

# Determination of the Relationship Between Midwifery Students' Views on Being Male in the Profession and Gender Perceptions: A Cross-Sectional Study

## Ebelik Öğrencilerinin Meslekte Erkek Olmasına İlişkin Görüşleri ve Toplumsal Cinsiyet Algıları Arasındaki İlişkinin Belirlenmesi: Kesitsel Bir Çalışma

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**ABSTRACT Objective:** This study, it was aimed to determine the views of midwifery students about the involvement of men in the profession and their gender perceptions. **Material and Methods:** The cross-sectional study was conducted with 280 midwifery students at a state university in Kahramanmaraş in the academic year 2022-2023. Data were collected between June 12 2023 and July 7 2023 using a questionnaire form and the Gender Perception Scale.  $p<0.05$  was considered statistically significant. **Results:** 68.9% of the participants reported that they thought midwifery was a gender-based profession and 37.5% reported that they did not want men to take part in the profession. It was observed that the rate of thinking that midwifery was a gender-based profession was lower and the rate of wanting men to be in the midwifery profession was higher among the students who took courses on gender issues ( $p<0.05$ ). The mean scores of the Gender Perception Scale of those whose mothers were working, who preferred the department willingly, and who took courses on gender were higher ( $p<0.05$ ). Students who thought that midwifery was a gender-based profession, who did not want men in the profession, and who reported that they would feel uncomfortable receiving care from a male midwife had lower mean scores on the Gender Perception Scale ( $p<0.05$ ). **Conclusion:** It was concluded that a significant proportion of midwifery students had negative views about having men in the profession and that students with negative gender perceptions also had negative views about having men in the profession.?

**Keywords:** Midwifery; occupation; students; gender

**ÖZET Amaç:** Bu çalışmada, ebelik öğrencilerinin meslekte erkeklerin yer alması ile ilgili görüşleri ve toplumsal cinsiyet algılarının belirlenmesi amaçlanmıştır. **Gereç ve Yöntemler:** Araştırma kesitsel türde, 2022-2023 akademik yılında Kahramanmaraş'ta bir devlet üniversitesinde 280 ebelik öğrencisiyle yürütüldü. Veriler 12 Haziran 2023 ve 7 Temmuz 2023 tarihleri arasında anket formu ve Toplumsal Cinsiyet Algısı Ölçeği kullanılarak toplandı.  $p<0,05$  düzeyindeki değerler istatistiksel olarak önemli kabul edildi. **Bulgular:** Katılımcıların %68,9'u ebeliğin cinsiyete dayalı bir meslek olduğunu düşündüklerini ve %37,5'i meslekte erkeklerin yer almasını istemediklerini bildirmişlerdir. Öğrencilerden toplumsal cinsiyet konusunu içeren ders alanların ebeliğin cinsiyete dayalı bir meslek olduğunu düşünme oranının daha düşük ve ebelik mesleğinde erkek olmasını isteme oranının daha yüksek olduğu görülmüştür ( $p<0,05$ ). Anneleri çalışan, bölümü isteyerek tercih edenlerin ve toplumsal cinsiyet konusunu içeren ders alanların Toplumsal Cinsiyet Algısı Ölçeği puan ortalamaları daha yüksektir ( $p<0,05$ ). Ebeliğin cinsiyete dayalı meslek olduğunu düşünen, meslekte erkek olmasını istemeyen ve erkek ebeden bakım almaktan rahatsızlık duyacağını bildiren öğrencilerin Toplumsal Cinsiyet Algısı Ölçeği puan ortalamaları daha düşüktür ( $p<0,05$ ). **Sonuç:** Bu çalışmada, ebelik öğrencilerinin önemli bir bölümünün meslekte erkek olması ile ilgili görüşlerinin olumsuz olduğu ve toplumsal cinsiyet algıları olumsuz olan öğrencilerin meslekte erkek olması ile ilgili görüşlerinin de olumsuz olduğu sonuçlarına varılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Ebelik; meslek; öğrenciler; cinsiyet

