



## Resilience in the Classroom: A Qualitative Inquiry on How Parental Separation Affects College Students' Learning and Their Coping Abilities

Genevieve Redulfin<sup>1</sup>, Desiree C. Tenebroso<sup>2</sup>, Ruben L. Tagare, Jr.<sup>3</sup>, Ana Trisha F. Siocon<sup>4</sup>, Rishel Lyn P. Gaspar<sup>5</sup>, Gauvin Adlaon<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1,3,6</sup> University of Southern Mindanao, Kabacan, Cotabato, Philippines

<sup>2,4,5</sup> Mindanao State University, Maguindanao, Philippines

<sup>3</sup> College of Education and Liberal Arts, Adamson University, Manila, Philippines

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose of the study:** This study aims to examine the impact of parental separation on the academic experiences of Bachelor of Physical Education students, focusing on how it influences their learning, engagement, and overall academic performance. By exploring both the challenges they face and the coping strategies they employ, the study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the educational implications of parental separation and contribute to the development of targeted support systems for affected students.

**Methodology:** A qualitative approach was used to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences. Interviews were conducted among 25 Bachelor of Physical Education students using a validated set of open-ended guide questions. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and translated to ensure accuracy and consistency in data interpretation. For data analysis, thematic analysis was employed, allowing the researchers to identify recurring patterns, themes, and significant insights related to the effects of parental separation on students' learning and coping mechanisms. This systematic approach ensured that the findings were grounded in the participants' lived experiences, providing a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

**Main Findings:** The study identified five significant effects of parental separation on students: loss of focus, feeling depressed, missing classes, studying hard to reach goals, taking the situation positively, lack of financial support, delays in submitting schoolwork, reduced moral support from parents, and even dropping out of school. In terms of coping mechanisms, the participants identified five main strategies: engaging in physical activities, strengthening their faith in God, using the situation as motivation, surrounding themselves with supportive people, staying brave and keeping away from negativity, and remaining positive by going with the flow and being grateful.

**Novelty/Originality of this study:** The study highlights the significant impact of parental separation on students' academic performance and identifies physical activity as an effective coping mechanism. It provides valuable insights into the experiences and resilience strategies of Bachelor of Physical Education students, offering a culturally relevant perspective in the context of the Philippines.

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### Corresponding Author:

Ruben L. Tagare, Jr.

Institute of Sports, Physical Education, and Recreation, University of Southern Mindanao, Kabacan, Cotabato, Philippines

Email: [tagareruben@usm.edu.ph](mailto:tagareruben@usm.edu.ph)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Conflicts are inevitable in families, and when they escalate, they often lead to the separation of couples. What was once envisioned as a solid, lifelong marriage can unravel, resulting in profound consequences for all family members, especially the children. Marriage is considered a fundamental commitment rather than a contract that can be quickly dissolved. Yet, separation disrupts the family unit, often leading to significant changes in the child's environment and emotional well-being.

According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, one out of every five married couples in the Philippines is on the brink of separation or divorce. In 2012 alone, 10,528 marriage nullity and annulment cases were filed, averaging 28 daily cases. These alarming figures underscore the magnitude of the problem, with reasons for separation ranging from incompatibility and poor communication to financial difficulties, lack of commitment, substance abuse, and mental illness [1]. While separation has been a social reality for decades, its impact on family dynamics, particularly children, remains profound. In the 1960s, the Philippines had 28,988 separated or separated men and 52,187 separated or separated women, with the study revealing that children growing up in low-income areas, affected by factors like religion and ethnicity, were more vulnerable to the challenges posed by parental separation [2].

For children and young adults, parental separation can have far-reaching effects on their emotional and psychological well-being, disrupting their academic performance. College students, in particular, may struggle to maintain their focus on educational tasks when faced with the emotional toll of family breakdown. Studies suggest that students dealing with the stress of parental separation are more likely to experience anxiety, which may affect their learning and participation in school activities [3]. The increased demands of academic achievement at the tertiary level and a lack of parental support can make it difficult for students to keep up with personal and educational responsibilities [4].

Education plays a crucial role in shaping students' futures, and strong academic performance is often seen as a gateway to achieving personal and professional goals. However, when parental conflict or separation disrupts the parent-child relationship, it can negatively affect students' motivation, concentration, and overall academic performance [5]. While parental divorce or separation has become more common, it continues to exert a significant emotional toll on all family members, with long-term implications for mental and physical health [6].

