

## Research Article

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# Coping Mechanisms Among High School Students With Divorced Parents and Their Impact on Learning Motivation

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**Abstract:** The high divorce rate in Pariaman, West Sumatra, Indonesia, hurts children's psychology, reduces self-confidence and learning motivation. Based on previous research, it appears that no studies have examined the coping mechanisms of parents who are divorced and their impact on the study motivation of high school students in a family environment. The study aims to analyze how the coping mechanisms of children with divorced parents affect the learning motivation of high school students. The study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional design to investigate the relationship between coping mechanisms for dealing with divorced parents and the learning motivation of high school students. We collected data by administering a questionnaire to a sample of 45 students who had experienced parental divorce. The study's results on 45 students showed a significant relationship between coping mechanisms and learning motivation ( $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). The study concluded that strengthening adaptive coping mechanisms in students, especially those from divorced families, is essential. This is because such support not only improves students' emotional well-being but also significantly improves their motivation and academic performance.

**Keywords:** coping mechanisms, divorced parents, student psychology, learning motivation

## 1 Introduction

Marriage is a physical and spiritual bond between a man and a woman, who become husband and wife to establish a family. The ideal family is happy and harmonious. A happy family fulfills its rights and obligations, forming a good and mutually loving family between the husband, wife, and children. Happy families provide real role models for children because what children hear, see, and feel when interacting with their parents will leave a deep impression on the child's memory (Izzo, Baiocco, & Pistella, 2022). Therefore, children need harmony in the family. The family is the only place or natural environment that can be used to educate children properly and correctly. However, in the context of marriage, parents can get divorced, which results in the legal or religious termination of the relationship between husband and wife (Musyafah, 2020). Divorced parents have positive and negative impacts on children's development. Divorced parents can have a positive impact if children react to it positively. The negative effects that can arise from parents' divorce on children's social lives are juvenile delinquency, disrupted coping mechanisms in dealing with existing problems, inability to express feelings, feelings of loss of parents, reduced imaginative power, decreased motivation to learn, and lack of trust. themselves both in the school environment and where they live (Sumari, Subramaniam, & Md Khalid, 2020). According to Amato and Boyd (2013) and Sheykhi (2020), divorce parent rates are increasing in many places in the world, including Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, most European countries, and many societies in Asia, including Indonesia. In Indonesia, the divorce rate shows a significant increase both nationally and regionally. The increase in divorce rates in Indonesia, from 408,202 cases in 2018 to 480,618 cases in 2019 (up 18%), indicates that more and more students are potentially experiencing psychological impacts due to parental separation (Latifah & Ritonga, 2022). This condition can have negative implications for students' learning motivation. In addition, it disrupts students' focus and concentration in learning,

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reduces their interest in lessons, and ultimately reduces their learning motivation in the family and school environment. Likewise, in the city of Pariaman, West Sumatra, Indonesian divorced parents in 2019 were around 839. In 2020, the number of divorce cases was approximately 974, and in 2021, it increased to 1,208 cases (Liza, 2022). The high number of parents divorced in the city of Pariaman greatly affects children's psychology, such as children lacking self-confidence and children's motivation to learn decreases. The rising divorce rate may diminish students' motivation and concentration on studying due to psychological stress, thereby jeopardizing the overall quality of educational outcomes. Consequently, understanding and mitigating the effects of divorce on students is essential for promoting equity and enhancing the academic quality of all children.

The divorce of parents dramatically affects student motivation, with diverse coping processes crucially modulating these impacts. The theoretical connection among these factors can be understood through the perspective of the emotional and psychological difficulties encountered by children of divorced parents, which subsequently affects their academic motivation and performance. This interaction is intricate and multifarious, encompassing emotional support, coping mechanisms, and the educational context. Parental divorce often leads to diminished affection and support from parents, resulting in decreased self-confidence and social skills in children, which adversely impacts their willingness to learn. During crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, children of divorced parents showed diminished intrinsic drive relative to their counterparts from intact households, indicating the importance of familial stability in sustaining academic motivation. College students from divorced families exhibit reduced persistence in their studies and generally attain inferior academic performance, signifying the enduring impact of parental divorce on educational achievements. Children with divorced parents frequently encounter elevated levels of stress and familial discord, resulting in the adoption of avoidant coping mechanisms. These tactics correlate with increased anxiety and sadness, subsequently reducing academic motivation. Supportive parenting and family cohesion before divorce can alleviate certain adverse consequences, indicating that effective coping strategies and emotional support are essential for sustaining motivation. Researchers still do not fully understand how parental divorce influences educational goals; however, they suggest that unresolved childhood conflicts may resurface during college, affecting students' academic motivations and ambitions. Students from split households might find it especially difficult to psychologically detach from their parents and establish new relationships throughout college, which impacts their academic and social assimilation.

