



Gender Perceptions of the Primary School 4th Graders Regarding “Children’s Rights”*

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ABSTRACT

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Problem Statement and Purpose: It is crucial to determine the gender stereotypes, learned at an early age and limiting the freedom and rights of individuals to initiate the change in the egalitarian direction at an early age. Therefore, the present study aimed to investigate the 4th-grade primary school students’ perceptions towards gender (in)equality based on children rights and to assess whether the perceptions differ by gender.

Method: This study was conducted using a descriptive survey method. The study group, which were assigned using a convenience sampling strategy, comprised by 570 4th grade students, 264 of whom were girls and 306 were boys, from six districts of Ankara Province. The research data were obtained by a data collection tool that was developed by the researchers drawing on the books, namely The Declaration of Girls’ Rights and The Declaration of Boys’ Rights by Elizabeth Brami and Estelle Billion-Spagnol, which were written for children. Data were analyzed using frequency, percentage and Chi-square test.

Findings: Overall results of this study suggested that the primary school fourth-grade students failed to consider professions, plays, toys, colors, daily life skills, academic, artistic, and sportive activities based on “rights”, that they had explicit stereotypical approaches, and that girls had more equalitarian perception than boys regarding gender roles.

Implications for Further Research and Practice: Efforts should be made to eliminate all kinds of sexist items and practices from the content and functioning of the education (e.g. programs, books, teacher behaviors, spaces, activities). Steps should be taken to increase the awareness of families and society in general about gender equality.

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Introduction

The first question ever asked about a due or new-born baby is if it is a boy or a girl. The answer would refer to the biological sex of the child at first. Biological sex emphasizes the differences between the female and male sexes regarding chromosomes, anatomy, hormones, reproductive organs, and other physiological components. The biological sex refers to "real" differences between female and male, which are not learned but natal (Dokmen, 2010). The answer to the baby's sex refers at the same time to her/his "gender", which should shape how she/he is to be treated, the plays she/he will be playing, the colors she/he will wear on or use, the roles she/he will be assuming, her/his perception of oneself, success, and profession. Gender is a learned condition that is determined by social norms, constructed within particular social contexts, and furthermore, it expresses social, cultural, and psychological traits attributed to roles and behaviors that are considered appropriate for men and women. Gender is also a condition that produces differences and inequalities (Dokmen, 2010; Lindsey, 2016; Ryan, 2015; Wharton, 2005; Wienclaw, 2011). Separating women and men into masculine and feminine identities, imposing them roles appropriate for such identities, and identifying the same with a certain status, gender is the origin of the suppressive and subordinating approaches and behaviors both at home, and in public space in the historical process. Having been constructed upon religious, cultural, economic, and political power structures, gender is not static but is subject to change.

Children learn the stereotyped considerations and expectations regarding how should they look, think, feel, and act based on their sex at very early ages (Bem, 1983; Bian, Leslie & Cimpian, 2017; Guldu & Ersoy-Kart, 2009; Halim & Ruble 2010; Martin, 2011). Stereotyped sexual considerations and expectations as learned during early ages result in that gender inequality is adopted as normal and unchangeable and leads to blindness towards inequalities. In the foregoing context, the present study aims to investigate how the fourth-graders at primary school perceive gender equality based on "children's rights". In accordance with the aforementioned purpose, answers to the following questions are sought: what are the gender perceptions of fourth-graders as regards "children's rights" and if such perception of the students varies by their sex?

It is important for being able to launch change that aims equality to detect during early ages the sexist presuppositions that restrict the freedom and rights of individuals as acquired during early ages. Accordingly, the authors hope that this study would contribute in a clearer and more in-depth understanding of the issues that need to be intervened to form a society that is sensitive to gender equality. It is considered that the results of the study would also be instructive in raising awareness in children that gender equality is a human right and protecting their basic rights. There are various studies on social gender equality/inequality in the framework of educational programs and practices (e.g., Dokmen, 1995; Esen 2015; Gumusoglu, 2008; Kalayci & Hayirsever, 2014; Kirbasoglu-Kilic & Eyup, 2011; Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2016; Sayilan & Ozkazanc, 2009; Sayilan, 2012). However, to our knowledge, in the relevant literature, there is not any study that investigated the gender perception

of the primary school students based on "children's rights", which remained under-researched. Thus, the present study will provide valuable insights in that regard.

Development of Gender Roles

When and how the children recognize their gender identity, role, a "sexist" self, and differentiation based on sex, and to what extent such awareness direct their behaviors? There are theories that address the questions above from diverse perspectives. Such theories are generally categorized under two groups; namely, nature-based - biological and raising based-sociocultural (Kilvington & Wood, 2016, p. 61-63). Biological explanations of gender differences emphasize the biological basis of the sex difference. The differences between male and female behaviors are genetic. In other words, given that the chromosomes, reproductive organs, hormones, structure of the brain, and brain chemistry are different in men and women, this difference leads to different behaviors of men and women, all of which are a part of the evolutionary process (Kilvington & Wood, 2016). According to the biological theory, the basic factor that differentiates the roles of men and women is that women can bear children, while men cannot. Biological explanations disregard the variety of individual behaviors, and they are generally used to justify social inequalities (Martin, 2011).

Sociocultural theories, on the other hand, tend to elucidate the acquisition of appropriate behaviors as attributed to men and women similar to "learning" processes in general (Kretchmar, 2011). For instance, the social learning theory is an extension of the behaviorist tradition that defines learning as stimulant and response (Kretchmar, 2011). Social learning theory is focused on observable behavior. According to the social learning theorists, socialization is based on rewards (encouraging appropriate behaviors) and punishment (removing inappropriate behaviors). Imitation and modelling spontaneously occur in children, yet the said behavior is developed by reinforcement and becomes a regular practice as a result. According to that theory, similar to the other behaviors, the social gender identity and roles are learned through punishment and rewards (Bem, 1983) and indirectly through observation and imitation (Lindsey, 2016). Children observe and copy the behaviors of men and women, and then, receive positive or negative responses against their social gender behaviors, which strengthens the development of the social gender roles (Kilvington & Wood, 2016). Children are encouraged by the adults for behaving in accordance with the roles determined in line with their biological sex (Guldu & Ersoy-Kart, 2009).

