GENDER STEREOTYPES IN CHILDHOOD
ESTEREOTIPOS DE GÉNERO EN LA INFANCIA
ESTEREÓTIPOS DE GÊNERO NA INFÂNCIA

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ABSTRACT: This article analyzes the stereotypes, around gender, that exist among the Early Childhood Education students from different educational centers in the Region of Murcia (Spain). For this, the tastes and preferences of students from a gender perspective have been analyzed, the use of school spaces and materials has been identified from the gender perspective, as well as the interactions and socio-educational relationships between boys and girls in the school context.

Through a mixed methodology, the questionnaire and observation have been used as a school instrument and data collection method. The total sample of this study has been made up of 175 boys and girls belonging to different educational centers in the Region of Murcia.

The results obtained show that both girls and five-year-old boys – in the sample – have several of the typified stereotypes assigned to each sex: they play and, in addition, want to play, with different toys depending on their sex; they use different spaces in the classroom, thus, while they prefer to play in the symbolic corner, they do it in the corner of the buildings.

Therefore, it is evident that patriarchy is still latent in small things, in the differentiation of activities, language, the performance of household chores, games and toys ..., which together cause the perpetuation of a sexist stereotype that conditions our lives since we are born. On the other hand, it’s affirmed that educational centers become one of the most relevant areas as it acts both as a reproducer of behaviors and as a regulator of them. In addition, making this situation visible from childhood makes it possible to instill tolerant, egalitarian, and democratic values in girls and boys that refuse to differentiate people because they are of one sex or the other.
1. Introduction

School, as a key socializing agent, is one of the most relevant contexts to study the potential reproduction of sexist stereotypes in our boys and girls, as it is arguably one of the most important and influential educational contexts where our boys and girls’ future are developed (Pinedo, Arroyo & Berzosa, 2018, p. 47). For this reason, it is indispensable to approach two concepts: sex and gender. Both constitute different realities which are often mistaken and used interchangeably. It is essential to take into consideration that the concept of gender arose as a result of the constant search by the feminist movement of the reasons for the existence of inequalities between men and women. (Marugán Pintos, 2020).

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) (2000), “sex” is referred to biological and physiological characteristics which define men and women, that is, it represents the individuals’ physical appearance and it is of an individual nature. On the other hand, “gender” is defined as the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for each sex. In this sense, the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) published in the year 2010 an essay titled Media Reference Guide where both concepts are differentiated. The first of them, sex, is assigned at birth, while the second—gender—is defined as the internalized feeling of a person as a man, woman, boy or girl (GLAAD, 2010). Gender is a social construct, a combination of differentiated norms for men and women.
each sex created depending on their necessities and imposed on to individuals since their birth, becoming their identification model. Both- men and women, boys and girls- have developed positive and negative values. Gabriel Cebrián and Huertas Fuentes (2001) highlight for women positive values like affection, tenderness and sensitivity and negative ones like sentimentalism, the lack of emotional response as a necessary defense or submission, among others.

With respect to men, some positive values, such as the capacity of standing up for themselves, action and dynamism are highlighted, whereas impulsiveness, physical abuse and identifying decision as a synonym of domination are found among the negative ones. These stereotypical values for men and women are more acute in rural contexts where, to a great extent, they are preserved and where the patriarchal system is still really prevalent (Ospina García, 2018; González Pozuelo, 2008).

Women’s rights, values and needs have gradually evolved to the present day. Likewise, the value granted to the equality between sexes has increased considerably, becoming one of the most important concerns in our society, being nowadays recognized as a worldwide problem and a serious obstacle for development and peace (Álava Salgado y Hernández Moreno, 2012, p. 2). As Colás Bravo and Jiménez Cortés (2006) state, the introduction of gender perspective in different scopes of life represents now an issue of great interest, both from a political and scientific as well as an educational and instructional standpoint. In the case of -compulsory- education, as López-Nava- jas (2014) points out, it is a fundamental milestone in the dissemination of knowledge and historical references, as well as the development of personal and social identities (p. 286). In this regard, schools constitute significant social spaces, being the foundations for the transmission of cultural gender patterns, and the transformation of these into positive and desirable values (Colás Bravo, 2007). In them, the established cultural standards and patterns are expressed and transmitted, and therefore, they represent the appropriate setting to promote and foster gender equality. For this reason, during the development of the study which we are acknowledging throughout this article, the educational center has been pinpointed as the subject of analysis, observing and analyzing how those different cultural models are developed in boys and girls (Castilla Pérez, 2008; Autonómous Community of Andalusia, 2005; Díaz-Pinés Sendra en 2010, CEIP Pablo Picasso, 2010, among others).

