

THE MEDIATING ROLE OF SHAME AND GUILT IN THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTIFICATION AND
SEPARATION-INDIVIDUATION



AYŞE NUR İLBAK

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AYŞE NUR İLBAK

SUPERVISOR
DR. SERAY AKÇA

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PLAGIARISM

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Date : 22.05.2023

Name/Surname: Ayşe Nur İlbağ

ABSTRACT

In this study, the main purpose was to explore the mediating roles of shame and guilt in the relationship between parentification and separation-individuation. In order to measure the relationships between variables, data was collected through an online survey with the participation of 384 individuals between ages 18 and 58. Parentified Child Scale-Adult Version, Separation-Individuation Inventory, The Trait Shame and Guilt Scale and Demographic Information Form were used to assess these variables respectively. Quantitative research methods were used through the SPSS : 1) correlational analysis of study variables with each other were performed, 2) mediation analysis was performed for the mediating role of shame and guilt on the relationship between parentification and separation-individuation issues, 3) means of demographic informations and study variables were compared for their possible contribution. The findings suggested that all study variables had significant and positive relationships among themselves. Therefore, there was a significant and positive relationship between parentification and separation-individuation issues. In addition, according to mediation analysis, it was observed that parentification significantly predicted shame and did not significantly predict guilt. However, when shame and guilt were taken into equation at the same time, both emotions were found to have a positive and significant partial mediating role in the relationship between parentification and separation-individuation issues. Finally, all findings were discussed in reference to existing literature and implications along with future directions were presented.

Keywords: Guilt; parentification; role reversal; separation-individuation; shame

ÖZET

Bu çalışmada, ebeveynleşme ile ayrışma-bireyleşme arasındaki ilişkide utanç ve suçluluk duygularının aracı rolünün araştırılması temel amaç olmuştur. Çalışma değişkenleri arasındaki ilişkileri ölçmek için yaşları 18 ile 58 arasında değişen 384 kişinin katıldığı çevrimiçi anket aracılığıyla veriler toplanmıştır. Sırasıyla, Ebeveynleştirilmiş Çocuk Ölçeği – Yetişkin Formu, Ayrışma-Bireyleşme Envanteri, Sürekli Utanç ve Suçluluk Ölçeği ve Demografik Bilgiler Formu kullanılmıştır. SPSS aracılığıyla nicel araştırma yöntemleri kullanılmıştır : 1) çalışma değişkenlerinin birbirleriyle korelasyonel analizleri yapılmıştır, 2) ebeveynleşme ile ayrışma-bireyleşme arasındaki ilişkide utanç ve suçluluğun aracı rolü için aracılık analizi yapılmıştır, 3) olası katkılarının değerlendirilebilmesi adına demografik bilgilerin ortalamaları çalışma değişkenleri ile karşılaştırılmıştır. Bulgular, tüm çalışma değişkenlerinin kendi aralarında anlamlı ve pozitif ilişkilere sahip olduğunu göstermiştir. Dolayısıyla ebeveynleşme ile ayrışma-bireyleşme arasında anlamlı ve pozitif bir ilişki bulunmuştur. Ayrıca aracılık analizlerine göre ebeveynleşmenin utancı anlamlı düzeyde yordadığı, suçluluğu ise anlamlı biçimde yordamadığı görülmüştür. Ancak utanç ve suçluluk aynı anda denkleme alındığında, her iki duygunun da ebeveynleşme ve ayrışma-bireyleşme arasındaki ilişkide pozitif ve anlamlı bir şekilde kısmi aracı role sahip oldukları görülmüştür. Son olarak, tüm bulgular mevcut literatür referans alınarak tartışılmış ve gelecekteki çalışmalara önerilerle birlikte çalışmadan elde edilen çıkarımlar sunulmuştur.

Anahtar kelimeler: Ayrışma-bireyleşme; ebeveynleşme; rol karmaşası; suçluluk; utanç



To my dear friend Defne Arık,
whose laughter I will hear in my
ears for the rest of my life...

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Parentification

1.1.1. Family systems theory

According to Family Systems Theory, a family is a small organization that has its own unique system (Bavelas & Segal, 1982). Each individual within this system creates subsystems (*parent-child subsystem, marital subsystem, sibling subsystem*) that naturally each individual contributes to the functioning of the system and generates some behavioral and/or emotional patterns within the family. Since the systems within families have an interdependent nature in themselves and affect individuals, it is insufficient to consider individuals independently (Bowen, 1966; Minuchin, 1985). Minuchin (1985) emphasized that families which have a functional system, their subsystems of the large system have clearly separated boundaries and there are constant rules in the interaction of subsystems. The feature that keeps the family structure functional is related to the fact that these boundaries need to be flexible in the developmental transition stages that occur in the flow of life (Minuchin, 1985). However, Bowen's Family System Theory displayed that the system within the family emerges with patterns that aim to reduce anxiety. He emphasized that families generate chronic emotional anxiety that affects members' reactions and for functional family system, family members need to enhance their emotional awareness of their reactions to each other (Brown, 1999; Haefner, 2014).

Although there are differences between Family System Theories on an emotional, behavioral or structural level, the literature agrees that these systems have an impact on the developmental processes of both families and individuals (Cox & Paley, 2003). Moreover, most theories agree that family boundaries which disrupts developmental processes such as change, growth and individuation, are mostly the result of the unmeshed, weak or rigid boundaries (Navarre, 1998; Perosa & Perosa, 1993). Wood (1985) extended the concept of boundaries that emerges within the family by dividing them into proximity (*interpersonal boundaries*) and generational hierarchy (*subsystem boundaries*). The concept of proximity includes the closeness of

individuals in the family with each other and the ability to have their own autonomous existence while in contact with each other within this closeness. For example, when a family member shares his/her sadness with the family, other members need to be able to distinguish that this sadness belongs to the living person while accompanying this sadness. Generational hierarchy, on the other hand, includes the divisions of the individuals into social classes among themselves. In other words, since the roles of individuals in the family are hierarchical, they contain regulations on who will act when and how. Among the factors that play a role in the clarification of the subsystem boundaries are nurturance, control, coalitions, and peers. Wood (1983) mentioned some distribution of these factors according to hierarchical roles. For instance, when husband-wife is peer, siblings can be peers among themselves, and hierarchical boundaries may be demolished if the mother is in a coalition with the child while the mother is expected to be in a coalition with the father.

1.1.2. Role reversals

The boundaries mentioned above are not static boundaries. The boundaries that can and actually should be reorganized in crises or transitions that arise within the family. For example, if parents get sick, the child can take on the role of caregiver for a while. At this point, the significant thing is to ensure that the closeness and distance between family members need to be in a way that does not interrupt their developmental processes while the boundaries are being organized/reorganized (Fullinwider-Bush & Jacobvitz, 1993). Otherwise, boundaries can be too rigid or unmeshed that role reversal can occur within the family (Kerig, 2005; Shaffer, 2005). In the literature, the existence of mental illnesses such as depression in the parents (Champion et al, 2009; DiMarzio, 2021), alcohol/substance misuse (Bekir et al, 1993; Pasternak & Schier, 2012), divorce (Johston, 1990) is mentioned among the situations that make it difficult to organized/reorganized the boundaries that leads to role reversals.

Macfie (2015) and Hooper (2007) argue for the intergenerational transmission of role reversals in the framework of Bowlby's internal working model theory. They emphasized that if parents are unresponsive to the needs of children, but if there is a response when the child meets the unmet needs of parents, accordingly, children may experience the proximity. In case of maintaining the proximity obtained in this way,

the child's internal working model is formed according to the occurred role reversal. In a study conducted by Macfie et al (2005) observed that mothers who had role reversals in their childhood internalized an internal working model that functions in establishing bonds and proximity by meeting the needs of the parents rather than having the child's own needs met by the parents. This situation can lead to the establishment of a family system that causes the mother to expect from her child for the needs that were not met in her childhood. With the emergence of such a cycle, it can be said that people who experienced role reversal in their childhood may carry this situation to the next generation by this way. In such circumstances, it is seen that the family system is corrupted and in this deteriorated system, the roles between parent-child are often confused. Moreover, this confusion leads to parentified children have a disorganized attachment type and dissociation because the parent who will meet the child's comfort and reassurance needs is already the same person who worries the child (Alexander, 2003; Engelhardt, 2012).

In cases where the parents can not fulfill their own responsibilities and parental roles, the child assumes these missing roles and responsibilities in the family. With the existence of such a dynamic, children can not stay in the role of a child in the family and begin to take a role in a way of parentified, adultified or spousified. Spousification is a dynamic that aims to meet the intimacy and affection needs of parents in the relationship they established with their children because those needs are not met in their own marriage (Kerig, 2005). Adultification, on the other hand, refers to the fact that the child, who is hierarchically lower than her/his parents due to her/his developmental needs, comes to the same level with her/his parents hierarchically, by taking the role of her/his parent's friend, colleague, ally (Gerber, 2011). In the case of parentification, it refers to a family system in which the care, support, comfort and nurturance that the child needs from an adult is ignored by parents and child is shifted to meet parents' needs of care, support, nurturance (Peris et al., 2008). Although different dynamics are observed in all these roles that children enter, what is observed in common is that the child can not be in an age-appropriate role in the family system, and accordingly, there are disruptions in their emotional development, no matter how mature they seem (Bekir et al., 1993; West, 1991). Another common situation seen in these different dynamics is that adults often meet

their own unmet needs through children who are already in need but whose needs are ignored (Gerber, 2011; Kerig, 2005).

1.1.3. Parentification

Parentified children are those who forgo their developmental needs in order to meet their parents' needs by doing so at the expense of not being able to establish their true, independent, authentic self (Castro et al., 2004; DiCaccavo, 2006; Haxhe, 2016; Nuttal et al., 2014). For instance, these children, in the face of adult parental conflicts, try to calm their parents like an adult, and their need for reassurance for the distress they feel while witnessing the conflict can be overlooked. Peris et al. (2008) observed in the study that in families with parentification dynamics, parents perceive that they have a close and warm relationship with their children, while children perceive that they have a low warm and unsupportive relationship with their parents.

Jurkovic (1997) divides children's caregiving behaviors, which are mostly not age-appropriate, into two categories as instrumental (*taking responsibilities of their siblings, preparing meals, cleaning the house, earning money for the needs of the house etc.*) and emotional (*socioemotional needs of family e.g., marital problems, appease parents' anxiety*). Trying to meet the emotional needs of parents can be more burdensome (Champion, 2016), as well as meeting the needs of all kinds of parents' that are resulting from parentification, usually expectations that are above what children can do (Castro et al., 2004). In this case, the false self that emerges as a result of the denial of one's own needs and desires, as in this way a child can establish approval, acceptance, intimacy from his parents, is experienced as a self that fails to meet the expectations of parents (DiCaccavo, 2006.) This situation causes the person to feel shame against both the real self and the self that is already inadequate in the face of the expectations of the parents (Wells, 2000). Hooper et al. (2013) see parentification as a relational paradox. They emphasize that parentified children's needs for bonding and intimacy are not met by their parents, however children achieve their need for intimacy and bonding by meeting the parental or/and relational needs of the family.

Boszormenyi-Nagy & Spark (1973) defined the concept of invisible loyalties that can exist within the family. What is meant to be mentioned with the invisible loyalties is that the attitudes which are accepted as loyal in the family are internalized

and non-compliance can cause individuals to feel guilty as a result of not matching with the debt of gratitude they feel towards the family. Such loyalty commitments have a function of keeping the family system together, while it may also distance the person from the feeling of guilt. (Winnicott, 1965). In Parmiani et al. (2012) study with divorced parents, they state that parents turn to their children to meet their emotional needs and to be supported by their children. They express that children perceive this situation as a loyal attitude by giving up their own needs in the face of expectations of their parents and even seeing themselves as self-sufficient about their needs. At the end of the study, they add that one of the results of experiencing such a loyalty conflict leads to negative effects on the children's individuation processes. However, the recognition, acceptance and love that children gain as a result of such inverted family roles takes precedence over their needs for self-actualization and independence (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Spark, 1973; Parmiani et al., 2012).

