



An Evaluation of Parents' Foreign Language Teacher Choices in terms of Gender

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Abstract: Parents are the first role models of their children and have the potential to affect children's perceptions regarding gender. The present study aims to investigate parents' perceptions of gender equality and to see whether their perceptions of gender influence their choices regarding their children's foreign language teachers. Adopting a mixed methods research design, 189 parents (110 mothers, 79 fathers) as selected as sample, participated in the study. Some sociodemographic questions were used to measure their views on gender roles and life values. Quantitative data was collected via the "Gender Equality Scale" and analysed using descriptive statistics and Mann-Whitney U test. Furthermore, Qualitative data was collected via open-ended questions and analysed using Thematic Analysis. The results of the study showed that the parents believed in gender equality and in line with this, a foreign language teacher's professional qualifications and personality traits were emphasized over gender. While the majority showed an egalitarian approach towards gender, a sexist and discriminatory attitude was observed by 15.9% of the participants. The study's findings are extremely significant since they provide insight into how parents perceive gender roles.

Keywords: Gender, Gender Perception, Gender Equality, Parents' Gender Perceptions, Foreign Language Teachers

1. Introduction

Any specific society and culture impose certain roles to women and men and these roles generally form stereotypical roles to both. Each gender is identified with specific roles; however, it should not be forgotten that there is a freedom for each of them in terms of acceptable behaviors. Acceptable behaviors regarding gender are affected and formed by perceptions of people and it is vital to note that childhood plays a significant role in perceptions.

The construction of gender related perceptions begins quite early in childhood, with parents having the most direct impact on this formation (Osiesi & Bliaut, 2024). Parents are the first role models of children. They have an inevitable effect on their children's views, thoughts, behaviors, choices etc. and either consciously or unconsciously, parents play an important role in shaping these. Considering issues related to gender, the impact parents might have on their children's construction of gender related issues is inevitable. This impact might result in the formation of gender stereotypes or not.

Having some stereotypical images of gender in mind might hinder children to do specific things in their lives. For instance, doing the dishes is generally associated as a chore which should be completed by women. Also, taking care of children is much more a mother's issue (Hanna & Paivi, 2023). In such a case, if the parents have this point of view, they might ask their daughters to do the dishes and not their sons. In this way, boys and girls would create an image in their mind what boys and girls should and shouldn't do. When considering the school context, if parents consider women teachers as better teachers, children might also form such a belief, and this might result in having some prejudice towards men teachers. Bian, Leslie and Cimpian (2017)'s study on understanding gender stereotypes in terms of intellectual ability of children showed that gender attitudes start to develop in early life and have an impact on later professions. As highlighted in the study, children's gender attitudes and perceptions start to develop in childhood and parents as children's first role models in their lives might have an effect on their children's attitudes and perceptions regarding gender. Therefore, it is worth evaluating parents' views and perceptions in terms of gender to infer its possible effect on children's construction of gender perceptions.

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Several studies have been conducted regarding parents' views and gender. The focus of some studies has been on parents' views regarding the gender of the teacher. In their study, Erdem and Kaf (2022) found that some characteristics such as courage were associated with male teachers. In another study, McGrath and Sinclair (2013) found that there was more demand for male teachers among parents and sixth grade students. Other studies focused on pre-school contexts. Akman et al. (2014)'s study examined the views of parents towards male pre-school teachers. It was concluded that male teachers were thought as successful as female kindergarten teachers. On the other hand, Yağbasan and Aksoy (2016)'s study showed that this profession was associated with women. Despite the fact that the results differ, in general, studies showed that there are some stereotyped gender roles associated with teachers.

The main focus on gender related issues in previous studies was on primary and pre-school teachers' gender role or its effect. It is crucial to ask whether the gender of English language instructors is also regarded as significant given the global prominence that English language learning has attained, particularly in the Turkish context. As English language learning starts at an early age, it is possible that children's views regarding the gender of their English language teacher might be affected by their parents' perceptions in terms of gender. Parents play an important role in shaping a child's perception regarding gender and gender related issues. Therefore, the aim of this study is to investigate parents' foreign language teacher choices in terms of gender. This aim is two folded. Firstly, it is aimed to understand parents' gender views and see whether this affects their foreign language teacher choices in terms of gender. Secondly, it is aimed to infer the potential of parents' views regarding gender in terms of affecting their children's gender perceptions.

