

Original Article

The Effect of Adolescent Boys' Attachment to Fathers on Social and Emotional Development

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Abstract. Father involvement during adolescence remains relatively low and may negatively impact boys' social skills and emotional regulation. This research aims to provide deeper insight into how adolescent boys' attachment to their fathers contributes to their social-emotional development. This study employed an associative quantitative method involving 71 respondents selected through purposive sampling, based on the criteria of male students aged 15–18 years who lived with their fathers. Data were collected using adapted research instruments, namely the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) and the Social-Emotional and Character Development Scale (SECDs). Simple linear regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis. The results show a significant influence of father–son attachment on social-emotional development ($F_{count} = 15.817 > F_{table} = 3.98$; $p < 0.05$). The determination coefficient (R^2) of 0.186 indicates that 18.6% of the variation in social-emotional development is explained by attachment to fathers, while the remaining 81.4% is influenced by other unexamined factors. The findings highlight the importance of fathers' involvement in fostering adolescents' social-emotional development. Therefore, schools are encouraged to optimize guidance and counseling services by providing family engagement programs, including parenting workshops and father–child counseling, to strengthen paternal support.

Keywords: Attachment, Social Emotional Development, Adolescent Boys.

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Introduction

Adolescence is the transition phase from childhood to adulthood. Adolescence is divided into three stages: early adolescence, middle adolescence, and late adolescence. The age criteria for early adolescence are 13-15 years. The age criteria for middle adolescence are 15-18 years. The criteria for late adolescence are 18-21 years. The most important aspect of adolescence is not age, but rather the developmental tasks the individual is able to accomplish (Agustriyana et al., 2017).

During adolescence, individuals experience development in all aspects of life, including biological, cognitive, and socio-emotional aspects. Adolescence is characterized by the development of strong relationships, building relationships, and exploring future career paths. Adolescence is a crucial time for receiving special care and attention from parents and the surrounding environment. Adolescence is a period of individual development closely related to emotional issues (Ashran et al., 2020).

Socio-emotional development is a crucial stage in children's development, enabling them to integrate with those outside their family. Appropriate habits and stimuli will help children become accustomed to interacting with others. Besides home, school is also a place where children learn to explore many things and meet peers and teachers. Limiting this exploration

will hinder children's social and emotional development. Limited interaction with their families prevents them from learning about the concepts of sharing, empathy, and other skills (Rogamelia et al., 2022).

Social and emotional development is crucial for individuals, especially as individuals are inextricably linked to interactions with their environment (Syahrul & Nurhafizah, 2021). A child's sensitivity to understanding other people's feelings can be seen in everyday life when interacting with parents, siblings, peers, and the wider community (Ningsih et al., 2022). Early social and emotional development in children develops through their relationships with parents or caregivers at home, especially with family members (Firmansyah, 2021). Unconsciously, children begin to learn to interact with people outside themselves, namely those around them (Djamaluddin et al., 2025). Social interactions then expand, extending beyond family to neighbors and, ultimately, school (Mawaddah, 2023).

At school, children grow and develop based on interactions within their environment. The emergence of good and bad behavior indicates that children are beginning to understand and comprehend social rules and norms that can be used to assess their behavior. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS 2021) indicates an increase in juvenile delinquency from year to year. The trend of juvenile delinquency and juvenile crime, ranging from physical violence to psychological violence, shows an increase year after year. Based on BPS (2021) juvenile delinquency increased by 10.7% from 2018 to 2021. According to research by ENH & Sartika, (2022) the average number of juvenile offenders in South Sumatra Province who were incarcerated in the Palembang LPKA throughout 2020 was the highest in Indonesia. This data does not include data on juvenile inmates in several other prisons and detention centers in South Sumatra. During this period, the average number of juvenile offenders in South Sumatra was 171. According to Islamiyah (2019) a child's social and emotional development can be influenced by various factors, both internal and external, such as family and play environments. The family environment is a child's first environment; all behaviors that emerge in children are the result of imitating the behavior of their parents. Parents are older or respected individuals, consisting of fathers, mothers, grandparents, and parents who have the obligation to care for and educate their children.

