

## Is Attachment a Fate? A Literature Review on Adult Attachment and Intimate Partner Violence

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### Abstract

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) continues to receive global scholarly attention. Adult attachment theory provides a lens to understand IPV in close relationships. This study explored whether childhood attachment persists into adulthood, how insecure adult attachment relates to IPV risk, and what additional factors influence this across domestic and dating contexts as a form of IPV. A systematic literature review was conducted following PRISMA 2020 guidelines. Articles were retrieved from Scopus and Google Scholar using predefined keywords, focusing on studies published between 2015–2025. A total of 22 studies (N = 7211) met the eligibility criteria. The findings indicate that while early attachment influences adult attachment, situational context and life experiences can also shape the way individuals respond to their partner or the attached figure. In addition, the dynamics of the adult attachment, anxiety, and avoidance components are related to victims and perpetrators of violence. This review deepens the understanding of IPV through the adult attachment lens, highlighting that attachment is not a deterministic factor in predicting IPV. Future studies should examine other psychological and contextual factors and support the development of counselling and intervention strategies for IPV prevention.

Keywords: adult attachment, dating violence, domestic violence, intimate partner violence

### Abstrak

Kasus kekerasan pada pasangan intim adalah isu yang menjadi perhatian bagi peneliti di dunia. Teori mengenai kelekatan (*adult attachment*) dapat memberikan pandangan untuk memahami kekerasan. Studi ini ingin melihat apakah gaya kelekatan pada masa anak-anak tetap stabil hingga dewasa, bagaimana kelekatan yang tidak aman berkaitan dengan risiko kekerasan dan faktor apa saja yang mempengaruhi kekerasan dalam rumah tangga dan kekerasan dalam pacaran sebagai bentuk dari kekerasan pada pasangan intim. Tinjauan literatur sistematis dilakukan mengikuti pedoman PRISMA 2020. Artikel diambil dari Scopus dan Google Scholar menggunakan kata kunci yang telah ditentukan sebelumnya, dengan fokus pada penelitian yang diterbitkan antara 2015–2025. Sebanyak 22 studi (N = 7211) memenuhi kriteria kelayakan. Temuan ini menunjukkan keterikatan masa kecil memengaruhi keterikatan orang dewasa, tetapi konteks situasional dan pengalaman hidup dapat membentuk cara individu menanggapi pasangan mereka atau sosok yang melekat. Selain itu, dinamika komponen kelekatan, kecemasan, dan penghindaran orang dewasa terkait dengan korban dan pelaku kekerasan. Tinjauan ini memperdalam pemahaman tentang IPV melalui lensa keterikatan dewasa, menekankan bahwa keterikatan bukanlah prediktor tetap. Studi

di masa depan harus memeriksa faktor psikologis dan kontekstual lainnya dan mendukung pengembangan konseling dan strategi intervensi untuk pencegahan IPV.

Kata kunci: *adult attachment*, kekerasan dalam pacaran, kekerasan pada pasangan, kekerasan dalam rumah tangga

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## Introduction

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) remains a pressing issue that has been widely discussed by researchers worldwide. Based on data collected globally, it was found that IPV cases are at least 30% experienced in women under 50 years old who are in a romantic relationship (World Health Organization, 2024). This means that 1 in 3 women has experienced IPV. In line with these findings, the number of IPV cases in Indonesia remains high. Based on data collected in real time by the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KemenPPPA) of the Republic of Indonesia, until mid-2025, cases of violence against women have reached 10.957, of which the most perpetrators are their partners (KemenPPPA, 2025).

IPV refers to behaviours occurring within close relationships that can manifest as physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse, and control behaviours (World Health Organization, 2022). In the Indonesian context, the definition of violence is more frequently associated with gender-based violence (GBV), particularly against women (Komnas Perempuan, 2024). Furthermore, violence is categorized into domestic and dating violence. Despite this categorization, the forms of violence in both cases remain aligned with the general definition of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse (Flynn & Graham, 2010; Komnas Perempuan, 2024; Straus et al., 1996).

IPV or GBV has a significant impact on various aspects of women's lives- psychologically, physically, and socially. Physically, IPV has a negative impact on health, such as increasing the risk of diabetes, sexually transmitted infections when having sexual intercourse with other people, increasing the risk of consuming illegal drugs and alcohol, increasing chronic diseases and other physical illnesses (Stubbs & Szoeki, 2022). In victims of violence that occurred in Bangladesh, several symptoms were found of post-traumatic stress disorder (Taccini & Mannarini, 2024), anxiety, and depression (Akter & Deeba, 2022; Cirici Amell et al., 2023). Not only that, socially, violent behaviour occurs in the household, IPV carried out on couples has also been found to be related to violence against children (Defina, 2024).

In the context of relationships with significant others, the concept of attachment has been increasingly explored in recent research (Velotti et al., 2018). Adult attachment is a crucial topic of discussion because it forms the basis for establishing relationships with others (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016). In addition, adult attachment can affect how individuals can have strategies in regulating their emotions (Henschel et al., 2020; Ifthiharfi et al., 2024), the presence of insecure attachment has been found to indirectly affect health

symptom categories such as vegetative dysfunction, agoraphobia, social phobia, and overall psychological symptom severity. (Lewczuk et al., 2021). Insecure attachment is positively associated with negative emotional states, including depression and loneliness, and negatively associated with self-esteem and overall life satisfaction (Zhang et al., 2022).

