



## Araştırma Makalesi • Research Article

# A Matter of Life Chances: Preparing for Transition to High School (LGS) during the Pandemic Period from the Perspective of Mothers

## Bir Yaşam Fırsatı Meselesi: Annelerin Bakış Açılarında Salgın Sürecinde Lise Geçiş Sistemi'ne (LGS) Hazırlık

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### ÖZ

Bu çalışmanın amacı, salgın döneminde Lise Geçiş Sistemi'ne (LGS) hazırlanan öğrencilerin deneyimlerini annelerin bakış açısından incelemektir. Araştırma, genel nitel araştırma deseninde planlanmıştır. Veriler, çevrimiçi platformlarda on bir katılımcıyla görüşülerek toplanmıştır. Görüşmelerde araştırmacılarca düzenlenen yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu kullanılmıştır. Tematik analiz sonucu, öğrenme, organize olma, ilişkiler ve destek ihtiyacı temalarına ulaşılmıştır. Pandemi öncesi aile içi ve okuldaki olumlu ilişkilerin, pandemi sürecinin getirdikleri ile başa çıkmada destekleyici unsurlar olduğu görülmektedir. Aile içerisinde, sınav sürecini takip eden ebeveynlerin anneler olduğu görülmektedir. Ailelerin gözlemlerinde, okullar akademik anlamda sürece hızlı bir şekilde uyum sağlamışlar ve öğrencilerin ihtiyaçlarına cevap vermişlerdir. Ailelerin deneyimlerinde, okulların rehberlik servisleri, öğrencileri duygusal olarak destekleme konusunda beklentileri tam karşılayamamıştır. MEB tarafından atılan adımlar ise, öğrencilerin süreci daha kolay geçirmesine destek olmuştur.

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to examine the experiences of students who were prepared for the High School Transition System (LGS) during the pandemic period from the perspective of mothers. The research was planned in the general qualitative research design. Data were collected by interviewing eleven participants on online platforms. A semi-structured interview form prepared by the researchers was used in the interviews. As a result of the thematic analysis, themes were emerged, namely learning, organization, relationships and need for support. It is seen those positive relationships within the family and at school before the pandemic are supportive factors in coping with the consequences of the pandemic process. In the family, it is seen that the parents who follow the exam process are mothers. In the observations of the families, the schools quickly adapted to the academic process and responded to the needs of the students. In the families' experience, the school's guidance services did not fully meet the expectations in terms of supporting students emotionally. The steps taken by the MoNE, on the other hand, helped the students to pass the process more easily.

## 1. Introduction

One of the main functions of the family is to raise the new generation. This function indicates that; as well as meeting their psychological needs children should also be supported

in terms of developing their talents and potentials (Ozguven, 2001). The family solely falls behind to realize the talents and potentials of the children; at this point, the family receives support from institutions such as schools. Likewise, the school expects support from the family to achieve its goals. The aim of the cooperation with parents in the

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education process is to increase success by getting the support of the parents (Gumuseli, 2004). Studies show that family participation plays an important role in the acquisition of various emotional, social and academic skills of children with and without special education needs at different educational levels (Ekinci-Vural & Kocabas, 2016; Esmer et.al., 2017; Karakus, 2014). Families participate in their children's education at different levels, from providing appropriate care to the child, to cooperation with the community. Also, this range includes communication, volunteering, learning at home and making decision (Epstein, 2010). To illustrate, teachers can get help from parents for homework assigned to ensure that the family supports the child's success.

Teachers' collaboration with the family on homework, receiving their opinions about homework, providing the student with information about how parents can help and guide and how to regulate the study environment will contribute to the learning process (Epstein, Mac Iver, Mac Iver, & Sheldon, 2021; Mertol- Ilgar, 2008). The support of the family to the child in this process is through organizing the home environment and ensuring participation in school activities. Organizing the home environment means that the family knows what the children learn and what they have to learn, the tools they need, and the ways to help the child. Thus, it is expected from them to be able to motivate the child and to contribute to the success of the child with repetition and reinforcement. Time planning, helping with homework, talking with the child about activities at school are things that parents can do to support the child at home (Gumuseli, 2004). According to Xu and Corno (2006), middle school students also need parental support in terms of how to cope with, when they have difficulties and distractions while doing homework, as well as organizing the home environment. Also in their study, the researchers found that children who received parental support had more advantages in terms of time management, focusing, organizing the workspace, coping with emotions, and motivating themselves throughout the competition of homework (Xu & Corno, 2003; 2006). Most of the teachers generally believe that parental interest contributed to student's academic and social development (Cayak & Karsantik, 2020), especially students with highly educated parents (Tan, Lyu, & Peng, 2020). According to Xu and Corno (2006), middle school students also need parental support in terms of how to cope with when they have difficulties and distractions while doing homework, as well as organizing the home environment. Also in their study, the researchers found that children who received parental support had more advantages in terms of time management, focusing, organizing the workspace, coping with emotions and motivating themselves throughout the homework (Xu & Corno, 2003; 2006). Parental involvement in homework is seen as a potential determinant of homework effectiveness (Dettmers, Yotyodying, & Jonkmann, 2019). Parents with children attending school engage in behaviors such as talking to the child about homework, suggesting a place for information or help with homework, reviewing and checking the homework, helping with the project, arranging someone to help the child with the homework (Markow et al., 2007). Therefore, how the parents support the child in homework is essential.

Parents can help with homework in different ways. However, it is not about doing homework with the child or answering the questions for him. It is encouraging the child to find the correct answer, removing distractions, and setting rules for completing the assignments. (Gonida & Cortina, 2014). Besides, it is also possible to classify parental attitudes towards parental involvement in homework as supporting the child's autonomy, direct participation and eliminating distractions (Cooper, Lindsay, & Nye, 2000). Therefore, it seems important how the parents help out with homework. It was found that if the help with homework is supportive, the success of the student increases, while the interventionist help affects student success negatively (Moroni et al., 2015). A less intrusive approach and allowing them to be more autonomous increase success and the possibility of completing assignments (Cooper, Lindsay & Nye, 2000). Parents' emotional support and allowing the child to be autonomous make them feel more positive while doing homework (Kenney-Benson & Pomerantz, 2005; Knollmann & Wild, 2007). On the other hand, homework has an effect also on parents. Although many families see homework as an opportunity to communicate with their children, helping with homework can be a source of stress and conflict in some families, believing that it prevents children from spending time with the family for homework. This situation seems to be a burden especially for families who think that homework has no benefit (Markow et al., 2007).

One of the periods, when parents are most interested in the academic development of their children at school is when their children are preparing for central exams. In Turkey, the transition between stages is done with the exam center. LGS (High School Transition System) is a central examination to enter the so-called qualified schools. With the latest regulations, students who do not want to take the exam have the right to not participate in the exam (Toytok, Eren, & Gezen, 2019). According to the new system introduced in 2018, 90% of the students will be able to settle in schools in their region of residence without an examination. 10% of the students will be placed in schools called qualified schools, based on their success in the optional exam consisting of 90 questions (Education Reform Initiative, 2017). Due to the limited quotas of qualified schools and the large number of students applying, High School Entrance Examinations have turned into a race (Celik, Boz, Arkan, & Toklucu, 2017). Due to the effects of central exam results on the profession and school preferences, families and schools' expectations from students increase in this period (Dere, Dinc, & Koluman, 2014; Ozkan & Karatas, 2016; Toytok, Eren & Gezen, 2019). This process can affect students who prepare for the exam and their families. For both students and their families, the examination process becomes a source of stress (Donmez, 2009; Sinik- Baba, 2010) and anxiety (Sinik -Baba, 2010; Ural & Erktin, 2002). Most of the students receive support from non-school institutions with their own means in the process (Donmez, 2009). Families form their lives according to the exam preparation process and create a new life program (Sinik- Baba, 2010). This program for students and families will be shaped by the impact of Covid 19.

