

*Construction of Fatherhood Identity*

*A*

*Thesis submitted*

*In the partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of*

**MASTER OF ARTS**

**IN PSYCHOLOGY**

*(Clinical)*

*Submitted By:*

*Mehar Sekhon*

*(862302039)*

*Under the Supervision of*

*Dr. Kriti Vyas*



**THAPAR INSTITUTE**  
OF ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY  
(Deemed to be University)

**Thapar School of Liberal Arts and Sciences**

**THAPAR UNIVERSITY, PATIALA - 147004**

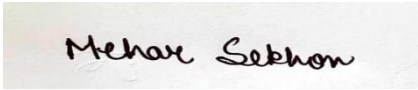
## ABSTRACT

This mixed method study aims to examine the construction of fatherhood identity across various life stages. Initial part of the study qualitatively explores the identity construction and its associated factors among fathers aged between 25-45+, revealing that age of children, marital quality, maternal gatekeeping, work-life balance and personal beliefs shape paternal identity. The second part of the study is conducted in two phases, beginning with quantitative phase, a set of standardized quantitative scales are employed that establishes significant relationship between fatherhood identity and variable such as- traditional fatherhood beliefs, marital satisfaction, maternal gatekeeping and family-work conflict. The second phase is purely qualitative, by incorporating semi-structured interviews to gain perspectives of mothers and grandfathers on modern fatherhood, highlighting the significance of paternal role in emotional availability, co-parenting, higher involvement in caregiving and intergenerational shift in traditional fatherhood ideology. By integrating insights from fathers, mothers and grandfathers, the research provides a comprehensive understanding on construction of fatherhood identity. The findings indicate that paternal identity is not static but is dynamic in nature, that gradually evolves and is influenced by paternal commitment, marital satisfaction, balance between work and family, suggesting that fatherhood identity is shaped not only by personal factors but also by relational, contextual and generational influences.

**Keywords-** Fatherhood identity, paternal involvement, maternal gatekeeping, marital satisfaction, work-family conflict and intergeneration transmission.

## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “*Construction of Fatherhood Identity*” submitted by Mehar Sekhon (Enrolment No. 862302039) for the partial fulfilment of the **degree of Masters of Arts in Psychology submitted in Thapar School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology, Patiala** is a Bonafide work completed under the supervision of Dr. Kriti Vyas, Assistant Professor, Thapar School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology, Patiala and that no piece of this venture has been submitted for the honour of any other degree.

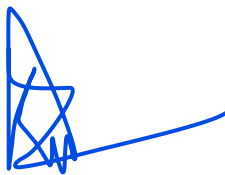


Mehar Sekhon

(MEHAR SEKHON)

(862302039)

This is to certify that the above statement made by the student concerned is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.



**DR. Kriti Vyas**

Assistant Professor,

Thapar School of Liberal Arts and Sciences (TSLAS),

Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology,

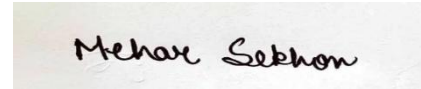
Patiala

## CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I, Mehar Sekhon, a student of M.A. Psychology (2023-2025), declare that the work being presented in the thesis entitled, "*Construction of Fatherhood Identity*" in the partial fulfilment of the degree of **Masters of Arts in Psychology, Thapar School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology, Patiala**, is an original record of my own research work carried out under the guidance and supervision of Dr.Kriti Vyas, Assistant Professor, Thapar School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology, Patiala. The content in the dissertation has not been submitted to any other university or institute for the award of any other degree.

**Date: 20 May, 2025**

**Place: Patiala**



**(MEHAR SEKHON)**

**(862302039)**

This is to certify that the above statement made by the student concerned is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.



**DR. Kriti Vyas**

Assistant Professor,

Thapar School of Liberal Arts and Sciences (TSLAS),

Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology,

Patiala

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who helped me throughout the process of completing my thesis. It has been a rewarding experience for me to carry out my research in the Department of Psychology at the Thapar School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala.

