behavior and an increase in girls' non-traditional job aspirations. According to the results of Dilek's (1997) study, it has been observed that despite the high level of education and income, most of the mothers and fathers - especially fathers - direct their children to gain gender identity.

The pressure to conform to gender roles reduces children's ability to explore options regarding their interests and abilities. Therefore, children who feel intense gender-stigmatized pressure tend to be troubled and insatiable in their future lives (Berk, 2013). The study's result is

thought to indicate that there is a stereotype about gender in terms of both sex and socioeconomic level. Research findings shows that gender stereotypes of individuals cause inequality in society (Altuntaş and Altınova, 2015; Kahraman, Kahraman, Ozansoy, Smart, Kekillioğlu, and Özcan, 2014). There are findings that there are gender inequalities even during the COVID-19 pandemic process (Web, 2020). Turkey and the other countries should also be said that the eliminate gender inequality. It can be said that this will be minimized through education, even if the situation does not seem to disappear completely.

Based on the findings of the study, there are some suggestions for researchers and practitioners in future implications. In this study, interviews were conducted only with primary school third-grade students and similar studies could be conducted in other classes of primary school students. Besides, interviews with parents can be done, and more detailed information can be accessed. Families may be advised to be role models for their children to develop a positive perception of gender and avoid behaviors that support gender discrimination. Schools play an essential role in acquiring the concept of gender, and it may be suggested that the practices regarding gender discrimination in schools should be determined and measures should be taken in this regard. Teachers can also be provided with in-service training on this subject. To prevent gender discrimination, it may be suggested to organize family training programs and to increase social sensitivity by emphasizing gender equality.

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