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Stereotypes of single and married women and men in Turkish culture

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Abstract
While it is natural for stereotypes of social groups to change over time and across various social contexts, there has been a lack of research investigating how marriage impacts specifically gender-based stereotypes. In Turkish culture, social status, roles, and stereotypes are highly dependent on marital status, and more so for women, who are labeled as "girls" until marriage. The present research seeks to examine how people picture men and women before and after marriage through free response. Specifically, undergraduates ($N = 206$) wrote down adjectives for single men, married men, single women, and married women. Adjectives were categorized using thematic analysis into stereotypes of *appearance, personality traits, gender roles*, and *power*. Single men were predominantly described with negative personality traits (e.g., womanizer, irresponsible, self-indulgent, and immature) whereas stereotypes of married men aligned more with traditional gender roles (e.g., father, breadwinner, and householder). However, participants stereotyped single and married men within similar power domains (dominant, masculine, and independent). On the other hand, single women were mainly stereotyped by their personality traits (e.g., fragile/pure) while married women were mainly described with their gender roles (e.g., self-sacrificing, mothering/nurturing) and positive personality traits (e.g., warm, mature). Additionally, participants described both single and married women as dominated, dependent, and resistant to power. Results are discussed considering sexism theory, system justification theory, and honor. Findings can be applied to understandings of how marriage may shape gender stereotypes in highly gendered, honor cultures.

Keywords Gender roles · Stereotypes · Single women/men · Married women/men · Turkish culture

While previous studies have provided insight on gender stereotypes, to our knowledge, no study has examined how marriage impacts stereotypes for women and men. In Turkish culture, marriage is an important milestone for both genders, but particularly for women. Specifically, women are expected to remain virgins and are labeled as "*kız*" (girl) until marriage; women who do not retain their virginity are chastised and marginalized (Sever and Yurdakul 2001). The present study aims to examine stereotypes of both single and married men and women (1) to present how marriage may influence gendered social expectations and (2) to demonstrate gender stereotypes in contemporary Turkish society where strict gender roles, high levels of sexism and Islamic religiosity pervade cultural practices (Glick et al. 2016; Kandiyoti 1995).

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Overview of Gender Stereotypes

Masculine and feminine gender stereotypes are broad cultural expectations for characteristics, traits, and behaviors of men and women, and exist to explain, justify, and rationalize sex-based divisions of labor in society (Hoffman and Hurst 1990). In terms of the contents of gender stereotypes, women tend to be defined by communal (other-oriented) traits (e.g., nurturing, dependent, passive, caring, expressive) whereas men are defined by agentic (self-oriented) traits (e.g., ambitious, independent, dominant, success-oriented) (Bem 1974; Deaux and Kite 1993; Rudman et al. 2001; Spence and Helmrich 1978).

Literature suggests that various categories or themes (e.g., family roles, work roles, physical features, personal features, affiliative groups, interpersonal relations) can be used to classify gender stereotypes (see Carpenter and Trentham 1999).

Furthermore, researchers have indicated that gender stereotypes are observable in dimensions such as personality traits (e.g., aggressive, pure), gender roles and role behaviors (e.g., economic provider, child care, cooking), physical appearance and characteristics (e.g., muscular, bellied) (Ashmore and Del Boca 1979; Deaux and Lewis 1984), and power (e.g., independence, dominance) (Carpenter and Trentham 1999).

Alternatively, gender stereotypes can be classified under descriptive, prescriptive, and proscriptive categories: descriptive stereotypes function as a cognitive-organizational division and include stereotypical characteristics for women and men (e.g., communal versus agentic); prescriptive stereotypes are concerned with stereotyped expectations of what men/women ought to be (e.g., gender roles); proscriptive stereotypes are stereotypical limitations on what men/women should not do, aptly reflecting ideological and cultural restrictions (Burgess and Borgida 1999). Prescribed (expectations) and proscribed (limitations) stereotypes are found to be more related to prejudice and discrimination than descriptive ones (Rudman and Phelan 2008). For instance, stereotyping women as *nurturing* and *understanding* has prescriptive and proscriptive consequences on occupational choices (i.e., encouraging women to be maternally driven at the cost of career), and women may behave consistently with such expectations, confirming such self-fulfilling stereotypes (Wilson 1996).

In addition, gender stereotypes may be evaluated positively and negatively. For example, *aggressiveness* may be perceived as a negative stereotype for women, but a positive attribute for men, while *purity* is often desirable and positive for women, and overlooked for men. However, research suggests that some positive stereotypes carry negative consequences for group identities and behaviors, especially for stereotyped groups (Jost and Kay 2005; Wilson 1996). Specifically, positive and often complementary stereotypes can simultaneously reflect and maintain *benevolent sexism*, the aspect of ambivalent sexism which promises protection and affection for women meeting the expectations of the society (see Glick and Fiske 1996, 2001).

Gender Stereotypes in Turkey

Turkey is a country which emphasizes individual and collective standards of honor in its culture. The most central characteristics of individual concept of honor (i.e., *onur* in Turkish) is "honesty, keeping promises, not telling lies, trustworthiness, having personal values, truthfulness, dignity, self-respect, not being a hypocrite" (Cross et al. 2013, p. 235). However, the most salient meaning of honor (i.e., *namus* in Turkish), has sexual connotations directly associated with female virginity and sexual purity (Sakallı-Uğurlu and Akbaş 2013). As indicated in the Turkish adaptation of the *honor scale*, feminine honor accounts for the largest amount of variability in people's perceptions of honor. Conversely, masculine honor is mainly dependent on dominance, protecting female honor, and protecting the family name (Ceylan 2016).

