

# Development of primary school 4th grade students awareness about gender equality in social studies course: A case study<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

In the research, it was aimed to examine the awareness and sensitivity of primary school fourth grade students towards gender equality and to give them an egalitarian perspective. This research was carried out within the framework of a case study as a qualitative research method and research design. A total of 24 children, 10 girls and 14 boys, who were studying in the fourth grade in a private education institution in Ordu in the 2021-2022 academic year, were selected as the study group of the research, according to the convenient sampling method, one of the purposive sampling types. Within the study's scope a workshop program consisting of a series of activities that will last for four weeks, 1 lesson hour (40 minutes) each week, was applied to the study group. The data obtained as a result of the workshop program were analyzed using the MaxQDA qualitative data analysis program. According to the results of the research, it has been revealed that the awareness status, views, and thoughts of the primary students about gender equality have changed positively with the workshops designed and implemented for primary students within the scope of gender equality in the primary school fourth grade social studies course.

## 1 Introduction

Gender is an innate concept that affects an individual's entire life. In our lives, where we open our eyes to the world as men and women, we have many experiences due to our gender. Some of these experiences are positive, and some are negative. Gender is a concept used to express the roles and responsibilities expected of us for our gender, which is determined by society. Gender characteristics, which are acquired later and vary from society to society, shape the behavior of individuals with certain stereotypes.

Gender equality means that society values women and men equally according to their similarities, differences, and roles in society (Stubbs & Lewis, 2008). The continuity of these roles in school, family, and work life causes individuals to internalize them more (Koyuncu Şahin & Çoban, 2019).

<sup>1</sup> This research is based on the first author's master's thesis.

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For example, we see gender stereotypes even in occupational choices. While professions such as teaching and nursing are seen as professions that women can do, professions related to technical subjects, such as engineering, are seen as professions that men can perform. In addition, the perception that domestic or childcare work can only be performed by women can be shown as evidence that social institutions such as the family reproduce this gender inequality. Children are also exposed to similar attitudes in educational institutions. They reinforce gender stereotypes due to both teacher attitudes and selected educational materials.

Gender equality in education is defined as “questioning the limitations of gendered social norms and stereotypes constructed for girls and boys that form the basis of inequalities; securing each individual’s personal skills, access to resources, and opportunities” (MoNE, 2016). The literature review revealed that gender equality in Turkey is reproduced, experienced and reinforced both in educational institutions and other social institutions. An educational institution is one of the areas where socialization is most intense. Therefore, it is necessary to transform these institutions into an environment where gender equality practices are promoted and positive attitudes towards gender equality are encouraged, rather than an environment where gender stereotypes are reproduced (Acar Erdol & Gözütok, 2018).

The most important step in ensuring gender equality in education is to revisit the educational spaces, tools, and materials that reproduce sexist stereotypes and to reorganize them on the basis of gender equality. In-school sexist practices and stereotypes, sexist teacher approaches, implicit curricula, and textbooks that reinforce gender stereotypes should be evaluated within the scope of gender equality. Schools are learning spaces where gender roles appropriate to biological sex are differentiated and gender stereotypes are reinforced. Many dynamics within the school nurture the concept of gender, and students learn to exhibit behaviors that align with this concept. Especially because school-age students imitate behaviors through modeling, it can be understood how significant the impact of each person in the school environment is on students. If school is considered a small model of life, the egalitarian perspective students acquire in this educational environment will similarly affect their lives outside of school. The learning of gender roles begins in the family and is reinforced through the educational process at school. The educational process at school, teacher attitudes, curricula, and educational materials make the differentiated gender roles more apparent and embedded (Vatandaş, 2011).

When considered in the context of teachers, the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and approaches of teachers, with whom children interact and communicate after their families, regarding gender equality can be transferred to students positively or negatively. Therefore, ensuring that teachers gain different perspectives on gender equality starting from the teacher training process and supporting them to have positive perspectives in this direction will help students move away from some opposing views on gender equality and have an egalitarian perspective instead of sexist stereotypes (Bayraklılar & Türkoğlu, 2022; Gür Türkdoğan & Altun Aslan, 2020; Kimzan & Arkan, 2021; Uygun & Önsan, 2020). For example, according to the study conducted by Uygun and Önsan (2020), the gender perceptions of female Social Studies teachers are more positive than male Social Studies teachers. According to the study, female Social Studies teachers have a more positive attitude towards breaking and eliminating gender inequality stereotypes. From this point of view, it is understood that teachers’ attitudes and approaches are critical in the reinforcement of gender roles throughout the school. In addition, teachers, who are an integral part of education, being sensitive to gender equality, choosing teaching activities, material selections, teaching methods, and communication languages with an egalitarian approach will contribute greatly to

raising generations sensitive to gender equality.

One of the important factors in ensuring gender equality is the education program. The concept of gender equality can be introduced to students through curricula. However, in the study conducted by Karakuş, Mutlu, & Diker Coşkun (2018) to examine gender equality in curricula, it was concluded that 'gender inequality' was less emphasized in most of the curricula updated by the Ministry of National Education in 2018; however, gender equality is still not given enough importance. Although many international conventions based on the equality of women and men in the social context have been signed in our country and many non-governmental organizations and municipalities are trying to raise awareness about gender equality in society, it is seen that gender equality remains limited in a certain part of the society. Therefore, as suggested by Seçgin and Kurnaz (2015), it is important to provide gender equality education to students in schools through curricula in a planned manner and in this context, it is important to teach the concept of gender equality in the Social Studies course.

Social Studies has an important role in developing concepts of equity among groups divided in society based on language, religion, race, gender, class, and sexual orientation and in educating students about the sources of inequalities in society (Hahn et al., 2007). The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) defines social studies as a coherent and collaborative study of the social sciences and humanities to develop citizenship competence. According to NCSS (2010), the primary purpose of Social Studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the common good as citizens of a democratic society in a diverse, culturally diverse, interdependent world. Doğanay (2002) defines Social Studies as a field of study that aims to raise individuals as citizens who think, question, and have democratic values based on the basic content and methods of social sciences. The Social Studies course in primary school is a comprehensive and important course in which the roles and responsibilities of individuals in society and their social rights are expressed and social values, norms, and rules are transferred to individuals (Temellioğlu & Küçükturan, 2022).

The Social Studies curriculum aims to raise students as individuals who prefer a democratic approach, know their rights and responsibilities, understand why all people are equal before the law, have sustainable environmental awareness, critical thinking, and basic communication skills, are aware of the importance of participation in economic activities for social life, are willing to contribute to the solution of individual or social problems, and are aware of their own interests, abilities, or needs as sensitive and virtuous independent individuals (MoNE, 2018). Of the 131 objectives in the Social Studies curriculum, 33 belong to the fourth grade level. Within the scope of the curriculum, from the fourth grade to the end of the seventh grade, 27 skills (Research, Environmental Literacy, Perceiving Change and Continuity, Digital Literacy, Critical Thinking, Empathy, Financial Literacy, Entrepreneurship, Observation, Map Literacy, Legal Literacy, Communication, Cooperation, Recognizing Stereotypes and Prejudice, Using Evidence, Decision Making, Location Analysis, Media Literacy, Perceiving Space, Self-Control, Political Literacy, Problem Solving, Social Participation, Drawing and Interpreting Tables, Graphs and Diagrams, Using Turkish Correctly, Beautifully and Effectively, Innovative Thinking, Perceiving Time and Chronology) and 18 Values (Justice, Caring for Family Unity, Independence, Peace, Science, Diligence, Solidarity, Sensitivity, Honesty, Aesthetics, Equality, Freedom, Respect, Love, Responsibility, Saving, Patriotism, Charity) (MoNE, 2018). In the context of the curriculum, in addition to critical thinking, empathy, stereotyping, and prejudice recognition skills and values such as sensitivity, equality, freedom, respect, and love, it can be said that the learning outcomes

in the fourth grade 'Individual and Society' and 'Active Citizenship' learning areas, such as 'Put themselves in the shoes of other individuals with different characteristics', 'Respect the different characteristics of other individuals' and 'Give examples of the rights they have as children' are closely related to the concept of gender equality.

When the general and specific objectives of the Social Studies course and the curriculum are examined in general, since it has sub-objectives such as raising democratic citizens who have positive attitudes towards different groups and beliefs, respect others, respect human rights and freedoms (Aşcı, 2020) and in the context of both skills and values, learning areas, and achievements in the curriculum, it creates the appropriate ground for providing gender equality education. In particular, it is a Social Studies curriculum outcome targeted for students to exhibit attitudes and behaviors towards gender equality within the scope of the outcome of respect for individual differences. The Social Studies course, which aims to prepare students for social life, is one of the most important courses to raise awareness about gender equality. Among the objectives of the Social Studies course, in which the transfer of national cultural elements is intensively taught, it can be counted that students adopt universal values as active citizens and grow up as individuals who are sensitive and respectful to individual differences. In particular, values such as justice, equality, and respect in the Social Studies curriculum present us more clearly the importance of gender equality awareness within the scope of this course. In their study, Seçgin and Kurnaz (2015) stated that with gender education, students' awareness and sensitivity will increase, existing stereotypical prejudices will decrease, and thus healthier and more egalitarian generations will be raised socially.

When the studies on gender equality in the Social Studies course are examined, there are studies examining the achievements in textbooks and curricula in terms of gender (Aşcı, 2020; Başaran, 2019; Bilgin, 2019; Demirel, 2010; Dündar, 2021; Erbuyurucu, 2022; Fidan, 2019; Geriş, 2022; Kafa, 2021; Kandilli, 2020; Karaboğa, 2020; Küçük Karaca, 2022; Sönmez & Dikmenli, 2021; Temellioğlu & Küçükturan, 2022); and studies examining the perceptions and opinions of pre-service Social Studies teachers and teachers on gender equality (Bartın, 2022; Çakır, 2022; Ceylan, 2022; Kurttaş & Tuncer, 2020; Uygun & Önsan, 2020). When the studies conducted with students on gender in the context of Social Studies course are examined, Özdemir Yılmaz (2019) examined the effect of gender equality activities on students' attitudes towards gender-based career choice through gender equality activities with primary school 4th grade students; Seçgin and Kurnaz (2015) examined the effect of gender activities organized in the Social Studies course on students' perceptions and attitudes with secondary school 7th grade students; Erbey (2022) examined the gender perceptions of primary school 4th grade students; Yeşil (2020) examined raising awareness in students with an action research on gender equality with secondary school 6th grade students. In this study, it is aimed to determine the awareness of primary school 4th grade students towards gender equality in the Social Studies course. When the above studies are examined, it is seen that there are a limited number of studies examining students' perceptions or awareness of gender equality, and two studies (Erbey, 2022; Özdemir Yılmaz, 2019) have been conducted in primary school. In the current study, the researcher designed and implemented workshops to determine the awareness of 4th grade primary school students about gender equality and to enable students to develop awareness in the context of gender equality, such as expressing the differences between biological and social gender, defining and questioning the gender-based division of labor, defining the concept of gender equality and discussing how they see gender roles, recognizing the factors that cause gender inequality transmission, recognizing sexist discourses in Turkish, and

learning the legal basis for gender equality. Therefore, with this study, it is thought that the activities carried out in the study will guide both teachers and parents in terms of teaching the concept of gender equality in order to raise children's awareness of the concept of gender equality from an early age, to make gender equality a behavior and to contribute to the formation of an egalitarian society. In addition, it is foreseen that this study, which shows how the integration of achievements and activities for gender equality into the Social Studies curriculum can be done, can also give ideas to program development experts in the field of Social Studies.

### 1.1 Purpose of the study

In this study, while firstly aiming to determine the awareness of fourth grade primary school students about gender equality, the activity workshops focused on students' perspectives on gender roles, the processes of change in gender stereotypes that affect their choice of clothes, toys and professions, and the legal basis for gender equality. In line with these main objectives, the main research question of the study was determined as "How are students' awareness-raising processes towards gender equality in the 4th grade Social Studies course?". In line with this research question, answers to the following questions were sought:

- How do 4th grade primary school students' thoughts about gender equality in the Social Studies course change before and after the implementation?
- How is the awareness of 4th grade primary school students about gender equality during the practices in the Social Studies course?

