

**An Intersectionality in Terms of Hierarchies and Stereotypes: Gender Roles and Eating Habits**

Üstünlükler ve Stereotipler Açısından Bir Kesişimsellik: Cinsiyet Roller ve Yeme Alışkanlıkları

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**Abstract:** Evaluating gender with an intersectional approach provides a broader area of influence. According to various theories, gender roles can be examined with attitudes towards non-human animals and the gender of animals when we expand the scope of "human justice" and "equity." The study aimed to determine the attitudes to gender roles and evaluate these attitudes according to Gender-Based Stereotyping in Eating Habits (GSEH) and nutritional features by controlling personality traits and sociodemographic characteristics. The study was conducted on people aged 18 years and over, 444 people formed the study group. A 37-item questionnaire, prepared using the literature, was distributed via social media platforms. Results revealed that being older, being male, not living alone, and not having participated in gender-related training were influential factors for negative attitudes towards gender roles. Additionally, in the study group, omnivorous and those with higher GSEH scores have more negative attitudes towards gender roles. The independent variables that the most important predictors of the gender roles attitude dependent variable were "being female," "being vegan," and "GSEH level," respectively. No relationship was found between personality types and the level of egalitarian attitudes towards gender roles.

**Keywords:** Gender, Eating Habits, Superiority, Attitude.

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**Öz:** Toplumsal cinsiyeti kesişimsel bir yaklaşımla değerlendirmek daha geniş bir etki alanı sağlar. Çeşitli teorilere göre "insani adalet" ve "eşitlik" kapsamını genişlettiğimizde toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri, insan olmayan hayvanlara yönelik tutumlar ve hayvanların cinsiyeti ile birlikte incelenebilir. Çalışmada, toplumsal cinsiyet rollerine ilişkin tutumların belirlenmesi ve bu tutumların, kişilik özellikleri ve sosyodemografik özellikler kontrol edilerek Yeme Alışkanlıklarında Cinsiyet Rollerine Dayalı Stereotipler (YACS) ve yeme alışkanlıklarına göre değerlendirilmesi amaçlanmıştır. Çalışma 18 yaş ve üzeri kişiler üzerinde gerçekleştirilmiş olup, 444 kişi çalışma grubunu oluşturmuştur. Literatürden yararlanılarak hazırlanan 37 maddelik bir anket sosyal medya platformları aracılığıyla dağıtılmıştır. Sonuçlar, daha ileri yaşta olmanın, erkek olmanın, yalnız yaşamamanın ve toplumsal cinsiyetle ilgili eğitimlere katılmamış olmanın toplumsal cinsiyet rollerine yönelik olumsuz tutumlar üzerinde etkili faktörler olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Ayrıca, çalışma grubunda hepçil olanlar ve daha yüksek YACS düzeyine sahip olanlar toplumsal cinsiyet rollerine yönelik daha olumsuz tutumlara sahipti. Toplumsal cinsiyet rollerine ilişkin tutum bağımlı değişkeninin en önemli yordayıcıları olan bağımsız değişkenler sırasıyla "kadın olmak", "vegan olmak" ve "YACS düzeyi"dir. Kişilik tipleri ile toplumsal cinsiyet rollerine yönelik eşitlikçi tutum düzeyi arasında bir ilişki bulunmamıştır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Cinsiyet, Beslenme, Üstünlük, Tutum.

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## Introduction

Gender roles are stereotypes and expectations associated with social and cultural norms related to men and women. Gender inequality, on the other hand, is the discrimination of individuals based on their gender, usually as a result of these stereotypes and expectations. Discrimination leads to unfair access to rights such as access to resources, opportunities, and services. Because many areas that are often considered "gender-neutral" actually have gender-related causes and consequences. Therefore, generating gender-based intersectional insights can lead to more inclusive innovations, leading to policies and efficiencies that promote equality in society (UN, 2020).

