



Articles

Ambivalent Sexism as a Mediator for Sex Role Orientation and Gender Stereotypes in Romantic Relationships: A Study in Turkey

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Abstract

The present study examined the mediating effects of ambivalent sexism (hostile and benevolent) in the relationship between sex role orientation (masculinity and femininity) and gender stereotypes (dominance and assertiveness) in college students. The variables were measured using the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI), the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI), and the Attitudes toward Gender Stereotypes in Romantic Relationships Scale (AGSRRS). These inventories were administered to 250 undergraduate students at Istanbul University in Istanbul and Suleyman Demirel University in Isparta, Turkey. Results indicate that benevolent sexism mediates the relationship between hostile sexism and male dominance. Benevolent sexism also mediates femininity and male dominance, as well as femininity and male assertiveness. Hostile sexism was mediated only between the masculine personality trait and benevolent sexism. The present findings expand the literature on sex role orientation by revealing evidence that masculine and feminine individuals experience ambivalent sexism distinctively. The results are discussed in terms of the assumptions of sex role orientation, ambivalent sexism, and gender stereotypes.

Keywords: ambivalent sexism, sex role orientation, gender stereotypes, romantic relationships, close relationships

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Significant gender researchers have proposed that the term ‘gender’ is a multifactorial and multidimensional construct. They conceptualize gender as a large coverage that involves the constructs of gender roles, gender stereotypes, gendered behavior, gender belief systems, sex typing, sexual orientation, and gender-related attitudes, among others. In addition, it is suggested that these constructs have numerous types and degrees of associations with one another and are likely combined in multifaceted ways to affect individual behaviors and experiences (Biernat & Kobrynowicz, 1998; Koestner & Aube, 1995).

In the present study, based on this multifactorial and multidimensional view, the relationships between three gender-related constructs—sex role orientation, ambivalent sexism, and gender stereotypes—are examined. Specifically, the purpose of the present study is to investigate the mediator role of ambivalent sexism for sex role orientation and gender stereotypes in romantic relationships. Moreover, the study is performed in Turkey which has a unique cultural structure that can affect the gender concerns (e.g., Sunar & Fişek, 2005).

In this section firstly, in order to distinguish these gender-related concepts from each other, the variables are defined and the role of the cultural framework on these variables is emphasized. Secondly, the associations of the concepts with romantic relationships are given. Lastly, the model and the hypothesis of the study are presented.

Overview of Terms: Sex Role Orientation, Ambivalent Sexism, and Gender Stereotypes in Romantic Relationships

Sex Role Orientation

Sex role orientation refers to the endorsement of masculine and feminine personality traits. As it is well known, masculine traits are attributed to males, whereas feminine traits are attributed to females (Özkan & Lajunen, 2005; Peplau, Hill, & Rubin, 1993; Winstead & Derlega, 1993). Competitiveness, independence, dominance are some examples of the masculine traits and empathy, nurturance, and being sensitive to the needs of others are some examples of feminine traits (Basow, 1992). These traits reflect the societies' decisions and views about the qualities of males and females rather than the biological sexes. Therefore a person's biological sex and sex role orientation may be different (Stets & Burke, 2000).

Firstly, researchers have conceptualized the masculinity and femininity as mutually exclusive and as opposite poles of a single dimension. Then, these concepts have been conceptualized as independent and complementary dimensions that people can have different degrees on them. Moreover, Bem has proposed a concept named psychological androgyny which is a combination of high masculinity and femininity (Bem, 1984, as cited in Stets & Burke, 2000; Whitley, 1983). In this study, masculinity and femininity are also conceptualized as independent dimensions and individuals' degree of masculinity and femininity is measured although psychological androgyny was not investigated.