Attachment refers to the quality of the bond between the infant and caregiver (Bowlby, 1983). During the early developmental stages, a child's attachment figure is typically with the parent or primary caregiver. However, over time, this attachment figure shifts from parents to significant others, such as friends and romantic partners. The attachment formed in adulthood toward a friend or partner is commonly known as adult attachment (Hazan & Shaver, 1994). This framework is particularly relevant for examining IPV in romantic relationships because adult attachment can influence relationship dynamics and interactions (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016)

According to Mikulincer and Shaver (2016), the concept of adult attachment mirrors that of early childhood attachment. Bowlby (1983) proposed attachment theory by studying how the separation between a child and their attachment figure could lead to two key emotional responses: anxiety, characterized by distress when separated from the attachment figure, and avoidance, characterized by a tendency to withdraw from attachment figures. These two components are also observed in adults who are separated from or distant from their attachment figures (partners). According to Brennan et al. (1998), in healthy relationships, both anxiety and avoidance should remain low, resulting in a secure attachment style that fosters warm relationships and cooperative behaviours. However, in the context of romantic relationships involving violence, insecure attachment is more prevalent. In this case, either anxiety or avoidance is heightened, making individuals more vulnerable to becoming either perpetrators or victims of IPV (Doumas et al., 2008).

Hazan and Shaver (1994) also explained the correlation between childhood attachment to parents and adult attachment to romantic partners. When individuals experience a secure and supportive presence from their parents during childhood, both in terms of having their physical needs met and receiving emotional support, this fosters a sense of security during infancy and early childhood. Furthermore, theorists have proposed models explaining this attachment process, suggesting that as attachment needs are fulfilled, the attachment function gradually shifts from the self to an adult attachment figure (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985), such as a peer group or romantic partner. This explanation is also consistent with findings that both men and women in Korea who have experienced violence during childhood tend to become victims of IPV in the future (Ferrareso, 2020). However, an intervention designed to enhance secure attachment was implemented with 26 parents, including both mothers and fathers who had experienced IPV either as victims or perpetrators. Following the intervention, participants reported greater self-control, increased confidence, improved communication skills, and a stronger ability to provide a sense of security, particularly for their children (Kamal et al., 2017). This suggests that individuals may already possess a predisposition to either perpetrate or experience violence based on their early attachment patterns. However, other findings indicate that attachment

can be modified through intervention. This makes it an intriguing area for further investigation based on existing evidence.

Regarding the relationship between IPV and adult attachment, several meta-analyses have explored their interconnectedness. A systematic review conducted by Karantzas et al. (2016) found that anxiety and avoidance are predictors of sexual coercion, both as perpetrators and victims. Furthermore, the study identified gender as a moderating variable in this relationship. A more recent study by Velotti et al. (2018) examined the association between the components of anxiety and avoidance in both victims and perpetrators of IPV, considering various forms of violence and relationships in same-sex couples. In addition, Stefania et al. (2023) expanded on previous findings by demonstrating that the components of anxiety and avoidance are strongly associated with all forms of violence against victims. Their study also examined the effects of participant characteristics, such as age and gender, and the types of measurement scales used in previous research. They suggested that further investigations should consider the type of romantic relationship, specifically distinguishing between domestic relationships (marriage or cohabitation) and dating ones. Previous studies have examined specific aspects of both dating violence (e.g., see Ifthiharfi et al., 2024) and domestic violence (Godbout et al., 2009). However, few studies have directly compared these two contexts.

Based on previous studies, this study first examined whether attachment styles formed in childhood persisted and remained stable into adulthood. Furthermore, it investigated whether adult attachment type, as anxious and avoidant attachment, contributed to the risk of becoming a perpetrator or victim of IPV and whether other psychological, social, or environmental factors played additional roles across domestic violence or dating violence context.

## Methods

This study will employ a systematic literature review method, following a critical analysis process that will culminate in a synthesis of existing research findings (Snyder, 2019). The data used in this study were derived from Google Scholar and Scopus. In this review, the author attempted to minimize bias by prioritizing articles from Scopus-indexed journals, focusing on those with Q1, Q2, Q3, or Q4 accreditation and employing empirical designs or valid methods. In addition, a manual search was conducted through Google Scholar to include studies that, while not published in top-tier journals, could offer diverse perspectives. The types of literature to be selected include empirical and theoretical journal articles that discuss the application of adult attachment theory. One limitation of this review was the absence of a formal bias assessment tool. However, the author applied a qualitative and selective judgment based on the methodological rigor and research design of each study. The author conducted two waves of data collection to address main objectives in this study. Additionally, the author adhered to the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines for quality appraisal (Page et al., 2021). The author conducted a data search on Scopus Data from 2015 to 2025. The decision to

limit the literature review to the last ten years was made to ensure that the findings reflect recent theoretical developments, empirical trends, and contemporary relational contexts relevant to adult attachment and IPV. This has also become common in previous studies that conducted literature reviews with a span of 10 years (e.g., see Dharampal & Ani, 2020; Murvartian et al., 2023; Santambrogio et al., 2019)