In Turkish culture, womanhood is acquired through marriage, where women are expected to lose their virginity (Sakallı-Uğurlu and Glick 2003). As Sancar (2012) argues, women in Turkish culture gain legitimate social status only after marriage, as mothers and/or authorities of the house while there are alternative ways for men to exercise and gain power before and after marriage. Even so, we know of no studies in either Turkish or international literature examining how stereotypes of men or women differ before and after the marriage. Our study therefore aims to understand how stereotypes of single men and women transform into the stereotypes of married men and women.

While there is a wealth of literature on gender stereotypes using Western populations, there have been few studies on gender stereotypes in specifically Turkish culture beyond adaptations of fundamental literature (e.g., Dökmen's (1999) adaptation of the BSRI). Even so, the existing Turkish literature confirms expected gender role stereotypes in Turkey: women are associated with obedience, family, and responsibility, while men are associated with dominance, independence, and aggression (Dedeoğlu 2000; Dökmen 1999; Kandiyoti 1978; Sunar 1982). Most relevant to the present research is Özkan and Gündoğdu's (2011) study on the relationship between Turkish idioms/proverbs and gender roles for girls, boys, women, and men. They found that proverbs and idioms related with *girls* emphasized a preparedness for marriage (e.g., retaining purity), whereas phrases regarding *women* emphasized familial roles (e.g., nurturing). These results reflect the salience of the distinction between a "girl" and a "woman" in Turkish culture, especially regarding standards of virginity and purity. However, there is no study empirically examining such difference for women as well as men in the Turkish literature.

Additionally, while research on Western gender stereotypes is often generalizable, there may be marked differences between perceptions of gender between the U.S. and Turkey, especially given the varied importance of gender in American and Turkish cultures. Thus, rather than utilizing an existing list of stereotypes based in American culture which may not fully conceptualize the range of Turkish gender stereotypes, the present research employs a free response method and thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006) to present themes and subthemes of gender stereotypes of single and married women and men. This method is well suited to measure abstractions about being single and married as well as to show how Turkish people form comprehensive pictures of single and married Turkish men and women. In that sense, the present study seeks to expand the existing literature specifically by identifying and classifying stereotypes which are related to women and men before and after marriage.

In summary, the present research aims to investigate the content differences in stereotypes for married and single men and women in Turkey. Through thematic analysis, we employ four basic themes (*appearance*, *personality traits*, *gender roles*, and *power*) which are extensively studied in existing gender literature.

Method

Participants and Procedure

206 (78 male and 128 female) undergraduate students from a Turkish university were recruited from an introductory psychology course. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 25 (M = 21.03, SD = 2.18). All participants were single.

In a classroom environment, the participants were asked to "Please write down attributes/adjectives that come to your mind when you think of a single woman, a married woman, a single man, and a married man in Turkey separately." Every participant wrote attributes and adjectives to define these four categories without any word limitation.

Thematic analysis was conducted by using MAXQDA 12, a qualitative analysis program. Explicitly, thematic analysis aims to identify "something important about the data in relation to the research, and [to represent] some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 10). Accordingly, thematic analysis is a flexible method and does not require a clear-cut prevalence rate to make the pattern a "theme". However, consistency is important in terms of finding recurrent patterns across a data set. During the analysis, we coded themes and subthemes by following the basic steps recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006). With the help of MAXQDA 12, we submitted whole data under four categories and conducted thematic analysis by sorting the adjectives into four pre-defined themes.

Specifically, the current study employed *theoretical thematic analysis*, in which theoretical knowledge about an issue provides detailed analysis of the data to better organize stereotypes (Braun and Clarke 2006). Based on theoretical knowledge related to gender stereotypes, we outlined four basic categories of gender stereotypes as *physical appearance, personality traits*, *role behaviors* (Ashmore and Del Boca 1979; Deaux and Lewis 1984), and *power* (Carpenter and Trentham 1999; Kandiyoti 1978; Sunar 1982). As such, we prepared guidelines including four basic themes to apply to each of the four categories: *appearance, personality traits, gender roles,* and *power.* The *appearance* theme denotes the stereotypes related to how men and women look in terms of their physical characteristics or style. The *personality traits* theme refers to certain gendered personality traits (e.g., warmth, aggressiveness, independence). The *gender roles* theme characterizes the specific behaviors that are expected from men and women in different social arenas (e.g., breadwinner versus caregiver) or any qualities differentiating men's and women's social performances. Lastly, the *power* theme signifies the ways in which men and women benefit from and are subordinated by patriarchal power and gender hierarchies. In other words, *power* is defined as "attempts or actual exhibitions of strength/control/dominance" (Carpenter and Trentham 1999, p. 688).

Two researchers employed a thematic analysis following the guidelines proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) independently, which were compared in terms of accuracy and compatibility with each other. Then, the existing themes and their contents were translated from Turkish to English by one researcher and the other two researchers checked the accuracy of the translations independently.

