The Relationship between Fathers’ Attachment Style, Parenting Style, Feelings of Parenting Competency and Psychological Wellbeing

Emma M. Hevers
B. Psych (Hons)

Master in Clinical Psychology
School of Psychology
University of Newcastle
December, 2015
Statement of Originality

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying subject to the provision of the Copyright Act 1968.

Signed: Date: 17th December 2015
Statement of Authorship

I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis contains a manuscript submitted for publication, of which I am a joint author. Below is a written statement, endorsed by my supervisor, attesting to my contribution to the joint publication.

Signed: Date: 17th December 2015

Signed: Date: 17th December 2015

Supervisor:
Dr Tanya Hanstock
Acknowledgements

Firstly I would like to thank my supervisor Dr Tanya Hanstock. Without your continued encouragement, support and feedback I would not have been able to complete this research as efficiently or confidently. When I first came to you I was uneasy about the task ahead. You reassured me, continued to challenge me and raised my confidence at every step. Thank you.

To Megan Valentine, who I would have been lost without. I have learnt so much from you this year and despite my tears; you continued to guide and support me so patiently and together we were able to create something I am very proud of.

To all of the wonderful fathers who participated in the study. I was so humbled by the number of responses and feedback that came from the recruitment phase. It only reinforced to me the importance of the study, motivating me to produce something with meaning as a way to say thank you in return.

To my parents who have always supported me and believed I could do anything I put my mind to. To my friends, you know who you are. You have been a continued source of strength for me this past year. You have walked with me step-by-step, made me laugh, listened to me when times were tough, and above all never lost faith in my ability.

And lastly to my husband James. You have been my rock. We have both made many sacrifices this year, but throughout it all we have stood strong and you have provided me with an abundance of understanding and support. I wouldn’t have wanted to do any of it without you by my side. Thank you.
# Table of Contents

Statement of Originality .................................................................................................................. 2  
Statement of Authorship .................................................................................................................. 3  
Acknowledgements .......................................................................................................................... 4  
List of Tables and Figures ............................................................................................................... 6  
Abstract .......................................................................................................................................... 8  
Literature Review ............................................................................................................................. 9  
  Attachment During Childhood ......................................................................................................... 9  
  Attachment During Adulthood ...................................................................................................... 12  
  Assessment of Attachment in Adulthood ..................................................................................... 14  
Parenting Styles ............................................................................................................................... 17  
  Attachment and Parenting ............................................................................................................. 20  
  Australian Household Structures .................................................................................................. 21  
  Fathers’ Role in Parenting ............................................................................................................ 23  
  The Relationship between Parenting and Parental Competence ............................................... 25  
  Psychological Wellbeing and Parenting ....................................................................................... 27  
  Aims and Hypotheses .................................................................................................................... 29  
Manuscript ....................................................................................................................................... 30  
Abstract .......................................................................................................................................... 31  
  1. Introduction ............................................................................................................................... 32  
  2. Method ..................................................................................................................................... 42  
    2.1. Participants .......................................................................................................................... 42  
    2.2. Measures ............................................................................................................................ 43  
    2.3 Procedure ............................................................................................................................ 46  
    2.4 Data and Analyses ............................................................................................................... 46  
3. Results .......................................................................................................................................... 47  
4. Discussion ..................................................................................................................................... 53  
  Limitations ................................................................................................................................... 57  
  Future Research ............................................................................................................................ 58  
  Clinical Implications ..................................................................................................................... 59  
  Conclusion ..................................................................................................................................... 61  
References ......................................................................................................................................... 62  
Appendices ....................................................................................................................................... 74
List of Tables

Table 1: Demographic information for the 258 participating fathers ......................... 48
Table 2: Proportion of fathers in each DASS21 category ............................................. 49
Table 3: Median, range and reliability of the subscales ................................................... 49
Table 4: Correlations between attachment style, parenting style and sense of competency subscale ........................................................................................................ 50
Table 5: Linear regression model for anxious attachment and avoidant attachment as predictors for authoritative parenting ......................................................... 50
Table 6: Linear regression model for anxious attachment and avoidant attachment as predictors for father’s feelings of self-efficacy as a parent ..................................... 51
Table 7: Linear regression model for anxious attachment and avoidant attachment as predictors for a father’s feelings of satisfaction as a parent ................................ 51
Table 8: Linear regression model for anxious attachment, avoidant attachment and authoritative parenting style as predictors for a father’s feeling of self-efficacy as a parent ............................................................................................................................... 52
Table 9: Linear regression model for anxious attachment, avoidant attachment and authoritative parenting style as predictors for a father’s feeling of satisfaction as a parent ............................................................................................................................... 52

List of Figures

Figure 1: Models of attachment in adulthood ................................................................. 15
Figure 2: Parenting styles and associated level of responsiveness and demandingness ................................................................................................................................. 19
Reference styles used in this thesis

This thesis is written with the intention to submit the manuscript contained within for publication in the Journal of Personality and Individual Differences. As such the thesis is written according to the journal’s preferred style: APA 6th ed. This reference style applies to the entire document. Submission guidelines for the relevant journal are included in Appendix A.
Abstract

Adult attachment is the long-term bonds between two people satisfying each other’s needs for intimacy, trust and security. The attachment style of a parent is believed to influence the attachment style they have with their own children. Attachment has been mostly studied between mothers and children. Recent literature indicates that both maternal and paternal parenting are important in relation to positive child development. The current study investigated whether there was a relationship between fathers’ adult attachment style (attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance) and authoritative parenting style. We also examined whether fathers’ sense of competency (parental self-efficacy and satisfaction) was predicted by their parenting and attachment style. Participants included 212 fathers (aged 21-70 years, $M = 38$, $SD = 7.47$) with biological children (aged 2-12 years, $M = 4.60$, $SD = 3.22$). Participants completed an online survey involving demographic questions and questionnaires on adult attachment style, parenting style, sense of competency and psychological wellbeing. Fathers who reported being securely attached displayed an authoritative parenting style with their children. Furthermore, fathers who displayed higher levels of secure attachment and authoritative parenting styles were more likely to feel increased competency in their role as a parent. These results highlight the importance of secure attachment in fathers and their parenting style, feelings of parenting competency and psychological wellbeing. It also highlights the importance of assessing fathers’ attachment style when working with them around their parenting practices. Self-report questionnaires and social desirability by participants are important limitations to consider when interpreting the results.
Literature Review

Adult attachment is the long-term bonds between two people satisfying each other’s needs for intimacy, trust and security (Bowlby, 1979). Romantic relationships are an attachment process, seen as translating childhood attachment style to an observable adult attachment style. The attachment style of a parent influences the attachment style they have with their own children. There is growing literature to support the link between self-reported attachment styles and parenting practices (Fonagay, Steele & Steele, 1991). Children who develop strong paternal attachment alongside maternal attachment are most likely to develop a secure attachment style throughout their lifespan (Hawkins & Biller, 1993). Fathers in the caregiving role who develop strong and positive relationships with their children are more likely to demonstrate a secure adult attachment style, higher resilience levels enabling more functional responses in stressful situations, increased levels of confidence in both parenting and employment and healthy social relationships (Burgess, 2009). The aim of the current study was to examine father’s attachment style, parenting style, parental sense of competency, and psychological wellbeing.

Attachment During Childhood

Bowlby (1980) developed attachment theory, a comprehensive theoretical framework, to understand the close social and emotional bond that develops between a child and their primary caregiver. More often, the caregiver of a child is their parent. The role of the caregiver aligns to meet the needs of their child as they develop. The quality of attachment is based on the interaction between the caregiver and child. Bowlby hypothesised that stronger child-caregiver attachment led to increased feelings of security, improving developmental outcomes in the child. This includes increased self-confidence and resilience (Sroufe et al., 2005), greater ability to manage stress, ability to cope with shame and the development of empathy (Schore,
Conversely, children who failed to experience strong feelings of security were
more likely to be fearful, impacting negatively on their development. The availability
and responsiveness of the caregiver to the child’s emotional needs are crucial in the
organisation and regulation of early emotional experiences for the child (Bowlby,
1969).

Bowlby (1969) believed that children were born with an innate need to
develop an attachment to a primary caregiver. He reported that this attachment led to
the development of an internal working model (IWM) of relationships. The main
features in relation to this included viewing the self as valued, and viewing others as
trustworthy. A child’s experience with their caregiver subsequently forms a
foundation in which they view themselves, others and the world (Bowlby, 1980).
Despite not being as strong, IMW’s can also be developed from other relationships
such as grandparents, siblings, and other influential relationships. IWM’s guide social
behaviour and personality into adulthood, influencing thoughts, feelings and
behaviour (Pietromuco & Barrett, 2000). For example, a child who experiences
reflective, available and supportive caregiving from their attachment figure will build
a model of self as loveable and valued. They further construct a model of others as
kind and trustworthy. All of which develops into a secure attachment, allowing them
to view the world as a safe place. In contrast, a child that is not supported and
experiences rejection from their caregiver develops a model of self as unworthy and
unlovable. Such children often view others as unresponsive and discard
(Pietromuco & Barrett, 2000). This often leads to an insecure attachment and
continued instability in relationships. The caregiver-child relationship becomes the
model for future adolescent and adult relationships.

Ainsworth (1982) extended Bowlby’s work on attachment with her view that
individual differences in attachment existed. Ainsworth developed an assessment
A technique called ‘the Strange Situation’, which investigated how attachment differs amongst children. Ainsworth’s experiment utilised observational methods to determine the attachment behaviour of children. For 20 minutes a child was exposed to both the caregiver and a stranger leaving and entering the room. Based on the responses of the child (e.g., level of distress when caregiver leaves; weariness around stranger; ability to explore and play and reaction upon return of caregiver) they were categorised into secure, insecure avoidant and insecure ambivalent attachment styles (Ainsworth, 1969). Research showed that 70% of children displayed a secure attachment style (e.g., utilisation of caregiver as a secure base, happy exploring during caregivers presence, upset on their departure, happy upon their return), 15% displayed an insecure ambivalent attachment (e.g., demonstrated difficulty exploring when stranger is present - even when caregiver is in the room, distressed by caregiver leaving and is ambivalent when caregiver returns), and 15% displayed an insecure avoidant attachment (e.g., shows little response to caregiver when present or when leaves; does not explore much, shows little emotion overall). Main and Solmon (1986) added a fourth attachment style, disorganised attachment (e.g., child views the caregiver as source of safety and fear). The Strange Situation and most of Ainsworth’s research was conducted on mothers as the primary caregiver and attachment figure.

Findings suggest that each attachment style influences the way a child will interpret a situation (Belsky, Spritz, & Crnic, 1996; Suess, Grossman, & Sroufe, 1992). Children who display a secure attachment style, viewing models of self and others as positive, are more likely to demonstrate better social skills, have higher self-esteem and subsequently form stronger friendships than those children who display an insecure attachment style (Cassidy et al., 1996). This enables children with a secure attachment to manage and react to situations with more consistency and rationality,
and thus often obtaining better outcomes. Evidence has shown that childhood mental health disorders are associated with insecure attachment styles. These struggles are more likely to continue into adulthood (Milward et al., 2006; Fonagy et al., 1996) and attachment style classifications are more likely to remain stable over time (Main & Cassidy, 1988; Waters et al., 2000). Fraley (2002) conducted a meta-analysis and found that attachment security for the first 19 years of an individual’s life remains moderately stable over the person’s lifetime.

**Attachment During Adulthood**

Attachment during adulthood is defined as the long-term bond between two people satisfying each other’s needs for intimacy, trust and security (Bowlby, 1979). The theory of adult attachment within romantic relationships was founded by Hazan and Shaver (1987). They hypothesised that romantic relationships are an attachment process, seen as translating childhood attachment style to an observable adult attachment style. In fact the adult relationship mirrors the caregiver-child relationship (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Despite IWM’s of relationships being developed throughout childhood, these foundations create a template for later adult romantic relationships. IWM’s continue to be formed within adult relationships based on how available and responsive their respective partner is in times of need. Such beliefs and expectations stem from previous experiences of attachment, often formed in childhood (Fraley & Shaver, 2000).

Hazan and Shaver (1987) completed a majority of their research on couples and the attachment displayed between them. It was found that attachment played a large role in reactions to stressors and other stimuli. In romantic relationships, adults still sought out a secure base to satisfy their needs of safety and security. Adults who demonstrated weaker attachment were more likely to show lower feelings of self-efficacy and satisfaction within the relationship (Rholes et al., 2006). Those who
displayed too strong an attachment were more likely to be co-dependent on their partner demonstrating difficulties with boundaries and emotional regulation. The relationships that were found to function well were those where reciprocal trust and safety had occurred, alongside a balance between independence and intimacy. This work paralleled that of childhood attachment, whereby child-caregiver relationships functioned best when there was a secure base balanced out by a feeling of confidence to explore the world.

Activation of the Attachment System

As in children, the attachment system in adulthood becomes activated when a situation is perceived as threatening (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). The adult’s attachment system can have an impact on the caregiver-child relationship. This can be positive or negative depending on the ability of the parent to attend to their caregiving responsibilities. When the adult attachment style of a caregiver is secure, the needs of the child are often met with responsiveness and understanding. However, for caregivers who do not have a secure attachment themselves, the activation of a child’s attachment system can trigger insecurity and fear. As such, both adult and child are left experiencing the need for protection. This can prohibit the parent’s caregiving system functioning effectively, reducing the responsiveness and overall care provided by the parent. Subsequently if a caregiver’s attachment system becomes activated, their attention may be on their own needs and less focus will be placed on the needs of the child. Maintaining an activated attachment system is often a difficult task for adults with an insecure attachment system, reducing the ability for the caregiver to be consistent in responding to the needs of their child (Rholes et al., 2006). Specific parental attachment system functioning may predict the type of parenting delivered. Increasing evidence supports attachment related differences in parental caregiving behaviour (Cohn et al., 1992; Edelstein et al., 2004; Rholes et al., 1995).
Assessment of Attachment in Adulthood

Interview methods and self-report measures of adult attachment have been used for differing purposes over a number of decades. Self-report measures explore an adult’s feelings and behaviors in relation to romantic or close relationships. Interview methods, such as the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI; Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985), have been used to explore an adults state of mind in relation to past childhood relationships/experiences with their own parents.

The Adult Attachment Interview (AAI; Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985) arose from the Strange Situation experiment developed by Ainsworth and colleagues (1978) and has shown to be a good predictor of the experiment. The AAI is the current gold standard measure for assessing attachment in adulthood. Semi-structured interviews are used to investigate child-caregiver relationships and the meaning adults make of their past experiences. Trained clinicians examine and score the resultant transcripts, categorising adults into three different attachment styles (autonomous, preoccupied and dismissing) in line with Ainsworth’s (1978) prior research. The AAI is based on retrospective reports of adult’s experiences, which at times can be unreliable and requires access to an individual’s memory. However, it is important to note that training in the AAI involves interpreting both verbal and nonverbal information, inclusive of the reasoning why poor memory may be present in relation to past experience. One of the main limitations of the AAI is that it can be prohibitive in relation to the cost and time involved in clinical settings.

