

EXPLORING GENDER TRAITS (MALE AND MASCULINITY) IN UP NORTHERN REGION OF ALBANIAN SOCIETY

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Abstract

One specific component of individual general identity development is gender identity. This concept refers to the development of a broad set of characteristics that distinguish males from females and includes a set range of personal attributes, social roles, social customs, activities, and behaviors. It is thought that during mid-adolescence gender identity is quite rigid and stereotyped. Up to this date, no or little research, has been carried out onto the investigation of masculinity identity sense among adolescents in the up Northern Region of Albania, who among others face gender identity maturation. Insights into the issues of gender roles, stereotypes and masculinity among young adolescent males could help the Albanian society understand better what is happening with the inner world of the male adolescents in nowadays and how they could be helped better to maturate healthier gender identities. Thus, the aim of this study was first, to investigate the perceptions of young adolescent males, aged 15-18, on gender issues and expected masculine and feminine roles, mainly focusing on the private sphere. And, second to gather quantitative data obtaining information regarding attitudes and perceptions of young Albanian males towards gender identity and roles, masculinities, femininities and stereotypes. Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 young male adolescents, aged 15-18. Interview data were analyzed with the content analysis method (Neuendorf, 2010), where each transcript was divided into meaning units. On the other hand, the meaning units were used as codes, representing the key concepts and topics of respective text fragment (Tesch, 1990). The results confirmed that the male adolescents aged 15-18, are holders of rigid gender stereotyped roles which match perfectly with the typical sets of the characteristics of a masculine society as described by Hofstede (2001). Adolescents at this age (15-18) didn't experienced gender identity crisis, as it might be generally thought.

Keywords: *gender traits, gender identities, gender identity maturation*