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From Burden to Bonding: Parentification Indirectly Enhances Marital Flourishing Through Parenting Efficacy

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Abstract

Previous studies on the impact of parentification have yielded mixed findings; yet, the specific link between early parentification and marital flourishing, with parenting efficacy as a mediating factor, remains unexplored. The objective of this study was to investigate the mediating role of parenting efficacy in the relationship between parentification and marital flourishing among young Indonesian parents. Two hundred fifty-six young Indonesian parents (ages 20–40) completed the survey using convenience sampling. A mediation analysis in JASP was used to examine the relationships among the variables. Results confirmed positive correlations between parentification and parenting efficacy (r = 0.500, p < 0.01), between parentification and marital flourishing (r = 0.190, p < 0.01), and between parenting efficacy and marital flourishing (r = 0.214, p < 0.001). While the direct effect of parentification on marital flourishing was not significant (B = 0.062, SE = 0.040, p = 0.116), its indirect effect through parenting efficacy was significant (B = 0.045, SE = 0.020, p = 0.028, 95% CI [0.005, 0.085]), indicating an indirect-only mediation effect. These findings suggest that parenting efficacy may represent one pathway linking parentification to marital flourishing. Therefore, interventions designed to enhance parenting efficacy might prove beneficial for individuals with a history of parentification.

Keywords: marital flourishing, marriage, parentification, parenting efficacy, young parents

Dari Beban Menjadi Ikatan: Parentifikasi Secara Tidak Langsung Meningkatkan *Marital Flourishing* melalui Efikasi Pengasuhan

Abstrak

Penelitian terdahulu mengenai dampak parentifikasi telah menghasilkan temuan yang beragam; namun, kaitan spesifik antara parentifikasi pada masa kecil dan *marital flourishing* pada usia dewasa, dengan efikasi pengasuhan sebagai faktor mediasi, masih belum dieksplorasi. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk menyelidiki peran mediasi efikasi pengasuhan dalam hubungan antara parentifikasi dan *marital flourishing* di kalangan orang tua muda Indonesia. Dua ratus lima puluh enam orang tua muda Indonesia (usia 20–40 tahun) menyelesaikan survei menggunakan teknik *convenience sampling*. Analisis mediasi dalam JASP digunakan untuk memeriksa hubungan antarvariabel. Hasil penelitian mengonfirmasi korelasi positif antara parentifikasi dan efikasi pengasuhan (r = 0,500, p < 0,01), antara parentifikasi dan *marital flourishing* (r = 0,190, p < 0,01), serta antara efikasi pengasuhan dan *marital flourishing* (r = 0,214, p < 0,001). Meskipun pengaruh langsung parentifikasi terhadap *marital flourishing* tidak signifikan (B = 0,062, SE = 0,040, p = 0,116), pengaruh tidak langsungnya melalui efikasi pengasuhan signifikan (B = 0,045, SE = 0,020, p = 0,028, 95% CI [0,005, 0,085]), yang menunjukkan adanya efek mediasi *indirect-only*. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa efikasi pengasuhan mungkin merupakan salah satu jalur yang menghubungkan parentifikasi dengan *marital flourishing*. Oleh karena itu, intervensi yang dirancang untuk meningkatkan efikasi pengasuhan mungkin bermanfaat bagi individu dengan riwayat parentifikasi.

Kata kunci: efikasi pengasuhan, *marital flourishing*, orang tua muda, parentifikasi, pernikahan

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a continuation of a romantic relationship built by two individuals who share mutual affection. Developing romantic relationships is a crucial developmental task during young adulthood, and it can become a foundation for later relationship success (Xia et al., 2018). According to Erik Erikson, young

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adults should establish emotionally intimate and committed relationships as a developmental task of this phase. If young adults do not continue the relationship into a healthy marriage, it may diminish happiness and satisfaction with life (Orsley & Simanjuntak, 2023). Especially in Indonesia, marriage is generally recognized as a higher level of long-term commitment than other kinds of romantic relationships. It constitutes sociocultural pressure and a religious obligation, as well as a marker of personal achievement, while remaining single past an acceptable age may result in social stigma (Himawan, 2020). It is also regarded as the ideal standard of a committed romantic relationship. Previous research suggests that for Indonesian adults, marriage is associated with social status and psychological well-being. Most of them continue to endorse marriage as an essential purpose in life, reflecting constant exposure to cultural, religious, and familial expectations (Himawan et al., 2019).