Unlike the social learning theory, the cognitive development theory considers children as the basic subject in the socialization of the gender roles (Bem, 1983). According to that theory, the reason of the fact that children want to be feminine or masculine is not that they were rewarded by others but that they identify themselves as a girl or a boy (Dokmen, 2010). Once the child constructs one's gender identity (acting as a girl), the reciprocal interaction between the behaviors and thoughts (I am a girl) leads to constant gender identity or in cognitive development theory terms, the child acquires gender constancy (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). By the age three, the children begin to define themselves by sex and apply the sex-related labels to

themselves and mostly towards others; by the age six, the gender constancy becomes established (Lindsey, 2016).

The social gender schema theory bears the attribute of the social learning theory and cognitive development theory. The theory suggests that development of gender roles is a phenomenon that is both attributable to own cognitive processes, and learned within the society (Bem, 1983). According to the social gender schema theory, once the child first learns the cultural definitions of social gender, such schemas become the center, where all the other information is organized. Children learn what it means to be a woman or a man from their culture. Pursuant to the said theory, children adapt their behaviors to comply with the norms and expectations of sex in their culture (Kilvington & Wood, 2016). The schemas tell children what they can or cannot do according to their sexes. The schemas also affect the behaviors and self-respect of children. For example, once a girl learns that to be polite and courteous is valid for women in her culture, such behaviors are incorporated into the emerging social gender schema, and the behaviors are organized in respect of it (Lindsey, 2016). "The motivating force guiding children's gender-link conduct, as in cognitive-developmental theory, relies on gender-label matching in which children want to be like others of their own sex" Such coupling may, for instance, be in the form of the following: dolls are for girls and 'I am a girl' (Bussey & Bandura, 1999).

The Social Cognitive Theory suggests that development and differentiation of gender emerge through reciprocal and bidirectional effects occurring between the three factors, namely personal, behavioral and environmental (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). This theory suggests that children are active participants in the socialization process and that their cognitive skills are important in that regard. Children form their abstract models for the behaviors appropriate for both women, and men, and then adopt behaviors that comply with their models. Such modelling of children may not suit their relatives' behaviors. Thus, a girl may not imitate her mother or brother (Kilvington & Wood, 2016).

As it was stated in the introduction section of this study, children learn the acceptable and unacceptable situations for their sexes at very early ages using the reactions of people surrounding them. As age increases, the developed gender roles manifest in their most explicit state during adulthood (Guldu & Ersoy-Kart, 2009). In almost all the societies, children learn the existing gender roles explicitly and implicitly from a variety of channels, such as family (Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Leaper, 2014; Lindsey, 2016; Witt, 1997, Yagan-Guder & Guler-Yildiz, 2016), teachers (Asan, 2010; Bussey & Bandura, 1999), schools (Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Esen 2015; Gumusoglu, 2008; Kalayci & Hayirsever, 2014; Kirbasoglu-Kilic & Eyup, 2011; Martin, 2011; Ministry of National Education [MoNE], 2016; Sayilan & Ozkazanc, 2009; Sayilan, 2012) peer groups (Aina & Cameron, 2011; Bussey & Bandura, 1999; Lindsey, 2016; Serbin, Connor, Burchardt & Citron, 1979), fairy tales (Sezer, 2004), TV programs for children (Aubrey & Harriston, 2004; Barner, 1999), advertisements (Furnham, Babitzkow & Ugucioni, 2000), cartoons (Kalayci, 2015), plays (Martin, 2011; O'Connor, McCormack, Robinson & O'Rourke, 2017), computer games (Kan, 2012),

courses (Gumusoglu, 2008; Dokmen, 1995; Esen, 2015) and illustrated books for children (Catalcali-Soyer, 2009; Oskamp, Kaufman & Wolterbeek, 1996).

Legal Bases of Gender Equality

While on the one hand, gender roles are adopted by the new generations and reproduced in the society through the aforementioned channels, the national and international legislation, on the other hand, provided for the legal framework for gender equality as a fundamental "right". For example, Article 10 of the Constitution of Republic of Turkey, titled as "Equality before the law", including the provision that "Everyone is equal before the law without distinction as to language, race, color, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion and sect, or any such grounds. Men and women have equal rights. The State has an obligation to ensure that this equality exists in practice. Measures taken for this purpose shall not be interpreted as contrary to the principle of equality" emphasized the women-men equality.

The most important and internationally valid document for ensuring women - men equality is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted by the United Nations (UN) in 1979 (UNICEF, 2004). This document lists seven actions that prevent differentiation against women for the parties of the Convention to ensure that women have equal rights with men in education based on women-men equality. Among the foregoing actions, "The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging coeducation and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programs and the adaptation of teaching methods" measure especially emphasize the women-men equality in the context of gender roles.

Along with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action constitutes another international legal legislation for ensuring gender equality. The Beijing declaration obligates the "governments to ensure empowerment and advancement of women in the society, to increase women - men equality and ensure that gender perspectives reflected in all fundamental policies and programs" (Sabanci University Gender and Women's Studies Forum, 2015, p. 5). Article 2 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which provides the direct framework for the children's rights, confirm and commit that without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status would be imposed on children. Unfortunately, despite the legal regulations, deep inequalities between women and men, and girls and boys arise from the gender roles and pattern prejudices that are learned at early ages through socialization.

In the light of all these above explanations, this study aimed to investigate fourth-grade primary school students' perceptions towards gender (in)equality based on children rights and to test whether their perceptions differed by sex. For this aim, the following research questions were posed for this study:

1. What are the perceptions of fourth-grade primary school students' towards gender (in)equality based on children rights?
2. Do the perceptions of fourth-grade primary school students' towards gender (in)equality based on children's rights differ according to their sex?

Method

Research Design

This study was designed upon descriptive simple survey model with an aim to examine, on the basis of rights, the perceptions of primary school fourth-graders for gender and if such perceptions vary by their sex. Descriptive studies aim to describe the events and phenomena without any intervention (Karasar, 2005, p. 77; Buyukozturk, Kilic-Cakmak, Akgun, Karadeniz & Demirel, 2008, p. 19). No explanation or direction was provided to the participant students that might influence their perceptions before the data collection, and that the data were collected upon "as is" principle. Only their sexes as regards their personal information were asked to determine if their perception regarding gender changed.

