



Determining Gender Stereotype based on Physical Appearance Expectations in Interpersonal Communication Process: An Intercultural Comparison between Turkey and Portugal

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ABSTRACT

While making inferences about the physical appearance of other persons, the individual makes use of various stereotypes, and according to these stereotypes, categorizes the new individual based on his/her physical appearance. This affects the interpersonal communication process established, and the individual starts and maintains the communication process according to the stereotypes about other persons categorised in the mind. In this regard, it can be suggested that gender stereotypes, which are based on the physical appearance of the individual, are determinant on the content and quality of interpersonal communication. In this context, determining these stereotype-based expectations is of great importance also for reducing communication barriers encountered in interpersonal communication. Based on this focus, the research aims to reveal the physical appearance features of the other person, which the individual pays attention to most, at the start of and during the interpersonal communication process, and whether this attitude differs according to the gender of the evaluating or evaluated individual. Conducted in accordance with this aim, the study is a descriptive method-based field research implemented by means of open-ended question form. The study also aims to present an intercultural perspective; within this scope, findings obtained from the statements of Turkish and Portuguese respondents are provided in a comparative manner. The primary result of the study is the fact that both physical appearance features, which the individual first evaluates in the moment of first meeting and during the interpersonal communication process, differ according to the gender and cultural background of the evaluating individual.

Keywords: interpersonal communication, gender, gender stereotypes, physical appearance, gendered expectation

INTRODUCTION

Gender stereotypes refer to a belief system that the individual starts learning as soon as he or she is included in the social life. The belief system in question consists of cognitive schemas, based on gender roles about what a woman and man should do, how they should behave and how they should look in their social lives (Deaux & Major, 1987) and the individual takes advantage of these cognitive schemas, when he or she sees and evaluates an unfamiliar person (Barbera, 2003; Bem, 1981; Mather, Johnson, & De Leonadis, 1999; Spaniol & Bayen, 2002). Cognitive schemas offer information to the individual about others and the individual utilizes them, as he or she evaluates each new individual he or she meets and makes inferences about them. Although these cognitive schemas, utilized by the individual, helps him or her to categorize his or her environment and make sense of others around them, they also bring along the notion of having certain expectations, which are in accordance with the category in question. Including gender stereotypes as well, these expectations do not only involve the differences, which are posited to exist between men and women only, but also shape the manners, in which men and women define themselves and others and behave

(Ellemers, 2018, p. 275). In this sense, it is possible to argue that the individual's definition of him/herself and others around him/her, based on his/her expectations determines the manner, in which he/she establishes relations and communicates with others. That is because the individual evaluates other individuals according to his or her expectations, which include gender stereotypes, and makes inferences according to whether or not the other person is conforming to the said expectations. This means that the evaluated individual's compliance with the evaluating individual's expectations affect the common meaning production between the individuals and becomes determinant over the content and quality of the communication process. Thus, it can be suggested that cognitive and motivational functions gender stereotypes offer individuals designate our beliefs and expectations about men and women, hence shaping the manner in which the individual communicates. In addition, gender stereotypes include a variety of components (Deaux & Kite, 1993; Deaux & Lewis, 1983, 1984; Deaux et al., 1985; Freeman, 1987; Jackson & Cash, 1985; Six & Eckes, 1991) and one of the most important of them is physical appearance of the evaluated individual (Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Dökmen, 2012). That is because the physical outlook of the individual is the first and most accessible stereotype component, presented about the individual's self to the others. The individual, who is evaluated based on various characteristics of her/his physical appearance, is expected to act in accordance with the stereotypes, which are categorised according to these characteristics, and inferences are made based on whether the individual conforms to such stereotypes or not. The communication process is started, maintained and completed based on the attitude adopted in accordance with the inferences. However, the individual evaluated in this process is not categorised based on the same physical features, and the physical appearance, to which the attention is first paid, differs according to the evaluating and the evaluated individual. In this regard, it is important to understand the physical appearance features, which are primarily evaluated, to have an understanding of the inferences made about the individual and therefore, reducing the barriers encountered in interpersonal communication process. In this context, the study aims to reveal the physical appearance features of the other person, which the individual pays attention to most, at the start of and during the interpersonal communication process, and whether this attitude differs according to the gender of the evaluating or evaluated individual. Also, it is observed that there are few studies, which address the gender stereotypes and expectations, which are based on these stereotypes on an intercultural level (Hofstede, 1996; Sczesny et al., 2004; Williams & Best, 1982; Williams et al., 1999); in this regard, it is thought that the study is important for providing an intercultural comparison between Turkish and Portuguese respondents. Accordingly, the study will first investigate the relationship between gender stereotypes and interpersonal expectations, address the physical appearance component, and mention the intercultural differences regarding stereotype contents. In the research section of the study, findings on the physical appearance features of communication source, to which the individual is primarily paying attention to, and whether this differs according to the gender identity of the evaluating and the evaluating person, based on the answers of Turkish and Portuguese respondents, will be provided in a comparative manner.