Several studies have explored the impact of parental separation on students' academic performance and well-being across various disciplines. Research has shown that children of divorced or separated parents often experience lower academic achievement, increased anxiety, and reduced self-esteem, which can hinder their overall learning process [7]. In the field of psychology, findings suggest that students from separated families exhibit higher levels of emotional distress, which negatively affects their cognitive development and classroom engagement [8]. Similarly, in the context of social sciences, studies have highlighted that the absence of parental support due to separation can lead to decreased motivation and poor academic outcomes, especially among adolescents facing financial instability [9]. Additionally, educational research has found that students with divorced parents are more likely to struggle with concentration and time management, further impacting their academic success [10].

Despite the extensive body of research examining the impact of parental separation on children and its implications for emotional well-being and family dynamics, there remains a significant gap in the literature concerning how this issue specifically affects tertiary students, particularly those pursuing degrees in physical education. While studies have explored the general psychological and academic consequences of parental separation, none have delved into the unique experiences and coping mechanisms of this demographic. This gap highlights the need for a focused investigation to understand better how parental separation influences college students' academic performance and resilience in the context of the Philippine cultural and educational landscape. By addressing this unexplored area, the study aims to provide insights that can inform targeted interventions and support systems for students grappling with this challenge.

This research is significant because it addresses a critical yet underexplored issue: the impact of parental separation on the academic experiences of tertiary students, particularly those pursuing a Bachelor of Physical Education. As college students navigate the demands of higher education, the emotional and financial strain caused by parental separation can significantly affect their ability to succeed academically. By examining how parental separation influences students' academic performance and identifying the coping mechanisms they employ, this study aims to bridge the gap between their unique needs and the support systems currently in place. The findings will be instrumental in guiding educators, administrators, and policymakers in creating intervention plans that offer targeted support to students facing such challenges.

The novelty of this research lies in its specific focus on tertiary students in the context of the Philippine cultural and educational landscape, where marriage dissolution is traditionally stigmatized yet increasingly prevalent. Unlike previous studies that generalize the effects of parental separation on children or young adults, this study delves deeply into the experiences of a particular group—physical education students—highlighting their academic struggles and resilience. By providing culturally relevant insights and emphasizing the role of

physical activity as a coping mechanism, the study contributes new perspectives to the discourse on family dynamics and academic performance, offering practical applications for improving educational outcomes and student well-being.

## **2. RESEARCH METHOD**

### **2.1. Research Design**

This research utilizes a phenomenological design to explore the impact of parental separation on the learning experiences of tertiary students. The phenomenology approach is the most suitable for this study because it seeks to understand the lived experiences and personal perspectives of individuals who have encountered a specific phenomenon—in this case, parental separation. By focusing on how students perceive and make sense of their experiences, phenomenology allows the researcher to capture the more profound, subjective dimensions of how parental separation influences their academic life, emotional well-being, and coping mechanisms [11].

The researcher will gather rich, detailed data from the participants through in-depth interviews using a structured interview-guide questionnaire. The phenomenological approach is particularly appropriate because it prioritizes the participants' descriptions and interpretations of their lived reality. It enables the researcher to delve into the personal meanings students assign to their experiences, exploring the external impacts on their learning and their internal emotional and psychological responses.

The design is ideal for this study as it allows for exploring the phenomenon from the participants' viewpoints, recognizing that each individual's response to parental separation is unique. The participants' feelings, insights, and narratives provide fresh, nuanced understandings that might not be fully captured through other research designs. Examining the phenomenon experienced by the students themselves ensures that the research findings reflect those directly affected' authentic, lived experiences, making the results more meaningful and grounded in real-world contexts.

In sum, phenomenology is the most suitable design for this research because it emphasizes understanding the complexities of the student's experiences holistically and personally, offering valuable insights into the effects of parental separation on learning.

### **2.2. Research Participants and Materials**

The participants of this study are 25 Bachelor of Physical Education students from the University of Southern Mindanao whose parents are separated. Purposive sampling was used, meaning the researcher selected participants based on specific criteria relevant to the study.

To ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data, the researcher used an interview guide questionnaire and an audio recorder during the interviews. Before conducting the interviews, permission was obtained to use the interview guide for data collection. The researcher assured participants that their personal information would remain confidential, with only their age, location, and educational level used for the study. The interviews were conducted through voice messages or Messenger calls, a method chosen for convenience during the pandemic and agreed upon by both the researcher and participants. The interview guide consisted of five open-ended questions to help participants feel comfortable sharing their experiences, opinions, and thoughts in their language. The researcher began each interview by introducing the topic and guiding the participants through the conversation, encouraging them to express themselves freely. This approach helped uncover essential insights related to the research goals.

### **2.3. Research Procedure**

The data gathering process involved conducting in-depth, face-to-face interviews with 25 purposively selected participants to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences. Before the interviews, participants were briefed about the study's objectives, and informed consent was obtained to ensure ethical compliance. A set of open-ended guide questions, validated by experts, was used to facilitate structured yet flexible discussions. Each interview was conducted in a quiet and comfortable setting to encourage participants to share their thoughts openly. The interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' permission, ensuring accuracy in capturing their responses. Afterward, the recordings were transcribed verbatim and, when necessary, translated into English for uniformity in data analysis. To maintain confidentiality, all personal identifiers were removed, and participants were assured of their anonymity throughout the research process.

### **2.4. Research Instruments and Data Collection Techniques**

The research utilized a set of open-ended guide questions as its primary instrument, carefully designed to explore the effects of parental separation on the learning experiences and coping mechanisms of tertiary students. These guide questions underwent a rigorous validation process conducted by experts in qualitative research and educational studies to ensure their reliability, relevance, and clarity. The open-ended format allowed participants to share their experiences and perspectives in their own words, fostering a deeper understanding of their challenges and coping strategies. By using this validated instrument, the study ensured that the data collected was both comprehensive and reflective of the participants' lived experiences.

Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews, a qualitative technique well-suited for capturing the nuanced and personal nature of the research topic. These interviews provided a platform for participants to express their thoughts and emotions freely, enabling the researchers to gather detailed and meaningful insights. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and translated to maintain the accuracy and integrity of the data. The in-depth nature of this approach allowed the researchers to probe further into participants' responses, uncovering patterns and themes related to the impact of parental separation on academic performance and coping mechanisms. This method ensured a rich, contextualized understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

## 2.5. Data Analysis

To summarize the study's findings, narrative analysis was used to determine the impact of parental separation on tertiary students' learning. After the interviews, the researcher seeks to follow the procedure for authentic data analysis, where the researcher first transcribed the recorded data gathered, translated the verbatim data of participants' responses in the Mother Tongue to the English language, and the Categorization reactions of the participants. After the main ideas are identified, thematization is done for the results and discussion. The narration of the participants' real experiences based on their context occurred at the beginning of the interpretation. After carefully discussing the participants' experiences, an iterative interpretation based on their responses was given. Finally, theories and studies were used to support the interpretation of the data. A limitation of personal bias was observed to preserve the genuineness of the participant's thoughts and feelings.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. How having Separated Parents Affect Tertiary Students with their Learning

*Lost Focus Felt Depressed in doing Activities and Missed the Class.* The first significant theme in most participants' responses was how having separated parents affects tertiary students' learning. Students of separated parents have an increased risk for the improvement of academic learning problems. Counseling indicated that students from separated parents attend school less, do less homework, and have less parental supervision of their schoolwork [12]. At the same time, parental separation affects learners in several ways, such as educational learning that causes less concentration, declining attendance, and willingness to participate in class [5].

Students from separated parents showed less motivation in academics and school activities [13]. When participants were asked how their parent separation affected their learning, they mentioned losing focus in doing activities the most. Participant #3, Participant #18, Participant #13, and Participant #15, said:

*"...I lost my focus, literally nothing really, even doing homework, projects like that. I'm sluggish because of the situation until now, anyway. Especially now, online class, I just prefer to miss class every day..." P3*

*"...Uhm, sometimes, I can't focus on my activities anymore because when I'm alone, I think a lot, and I can't avoid it..." P18*

Students with separated parents hurt their education due to a lack of attention and poor care. Because of their circumstances, the students are distracted from learning and cannot study at home. It was also discovered that parental separation hurts students' accomplishments and academic learning [14].

