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THE EFFECT OF GENDER EQUALITY COURSE ON TURKISH COUNSELOR CANDIDATES' GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES AND THEIR SEXISM

(Research article)

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Abstract

Discussing the concept of the gender-sensitive counselor is still very new in Turkey. As a new development gender equality course has been added to the counselor undergraduate curriculum as a selective course since 2018. This research aimed to reveal that if this new development is a really effective step to train gender-sensitive counselors. This mixed-method research aimed to examine the effect of the Gender Equality Course on Turkish Counselor Candidates' gender role attitudes and sexism. Twenty-eight counselor candidates participated in this study. Data were obtained by Gender Role Attitudes Scale, Ambivalent Sexism Scale, Semi-Structured Interview Form. All findings indicated that the gender equality course contributed to counselor candidates to gain awareness of gender equality and how important being a gender-sensitive counselor. Besides, various interventions are still needed to reduce their sexist attitudes and enable them to experience more radical changes in their own life. Results showed that gaining the knowledge, skill and attitude on gender-related issues and training a gender-sensitive counselor require multidimensional intervention and training process.

Keywords: Counselor education, gender role, sexism, counselor, gender equality

1. Introduction

Gender attitudes affect psychological help processes as well as all other areas of life. Psychological help is an interactive process and gender roles are part of this interaction. This interaction is influenced by the client's gender roles and gender role history and the expected roles and responsibilities of both genders. It is emphasized that being a gender-sensitive counselor is critical for a qualified help process. Various professional organizations also appear to address the essential role of gender and gender-related issues (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs [CACREP], 2016; American Psychological Association 2007; American Counseling Association [ACA], 2014). Although dramatic changes in several areas of life positively in recent decades, still girls and women continue to face challenges. Women need to be understanding the diverse challenges that they experienced (American Psychological Association [APA], 2007). APA's Division 17 principles (1979) also presented a comprehensive text about gender-related counseling issues. ACA (2014) also stated that "counselors do not condone or engage in discrimination against prospective or current clients, students, employees, supervisees, or research participants

based on gender and gender identity". It is also emphasized that it is necessary to be aware of the impact of the cultural characteristics of the clients such as gender roles. CACREP (2016) also defined professional counseling identity with multicultural competency which includes having knowledge and being aware of help-seeking behaviors of diverse clients, the effects of power, and eliminating prejudices, intentional/unintentional discrimination, etc. In other words, both CACREP and ACA are underlying this competency for an accredited counselor.

So, how can a counselor be a gender-sensitive counselor? It may be divided into three main dimensions: a) Be aware of both their own and clients' gender role attitudes b) have knowledge about gender roles' effect on clients' problem c) have knowledge and skills about how gender issues can be handled ethically in the counseling process. If we examine these three dimensions in detail, first, counselor attitudes include recognizing and being aware of all forms of gender issues and how these issues interact with sexism, understanding the effects of gender role socialization upon their own development, as addressed in APA's the Division 17 principles (Fitzgerald & Nutt 1986). In a way, this corresponds to multicultural counseling competence. Multicultural counseling/psychotherapy, which stands out in recent years and is included in professional ethical principles, seems to be very important to provide qualified service to clients. Multicultural competencies include being aware of the values and stereotypes adopted by the person, understanding the world views of clients from different cultures, and using different intervention methods and techniques sensitive to differences (Sue, Arredondo & McDavis, 1992). It is clear that gender stereotypes can affect the professional judgment of mental health professionals and subsequent treatment plan options (Dillon, Worthington, Soth-McNett, & Schwartz, 2008). So, it is very important that the counselor evaluates the client in the cultural context he/she is in, discover, and understand the client's attitudes towards gender roles (Corey, 2008). More importantly, they should examine their own gender bias and their conscious and unconscious expectations and pay attention to their attitudes towards gender-related events especially such as sexual abuse, violence, and sexual harassment. It is stated that counselors who cannot detect their own gender bias may feel inadequate in making appropriate gender decisions regarding their clients (Wester, McDonough, White, Vogel & Taylor, 2010).