## 2 Method

### 2.1 Research design

In this study, in which the development of primary school fourth grade students' awareness of gender equality through activities on gender equality organized by the researcher was examined, the case study design, one of the qualitative research methods, was used. In this research, the 'Program Effects Case Studies' design specified by Davey (1991) was selected. The case study based on the effects of the program makes some inferences about the effect of the program; the reasons for the success or failure of the implemented program are revealed (Davey, 1990; Leymun et al., 2017). In this study, workshops developed by the researcher were implemented in order to develop students' awareness processes towards gender equality in line with the learning outcomes in the 'Individual and Society' learning area of the Social Studies course. Before and after the implementation, students' views on gender equality were analyzed. Therefore, it was determined what kind of awareness the students developed about gender equality before, during, and after the implementation and what kind of development they showed with the programs implemented.

### 2.2 Participants

The participants of the study consisted of 24 students (10 girls and 14 boys) who were in the fourth grade at a special education institution in Ordu province in the 2021-2022 academic year. However, while the number of students participating in the study was 24 before the application, it was determined that one student could not participate in the survey due to the COVID-19 pandemic after the application. The participants participating in the study were selected according to the convenience sampling method, one of the purposeful sampling methods. In the study, due to the Covid-19 pandemic conditions, the study group was determined according to the convenience sampling method in the selection of the research participants, and the primary school fourth grade students in the school where the researcher worked in Ordu were included in the

study.

## **2.3 Measures**

In the study, the questionnaire form developed by Yeşil (2020), researcher diary, student diaries, self-assessment form and student worksheets were used as data collection tools to determine students' awareness of gender equality before and after the workshops.

### ***2.3.1 Survey form***

The survey form developed by Yeşil (2020) was applied before the application in order to determine the existing awareness of the students about gender equality and after the application in order to determine the change processes in the awareness of the students at the end of the workshops conducted by the researcher. The survey form consists of two parts. The first part of the survey form includes students' opinions on gender equality, metaphors for gender and responsibilities, and the second part includes students' experiences related to the concept of gender in their social lives. While the first part includes students' thoughts about the concept of gender in general, the second part includes the determinants of the concept of gender in areas such as domestic roles and career choice (Yeşil, 2020).

### ***2.3.2 Researcher diary***

The notes taken by the researcher during the implementation are a tool that helps to analyze the data in all parts of the research process (Charmaz, 2014). In the study, researcher diaries were kept by the researcher during and after the workshops prepared by the researcher for gender equality in order to record the discourses and actions of the students during the process.

### ***2.3.3 End of workshop self-assessment form***

At the end of the workshops, students can express their feelings, thoughts and awareness about the workshops with the question, 'What did I feel? What did I learn? What did I realize?', two affective and one cognitive self-assessment form was developed. This form was sent to two social studies education field experts for their expert opinion, and the form was finalized after the approval of the field experts. The form was distributed to the students by the researcher at the end of the workshops and the students were asked to express their feelings and thoughts about the workshops they attended.

### ***2.3.4 Student worksheets***

With the 'What Can I Do?' activity implemented within the scope of the Gender Equality workshop, a worksheet prepared by the researcher was distributed to the students in order for them to present their suggestions on what they could do at school and in the family to ensure gender equality. In addition, within the scope of the workshop activity titled Gendered Division of Labor, a blank A4 worksheet prepared by the researcher was distributed to the students, and they were asked to draw a football player, school principal, nurse and pilot in each section. Thus, students' gender perceptions of professions were determined.

## **2.4 Workshops on gender equality**

Within the scope of the research, four-week workshops on gender equality were prepared by the researcher within the framework of the learning outcomes in the Individual and Society learning area in the Social Studies course. While preparing these workshops, the researcher first

determined the content of the training to be given by reviewing the literature and created workshop outcomes. Activities were prepared on the basis of these outcomes. In this context, workshop titles such as 'gender concept, gender-based division of labor and professions, gender equality/inequality, gender equality' were determined for gender equality, and outcomes, content and activities were created for each workshop. In the 'gender equality/inequality' workshop, some of the examples of evidence-based practices developed by Baki Pala (2019) on gender and equality were included. While designing the activities in other topics, a literature review was conducted and especially for the workshop to be organized for the concept of gender, the activity examples in the training guide on the concept of gender by Özberk and Ertekin (2010) were adapted according to the grade levels of the students and used in the study.

These workshops (Table 1) created by the researcher were first examined in detail by a faculty member working in the Social Studies Education department and a faculty member working on gender equality education and an expert in the field of Curriculum and Instruction. Information about the workshops is given in Table 1.

**Table 1** Information on workshops

Week	Workshop	Workshop Content	Duration	Date
1. Week	Workshop 1: The Concept of Gender	There are activities for students to define the concepts of sex, biological sex and gender; to express the differences between biological and social sex; and to recognize and recognize individual differences.	40 min.	29.12.2021
2. Week	Workshop 2: Gendered Division of Labor and Occupations	There are activities for students to define and question the gendered division of labor and to recognize the consequences of the gendered division of labor.	40 min.	05.01.2022
3. Week	Workshop 3: Gender Equality/Inequality	The activities included activities for students to define the concept of gender equality, express their views on gender equality, discuss how girls and boys experience and view gender roles, and recognize the factors that lead to the transmission of gender inequality.	40 min.	12.01.2022
4. Week	Workshop 4: Gender Equality	There are activities for students to recognize sexist discourses in Turkish, to learn the legal basis for gender equality and to develop solutions for gender equality.	40 min.	19.01.2022

## 2.5 Data collection process

Within the scope of the study, first of all, the necessary permissions were obtained from the ethics committee of the institution to which the researchers were affiliated. Then, permissions were obtained from the relevant Provincial Directorate of National Education and the school where the study would be conducted. Then, before the workshops to be held with the students, permissions were obtained from the parents of the students primarily through the Parent Permission Form. After all permissions were collected, the questionnaire form developed by Yeşil (2020) was applied to the students before the application. After the questionnaire form applications were completed, the necessary permissions were obtained from the classroom teacher in order for the researcher to conduct one hour of the Social Studies course per week. Within the scope of the research, each of the workshops prepared for gender equality was implemented in the Social Studies course for one hour a week. During the implementations, the researcher kept diaries about the research process, recorded the students' discourses in these diaries, and at the end of each workshop, students were asked to fill out a self-evaluation form to evaluate themselves. At the end of the practices, the questionnaire form developed by Yeşil (2020) was re-applied to the students in order

to determine the change in students' awareness of gender equality.

## 2.6 Data analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research follows the process of organizing data, reading data, coding, classifying codes, determining themes, describing, classifying and interpreting data in codes and themes (Creswell & Creswell, 2021). In this study, first of all, the questionnaire forms, researcher diaries, end-of-workshop self-evaluation forms and student worksheets applied to the students before and after the application were transferred to the MaxQDA 22 data analysis program. After the data were transferred to the analysis program, the student discourses in the questionnaire form were subjected to descriptive analysis. In this context, the student discourses given in the questionnaire form were separated and organized as before and after the application; in this context, categories were created in line with the questions in the questionnaire form. Then, codes were created by reading the student discourses in detail. The codes and themes were described and categorized, and the codes and categories determined and the codes belonging to the students (T1, T2, T3, etc.) were presented in the findings section through figures. Within the scope of the study, researcher diaries, student worksheets and end-of-workshop self-evaluation forms were subjected to content analysis. In this context, the data obtained from the aforementioned data collection tools were first read in detail by the researcher and the data obtained for each workshop were divided into separate categories and codes in the MaxQDA qualitative data analysis program. The data under these categories and codes were analyzed separately for each workshop and presented in the findings section.

## 2.7 Role of the researcher

The researcher's role in this study was to prepare and implement workshops on gender equality in the Social Studies course, collect data, and analyze the collected data. As mentioned in the previous section, she first designed the workshops on gender equality and presented them to the expert opinion. Then, she collected data from the students before and after the implementation through a questionnaire form to determine the changes in their awareness of gender equality. The researcher personally implemented the workshops she developed for a total of four weeks, one class hour each week in the Social Studies course. All data collected within the scope of the research were analyzed by the researcher. The researcher graduated from Anadolu University, Department of Sociology and has been working as a guidance counselor in private schools for 9 years. The researcher has interviewed many students and parents throughout her working life and had the opportunity to observe the gender stereotypes of students in these interviews and in the guidance lessons she conducted in the classroom. The fact that the researcher has a bachelor's degree in Sociology and has been involved in women's studies and research throughout her university life is one of the main bases of her interest and curiosity in the subject of Gender Equality. The researcher has spent the last four years of her working life with primary school students, has established close intimate relationships with them and has personally realized the importance and necessity of raising awareness on gender equality, especially from the age level of primary school students.

## 2.8 Credibility and ethics

In qualitative research, the concepts of credibility, confirmability, consistency and transferability are used to ensure validity and reliability (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021). In this study, the fact that the researcher was personally involved in the implementation of the workshops designed by the



researcher for gender equality within the scope of the Social Studies course, interacted with the students for a long time, and utilized many data collection sources such as researcher diaries, student worksheets, questionnaire forms and end-of-workshop self-evaluation within the scope of the research, ensures the credibility of this research and thus its internal validity. In addition, the use of a questionnaire form whose validity and reliability were ensured, and the expert opinion of faculty members who are experts in the field of social studies education and gender equality education for the workshops designed by the researcher show that confirmability is ensured in terms of the reliability of the study. In addition, the use of the purposive sampling method in determining the study group and the detailed inclusion of students' descriptions and discourses on gender equality in the findings of the study are indicators of the transferability of the study in terms of external validity.

### 3 Findings

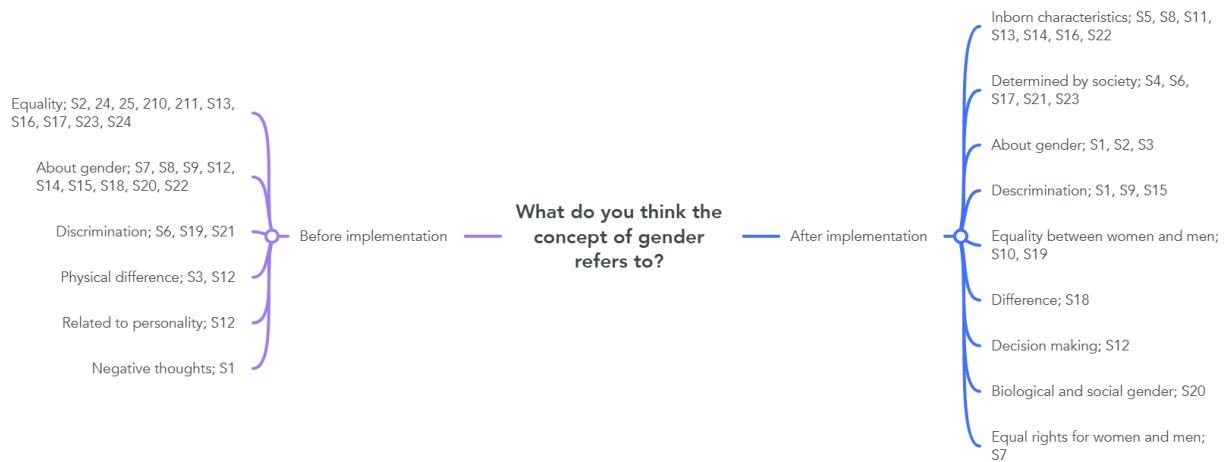
#### 3.1 Fourth grade primary school students' thoughts on gender equality before and after the implementation

Within the scope of the first research question addressed in the study, it was aimed to determine how the thoughts of primary school 4th grade students changed before and after the implementation of gender equality. For this purpose, the questionnaire form developed by Yeşil (2020) was applied to students to determine the change in their thoughts on gender equality before and after gender equality practices. In the questionnaire form, it was tried to determine students' thoughts about the concept of gender equality, metaphors for male and female gender, their views on responsibilities in this regard, and stereotypes about the concept of gender in students' social lives.

##### *3.1.1 Students' thoughts on the concept of gender equality*

The opinions of the students, who were the participants of the study, on the concept of gender equality were tried to be determined before and after the application. In order to get students' thoughts about the concept of gender equality, students were asked to answer the questions 'Have you ever heard of the concept of gender equality before?', 'What do you think the concept of gender refers to?' and 'What are the situations where girls and boys are equal and not equal among your friends?'. In this context, first of all, in response to the question "Have you ever heard of the concept of gender before?", four of the students before the application stated that they had heard of the concept of gender before, while twenty of them had not heard of the concept of gender before; but after the application, all of the students stated that they had heard of the concept of gender.

In order to determine the students' ideas about the concept of gender equality, a second question, "What do you think the concept of gender refers to?" was asked. The answers given by the students to this question before and after the application are given in Figure 1.