Gender Stereotypes and Interpersonal Expectation

Gender stereotypes describe certain behaviors and characteristics, which are expected by the society from women as a group and men as a group. These stereotypes in question provide descriptive prescriptions about men and women and from this point of view, are different than other forms of stereotypes. The descriptive aspect of gender stereotypes stems from the definitions in people's minds, concerning how a typical member of the group of the stereotype in question looks like¹. The element of prescription, on the other hand, refers to the part that dictates how they should behave and what they should do to the members of the said group. This prescriptive aspect - in other words - these requirements- take up quite a central and strong place in

¹ Typical group traits, defined about genders of men and women are divided into two fundamental clusters (Deaux & Lewis, 1982: p.992) and respondents reached a consensus, regarding the traits in these clusters. Accordingly (Broverman et al., 1972), respondents list the traits for women's traits in the warmth-expressiveness cluster (e.g., kind, talkative, gentle, fashion conscious, in need of security, compassionate, expressive) for men's traits in the competence cluster (e.g., aggressive, independent, not emotional, dominant, competitive, rational, leader, ambitious, does not care about looks, not hurt easily and so on). It is also possible to say that various studies (Byres, Miller & Schafer, 1999; Kite, Deaux & Haines, 2008; Rosenkratz, 1968; Spence, Helmreich & Stapp, 1975; Williams & Best, 1992; Williams, Satterwhite & Best, 1999) yielded similar conclusions to the difference in question.

gender identity stereotypes, for it limits the behaviors of both women and men (Dökmen, 2012, p. 105-106). This is because the prescriptive requirements, presented by the gender stereotypes to the individual about others around them, influence the individual's expectations and the way individual evaluates those around him or her, according to the extent to which they are in compliance with the expectations in question. Thus, it is possible to suggest that the individual's hardly noticeable expectations, including his or her needs, priorities and values, reflect his or her stereotypical opinions on men and women (Barreto & Ellemers, 2015; Ellemers, 2008). In this context, myriad research studies (Buffington et al., 2016; Grunspan et al., 2016; Joshi et al., 2015; Leslie et al., 2015; MacNell, Driscoll, & Hunt, 2015; Moss-Racusin et al., 2012; Proudfoot, Kay, & Koval, 2015; Trevino et al., 2015) reveal that the stereotypical expectations of the individual affect his or her forms and standards of evaluation (Biernat & Kobrynowicz, 1997; Ellemers, 2008) of other women and men's skills or behaviors.

In addition, expectations do not only influence the evaluation standard of the individual, but also how they pay attention to others, interpret them, the kind of conclusions they come to after interpretation and even how much of their opinions they will remember about the others (Ellemers, 2018, p. 275). During this process, the individual pays attention to some of the characteristics of the other person, earlier than other characteristics, reaches a conclusion about the individual by relating the characteristics, which are prominent for him or her, with stereotypical expectations and easily recalls new information, which he or she now associated with that individual. When all these diverse mechanisms work together, on the other hand, it could be argued that expectations involving gender stereotypes accompany processes of storing the information about men and women, its organization and the individual's evaluation. That is because the individual's new evaluation, which is in compliance with the expectation that involves gender stereotypes, is prioritized; therefore, evaluations that are not in compliance with the stereotypes have higher thresholds of being noticed, evaluated and stored than evaluations that are in compliance with stereotypes (Ellemers, 2008, p. 283). Many studies about this topic, carried out with both children and adults (Bennett et al., 2000; de Lemus et al., 2013; Ito & Urland, 2003) show that individuals definitely and quickly involve others they do not know in clusters, consisting of these gender characteristics, even though the categorization in question is not related with the current situation or does not involve helpful information. Thus, it is possible to suggest that gender stereotypical expectations influence the individual's priorities during the process of perceiving others around the individual and become significant outputs, affecting everyday life.

Gender Stereotypes and Physical Appearance in Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication, in the widest sense, "*is the process of generating meaning and sharing said meaning, established as a result of the interaction between two persons*" (Gürüz & Eğinli, 2011, p. 54). This process refers to individuals, relaying their messages of their own priorities, values and expectations to each other, and the exchanged meaning production being carried out continuously. Underlining the mutual meaning production of interpersonal communication, this very aspect also renders it a necessity to focus on gender stereotypes that arise as a barrier in interpersonal communication between the parties (Gül-Ünlü, 2018a, 2018b). That is because gender stereotypes influence the individual's manner of defining himself or herself first (Cidanu, Latrofa, & Carnaghi, 2011; Guimond et al., 2006; Spence, 1975), shape the content of the message he or she shares with the other party, hence undertaking an active role in the process of common meaning production between individuals.

Interpersonal communication process' dependence on the individuals' gender stereotype ideas and the individuals' need to fulfil stereotypical expectations cause a gender based differentiation, influencing how the communication source is observed and attributions are made to many of his or her traits (Marsh, Cook, & Hicks, 2006), the content of shared information between individuals and behaviors of opening oneself (Cash, Winstead, & Janda, 1986) and the individual's form of communication with the receiving man or woman about how to behave before them (Prentice & Carranza, 2002). Therefore, it is possible to suggest that the joint meaning production the individual realizes with the other individual within the interpersonal communication process includes both parties' expectations regarding gender stereotypes, and both sides open themselves and share information, according to their expectations.