Previous researchers who have researched divorced parents include Hasan (2022), who examined the relationship between parental divorce and the self-acceptance of junior high school students in Karawang, Indonesia. Similarly, Du Plooy and Van Rensburg (2015) conducted a retrospective study on young adults' perceptions of coping with parental divorce. The research results show the characteristics of adolescents in divorced families and how they maintain strong and healthy relationships with their parents after divorce. Research results by Rootalu and Kasearu (2016) found that children and parents have a significant influence on children's perceptions of divorce and how children deal with family breakdown. According to Kabyn (2023), children are negatively impacted psychologically by parental divorce. Dumitriu, Butac, and Popa (2022) found that the quality of their parents' relationship greatly influences children's post-divorce adjustment. The quality of their parents' relationship greatly influences children's post-divorce adjustment. High school students associate SMS with motivation to study within their family environment. The research aims to analyze how the coping mechanisms of children with divorced parents affect the learning motivation of high school students.

## 2 Method

### 2.1 Research Participants and Ethics

This research was conducted at Pariaman Senior High School 4, West Sumatra, Indonesia. This investigation adhered to the 2013 Declaration of Helsinki guidelines. Before launching the trial, the university's ethics committee granted formal ethical approval. The Ethics Committee approved the ethics permit of Padang State University, Padang, West Sumatra, Indonesia (No. 51.01/KEPK-UNP/IV/2023).

### 2.2 Data Collection

The sample of this study consisted of students whose parents were divorced, with a total student population of 45 people. The selection of the sample was specifically focused on students whose parents were divorced, and a comparison will also be made with students who have intact families to see the relevant differences. To collect data, a questionnaire was used as the main instrument. This questionnaire was designed to measure the level of students' learning motivation using the Student Motivation Towards

Science Learning (SMTSL) instrument. The SMTSL questionnaire consists of six scales: self-efficacy, active learning strategies, science learning values, performance goals, achievement goals, and learning environment achievement. The level of students' learning motivation is categorized as follows:

- Score less than 35: low level of motivation.
- Score 36–70: medium level of motivation.
- Score 71–175: high level of motivation.

Additionally, we used favorable and unfavorable questions to measure coping mechanisms. The type of scale used in the questionnaire is the Likert scale. The sampling method applied was random sampling using the formula according to a previous study, which is 10% of the total population. Based on this calculation, the number of samples determined in this study was 45 people. We tested the validity of the coping mechanisms and learning motivation instruments in this study using Pearson Product Moment. This validity test was carried out by analyzing the correlation of question items, where the consistency between the score of each question item and the overall score was measured based on the correlation coefficient. We used a total of 20 students from SMAN 4 Pariaman as samples in this validity test. As a result, 25 questions for coping mechanisms and 35 questions for learning motivation were all declared valid. We also conducted the reliability test using the Cronbach's Alpha analysis technique. The results showed a high-reliability value, namely, 0.796 for the learning motivation instrument and 0.806 for the coping mechanism instrument, which indicated excellent internal consistency between the two instruments. Coping mechanisms in the context of divorced parents refer to strategies that individuals use to cope with problems and adapt to changes after parental divorce. The assessment of coping mechanisms uses a graded scale with a score range between 25 and 100. The following are the details of the scoring for each response:

#### **Favorable statement**

- 1: Never
- 2: Rarely
- 3: Sometimes
- 4: Often

#### **Unfavorable statement**

- 1: Never
- 2: Rarely
- 3: Sometimes
- 4: Often

Categorization of measurement results

Based on the results of the questionnaire measurement, the level of coping mechanisms is categorized into two:

- Maladaptive: Score 25–61
- Adaptive: Score 62–100.