In order not to spread the disease during the Covid 19 outbreak, education in schools has been stopped and distance education was initiated. This decision was supported by UNESCO especially for disadvantaged regions (UNESCO, 2020). On the other hand, this measure taken for health has

a disadvantage. Studies show that unexpected school closures, such as teachers going on strike, has reduced student success even in a short time (Baker, 2013; Johnson, 2011; Montebruno, 2020). The Covid 19 process, on the other hand, caused a break from education in schools as a part of a long and uncertain process. Education, which cannot be carried out face-to-face in schools, has been moved to online platforms. At this point, distance education has turned a cause for concerns for students, parents, and other institutions (Williamson, Eynon, & Potter, 2020). Distance education is a complex process and some skills and time are required to prepare courses and materials in distance education. However, the OECD (2020) argues that taking into account the latest data collected within the framework of PISA, many education systems in the world are not ready for digital learning. Students may have problems with having a quiet place to work, accessing the computer, and internet connection. With that being said, there may be problems arising from the teachers, such as deficiencies in integrating the knowledge of technology and pedagogy in education, and not having the ability to prepare lessons in the digital environment. It is called emergency remote education rather than distance education because it has emerged as a temporary and compulsory solution to an emergency problem before the infrastructure is prepared (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020; Hodges et al, 2020). Also, this process affects all families. It is stressful since parents try to find a balance between both housework and parenting. If they deal with this stressful process, they are more involved in their children's activities (Spinelli, Lionetti, Setti, & Fasolo, 2020). Also, they need guidelines on how they can support children in educational and psychological aspects (Vuorikari et al., 2020).

After suspending the face-to-face education on March 16 for one week in Turkey, on March 23 2020 distance education was initiated through TRT EBA TV and Education Information Network (EBA) and maintained during the term based on the advice of the Scientific Board. The students were expected to turn on and listen to the relevant course within a certain program. For students preparing for the High School Entrance Exam, it was announced that they would be responsible only for the subjects they learned through face-to-face education, i.e. the content covered in the first term (Ministry of National Education, 2020). Ministry of National Education MoNE automatically registered all students' exam registrations and provided 'live/interactive courses' for the students who will take the high-stake examinations, i.e. for 8th and 12th graders. Furthermore, MoNE has started a new channel, which broadcasts at weekends, for these students. On the other hand, it is thought that children and parents had to cope with more than short tasks given as homework in this process. With the curfew restrictions imposed, people could not get together with the people they love. It was thought that being deprived of this social support could negatively affect people. For this reason, MoNE has prepared psychological guides, established a helpline for psychosocial needs, and assigned experts in Guidance and Research Centers (RAMs) to support the emotional health of students and parents. This was the first broad project by MoNE (Ozer, 2020). Meanwhile, most private schools have created online programs for distance education (Alper, 2020). As stated above, families and students have thought the exam will affect their future (Sad & Sahiner, 2016; Toytok et.al, 2019).

Private schools prepared programs for each class. Intensive programs, including private lessons and pilot tests, were offered to the 8th and 12th grades. Researches show that central examinations cause stress, fear, anxiety, difficulties, and discomfort for students (Duban & Arısoy, 2017; ERG Eğitim İzleme Raporu, 2017; Ulusoy, 2020). It turns out that both Covid 19 and LGS can cause stress and anxiety. Therefore, knowing the characteristics of families, children, and schools during the exam preparation process in a pandemic is very important. When the literature is examined, there is a limited number of studies examining the effects of the pandemic period on students preparing for the central exam. Participants of these studies are students (Karatas, 2020; Minott, 2020) These studies, in which students share their experiences about preparing for the exam during the pandemic period, are of course very important. However, to evaluate the process from a wider perspective, it is also important to know the observations of the families (Toytok et.al., 2019; Yalcin, 2019), who are the first source of support for the students in the exam process. With the pandemic, homes have transformed into educational spaces and parents' responsibility for their children has increased (Locke, 2020). First of all, knowing what process students go through in the process can give an idea about how schools plan their psychological counseling and guidance activities. In addition, understanding the reasons for students' positive and negative experiences during an important period such as preparing for the exam can contribute to making preparations for dramatic change processes similar to the one we live in. Within the scope of this research, it was aimed to examine the process experienced by the families of middle school senior students preparing for the entrance to high school.

## 2. Method

In this part, information about the model of the study, the sample of the study, data collection tool, data collection process, data analysis and validity and reliability are provided.

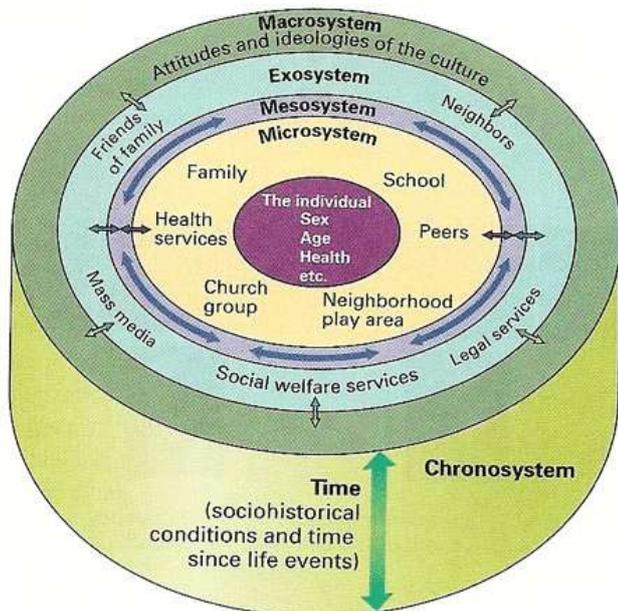
### 2.1. Research Design

A generic qualitative methodology approach was used in the study. Sometimes researchers ask research questions that include subjective attitudes and experiences, and these questions do not fit into focused methodologies such as ethnography, case study, and grounded theory (Percy, Kostere, & Kostere, 2015). In such a case, the generic qualitative methodology allows playing with these limits, to use the tools offered by established methodologies, to develop a research pattern suitable for epistemological stances, discipline, and specific research questions (Kahlke, 2014). Unlike phenomenology, generic qualitative research examines not the structures of internal processes, but the external processes that activate these structures. In this study, it would have been more appropriate to investigate the experiences of the students preparing for the exam from a phenomenological perspective, by interviewing with them. However, as the literature points out, examination periods are one of the periods when students' anxiety increases. Therefore interviews were conducted with the mothers as it is thought that children may be affected negatively due to the sensitivity of the examination period. In this context, a generic qualitative research design was preferred. The

general qualitative research pattern explores people's subjective opinions, attitudes, beliefs, or experiences outside of their external world. In this process, there is a focus on the external and real-world (Percy, Kostere& Kostere, 2015). It provides practicality in making observations and open-ended interviews about the real world (Patton, 2015). This study was carried out using generic qualitative methodology.

