

## Father's Attachment and its Implications for Children's Self-Confidence in Kindergarten

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### ABSTRACT

The background of this study focuses on the phenomenon of insufficient father involvement in child care in Indonesia, which impacts children's social-emotional development, particularly their self-confidence. This study aims to determine the effect of father involvement on the self-confidence of children aged 5-6 years old in Jatimurni, Bekasi City. The research employs an associative quantitative approach with a purposive sampling technique, involving 104 fathers and their children aged 5-6 years as respondents. A questionnaire that has been tested for validity and reliability serves as the research instrument. Data analysis is conducted using simple linear regression and Pearson correlation tests. The results of the study indicate that father attachment has a significant effect on the self-confidence of early childhood children, with a Pearson correlation value of 0.752 and R Square of 0.566. This means that 56.66% of the variation in children's self-confidence can be attributed to the father's involvement, while the remaining portion is influenced by other factors not covered in this study. These findings reinforce Bowlby's attachment theory and emphasize the importance of the father's role in fostering children's self-confidence from an early age. The practical implications of this study highlight the need to raise awareness and encourage father involvement in parenting through family education programs and social environment support. Additionally, this study recommends further research to explore other factors that may affect children's self-confidence.

### INTRODUCTION

The father is one of the important figures in the family with a different role from the mother. The role of the father is more likely to be the protective aspect, while the mother is more focused on nurturing. This difference in orientation continues to develop over time, both in substance and implementation. (Elijah, 2014). Research states that Indonesian children are not satisfied with their father's needs (Vinayastri et al., 2017). The father is physically present but is not affectively involved in the upbringing of his child. All children's educational needs are largely left to mothers, starting from the management of daily needs to the application of real life values, which is also the main task of fathers as family leaders. Although fathers generally spend less time than mothers, the role of fathers is just as important and influential in the development of children (Mil et al., 2022).

According to Bowlby, attachment is a behavior that is specific to humans, namely a person's tendency and desire to seek closeness to another person and seek satisfaction in a relationship with that person (Santyani & Suryanti, 2024). There are several terminologies

about paternal attachment according to experts. Pleck (1997) defines paternal attachment as *Paternal involvement* or *father involvement* which is interpreted as the involvement of the father that is positive for the development of the child. While Lamb (2010) In more detail, it states that paternal involvement is the positive participation of fathers in activities in the form of direct interaction with their children, providing warmth, monitoring and controlling children's activities and being responsible for the needs and needs of children. While Armsden & Greenberg define paternal attachment as a strong and meaningful affective bond that occurs between father and son that can be seen from several characteristics, namely communication, trust, and alienation (Kamila & Tasaufi, 2023), while Palkovitz (Hawkins et al., 2002; R. J. Palkovitz, 2014) mentioned that the father's attachment is spoken of as *Squirting* which means referring to how much effort a father makes in thinking, planning, feeling, paying attention, monitoring, evaluating, worrying and praying for his child (Hawkins et al., 2002).

There are several dimensions in father's attachment, namely *Commitment* (direct interaction and activities with children), *Accessibility* (physical and emotional availability), and *Responsibility* (responsibility in decision-making and meeting children's needs) (R. Palkovitz & Hull, 2018). Meanwhile, Lamb said there are three main components in *Paternal involvement* Among others: 1) the experience of fathers interacting directly and doing activities together (paternal engagement); 2) the presence and readiness of the father for the child (paternal accessibility); 3) The extent to which the father understands and meets the needs of the child (*Paternal Responsibility*) (Cabrera et al., 1999). The factors that affect father's attachment include psychological well-being, personality, attitudes, as well as religious and spiritual aspects that can strengthen the father's involvement in parenting. In his research, Garfiled & Isacco (2012), explained that the father's attachment was influenced, among other things, by individual influences in the form of *Self-efficacy* fathers and fathers' health and from family factors are affected by *Co-parenting* with mother.

