

Father attachment, perceived parental relationships, father psychological control, and attachment in romantic relationships: a study on men in emerging adulthood

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ABSTRACT

Aims: This study was conducted to evaluate the relationship between attachment styles to fathers, perceived parental relationships, and psychological control of fathers among men in emerging adulthood and their attachment styles in romantic relationships.

Methods: The study is descriptive and exploratory in nature. The study data were collected from 146 participants using the Descriptive Characteristics Questionnaire, Perceived Parenting Scale-Father Form, Psychological Control Scale-Father Form, Father Presence Scale, and Close Relationships Experience Inventory. The analysis of the study data involved the use of numbers, percentages, means, standard deviations, and Pearson correlation analysis.

Results: A positive relationship was found between the father's psychological control and his authoritarian and indifferent attitude toward the mother, and a negative relationship was found between his democratic and protective attitude ($p < 0.01$). A negative relationship was found between the father's psychological control practices and the mean scores of the subdimensions of the Father's Presence Scale ($p < 0.01$). A negative relationship was found between the mean scores of the subdimensions of the Father's Presence Scale and the mean scores of the father's authoritarian and indifferent attitude toward the mother, while a positive relationship was found between the mean scores of the protective and democratic attitude toward the mother ($p < 0.01$). However, no relationship was found between father's psychological control, father's attitude towards mother, father's presence scale and close relationships scale ($p > 0.05$).

Conclusion: It has been shown that father-child relationships and family climate have significant psychosocial effects both during the developmental process and in adult life. Although the relationship established with the father may not be directly related to romantic relationships, it is thought that the needs met and unmet in the relationship with the father will shape individuals' romantic relationships in later life. It is recommended that supportive interventions be designed to strengthen father-child relationships such as family counseling and father support program.

Keywords: Perceived parenting, father attachment, emerging adulthood, psychological control, attachment in romantic relationships

INTRODUCTION

People go through many developmental stages from infancy to old age, and one of these developmental stages is emerging adulthood. Over the past half-century, it has been emphasized that individuals do not transition directly from adolescence to adulthood, and emerging adulthood has been defined as a new developmental stage covering the late teens and twenties (ages 18-29). As in other developmental stages, individuals in emerging adulthood also have certain tasks and responsibilities to fulfill (Arnett, 2000). During emerging adulthood, individuals have responsibilities such as continuing the secure separation from parents that began in adolescence and reducing their dependence on parents, asserting their

autonomy and individuality, establishing close and trusting relationships with others, and developing a healthy sense of identity and self-concept (Arnett, 2000; 2007). In emerging adulthood, individuals focus on issues related to autonomy and individualization, forming close emotional relationships, career planning, choosing a profession, and forming views on life and the world (Arnett, 2000). The focus of self-concept issues during this period determines the developmental responsibilities that individuals must fulfill, and individuals during this period focus on deciding on their future profession and beginning education toward that end, establishing and maintaining peer relationships, forming close relationships

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based on trust, developing a philosophy of life, and planning their lives accordingly. In order for individuals to fulfill their developmental responsibilities during this period, become autonomous, and express their individuality, they need to form secure attachments with their parents and achieve secure separation (Arnett, 2000; 2007).

In order for individuals to safely separate from their parents, secure attachments must first be established (Erzar and Erzar, 2008). Secure attachment is a process that occurs when individuals establish physical, emotional, and social bonds with their primary caregivers and when their needs in these areas are consistently met by their caregivers. Separations, losses, and the inability to form bonds in the desired manner between the individual and the caregiver led to the development of anxious, resistant, and avoidant attachment styles. Insecure attachment behaviors can affect individuals' self-development and identity formation, as well as lead to problems in mental health, behavior, social functioning, and interpersonal relationships (Bowlby, 1988). Secure attachment to parents contributes to the development of trust-based relationships in adulthood. The trust relationship established with parents and parental attitudes affects not only the relationships established and to be established during the current period but also the close relationships that individuals will establish in their adult lives, i.e., their romantic relationships. Maintaining one's identity while forming trust-based bonds in romantic relationships is one of the tasks individuals must accomplish during emerging adulthood (Ercan and Eryilmaz, 2013; Erzar and Erzar, 2008). Although the mother figure is generally important in attachment relationships, the trust-based relationship that individuals establish with their father in early childhood also has significant effects on close and romantic relationships in adulthood. Trust-based bonds formed with the father in early childhood contribute to the formation of secure bonds in romantic relationships in emerging adulthood, high self-esteem, increased relationship quality and satisfaction, and the development of healthy dynamics in relationships. However, insecure, anxious, or avoidant attachment styles formed with the father negatively affect individuals' attachment styles, leading to a decrease in the quality and satisfaction of romantic relationships (Martinez-Alvarez et al., 2014; Jaroudi, 2005).

