

The Educational Context of Adolescents in a Low-Income Urban District: A Mixed-Method Research on Family Functioning and Schooling¹

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Abstract

For disadvantaged communities in the society, educational and family-based problems are more likely to affect children and adolescents. In this regard, the aim of the study is to examine adolescent students' experience in their educational life in terms of family relations and family functioning, from an ecological perspective. The study was carried out in a low-income district of Ankara. Based on the mixed-method approach, a convergent design was used. The quantitative data were collected from vocational high school students, using McMaster Family Assessment Device (FAD). Qualitative data were obtained from 22 students and 8 school professionals through one-on-one interviews. Findings showed that students' perceptions of family functioning varied by mother's employment, average grade point, attitudes towards school, educational support from family, student-family consensus on education. The qualitative findings mostly supported the quantitative findings, referring to adolescent's low academic motivation, problematic and dysfunctional family relationships, and families' poor or superficial support for education. Based on these results, it can be asserted that proactive programs to facilitate more effective family-school relations should be implemented.

Key Words: Adolescence, Family Functioning, High School Students, Mixed-Method.

Öz

Toplumda dezavantajlı durumda bulunan topluluklar açısından eğitim ve aile temelli sorunların çocuk ve ergenleri daha fazla etkilemesi muhtemeldir. Bu doğrultuda, çalışmanın amacı, ergenlik döneminde bulunan öğrencilerin eğitim yaşamlarının aile ilişkileri ve aile işlevselliği açısından ekolojik bir bakış açısıyla incelenmesidir. Çalışma Ankara'nın düşük gelir seviyesinde bulunan bir ilçesi olan Altındağ'da yürütülmüştür. Karma yönteme dayanan çalışmada yakınsayan paralel desenden yararlanılmıştır. Çalışmanın nicel verileri meslek liselerinde öğrenim gören öğrencilerden Aile Değerlendirme Ölçeği (ADÖ) kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Nitel aşamada ise 22 öğrenci ve 8 okul profesyoneliyle yapılan birebir görüşmeler yoluyla veriler elde edilmiştir. Bulgular, öğrencilerin aile işlevselliğine ilişkin algılarının annenin çalışması, not ortalaması, okula karşı tutum, ailenin eğitim desteği, eğitim konusunda öğrenci-aile fikir birliği gibi değişkenlere göre farklılaştığını göstermiştir. Nitel bulgular çoğunlukla nicel bulguları destekleyerek ergenin düşük akademik motivasyonuna, sorunlu ve işlevsiz aile ilişkilerine ve ailelerin eğitime yetersiz veya yüzeysel desteğine atıfta bulunmuştur. Bu sonuçlara dayanarak, aile-okul ilişkilerini daha etkin hale getirmeye yönelik proaktif programların uygulanması gerektiği vurgulanabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ergenlik, Aile İşlevselliği, Lise Öğrencileri, Karma Yöntem.

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Introduction

School-family relationship in a child's education addresses the importance of cooperation between these two systems. Despite the necessity of this partnership, creating a positive school-family engagement may not always be straightforward due to problems and needs at the micro and macro levels. Studies reveal that the problems and disadvantages in the family system are reflected negatively in educational processes.

It is a well-documented fact that children from families with low socio-economic status (SES) have more difficulty in the educational process (Bellibas, 2016; Bodvin, Verschueren, De Haene, & Struyf, 2017; Tezcan, 2014; Yılmaz-Fındık, 2016). Low SES is linked to a variety of issues, including inability to adjust to school, low academic achievement, school absenteeism, dropping out, and tendency to crime. Low-income families are more likely to send their children to schools that are of poorer quality (Bodvin et al., 2017; Egitim Reformu Girişimi, 2017). Studies also show that the larger family size, which is associated with disadvantages such as higher risk of poverty, gender biased parenting, and low parental control, has negative effects on children's education (Erbay, 2008; Feij & Taris, 2010; Simsek, 2011; Tezcan, 2014).

Studies indicate that children from broken families have more behavioral and disciplinary issues, have more problems with peer relationships, have lower academic achievement, have a higher risk of dropping out of school, and have more physical and mental health problems (Angacian et al., 2015; Eymann, Busaniche, Llera, De Cunto, & Wahren, 2009; Havermans, Botterman, & Matthijs, 2014; Sapharas, Estell, Doran, & Waldron, 2016). Single parent households, which are a social reality of today's world, have remarkable disadvantages for their children's educational needs. As the single parent's responsibility for childcare and livelihood increases, less attention may be given to educational needs. Research show that children from single-parent households have lower academic achievement as they're more likely to be in poverty (Amato, Patterson, & Beattie, 2015;

Aydiner-Boylu & Öztop, 2013; Chukwuka, 2018; Feyzioglu & Kuscuoglu, 2011; Hastings & Schneider, 2021; Mensah & Oduro, 2019).

Patriarchal family structure could be addressed as a family disadvantage for children's education. The global gender gap in education, which disproportionately affects girls, prevents women from taking advantage of socioeconomic opportunities and increases their risk of further disadvantages (Özçatal, 2011; Tezcan, 2014). In this context, the contribution of the family to the reproduction of gender roles should be considered as a disadvantage for children.

In addition to all the above, the functioning of the family as a healthy system is critical for the healthy development of children. For this reason, we believe it is crucial to approach a child's education in terms of family functioning, which is influenced by the family's psycho-social circumstances. In this context, the present study addresses the school experiences of adolescent students, who are at an important developmental stage, in the context of family functioning and family difficulties from an ecological perspective.

