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## **THE ROLE OF PROACTIVE PERSONALITY IN THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG PARENTIFICATION, PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING**

*Research article*

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# THE ROLE OF PROACTIVE PERSONALITY IN THE RELATIONSHIP AMONG PARENTIFICATION, PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

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## Abstract

The study aimed at investigating the role of proactive personality in the relationship between the experience of parentification, psychological resilience and psychological well-being. In the study, the survey method based on quantitative data was utilized. The participants were composed of 416 university students (266 females, 150 males). The data were gathered via the Psychological Resilience Scale (PRS), the Proactive Personality Scale (PPS), the Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS), the Parentified Child Scale-Adult Version (PCS-A), and a personal information form. The data were analyzed via Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient and mediation analysis. The findings revealed that the experience of parentification had a negative direct effect on psychological well-being and psychological resilience, while it had a positive indirect effect on psychological well-being and psychological resilience through proactivity. In other words, as university students' level of proactivity increased, the negative effect of parentification on psychological well-being and psychological resilience decreased.

*Keywords:* Parentification, proactive personality, psychological resilience, psychological well-being, university students

## 1. Introduction

Family of individuals provide them with the opportunity to internalize socio-cultural values and interactions in a cyclical manner. Family members gain balance by means of undertaking various roles, and thus ensure the sustainability of this phenomenon. However, the balance or distribution of roles within the family can get disturbed because of various reasons. When the state of balance and distribution of roles get disturbed, family members need to re-arrange the patterns existing within the family (Minuchin, 1988). One of the domains where the distribution of roles is disturbed is the experience of parentification. Parentification can be described as being obliged to ignore one's own needs at an early age in order to meet the needs of those who are indeed responsible for looking after them (Chase, 1999), whereas it also refers to various roles and responsibilities including looking after siblings and other family members (Hooper, 2012).

Literature review shows that the experience of parentification has both negative and positive results (Jurkovic, 2014). The studies that focus on the early age experiences underline the negative aspects of parentification starting from the idea that when children undertake responsibilities more than their current developmental stage allows and leave their own needs aside, their social and emotional development gets damaged (Hooper et al., 2011; McMahon & Luthar, 2007; Stein et al., 1999). According to this perspective, when parents burden their selfhood images on a child that they see as a potential parent strictly and chronically, this causes the child to develop an artificial identity that is created in line with

the needs of the family members or the family system. As a matter of fact, it is stated from a psycho-dynamic perspective that such children identify themselves with the selfhood reflected by the parents and invest emotionally in the parenting role designated by the family (Wells & Jones, 2000).

On the other hand, it is also mentioned that parents ascribe duties and responsibilities on children intentionally in order to help them gain efficiency, autonomy and responsibility, which is a state that is accepted to be normative in social terms (Burnett et al., 2006). It is even emphasized that the duties assigned to children in a healthy family environment are used as a tool to bring up responsible individuals, and that this should not be called as a “pathology” or “relational functioning disorder” (Lackie, 1983). In parallel to this idea, some recent studies express that experiences of parentification contribute to individuals’ sense of self-confidence and self-efficacy as well as the skill of empathy (East, 2010; Hooper, 2007; Jurkovic & Casey, 2000; Thirkield, 2002). Likewise, the difficult conditions that an individual experience while looking after parents or other family members as a result of the experience of parentification improve positive coping strategies (DiCaccavo, 2006; Tompkins, 2007).

The aforementioned different findings in the related literature show that individuals are not affected by the experiences of parentification in the same way. Some individuals suffer from negative effects such as anxiety, depression or stress at a level which causes psychological well-being and resilience to get disturbed (Hooper, 2007), while some others gain coping strategies as a result of parentification (Hooper et al., 2014). Within this scope, it can be claimed that the possible negative effects of parentification can be repressed with the mediating effect of some protective variables. Starting from the point of this assumption, this study aims at investigating the role of proactive personality traits including the approach to accept hardships as a set of structures that make people stronger and the development of active coping strategies in the relationship between the experiences of parentification, psychological resilience and psychological well-being (Bateman & Crant, 1993).