While secure attachment behavior in individuals is important in the close relationships they will form in adult life, the most important factor affecting secure attachment is the family. The family plays an important role in children's mental, emotional, social, physical, and identity development (Kooraneh and Amirsardari, 2015). Important factors affecting a child's development within the family include parents' attitudes toward their children, the relationship between parents, and the family climate. All these factors affect children's emotional, mental, social, and behavioral development processes (Roskam et al., 2014; Kooraneh and Amirsardari, 2015). In particular, parents' negative, authoritarian, and controlling attitudes toward their children cause problems in children's self-perception and identity. Parents with authoritarian parenting attitudes do not support children's autonomy, physical punishment is frequently used, and psychological control over the child is high (Baumrind, 1978). All parental behaviors cause problems in the child's self-perception, sense of self-efficacy, and self-esteem (Altaf et al., 2021). Therefore,

excessive authoritarian attitudes and psychological control practices by parents can also cause problems in romantic relationships. In particular, authoritarian attitudes and psychological control practices applied by fathers toward their sons can cause significant problems in the individual's self-perception. Additionally, studies in the literature indicate that secure attachment to the father and perceived paternal attitudes are associated with secure attachment styles and relationship satisfaction in romantic relationships (Gleeson and Fitzgerald, 2014; Black and Schutte, 2006). Karre (2015) noted that the relationship with the father has a direct or indirect effect on romantic relationships and that psychological and behavioral control practices applied by the father cause problems in romantic relationships. Similarly, it has been found that parenting attitudes toward children and insecure attachments formed with parents lead to anxious and avoidant attachment styles in romantic relationships, which in turn affect violence, relationship satisfaction, and quality in romantic relationships (Sabelnikova, Kashirsky, & Garvard, 2020). Similarly, it has been observed that secure attachment styles and increased romantic relationship quality are associated with trust-based relationships with fathers and perceived support and closeness from fathers, while the father's cold-rejecting, aggressive, and inconsistent attitudes are associated with decreased romantic relationship quality and support anxious and avoidant attachment patterns (Santona et al., 2019; Yilmaz Olcay, 2022). Whittington and Turner (2023) noted that individuals raised with high paternal psychological control experience more problems related to self-efficacy, which negatively affects their attachment styles, leading to unbalanced power dynamics, relationship problems, and decreased satisfaction in romantic relationships. Another factor influencing individuals' attitudes and beliefs about romantic relationships is the relationship between the father and mother and the father's attitude toward the mother.

While the relationships men establish with their fathers contribute significantly to the learning of masculine roles, the relationship the father establishes with the mother serves as an important guide for romantic relationships. The family environment in which individuals grow up, problems in the mother-father relationship, and dysfunctional patterns encountered within the family can lead to bullying and violence in romantic relationships in adult life, as well as a decrease in relationship satisfaction and quality (Velotti et al., 2018). Similarly, Zagefka et al. (2021) noted in their study with emerging adults that the dysfunctional patterns individuals encountered in their families led to dysfunctional patterns and insecure attachment patterns in their romantic relationships in adulthood. When examining studies in the literature, it is observed that positive perceptions of parental relationships and positive perceptions of the father in the parental relationship reduce anxious attachment in romantic relationships (Parekh et al., 2023), and the father's overly controlling attitudes toward both the child and the mother lead to the development of negative beliefs and attitudes toward romantic relationships and a decrease in the quality of romantic relationships (Tartakovsky, 2024). Although the literature indicates that fathers are an important factor for both women and men, there are no studies that specifically evaluate the effect of the relationships that men establish with their fathers in early childhood and the parenting attitudes

of fathers on attachment styles. Therefore, this study will be conducted to evaluate the relationship between attachment styles to fathers, perceived parental relationships, and paternal psychological control in romantic relationships among men in emerging adulthood.

METHODS

Ethics

The study was conducted with the approval of the Aksaray University Human Researches Ethics Committee (Date: 25.04.2023, Decision No: 2023/03-57). All procedures were carried out in accordance with the ethical rules and the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. After ethical approval for the study was obtained, an online survey was sent to participants. Participants were informed about the study and their consent was obtained before responding to the survey.

Purpose and Type of the Study

This study was conducted as a descriptive and correlational study to evaluate the relationship between attachment styles to fathers, perceived parental relationships, and psychological control of fathers among men in emerging adulthood and their attachment styles in romantic relationships.