First and foremost, I would especially want to thank my supervisor, Dr. Kriti Vyas, Assistant Professor, Thapar School of Liberal Arts and Sciences, for her invaluable guidance, constant support, and consistent mentoring throughout the course of this project. Her mentorship has played a crucial role in shaping the direction of my research, and I am grateful and fortunate to have worked under her guidance.

I am also thankful to Dr. Santha Kumari for creating a positive learning atmosphere and for her constant support and encouragement that has significantly contributed to my overall growth.

I would like to thank each and every participant that took time and effort to take a part in this study, by opening up about personal experiences and by taking part in interviews. Their insights are the core foundation of this study.

My sincere thanks also go to my friends who constantly encouraged and supported me. Finally, I would like to appreciate my family for their unconditional love, patience, and unending support throughout my academic journey.

**MEHAR SEKHON**

**(862302039)**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>CHAPTER 1: Introduction and Review of Literature</b> .....	4
1.1 Identity Theory.....	7
1.2 Work-Life Balance.....	10
1.3 Marital satisfaction.....	13
1.4 Maternal Gatekeeping.....	16
1.5 Intergenerational Perspective & Traditional Fatherhood.....	17
1.6 Research Gap.....	20
1.7 Research Objective.....	22
1.7.1 Hypotheses.....	22
1.7.2 Objectives.....	23
<b>CHAPTER 2: Methodology</b> .....	24
Study 1.....	24
2.1 Participants.....	24
2.2 Procedure.....	25
2.3 Design.....	25
2.4 Tools.....	25
Study 2 – Phase 1.....	25
2.5 Participants.....	25
2.6 Procedure.....	26
2.7 Design.....	26
2.8 Tools Used.....	27
2.9 Analysis.....	28
Phase 2.....	28

2.10 Participants.....	28
2.11 Procedure.....	28
2.12 Design.....	29
2.13 Tools .....	29
<b>CHAPTER 3: Results.....</b>	<b>30</b>
3.1 Study 1 – Qualitative Analysis of Fathers’ Perspective on Fatherhood Identity.....	30
Table 1: Theme 1 – Construction of Fatherhood Identity.....	30
Table 2: Theme 2 – Factors Shaping Fatherhood Identity.....	31
3.2 Study 2.....	33
3.2.1 Quantitative Results.....	33
Table 3: Pearson Correlation Coefficients Among Study Variables.....	34
Table 4: Model Summary – Commitment and ANOVA Table.....	35
Table 5: Coefficients.....	36
Table 6: Model Summary – Reconsideration of Commitment and ANOVA Table.....	37
Table 7: Coefficients .....	39
3.2.2 Qualitative Results.....	40
Table 8: Theme 1 – Construction of Fatherhood Identity.....	40
Table 9: Theme 2 – Factors Shaping Fatherhood Identity.....	41
Table 10: Theme 3 – Impact of Modern Fatherhood.....	42
Table 11: Theme 4 – Differences Between Mothers’ and Fathers’ Roles .....	43
Table 12: Theme 1 – Role and Belief as a grandfather.....	44
Table 13: Theme 2 – Fatherhood Experience and Associated Factors.....	44
Table 14: Theme 3 – Difference Between Own and Son’s Parenting.....	45

<b>CHAPTER 4: Discussion</b> .....	46
Study 1.....	46
4.1 Qualitative Discussion.....	46
4.1.1 Theme 1 – Construction of Fatherhood Identity.....	46
4.1.2 Theme 2 – Factors Influencing Fatherhood Identity.....	49
Study 2.....	52
4.2 Phase1: Quantitative Discussion.....	52
Phase 2: Qualitative Discussion.....	57
4.3 Mothers’ Perspectives.....	57
4.3.1Theme 1 – Construction of Fatherhood Identity.....	57
4.3.2 Theme 2 – Factors Responsible for Shaping Father’s Identity.....	61
4.3.3 Theme 3 – Impact of Modern or Involved Fathers.....	67
4.3.4 Theme 4 – Differences Between Mothers’ and Fathers’ Parenting Styles.....	68
4.4 Grandfathers’ Perspective .....	69
4.4.1 Theme 1 – Role and Belief as a grandfather.....	69
4.4.2 Theme 2 – Fatherhood Experience and Associated Factors.....	72
4.4.3 Theme 3 – Difference Between Own and Son’s Parenting.....	74
4.5 General Discussion.....	76
<b>CHAPTER 5: Conclusions, Implications, Limitations and Future Directions</b> .....	81
5.1 Conclusion.....	81
5.2 Limitations.....	82
5.3 Future Recommendations... ..	83
5.4 Implications.....	83