Considering the fact that parents play an important role in the construction of gender related perceptions of their children, this study is significant because it contributes to the literature by means of evaluating parents' gender perceptions and its potential on affecting their children's gender perceptions. Furthermore, to the knowledge of the researchers, no study has been conducted with the aim of evaluating parents' foreign language teacher choices in terms of gender. Therefore, this study is important as it will provide an insight into parents' perceptions in terms of the best gender of a foreign language teacher and an evaluation of its potential on the construction of children's gender perceptions.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Sex vs. gender

Sex is a term that expresses the biological distinctive related with physical and physiological characteristics found in human beings and animals, including chromosomes, genes and hormone function, and sexual anatomy (Heidari, 2016). Sex difference is about being born male or female in the context of natural processes.

Gender, on the other hand, refers to all the complex qualities that a culture attributes to sexes (Lott & Maluso, 2002). From the moment of birth, the individual is included in a category by his or her family and the society and is brought up in a harmony with the behaviors and values expected from this category. Then, he or she begins to mark the environment according to these stereotyped roles.

Biologically born as males and females, individuals are brought up according to the norms and expectations appropriate for their sex. Hence, they accept gender roles, male and female identities in accordance with these norms (Giddens, 1993). In every society, children grow up with a sense of gender consistent with the behaviors deemed applicable in their own culture (Bee & Boyd, 2014). That is, innate biological differences are culturally interpreted and evaluated. There have always been social expectations about how individuals should behave according to their gender, what is masculine and what is feminine (Bee & Boyd, 2014). Thus, it is expected that the behavior and status of women and men will conform to social norms (Öngören, 2019).

2.2. Gender roles

One of the most important terms that is related to gender is “gender roles”. Gender roles refer to the ones associated with women and men. In other words, these roles cover personality types and behaviors that are culturally appropriate for women and men (Dökmen, 2012). Women and men are expected to obey these roles shaped by the society they live in (Dökmen, 2012). Namely, gender roles are constructed by the society. When they are born, the individuals become the object of this construction process. Following birth, almost without delay, on the axis of the biological sexes, they become a member of a pattern of behaviors that are formed before. For instance, parents prepare clothes and toys for their children in accordance with their sexes. So, the child is brought up with the pattern of behaviors, attitudes, and roles that are expected from him or her. Besides, the social world determined for the child becomes more and more evident with the color of dresses and shape of hair etc (Lorber & Farrell, 1991).

To put it more explicitly, behaviors accepted appropriate for women are called feminine, while behaviors thought appropriate for men are called as masculine. It is expected from the individual to learn and internalize these roles (Yağan et al., 2016). The roles which are attributed to men and women can be classified as traditional and egalitarian roles. The traditional ones are the traditional duties such as being only responsible for housekeeping and not involving in work life for women while men are assigned duties such as ruling the roost. On the other hand, egalitarian roles support men and women to share responsibilities equally in family, work, marriage, social and educational life (Yılmaz et al., 2009).

Gender roles show significant differences especially in occupational life, social life, marriage, and family life. Considering the reflections of these roles on occupational life; the ones such as women's status and working in jobs with lower salaries, receiving permission from their husbands when they desire to work are considered appropriate. In social life, judgments such as women not going out alone at night and women not living alone can be cited as examples of gender roles and stereotypes. In family life, it is a very common attitude that only women are held responsible for household chores such as childcare and cleaning (Bhasin, 2000; Kimberly & Mahaffy, 2002).

Another result of gender roles and stereotypes in working life is that certain occupational groups are attributed to women and certain occupational groups to men. The fact that women are mostly limited to domestic responsibilities within the framework of care work and that their main jobs are considered as domestic even though they are professionals causes some positions and some professions to be deemed unsuitable for women and restricts their working lives (Bora, 2012).