### **1.1. The Relationship between Parentification, and Psychological Well-Being and Psychological Resilience**

In general, psychological well-being refers to accepting oneself, having an optimistic viewpoint about development and improvement, making an effort to live a valuable life with a goal, establishing positive relations with people around one and being able to make autonomous decisions (Ryff, 1989). The literature review shows that psychological well-being has a positive association with various psycho-social factors such as satisfaction with the relationship with parents (Cenksever, 2004), attitudes of parents (Corsano et al., 2006; Pantke & Slade, 2006; Ryff & Keyes, 1995), positive experiences (Ryff & Heidrich, 1997), positive interpersonal and social skills (Segrin & Taylor, 2007), social interaction, personal control and contentment obtained from social activities (Cooper et al., 1995). Therefore, considering the responsibilities and roles it includes, the experience of parentification can be expected to have a negative relationship with psychological well-being. Within this scope, it is claimed that those individuals who experience parentification undertake the responsibilities of other family members, they learn to act as an adult person and try to meet their parents’ needs before their own needs, and as a result, they face some negative results because of an excessive amount of responsibilities (Earley & Cushway, 2002). The studies whose findings support this idea point out that individuals who have experienced parentification suffer from depression (Burton et al., 2018; Hooper et al., 2020; Williams & Francis, 2010), anxiety (Tan et al., 2010), weak social relations as well as internalized and externalized behavioral problems (Macfie et al., 2005; Van Loon et al.,

2017), tendency to be embarrassed (Wells & Jones, 2000), psychomatic problems (Schier et al., 2015), and even masochistic and narcissistic personal traits (Jones & Wells, 1996). Similarly, in a study which was conducted with a sample group of 132 adult participants who had a parent having a chronic illness, it was concluded that parents' psychological well-being and parentification predicted the stress level of adolescents at a statistically significant level (Chen & Panebianco, 2020).

Psychological resilience, which is another quality related to parentification, can be described as being able to pursue a normal life after negative life experiences, make use of biological, psychological and social resources that are necessary to cope with difficulties, and to continue development (Ungar & Perry, 2012), and it improves more as one overcomes difficult conditions (Stewart et al., 1997). There should be two fundamental structures in order to display psychological resilience. First of all, there should be some negative life experiences which clearly involve risk such as long-term illnesses, compliance problems, leaving school, negative parental attitudes, a low socio-economic level, broken family and migration, all of which affect an individual's development badly. Secondly, the capacity of resilience should be accompanied by protective factors such as social support, self-control, the ability to take the advantage of social relations, being able to act proactively, cognitive flexibility, problem-solving skill (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998). Because of this reason, it seems possible to state that the conditions resulting from the experiences of parentification and the behaviors displayed depending on these conditions include risk factors, and that they can affect individuals' level of psychological resilience against negative conditions that may arise in the following years of life. In line with this idea, there are some studies in the literature which emphasize that early age experiences of parentification has the potential to create negative results that can last lifelong and be transferred from generation to generation (Chase, 1999; West & Keller, 1991). Individuals having such life experiences can internalize the relations and parental roles that they undertake in their family of origin, and then display these behaviors once again in families where they are actually parents (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Spark, 1984; Kretchmar & Jacobvitz, 2002). DiCaccavo (2006) expresses that individuals with a previous experience of parentification come for psychotherapy mainly because they go through states such as psychological exhaustion and breakdown as a result of not being able to help others, and that these people are mostly worried about others' needs instead of theirs. In another recent study, it has been concluded that university students who have experienced parentification make use of emotion-focused coping strategies including avoiding problems more than others (Boumans & Dorant, 2018).

Considering the related literature above, the hypotheses of the study about the relationship among parentification, psychological resilience and psychological well-being were constructed as follows:

*H1: Parentification has a negative relationship with psychological resilience.*

*H2: Parentification has a negative relationship with psychological well-being.*

## **1.2. The Role of Proactivity**

Proactivity is a personal characteristic that mobilizes individuals to take action actively in order to achieve a goal, and proactive people can influence people around them, take initiative, determine their roles in life instead of accepting them as they are, start and continue change (Bateman & Crant, 1993). Proactive coping strategy is different from reactive coping