Some researchers use the term of instrumental vs expressive qualities instead of masculine vs feminine traits and therefore in this view, masculine individuals are expected to show instrumental behaviors and feminine individuals are expected to show expressive behaviors (Lamke, Sollie, Durbin, & Fitzpatrick, 1994). However, some research findings about sex roles in Turkey have not confirmed these expectations in terms of instrumental vs. expressive qualities. For example, in a study, Turkish respondents have considered many expressive characteristics as equally descriptive for both sexes, while evaluated some instrumental characteristics as undesirable for both sexes (Gürbüz, 1985; as cited in Sunar & Fişek, 2005). This result is consistent with a finding which classifies Turkey as one of the feminine cultures on the masculinity index proposing that in feminine cultures both sexes are expected to be modest, tendered and concerned with the quality of life (Hofstede et al., 1998).

The Ambivalent Sexism Theory

The Ambivalent Sexism Theory postulates that relations between the sexes are characterized by the co-occurrence of male dominance and the intimate interdependence of the sexes in societies. For that reason, the construct of sexism involves both hostile and benevolent attitudes, different from typical conceptualizations that see sexism only as hostility toward women. Hostile sexism is defined as unfavorable attitudes toward women who do not conform to traditional gender roles. In other words, it aims to validate male power and traditional gender roles. This kind of sexism encompasses a wide range of negative affects, including antipathy and anger (Glick & Fiske, 1996, 1997, 1998; Kilianski & Rudman, 1998; Travaglia, Overall, & Sibley, 2009). On the other

hand, benevolent sexism involves subjectively positive affects toward women, such as caring and protection. It is defined as “a set of interrelated attitudes toward women that are sexist in terms of viewing women stereotypically and in restricted roles but that are subjectively positive in feeling tone (for the perceiver) and also tend to elicit behaviors typically categorized as prosocial (e.g., helping) or intimacy seeking (e.g., self-disclosure)” (Glick & Fiske, 1996, p. 491). However, despite its positive tone, benevolent sexism shares the same assumptions as hostile sexism, namely that women are the weaker sex and should be restricted to traditional roles. For this reason, the two types have been found to have highly correlated attitudes in several studies (Glick & Fiske, 1996, 1997, 1998; Kilianski & Rudman, 1998; Travaglia et al., 2009). A cross-cultural research performed on 19 cultures has shown that Turkish culture was on the relatively sexist side on hostile and benevolent sexism dimensions while it also indicated that Ambivalent Sexism is universal across cultures (Glick et al., 2000).

Gender Stereotypes in Romantic Relationships

Gender stereotypes are defined as cultural beliefs concerning the sexes (Eagly & Steffen, 1984). Prentice and Carranza (2002) showed that gender stereotypes are highly prescriptive, and individuals generally believe that women and men are supposed to differ in most ways. As it is well known, women are prescribed to have feminine traits, such as interpersonal sensitivity, niceness, modesty, and sociability, whereas men’s prescriptions emphasize masculine traits, such as strength, assertiveness, and self-reliance. Thus, the concept of gender stereotyping is very similar to the concept of sex role orientation, which was explained previously. However, whereas the concept of sex role orientation is concerned with the endorsement of personality traits, gender stereotypes are the structural beliefs about these personality traits. Gender stereotypes also involve a variety of attributes that include physical characteristics, preferences and interests, social roles, occupations, and relationships (Rudman & Glick, 2008). Moreover, there are specific stereotypes in romantic relationships regarding how men and women should behave, which is also the concern of the present study. According to the traditional dating script, the male is proactive and the female assumes the reactive role. Men are expected to initiate, plan, and pay for dates and to initiate sexual contact. On the other hand, women are supposed to be attractive, facilitate the conversation, and limit sexual activity (Eaton & Rose, 2011). Sakallı and Curun (2001) conducted a study that demonstrated two aspects of gender stereotypes in romantic relationships (male dominance and male assertiveness) in Turkish culture which is also used and examined in the present study.

To summarize, our aim is to analyze the associations between masculinity and femininity, hostile and benevolent sexism, and gender stereotypes of male dominance and male assertiveness in romantic relationships. Before presenting our model and hypothesis, the relationships between the variables and romantic relationships are summarized.