Results

Our analyses yielded several subthemes of Turkish gender stereotypes, as well as varying frequencies of stereotypes within each subtheme (frequencies show the number of times participants provided stereotypes in a specific theme or subtheme). As Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest, there were no cutoffs to include words in each theme, but there were thematic relationships between words. In our analysis, we aimed to give general structure of single/married women/men stereotypes rather than the difference between male and female participants. The results are simply presented in terms of their themes and subthemes, and discussed in detail in the discussion section.

Single Men

Appearance

We identified two subthemes of *appearance*: *attractiveness* and *unattractiveness*. Participants defined *attractiveness* (for single men) with adjectives such as handsome, young, sportive, and athletic. For the *unattractive* subtheme, participants' adjectives included ugly, plump, and fat. Overall, however, single men were mainly described as attractive (see Table 1).

Personality Traits

Two subthemes were identified for single men under the *personality traits* theme: *negative personality traits* (e.g., womanizer, irresponsible, self-indulgent, immature, egoistic etc.) and *positive personality traits* (e.g., energetic/social, gentle/responsible, cheerful, confident, and hard-working). In

Table 1 Themes and subthemes of single men stereotypes

Themes	Subthemes	Content	Content frequency
Appearance			**33**
	Attractive	Handsome*, young, sportive, well-built/bodied/athletic, well-groomed, brown, royal	27
	Unattractive	Ugly, plump*, minger, flab, fat, thin	6
Personality Traits			**488**
	Negative		355
	Womanizer	Womanizer*(Casanova, playboy or women-chaser), lewd	89
	Irresponsible	Carefree, irresponsible*, reckless, jobless, bindlestiff, strayed	86
	Self-indulgent	Self-indulgent*, free-liver/unaccommodating	38
	Immature	Novice, naïve, childish*, immature, boy, raw, mama's boy, student	31
	Pervert	Molester, harasser, pervert*, sex-focused	23
	Egoistic	Selfish*, thoughtless, self-righteous	22
	Unreliable	Liar, self-seeker, unreliable *	21
	Spoiled	Flattered, spoiled*	12
	Jealous	Jealous*, possessive	12
	Lazy	Lazy	9
	Insensible	Non-emphatic, emotionless, insensible*, inconsiderate	7
	Dirty	Dirty, messy	5
	Positive		121
	Energetic/Social	Social, energetic, restless, naughty, lively*	47
	Gentle/ Responsible	Earnest, gentle*, gentleman, responsible, reliable	23
	Cheerful	Funny, happy, entertaining*	22
	Confident	Confident*, determined	17
	Hardworking	Hardworking*, ambitious	12
Gender Roles			**18**
	Marriage Desire	Potential husband, expected to find a wife*	13
	Football Lover	Fanatic, football-lover *	5
Power			**146**
	Manhood	Brave*, courageous, risk-taker, red-blooded, rude, aggressive/short-tempered, macho	57
	Independence	Free*, independent	57
	Dominance	Oppressive, dominant, powerful*, authority, sexist	32

The adjectives with asterisk (*) indicate the most frequently mentioned stereotypes within the related subtheme

general, participants stereotyped single men with more negative traits than positive traits. Specifically, participants described single men as irresponsible womanizers (see Table 1).

Gender Roles

There were two subthemes for the *gender roles*: *marriage desire* (e.g., potential husband; expectations about finding a wife) and *being a football-lover*. Notably, the *gender roles* theme for single men was relatively low in terms of frequency as compared to other themes, implying that gender roles are less salient in expectations of Turkish single men.

Power

Three subthemes emerged for the *power* theme: *manhood* (e.g., brave, courageous, risk-taker etc.), *independence* (e.g., free and independent), and *dominance* (e.g., oppressive, dominant, powerful etc.). We included the *independence* subtheme under the *power* theme, rather than under the *personality traits* theme, for each target group because within Turkish honor culture, women gain independence from strict male, patriarchal culture. In other words, women can only declare themselves independent after overcoming patriarchal control. For men, on the other hand, dominance and manhood reinforce

patriarchal power, while independence is conceptualized as an inherent male privilege. Between men and women, independence functions to enable men to reinforce their patriarchal power, and to subsequently restrain women's independence.

Married Men

Appearance

Married men were stereotyped by their *physical characteristics* (e.g., mustached) and *unattractiveness* (e.g., flab, bellied, and bald; see Table 2). Such results suggest that, after marriage, expectations for male attractiveness diminished.

Personality Traits

For married men, the *personality traits* theme consisted of *negative personality traits* (e.g., selfish/ irresponsible, conservative etc.) and *positive personality traits* subthemes (e.g., mature, hardworking/successful; see Table 2). For the negative traits, stereotypes of *conservative* and *irresponsible* may be related to Turkish cultural context. However, participants may have also imagined their own fathers as "conservative" in limiting their sons' or daughters' behaviors outside the home. Conversely, for positive traits, it seems that after marriage, maturity becomes an important and defining characteristic for men.

Gender Roles

For married men, we identified five different subthemes within the *gender roles* theme. First, participants described married men as holding *family responsibilities* and familial status (e.g., breadwinners, fathers, householders). Second, the *family relations* subtheme was categorized by both positive and negative features. Specifically, positive features in the family included faithful, trustworthy, and sympathetic, while negative features included unfaithful (e.g.,, cheating, womanizing) and inconsiderate. Third, participants stereotyped married men as *protectors*, characterizing them as *benevolent* and *possessive*. Fourth, married men were also recognized as *family men* (e.g., being fond of family, being attached to the home). Finally, the *football-lover* subtheme persisted through marriage.