There is no a priori theory or pre-packaged theoretical perspective that leads generic qualitative research and a researcher using this approach needs to make his or her own choice about how, and to what extent, theoretical perspectives will inform their studies (Caelli, Ray, & Mill, 2003). Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1986) was used as theoretical framework. Bronfenbrenner's (1986) ecological systems theory describes the interrelationships between people and their environments, and focuses on outcomes and the processes that lead to those outcomes. Bronfenbrenner's theory helps to explain that students' environments influence their development and investigates systems where multiple individuals interact in multiple settings. Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, contains five different systems: the microsystem (family, school, peers), the mesosystem (interrelationships among the multiple microsystems), the exosystem (industry, mass media, local politics, social services), the macrosystem (attitudes and ideologies of the culture), and the chronosystem (socio-historical circumstances in the time the individual lives in sociological effects) (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). Pandemic is dramatic socio- historical change and each of these essential components has been effected in this pandemic (Cheng, Moon, & Arman, 2020). This theoretical lense was used to understand the pandemic from wide perspective.

The image below is a visual represantation of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. It can give a better understanding about how the all systems interact with each other.



**Figure 1:** Bronfenbrenner: ecological theory of child development (Source: Santrock, 2008; p.33)

## 2.2. Participants

A total of 11 mothers, 6 mothers of daughters and 5 mothers of sons, whose children are in the 8th grade in different private schools (4 different schools) in İstanbul, participated in this study. In the present study it was utilized by convenient or opportunity sampling. Since the first researcher had children at school age, she had the opportunity to observe family participation in academic processes. In this sense, she is able to internalize and conceptualize the period better, knows the importance of exam preparation periods for schools, parents, and students who will take the exam. Families plan the year their children will take the exam by putting LGS at the center. At the same time, schools make special plans for LGS preparation. Families rely on teachers to complete the exam curriculum and overcome the deficiencies in the areas the student needs. Teachers also plan to prepare students for the exam, thinking that they will be together with the students throughout the whole process. With the pandemic, these planned processes were interrupted and became uncertain. In some online groups including the first researcher, the parents of the students who were in the process of preparing for the exam talked about the difficulties of preparing for the exam during the pandemic period. These statements led the first researcher to investigate this topic. The researchers prepared an online information form and shared it in the groups they were a member of. In the planning phase of the study, it was considered to interview with both mothers and fathers. However, only mothers volunteered to participate in the research. Interviews were made with 12 participants. But while transcriptions were being made, since one of the interview's recording had poor quality and the statements were not clearly understood, it wasn't included in the analysis. Before the interviews, the participants read the informed consent form and gave their consent. During the research, there was no change in the interview form.

Table 1 contains information about the participants:

**Table 1:** Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Participant	Age	Occupation/ Employment Status / Monthly Income ("total" income of the whole family)	Number and Ages of Children	Children's own Room
P 1	45	Teacher-Unemployed-over 15.000 TL	3 Children 15 Y.O.-Boy 13 Y.O.-Boy	Yes
P 2	39	Teacher-Unemployed-over 15.000 tl	6 Y.O.-Girl 3 Children 14 Y.O.-Boy 7Y.O.-Girl 4Y.O.-Boy	Yes
P 3	38	Advertiser-Unemployed-over 15.000 tl	2 Children 13 Y.O.- Boy 9 Y.O.- Boy	Yes
P 4	42	Accountant-Unemployed-over 15.000 tl	3 Children 14 Y.O.-Girl 13 Y.O.-Boy 6 Y.O.-Girl	Yes
P 5	41	Teacher-Working-	1 Child 14 Y.O.- Boy	Yes

P 6	45	between 6000-9000 tl Teacher- Unemployed- between 6000-9000 tl	1 Child 14 Y.O.- Girl	Yes
P 7	37	High School Graduate- Unemployed- between 12.000-15.000 tl	3 Children 14 Y.O.-Girl 12 Y.O.-Girl 10 Y.O.-Boy	Yes
P 8	42	High School Graduate- Unemployed- over 15.000 tl	2 Children 18 Y.O.- Boy 14 Y.O.- Girl	Yes
P 9	41	Nurse- Unemployed- over 15.000 tl	3 Children 18 Y.O.-Girl 14 Y.O.- Girl 9 Y.O.- Girl	Yes
P10	34	High School Graduate- Unemployed- between 9.000-12.000 tl	3 Children 14 Y.O.-Girl 9 Y.O.-Boy 3 Y.O.-Boy	Yes
P 11	42	Nurse- Working- between 9000-12.000tl	1 Child 13 Y.-O.Boy	Yes

### 2.3. Data Collection Tools

In this study, a semi-structured interview form consisting of open-ended questions was used as a data collection tool. During the preparation of the questions process, seven experts were asked for their opinions, and the questions were revised as a result of their feedback. During the question preparation process, the opinions of experts with a Ph.D. degree who worked on family participation or family-related issues were taken. They have been working as assistant professors, research assistants with a PhD and lecturer with a PhD in education faculty of different state universities in Turkey. The questions were checked in terms of suitability, comprehensibility and clarity. Some of these experts suggested changes in the wording to understand the questions better. Some of experts stated that some questions were similar to each other. Therefore, three questions excluded from the initial form. The final revised interview form consists of 12 questions centered on exam preparation and family relations during the stay-at-home period. The interviews were opened with the question "Can you tell us how you spent one day at home during the pandemic period?" Afterward, with questions such as "What did the emergence of a pandemic make your child think/feel in the LGS preparation year?", "What would have changed if the exam had been prepared under conditions where there was no pandemic?", "Can you share what your child experiences during the transition to distance education?", "What were the reasons (in terms of individual characteristics, family structure, school characteristics, and government policies), which made the exam preparation pass in your home as you mentioned?", the process was tried to be understood in detail.

### 2.4. Data Collection Process

Participants were informed about aim of the study. Informed consent form shared with participants via google form and they confirmed their voluntary participation in the research.

All interviews were conducted by the first researcher. The interviews were made over the zoom application by turning off the cameras to protect the privacy of the participants. Only audio recording is made. Data collection process was conducted between May and June, and lasted three weeks.

The interviews lasted between 65 minutes and 100 minutes. All interviews were recorded and then transcribed.

### 2.5. Data Analysis

The pattern of the research is generic qualitative research. Generic qualitative research includes thematic data analysis with a focus on inductive analysis (Percy et al., 2015). Generic qualitative studies are less interpretative than phenomenological or ethnographical studies. Thematic analysis is 'data-driven' and coding does not attempt to fit the data into any pre-existing categories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). Researchers need insight to "make something of their data" (Cooper&Endacott, 2007). In the thematic analysis, the aim is to find repetitive patterns in participants' statements. The twelve-step inductive thematic analysis method defined by Percy et al. (2015) was used in the analysis. Each interview was transcribed onto a Word document and printed out as a hard copy. Hard copies were read by the researchers, and answers meaningful to the research question were highlighted and notes were made. Once all transcripts were read, reread, and notations were made, the identified raw data was organized by code, then clusters. Clusters were reviewed and organized for patterns. Themes were identified from patterns. Once this process was conducted by the researcher, raw data were entered into the MAXQDA software. The process was repeated with the software, and clusters, patterns, and themes were compared with those identified by the researcher. During the process researchers have done the coding separately. As a result of the comparison, it was seen that the researchers reached similar results.