Family functioning and adolescence

Family functioning can be seen in the adolescent-parent relationship in different ways, one of which is parenting style. Baumrind (1991) identified four main parenting styles as authoritarian, permissive, uninvolved, and authoritative. Basically, the levels of parental demandingness and responsiveness determine parenting styles. For instance, families with high demands of submission from their children while low responsiveness to them reflect an authoritarian parenting style. On the contrary, in families with permissive parenting style, expectations from children are generally quite low in terms of discipline. Based on the balance of freedoms and responsibilities, authoritative parenting is accepted as the functional and effective style. Resources indicate that parenting style is important for an adolescent's well-being and personality development (Gündoğdu-Aktürk, & Helvacı, 2010; Steinberg, 2013; Sümer, Özyürek & Tezel-Sahin, 2014; van Renen & Wild, 2008).

Although parenting style is significant for family functioning, the concept of "family functioning" covers a broader definition. Basically, family functioning refers to a set of characteristics that define a healthy family system. It is determined by factors such as family harmony and close interaction, parental involvement, developmental opportunities, positive affective climate, and problem-solving abilities (Alonso-Castillo, Yañez-Lozano, & Armendáriz-García, 2017; Berksun & Hızlı-Sayar, 2013; Epstein, Ryan, Bishop, Miller, & Keitner, 2003). A child's personality development in adolescence is highly affected by a healthy family structure. Studies reveal that alcohol and substance abuse, delinquency, violent and aggressive behaviours, inappropriate sexuality, and psychiatric disorders in adolescence are linked to family functioning (Alonso-Castillo, Yañez-Lozano, & Armendáriz-García, 2017; Ates & Akbas, 2012; Arslan & Balkıs, 2014; Kapçı & Hamamcı, 2010; Zinnur Kılıç, 2012). Therefore, family dysfunction is a major risk factor in adolescence, whereas a healthy family is a protective factor.

A well-known conceptualization of family functioning is the McMaster Model of Family Functioning, developed by Epstein, Baldwin, & Bishop (1983). The model, which is based on General Systems Theory, views family as a system and focuses on the components that are key to the system's functioning. These are six dimensions consisted of problem solving, communication, roles, affective response, affective involvement, and behavior control (see Table 1). The McMaster Model provides a clinical framework for assessing and enhancing family functioning. Based on this framework, various measurement tools and therapy methods have been developed.

Adolescent, family, and school from ecological perspective

The surrounding systems that adolescent interact with may be varied as family, school, circle of friends, relatives, and social institutions. Family and school are the two of major systems in adolescents' social and educational life. The ecological perspective conceptualizes the network

covering the interactions between internal and external factors on an individual's behavior as well as interactions with other individuals and systems. Each individual would seek to maintain their functioning within their ecology, based on their capacity to adapt to the environment (Baykara-Acar & Acar, 2002; Özbesler & Bulut, 2013; Teather, 2015). When an individual is unable to cope with the challenges in their environment, social and professional support would be required.

Since family has a high impact on one's ecology, Constable (2009) emphasizes that schools cannot achieve their mission without connecting with families. The contemporary literature thus focuses more on the parental involvement in education (Raines, Stone, & Frey, 2010). This may include monitoring the academic success of the child, providing an environment that will support home education, doing activities together, communicating with teachers and school management, participating in school activities, and seeking social resources for education (Jarolmen, 2014; Lindberg & Demircan, 2013). Because not all families are skilled or motivated to engage in such practices, they may need professional assistance.

Table 1. McMaster Model of Family Functioning

Dimension	Definition	Two sides of functioning
Problem solving	The family's ability to solve problems that threaten the family's integrity and functionality	<i>Functional</i> : Ability to follow the phases of a problem-solving process
		<i>Dysfunctional</i> : Inability to identify problems that encountered
Communication	Verbal and nonverbal communication patterns used by family members	<i>Functional</i> : Clear and direct communication
		<i>Dysfunctional</i> : Masked and indirect communication
Roles	Behavior patterns and task sharing to meet the family's material and spiritual needs	<i>Functional</i> : Fair and accountable role distribution among family members
		<i>Dysfunctional</i> : Role ambiguity and role unsustainability
Affective response	Family members' reactions to emotional stimuli	<i>Functional</i> : Reflecting appropriate emotions in most situations
		<i>Dysfunctional</i> : Avoidance or limitation of emotional expression
Affective involvement	Affection and care between family members	<i>Functional</i> : Empathetic emotional involvement
		<i>Dysfunctional</i> : Lack of emotional involvement
Behavior control	Rules and behavior control mechanisms in the family	<i>Functional</i> : Flexible and consistent behavioral control
		<i>Dysfunctional</i> : Chaotic and inconsistent behavior control

Adapted from Epstein, Baldwin, & Bishop (1983) and Bulut (1990)

The present study

There is a growing body of evidence that family experiences and familial characteristics have a significant impact on children's and adolescents' educational lives. Therefore, the schooling of a student who experience familial problems would be negatively affected by this situation. Understanding adolescent students' experiences in this context is an essential beginning point for this research. In this regard, the focus of the present study is to gain a comprehensive understanding about how adolescents perceive the influence of family interactions and family disadvantages on their schooling. In fact, it would be argued that considerable changes are needed to improve family-oriented school services in Turkey, where the research was conducted. The following research questions were addressed in quantitative and qualitative dimensions related to the main purpose:

- Does the perception of family functioning of adolescents vary in terms of gender, parent employment status, average grade, feelings about school, family support for education, meeting family expectations?
- How do adolescents describe their family characteristics related to family relationships, disadvantages, support, and expectations?
- How do school professionals describe the family profile, family disadvantages, and family functioning of the students they serve?
- What are the distinctions and similarities between the findings of quantitative and qualitative data?