2.3. Teaching profession and gender

Gender-based occupational discrimination is closely related to traditional role patterns and ideas that build the 'suitable occupations' for women and men. In this context, women are considered to be at a disadvantageous position and are expected to choose professions that will earn less wages, but that can prevent conflicts between their family responsibilities and work lives, and that offer them flexibility in terms of time (Ecevit, 2021).

Teaching has always been considered one of the most 'appropriate' professions for women. Teaching profession is generally defined as a female occupation, as it is mainly associated with womanhood, motherhood, and care responsibility (Sabbe & Aelterman, 2007). One of the most important reasons why the teaching profession is built as a feminine profession is that the attention to be given to the student, the ability to meet the requirements of care and domestic labor is seen as a skill of femininity and motherhood (Soylu & Esen, 2022).

According to Kelleher (2011), there are two main reasons why the teaching profession is seen as a feminine profession. The first of these is that men tend to work at new business areas with higher incomes and status or in line with their own related fields, and the teaching field is left to women. Social

norms that see men as the family's source of economic income and disapprove of working in low-paid jobs are effective here. The second is that teaching, which is seen as a feminine profession, is socially structured in relation to the role of women in taking care of the family (Diamond, 1991).

Considering the reasons Kelleher (2011) stated regarding the teaching profession being judged as feminine, it is important to question whether teachers' gender is perceived as important or not by students as well as by parents. As discussed earlier, children grow up in an environment in which their gender perceptions are shaped based on their family's and the society's perceptions regarding gender and gender roles. Therefore, teaching as a profession might be indirectly considered as feminine because of family, in particular parents' perceptions regarding gender.

2.4. The role of parents on their children's perception of gender

The perception of children regarding gender and gender roles are mainly affected by parents' perceptions. Furthermore, parents are the first resource children encounter regarding gender and gender roles. Children see their parents as role models and consider their perceptions in terms of gender roles as the ones to obey to. Additionally, the socialization process imposes gender-based behavior patterns on children in almost every society (Dökmen, 2010) and the family, in particular parents, have a critical role in forming gender-based perceptions. As a result, it is possible that the views, beliefs, and perceptions parents have regarding a teacher's gender might influence the formation of gender and gender role perceptions of children.

Yağan et al. (2016) conducted a study with the aim of investigating the role parents have on their children's gender perceptions. The focus of the study was on preschool children and the role parents played in the formation of gender perceptions. According to the results, several factors affecting children's stereotypical views regarding women such as being a housewife or having the responsibility for housework were identified. On the other hand, it was found that if the responsibilities were distributed among both parents, the children formed less stereotypical gender roles. The findings of this study highlight the effect parents have on their children's formation of gender-based perceptions.

The present study aims to evaluate parents' foreign language choices in terms of gender and its potential on affecting children's gender perceptions. With the aims, the following research questions are tried to be answered:

1. What are parents' views in terms of gender equality?
2. Is there a significant difference between mothers and fathers' views regarding gender equality?
3. What are parents' foreign language teacher choices in terms of gender?
4. What are the reasons of parents' choices in terms of the gender of the foreign language teacher?
5. To what extent and ways do parents' views in terms of gender equality and their choices in terms of the gender of a foreign language teacher match?

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

Built upon the pragmatic worldview, using different types of data is more effective than using only quantitative or qualitative data and enables to understand the research problem as good as possible (Creswell, 2014). A convergent parallel mixed methods design was used in which data were collected in parallel, analyzed separately and finally compared and related.

3.2. Participants

The target population of this study were parents (mothers and fathers) of children attending primary or secondary schools in Türkiye. Adopting a convenience sampling, 189 people (110 women, 79 men)

from Bursa participated in this study. While 58.2% of the participants were female (110 in total), 41.8% were male (79 in total). They were aged between 23 and 56, with an average of 40. Majority of the participants' children were attending public schools (65.1%).

3.3. Instruments

To gather data, Google Forms survey was formed. The survey had three parts. Demographic information was gathered in the first part of the survey including participants' gender, age and information about their children's school (private or public, grade).