However, knowing their parents' situation made some participants depressed, and they were unable to attend some of their school activities in some cases. Students who have experienced parental divorce are more likely to become depressed and misbehave. When it harms their education in a way that does not increase their learning capacity, they experience academic failure [15]. Students who have experienced parental conflict may experience depression following parental separation [16].

Divorce can have both physical and psychological consequences for children. "The health effects of divorce are well documented; separated or separated people have higher levels of depression, stress, and fear, as well as lower levels of self-esteem" [17]. Students who have experienced the separation of their parents, on the other hand, may experience a stage of depression, particularly in their learning performance [18]. In which participant #21 shared:

*"...Yes, it had a profound effect on my studies. I continued to be an honor student in high school, and then I just failed. I lost the top. I became depressed and lost my appetite for everything, including my studies, and I was no longer focused on doing our homework..." P21*

A study by Stadelmann et al. [19] discovered that students with separated parents presented negative examples of their learning. Parental separation is one of the causes of students' depression and poor academic performance, but it is not the only one. As participant #17 mentioned:

*“... there's also a time that I can no longer focus on my studies, as I can no longer do activities after my assignments, but my parents are not the reason, so, I set aside uhm my problem rather than thinking the separation of my parents...”P17*

According to Amato and Anthony [20], comparing students' learning performance before and after parental separation is feasible, and the consequence differs. While some students lose focus and feel depressed while studying, it should be emphasized as a method of acquiring knowledge and reducing depression from learning [21]. On the other hand, a student cannot be aware of and pay attention to everything at the same time. This is much more difficult at school, particularly for a teenager whose parents are separated. During the process, students should be able to avoid distractions that draw their attention but do not add to the learning process and make attempts to stay engaged in the task [22].

However, when parents pay more attention to their children, the detrimental consequences on their academic achievement are reduced. They may be better able to deal with what they are learning in school since parents are responsible for participating in their children's education, aiding them with their homework, and giving them what they need in school [23]. As a result, attention is both a mental state of alertness and a focusing activity. As a result, attention is engaged in learning and is required for people to learn [22].

*Less Financial Support and Got Delayed on Passing School Work.* Some participants noted this subject, stating that some students with separated parents had less financial assistance from their parents, causing schoolwork to be postponed. Parents provided less financial aid to students, causing instructional activities to be delayed. According to Anderson's [24] research, there is a rise in financial troubles among separated parents, which affects the payment of college fees and other day-to-day expenditures in students' lives. Furthermore, students with separated parents struggled with projects that needed financial support [25]. Financial troubles may alter a student's academic performance, which is a highly stressful aspect of the student's learning [26].

A student with a separated parent has difficulty learning, especially in areas where financial aid is one aspect of a student's life to achieve good grades in school. In a high-cost social service environment, where financial support is a big help for students learning, less financial support will be a problem for students in improving themselves in academics, leading to poor learning performance [27]. Participant 20 said:

*“...After all, there are a lot of complexities when it comes to finances. Even though my mother has a job, it still seems complicated because sometimes we delay paying the bills at home as well as my siblings' school because they are in private schools, so even if my mother has a job, it is still not enough for us and other thing was I have also been delayed in submitting projects to school so this situation is difficult for me...”P20*

As a result, students struggled to decide whether to spend their money on food or other necessities. A lack of financial support continues to be an issue for college students. It impacts their learning process [27]. Some students, including Participant # 7, stated:

*“...And as a student, I became more careless in my studies, and my support is limited as I can no longer buy the things I need in college because of the lack of financial support...”P7*

Separated parents give less financial assistance to their children [28]. Furthermore, students who suffered financial difficulty or dropped their quality of living have been linked to inferior scholastic learning [13].

*Less Moral Support from Parents.* This issue explores how parents offer less moral support to their children than they do throughout their studies. Yet, tertiary students need moral support to be motivated to gain information. Parents are valuable resources for students, providing moral support, practical assistance, and guidance and serving as role models for their children in learning how to acquire knowledge. Students with separated parents receive less support from their parents regarding schoolwork. They are less positively engaged in school, particularly learning, than students whose parents are separated [29]. Participant number 12 stated:

*“...Uhm, I can also say that my education is affected because until now, I still need the moral support of my parents because it's different when your mom and dad take care of you...”P12*

Furthermore, parents play a significant role in encouraging and motivating their students' learning. Moral support helps students be healthy and achieve long-term learning [30]. However, participant #23 said:

*“...Hmm, it affected my learning when I was a child and my parents got separated. Then, I struggled with my studies because I didn't have someone to send whenever there were school events, programs, or meetings. Then, I lost because there was no guidance from my parents...”P23*

Separated parents often did not participate in their children's school activities, did not attend teacher meetings, and did not guarantee that their children completed learning tasks. At the same time, students received less direction from them [31]. As a result, even if their parents are separated, parents should constantly be there for their children to be encouraged to learn via study and to feel supported by their parents. This is because students who have experienced parental separation have a terrible process of cultural, social, and academic transition in higher education [32]. Furthermore, adolescents who have experienced parental separation continue to experience a lack of moral support from their families [33].

### **How Students with Separated Parents Cope with Their Situations**

*Diverting My Attention Through Physical Activities.* The first trend emerged in the coping mechanisms of students experiencing parental separation, with most participants using this approach. Students like physical activities and utilize them as a coping tool. Some students used to react to their difficulties positively to forget their terrible condition temporarily. Other students with separated parents spent their free time participating in physical sports [34].

According to a study, students claimed that dealing with the circumstance of parental separation improves them via physical activities and is the most effective coping method for overcoming the problem [35]. According to the study's findings, participant # 14 and participant # 17 all share:

*“...Uhm, one reason I could move on immediately was playing volleyball, joining the dance troupe at school and the marching band. These are my ways of not imagining such family problems. I don't study because it's easy for me to get bored, so I joined school activities so that I can't lose the path like, uhm, I can forget the sad events in my life...”P17*

*“...I just embrace this situation even if it is difficult but necessary to accept it. Uhm, then I also participate in school activities so that somehow I can't imagine the problem caused by my parents' separation...”P14*

Students who have undergone parental separations participate in sports or groups where they may establish their self-worth and mingle with others [36], [37]. Physical activities are also helpful for students with split parents since they aid in reducing tension between separated parents and their children's academic abilities [38].

Students participated in more physical activities as coping mechanisms to assist them in overcoming the circumstance and letting go of their earlier experiences with their parents' troubles. On the other hand, students who have experienced parental separation are more involved in physical activities to relieve stress and enjoy themselves. As stated by participant #18:

*“...And I just turn my attention to physical activities to entertain myself...”P18*

Students have sufficient time to play, read, rest, and participate in physical activities. Participating in indoor and outdoor sports activities may aid in the release of tension and stress related to their conditions [39]. Students distract themselves at school by focusing on academics, hobbies, sports, and other extracurricular activities [40]. Physical exercise was also identified as a highly effective coping strategy used by several participants to distract them [41].

Students, on the other hand, participate in a variety of physical activities as a means of coping with their parents' situation. As a result, students could forget the difficulty of having separated parents. However, some students are not engaged in physical activities that stem from parental separation because they are preoccupied

with daily routines such as school activities and seeking support from the other parent [42]. As stated by participant #25:

*"...And it's easy for me to get bored with physical activities..."P25*

*Strengthening Religious Faith.* This theme talks about the relationship of students to God, where in times of difficulty, they ask for guidance from God, and they pray a lot, which helps strengthen their faith in Him and make Him their inspiration every day. According to Johnston and Sullivan [43], parents' separation positively affects student cases. In some situations, students grow concerned with others and understand that people are not all the same. In learn exist re-existing as well. Some students strengthen their faith, accept, and move forward from their situation [44].

However, in some studies, it was found that seeking spiritual support through praying, attending mass, and communicating with leaders in the church helps strengthen the faith in God and is used as a coping strategy in surpassing the situation within the family [35]. Praying in God as a coping strategy for students with separated parents helped them cope with the stressful situation. However, it gives confidence to the individual and helps release the pain from the situation. Participant # 15 and Participant # 22 talked about praying when they said:

*"...I always pray that may God will truly guide and conquer these struggles, emotions of guilt, hopelessness, and worthlessness that keep me bound, that's it..."P22*

It was observed that developing trust in God as a coping technique provides the basis for releasing the agony of the circumstance and making you feel better. This management method entails trusting and relying on God to protect the family. Individuals may analyze how students respond to the scenario causing their parents' problems by praying to God [45]. As a consequence, as Participant # 5 said, having a good connection with God may result in a beneficial outcome.