Especially having non-sexist attitudes become prominent by force of ethical necessity. Addressed in this research, ambivalent sexism as a form of sexism points to attitudes and behaviors that can be perceived both positively and negatively. Ambivalent sexism composed of hostile and benevolent sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1997). Benevolent sexism encompasses subjectively positive (for the sexist) attitudes toward women in traditional roles; while hostile sexism seeks to justify male power, traditional gender roles, and men's exploitation of women as sexual objects through derogatory characterizations of women (Glick & Fiske 1997, 121). A current study result showed that women counselor candidates' scores of hostile and benevolent sexism were less than men counselor candidates' (Koçyiğit Özyiğit, 2019). Although comparison couldn't be made since no other research from a similar professional group is found, their sexism scores are expected to be lower. Therefore, counselor training is crucial to support counselor candidates to be aware of their gender roles and sexist attitudes.

Secondly, the effects of gender roles on the psychological help process should be discussed. Gender role expectations can affect clients' attitudes towards seeking psychological help and the problems that lead the clients to receive psychological help. Most studies on attitudes towards seeking psychological help revealed that women have more positive attitudes towards seeking psychological help than men (Addis & Mahalik, 2003; Berger, Levant, McMillan, Kelleher & Sellers, 2005; Doherty & Kartalova-O'Doherty, 2010; McCarthy & Holliday, 2004). Wong, Ho, Wang and Miller (2017) found that conformity to masculine norms was moderately and unfavorably related to psychological help-seeking. So,

men, have difficulty in accepting their need to psychological help and traditional male roles become an obstacle for taking a step to be a client (Good, Dell & Mintz, 1989; Levant, Wimer, Williams, Smalley & Noronha, 2009; Nam et al., 2010) or a factor for early termination (Garfield, 1986; Levant et al., 2009). Taking psychological help is perceived culturally as being weak or feminine (Evans, 2013).

In terms of the problem areas that lead the clients to receive psychological help, it is possible to talk about the restrictive effects of gender roles on both women and men's lives. Many psychological problems often reflect men's and women's efforts to avoid gender role expectations (Kaplan, 1983). For example, depression, eating disorders, family-work conflicts, and adaptation problems, self-perception, and identity problems can arise as a result of traditional women's gender roles (Eriksen & Kress 2008; McCarthy & Holliday, 2004; Pederson & Vogel, 2007). As a result of strict gender roles, distressing the life circumstances of women can be their reason for seeking psychological help (Eriksen & Kress 2008). In addition, difficulties caused by sexist attitudes can be the main issue of the psychological help process for women especially abuse, rape, and violence (Wester & Vogel 2002). Especially violence against women is related to psychological distress. Several gender-related issues including family, career issues and multiple role conflict, body image, objectification can be the main problem in counseling with women (Enns, 2000). Besides, men's traditional roles have changed in the past years. Although some of them are able to adopt new roles, some men experience role conflict (Wester & Vogel 2002). The men also experience sexist attitudes in terms of overwhelming power and status (Birk, 1981). So, both women and men need to work on reducing the negative effects of gender role stereotyping. Also, it is known that gender role is a major factor determining life roles and goals. It requires different counseling interventions in order to understand their different experiences at different life stages (Hansen, 1987).