Although parentification seems to be a situation that mainly occurs as a result of the disruption of generational boundaries and has a negative impact on individuals' developmental processes, literature holds this concept in two ways as it can be constructive or destructive. Possible constructive consequences of parentification include interpersonal/relational competence (Hooper, 2008; Hooper et al., 2013), resilience (Borchet et al., 2016; Polonski et al., 2021), posttraumatic growth (Hooper et al., 2007), better coping skills (Stein et al., 2007), self-esteem based on feelings of competence and self-efficacy (Borchet et al., 2016), higher empathic skills and problem-solving skills (Van der Mijl & Vingerhoets, 2017). Before assuming that the parentification dynamic has direct destructive effects, it may be important to evaluate the intensity and duration of the parentification experience, how the child evaluates this situation and how child feels and how child gives meanings to those experiences and impacts of cultural factors (Borchet et al., 2020; Bornett et al., 1998; Hooper et al., 2012). Children's role of caregiver in crises and transition processes that arise in the family can be an adaptive attitude in order to maintain balance within the family (Hooper, 2008). However, the recognition of the children's role as a caregiver, mutual care of children by the family, seeing their contributions and rewarding them may reduce the negative consequences of parentification (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Spark, 1975; Earley & Cushway, 2002; Nuttall et al., 2012). Children may have different external sources that may generate recognition of their role and contribution,

needs for mirroring and achieving the positive results mentioned above. These external sources may include one of the child's parents, teachers, other adults in her/his life, or siblings. For instance, Borchet et al. (2020) in their study observed that despite being parentified, siblings can make positive contributions to their individual development as a result of factors such as recognition, support, mutual contribution, warmth and encouragement.

Despite all the possible constructive consequences of parentification, if the child is not supported, if needs and wishes are eliminated then it may be inevitable that destructive effects may occur. To elaborate on these effects, there are studies which mention that parentified children are prone to internalizing and externalizing problems (Peris et al., 2008; Van Loon et al., 2015). Moreover, they are vulnerable to feelings of shame and guilt (Wells & Jones, 2000), loneliness (Chojnacka, 2020; Haxhe, 2016), inferiority and fear of loss (Jones & Wells, 1996). It has also been found that there may occur psychological disorders that parentified children can develop in adulthood, such as depression (Carroll & Robinson, 2000; Cho & Lee, 2018), anxiety, substance abuse, eating disorders (Hooper, 2008; Hooper et al., 2011). Additionally, parentified children may develop masochistic, narcissistic, compulsive personality traits in their adulthood to protect themselves from feelings such as shame, guilt, inferiority, fear of loss (Jones & Wells, 1996; Lutman, 2019; Wells & Jones, 2000). Wells & Jones (1998) emphasized that these children may continue to use splitting, which is one of the infantile defense mechanisms, in order to cope with interpersonal distress in the future. Moreover, there may occur codependent personality traits as they have been able to establish a relationship with parents by caring for them and so that they may also engage in caring attitudes as a way of relating to others in the future (Wells et al., 1999). In that way, they may have become too other-oriented and over-comforting others as a result of ignoring their own needs and prioritizing the needs of others.

In the light of all these mentioned, it can be said that parentified children may lack the appropriate environment and relationships that will provide psychological development. As a result of these deficiencies, it is seen that there may appear difficulties in getting in touch with true self, self-differentiation and formation of independent, authentic self. Moreover, it seems that those deficiencies and the methods of establishing relationships tend to affect parentified children's

psychological states and methods of establishing relationships in adulthood. All these situations could suggest that adults who were parentified in childhood may have disruptions in the separation-individuation processes which is expected to be overcome in childhood with an appropriate developmental environment.

1.2. Separation and Individuation

1.2.1. Margaret Mahler's theory of separation-individuation

With the Separation-Individuation Theory, which Margaret Mahler brought to the psychoanalytic literature, she argues that the psychological birth of individuals occurs after their biological/physiological birth as a result of a gradual development process. The psychological birth of individuals occurs with the formation of libidinal object constancy and individuated self-investments from the third year of life (Mahler et al., 1975). Mahler (1971) also states that this psychological state of separateness and acquisition of individual existence can be reached by going through the developmental stages that she has divided into three. These stages are defined as *Normal Autism Phase*, *Normal Symbiotic Phase* and *Separation Individuation Phase*, respectively. The last phase, the Separation-Individuation has sub-phases, namely *Differentiation*, *Practicing*, *Rapprochement*, *Individuality* and *Emotional Object Constancy*.

The period between the birth of the baby and the first month is defined as *normal autism*. During this period, the baby seems to be in a state of primitive hallucinatory disorientation, since the baby is not able to differentiate between inner and outer world, self and object boundaries (Mahler et al., 1975). Accordingly, the baby provides homeostasis with somatopsychic mechanisms, and the gratification of physical needs is experienced as being provided with its own omnipotence (Mahler, 1967). The *normal symbiotic phase* initiates with the increase of the baby's awareness of the existence of the need-satisfying object that exists outside from the second month. Realizing that the other which exists outside is the object of need for the baby brings along an investment in the baby's caregiver, but the differentiation between the baby's inner and outer world, self and other has not yet begun. In this phase, the baby experiences a common omnipotence by merging with the mother, and there is a dual unity state where there are no limitations as well. In other words, "I" and "not-I" are

undifferentiated, and the infant is in omnipotent fusion with a delusional common boundary with the mother (Mahler, 1967).

In parallel with the increasing wakefulness durations of the infant, cracks originate in the autistic shell which keeps external stimuli out, by that way the period described as *hatching* and *differentiation* begins (Mahler, 1974). Attention directed inward, bodysensically focused on the symbiont trajectory, is beginning to turn outward. The infant's movements go ahead to be more purposeful and continuous. For instance, as the capacity to position his/herself in relation to the lap increases, his/her ability to distance his/her body from the mother's body also develops. In this way, the infant starts to examine the mother (face, facial expressions, gestures) and becomes able to compare the mother with other people. Consequently, anxiety of strangers also develops here. As long as this anxiety remains under curiosity and interest, the first steps of the infant's socialization process and formation of object constancy process are not harmed (Mahler, 1967; Mahler et al., 1975).

Between the tenth and seventeenth months, the infant's increased mobility with the onset of walking ensures the formation of autonomous functions. This development indicates that the infant has entered to the *practicing* period. The infant's capacity to crawl and/or walk away from the mother often brings separation anxiety for the infant (Mahler, 1971). As the infant moves away from the mother to explore the world that opened up in front of him/her with his/her ability to stand up, when the anxiety level increases, the infant returns to the mother for "emotional refuel" (Mahler et al., 1963). In this way, infant can continue his/her exploration with pleasure while his/her anxiety subsides. Moreover, this phase is a period when the narcissism of the infant is experienced at its peak, because the infant who can now able to stand on his/her feet is in an intense awareness of what he/she can do, his/her abilities and realizing the greatness of infant's own world (Mahler et al., 1975).

In the seventeenth and twenty-fourth months, the *rapprochement* phase begins. There is a significant boost in the awareness of separation from the mother in parallel with the increase in the emotional and cognitive capacity of the child during these months. This awareness also leads to an increase in separation anxiety. Accordingly, the baby is faced with how much he/she actually needs the love and attention of the mother, creating a decrease in his/her experiences of omnipotence and

narcissism (Mahler, 1971). Moreover, in this period, there is an increase in the child's desire to share his/her new discoveries with the mother and to find her physically next to him/her. However, at this point, an intense dilemma emerges in which the fear of being swallowed by the mother and being deprived of the freedom are felt at the same time, while trying to get close to the mother again. As a result of the pressure created by this dilemma, an increase in the child's negativity towards the caregiver, called rapprochement crisis (Gergely, 2000; Mahler, 1971), can be observed. For instance, dissatisfaction, inconsistent behaviors, tantrums (Mahler; 1974). These crises are overcome as a result of the caregiver's ability to tolerate the child's reaction to the dilemma, to approach changing needs flexibly, that is, to offer the space where infant can freely explore autonomously while allowing the closeness infant needs to settle down (Mahler et al., 1975). Otherwise, the child may have difficulty in establishing the balance of closeness and distance in this relationship, and infants may tend to calm the anxiety created by the dilemma by splitting good and bad mental representations.

Between the twenty-fourth and thirty-sixth months, it is expected that the infant has entered to the last and open-ended phase of the *individuality and emotional object constancy*. In this period, it is expected that by keeping the good and bad representations together, there are whole object representations, basic trust in oneself and to others will be gained, a sense of identity and secondary narcissism will be formed (Mahler et al.; 1975; Mahler; 1967). In addition, thanks to the internalized positive representation of the primary caregiver, the child's frustration tolerance level and self-soothing skills are expected to be increased in the physical absence of the primary caregiver. The internalized positive object may even be more functional than the real object at some point, because this representation can be flexible according to changing individual needs (Pine, 2004). As a result of all these achievements, it is expected that the child will be able to experience the differentiated and individualized self.

In the formation of this psychological birth/development, the effect of the caregiver's constant, consistent presence, accepting attitude, that is, good-enough mothering functions (Winnicott, 1998), are precursor at each period. Mahler et al. (1963) stated that children give new developmental cues specific to each period of development, and it is significant that these cues are seen by the caregiver and

interpreted according to the child's needs. If the caregiver selectively responds to these cues in a way that corresponds to caregiver's own needs, the child can use its own capacity to adapt according to caregiver's needs and emotions that consequently child may move away from his/her own separation-individuation needs.

1.2.2. Peter Blos' theory of second separation-individuation

While Mahler's theory of Separation-Individuation covering the first three years of life, Peter Blos (1967) states that there is a need for *adolescent individuation* process as a result of the gradual growth and differentiation of cognitive, physical conditions and more mature ego functions with the onset of adolescence. Depending on these changes, there is a growing awareness of a disengagement in infantile images as their parents are omnipotent figures of authority, and that their parents are ordinary people with weaknesses and strengths (Koepke & Denissen, 2012). As a result of this confrontation, boundaries between parent-child, infantile internalized objects and self go through reconstruction (Blos, 1967; Skoe & von der Lippe, 1998). Just like in the first Separation Individuation process, in the Second Separation Individuation process, adolescents need to feel emotionally connected with their parents and to the support of their parents (Meeus et al., 2005) while having a space for expressing their new autonomous abilities, needs and wishes. Only if this optimal distance and proximity can be established, adolescents may install a sense of adult self that separate from primary love objects and may achieve one's unique mature individuality (Blos, 1967; Kins et al., 2013). In the face of the child's increasing need for autonomy, distancing, differentiation and boundary formation occupations (Skoe & von der Lippe, 1998), parents who are not ready to separate-individuate from their children may have attitudes such as putting too much control over the child (Ingoglia et al., 2011), withdrawing attention and love (Skoe & von der Lippe, 1998), impose restrictions by using authority (Collins et al., 1997), prioritizing own needs at a level that inhibits the child's development (Goldner et al., 2022). As these attitudes of parents may lead to disturbances on the separation individuation processes of adolescents, correspondingly there may occur psychological/relational/self-oriented troubles such as difficulty in differentiation of self from others, using infantile mechanism of splitting (Pine, 1979), intolerance of being alone or separation anxiety (Christenson & Wilson, 1985; Kins et al., 2013).