Nevertheless, marriage itself does not guarantee an individual's life satisfaction and happiness. Young adults also need to maintain the quality of their marriage. Nurhayati et al. (2024) found that marital quality consisted of support, physical proximity, warmth, communication, acceptance and respect, role sharing, and responsibility between husband and wife. Marital quality plays an important role in determining the positive contributions of marriage to an individual's well-being. The positive contributions of marriage depend on marital quality, including emotional intimacy, strong commitment, relationship satisfaction, trust, mutual support, and effective communication (Fincham & Beach, 2010). Young adults are not only expected to marry but also to fulfill their own happiness and support each other in attaining positive outcomes.

Within the framework of a positive psychology approach, there is a psychological construct that emphasizes not only positive evaluations of marriage but also the extent of individual growth, thriving, and psychological functioning within marriage. It refers to marital flourishing, which is more than good marital quality; it also involves a high-functioning marital relationship (Sanri et al., 2021). Marital flourishing can be defined as a high-quality relationship; its dimensions are meaning, mutual growth, sacrifice translated into a more positive term, namely relational giving, and a shared goal of a healthy balance between marital roles and wider family dynamics (Fahd & Hanif, 2019).

The concept of marital flourishing emphasizes that a high-quality marriage is a more holistic dimension, involving not merely both partners feeling satisfied but also opportunities to grow individually and relationally (Sanri et al., 2021). This aligns with the positive psychology framework, which suggests that high-quality romantic relationships characterized by emotional support, satisfaction, and low conflict are associated with greater life satisfaction and overall well-being across the life course, including psychological and subjective well-being (Wong et al., 2023). These characteristics are consistent with research suggesting that high-quality marriages contribute to better psychological well-being and subjective life satisfaction (Majzoobi & Forstmeier, 2025).

A recent study in Indonesia suggests that factors such as marital commitment, effective coparenting, level of conflict, communication skills, and attachment contribute to relationship and marital flourishing. It indicates a growing shift in focus from reducing marital distress and problems to promoting the importance of flourishing marriages (Widhyastuti & Annisa, 2024). Married couples may experience different levels of marital flourishing, ranging from functional marriages to flourishing marriages, with flourishing couples showing the highest level of individual and relational well-being. Despite the high cultural and social value placed on marriage in Indonesia, a previous study highlighted that not all marriages reach a high level of flourishing. Research among Javanese couples determined three kinds of marital profiles, including functional, surviving, and flourishing marriages. It suggests that flourishing marriages are not generally experienced among Indonesian spouses (Nurhayati et al., 2024). However, research on marital flourishing in Indonesia is still limited. It is important to explore the factors that predict the development of marital flourishing.

Marital flourishing is not achieved automatically within marriage. It can be influenced by various psychological factors. Adult capacities in romantic relationships, including the ability to enhance marital flourishing, are fundamentally shaped by early-life experiences, especially family interactions and dynamics. One significant family experience that generally affects adult relationships is parentification, a role reversal in the parent–child relationship in which a child takes care of a parent's emotional and instrumental needs that should typically be fulfilled by parents (Dariotis et al., 2023). According to Tolmacz et al. (2025), parentification can interfere with a person's

ability to navigate their own emotional needs and develop intimacy in adult relationships because they are accustomed to being responsible for others' needs.

Previous studies describe how premature caregiving roles can negatively affect children's development (van der Mijl & Vingerhoets, 2017) and increase stress and the risk of developing psychological symptoms such as anxiety and depression (Lo et al., 2010). Research on parentification usually discusses developmental harm; however, emerging evidence suggests that not all forms of parentification are uniformly detrimental. Parentification may negatively influence marital flourishing because it disrupts interpersonal development and normative emotional development during childhood. It potentially results in long-term difficulties in adult romantic relationships, including marriage (Dariotis et al., 2023). Individuals with parentification experiences may develop inappropriate caregiving responsibilities, which may affect the development of mutual support, emotional intimacy, and positive relational qualities that are considered essential elements of marital flourishing.