### 2.6. Validity and Reliability

For research to be scientifically accepted, it must be valid and reliable. In qualitative research, validity meets the concepts of credibility and transferability, and reliability meets consistency and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) present a set of techniques for performing qualitative research that meets the standards they set out. The fact that the first researcher knew the participants before provided the trust required for credibility (Baskale, 2016). In cases where the statements of the participants are not fully understood, with questions such as "Can you explain a little more?", "Can you give an example about this?", the opinions of the participants were tried to be understood in depth. These questions also provided objectivity. Particular attention was paid to not asking questions in a directive or oppressive way. After the data analysis, the findings were shared with the participants for 'participant confirmation'. There was no theme added or removed at the end of the process.

Another criterion that ensures validity in qualitative research is transferability. The transferability of qualitative research results depends on the adequate description of the data on which it is based (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2013). The way to achieve this is by using direct quotations. In the findings

section, transferability was provided by including direct quotations.

Consistency has been given importance to ensure reliability in the research. Consistency has been applied in the creation of data collection tools, data collection and analysis stages (Yildirim & Simsek, 2008).

### 3. Findings

The themes and sub-themes that emerged from the participants' views are shown in Table 2.

**Table2:** Themes and Subthemes

Themes	Sub Themes
<b>Learning</b>	Lack of stimulus in the home environment Lack of feedback Problems in motivation and focus Time: Double edged sword
<b>Getting organized</b>	Accepting Characteristics of the child Physical features of the house School and the Ministry of National Education
<b>Relationships</b>	Relations with parents: Getting to know child better Responsible mothers Need for teacher-student interaction Lack of sharing exam anxiety with peers
<b>Support Needs</b>	Being understood by parents Guidance' of the guidance service Overcome fear and anxiety

#### 3.1. Theme 1: Learning

According to the participants, after the closure of schools with the pandemic process, the most important field that affected the students who carried out LGS preparations at home was the learning and study area. In the experiences of the participants, although there is a positive aspect of their children being absent from schools, such as providing flexibility over learning and studying, being away from the classroom and school environment caused students to lack motivation, focus, and feedback, which are important components of learning.

##### 3.1.1. Lack of Stimulus in the Home Environment

In the observations of the participants, one of the problems that children experience in learning at home is that the home environment is not like the classroom environment in terms of learning stimuli. Even though families provide the learning environment and materials as well as emotional support, they think that these cannot be as effective as learning in a classroom environment with a teacher and a friend. It is thought that the classroom environment would be more stimulating and efficient because the student can ask questions to the teacher quickly, the teacher can better observe the students and there will be different questions from different students.

*We did these; we prepared the working environment, provided the necessary resources, but we could not explain the solutions to the questions like a teacher explaining on the board. Most of the time, we couldn't be of help with solving the questions. We tried to support as much as we could. We tried to adjust her hours. We asked her how her exams went.*

*We followed her from the K 12 [an online tracking tool]. But we couldn't do the things that a teacher does (Participant 8.)*

*I don't think this educational process contributed to children. It was just a general revision, to keep the children engaged, I think in this way. It was good for me. It is of course good to have them under the supervision of teachers, rather than spending this process at home in their free time. But if you ask what it contributed to them, according to me, it didn't contribute anything (Participant 10.)*

According to the general experiences and observations of the participants, one of the biggest limitations of the system is that the students cannot interact with the teacher in an online environment by using eye contact, and there is little or no opportunity to discuss questions. According to the participants, switching to such a system is much better than the children's being completely free, but the learning environment in the classroom was not formed and the learning was incomplete. The lessons did not provide a new learning opportunity for the children; they simply prevented forgetting by repeating what they knew.

*Lesson hours decreased to half an hour or something. She does not have eye-contact with her teacher. It is better with students in a school environment. Eye contact is established. (Participant 7).*

*I think face-to-face training is more effective. She cannot ask what she wants; she just listens at that moment. Does she understand or not? She cannot ask the teacher when she doesn't understand. Normally, in the classroom one subject opens up another subject. They don't have such a chance online (Participant 9).*

##### 3.1.2. Lack of Feedback

In the experience of the participants, one of the issues that children most needed, concerning the support of teachers during the process, was the feedback about the questions in the homework and exams.

*But where are their correct and incorrect answers? Maybe the child has incorrect answers. She has her homework done and sent but how will she get support for her mistakes? (Participant 10).*

*We could not answer the questions. As a teacher, we could not sit down to explain the subject or the question that she could not understand (Participant 8).*

According to the decision taken by the MonE, the children who will take the exam were held responsible only for the first-semester curriculum. In participants' opinion, this situation paves the way for doing only subject repetition and doing tests are adequate in the distance education process. The general view is that if new topics were treated in the distance education process, children would not be able to learn these subjects at a sufficient level.

Participants think that online education's deficiency in feedback was somewhat compensated since the students were only responsible for the topics that students studied face-to-face in the process. In the observations of the participants, an issue that draws attention as much as the lack of feedback is that the home environment does not have the intense stimulation of the classroom.

### 3.1.3. Problems in Motivation and Focus

Participants state that the school has an important contribution to establishing a general routine and lesson order. In the experiences of some participants, the school's coming out of daily life brought difficulties in the formation of daily routines or increased the existing difficulties.

*School means seriousness in a way. We couldn't get that seriousness at home. 'Go to bed, go to bed'. If the school was open, he would have to sleep. Because he will get up and go the next day. We had special situations (getting psychological support, due to lack of motivation to do anything, including self-care, and constant conflict with the mother. Researcher's note) before the process; it was triggered by the process and doubled. We are somehow unable to arrange the sleeping hour. It was relatively better when the school was open. It necessarily gives that discipline and seriousness. As a parent, you cannot establish that seriousness and discipline (Participant 5).*

Some of the participants observed that the children had difficulties in being motivated and focused due to not being in the classroom. Even children who like to study find it difficult to be disciplined due to the lack of a control mechanism.

*Since she was always at home, she was not as disciplined as she was at school. She didn't give up, she studied, but if she was at school, her follow-up would be better. We have a sense of responsibility and a feeling of not wasting time. But a 14-year-old can also relax at some point. Sometimes it is difficult to run a plan by ourselves (Participant 6).*

The child, who cannot interact with the teacher or friends, may stop following the lesson from time to time and may be interested in a different activity. This activity is sometimes playing the game they love, sometimes drawing pictures, sometimes reading a different book.

*If there was mutual live streaming online, maybe it would be better. The kids' cameras are off. Only the teachers' is on. They just show their own screen. Meanwhile, the child is interested in something else. I observed this. For example, when the children are in their room, when I check it, I enter their room, the teacher teaches the lesson, and the child can be interested in something else. You catch her drawing something else; she doesn't listen to the teacher. But if it was school, she would not be able to do them. They had trouble focusing. So face-to-face education is better (Participant 4)*

*These are children after all. Sometimes I would click on the door and enter immediately. Without waiting for him to say 'I'm available'. The teacher is giving the lesson, but our kid is watching something on YouTube. The lesson is being disrupted there. So how much control is there? I see, for example, he is reading a book in his hand. I say 'Son, your teacher is giving a lesson'. He says 'Okay, I am listening to the teacher, too (Participant 3).*

### 3.1.4. Time: Double Edged Sword

For students preparing for the exam, the lack of teachers and friends are problem in terms of motivation and focus, but it has also brought some advantages and favorable consequences such as being at home, being able to spare time for extracurricular activities, reducing time loss, and setting

up an order according to everyone's own learning speed. They can be more flexible in their use of time

*At home, at least he studied under my control. How many questions did you solve, what did you do, and what did not you understand? Because when there is school, one can be split into two parts. You should deal with both of them. We were getting tired in the evenings. His teacher used to come. I didn't take him out from the social environments. He used to go to the gym. His guitar teacher used to come. It was tiring for him, and it was tiring for me. Even its control was tiring (Participant 3).*

*When he did not go to school, he created a disciplined working environment at home. I mean there was also a busy pace at home but it was like from the kitchen to his room, from his room to the living room. He could rest a lot. When the school was open, unavoidably there was a busy rush; there were the school lessons, too. He succeeded as he relaxed (Participant 1)*

Some cases, not experiencing some situations that negatively affect the child in the school environment, enabled the child to study better at home.

