

# **GENDER ROLES IN AZERBAIJANI- MEDIUM SECONDARY SCHOOL LITERATURE TEXTBOOKS**

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ADA 2019 Education Conference: “Towards Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education: Opportunities for Action



# OUTLINE

- **Introduction**
- **Methodology**
- **Findings**
- **Conclusion and Recommendations**

# INTRODUCTION

## ➤ **Problem**

## ➤ **Research Question**

- How gender sensitive and responsive is secondary school literature textbooks in Azerbaijan?
- The hypothesis of this study is gender portrayal and gender roles in Literature textbooks published in Azerbaijan do not respond the progress of society towards equality and equity between men and women.

## ➤ **Limitation**

## ➤ **Significance of the study**

# METHODOLOGY

## ➤ Quantitative Content analysis

- Literature textbooks from 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade selected
- Texts are analyzed based on two main criteria: the people involved in the improvement and production process and the authentic content.
- Texts are analyzed in three categories: Gender Visibility, Occupational and Domestic roles and Gender attributes.

## ➤ Qualitative Thematic Analysis

- Themes in Women's Gender Roles
- Themes in Men's Gender roles

# FINDINGS

## ➤ Total Personnel involved in Literature textbooks production (5<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> grade)

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

# FINDINGS

- **Number of authors of texts within textbooks**
  - **161 texts out of 198 texts were analyzed**

Gender	Number	%
Female	6	4
Male	127	79

# FINDINGS

## ➤ Male Female characters in texts

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

# FINDINGS

## Gender Ratio per Textbook

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



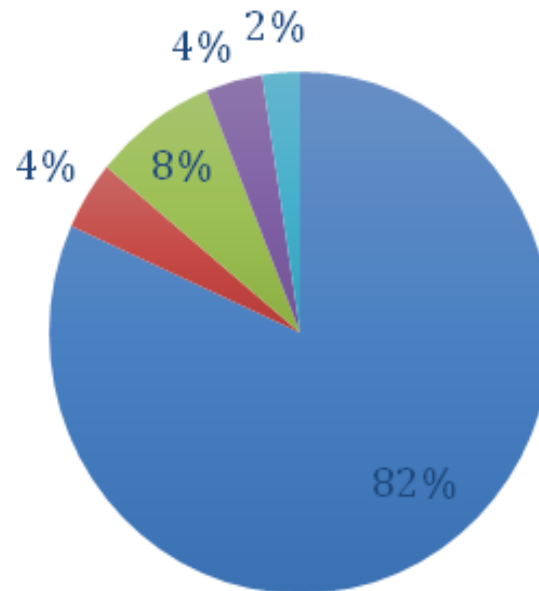
# FINDINGS

- **Images in textbooks**
  - **Overall images in textbooks**

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

# FINDINGS

## Overall Gender Ratio of Images



■ male ■ female ■ mostly male ■ mostly female ■ equal

# FINDINGS

## ➤ Gender Roles

### ■ Total number of Occupational and Domestic Roles of Males and Females

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

# FINDINGS

## ➤ Occupational and Domestic Roles of Males and Females

Domestic Roles		Occupational Roles
Female	Mother, wife, daughter, sister. Fiancée, aunt, mother in law, grandma, granddaughter, sweetheart	Student, teacher, school director, train, farmer, poet, interpreter, fighter
Male	Father, grandpa, son, uncle, grandson	shah, khan, governor, mayor, officer, police, student, master, teacher, scientist, gang, soldier, national hero, historical hero

# FINDINGS

## ➤ Mostly Used Gender Traits for males and females

### Female Traits

Young, old, dedicative, hesitant, shy, care giving, dedicative mother, self-sacrifice, teacher, mannish woman, courageous, beautiful, kind, merciful mother, knowledgeable, brave woman

### Male Traits

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, mother son, irresponsible, lazy, charity man, inapprehensive, self sacrifice, sneaky man

# FINDINGS

## ➤ Themes in Men's Gender Roles

- income provider, smart, dominant, patriotic, hero, brave man

## ➤ Themes in Women's Gender Roles

- nurturer/ care giver mothers, housewives, dedicative, courageous women.

# FINDINGS

Some example photos









# CONCLUSION

- Women are represented 3 times less in Azerbaijani literature textbooks.
- High level of gender stereotypes.
- Women are excluded, or representation quality was much lower.
- Female characters were mostly presented in domestic roles with more passive identity attributes.
- Highest level of gap between two genders.
- Females are less represented in occupational roles

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- Other subject textbooks need to be analyzed whether they are gender sensitive or not.
- Educators should also be trained with techniques that empower them to tackle with gender-based materials, deliver them students in an unprejudiced way.
- Textbook writers should analyze the textbooks for reduction of male dominance as much as possible.