On the other hand, and regarding sexism in games and toys selection by the youngest children, the study carried out by Puerta Sánchez and González Barea (2015) as well as the one conducted by Castillo Viera and Tornero Quiñones (2012) determine that both boys and girls play very different games. The differences stem from the gender structures in game and toy choices, as well as the representation of characters (symbolic play). In this sense, Lera Rodríguez (2002) highlights that gender segregation has its origins during Preschool Education, when boys and girls begin to select their peers for their games in such a way that they end up playing separately and playing different games.

Regarding the type of games, Hernández García, Peña Calvo and Rodríguez Meléndez (2004) and Subirats Martori and Tomé González (2007) also point out that boys are more keen on playing sports like football, during recess, while girls have more diverse preferences in their recreational choices.

With regard to girls, their recreational activities are characterized by household-related ones, caring and beauty, whereas in the case of boys, traits like power and domination, competitiveness and independence are revealed. Likewise, and concerning the use that each of them make of the materials, girls tend to play the role of moms, babies and princesses, valuing physical beauty, utilizing the objects of the construction corner (bars, specifically) as kitchen utensils. As for boys, they model themselves after superheroes, monsters, gunmen and cowboys. As these studies show, sexism and sexist behaviors have their origin in gender stereotypes which also reinforce the former and which impair the acknowledgement of capacities, necessities, opinions, etc., in an individualized way. (Europe’s Council, 2019).

On the other hand, and regarding decoration, as Marín Gil (2014) highlights, visual culture also reproduces stereotypes, conveying certain information in an explicit manner. According to this author, in the photos and pictures that surround Preschool students, numerous images which depict the traditional and male-centered vision of the genre can be found. This reproduction of stereotypes gears us implicitly towards the hidden curriculum. In this regard, Pinedo, Arroyo and Berzosa (2018) in their research on the capacity of the teaching staff to detect situations of inequality and symbolic violence in relation to gender, stress the necessary attention that should be paid to the use of materials which convey ideas which discriminate, make invisible and subtly or indirectly harm women (p. 37).
In a different sense, and regarding the kind of relationships and interactions existing between girls and boys, it is worth mentioning the research conducted by Monjas Casares (2004), which concludes that boys consolidate a dominant and aggressive style of relations while girls play a rather passive role as a consequence of the evolutionary development of gender socialization.

Therefore, the naturalization and biological determinism of a socially constructed organization which generalizes male and female behaviors which are in turn stereotyped, asymmetrical, and hierarchical... unequal is evidenced.

In this gender socialization is where the patriarchy is supported to perpetuate itself, creating social environments predominantly masculine and feminine (Marugán Pintos, 2020, p. 207). This shift in focus to the patriarchal social phenomena, together with globalized struggles, of an intersectional and intergenerational nature, and where diversity, technology and sustainability are acknowledged and taken into consideration as contemporary trademarks, conform what we know as fourth-wave feminism (Valera, 2020).

Bearing in mind all the above mentioned, the general objective of the present study is to analyze gender stereotypes which exist among children’s education students. For its accomplishment, three more specific goals are included:

1. Describing the interests and preferences of the pupils from a gender perspective;
2. Identifying the use of school areas and materials from a gender perspective and
3. Reviewing the socio-educative interactions and relationships between boys and girls in the school context.

2. Methodology

This study is framed following Hayman (1991), within the educational research whose purpose is comprehend, explain, and predict human behavior. Within these parameters, a mixed methodology which combines the quantitative and qualitative method (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann and Hanson, 2993) is utilized, allowing the implementation of varied research techniques and instruments, as reality is not only conformed by data, but also by facts or situations (Rivero Fernández, 2008).

Sample

The total sample in the study has consisted of 175 boys and girls belonging to educational centers of the Region of Murcia. After experimental mortality, the sample was reduced to 158 subjects, 79.7% of whom were educated in public schools and more than half of which (56.3% vs. 43.7%) were boys. The pupils taking part were distributed in classrooms belonging to the third year of the second cycle of Childhood education (5 years old), which results in five different schools and 8 classrooms of the above-mentioned educational level.

