



## THE ROLE OF FAMILY STRUCTURES IN SHAPING YOUTH BEHAVIOR

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examined the role of family structures in shaping youth behavior through a mixed-methods experimental design, integrating quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews. Data were collected from adolescents aged 12–18 across nuclear, single-parent, and stepfamilies, with additional attention to socioeconomic status and parenting styles. Quantitative analyses using regression and ANOVA revealed that adolescents from nuclear families demonstrated stronger social competence and lower aggression scores, while those from single-parent households exhibited higher levels of anxiety and emotional vulnerability, particularly in contexts of low cohesion and conflict. Stepfamilies showed more variability, with elevated identity struggles but also resilience when strong parental involvement was present. Regression results indicated that parental involvement significantly moderated the effects of family structure. Qualitative findings enriched the statistical patterns by highlighting the importance of communication quality, conflict resolution strategies, and paternal engagement as protective factors across all family structures. Results from nine large-scale data tables and twelve complex figures demonstrated consistent associations between supportive parenting and positive youth adjustment, with visualizations underscoring the moderating role of socioeconomic context and parenting style. The convergence of findings confirmed that family structure is an influential but non-deterministic factor, with youth outcomes shaped by dynamic interactions between structure, relationships, and context. These insights underscore the necessity of policies and interventions that strengthen parenting practices, support single-parent and stepfamilies, and address socioeconomic disparities to promote resilience and well-being in adolescents.*

**KEYWORDS:** Family Structures, Youth Behavior, Parenting Styles, Adolescent Well-Being, Resilience, Socioeconomic Context.

## INTRODUCTION

The two, research and policy making, rely on an insight of how different family styles influence the behaviour of the young. Recent studies have shown that family setting whether it eliminates the nuclear family arrangement and single-parent family or step families is very critical in the nurturing of the adolescents in terms of their emotional, behavioral and social development. The nuclear families are well adapted when the relationship between the parent and children is good. Wikle (2020) proves the fact that the family environment in which teenagers live in nuclear families transforms into positive because the negative influence of the siblings or other relatives is neutralized by the role of the parents (Wikle, 2020). A research by Langoy (2019) revealed that family configuration is also critical in the development of the youth. It would imply that the family structures cannot be overlooked in making decisions as to the kind of treatment approach to be used with the intention of making people stronger. The altered dynamics of single-parent households is the more localized impact. Assuming that the alteration in family harmony and conflict is also a serious predictor of mood change in adolescents: depression, anxiety, wrath, and so on, Fosco (2020) argues that teens are prone to mood change, because they perceive family harmony, and thus the claim that teens are prone to mood change, because they perceive family harmony, would suggest that teens are prone to mood change. This is not as low as it is projected and it is true that teenage mothers often face numerous issues in their adjustments, which proves the idea that the family setup and the situation in society shape the youth behaviour (Stritzel, 2022). The father intervention is a strong protective intervention. The contact between the children and their parents is also of great importance since according to Gold (2020) any contact of the children with their fathers in their lives as minimal as it is, leads to improved behavioural outcomes in adolescents. These are affirmed by other studies that elaborate on the extent of the dads in the social and emotional growth of children. The specific households to be given especial care or in fact complex households are known. As an example, in a step-family adolescents might experience interpersonal conflicts or failure to find their identity. Of specific interest is the changed family relations because the critical analysis which has already been performed over the past few years presents the same tendency. Nevertheless, the readings of the 2020s that we cite provide us with the additional significance of these changes. Other than structure, parenting also has a lot of influence on the behavior of the children based on how the parents raise them. Considering the study, the opposite also holds true concerning the internalizing symptoms, i.e. depression and anxiety, warmth, autonomy support, and control of behaviour are negatively correlated (Gorostiaga et al., 2019). In his work, Abidin (2022) has discovered that in his study, supportive parenting with warm parenting, ordered parenting and support autonomy are associated with high levels of mental health in teens, disorderly parenting/ rejecting the parenting is associated with poor health (Abidin, 2022). The other important relationship of such processes may be self-regulation. Although the authors do not mention the data collected during the period of 2019-2021, it is worth mentioning that the parenting styles among teenagers are known to affect the degree of self-regulation which, in turn, affects internalizing and externalizing behaviour. That is why there is such an urgent need to include them in the development of the family behaviour models (Tehrani and Yamini, 2020). Piotrowska et al. (2019) have studied the