**Figure 1** The concept of gender according to students

Prior to the implementation, the concept of gender expressed the concepts of equality, a concept related to gender and personality, discrimination, and physical difference for the students, and for one student, this concept also expressed negative thoughts such as violence and harassment. Sample student discourses related to this finding are given below:

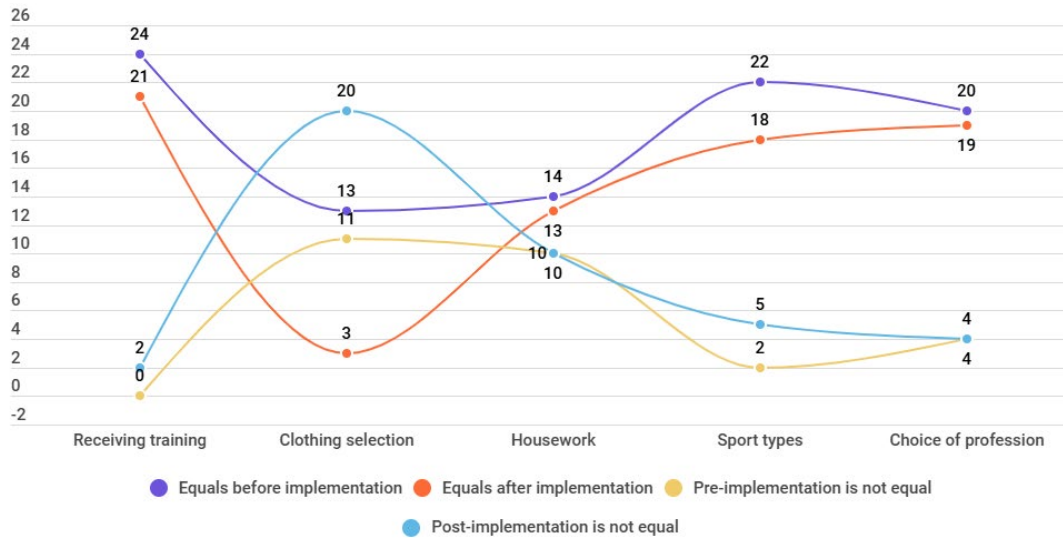
- ‘It expresses that girls and boys are equal.’ (S4)
- ‘Male gender, female gender.’ (S9)
- ‘It means violence, harassment, hitting, killing.’ (S1)

After the implementation, it was observed that the concept of gender again made the students think of difference, discrimination and gender, and that this concept also made them think of inborn characteristics, equality between men and women, decision-making, biological and social gender, equal rights of men and women, and a concept determined by society. Sample student discourses related to this finding are given below:

- ‘I think it is the characteristics of women and men that come later.’ (S11)
- ‘Things determined by society that we are not born with.’ (S6)
- ‘Male-female discrimination.’ (S9)

It can be said that students made more detailed definitions of the concept of gender after the intervention and that these definitions changed through the activities in the workshops conducted within the scope of the research.

In this context, the third question "What are the situations where girls and boys are equal and unequal among friends?" was posed to the students and the students' answers to this question before and after the implementation are given in Figure 2.

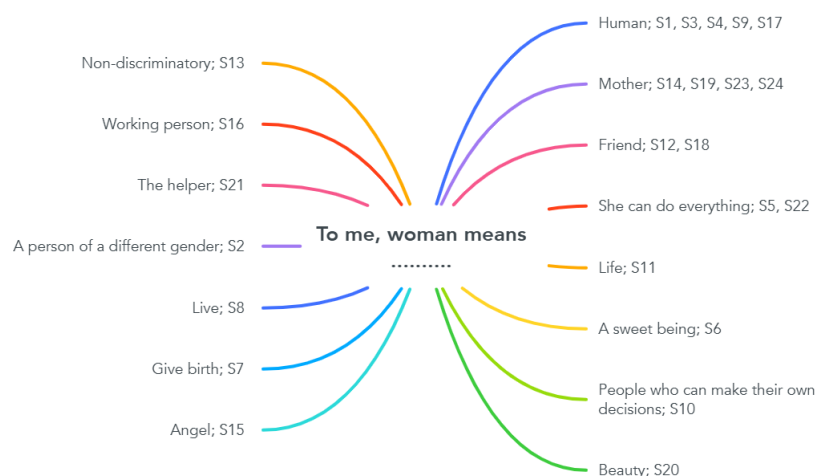


**Figure 2** Students’ opinions on the equality of girls and boys among their friends

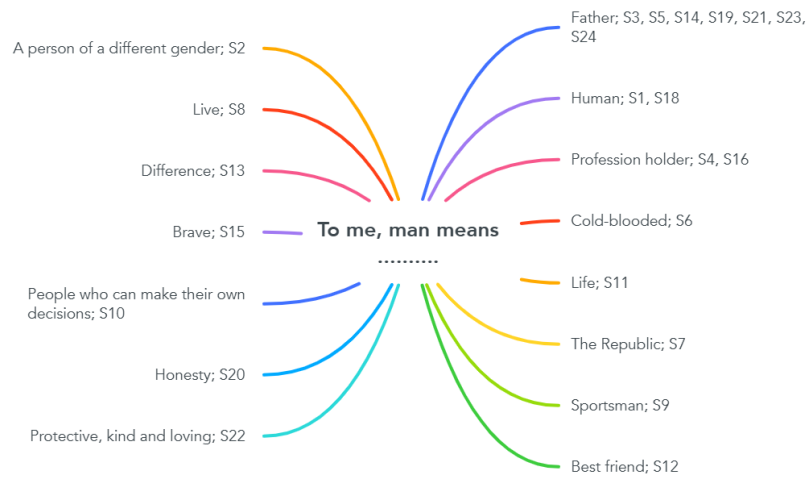
Within the scope of this question, when the students’ views on equality between women and men in the areas of receiving education, clothing selection, household chores, types of sports and occupational choice before and after the implementation were analyzed together, it was observed that there was a change in their views on equality between women and men especially in the areas of receiving education, clothing selection and types of sports after the implementation. On the other hand, it can be said that there was no change in students’ views on equality between women and men in the areas of housework and choice of profession. It can be said that students’ views on equality between women and men in the areas of receiving education, clothing selection, housework, sport types and occupational choice, especially after the implementation, stem from the workshops implemented within the scope of the research.

### 3.1.2 Students’ metaphors of female and male gender

In this section, in order for the students to produce metaphors about the concepts of women and men, they were asked to state what they think the concepts of women and men evoke and why they think this way. In this direction, the metaphors used by the participants to define women and men before the application are given in Figure 3.



**Figure 3** Students’ metaphors about female gender before the application



**Figure 4** Students’ metaphors about male gender before the application

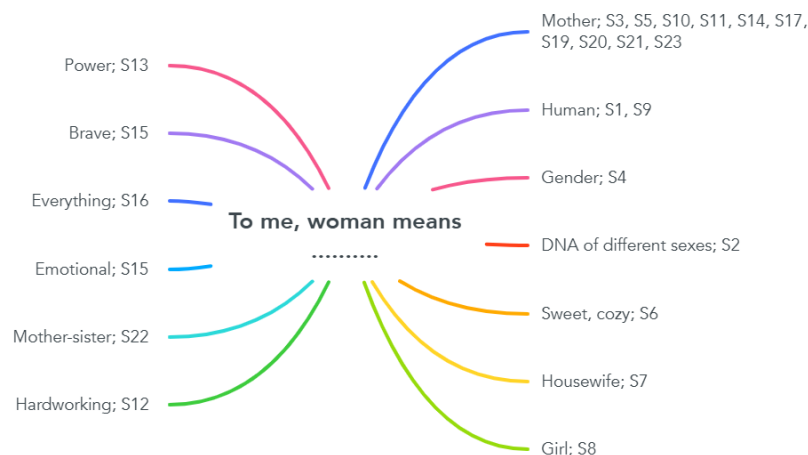
When Figure 3 is examined, it is seen that the metaphors that the students produced about the female gender before the application were mostly defined as ‘human, mother, friend and doer of everything’ and that they expressed the reasons for these metaphors in the context of the social roles belonging to the metaphors they thought. Student discourses related to this finding are given below:

- ‘We should accept and respect everyone as human beings.’ (S17)
- ‘Because she gave birth to me.’ (S24)
- ‘He is a friend.’ (S12)
- ‘Women can achieve anything.’ (S22)

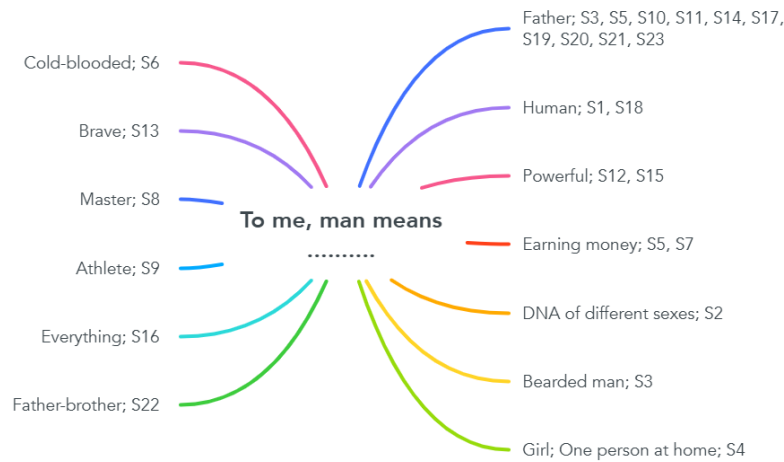
It is seen that the metaphors produced by the students for the male gender are mostly ‘father, human and professional’ and that they justify this situation in the context of the social roles of the metaphors they think. Student discourses related to this finding are given below:

- ‘Men become fathers.’ (S3)
- ‘It is the being created by Allah.’ (T1)
- ‘A person with a profession, who brings money home.’ (S4)

The metaphors used by the students to define women and men after the application are given in Figure 5 and Figure 6.



**Figure 5** Students’ metaphors about female gender after the application



**Figure 6** Students’ metaphors for male gender after the application

It was observed that the metaphors that the students produced about the female gender after the application were mostly defined as ‘mother and human’ and that they expressed the reasons for these metaphors in the context of the social roles belonging to the metaphors they thought. Student discourses related to this finding are given below:

- ‘She gives birth to us.’ (S17)
- ‘Everyone is a human being.’ (T1)
- ‘She does not have the same DNA as a man.’ (S2)

It is seen that the metaphors produced by the students for the male gender are mostly ‘father, human, strong, money-earner’, and that they justify the reasons for this situation in the context of the social roles belonging to the metaphors they think. Student discourses related to this finding are given below:

- ‘Usually men earn money.’ (S5)
- ‘Because she has children.’ (S23)
- ‘Everyone is a human being.’ (T1)
- ‘Carries heavy things easily.’ (S15)

There was no change in the metaphors used by the students before and after the application when defining the gender of women and men. This situation can be interpreted as that students produce metaphors according to their social roles while defining women and men.

### 3.1.3 Students’ thoughts on the roles and responsibilities of the female and male gender

In order to determine the students’ thoughts about the roles of women and men, questions were asked to the students before and after the application in order to get their thoughts about some roles and by whom or by whom these roles could be realised. The answers of the students to these questions are given in Table 2.

**Table 2** Students’ thoughts on roles and responsibilities of female and male gender roles and responsibilities before and after the application

Who should/can do it?	Women only		Mostly women		Both women and men		Mostly men		Men only	
	BI	AI	BI	AI	BI	AI	BI	AI	BI	AI
Who should be a doctor?					23	23	1			
Who can play soccer?					21	16	3	7		
Who should look after a younger sibling?			1	1	22	21	1	1		
Who should be a manager?					23	20	1	3		

Who can cook?	1	2	3	5	20	16
Who can iron?	2	1	3	8	19	14
Who should be a teacher?					23	23
Who can climb a tree?					22	19
Who should be a politician?					21	21
Who should be an engineer?					23	22

When the students’ ideas about the roles and responsibilities of men and women are examined, it is seen that before and after the implementation, students stated that the roles and responsibilities of being a doctor, taking care of a younger sibling, being a manager, being a teacher, climbing a tree, being a politician, and being an engineer can be performed by both men and women. While the students stated that both men and women could play soccer before the intervention, after the intervention they stated that mostly men could do it. Again, while the students stated that both men and women could cook and iron before the implementation, after the implementation they stated that mostly women could do it. When the answers given within the scope of the questions asked to the students to determine their thoughts about the roles of men and women were analyzed, it was seen that the students approached the roles with a more egalitarian perspective before the application, but after the application, they answered the same questions not according to themselves, but how the roles are distributed in real life. In this context, it was observed that there was a difference in their thoughts about roles such as playing soccer, cooking and ironing.