Participants

The study was conducted with men aged 18-29 who were in the emerging adulthood period, and the sample consisted of 146 participants. The inclusion criteria for the study were being aged 18-29, being male, having no diagnosis of mental or psychological illness, and volunteering to participate in the study. Participants who were not between the ages of 18 and 29, were female, had any mental or psychological disorders, or were not willing to participate in the study were excluded. Study data were collected using a convenience sampling method, with the research questionnaire sent online to participants who met the inclusion criteria.

Data Collection Tools

The data were collected using the Descriptive Characteristics Questionnaire, Perceived Parenting Scale, Psychological Control Scale Father Form, Father Presence Scale, and Romantic Relationship Attachment Styles Scale.

Introductory features questionnaire: This form, created by researchers, was designed to assess the introductory characteristics of participants and contains a total of 16 questions.

Perceived Parenting Relationship Scale-Father Form (PPRS-FF): PPRS-FF was developed by Çelik and Öziş (2016) to measure individuals' perceptions of their parental relationships, and the scale includes both mother and father forms. The scale consists of five subscales: Authoritarian Attitude (3 items), Indifferent Attitude (9 items), Protective Attitude (6 items), Democratic Attitude (12 items), and Dependent Attitude (7 items), totaling 37 items. Responses for each item are rated on a four-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly disagree (0)" to "Strongly agree (3)." The authoritarian attitude subscale ranges from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 9 points, the indifferent attitude subscale ranges from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 27 points, the

protective attitude subscale ranges from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 18 points, the democratic attitude subscale ranges from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 36 points, and the dependent attitude subscale ranges from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 21 points. As the score for each subscale increases, it can be said that the father's attitude toward his spouse is higher in relation to that subscale. When examining the Cronbach's alpha values of the subscales of the original scale's father form, the values were found to be as follows: Authoritarian Attitude =0.73, Indifferent Attitude =0.89, Protective Attitude =0.81, Democratic Attitude = 0.95, and Dependent Attitude =0.86. When examining the Cronbach's Alpha values of the subdimensions of the father form for this study, the authoritarian attitude subdimension was found to be 0.80, the indifferent attitude subdimension was 0.91, the protective attitude subdimension was 0.79, the democratic attitude subdimension was 0.95, and the dependent attitude subdimension was 0.78.

Psychological Control Scale-Father Form (PCS-FF): The PCS-FF was developed by Barber and colleagues (2012) to measure the psychological control exercised by parents, and its Turkish adaptation was carried out by Sayıl and Kindap (2010). The scale consists of both a mother and father form, with two subscales: Parental Neglect (8 items) and Psychological Control (8 items), totaling 16 items. Responses for each item are rated on a four-point Likert scale ranging from "Does not apply at all (1)" to "Applies very much (4)." A minimum of 8 and a maximum of 32 points can be obtained from the scale's subdimensions, and high scores indicate a high level of psychological control perceived from the father or mother in relation to that subdimension. The Cronbach's alpha values of the original scale's Father Form were found to be .83 for the Parental Neglect subdimension and .90 for the Psychological Control subdimension. The Cronbach's alpha values for the Turkish adaptation of the Father Form were found to be .89 for the Parental Neglect subscale and .79 for the Psychological Control subscale. For this study, the Cronbach's alpha values were found to be .93 for the Parental Neglect subscale and .82 for the Psychological Control subscale.

Father's Presence Scale (FPS): FPS was developed by Krampe and Newton (2006) to assess individuals' relationships with their biological fathers and the psychological presence of the father during childhood. The validity and reliability study of the scale in Turkish was conducted by Çelik and Bulut (2019). The scale consists of eight subscales and a total of 94 questions: Feelings Toward the Father, Mother's Support in the Relationship with the Father, Perception of Father's Involvement, Physical Relationship/Contact with the Father, Parent-Child Relationship, Views on the Father's Influence, Mother's Relationship with Her Father, and Father's Relationship with His Own Father. The Turkish validity and reliability study of the scale indicates that the selected subdimensions can be used separately if desired. Therefore, in this study, the sub-dimensions Feelings Towards the Father (13 items), Perception of Father Involvement (14 items), and Physical Relationship/Contact with the Father (9 items) will be used. The scale is a five-point Likert-type measurement tool, with responses ranging from "Never" (1) to "Always" (5) for each question. The scale allows for separate scores to be calculated for each sub-dimension as well as a total score. As the score obtained from the scale increases, it is interpreted

as indicating a high level of father-child interaction and the father's emotional presence in the developmental process. In the Turkish validity and reliability study of the scale, Cronbach's alpha values were found to range from .82 to .96. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha values of the subscales used in the study were found to be .95 for the Feelings Toward Father subscale, .94 for the Perception of Father's Involvement subscale, and .93 for the Physical Contact with Father subscale.