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Midwifery is one of the oldest professions in the world and is popularly known as a female profession.<sup>1,2</sup> As seen in the Ebers Papyrus, it was recognised as a female profession in ancient Egypt from 1900 to 1550 BC.<sup>3</sup> Although there are male midwives such as “Lavuta Vahit” in history, midwifery is known as a female profession in the world and Türkiye.<sup>4</sup> In ancient times, the midwife was usually the oldest woman in the neighbourhood and was usually married or recently widowed.<sup>5</sup> Midwifery, which initially started as a profession passed from mother to daughter in traditional medicine, has developed over time and gained a professional identity.<sup>5</sup> Midwifery education and services in the world have been affected by the history, culture, and political events of countries.<sup>7</sup> The first midwifery schools in the world were opened in France in 1673, in Germany in 1701, and in London in 1725, midwifery education started in the Ottoman Empire in 1869.<sup>8</sup> Since the beginning of midwifery education in our country during the Ottoman Empire, being a woman has been one of the most important conditions for participating in midwifery education.<sup>8,9</sup> Despite the developments in midwifery education over the years, midwifery education in Türkiye continues as a female profession. For the first time in our country, male students enrolled in the midwifery department at a state university in 2010. Then, in 2018, one university enrolled male students in three midwifery departments at the undergraduate level.<sup>10,11</sup> However, in the following process, these universities added the female student requirement again. In our country, in the student preference guide of the Council of Higher Education, there is a statement about midwifery: “*Only female students will be admitted to this programme*”.<sup>12</sup>

For all professions to be carried out professionally, sexist approaches and stereotypes should be eliminated and the traditional perspective should be reduced.<sup>13</sup> It is thought that the most important reason for the gender-based selection of professions in the health sector is gender roles.<sup>13</sup> Gender defines the physiological, biological, and genetic characteristics that women and men are born with.<sup>14</sup> Gender, on the other hand, is a variable concept shaped by women’s and men’s personal perceptions, social structures, and attitudes and expectations culturally attributed to

women and men.<sup>15</sup> Today, it is seen that gender affects many areas, especially professional life.<sup>16,17</sup> One of the most prominent reflections of gender inequality is the field of health.<sup>18</sup> Gender norms have a negative impact on women’s health, particularly on reproductive health.<sup>19</sup> For this reason, all health professionals, especially midwives, should look at health service provision from the perspective of “gender equality”. On the other hand, it is known that there are inequalities arising from gender discrimination during health service provision.<sup>19,20</sup> Health professionals have important responsibilities to have knowledge about gender discrimination, to perceive its causes, to foresee gender-related health injustices, to adopt stereotypes and attitudes related to gender roles in an egalitarian manner to society and most importantly to provide services with an egalitarian approach without discrimination.<sup>20-22</sup> Since the gender perceptions of health professionals may affect the health services they provide, the gender perceptions of midwives, the profession closest to women, are extremely important in reducing discrimination against women.

Nursing, which is one of the closest professions to midwifery, has been seen as a female profession for many years in Türkiye and around the world. The most important reason for this situation is that the “care role”, which is one of the main duties of midwives and nurses, has traditionally been attributed to women.<sup>23</sup> However, in many countries, efforts to include the male gender in the nursing profession have been put on the agenda in the past. In England, the foundations of male nursing began to be laid in 1937.<sup>24</sup> In Türkiye, the nursing law was amended in 2007 and gender discrimination in nursing was eliminated.<sup>25</sup> Thus, nursing has ceased to be only a female profession and has become a profession in which all individuals, both men and women, demonstrate their knowledge and skills at a professional level.<sup>26</sup> On the other hand, it is noteworthy that a significant proportion of gynaecologists and obstetricians who work most closely with the midwifery profession are male. In a study conducted in Türkiye, it was reported that more than half of the physicians working in the departments of obstetrics and gynaecology of medical faculties of universities were male.<sup>27</sup> In a study con-

