# The Influence of Paternal masculinity Behavior on the Formation of Individual Attachment

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**Abstract.** Paternal masculinity behavior has been recognized as an important factor in a rearing process of a family that might influence children's attachment strongly and has a certain relevance to individual attachment when children grow up. In this study, researchers show that fathers' involvement and paternal masculinity behavior have a strong impact on the formation of individual attachment, especially adult avoidant. Fathers who intend to show their masculinity may suppress their emotional expression and try to build a moral paradigm in front of children. Children learn information from fathers about gender behaviors and the idea of how they start and sustain a romantic relationship. It may lead to an avoidant attachment since children acquire the restriction of emotional expressions, and criticize moral standards in their childhood from either insufficient father involvement or paternal masculinity behaviors. The result inspires researchers that father involvement and paternal masculinity behaviors should be further considered and developed as key elements when it comes to parenting and attachment in the scientific field.

**Keywords:** Father involvement; paternal masculinity; attachment.

## 1. Introduction

Adult attachment has always been a topic that discusses widely as it correlates with career, family, parenting and etc. One of the best ways to figure out adult attachment is back to the formation of children's attachment. When it comes to children's attachment, most of the research or study focuses on maternal attachment since mothers are considered to be the main rearing role in a family under many cultural circumstances. They feed the babies, change diapers, and take care of everything of babies. In this case, people usually oversee the role of fathers in families because they do not give birth to babies, conduct a direct rearing process for babies, and are recognized as a breadwinner so they may not have an impact on children's attachment.

However, an increasing number of studies have demonstrated that the presence of a father in a family may have a protective impact against teen smoking. Reduced adolescent behavioral issues, improved social or relational functioning in both childhood and adulthood, and improved academic results were outcomes in research showing widespread impacts [1], which reflect the importance of the father's role when it comes to attachment. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the role of fathers and the key traits of fathers that impact children since there is a lack of research on the influence of masculinity on adult attachment.

In past studies, fathers' masculinity has been studied a lot because it is explicit, well-observed, and measured. Current studies of the masculinity of fathers generally describe the bad side of it, for example, domestic violence, abuse, and hegemony masculinity, which leads to behavioral problems in adolescence even in adults. Little research reveals that there is also a good side to masculinity, like responsible providers, moral journey agents, and emotional paradigms. Thus, this study will try to demonstrate the impact of paternal masculinity on children's and adults' attachment. This paper assumes that paternal masculinity affects the formation of children's attachment. Children's attachment is dominant to the adult attachment. Adult attachment has a significant impact on the formation of a close relationship.

# 2. Paternal Masculinity Behavior and Its Role in Raising Children

## 2.1 The Definition of Masculinity

Masculinity is adopted by western countries at the end of the 19th Century and early 20th Century to express male temperament, and it mainly describes the modern male temperament or the male image in the public mind. According to 'Century Dictionary', 'masculine' refers to male characteristics. 'Masculinity' refers to typical characteristics that male has in human society including physical and mental features which are different from those of female, for example, men's physical appearance, hair, speech and behavior, clothing, pace, occupation, etc.

There are some basic aspects of masculinity. Masculinity means responsibility and a provider role. The definition of masculinity that was most frequently utilized emphasized responsibility. This kind of accountability was misunderstood inside the traditional leadership paradigm. It was believed that masculinity was an active process that entailed acting with assurance, being responsible, and looking out for others. These behaviors were seen as crucial in the dual development of becoming an adult and a man, and exhibiting them set men apart from boys. The moral journey is one of the primary components of masculinity among many others. Being a moral agent is sometimes seen as a process of developing into a man with masculinity. adhering to social customs and laws that are strictly enforced, satisfy societal moral standards, and possess a typical course. Expression of emotions is another factor. Emotional outbursts were seen as both incompatible with and supportive of masculinity. It is inappropriate for a man to express any emotion that shows weakness, like crying. However, sometimes anger can be recognized to be a signal of masculinity on certain.

For individuals, the social definition and gender norms of masculinity and manhood play an important influence on the process of identity formation when they are young. In a society, there are many different ways to be a man, or numerous masculinities. It is accepted as a common social ideal that dominance and control over women are frequently among the traits and actions of men. It's important to note that both women and men highly accept the dominance of this masculinity over others as natural, it's not compulsive. In general, men and women alike concur that this social ideal illustrates how males and intimate relationships ought to be [2].

However, obeying rigid masculine norms or even the hegemony of masculinity leads to multiple poor outcomes in interpersonal relationships and gender inequity. Thus, masculinity that is accepted by the daughter in a family can play an essential impact in her intimate relationship. The extent to which gender-inequitable views attributed to masculinity norms lead to the use of violence, hazardous risk-taking, and unfavorable coping mechanisms has been highlighted in the global public health literature.

