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**The Impact of Father Involvement on Self-Esteem and  
Attachment Styles in Lebanese Male and Female Young Adults**

**By  
Rana Kalo Jaroudi**

**May 2005**

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THE IMPACT OF FATHER INVOLVEMENT ON SELF-ESTEEM AND  
ATTACHMENT STYLES IN LEBANESE MALE AND FEMALE YOUNG ADULTS

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THE IMPACT OF FATHER INVOLVEMENT ON SELF-ESTEEM AND  
ATTACHMENT STYLES IN LEBANESE MALE AND FEMALES YOUNG ADULTS

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between a perceived father involvement and self-esteem and romantic attachment styles in young adult Lebanese males and females. A sample of 136 university students (77 females and 59 males) completed self-report questionnaires that measured their perception of their relationship with their fathers, their self-esteem, and their romantic attachment style. Regression and correlation analyses showed that there is no gender difference in the perception of father involvement in this particular sample, and that self-esteem is strongly correlated with a secure attachment style. Moreover, results confirmed that father involvement predicts levels of self-esteem in both males and females, and that this relationship was even more strongly significant for males. However, father involvement was found to have no relationship to adult relational style, as was initially predicted.

## Introduction

“To have no father is bad enough, but not to have a good father can be just as bad.”

Langeveld, M.J.

## Statement of the Problem

While the benefits of a positive mother-child relationship have been well established in psychological literature, the issue of whether the father-child relationship offers an independent contribution to psychological well-being continues to be debated.

For some, it is now almost unquestionable that positive father involvement is consequential to the social, emotional, and cognitive development and functioning of children, adolescents, and adult offspring (Amato, 1998; Jones & Beach, 2000; Kilmann, 2000; Krohn, 2001; Lamb, 1997; Morman, 1999; Naus, 1999; Osherson, 2004; Perkins, 2001; Rohner & Veneziano, 2001; Sanderson, 2002; Secunda, 1992; Snarey, 1993). However, there is no denying that an empirical body of evidence still needs to grow, not only to support the importance of good fathering for the well-being of offspring (especially adult offspring), but also to understand the direct and indirect ways fathers influence their offspring.

It is important to note that, for one, the bulk of research has focused on children rather than taking a long-term perspective and investigating adult offspring specific psychological outcome. Second, when research was concerned with “fathering” it was mostly addressing themes such as the “absence” of fathers, divorce, death, and/or abuse

(Krohn, 2001; Morman, 1999; Nielsen, 2001; Perkins, 2001; Pittman, 1992; Rohner & Veneziano, 2001), and not aspects of good fathering in two-parents families. Moreover, research on father-daughters dyads are significantly sparser compared to father-son dyads and the two groups almost always explore different outcome variable for the two adult groups. Even in Western countries, where most of the research on father involvement is carried out, very little research attempts to study the variations, between gender groups, of the influence of father involvement on variables such as self-esteem and relational (intimacy) styles.

However, the most important point remains that no study on father involvement has been conducted in Lebanon, where a lot of the patriarchal era of man's authority and privilege still persist, however mixed with newer trends of feminism, consumerism, and modernization imported from the West. Such a culture, with its diversities, is host to numerous implications for father involvement with offspring and thus the interest and the appeal of the present study.

### **Background of the Study**

Historically, the possible influence of father's involvement has been largely ignored. The overwhelming bulk of research dealing with parental involvement concentrated on mothers' behavior because of the primacy of mother-child relationship. Shared wisdom asserted that competent and nurturing mothers, was all that children needed for successful cognitive, social, and emotional development (Bowlby, 1969; Spock, 1992). This served patriarchal and post-industrial societies, like the Lebanese one, rather well. Society had already decided that raising children was women's work and that

making money was the single-minded point of men's lives. Father was the breadwinner, the economic provider: his major role was in the instrumental domain rather than the expressive-affective domain.

In addition, the unfolding of the Lebanese civil war had many Lebanese fathers leave the family home to join the fight and many others left the country to find jobs and continue providing economically for their families. Lebanese families paid a very high price for the civil war: A great number of men were killed, the ones who came back from years of fighting carried psychological scares that spilled over to their families, and the expatriated fathers who came back, or came to visit, were complete strangers to the family unit. The mother was then left alone as the sole responsible for the upbringing of the children. A lot can testify, myself included, to the "father hunger" (Langeveld, 1987; Pittman, 1993; Secunda, 1992) that resulted. Many mothers, as well as adult-offspring, like myself, realized that mother love was not sufficient in itself and that a lot of the psychological ailments today have their source in the unavailability of fathers, either physically or emotionally.

Indeed, a growing number of Western studies have begun to conclude that father positive involvement is as important as mother's involvement in significantly predicting offspring psychological well-being (Amato, 1998; Beach, 2000; Kilmann, 2000; Lamb, 1997; Langeveld, 1987; Loch, 1986), and occasionally the sole significant predictor of specific outcomes, such as personality and psychological adjustment problems, conduct and delinquency problems, and substance abuse, after removing the influence of mother's love (Krohn, 2001; Rohner & Veneziano, 2001; Secunda, 1992).

### **The Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the present study is to assess and evaluate the extent to which perceived father involvement influences specific psychological outcomes in both males and females offspring, in a Lebanese context, and to determine the variations in the impact, if any, within and between gender groups.

### **The Significance of the Study**

By examining the relationship of father involvement to adult offspring self-esteem and relational styles the study will be able to recognize the importance of such positive fathering and that in turn should have several salutary effects:

Widespread recognition of father's influence may, for one, help motivate men to become more involved in nurturing and supportive fathering. This is of particular importance to the Lebanese culture where the majority of men still consider children upbringing to be feminine work. Studies have found that fathers were more likely to engage in nurturing activities when they believe such behavior will make an important difference in the life of their child (Sanderson, 2002; Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004). Second, the recognition of the influence of fathers should help reduce the incidence of "mother blaming" in the clinical field and should help shift the dominant paradigm in the social sciences from a dyadic (i.e., mother-child) to a triadic (i.e., father-mother-child) model (Rohner & Veneziano, 2001).

Recognition of the father-daughter dyad as a strong predictor of adult daughter psychological outcome, more specifically self-esteem and intimacy issues, will shed light as to the importance of masculine role model for the healthy development of females in



particular, and not only males, and for the unfolding of healthy intimate relationships in their lives.

Moreover, the exploration of gender differences will help answer some of the questions about whether or not father involvement affects boys and girls differently in the Lebanese culture.

Finally, young adults may gain insight into the manner in which their perceived relationship with their father may influence their attachment style in their romantic relationships in the present as well as the future.

### Definition of Terms

#### **Nature of the study**

The study will be a quantitative study using the methodology of correlational research and relying on self-report measures. A sample of 59 young males and 77 young females will be assessed on several dimensions: perceived paternal involvement, self-esteem, and relational styles. Perceived paternal involvement will be regressed and correlated with the other two dimensions to determine the extent and the way they vary together.

### Abstract and Physical context; and Adolescence and Environment

#### Abstract

#### **Hypotheses**

Hyp1: For both young males and young females, father involvement will predict levels of self-esteem.

Hyp2: For both males and females, father involvement will predict levels of a secure relational style and therefore there will be a negative association between father involvement and an anxious or an avoidant relational style.

Hyp3: The association between Father Involvement and Relational Style will be stronger for females than for males while the association between Father Involvement and Self-Esteem will be stronger for male than females.

Hyp4: There will be a positive association between Self-Esteem and Relational Style regardless of Father Involvement for both males and females.

The study will further attempt to explore the extent and nature of gender differences in perceived Father Involvement.