ducted in the United States of America (USA), it was reported that the majority of women did not consider gender when choosing an obstetrician and thought that gender did not affect the quality of care.<sup>28</sup> In another study conducted in Türkiye, almost half of the women who gave birth and their attendants stated that they thought that midwifery was not a profession specific to women and that there could be male midwives.<sup>29</sup> However, the rate of male midwives is not at the desired level.<sup>11</sup> It is known that there are no male midwives in Türkiye. In the USA, the rate of male midwives is 1%.<sup>30</sup> In a study examining the number of male midwives in 77 member countries of the United Nations, it was reported that there were male midwives in 37 countries and the average male midwife rate in these countries was 0.63%.<sup>31</sup> In the same study, it was reported that male midwifery is not allowed in Afghanistan, Brunei, Cambodia, Japan, and Saudi Arabia; there are no male midwives in Bangladesh, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Haiti, Iceland, Indonesia, Kyrgyz, Madagascar, Malaysia, Nepal, Republic of Korea, Tunisia and Uganda; and over 10% male midwives in Burkina Faso, Burundi, Ethiopia, Spain and Zambia.<sup>31</sup> More recently, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Population Fund, the International Confederation of Midwives, and The Lancet have identified the urgent need to train and employ more midwives.<sup>32</sup> Despite the high demand for midwifery care, there are not enough midwives to meet these demands.<sup>33</sup> One of the important reasons for this situation is thought to be gender inequality in the midwifery profession. The American College of Nurse-Midwives Code of Ethics included the mandate that "midwives in all aspects of their professional practice will act without discrimination based on ... gender" and "will promote and support the education of midwifery students and peers".<sup>30</sup> The reasons for the persistent lack of gender diversity in midwifery have not yet been fully identified.<sup>32</sup> In a study examining the experiences of male midwives, 74% of participants reported experiencing difficulties related to their gender during their midwifery training or in clinical practice. Participants stated that they felt "marginalised" because they were often reminded of their differences or "treated as a kind of mascot" by their colleagues.<sup>34</sup> Midwives'

attitudes towards gender can directly affect their care.<sup>32</sup> In this respect, it is extremely important to determine the views of midwifery students who are midwifery candidates on gender attitudes and the presence of men in the profession. This study was conducted to determine the relationship between midwifery students' views on being male in the profession and their gender perceptions.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### TYPE OF RESEARCH

The study was conducted in a cross-sectional type.

### POPULATION AND SAMPLE OF THE RESEARCH

The population of the study consisted of students actively studying in the midwifery department of the faculty of health sciences of a state university in Kahramanmaraş in the 2022-2023 academic year on June 12 2023 and July 7 2023. The number of students studying at the undergraduate level in the midwifery department was 337. The sample size of the study was calculated based on the findings of a study examining the views on male midwives in a similar sample in our country.<sup>8</sup> In this study, 52.2% of midwifery students thought that they could be male in the profession. Based on these data, the minimum number of individuals to be included in the sample was calculated using the formula  $n = \frac{(1.96)^2 pq}{d^2 + (1.96)^2 pq/N}$  based on the values  $n=337$ ,  $p=0.66$ ,  $q=0.34$  and  $t=1.96$  ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) and found to be 171 and 280 students were included in the study. Inclusion criteria were defined as being 18 years of age or older, having no psychiatric disorder, agreeing to participate in the study, and using a smartphone for seniors.

### DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

The research data were collected using a questionnaire form and the Perception of Gender Scale.

**Questionnaire form:** The questionnaire form used in the study was developed by the researchers based on the literature.<sup>11,29,32</sup> This form consists of 22 questions aimed at determining the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants and their views on the participation of men in the profession.

**Perception of Gender Scale:** Perception of Gender Scale was developed by Altinova and Duyan in 2013 to assess the gender roles and perceptions of adults.<sup>35</sup> The scale is a one-dimensional, five-point Likert-type measurement tool consisting of a total of 25 items. Ten of the items are positive and 15 are negative. The scores that can be obtained from the scale are in the range of 25-125, and high scores indicate that gender perception is positive. In the development study of the scale, the Cronbach alpha value was determined as 0.87. In this study, Cronbach's alpha value was found as 0.82. Positive opinions and approval were obtained from the authors for the use of this scale in the study.