1.2.3. Separation-individuation and parentification

With the completion of the Separation-Individuation developmental process in a healthy way, it is expected that people will be able to establish self and other boundaries in close relationships, and accordingly, optimal closeness and distance can be achieved in those relationships. By this achievement, individuals are expected to be able to distinguish and describe their own needs and desires by being differentiated from others, and not to lose their closeness in the relationship as they differentiate and diverge. In some cases, the quality of the boundaries between the self and the other may lead individuals not enough to be differentiated and separated, and as a result, not be able to form their authentic individual self (Schier et al., 2014). One of the situations that may hinder the formation of self-other boundaries, which plays a significant role in individuals being separated and individuated, is parentification (Borchet et al., 2016; Perosa & Perosa, 1993; Schier et al., 2014).

As parentification is related to diffusion and/or enmeshment boundaries between family members, it causes the child to not be able to stay in a role that will support her/his separation-individuation task and limit the child's self-development with the burden of the adult role (Borchet et al., 2016; Boumans & Dorant, 2018). These explanations do not mean that children should not take care for their parents at all, but it is emphasized that the caregiver should be mostly parents by providing to children protection, safety, guidance and promoting their separateness (Boszermenyi-Nagy & Spark, 1975; Mayseless & Scharf, 2009). Otherwise, children's emotional overinvolvement within the enmesh boundaries limits the separation-individuation process (Perrin et al., 2013). For instance, in conflictual couples (Borchet et al., 2016), alcohol dependent parents (Pasternak & Schier, 2014), divorced parents (Perrin et al., 2013), low level of individuation has been observed in their children in case of boundary enmeshment and/or parentification. The common situation among these studies is that parents are overly preoccupied with their own needs and are insensitive, unavailable to their children's needs. As a result, children cannot benefit from the parental resources they need during their individuation process. Additionally, children who need to stay connected with their parents under all circumstances may also tend to direct negative emotions toward themselves in order to maintain their parents' positive mental representations.

Being connected but at the same time acquiring a high level of autonomy and individuation is seen as the main issue of the separation-individuation process. Although parentification also serves to enable children to establish a connection with their parents, it is difficult to say that this connection most likely can serve the separation-individuation process functionally. One of the meanings of close connection between family members signifies that there is a warm, accepting, nurturing, supportive, secure based family climate (Barrarera et al., 2011; Bell et al., 2008; Bowlby, 1979). Bell et al. (2008), described that close connection with parents is a primer component for individuation if that close connection is established with clear interpersonal boundaries. Such a family environment evolves a space for individuals to express their own feelings, needs and ideas that promotes increasing differentiated self and develops a sense of personal autonomy. Barrera et al. (2011) emphasized that although parentification is associated with enmeshment boundaries, enmeshment boundaries should not be considered as inhibiting individuation in every family system. They pointed to family systems that depend on collectivist values such as emotional connectedness and interdependency that may seem in an enmeshment boundaries. Individuals from such a family system may feel secure and connected by adopting these values. As a result, individuals may be able to explore and define who they are, with the basis of a safe connection provided in this way. In other words, while individuals are separating intrapsychically and moving towards individuation, it is as important as clear self-other boundaries that individuals feel within these boundaries secure, warmth, connected in their close relationships (Barrera et al., 2011; Bell et al., 2008).

Considering gender roles, important findings were obtained regarding the positive association between parentification and separation-individuation in studies conducted with female participants, who are thought to be more prone to caregiving attitudes (Goldner et al., 2022; Mayseless & Scharf, 2009; Pasternak & Schier, 2014). Mayseless & Scharf (2009) stated that while in conflictual needs for closeness and distance, inadequate boundaries may cause women to be preoccupied with conflict and experience strong separation anxiety. Consequently, women may have separation difficulties and have a strong tendency to remain connected to parents in an immature way. Goldner et al. (2022), on the other hand, emphasizes that the separation process between mother and same-sex baby may be more complicated due to intense and

prolonged identification probability. Therefore, since the balance of becoming separate from mother and remaining connected could not be established, the separation-individuation process may be denied by children. Thus, the separation process is suppressed, becoming merged with other instead of distancing may occur as a consequence.

1.3. Shame and Guilt

1.3.1. Shame and guilt from a psychoanalytic perspective

Since feelings of shame and guilt have an impact on the formation of ethical values, inhibit socially undesirable behaviors and have an impact for individuals' harmonious integration in society, they are considered as moral emotions in the literature (Carni et al., 2013; Lansky, 2005; Tangney, 2001). According to Freudian perspective, the presence of guilt has a significant role in the formation of the functional superego (Carni et al., 2013). Since the superego contains internalized social rules, prohibitions, boundaries that are shaped by interaction with authority figures, it is stated that individuals feel guilty in case of violating or even if likely to violate these norms and rules (O'Connor et al., 1997). According to this point of view, the mentioned guilt also brings with it the fear of punishment in case of the emergence of prohibited sexual and aggressive impulses (Mitchell, 2000). From the Freudian perspective, although not much attention is paid to the feeling of shame, this feeling is handled as the transformation of guilt as a result of unacceptable sexual and hostile impulses (Carni et al., 2013).

Contrary to the Freudian perspective, the Kleinian perspective suggests that guilt occurs as a result of the infant's relationship with the breast in the preoedipal period. In the paranoid-schizoid position, the breast is perceived as a partial object, and the satisfying and frustrating sides of the breast are divided into as all good and all bad. Accordingly, while an infant hatefully destroys the all-bad object, at the same time deeply loves the all-good object (Klein, 1975). However, when an infant realizes that these two split objects are actually whole object, an intense feeling of guilt arises. According to this point of view, the feeling of guilt is considered to generate in the infant as a reparative emotion in case when the love for the whole object is felt more dominant. So that both the loved and the hated partial objects are able to turn into a

whole object representation (Mitchell, 2000). It is stated that the feeling of shame is also related to the paranoid-schizoid position. It is declared that the one's being fragile, sensitive and in need arises with the anxiety experienced that this situation will be used and humiliated by the other (Lansky, 2005).

Piers & Singer (1954) state that the feeling of guilt arises as a result of the destruction of the rules and limits of the superego by the id impulses (*aggression and sexuality*), while the shame arises as a result of the conflict between the ego and ideal ego, which is one of the substructures of the superego (*positive identifications, ego's potentialities, goals, social roles, set of standards etc.*) Accordingly, while threat from guilt relates to annihilation and castration, threat from shame relates to abandonment and rejection feelings.

Since the working of shame and guilt is considered as a function of the superego, it is also explained that these two feelings are structured in the psyche by identification and internalization phenomena (Lewis, 1971; Jacobson, 1964). For instance, shame can be related to the failure of the person's ego ideal related values that are shaped by internalized and idealized objects and failure to meet these objects' expectations (Thrane, 1979). Lewis (1971) added that as a result of the internalization of the admired/beloved parental figure, loss of parental love may emerge as a kind of punishment anxiety accompanying shame and guilt. It is also stated that the emergence of loss of parental love anxiety may generate shame in the eyes of loved ones and may cause loss of self-love as well. Moreover, Carni et al., (2013) stated that moral standards are internalized due to the intense discomfort caused by the experiences of guilt feeling and fear of punishment. However, considering that this internalization process is significantly reinforced in the relationship with significant others, they stated that the feeling of guilt also develops as a stimulating effect against situations that threaten close relationships. Depending on this thought, if the child is repeatedly shamed by parents and made to feel guilty for his/her actions, these emotions may be inhibiting rather than adaptive in terms of maintaining close relationships (O'Connor et al., 1997). In accordance with Kohut's concepts, distressful shame stems from insufficient mirroring function and unconditional acceptance of idealized selfobjects. Therefore, in case of failing to establish her/his own values and ideals, the person feels low self-esteem, defective self, emptiness in the self and worthlessness (Morrison, 1984). For this reason, although they try to

overcome the narcissistic deficiencies and damages with grandiose ambitions, they feel shame for their repetitive failures. Moreover, the fact that their developmental needs are ignored, as a result of not being able to create realistic goals and ideals, generates a lack of acceptance by self and other (Morrison, 1983).

The similarities and differences are often discussed in the literature for the conceptualization of shame and guilt feelings. According to the discussions in the psychoanalytic literature about the similarities, although both emotions arise from the functionality of the superego, it is stated that both of them take their roots from objects relations and impulses in the preoedipal stages, and continues with the formation of developmentally set of standards, ideals, role expectations. Moreover, the two emotions evolve into moral emotions as conflicts occur on these issues (Lansky, 2005). Furthermore, both emotions may have adaptive and maladaptive aspects, depending on the level of feeling these emotions, such as having an effect on maintaining close relationships (O'Connor et al., 1997), protects self (Weiss, 2015), on the other hand, may causing dysphoric feelings due to the person's negative self-evaluations state (Karlsson & Sjöberg, 2009; Shapiro & Stewart, 2011). Lansky (2005) states that these two feelings are felt when the internalized danger emerges as an external danger and depending on the subjective experiences, these emotions can appear as capable or unmanageable. However, he added that these feelings are may difficult to cope with, if these feelings arise under the threat of loss of connection to the social order, ultimate form of separation or social annihilation.

In the discussions on the differences of guilt and shame, it is emphasized that the feeling of shame refers to the evaluation of the one's whole self/core of identity, and guilt arises about a specific behavior/action in terms of transgressing limits, breaking rules etc. (Karlsson & Sjöberg, 2009; Tangney, 2001). On the grounds of that difference, when one feels shame wants to get lost, hide, disappear, annihilate the situation; when one feels guilt tends to try change, repair and excuse for what has been done. In other words, since the shame eliciting experiences creates a judgment about the whole self, the situation is experienced as stable, permanent, difficult to change. On the other hand, the guilt inducing situation is experienced as temporary, modifiable, as the one does not attribute to the whole self, but only to the particular single behavior (Carni et al., 2013; Karlsson & Sjöberg, 2009).

In the face of the same situation, both shame and guilt may occur in a fused way, or some people may be prone to feel shame while others may be prone to feel guilt (Karlsson & Sjöberg, 2009; Tangney, 2001). Lewis (1971) explains these differences that emerge in a similar experience through the role of the self. According to her perspective, when the experience evokes shame, the evaluation of the self is focusing on the eyes of others, and when the experience evokes guilt, the evaluation of self is focusing within the self. Both situations can arise through the internalization of past experiences, so there is no need for someone really looking outside for shame, because there may occur a split in self-functioning that is self become both agent and object of observation.

1.3.2. Shame and guilt as self-conscious emotions

Shame and guilt are often conceptualized as self-conscious emotions in the literature. Among the reasons why it is conceptualized as self-conscious emotions is that these emotions contain self-reflection (Lewis, 2019), self-evaluation (Muris et al., 2013) and self-criticism (Leach, 2017) processes. These emotions have an effect on maintaining social interactions and close relationships in an optimal way. Muris & Meesters, (2013) stated that this effect can be achieved by developing the ability to evaluate one's own behavior or one's being from the eyes of the other. Moreover, it is also about the awareness of the global and specific aspects of the self, and the ability to evaluate how much of these aspects comply with internalized standards and rules depending on the experienced situation (Lewis, 2019). As a result of these developed abilities, the person can feel self-conscious emotions such as shame, guilt, and pride against failures, transgressions and successes.