In order to find out the students’ opinions on the responsibilities of women and men, the questions “What responsibilities do you think women should have in society?” and “What responsibilities do you think men should have in society?” were asked to the students. In this context, the answers given by the students to the question “What responsibilities do you think women should have in society?” before and after the application are given in Figure 7.



**Figure 7** Responsibilities of women in society according to students

Before the implementation, it was observed that students expressed the responsibilities of women in society as housework, economic affairs, child care, personal care, help, nature, self-protection and equal responsibility. Student discourses related to this finding are given below:

- ‘Tidying up the house.’ (S3)
- ‘He should cook.’ (S2)
- ‘He should contribute to his family.’ (S11)
- ‘He should take care of the children.’ (S20)

After the application, it was observed that some students stated that women’s responsibilities in society were in the same areas of responsibility as before the application, but some students also stated that women had the responsibilities of being cheerful, making decisions, driving a car and being a housewife. Student discourses related to this finding are given below:

- ‘Preparing the table, ironing.’ (S1)
- ‘To earn money.’ (S7)
- ‘Deciding everything.’ (S12)
- ‘Women should spread joy in society.’ (S16)
- ‘He should drive a car.’ (S5)

The students’ answers to the question “What responsibilities do you think men should have in society?” before and after the application are given in Figure 8.



**Figure 8** Responsibilities of men in society according to students

Before the implementation, it was observed that students expressed the responsibilities of men in society as household chores, economic affairs, child care, personal care, helping, protecting the environment, self-protection, driving and entertainment. Student discourses related to this finding are given below:

- ‘He should have a profession and work.’ (S4)
- ‘Repairing and cooking.’ (S2)
- ‘She should take care of her child.’ (S10)
- ‘They can help women with housework.’ (S15)
- ‘He should take care of himself regularly.’ (S3)

In the post-implementation period, although they stated that men’s responsibilities in society were in the same areas of responsibility as before the intervention, some students stated that men also had the responsibilities of being cheerful, making decisions, going to the market, politics and repair work. It was also observed that students did not specify personal care as men’s area of responsibility after the implementation. Student discourses related to this finding are given below:

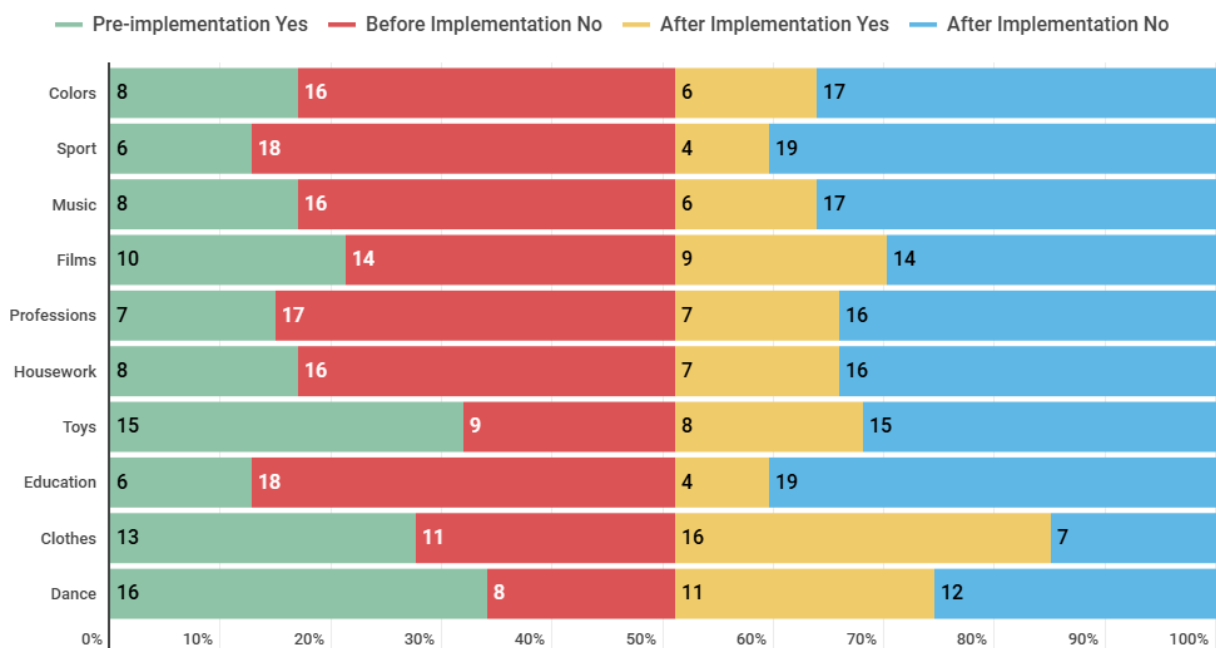
- ‘He should be a politician.’ (S4)
- ‘They should be sensitive to nature.’ (S22)
- ‘He should do things like repairing.’ (S6)

‘He should protect himself and his home.’ (S3)

When the students’ ideas about the areas of responsibility of women and men in society are evaluated in general, it is seen that women are associated with responsibilities in the field of housework, while the area of responsibility emphasized more in men is economic affairs.

### 3.1.4 Students’ thoughts on stereotypes regarding the concept of gender in their daily and social lives

In this part of the study, the students were asked questions before and after the application in order to determine their thoughts about the areas they encounter in their daily lives and the stereotypes they encounter in their social lives. The question “Can colors, sports, music, movies, professions, housework, toys, education, clothes and dance have a gender?” was asked to determine the students’ opinions in some areas they encounter in their daily lives, and the answers given by the students before and after the application are given in Figure 9.



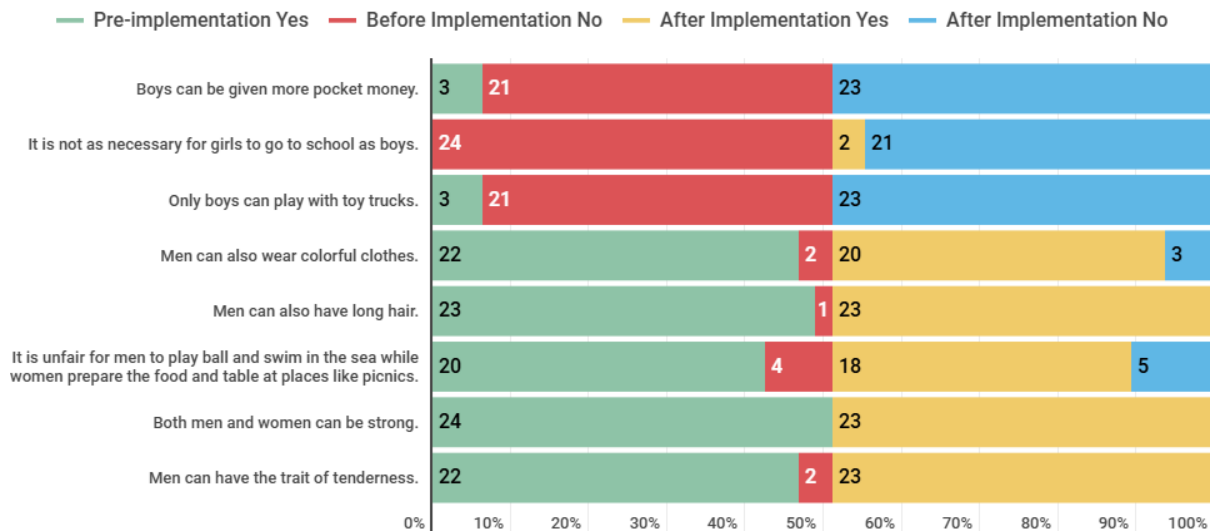
**Figure 9** Students’ thoughts on stereotypes about the concept of gender in their daily and social lives before and after the application

Before the intervention, it was observed that the majority of the students stated that color, sports, music, movies, professions, housework and education did not have a gender; in addition, the majority of the students stated that toys and dance had a gender, while half of the students stated that clothes had a gender and half of the students stated that clothes did not have a gender. When their opinions after the application were examined, it was seen that they maintained their opinions that color, sports, music, movies, professions, housework and education do not have a gender, but the majority of the students stated that toys do not have a gender and clothes have a gender. In dance, it was observed that half of the students stated that there was a gender and half stated that there was no gender. It can be said that the main sources of the change in students’ views on this question before and after the implementation were the evidence-based group activities organized within the scope of the research and the ‘Riley talks about toys’ activity, which is a video-based activity.

In order to determine the students’ thoughts on gender stereotypes in their social lives, the



propositions given in the table below were given to the students and the answers given by the students before and after the application are given in Figure 4.10.



**Figure 10** Students' thoughts on gender stereotypes in their social lives before and after the application

When the students' responses to the propositions consisting of gender stereotypes in their social lives were examined, it was observed that the students generally gave egalitarian answers to the propositions given before and after the application.

### 3.2 Primary school 4th grade students' awareness of gender equality during the practices

The second research question was based on the question 'How is the awareness of fourth grade primary school students towards gender equality during the practices? In this direction, workshops including activities that enable students to gain awareness on gender equality were designed and implemented by the researcher. Under this heading, the findings regarding the awareness processes of students towards gender equality during the workshop practices are included.

#### 3.2.1 Students' awareness of the concept of gender

Within the scope of the workshop organized for students to gain awareness about the concept of gender, activities were applied to students based on the learning outcomes 'Defines gender', 'Defines biological and social gender', 'Expresses the differences between biological and social gender' and 'Recognizes and accepts individual differences'.

Within the scope of the learning outcome 'Defines gender', students were first asked the question 'What comes to your mind when you think of gender? Students were asked what they think of when they think of men and women and the answers are given in Chart 1.

**Chart 1** Students' statements on the concept of gender



*Mother, sister, empathetic, different thinker, smart, able to do anything, able to cook, hair, able to do any profession, productive, kind-hearted, sincere, friendly, cheerful, emotional, family-oriented, frugal, fun, fair, freedom, women's rights.*

*Father, beard, mustache, footballer, protector, hero, money-earner, strong, cold-blooded, politician, swearer, productive, Atatürk, open-minded, superior, king of the house, boss of the house, fearless, traveler, repairman, brave, handsome, self-confident, joker, mathematician.*



When Chart 1 is examined, it is seen that students express the concept of gender as male and female depending on both biological and social stereotypes.

Within the scope of the learning outcomes 'Defines biological and social gender' and 'Expresses the differences between biological and social gender', students were first asked what they think of when they think of biological and social gender and their answers are given in Chart 2.

**Chart 2** Students' statements on the concept of biological and social gender



*Man, the sex of animals, mutated man, women turning into men.*



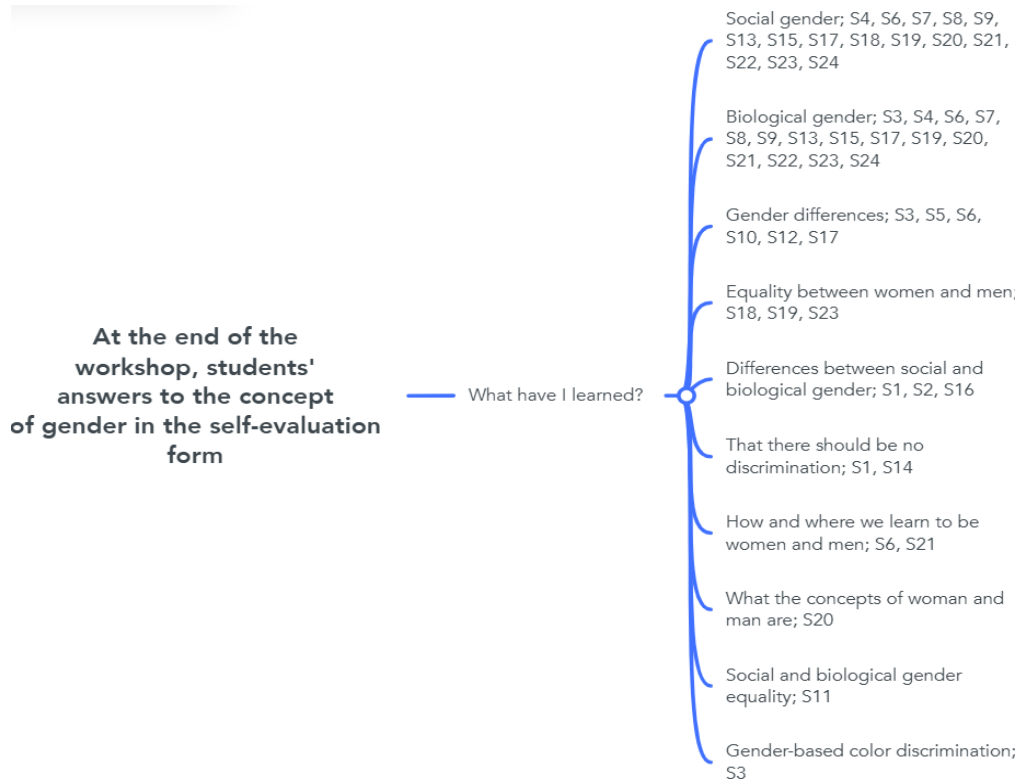
*Male and female gender, gender in general, genderless, gender equality or inequality.*

As can be seen in the chart, it is seen that the students have no knowledge about the concepts of biological and social gender. Accordingly, the researcher informed the students about what biological and social gender are. Then, in order to reinforce the subject, the students were given propositions about biological and social gender (Women give birth to children, men do not. Little girls are docile and soft, while little boys are quarrelsome and tough) were read to the students and they were asked to classify these propositions as biological gender or social gender. As a result of this activity, it was observed that all of the students classified the sample sentences as biological and social gender.

