

The Relation between the Gender Stereotypes of Children and the Gender Perceptions of their Parents*

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the relation between the gender stereotypes of preschool children and gender perceptions of their parents. Within this study, in which it is aimed to examine the relation between the gender stereotypes of preschool children and gender perceptions of their parents, relational scanning model was used. The population of the study consists of male and female nursery school children who were 54-66 months old and their parents. Within the sample of the research, 100 female and 100 male children, totally 200 students who attended five nursery schools and five infant schools and their parents took place in Bursa city center counties. Gender Stereotype Scale and Gender Perception Scale were used. Mann Whitney U test and independent group t test was carried out. In order to examine relation between the stereotypes of children's gender features and gender perceptions of their parents Pearson Moment Product Correlation Coefficient technique was used. As a result of the research it was determined that there was not a relation between parents' gender perceptions and children's gender stereotypes. Also, it is concluded that there was not a significant difference within the development of stereotypes regarding gender characteristics between female and male children. In addition to this, it was determined that mother and father gender perceptions score averages do not cause a significant difference according to the sexes of the children.

Keywords: Preschool Education, Stereotype, Gender Stereotypes, Gender Perceptions, Parents.

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Çocukların Cinsiyet Kalıp Yargıları ile Ebeveynlerinin Toplumsal Cinsiyet Algıları Arasındaki İlişki

Öz

Bu araştırmanın amacı okul öncesi dönem çocuklarının cinsiyet kalıpyargıları ile ailelerin toplumsal cinsiyet algıları arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektir. Okul öncesi dönem çocuklarının cinsiyet kalıpyargıları ile ebeveynlerinin toplumsal cinsiyet algıları arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemek için tasarlanan bu çalışmada ilişkisel tarama modeli kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın evrenini Bursa ili anasınıfı ve anaokullarına devam eden 54-66 aylık kız ve erkek çocuklar ile onların anneleri ve babaları oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmanın örnekleminde ise Bursa ili merkez ilçelerine bağlı beş anasınıfı ve beş anaokuluna devam eden 100 kız, 100 erkek toplam 200 çocuk ile bu çocukların anne ve babaları yer almaktadır. Araştırmada veri toplamak amacıyla Cinsiyet Kalıpyargıları Ölçeği ve Toplumsal Cinsiyet Algısı Ölçeği kullanılmıştır. Verilerin analizinde Mann Whithney U testi ve bağımsız gruplar için t-Testi kullanılmıştır. Araştırma kapsamına giren çocukların cinsiyet özelliklerine ilişkin kalıpyargıları ile anne-babalarının toplumsal cinsiyet algıları arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi amacıyla Pearson Momentler Çarpımı Korelasyon Katsayısı tekniği kullanılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda annelerin ve babaların toplumsal cinsiyet algılarının, hem kız çocuklarının hem de erkek çocuklarının cinsiyet kalıpyargıları arasında anlamlı bir ilişki olmadığı belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca kız ve erkek çocuklar arasında, cinsiyet özelliklerine yönelik kalıpyargıların gelişiminde anlamlı bir farklılığın olmadığı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Bununla birlikte anne ve baba toplumsal cinsiyet algı puan ortalamalarının çocukların cinsiyetlerine göre anlamlı bir farklılığa yol açmadığı belirlenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Okul Öncesi, Kalıpyargı, Cinsiyet Kalıpyargıları, Toplumsal Cinsiyet, Ebeveyn.