### **Definition of Terms**

#### Father involvement

Father involvement is the perceived level of positive interaction with the father in a multitude of dimensions that the literature identifies as indicators of intimacy for both male and females: Self-Disclosure; Emotional Expressiveness; Appreciation, Care, and Respect; Assistance and Support; Understanding and Empathy; Control and Power; Closeness and connectedness; Relationship satisfaction and Enjoyment; Conflict; Affection and Physical contact; and Acceptance and Encouragement.

#### Self-esteem

Self-esteem is the overall evaluation of one's worth or value.

#### Relational style

Relational style is the person's attachment style or pattern in romantic and intimate relationships. These attachment styles can be described as Anxious, Avoidant, or Secure.

Anxious: People who score high on this variable tend to be low in self-worth, are preoccupied with relationships and seek extreme intimacy. They fear rejection and are clingy and dependent (Gruenert, 2003).

Avoidant: Avoidant adults are fearful of intimacy; they believe others to be untrustworthy. They also maintain distance in relationships and value independence and autonomy (Gruenert, 2003).

Secure: Secure people are comfortable being intimate with others; they have high self-worth, think positively about others, and desire intimate relationships with a balance between closeness and autonomy (Gruenert, 2003).

### **Limitations**

The present study will have several limitations that should be considered before generalizing its results to the general population:

For one, it is limited by a failure to control for mothers' involvement. The effect of positive mothering can act as a buffer or a mediator for father-child relationship (Beach, 2000; Robinson, 2000). Furthermore, the interdependence of mother/ father parenting is also significant in affecting offspring outcome (Amato, 1998; Kilmann, 2000).

Second, the sample is drawn from a Lebanese population of middle to high socio-economic background; therefore results cannot be generalized to the whole Lebanese population or to different cultures before considering that different patterns or relationship perceptions might exist among other groups or sub-cultures of young adults.

Moreover, the measures employed in this study are essentially retrospective self-report measures; this implies that the reported answers, at that particular point in time, may be distorted by the current mood or state of mind of the respondent as well as by his/her temperament. Furthermore, subjective feelings collected in this manner are probably subject to the ubiquitous social desirability effect.

It must also be noted that the measure used for assessing “father involvement” was borrowed from a study measuring intimacy with fathers and was developed by the author himself for this specific purpose. Although the domains identified in Gruenert’s (2003) study were found to be significant and purposeful for the present study, care should be taken in generalizing the validity of this specific tool to other studies regarding father involvement. Moreover, this particular measure is comprised of only some components of what could constitute positive father involvement, namely: self-disclosure; emotional expressiveness; care and respect; assistance and support; understanding and empathy; control and power; closeness and connectedness; relationship satisfaction and enjoyment; conflict; affection and physical contact; and acceptance and encouragement. The literature on this topic suggests additional direct ways (i.e. play, shared activities, and sports) as well as indirect ways in which a father can be actively involved with his children, such as financial provision, father’s social capital (as in co-parental relationship), and the father’s human capital (Amato, 1998; Lamb & Lemonda, 2004).

## **Chapter Two**

### **Review of Literature**

Since the intent of the present study was on measuring the possible association between a father's positive involvement and his young adult offspring self-esteem and relational style, there was a strong need to explore available literature on such issues and constructs as fatherhood and positive father involvement, self-esteem, and attachment styles, and the possible and documented connections between these domains. Furthermore, the father-son and the father-daughter dyad and their implications for the psychological well being of the offspring not only constitute a significant element in understanding what has yet been known to such relationships but also provide firm grounds to the unfolding of the study.

#### **Fatherhood**

“We must examine what it means when we say: A child should have a father. A child, of course, always has a father, but now we mean that the father should be present for the child, not just as a cause of its being, but as a condition of its life. This determines our Weltanschauung (world view), our history, our cultural view, our view of total child development as we understand it” (Langeveld, 1987, p.7).

Since ‘Father’ is the pivotal component of the present study, the issue is to understand the meanings commonly associated with the concepts of father, fatherhood, and fathering. Accepting these meanings (i.e., cultural construction) as being true will implicate much of one's behavior and cognition.

The concept of “fatherhood” has, undoubtedly, shifted considerably over the course of human history: from a stern patriarch to the distant breadwinner to the role model and then, from the 1970’s onward, to the co-parent in some cultures (Griswold, 1997; Pleck, 2004; Rohner & Veneziano, 2001). The industrial revolution in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was a determining point in defining one of the most enduring elements defining fatherhood: the assumption that the major role of fathers within the family is as an economic provider. Economics dictated that somebody had to leave home to work and since they couldn’t breastfeed, this someone was the man. With time, the separation from of home and workplace widened with the increase of geographic mobility and many fathers were away from their home for prolonged periods of time (Griswold, 1997; Mintz, 1998; Pleck, 2004). The father became the Provider, and still is in many contemporary cultures like ours. His status and personal worth was judged by how well he provided economically for his family (Mintz, 1998; Pittman, 1993; Rohner & Venezino, 2001), and paternal authority was reinforced by the nature of employment (Mintz, 1998).

Another essential element in defining fatherhood is gender role and gender identity. Masculinity has a lot of trappings both in old and contemporary cultures. Father is the Man. Man was the hunter, the fighter, the warrior; he conquered or he died. With the advent of the industrial revolution, masculinity began to be defined in terms of careers and making money. The father moved out of the family life and family values like fathering and husbanding ceased to define his masculinity. Masculine identity became increasingly identified with a man’s occupation or career (Mintz, 1998). Men on the Daddy’s Track were severely penalized (Pittman, 1993). Father, the Man, represented

the world out-there with its wide horizons, the challenges, and the risks to be taken. Child-care was, and still is, widely associated with feminine behavior; just as much as the expressive-affective domain cannot fall in the masculine stereotype. A typical Male has 'Instrumental' relationships (i.e., based on a sharing of activities) as opposed to 'Expressive' relationships (i.e., based on the sharing of emotions) (Gruenert, 2003)

The father is also, in the bond of motherchild-father, the symbol of security, the protector of security in the family life. He makes it possible for the family, in some cultures, to enjoy life without the reality of constant or immediate threats. This allows, both mother and child, to be naturally vulnerable; the first in her femininity, the second in his/her innocence (Langeveld, 1987). Langeveld (1987) states that:

"Mother gives child the first foundation for a sense of security which makes trust in life possible. The widening of this actual living and being in trust is assured by the father" (p.11).

### **Father Involvement**

"Men bring different things to parenting, things that are unique and irreplaceable".

Steve Biddluph

With the advent of the feminist movement, women entered the out-of-home paid workforce, gained unprecedented degrees of economic independence, and were able to demand greater participation in house and family work from their husbands. This led to the emergence of "masculine domesticity" (Griswold, 1997). The call for gender equality led eventually to a reexamination of the meaning of femininity and masculinity and thus to a reexamination of the cultural construct of "fatherhood" (Floyd, 2002; Mintz, 1998;

Pittman, 1992; Rohner & Veneziano, 2001). The feminist movement brought the role of fathering and the influence of paternal involvement into sharp focus. Behavioral scientists became keenly motivated to study fathers directly (Amato, 1998; Brotherson, 2003; Floyd, 2002; Gruenert, 2003; Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997; Lamb, 1998; Lamb & Lewis, 2003; Langeveld, 1987; Loch, 1986; Morman, 1999; Naus, 1999; Palkovitz, 1997; Rohner & Veneziano, 2001; Secunda, 1992; Snarey, 1993). The majority of the studies reviewed showed that father's involvement was a significant contributor to offspring outcomes. It is worthy to note here that experts, in the 1950s and 1960s, had already insisted that, "fathers imbued with a democratic, permissive, nurturing sensibility could produce well-adjusted offspring capable of resisting the new dangers of the age – authoritarianism, juvenile delinquency, schizophrenia, and homosexuality"(Griswold, p. 81).