Close Relationships Life Inventory-II (CRLI-II): CRLI-II was developed by Fraley, Waller, and Brennan (2000) to determine attachment styles in close relationships among adults. The validity and reliability study of the scale in Turkish was conducted by Selçuk, Günaydın, Sümer, and Uysal (2005). The scale consists of two subscales, Anxious and Avoidant Attachment, and a total of 36 items. Eighteen of the scale questions assess the anxious attachment style, while the other 18 questions assess the avoidant attachment style. Participants respond to each question using a seven-point Likert-type measurement tool ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (7). The scores obtained from the scale are calculated separately for anxious attachment and avoidant attachment styles. As the scores from the subscales increase, it can be said that participants exhibit attachment styles and behavioral characteristics related to that subscale. The Cronbach's Alpha values for the Anxiety and Avoidance subscales of the scale were found to be .86 and .90, respectively. For this study, the Cronbach's Alpha values were found to be .60 for the Anxiety subscale and .65 for the Avoidance subscale.

Data Collection

After obtaining ethical committee approval, the data collection forms to be used in the study were transferred to an online environment, and online questionnaires (via email, WhatsApp, etc.) were sent to participants who met the inclusion criteria. Before participants began answering the questionnaire, they were provided with information about the study, their consent was obtained, and they then began filling out the questionnaire. The necessary adjustments have been made to the online form settings to prevent the same participant from submitting multiple responses. Study data were collected from 146 participants between May 15 and December 15, 2023. The average time required for participants to complete the questionnaire was estimated to be 20 minutes.

Statistical Analysis

After collecting the data, the online data was transferred to the SPSS 23.0 software package. In the analysis of descriptive data, the mean, standard deviation, number, and percentage were used, while in the analysis of scale scores, the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values were used. To determine whether the data showed a normal distribution, skewness and kurtosis values were examined, and it was determined that these values were between -2 and +2 and showed a normal distribution. Pearson's correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between the measurement tools.

RESULTS

The descriptive characteristics of the participants in the study sample are presented in **Table 1**. When the descriptive

Table 1. Descriptive characteristics of participants

Descriptive characteristics	n	%
Age (mean±SD) 22.42±2.42	18-21	53 36.3
	22-25	76 52.1
	26-29	15 11.6
Marital status	Single	105 71.9
	Married	41 28.1
Educational status	High school and below	8 5.5
	University and above	138 94.5
Family type	Core family	108 74.0
	Extended family	29 19.9
	Broken family	9 6.2
Active working status	Yes	37 25.3
	No	109 74.7
Economic status	Less than expenses	45 30.8
	Equal to expenses	77 52.7
	More than expenses	24 16.4
Mother's educational level	Elementary school or below	104 71.2
	High school	27 18.5
	University and above	15 10.3
Father's educational level	Elementary school or below	76 52.1
	High school	40 27.4
	University and above	30 20.5
Current romantic relationship status	Yes	60 41.1
	No	86 58.9
Previous romantic relationship experience	Yes	94 64.4
	No	52 35.6
Experienced violence or abuse in your romantic relationship	Yes	26 17.2
	No	120 82.8
If you have been exposed to bullying, what type of bullying have you been exposed to? (n=26)*	Physical	2 7.6
	Emotional	22 84.6
	Economic	2 7.7
Engaged in violent or abusive behavior in your romantic relationship	Yes	14 9.6
	No	132 90.4
If you have, what type of bullying behavior did you engage in? (n=14)*	Physical	3 21.4
	Emotional	10 71.5
	Economic	1 7.1
Perception of relationship with father	He showed interest and affection, and I could talk to my father about anything.	51 34.9
	He was strict, cold, and authoritarian and did not show his feelings much, nor did he take much interest in us.	76 52.1
	He was overly protective and caring.	11 7.5
	He allowed everything and did not control my behavior.	8 5.5
	They were warm and caring towards each other and showed their love.	82 56.2
Parent-to-parent relationship	There were constant conflicts and disagreements at home.	21 14.4
	My father physically, emotionally, and psychologically abused my mother, and my mother did the same to my father.	14 9.5
	They did not show violence towards each other, but they did not show their love either.	29 19.9
Total	146	100