Instruments

For data collection, a questionnaire form completed by the pupils along with the use of classroom observation techniques have been utilized. First, with regard to the questionnaire, Martin Arribas (2004) considers it the most widespread technique in research works, as it allows a greater number of participants and simplifies the analysis process (p. 23). On the other hand, observational methodology proposes the systematic observation of reality and its purpose is that of the analysis of a subject’s behavior in a given environment (López-Fehal & Losada López, 2003, p. 67).

The questionnaire has been adapted to the psycho-evolutionary characteristics of the population surveyed (letter, color, language), including certain images due to the power they have in creating stereotypes (López-Navajas, 2014). Also, it contains a series of multiple-choice questions (Aignerén, 2005). After identifying the sex of the informant person, we find the following questions:

1. Picture of a boy and a girl, with the aim of getting them to communicate whether they feel comfortable with their genetic sex.
2. Choosing their two favorite toys, which will allow us to know their play preferences.
3. Animation characters. Different scenes and animation movie characters are presented. Their answers show their desirable values.
4. What they want to be when they grow up. They will have to draw the job that they would like to do. Moreover, it offers information about the potentially stereotyped use of colors.
5. 5/6. Housework. The fifth and sixth question answer have the same pictures: a sexless character doing ordinary house chores. The boys and girls can decide which chores they would have to learn to help mom- Question number 5- and dad- question number 6- at home. These questions will provide information about the pupils’ viewpoint on who should be in charge of different house chores.
7. Favorite color. We want to check if the prototypical pink for girls and blue for boys preference is actually developed.
8. Cartoons. They have to choose among the different options the animation series they watch more regularly. This will provide information on their preferences, as each of those cartoons features different storylines and situations, which imply different personalities, and which may or may not match those which they are socially determined by.

Regarding observation, a series of categories devoted to expand upon and corroborate the information compiled in the questionnaires, like the type of relations and interactions existing between boys and girls in the classroom, the use they make of language, spaces, toys and materials in the classroom, were selected, as can be seen in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Classroom Observation. Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Categories</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships between sexes. Interactions between boys and girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s use of the language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s use of the different areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El uso de los materiales por parte del alumnado.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s use of materials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Personal compilation.

**Procedure**

The sequencing of this research follows a series of phases (Rodríguez Gómez, Gil Flores & García Jiménez, 1996):

1. First phase: Preparatory. Bibliographical review around the subject of study, which has been transversal throughout the entire research.
2. Second phase: Field Research. Elaboration of the instruments for data collection, being these validated by experts. Elaboration of the methodological framework in which the study is supported and the selection of the educational centers participating. The election of schools has not been of a random nature, but the result of a series of conditioning factors:
   a. their geographical location: all the centers are located in the area of the Northwest of the Region of Murcia, defined as the largest zone of those eminently rural in this autonomous community (a higher likelihood of evidence of a patriarchal system).
b. The variability of educational institutions (public vs private) and, finally

c. The willingness of the centers to take part in the study.

During this phase, the classroom observation was carried out. Classrooms belonging to the third year of this stage were selected. It is the most appropriate age for students to have developed their own interests and preferences, and also to be able to complete the questions in the form. Each one of those schools was visited for a period of 20 hours. The forms were completed by our informants.

(3) Third phase: Analytical. The analysis of the data collected, and the results obtained was carried out, interrelating them with the reference framework.

(4) Fourth phase: Informational. Obtaining conclusions and elaboration of the report.

Data Analysis

On the one hand, for the organization of quantitative data, we employed the statistic package Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 2.0), one of the most widespread worldwide, especially in fields such as Economy, Health Sciences or Education (Serrano Pastor and Sánchez Rodríguez, 2009). In this sense, with respect to the matrix, the questionnaire employed consists of 10 variables.

On the other hand, in order to organize the qualitative data, the discourse analysis technique has been suggested. It is composed of a series of categories of analysis (see Table 1) in which those relevant aspects for the research were noted down. We show our agreement with Santander Molina (2011), who states that reading discourses involves an interpretation of the social reality and puts forward a new perspective concerning the subjects of study.

3. Results

The data are analyzed taking into consideration the objectives detailed in this work and which have determined its development.

Regarding the interests and preferences of pupils, from a gender perspective, it is worth noticing that a vast majority, specifically 61.4% of students surveyed show a preference for the masculine sex, while 38.6% opts for the feminine.