The second part of the survey comprised of "Gender Equality Scale" by Gözütok et al. (2017). It had 13 self-report items with five-point Likert scale. The participants had to choose from "1-strongly disagree" to "5-strongly agree". The scale was used without any changes and the Cronbach's alpha value of the scale was 0.889. As the participants' first language was Turkish, the scale was used in Turkish. The items were translated into English by the researchers for the sake of the study.

The third part of the survey comprised of two open ended questions which were as following;

1. What should be the gender of your child's English teacher? Please explain your reasons.
2. Is the gender of your child's English teacher important? Why? Please explain your reasons.

To begin with, a small-scale pilot study was conducted. In this pilot study, 20 parents took part to ensure the reliability of the scale and the wording of the open-ended questions. Their answers were not included in the main study. Cronbach's alpha values of the scale was 0.787. As the value was above 0.70, the instrument can be regarded as reliable (Dörnyei, 2007). Also, the instrument was aimed to be used in Turkish contexts, which made them suitable for the present study.

3.4. Data collection and analysis

First, informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study. The research project was approved by the Institutional Review Board of Bursa Technical University with the number of 102533. Data collection was done during May – July 2023. The survey was conducted in Turkish and sent to parents via Google Forms together with a consent form at the beginning of the survey. Participants could move on to the actual survey after approving to participate voluntarily to the study. The survey lasted between 5-10 minutes to be completed.

IBM SPSS 22.0 statistical package was utilized to analyze the data gathered via the survey. To answer the first research question, using descriptive statistics the mean scores were calculated to understand the participants' gender equality views. The items were grouped into two factors in line with the findings of Gözütok et al. (2017)'s scale study. While items 1, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 were highlighting "An Understanding of Male Superiority", items 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8 were highlighting "An Understanding of Women's Dependence on Men". If the scores were close to 5.00, high understanding of male superiority and high understanding of women's dependency on men was accepted.

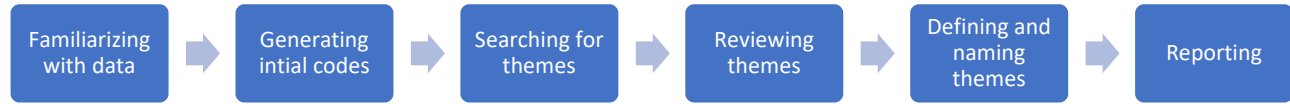
Next, test of normality was conducted. The data was not normally distributed as the skewness and kurtosis values were not between -1.0 and + 1.0 (Hair et al., 2013). Therefore, non-parametric test, namely Mann-Whitney U test, was used to answer the second research question.

For answering the third research questions, the frequency of the participants' answers regarding their foreign language teacher choices was calculated via descriptive statistics. With the aim of identifying patterns and overarching themes, thematic content analysis was conducted using Braun & Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach. Data from open-ended questions were analyzed inductively, aiming themes to emerge from the data rather than from pre-existing codes. The data were systematically coded, categorized and refined through a repeated process of reviewing and defining themes. dependability and transparency, verbatim quotes from the questionnaire responses were added to the findings. With

the adapted six-phase approach, reasons of parents' choices in terms of the gender of the foreign language teacher were identified. Figure 1 shows the procedure of coding.

Figure 1

Braun and Clarke's (2006) Six-Phase Approach Used for Qualitative Data Analysis



Finally, for the last research question, quantitative and qualitative data were compared, and the relation was identified.

4. Results

4.1. Parents' views in terms of gender

For the first research question, descriptive statistics were conducted and individual and overall mean scores of the Gender Equality Scale were calculated.