* The line percentage has been taken. SD: Standard deviation

characteristics of the participants were examined, the mean age was found to be 22.42±2.42, and the vast majority of participants were single (71.9%) and had a nuclear family (74.0%). When the educational status of the participants was evaluated, it was found that almost all of them (94.5%) had a university degree or higher, the vast majority (74.7%) did not have a regular income-generating job, and more than half (52.7%) had an economic status where their income was equal to their expenses. When the educational levels of the participants' parents were evaluated, it was found that the vast majority of mothers (71.2%) had an elementary school education or below, while more than half of the fathers (52.1%) had an elementary school education or below. More than half of the participants (58.9%) did not currently have a romantic relationship, while most participants (64.4%) reported having had a romantic relationship in the past. The vast majority of participants (82.8%) stated that they had not encountered violence or abuse in their romantic relationships, while the vast majority of participants who stated that they had encountered violence or abuse (84.6%) stated that they had encountered emotional violence/abuse. The vast majority of participants (90.4%) stated that they did not engage in violent or abusive behavior toward their partners in their romantic relationships, while the vast majority of participants who did engage in violent or abusive behavior (71.4%) stated that they engaged in emotionally violent/abusive behavior. When participants' relationships with their fathers were evaluated, more than half of the participants (52.1%) described their fathers as "cold, distant, authoritarian, unable to show their emotions, and not very interested in them." When the participants' mother-father relationships were evaluated, more than half of the participants (56.2%) described their mother-father relationship as "warm, caring, and affectionate towards each other."

Table 2 shows the average scale scores of the participants. First, the average scores of the participants' Psychological Control Scale-Father Form subdimensions were evaluated, and the average score for the Parental Neglect subdimension was found to be 12.22±5.82, while the average score for the Psychological Control subdimension was 16.23±5.36. These mean scores indicate that participants' perceived levels of paternal psychological control for the Parental Neglect subscale are below the average value, while their perceived levels of paternal psychological control for the Psychological Control subscale are at the average value. Second, participants' parent-child relationships were assessed using the Perceived Parenting Relationships Scale-Father Form. When the fathers' attitude scores toward mothers were evaluated, the average score for the Authoritarian Attitude subscale was found to be 7.56±2.72, which is above the average value. The average score for the Indifferent Attitude subscale was found to be 16.37±7.23, which is close to the average value. The mean score for the Protective Attitude subscale was found to be 15.13±4.26, and it was observed that this score was above the average value. The mean score for the Democratic Attitude subscale was determined to be 33.41±9.65, and it was observed that this score was above the average value. Finally, the mean score for the Dependent Attitude subscale was evaluated and found to be 13.49±5.55, indicating that this score is above the average value that can be obtained from the scale. When the subscale mean scores of the Father's Presence Scale were

evaluated, the subscale mean score for Feelings Toward Father was found to be 45.93±13.31, while the subscale mean score for Perceived Father Involvement was found to be 45.36±13.51. It was determined that the mean scores of these two subscales were above the average score and close to the upper limit value that could be obtained. The subscale mean score for Physical Contact with Father was determined to be 27.07±9.52, and it was observed that this mean score was above the average value. When the subscale mean scores of the Participants' Close Relationships Inventory were evaluated, the mean score for the Avoidant Attachment subscale was found to be 74.26±9.08, while the mean score for the Anxious Attachment subscale was found to be 72.51±10.50. It was determined that these mean scores were above the average value that could be obtained from the scale.

Table 2. Father psychological control, perceived parent relationship, father's presence, and close relationships scales scale total and subscale mean scores

Measuring instruments	Sub-scales	Mean±SD	Obtained min-max values
PCS-father form	Parental neglect	12.22±5.82	8-32
	Psychological control	16.23±5.36	8-32
PPRS-father form	Authoritarian attitude	7.56±2.72	3-12
	Indifferent attitude	16.37±7.23	9-36
	Protective attitude	15.13±4.26	6-24
	Democratic attitude	33.41±9.65	12-48
FPS	Dependent attitude	13.49±5.55	7-24
	Feelings toward the father	45.93±13.31	13-65
	Perception of father involvement	45.36±13.51	14-70
CRLI	Physical contact with the father	27.07±9.52	9-45
	Avoidant attachment	74.26±9.08	46-94
	Anxious attachment	72.51±10.50	30-103

SD: Standard deviation, Min: Minimum, Max: Maximum, PCS: Psychological Control Scale, PPRS: Perceived Parenting Relationship Scale, FPS: Father's Presence Scale, CRLI: Close Relationships Life Inventory