Conversely, despite the risk of maladaptive consequences, parentification experiences can create positive psychological capabilities. Borchet et al. (2020) noted that individuals who perceive their parentification experience as positive learning tend to develop healthy self-esteem. Similarly, Macfie et al. (2015) emphasized that parentification experiences contribute to the development of caregiving competence that is internalized and ready to be activated in future caregiving contexts. Individuals who learned caregiving skills in childhood are more likely to show supportive behaviors within their marriage, contributing to marital flourishing (Walsh, 2016). This domain is relevant to parenting efficacy, defined as an individual's belief in their capability to perform parenting tasks effectively and to influence their child's development (Glatz et al., 2023). Parenting efficacy is an important focus of research in the fields of parenting and the postpartum period (Dol et al., 2023).

Parenting efficacy has been shown to be an important factor in parenting behaviors, including the ability to support children's self-regulation (Anandiva & Hendrawan, 2024) and social-emotional development (Fung et al., 2022). Furthermore, higher parental self-efficacy also plays a significant role in the link between relationship satisfaction and marital satisfaction (Chiș et al., 2022). Couples' involvement in raising children, confidence in their parenting abilities, collaboration in sharing roles effectively, and support for each other's parenting decisions are linked to better marital satisfaction, quality, and happiness (Jones & Prinz, 2005; Rahmananda et al., 2022).

Parenting efficacy can be an important resource that facilitates the mechanism within the psychological dynamics of parentification and marital flourishing. Parentification may not directly play a role as a risk factor for marital flourishing. Rather, depending on an internal factor such as parenting efficacy, parentification may contribute to the development of psychological resources that facilitate marital flourishing. Within Indonesian families, familial and collectivistic values frequently influence parental responsibilities. Parenting efficacy has been associated with greater parental well-being and positive family dynamics (Asmara et al., 2026). Surijah et al. (2024) argue that previous research in Indonesia has identified risk factors for marital satisfaction but has not yet tested protective mechanisms, particularly parenting efficacy. However, the theoretical pathway of parenting efficacy mediating the link between parentification and marital flourishing remains understudied, especially within the Indonesian context.

It is important to conduct this research because most couples become overly focused on their parenting responsibilities. At the same time, the marriage itself still needs to be nurtured and to flourish to minimize dissatisfaction and avoid divorce. Thus, this study hypothesized that parenting efficacy significantly mediated the relationship between parentification and marital flourishing among young parents in Indonesia. Also, this study aims to understand how childhood responsibility that is seen as a burden can be transformed into positive caregiving beliefs that strengthen a high-quality marriage.

METHODS

Research Design, Location and Time

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional research design to examine the mediating role of parenting efficacy in the relationship between parentification and marital flourishing among young parents in Indonesia. The study was conducted in various regions across Indonesia through an online survey administered using Google Forms. Data collection was carried out from May 2025 to July 2025.

Sampling Technique

The participants consisted of 256 young parents residing in Indonesia. Participants were selected using convenience sampling based on the following inclusion criteria: (1) aged 20–40 years, (2) legally married, (3) having at least one child, (4) having at least one sibling (because the parentification questionnaire requires this criterion), and (5) willing to participate voluntarily.

Among the participants, 52 were male (20%) and 204 were female (80%). The participants' ages ranged from 20 to 40 years (M = 27.66, SD = 4.89). The sample size was considered adequate for mediation analysis and sufficient to detect indirect effects with a 95 percent confidence level.

Procedures for Data Collection

Prior to data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the Indonesian Psychology Research Ethics Committee (Komite Etik Penelitian Ilmu Pengetahuan Indonesia/KPIN) with Ethical Clearance Number 119/2025 Etik/KPIN. Following ethical approval, data were collected using an online questionnaire distributed via social media platforms and young-parent community networks. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: informed consent, demographic information, and research instruments. Participants were required to read and provide informed consent before accessing the questionnaire. The consent form explained the purpose of the study, participation procedures, confidentiality assurance, voluntary participation, and participants' right to withdraw at any time. Completion of the questionnaire required approximately 15–20 minutes. Responses were automatically recorded and securely stored in the Google Forms database for subsequent analysis.