The students were asked the question "How or from what do we learn to be women and men?" and it was determined that the students did not have any information on this subject. The researcher then informed the students about how we learn to be women and men from factors such as family, children's books, colors, toys, school, textbooks, media, law, etc.

The students were asked whether the expectations about femininity and masculinity were biological or gender-related, and most of the students stated that they were gender-related and that they did not know the concept of gender before.

At the end of this workshop, students were asked to fill out an end-of-workshop self-evaluation form. The majority of the students stated that they felt happy during this workshop. The reasons for this feeling of happiness include the excitement of learning new information and participating in the in-class activity. In addition, some students expressed that they were surprised and saddened. The students who were surprised stated that they had never thought like this before, while the students who felt sadness stated that they felt this emotion because of gender discrimination between men and women. The students were asked what they learned within the scope of the self-evaluation form at the end of the workshop and the answers are shown in Figure 11.

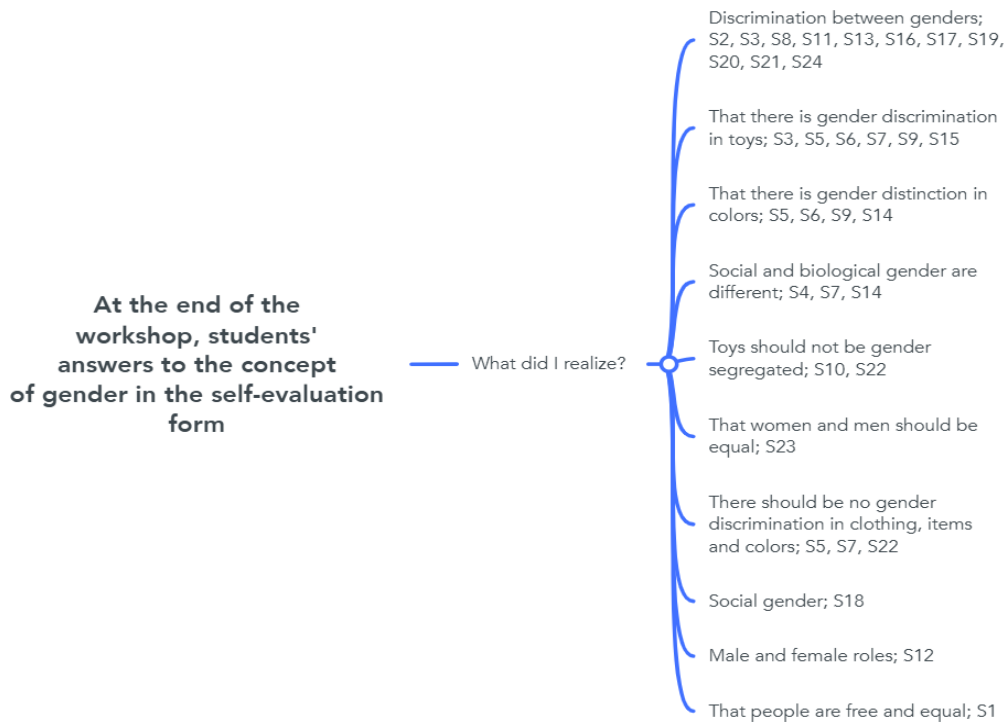


**Figure 11** Students' answers to the question "What did I learn?" in the end-of-workshop self-evaluation form for the concept of gender

When the students' discourses on the concept of gender at the end of the workshop were examined, they stated that they learned structures such as social gender, biological gender, gender differences, gender discrimination, gender equality, differences between social and biological gender roles. Student discourses related to this finding are given below:

- 'I learned about gender.' (S4)
- 'What biological sex is.' (S19)
- 'I learned about gender differences.' (S3)
- 'I learned about the discrimination between men and women.' (S16)
- 'I learned about the equality of girls and boys.' (S23)

Students were asked what they realized within the scope of the self-evaluation form at the end of the workshop and the answers are given in Figure 12.



**Figure 12** Students' answers to the question "What did I realize?" in the self-evaluation form at the end of the workshop on the concept of gender

When the students' discourses on the concept of gender were examined at the end of the workshop, they stated that they realized that there is a distinction between genders, that there is a gender distinction in toys, that there is a gender distinction in colors, and that social and biological gender are different. Student discourses related to this finding are given below:

- 'Gender discrimination is done a lot in society.' (S13)
- 'That female and male toys are separated.' (S6)
- 'That no man wears pink.' (S14)
- 'When I learned about biological and social gender, I realized that they are different things.' (S4)

### 3.3 Students' awareness of gender-based division of labor

Within the scope of the workshop organized for students to gain awareness on the concept of gender-based division of labor, activities were applied to students based on the learning outcomes 'Defines gender-based division of labor', 'Questions gender-based division of labor' and 'Recognizes the consequences of gender-based division of labor'. Activities were applied to the students based on the gains.

'Defines gender-based division of labor.' Within the scope of the acquisition, students were asked what comes to mind when they think of gender-based division of labor, and their expressions about gender-based division of labor are given in Chart 3.

**Chart 3** Students' statements on gender-based division of labor



As seen in Table 4.3, students defined the concept of gender-based division of labor as occupations, jobs, actions and responsibilities according to gender. Therefore, it is seen that students have never heard of the concept of gender-based division of labor before.

Students were asked ‘Question the division of labor based on gender.’ The activity ‘Who does this?’ was applied within the scope of the learning outcome. Students were given sticks with representative pictures of women and men, and the students decided who did the sample actions mentioned by the researcher (woman/man/two of them) and held up the sticks with the pictures in their hands. Most of the students stated that both men and women can do the actions of cooking, cleaning, taking children to school, preparing breakfast, grocery shopping, brewing tea, watching football matches, playing computer games and helping children with their homework. According to the students, the action of preparing the lunchbox is mostly a task that women can do, while the actions of cleaning and repairing the car are mostly tasks that men can do. Ironing is seen as an action that can be done by women for half of the students, while it is seen as an action that can be done by both men and women for the other half.

During the activities on gender-based division of labor, it was observed that the actions performed by men and women in their daily lives were actually strictly segregated, but within the scope of the information provided by the researcher until this activity, students made decisions from a more egalitarian perspective. In fact, when the researcher asked why women mostly do the act of preparing the lunchbox or why men mostly do the act of repairing, the students stated that they did not know the reasons for this situation, but that they realized that the reason for such a separation was based on gender within the scope of the workshops.

Students ‘Question the division of labor based on gender.’ Within the scope of the learning outcome, the board was divided into two with a line and ‘Ayşe (Female)’ was written on one side and ‘Ali (Male)’ on the other. The students were asked about the 10 jobs that Ayşe and Ali do the most inside and outside the home. The answers given by the students are as in Chart 4.

**Chart 4** Students’ statements on gender-based division of labor



*Cooking, washing up, going to work, ironing, cleaning, setting the table, doing the laundry, driving, washing their children, playing sports, looking after children, making tea.*

*Going to work, taking care of the child, driving/washing the car, helping the wife, watching the news, washing the dishes, watching the game, repairing, drinking coffee, cleaning, taking care of the dog, hanging out the laundry, playing on the phone.*



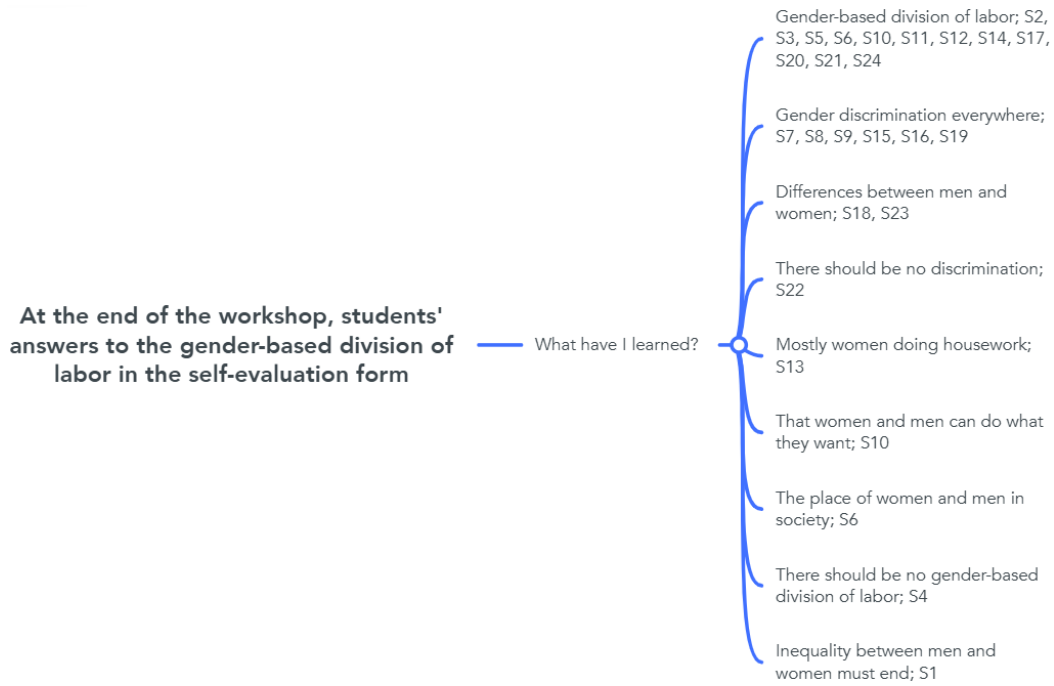
When the answers given in Table 4.4 are analyzed, it is seen that the students stated that women mostly do domestic work and men do work outside the home. Students stated that washing dishes, cleaning, driving a car and going to work are actions that both men and women can do. However, although students classified many actions as common actions for both men and women in the sample actions given by the researcher in the previous activity, it was observed that only a few actions were common for both men and women in this activity. One of the reasons for this situation from the student’s point of view is that the student responded to this activity in line with the social stereotypes he/she acquired in real life and realized through the workshops that the

division of labor is a distinction shaped according to society.

The students were given A4 paper within the scope of the learning outcome 'Recognize the consequences of gender-based division of labor. Within the scope of the learning outcome, A4 paper was distributed and students were asked to draw a football player, a school principal, a nurse and a pilot. One student drew the football player as female and 22 students as male; 5 students drew the school principal as female and 18 students as male; all of the students drew the nurse as female; and 7 students drew the pilot as female and 16 students drew the pilot as male. In the workshop trainings, students stated that professions would not have a gender; however, when asked to draw the professions in the activity, they showed a sexist orientation. According to the students, the reason for this was that in their real lives, for example, they always saw female nurses in hospitals or male principals in schools.

Within the scope of the same achievement, the rates of women and men in education, employment and decision-making mechanisms were statistically analyzed with students (*According to the results of TurkStat Household Labor Force Survey; in 2019, the proportion of employed people aged 15 and over in Turkey was 45.7% and this rate was 28.7% for women and 63.1% for men. According to the data of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey; in 2020, the number of female deputies among 584 deputies was 101 and the number of male deputies was 483. According to TURKSTAT National Education Database data, in 2019, the proportion of women aged 25 and over who are at least university graduates is 18.5% and 23.1% for men*). When the students analyzed this statistical data, they were surprised by the low number of female MPs and the fact that women receive less education than men. As a reason for this, they stated that they did not experience or feel such a discrimination in education. In addition, while examining the statistical ratios given in the course, it was observed that the students stated that job advertisements generally recruit male employees and that the idea that men must earn money and women may not work is widely used in society.