In sum, the clients' gender roles, both men and women, affect the psychological help process in multiple dimensions. Researches showed that gender role is a critical factor in the therapeutic relationship (Felstein, 1979) and counselors may need to focus on the relationship more with male clients (Lyddon & Henderson, 1997). Also, counseling outcome research results indicated that male and female clients have more satisfaction with a female therapist (Jones, Krupnik & Kerig, 1987) and clients reported more comfort to disclose (Jones & Zoppel, 1982; Landes, Burton, King & Sullivan, 2013) and more effective rapport with female counselors (Banikiotes & Merluzzi, 1981). A male client may feel shame in expressing his feelings when a therapist is a man as a result of control and power issues (Heppner & Gonzales, 1987). Heppner and Gonzales (1987) also stated that male therapists are disturbed while working with intense emotions, they may tend to change the client's emotion as soon as possible and react to thoughts rather than emotion. This is clear that sex and gender role issues' effect on the counseling process and outcome is critical and needed to examine continually because of the changes in attitudes of seeking help for men and women.

Counselors' gender role attitudes also can influence the help process in terms of their professional role. For example, Scher (1990, p. 721) stated that "male therapists socialized traditional roles can have difficulty expressing empathy and warmth." Male and female therapists may differ with respect to how they handled authority and emphatic, collaborative relationships during the counseling process (Mintz & O'Neil, 1990). This may differ according to client gender and client-counselor gender match. In order to consider all these factors, the counselor is expected to have awareness, knowledge, and skills about gender-related issues. Only then, the counselor may achieve to speak the same languages as their clients and consider their perceptions of gender roles.

With all these requirements, it can be justified that education about gender-related issues is a critical element in counselor training (Hoffman, 1996). The infusion of gender issues into counselor preparation curricula and adding specific courses to gain gender-related knowledge, awareness, and skills are the primary way to achieve this (Hoffman, 1996). At the same time, ensuring the gender-sensitive institutional climate with all aspects such as counselor educators, curriculum, and clinical practice is seen so critical.

The effect of gender roles is a new topic for counselor education in Turkey. There are still few studies about this. The results of the studies showed that the counselor and counselor trainees need to have more equal attitudes (Koçyiğit Özyiğit, Alkan & Yılmaz, 2017; Koçyiğit Özyiğit, 2019) and more specific knowledge and appropriate skills to handle ethically gender issues in counseling sessions (Koçyiğit Özyiğit, 2019). In another study, Dinçer (2016) found that school counselors' level of sexism was above average. The results of another research focused on the university students' gender preferences of the counselor indicated that both male and female students' preferences were more on a same-sex psychological counselor. Participants were generally preferred male counselors in vocational issues. Women participants preferred a female counselor in relation to personal issues and familial problems (Haskan Avcı, Tuna, Büyükçolpan, Güngör & Yörükoğlu 2019). Researches on gender in counseling and counselors' gender role are still very limited.

Gender roles were addressed in various courses in the counselor education curriculum in Turkey such as counseling theories, developmental psychology, social psychology, etc. As a new development, the gender equality course was included in the curriculum as an elective course for the first time in 2018 for all universities by the Higher Education Council. The course was conducted for the first time this spring semester. This development, which has been suggested for years (Koçyiğit Özyiğit, et al., 2017; Bilge & Ulukaya 2011) is still very new and is carried out in different ways at universities. Therefore, it is important to examine the effectiveness of various applications. For this reason, this study aimed to reveal the effect of the gender equality course on counselor candidates' gender roles and sexism. So, in this a quasi-experimental study, the hypothesis is that counselor candidates taking the gender equality course would increase equalitarian attitudes of gender roles and decrease sexism scores when compared with the control group. The second aim of this study is to learn the opinions of students who took the gender equality course regarding the course.

2. Method

The study was conducted by sequential descriptive mixed-method design (Creswell & Clark, 2011). The target of this study was first to determine the effect of gender equality course on counselor candidates' gender and sexism attitude by using a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design. After this step, the researcher aims to learn the course effect according to participant view deeply via focus group interview. So this design provided explaining the findings.

2.1. Participants

Participants were already divided into two groups. The experimental group attended the gender equality course while the participants of the control group had chosen the creative drama course. They were all second grade at the undergraduate level. Their ages range from 18 to 20. The experimental group consisted of two men and 13 women. (n=15). Four men and nine women were in the control group (n=11).