Method

This study is based on a mixed-method which combines quantitative and qualitative methods. Mix-method research involves collecting and analysing both qualitative and quantitative data in order to address the advantage of utilizing both research methodologies to highlight and enhance our understanding of the topic. This methodology of research has gained prominence due to its

applicability for research problems when quantitative or qualitative paradigms alone are not adequate. (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2014; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

The primary rationale for employing a mixed-method in current research is to detail and explain statistical knowledge on research subjects through their thoughts and experiences. In this context, it was assumed that this method would be more functional in terms of providing a multi-faceted evaluation of adolescent students' school and family lives. Choosing an integrative approach could be a more effective way to get the necessary data since human needs and problems are inherently complex (Watkins & Gioia, 2015).

For this study, a mixed method design that gives equal weight to quantitative and qualitative aspects was adopted. This is called as convergent design or concurrent triangulation design. The design is based on concurrently gathering quantitative and qualitative data, analysing them separately, and comparing the findings. Therefore, an integrative interpretation could be established by evaluating the similarities and differences (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2014) (see Figure 1).

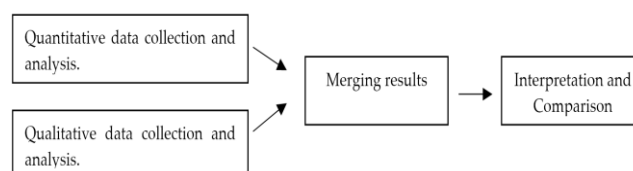


Figure 1. Convergent Mix-Method Design (Adapted from Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2014)

Research sample

The population of the study was 9233 high school students from vocational high schools located in Altındag, Ankara, Turkey. The researchers chose this district on purpose as it is one of the most socioeconomically disadvantaged central districts in Ankara (Ankara Kalkınma Ajansı, 2018). Vocational high schools were also selected purposefully as they are presumed to have more children from disadvantaged families in Turkish educational context (Vuranok, Özcan, & Çelebi, 2017; Yazgan & Sugur, 2019). For the quantitative phase of the study, the sample consisted of 412

vocational high school students from randomly selected schools. Using the cluster sampling method, the following steps were implemented in the selection process:

- In order to involve schools from different sides of the district, the district is divided into four parts as clusters.
- From each part, one school was randomly selected as clusters.
- From school-based clusters, classes from each grade level were randomly selected. All students in selected class were involved in the study sample.

The data of 397 students was processed but data of 15 participants could not be used due to critical missing value. The descriptive statistics about the sample of quantitative part of the study are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. The sociodemographic characteristics of the study group

Variable	Category	f	%
Gender	Female	125	31.5
	Male	272	68.5
Grade level	9th	122	30.73
	10th	128	32.24
	11th	83	20.91
	12th	64	16.12
Age	14-15	89	22.6
	16-17	248	62.9
	18 and older	57	14.5

For the qualitative phase of the study, maximum variation sampling was employed. The aim of maximum variation sampling is to reflect diversity of individuals who experience the problem and who could bring knowledge from different perspectives (Yıldırım & Simsek, 2016). Selected students and school professional were involved in this phase. Students for the qualitative dimension were chosen from those who had attended the quantitative data collection and filled out the questionnaires. The students were chosen under the supervision of the school staff, and it was aimed to involve students with various characteristics in terms of school and family status. Those who agreed to participate were involved in this stage. The information about the participant students of qualitative part are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Participant students of the qualitative phase *

Participant	Gender	Age	Participant	Gender	Age
P1	Male	15	P12	Male	17
P2	Female	15	P13	Male	17
P3	Male	17	P14	Female	16
P4	Male	16	P15	Female	16
P5	Male	16	P16	Male	17
P6	Female	16	P17	Female	17
P7	Male	18	P18	Male	17
P8	Male	17	P19	Female	17
P9	Male	15	P20	Male	16
P10	Male	15	P21	Female	15
P11	Female	16	P22	Male	15

* The listing has been made by the order of interviews.

School professionals were also included in the qualitative phase in order to enrich and diversify data. At this point, the aim was to have school professionals, especially school counselors, from each selected school. School counselors were targeted because they are in a position to work directly with students and families. Eight professionals volunteered to take part in the study. Since there was no school counselor in one selected school, school administrators were involved instead. The information about the participant school professionals is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Participant school professionals of the qualitative phase of the study*

Participant	Gender	Age	Work year
SP1	Male	50	25
SP2	Male	51	29
SP3	Male	45	22
SP4	Male	35	8
SP5	Female	46	23
SP6	Female	44	20
SP7	Female	33	7
SP8	Female	45	21

* The listing has been made by the order of interviews.

Participant selection for the qualitative phase lasted until saturation achieved. When participants do not provide further analytical information, the qualitative data may become saturated (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). Therefore, the sample size for this phase was consisted of a total of 30 participants to provide maximum outcome on the research problem.

Data collection tools

Survey form: A self-report survey form for students was prepared to obtain data on

demographics and perceptions of certain themes. Demographic questions covered gender, grade level, age, parental status, number of siblings, birth order, parental education status, parental employment status. School life theme had questions on school success, sense of accomplishment, school motivation, and interactions with others in the school environment. Family theme included the questions on perception of family relations, perception of family support for education, and sense of meeting family expectations. The form was implemented in a pilot study with 15 students from one of the selected schools to decide whether the draft form was clear and understandable. After this process, the final survey form was completed.