strategy, which aims at diminishing the conditions that create stress or the following negative effects. Proactive coping strategy includes efforts to reach resources to ensure improvement and strengthen the structure. When proactive coping is in question, the current risks are accepted to be an opportunity and the actions are goal-oriented. People who adopt proactive coping strategy challenge to current restrictive and difficult conditions, whereas these conditions are not perceived as a threat, damage or loss (Brandtstädter & Wentura, 1995). Proactive people also display a resistant stance with their actions against situational and environmental restrictions, and they accept such barriers as a way to strengthen themselves. They make independent choices despite obstacles and create positive changes, and thus they expand their sphere of influence (Seibert et al., 2001). They would like to create positive changes not only for themselves but also for those around them. This positive mood is, at the same time, the source of internal motivation, which is a fundamental prerequisite of proactive actions (Parker et al., 2010). One of the results of proactive actions, which are mostly addressed within the scope of job-related behaviors in the literature, is increasing level of competence, which in turn has a positive effect on psychological well-being (Cangiano et al., 2019). In parallel with this fact, a meta-analysis study which has analyzed 107 studies has concluded that proactivity has a positive relationship with psychological empowerment, perception of self-efficacy, openness to experiences and congenial personality, whereas it has a negative relationship with neurotic personality (Fuller & Marler, 2009). Similarly, a study conducted by Nguyen et al. (2016) with a sample group of 269 employees has concluded that proactivity predicts psychological resilience at a statistically significant level.

When it comes to the experience of parentification, there are some studies which emphasize that the difficult conditions created by parentification can improve positive coping strategies (DiCaccavo, 2006; Tompkins, 2007). Literature review shows that the individuals who have successfully fulfilled the roles and responsibilities undertaken within the family have a high level of competence and self-efficacy (Jurkovic & Casey, 2000), self-confidence, empathy (East, 2010) and psychological well-being (Telzer & Fuligni, 2009), whereas their level of depression is low (Williams & Francis, 2010). Likewise, it has been concluded in a study that there is a significant positive relationship between the experience of instrumental parentification during childhood and level of interpersonal competence in adolescence (Thirkield, 2002). A longitudinal study carried out by Stein et al. (2007) aims at evaluating the negative effects of parentification, and emphasizes that the negative effects do not last more than six years, undertaking adult roles at an early age increases teenagers' level of competence and self-respect, and it contributes to the improvement of psychological resilience in the long term. In another study which aims at analyzing the relation between early age acute and chronic stressors on one side and psychological resilience during adulthood on the other side, it has been concluded that the experience of emotional parentification has a great impact on positive parenting approach in adulthood as well as coping with a serious medical problem arising within the family (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). In another study conducted with university students, it has been concluded that perceiving the experiences of parentification as useful has a positive relationship with self-efficacy, and experiences of parentification affects self-respect in a positive way by means of establishing good relations with siblings (Borchet et al., 2020). Van Loon et al. (2017) have carried out another study with adolescents in which they have found out that parentification is related to internalized and externalized problems via stress, and this relation does not last longer than a year. Another study conducted with adolescents have concluded that parentification is positively related to criminal behaviors, but family relations have a regulating effect on this relation. It has been found out in this study that when parentification makes family

relations stronger, the relation between parentification and criminal behaviors disappears (Nurwianti et al., 2018). As a result of these findings, it is possible to state that positive coping strategies such as coping with stress or proactive behaviors, or social support resources such as positive family relations can diminish the negative effect of parentification or eliminate it at all.

The review of literature presented above gave rise to developing the hypotheses about the role of proactivity in the relationship between parentification, psychological well-being and psychological resilience as given below:

*H3. Parentification has an indirect effect on psychological well-being through proactivity.*

*H4. Parentification has an indirect effect on psychological resilience through proactivity.*

## 2. Method

The study, which sought answer to the research question; “*What is the role of proactive personality in the relationship among parentification, psychological resilience and psychological well-being?*”, adopted the survey method based on quantitative data. The details about the study design is given below.

### 2.1. Participants

The participants were composed of 416 university students, 140 (36%) of whom were male and 266 (64%) were female. The mean of participants’ age was 20.43 (Sd= 1.71). Out of these 416 participants, 98 (24%) stated that they had mostly lived in a village or town, 101 (24%) lived in a district, 145 (35%) in a province, and 72 (17%) in a big city.

### 2.2. Data collection tools

In the study, besides a personal information form which was developed by the researcher, the following instruments were utilized in order to collect data.

#### 2.2.1. Parentified Child Scale – Adult Form (PCS-A)

PCS-A, which was developed by Zencir and Haskan-Avcı (2019) in order to measure individuals’ parentification experiences, is a 5-Likert type scale including 32 items and four sub-dimensions. PCS-A is composed of two sub-scales, one of which is “General Parentification” while the other is “Sibling-Focused Parentification,” which was completed by the participants having a sibling. The sub-scale of “General Parentification” includes 22 items and four sub-dimensions. A high score means that the individual’s parentification experiences are high as well. While Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient belonging to the sub-scale of “General Parentification” is .91, it has been calculated as .83 in this study.