The involvement of fathers in childcare provides far-reaching benefits and positively influences various aspects of child development. Fathers who are positively involved through democratic and stimulating parenting have been shown to improve the development of children's cognitive abilities, prosocial skills and self-regulation (*Self-regulation*) (Choi et al., 2021), Children with actively involved fathers show better cognitive development (Sethna et al., 2017), better social skills and better self-control which all contribute to academic success (Baker, 2017) and their emotional well-being (Lamb, 2010). Father's involvement also has a significant impact on children's mental and psychological health (Mil et al., 2022). The quality of the father-son relationship is not just the quantity of time spent together, it is key in reducing problematic behaviors such as insecure behavior (Mil & Qothrunnada, 2023) and increase children's confidence and social skills. Research also proves that father's involvement is an important factor that supports a child's holistic development, covering cognitive, emotional, social and physical aspects as well as general family well-being (Yoon et al., 2021)

In the context of social-emotional development, there are developmental aspects that reflect confidence, with indicators such as: the ability to appear confident, the courage to ask and answer, the ability to convey opinions fluently, and the ability to work well together (Sitorus, 2023). One of the abilities that grows from these social-emotional development factors is children's confidence. Warren states that confidence is a person's belief in his or her ability to overcome challenges and problems (Kumari et al., 2023). Children who have confidence will be able to face new things with confidence, remain confident even in difficult situations and develop a positive attitude without feeling anxious about the conditions or situations around them. Another definition mentions confidence is a positive attitude that allows a person to build a good view of themselves and the situation they are facing. (Dr. Ahmad Susanto, 2016). According to Lindenfield, the stages of confidence in children aged 5-6 years are trying to master the environment, adapting, comprehension skills, role-playing with gender roles, experimenting, being active and starting to build relationships with friends. When children are always given the opportunity and motivation to perform, then children will grow up with high confidence. So that parents and educators have a great influence in fostering children's confidence from an early age. (Lindenfield, 1997).

Lautser states the *self-confidence* among others, belief in self-ability, optimism, objectivity, responsibility and rational and realistic attitudes (Safitri & Prabawa, 2024). Yoder and Proctor explain that confidence can help a person achieve success in achieving a desire, luck or big goal in a career (Kintani et al., 2013). Confidence makes a person more confident and daring to try new things. Therefore, a confident person is usually more likely to succeed in achieving what he wants, getting good opportunities and achieving important goals in his job or career. In the context of early childhood, confidence can make children feel confident and brave to try new things such as playing, learning or interacting with friends. Confident children are not easily afraid or hesitant when faced with something they have never done before (Salistina, 2016). Confidence also helps children to be active and enthusiastic in learning, so that they can grow into children who are ready to face future challenges (Kintani et al., 2013).

The role of parents, teachers, and the surrounding environment is very important in helping children develop confidence (*sense of self*). Support from parents, especially fathers, plays a big role in fostering this confidence (Hidayat et al., 2024). Strong attachment between father and son, which is demonstrated through good communication (Kumari et al., 2023), emotional presence, and active involvement in parenting, can increase a child's confidence (Hidayat et al., 2024). In parenting, fathers interact with children through communication, among other things, by having conversations. In research conducted by Wahyuni, it was stated that fathers converse with children more than mother-child conversations (Wahyuni et al., 2021). By conversing with my father, attachment with my father will be established. If a child has a close and strong relationship with his father, as an adult when facing difficult situations or having to make important decisions, the child will remember how his father would feel if he did something wrong (Aini et al., 2021). This memory can help the child

think well and choose the right actions because he wants to protect his father's feelings and expectations.

Based on the results of research, the attachment of father and son turns out to have differences in each child's gender. The study found that 67.5% of girls felt more closeness to their fathers than boys with a magnitude of 61.59%. (Aida Larasati & Rahmasari, 2024). The closeness of fathers to daughters occurs because of the daughter's perception of her father who understands, loves, and guides (Fatmasari & Faturochman, 2013). Based on this study, it was concluded that 43.7% of fathers and 27.2% of mothers never sought information about childcare. Other research also states that fathers' involvement in childcare has a great influence on children's development, especially children's confidence (Kholasoh Riflatullisa et al., 2024). Another research in South Gandaria on early childhood also states that a safe relationship between parents and children helps build children's confidence (Nada, 2023).

Based on the results of observations conducted at Kindergarten (TK) in the Bekasi area, based on the results of interviews and observations, it is known that as many as more than 43,4% of children who attend kindergarten are not close to their fathers. And data in the field also shows that children who are not close to their fathers are known to have characteristics that tend to be more quiet, difficult to socialize, and afraid when talking to their parents and friends. When meeting a stranger, the child feels frightened. In contrast to children who are close to their fathers, tend to socialize easily with their friends, are more confident, and dare to talk to their teachers or friends. This makes the researcher interested in further research on how father's attachment affects self-confidence in children who attend kindergarten. This is because fathers are parents who have a very important role in raising children, providing affection, and being responsible for providing guidance and direction in children's lives.