## DATA COLLECTION

The data were collected between June 12 2023 and July 7 2023. Between the dates when the data were collected, the university was providing distance education due to the Kahramanmaraş earthquake. Students studying in midwifery Grades 1-3 were in the hospital on these dates for course internships. The data of the students in the first three grades were collected by the first researcher by face-to-face interview method during the resting hours of the students. Since the final year midwifery students were given the right to transfer to other universities, the data of these students were collected by online survey method. The survey link was shared in the WhatsApp group of the students.

## VARIABLES

Midwifery students' views on the presence of men in the profession (thinking that midwifery is a gender-based profession and wanting to have men in the midwifery profession) and the level of gender perceptions are the dependent variables of the study. The socio-demographic characteristics of the students constitute the independent variables of the study.

## ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Ethical permission was obtained from Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University Medical Research Ethics Committee on November 28, 2022 for the conduct of the study (protocol no: 325). Institutional permission was also obtained from the dean's office of the faculty where the students received ed-

ucation (date: June 1, 2023, number: 215942). The principles of the Declaration of Helsinki were followed in the study. Before the study, all students were informed about the study, and their verbal and written consent were obtained.

## STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

SPSS for Windows 22.0 was used for data analysis. Number, percentage, mean and standard deviation tests were used in the analysis of descriptive data. The distribution of the data was analysed by the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. The research data were analysed by chi-square test for the comparison of categorical variables student t-test and one-way analysis of variance test for the comparison of continuous variables. The level of significance was set in all analyses as  $p < 0.05$ .

## RESULTS

The sample of the study consisted of 280 students. Fifteen students did not complete the data collection form completely and were therefore excluded from the study. Among the senior students whose data were collected through the online survey method, 32 students did not respond. In addition, 10 students were excluded from the study because they refused to participate in the study (Figure 1).

The majority of the participants were aged between 18-22 years, single (97.5%) and living in the city center. 42.1% of the students reported that they had taken courses on gender (Table 1).

In this study, 68.9% of the participants reported that they thought midwifery was a gender-based profession and 37.5% reported that they did not want men to take part in the profession. In addition, it was determined that 53.6% of the students did not want a

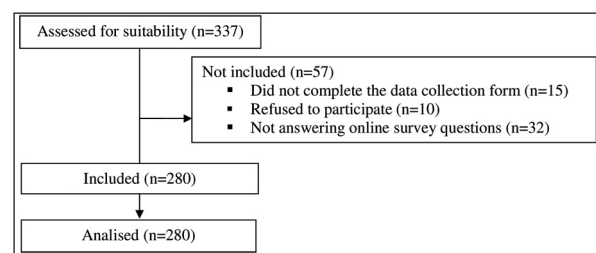


FIGURE 1: Diagram of the research process.



Characteristics	n (%)
Age (years)	
18-22	237 (84.6)
23-28	43 (15.4)
Classroom	
Grade 1	73 (26.1)
Class 2	75 (26.8)
Grade 3	72 (25.7)
Grade 4	60 (21.4)
Preferring the profession willingly	
Yes	188 (67.1)
No	92 (32.9)
Marital status	
Married	7 (2.5)
Single	273 (97.5)
Place of residence	
Urban	174 (62.1)
District	63 (22.5)
Village	43 (15.4)
The employment status of the mother	
Yes	60 (21.4)
No	220 (78.6)
Taking courses on gender issues	
Yes	118 (42.1)
No	162 (57.9)

male relative to be a midwife, 46.1% of them would feel uncomfortable receiving care from male midwives and 36.8% of them did not think that male midwives would lead to a change in the profession (Table 2).

The views of the participants on the presence of men in the profession and the comparison of their descriptive characteristics are summarised in Table 3. It was determined that there was a statistically significant difference between the students' thinking that midwifery was a gender-based profession and their willingness to choose the profession and take courses on gender ( $p=0.001$  and  $p=0.016$ , respectively;  $p<0.05$ ). Again, it was seen that there was a significant difference ( $p<0.05$ ) between the students' desire to have a man in the midwifery profession and willingly choosing the profession ( $p=0.000$ ) and taking a course on gender ( $p=0.000$ ).