Deaux and Kite (1985), address the individual's knowledge about the other person's gender as a three-stage model. According to this model, the individual, upon encountering the information about the other

individual's gender, (1) defines it over the other individual's biological traits, (2) identifies it according to the other individual's physical characteristics, (3) attributes an attitude according to the other individual's personality traits. Physical characteristics of the individual take up a significant place throughout this evaluation process; they are approached as a component per se, offering various evaluation criteria for assigning attributions to the other individual, which contain specific stereotypes. Similarly, Dökmen (2012, p. 111) states that the first impression of the individual is also dependent on the component of physical appearance, underlining that the individual's physical and behavioral characteristics include stereotypes about himself or herself and influence their utilizability. The acceptance of physical appearance as one of the most important components that activate gender stereotypes about the evaluated individual² leads to the emergence of the individual's physical characteristics as an important variable in terms of the mutual meaning production during interpersonal communication process. In this context, many research studies (Cash & Kilcullen, 1985; Cash, Rissi, & Chapman, 1985; Cash & Brown, 1989; Gül-Ünlü, 2018, 2019; Jackson & Cash, 1985; Jackson & Ervin, 2001; Jackson, Sullivan, & Hymes, 1987; Jackson, Sullivan, & Rostker, 1988; Stake & Lauer, 1987; Wallston & O'Leary, 1981) underline that the individual's physical appearance, which is interpreted with respect to his or her gender and gender role, is determinant in the individual's interpersonal relationships.

Additionally, stereotypes that are attributed to the individual over his or her physical appearance are not only linked with the individual's gender, but also with the levels of masculinity or femininity. In this regard, it can be suggested that components of physical appearance, which are linked with masculinity and femininity, differentiate the individual's self-evaluation of his or her own physical appearance (Linda et al., 1988), his or her tendency to find himself or herself or others attractive, based on his or her physical appearance (Jackson et al., 1987) and the content of attributions about him or her, made by those, who observe the individual in question (Marsh, Cook, & Hicks, 2006)³. Thus, levels of masculinity or femininity, which the individual adopts in link with his or her physical appearance, can be claimed to influence the impression he or she makes on other individuals and determine the content of gender stereotypes (Berry & McArthur, 1985; Deaux & Lewis, 1983, 1984; Sczesny, Spreeman, & Stahlberg, 2006).

It must be underlined that the individual's deductions, as attributed to the individual and to others, differ according to the sex of the evaluator and the evaluated during the evaluation process of physical appearances of the individuals, besides the evaluation criteria. In this context, Friedrickson and Roberts (1997), posit that women and men have different evaluation standards for the women and men they evaluate; women evaluate the other person over their physical appearance, rather than their success, while men do not have such a prioritization during the process. Cikara, Eberhardt, and Fiske (2011) state that the evaluator's focus on the woman's physical appearance first causes a less competent impression, while Heflick et al. (2011) highlight that in cases, where men are evaluated over their physical appearances, physical appearance is not determinant on the perceived quality of the man. On the other hand, it is observed that individuals' body perceptions and postures are related to their gender stereotypes. Accordingly, the individual's perception on both his/her or others' bodies differ according to gender stereotypes, regardless of the evaluator's gender,

² Many studies that were conducted (Deaux & Kite, 1993; Deaux & Lewis, 1983, 1984; Freeman, 1987; Six & Eckes, 1991) point out that gender stereotypes emerge as a result of fundamental components such as physical appearance, behavior, role-based behavior and occupation. For example; Six and Eckes (1991, p.69) underline that gender stereotypes are not attributed only by the personality traits of the individual, but also in relation with components such as physical appearance, social role and occupation. Deaux and Lewis (1984, p.1003), on the other hand, state that the relation between gender stereotype and the component of physical appearance can also be observed in other components such as role-based behavior or occupation; however, the influence of the component of physical appearance cannot be overlooked, for the component of physical appearance is highly utilized, while inferences about others are made.

³ The three research studies in question can be listed as follows; Linda et al. (1988) asked individuals to assess their own physical appearances over various components and found out that women with feminine traits represent the sample group that focuses on their own physical appearances the most. Jackson, Sullivan and Hymes (1987), on the other hand, acquired the finding that women, who have a feminine outlook, find their own physical appearances less attractive and are more prone to changing it. Moreover, Marsh, Cook and Hicks (2006) conducted a study, where they found that when the observed individual is a man, attributions are more accurate than those of women. However, when respondents think that the individual is gay or lesbian, the content of their attributions differ. From this perspective, it is possible to say that the adopted masculine or feminine roles of the individuals are also important determinants, in addition to gender, throughout the evaluation process of the individual.

while the body perception of women are claimed to have a more negative content, compared to those of men (Cash & Brown, 1989). Similarly, it is expressed that this phenomenon is also determinant on the posture of the individual and women and men assume different postures; men have a more open and spreaded stance, while women have a more closed and withdrawn stance (Cashdan, 1998; de Lemus, Spears, & Moya, 2012). Therefore, it would not be wrongful to argue that physical appearance is a rather more determinant component in the evaluation process for women than men, women are more easily objectified over their physical appearances and this has a negative influence on the internal and external evaluations concerning the physical appearance of women.