McMaster family assessment device (FAD): To measure adolescent students' perceptions of family functioning, McMaster Family Assessment Device (FAD) was employed. FAD is a self-report scale based on McMaster Model of Family Functioning which identifies 6 dimensions of family as problem solving, communication, roles, affective responsiveness, affective involvement, behavior control. Epstein, Boldwin and Bishop (1983), the developers of FAD, added a sub-scale reflecting the general functioning of the family and designed the scale to be consisted of seven sub-scales and 60 items. It is a four-point Likert-type scale and the higher value on each sub-scale indicates poorer levels family functioning. Bulut (1990) adapted FAD to Turkish culture. The internal consistency of subscale ranged from .72 to .92. The internal consistency of Turkish version was found to be .38 and .86, test-retest reliability was found as .62 and .90.

Semi-structured interview forms: Semi-structured interview forms designed by the researcher were used to obtain the qualitative data of the study. In this regard, two forms were generated as student interview form and school professional interview form. The forms, which were used as a guide in conducting the interview process, included open-ended questions under certain themes. Student interview form included the themes of school life in a general manner, problems in school, family

relations, family functioning, and educational expectations. School professional interview form had themes on student's academic achievement and motivation, family profile, family disadvantages, family related educational problems and needs, suggestions for solutions, the role of social work in addressed concerns. Both forms were reviewed by two peers and two of the school professionals and revised in line with the recommendations.

Data collection and analysis

The survey and FAD were administered in student's classrooms face to face, by using hard-copy, and under supervision of the researcher and teachers. To ensure this, the researcher asked the teachers who teach in the selected classrooms whether they allowed to a survey being administered during their class. Students were informed about the research and asked for their consent. Those who accepted to voluntarily involve in the study were asked to sign the informed consent form. Data collection was conducted in 16 separate classrooms with the teachers who agreed to participate. Questionnaires were delivered to 412 students. After checking carelessly and inconsistently filled forms, 15 forms were eliminated. Data of 397 were entered to SPSS 23.0 software. Before analysing the data, normal distribution was tested. To check the normal distribution, the skewness and kurtosis values were examined (see Table 5), and it was assumed that the data were normally distributed. Independent samples t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between the group means. When an ANOVA result indicates a difference, post-hoc test was used to determine the source of the difference.

In the qualitative phase, data was collected through interviews in May and June in the year 2017. To record interviews, a recording device and note-taking were used. To prevent data loss, the teachers who did not want to use voice recorders verified their quotations after the interviews. Interviews of both students and school professionals were held in places that allow one-

on-one conversation, such as the guidance office, administrator office, or an empty classroom. Thankfully, school staff was quite helpful in this process. To prepare for analysis, all interviews were transcribed into Word files. All files have been systematically read, and prepared for encoding through transferring to the MAXQDA 2018. Using thematic analysis methods for qualitative research, the data were reviewed by the researchers for overlapping or differentiating aspects to find themes and categories related to research objectives. After creating a code system, researches encoded data individually and then the themes were determined jointly. The agreement rate between the two researchers' coding was calculated via MAXQDA Intercoder Agreement Tool as 88.9%. According to Miles and Huberman (1994, as cited in Baltacı, 2017) intercoder agreement rate should not be less than 80%. Moreover, triangulation strategies were used to ensure the internal validity of the data, using multiple data sources (students and school staff), comparing the findings from the data sources, and using at least three sources of information to support each major finding. The findings from the qualitative and quantitative dimensions were organized to integrate and report together at the end of the process. Finally, direct quotations were used in order to substantiate the categories and themes.

Research ethics

Before data collecting, ethical confirmation was acquired from Hacettepe University's ethical committee and the research permission was acquired from Ankara Provincial Directorate of National Education. During the data collecting, the study participants were informed about the confidentiality, anonymity, objectives, and contact information of the researchers through a voluntary participation form. The APA's (2017) ethical guidelines were followed throughout the research process.

Findings

The results of the study are based on a thematic combination of quantitative and qualitative analyses. Quantitative findings represent the comparison of FAD scores between groups, while qualitative findings are presented through direct quotations after the quantitative findings. Table 5 shows the FAD scores that reflect the students' perceptions on family functioning.

Table 5. Family functioning scores of adolescents

FAD sub-scales	\bar{X}	SD	Min	Max	Skew.	Kurt.
Problem solving (PS)	2.06	0.62	1.00	4.00	0,558	0,092
Communication (CM)	2.12	0.52	1.00	3.67	0,289	-0,106
Roles (RL)	2.19	0.42	1.27	3.55	0,446	0,363
Affective responsiveness (AR)	2.13	0.61	1.00	4.00	0,558	-0,101
Affective involvement (AI)	2.40	0.39	1.43	3.71	0,463	0,274
Behavior control (BC)	2.13	0.34	1.33	3.11	0,287	-0,131
General functioning (GF)	1.87	0.57	1.00	4.00	0,679	0,158

Table 5 indicates that the mean score is more than 2 in six of the seven sub-scales of the FAD. A mean score of 2 or above in the FAD evaluation shows that the family would have dysfunctional tendencies in the relevant sub-dimension. Adolescents generally have a perception of low family functioning. The results of the correlation analysis between the scores of the sub-scales are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Correlations between subscales of FAD

	CM	RL	AR	AI	BC	GF
PS	r .533** p .000 n 397	.502** .000 397	.452** .000 397	-.036 .470 397	.326** .000 397	.703** .000 397
CM	r 1 p .000 n 397	.499** .000 397	.552** .000 397	.208** .000 397	.271** .000 397	.691** .000 397
RL	r 1 p .000 n 397	.499** .000 397	.552** .000 397	.208** .000 397	.271** .000 397	.691** .000 397
AR	r 1 p .000 n 397	.499** .000 397	.552** .000 397	.208** .000 397	.271** .000 397	.691** .000 397
AI	r 1 p .000 n 397	.499** .000 397	.552** .000 397	.208** .000 397	.271** .000 397	.691** .000 397
BC	r 1 p .000 n 397	.499** .000 397	.552** .000 397	.208** .000 397	.271** .000 397	.691** .000 397