Research Sample

The study group of this research was comprised of a total of 570 students, i.e. 264 girls (43.6%) and 306 boys (50.6%) attending to a public school each selected from Cankaya, Elmadag, Mamak, Pursaklar, Sincan, and Yenimahalle districts of Ankara Province. The study group was determined by convenience sampling method; a non-random sampling method, on the grounds that it was accessible and data collection tools were easy to apply (Buyukozturk, Kilic-Cakmak, Akgun, Karadeniz & Demirel, 2008). This research was conducted with the fourth-graders on the grounds that they would complete the surveys more comfortably and consciously since the "rights" matters were included in this study, that fourth-graders attended to the Social Sciences and Human Rights, Citizenship, and Democracy courses, and that their reading, writing, and comprehension skills were more developed compared to the other grade levels.

Research Instruments and Procedures

The data collection tool was developed by the researchers upon inspiration from the books, namely *La déclaration des droits des filles* (The Declaration of Girls' Rights) and *La Déclaration des droits des garçons* (The Declaration of Boys' Rights) by Élisabeth Bami and Estelle Billion-Spagnol (2017), which were written for children but addressed to people from any age group and made them think. The rights provided in clauses in both of the books (e.g. "similar to the boys, the girls also have the right to have their hair cut very short") were transformed into survey items (e.g. "who has the right to have her/his hair cut very short") and 70 items were generated. Each item was provided with three options, namely "girls' right", "boys' right", and "both girls', and boys' right". Accordingly, the data collection tool was submitted for review of experts each from child development, educational law, educational management, and curriculum and instruction and two doctorate students. Upon suggestions of the experts, the number of items was decreased to 48 and the wording of certain items was edited. The tool was also subject to trial to see whether it was

appropriate regarding clarity and time to be applied to a fourth-grade student. During the trial of the survey, "This is not a test, and there are no right or wrong answers." phrase was added into the remarks section of the survey along with other clarifications upon a student's question if he would be scored. Having been finalized accordingly, the "Gender Equality Survey in terms of Children's Rights" was applied by the researchers in the classrooms of the participant students upon permission by the Ministry of National Education. Before being distributed to the students, the purpose of the survey was explained to students, their kind assistance was requested, it was made clear that they might decline to participate, and explanations as regards how the survey was to be completed were provided. The personal information of the children and the names of their schools were kept confidential based on ethical considerations. Approximately 25 - 30 minutes took for the students to complete the surveys.

Data Analysis

The data collected using the surveys were analyzed by the SPSS software program. Thirty-five surveys were excluded on the grounds that sex section was left blank, or the same item was marked twice, or at least five items were left blank, and thus the analyses were performed on 570 surveys. The data were analyzed by frequency, percentage and Chi-Square since the variables in question included two (2) attributes for sex (Girls, Boys), and three (3) attributes for "girls' right", "boys' right", and "both girls', and boys' right". As a result of the analysis, significance interpretation was not performed for the items that the number of cells below anticipated frequency was more than 20% of the total number of cells and that such items were used only as a cross table. For the items, where significance interpretation was possible, percentages were also considered to have healthier interpretations as regards the items with intergroup differences.

Results

This section presents the findings based on data analysis. On the grounds that significance interpretation was not performed for the items that the number of cells below anticipated frequency was more than 20% of the total number of cells as a result of Chi-Square analysis, the degree of freedom (*df*), chi-square value (X^2) and significance value (*p*) columns were left blank for the aforementioned items.

Various questions were introduced to students as regards the right to play, and their responses to such questions were analysed by their sex. The student perceptions as regards the right to play are provided in Table 1.

Table 1.

Chi-Square Test Results regarding the Sex of Students and their Perceptions regarding the "Right to Play"

Children's Rights	Sex	Girls' Right		Boys' Right		Both Girls', and Boys' Right		Total		df	X ²	p
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%			
Who has the right to play with marbles?	Girls	1	0,4	64	24,2	199	75,4	264	100,0	2	7,31	.03
	Boys	10	2,3	83	27,2	212	69,5	305	100,0			
	Total	11	1,9	147	25,8	411	72,2	569	100,0			
Who has the right to play with airplanes?	Girls	6	2,3	119	45,6	136	52,1	261	100,0	2	1,67	,43
	Boys	7	2,3	155	51,0	142	46,7	304	100,0			
	Total	13	2,3	274	48,5	278	49,2	565	100,0			
Who has the right to play computer games?	Girls	1	0,4	10	3,8	252	95,8	263	100,0	-	-	-
	Boys	3	1,0	58	19,2	241	79,8	302	100,0			
	Total	4	0,7	68	12,0	493	87,3	565	100,0			
Who has the right to play with dolls?	Girls	180	68,7	0	-	82	31,3	262	100,0	-	-	-
	Boys	238	78,8	1	0,3	63	20,9	302	100,0			
	Total	418	74,1	1	0,2	145	25,7	564	100,0			
Who has the right to play at families?	Girls	140	53,2	0	-	123	46,8	263	100,0	-	-	-
	Boys	220	72,1	1	0,3	84	27,5	305	100,0			
	Total	360	63,4	1	0,2	207	36,4	568	100,0			
Who has the right to climb trees?	Girls	1	0,4	52	20,5	201	79,1	254	100,0	-	-	-
	Boys	6	2,0	110	36,9	182	61,1	298	100,0			
	Total	7	1,3	162	29,3	383	69,4	552	100,0			
Who has the right to play with toy cars?	Girls	1	0,4	148	56,3	113	43,0	263	100,0	-	-	-
	Boys	3	1,0	180	59,4	120	39,6	303	100,0			
	Total	4	0,7	328	58,0	233	41,2	566	100,0			
Who has the right to play hopscotch?	Girls	60	22,7	0	-	204	77,3	264	100,0	-	-	-
	Boys	73	23,9	1	0,3	231	75,7	305	100,0			
	Total	133	23,4	1	0,2	435	76,4	569	100,0			
Who has the right to skip rope?	Girls	88	33,3	0	-	176	66,7	264	100,0	-	-	-
	Boys	96	31,7	2	0,7	205	67,7	303	100,0			
	Total	184	32,5	2	0,4	381	67,2	567	100,0			