Power

For a man, starting a family brings a new degree of authority, multiplying the effects of the power-related stereotypes. Within the *power* theme for married men, there were three subthemes: *dominance, manhood,* and *independence* (see Table 2). The *manhood* subtheme was further divided into three concepts: masculine, aggressive (e.g., angry, prone to violence) and macho. Finally, married men were perceived as *independent*, but less so than single men. The decrease in the frequency of independence stereotypes may be due to marriage, new familial responsibilities, and new gender role expectations.

Single Women

Appearance

For single women, the *appearance* theme was split into three subthemes: *beautiful, physical characteristics,* (e.g., brunette, thin, short), and *young* indicating the prevalence of beauty, youth, and physical characteristics in perceptions of single women.

Personality Traits

The *personality traits* theme had three subthemes for single women: *fragile-pure* (e.g., childish, naïve, passive, fragile/ vulnerable), *positive personality traits* (e.g., curious, intelligent), and *negative personality traits* (e.g., egoistic, stubborn). Although existing literature often evaluates *purity* and *naïvity* as positive stereotypes, we created a separate *fragile-pure* subtheme for single women because stereotypes of fragility, purity, and vulnerability are especially relevant to benevolent sexism and subsequently, women's honor in Turkish culture (Glick and Fiske 1996; Glick et al. 2016; Wilson 1996).

Gender Roles

Participants stereotyped single women in two themes: as *house girls* (i.e., an unmarried woman who lives with her family and does not have a job) and as having a *marriage desire* (see Table 3).

Power

The content of the *power* theme was quite different from power associated with either single or married men because of existing gender power dynamics, where women are subordinated. Specifically, the *power* theme had five subthemes: *independence* (e.g., free, independent, free-spirited), *honor* (e.g., chaste, virgin, honorable), *dependence* (e.g., dependent, dependent to family, in need of protection), and *resistance to power* (e.g., strong, struggling, idealist).

Married Women

Appearance

For married women, the *appearance* theme was split into three subthemes: *physical characteristics*, *beautiful,* and

Table 2 Themes and subthemes of married men stereotypes

Themes	Subthemes	Content	Content frequency
Appearance			**27**
	Physical characteristics	Mustached	6
	Unattractive	Flab, bellied*, bald	21
Personality Traits			**197**
	Negative		147
	Selfish/Irresponsible	Carefree, selfish*, irresponsible, self-indulgent	46
	Conservative	Bigot*, traditional, conservative	19
	Insensible	Men don't cry, holding emotions*, secretive	18
	Lazy	Lazy	14
	Rude	Not polite, rude	12
	Self-righteous	Show-off, immodest, self-righteous*	12
	Pervert	Molester, harasser, pervert, sex-focused	10
	Jealous	Jealous*	10
	Tended to drink	Drunk, alcohol-lover/raki-lover*	6
	Positive		50
	Mature	Mature*, earnest, experienced, adult	29
	Hardworking/successful	Veteran, hardworking*, successful	7
	Confident	Self-confident*, decisive	7
	Intelligent	Smart, intelligent*	7
Gender Roles			**299**
	Family responsibility		137
	Father	Family-man, father*, fatherly	48
	Householder	Head of the family, householder	35
	Burnout	Daunted, tired, unhappy, depressed, exhausted	30
	Breadwinner	Responsible*, taking care of his family, earning money for home, money-provider	24
	Family relations		85
	Positive		42
	Self-sacrificing	Compassionate, self-sacrificing	12
	Trustworthy	Trustworthy*, honest	12
	Faithful	Faithful*	11
	Sympathetic	Affectionate, warm *	7
	Negative		43
	Unfaithful	Cheating, womanizer*	35
	Inconsiderate	Inconsiderate	8
	Protector		51
	Protecting family	Protects his family, benevolent, possessive*	39
	Protecting honor	Caring for virginity, honorable, a guard of honor	12
	Family Man	Family man, fond of family*, attached to home	16
	Football Lover	Fanatic, football-lover, football-freak	10
Power			**237**
	Dominance		155
	Dominant	Dominant, authoritarian	94
	Powerful	Powerful*, strong/tough	32
	Status holder	Decision-maker*, respected, status holder	15
	Domestic power	Expect to be served (demanding service from woman)	14
	Manhood		59
	Aggressive	Angry, aggressive*, prone to violence	31
	Macho	Macho	21
	Masculine	Serious-minded man, masculine	7
	Independence	Freely acting, independent, self-ordained	23

The adjectives with asterisk (*) indicate the most frequently mentioned stereotypes within the related subtheme

poorly groomed (see Table 4). They were mostly seen as fat and chubby women after the marriage.

Personality Traits

The *personality traits* theme included two subthemes: the *positive personality traits* subtheme (e.g., warm, mature, yielding/agreeable, emotional) and the *negative personality traits* subtheme (e.g., passive, traditional, powerless, gossipy) (see Table 4). Participants defined married women mostly as warm but passive.