Physical appearance and intercultural differences

Although gender stereotypes have similar contents to one another, they are not universally the same. The content of stereotypes differ, according to the society's educational level, historical background, geographical location or cultural characteristics. In this context, Ersoy (2009, p. 213-215) mentions that gender roles have predefined and envisioned contents within the social culture and individuals intrinsically possess the habits, moods, attitudes and evaluations that express the society's expectations, concerning the individual's gender. When the importance of the gender role, adopted by the individual, is considered with respect to the individual's evaluation process, it could be suggested that deductions, made by individual-specific evaluations, are directly related to that gender role's compliance or incompliance with the society's cultural structure. In this context, it could be argued that social values and beliefs, which are determinant on the social interaction of the individual (Shaffer, Crepaz, & Sun, 2000) may differ according to the cultural structure and this would mean that components, which make up a stereotype, would also differ (Higgins & King, 1981). On the other hand, it must also be pointed out that the level of influence from cultural standards for each individual throughout the evaluation process for the others will not be the same for everyone. Various studies within this scope (Jackson & Ervin, 2001; Jackson, Sullivan, & Hymes, 1987; Jackson, Sullivan, & Rostker, 1988) reveal that individuals with gender-typed roles are more affected by the cultural standards of the society, in which they exist, which, in turn, renders the individual more prone to evaluate the physical appearance of him/herself and the individual, he or she evaluates, in line with the cultural standards in question. Thus, the existence of a relation between the individual's environmental expectations about the suitable gender role and the cultural structure may differentiate the deductions about the components of physical appearance, matched with that particular gender role⁴.

Aim and Methodology

This research study aims to reveal the physical characteristics, to which the individual pays attention first upon encountering the other individual during interpersonal communication process, according to their gender stereotypes. Moreover, the study in question aims to provide an intercultural comparison; from this framework, a comparative examination is also targeted, based on the research findings, acquired over examples from Turkey and Portugal. To that end, answers to the following research questions are sought:

RQ1: Which physical appearance features do the respondents primarily pay attention to, when they see an individual for the first time, before the interpersonal communication process? Does this differ according to the gender of the individual? Is there a significant relationship between the gender and cultural background of the evaluating individual, and the physical appearance features of the evaluated person, which are primarily evaluated?

RQ2: Which physical appearance features do the respondents primarily pay attention to, when they are in an interpersonal communication process with another individual (while speaking and listening)? Does this differ according to the gender of the individual? Is there a significant

⁴ It is possible to say that the few studies that emphasize intercultural differences in evaluations regarding physical appearance often focus on the attraction of physical appearance, perceived between the individuals (Dion, Pak & Dion, 1990; Hofstede, 1996; Shaffer, Crepaz & Sun, 2000), the content of deduction they make according to physical appearance differ in line with societies' levels of collectivism or individualism and individuals from collectivist cultures are more sensitive in capturing elements of physical attraction.

relationship between the gender and cultural background of the evaluating individual, and the physical appearance features of the evaluated person, which are primarily evaluated?

RQ3: Which features do respondents primarily pay attention to, when they evaluate the physical appearance elements of the individual (body structure and dress choices) in an interpersonal communication process? Does this differ according to the gender of the individual? Is there a significant relationship between the gender and cultural background of the evaluating individual, and the physical appearance features of the evaluated person, which are primarily evaluated?

RQ4: Regarding the femininity and masculinity of the individual, to which physical appearance features do respondents primarily pay attention during the interpersonal communication process? Does this differ according to the gender of the individual? Is there a significant relationship between the gender and cultural background of the evaluating individual, and the physical appearance features of the evaluated person, which are primarily evaluated?

The study carries the quality of a field study, carried out with the descriptive method and based on an open-ended questionnaire. A projective test within the questionnaire, where respondents were asked to match given statements with the method of completion, is applied. The projective test method gives the subject implicit stimuli and asks the subject to react to them. The purpose of the test is not clearly expressed to the subject; therefore, the answers are assumed to reflect the subject's unconscious wishes and feelings, as well as their manner of perceiving the outside world (Akkoyun, 1983, p. 399). From this perspective, respondents were asked questions, where they had to complete the statements with incomplete stimuli concerning the evaluated individual within the scope of the projective test in question, and complete these statements with the first physical characteristics that pop into their minds.

Development of the Measurement Tool

A few studies that are carried out to measure gender stereotypes (Beller and Gafni, 2000; Moreno and Mayer, 1999; Six and Eckes, 1991; Sullivan, 2001) utilize open-ended questions and the questionnaires, in this regard, are preferred to prepare other questionnaires with lists of standardized adjectives to be used later (Bem, 1974; Gül-Ünlü, 2018a, 2019; Rosenkrantz et al., 1968). From this perspective, this study utilizes an open-ended questionnaire with a projective test quality, so that respondents are not forced to select one of the provided options and can use their own cognitive references and reach judgments and evaluations about their social categorizations of men and women on individual levels (Six and Eckes, 1991, p. 59). Projective tests involve unstructured and open-ended questions; therefore, they give the researcher the opportunity to observe how respondents organize and reflect the materials they possess. Thus, the respondent's means to freely answer the questions do not limit him/her and even allow the utilization of his/her inner world (Akkoyunlu, 1983). On the other hand, many studies conducted to identify gender stereotypes (Deaux and Lewis, 1984; Gül-Ünlü, 2018a, 2019; Marsh, Cook, & Hicks, 2006; Six & Eckes, 1991) predicate that individuals are prone to making deductions about others that are related to gender roles over the small hints they already possess and these deductions are then linked with many other characteristics of the evaluated individual (socio-demographic traits, skills, areas of interest and so on); hence, they acquire opinions about other social categories, regarding the evaluated individual. It is even mentioned that when the differentiating characteristics of the source are scarce, stereotypes have far more influence on the content of many attributions, made onto that source (Bayen et al., 2000). Within this context, no information other than the gender of the individual in question, regarding the physical appearance characteristics, which are asked to be evaluated by the respondents in the questionnaire, are included. Respondents were asked to form a relation between these two variables that are presented to them (gender of the evaluated and physical appearance characteristic) and complete the sentence. Thus, the manner in which respondents come up with stereotypes about the target individual, about whom no characteristics other than his/her gender is provided, is aimed to be identified, when respondents relate their opinions on different physical appearance characteristics with biological gender.