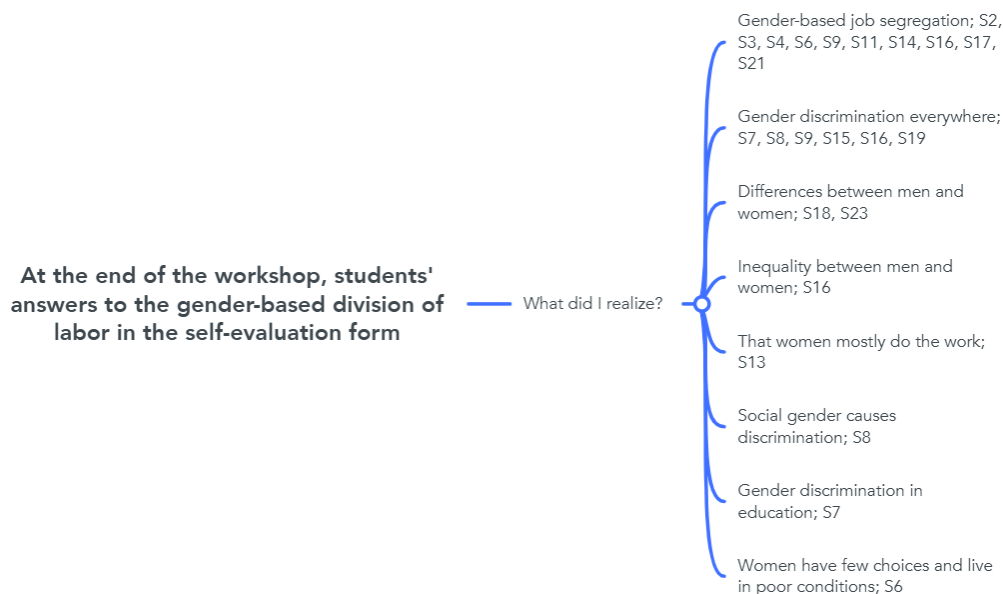
At the end of this workshop, students were asked to fill out the 'End of Workshop Self-Assessment Form' in order to raise awareness about the gender-based division of labor. The majority of the students stated that they felt happy during this workshop. The reasons for this feeling of happiness include the excitement of learning new information and participating in in-class activities. In addition, some students expressed surprise and sadness. Some of the students were surprised because they realized that there was gender discrimination in the division of labor, while others were upset because women were too burdened, there was discrimination in the division of labor, and there was no equality between men and women. The students were asked what they learned within the scope of the end-of-workshop self-evaluation form and the answers are shown in Figure 13.



**Figure 13** Students' answers to the question "What did I learn?" in the end-of-workshop self-evaluation form for the concept of gender-based division of labor

When the students' discourses on the concept of gender-based division of labor at the end of the workshop were examined, it was found that most of the students stated that they learned about the gender-based division of labor, that gender discrimination is made everywhere, and that there are differences between men and women. Student discourses related to this finding are given below:

- 'I learned about gender-based division of labor.' (S17)
- 'There is gender discrimination almost everywhere.' (S7)
- 'I learned the difference between boys and girls.' (S23)
- 'I learned that I should never discriminate.' (S22)



**Figure 14** Students' responses to the question "What did I notice?" in the end-of-workshop self-evaluation

form for the concept of gender-based division of labor

When the students' discourses on the concept of gender-based division of labor at the end of the workshop were examined, it was found that most of the students stated that there was gender-based division of labor, that there should be no discrimination, that women and men were equal and that they realized the inequality between men and women. Student discourses related to this finding are given below:

'I realized that there is job segregation.' (S2)

'I learned that we should not make gender discrimination.' (S19)

'I realized the equality of girls and boys.' (S23)

'What is different in boys, what is different in girls.' (S18)

### 3.4 Students' awareness of the concept of gender equality/inequality

Within the scope of the workshops organized for students to gain awareness on the concept of gender equality/inequality, 'Defines the concept of gender equality.', 'Expresses their views on gender equality.', 'Discusses how girls and boys experience and see gender roles.', 'Recognizes the factors that cause the transmission of gender inequality', 'Recognizes sexist discourses in Turkish', 'Knows the legal basis for gender equality' and 'Develops solutions for gender equality'.

Within the scope of the outcome 'Defines the concept of gender equality', the students were asked the question 'What is gender equality?' and it was concluded that the students did not have information about this concept. Afterwards, information about what this concept is was shared with the students by the researcher.

Then, within the scope of the outcomes 'Expresses his/her views on the equality of women and men' and 'Discusses how girls and boys experience and see gender roles', the students were first asked whether they would buy pink toys for boys and blue toys for girls when they went to a toy store. It was observed that 18 of the students stated that boys can buy pink toys and girls can buy blue toys when they go to a toy store, while 6 students stated that they would not. The students were then asked about the reactions of their parents to this situation. To this question, it was observed that most of the students stated that their parents would react that boys should buy blue toys and girls should buy pink toys, while very few of the students stated that their parents would not interfere with the choice of color in toys. Examples of this situation are given below:

'My mom and dad wouldn't say anything.' (S22)

'Isn't there any other color, he used to say this girl color.' (S2)

'At least you should have bought the yellow one, not the pink one.' (S6)

'She would say, 'Would a boy ever buy a pink toy, change it.' (S23)

He would say, 'My daughter, look, the pink one is prettier, if you want, buy this one.' (S13)

During this activity, although mostly male students in the class had a positive view of boys buying pink toys and girls buying blue toys, they stated that they received more intervention from their families on this issue; the same students even stated that this intervention affected their choices in their real lives. In addition, during this activity, students stated that there is an implicit sexist distinction between boys and girls in toy and stationery stores. Some male students stated that they actually liked the color pink and fancy items, but they had to buy items in certain colors; some female students stated that although they did not like too many fancy items, they could not find plain colored items because the toy aisles for girls were full of colorful fancy things.

As another activity within the scope of this outcome, the video titled 'Riley Talks About Toys' was shown to the students. After watching the video, the students were asked the question 'Do you



think that toy manufacturers influence your choices when buying toys? The students think that toys are categorized as boys and girls in the toy shop and that this affects their toy choices when buying toys. The students stated that there were more toys on the girl's side and there were always fancy dolls; however, the toys on the boy's side were fewer and were usually toys related to guns and cannons, and they said that they had to choose between the options.

After these statements, the students were asked what they pay attention to when buying toys. The students responded that the package should be unopened, that it should work, that it should not be broken or torn, that it should be original and of good quality, that its color should not be faded, that it should be suitable for equality, that it should be a toy for boys and girls, and that there should be a variety of toys. Based on the answers they gave here, it was seen that the students actually stated that when they do not care about the reactions of their parents and friends when buying toys, they will not pay attention to colors in toy selection; the first thing that is important for them in toy selection is the durability and quality of the toy.

Finally, students were asked about the good and bad aspects of being a woman and a man. The students expressed the good aspects of being a woman as giving birth to children, being strong, being able to accomplish anything, being decorated and being free; the bad aspects of being a woman as wearing a burqa, being harassed, being subjected to violence, being responsible for all the care of the baby, not being able to go to school, allowing her freedom to be restricted, not having some rights, not being exposed to equal behavior with men, being ugly and not being able to do whatever she wants.

During the activity, it was observed that the female students in the class associated being a woman with fertility and reflected being a woman positively within this framework. However, it was observed that male students emphasized that being a man has good aspects due to gender characteristics. However, in general, students stated that there are more positive aspects of being a man, and the biggest reason for this is that men are raised more freely in the social sense. As a proof of this, male students are happy to be born as men; however, some of the female students stated that they wish they had been born as men in terms of freedoms.

An evidence-based group activity was conducted with the students within the scope of the learning outcome 'Recognizes the factors that cause gender inequality to be transmitted'. In the first evidence, students were given a news text about the color of toys and personal belongings according to gender. The students stated that what Jeong Mee Yoon wanted to draw attention to with this project was to emphasize that there is discrimination and to try to make us realize the inequality. The students stated that the children in the news report were not free to choose their toys and personal belongings and that they themselves were not free in these matters.

In the second piece of evidence, students were given a news report on the financial accounting of women's domestic labor. Students stated that the division of domestic work between men and women is unfair because domestic work is always seen as women's work, while work related to earning more money is seen as men's work. Students whose parents were working, on the other hand, stated that most of the domestic chores were done by their mother or the woman who came to clean the house.

In the third piece of evidence, students were given a news article about women's and men's work life. Students stated that maternity leave should be given equally to mothers and fathers and that fathers are not given enough leave. They stated that the mother is given more leave because she

is thought to be responsible for child care; however, this is not true. They emphasized that the state should equalize these leaves. During the activity, it was observed that the majority of the students did not have information about maternity leave and the duration of leave and were surprised by the differences in the duration of leave in different countries. Male students even stated that the time given to men was too little and that this was unfair to them.

In the fourth piece of evidence, a news text on gender equality was given, which included the views of two girls about being a girl in the conditions of their country. The students stated that since there is gender equality in Canada, girls living there are more free; however, since there is no gender equality in India, girls are not free, their rights are very few compared to boys, and girls sit at home and wait. Female students stated that they were lucky to live in Turkey compared to girls in India.

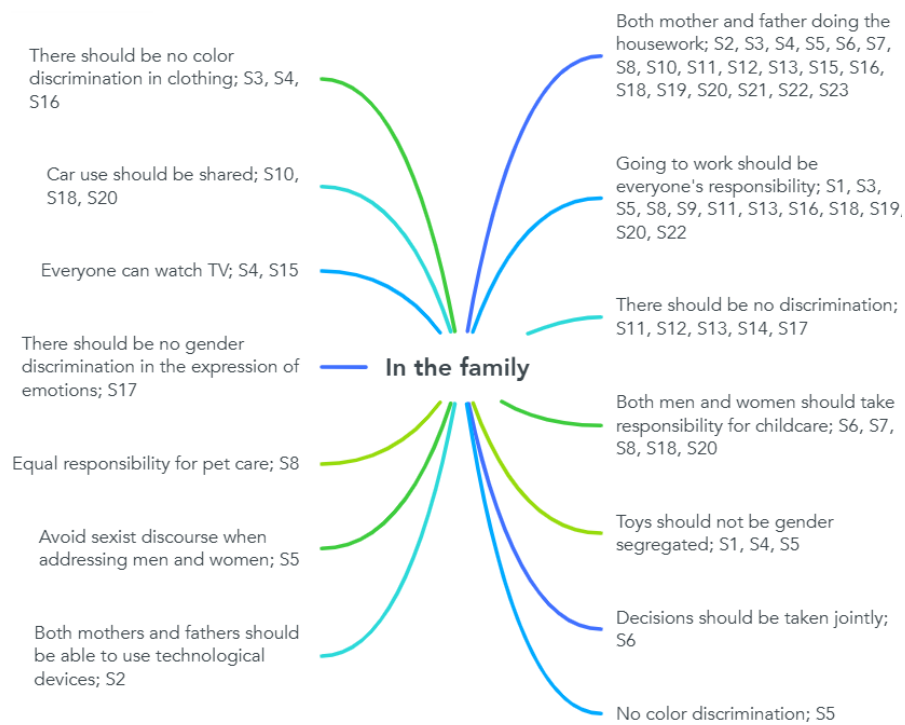
Examples of sexist discourses (*scientist, human being, businessman, manly, ladylike, ladylike, man of his word, man's word, man's word, per girl-woman*) were shared with the students and the opinions of the students on this subject were taken with the opinion development technique.

During the application of this technique, two propositions were given to the students, and cards with the sentences 'I agree', 'I disagree with this idea' and 'I am undecided' were hung in three corners of the classroom. Then, the proposition 'It is the mother's duty to earn money and provide for the household' was read to the students and they were asked to stand in front of the cardboard with the statement indicating their opinions about the proposition. Twenty students in the class stated that they disagreed with the proposition and three students were undecided. Most of the students stated that earning money and providing for the household should be the duty of both the mother and the father, but it usually seems to be the father's duty. Because of this view, it was determined that especially three students characterized their opinion on the proposition as undecided. In addition, the students stated that it is considered normal when the mother does not work, but it is not considered normal when the father does not work. Although the mothers of more than half of the class work, most of them see the task of providing for the household primarily as the father's duty. The main reason for this situation is that students experience a dilemma between the stereotypes in society in real life and the information they learned during the workshops; it is seen that they use the information they learned in the workshops, but the roles assigned to women and men in society still affect their views.