Self-report

Hazan and Shaver (1987) were the first researchers to develop a self-report questionnaire measuring attachment in adulthood. The questionnaire was designed to classify adults into three attachment styles (secure, avoidant and anxious/ambivalent).
In 1991, Bartholomew and Horowitz extended the work of Hazan and Shaver (1987) around the patterns of attachment in adult relationships. The interactions and experiences that influence a person’s IWM are influential in the type of attachment displayed within a romantic adult relationship (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Based on the two fundamental dimensions of IWM’s (i.e., model of self and model of others) secure, preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful attachment styles were categorised.

Secure individuals are characterised as sensitive, high in self-esteem, and experience more meaningful adult relationships (Feldman, 2005). They view both themselves and others in a positive way. Preoccupied individuals are characterised as having an inherent feeling of unworthiness and an avid desire to gain others’ approval. They view themselves as negative and others as positive. Adults demonstrating a dismissive pattern of attachment are often self-sufficient, displaying little need for emotional closeness or intimacy; they have a positive view of self and negative view of others. Lastly, adults with a fearful attachment pattern have a negative view of self and other, showing a desire for closeness with others but hold a strong fear of rejection and subsequently avoid depending on others (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007) (see Figure 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model of Self</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Secure</td>
<td>Preoccupied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Dismissing</td>
<td>Fearful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 1: Models of attachment in adulthood as defined by Bartholomew (1991)*
Recent research has found that attachment is best measured on a continuum ranging from attachment avoidance to attachment anxiety (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998). Attachment avoidance is defined as the fear of intimacy and dependency on others, an excessive need for autonomy, and difficulty trusting others. Attachment anxiety is the fear of interpersonal rejection or abandonment, an excessive need for approval and reassurance, and significant difficulty when others are impassive. Adults presenting with high levels of both attachment avoidance and attachment anxiety often display insecure attachment. Conversely, adults demonstrating secure attachment style display an absence of, or little attachment related avoidance and anxiety (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998; Lopez & Brennan, 2000; Mallinckrodt, 2000). Similar to the distributions found in childhood attachment, studies have found a majority of adults present with secure attachment (55%), avoidant adult attachment style was found in 25% of adults and a further 20% present with an anxious attachment style (Shaver & Hazan, 1993).

Hazen and Shaver (1987) found no significant difference in relation to the impact of gender on the style of attachment within an adult romantic relationship. Conversely, Del Giudice (2009) found significant differences, namely that males demonstrated higher levels of avoidant attachment. In addition males were more likely to be dismissing in their attachment style (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998).

Research has indicated that styles of attachment remain stable over time (Main & Cassidy, 1988; Waters, 1978; Waters, Crowell, Treboux, Merrick, & Albersheim, 1995). However, this does not mean that change cannot occur in either childhood or adulthood attachment style. When an attachment pattern change occurs in childhood (i.e., children who have experienced abuse by a caregiving being removed and placed with a secure caregiver) a corresponding change should be noted in the quality of the child-caregiver relationship (Bowlby, 1969/1982). New relationships in adulthood can
create strong emotional bonds; increase security and safety, allowing for increased reflection and reorganisation of past and present experiences (Bowlby, 1980). Attachment in adulthood provides additional purposes that are not found in child-caregiver attachment relationships. This includes companionship, sexual intimacy, a feeling of competency within the relationship, and a shared purpose and experience (Ainsworth, 1985; Weiss, 1974). In addition, research has shown that specific parental attachment system functioning may predict the type of parenting delivered (i.e., secure attachment is more likely to result in a consistent and fair parenting style as opposed to insecure attachment which is more likely to lead to an inconsistent and possibly rejecting parenting style). Increasing evidence supports attachment related differences in parental caregiving behaviour (Cohn et al., 1992; Edelstein et al., 2004; Rholes et al., 1995).

**Parenting Styles**

Parenting styles are parental behaviours and attitudes expressed towards their child (Williams et al., 2009). Baumrind (1966) outlined two key factors in separating and explaining parenting styles; the level of nurturing a child receives during an interaction with a caregiver, and the level of control a caregiver displays towards their child. Nurturance refers to the level of responsiveness, such as love and affection, shown towards a child. Nurturance can be separated into high and low responsiveness. High responsiveness refers to lots of love and affection displayed in a caregiver-child relationship. Low responsiveness on the extreme end is little to no love or affection shown. Parental control on the other hand is viewed as the level of supervision and limits and demands placed on the child by their primary caregiver (Macoby & Martin, 1983). This can be further divided into low demand and high demand. Low demand sees little parental involvement in the activities and interests of a child allowing increased self-regulation by the child, as opposed to high demand.
High demand sees the parent place disproportionate expectations on the child, with a desire to control the child’s attitude and behavior. Baumrind (1966) introduced her theoretical model of parenting behaviour, which focused on three different styles (authoritative, authoritarian and permissive). In addition, two subtypes of permissive parenting were distinguished, indulgent and neglectful parenting (Maccoby & Martin, 1983) (see Figure 2).

Authoritative parenting style is characterised by a good balance of parental nurturance and control. Caregivers are often highly responsive to children’s needs, supporting of autonomy and learning whilst setting fair boundaries to ensure safety. Authoritative parents respond in an emotionally responsive way, demonstrating availability and flexibility to the child’s needs promoting self-confidence. They listen to the child, encouraging them to have a voice whilst providing a structured environment with appropriate discipline when needed. Such parenting is deemed optimal with research indicating authoritative parenting results in better-adjusted children, and increased feelings of parental confidence in adults (Baumrind, 1991; Glasgow, et al., 1997; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Caregivers who display an authoritative parenting style are generally more able to manage situations in an effective and efficient way (Glasgow, et al., 1997).

Contrasting this, authoritarian parenting style is characterised by the caregiver setting unrealistically high standards and holding their children accountable with little flexibility (Baumrind, 1966). Such parenting enforces discipline using often punitive and forceful methods with little or no explanation. This style of parenting is characterised by low levels of warmth and high levels of control (Chambers et al., 2001). In comparison to authoritative parenting style, the use of authoritarian parenting is based on rules and discipline, with less affection and nurturance shown towards their child (Baumrind, 1971). Poorer child development outcomes have
resulted from authoritarian parenting, including lowered self-esteem, higher rates of depression and anxiety, social isolation and reduced coping strategies to manage stressful situations (Bogels & Van Melick, 2004; Oldehinkel et al., 2006; Wolfradt, Hempel, & Miles, 2003).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demandingness</th>
<th>Responsiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Authoritative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Permissive-indulgent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Permissive-indifferent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2:** Parenting styles and associated level of responsiveness and demandingness (Baumrind, 1991; Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

Finally, permissive parenting style is characterised by a highly relaxed parenting style, with little to no demands placed on the child. Such parenting allows children to make their own rules and regulate their own emotions regardless of their stage of development. No discipline or structure is in place for children to assist in their development and adjustment to social norms. Maccoby and Martin (1983) further went on to divide permissive parenting into two separate styles, permissive-indulgent and permissive-indifferent parenting. Permissive-indulgent parents are able to demonstrate responsiveness to their child. The child is encouraged to express their feelings, and parental nurturance can be high, although this is not always aligned with the child’s needs at the time. Rules are often not established, with little control exercised over the child’s behaviour. Permissive-indifferent parenting on the other
hand is also referred to as ‘Laissez-Faire Parenting’. This style is reflected by low levels of demandingness and low levels of responsiveness. A child may feel a level of rejection, with parent’s often being uninvolved in the child’s life. Caregivers who display a permissive or authoritarian parenting style experience higher levels of conflict with children. They also have less satisfying roles as a caregiver and children are often left with little support (Cheng & Furnham, 2000).

**Attachment and Parenting**

The development of a secure or insecure attachment style has been linked to the parenting style of the primary caregiver (Fonagay, Steele & Steele, 1991). Securely attached adults show greater warmth, support, responsiveness and engagement with their children (Rholes et al., 1995). Parents who present with insecure attachment styles are more likely to be emotionally and psychologically unavailable to their children (Bartholomew, 1990). Often insecure parents may put their own needs before their child’s, showing low responsivity in times of need (Turney & Tanner, 2001). Bartholomew (1990) hypothesised that insecure adult attachment styles are more likely to result in inconsistent, insensitive and possibly rejecting parenting styles. Jones, Cassidy and Shaver (2013) completed a review that explored previous research addressing the relationship between adult attachment styles and parenting styles. This review looked at approximately 50 studies and the results inferred that insecure adult attachment styles corresponded highly with adverse parenting styles and cognitions.

A strong association in the literature linking self-reported adult attachment style to the type of caregiving provided has been found (Mikulincer & Goodman, 2006). Strategies employed by insecure parents (i.e., higher anxious and avoidant attachment style) as a means for coping has been found to impact an adult’s functioning and caregiving capacity (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Parents identified
as being insecure in their romantic relationships demonstrate more maladaptive responses in the face of stress, hindering their ability to be present and available for others, including their children. Adults who have a higher level of avoidant attachment style are more likely to escape unpleasant situations, through both physical and psychological distancing, as a way to cope (Fraley & Shaver, 1997). This often leads to disrupted adult and parent-child relationships. Those adults who demonstrate higher anxious related attachment are less likely to manage difficult and stressful situations, often ruminating about their own distress. Thus heightening their own distress as opposed to developing effective coping strategies. Responses in their romantic relationship, or in the role of a caregiver, are often interfering and inappropriate and do not meet the needs of the other person or child (Reizer & Mikulincer, 2007). There is growing literature supporting the link between self-reported attachment styles and parenting practices. Insecure attachment styles may interfere with a parent’s ability as a caregiver to provide the required care to their child in a consistent, warm and responsive way (Mills-Koonce et al., 2011). Parenting style differences often occur as a result of differing IWM’s. The way parents make sense of the world has a direct impact on the way they experience parenthood and the relationship that develops with their child.

**Australian Household Structures**

In 2012-13, there were 8.9 million households in Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2015). Just less than three quarters (74%) were classified as family households, and around 50% of the population over the age of 15 was married. Of the 6.7 million families in Australia in 2012-13, 85% (5.7 million) were couple families, 14% (909,000) were one-parent families. One-parent families were predominately single mother families (16% of all families with children aged 0 to 17 years) with single father families making up 3% of all families with children aged 0 to
17 years. Over the last decade, between 11 and 14 couples in every 1000 marriages were granted a divorce every year (ABS, 2015).

There has been an overall increase for men in Australia in relation to time spent with their child across a variety of activities and caregiving roles (Craig, Mullen, & Blaxland, 2010). Research indicates that mother’s employment status is that of part time or unemployed during a child’s early years, whereas fathers continue to maintain full time employment (Baxter et al., 2007), impacting the time available to spend with their child. Baxter and Smart (2011) found that fathers of children who did not engage in employment or were part time employed demonstrated higher levels of involvement in the care of their children. As the amount of working hours increased, the level of involvement with their child decreased. In a recent survey 80% of father’s reported they were responsible for financially providing for their family. In addition, 80% further reported they were responsible for also caring for their child (Wells, Mitra & Flanagan, 2015).

In a study completed by Weston, Qu, and Baxter (2013) the majority of Australian parents sampled reported being satisfied with their adult relationship. Father’s expressed higher satisfaction within their adult relationship then mothers (75% and 66% respectively). Further to this 70% of father’s were highly satisfied with their parent-child relationship, in comparison to 66% of mothers. Fathers who identified as being married and happy within their relationship demonstrated higher quality parent-child relationships, and further showed more warmth and consistency in their parenting style (Baxter & Smart, 2010).

**Fathers’ Role in Parenting**

The role of fathers has evolved over time. Fathers are showing higher levels of involvement during a child’s early years. Research has also found an increase in the role of fathers as the primary caregiver, staying at home with their child whilst
mothers return to work (Baxter & Smart. 2011). A limitation of the research in the area of attachment and parenting is the high focus on maternal parenting. What literature has begun to show is that both mothers and fathers can develop a secure attachment relationship with their child. In fact in 1967, Ainsworth concluded that infants were able to form attachment relationships with their fathers despite infrequent contact, however notwithstanding growing involvement of fathers with their child, little research has been completed to explore this further.

Historically, mothers have been identified as the primary caregiver and the primary attachment figure, with fathers declared to have a more hand’s off approach to parenting. More recently, a father’s role in relation to caregiving has been outlined as protective and fundamental to behavioural and psychological development in children (Lamb, 2010). Studies have found that fathers who are more involved with their child promote increased health and social wellbeing benefits for both adult and child (Fletcher, 2011; King, 2000). Hawkins and Biller (1993) reported that children who develop strong paternal attachment alongside maternal attachment are more likely to develop a secure attachment style throughout their lifespan. Fathers in the caregiving role who develop strong and positive relationships with their children are more likely to demonstrate a secure adult attachment style, more effective responses in stressful situations, and increased feelings of confidence in parenting (Burgess, 2009). In a study completed by Vasquez (2002), 64% percent of mothers and 47% of fathers identified as securely attached, 16% and 36% identified as dismissing, 9% and 7% as preoccupied and 10% and 11% as fearful, respectively.

The Difference of a Father’s Parenting Style

As discussed, fathers play an important role in the support and development of children. Both parents are equally capable of providing the needed caregiving to a child (Newland & Coyl, 2010). Over the last decades there has been a shift in the
view that fathers are solely there to provide the financial resources for children, now there is a great belief that mothers and fathers are both needed to provide the social, emotional, physical and intellectual well-being of their children. Turner (2011) believed that fathers’ were more likely to engage in less predictable behavior, be more physically active with their child using this as a means to promote development socially, intellectually and emotionally. Fathers’ were more likely to challenge their child more often, promoting problem-solving skills through the use of withholding immediate support. This was further supported by Fletcher (2011) reporting a father’s stimulation of their child’s excitement through physical play remains important in nurturing child development. In exploring paternal parenting styles, there needs to be recognition that there may be differing elements to consider in relation to fathering compared to mothering (Hawkins et al., 2002; Lamb, 1997). And further that whilst paternal and maternal parenting styles may differ they are more likely to be complimentary as opposed to a direct mirroring of each other (Roskham & Meunier, 2009).

Overall, evidence has shown that fathers play an important role in relation to child rearing. There has been a steady shift over the last decade around the expectations of mothers and fathers in relation to parenting. As such, research and clinical services require continued growth around the family system and increased paternal involvement. It is important to encourage fathers to develop strong attachment relationships with their children. This includes providing fathers with education and support around parenting and recognition of their role within the family. In 2015, a survey found that 45% of fathers reported never having sought out support in relation to parenting (Wells, Mitra & Flanagan, 2015).

The Relationship between Parenting and Parenting Competence

Researchers have identified the importance of parental cognitions and beliefs
around their ability to parent, and the impact this has on the caregiver-child relationship (Bugental & Johnston, 2000; Rubin & Chung, 2006). One area of parental cognition that has demonstrated significant importance in the role of parenting is a parent’s perceived sense of competence. Johnson and Marsh (1989) defined parental sense of competence in two distinct components: feelings of self-efficacy in their parenting role and the satisfaction they feel in relation to parenting.