According to the developmental perspective, self-conscious emotions emerge with the formation of the differences and boundaries between self and other. Correspondingly, these emotions are shaped depending on the quality and type of the interaction between self and significant other (Lagattuta & Thompson, 2007). Lewis (2007) argued that the difference between self-conscious emotions and primary emotions (e.g., *fear*, *sadness*, *joy*) is that self-conscious emotions involve elaborative cognitive processes such as making a comparison between action and standard, making evaluations, and having an observing self. For this reason, he added that the increase of cognitive skills in children precursor to the development of self-conscious

emotions. Lagattuta & Thompson (2007) clarified developmental processes of the mentioned set of cognitions. They indicated that at the end of the first year and at the beginning of the second year, children begin to gather clues according to the events' interpretations and evaluations by observing the evaluations and emotional reactions of adults (*mostly parents*). As a result of these observations made by the child, in the child's developmental process, theory of mind and certain rules/standards emerge (Lagattuta & Thompson, 2007; Muris & Meesters, 2013). Between the second and third ages of the child, there is an increase in the child's awareness that others may have expectations of the child's behaviors and that others have a subjective mental life. Individuals gradually internalizes parent's expectations, rules and reactions to events, and over time, even in the absence of the parents, they become to maintain them and have an effect on their self-perception (Lagattuta & Thompson, 2007).

As mentioned before, self-conscious emotions are actually normal developmental processes as they are functional and adaptive (Taihara & Malik, 2016). However, since these emotions contain self-evaluation, in order for these emotions to be used in an adaptive way, the person needs to form stable self-representations so that one can receive instant and salient feedback on internal/external acceptability of psychosocial roles, behaviors, traits, characteristics (Muris & Meesters, 2013; Taihara & Malik, 2016). When these consistent self-representations, values, standards, ideals become inconsistent with an event, the person may expect that he/she is going to across with rejection or/and losing face (Muris, 2014). Although self-conscious emotions are adaptive, because they are distressing emotions, a high proness to these emotions or their constant fusion with shame or lack of these emotions can render them as maladaptive (Lewis, 2019; Muris et al., 2015).

In literature often guilt is handled as an emotion that arises with a negative self-evaluation attributed to a specific behavior and motivates the person to correct and/or compensate for fault that was made. On the other hand, shame arises with negative evaluation attributed to the whole self and motivates the person to run away, express avoidance behaviors or defensiveness (Muris & Meesters, 2013; Tangney, 2001). For the reason these two emotions are handled in this way, guilt is often discussed as less intense and destructive than shame (Lewis, 2019), but guilt may become a more destructive emotion when it is fused with shame (DiCaccavo, 2006). Miceli & Castelfranchi (2018), on the other hand, stated that guilt emerges as a result

of negative moral evaluation, while shame emerges as a result of non-moral negative self-evaluation. The basis of the difference here is that the person may feel guilty about a subject for which one feels responsible, but in shame, one perceives a discrepancy between one's actual and one's ideal self. However, one may also feel shame instead of guilt for taking excessive responsibility.

Leach (2017) and Miceli & Castelfranchi (2018) emphasizes that these two emotions actually have a smaller difference than is thought, and therefore these two emotions are often considered in a fused way or interchangeable. Leach (2017) pointed out that both emotions can motivate a person for constructive effort at the improvement of self, behavior and social relations. Although depending on the degree of guilt and shame cause people to experience different ways of failure, Leach (2017) emphasized that instead of focusing on this difference, it can be more beneficial to focus on whether people interpret this failure as repairable or not.

In brief, both shame and guilt have constructive and destructive aspects. On the basis of addressing these aspects, it can be said that the level and intensity of these emotions, the ability of the person to regulate these emotions, the way of handling and interpretation may make a difference in the function of these emotions.

1.3.3. Shame, guilt, and parent – child relations

Considering the above mentioned, it can be said that the development and formation of the child's sense of guilt and shame depend on the quality of the relationship established with caregivers. In many studies it is observed that negative parenting practices and childhood maltreatment causes shame and guilt emotions in children to be inhibiting and destructive rather than to be in an adaptive form (Mintz et al., 2017; Sekowski et al., 2020; Stuewig & McCloskey, 2005).

In order to have adaptive self-conscious emotions, children need attention, warmth, guidance, monitoring, and consistent discipline by their parents while experiencing these emotions (Hoseini et al., 2021; Mojallal et al., 2021). Otherwise, they can not develop positive and consistent self-evaluation skills and they may have difficulties in coping with the experiences emerged by these feelings (Hoseini et al., 2021). In the case of childhood maltreatment, children may tend to direct negative emotions towards themselves in order to maintain positive representations of their parents. At the same time, they do not get enough emotional mirroring from their

parents to process their emotions, which can cause difficulties in regulating emotions, causing them to feel highly generalized feelings of shame and guilt (Sekowski et al., 2020). Shahar et al. (2014) and Sekowski et al. (2020) emphasized that individuals who experienced emotional abuse and/or emotional neglect in their childhood may feel an intense internalized shame and guilt later in their lives. These carelessness, unresponsive and unavailable attitudes of parents towards children can cause children to feel rejected and to form irrational beliefs that these attitudes of their parents are due to their own deficiencies and/or a mistake they have made (Donohue et al., 2019; Mintz et al., 2017).

Considering the negative consequences of parentification mentioned earlier, it can be said that parentification can also be a kind of childhood maltreatment output. Accordingly, one of the negative consequences of parentification is seen that people experience feelings of shame and guilt intensely in their future experiences (Byng-Hall, 2002; Castro et al., 2004; DiCaccavo, 2006; Wells & Jones, 2000).

1.3.4. Shame, guilt, and individuation

Considering that emotions of shame and guilt are shaped by self and other differentiation ability, it can be assumed that individuals must achieve a differentiated self in order for these feelings to function adaptively (Vieira, 1993). However, since feelings of shame and guilt have a regulatory effect on in-group relations, these feelings can emerge in some families at an excessive level that may hinder the separation-individuation processes of individuals (Stierlin, 1974).

In Erik Erikson's psychosocial developmental theory, there is an autonomy versus shame and doubt phase. The concept of autonomy here means that the person can independently, individuated and realistically define own interests, goals, values, as well as be competent, authentic and related (Severino et al., 1987; Young et al., 2016). However, this does not mean that there is no sense of shame, on the contrary, the non-traumatic experience of shame is associated with the individuals' realistic limitations and inadequacies, and individuals may modify their autonomous functioning with some degree of shame. Moreover, lack of feeling of shame may cause ego regression, defensive grandiosity, and the use of splitting defense mechanisms as a result of not being able to be in touch with one's deficiencies and inadequacies (Severino et al., 1987). One of the significant factors in the formation of

shame that ensures the development of autonomy is related to the fact that the child is protected from intense shame and doubt experienced by the caregivers during the autonomy practices. In this process, also child's independence initiatives need to be supported and encouraged by the caregiver, which also contributes to the child's confidence, competence and self-esteem. Under these conditions, the child is able to form a unique, autonomous and acceptable identity with some deficiencies and limitations without experiencing intense shame (Graves & Larkin, 2006).

Vess et al. (2013) and Young et al. (2016) stated in their studies that people with autonomy can use their feelings of shame and guilt in a more adaptive way. Roth (2008) examined the differences between autonomy support parenting and parental conditional regard. He emphasized that in the autonomy-supportive parenting attitude, the internalization process of the person is experienced in an identified and integrated way. However, in the conditional regard parenting attitude, introjection (*taking values and goals despite not accepting them*) plays a role in the person's internalization process. He added that in the internalization process that occurs with introjection, people have excessive amounts of shame, guilt and unstable self-esteem.

In cases when children express their emotions, if their parents do not contain their emotions and/or if children encounter reactions that make them think that their feelings affect their parents negatively may cause children to distance themselves from their own feelings and feel that they are responsible for their parents' emotions. Along with this responsibility, intense feelings of shame and guilt may occur in case of hurting or upsetting their parents (Vieira, 1993). In the study of Chang (2012) on codependency, one of the personality traits focused on excessive care for the other, stated that people with this trait have intense internalized shame, guilt and low self-esteem. It has been also stated that excessive codependency may cause individuals to be unable to go through the processes of self-differentiation, individuation as a result of dysfunctional family environment and boundary distortions.

Charles et al. (2001) conducted research on how mothers who have separation-individuation difficulties affect their daughters' separation-individuation processes. It has been observed that in the face of increasing competence and autonomy efforts due to the natural developmental process of their daughters, mothers may exhibit ambivalent attitudes and insensitivity towards these developmental

processes. It has been examined that daughters who are faced with such a situation may experience intense emotional conflicts, including feelings of shame and guilt, about attempts at autonomy. Therefore, daughters may prefer to move away from such distress at the expense of psychological differentiation and individuation.

1.4. Aim of the Study

Considering the literature review above, it is seen that the separation-individuation process and the emotions of shame and guilt are concepts that are parts of psychological developmental growth. Moreover, the structuring of the separation-individuation and emotions of shame and guilt in the developmental process may affect the social relations, self-perceptions, functionality and autonomy of individuals in their future lives. In order for individuals to develop these concepts in a positive way, it is significant that they have a good enough, adaptive, functional family environment that has clear interpersonal boundaries and supports psychological development. The situation of parentification, which may arise from a dysfunctional family environment, may reach a level that hinders psychological developmental processes of individuals. In the literature, it is often stated that there is a positive relationship between parentification and separation-individuation. However, there is no study that has examined how feelings of shame and guilt may have a role in this relationship, that may help to understand this relationship more deeply.

Therefore, the main purpose of this research is to investigate the mediating role of shame and guilt in the relationship between parentification and separation-individuation.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

2.1. Participants

A total number of 384 individuals completed the online survey. Demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in **Table 1**. The participants' ages ranged between 18 and 58 ($M = 28.14$, $SD = 9.09$). Of the 384 participants, 259 (67%) individuals identified themselves as female, and 125 (32%) as male. Participants of the present study stated that 185 (%48) of them live with their parents, 12 (%3) live with their relatives, 86 (%22) live with their spouse, 50 (%13) live alone, and 51(%13) of the participants selected the other option. In addition, while 244 (%63) participants reported that they live in the same city with their parents, 140 (%36) stated that they live in different cities. Mothers of 367 (%95) participants and fathers of 340 (%88) participants are alive. According to number of siblings, 142 (%37) of the participants have one sibling, 85 (%22) have two sibling, 52 (%13) have three siblings, 61 (%15) have four and over siblings, while 44 (%11) reported that they have no siblings. Regarding their row of birth, 195 (%50) of the participants reported themselves to be first child, 98 (%25) second child, 49 (%12) third child, and 42 (%10) fourth or over. 305 (%79) of the participants stated that their father is married and 300 (%78) stated that their mother is married.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

		$\underline{X}$ SD	Min.-Max.
Age		28.14 $\pm$ 9.09	18-58
		n	%
Gender	Women	259	67.4
	Men	125	32.6
The people who living	With Parents	185	48.2
	With The Relatives	12	3.1
	With wife/husband	86	22.4
	Alone	50	13.0

	Other	51	13.3
Mother alive	Yes	367	95.6
	No	17	4.4
Father alive	Yes	340	88.5
	No	44	11.5
Number of Siblings	None	44	11.5
	1	142	37.0
	2	85	22.1
	3	52	13.5
	4 and over	61	15.9
Row of birth	First child	195	50.8
	2.child	98	25.5
	3.child	49	12.8
	4. and over	42	10.9
Living same city with family	Yes	244	63.5
	No	140	36.5
Father marital status	Married	305	79.4
	Seperate	9	2.3
	Divorced	20	5.2
	Married again	17	4.4
	Widow	3	.8
	Other	30	7.8
Mother marital status	Married	300	78.1
	Seperate	8	2.1
	Divorced	30	7.8
	Married again	6	1.6
	Widow	27	7.0
	Other	13	3.4

2.2. Instruments

2.2.1. Parentified child scale-adult version (PCS-A)

The parentified child is often conceptualized by Chase (1999), Jurkovic (1997) and Boszormenyi-Nagy & Spark (1973) in the literature. However, it is difficult to make a single compromised definition of the concept of parentification because it is seen as a concept that can vary with the influences of ethnic and cultural differences (Chase, 1999; Kağıtçıbaşı, 1982). Accordingly, the PCS-A scale was developed by Zencir & Haskan-Avcı (2019) in order to measure the level of parentification of adult individuals in the Turkish population. The PCS-A scale includes two subscales; general parentification and sibling-oriented parentification. Out of a total of 32 items in the scale, items between 1-22 belong to general parentification subscale, and items between 23-32 belong to sibling-oriented parentification subscale. The reverse items of the scale were questions 8, 10, 12 and 22. It is a 5-point Likert type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) and the possible score from the general parentification subscale is in the range of 22-110, the possible score from the sibling-focused parentification subscale is in the range of 10-50. The higher the score from each subscale indicates the higher level of parentification. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the general parentification subscale was reported to be .91, for the sibling-oriented parentification subscale was reported to be .88. Test-retest correlation for general parentification subscale was .91, for sibling-oriented subscale was .77. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the whole scale was reported to be .88 and test-retest correlation was .91.