#### 2.2.2. Proactive Personality Scale (PPS)

PPS was developed by Bateman and Crant (1993) in order to measure individuals’ proactive qualities, and it was adapted into Turkish culture by Uncuoğlu-Yolcu and Çakmak (2017). It is a 5-Likert type scale including 17 items. Having a high score in the scale means having a high level of proactivity. Cronbach alpha internal consistency belonging to the original form of PPS is .89 (Bateman & Crant, 1993), while it is .87 for the Turkish version (Görmüş, 2019) and .86 for this study.

#### 2.2.3. Psychological Resilience Scale (PRS)

PRS, which was developed in order to measure individuals’ level of psychological resilience, is a 5-Likert type scale including 21 items and three sub-dimensions, which are commitment, control and challenge (Işık, 2016). Having a high score in the scale means having a high level of psychological resilience. Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was found to be .76 for the original form, while internal consistency coefficient was found to be .72 in this study.

#### 2.2.4. Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS)

The original version of the scale developed by Ryff (1989) within the framework of multi-dimensional well-being model includes six sub-dimensions, which can be listed as autonomy, environmental authority, individual development, positive relations, life goal and accepting oneself, and 80 items in total. The short version of the scale was created by Ryff and Keyes (1995) by choosing three items from each sub-dimension, resulting in 18 items in total. Having a high score in the scale means having a high level of psychological well-being. The scale was adapted into Turkish culture by İmamoğlu (2004). Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was found to be .79 in the original short version, while it was found to be .70 in this study.

### 2.3. Data Analysis

Before starting data analysis, it was noticed that there were missing data in 17 observations and missing data assignment was conducted via expectation-maximization algorithm. Four observations whose z scores were above  $\pm 4$ , one-variable outlier standardized value, were removed from the data set. Moreover, after the calculation of Mahalanobis distance value, one other observation that was defined to be an outlier at a level of  $p < .01$  (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) was also removed from the data set. As a result, data analysis was carried out with 416 observations.

Normality distribution was tested via examining skewness and kurtosis values of the variables, histogram of standard residual value. Skewness and kurtosis values were calculated to be between -1 and +1, and it was seen that normality distribution was met. The results obtained from Q-Q and distribution graphs showed that linearity hypothesis was met (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Having a correlation value among variables below .80, having variance inflation factor (1.00-1.87) and tolerance values (.53-.96) between acceptable values showed that multiple connectivity hypothesis was met. Moreover, having Durbin-Watson (D-W) test statistics (1.84) between acceptable values showed that the hypothesis of prediction errors independence was met (Field, 2013; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

A method developed by Hayes (2018) was carried out in order to identify the indirect effect of parentification on psychological resilience and psychological well-being via the mediating effect of proactivity, and for that purpose, 5000 bootstrapping sample was done to calculate indirect effects between %95 confidence interval and standard errors. The fact that there is no zero among the confidence interval values showed that the indirect effect was meaningful at a statistically significant level. The data were analyzed by using SPSS 21 Package program and SPSS Process V3 (Hayes, 2018).

### 3. Findings

The findings of study firstly include some descriptive statistics of variables. The mean scores, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis and Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient values and correlation coefficients between the variables are given in Table 1 below.

Table 1. *Correlation matrix and descriptive statistics*

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Parentification	1			
2. Proactivity	.114*	1		
3. Psychological resilience	-.040	.671**	1	
4. Psychological well-being	-.289**	.313**	.486**	1
Mean	51.00	62.54	80.40	66.91
Standard deviation	11.66	7.12	6.95	6.88
Kurtosis	.097	-.116	-.335	-.185
Skewness	.487	.078	-.026	-.193
$\alpha$	.83	.81	.72	.70

\*=  $p < .05$ ; \*\*=  $p < .01$ ;  $\alpha$ = Cronbach alpha internal reliability coefficients

There is a significant positive low relationship between parentification and proactivity ( $r = .114$ ,  $p < .05$ ), whereas parentification is negatively associated with psychological well-being ( $r = -.289$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Proactivity has a significant positive relationship with psychological resilience ( $r = .671$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and psychological well-being ( $r = .313$ ,  $p < .01$ ), as well as psychological resilience has a significant positive relationship with psychological well-being ( $r = .486$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Moreover independent group t-test was performed to compare the mean scores of variables according to gender. The results showed that mean scores of proactivity ( $t_{(414)} = 1.048$ ,  $p > .05$ ), parentification ( $t_{(414)} = -.110$ ,  $p > .05$ ), psychological resilience ( $t_{(414)} = -.138$ ,  $p > .05$ ) and psychological well-being ( $t_{(414)} = -1.958$ ,  $p > .05$ ) did not significantly differ by gender.