The Associations of Concepts and Romantic Relationships

Individuals differ in adapting the masculine and feminine personality traits, in their attitudes toward the hostile and benevolent sexism, and their beliefs about how men and women are supposed to behave in romantic relationships. Numerous research studies on gender issues and close relationships have demonstrated that the degree of an individual’s endorsement of these traits and attitudes has a crucial impact in shaping the patterns of their close relationships.

The studies that focus on this issue have generally investigated the link between femininity, masculinity and relationship satisfaction (e.g., [Curun, 2012](#)). The research findings have mostly shown the importance of feminine personality traits in maintaining satisfying relationships, suggesting that feminine personality traits lead to more affection and sensitiveness in relationships (e.g., [Antill, 1983](#); [Miller, Caughlin, & Huston, 2003](#)). Therefore, these results show that individuals' adaptation level of masculinity and femininity traits shape their behaviors in their close relationships. For example, [DeLucia \(1987\)](#) has shown this personality-behavior association in his study. That is masculine individuals tended to have also high scores on masculine dating index which involves behaviors like opening doors for the partner, paying for activities, and making decisions. On the other hand feminine individuals tended to score highly on femininity index which involves examples of feminine dating behaviors.

Masculine and feminine personality traits might affect the dynamics of romantic relationships through hostile and benevolent sexist attitudes. Malamuth and colleagues defined "hostile masculinity" ([Malamuth, Sockloskie, Koss, & Tanaka, 1991](#)) as behavior involving a tendency by men to control and dominate (particularly women) in relationships and treating them in a distrustful and defensive manner. In close relationships, hostile attitudes approve of and encourage male power within heterosexual relationships ([Glick, Sakalli-Ugurlu, Ferreira, & de Souza, 2002](#)). On the other hand, benevolent sexist attitudes originate from the intimate interdependence between men and women. These attitudes have been found to be related to traditional romantic roles, such as women who prefer financially successful men and men who prefer women skilled in keeping the house (e.g., [Eastwick et al., 2006](#)). Women are more receptive to benevolent attitudes than men, either because this is a way of valuing the traditional roles or because in some situations gender inequality is higher ([Glick et al., 2000](#)). Benevolent sexist attitudes predict both partners' ideals, whereas hostile sexist attitudes only predict men's ideals ([Lee, Fiske, Glick, & Chen, 2010](#)). Women with benevolent attitudes were found to be more under the influence of their partners and showed less hostile attitudes. This may be due to perceiving their partner as being more benevolent in situations that did not involve a conflict in their relationships; however, in the face of a conflict in their relationships, women who support benevolent attitudes were more assertive and active in their relationships ([Moya, Glick, Exposito, de Lemus, & Hart, 2007](#)).

There are also studies showing the link between hostile and benevolent sexism and romantic relationships. For example, [Travaglia et al. \(2009\)](#) demonstrated that individuals' hostile and benevolent sexist attitudes influence romantic relationship preferences. [Sakallı and Curun \(2001\)](#) showed that participants who score highly on hostile and benevolent sexism measures hold more positive attitudes toward stereotypes of romantic relationships than those with low scores on hostile and benevolent sexism measures. In another study investigating future time orientation in romantic relationships, [Sakallı-Uğurlu \(2003\)](#) demonstrated that for women, attitudes towards men's assertiveness and men's dominance in romantic relationships were important predictors, whereas for men attitudes toward men's assertiveness and romantic relationship satisfaction were important predictors of future time orientation.

In summary, several researchers have shown separately that these gender-related variables have an important impact on shaping the dynamics of romantic relationships. In the present study, we propose a model demonstrating the direct and indirect associations of these variables in an attempt to explore the multifactorial structure of gender in romantic relationships.

Model and Hypothesis

In light of the literature presented above, we expected that the endorsement of masculine and feminine personality traits would affect the endorsement of male dominance and male assertiveness. This would be consistent with the research findings demonstrating the link between sex role orientation and romantic relationships patterns (e.g., DeLucia 1987; Eryilmaz & Atak, 2011). However, based on our study, we propose that this association can be explained by the internalization of hostile sexist attitudes by masculine individuals and benevolent sexist attitudes by feminine individuals. As mentioned earlier, although the association between hostile and benevolent sexism and gender stereotypes in romantic relationships—specifically male dominance and male assertiveness factors—is demonstrated in some studies (e.g., Sakalli & Curun, 2001), no research has yet investigated the potential mediating effect of ambivalent sexism on sex role orientation and gender stereotypes.