Table 1 demonstrates the means scores for each item. Out of 13 items, the mean scores of all items were under 2, 00 indicating that almost all participants in this study disagreed with the fact that male superiority and women's dependence on men existed. Regarding Item 1 and Item 2, the mean scores were slightly higher than the other scores indicating that the participants were not sure whether to agree or disagree with these statements.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Gender Equality Scale

Items	N	Mean	Std.Deviation
1. A man approaches things more logically than a woman.	189	2.6085	1.40861
2. If a woman earns more money than a man, it harms the relationship between men and women.	189	2.7725	1.43885
3. A woman should get her husband's approval for the people she will meet.	189	2.2751	1.36774
4. Monetary expenditures of the family should be under the control of the man.	189	2.0000	1.33289
5. The work that needs to be done outside the home (such as paying bills) is the responsibility of the man.	189	2.4286	1.48447
6. Men are more successful than women because they are intelligent.	189	1.5079	1.10424
7. Men should be given priority in business life.	189	1.9841	1.36240
8. Household chores (ironing, washing dishes, tidying, cleaning, childcare, etc.) are the responsibility of women.	189	2.0370	1.33037
9. Politics is a "masculine" field.	189	1.9524	1.31798
10. Women's freedom should always be under the control of men.	189	1.6931	1.23814
11. Top positions in business life are suitable for men.	189	1.7354	1.22208
12. Men are always one step ahead of women.	189	1.7937	1.27778
13. Men are more successful than women in maths and science professions.	189	1.9365	1.29491
Valid N (listwise)	189		

Table 2 shows the overall mean score of the scale together with the two factors of the scale separately. The overall mean score is 2.0558 indicating that most of the participants believed in gender equality. Furthermore, the mean scores for both factors, 'An understanding of male superiority' and 'An understanding of women's dependence on men', showed that the participants generally disagreed with these factors.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Overall Mean Score of Gender Equality Scale

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Mean_Total	189	2.0558	1.01080
Mean_Tot_MaleSuperiority	189	1.9015	1.05892
Mean_Tot_WomensDependency	189	2.3026	1.04974
Valid N (listwise)	189		

4.2. Mothers and fathers' view in terms of gender

The second research question was aimed to identify whether there is a significant difference between mothers' and fathers' views regarding gender equality. As data was not normally distributed, Mann-Whitney U test was conducted.

The mean score of mothers was 1.6007, while fathers' mean score was 2.6894. Mann Whitney U test (Table 3) indicated that there was a significant difference between mothers and fathers' view regarding gender equality ($.000 < .005$). According to this finding, mothers believed in gender equality more than fathers.

Table 3

Mann-Whitney U Test Result

	What should be the gender of your child's English Language Teacher?
Mann-Whitney U	3127.500
Wilcoxon W	9232.500
Z	-5.166
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

4.3. Parents' foreign language teacher choices

The third research question was aimed to identify parents' foreign language teacher choices in terms of the teacher's gender. To answer the third research question, the frequency of participants' answers was calculated and presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Frequency of Participants' Answers

		What should be the gender of your child's English Language Teacher?			
		Doesn't Matter	Female	Male	Total
Gender	Female	105	5	0	110
	Male	54	9	16	79
Total		159 (84.1%)	14 (7.4%)	16 (8.5%)	189 (100%)

According to Table 4, most of the participants (84.1%) believed that the gender of the foreign language teacher didn't matter. Most participants believing that the gender of the foreign language teacher didn't matter were mothers.

On the other hand, some participants favoured a particular gender when considering foreign language teachers. While 8.5% of the participants preferred male teachers, 7.4% preferred female teachers. Furthermore, the participants who preferred male teachers were all men. The case for the participants who preferred female teachers was different. Out of 14 participants, only 5 women preferred female teachers.

4.4. Reasons for parents' gender preferences

The fourth research question was aimed to identify reasons why parents preferred female or male teachers or why gender did not matter. To do this, thematic content analysis was conducted to identify themes regarding the reasons of parents' gender preferences. Figure 2 shows the themes emerged from the answers together with its frequency of occurrence.

The results for research question 3 showed that most of the participants believed that the gender of the foreign language teacher did not matter. Two main reasons were identified: teacher's professional qualification and personality. Instead of focusing on the teacher's gender, issues related to professional qualification and personality were highlighted.