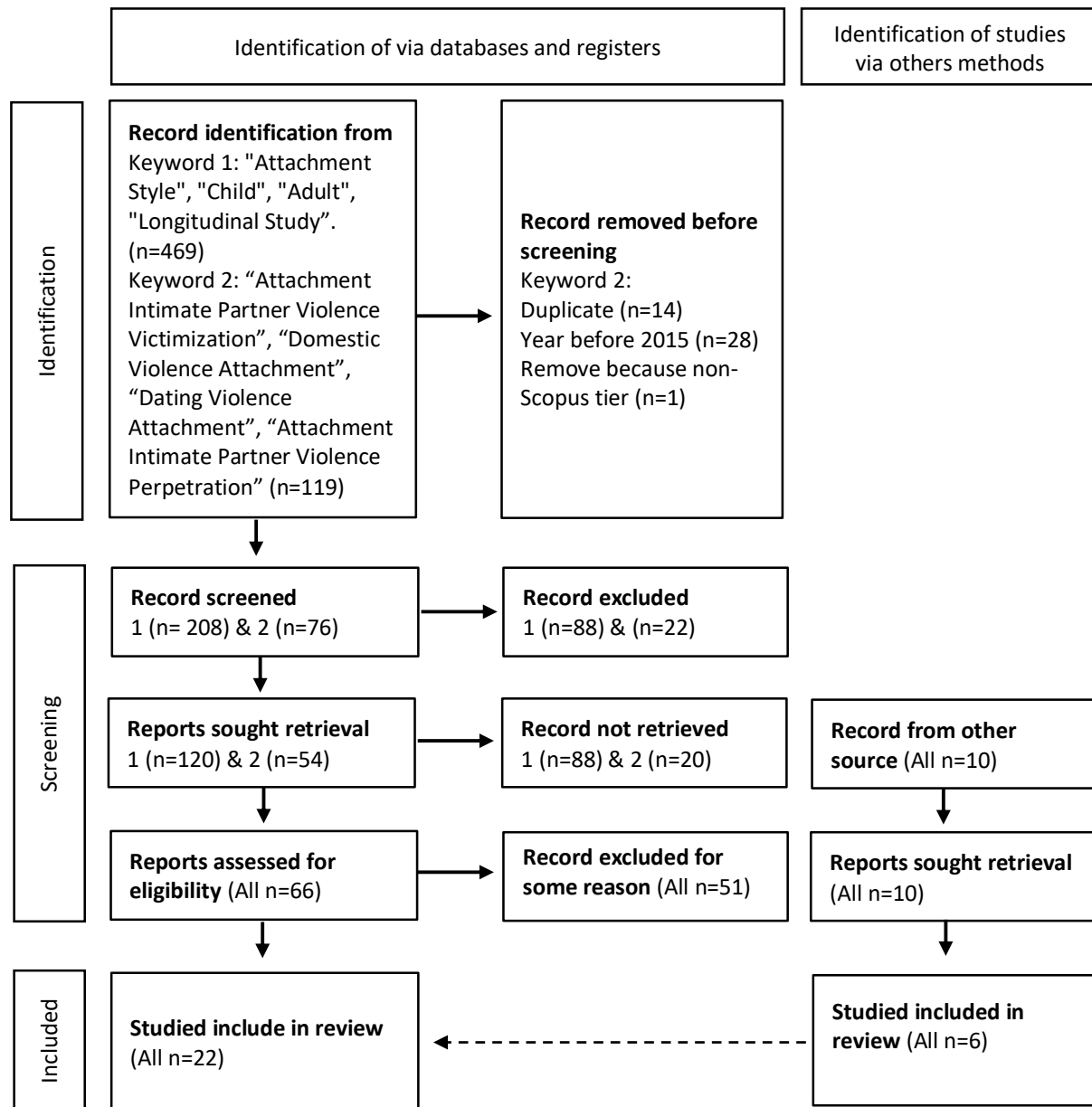


Figure 1. The PRISMA Report for The Development of Attachment, Adult Attachment, and IPV

For the first purpose of looking for the theory of attachment style that maybe can change gradually. The author used keywords related to "Attachment Style", "Child", "Adult", "Longitudinal Study". For the second purpose of looking for the insecure attachment style that relates to someone who is a victim or perpetrator of IPV. For the second purpose, author used keywords related to "Attachment Intimate Partner Violence Victimization", "Domestic Violence Attachment", "Dating Violence Attachment", "Attachment Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration". To illustrate the data selection process, please refer to the PRISMA flow diagram in Figure 1.

The results show that a total of 22 studies were included in the literature review, with a combined sample size of  $N = 7211$ . For data analysis, the author would systematically select relevant articles and match them with the predetermined research objectives. Studies that did not align with the central theme of this research would be eliminated based on citation frequency, ensuring the inclusion of sources that reflect the most updated theoretical advancements over time. Data were manually compiled into an Excel spreadsheet. Next, the author conducted a comprehensive review of the selected literature, focusing on phenomena, objectives, methods, and research findings. Once the literature review reaches sufficient depth, the author conducted a comparative and critical evaluation of the selected findings to generate an integrative synthesis. This synthesis was intended to consolidate existing knowledge, identify gaps, and offer a conceptual foundation for future research in this field (Snyder, 2019).