But what is good fathering? There are a number of ways to define father involvement. Many models stress the importance of a multifaceted and multi dimensional nature of father involvement (Palkovitz, 1997; Pleck, 2004; Schoppe, McBride, & Ringo Ho, 2004; Snarey 1993). These strategies emphasize the ways fathers address the many needs of children rather than simply meeting role obligations. The limited definitions of fathering given in the past (i.e. conceiving; providing; disciplining, etc) do not allow men to achieve their full potential as fathers because they fail to consider the other areas in which fathers contribute to their families well-being (Palkovitz, 1997; Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997).

The 1980s was the time when social scientists started offering constructs of positive father involvement. These scientists divided father involvement into three



measurable components (engagement, accessibility, and responsibility) and expected fathers to be held responsible for all three (Pleck, 2004). Later on, Snarey (1993), summarizing his intensive research on generativity among four generations of fathers, asserts that good fathering “matters over a long time, over a lifetime, and even over generations”(p.356). Snarey (1993) found strong empirical evidence to support the deep and abiding value of fathers being generative with their children and grandchildren. Dollahite, Hawkins, and Brotherson (2004) built on works by Snarey (1993) and others to develop the concept of generative fathering to describe fathering that responds readily and consistently to a child’s developmental needs over time. They moved beyond the Role-Inadequacy Perspective of fathering to suggest and emphasize what is possible and desirable (Dollahite & al., 1997). Rob Palkovitz, in his article *Reconstructing “Involvement”*(1997), illustrates the many domains in which ‘generative’ fathers are involved: cognitive, affective, and behavioral. Palkovitz (1997) offers examples of such involvement including: planning, providing financially, teaching, monitoring, showing affection, sharing activities, teaching, protection, availability, emotional support, connectedness. Palkovitz argues that parenting is much more than what others can see; actions are only one aspect of fathering. He states:

“As any parent can readily testify, there are numerous aspects of involvement that occupy the mind and require emotional or affective energy and investment” (p.208).

Utilizing the generative fathering perspective to study and examine narrative accounts of fathers, Hawkins (2005) suggest that connection with the child plays a central function in the relationship processes that occur in a father’s interactions with his children. Furthermore, Hawkins (2005) suggests some essential components of father-

child connection like a feeling of emotional and psychic connection, personal interaction based in support and shared activities, and meeting the child's developmental needs for care or guidance. This is in line with the study of Brotherson (2003), involving 362 father-adolescent dyads, which found that connection has a significant effect on relationship quality for both father-daughter and father-son dyads.

Two major underlying reasons for the scarcity of research concerning father involvement can be detected. First, fathers have been considered to be peripheral to the development of children in the social sciences sphere. Mothers have always been considered to be of paramount importance to the healthy development of children. This was largely due to the fact that the mother is the caregiver spending almost the totality of time with the child and to the assumption that mothers are naturally and instinctively nurturing (Bolwby, 1973; Mintz, 1998) while fathers are not cut for such a job (Hawkins & Dollahite, 1997). Second, fathers were assumed to be unavailable or inaccessible because out-of-home economic responsibilities (Sartor, 2002); much of the data were collected from men's wife or their children, not from fathers themselves (Gruenert, 2003; Kilmann, 2000; Naus, 1999; Perkins, 2001; Sartor, 2002). Rohner & Veneziano (2001) and Nielsen (1999), after an extensive review of the literature on father love, pointed to the rarity of reports about fathers, especially about positive father involvement and father-daughter relationships, be it in the popular press, professional publications in child development and family studies, or in the professional literature on parent-child relations.

### Attachment Styles

John Bowlby formulated the basic tenets of attachment theory while Mary Ainsworth's innovative methodology made it possible to test some of these ideas empirically and to expand the theory itself (Bretherton, 1992). Bowlby's attachment theory has guided most research on this topic in the last four decades (Lamb & Lewis, 2004). According to Bowlby, and broadly defined, attachment reflects one's degree of confidence that significant others, usually family members, will provide support and protection and will remain within emotional proximity (Liddle, 2002). Moreover, the root of human personality lies in the earliest childhood experiences. Significant failure or trauma in those relationships will permanently shape the child's development. Infants start to form 'internal working models' of their relationships with parents and/or key others as early as the end of the first year of life (Bee, 1997). According to Bowlby, the more adequate an organism's internal working model, the more accurately the organism can predict the future (Bretherton, 1992).

The relevance of attachment theory for adult relationship functioning has become an increasingly popular research topic (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998, Kilmann, 2000; Gruenert, 2003). In *Seperation* (Bowlby, 1973), Bowlby expands the idea proposed in *Attachment* (Bowlby 1969), by proposing that, within an individual's internal working model of the world, working models of self and attachment figure are especially salient. He elucidates the role of internal working models in the intergenerational transmission of attachment patterns. According to Bowlby, individuals who grow up to become relatively stable and self-reliant, normally have parents who are supportive when called upon, but who also permit and encourage autonomy (Bowlby, 1973). Bowlby believed that

attachment characterized human experience from “the cradle to the grave” (Fraley, 2004). An additional source of inspiration for the study of internal working models came from attempts to translate Ainsworth’s infant-mother attachment patterns (identified in her Strange Situation procedure) into corresponding adult patterns. The consistency and stability of attachment classification was shown to be more typical (as opposed to fluidity) over time, mainly due to the stability of internal working models (Bee, 1997; Bretherton, 1992; Liddle, 2002). Thus, the research on adult attachment is guided by the assumption that the same motivational system that gives rise to the close emotional bond between parents and their children is responsible for the bond that develops between adults in intimate relationships. The Adult Attachment Interview classifications, work of George, Kaplan, and Main (1984) identified patterns that, not only, correspond to Ainsworth’s secure, anxious-resistant, and avoidant infant patterns at a conceptual level, but also empirically correlated with infant patterns (Bretherton, 1992). Shaver and Hazan (1988) also translated Ainsworth’s infant attachment patterns into adult patterns, focusing for the first time on romantic attachment (Bretherton, 1992; Shaver & Fraley, 2000). Hazan and Shaver noted that infants and caregivers and romantic partners share many parallel features and argued that adult romantic relationships are attachment and that romantic love is a property of the attachment behavioral system (Fraley, 2004).

Today, perhaps the most challenging and controversial task in dealing with the implication of adult attachment theory is to ascertain that a person’s attachment style as an adult is shaped by his or her own interactions with parental attachment figures. Although some studies have found the correlation between one’s attachment style to one’s attachment style to parent (mother, father, or both) to be only moderately correlated

at best (Fraley, 2004), other studies supported the idea that the stability of one's attachment to one's parent is significantly correlated with one's current attachment style in romantic relationships (Kilmann, 2000; Naus, 1999; Perkins, 2001; Secunda, 1992).

Peter Kilmann (2000), in a study of 154 female college students, found that a fearful attachment pattern was associated with distant father and absent mother characteristics, a preoccupied attachment pattern was linked to absent and demanding father and mother characteristics, and a dismissive attachment pattern was associated with distant father characteristics. Secunda (1992) also suggested that a female's attachment experiences with her father are instrumental in shaping her ability to have healthy, functional relationships in adulthood. The men identified as Secure (in their relationship pattern) in Gruenert's (2003) study were the young men who reported good relationship with both parents while growing up and high levels of intimacy with their fathers. Men in the Fearful cluster reported poor relationships and intimacy levels with their father while growing up. However, despite studies that show fathers to be competent, still much is to be learned regarding children's attachment to father (Bretherton, 1992).

