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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Gender Roles in Azerbaijani-Medium Secondary School Literature Textbooks: An Analysis of Content and Representation

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to analyze gender roles in Azerbaijani-medium secondary school literature textbooks used in grades 5 to 9, and to find out how gender sensitive and gender responsive these literature textbooks are. The data collection method is quantitative content analysis, involving reviewing literature textbooks. The quantitative analysis considers five categories: the gender and number of authors of textbooks, the gender and number of authors of texts included in the textbooks, the gender and number of the characters and figures in images, and the occupational roles in the texts and gender traits most commonly observed. The results indicate that Azerbaijani-medium literature textbooks do not promote equal gender roles. Men and women are not equally represented in texts, visuals, and in occupational roles. The research recommends conducting research on all textbooks used at school level, analyzing their portrayal of the genders constructing new gender-sensitive textbooks.

Introduction

Education is an essential human right and a powerful component in the sustainable development of societies and countries. Providing education to students, regardless of their gender, can help reduce social boundaries and poverty because education is strongly correlated with all development goals. "Education is the route to economic prosperity, the key to scientific and technological advancement, the means to combat unemployment, the foundation of social equity, and the spread of political socialization and cultural vitality" (Chimombo, 2005).

However, gender discrimination is an obstacle to girls' education. Although most of the world's labor consists of women, they are still discriminated against and stereotypes persist, such as the idea of women as home-loving mothers who raise children, take care of their families, do housework, and carry out other domestic responsibilities. Coming from Astara, a rural region of Azerbaijan which borders Iran, far from Azerbaijan's capital city, I have personally witnessed the abuse of women's rights in my society. In my community, parents treated boys and girls differently. There was always a sense of favoritism toward boys, and girls were never expected to be educated or to take on leadership roles.

People in rural areas of Azerbaijan are typically very conservative and often use certain interpretations of religion as a tool to oppress women and girls.

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Many girls in my village desired to study, but their parents forbade it. Girls' rights to education are still ignored, either by their parents or by society. In rural parts of Azerbaijan, in some cases, girls are not allowed to go school and are sometimes forced to get married early. Furthermore, women are represented in stereotyped gender roles. These roles are present in educational and learning materials as well. As in other male-dominated countries, women's education and employment are not supported by society, especially in underdeveloped rural regions

1.1. Context of the Research

Textbooks have an important role in influencing schoolchildren's personalities and their perceptions of society. That is why the content of school textbooks, and the information these textbooks transmit to our youngest citizens is very influential (Evans & Davies, 2000). Secondary school textbooks play a significant role in the process of internalizing the norms and ideologies of a society. The presentation of men and women in these textbooks helps to form the attitudes of the students and their beliefs about gender roles in society. If, in presenting gender roles, textbooks transmit prejudiced and discriminatory language, they will gradually shape a student's understanding of gender roles. Literature textbooks might incorporate the biased gender roles seen in Azerbaijani society. Both the learning materials, and the biased environment may affect girls' behavior, as their roles in society are limited. . As Chapman (2002) states, educators should be mindful about the biased information that they are transmitting to their students via "socialization messages, inequitable division of special education services, sexist texts and materials, and unbalanced time and types of attention spent on boys and girls in the classroom".

Little research has been conducted on the gender roles in textbooks, particularly secondary school textbooks. In the Azerbaijani context, since the application of the new national curriculum, no intensive and systematic research has been carried out to identify how gender roles are presented in secondary school textbooks.

The aim of this research is to analyze gender roles in secondary school literature textbooks. I chose specifically literature textbooks because the nation's culture, traditions, and attitudes are most clearly demonstrated in history and literature textbooks. In this research I will analyze textbooks used in grades 5 to 9, and will identify how gender sensitive and responsive secondary school literature textbooks are in Azerbaijan. I will also determine how we can develop gender sensitive textbooks that improve girls' educational experiences and outcomes.

1.1.1 Azerbaijan as a country and its Education System

Azerbaijan is a country located in the South Caucasus region of Eurasia at the crossroads of Eastern Europe and Western Asia. The country has a population of 992 million (The World Population Review, 2018). In 1991, Azerbaijan became an independent Republic after being under the dominance of the Soviet Union for seventy years. After gaining independence, radical changes happened in the country's politics, economy, and society. One of the biggest challenges during the transition period for Azerbaijan was the undeclared armed conflict with Armenia over the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh; as a result of this conflict, about 20 percent of Azerbaijani lands are now occupied and more than 1 million people, about 13 percent of the whole population became refugees and settled in Baku and other regions of Azerbaijan. In 1995, a ceasefire agreement was established between Armenia and Azerbaijan (de Waal, 2013).

During the Soviet era, the quality of Azerbaijani Education was quite high, and illiteracy was eliminated. The majority of people could read and write. Schools were established even in the rural villages of Azerbaijan. During the transition period, as in other sectors, the education sector also faced many challenges. The most important one was the necessity of making significant changes in the curricula with reference to national values. For this, the biggest obstacle was a mass transition from the Cyrillic alphabet to the Latin script. There was a need to print textbooks and other educational materials in the Latin alphabet (MOE, 2008). In the first years of independence, these materials were translated from former Soviet books and because of that, there were no obvious changes in the content of textbooks. Enrolment rates remained high. However, the quality of education has decreased due to a lack of governmental investment in education.

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To address the above challenges, the Government established and commended an in depth Education Reform Program in 1999. In 2003, the Government determined new priorities and clear-cut directions for the improvement of the education sector in the draft Ten-Year Education Reform Strategy (2003-2013), prepared by the Ministry of Education. For this purpose, the Ministry of Education designed a three-phase program titled the Education Sector Development Project (ESDP) with the sponsorship of the World Bank (World Bank, 2010). Detailed information about the Education system of the Republic of Azerbaijan will be given in Chapter 2.

1.2 Description of the research

This study focuses on Azerbaijani literature textbooks. In this research I will analyze textbooks used in grades 5 to 9 and will identify firstly how gender sensitive and responsive secondary school literature textbooks are in Azerbaijan and secondly, how we can develop gender sensitive textbooks that improve girls' educational experiences and outcomes. During the analysis process, the following specific questions will be addressed.

1. What is the ratio of male characters to female characters in texts and images? Is there a ratio difference in the texts?

2. What roles are assigned to the characters in public and domestic settings?

3. To what extent are men/women described in domestic roles?

4. What is the visual representation of men and women?

5. How gender sensitive and responsive are secondary school literature textbooks in Azerbaijan?

6. How can we develop a gender sensitive curriculum and textbooks that improve girls' educational experiences and outcomes in Azerbaijan?

I chose quantitative content analysis and qualitative thematic analysis methods to analyze the research questions. For this study five literature textbooks used in grades 5 to 9 were selected and analyzed quantitatively in order to establish how many male and female roles exist in the texts, what roles are assigned to women and men, and how women and men are represented. After collecting the quantitative data, qualitative thematic analysis was carried out to determine themes in men's and women's gender roles. In the summary of the findings, the gender sensitivity and gender responsiveness of literature textbooks will be analyzed. The discussion will focus on summaries of both past and present studies. Furthermore, the relevance of the current study for the Azerbaijani context will be made explicit. Based on the findings and discussion, in conclusion, I will provide suggestions for future research and recommendations for policy makers, curriculum developers, and teachers.

