

SUBJECTIVE MEANINGS OF DEATH AND BEREAVEMENT AMONG YOUNG  
PEOPLE GRIEVING FOR THE DEATH OF A GRANDPARENT



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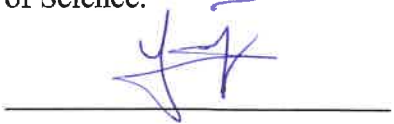
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## ABSTRACT

### SUBJECTIVE MEANINGS OF DEATH AND BEREAVEMENT AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE GRIEVING FOR THE DEATH OF A GRANDPARENT

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The main purpose of the current study was to investigate subjective meanings of death and bereavement processes of young people in Turkey grieving for the death of a grandparent. Particularly, experiences of bereaved Turkish youth with grandparent loss were investigated from a developmental and cultural perspective. To achieve this aim, a qualitative study was performed. Accordingly, semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven bereaved college students, and data was analyzed through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Six super-ordinate themes emerged from the obtained data, which were (1) losing the second mother/father, (2) youngster's first contact with death as a transformative experience, (3) youngster's ambivalence regarding death-related rituals, (4) grandparent loss as a dual loss process, (5) university both as a barrier and shield in the grieving process, (6) death as a multidimensional concept. Findings were discussed in line with the relevant literature and cultural values of Turkey.

Keywords: Grieving young people, Grandparent loss, Subjective meanings of death and grief, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis



## ÖZ

Büyükanne/Büyükbabalarını Kaybeden Gençlerde Ölüm ve Yasın Öznel Anlamları

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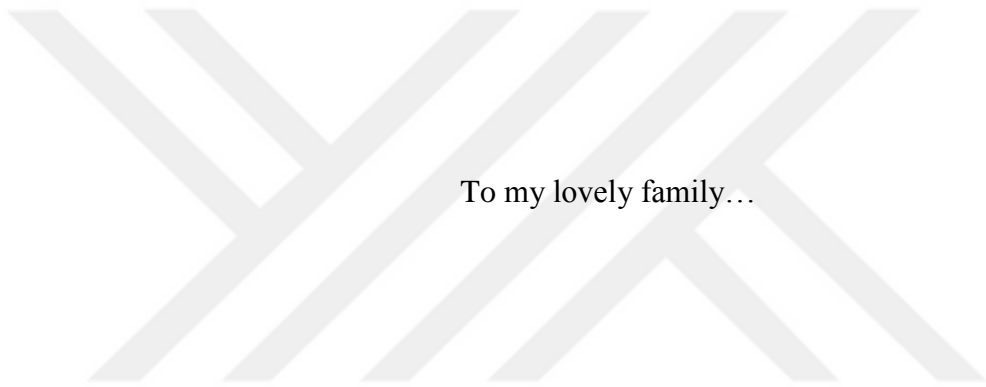
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Bu tezin temel amacı, büyükanne veya büyükbabasını kaybetmiş gençlerin ölüm ve kayıp olgusuna verdikleri öznel anlamları ve yas süreçlerini derinlemesine incelemektir. Bu bağlamda, torun-büyükanne/büyükbaba ilişkisinin Türk kültüründeki önemi göz önünde bulundurularak, gelişimsel açıdan geçiş döneminde bu yas sürecini deneyimlemekte olan gençlerin yaşantıları derinlemesine incelenmiştir. Bu hedefe ulaşmak amacıyla nitel bir çalışma yürütülmüştür. Niteliksel araştırma kapsamında, büyükanne veya büyükbabasını kaybetmiş yedi üniversite öğrencisiyle yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiş ve elde edilen veriler Yorumlayıcı Fenomenolojik Analiz ile çözümlenmiştir. Analizler sonucunda, (1) ikinci anne/babanın kaybı, (2) hayatı değiştiren bir deneyim olarak gençlerin ölümle ilk teması, (3) gençlerin ölümle ilgili ritüellere ilişkin tereddütleri, (4) bir ikili-kayıp süreci olarak büyükanne/büyükbaba kaybı, (5) yas sürecinde üniversitenin engel ve kalkan işlevleri, ve (6) çok boyutlu bir kavram olarak ölüm olmak üzere altı üst tema oluşturulmuştur. Söz konusu temalar Türk kültürünün özellikleri ve ilgili literatür ışığında tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Gençlerde Yas, Büyükanne/Büyükbaba Kaybı, Kayıp ve Ölüm Yaşantısının Öznel Anlamları, Yorumlayıcı Fenomenolojik Analiz







To my lovely family...

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Losing of a loved one due to death is an inevitable experience in one's life and such an experience might have life-changing implications. Although grief and bereavement literature mostly focused on loss of parents, children and spouses (Dellmann, 2018; Maccallum, Malgaroli, & Bonanno, 2017) or impacts of traumatic deaths on survivors (Barlé, Wortman, & Latack, 2017; Chapple, Ziebland, & Hawton, 2015; Jacobs, 2016), only a few researchers have examined the impacts of grandparent loss particularly on young people. This limited attention might be related to the lack of awareness about the strong relations among grand dyads particularly in cultures beyond Western context. Considering importance of losing such a prominent figure in different cultures, subjective meanings of death, loss and bereavement of young people grieving for their grandparents should be examined from a developmental perspective in order to inform culturally and developmentally sensitive grief intervention strategies.

Accordingly, this study aimed to provide an in-depth understanding of the grief experiences of Turkish young people with grandparent loss and subjective meanings attributed to death after this loss. The introduction chapter started with a brief background about grief responses of young people after losing of a loved one. After that, how young people experienced losses was covered taking into consideration their developmental stage. Then, step-by-step, this chapter started to focus on essential topics of the current study. Firstly, how culture shaped the relationship between grandparent and grandchild were explained and importance of



grandparent-grandchild relationship in Turkey was emphasized. Afterwards, roles and effects of grandparents on their grandchildren's development in Turkey were presented. Finally, the introduction part was concluded by covering scope, aims and research question(s) of the current study.

## **1.1 Loss and Grief**

Losing a loved one due to death is an inevitable life circumstance which might have different manifestations for each individual. Individuals experienced both common and unique grief reactions depending on their personal, familial and cultural background (Parkes & Prigerson, 2010). As a natural and normal reaction to loss, grief included physical, emotional, cognitive, behavioral and sometimes spiritual reactions. Particularly, sadness, guilt, mental pain, apathy, pre-occupation with the deceased, impairments in daily functioning, academic problems and withdrawal were amongst the important manifestations given in response to loss of a loved one (Berson, 1988; Hai, Currin-McCulloch, Franklin, & Cole Jr, 2018; Hall, 2014; Lindemann, 1944; Walker, Hathcoat, & Noppe, 2012; Zisook et al., 2010). In addition to negative symptoms of grief, some positive changes might also be expected as an outcome of grieving process. For instance, according to Schwartzberg and Janoff-Bulman (1991), %35 of the college students who were grieving for their parents had a broader and deeper understanding of life, felt more mature and realistic after their loss. Similarly, realizing new possibilities, increased appreciation of life, gaining personal strength, and enhanced pro-social behaviors were mentioned as other positive manifestations of losing a loved one (Bellet, Jones, Neimeyer, & McNally, 2018; Berzoff, 2011; Boyraz, Horne, & Sayger, 2010; Calhoun, Tedeschi, Cann, & Hanks, 2010; Gross, 2018; Xu, Fu, He, Schoebi, & Wang, 2015).

In general, Kübler-Ross and Kessler (2005) categorized five stages of grief as follows: (1) “*denial*” as questioning the reality of the loss; (2) “*anger*” as an immediate feeling hosting hidden emotions; (3) “*bargaining*” which was full of sentences starting with “if only...” and “what if...”; (4) “*depression*” as an intense sadness which was different from a sign of mental problem; and (5) “*acceptance*” as an adaptation to new normal after loss. There is a growing body of literature that recognizes factors affecting grief and bereavement process for different losses. Accordingly, quality of relationship, kinship, type of death (e.g. unexpected, traumatic/violent and/or stigmatized deaths), historical antecedents (e.g. previous losses, mental health history, and unresolved loss experiences); personal variables (e.g. age, gender, coping style, attachment style, cognitions, self-esteem and self-efficacy, beliefs and values); psycho-social variables (e.g. social support, social role involvements, religious resources and ethnic expectations); concurrent losses and stresses (e.g. secondary losses) were amongst the factors impacting on the severity and duration of grief reactions (Barlé et al., 2017; Buckley et al., 2015; Feldman, Fischer, & Gressis, 2016; Fernández-Alcántara, & Zech, 2017; Howard Sharp, 2018; Leopold, & Lechner, 2015; Murray, Toth, & Clinkinbeard, 2005; Worden, 2009). Besides, several adaptations and tasks were required that would enable survivors to adapt their loss like processing the pain of grief; adjusting to a world without the deceased and finding an enduring symbolic connection with the deceased (Worden, 2009).

Although many studies have investigated psycho-social variables associated with normal and prolonged grief symptoms for spouse, partner, parent and child losses (Bergstraesser, Inglin, Hornung, & Landolt, 2015; Bruinsma, Tiemeier, Heemst, van der Heide, & Rietjens, 2015; Dellmann, 2018; Hutti, Armstrong, Myers, & Hall, 2015; Kamp, O’Connor, Spindler, & Moskowitz, 2019; Kõlves et al., 2019; Maccallum et al., 2017; Sandler, Tein, Cham, Wolchik, & Ayers, 2016; Zetumer, 2015), there is a

scarcity of research on how loss of a grandparent played a role on the grieving process of young individuals. One reason explaining this lack of research interest might be related with the societal expectation that death of an elder grandparent is a natural part of living cycle (Uhlenberg, 1980). Besides, grandparents might be assumed in the outer cycle of nuclear family which might lead researchers to unnotice importance of such a loss on grandchildren's functioning. However, considering the physical and psychological proximity between grandparents and grandchildren particularly in collectivistic cultures like Turkey (Aytaç, 1998; Georgas, 1997; Hurme, 1995; Lin, 2013), losing a grandparent might have differential impacts on youth who are at the same time expected to adapt to various developmental transitions, as well.

## **1.2 Losing a Loved One during a Transition Period: Perspectives of Young People**

Loss and grief processes might be experienced differently in each lifespan period due to differing developmental tasks. During college years, youngsters were particularly exposed to many transitions which might have differential manifestations and outcomes during grief and bereavement processes. University students went through loss and bereavement as another significant life transition, crisis or transformative process (Seah, & Wilson, 2011). Balk and his colleagues (2010) highlighted that almost 30% of college students displayed clinically significant grief reactions within 12 months of experiencing a loss. Since adolescence and young adulthood are usually marked by profound psychosocial, moral and interpersonal transitions, young people's bereavement experiences might be conceptualized as an extremely serious life crisis (Balk, 1991). In that regard, Floerchinger (1991) stated that the death of a family member or friend might be experienced uniquely by adolescents when compared with older adults. Despite some similarities with other age groups, emotional experiences of bereaved young people who are in the stage of

late adolescence or young adulthood can be qualitatively different from their younger counterparts. These differences were usually accounted for by the impacts of grief on intimate relationships, college adjustment, and developmental milestones like separation from parents and individuation (Palmer, Saviet, & Tourish, 2016). Besides, death of a loved one might put an extra burden on grieving college students as they already started to question their self-competence, self-worth and identity during university education (Balk, 2001). As emphasized in the literature, planning a future career path, establishing an academic pursuit, making new friendships at university, crystallization of identity, releasing familial ties and forming adult like lifestyles that were inherently stressful might become more challenging when those youngsters experienced loss of a loved one (Balk & Corr, 2001; Cupit, Servaty-Seib, Tedrick Parikh, Walker, & Martin, 2016; Manoogian et al., 2018; Servaty-Seib & Hamilton, 2006; Vickio, 2008).

### **1.3 Being a Grieving Youngster at University**

Bereaved college students suffering from different losses (e.g. parent, sibling, relatives, and close friends) mainly reported to experience sadness and loneliness. Besides, both amount of sadness and recovery time were found greater than researchers had expected (Balk, 1997). Moreover, remembering positive memories with the deceased, engaging in religious practices, crying, keeping busy, ventilation, and believing “the person is better off because he/she is dead” were used as helpful coping practices (Balk, 1997; Cousins, Servaty-Seib & Lockman, 2015; Lövgren, 2017). One important issue that influenced college students’ grieving process might be related to the physical distance from their homelands and families due to university education. Cohesiveness of family, communication among family members and quality of the familial relations during bereavement might either hinder or facilitate grieving reactions of youngsters (Gilbert, 1996; Kissane, 2003; Neimeyer, 2005;

Lagrand, 1981; Traylor, Hayslip, Kaminski, & York, 2003). In fact, increased familial support during bereavement was associated with greater adjustment to bereavement for bereaved college students while more familial support might hinder the separation process for non-bereaved university students (Cousins et al., 2015). Besides, bereaved university students reported more negative interpersonal transactions at university when they did not obtain sufficient familial support after the loss (Schultz, 2007). Hence, how family of the bereaved youngsters mitigated loss-related needs of their children seem to have a pivotal role on the grief responses of university students (Cousins et al., 2015; Schultz, 2007)

Additionally, young people's exploration of religiosity and spirituality seemed to accelerate during university years as they were exposed to differing perspectives other than their parents (McNamara Barry, Nelson, 2005; McNamara Barry, Nelson, Davarya, & Urry, 2010; Webber, 2002). Consistently, spirituality/religiosity had an important role on their adjustment to bereavement. According to a recent review (Hai et al., 2018), spirituality/religiosity had contradictory outcomes on bereaved college students' adjustment process depending on the conceptualization of religion and spirituality. Although spirituality/religiosity was related with growth and wellbeing for some bereaved youngsters; it was also associated with increased distress when negative religious coping strategies were implemented to handle loss-related emotions. (Bratkovich, 2011; Currier, Mallot, Martinez, Sandy, & Neimeyer, 2013; Hai et al., 2018; Lee, Roberts, & Gibbons, 2013; Lord, 2010; Park, 2005; Park & Cohen, 1993).