Self-efficacy is an individual’s belief in their ability to successfully undertake a task and meet goals (Bandura, 1977). Translating this into parenting, parental self-efficacy relates to the felt ability to competently manage one’s responsibilities as a parent (Jones and Prinz, 2005). Johnston and Marsh (1989) referred to parental self-efficacy as an instrumental dimension of parenting, the degree to which a parent feels capable in the role, competent and demonstrates awareness of the demands parenting entails. This often curtails from a parent’s cognitions on how well they can fulfill their duties as a parent and provide a positive impact on their child. Higher levels of parental self-efficacy have been linked to improved parent-child relationships and increased parental warmth and responsiveness (Jones & Prinz, 2005).

Attachment in adulthood and the link with parental self-efficacy has had fewer studies completed over recent times. Those studies that have been completed have mostly focused on maternal parenting. For example, an association between attachment anxiety and parenting self-efficacy was mediated by feelings of depression in mothers (Caldwell et al., 2011). Further to this, Kohlhoff and Barnett (2013) found that both attachment anxiety and avoidance were associated with parental self-efficacy, again mediated by maternal depression. They also found there was also a direct link between attachment anxiety and parental self-efficacy in mothers. Howard (2010) focused on paternal parenting and found that fathers with a secure attachment style rated themselves higher in parental self-efficacy.
Parental satisfaction is however more an affective dimension of parenting, inclusive of emotional regulation, motivation and enjoyment as a parent (Johnston & Marsh, 1989). Parental satisfaction is the sense of pleasure and fulfillment received from the role of parenting (Pridham & Chang, 1989). Limited research has been undertaken looking at the link between adult attachment styles and parental satisfaction. In 2005, Cohen and Finzi-Dottan found that attachment avoidance was associated with lower levels of parenting satisfaction. This finding was substantiated by later studies (Rholes et al., 2006; Cohen et al., 2011; Vieira et al., 2012). Research findings have been inconsistent in the area of attachment anxiety and parental satisfaction. Cohen and colleagues (2011) found a significant negative relationship between attachment anxiety and parental satisfaction, however no further studies to date have been found to replicate these findings. La Valley and Guerrero (2012) further found that secure attachment was associated with higher parental satisfaction.

Parents with a secure attachment style hold a more positive view of their parenting role and experience less difficulty responding to their children’s needs. Such secure attachment provides higher levels of parenting self-esteem and greater ability to effectively parent (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Conversely, fathers who are found to have an insecure attachment style are less satisfied with their role as a parent (Howard, 2010). Interestingly, parents who rated high on avoidance and anxiety attachment dimensions perceived their children as more apprehensive, easily distressed and highly reactive (Pesonen et al., 2003). Research on attachment and fathers is more limited and requires further exploration.

Parental self-efficacy and satisfaction are important psychological constructs impacting both the parent’s own well-being and the parent-child relationship. The communication of parents who feel positive and competent in their role as a caregiver is likely to be more effective. Such parents are able to deliver higher levels of care
and demonstrate consistent caregiver-child attachment throughout parenthood (Johnston, 1996; Bugental & Johnston, 2000; Rubin & Chung, 2006). The significance of parents’ beliefs in relation to their parenting style is an important factor that commences prenatally, through to parenthood (Palkovitz, 1992) and into their own child’s adulthood (Schofield et al., 2014).

**Psychological Wellbeing and Parenting**

Attachment style has been seen in both childhood and adulthood to impact the way an individual sees themselves, and others (Bowlby, 1979; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). It shapes close relationships whether it be with a caregiver or romantic partner. It is not surprising that attachment style can also have an impact on a person’s mental health. The display of a secure attachment in adulthood is seen as a protective factor in relation to mental health. Individuals’ with little attachment related anxiety and avoidance are more likely to effectively manage stressors in comparison to those displaying insecure attachment styles (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002). Given individuals who are securely attached have positive IMW’s (i.e., view themselves and others as positive) during times of hardship it is easier to trust and rely on others for support, to problem solve and use effective coping strategies (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002).

Conversely, adults with insecure attachment styles are less likely to seek out the support from their partner when distressed, and are more likely to withdraw (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Further to this, adults with an insecure attachment are more likely to demonstrate behaviours that exacerbate conflict as opposed to alleviating it (Simpson et al., 1996). Repeated evidence points to the association between insecure attachment styles, anxiety (Marganska, Gallagher, & Miranda, 2013; Picardi et al., 2013) and depression (Cassidy & Shaver, 2007; Jinyao et al., 2012; Marganska, Gallagher, & Miranda, 2013; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2012). Secure caregivers reported lower levels of distress then that of insecure parents. Howard
(2010) identified that fathers who experienced higher levels of stress presented with greater levels of insecure attachment styles and as a result displayed a more negative parent-child relationship.

Mental health and parenting styles have also been found to have an important interaction (Geortzel, et al., 2004). Authoritarian and permissive parenting styles have been associated with adults displaying higher levels of depression and anxiety (Alloy, 2001; Barlow, 2002). Excessive control as demonstrated in authoritarian parenting has been suggested to be due to underlying anxiety (Bystritsky, 2000).

Fathers who show interest and engagement with their children have greater mental, physical and sexual health (Ricardo, 2014). Research has found improved adult relationships, increased feelings of satisfaction and happier children when fathers demonstrate meaningful parenting (Burgess, 2009). Fathers who demonstrate greater satisfaction and engagement in their role of a caregiver enhance the wellbeing of their child, themselves and their relationships. Mothers have reported greater sense of satisfaction and wellbeing within their relationship when shared decision-making occurs within the role of caregiving. Positive parenting from both mothers and fathers has demonstrated better outcomes within the family system.

**Aims and Hypotheses**

The impact of a father’s adult attachment on parenting has rarely been the focus of past studies. There is increasing evidence that positive child development is reliant on both maternal and paternal influences. In addition there is limited evidence around the sense of competency (i.e., parental self-efficacy and satisfaction) a father feels as a parent and what contributes to this. The current study aims to explore the role of secure attachment in fathers and whether this is associated with an authoritative parenting style and how competent they feel in their role as a parent. It was hypothesised that:
1. Fathers who report secure adult attachment (i.e., low attachment avoidance and low attachment anxiety) will report higher levels of authoritative parenting.

2. Fathers who report secure adult attachment (i.e., low attachment avoidance and low attachment anxiety) will report higher feelings of competency as a parent (i.e., increased self-efficacy and increased feelings of satisfaction as a parent).

3. A father’s sense of competency will be predicted by authoritative parenting style and secure attachment style.
Manuscript

The Importance of Fathers’ Attachment Style, Parenting Style, Feelings of Parenting Competency and Psychological Wellbeing

Emma.M. Hevers\textsuperscript{a}, Tanya.L. Hanstock\textsuperscript{a}, & Megan, E. Valentine\textsuperscript{b}

\textsuperscript{a} School of Psychology, Faculty of Science and Information Technology, University of Newcastle, Australia
\textsuperscript{b} Statistics Consulting Unit, School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences, Faculty of Science and Information Technology, University of Newcastle, Australia

Corresponding author:
Dr Tanya Hanstock
School of Psychology
University of Newcastle, Callaghan, NSW, 2308, Australia.
Email: tanya.hanstock@newcastle.edu.au
Abstract

Adult attachment is the long-term bonds between two people satisfying each other’s needs for intimacy, trust and security. The attachment style of a parent is believed to influence the attachment style they have with their own children. Attachment has been mostly studied between mothers and children. Recent literature indicates that both maternal and paternal parenting are important in relation to positive child development. The current study investigated whether there was a relationship between fathers’ adult attachment style (attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance) and authoritative parenting style. We also examined whether fathers’ sense of competency (parental self-efficacy and satisfaction) was predicted by their parenting and attachment style. Participants included 212 fathers (aged 21-70 years, $M = 38$, $SD = 7.47$) with biological children (aged 2-12 years, $M = 4.60$, $SD = 3.22$). Participants completed an online survey involving demographic questions and questionnaires on adult attachment style, parenting style, sense of competency and psychological wellbeing. Fathers who reported being securely attached displayed an authoritative parenting style with their children. Furthermore, fathers who displayed higher levels of secure attachment and authoritative parenting styles were more likely to feel increased competency in their role as a parent. These results highlight the importance of secure attachment in fathers and their parenting style, feelings of parenting competency and psychological wellbeing. It also highlights the importance of assessing fathers’ attachment style when working with them around their parenting practices. Self-report questionnaires and social desirability by participants are important limitations to consider when interpreting the results.

Keywords: Attachment, Parenting Style, Paternal, Sense of Competency
1. Introduction

Adult attachment is the long-term bonds between two people satisfying each other’s needs for intimacy, trust and security (Bowlby, 1979). Romantic relationships are an attachment process, seen as translating childhood attachment style to an observable adult attachment style. There is growing literature to support the link between self-reported attachment styles and parenting practices. (Fonagay, Steele & Steele, 1991). Children who develop strong paternal attachment alongside maternal attachment were most likely to develop a secure attachment style throughout their lifespan (Hawkins & Biller, 1993). Fathers in the caregiving role who develop strong and positive relationships with their children often demonstrate a secure adult attachment style, higher resilience levels enabling more functional responses in stressful situations and increased levels of confidence in parenting (Burgess, 2009).

The aim of the current study was to examine father’s attachment style, parenting style, parental sense of competency, and psychological well-being.

Attachment During Childhood

Attachment theory is a comprehensive theoretical framework that explains the close social and emotional bond that develops between a child and their caregiver (Bowlby, 1980). Stronger child-caregiver attachment leads to increased feelings of security, improving developmental outcomes in the child (Bowlby, 1980; Sroufe et al., 2005). Children who fail to experience strong feelings of security are more likely to be fearful and this impacts negatively on their development. The availability and responsiveness of the caregiver to the child’s emotional needs are crucial in the organisation and regulation of early emotional experiences of the child (Bowlby, 1969).

Children are born with an innate need to develop attachment to a primary caregiver (Bowlby, 1969). A child’s experience with their caregiver subsequently
forms internal working models (IWM’s) of relationships, a foundation in which they view themselves, others and the world (Bowlby, 1973; 1980). These models guide social behaviour and personality into adulthood, influencing thoughts, feelings and behaviour (Pietromoco & Barrett, 2000). The caregiver-child relationship becomes the model for future adolescent and adult relationships.

Ainsworth (1982) extended Bowlby’s work on attachment with her view that individual differences in attachment existed. Ainsworth developed an observational assessment technique called ‘the Strange Situation’ investigating how attachment differs amongst children. Based on this experiment three categories of attachment were established (secure, insecure-avoidant and insecure-ambivalent). Ainsworth found that 70% of children displayed a secure attachment style, 15% displayed an insecure-ambivalent attachment style and 15% displayed an insecure-avoidant attachment style. Main and Solomon (1986) later added a fourth attachment style, disorganised attachment.

Each attachment style influences the way a child will interpret a situation (Belsky, Spritz, & Crnic, 1996; Suess, Grossman, & Sroufe, 1992). A secure attachment in childhood leads to better developmental outcomes in comparison to children with an insecure attachment style (Cassidy et al., 1996). These struggles are more likely to continue into adulthood (Fonagy et al, 1996).

**Attachment During Adulthood**

Adult attachment is the long-term bond between two people satisfying each other’s needs for intimacy, trust and security (Bowlby, 1979). Hazan and Shaver (1987) believe that romantic relationships are an attachment process, seen as translating childhood attachment style to observable adult attachment style. IWM’s formed in childhood continue to impact on adult relationships. These IWM’s are
either challenged or reinforced based on the availability and responsiveness of a partner in times of need (Fraley & Shaver, 2000).

Adults continue to seek out a secure base within a romantic relationship, satisfying their needs of safety and security (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Weaker attachment is associated with lower feelings of self-efficacy and satisfaction within the relationship. Whereby too strong an attachment results in co-dependency with difficulties arising around boundaries and emotional regulation. The relationships that function well are reciprocal in trust and safety, with a balance between independence and intimacy.

As in children, the attachment system in adulthood becomes activated when a situation is perceived as threatening (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). This can impact not only their own romantic relationship but also the parent-child relationship. Secure adult attachment enables the needs of the child to be met in a responsive and understanding way. A caregiver with insecure attachment may become fearful following the activation of a child’s attachment system. Both adult and child can be left experiencing the need for protection. Increasing evidence supports attachment related differences in parental caregiving behaviour (Cohn et al., 1992; Edelstein et al., 2004; Rholes et al., 1995).

**Assessment of Attachment in Adulthood**

Interview methods have been used to explore an adult’s recollection of past childhood relationships/experiences with their own parents. The Adult Attachment Interview (AAI; Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985) is a gold standard interview method that arose from ‘the Strange Situation’ experiment (Ainsworth, 1978). Semi-structured interviews are used to investigate child-caregiver relationships and the meaning adults make of their past experiences. Adults are categorised into three
different attachment styles (secure, insecure-avoidant and insecure-ambivalent). One limitation of the AAI is the retrospective reports of adult’s experiences.

Self-report measures explore an adult’s feelings and behaviors in close relationships. The development of a self-report questionnaire created four categories of attachment style (secure, preoccupied, dismissing and fearful) (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Attachment styles were based on the two dimensions of IWM’s (model of self and model of others).

Secure individuals are characterised as warm, high in self-esteem, and having more fulfilling adult relationships. They view themselves and others in a positive way. Preoccupied individuals hold an inherent feeling of unworthiness and desire to gain others’ approval. They view themselves as negative and others as positive. Adults demonstrating a dismissive attachment style are self-sufficient, displaying little need for emotional closeness; maintaining a positive view of self and negative view of others. Lastly, adults with a fearful attachment pattern have a negative view of self and of others, showing a desire for closeness with others but hold a strong fear of rejection and subsequently avoid depending on others (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007) (see Figure 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model of Self</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secure</td>
<td>Preoccupied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model of Other</td>
<td>Dismissing</td>
<td>Fearful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1:** Models of attachment in adulthood as defined by Bartholomew (1991)
More recently, attachment is measured on a continuum ranging from attachment avoidance (high need for autonomy, fear of depending on others and trust difficulties) to attachment anxiety (fear of rejection, need for approval and difficulty with impassivity) (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998). Adults with a secure attachment style display less attachment related avoidance and anxiety (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998; Lopez & Brennan, 2000; Mallinckrodt, 2000). Adults with high attachment avoidance and anxiety display insecure attachment styles.

Research indicates that patterns of attachment remain stable over time (Main & Cassidy, 1988; Waters, 1978; Waters et al., 1995). Adults are seen to have stable IWM’s of attachment relationships in which they use with other significant relationships in their life. For example, adults with a secure pattern of relating to others will generally use a secure pattern of relating to both existing and new relationships. Alternatively, adults with anxious or avoidant patterns of relating to others, will generally use an anxious or avoidant way of relating to existing and new relationships. This same ‘blue print’ of IWM’s of attachment has also been found to be used by adults in other relationships, including with their children.

**Parenting Styles**

Parenting styles are the behaviours and attitudes expressed from a parent towards their child (Williams et al., 2009). Parenting styles are differentiated by the level of nurturing (responsiveness) a child receives and the level of control (demandingness) displayed towards a child (Baumrind, 1966; Macoby & Martin, 1983). From this Baumrind et al., (1996) categorised four parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent and neglectful) (see Figure 2).