Within the scope of this activity, students were given the second proposition: 'It is the father's duty to clean and organize the house'. Again, students were asked to stand in front of the statement indicating their opinions about the proposition. Fourteen students in the class stated that they were against the idea of this proposition, while 9 students were undecided. Students stated that cleaning and organizing the house should be done jointly. A few students stated that it would be better if it was not a task but whoever wanted to do it. However, in general, the students stated that these tasks were always done by the mother and that their fathers returned home later than their mothers, so they could not do household chores. Some students, whether their mothers worked or not, stated that the housework was done by the housekeepers who came to the house. However, when asked by the researcher why it was always women who came to the house to clean, the students were surprised and could not express an argument as to why the helpers were always women.

Within the scope of the outcome 'Knows the legal bases expressing gender equality', important articles in the 'Convention on the Rights of the Child, Universal Declaration of Human Rights and

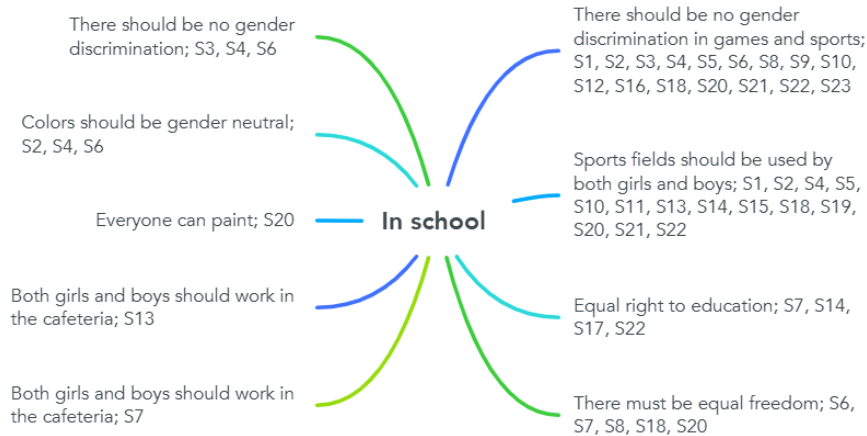
Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women’ were shared with the students. Most of the students had heard of the ‘Convention on the Rights of the Child’ and the ‘Universal Declaration of Human Rights’ within the scope of the ‘Human Rights’ course they took during the semester; however, they had not heard of the ‘Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women’ and were not aware of the articles of this declaration. Then, the researcher provided information about these legal bases. During the briefing process, it was observed that the students listened carefully and questioned the relevant articles. In addition, the students mentioned the Istanbul Convention, which they had recently heard a lot about in the media. During the workshop process, it was observed that the students were happy to hear about their rights and started to form sentences with a more confident tone of voice in their expression skills. Within the scope of the learning outcome ‘Develops solutions for gender equality’, ‘What Can I Do Activity’ was distributed to students as a worksheet so that they could present their suggestions on what they could do at school and in the family to ensure gender equality. The answers given by the students are given in Figure 15.



**Figure 15** Students’ suggestions for solutions within the family to ensure gender equality

When the students’ discourses on what they can do in the family to ensure gender equality are examined, most of the students stated that both parents should do housework, going to work is everyone’s responsibility, there should be no discrimination, both men and women should take responsibility for child care, car use should be shared, there should be no gender discrimination in toys and there should be no color discrimination in clothing. Student discourses related to this finding are given below:

- ‘The father can do the laundry as well as the mother.’ (S2)
- ‘Both parents should work.’ (S13)
- ‘Children should watch television equally.’ (S14)
- ‘Taking care of the child should be the responsibility of both men and women.’ (T20)
- ‘Driving a car is something that both mother and father can do.’ (S18)

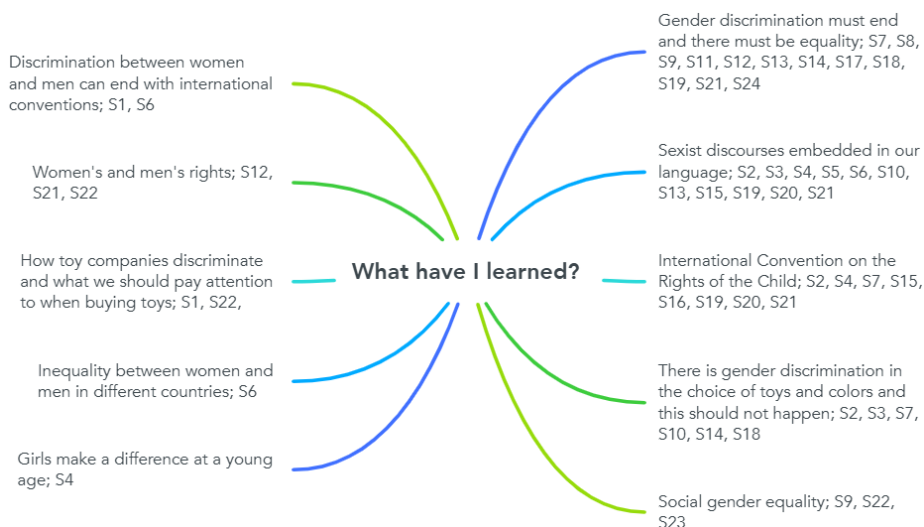


**Figure 16** Students’ suggestions for solutions at school to ensure gender equality

When the students’ discourses on what they could do at school to ensure gender equality were examined, most of the students stated that there should be no gender discrimination in games and sports, girls and boys should use sports fields, the right to education should be equal, there should be equal freedoms, and there should be no gender discrimination in objects and colors. Student discourses related to this finding are given below:

- ‘Girls and boys should be able to do the same sports.’ (S3)
- ‘Girls can also play on the basketball court.’ (S15)
- ‘Both girls and boys should stand up at the blackboard.’ (S14)
- ‘Girls and boys should have equal freedom.’ (S7)
- ‘In school books, girls should not be dressed in pink and boys in black and blue colors.’ (T6)

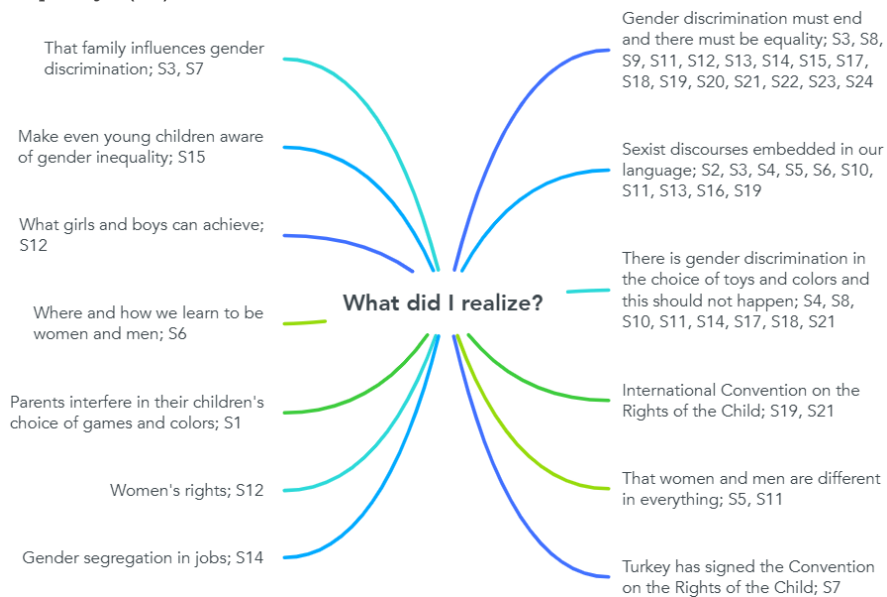
At the end of this workshop, which was organized to raise students’ awareness of the concept of gender equality/inequality, students were asked to fill out the ‘End of Workshop Self-Assessment Form’. The majority of the students stated that they felt happy in this workshop. In addition, some students expressed that they were surprised and saddened. Some students were surprised to realize that they had made a distinction without realizing it, while others were upset that women and men were not equal and that they had made a distinction in this regard. The students were asked what they learned within the scope of the self-evaluation form at the end of the workshop and the answers are shown in Figure 17.



**Figure 17** Students’ answers to the question “*What did I learn?*” in the end-of-workshop self-evaluation form on the concept of gender equality/inequality

When the students' discourses on the concept of gender equality/inequality at the end of the workshop were examined, it was found that most of the students stated that they learned about sexist discourses that are embedded in our language, the international convention on the rights of the child, gender discrimination, discrimination, that there should be gender equality, and that there is and should not be gender discrimination on the choice of toys and colors. Student discourses related to this finding are given below:

- 'I learned that there are sexist words in our language.' (S2)
- 'I learned about the Convention on the Rights of the Child.' (S4)
- 'I learned that there is a distinction between boys and girls.' (S21)
- 'I learned that men and women should be equal.' (S19)
- 'Gender equality.' (S6)



**Figure 18** Students' answers to the question "What did I learn?" in the end-of-workshop self-evaluation form on the concept of gender equality/inequality

When the students' discourses on the concept of gender equality/inequality at the end of the workshop were examined, it was found that most of the students expressed that they realized that sexist discourses that have become ingrained in our language, discrimination, that there should be no distinction between men and women, that everyone may want to buy a pink toy, and that toy and clothing companies support gender discrimination. Student discourses related to this finding are given below:

- 'I realized that girls and boys can do everything.' (S8)
- 'Girls and boys can buy toys in any color they want.' (S14)
- 'I realized that toy and clothing companies make us discriminate without realizing it.' (S2)
- 'Profession, game, color discrimination is made because of companies and our parents.' (S7)

#### 4 Conclusion, Discussion, and Recommendations

Within the scope of the research, the change in the thoughts of fourth-grade primary school students about gender equality in the Social Studies course before and after the implementation and the awareness of students about gender equality during the workshops organized during the implementation were examined.

In the questionnaire form applied to determine how the thoughts of fourth grade primary school

students changed before and after the implementation of gender equality in the Social Studies course, the students' thoughts about the concept of gender equality, their metaphors for the gender of men and women, their views on responsibilities in this regard, and their thoughts on stereotypes about the concept of gender in their social lives were determined. When the students' thoughts about the concept of gender equality before and after the application were analyzed, it was concluded that most of the students had not heard of the concept of gender before the application, but after the application, all students created an awareness of the concept of gender. Again, while the concept of gender expressed negative thoughts such as equality, a concept related to gender and personality, discrimination, physical difference, violence and harassment in students before the intervention; after the intervention, this concept expresses that this concept is a concept determined by the society, inborn characteristics, difference, equality of women and men, biological and social gender, equal rights of women and men. Therefore, it can be said that the students' detailed definitions of the concept of gender after the implementation were realized through the workshops conducted in the research. When the answers of the students regarding the equality of girls and boys among their friends in terms of getting education, choosing clothes, household chores, types of sports, and choosing a profession, it was concluded that there was a change in their views on equality between women and men especially in the areas of getting education, choosing clothes, and types of sports after the implementation, while there was no change in their views in the areas of household chores and choosing a profession.

It was concluded that the metaphors used by the students to define women and men before and after the application were predominantly shaped according to the social roles of women and men and that there was no change in these metaphors. As the main reason for this situation, it can be said that the students experienced a dilemma between the information learned by the researcher and the workshops on social stereotypes about the social roles of women and men, they tried to use their knowledge, but they could not change the socially transmitted roles of women and men much during the four-week practices. As a proof of this situation, when the students' thoughts about the roles of women and men were examined, it was observed that before the implementation, the students approached the roles with a more egalitarian perspective; however, after the implementation, it was observed that the students answered the questions about roles such as playing football, cooking and ironing according to the distribution of roles in real life. In this context, when the students' views on the responsibilities of women and men were examined, it was observed that while they defined women's responsibilities in society as housework, economic affairs, child care, personal care, help, nature, self-protection and equal responsibility; after the implementation, they stated that women also have the responsibilities of being cheerful, making decisions, driving a car and being a housewife in addition to these areas of responsibility. The students' pre-intervention views on men's responsibilities in society included housework, economic affairs, childcare, personal care, helping, protecting the environment, self-protection, driving a car and entertainment; after the intervention, they stated that in addition to these responsibilities, they also had responsibilities for being cheerful, making decisions, going to the market, politics and repair work. When the students' ideas about the areas of responsibility of women and men in society are evaluated in general, it is seen that women are more associated with responsibilities in the field of housework, while the area of responsibility emphasized more in men is economic affairs. Therefore, it can be concluded that roles and responsibilities are socially transmitted to students from many areas, such as parents, teachers, schools, and textbooks; students accept these stereotypes and the roles and responsibilities assigned to women

and men by society as they are. As Yaşın Dökmen (2009) and Giddens (2012) state, especially from parents and teachers, gender roles and responsibilities are transmitted according to the social environments in which children are located, and according to the results of the research, this transmission starts from the preschool period. It can be said that the results of the present study support the findings of these studies.