As emphasized above, it is important to realize that young people might have both common and differential needs during loss and bereavement process due to their maturational stage and psycho-social development (Toth, Stockton, & Browne, 2000). Firstly, university students usually separated from their parents for the first time due to education and started to invest more on other interpersonal relations while handling

individuation related issues (Furman & Wehner, 1994; Shulman & Kipnis, 2001). Besides, they were more likely to expose to new stressors they were not familiar with like academic multi-tasking and career planning (Cupit et al., 2016). Hence, loss of a loved one might inevitably have an impact on adaptation to these new stressors since loss experiences usually invoked changes on emotional and cognitive structures of the affected individuals. Secondly, college years represented an important transitional period for youngsters in which their identity and life perspectives become more crystallized as they were exposed to different perspectives more at university (Arnett, 2000, 2004; Dunkel & Sefcek, 2009; Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Hence, it seems fundamental to understand how youngsters with such developmental tasks and stressors would experience loss of a significant loved one during this period of time. Nevertheless, although loss of spouse, parent or child have been commonly investigated in bereavement literature; friends/peer loss and grandparent loss have been overlooked by the researchers for youngsters. Considering the cultural importance of grandparents in physical and psychosocial development of grandchildren particularly in collectivistic cultures (Aytaç, 1998; Boon & Brussoni, 1996; Lin, 2013), it is of utmost importance investigating how youngsters experienced such a prominent loss while going through multiple psycho-social transitions.

#### **1.4 Role of Culture on Grandparent-Grandchild Relationship in Turkey**

The relationship between grandparents and grandchildren were usually shaped through different socio-cultural values. It is obvious that cultural variations associated with individualism and collectivism had pivotal roles while determining the emotional bonds among family members. Particularly, individuals from collectivistic cultures tended to emphasize importance of family ties and interconnection among family members while defining their cultural roots (Davis & Williams, 2018; Kağıtçıbaşı, 1994; Triandis & Suh, 2002). For example, Taiwanese grandchildren believed that

being raised in a collectivistic culture strengthened the emotional and psychological bonds they had with their families (Lin, 2013). Similarly, collectivistic values encouraged intergenerational communication between elder and younger generations more which seems to enhance the frequency and quality of relation between grandparents and grandchildren (Hurme 1995; Schwarz, Trommsdorff, Kim, & Park, 2006). Grandchildren with collectivistic values appreciated the relation they had with their grandparents more and referred to their grandparents with more personalized and positive terms (Hurme 1995).

Turkey is a hybrid country mainly dominated by collectivistic norms and values (Aygün & İmamoğlu, 2002). Functional extended family characteristics are shaping daily living practices of Turkish people as much as nuclear family structures (Ataca, Kağıtçıbaşı, & Diri, 2005). Turkish familial system encouraged strong family ties and well-established emotional bonds between generations which increased the quality of relationship between grandparents and grandchildren (Harwood, Yalçinkaya, Citlak, & Leyendecker, 2006). Although both ‘modern’ and ‘traditional’ lifestyles coexist at the same time, strong nuclear and extended family ties still continue to shape the values, attitudes, aspirations and goals of families in Turkey (Copur, 2018). Consistently, there is a frequent and strong interaction among extended relatives including grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins (Baştuğ, 2002). Regarding living arrangements of Turkish families, incidence of living nearby to grandparents is quite high (around one half) compared to many East and Southeast Asian countries (Aytaç, 1998). This physical proximity usually provided opportunity for grandparents to look after “children of their own children”. Grandparents are also respected by younger generations including adult children and grandchildren as they are assumed to have more knowledge, wisdom and experience (Poyrazlı, 2012).

## **1.5 Roles of Grandparents on the Psycho-Social Development of Grandchildren**

In family systems, grandparents assume various psychosocial roles such as being an authority figure and inspiration for younger generations. They also enhance social interactions and contribute to the emotional stability of family relations (Stasova & Krisikova, 2014). Particularly, grandparents usually had a profound impact on the psycho-social development of their grandchildren while broadening their life perspectives, as well (Hauser-Schöner as cited in Stasova & Krisikova, 2014). They assumed the educator role in grandchildren lives' through shared symbolic activities such as telling fairy tales, stories or anecdotes which seems to facilitate language development of grandchildren (Smorti, Tschiesner, & Farneti, 2012). In fact, the most important component of this grand-dyad relationship was reported as 'fun-seeking' both by grandparents and their grandchildren (Triadó, Villar, Solé, Osuna, & Pinazo, 2005). In addition to that, as a source for identity development, the grandparents had an important role in terms of connection with the history of the family and familial roots (Baranowski, 1982).

According to the accounts of college-aged grandchildren, particularly grandmothers greatly contributed to grandchildren's value development including personal identity, religious beliefs, moral beliefs, family ideals, and educational goals (Roberto & Stroes, 1992). They also perceived their grandparents as a source of unconditional acceptance, and wisdom which helped them understand their own parents' perspectives better (Brussoni & Boon, 1998). Consistently, grandchildren felt responsible towards their grandparents as well and provided emotional and tangible support when needed (Robertson, 1976). This intimate and nurturing relationship became stronger particularly when parents encouraged the relationship of 'grand dyads' (Attar-Schwartz, Tan, & Buchanan, 2009).



In both developed and developing countries, grandparents usually become partial caregivers for their grandchildren through co-residence (Uhlenberg & Cheuk, 2010) or actively involving to child caring in separate but near residences (Rossi & Rossi, 1999). Brown (2003) suggested that the more grandparents were involved in raising the grandchild during formative years, the more intimate the relation between grandparents and grandchildren became. Similarly, coparenting of grandparents has an essential importance on family dynamics in Turkey. Particularly, the quality of parent-grandparent relation, parents' attitudes towards grand dyad, time spent for caregiving the grandchild and more shared grandparent-grandchild activities strengthened the emotional intimacy among them (Hazer, 2012). In turn, grandparents felt more contented and happy as they were actively involved in grandchild caring activities (Tezel-Şahin & Şahin, 2018). More specifically, grandmothers spent more time with grandchildren during babyhood when compared with grandfathers (Salman-Engin, Sümer, Sağel, & McHale, 2018). In Turkey, grandparents seem to convey values of love, respect, sharing, tolerance, patience, faithfulness and goodwill to their pre-school grandchildren through various shared activities (Altan, & Tarhan, 2018). Paralelly, when Turkish child novels were examined, grandparent-grandchild relations were usually depicted with love and pride in which grandparents contributed to the value transmission across generations (Firat, 2018).

## **1.6 The Scope of the Thesis and Research Question**

Death of a grandparent was the first and most frequently reported loss experienced by adolescents and emerging adults in US and Europe (Ens & Bond 2005; Glass, 1990). These grandchildren usually considered their deceased grandparents as a member of immediate family although traditional classification treats grandparents as an extended family member (Liew & Servaty-Seib, 2018).

Besides, bereaved university students usually emphasized shifts in family roles and personal growth after losing their grandparents (Manoogian et al., 2018). Although limited in number, those studies of grandparent loss have been mostly limited to youngsters' grief reactions only in Western cultures and none of these studies employed a developmental perspective. Considering the cultural importance of grandparent-grandchildren relations in Turkey and multiple developmental transitions that youngsters have to go through during bereavement, this thesis aimed to understand young people's experiences of grandparent loss in Turkey.

Accordingly, research questions were formed as follows:

1. What are the unique and common experiences of bereaved Turkish youth with grandparent loss from a developmental and cultural perspective?
2. How do young people grieving for the death of a grandparent assign subjective meanings to death and bereavement in Turkey?

## CHAPTER 2

### METHOD

#### 2.1 Methodological Background

Conceptualization of death and bereavement is complex since each individual might experience his/her grief in unique ways due to personal and culturally sensitive nature of the topic. Besides, grief and bereavement experiences of young adults with grandparent loss has been studied relatively less which necessitated a more flexible methodology to obtain detailed information about the youngsters' lived experiences (Manoogian et al., 2018). Consequently, a qualitative methodology was adopted to ensure more detailed conceptualization of personal data. Amongst other qualitative methods, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was chosen as the most convenient methodology in the current study for several reasons. Firstly, IPA provided an in-depth investigation of how individuals were giving personal meanings to their own experiences taking into consideration the perspective of the researcher. Throughout this process, researchers were required to take an active role both in data collection and analysis. This active stance was explained by a two-step interpretation process called as "double hermeneutics". Accordingly, the final meaning obtained was the result of participants' own conceptualizations, researchers' meaning making process and the interaction between the participant(s) and the researcher(s) (Smith, & Osborn, 2008).

Secondly, IPA was usually preferred to examine phenomenon which was relatively less studied (Smith, Jarman, & Osborn., 1999) and influenced by the socio-cultural context in which an phenomenon was experienced and conveyed through language (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006). Further, it employed a bottom-up approach

allowing data to construct itself without any theoretical restrictions (Willig, 2008). Since there was scant attention in the literature about the idiosyncronic meanings attributed to grandparent loss in different cultures, IPA was chosen as the most proper methodology in the current thesis. Additionally, losses associated with grandparent loss might be heavily influenced by the cultural context in which the relation between grandchildren and grandparents were shaped and maintained (Lin, 2013). Therefore, IPA was preferred to understand the socio-cultural background contextualizing grandparent loss in Turkey.

## **2.2 Measures**

**Demographic Information Form.** Socio-cultural and bereavement related information was obtained through demographic information form prepared by the researchers (See Appendix A).

**Semi-Structured Interviews.** Based on IPA principles, 11 open-ended questions for subjective meanings of death and 10 open-ended questions for psychosocial and cultural meanings of grandparent loss were developed for the semi-structured interviews (See Appendix B). Besides, prompts were used to elaborate questions perceived as abstract by some participants. Questions of the semi-structured interview were developed from the atheoretical perspective by research team. Also, a pilot interview was conducted to evaluate quality of questions. During initial analyses, it was realized that there was a need to prepare more questions regarding grandparent-grandchild and parent-grandparent relationships to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the grandparent loss in Turkish culture. Consequently, the following questions were added to the semi-structured interviews: “What was the role of your grandparent in your life?”, “How was the relationship between your father/mother and grandparent?”, “How were you affected by this relationship?”, “What about your parents’ reactions to loss?” Substantial effort was spent to develop non-directive

questions in order to leave room for youngsters to make-sense of their own loss experiences.

**Texas Revised Inventory of Grief (TRIG).** To create a homogenous sample, “Texas Revised Inventory of Grief” was initially applied to university students through social media and academic websites (See Appendix C). The scale was originally developed by Faschingbauer in 1981 in order to assess intensity of grief reactions. The inventory included 21 items which were responded on a 5-point Likert-type scale. Higher scores indicated lower levels of grief. A sample item of this scale was “I feel it’s unfair that this person died”. Turkish adaptation of Texas Revised Inventory of Grief was performed by Yıldız and Cimete in 2011. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for internal consistency was .85. In the current study, Texas Revised Inventory of Grief was used to select youngsters whose grief reactions pertaining to grandparent loss were relatively higher. Cronbach alpha value of the scale was .87 for the current study.

**Initial Assessment Interview.** Since prolonged grief had different psycho-social implications on bereaved individuals (Prigerson et al., 1995), a brief interview was conducted by the thesis advisor (Ar-Karci) who is also a clinical psychologist to exclude individuals with prolonged grief symptoms. Since Turkish version of the Prolonged Grief Inventory was still in progress at the time of study, the researcher performed the interviews without using the Turkish form of the scale, but still tried to base her evaluations based on the criteria suggested by Prigerson and her colleagues (2013). Interviews lasted 15 minutes on average. However, a note to caution is due here. The clinician did not apply Prolonged Grief Inventory or Interview to the participants since application of this inventory necessitated qualification. Rather, criteria regarding functionality, intensity and frequency were used to obtain a general grasp of participants’ grief symptoms.

## 2.3 Participants

Thirty-four bereaved university students were initially reached through social media and academic forums of TED University to complete Texas Revised Inventory of Grief. A call for participation to the semi-structured interviews was sent through e-mails to participants (1) who had lost their grandparents, (2) who had relatively lower grief scores and (3) who were volunteer to take part in the interviews. Consistent with the IPA guidelines, purposive sampling method was utilized in order to obtain a homogenous sample. Accordingly, bereaved young people whose grief scores were 1 SD below the mean indicating the presence of more intense grief reactions were included for the semi-structured interviews.

Application of Texas Revised Inventory of Grief also enabled to confirm previous research findings stating that grandparent loss was the most frequently reported loss for youngsters, as well. Based on the results of Texas Revised Inventory of Grief, the most frequently reported death was grandparent loss ( $N = 29$ ), followed by loss of a close friend ( $N = 2$ ), loss of father's great grandmother ( $N = 1$ ), loss of sister ( $N = 1$ ), and loss of step-father ( $N = 1$ ), respectively. The mean age for those participants was 20.82 ( $M = 20.82$ ,  $SD = 1.09$ ). Consistent with the aims of the study, only participants who experienced grandparent loss were included to the study.

To obtain a homogenous sample, the following inclusion criteria for interview participation were formed as follows: (1) being a university student aged between 18 and 22, (2) losing a grandparent at least 3 months or at most 2 years before the study, (3) having a grief score corresponding to the 1 SD below the mean of Texas Revised Inventory of Grief. Accordingly, only eight participants had a score 1 SD below the mean and one of them did not respond to the e-mail inviting for the interviews. As a result, seven bereaved university students with grandparent loss constituted the final sample of the current study. None of the university students were excluded after the initial assessment interview conducted to rule out prolonged grief symptoms. The

ultimate number of participants was determined as the researchers believed data saturation was achieved and data started to repeat itself.

The mean age of interview participants was 20.43 ( $M = 20.43$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ ), with ages ranging from 19 to 22. All interview participants were granddaughters ( $N=7$ ), and were continuing their undergraduate education (See Table 1 for detailed socio-demographic characteristics of the participants).



Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the participants in both grief scale and the qualitative study

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Scale Participants</i>				<i>Interview Participants</i>			
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<b>Age</b>	34		20.82	1.09	7		20.43	1.13
<b>Gender</b>	34				7			
Female	27	79.4			7	100		
Male	7	20.6						
<b>Belonging to Religion</b>								
Yes	18	52.94			1	14.3		
No	12	35.29			6	85.7		
Not preferring to specify	4	11.76						
<b>Religiousness Level</b>								
Very religious								
Religious	2	5.88			1	14.28		
Mildly religious	9	26.47			3	42.86		
Not much religious	8	23.53			1	14.28		
Not religious	12	35.29			1	14.28		
Not preferring to specify	3	8.82			1	14.28		
Other								
<b>Degree of Relationship / Cardinality</b>								
Grandmother	13	38.2			4	57.14		
Grandfather	16	47.1			3	42.85		
Other	5	14.7						
<b>Cause of Death</b>								
Cardiovascular disease	10	29.41						
Cancer	4	11.76			1	2.94		
Elderliness	4	11.76			3	8.82		
Organ failure	4	11.76			1	2.94		
Falling	1	2.94			1	2.94		
Embolism	1	2.94			1	2.94		
Uncertain	2	5.88						
Others	8	23.53						
<b>Expectation Level of the Loss</b>								
Extremely not expected	13	38.24			4	57.14		
Not expected	3	8.82						
Moderately / slightly expected	11	32.35			2	28.57		
Extremely expected	7	20.59			1	14.29		



<i>Variable</i>	<i>Scale Participants</i>				<i>Interview Participants</i>			
	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<b>Time Since Loss (months)</b>			13.7	7,81			14.85	6.62
<b>Any psychological support due to loss</b>								
Yes	3	8.82						
No	31	91.18			7	100		

## 2.4 Ethical Permission

The procedures of the current thesis were approved by TEDU Human Subjects Ethics Committee. Informed consent (See Appendix D) and debriefing forms (See Appendix E) were given to the participants in the online-written format while completing TRIG scale. In the initial informed consent form, e-mail addresses were obtained from the participants who were volunteer to take part in the semi-structured interviews. Volunteered bereaved youngsters with lower grief scores were contacted through e-mails to arrange time and place of the interviews.

Before starting each interview, written explanation about the purpose of the study and confidentiality including audio recording were provided to each participant (See Appendix F). Besides, participants were informed that they had a chance to withdraw from the study on request at any time they wanted. Informed consent for participation and audio-recording were obtained through two separate written documents. Debriefing form was distributed to each participant after the interviews. Because of the sensitive nature of the topics discussed, a brochure and seminar about adaptation to loss and bereavement were offered to each participant taking part in both assessment process and semi-structured interviews. Furthermore, to ensure confidentiality, names and information identifying participants were distorted during the transcription and reporting of the quotations.

## 2.5 Procedure

After permission was taken from TEDU Human Subjects Ethics Committee, data was collected via purposive sampling method to reach a homogenous sample. Purposive sampling allowed researchers to perform a detailed examination of the phenomenon being studied. According to IPA guidelines, a homogenous group was necessary for whom research questions would be of great interest (Shinebourne, 2011). Accordingly, Texas Revised Inventory of Grief was initially applied to bereaved university students with various losses and then those with grandparent loss and more intense grief reactions were selected for the semi-structured interviews. Additionally, a brief assessment before each semi-structure interview was conducted by a clinical psychologist (Ar-Karçı) in order to eliminate possible participants with prolonged grief symptoms.

Based on the IPA principles, questions of semi-structured interview were developed by the research team. To evaluate the questions, a pilot interview was performed with the thesis advisor (Ar-Karçı) who lost her grandmother two years ago due to KOAH related complications. As Shinebourne (2011) suggested, questions not leading predicted answers were developed without making too many assumptions about individuals' unique experiences. Announcement for recruitment was posted on the social media (e.g. Facebook groups, personal Twitter and Instagram accounts) and Moodle which is the official academic forum of TEDU. For participants meeting the inclusion criteria, interviews were scheduled via email. After obtaining written informed consent for participation and recording, a warm up question was asked initially to facilitate the relation with the bereaved university students (i.e. some people might avoid talking about death, what you thought while deciding to participate to this study? What did you have in your mind?). The duration of the interviews ranged from 52 minutes to 118 minutes, with an average of 86 minutes. Interviews were mostly conducted in TED University's interview room pertaining to

Developmental Focused Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology department. One of the interviews was conducted in Istanbul since the participant was living there at the time of study. This interview was conducted in an office at a university the conditions of which were proper for conducting the interview.

## **2.6 Data Analysis**

Audio-recorded interviews were transcribed word by word by the author (Karabayır) consistent with the IPA guidelines. The transcripts were read and re-read before conducting analysis of the each case to become acquainted with the raw data. Each transcript was analyzed case by case as IPA necessitated an idiosyncratic approach for the meaning-making process. Interpretative conceptual words and phrases were assigned to each meaning unit while developing sub-ordinate themes. Conceptually related sub-ordinate themes were used to form super-ordinate themes for each case. After the analysis of the first case, tentative themes were examined through cross-case comparisons of each individual transcript. This analytic process repeated for each transcript and a master theme table was constituted. Four cases were analysed by both researchers and meetings were arranged for each case starting from the first transcript in order to develop tentative tables for super-ordinate and sub-ordinate themes. Finally, the final form of super-ordinate themes was given.

## **2.7 Trustworthiness of the Current Study**

According to qualitative methodology, the correspondance between reality and expressed phenomenon is named as the concept of credibility or trustworthiness. To ensure credibility, particular concerns of trustworthiness were subjectivity, reflexivity, adequacy of data, and sufficiency of interpretative process (Morrow, 2005).

Phenomenology part of IPA emphasizes the importance of subjective meanings and experiences (Smith, & Osborn, 2008); while the interpretative part

focuses on the researcher's own interpretations while making sense of participants' personal accounts (Shinebourne, 2011). Interpretation as a dynamic process between the participant and researcher aims to make hidden parts of the experience more visible through use of existing knowledge and experiences of the researcher (Shinebourne, 2011). Thus, in contrast to quantitative approaches, qualitative researchers use their embedded knowledge on all research process which is referred as "subjectivity" (Morrow, 2005). Hence, eliminating subjectivity is not the aim of qualitative methodology. Rather, it is used as a tool to enhance conceptualization based on the theoretical assumption that researchers would inevitably influenced research process. Since researcher had a fundamental role in collecting, analyzing and reporting qualitative data, information about the researchers should be provided to enhance the credibility of the study (Patton, 1999).

For the adequacy of data, data saturation in terms of quality, length, and depth of the interviews were considered while the sample size was determined (Morrow, 2005). In that regard, when data started to repeat itself, collecting data was finalized. In addition, a research team consisting of one academician and two clinical psychology master program students were used to contribute to the analytic process. Besides, the analytic chain began with the analysis of the first case including establishing tentative table for emerging themes and developing necessary questions for the subsequent interviews. Only after the completion of the first case, the interview and data analysis process started for the second case. This analytic process was repeated until the last case. Finally, relevant quotations from participants' accounts were included to support interpretations of the researchers (Yeh & Inman, 2007).

## **2.8 Reflexivity**

Reflexivity as an extension of self-appraisal refers to being aware of the possible impacts of researcher's values, attributions, background, and previous experiences on the research process (Berger, 2013; Cope, 2013). That is, one

important function of reflexivity is to broaden the understanding of how the researchers' positions and interests had played a role through all research process (Primeau, 2003). Also, reflexivity covers roles of the researcher's cultural background, personal characteristics, and emotional stance towards the phenomenon being studied. In that regard, the researcher would provide background information about her position for the current study:

“I am (Karabayır) a 25 years old female psychologist. I have lived mostly in Antalya and continued my bachelor and master education in Ankara. I first encountered with a significant loss two months after starting my university education. My maternal great grandmother died because of her old age but still her loss was unexpected for all my family. Because of the course duties related to my university education, I did not participate her funeral and other death related rituals performed in our homeland. I remembered that the most impressing thing for me was my maternal grandmother's sorrow upon losing her own mother. Her deep sorrow scared me because I had concerns about her health and I believed that her health might have been negatively impacted by sadness and pain during her grieving period. After this loss, my maternal great grandfather moved to my grandparents' house and I observed the burden of my grandmother since she assumed the caregiver role for her own father. Then, after two years, I experienced the loss of my maternal grandfather in 2014 with whom I had a very close relationship. Again, I did not participate to the funeral and death related rituals. Although university load was my visible reason for not participating, in deed, I was not ready to face the reality of his death. I also did not prefer to share my grief with my family. This loss was like a milestone for our family affecting us in many respects. Interestingly, my maternal great grandfather became more supportive towards my grandmother who lost her dear husband. This positive relationship also prevented my maternal grandmother from feeling alone and isolated after this loss.

As a psychologist, I always have an interest in various types of losses except from death-related ones. Probably, it was because of my personal avoidance to process grief-related emotions. When I realized this personal difficulty, I decided to investigate grandparental loss from a more academic perspective which seemed safer for me.

I think that my personal experiences of loss enabled me to be in harmony with the participants of the current study. Such a perspective also helped me form and ask relevant questions regarding the topic. Besides, I believe that I had established a strong rapport with the interviewees since most of them stated that they had not talked so deeply about their loss before, which seems to have therapeutic impacts on them.”

## CHAPTER 3

### RESULTS

Six recurrent themes emerged through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of seven cases. These super-ordinate themes were (1) losing the second mother/father, (2) youngster's first contact with death as a transformative experience, (3) youngster's ambivalence regarding death-related rituals, (4) grandparent loss as a dual loss process, (5) university both as a barrier and shield in the grieving process, (6) death as a multidimensional concept (See Table 2 for both superordinate and subordinate themes). Quotations from bereaved youngsters' accounts were cited for each sub-ordinate theme in order to increase transparency of the results.

*Table 2.* Interpretative Phenomenological Analyses of Grandparent Loss Experience: Superordinate and Subordinate Themes.

Theme I	<b>Losing the Second Mother/Father</b>
A.	Unique relationship
B.	Losing the mother/father of the family
C.	Grandparent loss as the loss of the childhood
Theme II	<b>Youngster's First Contact With Death As A Transformative Experience</b>
A.	Emergence of existential dilemmas
B.	Increased fear of losing own parents after grandparent loss
C.	Grief contributing to the formation of identity
Theme III	<b>Youngster's Ambivalence regarding Death-Related Rituals</b>
A.	Death-related rituals/clichés as disturbing
B.	Need for a final goodbye
Theme IV	<b>Grandparent Loss as a Dual Loss Process</b>
A.	Observing own mother/father grieving for their own parents
B.	External family problems
Theme V	<b>University both as a barrier and shield in the grieving process</b>
A.	Missing the opportunity of saying good-bye
B.	Being away from the family
C.	Distractor role of university
Theme VI	<b>Death as a Multidimensional Concept</b>
A.	Death for deceased
B.	Death for livings

### 3.1 Losing the Second Mother/Father

Our first theme was “losing the second mother/father”. Youngsters usually referred their grandparents as their “second mom or dad” throughout the interviews. Their grandparents behaved like surrogate parents since their childhood. As a result, they usually described bereavement process “as if they had lost their own parents” which seems to intensify their grief-related emotions. For example, Selin who lost his grandfather due to heart attack stated that:

I have watched videos of my childhood with him. The compassion he showed to me... It impressed me a lot... We had a beautiful relationship. How can I describe? It was not like a grandfather-grandchild relation. It was more like a father-child relation. This is why I felt his absence more (crying).

Bereaved youngsters explained that their intense grief reactions resulted from the unique relationship they had with their grandparents. During the interviews, almost all of them emphasized that this relationship was “more intimate, compassionate and supportive” when compared with their own parent-child relations. They had a tendency to compare parenting practices of grandparents with their own parents’ and concluded that grandparents were better in many respects. Grandparents behaved like “guardian angels” against parents especially during parental conflicts. In spite of the “generation gap”, youngsters felt more appreciated and understood by the grandparent, and this is why they shared “youth problems” like friendship difficulties and career choices with them rather than with their parents. They regarded grandparents as “the more experienced and more tolerant parent”. Consequently, they felt not only losing their second parent but also their “companion”, “mentor” and “comfort zone” in life. They described this situation as an ‘incompleteness which is irreplaceable’. For example Öykü who lost her grandmother due to falling expressed that:



It is as if I had lost my mother. As if I was an orphan now. She always supported me in major life decisions. Mmm... When I declared to my family that ‘I want to be a journalist’, my father opposed against my decision intensely. He said ‘the job is very risky, you will get into trouble!’ But my grandmother always supported my decision and said that ‘don’t listen to him. I will persuade him. You will be the best!’ So, I was always aware that my grandmother would protect me when there was a crisis. Now I lost that shelter.

Similarly, Banu describes this situation as follows:

As I said, the lack in there is longing for her because there are lots of things that I need to talk with her, I have to tell to her, not sharing these issues with her is my lack. Because sometimes more than our parents... I mean for me, they (grandparents) are more knowledgeable, wiser... For example, well, younger generations no longer... Mmm... I don’t want to say that but nowadays younger generations become ignorant; our grandfathers know more, our grandmothers know more than our mothers and fathers. Because they are more experienced and knowledgeable than our mothers and fathers, I never thought their (referring to grandparents) yelling and anger as a negative thing. Parents can do things like hitting but grandparents were more tolerant, more protective, more loving because I grew up like that with my grandmother, now the absence coming from her (referring to grandmother)... For example, sometimes something happens, we are arguing with my mother, if my grandmother had been here, she would say something, she would never upset me, my mother upsets me. So, this is the lack I suffer”

Interestingly, youngsters felt they had a “unique position” on the behalf of the grandparents because they were more tolerant and intimate with grandchildren when compared with their own children. In other words, somehow, grandparents put grandchildren at a place which is “beyond their own children”. To illustrate, Selin told that “I remember the games we played in my childhood. In fact, he (grandfather) wasn’t that much tolerant to his own children. My father always said ‘he changed a lot as he aged. You had a different place in his heart’.