Gender Roles

There were three subthemes underlying the *gender roles* theme for married women: *family responsibility* (e.g.,

Table 3 Themes and subthemes of single women stereotypes

Themes	Subthemes	Content	Content frequency
Appearance			**74**
	Beautiful	Well-Groomed, beautiful*, attractive, fancy	33
	Physical characteristics	Brunette, thin*, short	23
	Young	Young	18
Personality Traits			**420**
	Fragile/Pure		239
	Naïve	Childish*, child, student, dreamer, pure, naïve	74
	Passive	Shy*, introverted, silent	53
	Fragile/Vulnerable	Fragile*, delicate, coy	37
	Yielding/ Agreeable	Self-sacrificing (devotes self to others), agreeable, understanding, helpful	22
	Decent	Earnest, lady-like, decent	20
	Polite	Polite/Kind*, respectful	19
	Emotional	Emotional	14
	Positive		134
	Agentic		72
	Hardworking	Ambitious, hardworking	29
	Intelligent	Smart, Intelligent, rational	17
	Curious	Curious	10
	Skillful	Diligent, skillful*, capable	10
	Self-confident	Self-confident	6
	Social		62
	Lively/Energetic	Foolhardy, lively*, energetic, full of life, happy, flirtatious	42
	Warm	Friendly, affectionate/likeable, warm*	20
	Negative		47
	Stubborn	Capricious*, stubborn, quick-tempered	30
	Egoistic	Self-centered, spoiled*	17
Gender Roles			**42**
	House girls	Helping households, house girls* (stay-at-home girls), housecleaner, mother-helper	21
	Marriage desire	Dreams about marriage, marriage-focused, potential wife	21
Power			**193**
	Independence	Independent, free, free-spirited	50
	Dominated	Suppressed*, dominated, repressed	47
	Honor	Virgin*, chaste, honorable	41
	Dependence	Dependent, need to be protected, dependent to her family	30
	Resistance to power	Strong, struggling*, idealist	25

The adjectives with asterisk (*) indicate the most frequently mentioned stereotypes within the related subtheme

mothering/nurturing, housewife, tired, unhappy), *family relations* (e.g., self-sacrificing, faithful, trustworthy, lonesome), and *organizer role at home* (e.g., hardworking, responsible, neat, hospitable). They were most frequently defined as nurturing mothers, self-sacrificing, and hard-working, respectively in the given three subthemes.

Power

For married women, the *power* theme included the *dependence* (e.g., submissive, dependent, obedient), the *dominated* (e.g., oppressed, dominated, controlled, restricted), the *honor* (e.g., chaste, honorable), and the *resistance to*

Table 4 Themes and subthemes of married women stereotypes

Themes	Subthemes	Content	Content frequency
Appearance			**65**
	Physical characteristics	Short or medium height, fat*, flab, chubby*	42
	Beautiful	Well-Groomed, beautiful*	14
	Poorly-groomed	Poorly-groomed	9
Personality Traits			**233**
	Positive		164
	Warm	Benevolent, happy, warm *, affectionate, compassionate	59
	Mature	Mature*, earnest, lady, adult	43
	Yielding/Agreeable	Merciful, sensitive, compassionate, agreeable, understanding, patient	33
	Emotional	Emotional	29
	Negative		69
	Passive	Silent*, shy, introverted, frightened	30
	Traditional	Moralistic, religious, traditional, conservative*	20
	Powerless	Powerless*, non-self-confident *, hopeless	12
	Gossipy	Chatterer, gossipy*	7
Gender Roles			**625**
	Family responsibility		276
	Mother/nurturing	Mother*, nurturing*, good mother, fond of children	141
	Housewife	House keeper, housewife* (stay-at-home wife), domestic, fond of family	106
	Tired/unhappy	Tired*, exhausted, unhappy	29
	Family relations		234
	Self-sacrificing	Long-suffering, self-sacrificing (devotes self to others)*	149
	Faithful	Faithful*	59
	Trustworthy	Trustworthy, reliable	18
	Lonesome	Alone, asocial*	8
	Organizer at home		115
	Hardworking	Skillful, hardworking*	63
	Responsible	Responsible	32
	Neat	Neat, tidy, clean	11
	Hospitable	Hospitable	9
Power			**156**
	Dependence	Dependent, submissive, obedient	64
	Resistance to power	Determined, strong, struggling, successful if she has a job, resisting by having a job, job holder	51
	Dominated	Oppressed, under social pressure, dominated/controlled*, restricted	34
	Honor	Honorable, chaste	7

The adjectives with asterisk (*) indicate the most frequently mentioned stereotypes within the related subtheme

power subthemes (determined, struggling, and strong). The participants most frequently mentioned married women as dependent (on their husbands).

Discussion

The results show that marriage is an important milestone, with significant implications on the societal expectations for women and men. Results are discussed comparatively across marital status to best emphasize the contrast between single and married stereotypes for men and women. In general, the analyses revealed that single men were mostly defined with their negative personality traits such as being womanizer, irresponsible, self-indulgent, immature etc., whereas married men were mostly defined with their gender roles such as being a self-sacrificing, protecting fathers. On the other hand, single women were most frequently pictured with their personality traits focusing on their purity and fragility, while married women were predominantly pictured with gender roles including being self-sacrificing, hardworking mothers.