1.3 Significance of the Research

The analysis of the textbooks is one of broadly analyzed issues. Textbooks are invaluable because, either directly or indirectly, they transfer national values, norms, and traditions. However, sometimes these values and norms lower girls' and women's position in society. It is essential to reform and modify the curriculum, and more specifically to revise textbooks in order to make them gender sensitive so that students of both genders can get an equal education. The results of the study will contribute to the development of gender-awareness of teachers, authors, and textbook publishers. Further studies can investigate gender representation in textbooks for other subjects and the impact of other factors, such as the school environment and school staff's attitudes towards girls, with a particular focus on the attitudes held by teachers.

1.4 Limitations of the Study

The limitations are: the findings are not suitable for generalization since this investigation concerns only one school subject and only the compulsory part of general secondary education. Due to time constraints, it was possible to

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analyze only the literature textbooks used at the compulsory level of secondary school education (from grades 5 to 9). High school literature textbooks (from 10th to 11th grades) are not analyzed. Therefore, it is unclear whether this series is exceptional or representative in terms of the portrayals of females and males in the secondary school textbooks used in Azerbaijan.

Literature Review

2. Gender equality and gender equality in education policies at both national and international level

2.1 International Aims of gender equality according to the United Nations

Gender equality is a core of element social justice and inclusivity based on the values and practices of Human Rights. Regardless of differences among people, including gender differences, everyone should be treated equally.

Gender equality means accepting and valuing equally the differences between women and men and ensuring the equal visibility, empowerment, and participation of both sexes in all spheres of public and private life. However, the reality of the school environment does not always reflect the aims of gender equality presented in laws and curricula . Educational materials may still reinforce traditional notions of men's and women's roles in society, such as that boys are the reason for disturbance in the classroom, excel at mathematics and sciences, but are less successful in languages (Syrjäläinen & Kujala 2010, 35) (Council of Europe, 1998: 7-8).

In order to protect women's rights and gender equality, different international laws and treaties have been established in the world, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Declaration and Program of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights, and the Beijing Declaration.

Historically, women have suffered more from gender inequalities compared to men in society. Gender inequality creates boundaries on both individual and societal development. For individuals, inequalities related to gender may trigger low self-esteem, frustrations, and resentment. At the same time, it hinders boys and girls from achieving their full potential and restricts their roles in society and family because of biased expectations. On a community and societal scale, gender inequalities impede economic growth, social cohesion, and social justice. Gender inequalities in the family and the broader society also provide negative models for children and young people of 'legitimate' ways of treating others unfairly, of exploiting them, and depriving them of their human rights.

The goals of gender equality presented in legislation and curricula do not always correspond with the reality of the school environment. Educational materials may still foster traditional stereotyped roles of men and women in society, such as that boys are violent in the classroom, are good at mathematics and sciences but are not good at language learning (Kujanpää, 2015).

2.2. Gender Equality in Azerbaijan and its Education

Women in Azerbaijan constitute 51.2% of the whole population. They face many difficulties in Azerbaijani society. The Constitution of Azerbaijan and other laws and regulations state that men and women have equal rights. However, when it comes to reality, due to a "lack of special legal, economic and social protection mechanisms", women's rights in Azerbaijani society are abused and are not protected efficiently.

Education is one of the priorities of social development and it is the target of gender mainstreaming policy. Azerbaijan is one of the countries which has ratified "the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) on the eve of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995". The Azerbaijani government also follows the gender mainstreaming strategy in the implementation of policies, plans of action, and projects. Despite the activities initiated with application of gender mainstreaming policy, there are

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still many issues related to the quality of education, which has a negative impact on education. At all levels of education, especially at primary and secondary levels, the quality of education has declined. Girls' dropout rate has increased due to families' poverty (the State Committee on Women's Problems of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 2004).

There is a need to develop gender education and gender research, to widen awareness of the impact of gender issues, to improve the quality of education, and to eliminate the impact of gender discrimination to girl's competencies and qualifications.

In addition, gender-biased educational materials have a negative impact on the implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy. In particular, the literature textbooks of Azerbaijani-medium secondary schools contain a lot of biased information. Although the majority of literature textbook authors are women, the texts in these text books are mainly written by men.

Referring to Article 17 of the Education Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the education system consists of several levels, including preschool, general, primary, basic, secondary, primary/ secondary vocational, and higher (baccalaureate, master's degree, doctorate (MOE, 2009).

The current Azerbaijani education system is established based on national and universal values. According to the Constitution of the Azerbaijan Republic (section 2, chapter 3, article 42), all citizens – regardless of gender, age, social economic status, religion, ethnicity, and race – have the right to free compulsory primary and secondary education. Azerbaijani School Education consists of three stages: primary (grades 1-4), general secondary (grades 5-9), and full secondary education (grades 9-11). Attending school until grade 9 is obligatory. Progressing to the other stages of education is the individual's own choice Apart from school education, there are also vocational schools, community colleges, and universities (General Education Concept (National Curriculum in Azerbaijan Republic, 2006).

The aim of Azerbaijan's national curriculum is to develop a dual learning environment for all students which includes common development, develops interests, improves self-esteem, is outcome oriented, is student-oriented, and ensures integration. (General Education Concept (National Curriculum) in Azerbaijan Republic, 2006). The Azerbaijani constitution and the international law stipulate that everyone has the right to education regardless of their gender, social status, and religion, legal, or social and cultural issues of their communities. However, without considering the imbalances that differences in gender, religion, social and economic status, power differences have created in society, it is difficult to provide equal education to everyone.

Azerbaijan is one of the countries that has ratified UN treaties and declarations. The Azerbaijani government has also ratified "the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) on the eve of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995".

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all", reflects the global recognition of the need to address gender inequality in education. Realizing these commitments will require tackling the many obstacles facing girls, including discriminatory social norms, negative school environments, and concerns around safety and access. Despite the fact that the Azerbaijani government has ratified International Laws and amended national laws, there are still gaps in the implementation these laws and regulations because, in order to express their concerns, women's groups need support from international institutions to be heard by the government. (Aliyeva, 2011). Some women have a low level of education, and they are not able to express their problems to any authoritative agencies. That is why women either continue to live with the problems or they involve family members in finding a solution. However, in most cases, the family members' solutions are not successful. Azerbaijani society is patriarchal, male dominant, and in that sense, women are second-rate human beings who should only be recognized in relation to men. However, cultural stereotypes, which have passed from generation to generation create obstacles and hinder the implementation of the principles and values of the National Curriculum and results in girls' dropping out of education. A study was carried out in 2001 by UNICEF and the Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan. The purpose of this report was to investigate the reasons for girls dropping out of education in Azerbaijan and to provide advice on how to solve these issues with the support of the Ministry of Education and a "UNICEF Project Plan of Action". The report contains information

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about a workshop organized by UNICEF "for the Ministry of Education officials, senior educators, NGOs on the use of Participatory Learning and Action for girls' education activities". Many organizations and individuals took an active part in the collection of data for the development of the report. According to the report prepared by UNICEF and the Ministry of Education in 2001, internationally, the reasons that caused girls' dropout, poor participation, and low-quality performance are mainly divided into 4 categories:

1) Financial difficulties: these can have negative consequences for both genders, but they have a greater impact on girls than they do on boys. Although public schools are free of charge, students from low income families have difficulties affording other expenses such as clothes and stationary. Because of this, students from poor families drop out of education. Sometimes the children become involved in child labor or stay at home helping their parents with housework.

2) It is believed that girls are easily exposed to "physical and cultural dangers". Parents worry about rape and harassment of their daughters by their male peers or male teachers. Although there are no accurate statistics of such incidents, it happens. In order to protect their daughters, and, most importantly, family honor, parents decide not to allow their daughters to go to school. Family honor is very important in Azerbaijani culture and girls and women carry this responsibility on their shoulders.

