

ABSTRACT

Key Words: feminist identity, feminist identity development, feminist women, feminism in Turkey

This study was conducted to examine the feminist identity development of feminist women living in Ankara, Turkey. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with ten feminist women aged between 23-30, residing in Ankara. The feminist identity development model developed by feminist psychotherapists Downing and Roush in 1985 was used as the primary guiding model in the study. As a result of the research, six core themes related to participants' feminist identities emerged: (1) early childhood experiences with patriarchy and gender roles before encountering feminism, (2) biases against feminists and the role of education in the initial encounter with feminism, (3) feeling of relief through the discovery of sisterhood and anger against patriarchy, (4) feminists being marginalized in Turkey, (5) the importance of access to education and financial freedom, (6) the necessity of gender equality education. According to the study, it was observed that feminist identity in Turkey is mostly acquired in the school and educational environment. However, participants mentioned experiencing sexist and discriminatory incidents in their extended families and primary schools before encountering feminism, and they were aware of it at that time. For participants, having a feminist identity in Turkey brings certain prejudices, labels, and marginalization by the government and society. The study concluded that women from middle and upper classes in Turkey find it easier to embrace feminist ideas, and there is an emphasis on the importance of higher education in the development of feminist identity.