## Findings

### Introduction to Adult Attachment

Adult attachment encompasses thoughts, expectations, and emotional responses toward significant others, including thoughts and expectations of the attached figure in the adult relationship, that has been learned from birth through the presence of an attached figure (Shaver & Hazan, 1987; Tasca & Balfour, 2014; Zhang et al., 2022). Mikulincer and Shaver (2016) explained that ideal adult attachment in the context of romantic relationships is characterized by expectations and confidence in a partner's responsiveness. Furthermore, adult attachment involves an individual's desire to validate their worthiness for being loved and the expectation that their partner will respond positively and supportively. Adult attachment comprises two primary components: anxiety and avoidance (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991, 2006; Mikulincer & Goodman, 2006). Anxiety refers to an individual's fear of rejection and abandonment by their romantic partner. Individuals with high levels of anxiety feel threatened in emotionally negative relationship environments. They experience excessive worry and strongly resist separation from their partner. Avoidance refers to an individual's discomfort with closeness and preference for emotional independence in their relationship (both psychologically and behaviorally). Individuals with high avoidance levels tend to withdraw from conflicts rather than confront relationship issues. The interaction between anxiety and avoidance forms different adult attachment styles.

Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991, 2006) identified four adult attachment styles based on different combinations of anxiety and avoidance: (1) Secure Attachment: Individuals with low anxiety and avoidance feel worthy of love and expect their partner to be accepting and responsive. They are comfortable in relationships, feel secure with their partner, and engage in cooperative interactions. (2) Insecure Attachment Styles (Three subtypes), such as Preoccupied Attachment: individuals with high anxiety and low avoidance who feel unworthy of love but seek positive validation from others. This condition highly depends on external acceptance; Fearful Avoidant Attachment: Individuals with high anxiety and avoidance feel unworthy of love and anticipate rejection. To protect themselves, they avoid deep relationships out of fear rather than a desire for independence; Dismissing Avoidant Attachment: individuals with low anxiety and high avoidance desire love but hold a negative perception of their partner's evaluation. They protect themselves from disappointment by avoiding close relationships and striving for self-reliance.

### Development of Adult Attachment Styles

Adult attachment styles did not form instantaneously. Hazan and Shaver (1994) found a significant correlation between childhood attachment to parents and adult attachment in romantic relationships. However, more recent studies are presented in Table 1. In summary, longitudinal studies on the development of attachment in person can change over time, but researchers have to pay attention to multiple factors like the attachment style, parental involvement, and human development stage style (Booth-LaForce et al., 2014; Fraley et al., 2013; Fraley & Roisman, 2019; Pascuzzo et al., 2013; Theisen et al., 2018).

Table 1. Results of literature review of development in studies published from 2013 to 2025

No	Authors	Research Method Highlights	Relevant Result
1.	Pascuzzo et al. (2013)	8-year longitudinal study of 56 individuals aged 14 to 22 years. Participants were French-speaking individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attachment to parents and friends in adolescence affects adult attachment in adulthood, but only in the anxious type</li> <li>• Insecure attachment to parents and friends affects how individuals develop strategies to overcome problems. In the future, this will affect how children communicate with intimate figures as adults.</li> </ul> <p>Adult attachment has the effect of early attachment, but it turns out to have a small effect. The argument: the researcher has three reasons:</p>
2.	Fraley et al. (2013)	Fifteen years of longitudinal study. Participants were reconnected when their children were adults (18 years) The study of 707 children in the United States	<p>1) There will be different types of relationships.</p> <p>2) The quality of the attachment is also different, whereas the subject attachment is also different.</p> <p>3) Attachments are made up of many factors.</p>

Table 1. Results of literature review of development in studies published from 2013 to 2025 (Continue)

No	Authors	Research Method Highlights	Relevant Result
3.	Booth-LaForce et al. (2014)	330 participants (40%) were stably secure, 142 (17%) were stably insecure, 160 (20%) changed from insecure in early childhood to secure at 18 years, and 193 (23%) changed from secure to insecure. The participants were 15, 24, and 36 months old in late adolescence (age 18 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants who transitioned from secure to insecure attachment were more likely to experience a father's absence compared to those who remained stably secure. This suggests that the father's availability, rather than the quality of interaction, plays a significant role in attachment stability.</li> <li>• Changes in attachment security were associated with changes in maternal sensitivity. Participants who became insecure experienced lower levels of maternal sensitivity and a greater decline in maternal sensitivity over time.</li> <li>• Those who transitioned from secure to insecure attachment were less likely to live with their fathers, and their mothers reported a larger increase in negative life events over time.</li> </ul>
4.	Theisen et al. (2018)	A longitudinal cohort design to examine changes in attachment styles from childhood to late adolescence. The sample consisted of 690 children aged 8–19 years.	The study found that attachment-related anxiety remained low and stable from childhood to late adolescence, whereas attachment-related avoidance increased over time, particularly among boys.
5.	Fraley and Roisman, (2019)	Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early caregiving experiences shape the adult attachment style, but the connection is generally weak and depends on multiple factors.</li> <li>• Attachment styles are more flexible during childhood and adolescence, suggesting that socialization is more impactful early on, while selection processes take precedence in adulthood.</li> <li>• Early experiences do not strictly dictate adult attachment styles; individuals can develop different attachment patterns based on various life experiences.</li> </ul>