## 2.2 Paternal Masculinity Behavior and Its Role

The intuitive claim that parent engagement is crucial for the growth and welfare of their children would be accepted by most people. The father ideal has evolved over history, from being a moral authority and a strict disciplinarian to being a breadwinner and later a gender role model and 'buddy', to the modern nurturing, helpful father. The American Academy of Paediatrics' (AAP) Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health recently declared that actively expanding men's participation in the upbringing and development of their children is an important aspect of work, which reflects this social trend.

The conceptualization of father involvement proposed by Lamb and others includes several aspects [3]. Fathers are accessible first and foremost when they are present and available. Second, participation involves direct interaction, such as play, reading, excursions, or activities involving caregiving. The third factor is responsibility, which denotes taking part in decisions regarding childcare, medical appointments, and other practical matters like picking out clothes, diapers, and sleeping arrangements for the baby. According to Lamb, accessibility entails being available for interaction with the child, a condition that was unable to determine in a number of significant research.

The role is distinct between fathers and mothers. Mothers tend to care for children while fathers involve in games and exploration with children, and their temperaments, attachments, and personalities [4]. Through this process, the father shows his masculinity which includes teaching children the moral standard, how to take responsibility when coping with real problems, and temperaments like courage, perseverance, and others. These kinds of behaviors play an important role in children's growth stage and children may imitate them in a real situation when they are adults. In addition, the moral standard implied in the behaviors also influences the precise decision and even affects interpersonal relationships and romantic relationships when they become adults in the future.

### 2.3 How does Paternal mMasculinity Affect Children's Attachment

The effects of dysfunctional parenting get more complex the longer and more extreme it is, with vicious cycles involving low self-esteem, emotional dysregulation, impulsivity, and inattention, all of which are exacerbated by feelings of failure at home and in school. This confluence causes intergenerational parenting challenges and is costly to people, public services, and the larger society.

Recent research, which is essential to the current investigation, contends that secure father attachment, even after adjusting for maternal attachment, may have a distinctive impact on mental health. Even after taking into consideration the considerable impacts of mother attachment on outcome factors, it is noteworthy that less secure paternal attachment has been connected to protracted depression [5]. In addition, whereas prior works of literature have identified mother attachment as a risk factor for suicide attempts, father attachment appeared in one study as the only significant predictor of suicide attempts [6]. Despite the attachment literature's historical preference for maternal over father connection, these findings support the idea that paternal attachment may be of particular value to mental health.

Paternal masculinity helps to form the moral standard of children and the paradigm to imitate. Also, paternal masculinity behavior toward mothers and children shows how romantic relationships start and sustain, and how the role should play in a relationship and even a family. In this process, children learn how to get along with males or females, and build a relatively stable attachment style which will strongly affect their aspects everywhere.

## 3. The Correlation between Children's Attachment and Adult Attachment

### 3.1 The Definition, Classification, and Formation of Children's Attachment

Attachment is the term used to describe formed expectations of others' receptivity, particularly during times of need [7]. In order to safeguard children and prepare them for independence and parenting, families are bound together by an enduring emotional connection called attachment.

At any age, attachments can form. Bowlby's theory that assumptions derived from the earliest experiences of close relationships are particularly significant in establishing foundations that underlie subsequent relationships and thus influence everything that comes through relationships is supported by clinical and neurobiological evidence. Stern's video studies of mothers and their newborn children showed how attachment forms when mothers are attentive to their babies' cues through posture, facial expression, touch, movement, and small changes in voice tone, pitch, and rhythm. To achieve this, parents must be aware of and responsive to their baby's needs, and babies must respond in a cycle of interaction that reinforces one another.

The varying nomenclature for "attachment styles" undermines the trust of non-specialists and exposes them to label-related preconceptions. observing, comprehending, and describing the interactions between parents and children, as well as taking into account childhood secure attachment and avoidance attachment.

Infants' capacity to elicit a response and parents' capacity to do so with tact and consistency are the foundations of secure attachment. Relationships are viewed as worthwhile, dependable, and safe, and focus is perceived as easily obtained and safely given up, setting the path for healthy adult relationships and successful parenting.

Relationship avoidance is a learned behavior brought on by chronically inattentive parenting, which frequently occurs when parents' early bond was weak, or by consistently threatening to parent. Children become "loners," failing to pick up on non-verbal signs or the nuances of language, and many turn to "sameness" as a kind of anxiety control. The image that emerges is similar to "innate" autism spectrum disease. Some people overeat to the point of throwing up while oblivious to the surroundings, pain, and the need to use the restroom since their "inner world" is meaningless [8].