<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	85
<b>APPENDIX A:</b> Consent forms.....	98
<b>APPENDIX B:</b> The Traditional Fatherhood Scale.....	104
<b>APPENDIX C:</b> Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS).....	105
<b>APPENDIX D:</b> Work and Family Conflict Scale (WAFCS).....	107
<b>APPENDIX E:</b> Maternal Gatekeeping Scale (Father’s Version) .....	108
<b>APPENDIX F:</b> UMICS: PI.....	109
<b>APPENDIX G:</b> Interview Questions.....	110

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

This chapter introduces the key variables of the research where they were under the investigation. It includes a comprehensive review of literature that is relevant to the subject, which helps refer to studies within a broad field of psychological research.

Over the past few years, the notion of fatherhood has modified significantly due to the shift in the socio-cultural dynamics and familial expectations along with a shift in gender roles and increase of women participation in work setting in the contemporary times . Due to the evolving times, it has become essential to explore the fatherhood roles and identity construction in fathers.

Although, a lot of previous research addressing parental identity is heavily associated with maternal point of view and primarily focuses on mothers. Father's experiences remain underrepresented, especially when it comes to studying fatherhood identity across different stages of father's own life and across a child's lifespan. Majority of research still focuses on initial years of fatherhood, considering the experiences of new or first-time fathers, while fathers' experience across different life stages remains less explored.

Moreover, less scholarly attention is given on the shift from traditional to non-traditional fatherhood roles. Traditionally, fatherhood is linked with the roles and identity of a breadwinner, a financial provider and as an authoritative figure who is the disciplinarian of the family (L. Wang and Keizer, 2024) (Paterna & Martínez, 2006 . However, in the 21st century, these societal expectations and cultural norms have taken a turn, where women participate and stand in society equally as men. Van Holland De Graaf et al. (2018)

This change has led to an evolution in paternal role and identity, whereby fathers are also required to take active part in the nurturing and childcare process along with shared

responsibility with the mother (Adler,2021) . This has challenged the concept of traditional masculine fathers by redefining what it means to be a “good father”.

Another significant gap has been noticed when it comes to men’s well being and mental health especially after entering the fatherhood journey. Still many researches focus on maternal stress and challenges ,often neglecting stress and challenges faced by fathers (Schoppe-Sullivan et al.,2021)This struggle may lead to failure in societal and personal expectations that fathers have , affecting their self-esteem and lower confidence when it comes to rearing a child leading to mental stress . Therefore, understanding fatherhood identity is an important area to study.

The presence of a father, especially an involving father in a child’s life significantly impacts the child’s sense of self , which depends on fathers’ emotional availability and parenting style . Many studies have revealed that the presence of fathers affects a child's social, educational, emotional and psychological development. (Choi et al., 2021). Offer & Kaplan, 2021 highlights that even though progress has been made , still there is a significant gap in terms of how fathers play their role as a father and engage in the caregiving process. Understanding their roles and experiences is crucial in order to bring a balanced division of labour when it comes to parenting.

The current study aims to explore the construction of the fatherhood identity. Identity in general refers to an individual's values, attitude, beliefs, traits and roles that encompasses one's individual perception and the way others perceive them. a person’s identity is any role, including fatherhood which is shaped by societal norms and regulations. Even though identity is dynamic and not static in nature. Having a distinct and well defined sense of self provides individual stability and consistency. However, identity is influenced by several factors and life events, similarly, a fathers identity influences how they engage in parenting and what approach they are about, along with involvement in child care that impacts father-child relationship

(Clouthier, 2020). Several studies indicate that positive fathering is linked to satisfaction with one's role as a father.