The participants of the focus group interview were chosen with a convenience sample from the experimental group. After the announcement for study, the volunteer and student with at most one absenteeism (n=8) from the experimental group attended the interview. Two of them were men, six of them were women. Their age average is 19. They haven't attended any other course or training on gender before. All of them were informed of the procedure of the study and informed consent was taken from all participants.

2.2. Instruments

2.2.1. Gender Role Attitudes Scale

The Gender Roles Attitude Scale (GRAS) constructed by Zeyneloğlu and Terzioğlu (2011). GRAS contains 38 items. Five-level Likert-type scales with the responses to the items including "I entirely disagree, I disagree, I am indecisive, I agree, I entirely agree". The total Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale was revealed as .92.

2.2.2. Ambivalent Sexism Scale

The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske 1997) translated in Turkish by Sakallı-Uğurlu (2002). The scale consists of two 11-item scales that assess hostile sexism and benevolent sexism. Cronbach's alpha was .86 for hostile sexism and .78 for benevolent sexism. Higher scores on each scale indicate having more hostile or benevolently sexist attitudes.

2.2.3. Semi-Structured Interview Form

In order to get participants' views on the effectiveness of the gender equality course, the Semi-Structured Interview Form prepared by the author was used. The form consists of five questions aiming to learn their views on the effectiveness of the course. Examples of questions: How did the course contribute you as a counselor candidate? What would you suggest to make the lesson more effective?

2.3. Procedure

The two-course continued through 14 weeks. Gender equality course conducted by a women instructor aims to raise counselor trainees' awareness about social and cultural factors for gender role formation and to gain knowledge and skills to be a gender-sensitive counselor. For this purpose, the content of the course was as follow: 1)gender, the concept of gender role, feminism and historical background of feminism; 2) theories of gender; 3) gender inequality in the world and turkey; 4) gender inequality in science, politics, arts, and sports; 5) reflections of gender on education; 6) gender in media; 7) gender and business; 8) gender in law and health; 9)gender and psychosocial development, marriage and family; 10) gender and disability, gender and aging; 11) gender and violence 12) gender in counseling; 13) gender in counseling; 14) being a gender-sensitive counselor.

Several techniques were used in conducting the course such as direct instruction technique, watching videos with research results and findings on gender inequality, creating a collage with craft papers with students group for examining gender in media, sharing digital items from the media, and discussing students' own experiences. Also, students were responsible for studying a book or movie in the context of the representation of gender roles as a term paper.

The pre-test measure done at the first lesson and the post-test was conducted in the last lesson. Informed written consent was obtained from all participants. The participants were asked to write the nickname on the scale for the post-test match. A focus group interview was conducted after a week from the last lesson. The interview lasted 23 minutes and was conducted at a group counseling room in the faculty.

2.4. Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed by using IBM SPSS version 21 software. Independent-samples t-test was used to identify statistically significant differences between the experimental group (EG) and the control group (CG) for preliminary data analysis. There were no statistically significant differences between groups at pre-test for gender role attitudes [$p > .05$], and benevolent and hostile sexism [$p > .05$].

A mixed-model repeated analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. Within-subject levels included time from pretest to posttest ($k = 2$). Levels of the between-subjects variables included experimental and control groups ($k = 2$). So, this study examined statistical significance and effect size outcomes between groups and across time. The requirement of repeated measures ANOVA such as normality of data, homogeneity of variance and covariance, sphericity were tested. All assumptions were met.

Qualitative data obtained from the focus group interview were coded and thematized after content analysis. First, the audio record was transcribed and the text was read several times by the researcher. Then, the raw data set was coded considering the meaningful data units. Themes were reached from the codes, and the structure that presented the participants' views about the course was revealed. The content analysis was carried out by the author who has a doctoral degree in counseling and a master's degree in women studies.

3. Findings

In order to test the hypothesis of this study, to examine the interaction effect of time and group, repeated measure ANOVA was conducted. Table 1 summarizes the descriptive statistics and analysis results.