Table 3 shows the relationship between measurement tools. A positive relationship was found between the PCS-FF subdimensions of parental neglect and the father's authoritarian attitude (r=0.33) and indifferent attitude (r=0.48) toward the mother, while a negative relationship was found between protective attitude (r=-0.33) and democratic attitude (r=-0.45). Negative correlations were found between parental neglect and feelings toward the father (r=-0.71), perceived father involvement (r=-0.66), and physical contact with the father (r=-0.51). no significant relationship was found between parental neglect and the avoidant and anxious attachment subdimensions of the CRLI in men during adulthood. Among the PCS-FF subscales, a positive relationship was found between psychological control and the father's authoritarian attitude (r=0.45) and indifferent attitude (r=0.44) toward the mother, while a negative relationship was found between protective attitude (r=-0.29), democratic attitude (r=-0.35), and dependent attitude (r=-0.19) of the father toward the mother. A negative relationship was found between psychological control and feelings toward the father (r=-0.58), perceived father involvement (r=-0.48), and physical contact with the father (r=-0.35). No significant

Table 3. Correlation analysis to determine the relationship between scale and subscale mean scores

Scales and Sub-scales	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
	1-Parental neglect	1.00										
PCS-FF PPRS-FF	2-Psychological control	0.75**	1.00									
	3-Authoritarian attitude	0.33**	0.45**	1.00								
	4-Indifferent attitude	0.48**	0.44**	0.44**	1.00							
	5-Protective attitude	-0.33**	-0.29**	-0.16	-0.38**	1.00						
	6-Democratic attitude	-0.45**	-0.35**	-0.32**	-0.45**	0.72**	1.00					
	7-Dependent attitude	-0.15	-.19*	-0.08	-0.05	0.37**	0.38**	1.00				
	8-Feelings towards the father	-0.71**	-0.58**	-0.40**	-0.63**	0.48**	0.57**	0.15	1.00			
FPS	9-Perception of father involvement	-0.66**	-0.48**	-0.27**	-0.58**	0.41**	0.51**	0.19*	0.85**	1.00		
	10-Physical contact with father	-0.51**	-0.35**	-0.21*	-0.46**	0.28**	0.40**	0.16	0.66**	0.77**	1.00	
CRLI	11-Avoidant attachment	-0.14	-0.16	-0.11	-0.16	-0.01	0.03	-0.11	0.09	0.04	0.01	1.00
	12-Anxious attachment	0.15	0.14	0.07	0.01	0.03	0.07	0.05	-0.12	-0.08	-0.09	-0.33**

**p<0.01, *p<0.05 PCS: Psychological Control Scale, FF: Father form, PPRS: Perceived Parenting Relationship Scale, FPS: Father's Presence Scale, CRLI: Close Relationships Life Inventory

relationship was found between psychological control and the avoidant and anxious attachment subdimensions of the CRLI in adult men.

A negative relationship was found between the PPRS-FF subdimension authoritarian attitude and the FPS subdimensions feelings toward father ($r=-0.40$), perception of father's involvement ($r=-0.27$), and physical contact with father ($r=-0.21$), while no significant relationship was found between the CRLI subdimensions. There was a negative relationship between the PPRS-FF subdimension of indifferent attitude and the FPS subdimensions of feelings toward father ($r=-0.63$), perception of father's involvement ($r=-0.58$), and physical contact with father ($r=-0.46$), while no significant relationship was found between the CRLI subdimensions. There was a positive relationship between the protective attitude subdimension of PPRS-FF and the feelings toward father subdimension ($r=0.48$), perception of father involvement ($r=0.41$), and physical contact with father ($r=0.28$) subdimensions of FPS, but no significant relationship was found between the CRLI subdimensions. There was a positive relationship between the PPRS-FF subdimension democratic attitude and the FPS subdimensions feelings toward father ($r=0.57$), perception of father's participation ($r=0.51$), and physical contact with father ($r=0.40$), but no significant relationship was found between the CRLI subdimensions. A positive and significant relationship was found between the PPRS-FF subdimension dependent attitude and only the FPS subdimension perceived father involvement ($r=0.19$), while no significant relationship was found between the CRLI subdimensions. No significant relationship was found between the FPS subdimensions and the CRLI subdimensions.

DISCUSSION

Emerging adulthood is a developmental period that spans the ages of 18 to 29, during which individuals strive to maintain interpersonal relationships, such as making new friends and pursuing romantic relationships, while also managing their ongoing relationships with their families and striving for independence (Arnett, 2000; Nelson et al., 2011). During this developmental period, individuals may face numerous developmental crises, and if these crises are not effectively managed, they can lead to various psychosocial issues. To prevent psychosocial problems that individuals

may experience during this period, to enable them to assert their autonomy and individuality, and to establish healthy interpersonal and romantic relationships, secure attachment, functional family patterns, and parental attitudes are of great importance.