### Adult Attachment to Dating Violence vs. Domestic Violence

Research on adult attachment in the context of dating and domestic violence has expanded. Several key studies were selected for this literature review based on their relevance (Table 2). Understanding both contexts was important because dating and domestic violence differ in terms of commitment levels, cohabitation, and power dynamics, which can influence how attachment patterns manifest in violent behavior (Godbout et al., 2009, 2017; Stefania et al., 2023). According to Table 2, some studies do not include the IPV



context they want to research, using only the IPV category in general (Douadi et al., 2024; Gündoğmuş et al., 2023; Lafontaine et al., 2018; Lefebvre et al., 2021; Sokar et al., 2023; Woerner et al., 2025). Studies on dating violence emphasized anxious attachment more as a predictor of victims or perpetrators (Bonache et al., 2019; Sandberg et al., 2019). Studies on domestic violence found a combination of anxious and avoidant attachment as a risk factor (Bélanger et al., 2015; Sadegh Mohammadi & Spencer, 2025). Also, some studies were starting to consider interactions between couples, not just individuals. For example, Pudelko et al. (2025) showed that the avoidance effect on violent behavior only occurs when the partner has a low level of avoidance. However, there has been more discussion about dating violence than domestic violence.

Table 2. Results of literature review of attachment and IPV in studies published from 2015 to 2025

No	Authors	Research Method Highlights	Type of Violence	Relevant Result
1.	Bélanger et al. (2015)	The respondents were 20 couples in which males were involved in therapeutic programs for abusive violence.	Domestic Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Men with avoidant attachment styles reported higher rates of physical abuse victimization</li> <li>▪ Women with an anxious attachment style reported causing harm to their partners;</li> <li>• Women with high attachment anxiety were more likely to perpetrate dating violence, whereas the same pattern was not observed in men.</li> </ul>
2.	Yarkovsky (2016)	The respondents were 158 heterosexual couples (male-female dyads; $N = 316$ ) and committed in a dating relationship for at least 2 months.	Dating Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additionally, both men and women with high attachment avoidance were more likely to engage in violence as either perpetrators or victims, although they were more likely to be perpetrators.</li> <li>• Men who engage in sexual coercion often select partners based on their attachment tendencies. Specifically, men preferred women with high anxiety because they tended to self-blame and were less likely to avoid their partners.</li> </ul>
3.	Holmgreen and Oswald (2017)	The respondents were 167 male college students.	Dating Violence	

Table 2. Results of literature review of attachment and IPV in studies published from 2015 to 2025 (Continue)

No	Authors	Research Method Highlights	Type of Violence	Relevant Result
4.	Lafontaine et al. (2018)	The respondents were 608 Chilean university students involved in romantic relationships (369 women and 239 men). The mean age of the women was 21.41 years (SD = 2.26), and that of the men was 21.52 years (SD = 2.15)	Domestic Violence and Dating Violence but did not determine the accurate percentage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attachment insecurity that high anxiety over abandonment and avoidance of intimacy are linked to the use of physical IPV as perpetration</li> </ul>
5.	Sandberg et al. (2019)	The respondents were 133 female college students with a mean = 22.10 for age	Dating Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attachment anxiety was related to increased physical violence victimization within a romantic relationship during the 6-month follow-up period.</li> </ul>
6.	Bonache et al. (2019)	Online survey, 216 Spanish undergraduate student	Dating Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High attachment anxiety predicts victimization in dating violence.</li> <li>• Anxious attachment style significantly predicts IPV among university students, whereas avoidant attachment does not show a predictive relationship with IPV. Additionally, demographic factors such as age and sex were not significant predictors of IPV in this population.</li> </ul>
7.	Magorokosho and Mberira (2020)	A total of 159 male and 221 female undergraduate students aged 18 to 50 were enrolled.	Dating Violence	

Table 2. Results of literature review of attachment and IPV in studies published from 2015 to 2025 (Continue)

No	Authors	Research Method Highlights	Type of Violence	Relevant Result
8.	McClure and Parmenter (2020)	The study involved 254 undergraduate students (93 males, 161 females) aged 17–23 years.	Dating Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anxious attachment (fear of being left by a partner) was linked to IPV victimization and may explain why some students remain in violent dating relationships.</li> <li>• Attachment anxiety is positively associated with the perpetration of psychological IPV by both partners.</li> <li>• Attachment avoidance is indirectly linked to higher perpetration of psychological and physical IPV through increased relationship dissatisfaction in both partners.</li> </ul>
9.	Lefebvre et al. (2021)	The respondents were 88 couples seeking therapy for relationship difficulties who had been in their relationship for an average of 8.7 years	Domestic Violence, but not explicit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a direct negative association between attachment avoidance and physical IPV perpetration, but avoidance contributes to IPV risk mainly via relationship dissatisfaction.</li> <li>• Reported a weak but significant correlation between avoidant attachment, egalitarian gender roles, and attitudes toward romantic relationship violence.</li> </ul>
10.	Çelik and Tanrıverdi (2023)	A total of 126 respondents reported being in a romantic relationship, while 448 did not. Regarding relationship status, 99 were dating, 9 were engaged, and 18 were married.	Dating Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anxious attachment generally does not significantly predict dating violence.</li> </ul>