### **Self-Esteem**

Self-esteem is a very rich and broad topic and only the factors relevant to the present study will be reviewed. Self-esteem is an overall evaluation of one's worth or value. It is the only one component of the self-concept (the evaluative part), which Rosenberg (1965) defines as "totality of the individual's thoughts and feelings with reference to himself as an object".

Self-esteem is a widely used construct of psychological adjustment and has been found to be positively related to the perceptions of being accepted by those whom people consider close. This notion is in keeping with the views of self-actualization theorists such as Carl Rogers, who proposed that a positive self-evaluation results from perceiving oneself as genuinely understood and unconditionally accepted by a significant other person (Rogers, 1961). The prominent role played by self-esteem in defining human nature can be found in other theories of personality like Adler's and Maslow's (Corey, 2001; Feist, 1994).

It is at school age that children first develop a global self-evaluation (Bee, 1997) which continues to develop and be reinforced through the combination and interaction of several factors like significant others and parent-child relationships. It is widely accepted that one's self-concept, and more precisely, self-esteem, is determined to a large extent by how others view us, or the way we think and perceive others to view us (Rice, 1999). Others are, however, not all equal; it is significant others who exert the strongest influence and those are the individuals who occupy a high level of importance in one's life. It makes then intuitive sense to consider parents as the most significant others in one's life, to say the least because of their physical proximity and their on-going interaction with their offspring.

Parents, as primary caregivers, contribute to the formation of the child's internal working model, which, in turn, incorporate expectations about how worthy one is (Kilmann, 2000). However, the degree to which mother and father are influential and their opinions meaningful, depends largely on their degree of involvement, intimacy, and social support they provide (Amato, 1998; Brotherson, 2003; Gruenert, 2003; Rice,

p.177). Bowlby (1973) believed that the child is likely to develop an internal working model of self as valued and reliable (versus unworthy and incompetent) if the parent has acknowledged the infant's needs for comfort and protection while simultaneously respecting the infant's need for independent exploration of the environment.

Keltikangas-Jarvinen (2003), in a longitudinal study on gender related issues (n=824), found adolescent females' self-esteem to be dependent on significant others. The same study also found that maternal hostile child-rearing attitudes (emotional rejection of child, intolerance regarding child's behavior, and strict disciplinary style) predicted low self-esteem in adolescents. Watson (2001) also found that home/parents was the most potent predictor of global self-esteem in adolescents (n=545). Parenting styles have been shown to affect self-esteem. Parents who rate high on the authoritative parental style (high in both control and warmth) also have children who show high self-esteem and are more self-confident (Bee, 1997).

### **Fathers and Daughters**

Of all the pairings in the family, father/daughter is the least understood and the least studied by social scientists (Nielsen, 1999; Secunda, 1992).

The father-daughter bond is a prototype for male-female relationships for the daughter. Within the framework of this relationship, the daughter can test out her female energy and learn how to negotiate with the opposite sex in a safe, nonsexual relationship. A father gives the girl the opportunity to situate herself and to see a picture of womanness as given to her by her father, and to accept it, reject it, or correct it. He shows her what a woman means to him as wife, mother, partner, loved one, and so forth (Langeveld, 1987).



“Warm, rewarding father-daughter relationships play a vital role in helping a girl to value her femininity, to move toward a positive acceptance of herself as a woman, and to make easier and more satisfactory heterosexual adjustments” (Rice, 1999).

Numerous studies point to the fact that a woman’s capacity for a healthy romantic attachment is directly related to her relationship with her father. Secunda (1992), in a comprehensive text that discusses various father-daughter relationships, describes a woman’s father as her “first love”, regardless of her experience with her father. As Secunda (1992) sees it:

“The father-daughter relationship is the proving ground for a daughter’s romantic attachments, her dress rehearsal for heterosexual love. Women who have difficulties in this area almost always had fathers who could not be counted on, or who were emotionally or physically unavailable, when they were growing up” (xvi).

Secunda (1992) affirms that females duplicate the past in their romantic choices. A daughter who has been well fathered (that is, loved but given certain limits) will have feelings of being valued as a person and confidence as a lover. On the other hand, women who did not have a loving and involved fathers will run the risk of being drawn again and again to men who reject her or who do not satisfy her emotionally or sexually. These women are simply “trying to have one more shot at childhood, one more chance to rewrite their emotional histories” (p.224).

Sophie Freud (1988), in *My Three Mothers and Other Passions*, a text that highlights the identity struggles faced by postmodern women, dedicated an entire chapter to fathers and daughters, and the pain experienced by a woman when she feels abandoned by her father because she is no longer his “little princess”, his admiring disciple or his



little angel. The literature has suggested that most women, by simply growing up, experience the loss of their fathers' love; for even in the best of circumstances, men find it difficult to relate to their adult daughters in the same manner that they related when she was a little girl (Freud, 1988; Secunda, 1992). Freud (1988) says:

"The father is an empowering and formidable figure to his little daughter. He is not only a parent on whom she is totally dependent; he is also a member of a superior gender to whom women look up...His feelings and attitudes toward her, verbally and nonverbally conveyed, will penetrate her bones and stay there and determine her fate, because self-esteem is fate" (p.278-279).

Naus (1999), in a study investigating the relationship of fatherly affirmation to a woman's self-esteem and other psychosexual characteristics, found a positive relationship between perceived fatherly affirmation and a young female's self-esteem and comfort with sexuality, and a negative one between fatherly affirmation and her fear of intimacy. A father who was intimidating engendered insecurity and fear of intimacy, and a father who withdrew from his daughter when she began to develop physically during and after puberty (e.g. by no longer playing sports with her or showing physical affection or perhaps by even avoiding her) might similarly cause her to feel uncomfortable with her sense of self as a woman and with her sexuality. The results fit with the conclusions of Secunda's (1992) interviews with 150 daughters and 75 fathers, as well as with the study of Kilmann (2000), who found that young women with negatively perceived father characteristics had preoccupied and dismissive attachment patterns.

Research agrees that females who lack father figures are more prone to experience diminished cognitive development and poor school performance. Krohn (2001), while

examining the effects absent fathers have on their daughters' development and college attendance, exposes how father absence affects not only their school performance and cognitive development but also their interaction with adults, their interest and success in mathematics, risk of teenage pregnancy and high school drop out, low-self-esteem, and their ability to make sound decisions. In fact, USA and New Zealand teenage girls show a particularly strong tendency to engage in sexual activity and to get pregnant (before the age of 16) if they grew up in families without a father present. It is presumed that father's absence early in life may trigger doubts in girls about males' reliability that hasten sexual activity and reproduction as well as promote a preference for brief relationships (Bower, 2003).

### **Fathers and Sons**

The father-son relationship is more than a union between two family members, it is a relationship between two males. In fact, it is considered to be the most important same-sex relationship. As Pittman (1993) puts it:

“What goes on between the father and the son -and what does not go on between them- is surely the most important determinant of whether the boy will become a man capable of giving life to others or whether he will go through life ashamed and pulling back from exposure to intimacy with men, women, and children” (p.3).

Without question, the relational dynamic experienced by men within the father-son dyad is a source of significant long-lasting influence on a host of important psychosocial and developmental issues in the lives of men. Korey (2002) & Morman (1999) provide extensive research review to support this proposition. Both have found

significant research material showing the father-son relationship to be a an important predictor of son's: parenting style, communication behavior, attitudes toward sexuality, emotional health and relational success, academic achievement, and his potential for delinquent behavior and crime.