The mean Perception of Gender Scale score of the participants was  $109.47\pm10.63$  (range: 73-155).

Characteristics	n (%)
Thinking that midwifery is a gender-based profession	
Yes	193 (68.9)
No	87 (31.1)
Wanting to have men in the midwifery profession	
Yes	175 (62.5)
No	105 (37.5)
Thinking that male midwives will be accepted by society	
Yes	56 (20.0)
No	224 (80.0)
Wanting a male relative to be a midwife	
Yes	130 (46.4)
No	150 (53.6)
Feeling uncomfortable receiving care from male midwives	
Yes	129 (46.1)
No	151 (53.9)
Thinking that male midwives will lead to a change in the profession	
Yes	177 (63.2)
No	103 (36.8)

Compared to the students whose mothers did not work, the mean Perception of Gender Scale scores of those whose mothers worked were statistically significantly higher ( $108.34\pm10.83$  and  $113.15\pm7.00$ , respectively;  $p=0.001$ ). In addition, the mean Perception of Gender Scale scores of the students who took courses on gender were higher than those who did not ( $113.89\pm8.29$  and  $106.07\pm10.42$ , respectively;  $p=0.000$ ) (Table 4).

The mean Perception of Gender Scale scores of the students who thought that midwifery was a gender-based profession were statistically significantly lower than those who did not think that midwifery was a gender-based profession ( $103.87\pm11.99$  and  $111.84\pm8.39$ , respectively;  $p=0.000$ ). Compared with those who wanted to have a man in the profession, the mean scale scores of those who did not want to have a man in the profession were statistically significantly lower ( $112.86\pm7.83$  and  $103.54\pm11.31$ , respectively;  $p=0.000$ ). In addition, when compared with those who felt uncomfortable receiving care from a male midwife, the mean Perception of Gender Scale scores of those who did not were statistically significantly higher ( $107.44\pm10.05$  and  $11.21\pm10.84$ , respectively;  $p=0.003$ ) (Table 5).

**TABLE 3:** Comparison of thinking that midwifery is a gender-based profession, wanting to have men in the midwifery profession and students' characteristics.

	Thinking that midwifery is a gender-based profession			Wanting to have men in the midwifery profession		p value
	Yes (n=193)	No (n=87)	p value	Yes (n=175)	No (n=105)	
Age (years)						
18-22	159 (67.1)	34 (79.1)	0.118	148 (84.6)	89 (84.8)	0.966
23-28	78 (32.9)	9 (20.9)		27 (15.4)	16 (15.2)	
Classroom						
Grade 1	47 (64.6)	26 (35.6)		44 (25.1)	29 (27.6)	
Class 2	62 (82.7)	13 (17.3)	0.051	56 (32.0)	19 (18.1)	0.078
Grade 3	48 (66.7)	24 (33.3)		40 (22.9)	32 (30.5)	
Grade 4	36 (60.0)	24 (40.0)		35 (20.0)	25 (23.8)	
Preferring the profession willingly						
Yes	117 (62.2)	76 (82.6)	<b>0.001</b>	103 (58.9)	85 (81.0)	<b>0.000</b>
No	71 (37.8)	16 (17.4)		72 (41.1)	20 (19.0)	
Marital status						
Married	5 (71.4)	188 (68.9)	1.000*	6 (3.4)	1 (1.0)	0.262*
Single	2 (28.6)	85 (31.1)		169 (96.6)	104 (99.0)	
Place of residence						
Urban	118 (67.8)	56 (32.2)		104 (59.4)	70 (66.7)	
District	45 (71.4)	18 (28.6)	0.861	42 (24.0)	21 (20.0)	0.480
Village	30 (69.8)	13 (30.2)		29 (16.6)	14 (13.3)	
The employment status of the mother						
Yes	42 (70.0)	151 (68.6)	0.840	44 (25.1)	16 (15.2)	0.051
No	18 (30.0)	69 (31.4)		131 (74.9)	89 (84.8)	
Taking courses on gender issues						
Yes	60 (60.0)	133 (73.9)	<b>0.016</b>	88 (50.3)	30 (28.6)	<b>0.000</b>
No	40 (40.0)	47 (26.1)		87 (49.7)	75 (71.4)	

\*Fisher exact test; values with p<0.05 are highlighted in bold.