Authoritative parenting style is characterised by a balance of nurturance and control. Parents are highly responsive to their children’s needs whilst setting fair boundaries to ensure safety. Authoritative parents respond in an emotionally
responsive way, demonstrating availability and flexibility to the child’s needs. Such parenting is deemed optimal with research indicating authoritative parenting results in better-adjusted children and adults feeling more competent in their parental role (Baumrind, 1991; Glasgow et al., 1997; Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

Authoritarian parenting style is characterised by setting unattainable goals, holding children accountable without flexibility. Such parenting enforces discipline using punitive methods with no explanation. This style of parenting is characterised by low levels of warmth and high levels of control (Chambers et al., 2001).

Lastly, permissive parenting style is characterised by a highly relaxed parenting style, with little to no demands placed on a child. Such parenting allows children to make their own rules and regulate their own emotions. No discipline or structure is in place for children to assist in their development and adjustment to social norms. Permissive and authoritarian parents experience higher levels of conflict with children, and less satisfying roles as a parent (Cheng & Furnham, 2000).

![Parenting styles and associated level of responsiveness and demandingness](image)

*Figure 2: Parenting styles and associated level of responsiveness and demandingness* (Baumrind, 1991; Maccoby & Martin, 1983).
Attachment and Parenting

The development of a secure or insecure attachment style has been linked to parenting style (Fonagay, Steele & Steele, 1991; Mikulincer & Goodman, 2006). Securely attached adults show greater warmth, support, and responsiveness to their child (Rholes et al., 1995). Insecurely attached adults are often emotionally and psychologically unavailable for their child (Bartholomew, 1990). Responses to stressful situations are maladaptive, hindering their ability to be available for others, including their children. Adults displaying higher avoidant attachment escape unpleasant situations, through both physical and psychological distancing, as a way to cope (Edelstein & Gillath, 2008; Mikulincer & Florian, 1998). Insecure adult attachment styles are more likely to result in inconsistent, insensitive and rejecting parenting styles (Bartholomew, 1990).

Australian Household Structures

There were 8.9 million households in Australia in 2013, of these 74% were classified as family households. Eight five percent were couple families and 14% were one-parent families. One-parent families were predominately single mother families; however there has been an overall increase for men in Australia spending time with their child in a caregiving role (Craig, Mullen, & Blaxland, 2010).

A majority of Australian parents reported being satisfied with their adult relationship (Weston, Qu, & Baxter, 2013). Father’s expressed higher satisfaction within their adult relationship then mothers (75% and 66% respectively). Further to this 70% of father’s were highly satisfied with their parent-child relationship, in comparison to 66% of mothers. Fathers who identified as being happily married demonstrated higher quality parent-child relationships, and further showed more warmth and consistency in their parenting style (Baxter & Smart, 2010).
Father’s Role in Parenting

The role of fathers has evolved over time. Fathers are spending more time caring for their children and in some cases, are the primary caregiver (Baxter & Smart, 2011). Historically, mothers have been identified as the primary caregiver and the primary attachment figure, with fathers declared to have a more hand’s off approach to parenting. More recently, father’s role in relation to caregiving has been outlined as protective and fundamental to behavioural and psychological development of children (Lamb, 2010). Fathers who are more involved with their children promote increased health and social wellbeing benefits for both adult and child (Fletcher, 2011). Children who develop strong maternal and paternal attachment are more likely to develop a secure attachment style throughout their lifespan (Hawkins & Biller, 1993). Fathers who build positive parent-child relationships demonstrate increased resilience levels enabling more functional responses in stressful situations, increased levels of confidence in both parenting and healthy social relationships (Burgess, 2009). Exploring parenting styles requires understanding that whilst paternal and maternal parenting styles may differ they are more likely to be complimentary than a direct mirroring of each other (Campana et al., 2008; Roskham & Meunier, 2009).

It is important to encourage fathers to develop strong attachment relationships with their children, through provision of education and support around parenting and recognition of their role within the family. In 2015, a survey found that 45% of fathers reported never having sought out support in relation to parenting (Wells, Mitra & Flanagan, 2015).

The Relationship between Parenting and Parental Competence

Parental cognitions and beliefs around their ability to parent has a significant impact on the caregiver-child relationship (Bugental & Johnston, 2000; Rubin & Chung, 2006). One area of parental cognition that has demonstrated importance is an
adults feeling of competency in their role as a parent. Defined by Johnson & Marsh (1989) as the level of parental self-efficacy and the feelings of satisfaction as a parent.

Parental self-efficacy refers to felt ability to competently manage one’s responsibilities as a parent (Jones & Prinz, 2005). This often curtails from a parent’s cognitions on how well they can fulfill their duties as a parent and provide a positive impact on their child. Higher levels of parental self-efficacy have been linked to improved parent-child relationships, increased parental warmth and responsiveness (Jones & Prinz, 2005).

Parental satisfaction is the sense of pleasure and fulfillment received from the role of parenting (Pridham & Chang, 1989). Secure attachment is associated with higher parental satisfaction (La Valley & Guerrero, 2012), whilst attachment avoidance is associated with lower levels of parenting satisfaction (Cohen & Finzi-Dottan, 2005; Rholes, 2006; Cohen et al., 2011; Vieira et al., 2012).

Parental self-efficacy and satisfaction are important psychological constructs impacting both the parent’s own well-being and the parent-child relationship. Parents with a secure attachment style hold a more positive view of their parenting role, experience less difficulty responding to their children’s needs. Such secure attachment provides higher levels of parenting self-esteem and greater ability to effectively parent (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Howard (2010) found fathers with an insecure attachment style were less satisfied as a parent.

**Psychological Wellbeing and Parenting**

Attachment style has been seen in both childhood and adulthood to impact the way an individual sees themselves, and others (Bowlby, 1979; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). It shapes close relationships whether it be with a caregiver or romantic partner. It is not surprising that regardless of the type of attachment style held there will be an impact, either positive or negative, on one’s mental health. The display of a secure
attachment in adulthood is seen as a protective factor in relation to mental health. Individuals' who have low attachment anxiety and avoidance are more likely to effectively manage stressors in comparison to those displaying insecure attachment styles (i.e., higher attachment anxiety and avoidance) (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002). Given individuals who are securely attached have positive IWMs (i.e., view themselves and others as positive) during times of hardship it is easier to trust and rely on others for support, to problem solve and use effective coping strategies (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002).

Conversely, adults with insecure attachment styles are less likely to seek out the support from their partner when distressed, and are more likely to withdraw (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Further to this, adults with an insecure attachment are more likely to demonstrate behaviours that exacerbate conflict as opposed to alleviating it (Simpson et al., 1996). Repeated evidence points to the association between insecure attachment style, anxiety (Cassidy & Shaver, 2007; Marganska, Gallagher, & Miranda, 2013; Picardi et al., 2013) and depression (Cassidy & Shaver, 2007; Jinyao et al., 2012; Lee & Hankin, 2009; Marganska, Gallagher, & Miranda, 2013; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2012).

Mental health and parenting styles have also been found to have an important interaction. Authoritarian and permissive parenting styles have been associated with higher levels of depression and anxiety (Cukor, 2002). Fathers who show interest and engagement with their children have better mental, physical and sexual health (Ricardo, 2014). Fathers who hold greater satisfaction and engagement in their role of a caregiver enhance the wellbeing of their child, themselves and their relationships. Positive parenting from both mothers and fathers has demonstrated better outcomes within the family system.

The impact of a father’s adult attachment on parenting style has rarely been
the focus of past studies. There is increasing evidence that positive child development is reliant on both maternal and paternal influences. In addition there is limited evidence around the sense of competency (i.e., parental self-efficacy and satisfaction) a father feels as a parent and what contributes to this. The current study aims to explore the role of secure attachment in fathers and whether this is associated with an authoritative parenting style and how competent they feel in their role as a parent. It was hypothesised that:

1. Fathers who report secure adult attachment (i.e., low attachment avoidance and low attachment anxiety) will report higher levels of authoritative parenting.

2. Fathers who report secure adult attachment (i.e., low attachment avoidance and low attachment anxiety) will report higher feelings of competency as a parent (i.e., increased self-efficacy and increased feelings of satisfaction as a parent).

3. A father’s sense of competency will be predicted by authoritative parenting style and secure attachment style.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Participants were recruited via social media, email and posters located throughout the University of Newcastle, Callaghan Campus. Participants consisted of 258 self-identified fathers from the community and the University of Newcastle, Australia. Fathers were aged between 22 and 70 ($M = 38$, $SD = 7.47$) and had a biological child aged between two and 12 years old ($M = 4.6$, $SD = 3.22$).

Inclusion criteria included fathers who had at least one biological child and were involved in their part time or full time care. Fathers read an information statement. Subsequent commencement of the online questionnaire was deemed
implied consent as outlined in the information statement. Ethical approval was provided by the University of Newcastle Human Research Ethics Committee to conduct the study (H-2015-0129; see Appendix B).

2.2. Measures


The ECR-R-GSV is a self-report 20-item scale comprised of two subscales: the Avoidance subscale (e.g., “I am nervous when people get too emotionally close to me”) and the Anxiety subscale (e.g., “My desire to be close sometimes scares people away”). The Avoidance subscale comprises of 10 items, measuring two phenomena; the extent to which a person is comfortable with closeness and intimacy, and the degree to which a person feels that others can be relied on to be available when needed. The Anxiety subscale is comprised of 10 items which measure the extent to which a person is worried about being rejected, abandoned or unloved. For both subscales participants rate their responses on a five point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). From these four attachment styles are generated. These include secure (low anxiety, low avoidance), preoccupied (high anxiety, low avoidance), fearful (high anxiety, high avoidance) and dismissing (low anxiety, high avoidance). The ECR-R-GSV had demonstrated strong evidence supporting reliability of the Avoidance subscale ($\alpha = .88$) and the Anxiety subscale ($\alpha = .88$) (Wilkinson, 2011). Internal consistency was high for both in the current sample (see Table 3).

2.2.2. Relationships Questionnaire (RQ) (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991).

The RQ is a self-report measure of adult attachment relationship prototypes: secure, fearful, preoccupied, and dismissing. Participants read four descriptions of
relationship attitudes and choose one style they believe best describes them. Then, participants rate how much each description is characteristic of them (e.g., “It is easy for me to become emotionally close to others. I am comfortable depending on them and having them depend on me. I don’t worry about being alone or having others not accept me”). Ratings are on a seven point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all like me) to 7 (very much like me).

Four continuous attachment ratings are used to compute scores for the underlying model of self and model of others dimensions (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994a, 1994b). The model-of-self dimension is scored by adding the ratings on the preoccupied and fearful items. This sum is subtracted from the sum of the ratings on the secure and dismissing items. The model-of-others dimension is scored by adding the ratings on the dismissing and fearful items. This sum is subtracted from the sum of the ratings on the secure and preoccupied items. Lower model-of-self scores indicate a more negative view of self and lower model-of-other scores indicate a more negative view of others.

2.2.3. Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire – Short Version (PSDQ-SV) (Robinson et al., 2001).

The PSDQ-SV is a 32-item self-report scale. It measures parenting styles according to three subscales: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. The subscales measuring authoritative (e.g., “I am responsive to my child’s feelings and needs”), authoritarian (e.g., “I grab my child when being disobedient”) and permissive (e.g., “I give into my child when the child causes a scene about something”) subtypes comprise of 15, 12, and five items, respectively. Participants make their responses on a five point Likert scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (always) and subscale means calculated with reverse scores taken into consideration where appropriate. Higher scores indicate a more frequent use of the described parenting style. Internal
consistency of these items has been reported as .86 (authoritative), .82 (authoritarian) and .64 (permissive) (Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen, & Hart, 1995). The current study also demonstrated strong internal reliability (see Table 3).

2.2.4. Parenting Sense of Competency Scale (PSOC) (Gibaud-Wallson & Wandersman, 1978).

The PSOC is a 16-item self-report questionnaire. It measures parental competence on two subscales: Satisfaction – sum of nine items (e.g., “Being a parent in manageable, and any problems are easily solved”) and Efficacy – sum of seven items (e.g., “Sometimes I feel like I am not getting anything done”) with appropriate reversals. Participants make their responses on a 6 point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 6 (strongly disagree). Higher scores indicate positive parental experience. Internal consistency (range .75 - .88) have been reported for the PSOC in a number of studies including Johnston and Mash (1989), Ohan et al. (2000) and Lovejoy, Verda and Hays (1997). Internal consistency was also high for the current study (see Table 3).

2.2.5. The Depression, Stress and Anxiety Scale (DASS21) (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995b)

The DASS21 is a 21 item self-report questionnaire designed to measure the severity of the core symptoms of Depression (e.g., “I felt that I had nothing to look forward to”), Anxiety (e.g., “I was aware of dryness in my mouth”) and Stress (e.g., “I found myself getting agitated”). Participants report on their symptoms over the past week. Three subscales are assessed using the DASS-21: depression, anxiety and stress. Each subscale has seven items. The items are scored from zero (did not apply to me at all) to three (applied to me very much or most of the time). Each subscale is calculated by adding the items and multiplying the subscale total by two. Dependent on the score, the participant will fall into one of five categories for each subscale.
(normal, mild, moderate, severe and extremely severe). Studies have demonstrated good internal consistency for Depression (range = .91 to .97); Anxiety (range = .81 to .92); and Stress (range = .88 to .95) Internal consistency was also high for the current study (see Table 3).

2.3 Procedure

Fathers completed the online survey (LIME Survey; Schmitz, 2015) (see Appendix D-I). This included demographic questions about participants and their biological child. Participants who had two or more biological children were instructed to answer concerning their youngest child between the age of two and 12 years. Demographic questions were followed by questions on attachment, parenting, sense of competency and psychological well-being. All questions were compulsory; participants had the ability review their answers before submission.

2.4 Data and Analyses

Descriptive statistics and analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS statistics software (version 22.0; SPSS, Chicago, IL, USA). A priori, a Type I error of $\alpha = .05$ was assumed. Correlation analyses were used to test if secure adult attachment (attachment anxiety and avoidance) were associated with authoritative parenting style and regression analyses were used to determine how well attachment style predicted parenting style.