One of the most cited functions a father is believed to play for his son is the provision of a gender-role model. Through identification, imitation, and modeling, a son learns by direct observation from his father how to be a man, how a man relates to others, and how a man copes with the stresses of life. Although mothers can play a part in this, learning through imitation is often more powerful than through direction (Biddulph, 1998; Feist, 1994; Gruenert, 2003). Fathers offer qualitatively different benefits by modeling gender appropriate behaviors and providing an example of stable and positive masculine identity. Lamb & Lemonda (2004), however, stress the importance of good father-son relationship as a mediating variable for masculinity. They believe that sons "would only want to resemble fathers whom they liked and respected and with whom their relationship was warm and positive"(p.5). Fathers model ways in which to express intimacy, ways to form and maintain relationships, and provide peer-accepted social skills (Gruenert, 2003).

Psychologist and author, Steve Biddulph, in his best-selling book *Raising Boys* (1998), affirms that boys learn about love from watching their fathers. Not only do they learn how to love women but how to treat them: the lesson is about respecting women and self-respect. Yet one of the most important male lessons boys learn from their father, through rough play, is self-control or knowing when to stop (Biddulph, 1998; Gottman, 1998). Fathers' physical play with their young children is the vehicle capable of teaching

the children a great deal about affect regulation because of the potential for overstimulation and the need for mutual regulation (Gottman, 1998). This is, in fact, an important lesson for males, who must learn, as adults and usually stronger than their partners, how not to 'loose it'; "for a real man is the one who is in charge of himself and his behavior"(Biddulph 1998, p.82). In addition, sons also learn from their fathers less traditional masculine beliefs and behaviors: with proper modeling, sons learn that it OK for men to be verbal, to express emotions and affection, to be sad and cry, and to disclose and talk about problems (Biddulph, 1998; Gruenert, 2003). Research has shown that children have less sex-stereotyped attitudes about male and female roles when their parents assume less sex-stereotyped roles (Lamb & Lemonda, 2004).

Gruenert (2003) examined the relationship between intimacy, fathers, best friends, and the well-being of young adult males. The study found, through self-report measures and narrative memories, that Secure men had fathers who provided an involved, mentoring role, and that closeness was experienced through a diversity of activities characterized by mutual respect and understanding. Furthermore, the fathers of Anxious men appeared to be the source of, or contribute to, the problems of their sons. The comparison between Secure and Resilient men in this specific study highlights the differences uniquely associated with a poor father-son relationship. According to Gruenert (2003):

"By being a constant presence that engenders a sense of security, fathers may also teach their sons that the support of other men can be relied upon. Fathers may thus contribute to the well-being of their sons by fostering the independence that grows from this security. In this way, good fathering seems to be associated with enhanced positive well-being and

the capacity to experience intimacy in a number of diverse ways, in addition to reduced psychological dysfunction" (p.176).

For Pittman (1992 & 1993), fatherly affirmation, or unconditional positive regard, is a precondition for developing a healthy masculinity. Men who do not receive their father's blessings are left floundering, searching-sometimes desperately- for their identity as men. According to Pittman (1992), Fathers have the authority to let boys relax the requirements of the masculine model, and when they have been anointed by their fathers, sons can go on to develop other skills. However, boys whose fathers have not offered them protection, provision, nurturing, modeling, or anointment, grow up to become men in continuous search for a father: "All those tough guys who want to scare the world into seeing them as men and who fill up the jails; all those men who don't know how to be a man with a woman and who fill up the divorce courts; all those corporate raiders who want more in hopes that more will make them feel better; and all those masculopathic philanders, contenders, and controllers- all of them are suffering from Father Hunger"(Pittman, 1993; p.3). "Mascupathology" is the term Pittman uses to refer to an extreme insecurity about not measuring up as a man (Naus & Theis, 1992).

In the same line, Naus & Theis (1992) argue that a man's psychological well-being would suffer if he felt that his father had failed to affirm him in cultures that emphasize gender differences. The specific, negative effects are identified as poor self-esteem, discomfort with intimate relationships, and a tendency to use one's sexuality to shore up a tenuous sense of masculinity. Later on, Naus & Theis (1994) attempt to find empirical validation for their previous propositions, and as predicted, found that the greater the father's unconditional acceptance of his son, the greater the latter's self-

esteem and the less his fear of intimacy (comparison of two cultures showed stronger correlations for the culture that emphasized gender differences). The study was replicated a year later and the results were confirmed one more time (Naus & Theis, 1995).

### Summary

The above reviewed literature asserts that the concept of fatherhood is culturally bound and highly influenced by stereotypical gender role expectations. It also sheds the light as to the meaning of positive father involvement, which goes beyond feeding and changing diapers, drawing on “generative fathering” and its detrimental implication on the unfolding of offspring’s psychosocial health. More specifically, and beyond theoretical notions, empirical studies have repeatedly found that fathers have a crucial role and important power in determining their daughters’ self-esteem and romantic attachment styles and their sons’ self-esteem, comfort with masculinity, and romantic attachment styles.

Accordingly, it would be extremely significant to test the following hypotheses in the Lebanese culture, in which no similar study was conducted:

Hyp1: For both young males and females, father involvement will predict levels of self-esteem.

Hyp2: For both young males and females, father involvement will predict levels of a secure relational style, and thus there will be a negative association between father involvement and an anxious or an avoidant relational style.

Hyp3: The association between Father Involvement and Relational Style will be stronger for females than for males, while the association between Father Involvement and Self-Esteem will be stronger for males than females.

Hyp4: There will be a positive association between Self-Esteem and Secure relational style regardless of Father Involvement for both males and females.

Finally, the study will attempt to explore the extent and nature of gender differences as to reported Father Involvement.

## Procedure

The researcher's advisor volunteered to engage the help of her colleagues as well as herself in distributing the set questionnaire to their respective students. At the end of a class, each professor explained to his/her students about the questionnaire, stressing that it was completely voluntary, yet their participation highly appreciated. The professors asked the students how to write their names on the questionnaire to encourage self-identification. Voluntary participation and anonymity were highlighted on the cover sheet of the questionnaire that also explained briefly the purpose of the study. Only those males refused to participate because they had reservations about the research subject. Two female participants became highly emotional while filling in the questionnaire, and had to stop a while before completing the rest of the questionnaire.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology**

#### **Participants**

The sample for collecting the present study's data was a convenience sample taken from Haigazian University (in Beirut) and the American University of Beirut. The 136 participants were young females and males enrolled in different undergraduate programs: psychology, education, political sciences, business, and economics. The number of female participants was 77 and the number of male participants was 59, their ages ranging from 18 to 26 years old with an average age of 22.

#### **Procedure**

The researcher's adviser volunteered to engage the help of her colleagues (as well as herself) in distributing the set questionnaire to their respective students. At the end of a class, each professor explained to his/her students about the questionnaire, stressing that it was completely voluntary, yet their participation highly appreciated. The professors asked the students not to write their names on the questionnaire to encourage honest self-disclosure. Voluntary participation and anonymity were highlighted on the cover sheet of the questionnaire that also explained broadly the purpose of the study. Only three males refused to participate because they had reservations about the research subject. Two female participants became highly emotional while filling in the questionnaire, and had to take a break before completing the rest of the questionnaire.



## **Measures**

The measures for this study were contained in a single 5-page questionnaire including: a cover sheet, a demographics sheet, and self-reported measures of father involvement, self-esteem, and relational style. A copy of the questionnaire is attached as Appendix A.

### **1- The Father Involvement Questionnaire:**

This measure was adapted from Stephan Gruenert's (2003) Dimensions and Higher Order Domains for the Experiences and Expressions of Intimacy Items. The measure, developed by the author, was originally a 7-point Likert type scale comprising fifty-one items, including both positively and negatively worded items. Multiple items were created, by the author, for dimensions that were frequently mentioned in the literature and which included indicators other than the 'traditional female' ones (Gruenert, 2003), like work and practical problems. For the present study, only thirty-four items were retained. The discarded items were judged to be culturally irrelevant.