1. Introduction

Forming positive or negative impressions towards others basing on limited information is considered as a universal tendency. During a new situation priorly formed impressions take role as if they are real characteristics replacing information gaps. Accordingly when a new object/phenomenon or group is encountered these impressions are perceived through this thinking tendency not with their real characteristics (Göregenli, 2012). These images, in which the social reality is roughly schematized, are called stereotypes. Positive or negative, stereotypes may be generalized not only to features that clearly irrelevant and all other situations as well. The regular functioning of the society depends on people understanding others correctly. These reasons cause danger because of thinking based on stereotypes, the individual's being different from the group and the stereotypes not revealing the real situation (Dönmez, 2003). Another reflection of the stereotyping is the perception of gender differences (Aronson, Wilson and Akert, 2012). Bem (1984) explain the stereotypes regarding gender in two levels; stereotypes regarding gender roles defined as "sex-role stereotypes" and stereotypes regarding gender roles defined as "sex-trait stereotypes" (Kahraman and Başal, 2011). As a matter of fact gender stereotypes generally do not reflect the reality (Aronson, Wilson and Akert, 2012) and these stereotypes cause individuals to make generalization and mistakes in their judgments (Yzerbyt and Schardon, 2016). Researchers argue that biologic differences should be stated with "sex" and the socio-cultural differences should be stated with "gender". The expectations regarding sociocultural based gender differences shape the social attitude majorly turning into beliefs that are commonly accepted in society as "gender stereotypes" (Dökmen, 2012). "Sex" is the total of genetic, physiologic, biologic, anatomic and hormonal characteristics observed in individuals as male or female (Çetin, 2016). Gender stands for the features of being female and male acquired with the process of culture and socialization (Altınova and Duyan, 2013). Gender stereotypes on the other hand are the beliefs regarding the characteristics of men and women (Dökmen, 2012).

A role perception according to the sex take place in every cultural structure and this role perception are formed by transferring the attitude of parents to children through social interaction (Dökmen, 2012). With the effect of the society, environment and the family the children live in, it is provided to gain the gender

role they are expected to have (Başal, 2012). According to Social Learning Theory the children consider the attitudes of their parents as role model in forming their gender stereotypes; moreover they make this situation firm behaving appropriate for these gender stereotypes (Bandura 1977; McHale, Crouter and Tucker, 1999). According to Gender Scheme Theory the children form schemes regarding female and male types, decide which attitude is peculiar for boys and girls and try to adopt the male or female roles appropriate for themselves (Kail, 2004; Başal, 2012). Gender stereotypes are seen all over the world and they differ according to education level and culture (Kalan, 2010). In addition it is stated that there is a connection between the game, game friend and toy preferences of the children and gender roles (Kahraman and Başal, 2011; Güder and Alabay, 2016). Hence it can be stated that in preschool period the children shape their perceptions regarding sexes interpreting the judgments regarding gender presented to them by the society.

In 21st century changes like urbanization, economy, and the increase of schooling rate are felt in every part of the society and it affects the change of the values in the society. The stereotypes regarding the characteristics of women and men are affected by these values changed in the society. When the researches in Turkey are examined it is determined that the researches were generally examined in terms of the relation between the preschool children's gender stereotypes and their game and toy preferences, age and mother education level (Kahraman and Başal, 2011; Kahraman and Başal, 2012; Çelebi Öncü and Ünlüer, 2012; Güder and Alabay, 2016). However a research that searches for the relation between the gender perception of the parents and the gender stereotypes of their children was not encountered. Endendijk, Groeneveld, Van Berkel, Hallers-Haalboom, Mesman and Bakermans-Kranenburg (2013) state that the gender stereotypes of children is related with the gender perceptions of parents. Thereby the aim of this research is to examine the relation between the gender stereotypes of preschool children and the gender perceptions of their parents. In addition the aim of this research is to determine whether the stereotypes regarding gender and gender perceptions of parents differ according to sex or not.

In this research it is thought that gender stereotypes of children is related with the gender perceptions of parents. Thereby through this research it will be determined whether there is a relationship gender stereotypes of children and their mothers and fathers' gender perceptions or not. With this result, it is thought that parents will become aware of their attitudes and behaviors.

2. Method

Within this study, in which it is aimed to examine the relation between the gender stereotypes of preschool children and gender perceptions of their parents, relational scanning model was used. This model is a research performs in order to determine the relationships between two or more variables and obtains clues for cause-effect relationship.