As stated above, benevolent sexism view puts women into a low status group that should be protected because the members have feminine personality traits. According to this view, women lack the masculine traits that are related to money, achievement, and power, and they need the protection of men (Rudman & Glick, 2008). We argue that individuals who have high levels of feminine traits (which can be considered as an organization of relatively stable personality characteristics) would agree with a benevolent sexist view which emphasizes the need for protection. Moreover, by encouraging benevolence, these individuals might agree on a traditional romantic script that the male is dominant and assertive and the female is agreeable and passive. On the other hand, individuals who have highly masculine personality traits would endorse a hostile sexist view that emphasizes male dominance, which in turn leads these individuals to agree with male dominance and male assertiveness in romantic relationships.

In this study, based on earlier research findings, we argue that the degree to which both men and women endorse masculine and feminine personality traits affects their endorsement of hostile and benevolent sexism. This endorsement mediates the individual's acceptance of the stereotypes of male dominance and assertiveness in romantic relationships.

Additionally, since our focus is sex role orientation rather than biological sex, we did not consider the biological sex difference. Moreover, the study is performed in an authentic cultural frame work, Turkish culture which has both individual and collectivist cultural patterns, and is classified as a relatively sexist and a feminine culture (Cukur, de Guzman, & Carlo, 2004; Glick et al., 2000; Hofstede et al., 1998).

Consistent with the empirical studies previously described, we hypothesize that the associations among sex role orientation, ambivalent sexism, and gender stereotypes in romantic relationships can be conceptualized in a model, as shown in [Figure 1](#).

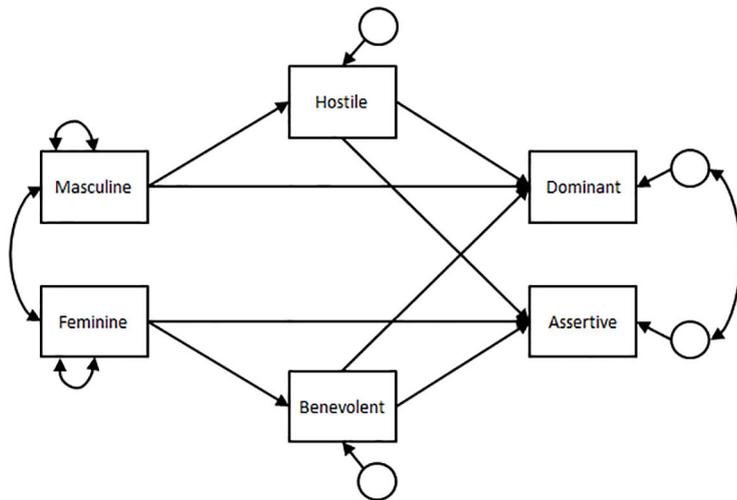


Figure 1. Hypothesized model.

Method

Participants

The participants included 250 undergraduate students (217 women and 33 men) studying in various departments of Istanbul University and Suleyman Demirel University in Turkey. The age range of the sample was 17–43, with a mean of 21.11.

Procedure

The students took part in the study voluntarily and were given questionnaires by the researchers, which were completed in classroom settings

Instruments

The Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) – Short Form

The short form of the BSRI was used to assess the feminine and masculine personality traits of the participants. The original BSRI was constructed by Bem (1974, as cited in Özkan & Lajunen, 2005) and is composed of 60 adjectives of which 20 are feminine, 20 are masculine, and 20 are neutral. The reliability coefficients of the masculinity and femininity subscale of this inventory were reported as .90. In the present study, the concepts of masculinity and femininity are measured with the short form of the BSRI, which was adapted to Turkish culture by Özkan and Lajunen (Bem 1981, as cited in Özkan & Lajunen, 2005). The short version of the scale consists of 10 feminine, 10 masculine, and 10 neutral items. Participants were instructed to evaluate all the adjectives using a five-item response format.