The family is the smallest unit in society and is the primary place for educating, nurturing, socializing values, and developing the abilities of all its members so they can function effectively in society, as well as providing satisfaction and a healthy social environment to achieve family prosperity (Lubis et al., 2021). The family is also a place for children to learn to develop aspects of life that will later shape a good personality in interacting with the environment and others (Irfanullah & Nihayah, 2023). According to Maisyarah et al. (2017) the family is one of the centers of education. In the family, education does not proceed based on formalized provisions but rather takes the form of nurturing that grows from a true moral awareness between children and parents. The family is the primary influence in the process of growth, development, and attitudes of children (Hanifah & Farida, 2023). One form of important relationship with parents that influences this development is attachment, namely the emotional bond formed through early interactions between children and parents (Novitasari et al., 2020). Thus, the quality of the relationship and interaction between parents and children forms an attachment pattern that is very important for emotional and social development in children (Mimin et al., 2025)

According to Surahman (2021: 16) the term attachment was first coined by British psychologist John Bowlby in 1958. A more comprehensive formulation was proposed by Mary Ainsworth in 1969. Attachment is a strong emotional bond that children develop through interactions with significant others in their lives, usually their parents. Attachment plays a crucial role in helping adolescents fulfill their developmental tasks, particularly in achieving independence. Bowlby defined attachment as a strong, intense, affectionate bond between two individuals. A strong attachment between parents and adolescents allows adolescents to become

more independent, thus preventing them from facing rejection from their parents in making independent decisions.

Attachment is an emotional bond that develops through interactions with significant others, in this case, parents. Attachment is a form of affectionate relationship, built on an emotional bond that fosters a sense of security (Utami & Pratiwi, 2021). Entering adolescence, attachment to parents can be interpreted as an emotional relationship or affective relationship between adolescents and parents where the relationship that is built is reciprocal, long-lasting and provides a sense of security even though the parents as the attached figure are not close to the individual concerned (Ainsworth et al., 2015).

According to Santrock, (2016) attachment between parents and adolescents is crucial because it can have a number of positive effects on emotional intelligence. Adolescents with strong attachments are on a positive path to internalizing parental socialization goals and family values. Regarding relationship quality, attachment to parents plays a crucial role in adolescents' moral development. Attachment is a crucial element in emotional, social, and cognitive development in adolescents (G. Yolanda et al., 2018). To form attachments, a sense of trust must be established in children from infancy. Secure attachment experiences between parents and children play a crucial role in developing positive mental constructs, which serve as resources for coping with negative events (Natalia & Lestari, 2015).

Based on existing phenomena, attachment to parents declines as adolescents enter adolescence, as adolescents develop self-control and make choices (Aini & Afdal, 2023). Adolescents tend to build relationships with someone who understands them (Dilla et al., 2024). Within families, girls tend to communicate and build good relationships with their parents because they can control their feelings and express empathy (Puspitawati et al., 2021). Meanwhile, boys tend to be less willing to express themselves due to feelings of pride or the belief that men can handle things on their own (Nelyahardi et al., 2022).

Consequently, communication between boys and their parents is limited. Septariana & Hastuti, (2019) found significant differences between male and female adolescents regarding their father attachment. Adolescent attachment was still categorized as moderate, with boys, particularly those with lower attachment to their fathers than girls. Approximately 75.7 percent of the adolescent sample was categorized as father-attached, compared with 63.8 percent of girls. Furthermore, only 2.7 percent of boys have a strong attachment to their fathers, compared to 21.3 percent of girls (Septariana & Hastuti, 2019). Many studies have found the importance of fathers' roles in building self confidence (Larasati & Rahmasari, 2024), communication (Gita & Parapat, 2024), and alienation because they can influence development. The closer a child is to their father, the less likely it is to engage in immoral or negative behavior (Ntoma & Kusmawati, 2024).