# **Executive Summary of Gender Roles in Azerbaijani - medium Secondary School Literature textbooks**

## **1.1. Context of the Research**

Gender equality has been one of the vital goals of inclusive education for several decades and considering that textbooks are resources for teachers to deliver information and for students to accept this information, they can have a negative impact on girls' and boys' development and gender inclusive education. The secondary school textbooks play a significant role in the process of internalizing norms and ideologies of society. The conception of men and women in these textbooks help to form the attitudes of the students on the beliefs about the gender roles in the society.

The aim of this research is to analyze gender roles at secondary school literature textbooks. In this research, textbooks from 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade are analyzed.

## **1.2 Description of the research**

This study focuses on Azerbaijani literature textbooks. In this research, textbooks from 5th to 9th grade is analyzed and found out how gender sensitive and responsive secondary school literature textbooks are in Azerbaijan and some recommendations in how gender sensitive textbooks can be developed that improve girls' educational experiences and outcomes.

Quantitative content analysis and qualitative thematic analysis methods were selected to analyze the research questions. After collecting quantitative data, qualitative thematic analysis was carried out to clarify themes in men's and women's gender roles. In the summary of finding gender sensitiveness and gender responsiveness of literature textbooks will be analyzed. Based on the findings, in conclusion, recommendations were provided for future research and for policy makers, curriculum developers, and teachers.

### **1.3 Significance of the Research**

The results of the study will contribute to the development of gender-awareness of teachers, authors and textbook publishers. Further studies can investigate gender portrayal in other subject textbooks and impact of other aspects such as school environment, school personnel's, especially teachers' attitudes towards girls.

### **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 basic part of general secondary education. Due to the limited time, it was possible to analyze only the literature textbooks used in basic level of secondary school education (from 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grades).

### **1.5 Organization of Chapters**

The thesis consists of following chapters:

Chapter 1 begins with context, significance, limitation of research and general overview of Azerbaijan and its education System. In Chapter 2, previous research in gender roles in textbooks gender were provided. Chapter 3 covers methodology, along with research questions. It gives information how gender has been analyzed and what the quantitative content and qualitative thematic analysis are. In chapter 4 research findings are analyzed. Chapter 5 is the conclusion with recommendations on school textbook policy.

## **2.1 Gender in Textbooks**

Many research studies have been conducted focusing on gender roles in various countries in the world. Majority of researchers found out that in most cases textbooks present man and boy characters more than women and girls. Their experiences were shown as cultural norms. (Kereszty, 2009).

According to the results of the study conducted by Adman Batinah titled “Analysis of Representation in Pre- Intermediate Market Leader: Business English Practice File in Sohar University in Oman, gender preference for males is less apparent and gender equity is more or less accomplished. Interestingly, comparing to males, females are represented in varied occupational roles whereas males are represented only in traditional occupational roles. However, there is still need to further develop gender representation.

Another research which is conducted by Two Iranian scholars, Gharbavi and Mousavi titled “A Content Analysis of Textbooks: Investigating Gender Bias as a Social Prominence in Iranian High School English Textbooks” indicates serious disparity between the occurrence of male and female characters in the texts and gender inequality is still in higher level in the textbooks used in Iranian high schools.

Khomeriki, Javakhishvili, & Abramishvili ( 2012) titled “ The Issue of Gender Equity while Teaching Social Sciences” ( as cited Tsiklauri, M, Gender In Georgian Secondary Education, 2012). According to the quantitative part of findings of the analyzed textbooks female are represented much less than the male. The qualitative analysis proves that the textbooks, especially of history, contain quite strong gender stereotypes.

Othman, Hamid, Dato'Hj, Yasin, Keong, & Jaludin, (2012) conducted research titled “Gender Images in Selected Malaysian School Textbooks: A Frequency Analysis. Analysis”. The research results disclose male dominance in the textbooks as a whole. The representation of characters in

accordance “their social, professional and political roles”, gender discrimination is portrayed highly by male characters.

Law, & 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 textbooks of Chinese language in the primary schools of Hong Kong are giving very powerful biased messages about gender variation, gender inequality, to our students. Females are overall represented less both in individual images and main characters. On analyzing the representation of main characters, the visibility of females, is higher in domestic context.

Kahveci, A. (2010) carried out a study titled “Quantitative analysis of science and chemistry textbooks for indicators of reform. Based on findings, overall, the gender representation in textbooks is biased. The textbooks were unsuccessful to provide enough factual proof to be recognized as gender equitable and inquiry-based.

In research titled “Gender Balance in K-12 American textbooks” conducted by Chick.A. K, the number of males was higher than females at all school levels in both content and images. However, it was noticed that history textbooks added more females than previous editions and since the publication of National History Standards. Furthermore, male-referenced illustrations remained at the same percentage reinforcing the lack of change in the status of women in this textbook.