### **2- The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (SES):**

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, developed by Dr. Rosenberg, is perhaps the most-widely used self-esteem measure in social science research. The scale generally has high reliability: test-retest correlations are in the range of .77 to .88. The scale is comprised of 10 items, answered on a four point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, and is commonly scored like a Likert scale

([http://www.bsos.umd.edu/socy/grad/socpsy\\_rosenberg.html](http://www.bsos.umd.edu/socy/grad/socpsy_rosenberg.html)).

3-The Experiences In Close Relationships Scale (ECR):

The ECR is a 36-item self-report attachment measure developed by Brennan, Clark, and Shaver (Fraley, 2004; Gruenert, 2003; Shaver & Fraley, 2004). The items were derived from a factor analysis of most of the existing self-report measure of adult romantic attachment. This measure is constructed by alternating items of two higher-order attachment dimensions, Avoidance (or Discomfort with Closeness and Discomfort Depending on Others) and Anxiety (or Fear of Rejection and Abandonment) (Shaver; Fraley, 2000). Items are measured on a 7-point scale (1-strongly disagree, 4-mixed/neutral, 7-strongly agree) and positive items are reverse coded. The avoidance and anxiety items are summed separately to form two 18-item scales found to have high internal consistency (avoidance  $\alpha=.94$  ; anxiety  $\alpha=.91$ ).

Scores on a Secure-versus-Fearful dimension can be calculated by adding an individual's anxiety and avoidance scores (Gruenert, 2003).

Table 1b  
Regression of Father Involvement on Self-Esteem for females

	N	Std. Error	Beta	F	Sig.
Constant	16	7.25	2.192	7.635	.009
Father Involvement	16	1.583	-.03	2.079	.041

Chapter Four

Results

To test the hypothesis that a positively perceived father involvement would predict higher self-esteem in both males and females, a regression analysis was conducted. Father involvement was regressed against Self-Esteem for males (see table 1.a), for females (see table1.b) and for males and females together (see table 1.c) respectively. Results are shown in the following tables:

Table 1.a.

Regression of Father Involvement on Self-Esteem for males

	B	Std Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	12.708	2.273		5.591	.000
Father Involvement	6.091E-02	.015	.470	3.981	.000

Table 1.b.

Regression of Father involvement on Self-Esteem for females

	B	Std Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	16.735	2.192		7.635	.000
Father Involvement	2.888E-02	.014	.235	2.079	.041

Table 1.c.

Regression of Father Involvement on Self-Esteem for both males and females

	B	Std Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	15.367	1.585		9.693	.000
Father Involvement	3.980E-02	.010	.319	3.862	.000

The above-obtained results confirm Hypothesis 1. This is in line with the findings of Naus (1999) and the findings of Naus & Theis (1992; 1994; 1995).

Hypothesis 2 predicted Father Involvement to impact both males' and females' Secure Relational Style positively (and therefore have a negative effect on Anxious and Avoidant styles). For both males and females, Father-Involvement was regressed against the three different Relational Styles, Secure, Anxious, and Avoidant, the results obtained did not support the predicted outcome. The relationship of perceived Father Involvement to both males and female different Relational Styles was found to be not significant and contrary to what was previously confirmed in the findings of Naus (1999) and Secunda (1992) regarding the impact of fathers on females' attachment styles, and the findings of Naus and Theis (1992; 1994; 1995) regarding the impact of fathers on their adult sons' comfort with intimacy.

To test the third hypothesis that predicted, in its first part, the association between perceived Father Involvement and Self-Esteem to be stronger for males than for females, a correlation analysis was carried out. The expectations specified above were confirmed by the following correlation results:

Table 2.

Correlation of Father Involvement with Self-Esteem for males and females

Father Involvement/ Self-Esteem	Pearson Correlation	Sig. 2-tailed	N
Males	.470	.000 (at 0.01 level)	58
Females	.235	.041 (at 0.05 level)	76

The difference between  $r = .470$  for males and  $r = .235$  for females is significant at  $p = 0.06$ . The results in Table 2 come as further support to the studies of Naus & Theis (1992; 1994; 1995) and Pittman (1992; 1993) who argue for the importance of fatherly affirmation and positive involvement to a man's self-esteem.

In contrast, the assumption in the second part of Hypothesis 2, that Father involvement would be more strongly related to a female's secure relational style than to a male's secure relational style, was not supported by the obtained statistical results. For females it was found that  $r = -.108$ ,  $p = 0.352$  and for males it was found that  $r = -.103$ ,  $p = 0.444$ .

The third hypothesis predicted a positive correlation between Self-Esteem and a secure Relational Style, for both males and females. The results shown below in Table 3 are in line with the expected relationships as they show a positive correlation between Self-Esteem and Secure relational style for females, for males, and for males and females together.

Table 3.

Correlation between Self-Esteem and The three relational styles for males, for females, and for males and females together.

		Avoidant	Anxious	Secure
Self Esteem	Males	-.060	-.238	-.258*
	Females	-.287*	-.440**	-.475*
	Males & Females	-.197*	-.344**	-.394**

\*  $p < 0.05$

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

It should be noted that the negative sign for the Secure score is due to the fact that the scale is keyed in the negative, i.e. the lower the score, the more Secure a participant is in his Relational Style. The results in Table 3 are similar to those obtained in the study conducted by Naus & Theis (1994), and repeated in 1995, that found self-esteem to be positively correlated to attachment style in young males.

The present study wished to explore the gender differences in the level of perceived Father Involvement for young adult Lebanese. The results indicated that there was no significant difference between males' and females' mean level of perceived Father Involvement in such a Lebanese context. The mean level of Father Involvement for males and for females were 143.73 and 152.64 respectively. On a basis of a t-test, no significant difference was found,  $t = 1.325$   $p = .187$  ( $df = 134$ ).

## **Chapter Five**

### **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of father involvement on both male and female offspring's self esteem and relational styles in romantic relationships. It was hypothesized that a highly perceived father involvement would impact a daughter's and a son's self-esteem positively, and that such a positively perceived involvement would also cause them to have a more secure attachment style in romantic relationships (and therefore a less avoidant or anxious style). It was also hypothesized that young males self-esteem would be more strongly associated with a father's involvement than a female's self-esteem, and that females would be more affected in their relational styles (than males) by such an involvement. Self-esteem was predicted to be associated with a more secure relational style, regardless of father involvement, and it was intended to explore gender differences in the level of perceived father involvement in the Lebanese culture.

#### **Father involvement and adult relational styles**

Against the expectations of this study, it was found that there was no direct relationship between perceived father involvement and the attachment style of these young adults in their romantic relationship. It was maintained that young adult males and females who did not perceive their fathers to be positively involved and emotionally available, would, as a direct result reflect such a relationship in their attachment styles. It was also maintained in Hyp 3, that such a relationship would be stronger for females than

for males. These assertions were based on many theoretical assumptions (Langeveld, 1987; Pittman, 1993) and empirical evidence (Naus, 1999; Naus & Theis 1994; Secunda, 1992) that have provided firm support for such an idea for both males and females.

The predicted connection between father involvement and the above-mentioned variables might have failed to hold true for more than one reason. Possible explanations for such an outcome include: Sample size and nature, the manipulation of the father involvement tool, and the failure to control for the co-parental relationship.