**TABLE 4:** Distribution of Perception of Gender Scale mean scores according to students' characteristics.

	Perception of Gender Scale	p value*
Age (years)		
18-22	109.58±9.97	0.414
23-28	108.18±12.13	
Classroom		
Grade 1	108.34±10.23	0.056
Class 2	109.40±11.00	
Grade 3	108.05±11.75	
Grade 4	112.66±8.62	
Preferring the profession willingly		
Yes	108.98±10.58	0.377
No	110.15±9.77	
Marital status		
Married	106.85±3.07	0.510
Single	109.54±10.75	
Place of residence		
Urban	109.71±11.21	0.511
District	110.00±10.00	
Village	107.76±9.04	
The employment status of the mother		
Yes	113.15±7.00	<b>0.001</b>
No	108.34±10.83	
Taking courses on gender issues		
Yes	113.89±8.29	<b>0.000</b>
No	106.07±10.42	

\*Student-t test and one-way analysis of variance test; values with p<0.05 are highlighted in bold.

**TABLE 5:** Gender perception the distribution of the mean scores of the Gender Perception Scale according to the students' views on the presence of men in the profession.

	Perception of Gender Scale	p value*
Thinking that midwifery is a gender-based profession		
Yes	111.84±8.39	<b>0.000</b>
No	103.87±11.99	
Wanting to have men in the midwifery profession		
Yes	112.86±7.83	<b>0.000</b>
No	103.54±11.31	
Thinking that male midwives will be accepted by society		
Yes	110.91±11.01	0.261
No	109.12±10.53	
Wanting a male relative to be a midwife		
Yes	109.94±9.84	0.494
No	109.07±11.29	
Feeling uncomfortable receiving care from male midwives		
Yes	107.44±10.05	<b>0.003</b>
No	111.21±10.84	
Thinking that male midwives will lead to a change in the profession		
Yes	109.91±10.64	0.369
No	108.72±10.62	

\*Student-t test; values with p<0.05 are highlighted in bold.

## DISCUSSION

This study was conducted with 280 midwifery students to determine the relationship between midwifery students' views on being a man in the profession and gender perceptions, mainly; midwifery students' views on being a midwife in the profession, gender perceptions, and findings on the relationship between these two were. Our study is important in terms of being among the few studies that examine the relationship between midwifery students' views on being a man in the profession and their gender perceptions.

In this study, a significant proportion of midwifery students reported that they thought midwifery was a gender-based profession and that they did not want men to be in the profession. Similarly, in two different studies conducted with midwifery students in Türkiye, it was found that a significant proportion of the students did not want men to be in midwifery and thought that midwifery was a gender-based profession.<sup>11,36</sup> However, in a study conducted with American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) members, many participants stated that they had positive experiences working with men before. In the same study, most of the participants reported that they believed that men could also practice midwifery, that gender did not affect the quality of care, and that ACNM should support gender diversity.<sup>32</sup> Based on these findings, it can be said that midwifery students, who are seen as a female profession, report negative opinions based on prejudice without any experience of the presence of men in the profession.

In this study, half of the students reported that they did not want a male relative to be a midwife and about half of them reported that they would feel uncomfortable receiving care from male midwives. Similarly, in a study conducted in our country, more than half of the midwifery students did not want a male relative to be a midwife.<sup>36</sup> This may be explained by the students' perception of midwifery as a profession for women and their gender perceptions. In this study, more than half of the students thought that male midwives would not be accepted by society. Similarly, in another study conducted in the USA, many midwife participants expressed a belief, fear,

or assumption that society would resist gender diversity in midwifery.<sup>32</sup> However, these beliefs and assumptions are not supported by previous and current literature. In a study evaluating pregnant women's perceptions of male obstetric nurses, 68% responded positively.<sup>37</sup> In another study, it was observed that a significant proportion of puerperal and their companions approved of the presence of men in the midwifery profession and stated that they were not uncomfortable with the presence of a male midwife.<sup>29</sup> Based on these findings, it can be said that people's gender perceptions lie behind the negative thoughts that they assume about society's thoughts about gender diversity in the midwifery profession.