Table 1 provides that significance interpretation can be performed for the items regarding the rights of playing with marbles and playing with toy airplanes. In that respect, the perceptions of 4th graders as regards the right to playing with marbles significantly differ by sex and that considering the percentages, the girls had a more egalitarian attitude compared to boys that the said right was entitled to both girls and boys. On the other hand, perceptions regarding the right to play with toy planes did not significantly differ by sex and that upon review of the percentages, it was highly seen as a right for both sexes, and in addition, it was remarkable that there was an agreement that it was only boys' right. Taking into consideration the Chi-Square analysis -but without interpretation- playing computer, playing hopscotch, skipping

rope, and climbing to trees were highly seen as a right by both sexes, where playing at families and playing with dolls were highly seen as a right of girls and playing with toy cars was highly seen that of boys.

Table 2 provides the perceptions of fourth-grade students by sex as regards clothing and appearance rights in a social gender context.

Table 2.

Chi-Square Test Results regarding the Sex of Students and their Perceptions regarding the "Right to Clothing and Appearance"

Children's Rights	Sex	Girls' Right		Boys' Right		Both Girls', and Boys' Right		Total	df	X ²	p	
		f	%	f	%	f	%					
Who has the right to have his/her hair cut short?	Girls	41	15,6	37	14,1	184	70,2	262	100,0	2	36,79	.00
	Boys	31	10,3	110	36,5	160	53,2	301	100,0			
	Total	72	12,8	147	26,1	344	61,1	563	100,0			
Who has the right to grow hair?	Girls	89	34,0	1	0,4	172	65,6	262	100,0	2	16,23	.00
	Boys	95	31,6	21	7,0	185	61,5	301	100,0			
	Total	184	32,7	22	3,9	357	63,4	563	100,0			
Who has the right to keep ponytail?	Girls	145	55,6	0	-	116	44,4	261	100,0	2	13,29	.00
	Boys	165	54,1	15	4,9	125	41,0	305	100,0			
	Total	310	54,8	15	2,7	241	42,6	566	100,0			
Who has the right to cloth in blue color?	Girls	3	1,2	52	20,0	205	78,8	260	100,0	-	-	-
	Boys	3	1,0	93	30,9	205	68,1	301	100,0			
	Total	6	1,1	145	25,8	410	73,1	561	100,0			
Who has the right to cloth in pink color?	Girls	98	37,4	3	1,1	161	61,5	262	100,0	-	-	-
	Boys	174	57,6	5	1,7	123	40,7	302	100,0			
	Total	272	48,2	8	1,4	284	50,4	564	100,0			

As it can be seen from Table 2, the students' perceptions regarding the rights to have their hair cut short, grow hair, and keep a ponytail significantly differed in statistical terms and that the boys held more sexist attitude towards the foregoing rights. In general, to have one's haircut and grow hair was seen as an equal right for both sexes, where keeping a ponytail was mostly considered a right of girls. However, considering the percentages of those rights, students deem that the right to wear blue or pink was an equal right for both sexes, where they think that wearing blue was more of a right of boys, where wearing pink was that of girls.

Table 3 below provides the perceptions of students by sex regarding the rights to make vocational choices in the context of social gender.

Table 3.

Chi-Square Test Results regarding the Sex of Students and their Perceptions regarding the "Right to Make Occupational Choices"

Children's Rights	Sex	Girls' Right		Boys' Right		Both Girls' and Boys' Right		Total	df	X ²	p
		f	%	f	%	f	%				
Who has the right to become a surgeon?	Girls	9	3,5	8	3,1	240	93,4	257	2	14,19	.00
	Boys	22	7,3	29	9,6	250	83,1	301			
	Total	31	5,6	37	6,6	490	87,8	558			
Who has the right to become a secondary school teacher?	Girls	3	1,2	5	1,9	252	96,9	260	2	12,94	.00
	Boys	8	2,6	25	8,2	271	89,1	304			
	Total	11	2,0	30	5,3	523	92,7	564			
Who has the right to become a fashion model?	Girls	125	49,2	8	3,1	121	119,2	254	2	2,02	.36
	Boys	144	48,0	17	5,7	139	140,8	300			
	Total	269	48,6	25	4,5	260	46,9	554			
Who has the right to become a sculptor?	Girls	4	1,6	89	34,8	163	63,7	256	2	1,25	.54
	Boys	7	2,3	93	30,9	201	66,8	301			
	Total	11	2,0	182	32,7	364	65,4	557			
Who has the right to become a truck driver?	Girls	0	-	179	67,8	85	32,2	264	-	-	-
	Boys	7	2,3	237	77,7	61	20,0	305			
	Total	7	1,2	416	73,1	146	25,7	569			
Who has the right to become an astronaut?	Girls	6	2,3	40	15,3	216	82,4	262	-	-	-
	Boys	3	1,0	69	22,7	232	76,3	304			
	Total	9	1,6	109	19,3	448	79,2	566			
Who has the right to become a public judge?	Girls	5	1,9	15	5,7	241	92,3	261	-	-	-
	Boys	3	1,0	43	14,1	259	84,9	305			
	Total	8	1,4	58	10,2	500	88,3	566			
Who has the right to be the President?	Girls	2	0,8	59	22,5	201	76,7	262	-	-	-
	Boys	2	0,7	119	29,3	182	60,1	303			
	Total	4	0,7	178	31,5	383	67,8	565			
Who has the right to become a nurse?	Girls	109	41,9	1	0,4	150	57,7	260	-	-	-
	Boys	170	56,1	6	2,0	127	41,9	303			
	Total	279	49,6	7	1,2	277	49,2	563			
Who has the right to become a police officer?	Girls	2	0,8	17	6,5	243	92,7	262	-	-	-
	Boys	0	0,0	24	7,9	281	92,1	305			
	Total	2	0,4	41	7,2	524	92,4	567			
Who has the right to become a babysitter?	Girls	186	71,8	1	0,4	72	27,8	259	-	-	-
	Boys	225	74,0	1	0,3	78	25,7	304			
	Total	411	73,0	2	0,4	150	26,6	563			
Who has the right to become a dancer?	Girls	104	40,0	1	0,4	155	59,6	260	-	-	-
	Boys	137	45,4	4	1,3	161	53,3	302			
	Total	241	42,9	5	0,9	316	56,2	562			
Who has the right to become a nursery class teacher?	Girls	54	20,7	2	0,8	205	78,5	261	-	-	-
	Boys	67	22,0	6	2,0	231	76,0	304			
	Total	121	21,4	8	1,4	436	77,2	565			