### 3.2 The Definition and Classification of Adult Attachment

Adult attachment theory was developed based on the infant attachment theory. Building an intimate relationship is like forming an emotional connection with parents during infancy. Bartholomew and Horowitz divided adult attachment into four types -- Secure, Focus, Avoidance, and Apathy. According to another study, adult attachment styles are divided into two categories: avoidance, the propensity to avoid emotional intimacy with others, and anxiety, a preoccupation with relationships that includes the dread of abandonment and rejection [9]. This article will mainly focus on secure attachment and avoidance attachment.

Adult secure attachment is the same as infant secure attachment, being attached to others or being depended on by others, being at ease and comfortable, they are not afraid of being unrecognized by others, and being able to establish an intimate connection with ease and comfort. The relationship itself can determine the attachment type. As long as the environment can be safely explored, there will be a love affair, and there will be a well-attached attachment type. People with independent attachments belong to the generally secure attachment type.

People with avoidance type avoid because of fear, thinking that their value is low, and try to avoid establishing close ties with others for fear of being rejected by others. They are afraid that once they establish close ties with others, they will not be able to get out and get hurt when they finally separate. It can be seen that such people have already thought of the worst results before they have established attachment, and they have a negative attitude towards the establishment of intimate relationships. Some people like staying single and think that being single is also good, or hold the idea that they will never contact others if nobody contacts them. The root of fear is fear of loss, so they dare not start. Because they are afraid of the pain of separation, they consider they should not invest in it at the beginning.

### 3.3 Dynamic Interaction of Children Attachment and Adult Attachment

Attachment had lifelong implications, including for parenting. A continuum of attachment types, from emotionally aloof "loners" to those who are overly dependent, can be seen in people of all ages. Those who fall between the two extremes are considered to display "insecure" connections, ranging from somewhat subpar to severely dysfunctional. Individuals in the center are those whose attachments are "secure" and who value relationships while being able to work effectively on their own These patterns usually persist throughout life and are more obvious under pressure.

The same three adult attachment patterns can be predicted based on childhood attachment history [10]. Several studies have revealed similar percentage distributions for the adult attachment type categories: roughly 55% secure, 25% avoidant, and 20% anxious/ambivalent. Numerous psychological and interpersonal factors have been linked to adult attachment style, such as personality, the quality of adult romantic relationships, and general adult relationship quality. Adult attachment styles have been broken down into three main categories: close, dependent, and anxious.

When it comes to the dynamic interaction of children's avoidance attachment and adult avoidance attachment. The childhood attachment paradigm is translated by Hazan & Shaver into words specifically applicable to adult relationships. The correlates of attachment style paint a picture of an individual who distrusts others, but in whom, nonetheless, strong feelings are elicited in attachment relations. These results suggest that a method based on the endorsement of an explicit definition of avoidance may be inadequate to identify defensive self-reliance. Although avoidant close relationships, adults appear to be aware of their unfulfilled attachment needs.

# 4. The Influence of Paternal Masculinity on the Adult Attachment

## 4.1 Paternal Masculinity Predicts Children's Attachment Avoidance

Up until the age of six, children who showed an avoidant pattern of attachment with their primary caregiver during infancy engage in a variety of maladaptive behaviors. These tendencies are generally consistent and may be influenced by internal expectations or social relationship models. In particular, many behavior patterns associated with childhood avoidance appear to be maladaptive. They can be understood as originally adaptive responses to difficult conditions and merely reflect a disruption in normal development engendered by inadequate early caregiving.

According to Bowlby, a child's belief in an attachment figure's availability in times of need is strongly influenced by early experiences. Sensitivity to the infant's signals is the maternal behavior trait that has the strongest correlation with the classification of childhood attachment [7]. Mothers of babies who are securely bonded have a tendency to constantly respond to their baby's cues and to interact with them in a kind manner. Mothers of infants who are categorized as ambivalent, on the other hand, frequently behave inconsistently and ineffectively around them, displaying a general lack of sensitivity to their infants' needs.

However, the dimension of paternal behavior also bears an important relation with childhood attachment, especially masculinity behaviors. A typical characteristic of masculine behavior is to suppress the emotion that is weak and also restrict the expression of love. As another main caregiver apart from the mother, the father tends to show more masculinity in the rearing process and is inclined to hide their love emotion. Being a moral judge or a strict teacher that instructs children on how to do things right leads to alienation between father and children, in that case, children have a desire to attain love from the father while having a fear of rejection. This type of worry may undermine a child's belief that an attachment figure will be there for them when they need them, which can lead to avoidant behavior.

## 4.2 Children's Attachment Predicts Adult Attachment

Bowlby highlights that attachment is not just a phenomenon in young children. He hypothesizes that early attachment underlies adult dysfunctions such as "marital troubles and trouble with children as well as neurotic symptoms and personality disorders," as well as the ability to form affectionate attachments in the future.