2.1. Research group

54-66 month old male and female children, who attend nursery schools in the city of Bursa, and their parents, constitute the population of the research. Within the sample of the research 100 female and 100 male totally 200 children, who attended 15 nursery classes within the seven different elementary schools in the center country of Bursa city, in 2016-2017 education year and their mothers and fathers were selected with random sampling. First of all, "Gender Perception Scale" was sent to the children's parents and then "Gender Stereotypes Scale" was applied by interviewing to the children of parents who filled these forms.

The sibling status and mother education status of the children forming the sample according to their sexes are given in Table 1.

Table 1.

The demographic characteristics of the children according to sex status

Demographic Information	Sex				
	Female		Male		
	f	%	f	%	
Sibling Status	Same Sex	37	37	32	32
	Other Sex	35	35	41	41
	No Sibling	16	16	20	20
	Sister-Brother	12	12	7	7
	Total	100	100	100	100
Mother Education Level	Elementary School	11	11	14	14
	Secondary School	15	15	16	16
	High School	36	36	40	40
	Associate Degree	13	13	10	10
	University	25	25	20	20
Total	100	100	100	100	

As it is seen in Table 1, 37% of the female children and 32% of the male children have got siblings within the same sex. 35% of the female children and 41% of the male children have got siblings within the opposite sex. 16% of the female children and 20% of the male children do not have any siblings. 12% of the female children and 7% of the male children have got sister and brother. In addition 11% of the female children and 14% of the male children have got elementary school graduated mothers. 15% of the female children and 16% of the male children have got secondary school graduated mothers. 36% of the female children and 40% of the male children have got high school graduated mothers. 13% of the female children and 10% of the male children have got associate graduated mothers. 25% of the female children and 20% of the male children have got university graduated mothers.

2.2. Gathering the data

Within the research for the purpose of determining the stereotypes regarding the gender features of the children, the researchers used Gender Stereotypes Scale, which was developed by Williams and Benett and put into final form by Best, Williams, Cloud, Davis, Robertson and Edwards (1977) and was adapted into Turkish by Şirvanlı-Özen (1992). In order to determine the gender perceptions of the parents Gender Perception Scale, which was developed by Altınova and Duyan (2013), was used.

2.2.1. Gender stereotypes scale.

Within the research for the purpose of determining the stereotypes regarding the gender features of the children, the researchers used Gender Stereotypes Scale, which was developed by Williams and Benett and put into final form by Best et al. 1977. Gender Stereotypes Scale was adapted into Turkish by Şirvanlı-Özen (1992). In addition the Test-Retest Reliability Coefficient of the scale was found .74 and Two Halves Reliability Coefficient was found .73 (Şirvanlı-Özen, 1992). This scale, which has 32 cards, consists of 25x35 cm cards and within the cards there are 17,5 male and female silhouettes. Silhouettes were drawn in black and the background was designed in blue. The direction of faces of the silhouettes and the way they stand were given differently in every picture. 16 of the cards female take place on the left and 16 of them males take place on the right. 16 of the 32 cards stating the stereotypes according to gender include adjectives for female stereotypes and 16 of them include adjectives for male stereotypes. These stereotypes adjectives are performed to children with 32 short stories. The answers of the children regarding the stories

are marked to “Gender Stereotypes Scale Registration and Scoring Form”. The child who knows one more of the half of the 16 adjectives is stated as stereotypical.

Within this research the reliability analysis regarding Gender Stereotype Scale was evaluated by the researchers in terms of two halves reliability. While this was being made the list which consisted of 32 adjectives were divided into two equal halves randomly in terms of being positive or negative and stating the feature of being female or male. The correlation between these total scores got from these two halves were calculated. Two halves reliability calculated with the scale’s Spearman-Brown formula was determined .76. It was determined that these reliability coefficients obtained were at an acceptable level.

2.2.2. Gender perception scale.

The Evaluation tool, which was arranged by Altinova and Duyan (2013) in order to evaluate the gender roles and perception of the adult individuals, has a self-reporting style. Cronbach Alpha coefficient was determined as 0.87 for this scale.