3. Results

A total of 353 people logged in using the URL provided, 258 (73%) fathers consented and commenced the survey and provided useable data. Two hundred and eight participants completed the entirety of the survey. Those who did not begin the survey following reading the information statement were not included in the results. Of these 258 fathers, the mean age was 38 years ($SD = 7.47$, range = 22–70 years).
The proportion of male children, father’s marital status, and other demographics are reported in Table 1. In addition, 58% of father’s reported always having an amicable relationship with the mother of their child, and 33% reported mostly having an amicable relationship with the mother of their child. Only 4% reported they did not have an amicable relationship with the mother of their child. The proportion of fathers in each clinical category of the DASS21 is reported in Table 2. The mean, range and reliability of each subscale are listed in Table 3.
Table 1

Demographic information for the 258 participating fathers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Child’s Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defacto</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>80.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Year 10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed Year 12</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAFE</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Degree</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>34.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate Degree</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2

*Proportion of fathers in each DASS21 category*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Severity</th>
<th>Depression</th>
<th>Anxiety</th>
<th>Stress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Severe</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*N.B. Depression (Normal 0–9; Mild 10–13; Moderate 14–20; Severe 21–27; Extremely Severe 28+), Anxiety (Normal 0–7; Mild 8–9; Moderate 10–14; Severe 15–19; Extremely Severe 20+), and Stress (Normal 0–14; Mild15–18; Moderate 19–25; Severe 26–33; Extremely Severe 34+)*

Table 3

*Median, Range and Reliability of the subscales*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Percentile</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PSDQ - SV</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritative</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.7–4.3</td>
<td>1–4.8</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>1.4–1.9</td>
<td>1–3.08</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permissive</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.8–2.4</td>
<td>1–4.4</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECR-R-GSV</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxious Attachment</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>1.8–2.7</td>
<td>1–4.1</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidant Attachment</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>2.2–3.2</td>
<td>1–4.4</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RQ</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model of Self</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>0–3</td>
<td>-6–9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model of Other</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-2–4</td>
<td>-9–9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PSOC</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficacy</td>
<td>34.00</td>
<td>31–38</td>
<td>8–47</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>39.50</td>
<td>35–44</td>
<td>18–54</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DASS21</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>0–6</td>
<td>0–38</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>0–6</td>
<td>0–38</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>2–14</td>
<td>0–32</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Normality of the measures were tested using Shapiro Wilks and non-parametric correlations as reported in Table 4. Both attachment subscales were weakly negatively correlated with authoritative parenting style, weakly negatively correlated with both parenting sense of competency subscales, and moderately positively correlated with each other.

Table 4

*Correlations between attachment style, parenting style and sense of competency subscale*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Authoritative Parenting Style</th>
<th>Efficacy</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Attachment Anxiety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attachment Anxiety</td>
<td>-.09*</td>
<td>-.14*</td>
<td>-.33*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment Avoidance</td>
<td>-.18*</td>
<td>-.19*</td>
<td>-.21*</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note = *p < .05. Correlations are Spearman’s Rho

Both attachment subscales were included in a linear regression to determine whether they were predictive of authoritative parenting style. The overall regression was significant, and the two predictors accounted for 6% of the variation in authoritative parenting style ($R^2 = .062, F = 7.13, p = 0.01$). However, when modeled with avoidant attachment, anxious attachment did not significantly contribute to authoritative parenting style (see Table 5).

Table 5

*Linear regression model for anxious attachment and avoidant attachment as predictors for authoritative parenting*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attachment Anxiety</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment Avoidance</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Both attachment subscales were also included in a linear regression to determine whether both were predictive of a father’s feeling of efficacy as a parent. The overall regression was significant, and the two predictors accounted for 8% of the variation in father’s feeling of efficacy ($R^2 = .08, F = 9.42, p < .01$). However, when combined with avoidant attachment, anxious attachment did not significantly contribute to father’s feeling of efficacy (see Table 6).

Table 6

Linear regression model for anxious attachment and avoidant attachment as predictors for a father’s feeling of efficacy as a parent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attachment Anxiety</td>
<td>-.86</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment Avoidance</td>
<td>-1.93</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both attachment subscales were included in a linear regression to determine whether both were predictive of a father’s feeling of satisfaction as a parent. The overall regression was significant, and the two predictors accounted for 22% of the variation in father’s feelings of satisfaction ($R^2 = .22, F = 29.16, p < .01$). However, when combined with anxious attachment, avoidant attachment did not significantly contribute to father’s feelings of satisfaction (see Table 7).

Table 7

Linear regression model for anxious attachment and avoidant attachment as predictors for a father’s feeling of satisfaction as a parent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attachment Anxiety</td>
<td>-3.98</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment Avoidance</td>
<td>-1.15</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attachment subscales and authoritative parenting style were included in a linear regression to determine whether both were predictive of a father’s feeling of efficacy as a parent. The overall regression was significant, and the three predictors
accounted for 26% of the variation in father’s feeling of efficacy \((R^2 = .26, F = 24.13, p < .01)\). However, when combined with authoritative parenting style, both avoidant and anxious attachment did not significantly contribute to father’s feeling of efficacy (see Table 8).

Table 8

**Linear regression model for anxious attachment, avoidant attachment and authoritative parenting style as predictors for a father’s feeling of efficacy as a parent**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attachment Anxiety</td>
<td>-0.86</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment Avoidance</td>
<td>-1.00</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritative Parenting</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attachment subscales and authoritative parenting style were included in a linear regression to determine whether both were predictive of a father’s feeling of satisfaction as a parent. The overall regression was significant, and the three predictors accounted for 24% of the variation in father’s feeling of satisfaction \((R^2 = .24, F = 22.21, p < .01)\). However, when combined with authoritative parenting style and attachment anxiety, avoidant attachment did not significantly contribute to father’s feeling of satisfaction (see Table 9).

Table 9

**Linear regression model for anxious attachment, avoidant attachment and authoritative parenting style as predictors for a father’s feeling of satisfaction as a parent**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attachment Anxiety</td>
<td>-3.98</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment Avoidance</td>
<td>-0.75</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritative Parenting</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Discussion

The aim of current study was to examine father’s parenting style, attachment style, sense of competency and psychological well-being. We investigated whether there was a relationship between father’s adult attachment style and their parenting style. We also examined whether father’s sense of competency (parental self-efficacy and satisfaction) was predicted by both authoritative parenting style and secure attachment style. Despite strong research indicating a link between attachment security and positive parenting behaviours, the literature is less clear in relation to the specific dimensions of security (attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance) that relate to specific parenting styles (authoritarian, permissive and authoritative parenting styles).

Demographics of Fathers

In the current study, a majority of fathers were well educated, in stable relationships and used authoritative parenting style. Over half of the participants had completed a university degree; specifically 35% had completed an undergraduate degree and an additional 16% had completed a postgraduate degree. Over 80% were married and a further 80% reported being regularly amicable with the mother of their child. Fathers self-reported using mostly an authoritative parenting style with their child. As a result, authoritarian and permissive parenting were not explored in this study. The majority of fathers further reported no difficulties with their psychological well-being. Over 80% reported having normal levels of depression, anxiety and stress at the time they completed the survey. Fathers reported lower levels of both attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance signifying that most fathers self-reported to have a secure adult attachment style. Lastly, fathers indicated they felt
competent in their role as a parent, reporting moderate to high levels of parental self-efficacy and parental satisfaction.

Secure Attachment and Authoritative Parenting Style

We firstly examined whether father’s secure attachment style was associated with increased use of authoritative parenting style. Individually both attachment avoidance and attachment anxiety had a significant negative association with authoritative parenting style. When combined, they were significant but not strong predictors of authoritative parenting style. In addition, the model showed that attachment avoidance was the significant and most important predictor of authoritative parenting style. This indicated that as a father’s attachment avoidance decreases their use of authoritative parenting style increases. This finding supports previous research indicating that there was a positive association between secure attachment style (lower attachment avoidance and anxiety) and authoritative parenting (Cowan et al., 1996; Rholes et al., 1995). Fathers who display a secure attachment style demonstrate more responsive and supportive parenting (Rholes et al., 1995). In addition, results support previous research that attachment avoidance is associated with reduced parental sensitivity, lower responsiveness and decreased parental support (i.e., little to no use of authoritative parenting) (Turney & Tanner, 2001). Parents displaying avoidant attachment often perceive parenting as less enjoyable and self-report poorer parent-child relationships (Rholes et al., 1995). Authoritative parenting style is deemed optimal with research indicating authoritative parenting results in better-adjusted children, and increased feelings of parental confidence for adults (Baumrind, 1991; Glasgow, et al., 1997; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). It is therefore expected that in the current sample of fathers that an increase in authoritative parenting style is predictive of a decrease in attachment avoidance.
Secure Attachment and Parental Sense of Competency

Research has shown a strong association between attachment in adulthood and the link to parenting styles (Jones et al., 2015). However, fewer studies have shown a clear and consistent relationship between adult attachment style and feelings of parental competency. The current study found that individually both attachment avoidance and attachment anxiety had a significant negative association with a father’s feelings of parental self-efficacy and parental satisfaction. In relation to parental self-efficacy, when combined, attachment avoidance and anxious attachment were significant but not strong predictors. The model showed that attachment avoidance was the significant and most important predictor of father’s feelings of parental self-efficacy. This indicates that as a father’s attachment avoidance decreases their feelings of parental self-efficacy increases. Consistent with previous research, insecure attachment (i.e., higher attachment avoidance and attachment anxiety) has a negative impact on parental self-esteem (Collins, 1996; Shaver et al., 2005). The current results further support Howard (2010) who found that fathers with a secure attachment style rated themselves higher in parental self-efficacy.

We also examined whether a father’s secure attachment style was associated with a father’s feeling of satisfaction as a parent. When combined, both attachment avoidance and attachment anxiety were significant and moderately strong predictors of father’s parental satisfaction. The model showed that attachment anxiety was the significant and most important predictor of father’s feelings of parental satisfaction. These results indicate that as a father’s attachment anxiety decreases, their feelings of parental satisfaction increases. As expected, these results indicate that father’s with a more secure attachment find increased feelings of pleasure and fulfillment in their role as a father (La Valley & Guerrero, 2010). The results further support Cohen and
colleagues (2011) who also found a negative relationship between attachment anxiety and parental satisfaction.

Adults who display higher levels of anxious attachment are more likely to experience a prolonged activation of their attachment system, which in turn can heighten their own distress as opposed to using effective coping strategies in attachment-related situations (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2002; Collins et al., 2006; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Such heightening of distress has been shown to impact self-esteem and satisfaction (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). This may be reflective of an adult with an anxious attachment style demonstrating continuous feelings of wanting more out of their relationships, including their parent-child relationship. Consequently, the parent may not feel as close as they would like in the relationship with their child, thus reducing the feeling of satisfaction as a parent.

Overall, the results indicate that as a father’s level of attachment avoidance and anxiety increase, their feelings of parental satisfaction and efficacy decrease. Consistent with theoretical beliefs, attachment insecurity was a significant negative predictor of parental self-esteem and parental satisfaction, and secure attachment was a significant positive predictor of overall sense of competency as a parent.

Secure Attachment, Authoritative Parenting Style and Parental Sense of Competency

Finally, we examined whether a father’s use of authoritative parenting style and secure adult attachment style were associated with a father’s overall feelings of competency as a parent (namely parental self-efficacy and satisfaction). In relation to parental self-efficacy, when combined authoritative parenting, attachment anxiety, and attachment avoidance were significant and moderate predictors. These findings however indicated that the most important and only significant predictor of parental self-efficacy for this model was authoritative parenting. For every increase in score in authoritative parenting style, the odds of a parent experiencing higher feelings of
parental self-efficacy increased five-fold. Clinically speaking this is a large gain in feelings of parental self-efficacy. As expected, fathers who are able to demonstrate increased warmth and flexibility as a parent, feel more able to competently manage one’s responsibilities as a parent (Jones & Prinz, 2005).

In relation to parental satisfaction, when authoritative parenting, attachment anxiety, and attachment avoidance were combined, they were significant and moderate predictors. These findings however indicated that authoritative parenting style and attachment anxiety were the most important and only significant predictors of parental satisfaction. Authoritative parenting style had a direct positive association with a father’s sense of satisfaction, and attachment anxiety had a direct negative association with father’s sense of satisfaction. The results of the analysis indicated that father’s with low anxious attachment that used an authoritative parenting style were more likely to feel a sense of pleasure and fulfillment in their role as a parent. As expected the less anxious a father felt in his role, the more satisfied he would feel. Again, this may be reflective of a father with higher anxious attachment style wanting more out of their parent-child relationship. As a result, the father may not feel as close as they would like in the relationship with their child, reducing his feelings of parental satisfaction. This finding is in line with Cohen and colleagues (2011) who found a significant negative relationship between attachment anxiety and parental satisfaction, however no further studies to date have replicated these findings. This could be the result of most of the research being completed on mothers as well as minimal research being conducted on a parent’s feelings of competency.

Limitations

The current study had a number of limitations that need to be taken into consideration. The first was that it was a cross-section design; as such it does not allow the ability to draw conclusions about causal links between the variables.
The second limitation was the use of self-reports measures. Social desirability effects can exist, that is, parents may be inclined to report that they engage in, more often than is actually the case, practices that are perceived by them to be accepted or good (Nederhof, 1985). For example parents have been found to be more likely to self-report higher use of authoritative parenting style (Greene et al., 2010).

In addition, this current sample was predominately married, well-educated fathers who reported being satisfied with their current adult relationship. As this study was relatively homogeneous in terms of socioeconomic and demographic variables it is uncertain whether the results would generalise to more diverse and higher-risk samples. Future studies may wish to provide greater access for completion of the survey, including pen and paper options for those who do not have access to the Internet.

Lastly, the current study did not take into consideration cultural differences in relation to adult attachment, parenting, sense of competency and psychological well-being. Furthermore, alternative family structures were not explored (e.g., step-parents, adoptive parents, same-sex and transgender parents) making this study less likely to be generalised to the overall father population.

Future Research

In addition to addressing the limitations of the present study, future research would benefit from exploring the following relationship pathways. First, there remains limited research around paternal parenting practices; thus further research is needed in this area. Second, looking at both maternal and paternal parenting in combination would provide additional and relevant data. Third, a focus is needed on increased testing and validation of proposed gender norms that already exist in the research. And lastly, future studies would benefit from exploring father-child
attachment to explore whether this compares to the father-romantic partner attachment style.

Whilst the current study mainly focused on secure attachment and authoritative parenting, future studies may wish to expand on this. As the majority of fathers reported using an authoritative parenting style, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles were not explored. By canvassing greater socio-economic populations a higher response of insecure attachment, authoritarian and permissive parenting may be captured. This would allow for greater analysis and interpretation of differing parenting styles and attachment styles and the impact this has on a parent’s overall sense of competency. Future studies may also benefit from more longitudinal studies assessing attachment over time and the impact on child development.

Finally, future studies may wish to utilise additional or alternative measures of parenting. Including a spousal report of parenting in addition to the self-report method to reduce such bias (Nix et al., 1999; Russell et al., 2003).

Clinical Implications

The results of the current study add additional insight into the areas of fathers parenting style, attachment style, sense of competency as a parent and psychological well-being. Whilst causation cannot be drawn, important considerations and implications for clinicians and parents will be outlined. Understanding the association between secure attachment style and authoritative parenting style provides a greater theoretical and practical application in clinical areas.

The results of this study provide a greater insight into father’s role in caregiving. The input of learning the associations between secure attachment and authoritative parenting style on a father’s parental self-efficacy and satisfaction may be used to inform the development of policies assisting with family decisions and support services. In addition the results may assist in identifying barriers to father’s
accessing support services (e.g., fathers higher in attachment avoidance, may be experiencing difficulties managing and feeling competent in their role as a parent, but will also be less likely to reach out for help due to fear of rejection). As such, awareness of differing attachment styles would assist is more targeted education and promotion around positive parenting.