Previously, there have been several studies on the analysis of early childhood self-confidence in social studies studies (Aini et al., 2021), increasing children's confidence through habituation methods (Rahmawati et al., 2024), how to stimulate children's confidence (Sitorus, 2023), but there is still little research that examines the significance of the placement carried out by fathers during parenting on the confidence possessed by children in kindergarten. This is one of the reasons behind the need to conduct this research.

## **METHOD**

A associative quantitative approach was used in this research to test whether there is an influence of paternal attachment on early childhood confidence. The population in the study is in Jatimurni Village, Bekasi. The *purposive sampling* technique is used for sample selection that is adjusted to the characteristics of the variables being studied. Using this technique, 104 fathers and children aged 5-6 years were selected in Jatimurni Village, Bekasi City.

The type of instrument used is in the form of a questionnaire filled out by fathers and distributed through *a googleform link*. Before the questionnaire was distributed, an internal and external instrument feasibility test was carried out. The internal test was carried out by validating the content by 2 expert lecturers in the field of Counseling Guidance. Then it was

followed by an external validity test on 55 samples that had characteristics similar to the research sample.

The flow of the research can be seen in the following image:

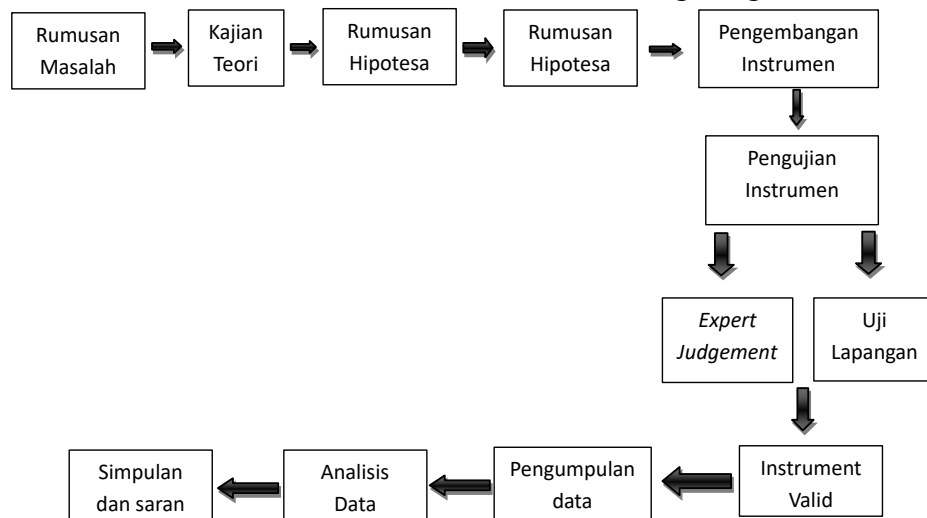


Figure 1. Stages of Research Flow

Based on the results of the field test, the data was analyzed with *the Product Moment Pearson Correlation* at a significance level of 0.05, so the questionnaire items were proven to be valid. The results of the reliability test with *Cronbach's Alpha Reability Analysis* obtained the results of *Cronbach's Alpha*, namely,  $> 0.60$  and the questionnaire proved to be reliable or consistent. Data obtained from reliability analysis using *Cronbach's Alpha* statistics showed sufficient results for both variables studied, namely "Father Attachment" and "Confidence". The variable "Father Stickiness," measured by 27 items, had a *Cronbach's Alpha* value of 0.647. This value indicates that the variable measurement instrument has a fairly good level of internal consistency, although it is still below the ideal threshold of 0.70. This suggests that while some items may be less consistent, overall the instrument is reliable for measuring paternal attachment to parenting.

Meanwhile, the "Confidence" variable using 36 items obtained a *Cronbach's Alpha* value of 0.688, showing better reliability than the father's attachment variable, but still slightly below the ideal value. This value indicates that the instrument is quite consistent in measuring early childhood confidence, although there is still an opportunity to improve the quality of the item in order to obtain more accurate and valid results.