Table 2. Results of literature review of attachment and IPV in studies published from 2015 to 2025 (Continue)

No	Authors	Research Method Highlights	Type of Violence	Relevant Result
11.	Tarigan and Himawan (2023)	A total of 300 married women (Mage = 32.88; SD = 5.41) participated in the online survey, in which they provided their personal experiences in close relationships and their spouses' conflict tactics.	Domestic Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High attachment anxiety increases the risk of victimization.</li> </ul>
12.	Sokar et al. (2023)	A total of 604 participants (301 men, 303 women). Population: Arab citizens of Israel	Domestic Violence but not explicit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attachment-related avoidance mediates the relationship between witnessing parental violence and IPV perpetration in adulthood, indicating that attachment insecurity is linked to IPV perpetration.</li> </ul>
13.	Gündoğmuş et al. (2023)	75 women aged 18-65 seeking psychiatric treatment at an outpatient clinic in Ankara, Turkey.	Not explicit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An anxious attachment style was related to psychological aggression, physical assault, and injury in IPV victimization, as well as perpetration behaviors.</li> </ul>
14.	Douadi et al. (2024)	A sample of 1,845 men aged 18–88 years from a Canadian Population (a perpetration)	Not Explicit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attachment avoidance and attachment anxiety related to IPV perpetration through affect dysregulation.</li> <li>• Attachment avoidance was directly associated with psychological violence and attachment anxiety with sexual coercion.</li> </ul>

Table 2. Results of literature review of attachment and IPV in studies published from 2015 to 2025 (Continue)

No	Authors	Research Method Highlights	Type of Violence	Relevant Result
15.	Sadegh Mohammadi and Spencer (2025)	102 Iranian women who had experienced domestic violence at the Social Emergency Centers in Isfahan	Domestic Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual IPV victimization was positively related to both avoidant and anxious attachment styles.</li> <li>• Anxious attachment was linked to emotion-oriented coping, whereas avoidant attachment was negatively related to avoidance-oriented coping.</li> <li>• Women with insecure attachment styles who experienced IPV tend to use avoidance and emotional coping strategies.</li> </ul>
16.	Pudelko et al. (2025)	A dyadic observational study was conducted on 178 young adult couples.	Dating Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The results showed that an individual's tendency to avoid (avoidance) was positively associated with the violent behavior they committed, but only when their partner had a low level of avoidance.</li> </ul>
17.	Woerner et al. (2025)	His meta-analysis focused on victims of intimate partner violence, synthesizing data from multiple studies.	Not explicit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This study discusses the relationship between attachment and IPV, highlighting how attachment theory provides an evolutionary perspective on individual differences in attachment related to IPV victimization and severity.</li> </ul>

### Discussion

This study first examined whether attachment styles formed in childhood persisted and remained stable into adulthood. This idea originates from Freud's psychoanalytic theory, which posits that childhood experiences shape an individual's behavior (Freud, 2022). Bowlby and Ainsworth further simplified this concept by studying infants separated

from their attachment figures and applied these findings to adult relationships (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016). The study area remains a subject of interest for researchers seeking further insights.

Hazan and Shaver (1994) conducted an early study that revealed a significant correlation between childhood attachment to parents and adult attachment in romantic relationships. Additionally, despite the statistical significance of the findings, the effect size of childhood attachment on adult attachment was relatively small. Consequently, these results require further validation through longitudinal studies to observe changes over time. Based on Table 1. The results of the longitudinal study showed that early caregiving experiences shape the adult attachment style (Booth-LaForce et al., 2014; Fraley et al., 2013; Fraley & Roisman, 2019; Pascuzzo et al., 2013; Theisen et al., 2018). Children with insecure parental attachments may develop maladaptive relational patterns in adulthood; this is because his parents also had unsafe *attachments* when they were children. Then, parents do not find standards that can be followed to have a safe attachment with their children. Children also imitate and tend to have *an adult attachment* that is insecure to their partner as an adult (Pigeon et al., 2024). On the other hand, the connection between child attachment relating to adult attachment is also generally weak (Fraley et al., 2013; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016), and the development of attachment in adult life depends on multiple factors.

Previous studies have revealed that attachment styles such as avoidance and anxiety develop differently from childhood through adulthood. According to Pascuzzo et al. (2013), attachment to parents and friends during adolescence influences adult attachment, but this effect appears to apply only to the anxious attachment style. In contrast, Theisen et al. (2018) found that attachment-related anxiety remained low and stable from childhood to late adolescence, whereas attachment-related avoidance tended to increase over time, particularly among boys. Although these two studies seem to present contradictory findings, they may actually be complementary when viewed through the lens of developmental timing and study design. Pascuzzo et al. (2013) conducted a longitudinal study spanning from middle adolescence to early adulthood, whereas Theisen et al. (2018) followed participants from childhood to late adolescence. These differing age ranges and developmental stages may explain the contrasting results.

Nevertheless, these studies offer a more nuanced understanding of attachment development. As noted by Arnett et al. (2014), during childhood and early adolescence, individuals tend to have a limited number of significant attachment figures, mainly parents and close peers. However, as they move into adulthood, their circle of significant others expands to include romantic partners, colleagues, and others. This shift may help explain why avoidant attachment appears more stable from childhood to adolescence, since attachment figures remain relatively consistent and attention is still needed. In contrast, during the transition to adulthood, individuals may face a broader range of social expectations and relationships, potentially leading to an increased tendency to avoid intimacy with a growing number of attachment figures.