Spiritual expression, a solid relationship with God, belief in the meaning and purpose of life, and spiritual connection with others are all positive spiritual belief coping strategies. Healthy religious coping elements include seeking spiritual assistance, practicing forgiveness, and participating in spiritual fellowship [34]. One person indicated forgiveness as a consequence of the research. According to Vorster [46], empathy comprehends another person from that person's point of view or frame of reference in a way that makes that person feel understood. Participant #5 mentioned:

*"...In my mind, the best way for me to move on is to put God first, like in praying, learn the true role of the bible, and also increase your salvation and that there is nothing perfect in the world..."P5*

Attending church establishes a connection to God, which plays an important role in dealing with parental separation for adolescents whose parents have separated and is also connected with reduced levels of academic stress [47] was discovered that encouraging someone to prepare using God-related language boosted participants' tenacity in completing a task, independent of their degree of religion. In contrast, participants #2 and #18 stated:

*"...My grandfather is religious, and because of that, I have also become religious. Also, because my grandfather's house is near the mosque, I am trained to go to the mosque; that's why I devoted my time to worshipping Allah..."P2*

*"...Uhm, my family and I go to church every Sunday. I just pray to God completely. Then, my uncles also advised me not to feel too emotional about our situation because they were there. They make me feel that even if I don't have a dad, they are there to support me..."P18*

Developing trust in God is a stress-reduction strategy, providing meaning and purpose to one's life and consolation in whatever scenario. Reliance, or a life's purpose, was considered a chance for growth. Having faith was positively related to the student feeling in control and capable of dealing with life's challenges [34].

*Be with People Closest to You.* This subject focuses on students' coping strategies after their parents separate; being surrounded by others helps them forget the grief caused by their parent's divorce. Being with individuals close to you will benefit your learning, particularly during stress and difficulty. According to some studies, students highlight their friends, family, and relatives, contributing to positive performance in students' learning and a beneficial influence on their everyday lives [30]. Another conclusion was that direct assistance from those who are always there for you had a favorable impact in times of adversity [48]. You may feel more positive

when you are surrounded by individuals you know. They are more content when having fun and making memories with them. Whereas participant 13 and participant 12 responded:

*"...And I'm grateful to the people next to me because they are there if I have a problem. Like my sister, she seems to be my mama when mama isn't there, so I'm also very grateful to my friends." P13*

*"...Because of my friends and the people next to me now, they have been the ones I lean on in every situation. For now, I can say that such a situation is normal, and I can also accept that maybe because of my friends and relatives who are there with me..." P12*

According to Plooy [41], spending time with friends and exchanging emotions and opinions with one another is an excellent approach for children to cope with their parents' separation. Friendship is a key coping skill during parental separation. They provide emotional and moral assistance to youngsters who have parental separation while going through the divorce process. Stabilizing by discussing things with friends or getting counsel from a friend can help them forget the anguish they are experiencing on the inside [41]. As said by participants #3, #8, and #9:

*"...Just go to the good way. Everything has a reason. And during the off-season, I just walk with my friends to get rid of the pain I'm feeling..." P3*

*"...I don't think much about the situation, and because I have a lot of friends, of course, when you're with your friends, you can't imagine those situations..." P8*

*"...taking a walk with friends if there is an occasion where I forget my problems..." P9*

*Self-motivation by Being Brave and Keeping Distance from Negativity.* This subject focuses on the coping mechanisms of students who have experienced parental separation. Some students are bold enough to overcome the circumstances and avoid negativity while motivating themselves to succeed. According to [30], several students firmly agreed that self-motivation is a strategy to advance in life and contributes to good academic learning performance. Other research studies have stressed the importance of the connection between educational achievement and student motivation, where student conduct is linked to students' drive to learn and reflect on their condition to achieve a better end [49]. Thus, as participant # 6 said, self-motivation is one of the most regularly employed coping techniques for students:

*"...Everything was okay, even without my dad. Even if we're not complete, it's like nothing to me. Then my mother was there to give us a beautiful and orderly life somehow, and I make my mother and my siblings as my motivation..." P6*