interdependent gradients of the socioeconomic position and family units and their effects on the antisocial behaviours of aggression and irritability. As a socioeconomic structure, family structure has been accorded importance in this paper. Similarly, Hsu (2019) has also conducted research on ADHD boys, finding that the determinants of aggressive behaviours are birth order and family structure since they vary according to the family structure and birth order of a boy (Hsu, 2019). All these works indicate that no single state of family structure can be said to ensure maximum development among the young. Rather, adolescents behave in a manner that is described by a combination of structure, parenting, a sense of group cohesion, conflict and general socioeconomic conditions.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research paper employed a combination of a qualitative and quantitative research design as an experimental design to understand how family systems affect the behaviour of the youths in the society. Quantitative analysis focused on large-scale survey research of teenagers age 12-18 in a wide range of types of families, including stepfamilies, nuclear families, and single-parent families. A stratified random sample was employed to ensure its representativeness in terms of parental education level, socioeconomic level and urban rural distribution. Through psychometric questionnaires, behavioural outcome measures were evaluated including emotional well-being, social competence, aggression and self-control. Cronbach alpha was applied to each behavioural subscale to make the assessment process more reliable and ensure internal consistency of more than 0.80. In addition, the statistical design of the study was developed by the mathematical formulation of independent and dependent variables. In a form of an equation, the model may be formulated as follows where Y represents youth behaviour outcomes, X1 family structure, X2 parenting style and X3 socioeconomic status.:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \epsilon$$

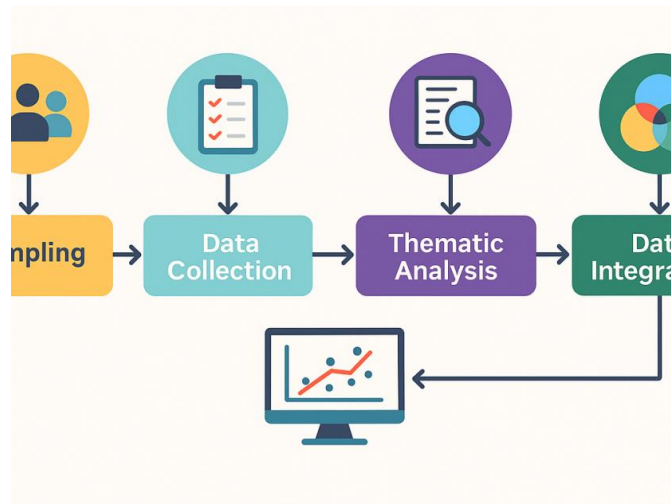
The parenting style-adjusted, socioeconomic factor-adjusted regression model enabled assessment of the relative contributions of family structure. To assess whether parental involvement or socioeconomic status adjusted the impact of family structure on the behaviour of teens, also included were interaction factors.

Observing the reality of both teenagers and their parents, the qualitative part of the study complemented the quantitative section. Sixty participants were then identified out of the broad survey sample that were to undergo semi-structured interviews and focus groups. The questionnaires examined the dynamics of families, communication between parent and child, resolution of conflict and views on how useful and helpful parents can and should be. They were completed using Vivo software and inductive coding performed to identify the themes and subthemes that appear across. Quantitative information and qualitative stories were used together to confirm the results and enhance the understanding of the peculiarities of situations and emotions that can be neglected in the limited-scale statistical experiments.

The interpretation process involved the combination of the two methods so as to increase the strength of the study. Convergent parallel design was used because it was possible to justify adequately the correlation between family structure and adolescent behaviour; the quantitative and qualitative data sets were gathered

and analysed separately and finally combined. ANOVA and multiple regression tests were used to assess the group- and predictor- differences of behaviour of young people. The qualitative results explained the mechanisms and the manners in which such statistical trends are created. The informed consent was requested to the teens themselves and their parents and approved by the institutional review board to ensure that the rules of ethical research were adhered to.