Differences or changes in the presence of attachment figures have also been discussed as a factor that affects childhood attachment on attachment in adulthood (Fraley et al., 2013; Fraley & Roisman, 2019). These studies suggest that variations in relationship types, along with external factors beyond the attachment relationship itself, may have a greater impact on adult attachment development. Mikulincer and Shaver (2016) explained this phenomenon using attachment activation theory, stating that attachment responses are situation-specific and influenced by proximity-seeking behaviors. Similarly, developmental disruptions such as the absence of a paternal figure have been shown to affect attachment formation (Booth-LaForce et al., 2014) also affect the formation of attachments. While early attachment lay the foundation for relational tendencies, these findings collectively highlight that attachment is not fixed but rather dynamics. In other word, the attachment can adjust in response to new relational experience and life events.

The second objective was investigated whether adult attachment type, as anxious and avoidant attachment, contributed to the risk of becoming a perpetrator or victim of IPV and whether other psychological, social, or environmental factors played additional roles across domestic violence or dating violence contexts. Mikulincer and Shaver (2016) conducted a literature review and revealed that attachment insecurity is a significant risk factor for perpetrators and victims of IPV. The discussion of adult attachment and IPV in a specific context is quite a complex discussion. In understanding the relationship between discussions in literature studies conducted today, many things have been found.

Several studies included in the review did not clearly distinguish the specific type of IPV (Douadi et al., 2024; Gündoğmuş et al., 2023; Lafontaine et al., 2018; Lefebvre et al., 2021; Sokar et al., 2023; Woerner et al., 2025). Nevertheless, these studies still provided relevant contributions to the understanding of attachment and IPV. On the other hand, some studies explicitly differentiate between dating violence and domestic violence, offering more specific insight into the dynamics of attachment within each context.

From the results of the literature review conducted, it is known that women and men who have attachment anxiety to their partners are more vulnerable to becoming perpetrators of violence in dating violence (Bélanger et al., 2015; Lafontaine et al., 2018; Magorokosho & Mberira, 2020; Yarkovsky, 2016) and in the context of domestic violence (Gündoğmuş et al., 2023; Lafontaine et al., 2018; Lefebvre et al., 2021). However, there was an explanation that there was not always a direct impact of how individuals have a certain attachment style to become vulnerable to becoming violent perpetrators. As research from Douadi et al. (2024) found that when individuals had an attachment style that tends to be easily anxious, they tend to have difficulty regulating their emotions. This causes the individual to become a perpetrator of violence and also to meet the need to always be close to his partner; he commits violence to protect himself from avoidance and forces the partner to stay with him (Bélanger et al., 2015; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2016). However, other studies have shown no association with IPV (Çelik & Tanrıverdi, 2023; Pudelko et al., 2025). The researcher argued that partners with anxious attachment will keep in touch with their partners and want closeness. This may explain how early attachment can indirectly

influence violent behavior, but when they are frustrated, Bélanger et al. (2015), Mikulincer and Shaver (2016) had explained more before.

On the other hand, women and men who have attachment anxiety also have the vulnerability to become victims of violence committed by their partners, both in dating violence (Bonache et al., 2019; Holmgreen & Oswald, 2017; McClure & Parmenter, 2020; Sandberg et al., 2019) and domestic violence (Gündoğmuş et al., 2023; Lafontaine et al., 2018; Lefebvre et al., 2021). This can happen because the impact of attachment anxiety not only results in behavior that is on one side of a certain pole but can also make someone more vulnerable. When individuals desire to stay close to their partner, this can lead them to obey what their partner does even though it is in the form of violence that they experience.

In the type of attachment avoidance, the results of the study also show that there are two behaviors that are not only at risk not only as perpetrators but also victims of violence, attachment avoidance, which can increase the risk of becoming a perpetrator of violence in dating violence (Lafontaine et al., 2018; Yarkovsky, 2016) even if the influence tends to be weak or small (Çelik & Tanrıverdi, 2023a; Pudenko et al., 2025; Sokar et al., 2023). Likewise, in the context of domestic violence whose influence is through relationship dissatisfaction (Lefebvre et al., 2021) and through difficulty managing emotions (Douadi et al., 2024). This can happen because when individuals have attachment avoidance, they tend to avoid conflicts that occur with their partners, which allows when there is a problem, a tendency to commit violence to maintain distance from their partner. This can also happen because difficulty managing real emotions can lead to violent behavior, as well as dissatisfaction in relationships encourages individuals to do things that can keep their distance. However, there is also research that states that in dating violence, individuals with attachment avoidance can become victims of violence (Yarkovsky, 2016) or occur in the context of domestic violence (Sadegh Mohammadi & Spencer, 2025). In this way, individuals with avoidance attachment will find it difficult to ask for help so that they can accept being victims of violence.