A father's role and parenting behavior influence a child's development and well-being during the transition to adolescence (Nuryanto & Saptandari, 2025). A father's support is essential for adolescent boys to make social adjustments. The function of paternal social support for adolescent boys is to foster a sense of self-worth, academic success, and moral development (Maros & Juniar, 2016). A lack of paternal social support can lead to difficulties with social adjustment in adolescent boys, one of the consequences of which is deviant behavior (Rahayu & Hartati, 2015).

According to Yolanda & Prihanto, (2019) fathers are key figures in shaping a child's character and personality. Every father's behavior influences their children. Fathers are considered "fun parents" and have more playtime than mothers. Good fathers interact extensively with their children, providing physical stimulation. Fathers who fail to fulfill this role will negatively impact adolescents. A teenager who does not have a good relationship with his father will result in the child seeking attention from other people and will tend to have a character that does not meet expectations and will be detrimental to the family itself.

Fathers have their own unique way of relating to their family members, especially their children, and family relationships require these differences. While a father's responses may be

slightly less automatic and slower than a mother's, he is still able to build strong bonds with his children throughout life's stages (Nisa et al., 2022). Nothing can mature a man more than a father's involvement. Children who are not attached to and receive little attention from their parents will feel unloved and worthless (Kamila & Mukhlis, 2023). These feelings lead to the development of a negative self-concept. This self-concept makes it difficult for them to be independent and disciplined, which can impact later in life, making children more likely to adopt bad behaviors, such as stealing, lying, hurting, fighting, and so on (Situmorang & Budiman, 2022). Families that can provide positive examples for their environment can help children manage their feelings and regulate their moods, thus determining their success in motivating themselves to relate well to others (Amaliyah, 2021). Social emotional development tends to be successful if it is supported by a good environment from family, school, peers, or the external environment that supports it to develop positive emotions so as to avoid emotional mental problems or disorders (Ummah & Fitri, 2020).

Therefore, the role of fathers is crucial for the development of independence, self-control, and social skills (Yolanda & Prihanto, 2019). However, previous research on adolescent attachment has focused more on the mother-child relationship, for example, research conducted by Fernando & Elfida (2023) which examined the relationship between adolescent attachment and mothers and their social and emotional development. However, the role of paternal attachment in the social and emotional development of adolescent boys has received less specific research. In Indonesia, juvenile delinquency is predominantly male (BPS, 2021). Therefore, a deeper understanding is needed to examine family factors that have the potential to prevent deviant behavior. Therefore, this study is important to examine the extent to which adolescent boys' attachment to their fathers contributes to their social and emotional development.

Method

This study used an associative quantitative method to determine the influence of adolescent boys' attachment to their fathers on their social-emotional development. Data was collected cross-sectionally through a standardized questionnaire.

Participants

Participants in this study were 71 adolescent boys aged 15–18 years who were students at Lingua Prima Vocational School. All participants lived with their fathers and voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. This demographic was selected because it represents adolescent boys in early to middle adolescence who are in a crucial stage of developing social-emotional skills and attachment to parental figures

Sampling Procedures

This study employed a purposive sampling technique to determine the participants who met specific inclusion criteria. The criteria included male students aged 15–18 years, living with their fathers, and willing to participate in the research. Data collection was conducted through online questionnaires distributed using Google Forms during May–June 2024 at Lingua Prima Vocational School. The total number of participants who met the criteria and completed the questionnaire was 71 respondents.