*There were different things he used to do. For example, games with his friends during the breaks at school, shopping with his friends. These are important things of course. Somethings affected my son negatively. These did not happen in online education, that is, in the home environment, it was more enjoyable and comfortable. He was more concentrated (Participant 2)*

In the experiences of families, flexibility in time has some unfavorable consequences too. The biggest risk that participants see for their children is the increasing screen time. Parents thought that their children's interest in technology would be beneficial for them to focus on lessons during the pandemic period. But in the process, they realized that being in front of the computer constantly carries some risks. In a short break, students use the computer for some purposes other than studying.

*As soon as I leave (from his room), I go to the kitchen, for instance, he watches a video with a tab opened from behind. Or he connects to a game. When we realized this, his father started connecting the computer remotely. Supposedly we checked him on the computer. This made him very aggressive. He said we didn't trust him. We said 'We trust you, but we see that you started spending ten minutes and twenty minutes on math. How will you be successful?' Yes, he finishes the exam on time, but he solves it like this (Participant 5).*

*Let me tell you like this; I's need to spend time on the phone and television started to increase. She usually used to go out and play with the ball or chat with a friend after the lessons finished at four o'clock. When I's willingness to completely watch these afternoon programs increased, I was a little bit panicked. She hasn't been reading any books in the last month, but I said 'at least you can solve a test for ten minutes'. When she is free, the only thing she does is watching YouTube videos of ridiculous people (Participant 10).*

According to the observations of the participants, the reason why students preparing for the exam spend the process

efficiently at home is that they are in the exam preparation process. In other words, the teaching activities are limited to repeating the topics studied in the face-to-face education period and solving questions. When the course content was like this, the students who were prepared for the exam were able to create a study plan according to their own rhythms, and the process was efficient. If all the children in the family were attending school, the parents did not have much trouble. However, if there was a young child at home, the situation became difficult for the parents. They could not provide adequate support to their younger children who needed support in terms of lessons or activities. For the parents, on the other side, increasing of the screen time is a source of concern.

### 3.2. Theme 2: Getting Organized

While the participants were in an intense but routine order, they experienced some difficulties in transitioning to the new order that occurred suddenly within the scope of pandemic measures. The uncertainty of the process lies at the root of these difficulties. After dealing with these uncertainties, an order was established in the house. The factors influencing the establishment of the order were stated by the participants as accepting the situation, the individual characteristics of the child, the physical characteristics of the house, the practices of the schools, and the Ministry of National Education.

#### 3.2.1. Accepting

The most challenging issue for the participants at the beginning of the process is uncertainty. They wait for answers to questions such as whether schools that are suddenly closed will open or not, if so when they will open. The Ministry of National Education's first taking a two-week break and explaining this process as taking the intermediate holiday forward created an idea that the schools would open. But the families who follow the general situation in the world and Turkey thought that the schools would not open in a short time and decided that they had to establish a new order at home. Participants named this situation as "accepting and continuing the process".

*We coped with it by making a good schedule. At first, there was a holiday mood. As I said, my son used to go to school very early. We thought that the schools would open after this holiday. They said it would last for fourteen days. Then another fourteen days. Then we realized that it would no longer open. Because we observed by watching the news, it was spread all over the world during that process. Now, it is not possible to end here before it ends in the world. After realizing this and accepting that the process will go on like this, we prepared the program (Participant 8).*

Families, who set the routine quickly, primarily attribute this situation to a previously existing studying order. According to the participants, since they have a family life order, their children formed a lesson order in their education life. While the families that had settled this order rapidly transitioned to the new order, the families who did not have this order had difficulties. The common characteristics of the families that make up the order are that everyone in the house knows and fulfills their responsibilities and limits.

*I think like this; if a person wants to study, then that person studies. I believe this. It must come from within. But families*

*should also prepare for this environment. For example, when the kid was in first or second grade some friends used to say 'if he doesn't study let him if he doesn't do, let him, he is so little, and he will do it in the future.' If you do not guide them to establish their system when they were young, if you do not care about school assignments, if you do not support their work, it is much more difficult for that child to study in the future. Everyone will know their responsibility. It is not just about lessons. He sweeps the floor or hangs curtains if needed. 'What do you want? A cake? A pizza? Check it on the internet and let's make it together (Participant 1).*

Realizing and accepting the process was important in creating a new order, according to the participants. The point that ensures the establishment of order is primarily the dynamics within the family. Families who generally define their lives as "regular" and whose family responsibilities are shared and fulfilled, established the new order more easily. Families who were not satisfied with their family dynamics and had problems with the order had difficulties. Apart from the dynamics of the family, another factor that enables the establishment of order and the continuation of the exam preparations of the student preparing for the exam is the temperament characteristics of the child.

#### 3.2.2. The Characteristics of The Child

According to the participants, the characteristics of the child were also important in settling order in the process. Children who are aware of their responsibilities, who adapt easily to changes, and who know themselves were able to both establish and follow routines.

*The first reason is his personality. He's an organized boy. So when someone else sets the rules, he doesn't like it and may not follow them. But he knows his responsibilities and creates a routine. His character is like this (Participant 11).*

*My daughter's being a harmonious child, doing her lessons already, is helpful, that is, she likes studying, which made the process easier. At the same time, she is a strong-willed child (Participant 4).*

Children who were able to get organized were able to continue studying voluntarily by delaying the certain things they have fun with. It was observed that children who cannot get organized generally cannot achieve such control.

*He has potential, but he can't show it in action. We cannot facilitate his motivation. He has neither internal motivation nor external motivation (laughs). I cannot understand. Since he does not do it himself by providing self-control during studying and not get organized at home, it became a disadvantage. Unfortunately, he cannot say 'I am going to sit down and do this'. He logs in to the lesson, but in the background, he plays games. In the pilot test, he opens a game and tries to pass a level (Participant 5)*

Knowing their responsibilities, being willful, and adapting to changing situations made it easier for children to establish order while their lack of pre-established order and their inability to motivate themselves made it difficult to establish order in the process.

#### 3.2.3. Physical Features of The House

In the experiences of the participants, in addition to the dynamics of the family and the temperament of the child, the

physical facilities of the house provided a suitable studying environment for the child, which facilitated the creation of order.

*We have the advantage of having a two-story house; I was able to adapt the children more comfortably to the lesson in their upstairs rooms. If it was a flat, it would be twice as difficult for me (Participant 10).*

*Here, one of our advantages to create a comfortable routine at home or to spend time for ourselves is that the house is big. I mean everyone has their own computer in their room. Everyone can work comfortably. There is also a door between the living area of the house and the resting area. Even that door was closed while they were in the lesson. There was such a silence during the day, like a school. There was a movement during breaks (Participant 9).*

Although the physical facilities of the house are important, family dynamics and children's characteristics are more effective in establishing order. Only the suitability of the home environment does not aid in the child forming a study order.