It can be seen that the scores in almost all sub-scales are positively related to each other. The general functions (GF) scores demonstrate a positive correlation with other subscales, strong with PS ($p < 0.05$, $r = .703$), CM ($p < 0.05$, $r = 0.691$), RL ($p < 0.05$, $r = 0.632$), and AR ($p < 0.05$, $r = 0.686$), moderate with BC ($p < 0.05$, $r = 0.403$), and weak with AI

($p < 0.05$, $r = 0.187$). Accordingly, it was considered that general functions scores could represent the adolescents' perception of family functioning in further analyses. The following are the results of examining adolescents' perceptions of family functioning (GF) in terms of various variables (Table 7).

Table 7. Comparing FAD's General Functioning Scores

Variable	Category	n	\bar{X}	SD	t	p	d	
Gender	Female	125	1.87	0.58	.000	1.000	-	
	Male	272	1.87	0.56				
Mother's employment	Non-employed	308	1.83	0.56	-2.761	.006**	0.34	
	Employed	86	2.02	0.56				
Last year's grade	Under 70	234	1.91	0.58	2.282	.023*	0.25	
	70+	151	1.77	0.53				
Variable	Category	n	\bar{X}	SD	F	p	η^2	Tukey
Family relations	Very good (I)	200	1.60	0.44	84.021	.000**	0.39	I<II I<III
	Good (II)	127	1.94	0.40				I<IV
	Moderate (III)	46	2.36	0.52				II<III
	Bad (IV)	24	2.86	0.53				II<IV III<IV
Feelings about school	Very positive (I)	60	1.76	0.53	7.579	.000**	0.06	I<IV
	Positive (II)	127	1.74	0.53				II<IV
	Neutral (III)	158	1.95	0.54				III<IV
	Negative (IV)	50	2.12	0.69				
Perceived parental support for education	Always (I)	249	1.74	0.52	30.957	.000**	0.13	I<II
	Often (II)	82	1.93	0.49				I<III
	Sometimes or rarely (III)	65	2.31	0.59				II<III
Effects of family problems on school life	Never (I)	96	1.74	0.51	13.642	.000**	0.12	I<IV
	Rarely (II)	111	1.72	0.46				I<V
	Sometimes (III)	86	1.83	0.53				II<IV II<V
Adolescent-parent consensus on educational expectations	Always (I)	64	1.65	0.47	24.596	.000**	0.15	I<III
	Often (II)	122	1.64	0.44				I<IV
	Sometimes (III)	144	2.02	0.58				II<III
	Rarely/Never (IV)	66	2.20	0.58				II<IV

Regarding the perception of family functioning of adolescents, the mean scores of general functions are equal, hence the t-test results indicate no significant difference between the groups ($p > .05$). The results in terms of parental employment status indicated a differentiation between groups. Despite the results indicated no significant difference between the groups of paternal employment status, it was observed that students' perception of family functioning differentiated according to maternal employment status. The students whose mothers work perceived their families to be more 'dysfunctional'

than students whose mothers do not ($t = -2.761$, $p < .01$). The effect size of this significant difference was small, according to Cohen's d calculation ($d = 0.34$).

The t-test results revealed that the academic achievement grades significantly differed between the groups ($t = 2.282$, $p < .05$). Accordingly, it has been shown that students with average or below (average=60-69, pass=50-59, fail=0-49) grades perceived their families less functional than students with above average (good=70-84, very good=85-100) grades. The effect size of the significant difference in this variable is also small ($d = 0.25$).

According to one-way ANOVA results, the students' perceptions of family functioning vary depending on how they rated their family relations ($F = 84.021$, $p < .01$), feelings about school ($F = 7.579$, $p < .01$), perceived support from family for education ($F = 30.957$, $p < .01$), the effects of family problems on their school life ($F = 13.642$, $p < .01$), and consensus with parent on educational expectations ($F = 24.596$, $p < .01$). When the eta square is calculated, the effect sizes of the differences between the groups related to these variables were found to be medium ($\eta^2 = 0.6-0.13$) to large ($\eta^2 = 0.15-0.39$).

To determine the source of the difference between groups, post-hoc tests were employed. According to observed mean scores comparison, students who rated their family relationships as better perceived their families to be more functioning. Those who have negative feelings towards school have a perception of lower family functioning than other groups. Students who think that they always receive support from their families for education have a perception of higher family functioning than other groups. Those who reported that the problems they experienced in the family were more frequently mirrored in the school also perceived a lower family functioning (Table 7).

The findings from the qualitative data provided an in-depth understanding in the findings of quantitative phase. In this respect, the results of the analysis revealed significant information concerning adolescents' familial difficulties and school experiences (Table 8).

Table 8. Themes and categories of adolescents' familial and educational disadvantages

Themes	Categories	Students (f)	School Professionals (f)
Family disadvantages	Financial issues/poverty	12	7
	Stressful life experiences	9	7
	Patriarchy/Gender issues	18	8
Family relations	Ineffective parenting	9	6
	Gender biased roles	11	7
	Poor/limited interactions	15	7
Student experience in school	Low academic motivation	12	8
	Low sense of achievement	14	5
	Negative feelings about school	10	4
Family in education	Low parental involvement	13	8
	Superficial support/General advices	12	6
	Unrealistic educational expectations	7	5

The findings from the qualitative data provided an in-depth understanding in the findings of quantitative phase (Table 8). The disadvantages of families, relationships in the family, school experiences, and family involvement in education shaped the main domains of qualitative findings.