In Azerbaijan context, there is no previous fundamental research conducted on gender roles in textbooks. Only one report was prepared in 2001 by UNICEF and Ministry of Education of Azerbaijan. Grade 2 Reading was randomly selected and found out that girls do not play important role even in textbooks. It is obvious from the report that girls are presented mostly in domestic setting as a parent, sibling. In public roles, they are represented as a doctor or nurse. Men are portrayed in higher ranked positions such as leaders, presidents, kings, heroes, problem solvers, life savers. Women and girls play subordinate roles for men's/boys' activities.

For this study, quantitative content analysis and qualitative thematic analysis were carried out.

### **3.1 Research Questions and Hypothesis**

Based on previous research studies analyzed gender roles, the specific research questions are set to find out how gender roles are described in literature textbooks.

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 setting?
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 is secondary school literature textbooks in Azerbaijan?

The hypothesis of this study is gender portrayal and gender roles in Literature textbooks published in Azerbaijan do not respond the progress of society towards equality and equity between men and women.

### **3.2 Methodology**

In the analysis, the quantitative approach was used for calculation of the relative frequency of occurrence of pictures, illustrations and linguistic features representing males and females in relation to different aspects. Quantitative content analysis was carried out to analyze the frequency of representation of male and female characters and their roles in given texts in five literature textbooks. The relative frequency of the occurrence was calculated and the relative frequency of each item under analysis was determined.



In the second stage, qualitative thematic analysis was carried out and gender roles were put into themes based on identified gender traits: Themes in Women's Gender Roles and Themes in Men's gender roles.

### **3.3. Selection of Data**

Only the textbooks from fifth to ninth grade were selected because school education is compulsory from fifth to 9th grades. After ninth grade, attending school is not obligatory.

These books were analyzed based on two main criteria: the people who involved in the improvement and production process and the authentic content. Texts were analyzed with quantitative content analysis in three categories Gender Visibility, Occupational and Domestic roles and Gender attributes. With quantitative content analysis, the number of males and females involved in literature textbook writing team, the number of male and female characters in both texts and visuals were found out. Also, the total number of domestic and occupational roles connected with males and females in textbooks were analyzed. Finally, the personality attributes for both men and women were grouped and examples from texts and images were provided. In this study, procedures were done in several steps. In the first step, literature textbooks were examined, the number of male and female authors, characters in texts and visuals were counted. Then the findings were represented in tables along with in depth analysis. In next step, the occupational and domestic roles of male and female characters were found out. In last step, the personality attributes used for male and female characters were analyzed and grouped. In the second stage, qualitative thematic analysis was carried out and gender roles were put into themes: Themes in Women's Gender Roles and Themes in Men's gender roles.

In this chapter, the quantities and the qualities of the gendered characters presented in Azerbaijani –medium textbooks are examined by using quantitative content analysis as the method.

#### 4.1. Gender and Number of Text Authors

For this study only 161 texts out of 198 texts from 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade were analyzed.

Gender	Number	%
Female	6	4
Male	127	79

**Table 2. Number of authors of texts within textbooks**

Table 2 indicates that 127 of the authors which is 79% are male.

##### 4.1.1. Gender and Number of Characters in Texts

Characters were analyzed based on texts and visuals. The number of characters within texts from 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grades is 479. 365 of them are male and 114 are female characters.

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

**Table 3. Male Female characters in texts**

The table number 3 indicates the overall gender ratio in all textbooks. 76% of the characters in texts are males. The ratio between female and male is more than 3:1.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Male %</b>	<b>Female %</b>
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**

In the table number 4, the number of males and females are shown in both numbers and percentage per textbook. Literature of 8<sup>th</sup> grade is especially protrusive: with 84% of overall characters are male, the textbook includes more male characters than female characters. Only 16% of characters are female.

#### **4.1.2 Gender Roles**

For the analysis of gender role representation in the textbooks, family roles and other household duties were taken into consideration. The Azerbaijani literature textbook stands out from the other two in the high frequency of females engaged in household activities such cleaning, cooking, and taking care of family and children.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Occupational Roles</b>	<b>Domestic Roles</b>	<b>Total</b>
Males	272	93	365

Females	14	100	114
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**Table 6. Total number of Occupational and Domestic Roles of Males and Females**

The table above shows the total number of domestic and occupational roles of males and females. The number of female characters in texts is 112. Only 12 of characters are represented in occupational roles. The rest of characters are represented in domestic roles. Female domestic roles are included: Mother, wife, daughter, sister, fiancée, aunt mother n law, grandma, granddaughter, sweetheart, and lover. Female are represented occupational roles such as student, teacher, school director, train guard, farmer, poet interpreter, and fighter. Females were not represented in any occupational roles from 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade. The number of male characters is 353. That is why in these texts, male dominance is high and they are represented high rank positions of their time such as shah, sultan, khan which mean king.