In the scale, which was developed for measuring the gender perceptions of the people, there are 25 items and 10 of them are positive and 15 of them are negative. The five likert scale is ranked as (1) totally agree, (2) disagree, (3) indecisive, (4) agree and (5) totally disagree. The negative items of the scale are 2., 4., 6., 9., 10., 12., 15., 16., 17.,18., 19., 20., 21., 24. and 25. items. The points that can be scored change between 25-125 range and the highest scores indicate that gender perceptions are in the positive direction.

The reliability analysis of the Gender Perception Scale was carried out again and the results were calculated by Cronbach Alpha coefficient. This coefficient was calculated as 0.82 for the gender perceptions of the mothers and .86 for the gender perceptions of the fathers.

After determining the sample the next step was the application of measuring tools. Before starting the applications the required permission was provided by the Bursa Provincial Directorate of National Education. Gender Perception Scale was sent to mothers through the class teachers of the children within the context of the research and after being filled up by the mothers they were collected by the teachers. In the application part of the scale the nursery classes in the elementary schools were visited in certain dates, which were formerly determined. The children were taken into an empty room one by one and the Stereotypes Scale Regarding Gender Characteristics was carried out to children individually.

2.3. The analysis of the data

The data obtained in the research was analyzed using SPSS program. In order to determine whether the data was distributed normally Kolmogorov-Smirnov normally test was carried out. As a result of this test the distribution of the data obtained from Mother Gender Perception Scale was found normal; the data obtained from Father Gender Perception Scale and Gender Stereotype Scale was determined to be abnormal for the sub-dimensions. Therefore Mann Whitney U test was applied to nonparametric data; and indepedent group t- Test was applied to the data, which indicated normal distribution. For the purpose of examining the relation between stereotypes regarding the gender characteristics of the children participated in the research the gender perceptions of their parents Pearson Moment Product Correlation Coefficient technique was used.

3. Findings

Within this research in which it is aimed to examine the relation between the gender stereotypes of the preschool children and gender perceptions of parents the data is presented in headlines.

The total score of the children that participated in the research got from Gender Stereotypes Scale according to gender perceptions of the parents regarding the average and other statistical information are given in Table 2.

Table 2.

The statistical information regarding the stereotypes total scores of the children and parents' gender perceptions

	N	X	SS
Mother gender	200	92,82	15,39
Father gender	200	82,61	17,89
Female stereotype	200	9,67	1,95
Male stereotype	200	10,39	2,16
Total stereotype	200	20,07	3,30

As it is seen in Table 2; the score average regarding gender perceptions of the mothers, whose children participated in the research, were 92,82; the score average of the fathers gender perceptions were 82,61. Depending on this information it was determined that gender perceptions of the mothers were more positive compared to fathers.

Female stereotype score average regarding gender perception of the family was 9,69; male stereotype score average was 10,39; total stereotype score average was determined to be 20,07. It was determined that the stereotype score average of men was higher than female stereotype score average.

Table 3.

The correlation results between the parental gender perception scores and gender stereotype scores

		ATC	BTC	KK	EK	TK
Mother gender	r	1	.575**	-.027	-.075	-.065
	p	.	.000	.706	.291	.362
Father gender	r	.58**	1	-.040	.038	.001
	p	.00	.	.575	.593	.985
Female stereotype	r	-.03	-.040	** 1	.293**	.781**
	p	.71	.575	.	.000	.000
Male stereotype	r	-.08	.038	.293**	1	.826**
	p	.29	.593	.000	.	.000
Total stereotype	r	-.07	.001	.781	.826**	1
	p	.36	.985	.000	.000	.

** The correlation between them is significant at 0.01 level.

As it is seen in Table 3 a medium level positive directional relation was determined between the gender perceptions of the mothers and gender perceptions of the fathers ($r=.293$; $p<.01$).

A low level positive directional relation was determined between the female stereotype levels and the male stereotype levels of the children who participated in the research ($r=.293$; $p<.01$). A positive directional high relation was determined between female stereotype levels and total stereotype levels of the children ($r=.781$; $p<.01$). In addition a positive directional high relation between male stereotype levels and total stereotype levels of the children ($r=.826$; $p<.01$).