To adapt the scale to Turkish culture, Özkan and Lajunen (2005) translated the scale to Turkish using the back translation method. They performed a factor analysis with 10 feminine and 10 masculine adjectives for each sex separately and evaluated the structure of the scale. The analysis for the men's data showed that the first factor was masculinity (27.86%) and the second was femininity (12.39%). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for

masculinity was .80 and for femininity was .73. Consistent with the men's data, the women's data also demonstrated that masculinity was the first factor (23.98%) and femininity (15.63%) was the second. Moreover, the reliability coefficients of the women's data for the masculinity and femininity subscales were .80 and .66, respectively. In the present study, femininity and masculinity subscales were also used. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the masculinity subscale was .72 and for the femininity subscale was .77.

The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (ASI)

The ASI was used to measure the ambivalent sexist attitudes of the participants. The scale has 22 items that measure the hostile and benevolent aspects of ambivalent sexism. Participants were instructed to answer each item using a 5-point response format. There were no reverse items on the scale, and higher response points indicate higher levels of hostile and benevolent sexism. The scale was developed and validated by Glick and Fiske (1996, 1997, 1998; Glick et al., 2000). Sakallı-Uğurlu (2002) adapted the scale to Turkish culture, and a factor analysis was performed to evaluate the structure of the scale. The results confirmed Glick and Fiske's (1996) results, and the analysis results are as follows: hostile sexism (25.69%; $\alpha = .87$), and three factors of benevolent sexism—heterosexual intimacy (13.01%; $\alpha = .77$), protective paternalism (7.22%; $\alpha = .70$), and complementary gender differentiation (5.14%; $\alpha = .60$). When the data was forced to two factors, the results of the two-factor solution were consistent with Glick and Fiske's (1996) results. The Cronbach's alpha for the scale was .85 and the test re-test reliability coefficient was .87. Moreover, the correlation of ASI and the sex role stereotyping of Burt (1980, as cited in Sakallı-Uğurlu, 2002) was found to be .60. In summary, Sakallı-Uğurlu (2002) showed that ASI is reliable and valid in Turkish culture. In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha was .84 for the whole scale, .80 for hostile sexism, and .80 for benevolent sexism.

The Attitudes toward Gender Stereotypes in Romantic Relationships Scale (AGSRRS)

This scale was developed to measure attitudes toward gender stereotypes in romantic relationships. The scale had 12 items, and respondents used a five-item response format. There were some reverse items on this scale (Sakallı & Curun, 2001). The authors (2001) performed a factor analysis that demonstrated two factors—male dominance and male assertiveness—and explained 54.01% of the variance. The Cronbach's alpha for all items was .85. Sakallı-Uğurlu (2003) used the scale in another study and performed a factor analysis, which confirmed the earlier results. The two factors explained 59.33% of the total variance. The first factor—male assertiveness—explained 31.20% of the variance, and the Cronbach's alpha for the factor was .84. The second factor—male dominance (attitudes toward women's compliance in romantic relationships)—explained 28.12% of the variance. The Cronbach's alpha was found to be .80 for this factor. Higher scores indicate agreement with traditional gender-related stereotypes for both factors. In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha was .74 for male dominance and .70 for the male assertiveness factor.

Data Analysis

The proposed model was analyzed with Mplus 5.1 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2010). Non-significant paths were removed systematically. Then, based on the modification indices suggested by Mplus, a path was added to increase model data fit. The data showed non-normal distribution. The robust maximum likelihood (MLR) estimation method is known to work well under non-normal data conditions, so the MLR was used in this study. The data also had some missing values. The MLR (e.g., full information maximum likelihood (FIML) estimation method also works well with missing data (Orcan, 2013).