Youngsters also emphasized that grandparents are the “parents of all family members” including extended family and neighbors. Grandparents usually guided and supported the ones who sought help in the family. İrem exemplified this situation as follows: “She always gave advice to my cousins, even to unrelated strangers! They

were not her children or grandchildren but they still wanted help from her. I heard such statements as ‘thanks to her we have chosen the right direction’ a lot”

Participants also symbolized deceased grandparent as a “big house” around which all family members gathered particularly on special occasions like Bayrams. It seems that grandparents functioned as a glue to strengthen family bonds and coherence. Since they were an important part of family rituals (e.g. celebrations like Bayrams), grandchildren felt that their families had lost an important part of family traditions, as well. Youngsters also believed that family ties and unity become loosened after grandparent loss. For example Öykü expressed that:

The house would always be crowded, people used to come to visit her, she couldn't get out much, she couldn't walk e-ee because of her heart, but the house wouldn't be empty. People would come to talk to her. Each time when I come from school, the balcony would be full, her friends would come so I know that my grandmother was there. After she died, even those who came to her home regularly disappeared. For example, in holidays, the house was always very crowded when she was live. But now number of people coming has decreased. My mother works already, in house...Mmm... The voice... I mean the house became quiet.

Similarly, Selin explained how her grandfather was an important part of family rituals and how losing him caused “emotional emptiness” as follows:

For example, at Bairams (religious celebrations in Islam) I felt profound sadness in the last two or three bairams after his death. That came to my mind right now, I mean, he had a place there, but he is not there anymore... I felt very empty. Actually we're a crowded family so it's not possible to feel empty but physical absence of my grandfather made me feel this emptiness. For example, I'm not going to go there at next bairam, but for as long as i've known myself, each bairam, we had gone to his home. So, it felt terrible.

Finally, youngsters perceived grandparent loss as the loss of their childhood. They emphasized that they lived either in the same or close houses and therefore were mainly raised by the deceased grandparent during their childhood. Besides, some youngsters defined their grandparent as the main caregiver because they were cared for by the deceased because of the working conditions of their parents. This constant

physical proximity seems to help the formation of parental relation with the deceased grandparents. To illustrate Banu described that:

I mean she (referring to her grandmother) raised me, I spent almost all of my time during school period with my grandmother... We were always together, I was leaving school and I was there until evening. Firstly, we would study together, we would repeat that day's lessons together, and we would always do some activities together. Our grandparents were always with us. We were living in a small town, I am from Aydın, İsabeyli. It was a very small town that did not have the advantages of metropolitans but they did everything for us (referring to grandparents). For example, they took us to places where we could play games, if we could not go outside for playing, they would have created games for us.

Similarly, Elif stated that:

I would go to her house every summer. We would stay there for 3 months with my sister. My cousin and my uncle were living there too... Because they (referring to her parents) worked, they sent us (with siblings) there for summer vacation. We were always with our grandmother for 3 months. Since I was born, it was like that. I can say that I grew up with her. Also since I was born, always the same house, same furnitures... You get used to it... You are always side to side, you sleep together, she always cooked for you. For example... For example, there are some meals that I haven't eaten since she died because I eat that meals only when she cooks. I do not want my mom to cook them.

### **3.2 Youngster's First Contact with Death as a Transformative Experience**

Our second theme was “youngster's first contact with death as a transformative experience”. Youngsters conveyed that losing their grandparents was either the “first” or “most significant loss” they had experienced so far. It seems that death becoming a reality with grandparent loss triggered questioning of existence, future possible deaths and organization of their identity. These examination of life and death issues also brought many changes on the topics that they had not examined so far.

Firstly, all participants explained that grandparent loss initiated some existential dilemmas for the first time in their life. First realization of death made the

concept of death “more real” and “part of life” for these youngsters. However, since it was an unknown experience, they usually described death of the grandparent as a “puzzling” situation. Youngsters reported difficulty to comprehend the reality of death and this difficulty was evident throughout the interviews, as well. For example, Melis expressed her first encounter with death due to her grandfather loss as follows:

I see that death is a real thing and it has a real place in humans' lives. So you are losing someone very close...Sorry... I have not lost someone that so close before my grandfather, so I might be talking nonsense. Everything is so intertwined and complex (silence)... Now he has gone and I understand what death is for the first time.

Similarly Selin expressed her difficulty in comprehending feelings of the loss and grief as follows:

Immm, it is a little bit weird to talk about death because the person is not able to understand what he is going through. At least for me...I still have difficulty to comprehend what I am going through because you share a long and intimate history with that person and than that person is not present anymore and you are talking about him ... It is a little bit weird.

First contact with death raised a variety of existential questions amongst youngsters like “Is there an afterlife?”, “What does happen after death?”, and “What is the meaning of life if everything has an end?” These questions not only led them to experience curiosity but confusion as well since they were still “searching for answers”. They also reported increased anxiety after realization of the “immediate and uncontrollable nature of death” which seem to shaken their assumptions about life. For example, Öykü explained the dilemmas she experienced after her grandmother died as follows:

It feels like everything is meaningless. In fact, it triggers ‘why I am doing the things in my life’. It increased my willingness to question my life even for simple things like ‘why I am going to university’. You are starting to question even simple things. Since I think after life might be equal to emptiness, sometimes I feel aimless. But (silence)... At the same time, I want to touch the lives of others. This is why I chose my department. It is complicated... The answers are still ambiguous for me... It is weird. It feels like you can lose someone at any minute, like slipping away from your hands. I realized unexpected things might happen anytime in life.

Secondly, the awareness that “We are not immune to death” increased youngsters’ fear of losing their own parents. It seems that realization of “everything has an end” made the possibility of losing other loved ones more real for these youngsters. Fear of “who will be the next one?” lead bereaved youngsters to ask “What is the worst case scenario for my family?” For example, İrem told her concerns as follows: “Yes, everyone will die but when? We know everyone will die one day, but I am asking frequently ‘is everyone I love is leaving this world?’. However, interestingly, youngsters emphasized that they started to worry about only losing their own parents. In other words, their fear related to possible future deaths did not include their own deaths or death of others like their friends or extended family members. To illustrate, Pelin told that:

It (referring to grandfather’s death) reminds me the fear of death, I mean I was thinking it would happen to us (referring to her family) and then my first thought was ‘it could have been my mom or dad’. I realize they might die one...I mean, now, I fear of my parents’ death more than my own death. It makes me really anxious.

Finally, youngsters stated that losing their beloved grandparents contributed to their identity formation, as well. This transformative experience impacted their identity in two ways. Firstly, most youngsters tried to internalize positive personality characteristics of the deceased grandparents (e.g. sharing, helping others etc.). That is, they took deceased grandparent as a role-model and they were trying to fulfill their grandparent’s wishes as a continuing bond. They perceived “trying to be like him/her” was an important mission shaping their personality. In fact, they considered personality characteristics of the grandparent as a legacy that should be integrated into their own personality. For example, İrem expressed that:

I mean, for example, she feed a lot of poor people... She helped poor people a lot...Even though we did not have our own food, she was sharing with others. And the people whom she helped came after her death, I don’t know. That was interesting. Then I decided I should be like this. I should be pro-social, I should share. It impressed my behaviors, attitudes, personality a lot.

Secondly, youngsters' identity formation seem to be impacted by grandparent loss in a more indirect way. They expressed that they become 'mature', 'tolerant', "aware of their own emotions" and 'sensitive to others' needs' after their loss. Besides, loss as a transformative experience shaped their attitudes towards life in a more positive manner. They emphasized that they started to "live the life as it was" and their loss made the living "much more valuable".

### **3.3 Youngster's Ambivalence regarding Death-Related Rituals**

Youngsters in the current study emphasized that they were still searching for answers to questions regarding religion and death. That is, even before losing their grandparents, they did not have well-established opinions about religiosity and spirituality. Thus, they usually felt "alienated" and "uncomfortable" during observing and performing death related rituals after their grandparents' death.

Condolence visits to the house of the deceased is one of the most important cultural rituals in Turkey. Throughout those visits, visitors express their sorrow and provide consolation to the immediate family members; perform some religious rituals like reciting some parts of the Quran (Bahar, Beşer, Ersin, Kıssal, & Aydoğdu, 2012) and eat food which are usually prepared by the immediate family members' of the deceased to symbolize continuation of the living. These death related rituals usually help survivors to realize and process grief-related emotions while symbolizing "life is not over for the survivors". Consequently, the house of the deceased is usually full of people especially in the first week of loss (Aksoz-Efe, Erdur-Baker, & Servaty-Seib, 2018); and not visiting the survivors is usually perceived as improper (Özdemir & Frank, 2000). Interestingly, youngsters in the current study perceived these rituals as "confusing" and "meaningless". Those youngsters mostly emphasized that they were disturbed by the visitors during condolence visits since those visitors were not from the immediate family members. In this regard, they emphasized that saying "my condolences to you" was only "meaningful" and "sincere" when it was conveyed by

the closest ones suffering from the same pain. Thus, bereaved youngsters referred death-related rituals as “clichés” which hampered their natural grief process. For example, Öykü stated that:

They said ‘You can't die with the one who dies, life is always going on’. So ‘if you suffer that much, your grandmother will be more upset’. Actually I wouldn't want to hear these things, I just wanted them to leave me alone. Because I already know that life will go on, it goes on after we buried her, we came to home, we ate, well, life goes on. It will go on. But it will not continue as before because there has been a change, something is missing in my life now. There is a difference between my old life and my current life.

Although youngsters were well-aware that these rituals helped their grieving parents to cope with painful emotions, they still had difficulty to comprehend “the real function” of those rituals. It seems that their grief related needs were different from their own parents and needed a personal space to process their own emotions. For example, Elif stated that “They came to a funeral home but waited for food service. Normally, they should bring food to our house as food isn't our priority. They are asking, ‘is there any food, we are hungry’. They don't allow people to process pain”. Similarly, Selin expressed her confusion about food service in the funeral house as follows: “People sat over there, eat pide (i.e. a traditional Turkish meal). It was a weird environment. It was ridiculous demanding food while others were grieving. My mother, for example, she had pain but she washed the dishes, it was too strange.”

Only few youngsters stated that they “sincerely” performed religious rituals at funeral house (e.g. performing salaad, taking part in group prayers). By contrast, many carried out these rituals although they doubt meaning and functions of those customs. These youngsters emphasized that neighbors and extended family members pressured them to perform those religious rituals to honour their deceased grandparents. However, they felt more uncomfortable and “confused” as they carried out those rituals unwillingly. For instance, Selin told that:

I mean, I'm still not such a religious person. I mean, I am not a devotee yet, but for example, in the funeral, they (referring to extended family members) said that “you

should perform salaad (i.e. namaz kılmak) for your grandfather”. I didn’t want to do, so I could not perform it sincerely. Of course I prayed, but I didn't believe it too much. This created confusion for me. It was like ‘whether am I a real Muslim, whether I believe or not, I am in between still, I don’t know, those issues were still ambiguous for me. I was disturbed at funeral house.

Although youngsters perceived all aforementioned rituals as disturbing, there was one custom they particularly found functional. In Turkish culture, washing dead body consistent with the Islamic rules is the final duty towards the deceased before burying the body. Deceased body is usually washed in a special place called “gasilhane”. In Turkish culture, close relatives of the deceased usually go to gasilhane and either take part in or observe the washing ritual as a final goodbye (Biçer, 2019). Interestingly, the importance of this ritual was repeatedly underlined by the participants of the current study. Many had a chance to engage in this ritual and believed that this was their “final good bye”. They also stated that this experience helped them acknowledge the grandparent loss at an emotional level. Interestingly, although youngsters felt uncomfortable while performing rituals in front of others, they found solace with this more personalized custom. To illustrate, Öykü explained the special moment she shared with her grandmother at gasilhane as follows:

It was all over when she lies in gasilhane, well, it became more real. I realized at that time that it was over, there was no more hope. Besides her eyes were already closed, her face started to become white and pale because she was kept on a cold place and she seemed like not the person that I know. The dead, when a person dies, he/she turns into something completely different, I don’t know, I felt like this (silence). I did not able to spend a lot of time in there (gasilhane) because there were other people with me who wants to see her. This was the last moment that I said goodbye to her because I never preferred to say goodbye in intensive care, I never prepared myself to this. It was special, only she and me. This was my final good bye.

### **3.4 Grandparent Loss as a Dual Loss Process**

Majority of participants reported similar experiences resembling a double-loss process after losing their grandparents. They not only lost their dearly grandparent but



also observed the grief reactions of their own parents and loss-related struggles among extended family members. Grandparent loss coupled with these multiple losses seems to create a unique pressure on the bereaved youngsters in the current study.

Youngsters reported that they closely witnessed the grieving process of the parent who lost his/her own parent. Particularly, parent's "sorrow", "intense crying" and "longing for the deceased" lead youngsters to feel sorry and anxious about the emotional well-being of the affected parent. They emphasized that observing grieving parent's reactions created a unique pressure since they were doubtful regarding the coping skills of the affected parents. Some youngsters even tried to stay strong in order not to create an additional burden for their parents. For example, Banu trying not to be a burden to her already grieving mother expressed that:

When you are stressed, when you are depressed... You know...Sometimes I cry during stressful times, I mean in times of depression. There are things I cannot handle...Sometimes I remember bad things...During those times I want to call my mother and father... I want to know that they are here with me psychologically. But now it is very sad that I cannot call my mom... As if I had no one in my life...No supporter... I wouldn't want to be in this situation.

Interestingly, youngsters also tried to comprehend "what it felt like to lose a parent" by closely monitoring their parents' grieving experiences. As such, Pelin who lost her paternal grandfather described the emotional reactions of his father as follows:

For example, what affected me more than losing my grandfather was my father's situation... He became so desperate... He broke down in tears... I have never seen my father in such a desperate state before.... After all he lost his father. It impacted me a lot. I felt profound sadness.

Although bereaved youngsters acknowledged their parents' suffering, they also wanted them "to be strong" in the face of death. It seems that how affected parents regulated their grief related emotions after losing their own parents had an impact on the youngsters' grieving process, as well. For example, Banu mentioned how her mother's "normal emotional reactions" did enhance her own grieving process as follows: "Assume that while praying, while remembering... if my mother had cried

all the time, I mean not a normal crying, an extreme crying... like a crying crisis, I would have been profoundly affected, all in all, she is my mother”.