Materials and Apparatus

Two standardized instruments were used to measure the research variables. The first instrument was the Social-Emotional and Character Development Scale (SECDs) developed by Ji et al (2021) , which measures the socio-emotional development variable. This instrument consists of six indicators: prosociality, honesty, self-development, self-control, respect at school, and respect at home. The SECDs uses a 4-point Likert scale to assess each item. The second instrument was the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA) developed by Armsden & Greenberg (1987). This scale measures the level of adolescent boys' attachment to their fathers and consists of three indicators: trust, communication, and alienation. The IPPA includes 29 validated items, each assessed using a 4-point Likert scale

Procedures

The research procedure began with identifying participants who met the inclusion criteria, followed by distributing the online questionnaires through Google Forms. All responses were collected automatically and compiled in a spreadsheet format for data analysis. Ethical consent was obtained from participants prior to data collection, and confidentiality was maintained throughout the process.

Design or Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 24. The primary statistical technique used was simple linear regression analysis, which aimed to determine the effect of adolescent boys' attachment to their fathers on their social-emotional development. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution were also used to describe participants' demographic characteristics and variable distributions before performing inferential tests.

Results and Discussions

Based on the 71 students who responded to the questionnaire at Lingua Prima Vocational School, the following characteristics can be identified. The majority of students were 17 years old (50.7%), which is in late adolescence. During this phase, boys are in the process of forming their identity and emotional independence, so relationships with their fathers play a crucial role in their social and emotional development. The highest birth order in families was the first child, with 30 students (42.3%). First children typically have greater responsibilities in the family and often have a different emotional closeness to their father than other children.

The highest number of siblings in the family was 19 students (26.8%), with two brothers. The majority of fathers' occupations were farmers, with 25 students (34.2%), while the remainder were traders, entrepreneurs, and teachers. The father's occupation can influence the intensity of interactions between fathers and children, such as the amount of time spent together and the type of emotional support provided. Regarding parental status, 70 students (98.6%) still had both a father and a mother, so the majority of respondents had direct experience with a father figure, which is relevant to the research focus on father-child attachment.

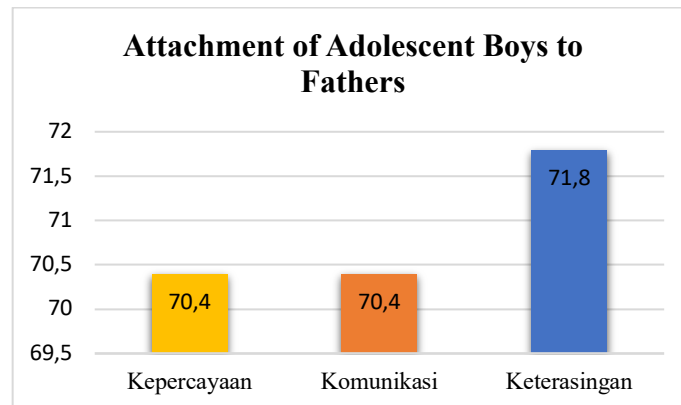


Figure 1. Stickiness Dimension Data Description

There are three categories of attachment: low, medium, and high. Based on the research results listed in Table 1, the attachment variable of adolescent boys with their fathers has an average of 91.55, with the dimensions of trust having an average of 50.06, communication with an average of 26.28, and alienation with an average of 54.70. The results obtained from the attachment variables and dimensions studied indicate a moderate category. This indicates that if closeness with a father can be built well, it will lead the child to a well-functioning relationship. Likewise, if the closeness of the father with the child is not well-established, the resulting relationship will be less well-functioning.