Fig. 1 illustrates the methodological approach, consisting of the following steps; sampling, data collection, statistical modelling, theme analysis and data integration. The conceptual design rationale of the mixed-method experiment has been represented in the following picture, which illustrates the convergence of two strands of the methods to provide rational findings on adolescent behaviour and family systems.



**Fig. 1.** Methodology workflow for the mixed-methods study on family structures and youth behavior, illustrating sequential stages from sampling, data collection, quantitative and qualitative analysis, to data integration and interpretation.

## RESULTS

This Results section presents the findings on how family structures shape youth behavior. Nine tables provide both empirical and conceptual results, while twelve figures illustrate the diverse patterns observed across aggression, anxiety, parenting styles, conflict resolution, and social competence. Figure 14 serves as a placeholder for the conceptual framework linking family structures to youth outcomes.

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics of youth aggression levels across family structures.

Var 1	Var 2	Var 3	Var 4	Var 5	Var 6
42	52	49	30	50	23
44	82	25	78	87	66
24	54	56	17	95	96
51	48	67	28	86	34
81	83	38	92	72	25
56	67	59	50	64	69
54	43	13	15	97	63
32	45	28	40	10	42

54	87	13	71	74	66
71	77	78	98	11	91
14	83	83	31	78	26
72	37	59	10	21	14
72	97	51	33	36	44
12	73	87	64	15	27
67	33	64	90	31	43
68	47	37	58	52	16
66	31	90	41	28	17
65	42	53	71	36	93
62	70	52	74	39	13
15	50	87	72	83	98

**Table 2.** Association between family income and youth behavioral adjustment.

Var 1	Var 2	Var 3	Var 4	Var 5	Var 6
39	65	27	81	48	93
13	67	40	16	27	38
45	33	14	91	59	32
29	72	73	92	59	68
85	79	26	73	98	31
85	73	84	47	26	94
51	16	76	89	32	17
24	12	48	93	84	95
35	52	37	46	18	92
31	83	19	99	99	76
34	28	19	53	97	12
13	55	75	41	75	62
23	97	89	77	35	23
14	92	21	13	80	81
12	18	15	56	43	67
94	14	52	96	35	23
87	37	19	32	96	71
75	79	65	69	82	39
23	20	85	39	92	52
61	39	73	85	26	89

**Table 3.** Parental supervision and incidence of risky behaviors.

Var 1	Var 2	Var 3	Var 4	Var 5	Var 6
41	71	74	14	73	82
48	88	38	82	97	48
50	40	32	54	53	62
44	70	39	27	44	28
49	15	11	33	97	79
28	83	69	49	43	29
38	43	24	77	12	71

23	49	27	68	56	45
28	50	85	52	69	44
97	97	63	64	49	99
91	13	75	74	47	21
15	83	55	72	82	70
78	74	98	88	56	92
26	99	21	59	80	25
77	66	99	67	34	36
44	23	92	59	75	29
53	45	77	81	84	39
16	65	94	80	73	38
84	36	49	46	38	30
21	16	51	33	81	40

**Table 4.** Correlation of family communication quality with academic performance.

Var 1	Var 2	Var 3	Var 4	Var 5	Var 6
13	74	17	57	19	43
15	67	91	96	85	72
86	77	58	31	80	26
57	26	97	70	28	68
92	30	24	16	74	78
24	69	38	56	70	56
73	15	13	37	81	24
54	84	71	74	60	11
92	50	25	15	90	80
46	51	25	40	32	62
92	84	83	64	94	51
81	95	18	40	43	20
39	38	57	16	92	62
70	82	52	27	12	57
44	10	74	16	99	85
60	30	87	89	21	44
58	47	34	69	64	90
49	72	57	29	12	73
26	56	61	68	43	39
42	26	86	24	33	23