As another extension of dual-loss process, extended family problems experienced after grandparent loss seems as another distressing experience complicating grieving process of both youngsters and their grieving parents. Problems such as “inheritance share”, “determining who would be the caregiver of the deceased’s spouse”, and “talking behind the deceased’s back” were amongst the topics emphasized by our participants. Bereaved youngsters were profoundly angry with their relatives who caused emotional distress and additional burden for their grieving parents. Their accounts indicated that extended family members’ demanding for inheritance complicated the grieving process of their own parents. Additionally, youngsters believed that bringing up the subject of inheritance immediately after loss was disrespectful to the soul of the deceased. For example, Selin stated the situation as follows:

My father has 10 brothers and sisters. So who will care her (referring to surviving grandmother), what will happen to my grandfather’s legacy? It was stressful... We felt a lot stress... Even though I am a grandchildren I felt that stress a lot. That person dies but he leaves lots of bad things behind him; very unpleasant things happened after his death among his children, and that was very stressful for me and especially for my father. I witnessed firsthand. We were so upset. He was your father, how could you think about money and heritage? It seemed so profane to consider about heritage after death. We had stress and I started questioning... so you're dying, you leave something behind, but people are concerning about money... They hurt each other. Brothers and sisters become enemies. These things have created a lot of stress for me.... Like, have a respect for the dead. Ok? There is a procedure that has to be done in the end, I know (referring inheritance). There is a legal thing, but pressurizing my father during that time... That’s why I am so sad because of this, he is still dealing with the same troubles, still does not communicate with any of them (referring her uncles), he (her father) suffered a lot, he lost both his father and his brothers, they are not seeing each other, the things he lived was so hard on me. I know I couldn’t cope if I had been in his position.

### **3.5 University both as a Barrier and Shield in the Grieving Process**

Majority of the participants in the current study perceived university both as an external barrier and protective shield throughout the grieving process. In fact, six participants were living away from their parents because of university education. Since university life was a main agenda in their lives, they mentioned effects of being a university student during grieving process in many respects.

Concerning the barrier role of the university during bereavement, youngsters mainly emphasized their sadness and guilt over “not seeing the deceased grandparent alive for the last time”. Particularly, physical distance from their homelands and heavy university requirements (e.g. exams, deadlines) prevented them from saying a final goodbye and/or performing some death related rituals with their parents. For instance, Selin expressed her regret because of not seeing her grandfather for the last time before dying as follows: “I had homeworks in those days, we were writing an article, I was very busy, I wish I'd gone as soon as I heard he was fading, I'm very regretful. I wish I had seen him at least for the last time but I couldn't imagine that he was dying”. Similarly, Melis had the funeral postponed since she needed time to arrive her homeland to show her final tribute to her grandfather. She did it in order not to experience “guilt and regret” later. İrem who did not participate to her grandmother's funeral mentioned her own regret as follows:

I felt really bad, I wish I could catch up the funeral, but I didn't have a chance. I mean I really did not have a chance. I guess it was my exam week, so I was supposed to go to the classes. So I missed the funeral. I felt sad... I thought I should have been there as if I missed something I should have done and I would like to be there to support my family and I would like to do it as my last duty, but unfortunately I couldn't.

Another concern expressed regarding being away from the family during grieving was about missing the opportunity to process loss related emotions with parents. Youngsters expressed their need to be with the ones who were going through the same pain. However, some youngsters stated the opposite since they believed that

being so close to their grieving parents might have intensified negative emotions of themselves and their parents. To illustrate, Banu expressed how being away from home because of university eased the grieving process of the family as follows:

I know that my mother was experiencing intense feelings. The things that we shared... Our memories... For example, I could not have said to my mother that 'I am feeling your pain, such a big pain'. Because I thought it would intensify her pain more, she might have been suffocated by this pain. So, for example, I believe that being away during that period was good for everyone including me, but especially for my mom.

Youngsters also mentioned the distractor role of university during bereavement process, as well. It seems that it helped them to focus on the things other than their loss which eased their suffering and sorrow. For example, Melis told the day her grandfather died and how she wanted to return to the city she stayed for university as follows: "I said that now, here, in this house (referring grandfather's house) without my grandfather, sitting that night and crying for hours seemed to me that my grandfather was not going to like it and I said I'm going back to Istanbul. I would ease my pain"

### **3.6 Death as a Multidimensional Concept**

Subjective meanings attributed to death seem to be shaped by both cultural and personal values in the current study. When definition of death was asked, participants usually provided accounts both from the side of deceased and survivors. The various conceptualizations of death from the youngsters' accounts could be examined from Table 3.

Table 3. Subjective Meanings of Death

<b>Subjective Meanings of Death</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Representative Quotation</b>
<b>Death for the deceased</b>		
Physical decay of the body	Physical deterioration after death	“I think she was buried and then will be rotten there. I know we will never see each other again.”
Absolute end / not absolute end	Questions about continuation of existence	“We will certainly meet someday when we die.” “Now, he went to a beautiful place, he is not with us now but he is watching us and feeling happy.”
One-way ticket	Death is the point of no return	“I don't know, it actually is something of no-return.”
Sleep	Death is similar to sleep	“Death is a state of indefinite sleep.”
Unknown process	Uncertain nature of death	“Not knowing what will happen scares me a bit, I mean what will happen at the end, I mean I'm gonna die but will everything be over or will everything start again after? This thought make me too much... creates also stress and anxiety.”
Inevitable reality	Death is unavoidable	“We will all die eventually.”
Suddenness	Death has an unexpected nature	“I mean death by drowning will never came to mind of anyone, I mean my grandfather passing by drowning... For example, it never come to my mind that my feet will slip on ice, I will hit my head to stone and die. These are things that all might happen; the thing that death is right behind us. You know what they say: Live like it's your last day.”
Natural	Normalization of death by emphasizing biological aspect	“I think that death is as natural as birth.” “Everyone knows they're going to die when they born.”
Uncertainty of afterlife issues	Ambiguous thoughts about afterlife	“I can say that people have a beginning and an end, it's like his end but maybe it isn't. We can never know that.”

<b>Subjective Meanings of Death</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Representative Quotation</b>
<b>Death for livings</b>		
Having no control over death	Death is uncontrollable	“Why my grandfather? He had no sin and no fault. I had such thoughts. I unwillingly wondered why he died, he had no illness, this just happened to him suddenly. Then there has been an acceptance since summer I guess. I mean I started to think that it is part of life; things you're not expecting might happen when you're least expecting.”
Continuation of life for livings	Despite of loss, life is going on for livings	“You become sad, you cry, it haunts in your dreams and then you move on like nothing happened. I mean, it sometimes comes to your mind, you get sad but that process is weird for me.”
Longing for	Yearning for sharing, communication and physical contact with lost one (longing for presence)	“My grandmother lost her ability to speak because she had a stroke during two months intensive care period and I never heard her voice in that two months and I couldn't remember her voice when she passed away. I think that what kind of voice she had, why I couldn't remember, why I couldn't remember... So I started looking for videos to hear her voice again for a bit.”
A gradual adaptation	Adaptation, not linear / Death as a process from burden to acceptance including coping	“Gloom reminds me a process (light chuckles) when he is not there and that time and this thing has no end. I mean I have to die, as well, I mean, to end the grief about him; I think I'm always, always, always going to be sad. Maybe not at this intensity, maybe less, maybe I will get accustomed but it will still be staying”
Loss of future plans with the loved ones	Losing a shared future with the deceased	“I mean we could have spent more quality time together, I mean we could have done better stuff... Better... My grandfather would have come to İstanbul and we could have spent time together. I mean we could have had so much fun.”

<b>Subjective Meanings of Death</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Representative Quotation</b>
Emptiness	Emotional emptiness of livings and physical absence of loved one	<p data-bbox="824 457 1425 583">“I mean the person disappears suddenly; and intimacy and sharing that are normally filled by that person is replaced by a lack. It will never come back.”</p> <p data-bbox="824 619 1425 850">“Bairams (religious holidays) for example; I've been very sad during two or three bairams. That came to my mind right now, I mean, there was his place... He is not there... I felt very empty; actually we're a crowded family so it's not possible to feel empty but absence of my grandfather felt his place very empty for me.”</p>

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DISCUSSION**

The present study aimed to investigate subjective meanings of death and grief among bereaved young people in Turkey with grandparent loss. Although few studies examined how youngsters experienced and coped with grandparent loss (Ens & Bond, 2005; Manoogian et al., 2018; Patrick & Henrie, 2015), to the researchers' knowledge, there has been no detailed investigation of bereaved youth's experiences of grandparent loss from a cultural and developmental standpoint. Accordingly, six super-ordinate themes were identified from the data obtained from semi-structured interviews conducted with seven bereaved college students grieving for their grandparents: (1) losing the second mother/father, (2) youngster's first contact with death as a transformative experience, (3) youngster's ambivalence regarding death-related rituals, (4) grandparent loss as a dual loss process, (5) university both as a barrier and shield in the grieving process, (6) death as a multidimensional concept.

#### **4.1 Losing the Second Mother/Father**

Results indicated that bereaved youngsters perceived grandparent loss as "losing their second father/mother" because of the qualitatively unique and different relationship they had with grands. They lost not only their more compassionate surrogate parents but the mother/father of the whole family. Grandparent-grandchild relationships were usually described as affectionate and long-lasting in different cultures (Manson & Booth-Butterfield, 2011; Ruiz & Silverstein, 2007). Yet, the role that grands play in the physical and psychosocial development of grandchildren is



more central in collectivistic cultures like Turkey. In collectivistic cultures, “family integration” enhanced the emotional and social sharing across generations and “distance” from grands hampered the family unity (Triandis, 1990). Hence, grandchildren were usually encouraged by their parents to frequently contact with grands to benefit from psycho-social experiences and skills of the grands (Hurme, 1995; Scharf, 2016). Accordingly, collectivistic values of Turkey related to family ties might have shaped or contributed to the qualitatively different relationship described by our participants. Reciprocally, having and caring for a grandchild was defined as the best life experience by Turkish grands, as well (Aközer, Nuhurat, & Say, 2011). As they aged and became wiser, Turkish grandparents somehow exercised more tolerant and compassionate parenting practices towards grandchildren when compared with those they used for their own children (Aközer, Nuhurat, & Say, 2011; Yıldırım, 2016). In fact, there are even some proverbs in Turkish culture emphasizing the cultural importance of grandchildren for grands like “Grandchild tastes sweeter than honey” (i.e. “Torun baldan tatlıdır); “Child growing is like making a tree grow, while having a grandchild is the fruit of that tree” (i.e. “Torun ağaç yetiştirmeye benzer, torun ise meyvedir); “Child is for pain, grandchild is for enjoyment” (i.e. Evlat cefası, torun sefası). Thus, this mutual appreciation and closeness seem to strengthen the quality of relationship between grand dyads in Turkey, which might explain why Turkish grandchildren felt as if they had lost their second parent with grandparent loss.

In contrast to previous findings, our participants perceived their grandparents as main carers regardless of the relationship between grands and parents (Kemp, 2005; Soliz, & Harwood, 2006). Besides, youngsters usually compared personality and parenting attitudes of grands with their own parents and concluded that their grandparents were much more supportive. In fact, Turkish grandparents seemed to establish a psychological bridge between their own children and grandchildren in order to ease familial communication. They also seemed to support life decisions of

grandchildren even when the parents did not agree, and imposed their cultural power on their adult children for persuasion (Kılıç, 2018). Consequently, youngsters seemed to feel more empowered against their parents in the presence of their beloved grandparents. In fact, this culturally prescribed role of grandparents might explain why Turkish youngsters felt they had lost their protector and supporter in life. In Turkey, it is still a common practice for grandparents to co-parent children of their adult offspring. Grandparents either co-resided with or lived nearby to their adult children even in the urban regions of Turkey (Aytaç, 1998; Turkey Demographic and Health Survey, 2013). Hence, this physical proximity seemed to give grands more opportunity to provide a consistent care for their grandchildren. Besides, increased number of Turkish women in work force necessitated a reliable care for children (Turkey Demographic and Health Survey, 2013). Consequently, Turkish children might spent at least as much time with grandparents as their parents throughout their childhood period. Compounded with the more tolerating attitudes of grandparents, this physical proximity might be associated with a more affectionate relationship between grandparents and grandchildren. Consequently, Turkish youth might have felt more vulnerable in the face of parental problems because they had lost their “protective angel”. Although youngsters experienced a deep sorrow for being more vulnerable after grandparent loss, this imperative separation might have contributed to the individuation and separation processes of them, as well. Since establishing an autonomous identity was an important developmental task for young people (Dunkel & Sefcek, 2009; Eccles & Gootman, 2002), grandparent loss might lead them to develop their own problem solving skills to handle parental conflicts through more constructive means.

Bereaved youngsters also indicated that grandparent loss impaired the family unity and cohesiveness among extended relatives. In fact, this finding was also consistent with the binding position of elders in Turkish culture. In collectivistic

cultures, grandparents were regarded as respected elders which provided a culturally ascribed power to regulate family relations (Kılıç, 2018; Niles, 1998). Besides, younger family members usually gathered in the house of the eldest family member in Turkey particularly in religious celebrations (e.g. bairam) and important days (e.g. New Year) to strengthen the family unity (Taşkesenligil, 2016). This might be why Turkish grandchildren felt losing an important part of family rituals and unity with grandparent loss. Despite the loosening relations among extended family members, Turkish youth believed that their relationships became more intimate with their grieving parent after grandparental loss. This change in the quality of parental relations might be explained by sharing the same pain with the affected parent (Manoogian et al., 2018).