*I didn't really think negatively at the beginning. He loves technology. His audiovisual learning is good. He won't waste time going to school. He was also happy at first as he had the chance both to play games and study. But I was wrong. The house was very available, he has no siblings, he is the only child, he has got his computer and phone, he has got his own room, and there is no noise. Despite all, he didn't study (Participant 5).*

### 3.2.4. School and Ministry of National Education

According to the experiences of the participants, the conditions that affect the children's routine formation and which are not under the control of the individuals in a sense were created by the schools where the children attend and by the Ministry of National Education. While the schools with ready infrastructure immediately transitioned to the new system, other schools experienced some problems.

*I mean the live lessons. I was checking them in their rooms. They were accompanied by a computer and had mutual live lessons with their teachers. I had already taken their notebooks and books from school. Everything was within their reach. They were attending lessons, doing their homework (Participant 4)*

*The transition to the online education process was comfortable in our home. Our school had already started online education last year. They were doing studies, there were repetitions on weekends. So Friday the school is closed. Our school started online education as of Monday. Everyone has a separate room, a separate computer. We did not have a big problem. It was enjoyable at first. Questions solutions, lectures, etc. (Participant 3).*

Although some of the schools had difficulties at first, after two weeks, all of them settled their systems. Practices that enable participants to advance the process more easily were implemented by the Ministry of National Education. Although there were different opinions regarding the advancement of the examination date, the participants found the practices of the Ministry to be supportive.

*In general, MoNE managed it well. They switched to EBA immediately. Somehow they tried to give something. It can always be better, of course. It was a very good decision to reduce the topics. It was a very comforting decision for us. Too many questions were published. We benefited from them. We tried to make her solve them (Participant 9)*

When the experiences of the participants were examined in general, the individual characteristics of the child, the structure of the family, the physical characteristics of the house, the school, and MoNE decisions were effective in the process of establishing a new order at home and forming a new normal. In the experiences of the participants, one of the areas most affected by the pandemic process was family relations.

### 3.3. Theme 3: Relationships

#### 3.3.1. Relations with parente: Getting to Know the Child Better

Participants stated that they got to know their children better and had the opportunity to see their interests and abilities better during the pandemic process. For some of the participants, the process was also an opportunity to see their shortcomings. It has been a "nice break" for parents who cannot find the opportunity to spend time together due to the pace of daily life.

*At first there was a cheerful mood, everyone was at home, their father was at home. Since their father often used to work out of town, they didn't use to see him a lot. They couldn't spend time together. It was a time for all three to get to know each other. They spent time together, they washed the terrace, took care of the flowers. It was the springtime, flower time. They liked it (Participant 8).*

*For example, I used to interfere even with how the child studied. I mean, for example, when I study, I have a pencil, notebook, colored paper and so on. If I solve a problem, I re-write it again. If I listen to something, I need to take notes to keep it in my mind. But my son, for example, listens to lessons from the computer, no paper and pen, just listens. I say 'Honey, if you don't take notes, you don't understand.' He says 'I understand.' Then I observe that when the teacher asks something he answers. So I realized that I was trying to make him like me. This process made me see this better (Participant 11).*

However, as the process gets longer, it becomes boring for families whose children have younger siblings and whose relationships have previously had problems.

*The children got bored. There was a routine at home. They woke up, they had their online lessons, and they did their homework. It turned out into something like ' Let's get this together. Let's watch this. Let's do this.' So they got bored (Participant 10).*

#### 3.3.2. Responsible Mothers

All of the participants stated that there were conflicts sometimes between their children and themselves, and sometimes between siblings during the process. Parents accepted these conflicts and their children's tensions as normal and tried to understand them, since their children were in 'adolescence'.

*Of course, she had fights with her siblings in this period. Unfortunately, my daughter, who never raised her voice, raised her voice. She quarreled with my middle son. Both are in adolescence after all. I did not interfere too much. I was intervening when things got out of hand so that they would not lose their respect for each other. (Participant 4).*

The statements of the participants show that the conflicts are experienced by mothers. Whether working or not, the mother is the parent following the exam process and is seen as in some way responsible for the process. While mothers create more discipline in their children, fathers are generally more flexible. Usually, they do not deal with the lessons and follow-up questions; they stay outside the process and play a balancing role for some conflicts. During this period, it is seen that the discussions are about subjects such as studying, exams, and spending too much time in front of the screen. The children are always at home so the participants increased expectations for their study hours. Since they no longer go to school and get tired and do not waste time on the road, there is an expectation that they should fill this time with studying.

*When I say 'I restrict her, I mean children's studies, are sometimes insufficient for mothers. So my eyes always want to see her studying. I want to see her with a book, a test. I don't want her time wasted as there is a lot of time (Participant 4)*

*One day, I don't exaggerate, E. played computer for 15 hours. It was a few days before the religious festival. I felt sorry not because he didn't solve any questions or something, I was sorry because my dear son was stuck at the computer for so long. I was angry. I shouted. This time he shouted too. He stamped his feet or something. My husband came due to the noise. My husband was also disturbed by the tension, he said, "Let this exam be over, let me get rid of you and it". (Laughs) He started to grumble as 'Let this exam be over (Participant 1).*

In some cases, fathers follow the exam process but they are only in a position to judge the success of the child. It is also up to the mother to find the balance here.

*His father also has something like this. At first, he used to do it a lot. As soon as he saw her, he used to say 'How many questions did you solve today? How many tests did you solve? Go and solve some tests. I warned my husband. I said 'Look, it won't be followed this way. If she tells you that she solved 500 questions or 1000 questions when you ask, how will you know, how will you follow? I told him many times that this is not the way of dealing with her. He slowly got better (Participant 7).*

In the experience of the participants, it is seen that the parent who follows the exam process is the mother. The position of the fathers, on the other hand, varies. Some fathers do not interfere with the exam, thinking that there is no need for pushing. Some fathers step in when conflicts occur. Some fathers just follow their points and the number of questions they solve. But every father asks the mother for the reason /explanation when the child's scores drop. As one participant stated, when fathers take the role of "good cop", mothers become "bad cop".

### 3.3.3. Need for Teacher-Student Interaction

According to the participants, the relationships with the teachers before pandemic were effective on the students. As the visible face of the school, relations with teachers became important in the process. Students who have good relationship with their teachers showed more willingness to participate in the lesson.

*She liked her school. She also had a good relationship with her teachers. She used to do her homework all the time. I was also involved in homework activities, and I used to see her teachers constantly. I have never had any problems with contacting with the teachers (Participant 4).*

*My children have been like that since they were young. They do not cause any problem in the lesson. They also see their friends there, they love the environment. Because they love their teachers, they accepted the situation." (Participant 7)*

### 3.3.4. Lack of Sharing of Exam Anxiety with Peers

Participants stated that the most difficult issue for their children during this period is that they cannot meet with their friends. Not being able to meet with friends during the quarantine process made this stressful process more difficult.

*From time to time she rebelled, of course. They studied hard after all. She spent all her time studying. At school there are friends and breaks. Even if she has a little conversation it comforts her (Participant 9).*

During the pandemic, according to the experiences of the participants, intra-family relations developed positively. Parents both got to know their children better and realized their own shortcomings. Conflicts occurred because that children are in adolescence and the exam period. These conflicts generally occurred between mother and child. Children who had good relationships with the teacher before the pandemic period were more motivated to attend classes.

## 3.4. Theme 4: Support Needs

Families are aware of that their children are going through a difficult process, and they need support.

### 3.4.1. Being Understood by Parents

Participants realized that children were experiencing intense stress during this period, and supported them so that they could calm down and feel better.