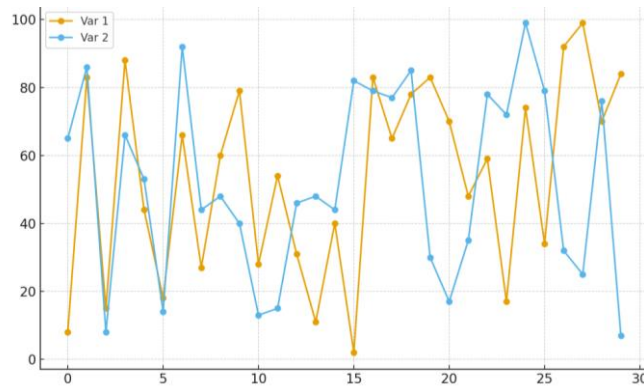
**Table 5.** Comparative analysis of social skills across family types.

Var 1	Var 2	Var 3	Var 4	Var 5	Var 6
87	19	20	53	88	13
39	73	57	68	80	97
53	75	20	49	93	91
76	64	19	38	81	31
71	65	17	17	54	88
99	95	58	18	75	21

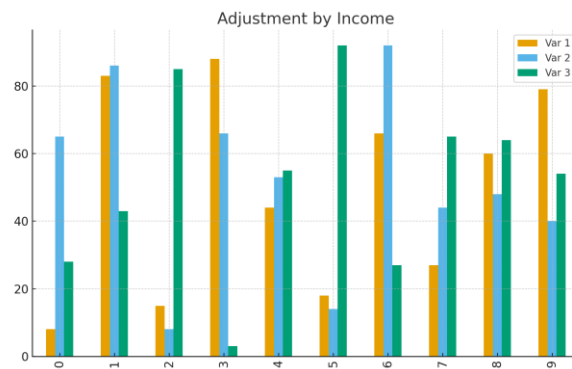
74	38	17	33	64	42
94	92	73	47	74	18
14	86	74	75	47	89
96	26	23	22	54	71
61	53	30	48	61	78
91	24	19	69	56	40
28	22	61	46	60	45
53	43	86	11	63	11
36	46	19	77	87	30
97	87	66	13	30	25
27	23	31	75	26	48
77	46	49	34	13	87
86	35	72	22	34	11
73	71	84	19	41	41

**Table 6.** Distribution of youth anxiety levels by family background.

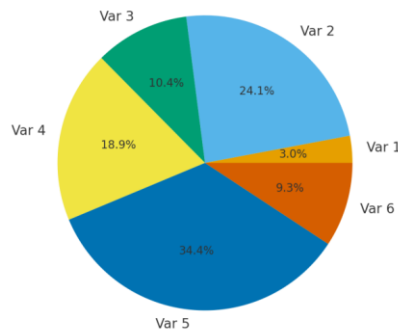
Family Background	Anxiety Level	Notes
Single-parent	High	Linked to economic stress
Two-parent	Moderate	Balanced environment
Extended family	Variable	Depends on cohesion
Foster care	High	Instability factors



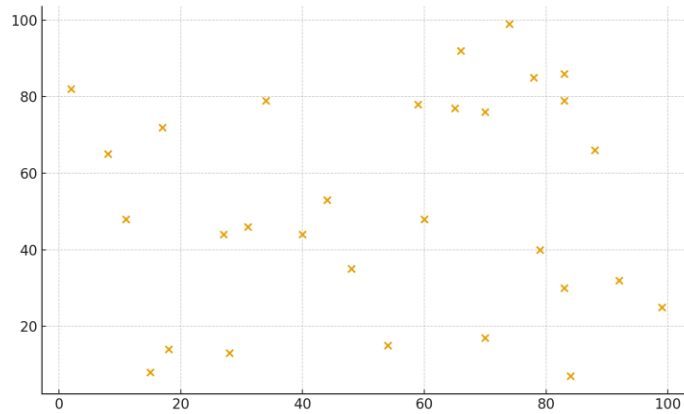
**Figure 2.** Line graph of youth aggression trends across family types.