Results

Table 1 summarizes the descriptive statistics, as well as the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality, for the interested variables. The first column of the table shows the number of missing cases. Among all, *Masculine* had the most missing cases (7 cases out of 251). The second and third columns give the mean and standard deviation of the variables. The last column shows the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality for each variable. All variables were significant except for *Masculine*. That is, the distribution shapes of the variables were significantly different from a normal distribution. Table 2 shows the correlations among the items. Most of the items significantly correlated with each other. However, *Masculine* is significantly correlated only with *Dominance* and *Feminine*. All correlations among the variables were positive, and the values ranged from .09 to .62.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and the Normality Test

Variable	Number of Missing Cases	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Tests
Benevolent	6	50.00	12.10	.09**
Hostile	4	48.52	11.31	.10**
Dominance	1	28.80	8.83	.09**
Assertiveness	1	23.65	6.33	.16**
Feminine	3	59.45	6.60	.10**
Masculine	7	47.23	7.63	.06

* $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$.

Table 2

Correlations Among the Variables

Variable	Benevolent	Hostile	Dominance	Assertiveness	Feminine
Benevolent	—				
Hostile	.35**	—			
Dominance	.52**	.38**	—		
Assertiveness	.53**	.25**	.61**	—	
Feminine	.24**	.11	.30**	.34**	—
Masculine	.09	.12	.14*	.11	.18**

* $p \leq .05$. ** $p \leq .01$.

The hypothesized model is shown in Figure 2. The model did not show good model data fit in terms of chi-square and other supplementary fit indices (e.g., CFI = .939, RMSEA = .081, and SRMR = .078), based on Hu and Bentler's (1999) cutoff criteria. In addition, one of the paths was non-significant at a .05 alpha level (i.e., the path from *Hostile* to *Assertiveness*). The non-significant path was removed from the model, and modifications were examined to increase model data fit. Based on the indices, the direct effect from *Hostile* to *Benevolent* was added to the model. This modified model formed the final model, as shown in Figure 2. The final model showed good model data fit based on Hu and Bentler's (1999) criteria. The chi-square (χ^2) of the model was 2.80 with 5 degrees of freedom (*df*), and the scaling correction factor was 2.31. The chi-square of the model was not significant at the .05 level ($p = .80$). Therefore, model data fit was supported by the chi-square. For a

good model, the comparative fit index (CFI) should be greater than .95, and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) should both be lower than .06 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). For the final model, the supplementary fit indices showed good model data fit (CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = .00, and SRMR = .03).

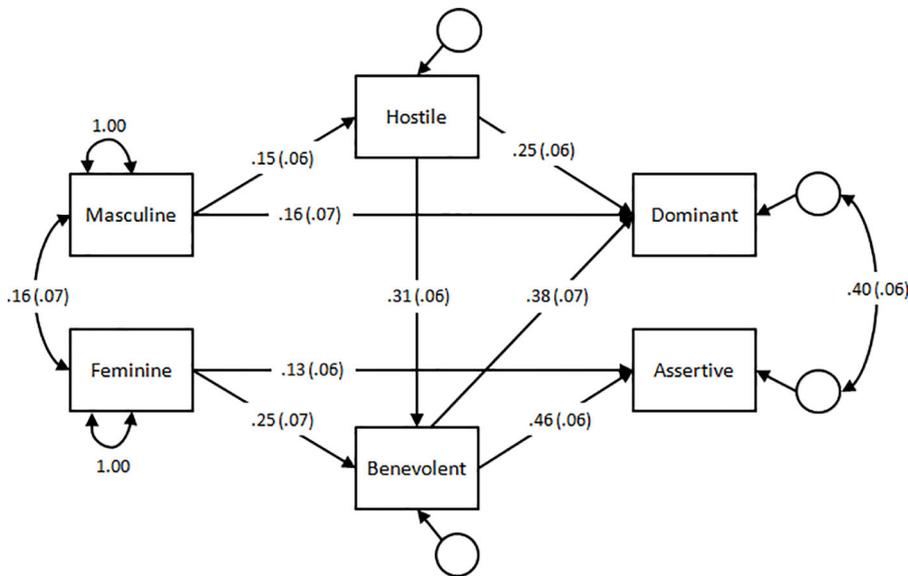


Figure 2. Final model.