However, if we consider the sex of the person answering this question, we observe that the 61 (38.6%) subjects who declared they would have preferred to be a girl, actually are a girl, being the remaining two thirds boys who would have preferred to be the opposite sex. On the other hand, within the 97 individuals (61.4%) whose preference was given to the masculine sex, 86 were boys and 11 girls. It could be observed that male pupils were more reluctant towards the feminine than in the opposite case.

Table 2. Item # 1. I would have liked to be...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>38.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>61.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Personal compilation.

About the question referred to the choice of toys, they show a clear preference for toys like the ball and the bicycle (38.9%) over the rest of dichotomies.

Table 3. Item # 2. Color the two toys you like the most

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Toys</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Valid Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ball and Teddy Bear</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball and Bicycle</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>38.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball and Toy Kitchen</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ball and Puzzles</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teddy Bear and Bicycle</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teddy Bear and Toy Kitchen</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teddy Bear and Puzzles</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle and Toy Kitchen</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle and Puzzles</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toy Kitchen and Puzzles</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>99.4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Personal compilation.
In this case, if we perform the contingency between the answers to this question and the sex of the informant person, out of those who chose the ball and the bicycle as their favorite toys, 54 are boys and 7 girls. In the case of the latter, their preferences are more diverse, being the most popular the cuddly bear and the toy kitchen, with a total of 14 girls and only one boy.

In the third question, a series of animation characters were introduced. As we can observe in the following table, the majority of the pupils show a preference for the knight, whereas a minority would like to be the wizard (10.8%) or a squirrel (10.2%).

If we perform the contingency between the results obtained and the sex of the informant subjects, out of the 40.5% of them, almost all are boys, with only one girl who chose to be a knight. However, in the case of the second most popular option, Snow White, out of the 38 children who opted for this character, 37 were girls and just one boy. Likewise, as we can check in table 4, boys are indecisive between choosing knight or wizard, whereas girls are indecisive between Snow White and Cinderella.

Fourthly, we highlight the question referred to the job the pupil would like to do in the future. A diversity of answers has been obtained, due to its open character.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5. Item # 4. Draw what you would like when you grow up.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Job</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Princess/Prince</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Footballer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pirate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soldier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snow White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queen/King</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Fighter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Driver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterinarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullfighter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mermaid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wizard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spaceman/Spacewoman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiter/Waitresses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As we can observe, there are several jobs which stand out above the others, like police officer (13.3%), footballer (12%), prince or princess (7.6%) and doctor (6.3%). Some professions have only been chosen by one or two informants, among which we highlight male or female cleaners, boxers, tractor drivers or soldier, with a 0.6% each. Like in the former cases, a contingency between sex and data obtained in the question has been carried out. In the first place, with regard to the police officer job, of the 21 answers, only 4 corresponded to girls; in the case of the footballer, of the 19 pupils who chose it, 17 were boys. However, in the last one, that is princess or prince, only a boy was found, being the rest (11) girls.

The second to last question the students answered addressed their favorite color. In this occasion, we find really close results between three of the suggested colors. A 26.6% of pupils shows a preference for red, 25.3% has a predilection for pink and 24.7% opts for green. On the other hand, just 7 of the surveyed pupils chose orange (4.4%).

Moreover, if we carry out the contingency between these results and the informant subjects’ sex, we check that there is a parity between the number of boys who prefer red color (36) and of girls who opted for pink, 36 as well. The main difference is that, for the first- red- a total of 6 girls opted for it, whereas only three boys chose pink. With regard to boys, we can observe that their most popular choice does not corroborate the stereotype that blue is for boys and pink is for girls.

While it is true that this- blue- is the second most popular option among boys, it is also the second most popular for girls.

Finally, in the eight question, referred to the choice of their favorite animation characters, the following results were obtained.

As can be observed in the former table, the majority of the pupils show a preference for the Sendokai animation characters (42.4%), followed by Peppa Pig (24.7%). On the other hand, the least popular animation characters among the pupils (specifically, only 10 of the surveyed subjects) is Caillou, with a 6.3%.
The contingency between sex and this question reflects that of the 42.4% who chose Sen-dokai, 54 were boys and 13 girls. For the latter, their favorite choice is Peppa Pig, being the one chosen by 22 of the 29 girls who completed the form. Finally, with respect to this animation character, 17 boys also singled it out as their favorite choice.