In the present study, reliability analysis was conducted to test the internal consistency. The Cronbach's alpha value is found to be .86 for the general parentification subscale. (**Table 2**).

2.2.2. Separation-individuation inventory (SII)

Separation- Individuation Inventory developed by Christenson & Wilson (1985) in order to measure difficulties that may occur in the Separation-Individuation process, which is Mahler's psychodynamic developmental theory. The SII consist of three subscales respectively, splitting defense mechanism, differentiation difficulty, and separation-individuation related relationship problems. SII has 39 items and

questions 7, 15, 18 are reversed items. It is a 10-point Likert type scale (1 = not characteristic of mine, 10 = very characteristic of mine). The score is obtained from the sum of all items and the possible score range is 39-390. Scores of 190 and above indicate the presence of separation-individuation pathology. The Turkish adaptation study of the Separation-Individuation Inventory was conducted by Göral (2002). According to Göral's (2002) study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale was .90, and test-retest correlation was .85.

Considering the reliability analysis of the SII used in the current study, the Cronbach's alpha value was found to be .92 (**Table 2**).

2.2.3. The trait shame and guilt scale (TSGS)

The Trait Shame and Guilt Scale was created by Rohleder et al. (2008) as a result of the modification of the State Shame and Guilt Scale that was developed by Marschall et al. (1994). The purpose of this modification was made to measure the shame and guilt that is constantly felt as a trait, instead of measuring the shame and guilt that occur in certain situations. One of the significant changes made to measure shame and guilt as a trait was to ask the participants how they felt in the last month. TSGS consist of three subscales respectively shame, guilt and pride. The scale is 5-point Likert type (1 = not feeling this way at all, 5 = feeling this way strongly) and has 15 items. Higher scores on each subscale indicate higher levels of shame, guilt, pride in each domain. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the original subscales was respectively, shame .74, guilt .76, pride .74 and test-retest correlation was .49 (six months). The Turkish adaptation study of the TSGS was conducted by Bugay & Demir (2011). According to Bugay & Demir (2011) study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the subscales respectively, shame .83, guilt .81, pride .87.

In order to check internal consistency, reliability analyses were conducted with data collected from 384 participants revealed Cronbach alpha of the shame .86 and guilt .80 (**Table 2**).

Table 2*Reliability Statistics for Scales*

Measures	Cronbach's alpha	N of Items
PCS-A		
General Parentification	0.864	22
Separation-Individuation	0.923	39
The Trait Shame and Guilt		
Shame	0.867	5
Guilt	0.809	5

2.2.4. Demographic information form

The demographic information form consists of 10 questions created by researchers. The questions asked in order to obtain the demographic information of the participants are about the participants' age, gender, who they live with, their parent's marital status and whether parents are alive or not, the number of siblings and birth order.

2.3. Procedure

After obtaining ethical approval (**see Appendix B**) from the Yeditepe University Humanities and Social Sciences Ethics Committee for the present study, data collection was initiated. Based on the convenience sampling method, the participants were invited to study with announcements shared on various social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, Twitter, E-mail groups, WhatsApp groups). Participants who accepted the informed consent form (**see Appendix C**) regarding the purpose of the study and confidentiality principles participated voluntarily. After this phase, the participants asked to fill in Parentified Child Scale-Adult Version (PCS-A) (**Appendix D**), Separation-Individuation Inventory (SII) (**Appendix E**), and The Trait

Shame and Guilt Scale (TSGS) (**Appendix F**), respectively. Finally, they were asked to fill in the demographic information form (**Appendix G**). After giving debriefing (**Appendix H**), contact information was also provided to participants in case they needed more information about the study. The survey was created via the online platform Google Forms, and respondents participated anonymously.

2.4. Data Analysis

In the current study, an independent variable is General Parentification that is measured by Parentified Child Scale-Adult Version which consists of 2 subscales of General Parentification and Sibling-Oriented Parentification. Additionally, the mediator variables are Shame and Guilt that is measured by The Trait Shame and Guilt Scale which consists of 3 subscales of Shame, Guilt and Pride. The dependent variable in the present study is Separation-Individuation and it is measured by Separation-Individuation Inventory.

In the evaluation of associations between demographic variables and study variables; One-way ANOVA results were used to compare the means of more than two independent groups and Independent Sample t Test results were used to compare the means of two independent variables. Levene test was used for homogeneity of variance in the ANOVA test, and Tukey HSD and LSD used if variance homogeneity was provided for group differences (≥ 0.05), and Tamhane Multiple Comparison test was used if variance homogeneity was not provided ($p < 0.05$).

Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated in the analysis of the relationship between the scales used to measure study variables. Mediation analysis (Process Hayes 2013) was performed to investigate the effect of mediation of shame and guilt in the relationship between parentification and separation-individuation. All test results were evaluated at the 0.05 significance level. SPSS v26.0, one of the statistical programs, was used in the implementation of all the mentioned analyzes.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Before starting to analyze study variables the data has been screened. There were not extreme outliers or missing values therefore, no participant was excluded from the study, and the answers of 384 participants were included in the analyses. In addition, the normality distribution of the scores of the variables, the values of kurtosis and skewness (**Table 3**), which are the assumptions of the normal distribution, were found to be between ± 2 and it was accepted that the variables were normally distributed (George & Mallery, 2010).

3.1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive information was calculated as mean scores, standard deviations, standard error means, and minimum- maximum values for the measures of General Parentification, Separation-Individuation Inventory, Shame and Guilt. Findings are presented in **Table 3**.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables

	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Min.	Max.	Skewness	Kurtosis
PCS-A							
General Parentification	384	46.33	12.72	21.0	87.0	.581	-.055
Separation-Individuation	384	168.03	56.20	44.0	328.0	.288	-.064
The Trait Shame and Guilt							
Shame	384	11.46	5.43	5.0	25.0	.574	-.528
Guilt	384	13.51	5.07	5.0	25.0	.437	-.473

3.2. Demographic Characteristics and Study Variables

The relationships of demographic variables with study variables were checked in order to identify possible contributions of them to the variance. When the PCS-A, SII, Shame and Guilt scores were tested with the independent t-Test according to gender, the mean scores of the scales did not differ significantly ($p > 0.05$).

When the mean scores of the PCS-A, SII, Shame and Guilt scales were compared according to who participants live with, significant differences were found between the mean scores of SII ($F(4, 379) = 4.15, p < 0.05$), shame ($F(4, 379) = 4.47, p < 0.05$) and guilt ($F(4, 379) = 8.44, p < 0.05$). The differences between the groups were examined, it was found that the mean SII score of the people living with their parents (174.91 ± 51.78) was significantly higher than the mean score of the people living with their spouse (147.81 ± 51.35). In addition, it is seen that the mean scores of shame (9.43 ± 4.77) and guilt (10.83 ± 4.33) of people living with their spouses are significantly lower than the mean scores of people living with their parents and in other ways. Moreover, the average scores of the scales according to living in the same city with the parents do not differ significantly ($p > 0.05$).

The mean scores of the PCS-A, SII, Shame and Guilt were compared to the whether mothers/fathers of participants were alive. It was found that the average scores of general parentification (54.65 ± 13.82) of the people whose mother alive were significantly lower than the average scores of those whose mother did not alive ($t(382) = -2.78, p < 0.05$; $t(286) = -2.53, p < 0.05$). On the other hand, the mean scores of SII, Shame and Guilt do not differ significantly according to whether the mother is alive or not ($p > 0.05$). Moreover, it is seen that the mean scores of shame (11.75 ± 5.36) and guilt (13.72 ± 4.95) of those whose father alive significantly higher than the average scores of those whose fathers not alive ($t(382) = 2.95, p < 0.05$; $t(382) = 2.23, p < 0.05$). On the other hand, the mean scores of PCS-A and SII do not differ significantly according to whether the father is alive or not ($p > 0.05$).

The mean scores of the PCS-A, SII, Shame and Guilt were tested according to the number of siblings; a significant difference was found with general parentification ($F(4, 379) = 5.17, p < 0.001$). It was found that the general parentification mean score of people with 4 or more siblings (52.16 ± 12.91) was significantly higher than the mean score of people who had 1 sibling (43.85 ± 12.09) and no sibling ($44.20 \pm$

13.94). On the other hand, the mean scores of general parentification, SII, Shame and Guilt do not differ significantly according to the birth order of the individuals ($p > 0.05$).

When the mean scores of the PCS-A, SII, Shame and Guilt were compared according to the marital status of the father, a significant difference was found with the mean scores of general parentification ($F(2, 381) = 6.61, p < 0.05$), shame ($F(2, 381) = 4.92, p < 0.05$), and guilt ($F(2, 381) = 4.45, p < 0.05$). The general parentification mean score of individuals whose fathers are married/remarried (45.30 ± 12.41) is significantly lower than the mean scores of individuals with separated/divorced/widowed (51.75 ± 11.89) fathers and in other (51.75 ± 11.89) marital status. It was also found that the mean score of shame (11.79 ± 5.47) and guilt (13.76 ± 4.96) of those whose fathers were married/remarried was significantly higher than the mean score of those whose fathers were separated/divorced/widowed and in other marital status. When the mean scores of the PCS-A, SII, shame and guilt were tested according to the marital status of the mother, a significant difference was found in the mean score of general parentification ($F(2, 381) = 9.78, p < 0.001$). It was also found that the general parentification mean score of those whose mothers were married/remarried (45.09 ± 12.27) was significantly lower than the mean score of those whose mothers were separated/divorced/widowed (49.77 ± 13.11) and in other (58.08 ± 13.00) marital status. On the other hand, SII, shame and guilt mean scores do not differ significantly according to the marital status of participants' mothers ($p > 0.05$).

3.3. Correlational Analyses

In order to assess the associations of general parentification, separation-individuation, shame and guilt, Pearson correlation coefficients were computed (**Table 4**). The correlation coefficients' strength is determined by Field (2005) as +.50 is large; +.30 is medium; +.10 is a small correlation.

The findings indicate that general parentification significantly and positively correlated with separation-individuation ($r = 0.27, p < 0.01$), shame ($r = 0.16, p < 0.01$), and guilt ($r = 0.15, p < 0.01$). Separation-individuation significantly and positively associated with shame ($r = 0.58, p < 0.01$) and guilt ($r = 0.53, p < 0.01$).

In addition, there is a significant and positive relationship between shame and guilt ($r = 0.78, p < 0.01$).