3) A false common assumption is that boys are more intelligent than girls. This assumption is common in most parts of the world but is particularly widespread in Eastern and Asian cultures. Parents think that it is better to support boys' education rather than girls' because boys are much smarter than girls.

4) Early marriage is also one of the reasons of dropout. Families either hold the belief that girls should marry young because of religion or because of cultural mentality (UNICEF, 2001) According to an amendment to Article 10 of the Family Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan made in 2011, the legal marriage age for both boys and girls has increased from 17 to 18. However, in some cases, such as if parents are ill or one partner lives abroad, "the minimum age of marriage age can be reduced by one year if permission is given by the local executive power. Despite the change in the law, people in rural areas knowingly or unknowingly break the law and get married young with a religious marriage certificate which is called "kebin". These facts are hidden by relatives in most cases (The State Committee of Family and Children, 2011).

According to the Azerbaijani constitution, school is obligatory until grade 9. Attending grades 10 and 11 is optional. After finishing grade, 9 students take an examination. Because it is not compulsory to continue, many parents can easily make their daughters leave school at this stage. In Azerbaijan, the school environment is not sensitive to gender. Although everyone has the right to get an education, the school administration, teachers' attitudes and textbooks are neither gender sensitive nor gender neutral.

In addition, despite the clear evidence of gender bias in learning materials, specifically textbooks, no policy initiatives have been implemented. Although Azerbaijani textbooks have recently changed, gender has not considered in textbook policy. In the 3rd Section of the textbook policy, which is about demands for textbook content, there is an item which states that textbooks should not contain national religious, racial and political discrimination or improved information"(MOE, 2006). Gender is not included in the specifications of textbook content.

2.3. Role of textbooks

Textbooks play a major role in the development of individuals and of the whole society. All over the world, school textbooks supply students with beneficial information about how cultural knowledge is approved, delivered to students, and assessed in schools. In the majority of countries, textbooks are developed based on "state-approved syllabi and curricula". In this context, they reflect the knowledge and values determined by a given society, especially its political class. They are also essential and suitable for passing values on to the next generation (Lässig, 2009). Printed textbooks are still the main sources of knowledge and information in rural parts of the countries. In the Azerbaijani context, the centralized exams are arranged based on the content of the textbooks provided to schools. That is why textbooks are an essential aid to frame the knowledge in a given discipline. In the development of knowledge in various subjects, the evaluation and determination of "the content, visuals and exercises of the textbooks from a gender perspective" is a key step (Srivastava, 2014). Textbooks play an important role in the students' development. According to textbook analysis done in other countries, school textbooks and teaching materials have a great impact in forming people's notions of being a man or a woman. However, the way gender is

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presented is problematic in two ways. First, text books portray very tough, brutal roles such as fighters, warriors, and thus create stereotypes. Second, women are presented as being at a disadvantage in most cases. They are presented in dependent, subordinate positions. For example, even though textbooks have constantly been reviewed over the years, they still present men and women as having different stereotypical gender roles. Women are predominantly portrayed undertaking domestic activities (Bursuc, 2013).

Gender bias in textbooks impacts students in a hidden way. Students spend most of their time with textbooks. Teachers prepare their lessons using textbooks. Exam questions are prepared based on textbooks. That is why the role of textbooks and their impact are unavoidable. As Sadker and Zittleman (2007) state, "students spend as much as 80 to 95 percent of classroom time using textbooks and...teachers make a majority of their instructional decisions based on the textbook" (As quoted in Blumberg, 2008, p 6). That is why textbooks with a gender bias cause fundamental hidden barriers to gender equity in education. According to Blumberg, "textbooks occupy 80% of classroom time". Therefore, gender bias in textbooks has the impact of lowering girls' accomplishments in schools, especially in schools in underdeveloped countries.

Textbooks are a useful tool for expanding education to many people because they are accessible. According to Brugelles and Cromer, "Textbooks are still the cheapest of available media, and they are easy to carry and use" (2009).

Textbooks stand at the heart of the educational enterprise. Teachers rely on them to set the parameters of instruction and to impart basic educational content. Students' schoolwork often begins (and in some schools ends) with the textbook. Texts constitute the basis of school knowledge, particularly in Third World countries where there is a chronic shortage of qualified teachers.

Besides providing knowledge, textbooks play an important role in the development of society. According to Brugeilles & Cromer, 2008 (as cited Bruillard, 2011) "textbooks can become powerful levers of social change in propagating universal values". Textbooks reflect the changes which happen in the society. "Students- consciously or unconsciously –use, absorb, and interpret the social economic and racial realities present in photographs, cartoons or pictures in their textbook" (as Discourse, 2009). That is why the information provided in textbooks should present the society in a precise way with all its diversity. If the information given in textbooks do not consider diversity and social justice, they can strengthen the existing biases and could lead to various types of social discrimination. "In their interpretation and presentation of knowledge, textbooks are (more or less consciously and deliberately) a vehicle for norms, values and models of social behavior through the representations that they contain" (Brugeilles & Cromer, 2009). Therefore, textbook development should be one of the priorities in the education policy of any government.

Wikigender is a global online platform which connects policymakers from both developed and developing countries to look for strategies to solve gender issues and foster gender equality. The aim of this platform is to bring experts together from all around the world to exchange their knowledge and experience on issues, particularly gender issues. On 16-20 January 2017, with the support of UNESCO, Wikigender hosted an online discussion on the topic "Addressing gender stereotypes in the classroom: how to achieve a conducive environment for adolescent girls' learning". The online discussion started with a presentation of the findings from "Textbooks pave the way to sustainable development" prepared by the UNESCO Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report. The findings indicated that from the 1950s to 2011, secondary school textbooks failed address concerns about "sustainable development, including gender equality". As a result of the discussion, it is governments must reassess their textbooks urgently to challenge negative gender stereotypes. Examples include using neutral and inclusive language or having gender equitable illustrations in textbooks, and participants shared useful resources for policy makers and textbooks revisers.

2.4. Textbooks as a hidden curriculum

The theory of the hidden curriculum is one of the mostly commonly used theories in textbook analysis. The concept of "hidden curriculum appeared in education in the beginning of the 20th century. A hidden curriculum contains "both intended and unintended consequences of schooling, both official and unofficial settings of learning, and both

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academic and nonacademic outcomes". The hidden curriculum can be used for both "official" and "none official" educational settings. (Novosel, 2015). "A hidden curriculum consists of those learning states of setting which are either intended or unintended but not openly acknowledged to the learners in the setting unless the learners are aware of them" (Martin, 2017). Hidden curricula mostly contain "textbooks, teacher's use of language, standard learning activities, and the social structure of the classroom, among others" (Novosel, 2015).

The hidden curriculum refers to the implicit knowledge learned at school regardless of the goals set by official curricula or legislation (Syrjäläinen & Kujala 2010, 26- 27). Due to the hidden curriculum, pupils are taught to act in a certain way at school and because of this the pupils' experiences may differ from one another. The stereotypical notions of the gender specific roles are further reinforced, and this creates a continuum in the society. Literature textbooks might have an influential impact given the hidden curriculum, as it is applicable in any educational setting and it will either directly or indirectly affect students' attitudes and behaviors. In Azerbaijani language, literature is defined in this way: Literature is a subject that reflects the human's feelings, thoughts, and desires and invites people to consider morality and to adopt high moral standards. In literary samples, the writer expresses feelings and thoughts through artistic examples to people. In such examples, life events are presented to the readers in a figurative way. This means that the events in the texts are reflected not as they really are, but as they are in the writer's imagination (Suleymanova, Bagirova, Muradova, 2016). In this case, literature textbooks could have a great impact on students' attitudes and behaviors.