Measurement and Assessment of Variables

Parentification refers to a role-reversal process in which children assume responsibilities and caregiving roles typically expected of parents within the family system. Parentification was measured using the Parentification Inventory developed by Borchet et al. (2023) and adapted into Indonesian by the author prior to administration. This questionnaire requires retrospective recall; therefore, participants were instructed to remember their family experiences before age 18. The instrument consists of 12 items covering three dimensions: parent-focused parentification (PFP), sibling-focused parentification (SFP), and perceived-benefit parentification (PBP). Respondents need to have at least one sibling so that the sibling-focused parentification dimension can be completed. Participants responded using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). An example item for PFP is "Saya diharapkan dapat menenangkan orang tua saya ketika mereka sedih atau mengalami kesulitan dalam mengendalikan emosi." An example item representing SFP is "Saya adalah orang yang paling bertanggung jawab dalam mendisiplinkan saudara kandung (kakak/adik) saya." The final example item describing PBP is "Saya benar-benar menikmati peran saya di dalam keluarga." Higher total scores indicate higher levels of parentification experiences. The instrument demonstrated good reliability in the present study (Cronbach's α = 0.849).

Parenting efficacy refers to parents' beliefs regarding their ability to effectively perform parenting roles and manage child-rearing responsibilities. Parenting efficacy was measured using the Me as a Parent Scale (MaaP) developed by Hamilton et al. (2015) and adapted into Indonesian by the author. The instrument consists of 16 items representing four dimensions: self-efficacy, personal agency, self-sufficiency, and self-management. Responses were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Example items are "Saya tahu cara menyelesaikan sebagian besar masalah yang muncul dalam mengasuh anak"; "Saya mampu merencanakan dan mengatur kegiatan yang menyenangkan dan mendidik untuk dilakukan anak saya"; and "Saya telah memenuhi harapan saya dalam menyediakan dukungan emosional untuk anak saya." Higher scores indicate stronger parenting efficacy beliefs. The instrument demonstrated acceptable reliability in the present study (Cronbach's α = 0.713).

Marital flourishing refers to a positive and thriving marital relationship characterized by mutual growth, shared meaning, goal alignment, and supportive interactions between spouses. Marital flourishing was measured using the Relationship Flourishing Questionnaire (RFQ), adapted into Indonesian by Kusumawardhani et al. (2024). This instrument consists of 12 items covering four dimensions: goal sharing, personal growth, relational giving, and meaning. Each dimension consists of three items. The first four items used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), while the remaining items used a frequency-based rating scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always). Example items are "*Saya memiliki kesuksesan lebih banyak di tujuan penting saya berkat*

Table 1 Descriptive data among research variables (n = 256)

	Parentification	Parenting Efficacy	Marital Flourishing
M	43.871	62.543	52.402
SD	8.430	6.027	4.770
Minimum	20.000	44.000	36.000
Maximum	58.000	77.000	60.000

bantuan dari pasangan" (Goal Sharing item); "*Saya dan pasangan mencari aktivitas yang dapat membantu kami bertumbuh lebih baik sebagai pasangan*" (Personal Growth item); "*Membagi pemikiran pribadi saya dengan pasangan adalah hal yang berharga*" (Relational Giving Item); "*Saya dan pasangan melakukan hal yang bermakna bagi kami sebagai pasangan*" (Meaning Item). Higher scores indicate higher levels of marital flourishing. The instrument demonstrated good reliability in the present study (Cronbach's α = 0.808).

Data Analysis

Prior to the main analysis, preliminary analyses were conducted, including statistical assumption tests for normality, linearity, and multicollinearity, as well as reliability testing for each measurement instrument. The main analysis employed a mediation analysis technique to examine the indirect effect of parenting efficacy as a mediator in the relationship between parentification and marital flourishing. All analyses were performed using JASP (Version 0.19.2; JASP Team, 2024).

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Based on Table 1, all data from the 256 participants were valid and could be analyzed, with no missing data. The standard deviation values for all three variables were smaller than the means. This indicates that the data distribution was relatively homogeneous and there were no extreme variations in scores between participants, so the mean scores can be considered representative of the overall condition of the participants. The standard deviation of the parentification variable was relatively larger than those of the other two variables, indicating that participants' parentification experiences were more varied than their levels of parenting efficacy and marital flourishing.