Consequently, the conclusion is that self-motivation to have a better life is based on a student's desire to study and attain objectives [49]. As a result, students are generally more courageous in "stepping out" of family issues. According to several research findings, boosting self-courage and maintaining a safe distance from negativity is challenging when some students are heroically handling circumstances where they don't view themselves as requiring support from others, which might make them feel better [22]. As a result, participant #7 stated:

*"...I'm just waiting for the pain to go away. And I must accept that truth because if I let this, my life will be ruined. That is why I have been brave in all life's challenges and put myself to things I am happy about..." P7*

However, conflict between parents and students may benefit the students by making them more socially responsible, daring, and dynamic, helping them to do well in school and helping them to become positive thinkers. As a result, parental separation might be good for confident students who have problems with their parents [13]. Students are more troubled by the situation than their parents, but avoiding negativity as a coping method helps to broaden their understanding of parental separation. And, due to their parents' disagreements, some children are taking the initiative to better their lives, particularly in their academic learning. Keep a safe distance from negative individuals to mitigate the harmful consequences of their conditions [42]. In contrast, participant #10 stated:



*"...I distance myself from negative things, and I keep telling myself that I must reach my dreams and grow in everything I can. And I no longer depend on others, as if I were standing on two feet. Uhm, being independent in life, that's what makes me strong now..." P10*

On the other hand, some students are accountable in any scenario in which they accept the condition to overcome the situation of parental separation. According to Devor et al. [13], "accepting responsibility for oneself" was determined to be the key to dealing with the circumstance and maturing, followed by "being financially independent" and "completing education." On the other hand, students emphasized concentrating on what was essential to them in daily life [42]. Students were more productive in pursuing their jobs as they accepted the circumstances of their family difficulty. According to this viewpoint, individuals are active in their surroundings, interact with the world around them, and grow from their circumstances [50]. It was justified. Participant #11 said:

*"...Because of my work, I forget the pain, and I am thankful because they also have consideration for me; they just let me do my studies at the same time after my work, and I also do my job well..." P11*

Students may learn new skills and become more mature in problem-solving by fulfilling their responsibilities as a stepping stone to a better environment. Accepting their circumstances due to parental separation and fulfilling their duties impact their current knowledge and understanding that they can learn from events in their parents' predicament [50]. Participant number 19 stated:

*"...After all, I accepted the situation so unclear that they can't be together. Uhm, it's just I make those problems my inspiration so that I can cope with a situation like this and tell myself that I can handle it because it has already happened..." P19*

This study acknowledges several limitations that should be addressed in future research. First, the sample was limited to Bachelor of Physical Education students from a specific academic institution, which may not fully capture the diverse experiences of students in other disciplines or regions. Second, as a qualitative study, the findings are based on subjective accounts and may not be generalizable to broader populations. Additionally, the reliance on in-depth interviews may have introduced biases due to participants' willingness to disclose personal experiences. Future research could expand the scope by incorporating a larger and more diverse sample, employing mixed-method approaches to validate findings quantitatively, and exploring other variables such as socioeconomic status, gender differences, and cultural factors. Furthermore, longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into the long-term effects of parental separation on students' academic and personal development, offering a more comprehensive understanding of this critical issue.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

This study underscores the profound influence of parental separation on students' academic performance and emotional resilience, revealing how this family disruption affects both cognitive engagement and emotional stability in the classroom. The participants' narratives reflect a recurring struggle to maintain academic focus, often hindered by feelings of distraction, anxiety, and depression that arise from familial upheaval. These findings highlight the critical role educators play in recognizing and responding to these challenges, as their awareness and sensitivity can significantly impact the students' learning experiences and outcomes. The insights gained from this study not only underscore the urgent need for tailored interventions but also provide an empirical foundation for developing supportive frameworks within educational institutions, particularly through enhanced guidance counseling and proactive outreach by school staff.

A notable finding is the adaptive strategy many students employ by engaging in physical activities to cope with stress, illustrating the therapeutic potential of physical engagement as a medium for emotional regulation and improved focus. This suggests that institutions should consider expanding physical activity programs and other wellness initiatives as part of a holistic support strategy for students affected by parental separation. The broader applicability of these insights within the school, and potentially across similar educational settings, supports the integration of targeted support mechanisms aimed at fostering resilience among students facing similar adversities. By prioritizing interventions that recognize and address the multifaceted impacts of parental separation, educational institutions can foster a more supportive environment, ultimately enhancing students' academic and personal well-being.

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