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The Examination of Graduate Students’ Gender Roles in Relation with Demographics

Cemrenur Topuz a, *, Füsun Yıldızbaş b

a PhD Student, Fatih University, Istanbul, 34500, Turkey
b Assist. Prof., University, Istanbul, 34500, Turkey

Abstract

The different behavioral patterns of females and males stem from the social learning process of gender roles. Individuals develop their own gender identity; and gender behaviors, roles and attitudes according to the social norms of the society in which they were born (Giddens, 2000). This research aims to investigate the gender roles and analyze the relationship of these roles with demographic variables. The research group was consisted of 104 (78 female and 25 male) graduate students from Education Faculty of Fatih University in 2013-2014. The data collection instruments were demographic questionnaire and Bem Sex Role Inventory (Short Form). Bem Sex Role Inventory with Femininity and Masculinity scales was used to determine the gender roles. The results showed that males got higher masculine scores than females; however females do not get significantly higher feminine scores. Regarding gender role categories, it has found that undifferentiated gender role category is more frequent in metropolis and androgyny gender role category is higher in older age group.

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1. Introduction

Gender refers to the social characteristics and social roles of females and males (Vefikuluçay, Zeyneloglu, Eroglu & Taskin, 2007). It differs from ‘sex’ that the latter is biologically determined whereas the former is shaped by the

* Cemrenur Topuz. Tel:+4-432-123-222.
E-mail address: cemre_topuz@yahoo.com
expectations, perceptions and requirements of culture and society. Gender roles are defined as what people think about male and female categories (Archer & Lloyd, 2012). The expectations about what is appropriate for each sex constitute the characteristics of gender roles (Holt & Ellis, 1998). Spence (1993) includes personal characteristics, abilities, physical characteristics and choices into gender roles. Culturally expected personal characteristics and behaviors become the stable decisions for gender roles in a society. Bem (1974) defined feminine and masculine as two dimensions of gender roles. Masculine means being assertive, independent, fair, rational, analytical and determined; whereas feminine means being emotional, sensible, collaborative, instinctive, warm and kind (Park, 1996). However, there are more than two gender role categories: femininity, masculinity, androgyny and undifferentiated. Androgyny and undifferentiated gender role groups are defined as gender role categories which include the characteristics from femininity and masculinity. Bem (1975) asserted that modern world makes us believe that individuals from both sexes need to show the combination of gender roles, appropriate for the existing situations. It has also argued that sticking on only one gender stereotypes restricts individuals. Rather, Bem asserted that androgynous individuals are considered as good at adapting various situations (Bem, 1975). Further studies pointed out that androgynous individuals have higher self-esteem, better self-concepts and healthy relationships with the opposite gender (Witt, 1997). Individuals gain gender roles via gender role socialization. Parents’ expectations, teachers’ expectations and social expectations play the major roles in adapting gender roles (Özdil Aydin, 2009). The gender differentiated expectations of parents play the critical role in shaping boys’ and girls’ perceptions, interests and skills about gender identities, because parents promote gender-stereotyped activities during the development of their children (Eccles & Jabos, 1990). Parents’ beliefs about gender stereotypic abilities of female and male influence how children perceive their own abilities. Therefore, children’s social, sports and math abilities are determined by these expectations. Teachers’ expectations about gender roles are found to be highly influential in academic areas and career decisions (Jacobs & Eccles, 1992). Furthermore, research proposed that once established gender roles remain stable during adulthood (Witt, 1997). Androgyny parents and teachers are more supportive and have similar expectations from each gender; therefore they promote children/students to develop androgynous characteristics (Eccles, 1987). The purpose of this research is to investigate teacher candidates’ gender roles according to gender, age, financial situation and residence area variables; and determine their gender role categories.

2-Method

2.1. Participants

The participants of this study were selected from graduate students of Education Faculty of Fatih University in 2013-2014. Volunteer students participated in this research. The study group has consisted of 104 students. Of the participants, 75% (N=78) were female and 26% (N=25) were male. 63.5 % of them (N=66) were between 20-24 years old and 36.5 % (N=38) were either 25 years old or older than 25. 26% (N=27) were in low income group (≤2000TL), 44.2% (N=46) were in medium income group (2001-4000TL) and 27.9 % (N=29) were in high income group (≥4001 TL).