Open ended questionnaire form prepared consists of three sections. In the first section, questions intended for determining the demographic characteristics of the respondents, are presented. In the second

section, questions intended for determining the gender stereotypes attributed to the physical appearance of the individual, are presented. Physical appearance features included in the open ended questions are as follows: (1) physical appearance feature observed when the evaluated female/male individual is first encountered, (2) physical appearance feature to which the attention is paid while talking to the evaluated female/male individual, (3) physical appearance feature, to which the attention is paid while listening to the evaluated female/male individual, (4) physical appearance feature, to which attention is paid with regard to the body structure of the evaluated female/male individual, (5) physical appearance feature, to which attention is paid with regard to the clothing of the evaluated female/male individual, and (6) physical appearance feature, to which the attention is paid with regard to the femininity/masculinity of the evaluated female/male individual. In the third section, the study aimed to determine the agreement level of the respondents based on the answers given to open ended questions; therefore, they were asked to rate the agreement level of their questions (1: Very strongly agree, 2: Strongly agree, 3: Agree). Furthermore, respondents were explained, before they answered the questionnaire and in accordance with the filling method of projective tests, that there are no right or wrong answers in completing the sentences, which they were asked to do, and they were not given explicit information about the main purpose of the study. In addition, the inclusion of an intercultural comparison is simultaneously aimed with this study. From this perspective, university students were deemed suitable for the questionnaire, in order to present a similarity among respondent profiles. In this regard, the questionnaire was applied to students of Istanbul University's Faculty of Communication and students of Nova University of Lisbon, Social Sciences and Humanities Faculty with a randomized sampling method. During this process, completed questionnaire of 40 respondents were first evaluated (in both countries) and no problems were encountered. Thus, the questionnaire, which was decided to be applied, was answered by 290 respondents in total (160 respondents from Turkey and 130 respondents from Portugal). The evaluation of the answers from the questionnaire included the coding of the answers, which were then transferred to a digital environment with SPSS 22.0 frequency analyses and comparative tables as per the research questions were then acquired with the same program.

FINDINGS

This section covers the demographic data of the respondents from the study first, then provides a comparative landscape of tables of frequency and relation analysis concerning the respondents' answers to the open-ended question form. An examination of the demographics of respondents reveal that 50% of the respondents in Turkey (80 persons) are female and 50% are male (80 persons); while 52.3% of the respondents in Portugal (68 persons) are female and 47.7% (62 persons) are male. The age average of the respondents in Turkey is 24 and that of the respondents in Portugal is 22. From among the open-ended questions, answered by the respondents, those with the three highest frequencies are provided in the frequency tables below:

When I see a woman, I pay attention to her ...						
Turkey			Portugal			
		n	%		n	%
1	Physical appearance	42	26,4	Facial expression	33	25,4
2	Facial expression	28	17,6	Clothes	28	21,5
3	Eyes	24	15,1	Eyes	23	17,7

When I see a man, I pay attention to his ...						
Turkey			Portugal			
		n	%		n	%
1	Physical appearance	35	22,4	Facial expression	41	31,5
2	Facial expression	28	17,9	Eyes	27	20,8
3	Clothes	20	12,8	Clothes	15	11,5

Respondents were asked about the physical characteristic, to which they pay attention first upon encountering a woman. Turkish respondents stated that they first pay attention to the woman's overall physical appearance (26.4%), facial expression (17.6%) and her eyes (15.1%); while Portuguese respondents stated that they first pay attention to the woman's facial expression (25.4%), her clothes (21.5%) and her eyes (17.7%). Respondents were then asked about the first physical characteristic to which they pay attention upon encountering a man; Turkish respondents respectively listed the man's overall physical appearance (22.4%),

facial expression (17.9%) and his clothes (12.8%) and Portuguese respondents, for the same question, listed facial expression (31.5%), his eyes (20.8%) and his clothes (11.5%), respectively. The frequency distribution in question shows that Turkish respondents expressed that they first evaluate the physical appearance of the individual, regardless of the gender, while Portuguese respondents evaluate the facial expression first, regardless of the individual's gender.