According to Table 3, the perceptions of the fourth-grade students regarding the right to become a "surgeon" and a "secondary school teacher" significantly differed by sex. Girls adopted a more egalitarian attitude towards both rights. Perceptions as regards fashion model and sculptor professions were significantly differed by sex: becoming a fashion model was seen more of a right of girls by both sexes, where becoming a sculptor was seen as a right of both sexes. Students stated that becoming an astronaut, a public prosecutor/judge, and a police officer was highly a right for both sexes. However, there was a high level of agreement as regards that becoming a truck driver was a right of boys, where becoming a nurse or babysitter was that of girls. Furthermore, while becoming a dancer or a nursery school teacher was seen as a right for both sexes, there was also an agreement that performing such professions was mostly a right of girls.

Table 4 presents the perceptions of students as regards the right to know daily skills by sex.

Table 4.

Chi-Square Test Results regarding the Sex of Students and their Perceptions regarding the "Right to Know Daily Skills"

Children's Rights	Sex	Girls' Right		Boys' Right		Both Girls' and Boys' Right		Total	df	X ²	p
		f	%	f	%	f	%				
Who has the right to know how to wash dishes?	Girls	13	51,2	7	2,7	120	46,2	260	2	6,56	.04
	Boys	18	61,8	7	2,3	109	35,9	304			
	Total	32	56,9	14	2,5	229	40,6	564			
Who has the right to know how to iron?	Girls	13	50,4	3	1,1	127	48,5	262	2	8,61	.01
	Boys	18	61,1	7	2,3	111	36,6	303			
	Total	31	56,1	10	1,8	238	42,1	565			
Who has the right to know how to repair?	Girls	0	-	160	60,8	103	39,2	263	-	-	-
	Boys	7	2,3	215	71,0	81	26,7	303			
	Total	7	1,2	375	66,3	184	32,5	566			
Who has the right to know how to drive nails?	Girls	1	0,4	140	53,6	120	46,0	261	-	-	-
	Boys	7	2,3	203	66,6	95	31,1	305			
	Total	8	1,4	343	60,6	215	38,0	566			
Who has the right to know how to cook?	Girls	10	40,2	0	-	158	59,8	264	-	-	-
	Boys	12	40,8	8	2,6	173	56,5	306			
	Total	23	40,5	8	1,4	331	58,1	570			
Who has the right to know how to make cleaning?	Girls	12	47,7	1	0,4	137	51,9	264	-	-	-
	Boys	17	56,4	2	0,7	130	42,9	303			
	Total	29	52,4	3	0,5	267	47,1	567			
Who has the right to know how to sew?	Girls	15	57,7	2	0,8	108	41,5	260	-	-	-
	Boys	18	60,5	5	1,6	115	37,8	304			
	Total	33	59,2	7	1,2	223	39,5	564			
Who has the right to know how to knit?	Girls	17	66,0	3	1,1	86	32,8	262	-	-	-
	Boys	22	74,1	4	1,3	75	24,6	305			
	Total	39	70,4	7	1,2	161	28,4	567			

As it can be seen from Table 4, perceptions regarding the right to know how to wash dishes and iron significantly differed by sex, and that such right was mostly attributed to girls. Considering the ratio, it was seen that the boys held a more sexist attitude in that context. There was a high level of agreement as regards the fact that repairing and driving nails were a right for boys, where to know how to sew and knit was that of girls. Although knowing how to cook was seen as an equal right for both sexes, there is a more intensive agreement as regards given that girls were entitled to that right.

Table 5 provides the perceptions of fourth-grade students by sex as regards rights pertaining to areas of interest and engaging activities in a social gender context.

Table 5.

Chi-Square Test Results regarding the Sex of Students and their Perceptions regarding the "Right to Engage in Academic, Artistic, Sportive, and Cultural Activities"

Children's Rights	Sex	Girls' Right		Boys' Right		Both Girls' and Boys' Right		Total	df	X ²	p		
		f	%	f	%	f	%					f	%
Who has the right to learn how to shoot arrows?	Girls	6	2,3	41	15,8	213	81,9	260	100,0	2	9,95	.01	
	Boys	4	1,3	80	26,5	218	72,2	302	100,0				
	Total	10	1,8	121	21,5	431	76,7	562	100,0				
Who has the right to play football?	Girls	4	1,5	108	41,5	148	56,9	260	100,0	2	12,47	.00	
	Boys	6	2,0	167	56,0	125	41,9	298	100,0				
	Total	10	1,8	275	49,3	273	48,9	558	100,0				
Who has the right to read adventure stories?	Girls	10	3,9	9	3,5	240	92,7	259	100,0	2	41,93	.00	
	Boys	6	2,0	67	22,0	232	76,1	305	100,0				
	Total	16	2,8	76	13,5	472	83,7	564	100,0				
Who has the right to act naughty?	Girls	0	-	25	9,7	234	90,3	259	100,0	-	-	-	
	Boys	7	2,3	16	5,3	278	92,4	301	100,0				
	Total	7	1,2	41	7,3	512	91,4	560	100,0				
Who has the right to be successful in mathematics?	Girls	4	1,5	1	0,4	257	98,1	262	100,0	-	-	-	
	Boys	2	0,7	11	3,6	291	95,7	304	100,0				
	Total	6	1,1	12	2,1	548	96,8	566	100,0				
Who has the right to play chess?	Girls	1	0,4	3	1,2	256	98,5	260	100,0	-	-	-	
	Boys	1	0,3	28	9,2	274	90,4	303	100,0				
	Total	2	0,4	31	5,5	530	94,1	563	100,0				
Who has the right to boxing?	Girls	2	0,8	115	44,1	144	55,2	261	100,0	-	-	-	
	Boys	6	2,0	192	63,4	105	34,7	303	100,0				
	Total	8	1,4	307	54,4	249	44,1	564	100,0				
Who has the right to ballet?	Girls	167	64,0	2	0,8	92	35,2	261	100,0	-	-	-	
	Boys	224	73,7	7	2,3	73	24,0	304	100,0				
	Total	391	69,2	9	1,6	165	29,2	565	100,0				
Who has the right to weep for being affected while watching a film?	Girls	37	14,2	0	-	224	85,8	261	100,0	-	-	-	
	Boys	63	20,7	4	1,3	237	78,0	304	100,0				
	Total	100	17,7	4	0,7	461	81,6	565	100,0				
Who has the right to read detective stories?	Girls	6	2,3	36	13,7	220	84,0	262	100,0	-	-	-	
	Boys	3	1,0	76	25,2	223	73,8	302	100,0				
	Total	9	1,6	112	19,9	443	78,5	564	100,0				