After the relations between the variables were calculated, mediation analysis was carried out in order to identify the indirect effect of parentification on psychological resilience and psychological well-being via proactivity, and the results are given in Figure 1 and Table 2.

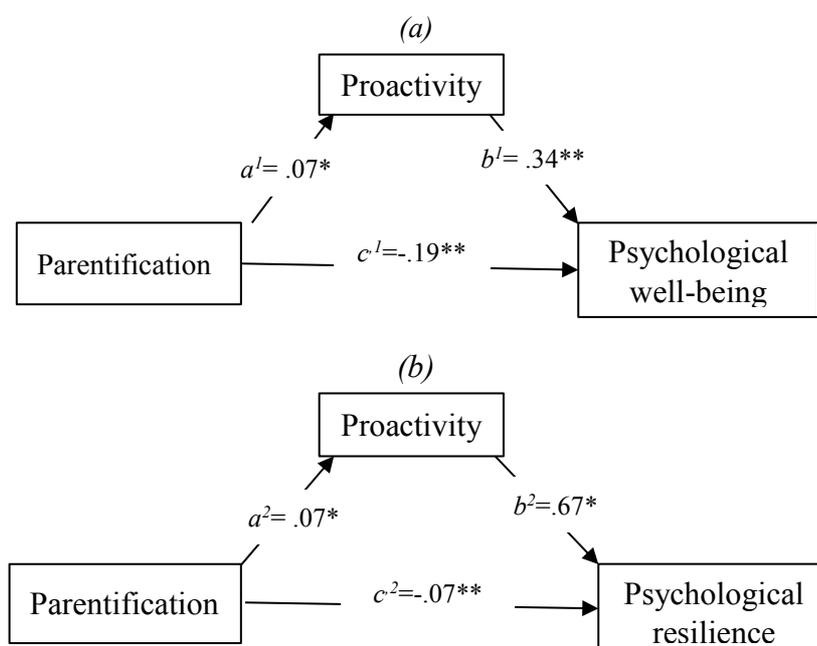


Figure 1. *Mediation model. a) Psychological well-being model, b) Psychological resilience model*

As is seen in Figure 1, in the psychological well-being model, parentification has a statistically significant positive effect on proactivity ( $a_1 = .07$ ;  $t_{(414)} = 2.33$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and

proactivity has the same effect on psychological well-being ( $b^1 = .34$ ;  $t_{(413)} = 7.92$ ;  $p < .001$ ). On the other hand, parentification has a statistically significant negative effect on psychological well-being ( $c^1 = -.19$ ;  $t_{(413)} = -7.45$ ;  $p < .001$ ) in line with H1.

Similarly, psychological resilience model shows that parentification has a statistically significant positive effect on proactivity ( $a^2 = .07$ ;  $t_{(414)} = 2.33$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and proactivity has this effect on psychological resilience ( $b^2 = .67$ ;  $t_{(413)} = 18.86$ ;  $p < .001$ ). At the same time, as we predicted in H2, parentification has a statistically significant direct negative effect on psychological resilience ( $c^2 = -.07$ ;  $t_{(413)} = -3.25$ ;  $p < .01$ ).

According to these findings, the higher the level of parentification is, the lower the level of psychological well-being and psychological resilience is. On the other hand, parentification predicts proactivity, proactivity positively predicts psychological well-being and psychological resilience. The results of 5000 bootstrapping sample regarding the indirect effect of parentification on psychological well-being and psychological resilience via proactivity are given in Table 2.