## **2.3 Data Analysis**

The data analysis technique uses univariate analysis, namely explaining coping mechanisms and learning motivation in the family environment. Bivariate analysis explains the relationship between coping mechanisms for divorced parents and motivation to study in the family environment at Pariaman Senior High School 4. The results of statistical tests using chi-square cross-tabulation show a  $p$ -value  $0.000 < \alpha 0.05$ .

## **3 Result**

Researchers have successfully carried out a study on coping mechanisms for divorced parents and their high school students' learning motivation. The results of the univariate analysis explain students' coping mechanisms and learning motivation.

### **3.1 Coping Mechanisms**

Coping mechanisms are ways a person uses to solve problems, adapt to changes, and respond to threatening situations. It is essential for students to use appropriate coping mechanisms to avoid the stress they experience. The results of the frequency distribution of coping mechanisms for Senior High School 4 Pariaman students can be seen in Table 1.

Based on the data in Table 1 above, it can be seen that of the 45 respondents, 29 people (64.4%) had adaptive coping mechanisms and 16 people (35.6%) had maladaptive coping mechanisms.

### **3.2 Motivation for Learning in the Family Environment**

Motivation to learn can be interpreted as generating more effort during the lesson and using strategies that can

**Table 1:** Frequency distribution of students' coping mechanisms

<b>Coping mechanisms</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Adaptive	29	64.4
Maladaptive	16	35.6
Total	45	100

support the learning process, such as planning, organizing, and practicing questions on the subject matter; reviewing the level of understanding of the material; and connecting new material with existing knowledge or skills. The study examines the frequency distribution of learning motivation in the family environment at Pariaman Senior High School 4 (Table 2).

Based on the data presented in Table 2, it can be seen that the level of student learning motivation in the respondent's family environment tends to vary but is dominated by the low category. Of the total 45 respondents, the majority, namely 25 people, or 55.6%, have low learning motivation. Meanwhile, 15 respondents, or 33.3%, showed moderate learning motivation. Conversely, only a small portion of respondents, namely 5 people or 11.1%, were in the high learning motivation category. This finding indicates a significant challenge in encouraging learning motivation among students who are the subjects of this study.

### 3.3 Bivariate Analysis

The results of the bivariate analysis explain the relationship between coping mechanisms for divorced parents and students' motivation to study in the family environment. The complete bivariate analysis results can be seen in Table 3.

Based on Table 3, it can be seen that the group with high learning motivation had a higher percentage of students with adaptive coping mechanisms, 51.7%. Comparing this figure to students with low learning motivation, we found no students with adaptive coping mechanisms (0.0%). The statistical tests using chi-square cross-tabulation yielded a  $p$ -value of 0.000. Because this  $p$ -value is smaller than  $\alpha$  0.05, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between adaptive coping mechanisms and learning motivation. The likelihood ratio value also shows a figure of 0.000, further strengthening this finding. The decision was accepted, which means there is a significant relationship between the coping mechanisms of students who experienced divorced parents and the motivation to study in the family environment among students at Pariaman Senior High School 4.

**Table 2:** Frequency distribution of student's learning motivation

Motivation to learn	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	25	55.6
Moderate	15	33.3
High	5	11.1
Total	45	100

**Table 3:** Relationship between divorced parents' coping mechanisms and learning motivation in students' family environment

Coping mechanisms	Learning motivation								<i>p</i> -value
	Low		Currently		High		Total		
	<i>F</i>	%	<i>F</i>	%	<i>F</i>	%	<i>F</i>	%	
Adaptive	2	9.7	12	41.4	15	51.7	29	64.4	0.000
Maladaptive	13	81.2	3	18.8	0	0.0	16	35.6	
Total	15		15		15		45	100	

