

## The Mediator Role of Schema Modes in the Relationship Between Parentification and Co-Dependency

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** The disruption of the hierarchy between the parent and the child obscures the role of the child in the family. Parentification is characterized by the child taking emotional and/or instrumental responsibilities and caring for parents and siblings. Therefore, lead to significant difficulties in the child's development of a self, and these difficulties may be reflected in the child's romantic relationships in adulthood in the form of difficulties in thinking independently. This situation is conceptualized as co-dependency and is defined as excessive focus on others, assuming full responsibility, and low self-esteem. It is hoped that discovering the roles of schema modes, which are defined as emotional and behavioral states that emerge suddenly when people are hypersensitive, in these relationship styles will be a significant guide, especially in therapy sessions. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to determine which schema modes mediate the relationship between parentification and co-dependence.

**Method:** The research was conducted with 355 participants aged 18-69 years. The Sociodemographic Form, Parentification Inventory, Co-Dependency Assessment Scale, and Schema Mode Scale-Short Form were used in the study. Process Macro analysis Model 4 developed by Hayes (2013) was used to test the mediating role of schema modes between parentification and co-dependency.

**Results:** According to the results of the analysis, the level of co-dependency is higher in women. Eight different mediator effect models were tested, including child modes, coping modes, parent modes, and healthy adult mode, between parent-focused parentification and sibling-focused parentification and co-dependency. The mediating role of the angry child mode, self-aggrandiser mode, and demanding parent mode was found between parent-focused parentification and co-dependency. In addition, the mediating role of the punitive and demanding parent mode was found between sibling-focused parentification and co-dependency.

**Discussion:** It is noteworthy that the same mediating effect between both parent-focused and sibling-focused parentification and co-dependency is the demanding parent mode. The demanding parent mode, which prioritizes the needs of others, predicts co-dependency and shows the mode that should be studied first in treatment. The attention is drawn to the mediating variable between the punitive parenting mode, characterized by self-blaming aspects in individuals who assumed the responsibility of caring for their sibling during childhood, and perfectionism, which is co-dependency. Similarly, it is observed that the self-aggrandiser mode compensates for the emotional deprivation caused by parentification. These modes, which develop in root family interaction, mediate similar imbalances in adult roles. The prominence of the angry child and self-aggrandiser mode suggests that these individuals can be evaluated especially in terms of narcissism in studies and/or therapy sessions that examine the relationship between parentification and co-dependency.

**Conclusion:** The schema modes come from the experiences of their root families and continue actively in the adulthood romantic relationships of individuals who take responsibilities that are not suitable for their developmental level in their childhood. It is thought that this study will enable individuals who experience parentification to define their unhealthy roles and explore their relational problems and will provide a new perspective on the predictor of childhood experiences on adulthood.

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