Family disadvantages

In the context of family disadvantages, when asked school professionals to evaluate the families of their current students. All the participant professionals identified characteristics associated with low socioeconomic status. In terms of income status, education level, professional qualification, and living conditions, it has been stated that families experience considerable disadvantages:

SP1: "Financial difficulties, limited budget, many children, as well as health problems, education problems, transportation problems... So there are many factors that bring about such problems."

SP3: "When we look at eighty percent, when I talk about our school, father in the family, temporary jobs. [...] seriously the economies are low..."

SP5: "Eighty percent of our students' families have a bad economic situation. [...] Sometimes we ask the student "Why don't you have a school uniform?" "My father didn't buy it," he says. [...] Most of the families are concerned about their livelihood and do not spare time for school and student issues."

SP6: "There are parents who work in various adverse conditions. [...] Some of them are waitresses in nightclubs [...] there are people who usually do cleaning or such things (especially among women). [...] There are those who work in the bakeries. They do "tea-making" or catering. That kind of stuff. So, nothing too high."

Another significant issue, the gender inequality was particularly addressed about family characteristics, considering the family disadvantages. Therefore, gender discrimination was reflected in family attitudes based on the students' thoughts on their families. Female students appear to be at a disadvantage because they believe they would be more at ease if they were boys:

P11: "If I were a boy) it would be different, quite different. [...] I would spend my time outside. I would spend it with my friends. [...] It's easier to them, harder to be a girl. Because boys can do whatever they want... I think so. I think (my parent) wouldn't have restricted me too much."

P14: "If I were a boy, things would be easier to do. [...] for example, I could come home whenever I wanted. [...] I would be freer. My parent would have treated me better, they wouldn't have intervened... (My brother as well) interferes with everything I do, including whether or not I come home, my clothes, and everything else. For this, I'm looking for a problem with my father. Because of not saying anything (to him)."

Similarly, school professionals made references to the gender biased attitudes of students' families:

SP4: "... we are a patriarchal society, boys are more valuable, they are given more tolerance. For example, a girl may be removed (by parents) from school due to one or two mistakes she made, but not for a boy. On the other hand, while there is a 'stay at home' mentality towards girls..."

SP3: "Is there a discrimination? Yes, there is. The first sacrificed will be girls, of course. So, the social thing... His son can take care of himself, he would invest in him. He would not to invest in his daughter because his daughter will go away, that is, someone else will earn the investment."

SP8: "When we look at the structure of families, we see that more space is given to boys. Boys are more at ease, they can even smoke with their father and talk about their girlfriend. But this is not the case for girls, they do most things secretly."

In terms of common gender roles in the community, mothers in most families have a great deal of responsibility, according to school professionals:

SP6: "(Children) spend more time with their mother. [...] We generally have mothers who do not work. The child comes to school depending on the mother's condition, discipline or responsibility. (The children) spend time with the mother, taking her as a role model."

In other words, their shares (with the father) are lower in this regard, but their shares with the mother higher."

SP7: "Fathers are unaware of most things. Most of them are people who leave in the morning and come in the evening or in the midnight... mothers take care of everything. All the burden is on the mother... Mother has to maintain control as much as she can. But this is a very risky area; anything can happen to children at any time. [...] That is terrifying."

SP8: "Families have financial and moral problems, this is a fact, but I also see some kind of reluctance to work. [...] Conditions of working women also difficult, they work in unqualified jobs because of their low level of education, such as cleaning, cooking, tea making, dishwashing..."

Family relations

Interviewed students' perspectives on family relations pointed to somewhat limited interactions in their families. A low tendency to spend time at home with other family members has been expressed by many of interviewed students.

P4: "When I get home in the evening, I will probably go to the computer. [...] I go into the room alone, play games. Others... They are sitting in front of the television. My brother plays by himself. Our house... There is not much conversation, my father is always silent. When a guest comes, he talks. Other than that, he doesn't..."

P5: "I watch TV series on Mondays. Then I go to the living room, otherwise I don't go much. [...] Spending time together [...] I see them at dinner and watching TV on Mondays. [...] (usually) I am in my room on the computer or on the phone."

It can be said that the interviewed school professionals also point to a rather negative portrayal of family relations and functioning:

SP1: "Students in this area do not tend to have much contact with their parents. But parents interestingly, I don't think they have a relationship with the student unless it is required."

SP4: "In children's lives, mother and father figures are very, very low, and child figures in families are low. [...] I mean, child is left so unattended... actually, there is no communication, they don't know each other (in the family), they are not aware of it."

SP7: "Many children do not get enough care and love from their families. It is such a thing that children do not have that luxury to expect such attention due to the living conditions and problems of their families."

School experiences

When examining at the attitudes of students toward school, it was understood that the majority of them felt a low sense of achievement:

P7: "I think of myself average. I neither work hard nor do I not. So I'm between the two. Sometimes I do my homework myself, sometimes I can't do it, I give it to my friends. Sometimes they help with exams."

P11: "To be honest, I'm not very hardworking... I believe my level of success is a lower than I would like... I don't think I'm successful... [...] you know, sometimes I can't focus too much. [...] There are a lot of stuff that I do not understand. [...] I get stressed when there is an exam or whatever."