Table 4

Correlations of the General Parentification, Separation-Individuation, Shame and Guilt

		General Parentification	Separation- Individuation	Shame	Guilt
General Parentification	r	1			
	p				
Separation- Individuation	r	.275**	1		
	p	<.001			
Shame	r	.164**	.587**	1	
	p	.001	<.001		
Guilt	r	.155**	.533**	.781**	1
	p	.002	<.001	<.001	

3.4. Mediation Analyses

Mediation analysis was conducted to look at the mediator role of shame and guilt feelings on the relationship between general parentification and separation-individuation, which is the main aim of this thesis. Before applying the mediation analysis, the assumptions of the linear regression were evaluated. According to the assumption of collinearity, multicollinearity is not observed (Separation-Individuation, Tolerance = 0.64, VIF = 1.56; Shame, Tolerance = 0.35, VIF = 2.85; Guilt, Tolerance = 0.38, VIF = 2.61). The data met the assumption of independent errors (Dublin – Watson value = 1.87) and Cook's distance values checked for identifying significant outliers ($Min. = 0.00$, $Max. = 0.07$). The histogram of standardized residuals indicated that data contained normally distributed ($M = -6.77E-17$, $SD = 0.99$) as illustrated by the P-P plot of standardized residuals. The

scatterplot of standardized predicted values displayed that the data met the assumptions of homogeneity of variance and linearity. During the Multiple/Parallel mediation analysis, General Parentification was included as the predictor variable, Separation-Individuation as the predicted variable, and Shame and Guilt variables as mediator variables. Before the variables entered into the analysis, the correlation results between them were examined in **Table 4**.

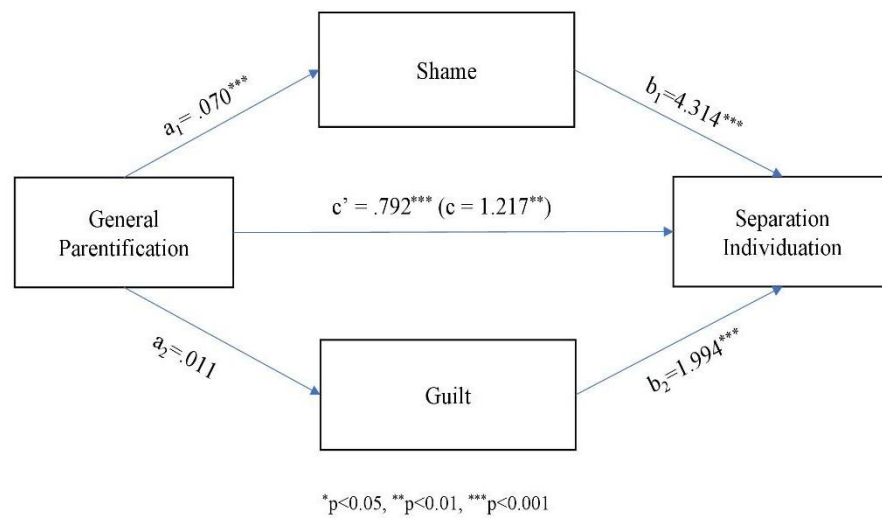
As a result of the examinations, between General Parentification (predictor variable) and Separation-Individuation (predicted variable); between Shame, Guilt, and General Parentification; between Shame, Guilt and Separation-Individuation has been observed that there are significant relationships. In addition, when the mediator variables (Shame and Guilt) and the predictor variable (General Parentification) were taken into the regression analysis simultaneously, the previous significant relationship between the predictor and the predicted variable decreased. Therefore, all the assumptions of Multiple/Parallel Mediation analysis are provided.

According to the results of the mediation analysis, while general parentification significantly predicts the shame (a_1 path; $\beta = .070$, $SE = .022$, $t = 3.242$, $p < 0.001$, $CI [.027, .112]$), it does not significantly predict the guilt (a_2 path; $\beta = .011$, $SE = .013$, $t = .868$, $p > 0.05$, $CI [-.014, .037]$). It means that individuals who have higher levels of general parentification were more likely to have higher levels of shame but not guilt. Moreover, shame (b_1 path; $\beta = 4.314$, $SE = .665$, $t = 6.487$, $p < 0.001$, $CI [3.006, 5.622]$), and guilt (b_2 path; $\beta = 1.994$, $SE = .711$, $t = 2.806$, $p < 0.01$, $CI [.597, 3.392]$), variables were found to be significantly associated with separation-individuation. It means that individuals who have higher levels of shame and guilt were more likely to have higher levels of separation-individuation. The total effect of the parentification variable on separation-individuation is significant (c path; $\beta = 1.217$, $SE = .217$, $t = 5.600$, $p < 0.001$, $CI [.789, 1.644]$). When parentification and the mediator variables shame and guilt were taken into the equation simultaneously, the direct relationship between parentification and separation-individuation did not lose its significance level, but the level of effect decreased (c' path; $\beta = .792$, $SE = .180$, $t = 4.410$, $p < 0.001$, $CI [.439, 1.145]$). These results display that shame and guilt variables have a partial mediating role in the relationship between parentification and separation-individuation.

In addition, it was found that the whole model was significant ($F(3, 380) = 80.988, p < .001, R^2 = .39$) and %39 of the total variance was explained (**Figure 1**).

Figure 1

Parallel Multi - Mediation Model for Shame and Guilt on the Relationship Between General Parentification and Separation-Individuation



CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

Parentification is a concept that basically refers to the situation where the roles are reversed as a result of the boundary diffusion between the individuals in the family, and as a result, the children give up their own developmental, emotional and physical needs in order to meet the needs of the parents (Gerber, 2011; Kerig, 2005).

Separation-Individuation conceptualized by Margerat Mahler et al. (1975) as a psychological developmental process, describes the ability of individuals to establish clear self-other boundaries and reach libidinal object constancy, being separated and having individuated self-investments. Caregivers of individuals play an important role in completing this development, because during this developmental process, children give clues about some of their needs. When these cues are seen by the caregiver and the needs for differentiation and individuation are met, this process may be completed in a functional way (Mahler & Furer, 1963).

Shame and guilt are emotions that contain self-reflection (Lewis, 2019), self-evaluation (Muris & Meesters, 2013) and self-criticism (Leach, 2017). Since they contain such processes, these emotions are also considered as moral emotions and self-conscious emotions, as they provide a harmonious integration in society and developing ability evaluate one's own behavior or one's being from the eyes of the other (Carni et al., 2013; Muris & Meesters, 2013; Tangney, 2001). Therefore, these emotions are also functions of the superego (Carni et al., 2013). That is, these emotions may be shaped by the internalization process of rules, standards and expectations of significant others/caregivers (Jacobson, 1964; Lewis, 1971). Feeling of shame may often be associated with evaluating one's whole self and there is a conflict between ego and ideal ego, where it can trigger fears of abandonment and rejection (Karlsson & Sjöberg, 2009; Piers & Singer, 1954). Guilt, on the other hand, often triggers anxieties of annihilation, castration, evaluation of single behavior, and there is an issue with violating the rules and boundaries of the superego (Piers & Singer, 1954; Tangney, 2001). However, in the face of a similar situation, feeling of shame may arise in some and feeling of guilt in others, and the differences in the levels of these feelings may cause these feelings to have adaptive or maladaptive

functions. How these feelings are shaped in the past experiences of individuals' interaction with their caregivers may create differences in the intensity and subjective meanings of these emotions in the future (Leach 2017; Miceli & Castelfranchi, 2018).

Since all the mentioned concepts are thought to be related to each other the main aim of the present study was to examine the mediating role of shame and guilt in the relationship between parentification and separation-individuation. Regarding this purpose, the findings obtained in the current study, implications and recommendations for future studies will be presented in this section.

4.1. Discussion Related to Correlation Analyses

Firstly, correlational analysis displays that there is a small positive association between these two concepts but according to regression analysis parentification strongly predicts separation-individuation issues. This finding is consistent with previous studies (Borchet et al., 2016; Perosa & Perosa, 1993; Schier et al., 2014). Mahler & Furur (1963) emphasized that in order to experience the separated and individuated self, one must first be able to differentiate from the first significant other. Considering the *practicing* subphase involved in the separation-individuation process, the child's ability to differentiate increases, but he/she also feels anxiety as he/she separates from the significant other. Because of this emerging dilemma, the child needs to turn to the significant other for "emotional refuel" when the level of anxiety increases, so that the child may continue to enjoy and wonder about his/her discovery. When the *rapprochement* subphase is considered, there is a greater increase in anxiety about separation, and there is an increase in the need for caregiver's attention, support, sharing discoveries, and feeling emotional connected (Mahler et al., 1975; Meeus et al., 2005). The caregiver should be sensitive to the needs of the child while establishing a balance of closeness and distance in the relationship. Moreover, parents should be flexible for changing needs of the child, as well as open a space for the child to freely explore autonomously. However, in a situation such as parentification, the caregivers' prioritization of their own needs and being unavailable to the child's developmental needs may interrupt the child's separation-individuation process (Goldner et al., 2022). In this case, the child may have unresolved separation-individuation issues by being preoccupied with the needs of their parents at the

expense of not being able to create their own authentic self (Borchet et al., 2017; Pasternak & Schier, 2014).

According to the correlation analysis, a positive and significant relationship is observed between parentification, shame and guilt. Wells (2000) and Boszormenyi-Nagy & Spark (1973) have emphasized based on their clinical experiences and conceptualization studies that parentification may increase the intensity of shame and guilt feelings in individuals. However, there is a lack of study in the literature on the relationship between the concept of parentification and feelings of shame and guilt. In spite of there are studies displaying that negative parenting practices and childhood maltreatment may form feelings of shame and guilt emotions in children to be inhibiting and destructive rather than to be in an adaptive form (Mintz et al., 2017; Sekowski et al., 2020; Stuewig & McCloskey, 2005). Considering the negative consequences of parentification that may disrupt the psychological development of individuals, it can be evaluated that parentification may become a kind of negative parenting practice and childhood maltreatment. For instance, children who are oriented to meet their parents' needs are actually inadequate because these needs are beyond what they can do (Castro et al., 2004). Therefore, it may cause them to feel shame against the real self as their actual needs and desires are denied, and against the self that is inadequate against the expectations of their parents (DiCaccavo, 2006; Wells, 2000). Moreover, in order to protect the positive mental representation of their parents, children may also direct their negative emotions to themselves (Borchet et al., 2016; Pasternak & Schier, 2014). By the same token, unresponsive and unavailable attitudes of parents towards children may cause children to feel rejected and to form irrational beliefs that these attitudes of parents are due to their own deficiencies (Donohue et al., 2019; Mintz et al., 2017). Sekowski et al. (2020) argued that in such parent-child relationships, there may be difficulties in processing and regulating emotions that arise because children do not receive adequate emotional mirroring from parents, so they may feel highly generalized feelings of shame and guilt. Additionally, insufficient mirroring function and conditional acceptance of idealized selfobjects may lead to distressful shame experiences (Morrison, 1984). In line with all these expansions, the significant positive relationship between parentification and feelings of shame and guilt found in the present study seems reasonable.

Among the results of the correlation analysis, it is found that there is a positive and significant relationship between separation-individuation issues, shame and guilt. This means that as individuals' feelings of shame and guilt increase, separation-individuation issues also increase and this finding is meaningful when looking at the previous studies. For instance, according to developmental perspectives on self-conscious emotions such as shame and guilt, the quality and construction of these emotions depend on the formation of differences and boundaries between self and others (Lagattuta & Thompson, 2007). Moreover, in order for these emotions to function adaptively, the person needs to also be able to constitute stable self-representations (Muris & Meesters, 2013; Taihara & Malik, 2016). However, when these can not be achieved, the individual's separation-individuation process may be inhibited due to intense feelings of shame and guilt. Vess et al. (2013) and Young et al. (2016) stated that individuals with high autonomy can use their feelings of shame and guilt in a more functional way. On the other hand, Chang (2012) emphasized that individuals with codependency personality traits feel too much shame and guilt to go through the processes of self-differentiation and individuation.