In the two attachment styles, the existence of violence of specific types, such as dating and domestic violence, can be seen in the discussion in this literature study. Research conducted in the context of dating violence is still found in the last 10 years of research, while in domestic violence research, it is rare to find a link between adult attachment and aspects of IPV or domestic violence. In addition, research findings are more often obtained from researchers and samples from the West and industrialized countries. This may not be generalized to other cultures because of limitations in explaining different cultures (Muthukrishna et al., 2020). When cultures differ, they also reflect different psychological states (Matsumoto et al., 2013). Therefore, it is necessary to conduct research that is also specific to certain contexts and cultures.

After the discussion above, in another study that also discusses the existence of other factors that may have an influence on those who are vulnerable to becoming victims of IPV. For example, the existence of higher cognitive empathy in victims of violence also allows individuals to survive being victims of dating violence in addition to having an insecure



attachment to their partner (Ifthiharfi et al., 2024). In addition, individuals who are victims of domestic violence have low self-esteem, which makes individuals more dependent on their partners (Sumiarti & Puspitawati, 2017). While previous research has stated that PTSD is an impact due to violence, other studies have stated that PTSD is also a risk factor for becoming a victim of violence (Stein et al., 2024). On the other hand, the influence of involvement in crime, drug use, antisocial behaviour (Capaldi et al., 2019) and harsh parenting (Rachman et al., 2023) are external factors regarding the self that tend to be strong in predicting IPV behaviour. In other words, there are many things that also affect the occurrence of IPV.

In addition to the contributions discussed earlier, this review has several limitations. First, most of the studies included were conducted in Western or industrialized countries, so the findings may not fully represent cultural contexts such as Indonesia, where relationship values and social norms may differ. Second, the data sources were limited to Scopus and Google Scholar, which may have excluded relevant studies indexed in other academic databases. Third, this review did not employ a formal tool to assess the risk of bias in each study; instead, the author relied on qualitative judgments based on the study's design and methodological rigor. Fourth, the review included more studies on dating violence than on domestic violence, potentially leading to an imbalance in thematic coverage. Fifth, since this study adopted a qualitative systematic review approach, it did not produce statistical comparisons or effect sizes, as a meta-analysis would. Furthermore, the review may be subject to publication bias, as studies with non-significant results are less likely to be published and accessed. There was also considerable variation in how adult attachment and IPV were conceptualized and measured across the studies, which may limit the comparability of findings. Lastly, since only English-language articles were reviewed, relevant findings from non-English publications may have been overlooked.

## **Conclusion and Recommendation**

### **Conclusion**

The objective of this study was to examine whether attachment styles persist continuously from early childhood formation to later influence individuals in adulthood. In addition, this study explores how the adult attachment framework can explain IPV in more specific relationship contexts, such as domestic and dating violence.

The discussion of adult attachment and IPV in specific contexts is highly complex. Overall, the findings suggest that while adult attachment may be influenced by past experiences, the ongoing context and accumulated experiences also play a crucial role in shaping an individual's responses toward their partner or attachment figure. This pattern is also observed in individuals who experience both forms of violence, such as dating violence and domestic violence. Each attachment component, anxiety, and avoidance, has distinct influences. However, attachment anxiety or avoidance is generally related to IPV victimization and perpetrators. In the other hand, the attachment is not the only factor that

can influence IPV. Attachment does not necessarily become fate or constant; if violence occurs in childhood (insecure attachment) will not always be a victim or perpetrator of IPV in the future.

Nevertheless, dating and domestic violence dynamics differ. Domestic violence is considered more complex because multiple external factors beyond adult attachment contribute to its occurrence. In contrast, dating violence is primarily influenced by relationship dynamics.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the discussion of the two main objectives in this study, it is known that attachment can change over time due to various factors and situations faced by individuals. Even if it does not change, in the end, attachment in adulthood is also not the only risk factor for IPV. Further research should explore how and when these attachment patterns interact with other psychological traits such as emotion regulation, empathy, or trauma history. Second, most of the data used in this study were derived from research conducted in Western countries. This raises concerns regarding cultural differences, particularly in the Indonesian context, where relationship dynamics may differ. Additionally, this study did not use comprehensive data from another database besides Scopus and Google Scholar. The author also concluded the Dissertation Data for this analysis. Future research should address these limitations by employing more robust analytical methods, such as meta-analysis, which utilizes statistical data. Next, the literature shows limited attention to domestic violence compared to dating violence; thus, targeted studies that differentiate between these two IPV contexts are necessary. Fifth, future studies should also consider intersectional factors, such as gender roles, socio-economic background, and parenting practices that may mediate or moderate the relationship between adult attachment and IPV risk.

From a practical perspective, this study can provide valuable insights for counseling professionals and support programs for survivors of IPV. Practitioners can help clients understand that past attachment experiences are not necessarily permanent and can change over time, leading to healthier relationships. In addition, government agencies and social organizations can use these findings to develop educational programs and outreach initiatives. In Indonesia, family counseling services, such as those provided by the government through PUSPAGA (Pusat Pelayanan Keluarga), play a crucial role in the prevention of IPV. Strengthening these programs could enhance public awareness and early intervention efforts to effectively address intimate partner violence.

Despite these limitations, the author hopes that this literature review can contribute to a better understanding of interpersonal relationship dynamics, particularly IPV (dating violence and domestic violence), within the framework of adult attachment. Furthermore, this study provides a foundation for future research in this field.

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