From seventh to ninth grade, no women are presented in occupational roles. Based on findings only 3% of females hold occupational roles in the texts.

#### **4.1.3 Mostly used Gender Traits**

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 to genders might resemble the real life of society.

The findings reveal that women are seen as caring, emotional and maternal in contrast to men being active, aiming at goals and working. That is why the analysis of the attributes to Azerbaijani Literature textbooks may disclose the attitudes towards males and females formed historically by passing from generation to generation to the present society of multinational cultures.

Gender Bias Examples from texts Gender bias examples are given to confirm gender stereotypes, which exist in Azerbaijani literature textbooks.

Female Traits	Male Traits
Young, old, dedicative, hesitant, shy, care giving, dedicative mother, self-sacrifice, 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, mother son, irresponsible, lazy, charity man, inapprehensive, self-sacrifice, sneaky man

**Table 8: Mostly used Gender Traits for males and females**

The quantitative part of analysis showed the gender portrayal of characters in texts and images. The overall charts indicated that men are resented 3 times more than females in the texts. 73% of images are male, 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 findings much clearer qualitative thematic analysis were carried out with some examples of texts and images.

## 4.2 Themes in Gender roles

### 4. 2.1 Themes in Men’s Gender Roles

In this stage, the attributes discovered from texts are divided into themes and samples of texts are provided. Men are represented mostly as income provider, smart, dominant, patriotic, hero, brave man. One of the most visible man roles shown in texts is being an income provider. In most cultures including Azerbaijan, it is man's responsibility to take care of social and economic welfare of family.

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

Patriotism and heroism is the second mostly presented topic in school literature textbooks

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



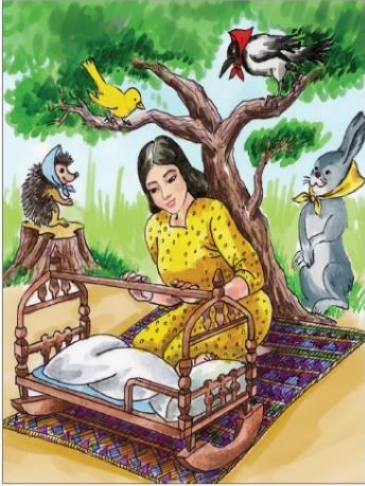
**Figure 1 National hero of Azerbaijan, Mubariz Ibragimov**

Figure 3, the image from fifth grade literature textbook, p 82 from the text titled "Brave Mubariz".

#### 4.2.2. Themes in women's gender roles

Considering less representation of women characters in textbooks, the themes of women roles are few. Women are represented as nurturer/ care giver mothers, housewives, dedicative, courageous women. Here are an extract and an image is provided.

The key role that women are presented mostly is mother who takes care of child, family and always ready in the service of family. In the following photo mother is trying make her child sleep by singing cradlesong.



**Figure 5 Mother singing cradlesong to her baby**

In few texts women are also represented courageous lady. Read, for example extract, from story titled “Between two worlds” written by Seyid Huseyn, p 40.

The conclusion of this analysis maintains the results, the implications and critical reflection of this study.

New findings demonstrated that there is an imbalance in gender representation in Azerbaijani medium literature textbooks. The results indicated that women are represented 3 times less in Azerbaijani literature textbooks. There is a high level of gender stereotypes. Overall, the contents of Azerbaijani literature textbooks from fifth grade to 9th grade show the highest level of gap between two genders. The occupational roles of characters from both genders were analyzed as well. It was found that females are less represented in occupational roles. It was also very clear that women are not involved in variety of jobs.

**Recommendations for MOE, textbook writers and for teachers**

1. Other secondary school textbooks should be analyzed 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 challenging part is to change the attitudes of educators and textbook writers. Educational materials writers should analyze the textbooks for reduction of male dominance as much as possible. This means a fair portrayal in future textbooks in terms of the number of male and female. 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 to “training of trainers” to train textbook writers in aspects of gender equity related to textbook publication. This should help to create a positive attitude for gender reform.
5. After managing reduction in gender bias in textbooks, school teachers are needed to be trained on how to use gender biased textbooks by using gender sensitive teaching methods. They need to be trained with techniques that empower them to tackle with gender-based materials, deliver them students in an unprejudiced way because they are key people to deliver information to student audience.
6. Finally, it is recommended to publish guideline books for instructors how to implement gender sensitive teaching methods to their real lessons.



## Reference

### Analyzed books

.....5<sup>th</sup> Grade Literature textbook

.....6<sup>th</sup> Grade Literature textbook

.....7<sup>th</sup> Grade Literature textbook

.....8<sup>th</sup> Grade Literature textbook

.....9<sup>th</sup> Grade Literature textbook

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