Table 1. Dimensions of Attachment of Adolescent Boys to Fathers

Dimensions	Min	Max	Mean \pm St. Dev
Trust	29	60	50,06 \pm 7,33
Communication	13	36	26,28 \pm 5, 39
Alienation	5	20	15,21 \pm 3,87

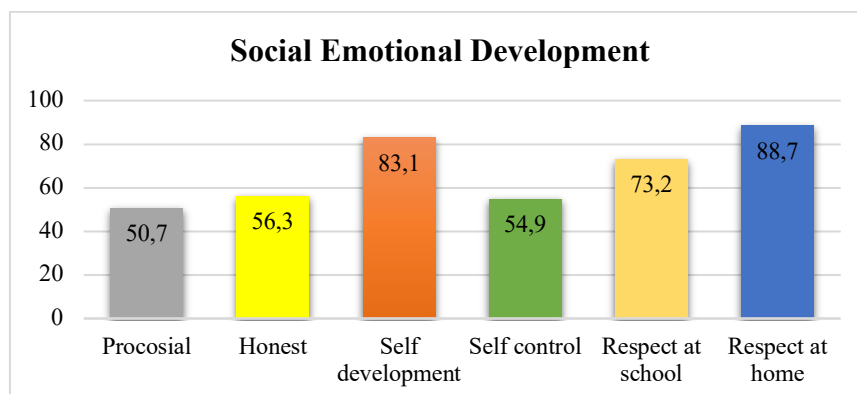


Figure 2. Development Dimension Data Description

There are three categories of social-emotional development: low, medium, and high. Based on the research results presented in Table 2, the social-emotional development variable has an average score of 80.85, with the prosocial dimension having an average score of 13.83, honesty with an average score of 17.01, self-development with an average score of 11.32, self-control with an average score of 9.96, respect at school with an average score of 18.34, and respect at home with an average score of 10.60. The results obtained from the social-emotional

development variables and dimensions studied indicate a moderate category. This indicates that the greater a boy's attachment to his father, the greater the opportunity for good social-emotional development in adolescence. Conversely, adolescent boys who lack attachment to their fathers typically exhibit low social-emotional development.

Table 2. Social Emotional Development

Dimensions	Min	Max	Mean \pm St,Dev
Procosial	9	16	13,83 \pm 2,06
Honest	7	20	17,01 \pm 2,90
Self Development	9	12	11,32 \pm 0,95
Self Control	3	12	9,96 \pm 2,00
Respect At School	11	20	18,34 \pm 2,21
Respect At Home	6	12	10,60 \pm 1,66

The results of the correlation coefficient significance test are (r_{xy}) = 0,607 and F_{hit} (F_{change}) = 15,817, with p-value = 0,000 < 0,05. Therefore H_0 is rejected. Thus, the correlation coefficient of attachment of adolescent boys with fathers and social emotional development is meaningful or significant. The coefficient of determination in this study can be seen from table 3, namely R_{square} = 0,186. Based on the calculation, it is known that the coefficient of determination is 18,6%. This gives the understanding that 18.6% of the variation in social emotional character development can be caused by the attachment of adolescent boys with fathers and the remaining 81.4% is caused by other factors.

Table 3. Correlation Test Results

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,432a	,186	,175	8,029

The results of the normality test in this study used Kolmogorov-Smirnov. The normality test aims to determine whether the data distribution is normal or not. The results of calculations using the SPSS version 22 application have a significance level of 0.200. Thus, a significance value of $0.200 > 0.05$ indicates a normally distributed residual value. Based on the linear regression equation test, $\hat{Y} = 54.751 + 0.285X$ is obtained. This means that the regression coefficient is positive so that it can be said that there is an influence of the attachment variable of adolescent boys with their fathers on social emotional development. The magnitude of the influence between the variables, attachment of adolescent boys with their fathers (X) on social emotional development (Y) can be seen from the coefficient of determination (R_{square}) = 0.186. This means that the attachment variable of adolescent boys with their fathers has an influence on social emotional development of 18.6%.

Attachment is a psychological relationship between humans, which is formed early in a child's life, which occurs between the child and the caregiver and has an impact on the formation of relationships that last throughout life (Bowlby dalam Linawati et al., 2020). Menurut Ainsworth et.al, (2015) entering adolescence, attachment to parents can be interpreted as an emotional or affective relationship between adolescents and parents where the relationship is reciprocal, long-lasting and provides a sense of security even though the parents as attachment figures are not close to the individual concerned. The important reason for exploring father-child closeness is because the father's role is very large in determining the positive and negative functioning of the child's psyche. If closeness with a father can be built well, it will lead the child to positive mental functioning. Likewise, if the father's closeness with the child is not built well, what happens is that the child's mental functioning will be negative (Rahmatullah, 2018).