Figure 2

Themes Emerged Regarding the Reasons of Parents' Gender Preferences

The gender of the English teacher does NOT matter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •professional qualification (88 participants) •personality (28 participants)
The English teacher should be a woman.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •professional qualification (4 participants) •personality (8 participants) •women's nature (2 participants)
The English teacher should be a man.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •responsibilities attributed to women (1 participant) •professional qualification (1 participant) •personality (13 participants) •sexiest approach (1 participant)

The teaching style was considered as important when considering foreign language teachers. For instance, Participant A claimed that *'The teacher should know how to teach and should love to teach. Therefore, the gender doesn't matter.'* Additionally, participants highlighted the importance of having fun while learning English. *'The important thing is that the teacher makes my child love the language she/he teaches. This is gender-neutral.'* (Participant B). Providing good quality of education, having good communication skills, being good at classroom management were other issues highlighted regarding professional qualification.

Apart from professional qualification, the personality was also highlighted as important when considering a foreign language teacher choice. Participant C highlighted some specific characteristics that were important of a teacher *'It is important for the teacher to be a person with a good personality, morals, and a person who loves his /her profession and children, who is supportive, patient, idealistic and trustworthy. The gender doesn't matter.'* Other personality traits mentioned by the participants were being caring, sincere, full of love and friendly.

The participants who preferred female foreign language teachers claimed that female foreign language teachers had better language skills. Being better in terms of English made female teachers being preferred. One participant even considered female teachers better in terms of first and second language teaching *'I think that women are more successful in mother tongue and foreign language teaching. (Participant D)'*

Apart from professional qualification, female foreign language teachers were considered to make lessons more fun for children and to motivate them more. Being disciplined, caring and being a good role model for children were other personality traits claimed by the participants.

The participants who preferred male foreign language teachers were all men. They considered male teachers as more disciplined, trustworthy, successful, and consistent in terms of behaviour and emotions. These participants also generally emphasized professional qualification and personality. Different from the other participants, Participant E put forward the following reasons for not choosing female teachers as *'the female teacher's constant self-excuses, continuous requests for leave, report, birth, maternity leave etc.'*

Overall, the results showed that, personality and professional qualification were highlighted by most of the participants and the gender of the foreign language teacher was not considered as important.

4.5. Parents' gender equality views and foreign language teacher choices in terms of gender

Regarding the gender equality scale, the overall mean score of the scale was 2, 0558 indicating that most of the participants believed in gender equality. The findings of the third research questions were in line with this. The majority of the participants believed that the gender of the teacher did not matter. Furthermore, the thematic analysis results are also supporting the fact that most of the participants believed in gender equality by highlighting that professional qualification and personality of a foreign language teacher were more important than the gender.

'What is important is not the gender of the English teacher, but his/her personality traits, foreign language proficiency, special subject knowledge and pedagogical formation training.' (Participant F).

5. Discussion

The aim of the previous study was to investigate both parents' gender perceptions and their foreign language teacher choices in terms of gender. Regarding the first research question, the result of the gender equality scale showed that overall parents believed in gender equality (mean = 2.0558). As parents influence their children's gender perceptions, it is possible to infer that these parents might raise children who do not have any social prejudice against men and women. For these children, men and women might do the dishes or drive a car. For them, what matters might not be the gender but being a human at all. Therefore, being a parent who believes in gender equality would result in raising a generation who would believe anything can be done regardless the gender of the person.

Even though parents in general believed in gender equality, a difference was observed between mothers' and fathers' views on gender equality. The mean score of mothers was 1.6007, while fathers' mean score was 2.6894. This result showed that mothers believed more in gender equality than fathers. Mostly mothers stated that the gender of their child's teacher was not important. They cared more about the foreign language teacher's personality and professional qualification. In some previous studies,

women's perception of gender equality was also found to be higher. As a result of the study conducted with 990 people between the ages of 20-65, the gender equality perception score of women was higher (Çifçi, 2018), which is in line with the present study. Additionally, in Valentova (2012)'s study conducted from 1999 to 2008, gender equality scores of young women were higher than young men. It was determined that they had a more egalitarian attitude than others. One reason why women believe more in gender equality than men might be the role attributed to women in the society. In traditional families like in the Turkish context, while fathers' duty is to work, mothers' duty is to raise children. Women today try to change this view and the results of the previous studies as well as the present study highlighting women's believing in gender equality more than men could be a result of this situation. Though, the difference between mothers and fathers' gender equality believes does not indicate that men do not believe in gender equality. Some male participants (54 in total) prioritized a foreign language teacher's personality and professional qualifications over gender.