Table 2. *Bootstrap results for indirect effect of parentification on psychological well-being and psychological resilience through proactivity.*

	Coefficient	Standard error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower	Upper
<b>Psychological Well-Being Model</b>				
Total effect	<b>-.1707</b>	.0278	-.2253	-.1162
Direct effect	<b>-.1943</b>	.0261	-.2455	-.1430
Indirect effect	<b>.0235</b>	.0104	.0035	.0446
<b>Psychological Resilience Model</b>				
Total effect	-.0239	.0293	-.0814	.0337
Direct effect	<b>-.0703</b>	.0216	-.1128	-.0278
Indirect effect	<b>.0464</b>	.0205	.0081	.0878

*Note:* Boldface type indicates a significant effect as determined by the 95% bias-corrected and accelerated confidence interval based on 5000 bootstrap samples.

As is seen in Table 2, parentification has a statistically significant direct negative effect on psychological well-being ( $\beta = -.1943$ ;  $Se = .0261$ ; 95% CI =  $-.2455 - -.1430$ ) and psychological resilience ( $\beta = -.0703$ ;  $Sh = .0216$ ; 95% CI =  $-.1128 - -.0278$ ). On the other hand, parentification has – via proactivity – statistically significant positive indirect effect on psychological well-being ( $\beta = .0235$ ;  $Sh = .0104$ ; 95% CI =  $.0035 - .0446$ ) and psychological resilience ( $\beta = .0464$ ;  $Se = .0205$ ; 95% CI =  $.0081 - .0878$ ) as we predicted in H3 and H4. These findings show that proactivity has a buffering role on the relationship between parentification, psychological well-being and psychological resilience. As is seen in Table 2, total effect of parentification on psychological well-being and psychological resilience is lower than its direct effect. This finding shows that when the proactivity is included in the model, the relationship between parentification on one side and psychological well-being and psychological resilience on the other side diminishes. In other words, the higher the level of proactivity is, the lower the negative effect of parentification on psychological well-being and psychological resilience is. Overall, these results provide support for H1-H4, suggesting that parentification is indirect predictors of psychological well-being and resilience through proactivity.

#### 4. Discussion

The study shows that psychological well-being decreases as the level of parentification increases (predicted in H1). This finding is in parallel with the previous studies in the literature which show that parentification has a positive relationship with psychopathology (Chen & Panebianco, 2020; Hooper et al., 2020; Van Loon et al., 2017). According to this, the negative effect of parentification on psychological well-being might result from the decrease in an individual's level of self-efficacy and self-acceptance, which are both important elements of well-being (Ryff, 1989). In this context, Wells et al. (1999) states that parentified individuals have a lower level of self-efficacy, whereas Champion et al. (2009) expresses that those individuals who experience parentification at an early age might lack the necessary cognitive and social skills in order to fulfil the roles and responsibilities they undertake at this early age, and this may result in a negative effect on their self-confidence.

Considering the fact that good relations established with people around one is closely related to psychological well-being (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995), the negative effect of parentification on psychological well-being can be understood better. This idea also complies with the study findings in the literature that parentification is related to weak interpersonal functionality (Jurkovic, 2014) and problems with interpersonal relations (Peris & Emery, 2005). Besides, it can be said that as parentified individuals consider others' interests and needs more than theirs (Chase, 1999), their psychological well-being including the skill of acting with his/her free will (autonomy) is affected negatively. Moreover, it can be stated that this can affect environmental dominance, which is another criterion of psychological well-being, negatively (Ryff, 1989).

Parentification experiences cause individuals to exchange roles in their life later on which means that they ignore their own needs and make a great effort in order to meet their parents' needs. It is emphasized in the literature that when especially children turn out to be the ones who provide the primary care in the family, this can create a long-lasting negative effect on their psychological development and life adaptation (Hooper, 2007). Considering the effect of parentification on individuals' psycho-social development and role changes in the family, it can be stated that these variables will affect their effort to improve their already-existing potential, and this will lead to a decrease in the personal development of psychological well-being.

Stress caused by the psychological and physical burden of parentification experiences might be influential in the decrease in individuals' level of psychological well-being. Within this scope, in a longitudinal study carried out by Van Loon et al. (2017), it was found out that parentification experiences increase level of stress in adolescents and this in turn leads to an increase in externalized and internalized behavioural problems in them. Similarly, it can be underlined that considering the fact that academic success predicts the level of psychological well-being (Ateş, 2016) and parentification creates a decrease in academic success (Stein et al., 1999), the individuals who have a high level of parentification will have a low level of academic success; and this will cause a decrease in their level of psychological well-being.