According to the sexes of the children who participated in the research; the statistical information regarding Total Gender Stereotype scores and t-test results are given in Table 4.

Table 4.

The t-Test results regarding the gender stereotype test scores according to the sexes of the children

	Gender	n	Average of Sequences	Total of Sequences	M-Whitney U	Z	p
Female stereotype	Female	100	106,11	10611,00	4990.5	-1.386	.166
	Male	100	94,89	9489,00			
Male stereotype	Female	100	102,03	10202,50	4847.5	-.376	.707
	Male	100	98,98	9897,50			
Total stereotype	Female	100	103,97	10397,00	4653.0	-.851	.395
	Male	100	97,03	9703,00			

As it is seen in Table 4 total stereotype score sequence averages is 103,97 for the female children participated in the research, total stereotype score sequence averages for the male children were determined to be 97,03. However a difference between female and male children regarding gender stereotype scores was not seen ($Z=-.395$; $p>.05$). Also it was determined that female stereotype score sequence averages of the female children were 106,11 and of the male children were 94,89. In other words it was determined that female stereotype score averages of the female children were higher compared to male children. However it was found that sex did not have a significant effect on the children's female stereotype scores ($Z=-1.386$; $p>.05$). Male stereotype score sequence averages were determined 102,03 in female children and 98,98 in male children. It was seen that sex did not have a significant effect on male stereotype scores of the children ($Z=-.376$; $p>.05$).

Table 5.

T-test results regarding mother gender scores according to the sexes of the children

	Sex	n	X	Ss	Sd	t	p
Mother Gender Perception	Female	100	93,18	14,73	198	.333	.742
	Male	100	92,46	16,09			

As it is seen in Table 5, it was determined that, mother gender perception score averages were 93,18 for the female children who participated in the research and it was 92,46 for male children. A difference was not seen between female and male children regarding mother gender perception scores ($t_{(198)}=.742$; $p>.05$). In addition when father gender perception score averages are examined it is seen that female children score averages were 82.33; and male children score averages were 82.89. It was determined that father gender perception did not cause a significant difference according to sex ($t_{(198)}=-.221$; $p>.05$).

Table 6.

Mann Whitney U test results regarding father gender scores according to sexes of the children

	Sex	n	Average of Sequences	Total of Sequences	M-Whitney U	Z	p
Father Gender Perception	Female	100	100,60	10059,5	4990,5	-.023	.981
	Male	100	100,41	10040,50			

In Table 5 findings regarding Mann Whitney U test indicate that father gender perception did not cause a significant difference according to the sexes of the children ($Z=-.023$; $p>.05$). Hence gender perceptions of the fathers do not differ according to the sexes of the children.

4. Results, Discussion and Recommendations

It was seen that there was not a relation between the gender stereotypes of both female children and male children and gender perceptions of parents. Accordingly although the score averages of parents' gender perceptions were in the positive direction, it was concluded that there was not a relation with gender stereotypes of children and the children have got gender stereotypes. However researches indicate that the gender stereotypes of both parents and children are related in positive direction (Freeman 2007; Tenenbaum and Leaper, 2002). This situation reveals that children are not only affected by their parents but also by other factors. Thus as a result of their study Chen and Rao (2011) determined that teachers have got stereotypes based on gender, they make groups depending on sexes, however the teachers are not aware of their own gender stereotypes. In addition Dilek (2014) states that gender stereotypes continue in story books.

According to the findings obtained as a result of this research it is concluded that there was not a significant difference within the development of stereotypes regarding gender characteristics between female and male children. This finding coincides with the results of other researches made on the same issue (Williams, Bennet and Best, 1975; Best, William, Cloud, Davis, Robertson and Edwards, 1977; Ward, 1985; Şirvanlı Özen, 1992; Kahraman and Başal, 2012; Güney, 2012; Endendijk et al, 2013). In Özdemir's research (2006), which was carried out with children at the age of 5 and 6, it is stated that there is not differentiation between female and male children within the development of gender stereotypes, however together with the change of the age a difference emerge according to sexes.