While the majority of the students interviewed stated that they were having some academic difficulties, it was noticed that male students, in particular, highlighted this more frequently. Female students, in comparison to male students, have a favorable attitude toward education. Further information on students' performance was also provided by school professionals as following:

SP8: "The students' level of interest in school is very low. They see this place only as a social environment. They have little interest in the course. [...] many of them have behavioral problems; they do not listen to lectures. [...] They want to finish the school, you know, to get a diploma, but most of them do not aim to work in the field they study after they graduate."

SP5: "Usually low-achieving students come here. Our school's (entrance) point is low... It is commonly selected by students with ambiguous goals and objectives... So it's like they have to enroll in a school... Motivation vanishes when success is low.."

Parents in education

When students were asked about their parents' engagement with school and how parents support them, the majority of the responses emphasized positive but inefficient attention:

P18: "So they don't come (to school). [...] Sometimes I make him to cancel my absence if he stops by. [...] You will bring certificate, you will bring appreciation (certificate of achievement). [...] They aren't like that. [...] I mean, if you pass the class, that's enough. [...] You know, (my father) doesn't have much with my classes,

but he knows that I will pass (the class), [...] As I said, my family is at ease."

P9: "(My mother) wants me to pass first grade. She doesn't want me to fail (the class). "Son, do not wait for anyone's word, study your lessons. Once you get past the first grade, the other grades are easy," she says. "Don't slack off your studies, and don't chat in class," she says. She doesn't say much else after that."

According to school professionals, many families are oblivious of their children's education, and do not get involved in their educational processes:

SP2: "(They) have an instinctive desire for it. "I couldn't go to school, but my kid should", they say. [...] They desire it as a wish, but they can't establish a reasonable goal for their children since they can't look at them objectively. The child understands that no matter how hard he tries, he will not be able to achieve the established objective."

SP7: "One of our most important problems is that we cannot contact families. Most of the families are struggling with their livelihoods and do not take time for school and student issues. That's one of our greatest challenges, so it's very difficult to involve families and work with them."

SP5: "For example, you want to organize an event for parents. For instance, field choosing... The children will select a (vocational) field. You make an announcement of the meeting in different ways. You say we're having a meeting that includes explanations about our children's future. [...] So, there are around 200 students in the ninth grade. Just one parent attended."

Due to the families' inability to adequately involve in their children's education, it can be addressed that their educational aspirations are low. In this context, a discussion is given below with the previous findings in the literature.

Discussion and Conclusion

Employing a mixed-method design, the present study revealed considerable findings on adolescents' and school professionals' perception of family functioning and family disadvantages related education. The perception of the participant students about their family was closer to dysfunctioning in the family. Similar results were obtained in other studies involving Turkish high school students (Coskun, 2007; Coskun, 2008; Ünal, 2019). While FAD scores revealed that gender had no relevance on students' perceptions

of family functioning, qualitative findings revealed that female students have a more disadvantaged family perception. Karaca, Ünsal-Barlas, Onan, & Öz, (2013) found that girls between the ages of 16-20 perceived their families as more dysfunctional than boys in multiple dimensions of FAD. In another study, Shek, Leung, & Lu (2013) reported that male students generally had more positive perceptions of family functioning than females had in all domains of family functioning, from the findings from a large-scale longitudinal research including secondary school students in Hong Kong. Similarly, in a survey of secondary school students, it was revealed that male students found their families to be more supporting than female students, while female students reported their families to be more obstructive (Özkurt & Camadan, 2018). Involving 530 female students, a study by Aydoğan (2011) found that the most common complaint about unfavorable family attitudes (26%) expressed by female students was interference with their freedom. This finding was also underlined by the students and school professionals interviewed in the present study.

In a study on behavioral problems and family functioning of students aged 12-17 in China, researchers found that the nature of the family relationship was different for boys and girls. It was suggested that male adolescents were more likely to have conflict with their parents due to seeking independence and autonomy (Ma, Yao, & Zhao, 2013). According to the study by Carvalho, Fernandes, & Carvalho-Relva (2017), boys were also the main targets of their father's aggressive disciplinary actions and both parent's penalties and supervision compared to girls. Researchers indicate that girls may not encounter this situation as they are more obedient due to their gender roles. Consistent with the findings of this study, gender issues seemed to be effective on parental roles as well. The perceptions of participant students of family functioning varied depending on whether their mother was working. Unexpectedly, it was observed that the students whose mothers were employed perceived their family as having lower functioning. A mother's employment with a low level of education can be challenging for the family in a disadvantaged community since it increases

the pressure on the mother, who is the primary caregiver for the family (Şirvanlı-Özen, 2009). In fact, the mother's work is not expected and seen as a necessity due to the family's financial problems (Bayat, 2015). As revealed in Özçatal's study (2011), women's work does not mitigate their chores and responsibilities at home. The majority of working women who participated in the study stated that they still have the primary responsibilities for cooking, cleaning, laundry, dishwashing, child care, or care of the elderly or sick at home.

The results of the study revealed that adolescents' perceptions of family functioning differentiated depending on how they rated family relationships. Better family relationships and better family functioning would be important for adolescents' well-being. Interviewed school professionals also stated that students' familial relationships are largely unsatisfactory. Studies have indicated that those who report higher level of positive family functioning have higher psychological well-being (Injo-Ulloque, 2020), have more subjective well-being (Eryılmaz, 2010), and have a higher level of adaptability (Kalyencioğlu & Kutlu, 2010). Adolescents who feel happy in the family have reflected fewer behavioral problems (Yavuz & Özmete, 2012), while those who experience trust, respect, and love in the family have reported a more positive relationship with their families (Karataş, Sertelin-Mercan, & Düzen, 2016).