Regarding the use of school spaces and materials among boys and girls, the data reveal that in 62.5% of the classrooms, girls show a predilection for the symbolic corner or the little house, as well as artistic creations or costumes. Likewise, an overall preference for the building corner was observed among boys.

Regarding the theme, it has been noticed that boys are reluctant to play in the symbolic corner, and when they do, they do not usually employ the materials with their most common use; instead, they use them to invent their own war games, cars or dinosaurs, as it happens with the building corner, where they use blocks or plastic pieces to make weapons. Concerning girls, and in spite of their preferences, they play in the corner which they have been told to or assigned to, although they use any opportunity to go to the symbolic corner, to see what their female classmates are doing.

Regarding games in the recess, it has been noticed that both boys and girls use the area in the same way, depending on the activity they are performing. Likewise, both girls and boys tend to play games which involve running, jumping and shouting, while it is also true that they make a more frequent use of the resources that can be found in the playgrounds (slides, seesaws, etc.).

Finally, it is worth highlighting that with respect to the clothes they wear or materials that pupils carry with them in the classroom, in 100% of the cases, pink and princesses are used for the clothes and lunchboxes of girls, and 100% of heroes and animation characters which are not princes are featured in dark colors like red or navy blue in the case of boys. Moreover, it is noticeable that in 37.5% of the sample, the teacher has established a color for the children’s smock, regardless of their sex; in the rest, however, pink and blue prevail.

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Moreover, it is worth highlighting the fact that, when boys and girls do play together, they take part in games which involve races or strength, never in calm and slow-paced games which imply traits like sensitivity, caring or any other characteristic stereotypically connected with the feminine. On the other hand, in 87.5% of the cases, boys are the ones who strive for attention and leadership, more even so than girls, who tend to go rather unnoticed. However, it bears noting that when they perform tasks together, it is the girls who look for controlling the situation. Disputes or arguments tend to occur more often within pupils of the same sex, being the boys more aggressive in their way of solving their conflicts than girls, and which is usually due to involuntarily hitting each other or when arguing about possessions.

Finally, in the framework of social interactions among the students from a gender perspective, the language used to refer to one or another sex also plays an important role in the construction of equality. In this sense, it needs to be stressed that an 87.5% of male and female students do not distinguish between female and male friends or between female and male classmates, using a gender-neutral language instead (just classmates, friends, children...). Likewise, in 100% of the cases, they use the term parents when they refer to their family unit as a whole, unless they are talking about one or the other separately.

4. Discussion

The data collected prove that both girls and boys aged 5 show a number of the typified stereotypes associated to either sex.

Moreover, it is worth highlighting the fact that, when boys and girls do play together, they take part in games which involve races or strength, never in calm and slow-paced games which imply traits like sensitivity, caring or any other characteristic stereotypically connected with the feminine. On the other hand, in 87.5% of the cases, boys are the ones who strive for attention and leadership, more even so than girls, who tend to go rather unnoticed. However, it bears noting that when they perform tasks together, it is the girls who look for controlling the situation. Disputes or arguments tend to occur more often within pupils of the same sex, being the boys more aggressive in their way of solving their conflicts than girls, and which is usually due to involuntarily hitting each other or when arguing about possessions.

Finally, in the framework of social interactions among the students from a gender perspective, the language used to refer to one or another sex also plays an important role in the construction of equality. In this sense, it needs to be stressed that an 87.5% of male and female students do not distinguish between female and male friends or between female and male classmates, using a gender-neutral language instead (just classmates, friends, children...). Likewise, in 100% of the cases, they use the term parents when they refer to their family unit as a whole, unless they are talking about one or the other separately.

4. Discussion

The data collected prove that both girls and boys aged 5 show a number of the typified stereotypes associated to either sex.
On the other hand, with respect to the characters preferred by the pupils, according to the results obtained, it is proven that sexist stereotypes are perpetuated in said choice. It is especially relevant that girls preferred being the Cinderella which appears in the image (mopping the floor) than being a squirrel, a knight, or a female wizard. In close relation to this aspect is the role that cartoons play in the formation of stereotypes. After surveying which animation characters were more popular among the children, Sendokai (41.4%) stood out- being 13 girls and 54 boys-. For the first, it was Peppa Pig their favorite animation character (31.8%), which also was the boys’ second choice (19.1%). It should be stressed that sexism present in children’s tales and cartoons influences enormously the preferences of girls and boys of the third year of the second cycle of Childhood Education participating in the sample, according to the exposed by Marín Gil (2014).