In this study, the relationship between paternal psychological control and perceived parental relationships was first evaluated. A positive relationship was found between the PCS-FF Parental Neglect and Psychological Control subscale and the father's authoritarian and indifferent attitude toward the mother, while a negative relationship was found between the protective and democratic attitudes. The father's attitude toward the mother is considered to be an important indicator of his attitude toward the child. Spouses who are authoritarian and indifferent toward their partners may also exhibit similar attitudes toward their children, and in such cases, it is thought that fathers may apply higher levels of psychological control toward their children. Sayil and Kindap (2010) concluded in their research findings that perceived psychological control and parental neglect are negatively related to democratic parenting style and positively related to authoritarian parenting style. McKinney, Milone, and Renk (2011) found that psychological control practices applied by parents lead to certain negative psychosocial effects on adult men and cause difficulties in adapting to the developmental stage they are in. In addition, authoritarian parents' behaviors involving excessive psychological control led to low self-esteem and dissatisfaction in the parent-child relationship, while indifferent parents' attitudes lead to negative emotional and social development in children (Baumrind, 1991).

Secondly, a negative relationship was determined between the PCS-FF subdimensions of Parental Neglect and Psychological Control and the FPS subdimensions of Feelings Towards Father, Perception of Father's Involvement, and Physical Contact with Father. High levels of psychological control by fathers prevent children from establishing trusting relationships with their fathers, resulting in their psychosocial needs not being met. In Turkish culture, fathers may exercise excessive psychological control in order to discipline their children and protect them from possible developmental risks. This causes the child to see the father as an object of fear and thus creates an obstacle to secure attachment. Secure

attachments with fathers, as well as secure attachments with mothers, have important effects on individuals' psychosocial well-being, in addition to influencing the close relationships they will establish with others in their current age and adult life. In their study, Brown, McBride, Shin, and Bost (2007) stated that the father's attitudes and behaviors are important for children's secure attachment patterns and that as the quality of interaction with the father increases, children form secure bonds. Similar to our study, it has been reported that children who fail to establish secure bonds with their fathers in early childhood and are emotionally and psychologically neglected by their fathers experience feelings of worthlessness and abandonment and behavioral problems more frequently, and that their satisfaction with their relationships with their fathers is low (Rees, 2008). Similarly, Salma and Rachma (2023) reported in their research findings that children raised in neglectful environments struggle with emotional regulation and experience increased levels of distressing emotions such as anxiety, anger, and sadness.

Another finding obtained in this study was that no significant relationship was found between the PCS-FF and FPS subdimensions and the Avoidant and Anxious Attachment subdimensions of the CRLI. Although relationships established with the father in early childhood may influence relationships with others, relationship satisfaction, and the individual's self-development, it is thought that the lack of a direct relationship with attachment in close relationships stems from the fact that the primary attachment figure is the mother. The relationship established with the mother serves as a foundation for relationships with others. At the same time, it is thought that the sociocultural characteristics of Turkish society may have an effect on this situation. In Turkish society, a patriarchal family structure is more commonly adopted, and men are emphasized to possess "strong" and "tough" characteristics. This situation is thought to stem from men being less able to express their emotions, fathers being unable to show their emotions in close relationships, and this parenting style being adopted by both the culture and the child. Contrary to the findings of our study, the literature shows that secure attachments formed with fathers contribute to secure attachments in individuals' romantic relationships, high self-esteem, and improved romantic relationship quality. In contrast, it has been found that individuals who form avoidant or anxious attachments with their fathers have lower romantic relationship quality and levels of satisfaction from the relationship (Jaroudi, 2005; Martínez-Álvarez et al., 2014). Beyarslan and Uzer (2022) concluded in their study that perceived childhood experiences of parental psychological control and negative parental attitudes affect adolescents' attachment styles in romantic relationships and may even be a risk factor for emotional abuse in romantic relationships. Tartakovsky (2024), on the other hand, noted that emerging adults who experienced positive parenting (providing care and autonomy) formed more secure attachments in their romantic relationships and had positive attitudes toward romantic relationships.

Another finding obtained in this study is that as the father's authoritarian and indifferent attitudes toward the mother increase, the mean scores of the FPS subdimensions Feelings Toward Father, Perception of Father's Involvement, and Physical Contact with Father decrease. This situation is