Ainsworth [11] explores the idea that throughout life, parents, classmates, siblings, and romantic partners could all serve as attachment figures and Weiss [12] focuses primarily on love relationships in adulthood. Most romantic partnerships include the characteristics of infant-mother attachment: a need for closeness to the attachment figure, especially under pressure; a sense of security from contact; and distress or protest when loss or separation is threatened. According to Bowlby, obsessive self-reliance in adults' manifests as a statement of the independence of emotional ties. In his opinion, because of a pattern of parental rejection, the attachment systems of compulsively self-reliant adults have become 'deactivated '. These adults are emotionally detached or, from the point of view of the individual, emotionally self-sufficient and are not consciously aware of their attachment needs. Unfortunately, this pattern has not been investigated empirically.

Although continuity of attachment-related behaviors has been documented [13], work has only recently addressed the question of how working models of attachment mediate adult emotional and social adaptation. Morris, Main, and others have studied the relationship between parents' working models of attachment based on accounts of their own childhood experiences and the caliber of their children's connection in a particularly fruitful new line of research [14]. Adult representations of their attachment relationships from childhood are examined in the Adult Attachment Interview established by Main [10]. It asks questions about parental rejection and separation as well as the quality of the relationship from childhood into the present. Based on the interview, adults are assigned to attachment groups parallel to the three childhood attachment patterns. The criteria for inclusion in groups were

initially derived by comparing the interview transcripts of groups of mothers defined by the attachment classification of their infants.

### 4.3 Paternal Masculinity and Adult Attachment Avoidance

Different kinds of parent-child interactions or other life experiences might account for the differing self-images of fearful and dismissing adults. It seems likely that the parents of fearful and dismissing adults differed in their child-rearing practices in ways that differentially affected their children as they moved into later childhood. For example, the parents of fearfully avoidant adults may have freely expressed negative affect toward and in front of their children, leading to fearfulness and the avoidance of interpersonal conflict on the part of rejected children.

As a result of their widespread coolness in relationships with their kids and deficiencies in emotional availability and sensitivity, the parents of people who dismiss others may have discouraged their children from expressing negative emotions in public. These parents may thereby have communicated to their children that it is unacceptable to experience or express negative feelings, contributing to a defensive negation of feelings that might undermine self-esteem. A lack of personal relationships may not have been perceived as reflecting badly on the self because people may have been encouraged by parents as children to value non-social domains like scholastic or athletic achievements more highly than achieving intimate relationships.

In summary, the father plays an important role in children-parent attachment and especially influences the behaviors of children. In a family, the father who shows more masculine behaviors may dismiss children's requirements and make children reflect negatively on the self when rearing their children, thus, undermining children's self-esteem. In this case, children form a relatively stable attachment and responsiveness when it comes to interpersonal relationships or romantic relationships when they grow up. They avoid building a close connection with others because they are afraid of being hurt even though they have strong desires. Even worse, they do not want to form a relationship with others because they feel it is unnecessary.

## 5. Conclusion

Through this research, the author discovers that masculinity is used to express a male temperament in the public mind and it can be divided into three categories including responsibility, moral journey, and emotional expression. In a family, the father tends to involve in games and exploration with the children which affects children's temperaments with paternal masculinity, for example, In this process, paternal masculinity helps to form the moral standard of children and the paradigm to imitate. Also, paternal masculinity behavior toward mothers and children shows how romantic relationships start and sustain, and how the role should play in a relationship and even a family. In this process, children learn how to get along with males or females, and build a relatively stable attachment style which will strongly affect their aspects everywhere.

Attachments form at any age and have lifelong implications including parenting. However, the attachment that forms at an early age may have a strong impact on adult attachment since building an intimate relationship is like forming an emotional connection with parents during infancy

Studies have shown that paternal masculinity predicts children's attachment avoidance. A typical characteristic of a father's masculine behavior is to suppress the emotion that is weak and also restrict the expression of love. As another main caregiver apart from the mother, the father tends to show more masculinity in the rearing process and is inclined to hide his love emotion. Thus, it may conclude that a father's masculinity can strongly influence adults' attachment since children's attachment predicts adults' attachment.

This study provides another view for researchers to explore adult attachment and children's attachment. Masculinity does not necessarily lead to violence in the rearing process and it may play an essential role in building behavioral standards and thus, the formation of attachment, which can fill in the blank of the studies for father's masculinity and correct some misunderstandings of it.

However, one of the drawbacks is that there is no empirical experiment to support this point of view. In a further study, researchers can collect data to explore the mechanism of masculinity that affect adults' attachment and dynamic interaction.

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