Table 5 Continue

Children's Rights	Sex	Girls' Right		Boys' Right		Both Girls, and Boys' Right		Total	df	X ²	p	
		f	%	f	%	f	%					
		f	%	f	%	f	%					
Who has the right to like horror films?	Girls	4	1,5	17	6,5	240	92,0	261	100,0	-	-	-
	Boys	3	1,0	85	28,3	212	70,7	300	100,0			
	Total	7	1,2	102	18,2	452	80,6	561	100,0			
Who has the right to be successful in literacy?	Girls	1	0,4	0	-	262	99,6	263	100,0	-	-	-
	Boys	5	1,6	4	1,3	296	97,0	305	100,0			
	Total	6	1,1	4	0,7	558	98,2	568	100,0			
Who has the right to read poems?	Girls	4	1,5	1	0,4	256	98,1	261	100,0	-	-	-
	Boys	8	2,6	8	2,6	287	94,7	303	100,0			
	Total	12	2,1	9	1,6	543	96,3	564	100,0			

As it can be understood from the table, there were statistically significant differences by sex as regards the students' perception of rights to learn how to shoot arrows, play football, and read adventure stories. Although boys held a more sexist attitude towards the three items, in general, it was considered that shooting arrows and reading adventure stories was an equal right, where playing football was a right of boys. Success in mathematics, acting naughty, playing chess, weeping for being affected while watching a film, favouring detective stories and horror films, success in literacy, and reading poems were seen as an equal right by the students. However, the ballet was seen as a particular right for girls, where boxing is for boys.

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

In the present study, we aimed to investigate fourth-grade primary school students' perceptions towards gender (in)equality based on children's rights and to test whether their perceptions differed by sex. A general evaluation of the findings indicates that in 45 items out of 48, the girls marked the "both girls', and boys' right" option unlike boys regarding percentages. This result suggests that compared to boys, the girl students participated in this study had a more egalitarian perception as regard to social gender roles. The relevant literature includes different studies (e.g., Kimberly & Mahaffy, 2002; Keith & Jacqueline, 2002; Vefikuluçay-Yılmaz et al., 2009) that support that boy students have a more sexist and traditional perception regarding gender roles compared to girls.

The findings showed that in 30 survey items out of 48, more than half of both girls, and boys held an egalitarian perception, where sexist perspectives were adopted in 18 items. For instance, more than half of both girls, and boys think that "to know how to repair and drive nails" and a daily life skill, were a right of boys. Similarly, more than half of both girls, and boys are convinced that "to know how to wash dishes, sew, knit, and iron" was a right of girls. Half of the girl students consider that "cleaning" is a right for both girls, and boys, where more than half of the boys consider "to know how to make cleaning" is a right of girls. Such responses indicate that students adopted sexist roles as regards daily life skills. Similarly, a research in the scope of International Survey of Children's Well-Being (ISCWeB) by Bruckauf and Rees (2017) on 8-, 10, and 12-years-old children in Turkey, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Israel, Malta, Norway,

Poland, Romania, Korean Republic, Spain, and United Kingdom suggested that there was a common social gender gap between the participation of girls and boys in housework. According to the researchers, the persistence of that difference indicates the reproduction of gender roles with the potential to reinforce lifelong inequality within the family.

Plays that have been traditionally identified with girls and boys were concurred by the students also in this study. Most of the students agree that "playing at families", "playing with dolls" were the rights of girls, where "playing with toy cars" was that of boys. However, a student held a more egalitarian perspective regarding "playing with marbles", "playing hopscotch", "skipping rope", and "climbing to trees" plays. The results as regards the perceptions of the girl and boy students towards plays are consistent with the results presented in national and international literature. For example, Bagceli-Kahraman and Basal (2011) found that in the 7-8 years' age group, girls instead prefer playing at families and playing with dolls, where boys prefer playing with toy cars, trucks, and balls. Similarly, Pomerleau, Bolduc, Malcuit and Cossette's (1990) study suggested that girls mostly liked playing with dolls, where boys liked playing with balls and vehicles.

As regards sports branches, slightly more than half of the girls consider "playing football" and "boxing" as an equal right, more than half of the boys held a more sexist approach compared to girls towards both sports branches. "Ballet" as a sports branch and field of art are highly seen as the right of girls by both student groups. Yuksel (2014) suggested that men tended to prefer football, basketball, wrestling, and boxing, where women tended to prefer fitness, step-aerobic, Pilates, volleyball, and gymnastics, which are the sports branches that incorporate the characteristics attributed to each sex. In addition to the foregoing findings, both groups held a highly egalitarian perspective as regards academic success, poetry and reading variety of books, expressing feelings while watching a film, playing chess, and watching a horror movie.

Both girls and boys highly consider performing such professions that require education, such as police officers, public prosecutor/judge, president, surgeon, nursery school/secondary school teacher, and astronaut, as an equal right. However, both groups held highly sexist perceptions as regards becoming "a truck driver" or "a babysitter". Perceptions of the girls as regards nursing are more egalitarian, where boys mostly consider that profession as associated with girls. Cetin-Gunduz and Tarhan (2017) obtained similar findings and suggested that primary school fourth-grade boys held more negative "attitudes towards women's choice of a profession" compared to the girls. Similarly, Bagceli-Kahraman and Basal (2011) asserted that boys in the 7-8 age group had more stereotypical approaches compared to girls.