Preliminary Analysis

Prior to the main analysis, the assumptions of normality, linearity, and multicollinearity were examined. Normality was assessed using skewness and kurtosis values and Q–Q plots. The skewness values ranged from −1.13 to −0.05, whereas the kurtosis values ranged from −0.36 to 1.74, all of which were within the acceptable range of −2 to +2 (George & Mallery, 2010). Visual inspection of the Q–Q plots indicated that the residuals were approximately normally distributed. Linearity was assessed by inspecting residual plots from the regression models. The residuals were distributed around zero without apparent systematic curvilinear patterns, supporting the assumption of linearity. Multicollinearity was assessed using tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) values. In the regression model predicting marital flourishing, both parentification and parenting efficacy showed a tolerance value of 0.75 and a VIF of 1.33, indicating no substantial multicollinearity.

Relationships among Research Variables

The relationships among parentification, parenting efficacy, and marital flourishing were examined using Pearson correlation analysis. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Correlation Matrix Among Research Variables (n = 256)

Variable		Parentification	Parenting Efficacy	Marital Flourishing
1. Parentification	Pearson's r	—		
2. Parenting Efficacy	Pearson's r	0.500***	—	
3. Marital Flourishing	Pearson's r	0.190**	0.214***	—

Notes. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Table 3 Results of the mediation test (n = 256)

	Estimate	SE	p	95% CI	
				Lower	Upper
Prn → PrE	0.357*	0.039	< 0.001	0.282	0.433
PrE → MrF	0.126*	0.056	0.024	0.017	0.234
Direct (Prn → MrF)	0.062	0.040	0.116	-0.015	0.140
Indirect (Prn → PrE → MrF)	0.045*	0.020	0.028	0.005	0.085
Total Effect (Prn → MrF)	0.107*	0.035	0.002	0.039	0.175

Note. CI = confidence interval, Prn = Parentification, PrE = Parenting Efficacy, MrF = Marital Flourishing. *p < 0.05.

The correlation analysis showed that all study variables were significantly associated. Parentification was positively associated with parenting efficacy and marital flourishing. Parenting efficacy was also positively associated with marital flourishing.

Mediation Analysis

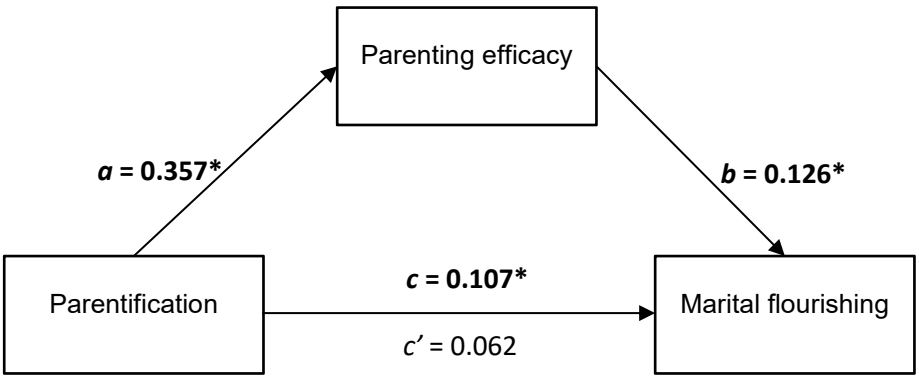
The mediation analysis was conducted to examine the role of parenting efficacy as a mediator in the relationship between parentification and marital flourishing. The results are presented in Table 3.

The mediation model showed a significant indirect effect of parentification on marital flourishing through parenting efficacy. The total effect of parentification on marital flourishing was statistically significant, whereas the direct effect was not statistically significant. The mediation model explained 25 percent of the variance in parenting efficacy (R^2 = 0.250) and 5.5 percent of the variance in marital flourishing (R^2 = 0.055). Figure 1 presents the mediation model and the standardized coefficients obtained from the analysis.