2.5. Gender in Textbooks

Many research studies have focused on gender roles in various countries. The majority of researchers found that in most cases, textbooks present male characters (both boys and men) more than females (women and girls). Their experiences were shown as cultural norms (Kereszty, 2009).

Adnan Batinah conducted a study titled "Analysis of Representation in Pre- Intermediate Market Leader: Business English Practice File " in Sohar University in Oman. He used content analysis to evaluate gender portrayal in 3 categories (gender visibility, gender firstness and occupational roles) in one of the textbooks used for teaching business English at Sohar University. The research indicates that in the Pre-Intermediate Market Leader Business English book, there is not a definite gender preference for males and gender equity is more or less accomplished . Interestingly, compared to males, females are represented in varied occupational roles whereas males are represented only in stereotypically male occupations. However, in terms of firstness, males occur before females in the textbook. According to Adnan Batinah's assessment of textbooks, there has been an improvement in the representation of genders in textbooks and there has been a positive change in women's occupational roles. However, there is still a need to develop gender representation further.

Two Iranian scholars, Gharbavi and Mousavi, carried out research\ titled "A Content Analysis of Textbooks: Investigating Gender Bias as a Social Prominence in Iranian High School English Textbooks". The aim of this research was to analyze four English textbooks currently used in Iranian high schools in terms of the visibility and occupational roles of male and female characters both in texts and images. The analysis showed a serious disparity between the occurrence of male and female characters in the texts. Furthermore, there are still high levels of gender inequality in the textbooks used in Iranian high schools.

Another study, conducted by Khomeriki, Javakhishvili, & Abramishvili (2012) is called "The Issue of Gender Equity while Teaching Social Sciences" (as cited Tsiklauri, M, Gender in Georgian Secondary Education, 2012). The aim of the research was to carry out gender analysis of textbooks, specifically those used in History and Civic Education, to establish whether the given textbooks have issues with gender equity and whether they presented the genders as equal. The authors also analyzed the role of these textbooks for establishing "the positive attitude towards gender equity" (Khomeriki, Javakhishvili, & Abramishvili, 2012). Quantitative analysis of the textbooks showed that females are represented much less than males. The qualitative analysis shows that the textbooks, especially the history textbooks, contain quite strong gender stereotypes. The textbooks do not support the improvement of gender equity. The textbooks are not able to make a positive impact on "the changes of social and cultural models that support the inferiority of female sex and the advantage of the male" (Khomeriki, Javakhishvili, & Abramishvili, 2012).

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Othman, Hamid, Dato'Hj, Yasin, Keong and Jaludin, (2012) conducted research titled "Gender Images in Selected Malaysian School Textbooks: A Frequency Analysis.". They analyzed the frequency of images in selected Malaysian school textbooks to examine gender portrayal. A series of four Malaysian English textbooks, 3 primary textbooks and 1 lower secondary textbook, were randomly chosen for analysis. The research results reveal male dominance in the textbooks. Considering the representation of characters in accordance with "their social, professional and political roles", gender discrimination in favor of male characters can be seen. Female characters are seen as less important in terms of the roles presented and of their positive impact on the society in general.

Hall conducted a study titled "Gender Representation in Current EFL Textbooks in Iranian Secondary Schools". This study investigated gender portrayal in modern EFL textbooks titled Right Path to English I and II that have been developed for Iranian schools and are used in a mandatory course in Iranian secondary schools. As English language teaching and learning in Iran is based on "a rigidly anti-imperialist ideology alongside indigenization and localization" (Borjian, 2013, p.13), the education programs established and regulated by the government reflect the cultural and religious beliefs of the country. Comparing the findings of previous research investigating the same textbooks, there were positive improvements in some areas of the textbooks. However, there is the need for further development to ensure equitable treatment of both genders.

Law and Chan, (2004) conducted research titled "Gender role stereotyping in Hong Kong's primary school Chinese language subject textbooks". The findings showed that images in famous Chinese language textbooks used in in Hong Kong's primary schools are giving powerful and biased messages about gender variation and gender inequality to students. Overall, females are represented less than males, both in individual images and as main characters. Analysis of the representation of the main characters shows that females are more visible in domestic contexts whilst males are more dominant in public settings. Women are mostly represented as doing household activities. Furthermore, compared to males, females are portrayed in more limited and positions and occupations with inferior salaries.

Kahveci (2010) conducted a study titled "Quantitative analysis of science and chemistry textbooks for indicators of reform". In this study, thematic and quantitative analyses were used to investigate the efficiency of Turkish chemistry and science textbooks . The books were analyzed based on 4 themes: gender equity, questioning level, science vocabulary load, and readability. The findings indicate that the textbooks have a biased representation of gender. There was not enough evidence in the textbooks to be able to state that they are gender equitable and inquiry-based. The quantitative approach employed for evaluation contrasts with a more interpretive approach and has the potential in depicting textbook profiles in a more reliable way, complementing the commonly employed qualitative procedures.

Chick's research, titled "Gender Balance in K-12 American textbooks" revealed that the number of males in textbooks was higher than that of females at all school levels in both content and images. However, the study found that history textbooks had more females than there had been in previous editions and since the publication of the National History Standards. However, there was the same percentage of images of males, reinforcing the lack of change in the status of women in this textbook.

To investigate why girls drop out of school, , UNICEF, MOE, with the support of other government organizations, analyzed the causes from different perspectives, including textbook analysis. They randomly chose one textbook from primary level, Grade 2 Reading, and discovered that girls do not play an important role even in textbooks. Girls are presented mostly in domestic settings as parents or siblings. In public roles, they are represented as doctors or nurses.. Men, however, are portrayed in higher ranked positions such as leaders, presidents, kings, heroes, problem solvers, and life savers. Women and girls play subordinate roles.

Methodology

In the methodology chapter, the research questions, research tools, data, and methods for analyzing the data will be discussed in detail. For this study, I conducted quantitative content analysis and qualitative thematic analysis. With the help of quantitative content analysis, the number of male and female characters and their roles in texts were

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examined and categorized. With thematic analysis, gender roles are grouped in themes, namely themes in male gender roles and female gender roles.

3.1 Research Questions and Hypothesis

The aim of this study is to examine gender roles in Azerbaijani secondary school literature textbooks used from grades 5 to 9. Based on previous research analyzing gender roles, the specific research questions investigate how gender roles are described in literature textbooks, and are as follows:

1. What is the ratio of male characters to female characters in texts and images? Is there a ratio difference in the texts?
2. What roles and traits are assigned to the characters in public and domestic settings?
3. To what extent are men/women depicted in domestic roles?
4. What is the visual representation of men and women?
5. How gender sensitive and responsive are secondary school literature textbooks in Azerbaijan?
6. How can we develop a gender sensitive curriculum and textbooks that improve girls' educational experiences and outcomes in Azerbaijan?

Although many countries and international organizations are tackling gender stereotypes and accomplishing equal representation of men and women in textbooks, men and women are still treated differently and unequally in many school textbooks. The hypothesis of this study is that gender portrayal and gender roles in Literature textbooks published in Azerbaijan do not encourage progress towards gender equality.

3.2 Methodology

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches for collecting and interpreting the data were used. In the first stage, quantitative content analysis was used to calculate the relative frequency of pictures, illustrations, and linguistic features representing males and females. The relative frequency of the occurrences was calculated. Content analysis was used to analyze the items in context. It helped to interpret the quantitative results. The analysis focuses on the authentic pictures and illustrations. The selection of visual materials was based on whether they are gender-marked or gender-unmarked which is a matter of subjectivity. However, pictures which displayed characters with unidentified gender were considered as gender-unmarked and were not taken into consideration.

In the second stage, qualitative thematic analysis was conducted and gender roles were put into themes: themes in women's gender Roles and themes in men's gender roles.

3.3. Selection of Data

For this research, five literature books were analyzed. These books were analyzed based on two main criteria: the people who involved in the improvement and production process and the authentic content. The texts vary based on their literary genres and have a wide range of themes and topics such as family, education, patriotism, heroism, honesty, goodness, nature, and country. The diversity of themes and topics was useful in investigating gender roles in literature textbooks in a more authentic way.

In textbooks, the tasks focus on the following skills: reading comprehension, narrating, and writing essays based on given topics. Each topic was supported by written texts and illustrations. Only the text texts and illustrations which have gender roles were analyzed since the research focuses on gender roles in textbooks. However, information about writing and poetry genres and texts about gender-neutral topics were not analyzed, as they are very general and this kind of gender-neutral information cannot contribute to this study. Texts were analyzed with quantitative content analysis in three categories: gender visibility, occupational and domestic roles, and gender attributes. Quantitative content analysis was used to calculate the number of males and females involved in the literature textbook writing team and the number of male and female characters in both texts and visuals.. Furthermore, the total number of

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domestic and occupational roles connected with males and females in textbooks was analyzed. Finally, the personality attributes for both men and women were grouped and examples from texts and images were provided. In this study, the procedures were done in several steps. In the first step, literature textbooks were examined and the number of male and female authors and characters in texts and visuals were counted. Then, the findings were represented in tables along with in depth analysis. The next step involved investigation of the occupational and domestic roles of male and female characters. In the final step, the personality attributes of male and female characters were analyzed and grouped and then qualitative thematic analysis was conducted. Finally, gender roles were grouped according to themes: themes in women's gender roles and themes in men's gender roles.

In Azerbaijan, textbook publication is centralized. As there are two sectors in Azerbaijani schools, textbooks are published in two languages: Azerbaijani and Russian. The textbooks used in these two sectors have different texts, content, and authors. Textbook policy is under the control of the Ministry of Education, as well as its relevant structures, academic institutions, private organizations, and public bodies. The textbook policy conforms with the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Education Law, and relevant legal acts of the Republic of Azerbaijan, as well as the textbook policy of the education system (MOE, 2006).

For analysis, secondary school literature books used from 5th grade to 9th grade were selected to investigate gender roles. Literature books were selected for analysis because literature reflects the cultural values, the history, and the social, political, and economic environment of a nation. Literature is an artistic subject that reflects society's feelings, thoughts, and desires, and invites people to consider morality and adopt high moral standards. After ninth grade, attending school is not obligatory. Students may leave school, go to community colleges, or may decide to continue their studies until eleventh grade.

Findings

4.1. Gender and Number of Authors

In the first stage, the quantitative results are presented based on two criteria: firstly, the number staff involved in textbook development, including production staff and authors of texts, and secondly the number of characters in texts, images, and the number of male and female characters in domestic and occupational roles. Each textbook was analyzed considering the gender of the authors of the texts, the number of males and females both in texts and images, and the occupational and domestic roles and personality attributes associated with males and females.

Based on the analysis which is shown in Table 1, 43 people were involved in the writing team of literature textbooks used in grades 5 to 9. 23 of them are men and 20 of them are women. It is important to provide the criteria of number of textbook production staff and authors in order to show the contrast. Although textbook authors are mainly women, the included in textbooks are mostly written by men, meaning that female textbook writers did not consider gender equality when considering which texts to include in textbooks.

Gender	Authors	Editors	Proof Readers	Designers	Picture Artists	Total
						43
Female	11	4	3	2	0	20
Male	6	8	2	2	5	23

Table 1.   Total personnel involved in Literature textbooks production (5ᵗʰ-9ᵗʰ grades)

The textbooks authors differ from text authors. Literature textbooks consist of different texts in various genres written by different authors. Altogether, there are 198 texts in the books used from grades 5 to 9. For this study, only 161 of them were analyzed because the rest of the texts are gender neutral and about topics such as nature, the motherland

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(Azerbaijan), moral values, and the expression of moral values through the roles of animals or plants. Only six of the authors of texts (4%) are women. 28 of the texts (17%) were written by unknown authors, and 127 (79%) of the authors are male.

Gender	Number	%
Female	6	4
Male	127	79

Table 2. Number of authors of texts within textbooks

4.1.1. Gender and Number of Characters in Texts

Characters were analyzed based on the number of texts and visuals they appeared in. There are 479 characters in the texts for students in grades 5 to 9. 365 of them are male and 114 are female. Since in the Azerbaijani language pronouns are not classified based on gender, we can differentiate genders according to their names and their images in texts. In the Azerbaijani language, the third person singular is "O" and refers to 3 genders. "O" translates into English as "she", "he", and "it".

Mode of Presentation	Grades 5-9	
Female	114	24%
Male	365	76%

Table 3. Male and Female characters in texts

Table 3 indicates the overall gender ratio in all textbooks. 76% of the characters in the texts are male. The ratio of males to females is higher than 3:1. This table provides a response to the first question of the study. Overall, it is obvious that males are shown in texts more than 3 times as often as females.

Grade	Male	Female	Total	Male %	Female %
Fifth	83	22	105	79	21
Sixth	67	28	95	71	29
Seventh	64	22	86	74	26
Eighth	75	14	89	84	16
Ninth	76	28	104	73	27

Table 4. Gender Ratio per Textbook

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Table 4 shows the number of males and females as both raw numbers and percentages per textbook. The percentage of male characters is higher than that of female ones. The results from the 8th grade text book are particularly striking; 84% of the characters are male and only 16% are female.

In the fifth grade literature text book, there are proportionally more male than female characters. 79% of all characters are male and only 21% are female. Indeed, in all five textbooks, female characters are presented less frequently than male characters. The biggest difference in proportions can be seen in the eighth grade literature textbook, but in almost all textbooks, female characters represent only around a quarter of all characters.

4.1.2. Images in textbooks

Images in textbooks represent photos of writers and poets, but there are also photos without any visible gender. The images of characters are divided into 5 categories based on the number of males and females in the pictures: male, female, mostly male, mostly female and equal. Some visuals of male characters have swords, and others, guns. This shows male dominance. Visuals of female characters are either pictures of female poets and writers, or mothers holding a baby doing household chores. Males are described mostly in authoritative or governmental roles.
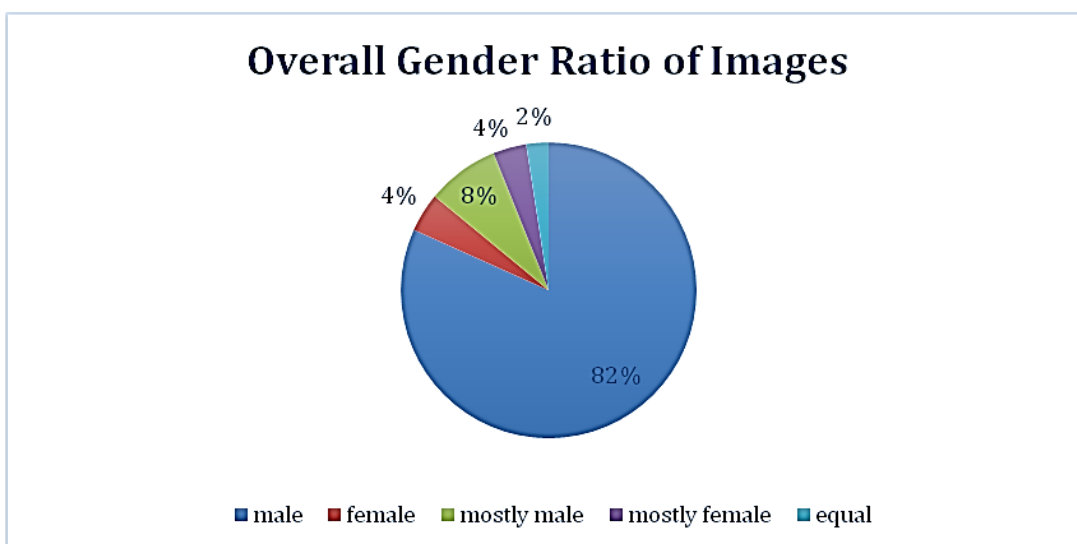

Figure 1 Overall Gender Ratio of Images

Figure 1 indicates the proportion of males and females in the images. Males appear in images more often than females. 73% of characters in visuals are male and 17% of visuals have mostly male characters in them. but only 4% of the characters in visuals are female. Similarly, only 4% of images contain mostly females. Images with equal numbers of males and females are the least frequently represented (2%).

Male	Mostly male	Female	Mostly Female	Equal
134	13	7	6	4

Table 5 Overall Male images in textbooks

4.1.3. Gender Roles

For the analysis of gender role representation in the textbooks, family roles and other household duties were taken into consideration.

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Gender	Occupational Roles	Domestic Roles	Total
Males	272	93	365
Females	14	100	114

Table 6. Total number of Occupational and Domestic Roles of Males and Females

In the 161 texts in the literature textbooks used from grades 5 to 9, very few female characters were represented in occupational roles, which means there is a lack of good examples for female students. Table 6 above shows the total number of domestic and occupational roles of males and females. There are 112 female characters in the text, of which only 12 are represented in occupational roles. The rest of the characters are represented in domestic roles. Female domestic roles include: mother, wife, daughter, sister, fiancée, aunt, mother in law, grandma, granddaughter, sweetheart, and lover. Females are represented in occupational roles such as student, teacher, school director, train guard, farmer, poet, interpreter, and solider. Females were not represented in any occupational roles in the books used in grades 7 to 9. They are only represented in domestic roles in these books. Some texts included in the literature books were written between the 12th and 19th centuries. At that time, women were rarely represented in public settings. The number of male characters is 353. That is why in these texts, males dominate, and they are seen in high ranking positions of that time, such as shah, sultan, khan (king). Males are also often represented in military positions, such as soldiers, officers, heroes, and knights. Only 14 female characters in total have occupational roles. whilst 100 female characters are represented in domestic roles. However, the allocation is vice versa for males; males are mostly represented in occupational roles and only 93 male characters are represented in domestic roles.

The allocation of occupational roles per textbook is even worse for female roles. The findings indicate that only 3% of females hold occupational roles in the texts.

Domestic Roles		Occupational Roles
Female	Mother, wife, daughter, sister, fiancée, aunt, mother in law, grandma, granddaughter, sweetheart	Student, teacher, school director, train guard, farmer, poet, interpreter, soldier
Male	Father, grandpa, son, uncle, grandson	shah, khan, governor, mayor, officer, policeman, student, workman, teacher, scientist, gangster, soldier, national hero, historical hero

Table 7. Occupational and Domestic Roles of Males and Females in texts

4.1.4 The most commonly used Gender Traits for males and females

Gender attributes refer to the way women and men are depicted in the textbooks. The images of how a man or a woman in a certain society should look or behave are highly dependent on the culture. As described by Mustapha (2012), attributes associated with the genders might resemble the real life of society. Studies have shown that similar attributes have ascribed to both men and women. According to Blumberg (2007, 7), in Syrian textbooks, men are most commonly presented as being brave and popular. The list of "top 10" attributes attached to men is as follows: strong, kind, achiever, innovative, adventurous, hardworking, and educated. Comparing the attributes ascribed to men and those ascribed to women, there were only two that were commonly associated with each gender. Women are presented as: beautiful, kind (the first similarity with men), loving, faithful, motherly, compassionate, generous,

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loyal, educated (the second similarity with men), and dependent. The findings reveal that women are seen as caring, emotional, and maternal in contrast to men, who are portrayed as active, goal-oriented, and hardworking. The analysis of the attributes associated with men and women in Azerbaijani literature textbooks may similarly reveal attitudes towards males and females formed historically by being passed down from generation t generation to the present generation.

Examples of gender biases are given to illustrate the gender stereotypes which exist in Azerbaijani literature textbooks.

Female Traits	Male Traits
Young, old, dedicative, hesitant, shy, care giving, dedicative mother, self-sacrificing, teacher, mannish woman, courageous, beautiful, kind, merciful mother, knowledgeable, brave woman	Strong, smart, incapable, capable, respectful, hardworking, fair, authoritative, thankful, leader, overconfident, angry, brutal, brave, hero, militant/ warlike, good, bad, trickster, supporter, arrogant, intellectual, bread winner, income provider, dominant, careless, wise, honest, ungrateful, cruel, oppressor, tyrannous, son, irresponsible, lazy, charitable, confident, self-sacrificing, sneaky

Table 8: The most commonly used Gender Traits for males and females

The quantitative analysis investigated the gender portrayal of characters in texts and images. Overall, men are represented three times more than women in the texts. The percentage of male characters in images is also higher than that of female characters: 73% of images are male and 17% of images are mostly males. These figures show the unequal allocation of gender roles in Azerbaijani-medium secondary school literature textbooks. In order to support and explain the findings, qualitative thematic analysis was conducted with some examples of texts and images.

4.2 Qualitative Analysis of Themes in Gender roles

4. 2.1 Themes in Men's Gender Roles

In this stage, the attributes found in the texts are divided into themes and samples of texts are provided.

Income provider

One of the most visible male roles in the texts is being an income provider. In most cultures, including Azerbaijani culture, it is a man's responsibility to take care of the social and economic welfare of his family. From childhood, boys are presented with the idea that it is compulsory for a man to have a profession. There are several reasons for this. First, parents see their sons as a future guarantee. When they get older, it is their children's, specifically their sons', responsibility to take care of their parents. Second, it is a rule that a man should work and earn money and that women should stay at home and take care of the children and her husband's family and do the housework.

Read, for example, the extract from the story titled "Running Alabash by the coast of the sea" written by Kyrgyz writer Chingiz Aytmatov, taken from the 6th grade literature textbook, p 40.

Elə buna görə də atalar deyiblər: «Ağıl — göydən, səriştə — uşaqlıqdan». Atalar belə də deyiblər: «Çörək gətirməyən oğul nəslə yükdür». Deməli, çörəkgətirən olmaq, ailə dolandıran olmaq üçün kişi xeylağı erkən çağlarından özünə bir peşə seçməlidir. Kiriskin də belə bir peşə öyrənmək çağıydı; oğlanı ovçuluğa öyrətmək, dənizə alışdırmaq vaxtı çatmışdı.

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A proverb states that "Wisdom comes from heaven, experience comes from childhood". Another proverb states that "a boy who does not earn money is a burden for his family". To be a breadwinner and to take care of his family, a boy should choose a profession in his childhood. This was the case for Kristin; it was time to for him to get used fishing and the sea. This example indicates the stereotype of it being a man's responsibility to ensure the social and economic welfare of his family and to learn to be the bread winner, an idea that is presented even in childhood. It is a biased attitude in many cultures, including Azerbaijani culture, that only boys are taught to have a profession and to learn the skills of earning money and supporting a family.

Dominant (in public and domestic setting)

As Azerbaijani society is patriarchal, men are dominant both in the family and in public. Historically, men have always been in authoritative positions and have been the decision makers. In the majority of texts, men are presented as shahs, sultans, khans, bays, policemen, and presidents. Some of them were presented positively as fair leaders, and some were shown in a negative lightto be cruel leaders. The poem from the fifth-grade textbook, named "Alexander came to the throne" was written by N. Ganjavi and was dedicated to Macedonian Alexander, and glorified his coming to throne. The poem provides an example of male dominance in society.

Figure 2. Dominant in public. A patriotic and heroic man

These two themes are connected to each other in Azerbaijani literature textbooks and being a patriot and a hero are mostly accepted as manly qualities. A real man should be a patriot and a hero and should always be ready to sacrifice his soul for the sake of the motherland. Patriotism and heroism are particularly glorified in literature and history textbooks.

Patriotism and heroism are dominant themes because Azerbaijan has been occupied by foreign invaders many times throughout its history. Many men have sacrificed their lives throughout history to protect the country from invaders. Therefore, patriotism and heroism are common topics in Azerbaijani literature. Men in patriotic and heroic roles are presented with swords and military uniforms. In stories and poems, they are described in battles as fighters and winners. Read, for example, the extract from the poem below titled "Mother's admonishment", by Samad Vurgun,

Sən də artır öz əlinlə zəfərlərin sayını.

Get, düşmənin qabağında igid tərpən vüqarla,

Tüfəngini təmiz saxla, atını da tumarla".

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A mother delivers a sermon to her son telling him to increase gain more victories, always stay honorable in front of the enemy, to keep his sword (gun) clean, and to groom his horse.

Some images and text samples related to heroism and patriotism are shown:

Figure 3. National hero of Azerbaijan, Mubariz Ibragimov

Figure 3, an image from the fifth-grade literature textbook, p. 82 from the text titled "Brave Mubariz". The text is about, Mubariz Ibrahimov, a National Hero of Azerbaijan. He is shown in the picture with gun in his hand. These kinds of images in literature textbooks aim to give people the message that Azerbaijani men are ready to fight to protect Azerbaijani lands from invaders.

Brave man

Being brave is one of the key qualities that men should have. However, interpretation of bravery can be vary depending on the nation and their culture. In the texts in Azerbaijani literature textbooks, bravery is described as showing strength by killing enemies, using swords and riding horses. Read, for example, the extract from Dada Gorgud epos (Imprisonment of Gazan Khan's son Uruz) p. 14.

Qardaşım Qaragünəm gördüm, -
Baş kəsib - qan töküdbür, haqqın alıb, ad qazanıbdır.
Sol tərəfə baxdıqda dayım Aruzu gördüm, -
Baş kəsib - qan töküdbür, haqqın alıb, ad qazanıbdır.
Qarşıma baxanda səni gördüm,
On altı yaşın oldu,
Bir gün ola, düşüb öləm, sən qalarsan;
Yay çəkməmisən, ox atmamısan,
Baş kəsməyibsən, qan tökməyibsən.
Qanlı Oğuz yurdunda bir mükafat almayıbsan.

Sabahkı gün vaxt gələr, mən ölüb sən qalanda taxt-tacımı birdən sənə verməzlər, - deyə sonumu andım, ağladım, oğul! – dedi".

In one of the assemblies, the brave men of the Oghuz tribe came together. In that meeting, Gazan khan looked to his right and left, saw his brother and his uncle, and felt proud. However, when he looked in front of him and saw his son, he cried. His son asked why, and he responded: "I looked to my right, saw my brother, he has shed blood, showed his courage, and made his name. I looked to my left side, saw my uncle Aruz, he did the same and became a brave man, but you are 16 years old, you have never shot an arrow, cut off a head, shed blood, and have not been rewarded. If I die one day, you cannot take my throne. My son, I realized my end and cried".

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Smart

In some texts, men are described as being smart. They are presented as scientists or smart boys and they are seen as ready to solve problematic issues and find solutions. Read, for example, the extract from the Azerbaijani tale "smart child", p 91.

Bu kənddə qoca bir qarının Əhməd adlı balaca nəvəsi var idi. O, çox ağıllı və qoçaq uşaq idi. Həmin gecə Əhməd səhərə kimi yata bilmədi, çox fikirləşdi, suallara cavab tapa bilmədi, axırda yadına düşdü ki, bu işdə böyüklərdən məsləhət almaq lazımdır.

Nənəsindən xəbər aldı ki, kəndimizdə heç qoca, ağıllı kişilərdən qalan varmı? Qarı dedi:

— Bala, kəndin kənarında bircə nəfər yaşı yüzü ötmüş bir qoca qalıb, şikəst olduğu üçün xanın adamları onu aparmayıblar".

The khan wanted to take the village from the people. He did not know what excuse to use to take the village. He decided to capture the smart men of the village and posed three puzzles for the villagers to solve. If they couldn't solve them, the khan would occupy the village. There was a little boy named Ahmad in the village. He was a very brave and smart boy. He thought about solutions, and suddenly he remembered to ask grandma whether there were any smart men left in the village. There was one; Ahmad found him, and with the help of the old man, they saved village from the khan.

4.2.2. Themes in women's gender roles

Given that there are fewer female characters in textbooks, there are also fewer themes in women's gender roles.

Nurturer

Women are often presented as mothers who take care of a child, the family, and who are always ready to serve their families. In the following photo, a mother is trying make her child fall asleep by singing a cradlesong.

Figure 5. A mother singing a cradlesong to her baby

Dedicative

In literature textbooks, women are presented as being dedicated. Their dedication is mostly related to the domestic setting and their roles as mothers and wives. Read, for example, the extract from a poem written by Bakhtiyar Vahabzxadeh, titled "white hairs", taken from a 5th grade textbook, p. 19

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Tanıyıram onu, dostlar, o ağsaçlı qadını mən.

Baxıb məchul bir nöqtəyə xəyalanı o dalmışdır?

Ah, o mənim müəllimim, nə qədər də qocalmışdır!

O ki onda cavan idi. Lakin yenə o cavanlıq

İtməmişdir. Gəlin, dostlar, biz düşünək bircə anlıq

Onun əziz cavanlığı yoxdursa da bu gün onda

O yaşayır mənim kimi yüz cavanın kamalında".

A female teacher is described as dedicated person, who has devoted her life to her students. She became old, but she lives in many young students' souls.

In the domestic setting, read, for example, an extract from a story titled "Through Path" written by Nariman Suleymanov, p 100.

Südabə xala həmişə səhər tezdən durar, uşaqları qalxanadək lazım olan işləri görər, onlar üçün çay-çörək hazırlayardı.

Bu səhər də hamıdan qabaq oyandı. Qalxmaq istədi, amma gördü canı ağrıyır, durmağa da həvəsi yoxdur. Bildi ki, xəstələnib. Yerinin içində astadan öz-özünə danışdı:

— Mən durmasam, iş aşmaz. Gedim bulaqdan su gətirim. Çay qoymaq lazımdır. Hələ uşaqlar əl-üzlərini də yuyacaqlar.

— Tərs kimi özüm də xəstələnmişəm".

Aunt Sudaba usually got up early in the morning, did the necessary household chores, and prepared breakfast before the children got up. This morning also woke up before everyone but could not get up because she was in pain. She was sick. She said to herself that if she didn't get up, nothing would go right. She needed to make tea, get the children to wash their hands and faces, and to fetch water from the spring. Even though she was ill, she felt guilty staying in bed.