The paths shown in Figure 2, the final model, were all significant at the .05 level. The standardized values of the parameter estimates (i.e., direct effects) and the standard errors of the parameter estimates (in parenthesis) are presented in Figure 2. For example, the direct effect from *Masculine* to *Hostile* was .15 and the standard error was .06. This means that one standard deviation (SD) change in *Masculine* was related to a .15 SD change in *Hostile*. All direct effects estimated in the final model were positive. The values of the standardized estimates ranged from .13 to .46. The largest estimate was the direct effect from *Benevolent* to *Assertiveness*. The direct effect from *Hostile* to *Assertiveness* was hypothesized to be significant. However, the results showed that this direct effect was not significant, and it was therefore removed. In addition, the results also indicated that adding the direct effect from *Hostile* to *Benevolent* significantly increased the model data fit ($\Delta\chi^2 = 11.82$ for $\Delta df = 1$).

The final model allowed us to analyze indirect effects (i.e., mediator effects). Indirect effects were estimated in Mplus 5.1. Table 3 shows significant standardized mediator effects. The results show four significant indirect effects for the final model. For example, the effect from *Feminine* to *Dominant* via *Benevolent* was significant, and its standardized value was .09 and the standard error was .03.

Table 3

Standardized Indirect Effects

Indirect Effects	Value (SE)
Feminine → Benevolent → Dominant	.09 (.03)
Hostile → Benevolent → Dominant	.12 (.04)
Feminine → Benevolent → Assertiveness	.11 (.03)
Masculine → Hostile → Dominant	.04 (.02)
Masculine → Hostile → Benevolent	.05 (.02)

Discussion

The present study investigated potential sexism mediators (hostile and benevolent) between sex role orientation (masculine and feminine) and gender stereotypes (dominance and assertiveness). The study results substantially support the hypothesized model. As expected in the initial model, benevolent sexism mediated between the femininity personality trait and male assertiveness as well as between the femininity trait and male dominance. Unexpectedly, hostile sexism only mediated between the masculinity personality trait and benevolent sexism. Another unexpected result was that benevolent sexism mediated between hostile sexism and male dominance.

To date, no research has examined the potential mediating effect of ambivalent sexism on sex role orientation and gender stereotypes, but the association between sex role orientation and gender stereotypes is consistent with Ambivalent Sexism Theory (AST) (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

In our study, sex role orientation emerged as a statistically significant predictor of gender stereotypes. The results are mostly consistent with our initial model. First, it was found that benevolent sexism mediated between the femininity personality trait and male dominance as well as the femininity trait and male assertiveness, which are factors of gender stereotypes in romantic relationships. These results confirmed our expectations that dating individuals with high levels of femininity showed a high level of benevolence as well as beliefs about either male dominance or male assertiveness in their close relationships. Glick and Fiske (1996) defined benevolent sexism as involving sexist attitudes toward women. Its roots come from traditional stereotyping and masculine dominance. Femininity, by the mediation effect of benevolence, predicted the power of a romantic partner, such as being dominant and assertive, which is also supported by other researchers (Chen, Fiske, & Lee, 2009; Lee et al., 2010). Thus, sex role orientation and gender ideology seem to guide beliefs about partners.

Benevolent sexism also mediated the relationship between hostile sexism and male dominance, which is an unexpected finding. Perhaps since romantic relationships involve intimacy and affection, the participants who score highly on hostile sexism measures only believe in behaving in a benevolent way to gain dominance in romantic relationships. Hostile sexism involves negative affect, such as antipathy and anger, and benevolent sexism involves positive feelings, such as affection and caring. Therefore, participants might endorse benevolent sexism on the surface but at a deeper level agree with hostile sexism and in turn male dominance. In summary, as the theory posits men's dependence on women in close relationships, this might have fostered

benevolent sexism in our sample (Curun, 2001; Glick & Fiske, 1996, 1997, 1998; Glick et al., 2000; Kilianski & Rudman, 1998; Travaglia et al., 2009).