2.2. Instruments

The instruments of this research were Short Form of Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) (Bem,1974) and Demographic Questionnaire. The Demographic Questionnaire was developed by the researchers. There are five categorical questions that include gender, age, financial situation and residence area. BSRI is a self-report instrument that measures participants’ perceptions regarding gender roles and enables to find out psychological masculinity, femininity and androgyny levels (Bem, 1974). The original form is consisted of 20 questions of each scale of masculinity, femininity and social desirability (neutral). The gender roles of participants are categorized as feminine, masculinity, androgyny and undifferentiated (Bem,1974). The Turkish adaptation of BSRI was conducted by Kavuncu (1987) and further studies were done by Dokmen (1999). The internal consistency levels of Turkish form were found as .82 for femininity and .86 for masculinity. Test-retest reliability coefficient was found as .75 for femininity and .86 for masculinity (Dokmen,1999). The short-form of BSRI adaptation was conducted by Ozkan and Lajunen (2005) and the short-form is also accepted as a valid and reliable measure.
2.3. Statistical Measures

The data were analyzed by IBM SPSS Statistics 20. Descriptive statistics were used in order to describe the main features of variables and t-test and chi-square tests were used for independent sample groups.

3-Findings and Discussions

3.1. Findings of Gender Role Scores

The mean scores of neutral, feminine and masculine items are shown in Table I. The participants feminine scale scores are \(M=5.9, SD=0.70\), masculine scales scores are \(M=4.8, SD=0.81\), and neutral scale scores are \(M=5.04, SD=0.50\). Independent samples t-test were conducted in order to find out if there is significance difference between gender roles according to gender and age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>5.91</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>-0.87</td>
<td>.634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td></td>
<td>.480</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The test found that male participants had statistically significantly higher masculine scores \(5.12 \pm 0.91\) compared to masculinity scores of females participants \(4.74 \pm 0.76\), \(t\) (102) = 2.087, \(p=0.039\). It has also found that there is no significant difference of feminine scores between male and female participants \(p>0.05\).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>5.83</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>-1.80</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥25</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The test found that there is no significant difference of feminine and masculine scores based on age groups \(p>0.05\). ANOVA test were conducted in order to find out if there are significant differences between gender roles according to financial situations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>5.95</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>5.98</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>5.84</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An analysis of variance showed that there is no significant difference between feminine scores \(F (2, 99)= 0.39, p = 0.67\) and masculine scores \(F (2,99) = 2.37, p = 0.09\) based on financial situations.

3.2. Findings of Gender Role Groups

In order to determine the femininity, masculinity, androgyne and undifferentiated gender groups, the median scores of feminine and masculine items were calculated. Median for feminine items is \(F\) 60 and median for masculine items is \(M\) 48. As shown in Table IV, 17.3% (N=18) of participants were in femininity group, 18.3% (N=19) of participants are in masculinity group, 34.6% (N=36) of participants are in undifferentiated group and
29.8% (N=31) of participants are in androgyny group. Masculinity, androgyny and undifferentiated gender groups,

Table 4: Analysis of Gender Role Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender Role</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Femininity</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculinity</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Androgyny</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undifferentiated</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square tests were performed to examine the relation between gender role groups and demographic variables. Significant relationships were only found between undifferentiated-residence area and androgyny-age. Apart from these relationships, gender role groups do not differ significantly according to demographic variables (p<0.05). The percentage of undifferentiated group members differs significantly by residence area. There are more undifferentiated participants in metropolitan areas than in cities and towns, χ²(2, N=102)= 6.36, sig<0.05. The percentage of androgyny group members differs significantly by age. There are more androgyny participants among individuals above 25-years-old than individuals below 25-years-old, χ²(1, N=104)= 4.32, sig<0.05.

4. Conclusions

The study results with the finding that the percentage of undifferentiated gender role category (% 34.6) is higher among participants, following with androgyny gender role category (%29.8). Although the study group is predominantly female; the percentage of femininity gender score is the lowest (%17.3). The findings of this research showed that males have more conventional gender roles than females. Male participants got significantly higher masculine scores. This result is consistent with the previous findings that males show more gender-stereotyped behaviors than females (Rosenkrantz, Vogel, Bee, Broverman & Broverman, 1986; Baykal, 1988; Guvenc, 1996; Araslı, 2001; Kimberly & Mahaffy, 2002). It has asserted that since male gender roles are highly promoted by the societies, it is much likely for males to hold more conventional gender roles (Vefikulucay, Zeyneloglu, Eroglu & Taskin, 2007). On the other hand, females did not show significantly higher feminine scores, which means they do not hold conventional gender roles. However, when gender role categories are calculated, the gender role difference is not clear for each gender. Neither, undifferentiated gender role is more prominent for females and androgyny gender roles are more prominent for males.

References