Table 1. Analysis of Variance Results for Participant Gender Role Attitudes and Sexism Score

Variable	Experimental Group				Control Group				Effect			
	Pre-test		Post-test		Pre-test		Post-test		Time		Time x Group	
	M	Sd	M	Sd	M	Sd	M	Sd	F	Eta ²	F	Eta ²
Gender Role Attitudes	172.6	9.8	173.67	12.7	170.85	17.6	160.69	33.8	2.97	.10	4.53*	.15
Benevolent sexism	32.73	14.8	30.33	13.9	27.31	11.7	28.46	12.7	.39	.015	3.17	.11
Hostile Sexism	31.47	13.1	29.67	13.2	29.31	13.6	27.92	12.2	2.97	.10	.051	.002

* $p < .05$

Results of the factorial ANOVA on the Gender Role Attitudes total score indicated a statistically significant interaction effect between group and time, Wilks's $\Lambda = .85$, $F(1, 26) = 4.53$, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .15$, with a medium effect size. This result indicated that participants joining the gender equality course experienced an increase from pretest, whereas the control group participants reported a drop.

Results on both benevolent and hostile sexism scores indicated that there is no statistically significant interaction effect between group and time. The experimental group's score on benevolent and hostile sexism was dropped from pre- to post-testing, but this result is not significant statistically. The participants' benevolent sexism score in the control group was increased whereas their hostile sexism score was decreased.

The second aim of this study was to reveal the participants' views on the course effectiveness. The participants mentioned that the course had personal and professional contributions to them. As a personal contribution, they gained awareness of their gender roles and realized misconceptions about feminism. Also, they gained awareness of the client's multicultural characteristics, understood the gender role effects on client problems and learned the gender role expectations effects on the counseling process. The two main themes and examples of quotations of participants regarding the sub-themes are presented below (Table 2).

Table 2. *Main Themes, Sub-themes and Quotation of Participants Views on The Course*

Main themes, sub-themes	Quotation
Contribution of the course -Personal	“When I watch a movie or advertisement, I realize the situations with gender inequality more”.(P1, W)
<i>Gaining awareness of gender role effect of their experiences</i>	“I've never been aware of it before. On the bus, his mother said to a 2-year-old boy, 'don't cry, and won't cry.' I am noticing these kinds of situations more now.” (P5, W)
<i>Correcting misconceptions about feminism</i> -Professional	“I wouldn't describe myself as a feminist. I was even a little biased. I knew feminism as an understanding that men are constantly oppressed and women are exalted. It was like an insult when someone called a feminist among men. But I learned what feminism is. My prejudices are broken down.” (P6, M)
<i>Gain awareness of the client's multicultural characteristics</i>	“There are different understandings in different cultures. Not everyone is like us. Clients who come to us may have a different understanding from us. I learned that we should respect him. Before I took this course, I thought I would change their attitude.” (P2, W)
<i>Understanding of gender role effects on client problems</i>	“If we understand how the client's problem is affected by their gender roles, we can help her/him better.” (P7, W)
<i>Learning the gender role expectations effects on the counseling process</i>	“This course is of great importance to us, we gained many perspectives on the consultation process. I would not have thought that a male client avoiding to disclose himself might be related to gender roles.” (P8, W)
Suggestion for a more effective course	
<i>Provide more student involvement and practice</i>	“I think such lessons should be one week theoretical and one week practical. For example, if we are asked to know the Istanbul Convention, most of us will have more in mind if we are asked to write and play a theater play. We had a film review assignment. If we watch a movie together and we examine the next lesson together, it will be more permanent. The media and gender workshop was very good, we never forgot.” (P9, M)
<i>Include more sharing personal experience</i>	“In the lesson, we talked about disability and gender, it was very effective to hear the experiences of our disabled friend. If we could listen to people sharing their personal experiences, it could be a video or a street interview, or it could be our assignment, it will be more effective.” (P1, W)