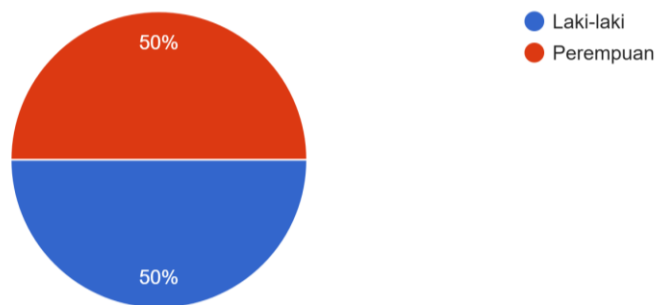
The questionnaire in this study is used to measure two variables, namely father attachment and children's self-confidence. For paternal attachment, the measurement includes three main aspects: direct involvement in parenting (involvement), the ease of access provided to the children (accessibility), and a sense of responsibility (responsibility), with a total of 27 questions. As for children's self-confidence, the measurement includes confidence

in self-ability, optimism, objectivity, a sense of responsibility, and the ability to think rationally, with a total of 36 questions.

**RESULT**

Based on the results of the questionnaire distribution, information related to respondent data on father data and child data was obtained, which can be seen in figure 2 and table 3 below.

Figure 2 is the data on the distribution of kindergarten B children studied in this research where there are a total of 104 children with the following gender distribution:



**Figure 2.** Child Characteristics by Gender

Figure 2 shows that the data produced is balanced, namely 50% of children are male and the rest are female. For the distribution of the age of 5-year-olds as much as 53.1% (55 children), the age of 6 years is 40.5% (42 children and 7-year-old children are 7% (7 children). The data on fathers that have been successfully obtained can be seen in the table below.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Data of Dads

Description of Dad	Sum	Percentage
<b>Data</b>		
Father's Age		
26-30 years old	27	25,9%
31-35 years old	29	36,7%
36-40 years old	22	21,1%
41-45 years old	12	11,6%
46-54 years old	5	5%
Education		
SMP	5	4,9%
SMA/SMK/SLTA	43	41,4%

Diploma	7	6,8%
S1	40	38,5%
S2	9	8,7%

Based on the data table above, it is known that the majority of fathers' ages range from 31-35 years old which amounts to 36.7% and the oldest father's age is found in the vulnerable age of 46-54 years which amounts to 5%. As for father's education in the Jatimurni Village area, the majority of them have a high school education of 41.4% while fathers with a Master's degree (S2) education at least 8.7%. This shows that the respondents of this study are fathers aged 31-35 years with the majority of high school (high school) education.

Based on the results of data from 104 respondents who have been analyzed using *IBM SPSS software*. The results of the *Kolmogorov-smirnov Test* normality test show that the value of *Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)* is  $0.200 \geq 0.050$ , then it can be concluded that the residual data is normally distributed. Meanwhile, to conduct a hypothesis test, it is carried out with a simple linear regression test, where the results can be seen in the table below:

**Table 2.** Simple Linear Regression Test

		<b>Coefficient</b>			
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
Type		B	Std. Error	Beta	t
1	(Constant)	7.222	2.426		2.977
	X	.588	.051	.752	11.524
					Sig.
					.004
					.000

a. Dependent Variable: Y

The results of the simple linear regression test stated that *the constant* number of *unstandardized coefficients* was 7.222, indicating that if the value of the father's attachment variable (X) was 0, then the value of the confidence variable (Y) was predicted to be 7.222. The regression coefficient of X (b) of 0.588 indicates that every 1% increase in the paternal attachment variable will increase the value of the confidence variable by 0.588. Based on the significance test on the regression coefficient, it showed a significance value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.050$ ), with a calculated t-value of 11.524 which far exceeded the critical value of t, the table further strengthens that the influence is very significant. With a *standardized coefficient (Beta)* value of 0.752, it can be concluded that paternal attachment has a strong contribution to the formation of confidence in children aged 5-6 years. These results indicate that the relationship between the child and the father plays an important role in shaping a child's confidence. The higher a child's attachment to his father, the higher the level of confidence he has.