Figure 1 presents the mediation model examining the role of parenting efficacy in the relationship between parentification and marital flourishing. Parentification was positively associated with parenting efficacy (a = 0.357, p < 0.001), and parenting efficacy was positively associated with marital flourishing (b = 0.126, p = 0.024). The total effect of parentification on marital flourishing was significant (c = 0.107, p = 0.002), whereas the direct effect after controlling for parenting efficacy was not significant (c' = 0.062, p = 0.116). The indirect effect of parentification on marital flourishing through parenting efficacy was significant (estimate = 0.045, 95% CI [0.005, 0.085]), indicating that parenting efficacy accounted for a significant indirect pathway between parentification and marital flourishing.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate no direct effect of parentification on marital flourishing, but a different pattern emerged when parenting efficacy mediated the relationship. Kusumawardhani et al. (2024) explained that marital flourishing tends to be influenced by positive qualities of romantic or marital relationships, such as marital commitment and secure attachment, rather than negative aspects such as insecure attachment. In addition,



Note. a = effect of parentification on parenting efficacy; b = effect of parenting efficacy on marital flourishing; c = total effect of parentification on marital flourishing; c' = direct effect of parentification on marital flourishing after controlling for parenting efficacy. *p < 0.05.

Figure 1 Mediation Effect Path Plot (N = 256)

findings across multiple studies indicate that early parentification experiences may disrupt normative attachment development, increasing vulnerability to insecure attachment styles, specifically anxious-preoccupied and avoidant-dismissive, in adult interpersonal relationships (Çetin Demirtaş et al., 2025). The findings above may explain the absence of a direct effect in the present study: parentification tends to be related to negative aspects of adult relationships, while marital flourishing appears to be driven by positive relational qualities. Meanwhile, parenting efficacy, the caregiver's belief in being able to fulfill the parenting role well and affect the quality of parenting, is considered a positive quality (Hamovitch et al., 2019). Therefore, parenting efficacy contributes more to marital flourishing than parentification experiences.

Parental behavior can be interpreted differently across cultures; for example, children in Indonesia believe that caring for their parents and being filial is a natural commitment and responsibility (Novianti et al., 2023). Indonesian culture, which is oriented toward Asian culture, adheres to a collectivist cultural system and respects parents, leading parentification research results to tend to be more positive than those in cultures outside Asia (Yew et al., 2017). This contrasts with research in Western cultures, where parentification has a negative influence on satisfaction with romantic and marital relationships (Baggett et al., 2015; Monaco & Heesacker, 2025; Zencir, 2021). In the future, further studies using qualitative research methods are needed to explore whether parentification experiences have a positive impact on parenting efficacy and the development of marital flourishing among young parents in Indonesia.

In this study, parenting efficacy significantly predicted marital flourishing. Previous research suggests that satisfied couples are better parents and that children develop better when their parents are happy with their marriage (Chen et al., 2022). In addition, Matalon and Turliuc (2023) demonstrated that parenting efficacy mediates the relationship between child behavior and marital satisfaction, highlighting the crucial role of parental beliefs in the quality of the couple's relationship. When parents are overwhelmed by managing their preschool child's behavior, it affects their marital quality, so it is important to increase their parenting efficacy to manage their child's behavior and maintain a high-quality marriage. Moreover, this aligns with experimental research: Chiș and Chiș (2026) conducted a Parental Education Program that showed increased parenting efficacy scores among parents who received the intervention, which also contributed to better relationship and couple satisfaction. This shows that parenting efficacy acts as a protective factor that can increase and maintain marital flourishing.

Kwan et al.'s (2015) study indicated that parenting self-efficacy moderated the relationship between parenting stress and marital satisfaction, suggesting that parents' beliefs in their parenting abilities can strengthen marital relationships by helping couples share roles and manage child-related conflicts. In the practical context of counseling, parent clients tend to focus more on fulfilling their parental role and on remaining in the marriage for their children's sake, neglecting their role as partners. In fact, when couples become parents, they can still achieve marital flourishing, for example, by having a sense of direction and purpose in life, such as home ownership or savings for a child's education (goal sharing aspect); supporting a partner's growth, such as career advancement or encouraging the pursuit of a hobby (personal growth aspect); facing life's challenges together (relational giving aspect); and appreciating the family life they have (meaning aspect) (Fowers et al., 2016).