thought to stem from fathers who exhibit authoritarian and indifferent attitudes toward their spouses also exhibiting similar attitudes toward their children, failing to contribute to the psychosocial and physical care process required by their children during their developmental process, and being unable to form secure bonds. Gaertner et al. (2007) stated that fathers' authoritarian attitudes negatively affect their relationships with their children, especially in care and play activities, reduce the quality of the father-child relationship, and may lead to less physical contact and emotional bonding between father and child. Authoritarian, aggressive, and neglectful attitudes among parents not only contribute to the development of attachment patterns toward parents in children but also cause internalizing problems such as anxiety and depression and externalizing problems such as aggression and rule-breaking in children (Pinquart, 2017; Tavassolie et al., 2016). This study indicates that there is a positive relationship between fathers' protective and democratic attitudes toward their wives and their children's feelings toward their fathers, perceptions of their fathers' involvement, and physical contact with their fathers. Fathers who possess these attitudes will be sensitive to their children's physical and psychosocial needs and will contribute to their children's upbringing in a positive family environment, leading to strong father-child relationships and bonds. In a study conducted by Cabrera, Shannon, and Tamis-LeMonda (2007), fathers who maintain supportive relationships with their spouses are sensitive to their children's needs and have children with high emotional intelligence. They emphasize that the father's presence from an early age is crucial for the development of emotional skills and intelligence. Lee (2007) states that fathers' protective behavior toward their wives improves the quality of marriage, that fathers are more involved with their children, and that fathers are more sensitive to their children's needs during their developmental process. It is stated that in families with a democratic family climate, tolerance and respect for individuals' independence and differences are encouraged, and children raised in democratic families have better communication skills and higher self-confidence (Velasco-Rauda and Castillo-Martínez, 2024).

The final finding of the study was that there was no significant relationship between the PPRS-FF subdimensions and the CRLI subdimensions. This situation is thought to stem from mothers playing a more dominant role as the primary attachment figure and the attachment relationship established with the mother forming the basis for relationships with others. Research findings supporting the study's findings are available in the literature, indicating that various factors influence the formation of attachment styles in romantic relationships, including gender, the quality of the relationship with the mother (Carr et al., 2019; Fan, 2024), general family dynamics (Fan, 2024; Pinquart, 2017), and children's own experiences and relationships (Suh and Fabricius, 2020). However, research findings also indicate that fathers' relationships with their spouses not only affect children's perceptions of and relationships with their fathers but also influence children's attitudes toward romantic relationships (Haodong, 2024; Xu, 2023). It is stated that children internalize these dynamics by observing their fathers' interactions with their mothers and exhibit similar behavioral patterns in their future relationships (Xu, 2023).

Limitations

This study has some limitations. First, the study used a convenience sampling method, so the results cannot be generalized to all men aged 18-29. Another limitation of the study is the low number of participants. Although various strategies were identified to increase the number of participants, the sample size could not be increased. Another limitation is that the measurement tools used in the study are based on self-report and the risk of bias. Another limitation of this study is that although the Cronbach's alpha reliability values of the CRLI-II scale subscale mean scores are within acceptable ranges, they were low in this study. The final limitation of the study is that it is a correlational study, and the results obtained are limited to the responses provided by the participants in the questionnaires.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between adult men's attachment styles to their fathers, their perceptions of parental relationships, paternal psychological control, and attachment styles in romantic relationships. A positive relationship was found between paternal psychological control and the father's authoritarian and indifferent attitude toward the mother, and a negative relationship was found between paternal psychological control and the father's democratic and protective attitude. Additionally, it was determined that as paternal psychological control increased, secure attachment patterns toward the father decreased. Furthermore, it was found that the father's democratic, and protective attitudes toward the mother positively supported the children's positive feelings and perceptions toward their fathers. Based on these findings, it is recommended that supportive interventions be designed to strengthen father-child relationships such as family counseling and father support programs. Furthermore, studies that consider the cultural context and mothers' attitudes toward fathers together will provide important contributions. Finally, it is recommended that the relationships of emerging adult men with their fathers, as well as the effects of their experiences in these relationships on their romantic relationships and psychosocial well-being, be examined in depth quantitative studies with large and diverse socio-demographic samples and using qualitative research methods.

ETHICAL DECLARATIONS

Ethics Committee Approval

The study was conducted with the approval of the Aksaray University Human Researches Ethics Committee (Date: 25.04.2023, Decision No: 2023/03-57).

Informed Consent

Written informed consent was obtained from all individual participants prior to their inclusion in the study. Participants were fully informed about the study's aims, procedures, potential risks and benefits, and their rights-including the right to withdraw at any time without consequence. All participants voluntarily signed a written informed consent form.

Peer Review Process

This manuscript was subject to external peer review.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest related to this study.

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Author Contributions

Concept: Y.K., N.Ö.; Design: Y.K., N.Ö.; Control: Y.K., N.Ö.; Data collection and/or processing: Y.K., N.Ö.; Analysis and/or interpretation: Y.K.; Literature review: Y.K., N.Ö.; Article writing: Y.K., N.Ö.; Critical review: Y.K., N.Ö.

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