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Musa Pinar

Valparaiso University, [musa.pinar@valpo.edu](mailto:musa.pinar@valpo.edu)

Coleen Wilder

Valparaiso University

Tulay Girard

The Pennsylvania State University-Altoona, [tug1@psu.edu](mailto:tug1@psu.edu)

Sinan Nardali

Katip Celebi University, Turkey

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# **Perceptions of Service Profession-Status Stereotyping: Comparisons of Turkish and American Millennials**

**Musa Pinar**

**Coleen Wilder**

*Valparaiso University*

**Tulay Girard**

*Penn State Altoona*

**Sinan Nardali**

**Katip Çelebi University, Turkey**

## **ABSTRACT**

Employment opportunities in the service industry have created jobs for both genders and raises the question about how these jobs are influenced and evaluated regarding occupational stereotyping based on prestige and gender (Gottfredson, 1981). For example, Oswald (2003) found that high prestige male occupations were rated significantly higher than high prestige female occupations. Likewise, low prestige male occupations were rated significantly higher than low prestige female occupations, which is indicative of occupational status stereotyping. A relatively small number of studies have been carried out after new service occupations were created from advancements in technology and demographic changes (Belt et al., 2002).

Moreover, occupational stereotypes are considered dynamic and malleable since they emerge from role-bound activities (Diekmann and Eagly, 2000). These trends and changes in the service sector may have impacted the perception of occupational status stereotyping. Therefore, more research is needed. A study by Pinar, Wilder, Filipek, and Karaatli (2016) showed that millennials perceived some services as low status and others as high status, which provided some evidence of service occupation status stereotyping. Given that millennials will comprise nearly 75% percent of the workforce by 2025 (Bentley University, 2013), their perceptions of service status stereotypes could have important implications for businesses regarding employment and service quality.

Lipton, O'Connor, Terry, and Bellamy (1991) defined occupational stereotyping as a preconceived attitude about an occupation, about people who were employed in that occupation, and about one's own suitability for that occupation. Prior studies have provided support for the existence of stereotypes for different jobs (e.g., McLean and Kalin, 1994; Moloto et al., 2014; Oswald, 2003) and showed that some traits were deemed more suitable than for others (Arkkelin and O'Connor, 1992). In addition, McLean and Kalin (1994) offered support for the existence of occupational stereotypes, such that these stereotypes were similarly shared among men and women. Other studies have also confirmed the existence of occupational stereotyping based on prestige and gender associated with certain types of service occupations (Glick, Wilk and Perrault, 1995; Etaugh and Hoehn, 1995; Kulik, 1998; Pinar, Schiffel, Strasser, and Stück, 2013).

This study intends to examine millennials' perceptions of service occupation status stereotyping in Turkey and the United States. The underlying reason is that young consumers perceptions may be different from those of previous generations. The specific research objectives were to: a)

Investigate whether service profession status stereotyping existed among millennials, b) Determine whether significant differences existed in millennials' perceptions of status stereotyping by gender within each country, c) Investigate whether service status stereotyping among millennials significantly differed by gender and across cultures.

In order to accomplish the research objectives, a survey instrument was designed to include a list of common service occupations in the US and Turkey. The survey included seventeen occupations. Pretesting of the survey provided useful input that confirmed status classifications and improved the wording and understanding of survey questions. This activity helped to establish the face validity of the constructs (Churchill and Iacobucci, 2005). Demographic questions were also included. The final survey was administered using convenience sampling, which produced 462 usable surveys, of which 44% (203) were from the U.S. and 56% (259) were from Turkey. About 52% of the respondents were female and 48% were male. The average age of respondents was 22.

The results of this study provided insights about service occupational stereotyping among millennials in Turkey and the US. Specifically, the study showed the existence of service profession status stereotypes. The findings indicated service profession status stereotypes exist were consistent with prior research (e.g., Belt et al., 2002; Corxton et al., 1989; Glick, 1995; Moloto et al., 2014; Oswald, 2003; Pinar et al., 2016, 2013). These results were somewhat surprising because millennials are known to be the most diverse and inclusive generation (Dakus, 2013; Smith and Turner, 2015). Companies may use these findings to attract the right employees, especially for low status professions. However, the results and conclusions must be put in the context of the limitations of the study and directions for future research.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

**Musa Pinar** (Ph.D., Mississippi State University) is a Professor of Marketing at Valparaiso University. His research interests include service quality, brand orientation, gender effect in sales field and tourism, gender-food stereotypes, brand ecosystem, and measuring brand equity in banking, higher education, sports league and political party. He has published in various academic journals and presented papers in national and international conferences and has received several best paper awards at several conferences.

**Coleen Wilder** (Ph.D., Illinois Institute of Technology) is an Associate Professor of Information and Decision Sciences at Valparaiso University. Her areas of interest include applications of decision science tools, queuing theory, and writing case studies. She has published in various academic journals and presented at national conferences. She has received several best paper awards.

**Tulay Girard** (Ph.D., Florida Atlantic University) is a Professor of Marketing at Penn State Altoona. Her research focuses on product classes, retailer attributes, perceived risk, brand equity in banking, higher education, and private-label branding. Her publications can be found at [www.tulaygirard.com](http://www.tulaygirard.com). She received several best paper awards and grants.

**Sinan Nardali** (Ph.D., Celal Bayar University) is an Associate Professor of Marketing at Izmir Katip Celebi University. His research interests include service marketing, brand management,

branding universities, ethical issues in guerilla marketing, and branding football leagues. He has published in various academic journals and presented papers in national and international conferences and has awards about marketing.