For the third research question, the parents' choices regarding the gender of the foreign language teacher were investigated. The results showed that 84.1% of the participants did not consider the gender of the foreign language teacher as important. An agreement among the participants was observed in terms of prioritizing a foreign language teacher's professional qualification and personality over gender. For most of the participants, gender was not seen as something that would affect a foreign language teacher's teaching. Therefore, it is possible to say that foreign language teaching was not associated with men or women. Furthermore, it can be inferred that this association was not considered as important or even necessary. Parents did not categorize foreign teachers according to their gender but highlighted the importance of personality and professional qualification. In line with this finding, it can be expected that the children of these participants might not differentiate between men and women foreign teachers. Unlike previous studies (McGrath & Sinclair, 2013; Erdem & Kaf, 2022), it is possible to say that the participants of the present study mostly did not follow a gender-based approach. It was seen that there was mostly an egalitarian approach regarding gender. The emphasis on the foreign language teacher's professional competence and some character traits can be considered as evidence for an egalitarian approach. As a result, children raised up within a family with an egalitarian approach might focus not on the gender of the teacher but on who does the job the best way. In other words, children will grow up in families believing in gender equality and prioritize the right behaviours over gender stereotypical believes.

Although most of the participants chose to make their foreign language teacher preferences with a rational approach, some parents (15.9% of the participants) displayed a sexist and discriminatory attitude. A good foreign language teacher was associated with men or women by emphasizing some characteristics. Some participants, who wanted their child's foreign language teacher to be a male emphasized the characteristics attributed to men such as "disciplined", "stable", "authoritative" as a result of the traditional patriarchal point of view, while female teachers were described as "difficult to understand" and "difficult to communicate to". This result indicated that some characteristics were associated with either men or women showing that these participants had social prejudice. There is a possibility that these parents would differentiate between things boys and girls can/can't do. As a result, children would have some gender stereotypes in their mind and as Bian et al. (2017)'s study stated, these gender stereotypes might affect children's future professions. To raise children having an egalitarian approach towards gender, it seems crucial for parents to believe in gender equality and be a role model in this line to not affect their children's gender perceptions.

Considering that education begins in the family, we can say that the child who grows up in a family that does not believe in gender equality and advocates male hegemony will most likely grow up with this perspective. Raising awareness of families on this issue is the starting point of social change. Women continue to be exposed to violence in societies where there is no gender equality and gender

discriminations occur in all areas of society. As a result, as they grow up individuals, it is of vital importance to raise awareness of parents about gender equality.

6. Conclusion

The present study investigated parents' gender perceptions and foreign language teacher choices in terms of gender. Overall, the results of the study showed that parents believed in gender equality and did not consider the foreign language teachers' gender as important. Although some sexist and discriminatory attitude was observed, most of the participants showed an egalitarian approach towards gender. It can be inferred from the study that parents with an egalitarian approach towards gender might affect the future generation to believe in gender equality and raise awareness on correct behaviours rather than gender-based issues. Being a good person and doing things correctly is more important than being a man or a woman. To have a society where gender equality is prioritized, it is important for parents to be role models who believe in an egalitarian approach towards gender.

It should be noted that the present study has some limitations. Firstly, studies with larger sample could be conducted and this would help to generalize results in the Turkish context. Also, to have a deeper understanding, collecting more qualitative data via interviews would be beneficial. In addition to this, data was only collected from parents. To see whether and how parents' views affect children's gender perception, studies in which children are involved could be conducted. Lastly, longitudinal studies which would show children's gender perception formation over time might provide more accurate evidence of parents' role on their children's gender perception formation.

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