To test whether there is a difference in significance, it is used using the Anova test. The results can be seen in the following table:

**Table 3.** ANOVA Test

ANOVA						
Type		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1227.831	1	1227.831	132.797	.000b
	Residual	943.083	102	9.246		
	Total	2170.913	103			

a. Dependent Variable: Y  
 b. Predictors: (Constant), X

The results of the anova test were known to have an F value of 132,797 with a significance of  $0.000 \leq 0.050$  which means that the regression model as a whole is significant. Thus, it can be concluded that the simultaneous attachment of fathers has a significant influence on self-confidence. This strengthens the results of the partial test and supports the validity of the constructed research.

The results of the summary test can be seen in the following table:

**Table 4.** Model Summary

Model Summary <sup>b</sup>				
Type	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	RStd. Error of the Estimate
1	.752a	.566	.561	3.041

a. Predictors: (Constant), X  
 b. Dependent Variable: Y

The results of the *summary model test* showed an R Square value of 0.566 which means that 56.6% variation in the dependent variable, namely Self-Confidence, can be explained by an independent variable, namely Father Attachment. In other words, the relationship between paternal attachment and self-confidence is strongly influential. Meanwhile, the remaining 43.4% was influenced by other variables outside of this study, which were not included in this study.

Here Is a table of the hypothesis test results:

**Table 5.** Associative Hypothesis Test

Correlations			
		X	Y
X	Pearson Correlation	1	.752**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	104	104
Y	Pearson Correlation	.752**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	104	104

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results of the associative hypothesis test obtained a Pearson correlation value ( $r$ ) of 0.752, which shows a strong and positive influence between the paternal attachment variable and the confidence variable. The significance value (*Sig. 2-tailed*) was  $0.000 \leq 0.05$ , so that there was a statistically significant influence with the number of data ( $N$ ) as many as 104 respondents. Thus, the hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) which states that there is an influence between the variables of paternal attachment and self-confidence is declared acceptable.

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that paternal attachment has a very significant influence on the confidence of early childhood (5-6 years) in Jatimurni Village, showing that the level of education and paternity age also affect parenting patterns. Fathers with higher education tend to better understand the importance of their role in parenting, not only as breadwinners, but also as figures who provide a sense of security and emotional support. Research states that parental education, which is one of the indicators of family socioeconomic status, affects parenting styles in the family (Mil et al., 2022). Fathers who have a high education have an understanding of the importance of good parenting for the development of their children so that fathers' involvement in parenting is also more (Mil, 2024). Fathers with higher education backgrounds better understand their role in parenting, not just as breadwinners, but also as involved in the day-to-day care and care of children.

The results of this study also show that the level of education and paternity age also affect parenting patterns. These results corroborate the findings of the (Prasetyo, 2018) which confirms that fathers with higher levels of education tend to better understand the importance of their role in parenting, not only as breadwinners, but also as role models and emotional support. . Fathers with higher education tend to better understand the importance of their role in parenting, not only as breadwinners, but also as figures who provide a sense of security and emotional support. Research states that parental education, which is one of the indicators of family socioeconomic status, affects parenting styles in the family (Mil et al., 2022). Fathers who have a high education have an understanding of the importance of good parenting for the development of their children so that fathers' involvement in parenting is also more.

The findings of the study also found that the majority of respondents were of productive age and had high motivation to be involved in childcare. Fathers who first become parents at a younger age, especially Under 27 tend to have lower involvement in early childhood parenting compared to parents at a more fortunate age (Mulihatun & Santi, 2022). In the research *cross-sectional di Yogyakarta* Muhatun & Santi (Mulihatun & Santi, 2022) It found that fathers who first became parents at age less than 27 had almost three times greater risk of being less involved in early childhood parenting.

This data corroborates the results of this research where the most involved fathers are in the age range of 31-35 years old with a percentage of 36.7%. This is thought to be related to emotional maturity, mental readiness and socioeconomic stability (Mil et al., 2022) which is

generally better at a more mature age. Baker et al. study (Cockerham et al., 2014) concludes that older fathers tend to be more involved in parenting. This can be explained by the level of confidence and *Self-efficacy* higher in older fathers, so they are more capable and responsible in carrying out parenting roles. But it's also important to note that the timing of the study is not always directly related to the level of engagement, but rather the age at which you first became a father is more influential. Therefore, there is a need for intervention to increase the involvement of fathers in parenting in young fathers groups through education and mentoring programs so that they are more prepared and confident in carrying out their parenting roles and are more involved in parenting. This underscores the important role of a positive father-son bond in fostering positive outcomes in a girl's life through these factors (Nielsen, 2014).