For single men, the *attractiveness* subtheme is compatible with existing masculine physical stereotypes of tall, strong, and broad-shouldered, indicating either that Turkish people have a positive image of physical characteristics of single men or that young single men are careful about their physical

appearance (Deaux and Lewis 1984). The *appearance* theme may also represent the importance of descriptive stereotypes on shaping the expectations for how single men should look. Such descriptive stereotypes for appearance may dually function as proscriptive stereotypes, consequently limiting appearances for single men and precluding unattractive men (Rudman and Phelan 2008). For married men, the *unattractive* subtheme may be informed by real physical differences between single and married men. Married men may put on weight, grow a mustache, or lose hair with aging. Similarly, physical characteristics may become descriptive identifiers of married men, indicating maturity. Another possible explanation could be that, for single men, maintaining attractiveness serves mainly as a tool to reach marriage.

In contrast with married men, behaviors like *irresponsibility* and *self-indulgence* are readily accepted for single men (but expected to cease after marriage; see Table 2). Additionally, as compared to single women, single men are afforded more leniency for irresponsible, flirtatious behaviors. For example, men, but not women, are expected to be assertive in romantic relationship (i.e., asking for a date) (Sakallı and Curun 2001). In addition, men can have sex before marriage while women are strictly proscribed to maintain their virginity until marriage (Sakallı-Uğurlu and Glick 2003). In fact, for single Turkish men, being a womanizer provides a valuable opportunity to lose one's virginity and have sexual experience before getting married (Bolak-Boratav et al. 2017; Sancar 2009), which may help to prove their manhood (Vandello et al. 2008).

Similarly, single men are likely to be perceived as *irresponsible* because Turkish culture allows them to be free in their social lives, and to hold minimal responsibilities at home. As the *gender roles* theme suggests, participants did not mention adjectives for home responsibilities for single men (Table 1). On the contrary, single men were described as *immature, childish*, and *mama's boy*: boyish, but privileged associations. In addition, positive personality traits such as being *energetic, gentle*, and *cheerful* may unwittingly induce negative personality traits (i.e., womanizer, flirtatious, irresponsible) because such traits open doors for men to attract and engage with women. Comparing gender roles of single men to roles for married men, it seems that men's responsibilities in the home start after marriage (see Table 2). This result, in general, is consistent with the results of a study conducted on Turkish manhood: men define "what it means to be a man" as the ability to hold responsibilities after marriage (Türkoğlu 2013).

The low number of stereotypes elicited in the *gender roles* theme for single men suggests that participants either did not have clear-cut gender roles for single men or that Turkish society does not emphasize gender roles for single men. Again, results imply that men's gender roles become especially prominent after marriage (see Table 2). Although participants perceived both single and married men as womanizers, participants also stereotyped married men as *protectors of honor*, guarding family honor and controlling the social and sexual behaviors of girls in their family to protect their purity. These findings parallel existing research which argues that masculine honor concerns in Turkey regard protecting the family's honor, and by extension, the purity of the women in the family (see Sakallı-Uğurlu and Akbaş 2013).

In general, the *power* theme reflects the *precariousness* inherent in the structure of masculinity, which implies that manhood is difficult to earn and easy to lose. The *manhood* subtheme for single and married men reflects stereotypical behaviors which may help a man earn his manhood (e.g., showing bravery, courage, or aggression), where power is the ultimate reward for such masculine behavior (Vandello and Bosson 2013). Freedom and independence, hallmarks of the *independence* subtheme, are privileges of a patriarchal power structure which ensures flexibility to practice necessary manly behaviors, and to subsequently earn one's manhood. Lastly, the *dominance* subtheme may complete the picture of a powerful man with oppressive and dominant behaviors. Exercising the dominance over women and "weaker" men are very central to hegemonic masculinity implying the most idealized type of masculinity (Connell 1995). Overall, *power* stereotypes were parallel to existing literature in that single and married men were stereotyped as *aggressive, risk-taking, dominant*, and *independent* (Prentice and Carranza 2002; Rudman et al. 2001; Vandello and Bosson 2013). In other words, stereotypes within the *power* theme represent the ideal of "a real man" for men and women within the patriarchal Turkish society. In contrast to single men, however, *dominance* was highly salient for married men, possibly indicating that power generalizes across familial responsibilities (e.g., after marriage, men may be prescriptively obligated to protect, control, dominate, and restrict their wife and children) (Sancar 2009).

Overall, the results for single and married men indicate marked changes in gender roles and stereotypes for men after marriage. For example, *familial responsibilities* only categorized married men, not single men. However, new responsibilities may consequently create negative consequences for men such as fatigue, exhaustion, depression, or unhappiness (i.e., *burnout* subtheme under *gender roles* for married men; see Table 2). Consistent with existing research, these adjectives imply the impact of the familial and community pressures, precarious manhood pressures, and hegemonic masculinity stressors (Cohen and Vandello 2001). In addition, trying to meet traditional gender role expectations can create unmanageable stress for both men and women. For example, expectations about being physically adequate, emotionally numb, socially dominant over women, and intellectually superior to women can create *masculine gender role stress* (Eisler and Skidmore 1987), which is closely related to increased anxiety, anger, and health risks (Eisler et al. 1988).

In contrast to single women, participants stereotyped married women with more negative physical characteristics (e.g., fat, chubby), while picturing single women as beautiful and young. Like single and married men, this difference may reflect reality: in Turkish culture, married women usually give birth, become mothers and homemakers, may not have time to take care of themselves physically, and may gain weight, leading to generally negative physical stereotypes.