Nutrition sociologically intertwines with traditional values and adherence to these values. Regarding eating practices, it was reported that those with a distinct omnivore identity and meat consumption are more likely to endorse authoritarianism, social hierarchies, and hierarchical domination (Allen et al., 2000; Çarpar, 2020). A theory correspondingly argues a relationship between traditional stereotypical attitudes toward gender roles and dietary practices (Adams, 2010). The literature also reported that personality traits associated with traditional values are associated with traditional gender role attitudes (Costa & Davies, 2012; Cullen et al., 2002). Some studies found a relationship between some values and omnivorous or vegetarian identity. For example, it has been reported that people with "traditional values" such as family security, obedience, and social order are less likely to be vegetarian. In contrast, people with "altruistic values" such as environmental protection, equality, rights, and social justice are more likely to be vegetarian (Fox & Ward, 2008; Hopwood et al., 2020; Kalof et al., 1999). In this respect, nutrition and eating practices are not only a concrete biological definition but is also related to personality traits that are socially related to many different life behaviors and perceptions.

The intersectionality between gender roles and eating habits manifests itself in stereotypes about eating habits. It can be observed that many stereotypical attitudes are prevalent in communities, such as considering compassion as a trait that belongs more to women and thinking that women are more likely to be vegan, and if meat is consumed, which animal meat is associated with which gender. The concepts of "ecofeminism" and "speciesism" come to the fore when explaining these stereotypical attitudes towards nutrition through discrimination between gender roles and species.

Ecofeminism sees the natural world as a feminist issue, arguing that the exploitation and oppression of nature fundamentally link to women, people of color, and others who are oppressed (Hawthorne, 2019). The black-and-white groupings of "men and women" and "animals and humans" can lead to stereotypes and discrimination against animals based on their gender. On the other hand, speciesism shows the contradictions in people's attitudes and behaviors towards non-human animals. For example, some animal species, such as cats and dogs, are seen as family members by many people, unlike others, and acts of violence against these animals cause reactions (Altınal & Tekdemir, 2020; Everett et al., 2019).

The dietary features of omnivorousness, vegetarianism, and veganism can be analyzed together with the idea of superiority. For example, the most widespread omnivorousness places humans at the top of the food pyramid; it is a diet and hence a way of life in which the foods consumed are generally traditional. With the changes in the world in many areas such as ethics/morality, beliefs/values, health, and economy, the scope of what constitutes violence or discrimination has begun to expand. Pythagoras defined meat consumption as an indicator of violence, which was considered the starting point of vegetarianism. Vegetarianism, considered the oldest of these in historical terms, includes not eating animal meat; however, it does not draw a sharp line on consuming animal ingredients such as eggs, milk, and honey. With the expansion of the scope of "violence" to include the use of animal outputs, veganism emerged. Therefore, veganism and opposing human superiority over other species or speciesism are inextricably linked. Vegans avoid using animals as food, goods, or resources without distinguishing (abolitionist veganism) (Wrenn & Johnson, 2013). For this reason, in relation to dietary types, attempts have been made to establish the link between eating habits and gender roles through the concept of "superiority" rather than "ecofeminism" in

this study. Ecofeminism, on the other hand, is associated with resistance to the principle of superiority and conformity to gender-based dietary stereotypes.

Despite the positive developments achieved under many regulations, Türkiye is ranked 64th among 188 countries according to the "gender inequality index" (United Nations, 2017) and 131st among 144 countries according to the "global gender gap index" (World Economic Forum, 2017). Turkey is also reported to have lower gender-egalitarian attitudes towards women than western countries (Bugay et al., 2019). According to a study conducted with 2630 people aged 18 and over living in 70 different provinces in 7 different regions to measure the perception of gender inequality, it can be said that individuals' stereotypes about gender roles in Turkey are at a severe level (Savaş, 2018).

Evaluating gender with an intersectional approach is essential in policy-making, as it provides a broader area of influence. Since eating habits are affected by traditional characteristics, examining attitudes to gender roles will contribute to creating gender-based intersectional insights. The study aimed to determine the attitudes to gender roles and evaluate these attitudes according to Gender-Based Stereotyping in Eating Habits (GSEH) and eating habits by controlling personality traits and determining sociodemographic characteristics. No previous research on the subject of the study in the literature can be considered a strength of the study. In addition, the study's main limitations are that it is a cross-sectional study and therefore cannot show causality, and the group selected for the sample is not representative of the society.