Father's parenting is beneficial for aspects of child development, including the development of religious-moral values in terms of beliefs or religion, the father is a commander. In addition, in moral aspects related to morals, ethics, behavior and positive things, children will pay attention to what the father says and conveys and will then be used as a model for the child, then with the establishment of a bond between father and child, it will have a positive influence on their child's identity and attitude (Wahyuni, 2021). In other words, the support that fathers give to children is also correlated with father-son warmth and academic achievement. A harmonious situation between father and son can arouse a desire for achievement in children. And the father's involvement is positively related to the child's social skills, maturity, and ability to relate to others. (Mil & Qothrunnada, 2023)

This research also strengthens the theory of attachment (*attachment theory*) that Bowlby put forward, where a secure attachment between the child and the parents, especially the father, will form a solid foundation for the development of the child's confidence and independence. Bowlby stated that the good relationship between children and parents, including fathers, is very important for children's psychological development. If children feel safe because their caregivers are always responsive, sensitive to children's needs and consistent in care, children will be more confident, independent and resistant to difficulties (Cassidy & Shaver, 2016). Especially when the father is positively involved by providing warm attention, emotional support and stimulation to learn, the child will feel safer and brave to explore the surrounding environment without fear. So the role of an active and affectionate father really helps children grow into strong and confident individuals. When a child feels accepted, supported and loved by his father, he will grow up feeling safe and comfortable. This sense of security makes it easier for children to believe in themselves, not afraid to try new things and dare to interact with others in their social environment.

When fathers show affection, give sincere praise, and become role models in facing challenges, children feel appreciated and loved. This builds a strong foundation of self-confidence, makes children more courageous to try new things, is not afraid of failure and is able to defend themselves in social situations. The results of other studies also show that there is a significant relationship between the role of fathers and the level of children's confidence, (Hidayat et al., 2024). The greater the role and involvement of the father in parenting, the greater the confidence of the child. Conversely, the lower the father's involvement in parenting

can cause the child to be less confident and have difficulty in building healthy social relationships.

Value *R Square* 0.566 shows that paternal attachment is one of the main factors affecting early childhood confidence. However, there are still 43.4% of other factors that also play a role, such as mother's parenting, social environment, and children's learning experience outside the home. Therefore, while the father's attachment is very important, the role of the family as a whole and the surrounding environment cannot be ignored either. This explanation is in line with the ecological theory developed by Bronfenbrenner, which states that a child's development is influenced by the sharing of different environments (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). Starting from the nuclear family, relationships between family members and the social environment to the culture and policies that apply in society.

Other research has also shown that while the role of the father is very important, the role of mothers, friends, teachers and the community also goes a long way in shaping children's confidence and well-being (Sitorus, 2023). In addition, good parenting from both parents and children's experiences outside the home such as in kindergarten or playgrounds also support children's social-emotional development (Aini et al., 2021). So while the relationship with the father is a major factor, the development of early childhood confidence is actually the result of many things interacting with each other, including the role of the family as a whole and the wider social context.

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the attachment between father and early childhood (5–6 years) has a very significant influence on the level of children's confidence. Fathers who have a higher level of education and are at a more mature age (31–35 years old) tend to be more involved in parenting, provide emotional support, and be responsive to the needs of children. This involvement forms a sense of security that is an important basis for the development of children's confidence. The study also indicates the need for special attention to the group of young fathers, who tend to have lower levels of involvement. Therefore, intervention through education and mentoring for fathers, especially those who become parents for the first time at a young age, is very necessary so that they can play an optimal role in parenting and support the psychological development of children as a whole.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that paternal attachment has a significant influence on early childhood self-confidence, where fathers who are more mature in age and highly educated tend to be more involved in supportive and emotional parenting. This involvement forms a sense of security in the child which is the foundation for his confidence and independence. However, this study has limitations in scope and time approach, and faces challenges in accessing active participation of fathers. Further research is suggested to include a broader population and longitudinal approaches to gain a more comprehensive understanding. These findings reinforce the importance of the role of fathers in parenting and contribute to the development of

parenting practices that encourage father's involvement to support the optimal psychosocial development of children.

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