## 4 Discussion

Based on the results of the frequency distribution of coping mechanisms for Pariaman Senior High School 4 students (Table 1), it is known that of the 45 respondents, 29 people had adaptive coping mechanisms (64.4%) and 16 people (35.6%) had maladaptive coping mechanisms. This finding means that more students can achieve physical and psychological balance despite having divorced parents. Adaptive coping strategies are essential for sustaining equilibrium between bodily and psychological well-being by allowing humans to professionally navigate stress and adversity. These mechanisms encompass tactics that enable individuals to directly tackle stressors, thus enhancing resilience and well-being. The effectiveness of adaptive coping comes from its ability to combine mental and physical processes, creating a unified response to stress that supports both mental and physical health. Many adaptation techniques, tailored to individual requirements and situations, achieve this equilibrium, fostering a comprehensive approach to health. Adaptive coping mechanisms are fundamentally intertwined with psychological processes and biological systems. Psychological coping methods, including problem-solving and soliciting social support, are associated with biological stress-buffering mechanisms that alleviate the physiological effects of stress (Friedhoff & Simkowitz, 1989). Adaptive coping strategies considerably mitigate work-related stress and enhance well-being, as demonstrated by a meta-analysis indicating their efficacy in improving employee health and productivity (Wamea & Nomp, 2024). In the realm of disease and disability, adaptive coping facilitates individuals in attaining a new balance, fostering healing and a mature perspective on life (Butler, O'Shea, & Truxillo, 2021; Moos & Holahan, 2007). The capacity to adaptively manage stress is associated with personality development and the establishment of a supportive environment, both of which are crucial for sustaining psychological balance (Proulx & Aldwin, 2015). Social ties are essential for the efficacy of adaptive coping techniques. Assistance from social networks and close relationships



improves stress management, leading to enhanced psychological well-being (Marroquín, Tennen, & Stanton, 2017). Approach-oriented methods, which entail confronting stressors instead of evading them, are linked to favorable health outcomes and are regarded as adaptive coping mechanisms (Olendo, 2023).

According to adaptive coping, they can generate positive responses that enable individuals to achieve a state of balance and strengthen their physical and psychological health. Maladaptive coping mechanisms are those that can inhibit integration functions and cause negative responses. Cortez and his colleagues conducted a study in 2023. The results of this research are similar to those conducted by Abdul Aziz et al. (2021). The research findings reveal that every student possesses effective stress management skills. Likewise, the results of research by Savira, Setiawati, Husna, and Pramesti (2021), Lestari and Asari (2023), and Abidin, Hasibuan, and Harahap (2023) regarding the relationship between stress, learning motivation, and coping mechanisms in adolescents during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research results showed that 65.4% of the 55 respondents had maladaptive coping mechanisms. Diverse psychological and educational processes link adaptive coping strategies with high-motivation learning. Adaptive coping mechanisms empower individuals to efficiently manage stress and challenges, creating an environment conducive to high-motivation learning, which is essential for achieving good learning outcomes. Strategies for these practices are positively associated with academic adaptability, aiding students in stress management and enhancing their learning outcomes. They facilitate students' more profound engagement in learning activities and prompt swift recovery from setbacks (Carlotto, Teixeira, & Dias, 2015). Coping methods that alleviate anxiety can increase motivation for reward-seeking actions, which are crucial for learning. Motivation profoundly affects the speed of adaptive responses in learning, especially for motor skills. Elevated motivation can enhance learning processes, resulting in accelerated skill development (Khatib, Chib, & Mawase, 2023). Learning flexibility, influenced by academic motivation and self-management, is essential for self-regulated learning. This adaptability enables pupils to efficiently respond to new difficulties, fostering high-motivation learning (She, Liang, Jiang, & Xing, 2023). Motivational coping theory posits that coping strategies are shaped by motivational processes, resulting in adaptive outcomes. The hierarchical coping paradigm incorporates motivation as a fundamental element, emphasizing its significance in promoting resilience and learning. Games that modify difficulty according to student success can improve motivation and learning results. Adaptive systems offer scaffolding that facilitates high-motivation learning by consistently presenting students with appropriately

challenging tasks (Sampayo-Vargas, Cope, He, & Byrne, 2013). Based on the research above, it can be concluded that coping mechanisms are the methods used by individuals to solve problems and how the individual acts towards problems or situations that threaten both cognitively and behaviorally. The individual's way of managing coping mechanisms is by carrying out actions that can reduce or eliminate stress by doing activities such as sports, painting, drawing, creating stories, or illustrating problems with natural resources around the individual.

