

The aim of the thesis is to examine and compare the notions of gender roles in the view of students, teachers and textbooks. The issue of gender roles involved in school environment concerns theoretical concepts of social construction of gender and theories of gender socialization. In the view of social constructionism gender as a social phenomenon is created, institutionalized and made into traditions by humans. Social constructionism is opposed to essentialism. A gender role is a set of behavioral norms associated with males and females in a given social group or institution. Schools, among other social institutions, are organized upon a dichotomous gender/sex system. According to cultural rules, norms and values, certain characteristics, attributes and roles are assigned to males and females based on their biological sex. The process through which the individual learns and accepts roles is called socialization. Socialization works by encouraging wanted and discouraging unwanted behavior. School as one of the agencies of socialization performs role behavior models and expectations. Through mechanisms of social control sanctions are used to make it clear what behavioral norms the child is expected to follow. Empirical survey explored the notions of gender roles perceived in school environment. It consisted of a gender analysis of a textbook, interviews with teachers and students and written accounts of students' beliefs about male and female roles. Oral and written interviewing as well as the analysis of the textbook focused on roles, characteristics and modes of behavior traditionally ascribed to males and females. Various elements of gender roles and ways of their expressions were considered, such as modes of behavior during classes, subjects of interest, educational and professional careers, family roles etc. The outcomes showed similar principles in textbook's, teachers' and students' views of role segregation and work division based on gender. Basically, the distinction of male and female roles was described as primarily based on sex differences, such as body constitution of women and men or their division of roles in the process of reproduction. Other attributes pictured in male and female role distinction were regarded to biological sex differences as well, such as male and female interests and concerns. Teachers especially depicted boys' capability of logical thinking compared to memorizing style of learning conceived as typical to girls. Defined gender roles distinction may be considered as similar to the "role theory" based on the ideas of structural functionalism. Male and female roles are derived from biological sex differences and involve particular functions that are complementary. The woman fulfills 'internal' functions of the family, for example childcare and housekeeping. The man, on the other hand, performs the 'external' functions of a family, such as providing monetary support. No significant differences in the notions of gender roles in the views of textbook, teachers and students were found. According to the theoretical concepts of socialization it seems that the process of adopting gender roles is consistent in presenting role models in different social institutions including school and that there are no significant discrepancies between the basic notion of gender roles in the view of students and school expectations associated with gender roles.