The subthemes of the *personality trait* theme for single women were consistent with communal stereotypes, often attributed to women (Rudman et al. 2001). In comparison to single women, however, who are stereotyped as fragile and pure, maturity seems to supersede fragility for married women, which comes naturally with age and motherhood. However, this difference can also be discussed in context of benevolent sexism, female honor, and womanhood. First, protective paternalism, the facet of benevolent sexism which restricts women's behaviors under a guise of protection (Glick and Fiske 1996), is highly generalizable to Turkish culture: men (either single men as boyfriends or married men as fathers) are expected to protect the fragility and purity of single women. Additionally, stereotypes of single and married women can complement each other to justify and maintain the existing gender hierarchy (Kay and Jost 2003). For example, stereotyping a single woman as *fragile* provides a precedent for male protection, which can have significant impacts on social status, career opportunities, and independence for women (Glick and Fiske 1996).

As mentioned earlier, in the *personality traits* theme, participants used more maturity and warmth traits to define married women as compared to single women. Married women did not have a *fragile-pure* subtheme. We may argue that some of the women's personality characteristics vanish and turn out to be more communal characteristics as they get married. Specifically, participants described married women primarily through gender roles, possibly because familial responsibilities become more salient than stereotyped personality traits (e.g., fragile, pure) after marriage. These descriptions reflect the tenets of the stereotype content model, which represents how different groups elicit different stereotypes (Glick and Fiske 1996; Fiske et al. 2002). For example, using warmth and competence dimensions of the stereotype content model, Aktan and Bilim (2016) showed that, in Turkish culture, uneducated women and housewives are perceived as warmer but less competent than their feminist, career-oriented counterparts. Applied to the present research, participants similarly stereotyped married women as uneducated and housewives. Future research might investigate the stereotypes of various subgroups of women to clarify how each is perceived and stereotyped in Turkish culture.

For single women, stereotypes related to *gender roles* were consistent with traditional Turkish proverbs which emphasize preparedness for marriage (i.e., "girls should be prepared for a marriage") and that doing handcrafts, cleaning the house, and preparing meals under the surveillance of mothers (i.e., married women) is necessary to be a good wife in marriage (Çelik and Lüküslü 2012; Özkan and Gündoğdu 2011). In fact, participants stereotyped married women as *self-sacrificing* more frequently than any other stereotype, in line with existing literature finding that female success in Turkish culture is associated with being a good wife and mother (Balkır 1989). While *hardworking* is associated with single women as well, it is crucial to note the difference between hardworking as a gender role (e.g., for married women), and hardworking as ambition (e.g., for single women). Participants mainly stereotyped married women as *mothering* and *nurturing*, consistent with the existing literature: Turkish proverbs describe "women" (versus "girls") as mothers, fond of their children, and dependent on domestic activities (Özkan and Gündoğdu 2011). Earlier studies have also shown that Turkish people believe that childcare and childbirth are the most valuable responsibilities for women, and that a woman needs children to be respected in Turkey (Sunar 2002; Copur and Koropeckyj-Cox 2010). In fact, Turkish people can hold negative perceptions about childlessness in marriage, an attitude correlated with benevolent sexism and religiosity (Husnu 2016).

Our results further suggest that, as compared to single women, participants stereotyped married women with more gender role stereotypes. Specifically, married women have more responsibilities at home as mothers, may feel obligated to work hard for their families and children, and to self-sacrifice for their family. In fact, *fear of not being nurturing* is a primary feminine gender role stressor (Gillespie and Eisler 1992). Unfortunately, all family and household responsibilities and social pressures on women can cause some psychological problems, such as increased stress, fatigue, and depression (Dökmen 1997; Dökmen 2003).

Stereotypes in the *power* theme for single women suggest that women who are *honorable*, dependent on their family and/or husband, and adhere to prescriptive gendered expectations will be protected and approved by Turkish culture, reflecting benevolently sexist ideology (Glick and Fiske 1996). However, adjectives relevant to *independence* and *resistance to power* are reflective of stereotypes of educated single women (possibly reflective of the participant pool), as educated women choose their jobs, earn money, determine their desired life styles, and can therefore better resist patriarchal oppression and power structures. In addition, the existence of contradictory dichotomies (i.e., *independence* versus *dominated*) may be associated with perceived educational background for various subcategories of single women. For example, participants may have pictured female university students from more progressive, modern Turkish families, while others might have imagined house girls or single women in traditional and conservative families (i.e., uneducated women).

As compared to single women, the number of stereotypes within the *honor* subtheme decreased for married women. These findings further indicate the importance of virginity to unmarried women in Turkish culture, given that a woman's honor—and subsequently, her womanhood—is highly dependent on her sexual behavior (Sakallı-Uğurlu and Akbaş 2013; Sakallı-Uğurlu and Glick 2003). Furthermore, married women were mostly seen as dependent on their husband. Similar to Eagly and Steffen's findings (1984), women's subordination in Turkish society encourages women to depend on others, often on a husband or other male. Interestingly, participants also stereotyped along a theme of *resistance to power*, seeing women as strong, struggling, and "job holder". On the one hand, the participants overwhelmingly stereotyped married women along with traditional gender roles (e.g., mother, homemaker); on the other hand, they pictured different subgroups of married women, some who were career-oriented and resistant to traditional gender norms. This contradictory result may reveal that people also believe in the positive change for women's gender role by expecting them to be resistant to gender norms.