4.2. Discussion Related to Mediation Analyses

According to correlation analysis, a positive and significant relationship was observed between parentification, shame and guilt, but in mediation analyzes, while parentification significantly predicted shame, it did not significantly predict guilt. When we look at the literature, it is seen that shame usually arises as a result of an individual's evaluation of a situation by attributing it to his/her whole self, while guilt emerges as a result of the evaluation of a specific behavior or part of self (Karlsson & Sjöberg, 2009; Tangney, 2001). Accordingly, shame brings with it the desire to get lost, disappear, annihilate the situation, because the situation is perceived as stable, permanent and difficult to change, since the judgment against the situation belongs to the whole self. The feeling of guilt, on the other hand, brings with it the tendency to change, repair and excuse what has been done because the evaluation made against the situation is perceived as temporary and modifiable (Carni et al., 2013). Considering the differences between these two emotions, guilt becomes less intense and destructive than shame (Lewis, 2019), but guilt can also be destructive if it fused with shame (DiCaccavo, 2006). As in the mediation analysis, although parentification

significantly predicted shame and it did not significantly predict guilt, when shame and guilt were taken into equation at the same time, both emotions were found that had a positive and significant partial mediating role in the relationship between parentification and separation-individuation.

Considering the mediation analysis, shame and guilt have a partial mediating role in the relationship between parentification and separation-individuation issues. Moreover, shame and guilt emotions had significant positive accounts in the relationship between higher levels of parentification and higher levels of separation-individuation issues. Supporting this expected finding is also meaningful in the light of the literature. Separation-individuation accomplishment refers to one's establishment of clear self and other boundaries, able to distinguish one's needs and desires by being differentiated from others and achieve one's unique mature individuality (Blos, 1967; Kins et al., 2013). However, role reversal that may arise when the boundaries between self and other are enmeshed in a situation such as parentification, may lead to an individual to not be able to stay in a role that will support separation-individuation task and limit one's self development with the burden of the parent role (Borchet et al., 2016; Boumans & Dorant, 2018). Therefore, the finding that parentification may lead to separation-individuation issues becomes meaningful.

It is also meaningful that feelings of shame and guilt may have a mediating role in this relationship, because shame and guilt are essentially adaptive emotions (Taihara & Malik, 2016). They are having a functional effect on improving self and behavior (O'Connor et al., 1997), protecting self (Weiss, 2015), maintaining social interactions and close relationships in an optimal way (Muris & Meesters, 2013). However, depending on the intensity of these emotions, the capacity of the person to regulate these emotions, and how individuals interpret these emotions subjectively, these emotions may turn from being constructive to destructive or inhibiting emotions (Leach, 2017; Miceli & Castelfranchi, 2018). The adaptive or maladaptive functioning of these emotions may also depend on the quality of the parent-child relationship. For instance, according to Erik Erikson's shame and doubt versus autonomy phase, nontraumatic experience of shame associated with individuals' realistic limitations and inadequacies which is necessary for the development of autonomy (Graves & Larkin, 2006). Nonetheless, it can be inhibiting if the individual

is constantly shamed by parents or constantly made to feel guilty for their actions (O’Conner et al., 1997). For instance, extreme shame experiences may lead to narcissistic injuries and, accordingly, may cause the person to be unable to create their own realistic values and ideals (Morrison, 1983). Moreover, for adaptive shame and guilt emotions, children need attention, warmth, guidance, monitoring while experience these emotions (Hoseini et al., 2021; Mojallal et al., 2021), otherwise children may feel intense shame and guilt (Sekowski et al., 2020; Shahar et al., 2014). It may even evolve into feelings that are difficult to cope with, creating threats such as loss of connection to social order or ultimate form of separation (Lansky, 2005) or may lead to one’s negative self evaluations state (Karlsson & Sjöberg, 2009; Shapiro & Stewart, 2011).

In the context of all these mentioned, it can be said that the model in which shame and guilt have a partial mediating role in the relationship between parentification and separation-individuation issues is meaningful.

4.3. Discussion Related to Demographic Characteristics and Study Variables

Although the average age of the participants in this study was twenty-eight, they had a distribution between eighteen and fifty-eight. This can be seen as a wide range, but patterns of parentification, separation-individuation issues, shame and guilt are formed at very early ages. Accordingly, unless there is a treatment on these issues, it can actually affect the person for life (Carroll et al., 2000; Cho et al., 2018). For instance, Macfie (2015) and Hooper (2007) stated that mothers with parentification patterns in their childhood may create a mother-child relationship to meet the needs that they lacked in their own childhood, through their own children.

In this study, who participants lived with was compared with the study variables. As a result of these comparisons, it was found that the separation-individuation, shame and guilt scores of the participants living with their parents were higher than those living with their spouses. There may be many parameters and variables affecting this result, but we found it appropriate to evaluate it based on the family system theories discussed in this study. According to family system theories, each individual in the family can be a part of the functioning family system with the formation of some behavioral/emotional patterns in the family. Therefore, it may be insufficient to evaluate the individual independently from the family (Bowen, 1996;

Minuchin, 1985). In some families, the family system may emerge with patterns aimed at reducing anxiety. However, in order not to interrupt the individuation processes of family members or to make a distinction between self and others, family members need to develop their emotional awareness of their reactions to each other. According to these perspectives, the reason why the separation-individuation, shame and guilt scores of the participants living with their spouses were lower than the participants living with their families, it was thought that the participants living with their spouses might have established a different family system that suits their adult selves.

Additionally, it is stated that parentification can be the result of role reversal that occurs at a level that causes the boundaries between family members to become enmeshed (Kerig, 2005; Shaffer, 2005). The boundaries mentioned here are not static boundaries, but rather the boundaries that need to be organized/reorganized in crises that arise within family or in developmental transition stages (Fullinwider-Bush & Jacobvitz, 1993). There are cases such as depression in the parents (DiMarzio, 2021), alcohol/substance misuse (Pasternak & Schier, 2012), divorce (Johnston, 1990; Parmiani et al., 2012) that parentification may occur as a result of difficulties in the organized/reorganized boundaries. In this study, it was found that the parentification scores of the participants whose mothers were not alive and whose mothers and fathers were divorced/widowed were higher than the participants whose mothers were alive and whose mothers and fathers were married/remarried.

According to cases that are mentioned above, it can be said that in a situation of loss of mother and the children of divorced or single parents may have a role reversal and a parentification may have occurred. While it is expected that one of the negative consequences of parentification may lead to the separation-individuation issues, no significant difference was observed in the separation-individuation scores of the participants. In other words, separation-individuation issues have not been seen where the parentification is observed. It can be said that this finding may support studies emphasizing that parentification does not always create negative results. For instance, parentification may even have constructive outputs such as interpersonal/relational competence (Hooper et al., 2013), better coping skills (Stein et al., 2007), resilience (Polomski et al., 2021), self-esteem based on feelings of

competence and self efficacy (Borchet et al., 2016), post-traumatic growth (Hooper et al., 2007).

Furthermore, while it was seen that the parentification scores of the participants with four or more siblings were higher than the scores of the participants who had one or no siblings, there was no significant difference between the separation-individuation, shame and guilt scores. Bobbitt-Zeher et al. (2016) clarified that as the number of siblings increases, individuals may become more conducive in developing the skills necessary for long-term relationships. Because sibling relationships are intimate, mixed with both positive and negative emotions, unique, long duration, shared familial environments. Moreover, regardless of birth order, siblings can provide a unique opportunity for children to learn to understand others and manage challenging emotions, resolve conflict, nurture themselves, and provide mutual support (Bobbitt-Zeher et al., 2016; Wu et al., 2018). Accordingly, the fact that while the parentification scores of participants with four or more siblings were high, there was no significant difference between separation-individuation, shame and guilt scores may be related to the fact that siblings can be a kind of source. For instance, Borchet et al. (2020) displayed that despite being parentified, siblings can make positive contributions to their individual development as a result of factors such as support, mutual contribution, and warmth.

In conclusion, comparisons between demographic information and study variables were made in order to evaluate their possible contributions to the study. Accordingly, when we look at the results, it is predominantly observed that there could be situations where the phenomenon of parentification is seen but the negative consequences that are assumed in the study are not observed. It can be added that, besides the fact that parentification can have a very deep structure, it can be misleading to assume that parentification can have directly negative consequences.

4.4. Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Further Studies

Although many significant results were obtained regarding the study variables in this study, there are some limitations. Firstly, most of the participants in this study were female, and the averages of the scores obtained from the scales did not differ significantly according to gender. However, in studies investigating the relationship between parentification and separation-individuation in the literature, significant

differences were observed as female participants may be more prone to caregiving attitudes when gender roles are considered (Fişek, 2018; Goldner et al., 2022; Mayseless et al., 2009; Pasternak et al., 2014). In this study, a significant and positive relationship between parentification and separation-individuation was obtained between the scores from mostly female participants. The fact that the majority of the population was female can be seen as a limitation. Future studies may shed light on this point, with a more balanced gender distribution.

Moreover, the data of the present study was based on self-report measurements that may lead to some biases in the data due to social desirability effect. Participants in the study were included using the convenience sampling method which may lack clear generalizability (Jager et al., 2017). In future studies, replication studies with different groups or applying the random selection method may contribute to the generalization of the findings. Moreover, the present study was based on cross-sectional research; however, experiences of parentification may turn into different meanings over time, and this may create some changes in effects. Therefore, further studies may investigate the current subject in detail using a longitudinal design.

Additionally, experiences of shame, guilt and parentification may have subjective meanings for each individual and accordingly, there may be differences in degree of separation-individuation issues, intensity and functionality of emotions. Moreover, although the relationship between parentification and separation individuation issues and the mediating role of shame and guilt feelings in this relationship was the focus of this study, the phenomenon of parentification also has positive outcomes in individuals. However, these concepts were not examined in depth in this study. Future studies may add qualitative methods to evaluate these aspects in more detail.

4.5. Implications of the Study

There are several studies in the literature displaying that there is a significant positive relationship between parentification and separation-individuation. There are also discussions about the existence of feelings of shame and guilt in both parentification and separation-individuation issues. However, there is no study in the literature showing that feelings of shame and guilt may have a mediating role in

parentification and separation-individuation issues. One of the contributions of this study is the finding that feelings of shame and guilt have a mediation role in the relationship between these two concepts.

It is also known that the level and intensity of shame and guilt feelings can cause these feelings to function in an adaptive or maladaptive way. Accordingly, seeing that these two emotions can have a mediating role may help reduce the possible negative consequences of parentification and separation-individuation issues by working on these emotions. In particular, mental health professionals who practice individual psychotherapy may focus on whether there are separation-individuation issues in clients with family role confusions. During this evaluation, it may also be beneficial for mental health professionals to focus on how shame and guilt function in their clients.

Finally, it has been a study that can shed light on possible preventive studies for institutions or individuals carrying out family studies. Especially since the enmeshment of parent-child roles of individuals in the family may inhibit individuals' individuation processes, this study may lead to preventive and educative studies on the importance of family roles and boundaries and the possible intense feelings of shame and guilt that may arise.