Based on the frequency distribution of motivation to study in the family environment among Pariaman Senior High School 4 students (Table 2), it is known that of the 45 respondents, 25 respondents (55.6%) had medium and high motivation to study in the family environment (33.3%), and the lowest was 5 people (11.1%). This condition shows that student learning motivation is relatively low for students who experience their parents' divorce. Motivation to learn, according to Narca and Caballes (2021), can be interpreted as generating more effort during the lesson and using strategies that can support the learning process, such as planning, organizing, and practicing questions on the subject matter; reviewing the level of understanding of the material, and making connections between new material and knowledge or knowledge that has been mastered. Motivation to learn is the driving force within an individual to carry out learning activities by increasing knowledge, skills, and experience. This motivation grows because the desire to know and understand something encourages and directs students' interest in learning so that they are more serious about their learning (Atma, Azahra, and Mustadi, 2021). The results of this research are also almost the same as the research conducted by Mahardhika, Dewi, and Arsana (2023) regarding the relationship between stress and learning motivation and coping mechanisms in adolescents. It was found that of the 60 respondents, the majority, namely 56.7% of respondents, had learning motivation, and 43.3% had no learning motivation. The results of this research are also similar to those conducted by Septyari, Adiputra, and Devhy (2022) regarding the relationship between stress and learning motivation and coping mechanisms for high school students. Among the 101 respondents, 72 students, or 71.3%, demonstrated high levels of learning motivation.

Furthermore, based on the results of research conducted by researchers on coping mechanisms for divorced parents with motivation to study in the family environment among students at Pariaman Senior High School 4, it can be seen from 45 respondents that there is a relationship between coping mechanisms for divorced parents and motivation to study in the family environment by

calculating using statistical tests. The chi-square test indicated that a value was obtained ( $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < \alpha 0.05$ ), which means there is a significant relationship between coping mechanisms for divorced parents and motivation to study in the family environment among students at Pariaman Senior High School 4. It was found that of the 45 respondents, there were two people (9.7%) who had adaptive coping mechanisms with low motivation to learn in their family environment. This is because the student's parents pay less attention to the student's learning progress, and the student feels less motivated to study when they are at home compared to school. Meanwhile, three people (18.8%) had maladaptive coping mechanisms with moderate motivation to learn in their family environment. This conclusion was because the students had support, direction, and strong determination, so these students were motivated to increase their desire to learn. The results of this research are also in line with research conducted by Dimala and Saraswati (2023) about the role of motivation to learn and coping behaviors in managing stress in working college students. The results of this study showed that when students work, they can overcome stress, which can increase their motivation to achieve.

This research is also almost the same as the research conducted by Haq and Wicaksono (2023). The quality of life of adolescents with divorced parents depends on their physical and psychological conditions. In this study, it was explained that the reason for the lack of a relationship between stress and coping mechanisms could be due to several factors, including available resources and previously used coping strategies. There were 26 female students at Pariaman Senior High School 4 who experienced coping mechanisms for divorced parents with the motivation to study in a family environment, while there were 19 male students. Based on gender, women are more likely to use adaptive coping mechanisms with high motivation to learn in the family environment. Female students are more easily directed by the family and guided by guidance and counseling teachers, while male students are more difficult to direct by the family and do not receive input from the family, guidance, and counseling teachers. This result was achieved because the female students of Pariaman Senior High School 4 were directed and guided, and the guidance and counseling teacher anticipated the students by providing direction and moral and mental motivation to the students so that they would not experience deviations that would lead to fatal outcomes.

Studies demonstrate that gender disparities markedly affect the utilization of adaptive coping strategies and learning motivation in familial contexts. Females typically exhibit a greater propensity to utilize adaptive coping