Of note are the limited strategies targeted specifically at fathers, currently a majority of guidelines and support that is offered are targeted towards separated and vulnerable families (e.g., Families and children access strategies guideline). Additional support for fathers (and families) during the period of pregnancy and following the birth of the child may assist in maintaining the use of authoritative parenting style and in promoting positive intergenerational effects of parenting and attachment styles. This would provide greater opportunities and likelihood for children growing up in a more secure environment and displaying a secure attachment themselves. Whilst policies need to target those families that are not displaying positive environments, perhaps the maintenance of those that are is an important consideration also. Given the growing evidence that fathers are taking on increased caregiving responsibilities, policies and support services would benefit from targeting both mothers and fathers simultaneously.

Lastly, in understanding the association between attachment and parenting, there is an option to reduce factors that can lead to an increased risk of depression, anxiety, substance use, and child mistreatment. Through an understanding of secure attachment and the benefits that exist not only in childhood but adulthood, and it’s association with the higher use of fair and consistent parenting (as seen in authoritative parenting), clinicians who work with families are able to pass this information on and assess and address concerns as they arise.
Conclusion

In conclusion, these results advance the growing body of literature demonstrating an important link between fathers self-reported attachment styles, parenting styles, sense of competency and psychological well-being. Fathers who demonstrate a secure attachment style are more likely to allow children to experience the world as a safe place. They are able to provide opportunities for their child to develop autonomy whilst providing a safe haven simultaneously. Secure attachment has been associated with greater use of authoritative parenting and both have contributed to an overall increase in feelings competency as a parent. Secure fathers who utilise an authoritative parenting style are less likely to experience the child’s needs as negative and find satisfaction in their role as a father leading to the development of a positive parent-child relationship and enabling the child to also develop a secure attachment. The current study highlights the importance of assessing fathers’ attachment style when working with them around their parenting practices to ensure a positive intergenerational cycle of positive attachment and parenting.
References


doi: 10.1177/0950017009353778

doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X09000016

doi:10.1080/146167303100001659584


doi:10.1002/10970355(199123)12:3<201::AIDIMHJ2280120307>3.0.CO;2-7


Fraley, R. C., & Shaver, P. R. (1997). Adult attachment and the suppression of


doi: 10.1177/0093650210391655

attachment organization: Toward an attachment theoretical perspective on the
doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.47.3.283

validity of measures of parenting efficacy and control. *Journal of Clinical

states: Comparison of the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales (DASS) with the
Beck Depression and Anxiety Inventories. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*,
33(3), 335-343. doi:10.1016/0005-7967(94)00075-U

Ed.), *Handbook of child psychology: Socialization, personality, and social

Main, M., & Cassidy, J. (1988). Categories of response to reunion with the parent at
age 6: predictable from infant attachment classifications and stable over a 1-
doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.24.3.415

adulthood: A move to the level of representation. In I. Bretherton & E. Waters
(Eds.), Growing points of attachment theory and research (pp. 66–106).
*Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 50, (1–2)


Reizer, A., & Mikulincer, M. (2007). Assessing individual differences in working models of caregiving: The construction and validation of the mental...


*Attachment & Human Development, 4*(2), 133-161. 
doi:10.1080/14616730210154171


Short Form. *Journal of Relationships Research, 2(01), 53-62.*

doi:org/10.1375/jrr.2.1.53


Appendix A

Personality and Individual Differences
Authors Guide

Your Paper Your Way
We now differentiate between the requirements for new and revised submissions. You may choose to submit your manuscript as a single Word or PDF file to be used in the refereeing process. Only when your paper is at the revision stage, will you be requested to put your paper in to a 'correct format' for acceptance and provide the items required for the publication of your article.

To find out more, please visit the Preparation section below.

Introduction


Neither the Editors nor the Publisher accept responsibility for the views or statements expressed by authors.

All incoming papers are subject to the refereeing process, unless they are not appropriate for the Aims and Scope of the journal as outlined, do not follow the Guide for Authors, or clearly suffer from methodological problems (e.g. unsatisfactory sample size). Correspondence regarding decisions reached by the editorial committee is not encouraged.

Click here to watch the recording of an author workshop presented by the Editor and Publisher of PAID. This video offers many practical tips for the preparation of your manuscript as well as useful background on the peer review and publication process.

Before you Begin

Ethics in publishing
For information on Ethics in publishing and Ethical guidelines for journal publication see https://www.elsevier.com/publishingethics and https://www.elsevier.com/journal-authors/ethics.

Human and animal rights
If the work involves the use of human subjects, the author should ensure that the work described has been carried out in accordance with The Code of Ethics of the World Medical Association (Declaration of Helsinki) for experiments involving humans, http://www.wma.net/en/30publications/10policies/b3/index.html; Uniform Requirements for manuscripts submitted to Biomedical journals, http://www.icmje.org. Authors should include a statement in the manuscript that
informed consent was obtained for experimentation with human subjects. The privacy rights of human subjects must always be observed.

All animal experiments should be carried out in accordance with the U.K. Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act, 1986 and associated guidelines, EU Directive 2010/63/EU for animal experiments, or the National Institutes of Health guide for the care and use of Laboratory animals (NIH Publications No. 8023, revised 1978) and the authors should clearly indicate in the manuscript that such guidelines have been followed. All animal studies need to ensure they comply with the ARRIVE guidelines. More information can be found at http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/page.asp?id=1357.

Conflict of interest
All authors are requested to disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest including any financial, personal or other relationships with other people or organizations within three years of beginning the submitted work that could inappropriately influence, or be perceived to influence, their work. See also https://www.elsevier.com/conflictsinterest. Further information and an example of a Conflict of Interest form can be found at: http://service.elsevier.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/286/supporthub/publishing.

Submission declaration and verification
Submission of an article implies that the work described has not been published previously (except in the form of an abstract or as part of a published lecture or academic thesis or as an electronic preprint, see https://www.elsevier.com/sharingpolicy), that it is not under consideration for publication elsewhere, that its publication is approved by all authors and tacitly or explicitly by the responsible authorities where the work was carried out, and that, if accepted, it will not be published elsewhere in the same form, in English or in any other language, including electronically without the written consent of the copyright-holder. To verify originality, your article may be checked by the originality detection service CrossCheck https://www.elsevier.com/editors/plagdetect.

Changes to authorship
Authors are expected to consider carefully the list and order of authors before submitting their manuscript and provide the definitive list of authors at the time of the original submission. Any addition, deletion or rearrangement of author names in the authorship list should be made only before the manuscript has been accepted and only if approved by the journal Editor. To request such a change, the Editor must receive the following from the corresponding author: (a) the reason for the change in author list and (b) written confirmation (e-mail, letter) from all authors that they agree with the addition, removal or rearrangement. In the case of addition or removal of authors, this includes confirmation from the author being added or removed.

Only in exceptional circumstances will the Editor consider the addition, deletion or rearrangement of authors after the manuscript has been accepted. While the Editor considers the request, publication of the manuscript will be suspended. If the
manuscript has already been published in an online issue, any requests approved by the Editor will result in a corrigendum.

**Copyright**

Upon acceptance of an article, authors will be asked to complete a 'Journal Publishing Agreement' (for more information on this and copyright, see https://www.elsevier.com/copyright). An e-mail will be sent to the corresponding author confirming receipt of the manuscript together with a 'Journal Publishing Agreement' form or a link to the online version of this agreement.

Subscribers may reproduce tables of contents or prepare lists of articles including abstracts for internal circulation within their institutions. Permission of the Publisher is required for resale or distribution outside the institution and for all other derivative works, including compilations and translations (please consult https://www.elsevier.com/permissions). If excerpts from other copyrighted works are included, the author(s) must obtain written permission from the copyright owners and credit the source(s) in the article. Elsevier has preprinted forms for use by authors in these cases: please consult https://www.elsevier.com/permissions.

For open access articles: Upon acceptance of an article, authors will be asked to complete an 'Exclusive License Agreement' (for more information see https://www.elsevier.com/OAauthoragreement). Permitted third party reuse of open access articles is determined by the author's choice of user license (see https://www.elsevier.com/openaccesslicenses).

**Author rights**

As an author you (or your employer or institution) have certain rights to reuse your work. For more information see https://www.elsevier.com/copyright.

**Role of the funding source**

You are requested to identify who provided financial support for the conduct of the research and/or preparation of the article and to briefly describe the role of the sponsor(s), if any, in study design; in the collection, analysis and interpretation of data; in the writing of the report; and in the decision to submit the article for publication. If the funding source(s) had no such involvement then this should be stated.

**Funding body agreements and policies**

Elsevier has established a number of agreements with funding bodies which allow authors to comply with their funder's open access policies. Some authors may also be reimbursed for associated publication fees. To learn more about existing agreements please visit https://www.elsevier.com/fundingbodies.

**Open access**

This journal offers authors a choice in publishing their research:
Open access
- Articles are freely available to both subscribers and the wider public with permitted reuse
- An open access publication fee is payable by authors or on their behalf e.g. by their research funder or institution

Subscription
- Articles are made available to subscribers as well as developing countries and patient groups through our universal access programs (https://www.elsevier.com/access).
- No open access publication fee payable by authors.

Regardless of how you choose to publish your article, the journal will apply the same peer review criteria and acceptance standards.

For open access articles, permitted third party (re)use is defined by the following Creative Commons user licenses:

**Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY)**
Let's others distribute and copy the article, create extracts, abstracts, and other revised versions, adaptations or derivative works of or from an article (such as a translation), include in a collective work (such as an anthology), text or data mine the article, even for commercial purposes, as long as they credit the author(s), do not represent the author as endorsing their adaptation of the article, and do not modify the article in such a way as to damage the author's honor or reputation.

**Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs (CC BY-NC-ND)**
For non-commercial purposes, let others distribute and copy the article, and to include in a collective work (such as an anthology), as long as they credit the author(s) and provided they do not alter or modify the article.

The open access publication fee for this journal is USD 1950, excluding taxes. Learn more about Elsevier's pricing policy: [http://www.elsevier.com/openaccesspricing](http://www.elsevier.com/openaccesspricing).

Green open access
Authors can share their research in a variety of different ways and Elsevier has a number of green open access options available. We recommend authors see our green open access page for further information (http://elsevier.com/greenopenaccess).

Authors can also self-archive their manuscripts immediately and enable public access from their institution's repository after an embargo period. This is the version that has been accepted for publication and which typically includes author-incorporated changes suggested during submission, peer review and in editor-author communications. Embargo period: For subscription articles, an appropriate amount of time is needed for journals to deliver value to subscribing customers before an article becomes freely available to the public. This is the embargo period and it begins from the date the article is formally published online in its final and fully citable form.
This journal has an embargo period of 24 months.

**Language (usage and editing services)**
Please write your text in good English (American or British usage is accepted, but not a mixture of these). Authors who feel their English language manuscript may require editing to eliminate possible grammatical or spelling errors and to conform to correct scientific English may wish to use the English Language Editing service available from Elsevier's WebShop (http://webshop.elsevier.com/languagediting/) or visit our customer support site (http://support.elsevier.com) for more information.

**Submission**
Our online submission system guides you stepwise through the process of entering your article details and uploading your files. The system converts your article files to a single PDF file used in the peer-review process. Editable files (e.g., Word, LaTeX) are required to typeset your article for final publication. All correspondence, including notification of the Editor's decision and requests for revision, is sent by e-mail.

**Submit your article**
Please submit your article via http://ees.elsevier.com/paid

**PAID** gives you the opportunity to enrich your article by providing readers with access to relevant statistical R-code and data. To **share your R-code** and corresponding (example) data set, please submit your R-code and data set with the manuscript. Multiple files can be submitted. We support the .R format for R-code and .CSV, .XLS, .TXT and .DAT files for datasets. Each R-file and corresponding data set will have to be zipped together and uploaded to online submission system via the "R data" submission category. Recommended size of a single uncompressed file is 100 MB. Please provide a short informative description for each file by filling in the "Description" field when uploading a dataset. Please mention dependencies on R libraries as comment in your R-code.

**Additional Information**

Manuscripts must be submitted using double-spacing including line and page numbers. These should not exceed the word count provided below:

**Lengthier reviews or meta-analyses:** The articles with exceptional quality will be considered for publication. Such papers will typically be no more than 10,000 words although longer papers may be submitted and will be considered at the discretion of the editors.

**Review articles:** These articles will be considered for a special review issue, which will appear once a year. Please select Review Article from the dropdown menu upon submission.
Single study research articles: Single study research articles can be up to 5000 words.

Research articles: Research articles/research articles reporting multiple studies should not exceed 10,000 words.

Short Communications: These articles should not exceed 3000 words.

Preparation

NEW SUBMISSIONS
Submission to this journal proceeds totally online and you will be guided stepwise through the creation and uploading of your files. The system automatically converts your files to a single PDF file, which is used in the peer-review process. As part of the Your Paper Your Way service, you may choose to submit your manuscript as a single file to be used in the refereeing process. This can be a PDF file or a Word document, in any format or lay-out that can be used by referees to evaluate your manuscript. It should contain high enough quality figures for refereeing. If you prefer to do so, you may still provide all or some of the source files at the initial submission. Please note that individual figure files larger than 10 MB must be uploaded separately.

References
There are no strict requirements on reference formatting at submission. References can be in any style or format as long as the style is consistent. Where applicable, author(s) name(s), journal title/book title, chapter title/article title, year of publication, volume number/book chapter and the pagination must be present. Use of DOI is highly encouraged. The reference style used by the journal will be applied to the accepted article by Elsevier at the proof stage. Note that missing data will be highlighted at proof stage for the author to correct.

Formatting requirements
There are no strict formatting requirements but all manuscripts must contain the essential elements needed to convey your manuscript, for example Abstract, Keywords, Introduction, Materials and Methods, Results, Conclusions, Artwork and Tables with Captions.
If your article includes any Videos and/or other Supplementary material, this should be included in your initial submission for peer review purposes. Divide the article into clearly defined sections.

Figures and tables embedded in text
Please ensure the figures and the tables included in the single file are placed next to the relevant text in the manuscript, rather than at the bottom or the top of the file.

REVISED SUBMISSIONS
Use of word processing software
Regardless of the file format of the original submission, at revision you must provide
us with an editable file of the entire article. Keep the layout of the text as simple as possible. Most formatting codes will be removed and replaced on processing the article. The electronic text should be prepared in a way very similar to that of conventional manuscripts (see also the Guide to Publishing with Elsevier: https://www.elsevier.com/guidepublication). See also the section on Electronic artwork. To avoid unnecessary errors you are strongly advised to use the 'spell-check' and 'grammar-check' functions of your word processor.

**Article structure**

**Subdivision - numbered sections**

Divide your article into clearly defined and numbered sections. Subsections should be numbered 1.1 (then 1.1.1, 1.1.2, ...), 1.2, etc. (the abstract is not included in section numbering). Use this numbering also for internal cross-referencing: do not just refer to 'the text'. Any subsection may be given a brief heading. Each heading should appear on its own separate line.

**Introduction**

State the objectives of the work and provide an adequate background, avoiding a detailed literature survey or a summary of the results.

**Material and methods**

Provide sufficient detail to allow the work to be reproduced. Methods already published should be indicated by a reference: only relevant modifications should be described.