When I am talking to a woman, I pay attention to her ...						
Turkey			Portugal			
		n	%		n	%
1	Facial expression	37	24	Eyes	39	30,7
2	Eyes	32	20,8	Facial expression	18	14,2
3	Voice	17	11	Style of speech	12	9,4
When I am talking to a man, I pay attention to his ...						
Turkey			Portugal			
		n	%		n	%
1	Facial expression	29	19,5	Eyes	43	33,9
2	Eyes	26	17,4	Facial expression	23	18,1
3	Style of speech	20	13,4	Voice	11	8,7
When I am listening to a woman, I pay attention to her ...						
Turkey			Portugal			
		n	%		n	%
1	Eyes	32	21,8	Voice	33	25,8
2	Facial expression	25	17	Style of speech	26	20,3
3	Content of speech	18	12,2	Content of speech	17	13,3
When I am listening to a man, I pay attention to his ...						
Turkey			Portugal			
		n	%		n	%
1	Eyes	29	20,6	Voice	32	25,6
2	Content of speech	22	15,6	Style of speech	19	15,2
3	Facial expression	19	13,5	Content of speech	18	14,4

Respondents were asked about the physical characteristic, to which they pay attention first, as they speak to a woman during interpersonal communication process. Turkish respondents respectively listed facial expression (24%), eyes (20.8%) and voice (11%) and Portuguese respondents respectively listed eyes (30.7%), facial expression (14.2%) and style of speech (9.4%). When the evaluated individual is a man, Turkish respondents stated that they first pay attention to facial expression (19.5%), eyes (17.4%) and style of speech (13.4%) and Portuguese respondents stated that they first pay attention to eyes (33.9%), facial expression (18.1%) and voice (8.7%). The question about the physical characteristic, to which the respondents pay attention first, while listening to a woman during the interpersonal communication process was answered by the Turkish respondents with eyes (21.8%), facial expression (17%) and content of speech (12.2%), while Portuguese respondents listed voice (25.8%), style of speech (20.3%) and content of speech (13.3%). When the evaluated individual is a man, Turkish respondents stated that they first pay attention to the evaluated individual's eyes (20.6%), content of speech (15.6%) and facial expression (13.5%) and Portuguese respondents stated that they first pay attention to, respectively, the evaluated individual's voice (25.6%), style of speech (15.2%) and content of speech (14.4%). Therefore, it is possible to say that Turkish respondents, during the interpersonal communication process, pay attention to the facial expression of the individual, whose physical characteristics they evaluate, regardless of the gender; whereas Portuguese respondents pay attention to the eyes of the individual they evaluate, regardless of the gender. It can also be posited that respondents focus on the same physical characteristics, regardless of the gender, as they are listening to the other individual; accordingly, Turkish respondents stated that they first pay attention to the other person's eyes and Portuguese respondents stated that they focus on the other individual's voice, as they listen to the other individual.

The first thing that I pay attention to in a woman's body structure is ...						
Turkey			Portugal			
		n	%			
1	Clothes	30	21,7	Body language	29	23,6
2	Cleanliness	25	17,5	Hair style	24	19,5
3	Shoes	24	16,8	Eyes	20	16,3
The first thing that I pay attention to in a man's body structure is ...						
Turkey			Portugal			
		n	%			
1	Clothes	36	25	Body language	30	24,8
2	Cleanliness	26	18,1	Eyes	19	15,7
3	Hair style	15	10,4	Clothes	15	12,4
The outfit that catches my attention the most is ... for a woman.						
Turkey			Portugal			
		n	%			
1	Looking elegant	38	26,4	Dress	26	23
2	Tightness of clothes	19	13,2	Classic clothes	19	16,8
3	Abnormality	18	12,5	Looking elegant	18	15,9
The outfit that catches my attention the most is ... for a man.						
Turkey			Portugal			
		n	%			
1	Looking elegant	29	20	Classic clothes	40	35,7
2	Classic clothes	22	15,2	Looking elegant	18	16,1
3	Abnormality	15	10,3	Branded clothes	13	11,6

Respondents were also asked about the body structure and concerning characteristics, to which respondents pay attention first, as they evaluate a woman with whom they are in the interpersonal communication process. Turkish respondents answered with clothes (21.7%), cleanliness (17.5%) and shoes (16.8%), while Portuguese respondents listed facial expression (23.6%), hairstyle (19.5%) and eyes (16.3%). The same question was also asked for when the evaluated individual is a man, to which Turkish respondents stated the individual's clothes (25%), cleanliness (18.1%) and hairstyle and Portuguese respondents stated that they pay attention to the individual's body language (24.8%), eyes (15.7%) and clothes (12.4%). Another question for the respondents was about the physical characteristics, to which they pay attention first during the interpersonal communication process, related to the individual's clothes. Accordingly, when the evaluated individual is a woman, Turkish respondents stated that they pay attention to, respectively, the elegance of the individual (26.4%), tightness of clothes (13.2%) and abnormal clothing (12.5%), while Portuguese respondents listed, respectively, the individual's dress (23%), classic clothing (16.8%) and the elegance of clothes (15.9%). When the evaluated individual is a man, Turkish respondents pay attention to the elegance of the individual's clothes (20%), classic style of clothing (15.2%) and abnormal clothing style (10.3%), while Portuguese respondents pay attention to the classic clothing style of the individual (35.7%), elegance of clothes (16.1%) and branded clothes (11.6%). Therefore, it would not be wrong to posit that Turkish respondents pay attention to the clothes, as they evaluate the body structure of the individual, regardless of the gender, and focus on how elegant the clothing style of the individual is, regardless of the gender again, when it comes to the specific property of clothes. When the responses of the Portuguese respondents are examined, on the other hand, it appears that body language has the highest frequency in terms of body structure, regardless of the gender. With respect to the respondents' selection of clothes, Portuguese respondents reveal a differentiation, based on gender. Accordingly, when the evaluated individual is a woman, respondents first pay attention to the dress and when it is a man, they first pay attention to the classic style of clothing.