Moreover, this result is supported by Glick and Fiske (1996), who presumed that there is a positive relationship between hostile and benevolent sexist attitudes. They posit that hostility and benevolence serve the same purpose as gender inequality. While hostile attitudes are more apparent in close relationships by connecting to power, benevolent attitudes affect partners in a latent way. Although Glick et al. (2000) indicated that hostile and benevolent ideologies are related but in different dimensions, our findings showed that hostile and benevolent sexism form a complementary system. Glick and Fiske (2001) stated that benevolent sexism may be important in justifying gender inequality; therefore, the participants' benevolent sexism, stemming from hostile sexism, may be an effort to justify their gender inequality. Glick and Fiske (1997) reported that high hostility and high benevolence can yield to ambivalent sexism and paternalism, and is one of the sources of ambivalent sexism. The present result supports the notion that participants with high hostility and high benevolence think that women are equal to children and need to be protected.

Another unexpected finding was that hostile sexism mediates the link between masculinity and benevolent sexism. That is, masculine partners endorsed benevolent sexism via hostility. The result is surprising because hostile sexism was found to be associated with negative feminine and masculine traits for women, and benevolent sexism was found to be associated with positive masculine and feminine traits for women (Glick & Fiske, 1996). This result is supported by some research (e.g., Jakupcak, Tull, & Roemer, 2005; Sinn, 1997) that suggests masculinity predicts hostility. The link between hostile sexism and benevolent sexism is clear, as indicated above. Common beliefs, such as viewing women as incompetent, are the underpinnings of both hostile and benevolent sexism. Men were found to be more hostile to women when women's behaviors were not parallel with men's gender expectations. Men were found to be more benevolent to women when women's behaviors were consistent with men's gender schemas (Sibley & Wilson, 2004). Consistent with Sibley and Wilson's (2004) research, the present study showed the link between hostile and benevolent sexism, and it also defined the direction of the path between these two forms of sexism. Although the two forms of sexism were highly related to each other, hostility seems to give rise to benevolent sexism among masculine individuals. This study was also the first showing the indirect relation between masculinity and benevolent sexism.

The sex distribution of our participants might be an important factor in explaining these results; most of the participants were women. In a cross-cultural study, Glick et al. (2000) showed that while women generally tend to reject hostile sexism, they tend to endorse benevolent sexism to the same or a greater extent than men. Similarly, Kilianski and Rudman (1998) asked the question "Do women approve of benevolent sexism?" and demonstrated that many women find benevolent sexist males more favorable than neutral males in terms of sexism. They cited that some women might view hostility and benevolence as unrelated or negatively correlated. Therefore, since our participants were mostly female, they might also agree with benevolent sexism without being aware of its hostile component and relationship with male dominance.

Moreover, as given in the introduction part, the study is performed in Turkish culture. Therefore, it is important to emphasize the relationship between gender and culture because gender seems intertwined with culture. Moreover Turkish culture might be an interesting cultural framework for investigating gender issues which has both individualistic and collectivist cultural peculiarities, and is classified as relatively sexist and feminine (Cukur, de Guzman, & Carlo, 2004; Glick et al., 2000; Hofstede et al., 1998). Therefore, in the light of our

findings, this research can be an evidence of the universality of the effects of gender issues on close relationships. Future research which will compare the variables on different cultures might be more informative in analyzing the link between gender and culture.

This study has some limitations. As stated, most of the participants were female; therefore, future studies should be conducted with a more equally distributed sample. Moreover, all participants were college students living in a relatively liberal environment when compared with the Turkish culture as a whole. Consequently, future studies should be conducted in more traditional sectors to see whether hostile sexism is more or less prevalent in general romantic relationships. In addition, we focused on the personality traits and attitudes of individuals. Later studies might look at the same issue with couples to better analyze dyadic relationships.

Despite these limitations, this study is the first to investigate the mediating effect of ambivalent sexism (hostile and benevolent) between sex role orientation (masculine and feminine) and gender stereotypes (dominance and assertiveness) in romantic relationships. Moreover, the present study offers empirical information about the association of hostile and benevolent sexism in close relationships.

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Competing Interests

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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