From the results of data analysis regarding the attachment of adolescent boys to their fathers, it was found that the attachment between adolescent boys and their fathers was in the moderate category (63.4%). The attachment of adolescent boys to their fathers consists of three dimensions, namely trust, communication, and alienation. In the trust dimension, the majority of respondents were in the moderate category, namely 70.4%. It can be seen from the distribution of respondents' responses that the majority answered that closeness with a father can be formed through mutual respect, appreciation, and involvement in resolving conflicts. However, many adolescent boys still feel that their father's trust in them is still insufficient, due to the pattern of hierarchical relationships or male authority, so they are less open in expressing closeness. As for distrust in decision-making, it is considered that adolescent boys are still unstable in determining freedom in making choices so they are not yet responsible for the choices and consequences of their choices. In fact, adolescent boys with fathers with a good emotional relationship can have trust in mutual understanding and respect for choices and decisions. In line with research by Hakim et al., (2012) emotional comfort and closeness are strongly influenced by the level of trust a child has towards their parents. Children will be more trusting and closer to someone who provides an emotional bond. Giving children the freedom to make decisions about their future is the same as giving them trust. Giving children the freedom to determine their own life goals teaches them to be more responsible for their own lives. This is because children feel they are the ones making the choices, and any consequences of their choices are their sole responsibility (E. Z. Siregar & Harahap, 2022).

In the communication dimension, the majority of respondents were in the moderate category, at 70.4%. The distribution of respondents' responses indicated that fathers can guide teenage boys to be open and assess the quality of their involvement and verbal communication in discussing the problems they face. However, many teenage boys still feel that communication with their fathers is still lacking due to their fathers' busy work schedules, a lack of closeness with their fathers, and feelings of shame or embarrassment in discussing the problems they are experiencing. Consequently, communication and interaction between teenage boys and their fathers are not optimal. This is in line with research by Partasari et al., (2017) which also found that father figures are less involved in daily care due to a lack of free time with their children. This impacts children who find it difficult to form an emotional closeness with their fathers. In fact, it is appropriate for a father to be beside teenagers to help build self-esteem and help them socialize.

In the alienation dimension, the majority of respondents were in the moderate category, at 71.8%. The distribution of respondents' responses indicated that they experienced detachment from their parents or fathers. A lack of responsiveness from fathers, even when simply asking about their condition, problems, or what adolescent boys are experiencing, contributes to the lack of closeness between them and their fathers. Alienation can also arise due to the father's busy schedule as head of the family, or because the child has entered adolescence, who tends to spend time alone or with peers, resulting in less time for communication. This finding, in line with research by Linawati et al., (2020) indicates that adolescent boys have a high level of attachment to their fathers in the alienation dimension. This attachment arises between adolescent boys and their fathers because most of their time is spent playing online games and rarely communicating with their fathers.

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) defines social-emotional development as a child's ability to manage and express positive and negative emotions, relate to others, and learn to explore their environment (Nurmalitasari, 2015). Social-emotional development is increasingly gaining attention in child development. This is because children are formed through a developmental process in the learning process. A child's social-emotional development is characterized by the development of a child's ability to adapt to their surroundings, develop a sense of friendship that involves their emotions, thoughts, and behavior. A child's social development can be seen through the process by which children are able to develop their interpersonal skills, by learning to form friendships and being able to open up their

understanding of the people around them because in this way, children also understand the beauty of togetherness in their surroundings (Haryono, 2020)