*As a mother, I try to ease her stress. Her stress increased as the exam approached. Besides, she bites her nails. Her hand is always in her mouth these days. When she started talking about what she would take to the exam with her, I realized that she was very stressed. I try to remove the exam from the center of daily life (Participant 10).*

*We never pressed her. But of course, she has that excitement inevitably. Besides she is excited about the trial tests constantly. She has anxiety while taking pilot tests whether 'she can solve and do it' or not. She started to worry slowly, but she doesn't reflect that. We also do not speak much at home. We say 'you will take the test then it will be over'. At home, it's not our main agenda. We have never put it in the center. As she can do it (Participant 8).*

Families observed their children in the process and either gave the support themselves or received the support of an expert according to their needs. They believe that it would

be more beneficial to follow the academic progress and general emotional states of children by the guidance service of their schools in the process.

### 3.4.2. The 'Guidance' of the Guidance Service

In the statements of the participants, school guidance services were the units that were thought to provide the most useful support during the pandemic process but remained the most passive. According to the participants, both families and children needed the services provided by the guidance service. However, while the schools established a good academic system, the guidance services remained 'weak'.

*P: I cannot say the counseling service performance was as good as the school's performance in the lessons. Sometimes they held group meetings or class discussions, but one-on-one meetings were not enough. They provided mentoring, one teacher, and ten people, especially during the online process. In that sense, they gave a general education. But they should have delivered the session one to one. I mean I needed it. Both in terms of parenting and supporting my son. We didn't have such an education anyway. They didn't give it to my son, either (Participant 2).*

*I am a parent; I have to be strong as a mother. I may have different psychological problems. I may not care about her. Maybe I couldn't follow it either. Of course, we supported our children, but they don't know me. Was each child's parent able to provide support? Were the child's needs met? How is the child? These should have been followed up. Classroom teachers called and asked about the process. But the guidance service remained weak (Participant 8).*

Participants think that guidance services should inform families about how to manage the process and support children in a more systematic way individually. This situation becomes even more important when the emotions experienced by children are taken into consideration.

### 3.4.3. Overcome Fear and Anxiety

According to the experiences of the participants, although the pandemic process is a process in which many positive and negative emotions are experienced together, the most obvious two situations are fear and anxiety caused by uncertainty. Although the reasons differ from the beginning to the end of the process, these feelings draw the general framework of the process in terms of exam preparation. As the schools established their systems and the process took shape, the concerns on this issue decreased, but the anxieties and fears due to the uncertainties in different areas and the stress associated with it started to be experienced. While the most important of these is the exam itself, getting sick and not being able to take an exam, getting sick on the exam, inability to experience the real exam environment, being no difference between hardworking and non-studying students due to the decrease in exam subjects are observed to be the other reasons.

*Actually, I am also putting a lot of pressure. Cut your hair, be tidy. I said, daddy get you the first appointment tomorrow for a haircut. He said: "No. I'll take the pilot test", I said him that you can go after the test. He said no, I don't want to become infected with COVID. For example, the cleaning lady comes once a week. He doesn't sit in the same place with her. He runs away from her. He thinks that if he wouldn't be*

*careful, he could be sick and not take the exam (Participant 1).*

*She's been thinking this way lately. The exam is an optional exam. What if I get excited and I can't do it, she felt anxious for a while. She even came to me with an offer to ask if she could not take the exam. She asked, that what would happen if she doesn't take the exam. She says often she will get excited. I say that nothing to be excited about, of course, it will be a little bit in every exam. I said we shouldn't fall into that excitement. She started saying if I couldn't understand the questions. I don't know this week he got into that thing. As the time drew nearer, the excitement of the exam came in (Participant 7).*

## 4. Discussion and Conclusion

In this section, findings of this research were discussed compared to the relevant study finding in the literature. This research was carried out with the mothers of eighth -grade students preparing for the high school entrance exam. Students study at private schools and their families have sufficient financial means. In the study, the process experienced by the students preparing for the exam during the pandemic process was tried to be understood from their mothers' perspectives. As a result of the research, factors such as having a family routine, having sufficient financial means, the school's established order and cooperating with the family, and establishing its own online education system seem to be important for success. Also, research findings showed that mothers were more effective than fathers in academic assistance. In the literature, fathers appear to be open to home-based parental involvement (Abel, 2012; van Bolhuis, 2011). During the pandemic process, it was observed that staying at home affected the father-child interaction positively, and the mother had to cope with the conflicts peculiar to adolescence while getting to know her child better. Participant views are negative about the lack of interaction during learning and not being able to benefit from the counseling service sufficiently. After the research was completed, the success status of the students was learned, and it was seen that the students gained the right to study in various high schools by getting high scores. This success is the result of children's responsibility in academic matters, the awareness of families about exams, the ability to prepare a suitable environment for their children to prepare for exams, and the rapid adaptation of schools to the process. These findings are seen to be compatible with the findings in MoEN's (2020) report on LGS. According to the report, parents' education level, socioeconomic level, and school achievement score are among the factors associated with exam success (MEB, 2020).

Findings from mothers within the scope of this research show that home-based father involvement appears to be in the form of playing with the younger child, helping other children with their homework and so on. Therefore, it can be said that there is a work sharing among parents at the point of participation in education. Mothers stated that, when the school created its own order regarding preparation for the exam during the pandemic process they could easily adapt to this order. Besides, it is noteworthy that these families have a certain order that is compatible with the school for a long time. Another characteristic of the families, who easily

adapted to online learning during the pandemic process, is that they were able to provide the child with a separate room and a separate computer due to their sufficient financial means. Different studies in the literature also point to the impact of families' economic conditions on the exam preparation process. Different studies in the literature also point to the impact of families' economic conditions on the exam preparation process. (Toytok et.al., 2019; Turk, 2009; Yalcin, 2019). Regarding online learning, it is recommended that this learning is under the supervision of the school and students' academic advisors (Simonson, Smaldino, & Zvacek, 2015). In COVID 19 process, parents support their children's learning life in different ways such as parental engagement in supervising the children study time, parent role in accompanying children in learning, supervising children study time, recognizing children learning difficulties and providing learning facilities (Novianti & Garzia, 2020). The findings of this study showed that students may need a structured environment due to online education (Georgiadou & Siakas, 2006), which offers a more flexible environment than face-to-face education.

According to the research findings, it was seen that mothers valued students' being in interaction with teachers. This finding is consistent with other studies (Yilmaz, Guner, Mutlu & Arın -Yılmaz, 2020). This point prevails in the opinion that traditional education meets the need for interaction and therefore is more effective. During face-to-face education, teacher-related features such as the teacher's charisma and energy can also be included in the learning process. Teachers also pointed out that in face-to-face education, the atmosphere in the classroom is socially satisfying (Kim & Asbury, 2020). Whereas it is considered that the fact that online learning is seen as relatively ineffective may also be due to the idealization of the traditional education environment by individuals (Rovai & Barnum, 2003). When effective online learning is designed, this design can give the opportunity to support teacher-student, student-student interaction as much as possible (Simonson, Smaldino, & Zvacek, 2015). In the online learning environment, to be more effective the teacher can clarify the goals of the lesson, be energetic, organize the students well and communicate with them (Tanis, 2020). In case of face-to-face training in online lessons or epidemic conditions, the mouth part transparent mask produced for the hearing impaired can be used by teachers (Mouth part transparent mask was produced for the hearing impaired, 2020). Nasır (2020), recommends prioritizing solutions to address psychosocial challenges before teaching. During classes, teachers may provide opportunities for students to talk about aspects of the examinations which cause them to concern and provide them with coping with strategies, which are rational, i.e., problem-focused positive ways of coping, for example, planning and carrying out personal research to "top-up" knowledge base (Minott, 2020). In addition to the communication during the online lessons, they can create a positive perception of the online learning environment by responding to students' e-mails on time (Kaufmann, Sellnow & Frisby, 2015). Parent involvement provides both academic and social development, especially regarding cooperation with the school and the teacher (Cayak & Karsantik, 2020). Based on the research findings, it can be expressed that students can behave indifferently towards the lesson by dealing with different jobs in the background during online

education. For these reasons, it seems useful to ask students to have their cameras turn on during online learning.