Family functioning has also observed as a significant factor in terms of adolescents' school life. The findings obtained from the quantitative and qualitative phases provided important information on this topic. Students with negative feelings about school have a lower perception of family functioning than other students. Moreover, the interviewed students mainly stated that their sense of achievement was low, while school professionals also reported similar thoughts on their school motivation. Annunziata, Hogue, Faw, & Liddle (2006) determined that family adjustment has a positive effect on school engagement, and therefore, increased family adjustment results in increased school engagement. In another study, Ateş & Akbaş (2012) found that some school-related deviant behaviors of adolescents such as

truancy and cheating varied by functional and dysfunctional family characteristics. Adolescents perceived their families as more functional, their scores for school dropout scores decreased, according to Arslan (2012). On the other hand, negative attitudes towards school are associated with low school commitment (Atik & Özer, 2020), low academic achievement (Stubbs & Maynard, 2017), absenteeism (Adıgüzel & Karadaş, 2013), deviant behaviors at school (Ateş & Akbaş, 2012), and truancy (Gökçe Arslan-Çifci, 2016).

It was observed that students whose year-end GPA was average or below (<70) had a poorer perception of family functioning than other students. This result is consistent with the findings of previous research, which demonstrate that children who have family difficulties succeed much worse in school grades (Dam, 2008; Stubbs & Maynard, 2017), and those who perceive their families as unhealthy made worse in mathematics (Karaagaç & Erbay 2015). Paz-Navarro, Rodríguez-Roldán, & Martínez-González (2008) compared the family functioning of high school students in terms of their school performance (low and average). Researchers conclude that families with students with low school performance had more vulnerable family functioning than families with students with average school performance.

Another significant finding was that parental educational support varied adolescents' perceptions of family functioning. It was shown that those who felt more parental support had better perceptions of family functioning. On the other hand, interviewed students' comments implied that their families' support for the school was somewhat superficial, while school professionals stated that parental involvement was minimal. According to Roksa & Kinsley (2018), socioeconomically disadvantaged families frequently lack the capacity to support their children toward success. In their research involving students of low-income families, they found that there was a significant relationship between family emotional support and academic outcomes of low-income students. Emotional support of family was beneficial as it enhances psychological well-being and increased school engagement. Similarly, Annunziata et al. (2006)

revealed that parental follow-up increased the adolescent's commitment to school, even if it was at a moderate level. In other studies that indicate the importance of family support, it has been found that perceived family support increases the student's commitment to school (Rodríguez-Fernández, Ramos-Díaz, Ros, Zuazagoitia, 2018), while low family support increases the risk of dropping out (Şimşek, 2011). As school professionals have pointed out, it is a significant issue since families from disadvantaged backgrounds lack an intact understanding to engage in their children's education. In a meta-analytic review, Castro et al. (2015) indicated the strong relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement when parents establish and maintain communication with children about school activities, schoolwork, and reading habits. Furthermore, authoritative parenting, which reflects healthy family functioning, has been found to be a major predictor of self-efficacy and resilience, as well as a significant correlation with academic achievement (Banerjee & Lamb, 2016). Therefore, it can be concluded that although these students need more parental involvement, they are more deprived of it due to their families' conditions.

The contradiction between parents and adolescents over educational expectations is one of the areas where students' perceptions of family functioning differ. It is recognized that children who report having less agreement with their families on educational goals consider their families to be less functioning. A similar direction can be seen in the qualitative findings of this study. School professionals emphasized that families with a poor level of education were unable to engage in their children's education and set reasonable expectations. Studies indicate that parents with less income and less education are more likely to have lower educational expectations for their children (Carolan and Wasserman 2015; Davis-Kean 2005). Another study conducted with students from a school serving low-income students found that their parents had high educational expectations despite their lower levels of educational attainment. The basic consensus between adolescent and parent is getting a four-

year high school degree (Kirk, Lewis-Moss, Nilsen & Colvin, 2011). Dam (2008) found that students were concerned about their parents' unrealistic expectations for themselves and their education. As stated by Bayhan & Dalgıç (2012), although families want their children to attend high school, because they cannot take an approach to prevent failure or absenteeism at school, the child's probability of dropping out increases. In this light, it can be stated that the findings of this study are generally consistent with those of previous studies in the literature.

The findings of the study provided valuable quantitative and qualitative understanding into the influence of families on adolescents' developmental tasks and educational achievement. On the other hand, research findings were mainly consistent with previous research. Moreover, quantitative and qualitative findings generally generated overlapping themes. According to adolescents' and school professionals' perceptions, it can be asserted that family relations and functioning may not be adequate to support adolescents in their education. Families' socioeconomic challenges are likely to have an impact on this issue.

From the ecological perspective, this could be an essential point for understanding the interaction of multiple systems on a child's school life. In fact, addressing students' school success only on an individual basis may cause ignoring other important systems that affect education. Therefore, it can be argued that family support services should be improved, considering that students and families from disadvantaged background need them the most. Supporting families by increasing their presence in education and enabling them to perform more effective parenting would be protective factors for adolescents' resilience. To accomplish this, it is important to note that the efforts of various professionals who engage in an interdisciplinary teamwork would be more relevant.

Finally, it should be noted that this study has some limitations. First and foremost, family functioning was assessed primarily from the perspective of adolescents in this study. The researchers' inability to include parents in the

study might be considered a limitation. The key reason for this situation is the difficulty in reaching families due to time and cost limits. On the other hand, gathering data in a short period of time has made it harder to predict the results' consistency over time. Using more than one measure to get more consistent findings would have been more efficient. Another limitation is that the study was conducted in a single school type and a certain district. A study based on the participation of students from different locations (district or province), socio-economic status, different types of schools could improve the comprehensive understanding of the subject.

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