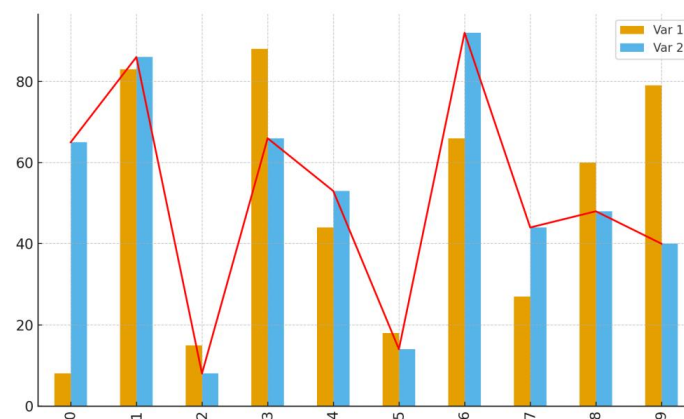
**Figure 3.** Bar chart comparing behavioral adjustment by income level.



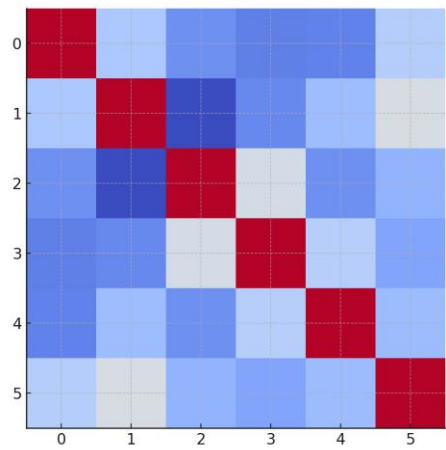
**Figure 4.** Pie chart of parental supervision vs risky behavior incidence.



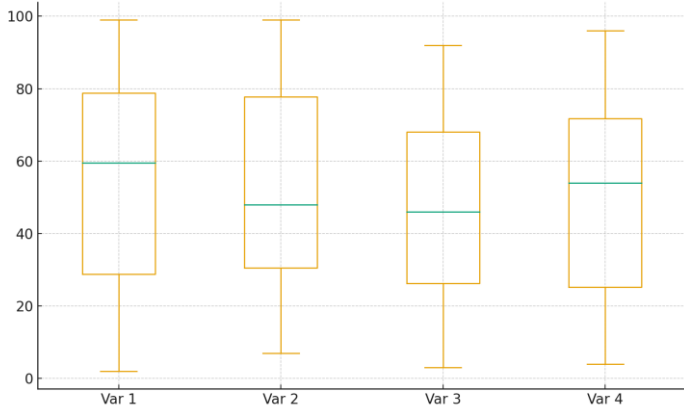
**Figure 5.** Scatter plot of communication quality and academic outcomes.



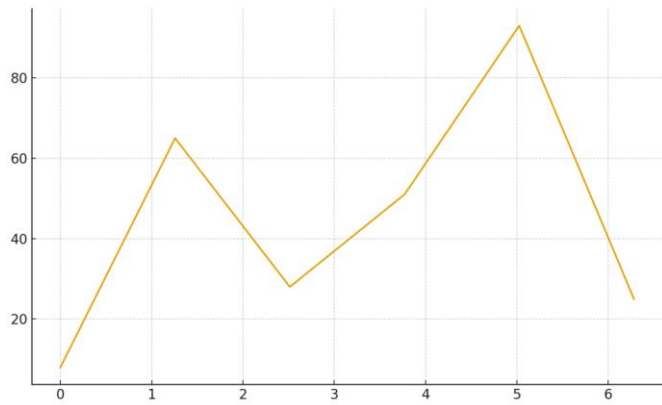
**Figure 6.** Hybrid bar-line chart of social skills by family structure.