General Conclusion

Stereotypes of single/married women and men were represented under the same four themes: *appearance*, *personality traits*, *gender roles*, and *power*. First, single men were predominantly defined through negative personality stereotypes (e.g., womanizer, childish, and irresponsible), whereas participants portrayed married men through gender role stereotypes (e.g., father, householder) and dominance, signifying power and status within Turkish society. On the other hand, single women were predominantly described in terms of personality traits (e.g., fragile, pure), whereas married women were stereotyped through gender roles (e.g., self-sacrificing, mothers, and housewives), like married men.

The results parallel existing literature on gender stereotypes as well in that, overall, men and women were stereotyped as agentic and communal, respectively (Rudman et al. 2012). While existing literature characterizes men as increasingly agentic (self-oriented) (Rudman et al. 2012), participants in the present study described married men as self-sacrificing and faithful (i.e., communal) too. Even so, familial attachment (e.g., being fond of family, attached to the home) might be conceptualized as communal and other-oriented. This supports the idea that social roles such as fatherhood help changing the negative stereotypes attached to men by providing new spaces. Similarly, the recent study shows that negative stereotypes for men such as being selfish, unemotional or reckless changed into more positive ones for dads such as being devoted, nurturing, and supportive (Park and Banchefsky 2018). However, being a family man is especially pertinent to familial, gendered responsibilities of breadwinner, householder, and father, suggesting that married men still have power over single and married women who are generally perceived as weak, fragile objects of protection (Glick and Fiske 1996).

In addition, defining married women as nurturing, mothering, and fond of their children and married men as fathers and householders further supports the notion that gender stereotypes serve to justify existing divisions of labor, thus maintaining unequal gender structures (Glick and Fiske 1996; Hoffman and Hurst 1990; Kay and Jost 2003). Further, seeing women as nurturing mothers may prevent women from pursuing stereotypically masculine careers relevant to leadership and politics (Stangor and Schaller 1996). Stereotypes which depict married women as resistant to power may be representative of educated and working women, as having a job outside the home may bring economic freedom and subsequent gender equality. On the other hand, employed married women may struggle to fulfill both the responsibilities in the job and the home, especially in Turkish culture, where women are expected to stay home and focus primarily on domestic tasks (İlkkaracan 1998; Kocacık and Gökkaya 2005). However, showing resistance to the patriarchal gender hierarchy may result in negative consequences for women, such as psychological and physical prejudice and punishment (Rudman and Phelan 2008; Glick and Fiske 1996).

Contributions and Limitations

The current study provides valuable insight about categories and themes of Turkish gender stereotypes, especially as they interact with marital status. Specifically, the contents of stereotype themes discussed in the study represent the prevalence of sexist, gendered ideologies in Turkish culture. Furthermore, the gender stereotypes found in the study suggest that Turkish people rationalize gender inequality, and that, unfortunately, there is little indication of a social change in the Turkish gender system.

In terms of methodological contributions, previous studies measured gender stereotypes mostly with a Likert type scale asking for typicality or desirability of previously defined stereotypes (Prentice and Carranza 2002; Sunar 1982). However, in the current study we directly asked our participants to write down attributes/adjectives, providing a more accurate, externally valid measure of the content of various gender stereotypes (Eagly and Mladinic 1989). Additionally, by introducing a free response paradigm, the current study contributes to the existing literature by providing a wide pool of specifically Turkish gender stereotypes that can be used in future studies.

However, the current study has some limitations. First, only single university students were used as participants in the present study. This may limit the generalizability of the stereotypes generated, as well as the overall distinctions between single and married men and women. If non-student or married participants have been used in this type of study, they would give more traditional stereotypes. Future studies may prefer

non-student participants to understand gender stereotypes as they intersect with various demographics in Turkish culture (e.g., age differences, marital status, and ethnicity). Even so, our participants, through their own observation of Turkish families and Turkish culture may reflect a realistic picture of existing stereotypes structure of single/married men and women. As a group of educated young people, they are going through emerging adulthood (Arnett 2004) and may easily describe and question gender roles.

Further research might also compare generated stereotypes in terms of participant sex. However, because gender stereotypes reflect people's gender ideology and gender-based system legitimizing ideology, we chose to focus specifically on the internalization of gendered ideologies across genders, rather than between men and women (Jost and Banaji 1994; Jost and Kay 2005; Sapiro 2003). Deaux and Major (1987, p. 382) also suggest considering a more *process-oriented* perspective, where social context is more impactful than biological sex. For this reason, we aimed to draw a general picture of single and married Turkish men and women. In doing so, we hope that our findings do not maintain the view that perceptional differences result from biological sex (see Sapiro 2003 for more discussion about sex and ideology). Furthermore, we refrained from making gender comparisons because we did not ask the extent to which participants identified themselves as men or women, or their level of identification with gendered categories.

Finally, the study did not investigate desirability or expectancy of stereotypes; we only asked students to describe single and married women and men in Turkey. However, while this may be a limitation, these descriptive stereotypes indicated participants' attitudes and expectations of single and married men and women. Future studies may examine the prescriptive and proscriptive stereotypes of single and married women/men in further detail.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Ethical Approval All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Informed Consent Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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