#### **4.2 Youngster's First Contact with Death as a Transformative Experience**

Young people who were in a transition period might go through bereavement as a transformative experience especially if death was experienced for the first time in their close network (Berzoff, 2011; Seah, & Wilson, 2011). Consistently, death was described as “unknown” and “puzzling” by Turkish youth in the current study who stated that grandparent loss was the “first significant loss due to death” in their close family. More specifically, death becoming a reality triggered existential questioning among Turkish grandchildren which in turn seems to complicate processing grief related emotions. In fact, death related losses could increase existential, religious, and spiritual doubts among bereaved individuals from all developmental stages (Robert, Thomas, & Morgan, 2016). Nevertheless, these doubts might be much more confusing for youth since they still tried to crystallize their beliefs, values and perspectives in life (Gutierrez & Park, 2014; Liew & Servaty-Seib, 2018). In the current study first contact with death made the loss experience more real and this new realization intensified youngsters' already operating existential doubts more. Interviews showed that Turkish youngsters were trying to find answers particularly for the issues of

religiosity and after life. At that point, it might be important to address those spiritual and religious questions because less religious/spiritual doubt was associated with greater growth for bereaved individuals (Patrick & Henrie, 2015).

Additionally, realization of immediate and uncontrollable nature of death seemed to increase bereaved youngsters' anxiety levels. In other words, first contact with death lead bereaved youngsters to realize "everything has an end." Although previous studies indicated that loss by death helped survivors realize their own mortality and be more comfortable with the idea of death (Frantz, Trolley, & Farrell, 1998), bereaved youngsters mostly emphasized increased existential fear upon grandparent loss. In fact, this result might also be explained from a developmental standpoint. Since young people's belief systems were not well-established (Gutierrez & Park, 2014; Barry & Abo-Zena, 2014; Stoppa & Lefkowitz 2010), loss of grandparent might have shaken their already unsettled ideas about life and death.

Although Turkish youngsters experienced a crisis period regarding existential topics, almost all of them reported to experience positive changes in their personality and life perspectives after losing their beloved grandparents. They usually became more 'mature', 'tolerant', "self-aware", and "sensitive to the needs of others". In fact, their accounts about positive post-loss changes were consistent with the previous findings in the literature. Studies indicated that college students appreciated life more, became more caring towards others and enhanced their interpersonal relations after experiencing a significant loss (Edmons & Hooker, 1992; Frantz et al., 1998, Manoogian et al., 2018; Oltjenbruns, 1991; Taku, Tedeschi, & Cann, 2015). Additionally, grandparent loss seems to accelerate individuation and separation processes of Turkish youngsters. Since they lost their "guardian angel" and "mentor" in life, they tried to manage life obstacles through internalizing and exhibiting functional traits of their deceased grandparents. It was also inferred that internalization of the positive attributes of the deceased grandparent might help them

to continue their symbolic bonds with the deceased (Scholtes & Browne, 2015; Surrine, Salloum, & Boothroyd, 2018).

Additionally, experiencing loss might have transformative impacts not only on individuals but also on family as a whole. After experiencing a loss, family system might need a reorganization; realignment of relationships, redistribution of family roles, and restabilization in survivors' lives to enhance adaptation process (McBride & Simms, 2001; McGoldrick & Walsh, 2014). Considering contributions of grandparents especially on value transmission across generations and their roles on family identity (Firat, 2018), grandparent loss might lead shifts in the boundaries by impacting information flow in the family system (Becvar & Becvar, 2017).

In conclusion, identity exploration centered mainly on worldview, love and work was the most important developmental task for individuals aging between 18 and 29 (Arnett, 2000; Bornstein & Lamb, 2011). Coupled with death-related loss of such a significant figure, these developmental tasks might become more challenging for bereaved youngsters. In other words, loss related changes in values and life perspectives might affect identity exploration process of youngsters through reshaping interpersonal relations, future plans like career goals, or examination of existential topics. Eventually, more unique loss-related needs might arise for youngsters since identity exploration process inherently had its own developmental challenges (Balk, 2001; Seah, & Wilson, 2011). Furthermore, sufficient attention should be paid to impact of the loss on the all family, and reorganization of the family system after grandparent loss.

### **4.3 Youngster's Ambivalence regarding Death-Related Rituals**

In the current study, Turkish grandchildren mostly emphasized feelings of discomfort and confusion regarding death-related customs performed in Turkey. In Turkish culture, house of the deceased were not left alone within the 10 days after death in order to provide emotional support to survivors. Hence, houses of the deceased were full of people where food was serviced to guests and particular prayers were performed to honor the soul of the deceased (Aksoz-Efe et al., 2018; Bahar et al., 2012). Accordingly, grief related emotions were expressed and shared in front of other people. Besides, family members' preparing food for the guests served as a distractor and symbolized continuation of the living. Interestingly, bereaved youngsters in our study were disturbed by those rituals with their extended family members and acquaintances. They believed that such a crowd did not allow close family members to process their grief naturally. They also expressed their anger because "not so close relatives" did not leave them alone during such a sensitive period. These findings indicated that bereaved youngsters' grief related needs might have been different from those of their parents.

Rituals such as condolence visits, grieving in a crowded house, eating with guests that were adaptive for parents did not have the same function and meaning for bereaved young people. It appears that those youngsters were in need of more personalized and private grief rituals to handle their pain. For example, youngsters in the current study found "seeing dead body in gasilhane" as an opportunity to adapt to the reality of death and to say a final good-bye to their beloved grandparents. Hence, it seemed that they were much more comfortable with non-public death related rituals (Paul, 2002). This preference for more personal but less visible death related rituals might again be attributed to the individuation and separation process that those youngsters were going through. Since that period necessitated differentiation from

family values and belief systems (Liew & Servaty-Seib, 2018), those youngsters might have been more inclined to private and personalized grieving customs.

Interestingly, some bereaved Turkish youngsters performed prayer and other customs at funeral house out of a sense of obligation or due to guests' pressure. Those who performed those rituals felt confused as they did not fully believe religious importance of such traditions. By contrast, others who did not perform, felt guilty as they were still not sure the rightness of their acts. This ambiguity related to religious and death rituals might also be explained by the lack of a well-established belief system among youngsters who were still searching for answers to life and death issues (Gutierrez & Park, 2014; Barry & Abo-Zena, 2014; Stoppa & Lefkowitz 2010). Since their self-exploration still continued, they were ambivalent about performing religion and death-related rituals. That might be the reason why bereaved Turkish youngsters defined religion and death related rituals as "confusing" and "meaningless".

#### **4.4 Grandparent Loss as a Dual Loss Process**

In the current study, bereaved Turkish youngsters carefully observed their parents' grieving process. How their parents were affected emotionally and how they reacted to parental loss were held under microscope by bereaved grandchildren. It seems that observing their parents' suffering put an extra burden for those youngsters. Participants in the current study tried to stay strong for affected parent and avoided expressing their own grief to support their family. Literature suggested that expressing emotional reactions to loss strengthened relationships, and made adaptation process easier (Hooghe, Neimeyer, & Rober, 2011; Shapiro, 2008; Stroebe, Stroebe, Schut, Zech, & Van den Bout, 2002). Moreover, grief communication particularly among family members were considered as an important source of support by bereaved individuals (Basinger, Wehrman, & McAninch, 2016). Therefore, being aware of bereaved young people's lack of motivation to openly process loss related emotions

might be necessary to enhance their adaptation while being away from their families during bereavement process.

In addition to parents' grief related emotions, bereaved youngsters were also sensitive to extended family problems including heritage conflicts and surviving grandparent's care aroused from grandparent loss. They expressed their anger towards extended family members as they believed such earthly demands hampered their parents' grieving process. Besides, heritage conflicts was perceived as disrespectful for deceased grandparent's soul. In fact, in cultures like Turkey, extended family problems might be perceived as more troublesome since family unity in times of crisis like death was deeply appreciated (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1994). Accordingly, lack of such unity might have created an extra stress for bereaved youngsters in Turkey while dealing with their own emotional pain.

#### **4.5 University both as a Barrier and Shield in the Grieving Process**

Bereaved Turkish grandchildren expressed function of university-related issues with both negative and positive terms simultaneously. In other words, advantages and disadvantages of being at university during bereavement were elaborated by our participants. For bereaved youngsters, university became both an external barrier and a protective shield while dealing with grief related emotions. Previous findings indicated that difficulties in returning to university from homeland, being away from family members, concentration problems, loss of familial support, and concerns about surviving members were amongst the obstacles experienced by bereaved college students (Floerchinger, 1991; Servaty-Seib & Hamilton, 2006). Consistently, Turkish grandchildren expressed their need of being physically close to their parents during bereavement process. They believed that they would have been much more comfortable while processing pain of loss with their parents who were going through the same experience. They also did not prefer to share their loss related



feelings with their peers in order not to be a “boring person” or due to the belief that “they would not understand my pain”. In fact, this finding was consistent with the literature stating that bereaved youngsters did not express their pain as they felt “different and disconnected” from their non-bereaved peers (Schultz, 2007). Besides, this lack of sharing might be related with non-bereaved students’ empathic understanding, feelings of helplessness and insufficient skills to reflect their empathic understanding (Balk, 1997). Besides, home might be perceived as a place where talking about death and bereavement is more acceptable (Toth, 1997). It is a known fact that family support is important for both grief process and social adjustment of bereaved university students (Cousins et al., 2015; Traylor et al., 2003). Thus, while other family members continued to support each other due to physical proximity, bereaved university students who were away from their families might run the risk of being isolated at university. However, if being at home became overwhelming, some students might prefer to go back to university settings to cope with their emotional reactions by being distracted with friends and course loads (LaGrand, 1985). In that regard, a few Turkish grandchildren stated that being at university helped them alleviate their pain due to a non-grieving environment. Besides, one youngster stated that being at university after loss enabled her not to see painful reactions of her mother, so that her grief did not become unbearable.

In the current study, bereaved youngsters mentioned their regret and guilt of not seeing their grandparents alive for the last time. Specifically, youngsters stated that distance from homeland and university requirements prevented the final re-union with the beloved grandparent. This finding was also consistent with the literature highlighting importance of seeing the person alive for the last time during bereavement. Accordingly, final conversations usually were associated with confirmation of connection and completion of relationship. Besides, they had the function of redefining an adaptive self-image and recognizing uniqueness of the relationship (Keeley, 2007; Keeley, Generous, & Baldwin, 2014).

#### **4.6 Death as a Multidimensional Concept**

Traditionally, death means “the irreparable cessation of spontaneous cardiac activity and spontaneous respiratory activity” (Leming, & Dickinson, 2010). Physical decay of the body, and irrevocable, unavoidable, and natural nature of death are amongst other meanings associated with the physical aspect of death. Besides its objective meanings, meanings of death were also shaped by personal, societal and cultural backgrounds of the individuals (Leming, & Dickinson, 2010; Melear, 1973). Understanding both personal and subjective meanings of death among bereaved young people is of utmost importance since such meanings might help development of functional perceptions (i.e. an orderly, predictable, comforting world) which enabled individuals to cope with death and dying through more adaptive ways (Cicirelli, 1998; Mancini, Prati, & Bonanno, 2011). By contrast, those subjective meanings might be associated with formation of negative perceptions (i.e. a chaotic, unpredictable and disordered life) which usually hindered processing death related emotions (Boelen, van den Bout, & van den Hout, 2006; Cicirelli, 1998). Similarly, personal meanings of death might influence personal choices in life after losing a loved one, psychological reactions in response to death and preparedness in the face of imminent death (Cicirelli, 2001). To illustrate, Noppe and Noppe’s (1997) indicated that college students usually associated death with maturity (i.e., universality, irreversibility, body non-functionality), non-corporeal continuation (i.e., any reference to life after death), and separation or leaving from others. Specifically, college students’ worries mainly centered on separation, life after death, timing of death, leaving a legacy, and concerns about physical changes. Hence, as Palmer et al. (2016) emphasized that there seems a fundamental role of an individual’s specific understanding of the concepts of loss and death in the subjective experience of loss. In the current study bereaved young people mostly emphasized unknown nature of death and uncertainty of afterlife issues while

giving reference to their increased existential questionings. Also, it seems that uncontrollable nature of the death lead them to experience fear in relation to questions like “who will be the next one?” Some of their subjective meanings attributed to death and living were more positive. For instance, they emphasized continuation of life for survivors despite their loss and gradual lessening of grief related pain. Additionally, subjective meanings of death related to living included longing, loss of future plans with deceased, and emotional emptiness after the loss of a loved one. These meanings might be associated with the unique and different relationship they with deceased grandparents.

#### **4.7 Clinical Implications**

The current study, while preliminary, suggested important developmental and culture sensitive clinical implications. First of all, this study might shed light on the grief and bereavement processes associated with grandparent loss considering the emotionally close relationship between grandparents and grandchildren in Turkey. It seems very probable that grandparents were amongst the main actors shaping and directing physical and psycho-social development of Turkish grandchildren. Considering importance of grandparents in Turkish culture, more attention should be paid to culturally related losses (e.g. loss of unique relation, loss of mother/father of family, loss of childhood and loss of mentor in life) experienced by youngsters in Turkey with grandparent loss. Secondly, intervention programs for bereaved young people should be sensitive to young people’s grief related needs in accordance with their developmental stage. Hence, mental health professionals should consider the interactional nature of developmental stressors (e.g. being away from family due to university education, identity exploration during bereavement) with such a prominent loss for bereaved youngsters in Turkey. Accordingly, supportive strategies helping university students to minimize existential dilemmas and to establish a functional

value system with the reality of loss might be necessary to increase adaptation to bereavement for youngsters in Turkey. Besides, more personalized grief counseling strategies might be provided for those youngsters as they felt uncomfortable with public grieving. Last but not least, all of these implications might be offered by universities' counseling departments at group or individual levels, as it would be both time and cost-effective for bereaved youngsters who were still continuing their university education.