Courageous

In a few texts, women are represented as being courageous. Read, for example, an extract from a story called "Between two worlds" written by Seyid Huseyn, p 40.

Payız mövsümü yaxınlaşdıqca Ənisənin vəziyyəti ağırlaşırdı. Üç ay olardı ki, o, məktəb həyatından ayrılmışdı. Bu üç ayın ərzində o, gələcək həyatı ilə bağlı bir qərara gəlməmişdi. Onun qarşısında üç yol vardı: darülfünun, ictimai həyat, ər evi.

Ənisənin yazdığı məktubu Muxtar Məşədi Əhmədə oxudu: Atacan! Bilirəm, mənim hərəkətimi pisləyəcəksən, çünki mən sənin sözündən çıxdım. Sənin xahişinə əməl etmədim. Yalnız bununla kifayətlənməyib, sənin evini tərk edib kəndə gedirəm.

Mən çox yaxşı bilirəm ki, qoca atalara ehtiram etmək lazımdır. Lakin kor-koranə onların əmrinə tabe olmaq ehtiram deyil. İnanıram ki, indi olmasa da, gələcəkdə mənə haqq verəcəksiniz".

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A girl called Anisa was in a difficult situation; she had to make decision. She had three choices: going to university, going to the village school where she had been offered a job, or getting married. Although her father wanted her to get married, she was against the idea and, at last, she decided to go to the village school, wrote a letter to her father, and left home.

The 8th grade textbook provides another example in the following extract from the poem called " Sultab Sanjar and Old Lady" by Nixami Ganjavi, p. 30.

Zülm edib bir qarıya çox uddurmuşdular qan,

O da Sultan Səncərin tutaraq yaxasından

Dedi ki: − Səndə insaf az görmüşəm, qulaq as!

Səndən gördüyüm zülüm əsla hesaba sığmaz".

An old lady was tyrannized by Sultan Sanjar's people. She was fed up of the sultan's tyranny, so she stopped him and ordered him to listen. She told him that she had not seen any mercy from him and that she could not count the number of times he had oppressed the people.

Discussion

Previous research conducted on English language textbooks indicated that there had been an improvement in balancing the portrayal of both genders in textbooks. For example, in the research titled "Gender Balance in K-12 American textbooks" conducted by Chick, there were more males than females at all school levels in both texts and images. However, newer history textbooks added more females than previous editions had had, which happened since the publication of the National History Standards. However, there was the same percentage of images of males, reinforcing the lack of change in the status of women in this textbook.

In the Azerbaijani context, there has been no previous substantial research conducted on gender roles in textbooks. Only one report was compiled in 2001 by UNICEF and the Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan. The interesting point of this research is an analysis of one random primary level grade 2 school textbook.

New findings have demonstrated that there is an imbalance in gender representation in Azerbaijani-medium literature textbooks. The results indicated that women are represented three times less than men in Azerbaijani literature textbooks. Gender stereotypes are also prevalent. Either women are excluded, or , if they are represented, they are portrayed in lowlier positions than men. Female characters were mostly presented in domestic roles with more passive attributes. Overall, the content of the Azerbaijani literature textbooks used in grades 5 to 9 present a big gap between two genders. The analysis indicated that the percentage of male characters represented is higher than that of female characters in all literature textbooks for both texts and images. The occupational roles of characters from both genders were analyzed as well. The research revealed that women are not represented as often as men in occupational roles. Females are mostly presented in domestic roles. Women are presented as being connected with the family, and are seen more frequently than men in domestic roles, taking on almost all the housework in all the textbooks. Based on the results of the quantitative analysis, the characters of both genders were grouped in themes.

Previous research established that females' activities were mostly in domestic settings. The results of the present study corroborate this finding; female activities were still restricted to domestic roles, such as doing household chores

Moreover, in the previous research, men were represented in images more frequently than females. Unfortunately, the new findings revealed no improvement in the representation of women in images, as the majority of images were of men.

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In previous research, an examination of the distribution of household responsibilities in the textbooks revealed that females tended to be in more traditional stereotypical roles such as doing housework and taking care of her children and husband, and serving guests. The sad reality is that the findings of the present research highlight the same biased portrayal of women.

In every category there was evidence that gender discrimination exists in textbooks used in secondary schools. Although over half of Azerbaijan's population is female and women are becoming more active in various social roles, they are still represented in pictures less than men are. It seems that the patriarchal culture has not left space for female visibility in secondary school literature textbooks.

Since textbooks reflect the social, cultural and religious ideologies and perceptions of writers, there is no doubt that there is not much room for women's visibility in Azerbaijani textbooks at the secondary school level. Regarding occupation, the gender inequality was even more obvious. In five Azerbaijani-medium secondary school literature textbooks, women were mainly seen in roles traditionally associate with females, such as teaching and doing household chores. It was also very clear that women were not portrayed as having a wide variety of jobs, whilst the men in the textbooks had a wide range of occupations. Males were also often portrayed as bread winners and as involved in providing the family's income. Overall, male characters were overrepresented in the five textbooks examined in the following ways: visually in frequency and order of occurrence, occupation, and stereotypical activities. Sexism, it seems, is so deeply ingrained in our culture, our language, and our subconscious that it is difficult for us to avoid it in the production of educational materials.

Conclusion and Recommendations for MOE, textbook writers and for teachers

Although Azerbaijan is undergoing changes and developments in all domains including issues relating to gender, this study revealed that society's old stereotypes are still alive and revived through different, modern and even educational ways. The present research examined only a few aspects to determine the representation of men and women in the textbooks. The results indicate that girls and women are less visible than boys and men in texts and images. In addition,, textbook writers portrayed women in limited occupational roles, whilst men are represented in variety of jobs. Males are dominant in the occupational roles and this may hold girls back from social and professional improvement. Here are recommendations for developing textbooks in the future:

1. Other secondary school textbooks should be analyzed to determine whether they are gender sensitive or not.
2. Gender stereotypes in school textbooks and classroom practices in policy documents should be eliminated. Elimination of gender biased texts and images may not be enough to attain the SDGs of gender equality by 2030. The most challenging part will be to change the attitudes of educators and textbook writers. Writers of educational materials should analyze textbooks for and aim to reduce the dominance of males as much as possible. This would mean that men and women are portrayed fairly future textbooks in terms of the number of male and female characters. One of the best ways in mainstreaming gender equality into the curriculum and teaching materials is regular revision of these materials by including gender-sensitive approaches and gender perspectives.
3. It is recommended that the Ministry of Education consider arranging small teams of outside academics – including at least one member with expertise in gender and education – to evaluate the textbook authors' compliance with the adopted demands of textbook policy.
4. Gender experts should be involved in training textbook writers in aspects of gender equity related to textbook publication. This should help to create a positive attitude for gender reform.
5. After ensuring a reduction in gender bias in textbooks, school teachers should be trained on how to use gender biased textbooks by using gender sensitive teaching methods. They need to be trained to use techniques that empower them to tackle gender-biased materials, and to present them to students in an unprejudiced way because teachers are the key people in delivering information to students.
6. Finally, guideline books should be published that will help instructors implement gender sensitive teaching methods in their lessons.

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Statement of Conflict
There is no any conflict of interest.

Analyzed textbooks
1. ....5ᵗʰ Grade Literature textbook
2. ......6ᵗʰ Grade Literature textbook
3. ....7ᵗʰ Grade Literature textbook
4. ....8ᵗʰ Grade Literature textbook
5. ....9ᵗʰ Grade Literature textbook
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