From the results of data analysis regarding social emotional development, it was found that it was in the moderate category at 64.8%. Social emotional development has six dimensions: prosocial, honest, self-development, self-control, respect at school, and respect at home. In the prosocial dimension, the majority of respondents were in the moderate category at 50.7%. This dimension measures behavior, respecting the opinions of others, and providing benefits. The results of the study showed that the majority of male adolescents were able to behave well in the environment and with others according to applicable norms. In line with research by Rahajeng et al., (2018) prosocial behavior tends to be considered normatively positive and easily elicits positive responses from those around them. So it is not surprising that adolescents who have high prosocial behavior are easily accepted by the environment and peers, and easily attract the hearts of friends to become the center of attention.

On the honesty dimension, the majority of respondents fell into the moderate category (56.3%). This dimension measures the ability to tell the truth and have the courage to apologize. The results showed that the majority of adolescent boys were able to tell the truth to others. Consistent with research by Inten, (2017) a child's honesty is a key asset for living well in society. Honesty contains spiritual values that reflect various attitudes that favor truth and moral uprightness. Children's honesty must be nurtured and supported by parents and educators so that it can flourish. Starting with the habit of being honest with themselves, children will develop the courage to express their thoughts and ideas, and solve problems.

On the self-development dimension, the majority of respondents fell into the moderate category (83.1%). This dimension measures the ability to strive and set goals. The results showed that the majority of adolescent boys always strive to be better than they were before. In line with research by Mutawadhiah & Purwoko, (2017) self-development is necessary for adolescents because adolescence is a period when individuals learn to use their ability to give and receive in relationships with others. As they develop, adolescents are required to learn to adapt to a broader social environment. Self-disclosure skills possessed by adolescents will help them achieve academic success and self-adjustment. If adolescents lack self-disclosure skills, they will have difficulty communicating with others.

In the self-control dimension, the majority of respondents (54.9%) fell into the moderate category. This dimension measures the ability to control oneself and follow rules. The results showed that the majority of adolescent boys would ignore other children when they teased or insulted them. Consistent with research by Madjid et al., (2022) self-control is crucial for an individual when interacting with others. This allows the individual to gain respect from others and be accepted by their environment. Well-managed self-control allows individuals to suppress aggressive behavior, whether physical or verbal, angry, or hostile toward those around them.

In the respect at school dimension, the majority of respondents fell into the moderate category (73.2%). This dimension measures the ability to respect and value the school environment. The results showed that the majority of adolescent boys respect the school environment by following existing rules. Consistent with research by Siregar & Lubis, (2024) respect and appreciation are not only applied in the community but also in the school environment. In this case, teachers have a very important role in improving children's social emotional abilities, especially the attitude of mutual respect and appreciation for each other, by carrying out social interactions with the child's closest environment, such as the school environment or when in the classroom.

Based on the distribution of the respect at home dimension, the majority of respondents fell into the moderate category, with the highest percentage at 88.7%. This dimension measures the ability to respect and appreciate the home environment, such as obeying parental orders and regulations. The results show that most adolescent boys, even when entering adolescence with uncontrolled behavior, still obey all their parents orders. In line with research by Andrean & Munastiwi (2021) in a harmonious family, children will gain experience as basic training for

developing good social attitudes and behavior. Furthermore, children will also gain various understandings regarding rights and obligations, a sense of responsibility, sensitivity to their environment, good communication, and empathy. This means that a child living in a family characterized by intimacy and warmth will develop the principles of good group life as a foundation for their life in society.

Conclusions

Based on the research results obtained, it can be concluded that there is a positive influence between adolescent boys' attachment to their fathers on their social-emotional development. This means that the greater the boy's attachment to his father, the greater the opportunity for good social-emotional development in adolescents. Conversely, adolescent boys who lack attachment to their fathers typically exhibit poor social-emotional development. Because for boys, fathers are of the same gender, they are seen as role models in their future lives. Fathers tend to be more involved in raising their sons, especially as the boys grow older and mature.

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