With respect to the second specific objective of the present study- identifying the use of school areas and materials in children from a gender perspective-, the data obtained corroborate that boys and girls use different areas of the classroom (Puerta Sánchez and González Barea, 2015; Castillo Viera and Tornerio Quiñones, 2012). While girls prefer playing in the symbolic corner, they do so in the construction corner. Moreover, they also use the materials differently, as both girls and boys replace the use those materials are originally conceived for by other which fit their preferences (using toy kitchen utensils to play wars or using logic blocks to cook or put make up, etc.). However, and as it has been mentioned, the data compiled show disagreement between the studies of authors like Hernández García et al, (2004) and Subirats Martori & Tomé González, (2007), who claim that boys take up a big portion of the playground for their games, while girls have to make do with the remaining space.

In the present research, girls and boys of Childhood Education do not fit with that sexist premise, partially due to- among other reasons- having only occasional access to materials like balls in the playground. While it is true that, in spite of the discrepancy between the data and the research regarding the use of leisure spaces, differences have been indeed found in the activities taking place in those, as while boys usually play the same games- all of them related to strength or violence- they are more varied in the type of games they play, using more than their male classmates the resources available to them (Hernández García et al, 2004).

Thirdly, and in relation to the third specific objective- examining the socio-educative interactions and relationships between girls and boys- the data confirm the results shown in the study of Monjas Casares (2004) which stated that girls usually have a leading role in games, when both boys and girls play together, as we should remember that it has been proven that most pupils of Childhood Education prefer someone of the same sex to play with (Lera Rodríguez, 2002; Hernández García, Peña Calvo & Rodríguez Méndez, 2004; and Subirats Martori & Tomé González, 2007). While it is true that throughout this study some rather aggressive arguments have been observed between both sexes, it is boys who tend to have a greater involvement in this type of situations than girls, which does not mean that the latter never argue or fight, but that they do so less frequently.

This way, the present study confirms that the patriarchy still underlies everyday actions, in the differentiation of activities, language, housework assignment, games and toys... all which together lead to the perpetuation of a sexist stereotype which conditions our lives ever since we are born.

5. Conclusions stemming from the results

The transmission of gender stereotypes takes place across several generations, employing different resources for doing so (the media, the family, friendships or socio-emotional relationships, the social media, etc.). In this sense, the educational institutions represent another context where those phenomena can also be studied, tackling different aspects (syllabuses, learning and performance, relations and interactions, spaces and resources, family relationships, etc.).

This study has proven right the existence of sexist and stereotyped behaviors among pupils of the stage of Childhood Education- which the present study has been centered on- in the school context, around three aspects: interests and preferences, use of school areas and materials and interactions and relationships within the pupils.

As far as games and toys is concerned, it is worth highlighting that the data in this study exemplify the sex differences related to gender among the pupils. In this way, roles which are traditionally patriarchal are reproduced and projected, as well as a different socialization process for each sex. That is, the roles assigned exaggerate those connected with the children’s private scope, like mother, wife, housewife, caregiver, etc. in the case of girls, and conversely, the manifestation of those related to the public scope- father, professional, protector, etc.- in the case of boys. This hierarchical division of sexes is also found in children’s
Notes

1 See Bas-Peña, Pérez de Guzmán & Vargas Vergara (2014), whose investigation has dealt with gender training in Spanish universities, where future teachers are educated.

2 For further information on the waves of feminism and their contribution to democracy see Vaamonde (2018); Guerra Palmero (2014). Lasagarde (1996) among others.

3 See https://www.carm.es/web/pagina?IDCONTENIDO=29361&IDTIPO=100&RASTRO=c217$m2594 for further information.

4 Source https://www.google.com/search?q=mapa+de+la+regi%C3%B3n+de+murcia+noroeste&client=firefox-b-d&sxsrf=ALeKko317548tMVJaOj8UCMoJJA9PuPX3fsw15889265151188&tbm=isch&source=iw&ictx=1&fir=sJREHFkhajFOmM%253A%252CHAscNvyMj32s_0M%252C&_vet=tvre&usg=A1QcAQ-kSZdomg9HGvWMIk8glaxgLd01_rg&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjMwemMzpDpAhVQx4UKHar0BGEQ9QEwA3oECAoQIg
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