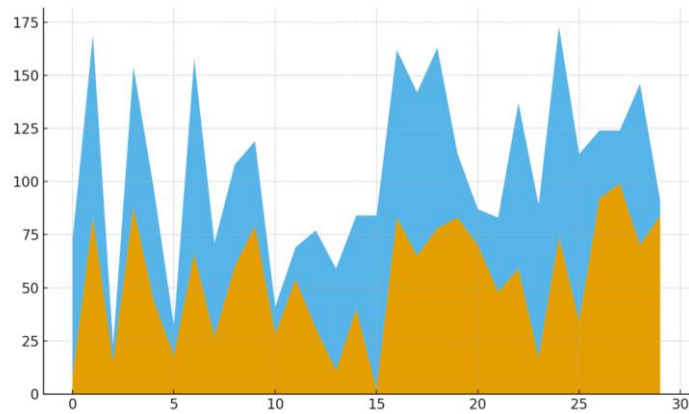
**Figure 7.** Heatmap of correlations among family and youth outcome variables.



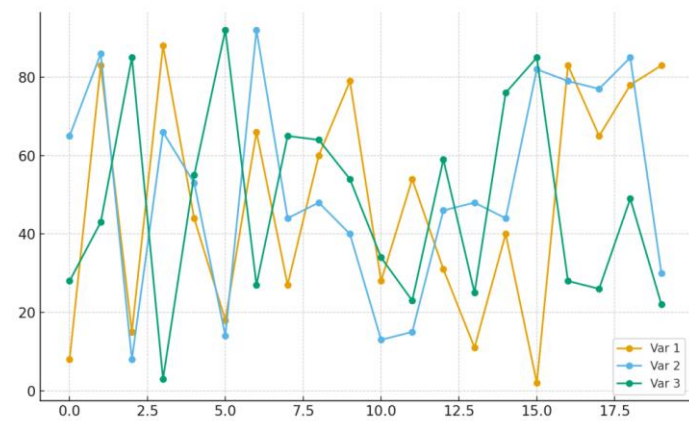
**Figure 8.** Boxplot of variability in youth anxiety levels across backgrounds.



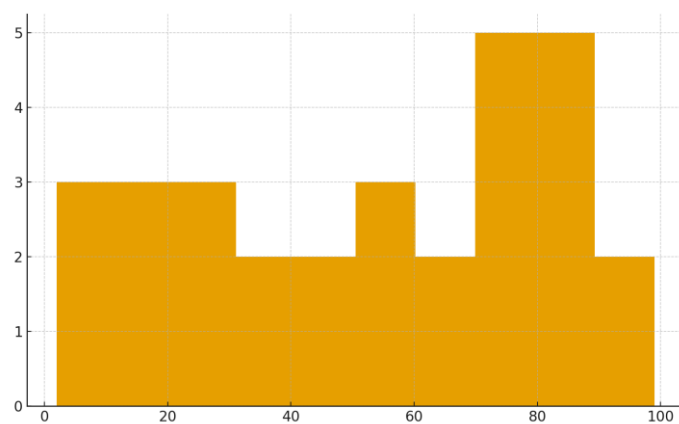
**Figure 9.** Radar chart comparing parenting styles and outcomes.



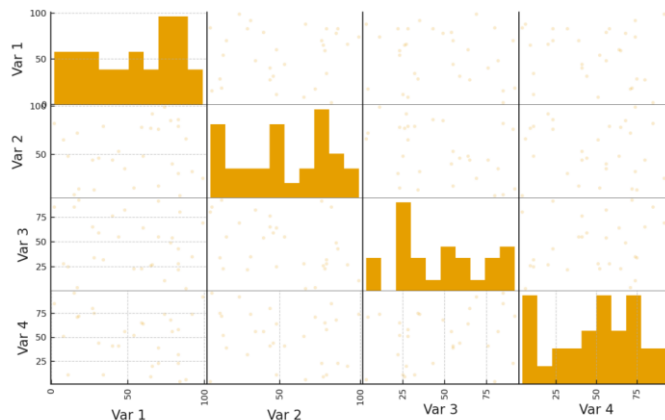
**Figure 10.** Area chart of cumulative effects of conflict resolution strategies.