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Appendix A: List of Abbreviations

M - Mean

SD – Standard deviation

p – Probability value

ANOVA - Analysis of variance

F -- Fisher's f distribution

r – Pearson's correlation coefficient

VIF - Variance inflation factor

β – Beta

SE – Standard error

CI - Confidence interval

R^2 - R-squared

Appendix B: Ethical Committee Approval



T.C.
YEDİTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜ

31.10.2022

Sayı : E.50532705-302.14.01-1332
Konu : Ayşenur İlbak Kurul Onayı

İLGİLİ MAKAMA

Üniversitemiz Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Klinik Psikoloji Bölümü Yüksek Lisans Öğrencilerinden Ayşenur İlbak'ın "The Mediating Role of Guilt and Shame in the Relationship of Seperation-Individuation and Parentified Adult Children" başlıklı araştırmasının Beşeri Bilimler etik standartlarına uygunluğuna ilişkin Yeditepe Üniversitesi Beşeri ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Etik Kurulu Onayı ekte sunulmuştur.

Cercikli iznin verilmesi hususunu bilgilerinize arz ve rica ederim.

İmza
Prof. Dr. Fatma Yeşim EKİNCİ
Rektör a
Rektör Yardımcısı

Ek: Etik Kurul Onayı.pdf

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Yeditepe Üniversitesi 26 Ağustos Yürleşimi, Laleli Mahallesi Kağıthane
50000 34755
İstanbul / İSTANBUL
Telefon No: (0212) 578 00 00 Faks No: (0212) 578 02 00
E-posta Adresi: www.yeditepe.edu.tr
E-posta Adresi: yeditepeuniversitesi@hs01.kep.tr

Bilgi İyisi: Suat AKAR
Unvan: Öğretim Üyesi
Telefon No: (0212) 578 00 00



Appendix C: Informed Consent Form

Bilgilendirilmiş Onam Formu

Sayın Katılımcı,

Bu çalışma, Yeditepe Üniversitesi Psikoloji Bölümü bünyesinde Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Seray Akça'nın akademik danışmanlığında, Klinik Psikoloji Yüksek Lisans Tezi kapsamında Ayşenur İlbak tarafından yürütülmektedir.

Çalışma, aile ilişkileriyle içsel deneyimler arasındaki ilişkileri incelemeye yöneliktir.

Sizden beklenen verilen anket içindeki soruları içtenlikle cevaplamanızdır. Çalışmaya katılım tamamen gönüllülük esasına dayalıdır. Çalışma boyunca sizden herhangi bir kimlik bilgisi istenmemektedir. Verdiğiniz bilgiler tamamen gizli tutulacak olup sadece araştırmacılar tarafından değerlendirilecektir. Elde edilen veriler sadece bilimsel yayınlarda kullanılacaktır. Size verilen anket içerisinde genel olarak stres verici sorular bulunmamaktadır. Ancak, çalışma sürecinde herhangi bir nedenden dolayı rahatsızlık hissederseniz anketi yarım bırakıp çıkabilirsiniz. Çalışmanın sağlıklı ilerleyebilmesi için çalışmaya katılacağınızı bildiğiniz diğer kişilerle çalışma ile ilgili detaylı bilgi paylaşımında bulunmamanızı dileriz.

☐ Bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum ve istediğim zaman yarıda kesip çıkabileceğimi biliyorum. Verdiğim bilgilerin bilimsel amaçlı yayınlarda kullanılmasını kabul ediyorum.

Appendix D: Parentified Child Scale-Adult Version (PCS-A)

Değerli katılımcılar, bu çalışmanın amacı, yetişkinlerin aile ilişkileri hakkındaki tutumlarını belirleyen bir ölçek geliştirmektir. Lütfen her maddeyi dikkatle okuyarak kendinizi yansıtacak biçimde cevaplayınız. **HİÇBİR MADDEYİ BOŞ BIRAKMAYINIZ.** Cevaplarınız toplu olarak değerlendirilecektir. Ölçek üzerine adınızı yazmayınız. Katılımınız için teşekkür ederiz.

Maddelerde yer alan “aile” ifadesi ile DOĞUP BÜYÜDÜĞÜNÜZ AİLE kast edilmektedir.

Annem/babam şeklinde ifadeler anneniz veya babanızdan herhangi biri anlamında kullanılmaktadır.

(1) = Kesinlikle katılmıyorum ve (5) = Kesinlikle katılıyorum olmak üzere her madde için sizi yansıtmaya derecesine göre uygun rakamı işaretleyiniz.

Maddeler

1	Aile için önemli konularda anneme/babama akıl verdiğim olurdu.	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()
2	Aileden birinin başı sıkıştığında hemen beni arar.	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()
3	Ailem bensiz bir sorunu çözemez	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()
4	Tatilimde bile, aileden birileri beni arayıp yardım ister.	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()
5	Annemin/babamın asistanı olduğumu düşündüğüm çok olmuştur.	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()
6	Annemin/babamın kaygılarını dindirmek benden beklenirdi.	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()
7	Annemin/babamın sorumluluğunda olan işlerde bile kendimi sorumlu hissedirdim.	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()
8	Altından kalkamayacağım bir durum olursa annem/babam bana destek olurdu.	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()
9	Annem/babam benim çocukluğumu yaşamama fırsat vermedi	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()
10	Annem/babam sorumluluklarını ne yapar eder yerine getirirdi	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()
11	Annemin/babamın sıkıntılarından benim sıkıntılara sıra	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()

	gelmezdi.					
12	Annemin/babamın evinde el bebek gül bebek büyütüldüm.	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()
13	Annemin/babamın güçsüzlüğünden dolayı benim güçlü olmam gerekti.	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()
14	Yemeklerin hazırlanması evde hep benden beklenirdi.	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()
15	Ev işleri aksadığında hesabı benden sorulurdu.	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()
16	Ev içi işler (bulaşık, çamaşır, temizlik vb.) annem/babamdansa benim üzerimdeydi.	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()
17	Annem/babam kızmasın diye evi hep temiz tutardım.	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()
18	Misafir geldiğinde onlarla ilgilenmek benden beklenirdi.	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()
19	Ev bütçesine katkıda bulunmam beklenirdi.	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()
20	Annemin/babamın borçlarını ödediğim olmuştur.	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()
21	Ev bütçesinin yönetilmesi benim görevimdi.	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()
22	Annem/babam evin maddi sorumluluklarını bana hiç yüklememi	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()

• **BU BÖLÜMDEKİ MADDELERİ KARDEŞİ OLAN KATILIMCILAR CEVAPLAYACAKTIR:**

Maddeler

23	Kardeşlerimle dışarı çıktığımızda onlardan ben sorumluydum.	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()
24	Kardeşim ağladığında annem/babam onunla ilgilenmemi beklerdi.	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()
25	Kardeşlerim kavga ettiğinde onları barıştırmam beklenirdi.	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()
26	Kardeşlerimi uyandırıp okula hazırlamak benim görevimdi.	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()

27	Kardeşlerimin kararlarında onları yönlendirmem beklenirdi.	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()
28	Kardeşlerimin uyutulması genelde benim işimdi.	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()
29	Annem/babam kardeşlerimin kararını beğenmezse, müdahale etmemi isterdi.	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()
30	Kardeşlerimin başına bir iş gelse benden bilinirdi.	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()
31	Kardeşlerimi okula ben götürüp getirirdim	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()
32	Kardeşlerim beni anne/babası gibi görürlerdi.	1 ()	2 ()	3 ()	4 ()	5 ()

Appendix E: Separation-Individuation Inventory (SII)

Aşağıdaki cümleler genel olarak insanlarla ve kendimizle ilgili düşüncelerimizi yansıtmaktadır. Her ifadeyi aşağıda verilen 10 dereceli ölçeği kullanarak değerlendiriniz. Yaptığınız derecelendirmeyi cümlelerin yanındaki boş kutuya yazınız. Lütfen hiçbir soruyu boş bırakmayınız.

Hiç katılmıyorum

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Tamamen I

EXAMPLES OF THE ITEMS	
1. İnsanlar birine gerçekten çok değer verip bağlandığında, sıklıkla kendileri hakkında daha kötü hissederler.	
2. Bir kişi, başka birine duygusal olarak aşırı yaklaştığında, çoğu zaman kendini kaybolmuş hisseder.	
3. İnsanlar birine gerçekten öfkeli olduğunda genelde kendilerini değersiz hisseder.	
4. İnsanların birine karşı duygusal olarak çok fazla yaklaşılmaya başladıkları zaman, büyük bir olasılıkla incinmeye en açık oldukları zamandır.	
5 İnsanlar zarar görmemek için başkaları üzerindeki kontrolü elinde tutmaya ihtiyaç duyar.	
6. İnsanları tanıdıkça değişmeye başladıklarını hissederim.	
7. Hem iyi hem kötü yanlarımı aynı anda görebilmek benim için kolaydır.	
8. Bana öyle geliyor ki insanlar benden ya gerçekten hoşlanıyor ya da nefret ediyorlar.	
9. İnsanlar bana karşı çoğu zaman sanki ben yalnızca onların her isteğini yerine getirmek için oradaymışım gibi davranıyor.	
10. Kendimden gerçekten hoşlanmak ile kendimi hiç beğenmemek arasında ciddi anlamda gidip geliyorum.	

Appendix F: The Trait Shame and Guilt Scale (TSGS)

Aşağıda geçen ay süresince kendinizle ilgili hislerinizi tanımlamaya yönelik ifadeler bulunmaktadır. Bu ifadelerin sizin bu süre içindeki duygularınızı ne ölçüde anlatıp anlatmadığını her bir ifade için 5'li derecelendirme ölçeğini kullanarak belirtiniz.

1-----2-----3-----4-----
--5

Bu şekilde
hissetmedim

Bu şekilde
hissettiğim oldu.

Bunu çok güçlü
bir şekilde hissettim

1. _____ Kendimi iyi hissettim.
2. _____ Yerin dibine girip, yok olmak istedim.
3. _____ Vicdan azabı ve pişmanlık hissettim
4. _____ Kendimi değerli ve kıymetli hissettim
5. _____ Kendimi önemsiz hissettim.
6. _____ Daha önce yaptığım şeylerle ilgili gerginlik hissettim
7. _____ Kendimi yetenekli ve işe yarar hissettim.
8. _____ Kendimi kötü bir kişiymiş gibi hissettim.
9. _____ Yaptıklarım ile ilgili düşünmekten kendimi alıkoyamadım.
10. _____ Kendimle gurur duydum.
11. _____ Kendimi aşağılanmış ve rezil olmuş hissettim.
12. _____ Kendimi özür diliyor ve itiraf ediyormuş gibi hissettim.
13. _____ Yaptıklarım dan memnun oldum.
14. _____ Kendimi değersiz ve güçsüz hissettim.
15. _____ Yaptıklarım hakkında kendimi kötü hissettim.

Appendix G: Demographic Information From

1. Yaşınız ...

2. Cinsiyet () Kadın () Erkek

3. Kimlerle yaşıyorsunuz?

() Ebeveynlerim ile () Yakınlarım ile () Eş ve çocuklarım ile () Yalnız () Sosyal kurum () Diğer

4-Anneniz hayatta mı? () Evet () Hayır

5-Babanız hayatta mı? () Evet () Hayır

6-Kardeş sayınız nedir? () Hiç ()1 ()2 ()3 ()Diğer

7-Doğum sıranız? ()İlk çocuk ()2.Çocuk ()3.Çocuk ()Diğer

8-Aileniz ile aynı şehirde mi yaşıyorsunuz? () Evet () Hayır

9-Baba medeni durumu. ()Evli ()Ayrı ()Boşanmış ()Tekrar evli ()Dul ()Diğer

10-Anne medeni durumu. ()Evli ()Ayrı ()Boşanmış ()Tekrar evli ()Dul ()Diğer

Appendix H: Debriefing Form

Çalışma Sonu Bilgilendirme

Çalışmamız bu noktada sona ermiştir. Bu çalışma kapsamında çocuk-ebeveyn ilişkisiyle içsel deneyimler arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Çalışmaya katılarak verdiğiniz veriler ile katkıda bulunduğunuz için çok teşekkür ederiz. †