#### **4.8 Limitations and Future Directions**

Still, the current thesis is not without limitations. Firstly, our pre-assessment interview might have been insufficient to recognize bereaved youngsters with complicated grief symptoms. Hence, more objective assessment tools should be utilized either to rule out or include bereaved youngsters with complicated grief symptoms. Secondly, the current study was conducted only with bereaved young people who had intimate and strong emotional bonds with the deceased grandparents. Therefore, further studies are suggested to investigate loss experiences of young people having more distant and/or conflictual relations with their grandparents. Finally, all interviewees were granddaughters and distinctions of grandfather and grandmother loss experiences were not evaluated in the current study. Hence, more research is required to understand how granddaughters and grandsons experience grandmother and grandfather loss separately. In fact, grandmothers were usually more favored grands over grandfathers (Dubas, 2001; Lussier, Deater-Deckard, Dunn, & Davies, 2002) and maternal grandmothers were regarded as the favorite grandparents by grandchildren (Viguer, Melendez, Valencia, & Cantero, 2010). Hence, these possible grand dyad dynamics are necessary to examine qualitatively in future research. Besides, there is no consensus about the impact of grandchild's gender on grandparent-grandchild relationship in the literature. Therefore, possible influences of

gender and culture on grandparent loss should be addressed by the researchers. Finally, although mainly dominated by collectivistic norms, Turkey has a heterogeneous cultural texture. Consequently, it is of utmost importance to examine how grandparent loss is experienced by youth in Turkey who were raised with less traditional norms and values.



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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION FORM

#### DEMOGRAFİK BİLGİ FORMU

- 1) Yaşınız? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Cinsiyetiniz?  
 Kadın       Erkek       Diğer       Belirtmek istemiyorum
- 3) Bölümünüz? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Sınıfınız? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Medeni Durumunuz:  
 Bekar       Nişanlı/Sözlü       Evli       Dul  
 Boşanmış  
 Birlikte Yaşıyor       Diğer (Belirtiniz: .....)
- 6) Tedavi gerektiren bir ruhsal rahatsızlık geçirdiğiniz mi?  
 Evet       Hayır
- 7) Evet ise bu rahatsızlık nedeniyle nasıl bir tedavi gördünüz?  
 Psikolojik Tedavi       İlaç Tedavisi       Tedavi Görmedim

Bu bölümde kaybedilen kişiyle ilgili detaylar yer almaktadır. Kaybettiğiniz yakınlarınızın sayısı birden fazla ise lütfen aşağıdaki soruları en önemli kaybınızı düşünerek cevaplayınız.

- 8) Ölüm tarihi: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

9) Öldüğünde kaç yaşındaydı? \_\_\_\_\_

10) Ölüm sebebi \_\_\_\_\_

11) Bu kayıp sizin için ne kadar beklendikti?

1. Hiç beklemiyordum
2. Beklemiyordum
3. Kısmen beklediğimiz/tahmin ettiğimiz bir kayıptı
4. Oldukça beklediğimiz bir kayıptı

12) Ölen kişiye yakınlığınız (kaybettiklerinizin sayısı birden fazla ise lütfen aşağıdaki soruları en önemli kaybınızı düşünerek cevaplayınız): (lütfen daire içine alınız)

1. Annem/babam
2. Eşim/Partnerim
3. Kardeşim
4. Çocuğum
5. Diğer akrabalar (lütfen belirtiniz)\_\_\_\_\_
6. Yakın arkadaşım
7. İş arkadaşım

13) Bu kayıp nedeniyle herhangi bir psikolojik ya da psikiyatrik destek aldınız mı?

- Evet Hayır

14) Bu kayıp ile ilişkili herhangi bir psikolojik ve/veya psikiyatrik tedavi aldıysanız, ne tür tedavi/tedaviler aldınız? (Bu kayba bağlı psikolojik ve/ya psikiyatrik tedavi almadıysanız bu soruyu boş bırakınız)

- Bireysel Psikoterapi Grup Psikoterapisi  
İlaç Tedavisi Diğer (Belirtiniz .....)

15) Mensup olduğunuz bir din var mı?

- Evet Hayır Belirtmek istemiyorum

16) Kendinizi ne kadar dindar biri olarak nitelendirirsiniz?

1. Çok dindarım
2. Dindarım
3. Orta derecede dindarım
4. Pek dindar değilim
5. Hiç dindar değilim
6. Belirtmek istemiyorum
7. Diğer (Belirtiniz: .....)



## APPENDIX B: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### GÖRÜŞME SORULARI

#### Ölüm

1. Ölüm hakkında konuşmaktan kimi insan çekinebilir, bu çalışmaya katılmaya karar verirken neler yaşadınız? Aklınızdan neler geçti?
2. Ölüm deyince aklınıza gelen 5 şey nedir? (Kelimeler, sıfatlar, cümleler)
3. Ölüm kavramı ile ilgili duygu ve düşünceleriniz neler?
4. Bana “ölüm”ü kendi sözcüklerinizle/ifadelerinizle tanımlayabilir misiniz?
5. Ölüme dair hiçbir bilgisi olmayan küçük bir çocuğa ölümü nasıl anlatırdınız? Bu sorunun doğru ya da yanlış bir cevabı yok, nasıl anlatmak isterdiniz?
6. Günlük hayatınızda ‘ölüm’ fikrinin genel olarak aklınıza geldiği olur mu? (Evet ise) Hangi durumlarda gelir ve aklınıza tam olarak neler gelir?
7. Ölümünden sonrası ile ilgili düşünceleriniz nelerdir?
8. Ölümü kabullenmeyi kolaylaştıran/zorlaştıran etmenler nelerdir?
9. Ölümü .....ler olarak gördüğünüzden bahsettiniz, ölümle ilgili bu düşünceniz kaybınızdan sonra yaşadığınız yas sürecinizi nasıl etkiledi? (Olumlu/olumsuz etkisi?)
10. Peki, büyükebeveyninizin kaybından önce ölümle ilgili düşünceleriniz nasıldı? (Farklılık/Benzerlikler?)
  - a. Sevdiğiniz kişinin kaybından sonra etrafınızdaki kişilerin söylediklerinden size iyi/kötü gelenler nelerdi? (Nesi iyi/kötü hissettirdi?)

#### Yas

1. Yakınınızı kaybetme sürecinizi biraz paylaşır mısınız?
  - a. Nasıl oldu?



- b. O süreçte neler yaşadınız?
  - c. Büyükebeveyninizin sizin hayatınızda nasıl bir yeri vardı? (neler yapar, paylaşırdınız, ilişkiniz?)
  - d. Anne/babanızın büyükebeveyninizle ilişkisi nasıldı?
  - e. Bu ilişkiden siz nasıl etkilendiniz? Onların tepkileri nasıldı? Size nasıl geldi?
  - f. Bu kayıp sizi nasıl etkiledi?
  - g. Bu kayıp hayatınızda değişikliklere yol açtı mı (olumlu / olumsuz)?
  - h. Yasınızı farklı ortamlarda yaşarken farklılaşma oldu mu?
2. Bu kayıp hayata bakışınızı nasıl etkiledi?
  3. Bu kayıp sizi insan olarak değiştirdi mi? (kişilik özellikleri, dindarlık)
  4. Bu kayıpla nasıl baş ettiniz?
    - a. Bu durumla baş etmenizi kolaylaştıran şeyler oldu mu?
    - b. Bu durumla baş etmenizi zorlaştıran şeyler oldu mu?
  5. Bu kayıpla baş etmeye çalışırken size yardımcı olduğunu / olmadığını düşündüğünüz güçlü / zayıf yönleriniz nelerdi?
  6. Bu dönemde sizi en çok zorlayan neydi?
    - a. Size en iyi gelen/yardımcı olan şeyler nelerdi?
  7. Çevrenizdekilerin bu kayba tepkisi nasıldı?
  8. Büyükebeveyninizi kaybetmeniz ölüme dair düşüncelerinizi nasıl etkiledi?
  9. Duygu ve düşünceleriniz bu süreç boyunca nasıl değişti?
  10. Büyükebeveynini kaybetmiş diğer kişilere bir şey söylemek isteseniz bu ne olurdu?

## APPENDIX C: TEXAS REVISED INVENTORY OF GRIEF

### TEKSAS DÜZELTİLMİŞ YAS ÖLÇEĞİ

Aşağıdaki maddeleri, bireyin öldüğü zamanı düşünüp, o zamanki duygu ve eylemlerinizi dikkate alarak 1: tamamen doğru, 2: çoğunlukla doğru, 3: ne doğru, ne de yanlış, 4: çoğunlukla yanlış, 5: tamamen yanlış seçeneklerinden sizi en iyi tanımlayanını seçerek işaretleyiniz.

Bölüm I: Geçmiş davranışlar	Tamamen doğru	Çoğunlukla doğru	Ne doğru ne de yanlış	Çoğunlukla yanlış	Tamamen yanlış
1. Bu insanın ölümünden sonra belli insanlarla anlaşmakta zorluk çektim.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Bu insanın ölümünden sonra yeterince çalışmakta zorlandım.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Bireyin ölümünden sonra aileme, arkadaşlarıma ve dışarıdaki etkinliklere olan ilgimi kaybettim.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Ölen bireyin yapmak istediklerini gerçekleştirme gereksinimi duydum.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Bireyin ölümünden sonra alışılmadık şekilde huzursuz biri oldum.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Bireyin ölümünün ardından üç ay boyunca normal günlük aktivitelerimi yerine getiremedim.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Beni bıraktığı için ölen bireye kızdım.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Bireyin ölümünün ardından uyumakta zorlandım.	1	2	3	4	5

<b>Bölüm II: Şimdiki duygular</b>					
<b>Bu bölümdeki maddeleri şu andaki duygularınızı dikkate alarak işaretleyiniz.</b>	<b>Tamamen doğru</b>	<b>Çoğunlukla doğru</b>	<b>Ne doğru ne de yanlış</b>	<b>Çoğunlukla yanlış</b>	<b>Tamamen yanlış</b>
1. Ölen birey aklıma geldiğinde halen ağlıyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Ölen birey aklıma geldiğinde halen üzülüyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Bu insanın ölümünü kabullenemiyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Bazen ölen bireyi çok fazla özlüyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Şimdi bile ölen bireyle ilgili anıları hatırlamak bana acı veriyor.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Sürekli aklıma ölen bireyle ilgili düşünceler geliyor.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Ölen bireyi düşündüğümde gözyaşlarımı saklıyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Hayatımda hiç kimse O'nun yerini alamayacak.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Ölen bireyi düşünmekten kendimi alamıyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Onun ölümünü haksızlık olarak görüyorum	1	2	3	4	5
11. Çevremdeki eşyalar ve insanlar bana halen ölen bireyi hatırlatıyor.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Ölen bireyin ölümünü kabul edemiyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Halen, ara sıra ölen birey için ağlama gereksinimi duyuyorum.	1	2	3	4	5

## APPENDIX D: INFORMED CONSENT (SCALE)

### Sayın Katılımcı,

Bu araştırma, TED Üniversitesi, Gelişim Odaklı Çocuk ve Ergen Klinik Psikoloji Programı Yüksek Lisans öğrencisi Afife Karabayır tarafından Yağmur Ar-Karcı danışmanlığındaki yüksek lisans tezi kapsamında yürütülmektedir. Araştırmanın amacı ölüme atfedilen psikolojik, sosyal ve kültürel anlamların derinlemesine incelenmesidir. Bu çalışmanın katılımcılarını 18-22 yaş aralığındaki üniversite öğrencisi genç yetişkinler oluşturmaktadır.

Bu çalışmada yer almayı kabul ettiğiniz takdirde, Kasım 2018- Şubat 2019 tarihleri arasında sizinle yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yapılacaktır. Proje araştırma ekibince size bilgisi iletilecek olan anket ve görüşme gibi uygulamalara önceden belirlenen takvim doğrultusunda katılmanız istenecektir. Çalışma süresince ve sonrasında kimlik bilgileriniz proje dışındaki hiç kimseyle izniniz dışında paylaşılmayacaktır. Bu çalışma kapsamında elde edilecek olan bilimsel bilgiler sadece araştırmacılar tarafından yapılan bilimsel yayınlarda, sunumlarda ve eğitim amaçlı çevrimiçi bir ortamda paylaşılacaktır. Toplanan veriler isiminiz silinerek, bilgisayarda şifreli bir dosyada tutulacaktır.

Bu çalışmaya katılım gönüllük esasına dayanmaktadır. Katılımınız, özellikle genç yetişkinlerin ölüme atfettikleri anlamların bilimsel bir zeminde bütüncül olarak anlaşılması açısından oldukça önemlidir. Bu bağlamda, genç yetişkinlerin olası bir kayıp durumuna psiko-sosyal uyumlarının artırılması için ileride oluşturulabilecek kültüre duyarlı destek programlarının temellenmesi bakımından bu ve buna benzer çalışmalara verilen desteğiniz bilimsel olarak oldukça kıymetlidir.

Ölüm olgusu gerek psikolojik gerek ise kültürel etmenler gereği konuşulması zor bir konu olarak görülmektedir. Öte yandan pek çok teorisyen ölüm ve/ya kayıp sürecine atfedilen psikolojik, kültürel ve toplumsal anlamların işlenmesinin olası bir kayıp durumunda sürece uyumu arttıracaklarını düşünmektedir. Görüşmeler sırasında konunun içeriği ve derinliği sebebiyle günlük hayatınızda hissettiğiniz stres seviyesinin üzerinde bir stres yaşamamız oldukça normaldir. Bu sebeple, katılımcılara (görüşmeleri tamamlayıp tamamlamamalarından bağımsız olarak) kayıp ve yas süreçlerinde baş etme stratejilerini anlatan bir bilgilendirme broşürü verilecektir. Ayrıca veri toplama sürecinin ardından Dr. Klinik Psk. Yağmur Ar-Karcı tarafından olası kayıp yaşantılarına uyum sürecinde yapılması/yapılmaması gerekenler ve ölüm olgusunun psiko-sosyal anlamlarına ilişkin bir seminer verilecek, sonrasında ise bir paylaşım toplantısı yapılacaktır. Buna rağmen, herhangi bir nedenden ötürü kendinizi rahatsız hissederseniz, uygulamaları nedenini açıklamaksızın yarıda bırakıp araştırmadan çıkmakta serbestsiniz. Böyle bir durumda vermiş olduğunuz bilgilerin araştırmacı tarafından kullanılması ancak sizin onayınızla mümkün olacaktır. Bu çalışmaya katıldığınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederim. Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak ve yanıtlanmasını istediğiniz sorularınız için araştırmayı yürüten Afife Karabayır'a (E-posta: [afife.karabayir@tedu.edu.tr](mailto:afife.karabayir@tedu.edu.tr)) iletişim kurabilirsiniz.

***Bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum ve istediğim zaman yarıda kesip çıkabileceğimi biliyorum. Bu proje kapsamında gereken anket ve/ya görüşme uygulamalarında yer alacağımı biliyorum. Verdiğim bilgilerin bilimsel amaçlı yayımlarda kullanılmasını kabul ediyorum. Görüşme süresince ses kaydı alınacağını biliyorum. Ses kayıtlarının bilimsel makaleler, akademik sunumlar ve çevrimiçi bir eğitim ortamı dışında kesinlikle kullanılmayacağını biliyorum.***

Projeye katılmak istiyorum

Evet / Hayır

***Bu çalışma iki aşamadan oluşmaktadır. Birinci aşamayı oluşturan anket verilerine göre gerekli kriterleri sağlayan katılımcılar belirlenecek ve ikinci aşama olan görüşmeye katılmaları istenecektir. Görüşme katılımcıların ölüme verdikleri anlamlar ve yas süreçlerini nasıl deneyimledikleri ile ilgilidir. Görüşmeye katılmayı istiyorsanız lütfen mail adresinizi aşağıya ekleyiniz.***

Mail adresi: .....

Teşekkürler,  
Araştırmacının adı, soyadı ve imzası

.....  
Ziya Gökalp Cad. No:48 Kolej/ Çankaya ANKARA, .....

*Araştırmaya katılımınız ve haklarınızın korunmasına yönelik sorularınız varsa ya da herhangi bir şekilde risk altında olduğunuza veya strese maruz kalacağına inanıyorsanız TED Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu'na (0312 585 00 11) telefon numarasından veya [iaek@tedu.edu.tr](mailto:iaek@tedu.edu.tr) eposta adresinden ulaşabilirsiniz.*

## APPENDIX E: DEBRIEFING FORM

### KATILIM SONRASI BİLGİ FORMU

Bu araştırma, daha önce de belirtildiği gibi, TED Üniversitesi, Psikoloji Bölümü Yüksek Lisans öğrencisi Afife Karabayır tarafından Yağmur Ar Karcı danışmanlığındaki yüksek lisans tezi kapsamında yürütülmektedir. Araştırmanın amacı, yas sürecinde olan ve olmayan 18-22 yaş aralığındaki gençlerin ölümü nasıl kavramsallaştırdığını ve yas sürecini nasıl deneyimlediklerini niteliksel olarak anlamaktır.

Kaçınılmaz ve evrensel bir gerçeklik olan ölüme atfedilen anlamların kişiye özgü olduğu ve kültürden etkilendiği bilinmektedir. Bu anlamların yas sürecini ve baş etme stratejilerini etkileyeceği düşünülmektedir. Gençlerin içinde buldukları gelişimsel dönemlerinden dolayı hem ölüme atfedilen kişiye özgü anlamları derinlemesine incelemek hem de yas süreçlerini ölüme atfettikleri niteliksel olarak farklı anlamlar açısından anlamak bu çalışmanın temel beklentilerindedir.

Elde edilen bilgiler sadece bilimsel araştırma ve yazılarda kullanılacaktır. Çalışmanın sağlıklı ilerleyebilmesi ve bulguların güvenilir olması için çalışmaya katılacağını bildiğiniz diğer kişilerle çalışma ile ilgili detaylı bilgi paylaşımında bulunmamanızı dileriz. Bu araştırmaya katıldığınız için tekrar çok teşekkür ederiz.

Araştırmanın sonuçlarını öğrenmek ya da daha fazla bilgi almak için aşağıdaki isimlere başvurabilirsiniz.

Yağmur Ar Karcı ([yağmur.ar@tedu.edu.tr](mailto:yağmur.ar@tedu.edu.tr))

Afife Karabayır ([afife.karabayir@tedu.edu.tr](mailto:afife.karabayir@tedu.edu.tr))

Çalışmaya katkıda bulunan bir gönüllü olarak katılımcı haklarınızla ilgili veya etik ilkelerle ilgili soru veya görüşlerinizi TEDÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu'na iletebilirsiniz.

e-posta: [iaek@tedu.edu.tr](mailto:iaek@tedu.edu.tr)

## APPENDIX F: INFORMED CONSENT (INTERVIEW)

### Sayın Katılımcı,

Bu araştırma, TED Üniversitesi, Gelişim Odaklı Çocuk ve Ergen Klinik Psikoloji Bölümü Yüksek Lisans öğrencisi Afife Karabayır tarafından Yağmur Ar Karcı danışmanlığındaki yüksek lisans tezi kapsamında yürütülmektedir. Araştırmanın amacı ölümün nasıl kavramsallaştırdığını ve yas sürecinin nasıl deneyimlendiğini niteliksel olarak anlamaktır. Bu çalışmanın katılımcılarını 18-22 yaş aralığındaki üniversite öğrencileri oluşturmaktadır.

Bu çalışmaya katılımınızı onayladığınız takdirde, Kasım 2018- Şubat 2019 tarihleri arasında projenin katılımcısı olacaksınız. Çalışma süresince ve sonrasında kimlik bilgileriniz proje dışındaki hiç kimseye izniniz dışında paylaşılmayacaktır. Bu çalışma kapsamında elde edilecek olan bilimsel bilgiler sadece araştırmacılar tarafından yapılan bilimsel yayınlarda, sunumlarda ve eğitim amaçlı çevrimiçi bir ortamda paylaşılacaktır. Toplanan veriler isminiz silinerek, bilgisayarda şifreli bir dosyada tutulacaktır.

Bu çalışmaya katılım gönüllük esasına dayanmaktadır. Katılımınız, özellikle genç yetişkinlerin ölüme atfettikleri anlamların bilimsel bir zeminde bütüncül olarak anlaşılması açısından oldukça önemlidir. Bu bağlamda, genç yetişkinlerin olası bir kayıp durumuna psiko-sosyal uyumlarının artırılması için ileride oluşturulabilecek kültüre duyarlı destek programlarının temellenmesi bakımından bu ve buna benzer çalışmalara verilen desteğiniz bilimsel olarak oldukça kıymetlidir.

Ölüm olgusu gerek psikolojik gerek ise kültürel etmenler gereği konuşulması zor bir konu olarak görülmektedir. Öte yandan pek çok teorisyen ölüm ve/ya kayıp sürecine atfedilen psikolojik, kültürel ve toplumsal anlamların işlenmesinin olası bir kayıp durumunda sürece uyumu arttıracığını düşünmektedir. Görüşmeler sırasında konunun içeriği ve derinliği sebebiyle günlük hayatınızda hissettiğiniz stres seviyesinin üzerinde bir stres yaşammanız oldukça normaldir. Bu sebeple, katılımcılara (görüşmeleri tamamlayıp tamamlamamalarından bağımsız olarak) kayıp ve yas süreçlerinde baş etme stratejilerini anlatan bir bilgilendirme broşürü verilecektir. Ayrıca veri toplama sürecinin ardından Dr. Klinik Psk. Yağmur Ar-Karcı tarafından olası kayıp yaşantılarına uyum sürecinde yapılması/yapılmaması gerekenler ve ölüm olgusunun psiko-sosyal anlamlarına ilişkin bir seminer verilecek, sonrasında ise bir paylaşım toplantısı yapılacaktır. Buna rağmen, herhangi bir nedenden ötürü kendinizi rahatsız hissederseniz, uygulamaları nedenini açıklamaksızın yarıda bırakıp araştırmadan çıkmakta serbestsiniz. Böyle bir durumda vermiş olduğunuz bilgilerin araştırmacı tarafından kullanılması ancak sizin onayınızla mümkün olacaktır. Bu çalışmaya katıldığınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederim. Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak ve yanıtlanmasını istediğiniz sorularınız için araştırmayı yürüten Afife Karabayır'a (E-posta: [afife.karabayir@tedu.edu.tr](mailto:afife.karabayir@tedu.edu.tr)) iletişim kurabilirsiniz.

***Bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum ve istediğim zaman yarıda kesip çıkabileceğimi biliyorum. Bu proje kapsamında gereken anket ve/ya görüşme uygulamalarında yer alacağımı biliyorum. Verdiğim bilgilerin bilimsel amaçlı yayınlarda kullanılmasını kabul ediyorum. Görüşme süresince ses kaydı alınacağını***

***biliyorum. Ses kayıtlarının bilimsel makaleler, akademik sunumlar ve çevrimiçi bir eğitim ortamı dışında kesinlikle kullanılmayacağını biliyorum.***

Projeye katılmak istiyorum Evet / Hayır

Ses kayıtlarımın araştırma amaçlı kullanımına izin veriyorum Evet / Hayır

Ses kayıtlarım aşağıdaki görsellerde kullanılabilir:

Çevrimiçi Eğitim ortamında Evet / Hayır

Raporlar, makaleler, ilgili haberler gibi görsel ve yazılı materyallerde Evet / Hayır

Ad Soyad: .....

Katılımcının İmzası: .....

Tarih: .....

*Araştırmaya katılımınız ve haklarınızın korunmasına yönelik sorularınız varsa ya da herhangi bir şekilde risk altında olduğunuza veya strese maruz kalacağınıza inanıyorsanız TED Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu'na (0312 585 00 11) telefon numarasından veya [iaek@tedu.edu.tr](mailto:iaek@tedu.edu.tr) eposta adresinden ulaşabilirsiniz.*



## **APPENDIX G: BROCHURE**

**It will be provided in a separate sheet in its original version upon request.**



## APPENDIX H: TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU



**TED ÜNİVERSİTESİ AYŞE İLİCAK KÜTÜPHANESİ**  
**Kütüphane Tez Kabul ve İzin Formu**  
**Thesis Submission And Permission Form To Library**

<b>İsim-Soyisim / Name-Surname</b>	Afife Karabayır
<b>Öğrenci Numarası / Student ID</b>	18106424118
<b>Bölüm / Department</b>	Psikoloji
<b>Enstitü / Institute</b>	LİSANSÜSTÜ PROGRAMLAR ENSTİTÜSÜ
<b>Tez Türü / Degree</b>	Yüksek Lisans / Master
<b>Tez Başlığı / Title Of The Thesis</b>	Subjective Meanings of Death and Bereavement among Young People Grieving for the Death of a Grandparent

**1. Tezimin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılsın ve kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla tezimin bir kısmı veya tamamının fotokopisi alınsın. / Release the entire work immediately for access worldwide and photocopy whether all or part of my thesis providing that cited. □**

**2. Tezimin tamamı yalnızca TED Üniversitesi kullanıcılarının erişimine açılsın. (Bu seçenikle tezinizin fotokopisi ya da elektronik kopyası Kütüphane aracılığı ile TEDÜ dışına dağıtılmayacaktır) / Release the entire work for TED University access only. (With this option your work will not be listed in any research sources, and no one outside**

*TEDU will be able to provide both electronic and paper copies through the Library) □*

**3. Tezim bir (1) yıl süreyle erişime kapalı olsun. (Bu seçenkle tezinizin fotokopisi ya da elektronik kopyası Kütüphane aracılığı ile TEDÜ dışına dağıtılmayacaktır) / Secure the entire work for patent and/or proprietary purposes for a period of one year. □**

*Yukarıda bilgileri bulunan öğrencinin tezi basılı ve elektronik (2 adet CD-ROM &1 adet PDF ) formatta teslim alınmıştır.*

**Yazarın İmzası / Signature**

**Teslim Alanın İmzası / Signature**

**Tarih / Date**



## APPENDIX I: ETHICAL PERMISSION

### TED ÜNİVERSİTESİ İNSAN ARAŞTIRMALARI ETİK KURULU

31.10.2018

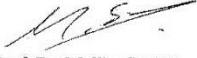
Sayı:85

**Konu:** Etik Kurul Kararı

Sayın

Afife KARABAYIR  
Psikoloji A.B.D, Gelişim Odaklı Klinik Çocuk ve Ergen Psikolojisi Programı  
Yüksek Lisans Öğrencisi

TED Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulunun 31.10.2018 tarih ve 2018/239 sayılı kararı ekte sunulmuştur.

  
Prof. Dr. Melike SAYIL  
TED Üniversitesi  
İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurul Başkanı

**TED ÜNİVERSİTESİ**  
**İNSAN ARAŞTIRMALARI ETİK KURULU**

**ETİK KURUL KARARLARI**

Toplantı Tarihi: **31.10.2018**

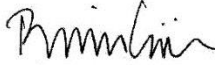
Toplantı Sayısı: **2018/85**

TED Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu **31.10.2018** Çarşamba günü saat 13:00'de toplanarak aşağıdaki kararları almıştır.

**Karar:(239)** TED Üniversitesi, Psikoloji ABD, Gelişim Odaklı Klinik Çocuk ve Ergen Psikolojisi Yüksek Lisans Programı Öğrencisi **Afife KARABAYIR**'ın sahibi olduğu "Yakını Kaybeden ve Kaybetmeyen Gençlerde Ölümün Öznel Anlamının Fenomenolojik Analizi" başlıklı araştırma projesine ilişkin 14.09.2018-1953 tarih ve sayılı etik kurul onay talebi görüşülmüş ve proje önerisinde, araştırma kapsamında uygulanacağı beyan edilen veri toplama yöntemlerinin araştırma etiğine uygun olduğuna OYBİRLİĞİ ile karar verilmiştir.



Prof. Dr. Melike SAYIL  
Başkan



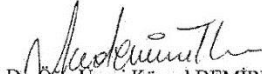
Prof. Dr. Berin GÜR  
Üye



Doç. Dr. Cem AKGÜNER  
Üye



Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Bengi ÜNAL  
Üye



Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Kürşad DEMİRUTKU  
Üye



Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Tekin KÖSE  
Üye



Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Aylin ÇAKIROĞLU ÇEVİK  
Üye



Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Mana Ece TUNA  
Üye