**Theory/calculation**

A Theory section should extend, not repeat, the background to the article already dealt with in the Introduction and lay the foundation for further work. In contrast, a Calculation section represents a practical development from a theoretical basis.

**Results**

Results should be clear and concise.

**Discussion**

This should explore the significance of the results of the work, not repeat them. A combined Results and Discussion section is often appropriate. Avoid extensive citations and discussion of published literature.

**Conclusions**

The main conclusions of the study may be presented in a short Conclusions section, which may stand alone or form a subsection of a Discussion or Results and Discussion section.

**Appendices**

If there is more than one appendix, they should be identified as A, B, etc. Formulae and equations in appendices should be given separate numbering: Eq. (A.1), Eq.
Essential title page information

• **Title.** Concise and informative. Titles are often used in information-retrieval systems. Avoid abbreviations and formulae where possible.

• **Author names and affiliations.** Please clearly indicate the given name(s) and family name(s) of each author and check that all names are accurately spelled. Present the authors' affiliation addresses (where the actual work was done) below the names. Indicate all affiliations with a lower-case superscript letter immediately after the author's name and in front of the appropriate address. Provide the full postal address of each affiliation, including the country name and, if available, the e-mail address of each author.

• **Corresponding author.** Clearly indicate who will handle correspondence at all stages of refereeing and publication, also post-publication. **Ensure that the e-mail address is given and that contact details are kept up to date by the corresponding author.**

• **Present/permanent address.** If an author has moved since the work described in the article was done, or was visiting at the time, a 'Present address' (or 'Permanent address') may be indicated as a footnote to that author's name. The address at which the author actually did the work must be retained as the main, affiliation address. Superscript Arabic numerals are used for such footnotes.

**Abstract**
An abstract, not exceeding 200 words should constitute the first page of the article.

**Graphical abstract**
Although a graphical abstract is optional, its use is encouraged as it draws more attention to the online article. The graphical abstract should summarize the contents of the article in a concise, pictorial form designed to capture the attention of a wide readership. Graphical abstracts should be submitted as a separate file in the online submission system. Image size: Please provide an image with a minimum of 531 × 1328 pixels (h × w) or proportionally more. The image should be readable at a size of 5 × 13 cm using a regular screen resolution of 96 dpi. Preferred file types: TIFF, EPS, PDF or MS Office files. See [https://www.elsevier.com/graphicalabstracts](https://www.elsevier.com/graphicalabstracts) for examples.

Authors can make use of Elsevier's Illustration and Enhancement service to ensure the best presentation of their images and in accordance with all technical requirements: [Illustration Service](https://www.elsevier.com/graphicalabstracts).

**Highlights**
Highlights are mandatory for this journal. They consist of a short collection of bullet points that convey the core findings of the article and should be submitted in a separate editable file in the online submission system. Please use 'Highlights' in the file name and include 3 to 5 bullet points (maximum 85 characters, including spaces, per bullet point). See [https://www.elsevier.com/highlights](https://www.elsevier.com/highlights) for examples.
Keywords
Immediately after the abstract, provide a maximum of 8 keywords, reflecting the essential topics of the article, which may be taken from both the title and the text. These keywords will be used for information retrieval systems and indexing purposes.

Abbreviations
Define abbreviations that are not standard in this field in a footnote to be placed on the first page of the article. Such abbreviations that are unavoidable in the abstract must be defined at their first mention there, as well as in the footnote. Ensure consistency of abbreviations throughout the article.

Acknowledgements
Collate acknowledgements in a separate section at the end of the article before the references and do not, therefore, include them on the title page, as a footnote to the title or otherwise. List here those individuals who provided help during the research (e.g., providing language help, writing assistance or proof reading the article, etc.).

Footnotes
Footnotes should be used sparingly. Number them consecutively throughout the article. Many word processors build footnotes into the text, and this feature may be used. Should this not be the case, indicate the position of footnotes in the text and present the footnotes themselves separately at the end of the article.

Artwork

Electronic artwork

General points
• Make sure you use uniform lettering and sizing of your original artwork.
• Preferred fonts: Arial (or Helvetica), Times New Roman (or Times), Symbol, Courier.
• Number the illustrations according to their sequence in the text.
• Use a logical naming convention for your artwork files.
• Indicate per figure if it is a single, 1.5 or 2-column fitting image.
• For Word submissions only, you may still provide figures and their captions, and tables within a single file at the revision stage.
• Please note that individual figure files larger than 10 MB must be provided in separate source files.

A detailed guide on electronic artwork is available on our website: https://www.elsevier.com/artworkinstructions.

You are urged to visit this site; some excerpts from the detailed information are given here.

Formats
Regardless of the application used, when your electronic artwork is finalized, please 'save as' or convert the images to one of the following formats (note the resolution requirements for line drawings, halftones, and line/halftone combinations given below):
EPS (or PDF): Vector drawings. Embed the font or save the text as 'graphics'.
TIFF (or JPG): Color or grayscale photographs (halftones): always use a minimum of 300 dpi.
TIFF (or JPG): Bitmapped line drawings: use a minimum of 1000 dpi.
TIFF (or JPG): Combinations bitmapped line/half-tone (color or grayscale): a minimum of 500 dpi is required.

Please do not:
• Supply files that are optimized for screen use (e.g., GIF, BMP, PICT, WPG); the resolution is too low.
• Supply files that are too low in resolution.
• Submit graphics that are disproportionately large for the content.

Figure captions
Ensure that each illustration has a caption. A caption should comprise a brief title (not on the figure itself) and a description of the illustration. Keep text in the illustrations themselves to a minimum but explain all symbols and abbreviations used.

Tables
Tables and figures should be constructed so as to be intelligible without reference to this text, each table and column being provided with a heading. Tables. Captions should be typewritten together on a separate sheet. The same information should not be reproduced in both tables and figures.

References
References should be prepared using the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association for style. They should be placed on a separate sheet at the end of the paper, double-spaced, in alphabetical order.

References should be quoted in the text by giving the author's name, followed by the year, e.g. (Hubbard & Ramachandran, 2001) or Hubbard and Ramachandran (2001).

For more than two authors, all names are given when first cited, but when subsequently referred to, the name of the first author is given followed by the words et al., as for example--First citation: Reuter, Roth, Holve and Hennig (2006) but subsequently, Reuter et al. (2006).

References to journals should include the author's name followed by initials, year, paper title, journal title, volume number and page numbers, e.g. Nettle, D. (2006). Schizotypy and mental health amongst poets, visual artists, and mathematicians. Journal of Research in Personality, 40, 876-890.

discursive history. In F. Andrada, E. Martin, & A. Spira (Eds.), Inner worlds outside (pp. 51-69). Dublin: Irish Museum of Modern Art.

This journal should be cited in lists of references as Personality and Individual Differences.

**Web references**

As a minimum, the full URL should be given and the date when the reference was last accessed. Any further information, if known (DOI, author names, dates, reference to a source publication, etc.), should also be given. Web references should be listed separately after the reference list under a different heading - Web References.

**Citation in text**

Please ensure that every reference cited in the text is also present in the reference list (and vice versa). Any references cited in the abstract must be given in full. Unpublished results and personal communications are not recommended in the reference list, but may be mentioned in the text. If these references are included in the reference list they should follow the standard reference style of the journal and should include a substitution of the publication date with either 'Unpublished results' or 'Personal communication'. Citation of a reference as 'in press' implies that the item has been accepted for publication.

**References in a special issue**

Please ensure that the words 'this issue' are added to any references in the list (and any citations in the text) to other articles in the same Special Issue.

**Reference management software**

Most Elsevier journals have their reference template available in many of the most popular reference management software products. These include all products that support Citation Style Language styles (http://citationstyles.org), such as Mendeley (http://www.mendeley.com/features/reference-manager) and Zotero (https://www.zotero.org/), as well as EndNote (http://endnote.com/downloads/styles). Using the word processor plug-ins from these products, authors only need to select the appropriate journal template when preparing their article, after which citations and bibliographies will be automatically formatted in the journal's style. If no template is yet available for this journal, please follow the format of the sample references and citations as shown in this Guide.

Users of Mendeley Desktop can easily install the reference style for this journal by clicking the following link:

http://open.mendeley.com/use-citation-style/personality-and-individual-differences

When preparing your manuscript, you will then be able to select this style using the Mendeley plug-ins for Microsoft Word or LibreOffice.

**Reference formatting**

There are no strict requirements on reference formatting at submission. References
can be in any style or format as long as the style is consistent. Where applicable, author(s) name(s), journal title/book title, chapter title/article title, year of publication, volume number/book chapter and the pagination must be present. Use of DOI is highly encouraged. The reference style used by the journal will be applied to the accepted article by Elsevier at the proof stage. Note that missing data will be highlighted at proof stage for the author to correct. If you do wish to format the references yourself they should be arranged according to the following examples:

**Journal abbreviations source**
Journal names should be abbreviated according to the List of Title Word Abbreviations: [http://www.issn.org/services/online-services/access-to-the-ltwa/](http://www.issn.org/services/online-services/access-to-the-ltwa/).

**AudioSlides**
The journal encourages authors to create an AudioSlides presentation with their published article. AudioSlides are brief, webinar-style presentations that are shown next to the online article on ScienceDirect. This gives authors the opportunity to summarize their research in their own words and to help readers understand what the paper is about. More information and examples are available at [https://www.elsevier.com/audioslides](https://www.elsevier.com/audioslides). Authors of this journal will automatically receive an invitation e-mail to create an AudioSlides presentation after acceptance of their paper.

**Supplementary material**
Supplementary material can support and enhance your scientific research. Supplementary files offer the author additional possibilities to publish supporting applications, high-resolution images, background datasets, sound clips and more. Please note that such items are published online exactly as they are submitted; there is no typesetting involved (supplementary data supplied as an Excel file or as a PowerPoint slide will appear as such online). Please submit the material together with the article and supply a concise and descriptive caption for each file. If you wish to make any changes to supplementary data during any stage of the process, then please make sure to provide an updated file, and do not annotate any corrections on a previous version. Please also make sure to switch off the 'Track Changes' option in any Microsoft Office files as these will appear in the published supplementary file(s). For more detailed instructions please visit our artwork instruction pages at [https://www.elsevier.com/artworkinstructions](https://www.elsevier.com/artworkinstructions).

**Open data**
This journal supports Open Data, enabling authors to submit any raw (unprocessed) research data with their article for open access publication on ScienceDirect under the CC BY license. For more information, please visit [http://www.elsevier.com/about/research-data/open-data](http://www.elsevier.com/about/research-data/open-data).

**Submission checklist**
**Ensure that:**
One author has been designated as the corresponding author with contact details:
• E-mail address
• Full postal address
• Telephone number
All necessary files have been uploaded, and contain:
• Keywords
• All figure captions
• All tables (including title, description, footnotes)
Further considerations
• Manuscript has been 'spell-checked' and 'grammar-checked'
• References are in the correct format for this journal
• All references mentioned in the Reference list are cited in the text, and vice versa
• Permission has been obtained for use of copyrighted material from other sources (including the Web)
• Color figures are clearly marked as being intended for color reproduction on the Web (free of charge) and in print, or to be reproduced in color on the Web (free of charge) and in black-and-white in print
• If only color on the Web is required, black-and-white versions of the figures are also supplied for printing purposes
• Title page has to be uploaded separately and it is a mandatory submission item
• Cover letter has to be uploaded as a separate document
• Articles should contain page number
• Ensure that the manuscript including the references are in double line spacing
• Ensure that the author's identity is removed from the original manuscript
• Highlights are submitted in the proper format
• Acknowledgments has to be uploaded as separate document
Appendix B

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Notification of Expedited Approval

To Chief Investigator or Project Supervisor: Doctor Tanya Hanstock
Cc Co-investigators / Research Students: Ms Emma Hevers
Re Protocol: The Relationship Between Adult Attachment Style and Paternal Parenting
Date:
Reference No: H-2015-0129
Date of Initial Approval: 16-Jun-2015

Thank you for your Response to Conditional Approval (minor amendments) submission to the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) seeking approval in relation to the above protocol.

Your submission was considered under Expedited review by the Ethics Administrator.

I am pleased to advise that the decision on your submission is Approved effective 16-Jun-2015.

In approving this protocol, the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) is of the opinion that the project complies with the provisions contained in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, 2007, and the requirements within this University relating to human research.

Approval will remain valid subject to the submission, and satisfactory assessment, of annual progress reports. If the approval of an External HREC has been "noted" the approval period is as determined by that HREC.

The full Committee will be asked to ratify this decision at its next scheduled meeting. A formal Certificate of Approval will be available upon request. Your approval number is H-2015-0129.

If the research requires the use of an Information Statement, ensure this number is inserted at the relevant point in the Complaints paragraph prior to distribution to potential participants You may then proceed with the research.

Conditions of Approval

This approval has been granted subject to you complying with the requirements for Monitoring of Progress, Reporting of Adverse Events, and Variations to the Approved Protocol as detailed below.

PLEASE NOTE: In the case where the HREC has "noted" the approval of an External HREC, progress reports and reports of adverse events are to be submitted to the External HREC only. In the case of Variations to the approved protocol, or a Renewal of approval, you will apply to the External
HREC for approval in the first instance and then Register that approval with the University's HREC.

- **Monitoring of Progress**

Other than above, the University is obliged to monitor the progress of research projects involving human participants to ensure that they are conducted according to the protocol as approved by the HREC. A progress report is required on an annual basis. Continuation of your HREC approval for this project is conditional upon receipt, and satisfactory assessment, of annual progress reports. You will be advised when a report is due.

- **Reporting of Adverse Events**

1. It is the responsibility of the person first named on this Approval Advice to report adverse events.
2. Adverse events, however minor, must be recorded by the investigator as observed by the investigator or as volunteered by a participant in the research. Full details are to be documented, whether or not the investigator, or his/her deputies, consider the event to be related to the research substance or procedure.
3. Serious or unforeseen adverse events that occur during the research or within six (6) months of completion of the research, must be reported by the person first named on the Approval Advice to the (HREC) by way of the Adverse Event Report form (via RIMS at [https://rims.newcastle.edu.au/login.asp](https://rims.newcastle.edu.au/login.asp)) within 72 hours of the occurrence of the event or the investigator receiving advice of the event.
4. Serious adverse events are defined as:
   - Causing death, life threatening or serious disability.
   - Causing or prolonging hospitalisation.
   - Overdoses, cancers, congenital abnormalities, tissue damage, whether or not they are judged to be caused by the investigational agent or procedure.
   - Causing psycho-social and/or financial harm. This covers everything from perceived invasion of privacy, breach of confidentiality, or the diminution of social reputation, to the creation of psychological fears and trauma.
   - Any other event which might affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.
5. Reports of adverse events must include:
   - Participant's study identification number;
   - date of birth;
   - date of entry into the study;
   - treatment arm (if applicable);
   - date of event;
   - details of event;
   - the investigator's opinion as to whether the event is related to the research procedures; and
   - action taken in response to the event.

6. Adverse events which do not fall within the definition of serious or unexpected, including those reported from other sites involved in the research, are to be reported in detail at the time of the annual progress report to the HREC.