When the students' opinions on stereotypes about the concept of gender in their daily and social lives were examined, it was determined that the majority of the students stated that color, sports, music, movies, professions, housework, and education did not have a gender before the application; however, toys and dance had a gender, and they were undecided about clothes. When their opinions after the application were examined, it was determined that they maintained their opinions that color, sports, music, movies, professions, housework and education do not have a gender; however, they stated that toys do not have a gender, clothes have a gender, and they are undecided about whether dance has a gender. It can be said that the source of the students' opinions, especially that toys do not have a gender after the implementation, is the evidence-based activities carried out within the scope of this research. When the students' responses to the propositions consisting of gender stereotypes in their social lives were analyzed, it was seen that the students gave egalitarian answers to the propositions given before and after the application.

When the results of the questionnaire form applied to determine the change in the thoughts of fourth-grade primary school students before and after the implementation of gender equality in the Social Studies course are evaluated in general, it can be said that the workshops organized by the researcher for gender equality created a change in the egalitarian direction in the opinions and thoughts of the students, especially after the implementation. Similar to this research result, in the study conducted by Özdemir-Yılmaz (2019), in which the effect of gender equality-based activities on the attitudes of fourth grade primary school students towards gender-related occupational choices was examined, it was concluded that gender equality-based activities affected students' awareness of gender equality. Similarly, Seçgin (2012) concluded that the perceptions and attitudes of seventh grade secondary school students changed and students gained awareness in the context of gender equality through gender equality activities organized on the basis of Social Studies course. Therefore, it is important to prioritize gender equality education in order for students to gain awareness of gender equality or to ensure a positive change in their existing awareness in this direction.

In the study, fourth grade primary school students' awareness of gender equality in the Social Studies course was examined during the workshops organized by the researcher. In this context, first of all, in order for students to gain awareness about the concepts of biological and social gender, students were asked to define what the concept of gender is and what male and female genders are. At this point, it was observed that the students mostly defined biological gender and used social stereotypes in their definitions (mother, emotional, etc. for women; earning money, football player, repairman, etc. for men). As a result of the information and workshops conducted by the researcher on the concepts of biological sex and gender, it was concluded that the students were able to classify biological and social sex, that the expectations about women and men are related to gender, that women and men should be equal and that there is a distinction between the sexes. This result supports the results of the studies conducted by Yolcu (2021) and Yeşil (2020). Similar to the results of this study, Yolcu (2021) found that students made sense of the concepts of gender and equality in a study conducted with fourth-grade elementary school students. Similarly, in the study conducted by Yeşil (2020) with sixth grade students in secondary

school, it was found that students made sense of the concepts of sex and gender. Therefore, it is seen that students' understanding and thoughts on this issue have changed positively through the activities implemented for gender equality.

In the first of the workshops organized to raise students' awareness about the gender-based division of labor, students were asked to define the gender-based division of labor and it was concluded that students had never heard of this concept before; however, it was seen that they tried to define this concept with expressions based on the professions that the genders can do. Although it was determined that the students had a perspective based on the actions of men and women in their real lives during the activities on gender-based division of labor, it was concluded that they had a more egalitarian perspective through the activities carried out by the researcher. It can be said that this situation stems from the division of labor shaped according to gender in society. During the workshops, it was observed that the students actually stated that professions would not have a gender; however, when they were asked to draw the professions in the activity, they showed a sexist orientation. According to the students, the reason for this is that in their real lives, for example, they constantly see female nurses in hospitals or male principals in schools. Students categorize professions according to gender roles, especially in the context of the social environment they live in and the gender roles that society reflects to them. In addition, Işık Demirhan (2021) states in her research that in the images of women and men used in textbooks according to occupational groups, women are mostly seen as teachers, court clerks and theater artists, and men are mostly seen as teachers, judges, traffic police officers, news reporters, etc. This situation proves that students learn stereotypes about professions both from their social lives and through textbooks.

In addition, as a result of these workshops on gender-based division of labor, it was concluded that students mostly made decisions about the actions performed by women and men in the gender-based division of labor from a more egalitarian perspective. When students were asked which specific behaviors are performed by women and which are performed by men, most of the students stated that cooking, cleaning, taking children to school, preparing breakfast, grocery shopping, brewing tea, watching football matches, playing computer games and helping children with their homework can be performed by both women and men. According to the students, the action of preparing the lunchbox is mostly a task that women can do, while the actions of cleaning and repairing the car are mostly tasks that men can do. Ironing is seen as an action that can be done by women for half of the students, while it is seen as an action that both men and women can do for the other half. Therefore, it is seen that although the students have an egalitarian view of the actions of women and men in general, they are still unable to change their views on social stereotypes and the roles assigned to women and men by society, such as women being responsible for childcare and men repairing and cleaning cars, which are internalized in society. Similar to this result, in the next activity conducted in the research, students were asked to list the jobs that women and men do the most. During this activity, the students ranked women as doing mostly domestic work and men as doing mostly extracurricular work; therefore, in support of the above statements, it was concluded that students internalized some social stereotypes and could not easily change their opinions on this issue.

Some statistical information was given to the students in order for them to realize the consequences of gender-based division of labor. At the end of this activity, it was concluded that the students stated that women receive less education than men, that women are left behind in working life compared to men, and that the idea that men must earn money but women may not



work is widely used in society. At this point, it is seen that students actually realize the roles assigned to men and women by the society in which they live and the results of the division of labor.

During the workshops organized to raise students' awareness on the concept of gender equality, it was determined that the students did not know the concept of gender equality at the beginning of the workshop, that the sexist perspectives of their parents were transferred to the children during the activities on gender equality and how girls and boys experience gender roles in the context of students, that they were intervened too much through sexist discourses transmitted from their parents, and that this intervention also affected their choices in real life. It was determined that students stated that there is an invisible sexist distinction between boys and girls in toy and stationery shops. This result supports Giddens' (2012) suggestion that parents transmit sexist discourses and stereotypes to children.

Within the scope of the research, when the students were asked about the good and bad aspects of being a woman and a man, it was concluded that they expressed the roles of women and men determined by society as good aspects; the bad aspects they mentioned for women were mainly seen in the context of gender inequality (being subjected to violence, harassment, not being able to go to school, etc.), and the bad aspects of being a man were seen in the context of negative characteristics (violence, harassment, alcohol, drug use, etc.) attributed to men by society. Therefore, through the workshops conducted within the scope of the research, it is seen that students see gender inequality as a negative concept; however, they express the good aspects of women and men in terms of social roles.

Evidence-based activities were carried out with the students to help them recognize the factors that lead to the transmission of gender inequality and activities to help them recognize sexist discourses in Turkish. As a result of these activities, it was observed that the students recognized the inequality in society, stated that they were not free to choose their toys and personal belongings, stated that the division of labor and legal rights between men and women were unfair, and that there was a social perspective that most of the domestic work was done by their mothers and most of the work outside the home was done by their fathers. In order for the students to learn the legal basis for gender equality, important articles in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women were shared with the students; it was concluded that the students had only heard of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but not the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. As a result of the workshop, it was observed that the students listened and questioned these articles carefully and also mentioned the Istanbul Convention. In addition, it was observed by the researcher that the students were happy to hear about their rights and spoke more confidently during the workshop. Özdemir Yılmaz (2019) stated that the gender equality training organized in the Social Studies course is important for students to comprehend that people are equal before the law and that this situation will have a positive contribution on students. As can be seen, in support of this statement; within the scope of this research, it was determined that when students were given legal grounds for gender equality, students learned their legal rights at this point and questioned this situation.

In the last activity organized by the researcher on gender equality, students were asked to develop solutions on what they could do at school and in the family to ensure gender equality. At the end

of this workshop, the students stated that in order to ensure gender equality in the family, all work inside and outside the home should be shared, in school, especially sports fields should be used jointly by both male and female students, games should not be segregated according to gender, sexist colors should not be used in pictures in school books, more male teachers should work in schools, and male and female students should be given equal say in lessons. When the students' suggestions are analyzed, it is seen that social practices based on gender equality should be implemented. In this case, it can be predicted that the more gender equality is brought to the forefront in students' daily and social lives, the less sexist perspectives students have and the more egalitarian perspectives they will develop.

In line with the results obtained in the study, suggestions can be made as follows:

- It was observed that fourth grade primary school students made sense of the concepts of gender and gender equality through the workshops organized on the basis of the learning outcomes in the 'Individual and Society' learning domain in the Social Studies course. In this context, it can be said that the Social Studies course is an important course for students to acquire gender equality. Therefore, the learning areas and outcomes in the curriculum of the Social Studies course can be revised by curriculum development experts based on gender equality and the curriculum can be organized in this direction.
- In the study, the researcher found that students became aware that women and men have equal roles in society through the workshops on social stereotypes about the social roles of women and men. However, it was observed that the students emphasized the social stereotypes they had previously learned about the social roles of women and men in some activities (such as women being in the forefront of domestic work and men being in the forefront of work outside the home). Therefore, it is thought that it will be important for students to understand social stereotypes and develop a more egalitarian perspective by firstly parents, then teachers and schools, and indirectly curricula and textbooks from an early age.
- It was observed that students raised awareness about gender equality through evidence-based activities in the Social Studies course. In this context, it can be ensured that the course can be designed by utilizing such activities in the activities to be organized by teachers for gender equality in the Social Studies course.
- In the study, it was ensured that students recognized the sexist discourses used in Turkish. Therefore, it is thought that if both parents and teachers use such discourses themselves, avoiding these discourses and including these discourses in their daily lives in a more egalitarian structure will play an important role in students' abandonment of sexist discourses.
- One of the important results of the study is that students only heard the names of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which are thought to be important for students to know their rights. In this context, it is thought that it is important to provide students with the necessary training to learn their rights from an early age.
- In the study, when students were asked to develop solution suggestions about what they could do at school and in their family lives, it was seen that the students developed solution suggestions with a very egalitarian perspective. In this context, it is thought that school principals, teachers, and families, starting from their immediate environment, listening to these ideas of students and taking the necessary measures in this direction will lead students to form an egalitarian perspective in their social lives. In order for students to develop an egalitarian perspective in society, it is thought that it is important that the discourses and behaviors of the people in the student's immediate environment and the elements in their living spaces have an egalitarian perspective.
- In this study, in which the awareness-raising processes of fourth grade primary school students

about gender equality in the Social Studies course were examined, it is seen that students are in a positive change towards gender equality. Therefore, future studies can be conducted to raise awareness, especially at the primary school level, through activities and workshops to be organized specifically for gender equality in the Social Studies course.

- It was observed that the students learned about the social roles and responsibilities of women and men through the workshops; however, the social stereotypes previously transferred to them from their social lives were more prominent in terms of the social roles and responsibilities of women and men. The activities carried out in this study were limited to four weeks and one class hour per week. The continuation of the social stereotypes transferred by the students may be due to the limited duration of the activity. Therefore, in future studies, it may be considered to design workshops on gender equality for a longer period of time.
- This study is limited to the learning outcomes of the primary school fourth grade Social Studies course, 'Individual and Society' learning domain: 'Places himself/herself in the shoes of other individuals with different characteristics' and 'Respects the different characteristics of other individuals'. In future studies, students' awareness-raising processes towards gender equality can be examined through workshops designed for gender equality on the basis of different learning areas and outcomes in this learning area on the basis of the Social Studies curriculum.
- This study is limited to 24 students studying in a private school in the province of Ordu and determining the awareness-raising processes of these students toward gender equality in the fourth-grade Social Studies course in primary school. In future studies, the awareness-raising processes of students from different socio-economic and socio-cultural backgrounds in different provinces can be determined, and studies comparing the awareness-raising processes of students can be conducted.

## 5 Statement of Researchers

### 5.1 Researchers contribution rate statement:

Derya DOĞAN YAYLAK: Introduction, methodology, review, and editing.

Sanem TABAK: Methodology, review, editing.

### 5.2 Conflict statement

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

### 5.3 Support and thanks

This study is based on the first author's master's thesis completed at Ordu University Institute of Social Sciences, Department of Turkish and Social Sciences Education, Social Studies Education. At the same time, a part of the thesis was presented at the International Congress of Integrated Social Research and Interdisciplinary Studies held between May30 and June01 and the summary of which was published in the congress proceedings summary book.

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