## Materials and Methods

### Study place and design

This study is a cross-sectional study conducted on the social media platform Twitter between 12/15/2021-12/31/2021 on people aged 18 years and over in Turkey.

### Population and data collection

In the study, data was collected with the "convenience" sampling method, one of the non-probability sampling methods. The survey form link was prepared in advance on Google Forms and disseminated in this process. Consents of participants were obtained on the questionnaire. Individuals who refused to participate in the study were under 18 years old and did not respond adequately to the questionnaire were excluded. Four hundred forty-four people who agreed to participate in the study constituted the study group.

### Questionnaire form

A questionnaire form was prepared based on the literature (Altınal & Tekdemir, 2020; Thomas, 2016). The form included sociodemographics -age, gender, education level, household income, employment status, marital status, whether having children or not, residence,- nutritional characteristics -the type of diet, and the most influential factor in the type of diet- factors that may affect gender role attitudes -attending on training on "gender equity" and whether there was a history of work-sharing between the sexes in grown-up household chores such as washing dishes or laundry- (12 questions). In addition, the questionnaire included questions about "GSEH" (10 questions) prepared by the researchers, the Ten-Item Personality Scale (TIPS) (10 questions), and the Gender Roles Attitude Scale (GRAS) (15 questions). Permission for use was obtained from the responsible authors of the scales.

### Gender Roles Attitude Scale (GRAS)

Participants' attitudes towards gender roles were assessed with the Gender Roles Attitude Scale. The scale, which was developed by García-Cueto et al. in 2015 and a validity and reliability study in Turkish conducted by Bakioğlu and Türküm in 2018, includes 15 questions in 5-point Likert type to determine the positive attitude level of individuals towards gender roles. The total score varies between 15-75. A higher score on the scale means a more positive attitude towards gender roles (Bakioğlu & Türküm, 2019).

### **Ten-Item Personality Scale (TIPS)**

The participants' personality traits were assessed with the TIPS developed by Gosling et al. in 2003, and a validity and reliability study in Turkish was conducted by Atak et al. in 2013. The scale consists of ten questions on a 7-point Likert scale and measures five important subgroups of personality traits: openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability. The total score is taken for each sub-dimension (1+6: extraversion, 2+7: agreeableness, 3+8: conscientiousness, 4+9: emotional stability, 5+10: openness to experience) (Atak, 2013).

### **Gender-Based Stereotyping in Eating Habits (GSEH)**

A total of ten 5-point Likert-type questions were asked on this subject. The questions included five stereotypical judgments in two subgroups that emphasized feminine and masculine characteristics in eating habits. For example, women are more likely to be vegan than men because they are more compassionate than men, and men need to eat meat more than women because they work harder, and so on. Internal consistency of the item group was calculated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient and found to be 0.67. The total score ranged from 0-to 40, and it was accepted that the higher the score, the higher the level of agreement with gender stereotypes in nutrition.

In the study, ecofeminism was assessed through Gender-Based Stereotyping in Nutrition (GBSN) level, and speciesism was assessed through vegan, vegetarian and omnivorous eating practices (abolitionist vegan approach). The respondents' residence was considered the place of residence where the respondents had lived for the longest period of their lives. Family income status was assessed by asking questions in line with the self-assessment (perceptions) of the respondents. Pescetarians and lacto- or ovo-vegetarians were grouped "vegetarians." Widowed or divorced people were analyzed in the "single" group. Those who identified themselves as "non-binary gender" (NB) or "gender fluid" (GF) were classified as "those who do not identify as female or male" (NBGF).

### **Ethics committee approval**

The approval of the Eskişehir Osmangazi University Non-Interventional Clinical Research Ethics Committee was obtained (date of 12/14/2021 and number of E-25403353-050.99-294661).

### **Statistical analysis**

The data obtained were analyzed using SPSS Statistical Package Software (ver. 15.0, Chicago). Shapiro Wilk test was used to determine the conformity of the data with normal distribution. Mann-Whitney U test, Kruskal-Wallis analysis, Spearman correlation test, and multiple linear regression analysis were performed after ensuring the conformity of the variables to the normal distribution in further analysis. Multiple linear regression analysis was performed to determine which of the independent variables affected the GRAS score. In the first stage, the independent variables were included in the multiple linear regression analysis separately in three groups ("sociodemographic characteristics," "level of GSEH, eating habit, and the most influential factor taken into account in diet type," and "personality types"). As a result of the analyses, the variables that were found to have a significant relationship with GRAS scores were analyzed by multiple linear regression in the final model. Statistical significance was set at  $p < 0.05$ .

### **Results**

Of the study group, 71.2% were female, 26.4% male, and 2.4% NBGF. Their ages ranged from 18 to 69, with a mean of  $31.5 \pm 10.8$  years. The scores obtained from the GRAS ranged from 47 to 75, with a mean of  $66.6 \pm 7.5$  (median 68.0).

Those who had a history of attending a training on gender constituted 35.6% of the group ( $n=158$ ). Those with a work-sharing history between the sexes in household chores such as washing dishes or laundry while growing up constituted 41.9% of the group ( $n=186$ ) (Table 1).

There was a weak positive correlation between "openness to experience", one of the personality sub-dimensions of the TIPS, and GRAS scores ( $r=0.248$ ;  $p<0.001$ ), and further analysis showed that the relationship between this personality trait and GRAS scores disappeared (Table 2).

Regarding the eating habits, 64.0% of the group was omnivorous, 26.4% vegan, and 9.7% vegetarian. The most influential factors considered in eating habits were ethical values (30.6%), health (22.3%), and taste/pleasure (19.8%), respectively. It was found that those who identified themselves as vegetarian or vegan had higher GRAS scores than omnivorous. Those who stated that ethical values were the most influential factor in eating habits scored the highest on GRAS ( $p<0.001$ ) (Table 3).

The final regression analysis determined that being older, being male, working in an income-generating job, not living alone, and not participating in gender-related training before were effective factors for negative attitudes towards gender roles. Furthermore, being omnivorous and having a high GSEH level were factors for negative attitudes towards gender roles. The independent variables that added the most value to the GRAS dependent variable were "being female," "being vegan," and "GSEH level" with standard beta values of 0.281, 0.271, and 0.261, respectively (Table 4).

**Table 1.** Distribution of the scores obtained from the gender roles scale (GRAS) in the study group according to the variables that may be related to attitudes towards gender roles.

Variables	n (%)	GRAS Score Median (Min- Max)	Statistical Value p
<b>Age</b>			<0.001*
24 years and younger <sup>a</sup>	135 (30.4)	72.0 (49-75)	
25-34 years <sup>b</sup>	188 (42.3)	68.0 (47-75)	
35 years and older <sup>c</sup>	121 (27.3)	65.0 (48-75)	
<b>Gender</b>			<0.001*
Woman <sup>a</sup>	316 (71.2)	69.0 (47-75)	
Man <sup>b</sup>	117 (26.4)	63.0 (47-75)	
NBGF <sup>c</sup>	11 (2.4)	75.0 (60-75)	
<b>Educational status</b>			0.433
High School and lower	44 (9.9)	64.0 (48-75)	
University and higher	279 (62.8)	68.0 (48-75)	
Master's degree/doctorate	121 (27.3)	69.0 (47-75)	
<b>Average monthly income level</b>			0.239
Poor	49 (11.1)	68.0 (47-75)	
Moderate	319 (71.8)	69.0 (47-75)	
Well	76 (17.1)	66.5 (49-75)	
<b>Marital status</b>			<0.001*
Married	145 (32.7)	64.0 (47-75)	
Single	299 (67.3)	70.0 (47-75)	
<b>Do you have a child?</b>			<0.001*
No	335 (75.5)	69.0 (47-75)	
Yes	109 (24.5)	63.0 (47-75)	
<b>Do you live alone?</b>			<0.001*
Yes	107 (24.1)	71.0 (49-75)	
No	337 (75.9)	67.0 (47-75)	
<b>Resident</b>			0.452
Village or district	53 (11.9)	69.0 (48-75)	

<b>City center</b>	391 (88.1)	68.0 (47-75)	
Did you ever attend training on gender equity?			<0.001*
<b>Yes</b>	158 (35.6)	71.0 (47-75)	
<b>No</b>	286 (64.4)	65.5 (47-75)	
<b>Whether there is/was a work-sharing between the sexes in household chores such as washing dishes or laundry while growing-up</b>			0.347
<b>There is/was</b>	186 (41.9)	69.0 (47-75)	
<b>None</b>	258 (58.1)	67.5 (47-75)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>444 (100.0)</b>	<b>68.0 (47-75)</b>	

a,b,c: the difference between groups not having the same letter is significant; NBGF: non-binary or gender-fluid.

**Table 2.** Distribution of GRAS scores in the study group according to the personality sub-dimensions of the TIPS.

<b>Sub-dimensions of the TIPS</b>	<b>GRAS Score r; p</b>
<b>Openness to experience</b>	0.248; <0.001*
<b>Conscientiousness</b>	0.003; 0.948
<b>Extroversion</b>	0.048; 0.314
<b>Agreeableness</b>	<0.001; 0.998
<b>Emotional stability</b>	-0.089; 0.060

**Table 3.** Distribution of scores obtained from the gender roles scale (GRAS) in the study group according to variables about eating habits.

<b>Variables about nutrition</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>GRAS Score Median (Min- Max)</b>	<b>Statistical Value p</b>
<b>Eating habits</b>			<0.001*
<b>Omnivorous<sup>a</sup></b>	284 (64.0)	65.0 (47-75)	
<b>Vegetarian<sup>b</sup></b>	43 (9.7)	71.0 (49-75)	
<b>Vegan<sup>b</sup></b>	117 (26.4)	72.0 (55-75)	
<b>The most influential factor in eating habits</b>			
<b>Health<sup>b</sup></b>	99 (22.3)	67.0 (49-75)	<0.001*
<b>Economic reasons<sup>b</sup></b>	57 (12.8)	64.0 (47-75)	
<b>Ethical values<sup>a</sup></b>	136 (30.6)	72.0 (54-75)	
<b>Environment/sustainability</b>	17 (3.8)	69.0 (49-75)	
<b>Social relationships<sup>b</sup></b>	38 (8.6)	63.0 (48-75)	
<b>Beliefs/religious values<sup>b</sup></b>	9 (2.0)	60.0 (51-68)	
<b>Taste/pleasure<sup>b</sup></b>	88 (19.8)	66.0 (47-75)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>444 (100.0)</b>	<b>68.0 (47-75)</b>	

a,b: the difference between groups not having the same letter is significant.

Table 4. Final regression model.

Variables	Unstd $\beta$	SE (Unstd $\beta$ )	Std $\beta$	%95 CI	t	p
Age (ref: older ages)	0.053	0.016	0.137	0.083; 0.022	3.392	0.001*
Gender (ref: man)	0.032	0.005	0.281	0.023; 0.041	6.982	<0.001*
Woman	0.036	0.013	0.108	0.010; 0.062	2.685	0.008*
NGBF						
Living alone (ref: no)	0.016	0.005	0.131	0.007; 0.025	3.442	0.001*
Yes						
Attended training on gender equity before (ref: no)	0.009	0.004	0.081	<0.001; 0.017	2.074	0.039*
Yes						
GSEH Score	-0.097	0.015	-0.261	-0.126; 0.069	-6.638	<0.001*
Eating habit (ref: omnivorous)	0.032	0.005	0.271	0.022; 0.041	6.655	<0.001*
Vegan	0.024	0.007	0.136	0.010; 0.037	3.458	0.001*
Vegetarian						
Sub-dimensions of the TIPS Openness to experience	0.023	0.016	0.054	-0.010; 0.055	1.382	0.168
Constant	1.959	0.033		1.895; 2.024	59.733	<0.001
R <sup>2</sup>	0.379					p<0.001*
F	28.003					

CI: Confidence Interval; R2: Adjusted R2, F: Test value

## Discussion

Evaluating attitudes towards gender roles with different parameters related to social values can generate new insights and provide a better understanding of these attitudes' nature, causes, and consequences. In this study, from this point of view, the levels of egalitarian attitudes towards gender roles of adults were determined, and the factors that may be related to these attitudes, especially personality and eating habits, were examined. The level of egalitarian attitude toward gender roles can be considered similar to the studies conducted on different groups in our country (Aylaz et al., 2014; Özmete & Zubaroglu Yanardağ, 2016).

It is known that in patriarchal societies, there are significant differences between men and women in terms of work-life, social life, and married life. Women are disadvantaged because they work at a lower status than men and are under the burden of housework. This situation may cause men to perceive activities considered as women's roles more negatively (Adana et al., 2011). In addition, women adopt more egalitarian attitudes because they are the gender that suffers more from social inequality. These inferences are also supported in the literature (Bekleviç & Kıran, 2017; Egmond et al., 2010; Ertugrul Yaşar & Zorluoğlu, 2021; Jular-Alba et al., 2021; Öngen & Aytaç, 2013; Son & Bulut, 2016; Şahin, 2020). In the study group, attitudes towards gender roles were found to be "more negative" in men than in women and NGBFs across gender groups. Çiçek & Çopur (2018) reported that there was no relationship between the level of egalitarian attitudes toward gender roles and gender. One of the reasons for the different results reported in the studies may be that the study groups had different socio-cultural/economic characteristics.

Given that they grew up when women were less likely to be employed outside the home, older people may have a more challenging time perceiving gender role discrimination than younger people. Again, it can be said that as age increases, the conservative approach is supported by social stereotypes. In studies conducted on this subject, it has been reported that young people generally have a more egalitarian approach to gender roles (Egmond et al., 2010; Kehn & Ruthig, 2013). Our study found a negative relationship between age and the level of egalitarian attitude towards gender roles. A study by Çiçek and Çopur (2018) reported that young people's attitudes towards gender roles were less egalitarian. The use of different measurement tools and sample characteristics may be effective in reporting different results.

The participants who stated ethical values as the most influential factor in their eating habits also had a more egalitarian attitude towards gender roles. Regarding rights, this may be associated with the fact that these people have attitudes that advocate for the rights or welfare of nonhuman animals ("superiority"). In line with this situation, it is thought that vegans and vegetarians exhibit more egalitarian behaviors regarding gender roles than omnivores (Son & Bulut, 2016). Our study found that those who stated that ethical value was the most influential factor on eating habits had higher egalitarian attitudes towards gender than other groups. In addition, vegetarians and vegans were found to have more egalitarian attitudes towards gender roles than omnivores. No difference was found between vegetarians and vegans regarding egalitarian attitudes towards gender roles. One study reported no difference between vegetarians and omnivores regarding this egalitarian attitude (Figueredo, 2021). However, it is noteworthy that this referenced study did not analyze vegans separately. Additionally, it is known that studies on this subject are limited in the literature.

Being open to new experiences may be associated with less adoption of gender roles, such as many traditions imposed by society. In our study, although it was observed that attitudes towards gender roles were more egalitarian in those with the "open to experiences" personality type, this difference was not found to be significant in further analysis. Kurpisz et al. (2016) also reported no relationship between personality types and gender roles. It is challenging to classify personality types accurately, and identifying personality with sharp boundaries may be one of the reasons why these differences could not be revealed.

Educational activities that raise awareness about gender roles create more egalitarian attitudes by breaking the stereotypes about gender roles (Koyuncu Şahin & Çoban, 2019). We determined that approximately one-third of the study group (35.6%) had a history of attending training on gender roles, and those who received training on this subject had a more egalitarian attitude regarding their perspective on gender. The literature also reported a similar result (Ergin et al., 2019).

People living alone assume all gender-related roles in their home, work, and social lives, regardless of their gender, which leads to a more egalitarian approach to gender roles. As expected, our study found that those living alone had more egalitarian attitudes towards gender roles than those living with two or more people at home. A similar result was reported in a study by Çiçek and Çopur (2018).

## **Conclusions and Suggestions**

The study determined that gender, eating practices, and the level of agreement with gender-based stereotypes in eating habits (GSEH level) were determinants for the attitudes towards gender roles. No relationship was found between personality types and the level of egalitarian attitudes towards gender roles. It may be helpful to develop more egalitarian attitudes towards gender roles, carry out awareness-raising attempts and thus provide more inclusive environments. Further studies are needed to better elucidate the relationality of attitudes to hierarchies in eating habits and gender roles.



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