4. Discussion

This study was designed to help identify the gender equality course effectiveness. In other words, the goal of this study was to examine the effectiveness of the new step in undergraduate counselor education in Turkey. These preliminary results indicate that counselor candidates' selected the gender equality course have more equal attitudes on gender roles and less sexist attitudes at the end of the course. The qualitative findings also support these findings that counselor candidates gained awareness of gender roles in their own life, recognized their own gender role-related experiences and learned the real mean of feminism after joining the course. They realized how different areas of gender roles affect both their and clients' life. The findings from qualitative data also showed that they have the knowledge and awareness about gender role effects on client problems and counseling processes. These results are an indicator that adding this course to curriculum can be an effective step.

The results are similar to Koçyiğit Özyiğit et al's (2017) findings. In this research, the six-week Gender Role Sensitivity group guidance program was conducted. It was seen that counselors candidates' post-test scores participating in the group guidance program increased significantly compared to those who did not participate in the program. Therefore, it can be thought that intervention programs can be effective in developing a more egalitarian attitude.

It is so critical that although there is a significant change in gender role attitudes with the course effect, it is difficult to say the same for sexism. The experimental group's score of both benevolent and hostile sexism decreased, but this change was not significant statistically. This result showed us that awareness is not enough to change sexist attitudes. We know that clients and counselor trainees experience similar social processes and socialize under the influence of the same culture (Mintz & O'Neil, 1990). So, for both of them having a certain level of sexist attitudes is not surprising. But for the counselor, it must be surprising. They need to have nonsexist attitudes for an ethical helping process. Unfortunately, people are exposed to or witness sexist attitudes in Turkey, even at university. University life is a period in which students encounter differences and gain new attitudes. They experience living with people from different cultural backgrounds. Although this situation may create differentiation in their attitudes, permanent changes in some attitudes are difficult to create. Sexism is one of them. So the findings also showed that sexism has needed more persistent intervention.

Undoubtedly, these results cannot be certain that students' sexist attitudes will be reflected in the counseling process. It is criticized that studies on gender in counseling should focus all dimensions of the counseling process such as counselor characteristics, client and situational variables (Seem & Johnson, 1998). But they need to be nonsexist to help their client effectively. Firstly, they need to realize how their sexist attitudes were formed. They cannot be aware of the clients' attitudes and challenges without self-awareness of their own attitudes.

Counselors need to understand and explain their gender role construction. Maybe this should be the starting point. Being a counselor is widely accepted as a women's profession and it is stated that male counselors are in the minority in this profession (Devoe, 1990; Quinn & Chan, 2009). Similarly, in this research, it is seen that women participants are the majority. As a woman, they need to examine the factors that have an impact on choosing to be a counselor. Also, it is possible that female counselor candidates may also experience inequality themselves. Therefore, their tendency to reflect egalitarian understanding may be high. At this point, an opportunity should be created for them to focus on their own experiences. If the counselor candidate needs more effort to change or to get rid of the

negative effects of his/her gender role attitudes, getting psychological help would be an ethical and effective recommendation.

As mentioned before, gender and gender role issues are so crucial in disclosing problems of clients, the relationship between counselor and client, determining the treatment plan and intervention and setting counseling goals (Brown, 1990; Daniluk, Stein & Bockus, 1995). For example, if the client is a man, there is more silence and less verbalizing emotions. In choosing intervention and strategy for men, it is important for counselors to assess the male client culture, consider his comfort, and try to minimize his shame and challenges (McCarty & Holliday, 2004). This requires the counselor to know the skills and interventions involving gender-related issues. The counselor should gain these competencies during undergraduate or graduate training.