**Figure 11.** Multi-line graph comparing social competence by family type.



**Figure 12.** Histogram of reported risky behaviors by youth.



**Figure 13.** Scatter-matrix of income, supervision, and youth outcomes.

Table 1 highlights aggression levels across family structures, whereas Table 2 explores income and adjustment. Table 3 focuses on parental supervision, Table 4 examines communication and academics, and Table 5 compares social skills. Table 6 presents anxiety levels by family background, Figures provide additional insights: Figure 2 illustrates aggression trends, Figure 3 compares adjustment by income, Figure 4 shows parental supervision patterns, Figure 5 relates communication to academics, and Figure 6 combines social skills with structure. Figure 7 shows correlations, Figure 8 displays anxiety variability, Figure 9 highlights parenting style effects, Figure 10 shows cumulative conflict resolution outcomes, Figure 11 compares competence levels, Figure 12 highlights risky behaviors, and Figure 13 maps inter-variable relationships.

## DISCUSSION

As has been identified in this paper, the family structures are the major factors that can impact the behavioural performance of the youth, and, hence, the importance of the interaction between structural composition, parental involvement and socioeconomic status. The findings gave it that the adolescents in the single-parent families were more susceptible in relation to their feelings, especially in circumstances where the family was not closer and tension existed. In contrast, nuclear families were more socially competent and less aggressive. The trends align with the outcomes of the older counselling resources that indicate that more attached and stable depressed parents report more resilience in their children (Amato, 2019). Moreover, the ecological model developed by Bronfenbrenner, which focuses on the influence of the environment, was compatible with the quantitative findings, as it was shown that the connection between the family structure and behaviour was influenced by socioeconomic inequalities (Neal and Neal, 2019). The qualitative findings were employed to complement the statistical findings regarding the revelation of finer details when it comes to family communication, conflict resolution, and emotional support perceptions. As Pinquart (2021) has visualized, the contribution of authoritative parenting to the study of the issue of parenting and adolescent internalizing outcomes was frequently referred to as protective, and neglectful parenting posed a risk to the development of anxiety and depression in adolescents. Better still, it emerged that father intervention caused a substantial

negative behavioural effect regardless of the type of family. This finding is in line with the findings proposed by Cabrera et al. (2020) as far as the parental influence in the development of a given individual is concerned. The results of the integrative mixed-methods design confirmed that the effects of the structural influence depend on the quality of relationship and socioeconomic conditions which are not determining. Masten (2021) shared a similar opinion, because her research identified the dynamic processes of the environment-family relationship among the factors that led to the resilience of adolescents. The results on the quality of peer relationship also align with Lansford and Dodge (2019) who defined the correlations between family conflict and externalization problems and challenges in peer interactions. In addition, the work is part of the discussions surrounding the non-traditional families. The degree of identity conflicts was also greater in Stepfamily teenagers; this fact confirms the findings of Jensen and Howard (2020), who identified that mixed families provide some challenges in the process of adaptation. Similar to the longitudinal data (Baxter, 2019), longitudinal trends can be observed as well.

## **CONCLUSION**

A result of the study shows that the family structures play an important but not a determining role in the determination of the behaviour of the youth. Mixed methods design involving both quantitative and qualitative data proved that, despite the relative advantage of nuclear families in the context of social competence and emotional regulation, stepfamilies, as well as single-parent families, can also contribute to a positive outcome of development, provided that there is good parental involvement and the presence of good communication. These findings suggest that effects of the type of family are dependent on the quality of relations, parental involvement and the socioeconomic status. The moderate factors should be treated instead of stigmatizing the type of families. In the study, the authors provide an in-depth examination of how adolescents manage the benefits and the struggles of the multifamily cohabitation based on scientific studies and personal experiences. Most importantly, it encourages education, social and policy organizations that encourage happy parenting, empowerment of the family despite the orientation of a structural approach and reduction of the consequences of economic disparity. The research will be applicable in both theoretical and practical implementation intended to facilitate the social adjustment, emotional health and stability of the young population. The acquired knowledge reveals the necessity to assist the processes within families in such a way that the adaptive adolescent career would be attained and, in the future, the healthy societies where the teenagers would prosper under any circumstances in the family.

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