In the research, mothers found the policies of the MoNE generally positive. Most particularly, limiting the exam to only the subjects learned in face-to-face education and having the exam in the child's own school were found positive, while the postponing of the exam date was found negative. In addition, it was observed that the online learning system established by the school itself was preferred to the system developed by the MoNE. In a study conducted in 2018 before the pandemic process began, it was found that only 5.1% of 18870 students used EBA every day (Cuya & Kayis, 2018). In the study conducted by Karatas (2020), it is seen that the rate of watching EBA during the class hour or watching the records after the class is relatively low. Though, it is observed that the participation rate of the school's distance education activities is higher than following the EBA lessons. The rate of those who see the change of date positively and negatively during the preparation for the exam process seems to be close to each other. However, more than half of the students stated that they were better prepared while attending school during the exam preparation process. In our study, mothers stated that their children were better prepared for the exam due to school fatigue, not spending time on the road and not being able to participate in extracurricular activities and they are more flexible to structure of their learning. In conclusion similar to Ozdagan and Berkant's (2020) and Alper's (2020) studies, distance education has both advantages and disadvantages.

The most negative situation that mothers see about online learning is that the school guidance service does not take an active role in this process. It is thought that the school guidance service can run online services, just like the transition to online learning in education. The school must offer psychological support during this period. Because the disruption of their routines and the sudden change in their lives during the epidemic affects students psychologically (Barlett, Griffin, & Thomson, 2020). Students live together the anxieties brought about by the pandemic and the exam (Minott, 2020). Besides, in Yalcin's (2019) study, consistent with the findings of this research, it is stated that stress and tensions within the family increased during the exam preparation period. In the same study, parents stated that their children had fear, anxiety, health problems, and psychological tensions. These effects of the examination process on children were also pointed out in the literature section, so it is important that the guidance services in schools must work.

Also, to the concerns experienced by the children, the research findings show that, consistent with the findings of Williams and Ritter (2020), families also experience various anxieties. Mothers have observed that as long as they can regulate their own emotions, their children can do it more easily. Although the student does not have experience with the exam directly, when the mothers' ability to control their anxiety is developed, indirectly, the child's anxiety about the exam can be alleviated. Therefore, various seminars can be organized for student and parent groups on certain days and hours. Nowadays many institutions and centers provide online psychological counseling services (Zeren, 2016). Therefore it is thought that the school guidance service can

also provide online psychological counseling during this period.

According to the research findings, one of the areas affected by the pandemic is relationships. Relationships between family and friends play an important role in the daily life of the adolescent (Santrock, 2014). Mothers have had the opportunity to spend time with their children due to the pandemic conditions. Ellis et al. (2020) found that American adolescents spend more time with their families during the pandemic period. Research results show that adolescents who spend time with their families report lower depression and less loneliness.

Most students during exam preparations in Turkey, the increased time they spend with family and there has been no deterioration in family relationships than in the past (Karatas, 2020). Mothers consider the inability of children to meet with their friends as an important deficiency. Karatas (2020) found that both 8th and 12th-grade students have the biggest aspirations for school, their friends. Because they have experienced that it is important to be able to spend time with friends in reducing exam anxiety. To reduce the anxiety of students preparing for the exam, counseling services can organize some group activities in addition to individual meetings. It is stated that students can benefit from online psychological counseling practices at school even during face-to-face education, especially when it comes to sensitive issues (Glasheen, Shochet, & Campbell, 2016).

Youth are spending larger amounts of time on screens and in virtual spaces during their leisure time (Stiglig & Viner, 2019). Media use, a leisure activity, has become a necessity with the pandemic. Parents who participated in the study stated that their children spent most of their time outside of the classroom in front of the screen for reasons such as watching videos, playing games, and watching movies. A study conducted in different countries found that there is a large increase in screen time worldwide and the highest increase is in the Z generation (Statista, 2020). This situation, in line with the findings of this study, maybe a cause of conflict between families and their children (Sela et al., 2020). When the literature is examined, it has been found that social media use has positive effects on adolescents' mental health and peer relationships (Jenkins et al., 2018). On the other hand, some reasons such as the specific negative aspects of the pandemic period and the increase in free time due to various anxieties, and the increase in free time due to compulsory homestays, also carry the risk of different addictions, including internet addiction (Dubey, et al., 2020). Tuglu (2017), who researched the use of social media by middle school students in the pre-pandemic period, found that 8th - grade students used social media less frequently than other classes. Yalcin (2019) found that the participation of students preparing for LGS in all social, sports and cultural activities decreased. This is because all of the students' time is planned and structured for exam

preparation. Brazendale et al (2017) states that screen usage increases during less structured times such as summer vacation. Recently, a study has been conducted in America examining the use of time and social relations of adolescents during the summer vacation during the pandemic period (Wray-Lake, Wilf, Kwan, & Oosterhoff, 2020). As a result of the research, it was seen that the participants were divided into three groups according to the activity they take into the center in their daily plans: Those who education - focused, those who are work-focused, and those who are media users. During the pandemic period, adolescents who received support from their families continued their educational activities despite the summer vacation. Those who received little support from their families for various reasons and those in vulnerable groups turned to their friends and spent their time online. Therefore, the research results show that getting support from the family draws a road map for how time will be spent. The participants of this study thought that being in front of the screen for long hours carries a risk of addiction. First of all, the participants may have made the wrong judgment because they were not used to seeing their pre-pandemic children on screen for so long. Since all educational activities are online, they may not be able to fully track the transition of children between lessons and games. The literature indicates that family support is effective in protecting adolescents from risky behaviors (Santrock, 2014). Social media use or online games can also have a positive impact on individuals (Jenkins, 2018; King, Delfabbro, Billieux, & Potenza, 2020). However, for people who are vulnerable or do not receive support from their families, the pandemic period also carries the risk of addiction (King, Delfabbro, Billieux, & Potenza, 2020).

### Future Research

Consistent with the findings of these studies, studies show that the success of students in the preparation process is affected by many variables such as individual characteristics, financial and moral support provided by families to their children, the structures of schools, and the characteristics of teachers (Bayindir, 2009; Demirbolat, 2018; Yalcin, 2019). This study was conducted only with the mothers. Information about exam preparation process with online learning can be obtained also from the consideration of fathers. In addition, the participants in the study were mothers of eighth grade students studying in private schools. Although mothers' views on online learning during the pandemic process focus on the order of the family and the effective use of school-family cooperation, when it comes to online learning, the student's previous experiences such as familiarity, attitude, beliefs, and closeness to online learning, student's goals and motivation become important (Rovai & Barnum, 2003). Consequently, it is considered that research can be conducted about the students from public schools who are successful despite their insufficient financial means.

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