The significant positive effect of parentification on parenting efficacy demonstrated in this study is further strengthened by empirical evidence from the Indonesian context. Kusumawardhani et al. (2026) found that among emerging adults in Jabodetabek, emotional parentification significantly and positively predicted mental well-being, contradicting the conventional assumption that parentification is always detrimental. This finding aligns with evidence that the impact of parentification in more collectivist Asian cultures appears positive, including greater independence and responsibility, greater resilience, and improved adaptability and interaction (Teng et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2017; Yew et al., 2017). Conversely, parentification in general is considered to have little benefit in later adult life, as it can lead to lower parenting skills due to perceived unfairness in childhood (Masiran et al., 2023). In other words, parentification is a subjective process that depends on individuals' interpretations within their cultural and relational contexts. The duality arising from parentification experiences in parenting efficacy later in life has practical implications for counseling. Practitioners need to understand local wisdom and collectivist culture to better support parentified clients (Tiwari & Woodward, 2026). Note that parenting efficacy is a subjective perception and belief, not a measurement of

actual parenting skills. Therefore, although young parents who experienced parentification score high in parenting efficacy, they still need to be equipped with positive parenting education to achieve better parenting in the future.

The findings of this study have significant practical implications for counseling and family psychology practitioners in Indonesia. First, the results emphasize the importance of premarital counseling as a preventive step for individuals with a history of parentification. In the context of premarital counseling, an assessment of parenting history should be included as part of the exploration of the client's family background so that counselors can help clients identify internalized parenting patterns and reframe them as sources of marital strength. Second, for married couples, psychoeducation to strengthen parenting efficacy should be prioritized, particularly during periods that have been shown to be vulnerable for marital satisfaction. Intervention programs designed to increase parents' confidence in their parenting abilities, such as positive parenting training, collaborative coparenting, and parenting stress management, are expected to improve parenting quality and indirectly strengthen couples' marital flourishing. Third, counselors need to be culturally sensitive when dealing with clients with a history of parentification from collectivist cultural backgrounds such as Indonesia, as the interpretation of parentification experiences is heavily influenced by local cultural values that cannot be separated from the therapeutic process. Therefore, a counseling approach that integrates an understanding of collectivist culture, strengthens parenting efficacy, and reframes parentification experiences has the potential to be an effective intervention strategy to encourage marital flourishing among young parents in Indonesia.

Several limitations should be acknowledged in this research: the cross-sectional design precludes causal inference, parentification was measured retrospectively and may be subject to recall bias, and all data were self-reported by one partner. Also, further research needs to examine details of parentification, such as parents' physical and mental health, financial condition, and siblings' physical and mental health problems, to obtain more comprehensive data.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study concludes that parentification does not directly determine marital flourishing in young parents; rather, its effect is fully mediated by parenting efficacy. Individuals with a history of parentification who successfully develop parenting efficacy appear able to transform early caregiving experiences into relational resources that support marital flourishing. This finding is consistent with contextual and developmental perspectives that view childhood experiences as either risk or protective factors depending on the psychological processes that accompany them, and it suggests that in the Indonesian context, parentification may function as an early rehearsal of caregiving roles rather than a purely adverse experience. Nevertheless, the modest effect sizes indicate that parenting efficacy is only one of several pathways contributing to marital flourishing.

Future studies could employ longitudinal or dyadic designs, distinguish between types of parentification (parent-focused vs. sibling-focused; emotional vs. instrumental), and examine perceived fairness or acknowledgment as a potential moderator. Cultural factors such as filial piety and collectivism also warrant investigation, as they may explain why parentification yields relatively positive outcomes among Indonesian samples. Practically, strengthening parenting efficacy through premarital education, parenting classes, and psychoeducation may help young Indonesian parents reframe parentification experiences into resources that foster marital flourishing.

AUTHOR STATEMENTS

Artificial Intelligence Use Statement. In preparing this manuscript, the authors used Grammarly to review the accuracy of the English writing. All outputs generated through the use of AI were reviewed and verified by the authors. The authors remain fully responsible for the accuracy, integrity, and content of the manuscript.

Author Contributions Statement. Sri Juwita Kusumawardhani: Project Administration, Conceptualization, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review & Editing. **Reny Rustyawati:** Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review & Editing. **Anggi Mayangsari:** Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review & Editing. **Ghiandra Putri Regawa:** Resources, Writing – Original Draft.

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