While talking to a man who acts like a woman, I pay attention to his ...						
Turkey			Portugal			
		n	%		n	%
1	Gesture	33	23,4	Gesture	35	28,5
2	Facial expression	29	20,6	Facial expression	19	15,4
3	Kindness	27	19,1	Clothes	12	9,8
While talking to a woman who acts like a man, I pay attention to her ...						
Turkey			Portugal			
		n	%		n	%
1	Facial expression	34	26,2	Gesture	23	19
2	Kindness	22	16,9	Facial expression	19	15,7
3	Cleanliness	18	13,8	Body language	17	14

Respondents were asked about the physical characteristics, to which they pay attention first, when they evaluate a man, who acts like a woman, during the interpersonal communication process. Accordingly, Turkish respondents listed, respectively, gestures (23.4%), facial expression (20.6%) and kindness (19.1%) and Portuguese respondents listed, respectively, gestures (28.5%), facial expression (15.4%) and clothes (9.8%). From this perspective, when the answers with the first two highest frequencies are examined, it would not be possible to say that respondents have different tendencies to consider the physical characteristics of a man, who acts like a woman, based on their cultural backgrounds. Respondents were also asked about the physical characteristics, to which they evaluate first, when it comes to a woman, who acts like a man. Accordingly, Turkish respondents stated that they first pay attention to the individual's facial expression (26.2%), kindness (16.9%) and cleanliness (13.8%), while Portuguese respondents stated that they first pay attention to the individual's gestures (19%), facial expression (15.7%) and body language (14%). Therefore, when the participant's answers are analysed, it is observed that Turkish respondents first pay attention to the evaluated individual's facial expression and kindness, when the individual in question is a woman, who acts like a man; whereas Portuguese respondents first pay attention to the individual's gestures and facial expression.

On the other hand, within the scope of the study, it was aimed to determine whether there is a significant relationship between participant's gender and the physical appearance feature, to which attention is paid primarily, and participant's country, and the physical appearance feature, to which attention is paid primarily. In this framework, it was considered necessary to control the normal distribution of data; histogram and plot graphics of data were taken, coefficients of variation (it was observed to be more than 0.30) and Skewness-Kurtosis values were checked, and it was observed that significance value of Kolmogorow-Smirnow test is $p < 0,05$. In this regard, it was considered necessary to conduct non-parametric tests to analyse data, which did not show normal distribution, and Chi-Square relationship test was implemented to determine whether the first physical appearance features preferred by the respondents had a significant relationship with the gender and country of the evaluated individual. In this context, Chi-Square test results of Turkish respondents, for whom a significant relationship was determined between the gender and evaluated physical appearance feature, are given below:

When I see a man, I pay attention to his physical appearance.			
	High	Medium	Low
Woman	17	1	0
%	94.4%	5.6%	0.0%
Man	10	4	3
%	58.8%	23.5%	17.6%
Total	27	5	3
%	77.1%	14.3%	8.6%

Chi-Square: $p < 0,05$, Cramer's V: $p < 0,05$

It was found that, in Turkish respondents, there is significant relationship between their gender, and the level of paying attention primarily to the physical appearance, when they see a man. Accordingly, it is observed that female respondents pay attention to the physical appearance when they see a man, at a high rate.

When I am talking to a woman, I pay attention to her facial expression.			
	High	Medium	Low
Woman	18	1	1
%	90.0%	5.0%	5.0%
Man	9	6	2
%	52.9%	35.3%	11.8%
Total	27	7	3
%	73.0%	18.9%	8.1%

Chi-Square: $p < 0,05$, Cramer's V: $p < 0,05$

It was found that there is a significant relationship between Turkish respondents' gender, and the level of paying attention to facial expression when they speak to a woman. Accordingly, it is observed that female respondents pay attention to facial expression when they speak to a woman, at a higher rate.

Based on the answers of Portuguese respondents, the statements, for which a significant relationship was determined between the gender and physical appearance of the evaluated individual, are as follows:

When I see a man, I pay attention to his facial expression.			
	High	Medium	Low
Woman	9	10	5
%	37.5%	41.7%	20.8%
Man	14	2	1
%	82.4%	11.8%	5.9%
Total	23	12	6
%	56.1%	29.3%	14.6%

Chi-Square: $p < 0,05$, Cramer's V: $p < 0,05$

It was found that there is a significant relationship between the gender of Portuguese respondents, and the level of paying attention primarily to the facial expression when they meet a man. Accordingly, it is observed that male respondents pay attention to facial expression when they meet a man, at a higher rate.

When I am talking to a man, I pay attention to his facial expression.			
	High	Medium	Low
Woman	11	10	6
%	40.7%	37.0%	22.2%
Man	12	4	0
%	75.0%	25.0%	0.0%
Total	23	14	6
%	53.5%	32.6%	14.0%

Chi-Square: $p < 0,05$, Cramer's V: $p < 0,05$

It was found that there is a significant relationship between the gender of Portuguese respondents, and the level of paying attention primarily to the facial expression when they speak to a man. Accordingly, it is observed that male respondents pay attention to facial expression when they speak to a man, at a higher rate.