As a result of the research, considering there was not a significant difference, it was determined that male stereotypes were known more by female and male children. The results of some researches made by other researchers support this finding (Ward, 1985; Şirvanlı-Özen, 1992; Kahraman and Başal, 2011; Güney, 2012). The reason of this condition may be the expectations of the society regarding male children, indicating male children as stronger characters with the value judgments attributed to male children by the society through media. Thus researches indicate that cartoons emphasize the sexist roles (Özsoy and Taşdelen, 2016).

As a result of the research it was determined that the stereotype information regarding female characteristics of female children was higher compared to male children. Also, Güney (2012) supports this finding. The male stereotype score averages of the male children were lower than the male stereotype score averages of the female children. It was determined that total stereotype score averages of male children were lower than the total stereotype score averages of the female children.

It was determined that mother gender perceptions score averages do not cause a significant difference according to the sexes of the children. In addition it was determined that father gender perceptions score averages do not cause a significant difference according to the sexes of the children. As a result of their research Endendijk et al (2013) determined that the fathers who have got male child possess more stereotypical characteristics. As a result of this research when the averages are examined it was determined that the gender perceptions of mothers were higher than the gender perceptions of fathers. The researches indicate that men have got more traditional gender roles. (Aylaz, Güneş, Uzun and Ünal, 2014; Esen, Soylu, Siyez and Demirgürz, 2017; Öngen and Aytaç, 2013) as a result of the research they concluded that men were more traditional. However as a result of this research it was determined that there was a relation between the mother and father gender perceptions. Briefly as long as the gender perception of the mother increases the gender perception of the father increases as well. A research reveals that the education level

of the woman and the fact that she is a part of the working life contribute to the change of the traditional roles (Attanapola, 2004). In addition Uzun, Erdem, Güç, Uzun and Erdem (2017) determined that the education they applied regarding gender roles affects developing positive attitude. As a result of this research it is thought that the reason of the determined gender perception was high in both women and men and the gender roles of male and female are related with each other are derived from they are affected from each other and their mother education status center upon high school and above.

At the present time fast change, globalization, urbanization, innovations in technology, multi-cultural society structures, multichannel information flow, fast transfer of information, changes in values, changes in the structure of the family and the changes in the understanding of raising children reflect on the gender stereotypes of children. Nowadays it seems impossible to explain children's gender stereotypes only with the family. From this point of view it can be said that children's stereotypes regarding female and male characteristics are not only affected by people such as parents, brother and sister in their family but mass communication, teachers and friendship relationship as well.

The occurrence of stereotypes regarding gender characteristics is a natural tendency. Because stereotypes are cognitive processes. The individuals after determining the common points they observed in women and men, they can generalize to other people too. At this point the most important point is to prevent the children's stereotypes regarding gender characteristics turn into prejudice and discrimination. In this respect majorly teachers and families, mass media take a very important role.

Families and teachers must be informed in order to prevent children's gender stereotypes turn into prejudice and discrimination. In this regard parents' and teachers' stereotypes regarding gender characteristics and their prejudices and discriminative attitudes must be searched; the teachers who have negative attitudes must take in service training. In addition for the families family consulting centers, public education centers and parental schools may have an active role.

Child education begins with the family and continues in pre-school education institutions. In this process children are affected by their parents, teachers, friends, mass media, and other people they interact with. It is very important to create awareness that the stereotypes regarding gender characteristics are not valid for every individual; in order to know individuals better preventing the stereotypes knowing the individuals with their distinctive characteristics must be considered. It is thought that this research is important for parents to evaluate tv programs correctly, for teachers to regulate sex-based interactions in the classroom and to prevent the discrimination against the sexes. At this point families and teachers have the major role. It is thought that the expanding future studies in a way that they will include parents, friend and media dimensions in different areas will contribute to the field.

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