For one, the sample of participants was drawn from a specific Lebanese sub-culture. Although the general culture is one that emphasizes gender order, one that relegates men and women to different domains and gives men much power over women, encouraging men to continue playing a minor role in parenting; this particular sub-culture could be different. As previously specified, the sample was drawn from a middle-to-high socio-economic status, and one can speculate that these young adults belong to a sub-cultural context that puts less emphasis on gender differences. It is important to note here that when the present study wished to explore gender differences in the level of father involvement, results showed the level of perceived father involvement to be practically the same for both genders, which lends much support to the above-proposed idea. In other words, in such a sub-culture, where gender differences are minimized and personhood is more important than being male or female, where men and women have more equal participation in public and familial domains, the father's affirmation would be less consequential for offspring attachment styles. Naus & Theis (1992; 1994; 1995; 1999) are two of many other researchers who have argued and found support for this idea in their comparisons of various cultures. These authors have provided empirical evidence



for the argument that a father's blessing (or unconditional positive regard) would be pivotal to a man's psychosexual development in cultures that emphasize gender differences; whereas, in cultures that do not, being affirmed by either father or mother would be crucial for the healthy development of intimacy.

Moreover, the power and robustness of the quantitative analyses performed have undoubtedly been affected by the moderate sample size of 59 males and 77 females. Had the sample size been considerably larger, we might have gotten stronger and more significant results.

Second, the way in which this study statistically used the father involvement measure might have compromised the results expected with regard to attachment style. The measure borrowed from the study of Gruenet (2003) was used, as also done by its author, to obtain a total score for perceived father involvement. As specified in Chapter 1, the measure was comprised of 11 domains constituting what the author found to be appropriate measures of intimacy. Specifically, these domains are: self-disclosure; emotional expressiveness; care and respect; assistance and support; understanding and empathy; control and power; closeness and connectedness; relationship satisfaction and enjoyment; conflict; affection and physical contact; and acceptance and encouragement. One possibility would have been to conduct a separate statistical analysis of each of the different domains that are included in the tool. Breaking up father involvement, initially considered as one variable, into many different components would have probably helped determine whether or not one, or more than one, of these domains is actually significant to an offspring relational style. Moreover, dealing with the above-specified domains as independent variables would have helped in answering some interesting questions like:

which particular domain of father involvement is more salient in determining one's relational style? Is this salience the same for males and females or are sons and daughters affected by different components in different areas?

The literature regarding father involvement suggests many other ways in which a father can be involved with his children. One of the most interesting indirect ways, stressed in the literature, in which a father impacts his children, is a father's social capital (the resource that adheres in the relationship between people). The father's human capital (i.e. his possession of skills and knowledge), his financial capital and the offspring genetic resources are beyond the scope of this discussion.

One particular component of a father's social capital, as defined by Amato (1998), is the co-parental relationship (the other being father-child relationship). It had already been raised in Chapter 1 that one of the shortcomings of the present study is the failure to control for mother's involvement. Previous research on early adulthood psychosocial adjustment (Beach, 2000) has found that paternal behavior interacted with maternal behavior to predict early adult outcomes. The findings of these studies, among others, suggest that, paternal involvement contribute to young adults' romantic attachment only when maternal acceptance was high.

Co-parental relationship was also unaccounted for in this study. Two interacting parents provide dyadic resources for their children. One benefit of a positive co-parental relationship is the modeling of dyadic skills. In the presence of such a relationship, children are able to learn skills as providing emotional support, showing respect, communicating, resolving conflict in a healthy manner. Healthy co-parental dynamics provide young adults with helpful tools for developing trust in successful interpersonal

relationships. More than a few research has documented the salience of the dyadic copaternal relationship in explaining the more positive intimate relationships in young adulthood. One study of particular importance is the one by Naus (1999) who found surprisingly high correlations between respondents' perceptions of father's feelings toward and treatment of one's mother, and perceived fatherly involvement and fear of intimacy.

### **Father involvement and self-esteem**

The statistically obtained results confirm that the study's theoretical proposition regarding the impact of perceived father involvement on both males' and females' self-esteem was rather well-founded. Not only was it found that the two variables were positively associated, but a linear regression analysis confirmed that perceived father involvement was responsible for the level of self-esteem in young adult offspring. The proposition was grounded in the works of Freud (1988); Langeveld (1987); Naus (1999); Naus & Theis (1994); Pittman (1993); Secunda (1992); among many others.

Moreover, and even though self-esteem correlated significantly with secure attachment style for both genders (Hyp 4), one cannot consider self-esteem to be a mediating variable between father involvement and attachment style as it was done by Naus (1999) and Naus & Theis (1994). The reason for this lies in the fact that, father involvement was found to have no relationship to relational style in this study, therefore one cannot affirm that self-esteem acts as a mediator between the two other variables.

In Hypothesis 3, it was expected that the association between father involvement and self-esteem would be stronger for males than females, and that held true. Following

the theoretical propositions of Naus & Theis (1994), Pittman (1992; 1993), and Langeveld (1984), it was argued that a father's anointment or recognition plays a crucial role in shaping his son's self-esteem, a role that is inherently strong in the concept of masculinity and process of same-sex identification. In no way does this intent to undermine the importance of the father's role in the shaping of a daughter's self-esteem for this also is strongly documented for in empirical research.

### **Recommendations for future studies**

Since the backup for the proposition that a father's involvement would have a direct relationship to a young adult son or daughter romantic attachment style came from Western studies, one might argue that what holds true in the West does not necessarily apply to cultures like ours, and that probably attachment style in young Lebanese adulthood is affected by different variables than the one suggested. However, we still believe that such a relationship is well-grounded both theoretically and empirically in general, and that it makes good sense even in the Lebanese culture. Therefore, it would be highly recommended to test again for such hypotheses while making some revisions.

A more effective way of pursuing the same idea, in future research, would be to acknowledge the shortcomings discussed earlier. Specifically, this would mean:

- Deal with father involvement not as one entity, but rather as different sub-domains
- Include a measure to assess the co-parental relationship
- Control for mother involvement.

Conducting such a revised study would help answer more confidently some primordial questions:

Does positive father involvement truly affect adult attachment styles? If yes, to what extent?

Do sons and daughters attach the same meaning to particular father attitude and behavior? What are the components of father involvement that have the most impact between gender?

To what extent does the co-parental relationship impact adult children's attachment style?

Which is more significant in its impact on attachment style, a positive father-child relationship or father-mother relationship?

Another recommendation for future research would be to consider sub-culture differences in the Lebanese population. In other words, replicate the study using comparisons of two Lebanese samples. One sample would include a population similar to the one used in this study, meaning of middle-high SES. The other sample should be drawn of a more traditional Lebanese background, in a sense that it would better reflect the more traditional patriarchal beliefs and attitudes as well as stereotypical views of masculinity. Such a cross-examination of Lebanese sub-culture will help to more confidently affirm that fathering and father involvement is culture bound and that the meaning attached to such involvement is also mediated by cultural beliefs.

### **Conclusion**

Despite its failure to find statistical validation for a part of its proposed ideas, the present study was, however, successful in showing the importance of positive father

involvement to a son or daughter's self-esteem. After all, and as Sophie Freud (1988, p.279) sees it, "self-esteem is fate"!

As the topic of this research was met with great interest, enthusiasm, and most of the time emotionality, the belief in the importance of such studies concerning father continues to be reinforced. Recognizing a "father wound" has many implications for counseling, psychotherapy, and individual journeys of self-discovery. The diversity of a father's role should never be ignored and need not be conceptualized in mutually exclusive categories. Moreover, studies of father involvement should move beyond the deficit perspectives model to a more faithful approach in "generative" fathering. Let's not hover too long over what fathers cannot do but, instead, recognize what they can do. We have long indulged in a culture of maternalism, which emphasizes mothers as indispensable, natural, and necessary; a culture where mother is the target of blame when trouble arises with the children. The purpose is in no way near wanting fathers to become more like mothers, but instead, the desire is to bring out the best in what fathers have within them, and them alone. In other words, show them "what difference they can make" and encourage them to be more committed. Involved fathering is not only about committing to actively care for the next generation, it is also about fulfilling an important developmental task for a father's growth, happiness, and well-being too.