On the other hand, the countries of the respondents and their preferences with regard to the physical appearance features evaluated were compared with Chi-Square test in order to determine whether there is a relationship between the cultural background of the respondents and the physical appearance feature they evaluate. Accordingly, tests results, in which a significant relationship was determined, are as follows:

When I am see a woman, I pay attention to her facial expression.			
	High	Medium	Low
Woman	17	8	3
%	60.7%	28.6%	10.7%
Man	30	2	1
%	90.9%	6.1%	3.0%
Total	47	10	4
%	77.0%	16.4%	6.6%

Chi-Square: $p < 0,05$, Cramer's V: $p < 0,05$

It was determined that there is a significant relationship between the countries of respondents, and the level of paying attention primarily to the facial expression when they meet a woman. Accordingly, it is observed that Portuguese respondents pay attention to facial expression when they meet a woman at a higher level.

	While talking to a man who acts like a woman, I pay attention to his gesture.		
	High	Medium	Low
Woman	21	10	2
%	63.6%	30.3%	6.1%
Man	32	3	0
%	91.4%	8.6%	0.0%
Total	53	13	2
%	77.9%	19.1%	2.9%

Chi-Square: $p < 0,05$, Cramer's V: $p < 0,05$

It was determined that there is a significant relationship between the countries of respondents and the level of paying attention primarily to the eyes of the man they are speaking to. Accordingly, it is observed that Portuguese respondents state that they pay more attention to the eyes when they talk to a man.

It was determined that there is a significant relationship between the countries of the participant, and the level of paying attention to the gestures when they talk to a man, who act in a feminine way. Accordingly, it is observed that Portuguese respondents attention to the gestures more when they talk to a man, who acts in a feminine way.

CONCLUSION

In this study, which was conducted to reveal the physical appearance features, to which attention is primarily paid at the start of, and during the interpersonal communication process, and whether this differs according to the gender of the evaluating and evaluated individual, the respondents were asked open ended questions to determine which physical appearance features the individual primarily pays attention to about the other individual. Also, in accordance with the study's aim of providing an intercultural perspective, two equivalent sample groups from Turkey and Portuguese were selected focusing on the role of cultural difference in individual's process of evaluating the other individual. In this context, according to the research results obtained within the scope of the study, Turkish respondents pay attention to the physical appearance of a woman and man regardless of the gender; while Portuguese respondents pay attention to the facial expression regardless of the gender. As far as these statements and the gender of the evaluated is concerned, it is observed that female Turkish respondents pay more attention to the physical appearance when they meet a man, while male Portuguese respondents pay more attention to the facial expression when they meet a man. As far as intercultural differentiation is concerned, based on their statements, it is observed that Portuguese respondents pay more attention to the facial expression when they see a woman.

As far as the attitude of evaluating the physical appearance features of the individual in the interpersonal communication process (while talking and listening) is concerned, it is observed that Turkish respondents focus on the facial expression of the individual they talk to regardless of their gender, focus on the eyes of the individual they listen to regardless of their gender; Portuguese respondents focus on the eyes of the individual they talk to regardless of their gender, and focus on the voice of the individual they listen to regardless of their gender. It was also found that there is a significant relationship between some of the statements and the gender of the evaluating individual. Accordingly, female Turkish respondents pay more attention to the facial expression when they talk to a woman; male Portuguese respondents pay more attention to the facial expression when they talk to a man. As far as intercultural differentiation is concerned, based on the statements of Portuguese respondents it can be suggested that they pay more attention to the eyes when they talk to a man.

With regard to the way individuals evaluate the physical appearance of other individuals in interpersonal communication process (body structure and choice of clothes), based on the statements, as far as body structure is concerned, Turkish respondents primarily pay attention to the clothes regardless of the gender, and focus on dressing elegantly regardless of the gender of the individual; on the other hand, as far as the body structure is concerned, Portuguese respondents pay attention to the body language regardless of the gender, and with regard to choice of clothing, they primarily focus on the dress when the evaluated person is female, and dressing in a classical manner when the evaluated individual in question is a man. Based on these statements, a significant relationship was not found between the gender and cultural background of the evaluating individual.

When physical appearance features of the person is evaluated in interpersonal communication process in connection with femininity and masculinity, it is observed that, Turkish respondents pay attention primarily to the facial expressions and kindness of a woman who acts in a masculine way, while Portuguese respondents pay attention primarily to the gestures and facial expression of the individual. While a significant relationship was not found between the statements in question and the gender of the respondents, it was determined that Portuguese respondents paid more attention to the gestures, when they speak to a man, who acts in a feminine way. Within the scope of the results of the study, it can be suggested that individuals prioritize the different physical appearance features of the other individual when they first meet them based on their gender stereotypes, and this varies according to both the gender and cultural background of the evaluating person, and the gender of evaluated individual. Reducing stereotypical thinking, prejudiced attitudes and discriminative behaviour is possible by understanding the primary perceived features of the individual, which activate the stereotypes attributed to the individual. In this regard, it is thought that the research conducted will contribute to the future studies addressing how gender-based stereotypes, and stereotypes which are sources of interpersonal communication barriers, can be reduced.

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