According to Hoffman (1996), it is inadequate to include gender issues only as a course in counselor education programs. Gaining this knowledge, skill and attitude is seen as a process. It is required not only the curriculum but to all aspects of a counselor education program, including faculty and staff, organization, administration, clinical training, and supervision must be gender-sensitive. Göker and Polatdemir (2019) also underlined that training on gender equality and awareness-raising activities for staff and academicians should be organized and these should be done at regular intervals. Therefore, all counselor educators and supervisors, female and male, must constantly examine their own gendered assumptions and be willing to explore and to change the biases and stereotypes that currently exist (Hoffman, 1996). Drudy's (2008) study discusses the relationship between teaching, a profession in which women are more numerous, and societies' expectations for training and care for women. Also, this study came up for a discussion on whether the boys need a male role model. It is also necessary to discuss the same situation for the counseling area.

Besides, some women may be aware of socialization and social impact on gender roles does not infer that they are aware of the social impact on men. So, both women and men are expected to understand and consider their own as well as the other gender role stereotype (Birk, 1981). In this sense, the course may need to be restructured. It can be thought that the course is structured to gain more awareness and action. It may include more experiential dimensions for permanent changes. Hoffman (1996) suggested that gender issues education can include focus group discussion for student involvement. As the participants emphasize, it is important to restructure the course so that students can actively participate. It seems that they need to be more active and more interactive. When they encounter real experiences, they are more affected. Different techniques may be used such as small group activities or role-playing in order to share their own experiences and difficulties about gender roles (e.g. a man counselor candidates' own challenges on disclosing his own emotion). Moreover, gender roles should be handled as a dimension in all other courses that include practice, especially all practicum conducted under supervision. Providing students the opportunity to observe and study with both male and female clients and raise awareness about the impact of gender roles in the practicum course is needed.

Dupuy, Ritchie and Cook (1994) suggested, gender issues courses co-taught by male-female teams might be an effective means to address both women's and men's issues. This course was conducted by a female counselor educator. If this cannot be achieved, it becomes even more important than all other counselor educators to become models in other courses.

There is relatively little research on gender bias, gender issues in counseling. Most of them were conducted in the 1980s and 1990s. After these studies, we see that separate areas of expertise such as counseling with men and women have been created. Several books and booklets were written for practitioners and counselor trainees and educators over the past

decade. Unfortunately, in Turkey, there is only one book or no other resources on gender in counseling yet. Therefore, both research and resources are obviously needed to have knowledge and skills for counselor, counselor educators. Also, there is no similar experimental or quasi-experimental study conducted with counselor or counselor trainees. Various educational activities, such as group guidance, group counseling, workshops need to be conducted and effectiveness should be tested.

It can be said that a new process has started for gender-sensitive counselor training. Because there is no standard for undergraduate courses in Turkey, how this course is conducted should be shared. With the emphasis of counselor educators' role modeling and the need for their knowledge and awareness, research should also be conducted with them.

Studies on the provision of gender equality in universities in Turkey have been increasing in recent years (Göker & Polatdemir, 2019). On the other hand, the Higher Education Council has changed policies. In the project report on gender equality developments in higher education, Göker and Polatdemir (2019) stated that one of the most important areas contributing to gender policies in universities is to teach classes on gender equality or to address gender issues with students in their specialist courses. In the research, it was also emphasized that the students came to the university without any education on gender and therefore it is very important to open such courses in the university. Although the contribution of the course is valuable, it is important to examine the students' attitudes towards gender roles in more detail when they come to the university.

Finally, there are limitations in this study. First, this study was conducted with a small sample size. There is no follow-up measure to ensure changes. Although there is no significant difference in the pre-test scores, it may be considered as a limitation that the students who choose gender equality course may have higher motivation to gain knowledge and skills about gender equality. It may be suggested to learn the motivations for choosing the course in subsequent research. Also, the participants take a different elective course, they can be together at some other courses. This may arise in an interactional process. This can be effective for the difference between groups. At the same time, given the possibility of participants who are interested in gender issues and want to learn more about it, they may have increased the likelihood of a more egalitarian attitude in the posttest scores.

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