While both girls and boys consider wearing blue and pink colored clothes as an equal right, considering the ratios, there was a sexist approach in both sexes, and in especially the boys, that men wear blue, where women wear pink. According to a study by Pomerleau et al. (1990) on babies and their families, the reason for the above approach was that parents mostly have their boys wear blue clothes, and girls wear pink clothes, that they acted based on sex for the choices from the color of paint in the child's room to the color of nipples, and that the environment they provided to their children and the daily experiences supported such choices.

Another result of the present study is that the perceptions of the students regarding the rights to have their hair cut short, grow hair, and keep a ponytail significantly differed in statistical terms and that the boys held a more sexist attitude towards the foregoing rights. In general, to have one's haircut and grow hair was seen as an equal right for both sexes, were keeping a ponytail was mostly considered a right of girls. In Yagan-Guder's (2014) study, both girls and boys associated the reason for being a girl or a boy themselves with the form of their hair. This finding suggests that the assertion of hair form as a sex criterion stems from a social perception and precept.

The results of this study suggested in consistence with the results of other studies that the primary school fourth-grade students had explicit stereotypical approaches in many fields, including, professions, plays, toys, colors, daily life skills, academic success, art, and sports.

Recommendations

Similar to racial, linguistic, religious, and economic fields, the establishment of a structure towards equal gender in society definitely requires questioning the political, legal, religious, and cultural power structures and transformation from which is asymmetrical to which is equal. As per the principle of equality in democracies, the essential responsibility of such transformation belongs to the state. Therefore, it is first expected from the state to implement laws for equal genders in each field of life. The present study found that the primary school fourth-grade students had explicit stereotypical approaches in many fields, including, professions, plays, toys, colors, daily life skills, academic, art, and sports, as it is commonly observed in our society. The students adopt the sexist perspective at early ages, yet they can also change such sexist tendencies towards an egalitarian direction. In order for that change is ensured, the policies, plans, and programs towards removing all kinds of sexist elements and practices from the contents and conduct (programs, books, teacher behaviors, spaces, activities) of education that play an important place in children's life and is performed under supervision and control of the state, should be implemented again by the state. Naturally, it is most likely that there will be a resistance based on religious and cultural grounds in the process of policies, plans, and programs that would establish equality of gender in daily life and educational environments. It is of utmost importance that the awareness all the employees in the field of education, the role models of children, as regards equal gender is raised before the children.

As a social entity, the child becomes a member of other social systems (such as school, neighbor, peers, groups, associations, and laws) other than their family as their age increases. Given that all the environments involving the children respect for human rights and freedoms and protect such rights and freedoms, hold an important place in learning and development of equality of gender. Therefore, the most important contribution any relevant adult can offer to a child is to create an environment, which will respect for the child only as a "human being" without regard to her/his sex.

Unlike the other studies on social gender, the present study holds an approach based on "rights" towards equality of gender. However, the findings showed that participant students did not consider professions, plays, toys, colors, daily life skills, academic, artistic, and sportive activities as an "equal right" for both sexes. This

requires problematizing how the "rights", "equality", and "justice" concepts are taught, learned, perceived, and experienced. Deeper studies towards such concepts may provide the field with new perspectives. Furthermore, this study was performed with the fourth-grade students that lived in Ankara, a metropolitan city and also the capital city of the country. Based on the characteristics of the city, it is possible that the participant students experienced a variety of learning experiences regarding gender roles and identities. Focusing on the experiences of the students living in different settlements and cultural environments, new studies that address social gender from the "rights" perspective will provide new insights.

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İlkokul Dördüncü Sınıf Öğrencilerinin "Çocuk Hakları" Temelinde Toplumsal Cinsiyet Algıları

Atıf:

- Aksoy, N., Nurlu-Ustun, O., & Coban-Sural, U. (2019). Gender perception of primary school 4th graders in terms of "children's rights". *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 83, 145-166, DOI: 10.14689/ejer.2019.83.7

Özet

Problem Durumu ve Amaç: Toplumsal cinsiyet toplumsal normlar tarafından belirlenen, belirli sosyal bağlamlarda inşa edilen, öğrenilen, erkek ve kadın için uygun görülen rol ve davranışlara atfedilen sosyal, kültürel, psikolojik özellikleri ifade eden ve aynı zamanda bir sistem olarak farklılık ve eşitsizlik üreten bir durumdur. Kadın ve erkeği kadınlık ve erkeklik kimliklerine ayıran, onlara bu kimliklere uygun roller yükleyen ve belli statülerle özdeşleştiren toplumsal cinsiyet, tarihsel süreçte kadını hem ev içinde hem de kamusal alanda ezen ve ikincilleştiren anlayış ve davranışların kaynağını oluşturmaktadır. Erken yaşlarda öğrenilen, bireylerin özgürlüğünü ve haklarını sınırlayan cinsiyetçi ön kabullerin yine erken yaşlarda tespit edilmesi, eşitlikçi yönde değişimin başlatılabilmesi açısından önemlidir. Bu nedenle bu

çalışmada ilkokul dördüncü sınıf öğrencilerinin “çocukların hakları” temelinde toplumsal cinsiyet eşit(siz)liğine yönelik algılarını ve bu algılarının cinsiyetlerine göre farklılık gösterip göstermediğini incelemek amaçlanmıştır.