- **Variations to approved protocol**

If you wish to change, or deviate from, the approved protocol, you will need to submit an Application for Variation to Approved Human Research (via RIMS at [https://rims.newcastle.edu.au/login.asp](https://rims.newcastle.edu.au/login.asp)). Variations may include, but are not limited to, changes or additions to investigators, study design, study population, number of participants, methods of
recruitment, or participant information/consent documentation. **Variations must be approved by the (HREC) before they are implemented** except when Registering an approval of a variation from an external HREC which has been designated the lead HREC, in which case you may proceed as soon as you receive an acknowledgement of your Registration.

### Linkage of ethics approval to a new Grant

HREC approvals cannot be assigned to a new grant or award (ie those that were not identified on the application for ethics approval) without confirmation of the approval from the Human Research Ethics Officer on behalf of the HREC.

Best wishes for a successful project.

Professor Allyson Holbrook  
**Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee**

*For communications and enquiries:*

**Human Research Ethics Administration**

Research Services  
Research Integrity Unit  
The Chancellery  
The University of Newcastle  
Callaghan NSW 2308  
T +61 2 492 17894  
F +61 2 492 17164  
Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au


**Linked University of Newcastle administered funding:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding body</th>
<th>Funding project title</th>
<th>First named investigator</th>
<th>Grant Ref</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

---
Appendix C

Information Sheet

Dr Tanya Hanstock
Senior Lecturer
School of Psychology
University of Newcastle
University Drive
Callaghan NSW 2308
Australia
Ph: (02) 4921 5641
E-mail: Tanya.Hanstock@newcastle.edu.au

Information Statement for the Research Project:
Adult Attachment Style and Paternal Parenting Practice

Document Version 3; dated 03/07/2015

You are invited to participate in the research project identified above which is being
conducted by Emma Hevers and Dr Tanya Hanstock from the School of Psychology
at the University of Newcastle.

The research is part of Emma Hevers’ Master of Clinical Psychology studies at the
University of Newcastle, supervised by Dr Tanya Hanstock from the School of
Psychology

Why is the research being done?
The purpose of the research is to investigate whether there is a relationship between
fathers’ parenting style and their adult attachment style.

Who can participate in the research?
You are invited to participate if you are a father and currently have contact or are
caring (on a full-time or part-time basis) for your biological child/children aged 2 to
12 years.

What would you be asked to do?
If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete an online
survey/questionnaire about your adult attachment style. You will then be asked to
complete 2 short questionnaires looking at parenting style and sense of competency.

What choice do you have?
Participation in this research is entirely your choice. Only those people who give their informed consent will be included in the project. Whether or not you decide to participate, your decision will not disadvantage you. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw from the project at any time prior to submitting your completed survey. Please note that due to the anonymous nature of the survey, you will not be able to withdraw your response after it has been submitted.

**How much time will it take?**
The questionnaire/survey should take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

**What are the risks and benefits of participating?**
Some of the questions deal with potentially sensitive issues such as your feelings of competency as a parent. You will be asked to rate your level of agreement with a number of statements, some of which include reference to your mental health and the different ways in which you may interact your child. Should you find any of the questions upsetting you can stop your participation at any time.

You can also contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 should you wish to seek support regarding any of the issues raised within the questionnaire/survey.

Whilst there are no anticipated benefits to you personally in participating in this research, the findings will help contribute to future research in relation to paternal attachment and parenting.

**How will your privacy be protected?**
The collected data will be stored securely on a password protected computer in the Chief Investigator’s office. Data will be retained for a minimum of 5 years as per University of Newcastle requirements.

Due to the anonymous nature of the survey/questionnaire the responses you provide will not be identifiable.

**How will the information collected be used?**
The collected data will contribute towards Emma Hevers’ Masters of Clinical Psychology Thesis and may be presented in academic publications or conferences. Non-identifiable data may be also be shared with other parties to encourage scientific scrutiny and to contribute to further research and public knowledge, or as required by law.

You can access a summary of the results of the research by emailing researcher Dr Tanya Hanstock after January 2016.

Individual participants will not be named or identified in any reports arising from the project although individual anonymous responses may be quoted.

**What do you need to do to participate?**
Please read this Information Statement and be sure you understand its contents before you consent to participate. If there is anything you do not understand, or you have questions, please contact the researcher.
If you would like to participate, please click on the following link and complete the online survey.


Completion of the online survey will be taken as your implied consent to participate.

If you are a University of Newcastle student you have the opportunity to participate in the research in exchange for partial course credit. This is a voluntary option and is not compulsory. If you are eligible to obtain course credit you will receive one credit upon completion of the survey.

Participants who volunteer from the general university or the general community population will be eligible to win one of four Bunnings gift vouchers to the value of $100 through random allocation following completion of the questionnaire. If you would like to be entered in the draw you will be asked for your email address, this information will be stored separately from the questionnaire data to ensure your anonymity.

Further information
If you would like further information please contact Emma Hevers at Emma.Hevers@uon.edu.au or Dr Tanya Hanstock at Tanya.Hanstock@newcastle.edu.au

Thank you for considering this invitation.

Dr Tanya Hanstock
Chief Investigator

Emma Hevers
Student Researcher

Complaints about this research
This project has been approved by the University’s Human Research Ethics Committee, Approval No. H-2015-0129

Should you have concerns about your rights as a participant in this research, or you have a complaint about the manner in which the research is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or, if an independent person is preferred, to the Human Research Ethics Officer, Research Office, The Chancellery, The University of Newcastle, University Drive, Callaghan NSW 2308, Australia, telephone (02) 49216333, email Human-Ethics@newcastle.edu.au.
Appendix D

Demographics Questions

What is your age?

N.B., Options ranges from 18 - 100

What is your marital status?

Please choose only one of the following:

- □ Single
- □ Defacto
- □ Married
- □ Divorced
- □ Widowed

How old is your child?

Please choose only one of the following:

- □ 2
- □ 3
- □ 4
- □ 5
- □ 6
- □ 7
- □ 8
- □ 9
- □ 10
- □ 11
- □ 12

What is the age of your youngest child? *

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:
Answer was 'Two' or 'Three' or 'Four' or 'Five or more' at question '3 [DEM03]’ (How many biological children do you have)

Please choose only one of the following:

- □ 2
- □ 3
- □ 4
- □ 5
- □ 6
- □ 7
- □ 8
What gender is your child?

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:
Answer was 'One' at question '3 [DEM03]' (How many biological children do you have)

Please choose only one of the following:

- Female
- Male

What is the gender of your youngest child?

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:
Answer was 'Two' or 'Three' or 'Four' or 'Five or more' at question '3 [DEM03]' (How many biological children do you have)

Please choose only one of the following:

- Female
- Male

Are you living with your youngest child’s biological mother?

Please choose only one of the following:

- Yes
- No

Are you residing with a different partner?

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:
Answer was ‘No’ at question ‘8 [DEM04]’ (Are you living with your youngest child’s biological mother?)

Please choose only one of the following:

- Yes
- No

How much care do you have of your child(ren)?

Please choose only one of the following:

- Full time carer
- Shared care
How many hours per week do you have your child(ren)?

Only answer this question if the following conditions are met:
Answer was 'Shared care' at question '10 [DEM05]' (How much care do you have of your child(ren)?)

Only numbers may be entered in this field.

Please write your answer here:

How amicable (friendly, civil and courteous) would you say your relationship is with your biological child's mother?

Please choose only one of the following:

- Never Amicable
- Rarely Amicable
- Sometimes Amicable
- Mostly Amicable
- Always Amicable

What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

Please choose only one of the following:

- Never went to school
- Year 1
- Year 2
- Year 3
- Year 4
- Year 5
- Year 6
- Year 7
- Year 8
- Year 9
- Year 10
- Year 11
- Year 12
- TAFE
- Bachelors degree
- Honours degree
- Masters degree
- Doctorate degree
- PhD

How many hours of employment do you usually work at your job each week?

Please choose only one of the following:
- ☐ 35 or more hours
- ☐ Less than 35 hours
- ☐ I am currently unemployed
Appendix E

Experiences in Close Relationships Scale – Revised – General Short Form

The measure is a general short form of the ECR-R (Fraley, R. C., Waller, N. G., & Brennan, K. A., 2000).

Details of psychometric properties can be found in:


Think about all of the people in your life. Now read each of the following statements and rate how much it describes your feelings.

**Put an ☐ in on box only**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree Strongly</th>
<th>Neutral/Mixed</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I prefer not to show others how I feel deep down</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I often worry that other people close to me don’t really love me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on other people.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I often worry that other people don’t care as much about me as I care about them.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I am very comfortable being close to other people.*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Sometimes people change their feelings about me for no apparent reason.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. It is usually easy for me to discuss my problems and concerns with other people.*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. My desire to be close sometimes scares people away.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. It helps to turn to others for support in times of need.*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. My relationships with people makes me doubt myself.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I am nervous when people get too emotionally close to me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. When I show my feelings to people I care about, I’m afraid that they will not feel the same about me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13. I find it easy to depend on other people.*

14. I am afraid that once somebody gets to know me, he or she won’t like who I am.

15. It is easy for me to be affectionate with other people.*

16. It makes me mad that I don’t get the affection and support I need from other people.

17. I feel comfortable sharing private thoughts and feelings with other people.*

18. I worry a lot about my relationships.

19. I feel comfortable depending on other people.*

20. I find that other people don’t want to be as close as I would like.

10 items for anxiety (even numbers) and 10 for avoidance (odd numbers)

* = reverse scored

Use mean of scale for total scores. Reduced from 36 items. Modified to refer to people in general (others) rather than romantic partners.
### Appendix F

**Relationships Questionnaire**

Following are four general relationship styles that people often report. Place a checkmark next to the letter corresponding to the style that best describes you or is closest to the way you are.

____ A. It is easy for me to become emotionally close to others. I am comfortable depending on them and having them depend on me. I don’t worry about being alone or having others not accept me.

____ B. I am uncomfortable getting close to others. I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them. I worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.

____ C. I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others, but I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I am uncomfortable being without close relationships, but I sometimes worry that others don’t value me as much as I value them.

____ D. I am comfortable without close emotional relationships. It is very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient, and I prefer not to depend on others or have others depend on me.

*Now please rate each of the relationship styles above to indicate how well or poorly each description corresponds to your general relationship style.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style A</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style B</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style C</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style D</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix G

Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire – Short Version

**Please read each of the following statements and rate how much it describes your behaviour towards your child.**

Please choose the appropriate response for each item:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Once in a while</th>
<th>About half of the time</th>
<th>Very often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am responsive to my child's feelings and needs</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use physical punishment as a way of disciplining my child</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I take my child's wishes into account before asking the child to do something</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When my child asks why he/she has to conform, I state because I said so, or I am your father and I want you to</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I explain to my child how I feel about the child's good and bad behaviour</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I spank when my child is disobedient</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I encourage my child to talk about his/her troubles</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find it difficult to discipline my child</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I encourage my child to freely express himself/herself even when disagreeing with me</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I punish by taking privileges away from my child with little if any explanations</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I emphasise the reason for rules</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I give comfort and understanding when my child is upset</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I yell or shout when my child misbehaves</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I give praise when my child is good</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I give into my child when the child causes a scene about something</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I lose my temper with my child</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I threaten my child with punishment more often than actually giving it</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I take into account my child's preferences in making plans for the family</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I grab my child when being disobedient</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I state punishments to my child and do not actually do them</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I show respect for my child's opinions by encouraging my child to express them</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I allow my child to give input into family rules</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I scold and criticise to make my child improve</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I spoil my child</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I give my child reasons why rules should be obeyed</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use threats as punishment with little or no justification</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have warm and intimate times together with my child</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Once in a while</td>
<td>About half of the time</td>
<td>Very often</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I punish by putting my child off somewhere alone with little if any explanations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I help my child to understand the impact of behaviour by encouraging my child to talk about the consequences of his/her own actions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I scold or criticise when my child's behaviour doesn't meet my expectations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I explain the consequences of the child's behaviour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I slap my child when the child misbehaves</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix H

**Parenting Sense of Competence Scale**

Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. The problems of taking care of a child are easy to solve once you know how your actions affect your child, an understanding I have acquired.  
   1 2 3 4 5 6

2. Even though being a parent could be rewarding, I am frustrated now while my child is at his / her present age.  
   1 2 3 4 5 6

3. I go to bed the same way I wake up in the morning, feeling I have not accomplished a whole lot.  
   1 2 3 4 5 6

4. I do not know why it is, but sometimes when I’m supposed to be in control, I feel more like the one being manipulated.  
   1 2 3 4 5 6

5. My father was better prepared to be a good father than I am.  
   1 2 3 4 5 6

6. I would make a fine model for a new father to follow in order to learn what she would need to know in order to be a good parent.  
   1 2 3 4 5 6

7. Being a parent is manageable, and any problems are easily solved.  
   1 2 3 4 5 6

8. A difficult problem in being a parent is not knowing whether you’re doing a good job or a bad one.  
   1 2 3 4 5 6

9. Sometimes I feel like I’m not getting anything done.  
   1 2 3 4 5 6

10. I meet by own personal expectations for expertise in caring for my child.  
    1 2 3 4 5 6

11. If anyone can find the answer to what is troubling my child, I am the one.  
    1 2 3 4 5 6

12. My talents and interests are in other areas, not being a parent.  
    1 2 3 4 5 6

13. Considering how long I’ve been a father, I feel thoroughly familiar with this role.  
    1 2 3 4 5 6

14. If being a father of a child were only more interesting, I would be motivated to do a better job as a parent.  
    1 2 3 4 5 6

15. I honestly believe I have all the skills necessary to be a good father to my child.  
    1 2 3 4 5 6

16. Being a parent makes me tense and anxious.  
    1 2 3 4 5 6

17. Being a good father is a reward in itself.  
    1 2 3 4 5 6
Appendix I

Depression Stress and Anxiety Scale – 21 Item Version

Please read each statement and circle a number 0, 1, 2 or 3 which indicates how much the statement applied to you over the past week. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any statement.

The rating scale is as follows:
0 Did not apply to me at all
1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time
2 Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time
3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time

| 1 | I found it hard to wind down | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 2 | I was aware of dryness of my mouth | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 3 | I couldn't seem to experience any positive feeling at all | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | I experienced breathing difficulty (eg, excessively rapid breathing, breathlessness in the absence of physical exertion) | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 5 | I found it difficult to work up the initiative to do things | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 6 | I tended to over-react to situations | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 7 | I experienced trembling (eg, in the hands) | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 8 | I felt that I was using a lot of nervous energy | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 9 | I was worried about situations in which I might panic and make a fool of myself | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 10 | I felt that I had nothing to look forward to | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 11 | I found myself getting agitated | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 12 | I found it difficult to relax | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 13 | I felt down-hearted and blue | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 14 | I was intolerant of anything that kept me from getting on with what I was doing | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 15 | I felt I was close to panic | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 16 | I was unable to become enthusiastic about anything | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 17 | I felt I wasn't worth much as a person | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 18 | I felt that I was rather touchy | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 19 | I was aware of the action of my heart in the absence of physical exertion (eg, sense of heart rate increase, heart missing a beat) | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 20 | I felt scared without any good reason | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 21 | I felt that life was meaningless | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |