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A STUDY ON GENDER PERCEPTIONS IN NORTHERN CYPRUS TURKISH COMMUNITY
KUZİY KIBRIS TÜRK TOPLUMUNDA TOPLUMSAL CİNSİYET ALGISINA YÖNELİK BİR ARAŞTIRMA

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ABSTRACT

This cross-sectional and descriptive study aims to identify the gender perception and the affecting factors in individuals from Northern Cyprus. The sample of the study included 304 participants, and the data were collected through the Socio-demographic Form and the Perception of Gender Scale. Statistical analyses showed that the participants' "Perception of Gender Scale" mean score was 89,08±16,28. The analysis results also showed that gender perceptions were more positive in women compared to men ($p<0.001$), in individuals living in İskele compared to the ones living in Yeşilköy ($p=0.003$), in individuals who lived in the city the longest period compared to the ones lived in the village ($p=0.024$), in single people compared to married people ($p=0.015$), and in those aged 25 and below compared to those aged 36 and above ($p=0.002$). Gender perception also was found to be lower in individuals who had four and more siblings ($p=0.022$), but it was found to be higher in those who had only girls as siblings ($p=0.033$). On the other hand, the gender perception of the individuals who had an education level of university and above was higher than the participants who had other education levels ($p<0.001$). Also high education level of the parents had an positive effect on the gender perception of the individuals ($p<0.001$). The results of this study showed that although the participants' gender perception was not very high, it was positive and was affected by many factors.

ÖZ

Kesitsel ve tanımlayıcı tipte tasarlanan bu çalışmada, Kuzey Kıbrıslı bireylerin toplumsal cinsiyet algısını ve etkileyen faktörleri belirlemek amaçlandı. Çalışmanın örneklemini 304 kişi oluşturdu. Çalışmanın verileri Kişisel Bilgi Formu ve Toplumsal Cinsiyet Algısı Ölçeği kullanılarak toplandı. İstatistiksel analizlerde katılımcıların "Toplumsal Cinsiyet Algısı Ölçeği"nden ortalama 89,08±16,28 puan aldıkları belirlendi. Ayrıca analizlerde kadınların erkeklere ($p<0.001$), İskele'de yaşayanların Yeşilköyde yaşayanlara ($p=0.003$) ve en uzun süre şehirde yaşamış olanların köyde yaşayanlara ($p=0.024$), bekârların evlilere ($p=0.015$), 25 yaş altı bireylerin 36 yaş ve üstü bireylere, kıyasla toplumsal cinsiyet algısının daha olumlu olduğu saptandı ($p=0.002$). Çalışmada dört ve fazla sayıda kardeşi olanlarda toplumsal cinsiyet algısının daha olumsuz ($p=0.022$); yalnızca kız kardeşi olanlarda daha olumlu olduğu belirlendi ($p=0.033$). Üniversite ve üzeri eğitime sahip bireylerin toplumsal cinsiyet algısı diğer eğitim gruplarından yüksekti ($p<0.001$). Ayrıca anne ve baba eğitim seviyesinin yüksek olması bireylerin toplumsal cinsiyet algısını pozitif yönde etkilemişti ($p<0.001$). Bu çalışmanın sonucunda katılımcıların toplumsal cinsiyet algısının çok yüksek düzeyde olmasa da pozitif olduğu ve pekçok faktörden etkilendiği belirlendi.

Keywords: Cyprus, gender, gender equality, perception, woman,

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kadın, Kıbrıs, toplumsal cinsiyet, toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği,

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INTRODUCTION

Sex is a whole of genetic, physiological, and biological features of an individual demonstrated as a male or female (1). Gender is a concept that differentiates as a result of the social, cultural, political, and economic structures of these characteristics, and it is not possible to talk about a complete consensus regarding its definition (2-4). However, with its broadest definition, the concept of gender refers to socially determined personality characteristics, roles, and responsibilities of males and females. According to Ann Oakley (1972), who developed the concept of gender in sociology, while sex refers to biological distinction between males and females, gender refers to the unequal division between masculinity and femininity (5).

An individual is a member of society and is expected to demonstrate some behaviors expected by other members of society. These behaviors defined as roles are categorized as women's roles or man's roles according to gender (5, 6). This categorization based on biological characteristics is important for both the individual and society because characteristics depending on these two roles not only determine individuals' opportunities and styles of participating in society but also affect the formation of the division of labor in society. The process of acquiring gender roles happens through initially learning and then internalization (5, 7).

A general assessment of gender roles indicates that males are attributed active roles such as imperishableness, courageousness, strength, etc. while females are attributed passive roles such as compassion, emotionality, dependence, and submissiveness (8, 9). These gender-based roles not only differentiate males and females but also create discrimination against women and push them into the background, leading to losses in their basic rights such as education, right to elect and be elected, and participation in work life (2, 3, 8, 10). On the other hand, gender roles form a basis for many problems concerning women's psychological and physical health by forming a kind of social pressure (11-13). The concept of gender roles and gender inequality caused by it is reported to affect mainly women's reproductive health (10, 14, 15). In this regard, the World Health Organization defined gender equality to attract attention to the concept and defined gender equality as "the absence of discrimination on the basis of a person's sex in decision-making, use of opportunities, the allocation of resources and benefits, and access to services" (1). As explained above, it is important to determine how gender roles are perceived by society for the prevention of gender inequality which has negative effects on women's status and health (16). While societies that have positive gender perceptions demonstrate egalitarian attitudes free from discrimination, societies with negative gender perceptions prioritize inequality and discrimination (4, 16, 17).

Gender perception has been shaping human life for hundreds of years. However, studies on the issue date back to rather recent years (4). An analysis of the literature shows that studies on gender roles in Cyprus date back to the beginning of the 1990s (18). Cyprus, the third biggest island of the Mediterranean Sea, fell under the domination of Genoese, Venetians, Lusignan Dynasty, Roman Empire, Byzantine Empire, and the Otto-

man Empire in different periods due to its geographical location (19). The full domination of the United Kingdom that temporarily settled on the island in 1878 continued from 1914 to 1960. In 1974, the island was divided into two administrations including the Republic of Cyprus that is composed of the Greek society in the south, and the Northern Cyprus (TRNC) in the north (19, 20). The demographic structure of the Northern Cyprus, which is officially recognized only by the Republic of Turkey, is composed of Turkish people brought to the island in the Ottoman period and immigrants that came from Anatolia after 1974 (19, 21). While the agriculture and industry sectors support the economy of the country, tourism and education are the vital points of the economy (22). This demographic mobility of the island from past to present has paved the way for the development of a multicultural environment (23).

Most women living in the Northern Cyprus, who compose 46% of the population, accept the traditional femininity and masculinity roles and define themselves with these roles (24, 25). Since the country has an eight-year compulsory education, 96% of women are literate, and the gender distribution of the students in education levels is similar (26). On the other hand, although the number of public officials is almost the same for both genders, the number of women in higher positions is significantly lower (20). When the numerical representation in political life is analyzed, in the Republic Assembly, only 11 out of 50 members of the parliament are women, and there is only one female minister in the cabinet, and no women have been assigned as president so far, indicating women's staying in the background in administrative duties (27). On the other hand, some examples for formal initiations regarding gender equality could be Northern Cyprus's approval of many women's and children's rights contracts even if unilaterally and the presence of the Gender Equality Department affiliated to the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (20, 28). Since the Northern Cyprus is not an internationally recognized country, contracts about women's and children's rights are not monitored by their stakeholders. Therefore, non-governmental organizations play a key role in the implementation and monitoring of the contract, which contributes to the development of positive gender equality in the country (18, 20).

As the above-mentioned conditions indicate, the country has limitations in terms of social, cultural, and economic developments (Gregoriou, 2007; Lisaniler, 2014; Scott, 1995) (18, 21, 29). The limitations caused by these conditions have been a big obstacle in front of gender equality (21). On the other hand, no matter how high the developmental level is, gender inequality is a condition experienced not only in the Northern Cyprus but also in many countries worldwide. In today's modern world, the regulations in this issue are inadequate, and the decisions made are not fully implemented in practice. On the other hand, gender equality is the only key factor for rationalist improvement and sustainable development (30, 31).

This study aims to identify the gender perception and the affecting factors in individuals from Northern Cyprus.

Research Questions

1. What are the gender perceptions of individuals

- from Northern Cyprus?
2. What are the factors affecting the gender perceptions of individuals from Northern Cyprus?

METHODS

Study design and the sample

This cross-sectional and descriptive study was conducted between 1st of November 2019 and 1st of March 2020 in Northern Cyprus. Northern Cyprus has a very dynamic demographic structure that continuously let in immigrants for work and education purposes. This condition had effects on the selection of the study regions. Gazimağusa, İskele and Yeşilköy were selected as they are among the places where settled Cypriots are densely populated, and these places represent both urban and rural areas. Administratively, Gazimağusa and İskele are towns, and Yeşilköy is a village.

Since there are no current formal data regarding the distribution of the country population, no sampling size was calculated. Instead, the sample was formed by 304 individuals who were accessed between the dates the study was conducted, met the research criteria, and agreed to participate in the study. Inclusion criteria were being from Northern Cyprus, being 18 and over, and agreeing to participate in the study. No methods were utilised for sample selection, either.

Data were collected through interviews conducted face-to-face based on the participants' self-report in their home or work place. The researchers helped the participants who were illiterate to fill in the questionnaire form. Each participant spent approximately 15 minutes for the study.

Measurements

Data were collected based on the participants' self-report using the Socio-demographic Form and the Perception of Gender Scale (PGS).

The Socio-demographic Form

The Socio-demographic Form was prepared by the researchers in line with the related literature (16, 32-34). The form included 16 questions regarding the participants' characteristics such as gender, age, marital status, education level, etc.

The Perception of Gender Scale (PGS)

The scale was developed in Turkey in 2013 by Altınova and Duyan to measure the perception of gender. The one-dimension scale has 25 items in total. The 5-point Likert scale is scored as "I totally agree" (5), "I agree" (4), "I am not sure" (3), "I disagree" (2), and "I totally disagree". While 10 items are positive, 15 items are negative; hence, items 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, and 25 are scored reversely. The scores to be obtained from the scale range between 25 and 125, with higher scores indicating positive gender perceptions. Cronbach's alpha value of the scale is 0.87 (16). Cronbach's alpha was calculated as 0,88 in this study.

Statistical Analyses

Data were analyzed in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 24.0 program. Distribution of the participants' sociodemographic and family characteristics was identified using frequencies. The participants' Perceptions of Gender scores were presented using descriptive statistics, and normality distributions of the scores were analyzed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and skewness and kurtosis coefficients and Levene

test was utilised to determine the homogeneity of the variances. As the data set met the assumptions of the normal distribution, the study utilized the parametric test statistics of independent samples t-test, analysis of variance (one-wayANOVA), and Tukey test. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

Ethical Considerations

Before the study was conducted, the Ethics Committee Approval was obtained from the Eastern Mediterranean University Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee Health Ethics sub-committee (ETK00-2019-0212 / Date: 21.10.2019). Written permission was obtained from the local administration of the regions where the study would be conducted. As for the participants, their written consent prepared in line with the Declarations of Helsinki was received.

FINDINGS

The average of participants age in this study was $37,91 \pm 15.14$ (min:18 – max:87) years. Also the average duration of education was 10.59 ± 4.78 (min:0 – max:16) years, the average duration of women's education was 10.97 ± 5.04 (min:0 – max:16) and that of men was 10.35 ± 4.60 years (min:0 – max:16). The proportion of married women was 24.6% (n=75) and that of men was 32.2% (n=98). The proportion of working in a wage-earning job was 14.1% (n=43) in women and 38.8% (n=118) in men. Other socio-demographic features of the participants are presented in Table I.

Table II demonstrates the distribution of the participants' family characteristics such as the family type where they grew up, the current family type, education level of the parents, number of siblings, family characteristics, etc.

The mean PGS score was 89.08 ± 16.28 (min: 54-max:125) in this study. A comparison of PGS scores according to some descriptive characteristics is shown in Table III. Statistical analyses indicated significant differences between gender ($p < 0.001$), age ($p = 0.002$), education level ($p < 0.001$), working ($p < 0.001$), marital status ($p = 0.015$), number of children ($p = 0.004$), and place of living ($p = 0.003$) variables and the scores obtained from the PGS.

Table IV demonstrates the comparison of the family characteristics of the participants and the scores they obtained from the PGS. The comparisons indicated significant differences between the groups that were formed according to the education level of the parents ($p < 0.001$), the place where they lived for the longest period ($p = 0.024$), the number of siblings ($p = 0.022$), the gender of siblings ($p = 0.033$), and the scores obtained from the PGS.

DISCUSSION

This study, which aimed identify the relationship between gender perception levels and the affecting factors in individuals living in Northern Cyprus, found the PGS mean score of the participants as 89.08 ± 16.28 . These values obtained were higher than the half of the top score to be obtained from the scale, indicating that although the participants' gender perception was not very high, it was positive. Like the present study, Eray and Erbilin (2021) reported the attitudes of young adults in Northern Cyprus towards gender roles were

Table I. Socio-demographic characteristics of the participants (n=304)

	N	%
Gender		
Female	121	39.80
Male	183	60.20
Age Group (\bar{x} =37.91±15.14)		
25 and below	83	27.30
26-35 years	73	24.01
36-45 years	53	17.43
46 and over	95	31.25
Education Level		
Primary school and below	73	24.01
Secondary school	47	15.46
High school	91	29.93
University and above	93	30.59
Marital Status		
Married	173	56.91
Single	131	43.09
Number of Children		
None	126	41.45
One	39	12.83
Two	68	22.37
Three and more	71	23.36
Gender of the children, if any (n=178)		
Only boys	46	25.84
Only girls	43	24.16
Both boys and girls	89	50.00
Working		
Working in a wage-earning job	161	52.96
Not working in a wage-earning job	60	19.74
Student	50	16.45
Retired	33	10.86
Financial Level		
Income less than expenses	101	33.22
Income equal to expenses	175	57.57
Income more than expenses	28	9.21
Place of Living		
Gazimağusa	119	39.14
İskele	84	27.63
Yeşilköy	101	33.22

Table II. Characteristics of the participants regarding their family (n=304)

	n	%
Characteristics of the Family where they grew up		
Nuclear Family	157	51.64
Extended family	133	43.75
One parent is not alive or Separated parents	14	4.60
Current Family Structure		
Nuclear family	223	73.36
Extended family	81	26.64
The place where they lived for the longest period		
Village-Town	182	59.87
City	122	40.13
The education level of the mother		
Illiterate	99	32.57
Literate	45	14.80
Primary school	91	29.93
Secondary school	28	9.21
High school and above	41	13.49
The education level of the father		
Illiterate	42	13.82
Literate	71	23.36
Primary school	95	31.25
Secondary school	38	12.50
High school and above	58	19.08
Number of siblings		
One sibling or none	60	19.74
Two or three siblings	105	34.54
Four siblings or more	139	45.72
Gender of the siblings (n=299)		
Only boys	48	15.79
Only girls	47	15.46
Both boys and girls	204	67.11

Table III. Comparison of the participants' socio-demographic characteristics according to their Perception of Gender Scale (PGS) scores (n=304)

	n	\bar{x}	s	Min	Max	t / F	p	Difference
Gender								
Female	121	96.98	15.96	66	125	7.470	0.001	
Male	183	83.86	14.30	54	120			
Age Group								
25 and below	83	93.63	16.29	55	125	5.076	0.002	1-3
26-35 years	73	90.89	17.67	57	125			1-4
36-45 years	53	84.19	14.04	54	117			
46 and over	95	86.45	15.27	57	122			
Education Level								
Primary school and below	73	84.03	14.94	59	120	13.440	0.001	1-4
Secondary school	47	85.79	15.98	57	125			2-4
High school	91	86.33	13.96	55	124			3-4
University and above	93	97.41	16.62	54	125			
Marital Status								
Married	173	87.12	15.81	54	125	-2.440	0.015	
Single	131	91.68	16.58	55	125			
Number of children								
None	126	92.77	16.34	55	125	4.481	0.004	1-4
One	39	89.03	18.41	57	125			
Two	68	86.96	15.98	54	125			
Three and more	71	84.61	13.88	61	122			
Gender of children, if any (n=178)								
Only boys	46	84.65	16.57	57	119	0.417	0.660	
Only girls	43	87.33	16.64	54	125			
Both boys and girls	89	87.00	15.00	61	122			
Working								
Working in a wage-earning	161	85.52	15.68	54	125	9.358	0.001	1-3
Not working in a wage-	60	92.55	16.07	66	125			3-4
Student	50	97.94	15.61	71	125			
Retired	33	86.76	14.72	59	120			
Financial Level								
Income less than expenses	101	88.32	16.20	59	125	0.227	0.797	
Income equal to expenses	175	89.30	16.49	54	125			
Income more than expenses	28	90.46	15.66	68	125			
Place of Living								
Gazimağusa	119	89.36	14.27	59	122	5.783	0.003	2-3
İskele	84	93.29	19.98	54	125			
Yeşilköy	101	85.26	14.20	59	125			

\bar{x} : Mean, S: Standard deviation, t: Independent Sample T Test, F: One-way ANOVA test

positive, although not at a very significant level (35). Bedioğlu and Batman (2014) investigated the views of university students in Northern Cyprus about women's gender roles and reported that traditional gender roles attributed to women still existed (36). Another study reported that women living in the north of Cyprus, independently of their age or education level, adopted the traditional gender roles attributed to them by society (25). These studies conducted in Northern Cyprus are in line with the results of the present study. In this study

women's gender perceptions were found to be more positive than those of men. The study conducted by Eray and Erbilin (2021) reported that female participants' gender perception was more positive compared to male participants (35). Four studies conducted in Turkey also reported women's gender perceptions more positive than men (32-34, 37, 38). Another study reported that men had a more traditional view than women in terms of their gender roles (39). The main

Table IV. Comparison of the participants' Perception of Gender Scale scores according to some family characteristics (n=304)

	n	\bar{x}	s	Min	Max	t / F	p	Difference
Characteristics of the Family where they grew up								
Nuclear family	157	90.76	17.14	55	125	2.168	0,116	
Extended family	133	87.68	15.10	57	125			
One parent is not alive or Separated parents	14	83.50	15.73	54	106			
Current family type								
Nuclear family	223	89.95	16.58	54	125	1.539	0.125	
Extended family	81	86.70	15.26	61	121			
The place where they lived for the longest period								
Village-town	182	87.36	16.03	54	125	-2.265	0.024	
City	122	91.43	16.31	59	125			
The education level of the mother								
Illiterate	99	82.90	14.03	54	119	14.439	0.001	1-3,2-3
Literate	45	83.22	13.02	61	121			1-5,2-5
Primary school	91	93.43	15.53	66	124			3-5,4-5
Secondary school	28	88.61	18.75	55	125			
High school and over	41	101.2	15.30	64	125			
The education level of the father								
Illiterate	42	81.12	13.06	57	113	11.222	0.001	1-3,1-4
Literate	71	83.13	14.11	54	119			1-5
Primary school	95	89.85	15.06	55	125			2-3,2-4
Secondary school	38	93.79	17.63	59	125			2-5
High school and above	58	97.79	16.80	62	124			3-5
Number of Siblings								
One or none	60	93.37	18.29	55	125	3.847	0.022	1-3
Two or three	105	89.88	16.25	54	125			
Four and more	139	86.63	15.01	57	125			
Gender of the Siblings (n=299)								
Only boys	48	90.00	16.47	55	124	3.444	0.033	2-3
Only girls	47	94.34	18.48	57	125			
Both boys and girls	204	87.59	15.46	54	125			

\bar{x} : Mean, S: Standard deviation, t: Independent Sample T Test, F: One-way ANOVA Test,

reason for the more positive perceptions of women in terms of gender and gender roles is that they personally experience the problems caused by gender perceptions. The comparison of the participants according to the age groups showed that gender perceptions of individuals aged 25 and below were higher than the ones aged 36 and above. Unlike the present study, two studies conducted with young adults in Northern Cyprus and university students in Turkey reported that the participants' age had no effects on gender perception (32, 35). These findings are considered to result from the fact that all the participants of both studies were composed of young individuals, and their age range was similar. On the other hand, a study conducted with individuals working in tourism establishments reported that young

participants had more positive gender perceptions compared to the participants aged 45 and over (33). Such negative results are considered to be caused by the factors that gender perception is a phenomenon recognized recently and the disadvantageous position of the woman is accepted as a normal condition in previous generations. This finding also indicates that discriminatory judgments attributed to women in previous times continued as a settled acceptance among individuals aged over a specific age. In addition, a more positive approach of individuals aged below 25 in terms of gender perception could be associated with the education they received, knowledge about mass communication networks especially social media, and more interaction with other cultures.

Due to gender inequality in society, women receive less education, participate in workforce less, and obtain less income. Therefore, education is one of the three fundamental variables used for the measurement of inequality and it is the most important one (6). On the other hand, studies report that individuals' gender perceptions increase with the increase in the education level (10, 37). In this study, the gender perception of the individuals who did not attend a school was lower compared to the other education groups. On the other hand, the gender perception of the individuals who had an education level of university and above was higher than the participants who had other education levels. The study conducted by Eray and Erbilin (2021) in Cyprus indicated that young adults developed more positive views regarding gender roles as their education level increased, and this condition was more significant among university graduates (35). Tekin (2017) reported that gender perception was affected more positively when there was an increase in the education level (33). This condition is the clearest evidence for the positive effects of education on gender perception. On the other hand, not only the individual's education level but also the family's (especially mother's) education level has effects on gender perception (6), because gender perception is a concept that is learned in the family. This study found that gender perceptions were higher in the participants who had parents with high education level. Especially university graduation was found to be an important variable at this point. While three studies reported that parent's, especially mother's, education level affected individuals' gender perception positively (34, 37, 38), a study reported no effects (40).

Another notable finding of the study was that gender perceptions of the participants working in a wage-earning job and that of the retired individuals were lower in comparison to student participants. The study conducted by Eray and Erbilin (2021) in Cyprus reported that gender perception of individuals who have a wage-earning job was more negative in comparison to those who did not work (35). This difference was considered to result from the fact that the majority of the participants having a wage-earning income were males, and as discussed before, males' gender perceptions were lower than females.

Marriage was found to be another variable affecting gender perception in this study. The findings showed that the gender perception of single individuals was higher than married participants. In a similar vein, gender perception was higher among the participants who had no children compared to those who had three or more children. The study conducted by Eray and Erbilin (2021) showed that single participants had more positive gender perceptions compared to married individuals (35). Tekin (2017) also found that single tourism workers had a more positive gender perception compared to married workers (33). In the study conducted with women, Dalkılıç (2019) reported that marital status and having children did not affect gender perceptions as much as education or employment (41). Based on the literature knowledge and study findings, married people's lower gender perception is considered to result from married men's putting their wives into the "mother and wife" category due to their judgments set

for hundreds of years.

According to literature having a sibling or not or the gender of the sibling is of importance in gaining gender roles (42). In this study similar to the literature gender perceptions of the individuals who have four or more siblings were lower than the individuals who had one sibling or no siblings. On the other hand, the gender perception of the individuals who had only sisters was higher than the individuals who had both sisters and brothers. Rust et al. (2000) reported that children without siblings had fewer stereotypes compared to the ones who had siblings from the same gender; however, they had more stereotypes compared to the ones who had siblings from different genders (43). McHale et al. (2004) reported that children who had siblings from the opposite sex demonstrated stereotype activities less frequently and concluded that these children's having the chance of trying "other" activities had important effects on their gender development (44). Güder-Yağan and Yıldız-Güler (2016) reported that children who had siblings from the opposite sex had less stereotype game and toy preferences in comparison to the ones who had no siblings or who did not have siblings from the opposite sex (42).

According to literature the socio-cultural level of the place of living affected people's gender perceptions (37). In this study similar to the literature gender perceptions of the individuals living in İskele were higher in comparison to the ones living in Yeşilköy. In comparison to the other regions of the island, İskele is a newly established region where mainly individuals with high socio-cultural level live, and they have a more western lifestyle. In addition, many other country citizens including England and Russia have begun to settle in this region. As for Yeşilköy, consists of individuals who have a rural and traditional lifestyle. Gender perception of the participants who lived in a city for the longest period was higher than that of the participants who lived in a village for the longest period, which supports the finding indicating that the place of living is an important variable affecting gender perception. On the other hand, the literature also includes studies which reported that living in a village or city did not affect gender perception (40).

The literature involves studies indicating that individuals' economic level and family structure factors affected gender perceptions (34, 40). However, like in the present study, the literature also includes studies indicating that these factors do not affect gender perception (38).

Study Limitations

This study was conducted with non-probability sampling. The findings are limited to the study group and cannot be generalized

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study showed that although the participants' gender perception was not very high, it was positive and was affected by many factors. Gender perception was found to be higher in women than men, in single people than married people, and in those aged 25 and lower than those aged 36 and over. The education level of individuals and parents was found to be one of the most important factors shaping the gender percep-

tion. Hence, education is known to affect this perception positively. Gender perception was found to be lower in individuals who had four and more siblings, but it was found to be higher in those who had only girls as siblings.

Besides, gender perception was higher in the participants who lived in a city for the longest period in comparison to the participants who lived in a village for the longest period and in the participants living in İskele town in comparison to the participants living in Yeşilköy.

There are only a few studies on social gender perception or gender equality in Northern Cyprus and these studies have been limited to young adults or women. Unlike other studies, sample of this study has a variety in term of sociodemographic characteristics of its participants. For this reason, this study is important in terms of reflecting the gender perception of the Northern Cypriot people.

Based on the results of the present study, conducting focus group interviews about this issue in the Northern Cyprus society is considered to help to understand the issue of gender and inequality better. Therefore, it is recommended to conduct qualitative studies on this issue in the future.

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Conflicts of Interest

No conflict of interest has been declared by the authors.

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