Yöntem: Çalışma, betimsel tekil tarama modeliyle gerçekleştirilmiştir. Seçkisiz olmayan örnekleme yöntemlerinden uygun örneklemeğe göre belirlenen çalışma grubu, Ankara ili Çankaya, Elmadağ, Mamak, Pursaklar, Sincan ve Yenimahalle ilçelerinden seçilen birer kamu ilkokulunun dördüncü sınıfında öğrenim gören 264’ü kız, 306’sı erkek olmak üzere toplam 570 öğrenciden oluşturmaktadır. Araştırma, içeriğinde “hak” konularının yer aldığı, Sosyal Bilgiler ile İnsan Hakları, Yurttaşlık ve Demokrasi derslerini alıyor olmaları ve diğer sınıf düzeylerine göre okuma, yazma ve kavrama becerilerinin daha gelişmiş olmasına bağlı olarak anketleri daha rahat ve bilinçli doldurabilecekleri düşüncesiyle dördüncü sınıf öğrencileri üzerinden gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmanın verileri Elizabeth Brami ve Estelle Billion-Spagnol tarafından çocuklar için yazılmış özgün adları La déclaration des droits des filles (Kız Çocuk Hakları Bildirgesi) ve La Déclaration des droits des garçons (Erkek Çocuk Hakları Bildirgesi) olan kitaplardan esinlenilerek araştırmacılar tarafından geliştirilen veri toplama aracı ile elde edilmiştir. Araştırmanın anketler yoluyla elde edilen verileri SPSS programıyla analiz edilmiştir. İncelenen değişkenlerin birisi “kız” ve “erkek” şeklinde iki (2) nitelik, diğeri de “kızların hakkıdır”, “erkeklerin hakkıdır” ve “hem kızların hem de erkeklerin hakkıdır” şeklinde üç (3) nitelik halinde olduğu için veriler frekans, yüzde ve kay-kare ile analiz edilmiştir. Analiz sonucunda beklenen frekansı 5’in altına düşen hücre sayısının toplam hücrelerin yaklaşık %20’sinden fazlasını oluşturduğu maddeler için anlamlılık yorumu yapılmamış, bu maddeler sadece çapraz tablo olarak kullanılmıştır. Anlamlılık yorumu yapılabilen maddelerde gruplar arasında farklılık çıkanlar ile ilgili daha sağlıklı yorumlar yapılabilmesi için de frekans ve yüzdelere bakılmıştır.

Bulgular: Ankette yer alan 48 maddenin 30’unda hem kız hem erkek öğrencilerin yarından fazlasının eşitlikçi bir algı içerisinde olduğu görülürken 18 maddede ise cinsiyetçi bakış açılarına sahip oldukları tespit edilmiştir. Örneğin hem kız hem de erkek öğrencilerin yarından fazlası gündelik yaşam becerilerinden “tamirat yapmayı ve çivi çakmayı bilmenin”, erkeklerin hakkı olduğu düşüncesindedir. Benzer şekilde yine hem kız hem de erkek öğrencilerin yarından fazlası “bulaşık yıkama, dikiş dikme, örgü örme ve ütü yapmayı bilmenin” kızların hakkı olduğu inancındadır. Geleneksel olarak kız ve erkek çocuklar ile özdeşleştirilen oyunlar bu çalışmada da öğrenciler tarafından onaylanmıştır. Öğrencilerin çoğunluğu “evcilik oyunu” ve “oyuncak bebekler ile oynamanın” kızların hakkı, “arabalarla oynamanın” da erkeklerin hakkı olduğu görüşündedir. Spor dallarından “futbol oynama” ve “boks yapma”yı kız öğrencilerin yarısından biraz fazlası eşit bir hak olarak görürken erkek öğrencilerin yarından fazlası her iki spor dalında da kızlara göre daha cinsiyetçi bir bakış açısı içerisinde. Hem bir spor hem de bir sanat dalı olan “bale” ise her iki öğrenci grubu tarafından da yüksek oranda kızların hakkı olarak algılanmaktadır. Bu bulguların yanı sıra akademik başarı, şiir ve türlerine göre kitap okuma, film izlerken duygularını açığa vurma, satranç oynama, korku filmi izleme gibi konularda ise her iki grubun da yüksek düzeyde eşitlikçi bir görüş içerisinde oldukları görülmüştür. Polis, savcı/hakim, heykeltıraş, cumhurbaşkanı, cerrah, anaokulu/ortaokul öğretmeni, astronot gibi eğitim gerektiren meslekleri edinmeyi hem kız hem erkek öğrenciler yüksek oranda eşit bir hak olarak görmektedir. Ancak “kamyon şoförü olmak” ile

“bebek bakıcısı olmak” konusunda her iki öğrenci grubunun da yüksek düzeyde cinsiyetçi olduğu görülmüştür. Hemşirelik mesleğinde ise kızlar daha eşitlikçi iken, erkekler bu mesleği daha çok kızlarla ilişkili görmektedir. Hem kız hem de erkek öğrenciler mavi ve pembe renk giymeyi her iki cinsiyet için de eşit bir hak olarak görürken oranlar dikkate alındığında erkeğin mavi, kadının ise pembe rengin taşıyıcısı olduğu cinsiyetçi bakış açısının da özellikle erkekler olmak üzere tüm öğrencilerde belirgin olduğu görülmüştür. Araştırmadan elde edilen diğer bir sonuca göre, öğrencilerin saçlarını kısa kestirme, uzatma ve atkuyruğu yapma haklarına yönelik görüşleri, cinsiyetlerine göre istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir şekilde farklılaşmakta ve erkeklerin bu haklarla ilişkili olarak daha cinsiyetçi tutumlara sahip oldukları görülmektedir. Genel anlamda saçlarını kestirmek ve uzatmak her iki cinsiyet için de eşit bir hak olarak görülürken saçlarını atkuyruğu yapmak çoğunlukla kızların hakkı olarak görülmektedir. Araştırmanın bütününde ilkokul dördüncü sınıf öğrencilerinin mesleklere, oyunlara, oyuncaklara, renklere, gündelik yaşam becerilerine, akademik, sanatsal ve sportif etkinliklere genel olarak “eşit hak” temelinden bakmadıkları, belirgin cinsiyet kalıp yargılarına sahip oldukları ve kız öğrencilerin erkek öğrencilere göre toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri açısından daha eşitlikçi bir algıya sahip olduğu sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

İleriye Dönük Araştırma ve Uygulama için Öneriler: Eğitimin içerik ve işleyişinin (programlar, kitaplar, öğretmen davranışları, mekânlar, etkinlikler) her türlü cinsiyetçi öğeden ve uygulamadan arındırılmasına yönelik çaba gösterilmelidir. Aileler ve genel olarak toplumun cinsiyet eşitliğine yönelik bilinçlerinin yükselmesi yönünde adımlar atılmalıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: toplumsal cinsiyet, çocuk hakları, dördüncü sınıflar, cinsiyet rolleri gelişimi, tarama modeli.