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This research is concerned with young adults' relationship with their fathers and how it relates to their psychological well-being.

Your participation is completely voluntary but greatly appreciated. You will be asked to answer some questions and to rate a number of statements relating to your feelings and attitudes to life.

The survey is anonymous. Please do not write your name on it.

Researcher: Rana K. Jaroudi

Haigazian University

Thank you

You and your Father

Your "father" can refer either to your biological father or to your step-father

**Young Men and Women,  
Their Fathers, and Their Psychological Well-being**

a) your biological father      b) your step-father

The following questions help us understand your family living arrangements as you were growing up. Please fill in the blank spaces that apply to you.

Your age:                      Your gender:      M      F

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**Thank you**

**You and your Father.**

Your “father” can relate either to your biological father **or** to your step-father.  
If for some reason you do not have consistent contact with your father in the present, think about what your relationship was like **with him** in the past.

Specify whether this person is:

- a) your biological father
- b) your step-father

The following questions help us understand your family living arrangements as you were growing up. Please fill in the blank spaces that apply to you.

Your age:

Your gender:    M       F

Number of siblings:

In case of non-consistent contact with father, state reason:\_\_\_\_\_.

1	Lived with both parents from	_____ years old to _____ years old.					
2	Lived with <b>mother only</b> from	_____ years old to _____ years old.					
3	Lived with <b>father only</b> from	_____ years old to _____ years old.					
4	Lived with <b>neither parent</b> from	_____ years old to _____ years old.					
5	Lived with <b>mother and her new partner(s)</b> from	_____ years old to _____ years old.					
6	Lived with <b>father and his new partner(s)</b> from	_____ years old to _____ years old.					
		Never there for you		Sometimes there		Always there	
7	As you were growing up, would say that your <b>father</b> was	1	2	3	4	5	
8	As you were growing up , would say that your <b>mother</b> was	1	2	3	4	5	
9 If your <b>father</b> was not around, what was the main reason for this:							
10 If your <b>mother</b> was not around, what was the main reason for this:							
		Not at all Satisfied		Neutral		Very Satisfied	
11	When your <b>father</b> was around as you were growing up, how satisfied with the quality of his company were you?	1	2	3	4	5	
12	When your <b>mother</b> was around as you were growing up, how satisfied with the quality of her company were you?	1	2	3	4	5	
		Not at all close		Neutral		Very Close	
13	As you were growing up, how close a relationship with your <b>father</b> do you feel you had?	1	2	3	4	5	
14	As you were growing up, how close a relationship with your <b>mother</b> do you feel you had?	1	2	3	4	5	



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Strongly Disagree			Neutral/ Mixed			Strongly Agree

1	Overall, I have a very satisfying and rewarding relationship with him	1	2	3	4	5	6	
2	Overall, I feel a strong bond and closeness to this person	1	2	3	4	5	6	
3	I really listen to this person and try to understand him	1	2	3	4	5	6	
4	This person accepts me for who I am	1	2	3	4	5	6	
5	This person understands who I am and what life is like for me	1	2	3	4	5	6	
6	This person can sense when something is bothering me	1	2	3	4	5	6	
7	This person encourages me to talk about my difficulties	1	2	3	4	5	6	
8	I can talk to this person about the problems I have in my relationships	1	2	3	4	5	6	
9	When we talk, this person listens to my point of view	1	2	3	4	5	6	
10	I don't feel that this person cares much about me	1	2	3	4	5	6	
11	This person punishes me or makes me feel bad when I do something wrong or something he doesn't like	1	2	3	4	5	6	
12	This person judges my work and what I do	1	2	3	4	5	6	
13	I can share personal information about my relationships with this person	1	2	3	4	5	6	
14	I feel free to ask this person about his personal problems	1	2	3	4	5	6	
15	I feel free to hug this person	1	2	3	4	5	6	
16	I do not trust this person to keep my secrets	1	2	3	4	5	6	
17	I feel that this person respects and admires me	1	2	3	4	5	6	
18	This person often touches my arm or hugs me	1	2	3	4	5	6	
19	This person influences the practical and work decisions I make	1	2	3	4	5	6	
20	I am always willing to help this person out whenever he needs me	1	2	3	4	5	6	
21	I find it difficult to tell this person how I am feeling about work	1	2	3	4	5	6	
22	I do not admire or respect this person much	1	2	3	4	5	6	
23	This person often lets me know how important I am to him	1	2	3	4	5	6	
24	If I have relationship problems, this person helps out when I need him	1	2	3	4	5	6	
25	I can share personal thoughts about my work with this person	1	2	3	4	5	6	
26	I usually decide what we do or talk about when with this person	1	2	3	4	5	6	
27	This person seems to enjoy my company	1	2	3	4	5	6	
28	This person and I often have arguments or disagreements	1	2	3	4	5	6	
29	I often judge the behavior of this person	1	2	3	4	5	6	
30	I can tell this person about the feelings I have in my relationships	1	2	3	4	5	6	
31	This person contributes to my overall happiness	1	2	3	4	5	6	
32	I can <u>not</u> talk easily to this person about my work or practical problems	1	2	3	4	5	6	
33	This person approves of the kind of relationships and friends I choose	1	2	3	4	5	6	
34	This person helps me out when I have work or practical problems	1	2	3	4	5	6	

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. If you **STRONGLY AGREE**, circle SA. If you **AGREE** with the statement, circle A. If you **DISAGREE**, circle D. If you **STRONGLY DISAGREE**, circle SD.

		STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1.	I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	SA	A	D	SD
2.	I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	SA	A	D	SD
3.	All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	SA	A	D	SD
4.	I am able to do things as well as most other people.	SA	A	D	SD
5.	I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	SA	A	D	SD
6.	I take a positive attitude toward myself.	SA	A	D	SD
7.	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	SA	A	D	SD
8.	I wish I could have more respect for myself.	SA	A	D	SD
9.	I certainly feel useless at times.	SA	A	D	SD
10.	At times, I think I am no good at all.	SA	A	D	SD



The following statements concern how you feel in romantic relationships. We are interested in how you generally experience relationships, not just in what is happening in a current relationship. Please write the number which indicates how much you agree or disagree with each of the following using the rating scale.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Strongly			Neutral /			Strongly
	Disagree			Mixed			Agree

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I worry about being abandoned.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I am very uncomfortable being close to romantic partners.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I worry a lot about my relationships.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Just when my partner starts to get close to me I find myself pulling away.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I worry that romantic partners won't care about me as much as I care about them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. I worry a fair amount about losing my partner.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. I don't feel very comfortable opening up to romantic partners.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. I often wish that my partner's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for her.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. I want to get close to my partner but keep pulling back.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. I often want to merge completely with romantic partners, and this sometimes scares them away.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. I am nervous when partners get too close to me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. I worry about being alone.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my partner.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. I try to avoid getting too close to my partner.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. I need a lot of reassurance that I am loved by my partner.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. I find it relatively easy to get close to my partner.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. Sometimes I feel that I force my partners to show more feeling, more commitment.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. I do not often worry about being abandoned.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. If I can't get my partner to show interest in me, I get upset or angry.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. I tell my partner just about everything.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. I find that my partners don't want to get as close as I would like.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. When I'm not involved in a relationship, I feel somewhat anxious and insecure.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. I feel comfortable depending on romantic partners.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. I get frustrated when my partner is not around as much as I would like.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 31. I don't mind asking romantic partner's for comfort, advice, or help.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 32. I get frustrated if romantic partners are not available when I need them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 33. It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 34. When romantic partners disapprove of me, I feel really bad about myself.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 35. I turn to my partner for many things, including comfort and reassurance.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 36. I resent it when my partner spends time away from me.