Another finding of this study shows that the higher individuals' level of parentification gets, the lower their level of psychological resilience gets (predicted in H2). When the relationship between psycho-pathology, which has a negative effect not only on psychological well-being but also on psychological resilience, and parentification is considered (Hooper et al., 2011; Hooper et al., 2020), parentification is expected to have a negative relationship with psychological resilience. It can be stated that traumatic stress together with psychopathology resulting from

parentification (Hooper et al., 2008; Van Loon et al., 2017) might affect individuals' psychological resilience, which can be defined as one's ability to recover and get better after difficult life conditions. Likewise, the relationship between parentification and attachment problems (Alpert et al., 1998) as well as personal qualities (Wells & Jones, 1998) indicates that parentification can prevent individuals from using their psychological energy wisely when they face problems and so it can diminish psychological resilience. In support of this idea, Boumans and Dorant (2018) carried out a study with university students and found out that individuals who have experienced parentification tend to avoid problems and resort to emotion-focused problem solving strategies including directing attention to different topics instead of dealing with the stress resulting from the problems.

Lastly, another finding of this study demonstrates that as the level of proactivity increases, the negative effect of parentification on psychological well-being and psychological resilience decreases (predicted in H3 and H4). Proactivity, which refers to active approach one adopts to deal with a problem (Frese et al., 1997), means that individuals get aware of the factors and processes apart from themselves, and struggle with them consciously. On that sense, it seems necessary to point out that when individuals approach a stressful occasion such as parenting at an active level, when they get aware of this process and struggle with this process consciously, they will adapt to parentification more easily, and their psychological well-being and psychological resilience will increase as well. Considering the relationship between improving one's current potential and well-being (Ryff, 1989) and considering that psychological resilience refers to the strength to recover after difficult life conditions (Earvolino- Ramirez, 2007), a proactive approach to parentification experiences can be expected to have a positive effect on well-being and resilience. A proactive attitude provides individuals with the opportunity to get aware of life conditions, struggle with them actively, adapt to the changes actively, getting ready for changes and show less resistance to changes after the changes and innovations brought by parentification (Williams, Francis, 2010). With this aspect, it can be pointed out that proactivity will repress the negative effects of parentification.

In line with the findings of this study, previous studies have shown that parentification increases stress level and is so related to psychological problems (Van Loon et al., 2017), and negative effects of parentification decreases when positive family and siblings relations are at a high level (Borchet et al., 2020; Nurwianti et al., 2018). Williams and Francis (2010) have carried out a study in which they have found out that parentification has a positive relation with depression and a negative relation with happiness, but in this relation, focus of control can have a protective role against the negative effects of parentification. Likewise, another study has demonstrated that coping strategies such as self-discipline or self-evaluation have a moderating role in the negative relationship between parentification and life satisfaction (Williams, 2015). These findings show that just like other psychological qualities which support individuals in dealing with stressful and negative life conditions, proactivity might have a role in diminishing the negative effect of parentification.

This study shows that as the level of effort one makes to cope with difficult conditions by using one's personal qualities such as attitude, endeavour and belief – struggling proactively – increases, negative effects of parentification on one's psychological well-being and psychological resilience decrease. These findings provide mental health experts, educators and researchers who are studying the short and long term negative effects of parentification on mental health (Cho & Lee, 2019; Galambos & Tilton-Weaver, 2000), with a different perspective to consider proactive personality traits transfer to the process of struggle and their

effect on individuals' mental health while carrying out a study on the issue. However, this study has some limitations.

First of all, this study has been carried out with a study group composed of university students. Because of that reason, it can be pointed out that individuals who are of different ages can assess their parentification experiences differently. Moreover, the data regarding parentification experiences have been gathered from the participants retrospectively by nature. The participants have been asked to think over some duties they fulfilled and behaviors they displayed years ago. Hence, participants' perception of undertaking an adult's role might have changed in time and through new experiences. Apart from that, this study has been carried out with people who have been brought up in a collectivist culture and who still live in such a culture. Collectivist culture's understanding of glorifying taking responsibility in the family might have caused the participants to perceive parentification more positively. When these limitations are considered, further studies can be conducted with different age groups, with individuals having different cultural backgrounds, and with a different purpose such as identifying the effect of developmental state and cultural properties on parentification, psychological health and protective factors.

### **5. Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

### **6. Ethics Committee Approval**

The study considers the ethical concerns, and does not require ethics committee approval.

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