methods, such as soliciting social support and expressing emotions, which are frequently linked to enhanced learning motivation. Conversely, male students often encounter difficulties in obtaining and using familial feedback, which may impact their adaptability and drive. Women are more inclined to employ emotion-focused coping techniques, such as soliciting social support and expressing emotions, which are deemed adaptive and correlated with increased learning motivation (Brougham, Zail, Mendoza, & Miller, 2009; O'Rourke et al., 2022). Research indicates that females endure increased family role strain but manage it by using social support more often than males, who may depend on less effective techniques such as venting (Bird & Harris, 1990). The familial environment significantly influences pupils' coping mechanisms and motivation for learning. Supportive familial relationships correlate with enhanced career adaptability and coping strategies (Asyha et al., 2024; Zulfiani & Khaerani, 2021). Female students frequently obtain greater familial support, which augments their capacity to employ adaptive coping mechanisms and sustain elevated learning motivation (Saadat, Alam, & Rehman, 2022). Male students, however, may encounter more difficulties in assimilating and responding to familial information, thereby impeding their adaptability and motivation (Bird & Harris, 1990; Zulfiani & Khaerani, 2021). Educational practices that emphasize the value of familial support and adaptive coping mechanisms can enhance learning results for all genders. Workshops emphasizing emotion-focused coping methods may be especially advantageous for male students (Brougham et al., 2009). Schools and teachers can greatly affect how well students do by creating settings that encourage positive family relationships and help all students develop effective coping skills.

The relationship between emotional-educational divorce, active and passive motivation, and parenting methods is intricate and multifaceted. The divorce of parents can profoundly affect children's emotional and educational growth, with differing consequences based on the degree of conflict and the parenting approaches used after the divorce. The academic performance and emotional well-being of children can be influenced by active and passive incentive factors. This response examines the effects of parental divorce on children's emotional and educational outcomes, the influence of parenting styles on motivation, and the consequences for practice and intervention (Pishghadam, Ebrahimi, Golzar, & Miri, 2023). Parental divorce correlates with increased anxiety, depression, and diminished self-esteem in children. The length and support during the divorce process are critical indicators of emotional outcomes, underscoring the necessity of supportive partnerships and effective coping mechanisms to enhance resilience in children (Dilla & Wado, 2024). Divorce can lead

to a decline in scholastic achievement, particularly for children whose parents did not anticipate their separation, as it represents a significant disruption. Post-divorce family income and children's psychosocial abilities, rather than cognitive abilities, facilitate this effect (Brand, Moore, Song, & Xie, 2017). High-conflict divorces intensify scholastic difficulties, resulting in children in these situations being more prone to subpar academic achievement (Escapa, 2024). Authoritative parenting, defined by elevated responsiveness and expectations, correlates positively with intrinsic drive and academic achievement. This approach cultivates a desire for knowledge, achievement, and experiential engagement during the learning process (Jemini-Gashi & Kadriu, 2022).

Conversely, authoritarian and permissive styles exhibit no substantial link with intrinsic motivation subscales. Active parental engagement, especially in communication, is essential for augmenting children's academic motivation. Authoritative parenting, characterized by the establishment of clear expectations and the provision of assistance, is associated with enhanced academic motivation (Mabao & Valle, 2023). Creating educational-psychological manuals grounded in positive parenting principles can markedly enhance emotional regulation in children of divorce. Such interventions can assist children in regulating their emotions and sustaining academic achievement despite parenting issues (Hamidi, Ahmadi, & Heydari, 2024). Systemic preventative interventions for emotional abuse are essential, particularly in high-conflict divorces, to alleviate adverse effects on children's mental health and social functioning (Roje Đapić & Buljan Flander, 2019).

## 5 Conclusion

The high divorce rate in Pariaman, West Sumatra, Indonesia, hurts children's psychology and reduces self-confidence and learning motivation. The study aims to analyze how the coping mechanisms of children with divorced parents affect the learning motivation of high school students. The study's results on 45 students showed a significant relationship between coping mechanisms and learning motivation ( $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ). The study concluded that strengthening adaptive coping mechanisms in students, especially those from divorced families, is essential. This is because such support not only improves students' emotional well-being but also significantly improves their motivation and academic performance. The implication is that strong support in the family and school is important to improve the motivation and well-being of students who

experience parental divorce. The limitations of this study are the lack of openness among respondents and time constraints in the research. Moreover, the relationship between coping mechanisms and learning motivation among high school students who have experienced parental divorce requires more detailed studies in the future. The study not only demonstrates a significant relationship between these factors but also emphasizes how crucial robust educational and emotional support systems are in helping these students manage their stress and maintain strong academic motivation. Future research might develop and evaluate new programs or workshops that enhance adaptive coping strategies, ultimately aiming to boost students' motivation to learn despite the challenges of having divorced parents.

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