In this study, it was determined that the rate of thinking that midwifery was a gender-based profession was lower and the rate of wanting a man in the profession was higher among the students who took courses on gender. This situation can be explained by the positive change in the gender perceptions of the students who took courses on gender.<sup>38,39</sup> Our study findings support this information. In our study, it was found that the gender perceptions of the students who took courses on gender were more positive. Similarly, in a study conducted, it was determined that the mean gender equality scores of the students who received training on gender were significantly higher in the post-training follow-up compared to those who did not receive training.<sup>38</sup> In another study, it was found that the mean gender scale perception scores of the students who took the gender course were higher than those who did not, and the difference was statistically significant.<sup>39</sup> In the literature, it is emphasised that training programmes to be organised in universities on gender roles in addition to basic professional knowledge will contribute to raising awareness of students and gaining positive attitudes towards gender equality.<sup>38,40</sup> For this reason, it may be recommended to include a course on gender equality in the curricula of all higher education institutions, especially in midwifery departments, and to organise seminar programmes on this subject.

In our study, it was determined that the gender perceptions of the students whose mothers were employed were more positive. Similarly, in another study conducted in our country, it was determined

that maternal education affected the gender score of the participants.<sup>41</sup> This may be because young people take their parents as role models in the development of gender roles and shape their ideas in this direction.<sup>22</sup>

In this study, the gender perceptions of the students who thought that midwifery was a gender-based profession, who did not want men in the profession, and who were uncomfortable with receiving care from a male midwife were more negative. In the literature, no other study was found to examine the relationship between views on gender diversity in the midwifery profession and gender perception. Our study is important in terms of being among the few studies that examine to show that midwifery students' negative attitudes toward gender negatively affect their desire for gender diversity in the profession. Despite the high demand for midwifery care worldwide, it is known that there are not enough midwives to meet these demands.<sup>33</sup> When the studies conducted are examined, it is known that the rate of male midwives is quite low worldwide.<sup>30,31</sup> By accepting men into midwifery, the number of midwives per person can be increased and thus the quality of care to be provided to increasingly diversified patients can be increased.<sup>32</sup> It is thought that one of the most important obstacles to gender diversity in the midwifery profession is gender inequality in the midwifery profession, and our study findings support this information.

## CONCLUSION

In this study, it was found that a significant proportion of midwifery students had negative views on the involvement of men in the midwifery profession; students who preferred the profession willingly and took courses on gender were less likely to think that midwifery was a gender-based profession and more likely to want men in the profession; the gender perceptions of the students whose mothers were working and who took courses on gender were more positive; the positive gender perception levels of midwifery students had a positive effect on not thinking that midwifery was a gender-based profession, wanting a man in the profession and not feeling uncomfortable about receiving care from a male midwife.



Recommendations in line with the results of the study are as follows: courses should be included in the curricula for midwifery students to gain a perspective sensitive to gender roles and more research on gender roles should be conducted. New studies examining the views of managers on the presence of men in the midwifery department should be carried out.

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### Conflict of Interest

No conflicts of interest between the authors and / or family members of the scientific and medical committee members or members of the potential conflicts of interest, counseling, expertise, working conditions, share holding and similar situations in any firm.

### Authorship Contributions

**Idea/Concept:** Emine Gönül, Deniz Akyıldız; **Design:** Emine Gönül, Deniz Akyıldız; **Control/Supervision:** Deniz Akyıldız; **Data Collection and/or Processing:** Emine Gönül, Deniz Akyıldız; **Analysis and/or Interpretation:** Emine Gönül, Deniz Akyıldız; **Literature Review:** Emine Gönül, Deniz Akyıldız; **Writing the Article:** Emine Gönül, Deniz Akyıldız; **Critical Review:** Emine Gönül, Deniz Akyıldız; **References and Fundings:** Emine Gönül, Deniz Akyıldız.

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