Significant societal and personal changes are associated with being a father, Carlson et al. (2015) studied the developmental journey of first time fathers, social support, partner interactions and emotional experiences that influence how one develops as a parent. First-time fathers often balance the traditional role of financial provider with the modern roles of caregiver to child.

Majority of the research focuses on the experiences of first-time fathers or those fathers who are in the early stages of fatherhood (Noh, 2021) and deals with the challenges and transition from being a husband to a father (Nurumal et al., 2024). There remains a noticeable gap in research while exploring the construction of fatherhood identity across different life stages of fathers and their grown children. Moreover, limited attention is given on how fathers adapt to different developmental stages of their children, along with what factors play a role in the development and shift in the identity and roles of a father.

Additionally, the factors that shape the fatherhood identity across different stages of life should also be explored. Several determinants like age, societal and family expectations, work-life balance, family dynamics and changing gendered roles exert influence on the level of involvement of fathers. Based on earlier research Han et al. (2023) grouped factors that shape fathers identities into 3 categories- father's traits, child's traits, family related factors. Further specified into father's socio-economic status, gender of child ,maternal gatekeeping and family type. Similarly, Planalp and Braungart-Rieker (2015) identified several factors that influence fathers involvement, these included- father's belief, socio-demographic factors, parent depression, involvement of mother, marital satisfaction, gender of the baby and child's temperament determined the role salience and engagement of fathers in childcare.

By addressing the previous literature and research gaps, the current study provides a more comprehensive understanding of fatherhood at different stages of life by providing insights into the experiences of fathers belonging to different age groups. Additionally, by incorporating the wives/mother and grandfather's perspectives aids support and complement the quantitative findings on fatherhood. therefore, by providing the qualitative experiences of wives and grandfathers. This deeper exploration also allows for better understanding on what factors contribute to the evolution and construction of fatherhood identities across different life stages.

The present study incorporates several interconnected concepts that influence the roles of fathers. Identity theory is a crucial framework as it provides a lens to better understand the views that fathers hold regarding their involvement and role as father. Furthermore, the study also considers factors like, work-life balance, maternal gatekeeping, marital satisfaction and effects of traditional or intergenerational influence on fatherhood. Each of these factors offers insight into the complexity of fatherhood.

### **1.1 IDENTITY THEORY -**

Identity is the sense of self, that is shaped by the social interactions and norms. As per identity theory, individuals have several identities, such as spouse, parent or employee. These identities are ranked according to their importance or “salience”. Similarly, theories related to paternal identity focus on how fathers perceive and value their roles as a caregiver or as a provider. Research on fatherhood identity helps to better understand how fathers balance their roles and to explore the transition in paternal identity over the passage of time.

One of the most important factors that affects father involvement , is the degree to which a father values his role as a parent, which is determined by the “fathering identity”. According to identity theory , if a father views himself as a caregiver , the more likely they are to be involved in child rearing. The theory suggests that fathers actions and behaviours are impacted by their

investment in the role as a father. Father engagement is multifaceted and is affected by several ways such as, social, emotional, cognitive and social capital viewpoints McBride et al. (2005). A three part model of parental involvement which included paternal involvement, accessibility and responsibility towards child, by Lamb (1987) helps in understanding that why some fathers adopt active caregiving roles and not just focus on being the financial provide

According to identity theory , people have several identities based on one's social roles,such as being a fathers. The identity of a person is influenced by social interactions and are ranked according to their significance it holds for a person.similarly, fathering style is determined by how important or “salient” a fathers role is to him. If more value is put on the role as a provider, they are likely to concentrate on primarily making the ends meet, on the other hand if more significance is given to the caregiving role as fathers , more active involvement of fathers in childcare is observed. However, life events like divorce and separation can alter a father's sense of identity. Therefore support or obstacles in the life of a father impacts paternal identity. A study by Petren and Ferraro (2023) examined the relationship between fathers' involvement with children after divorce and their overall (status) and specific (role) identities, along with challenges that impact this relationship. Those fathers who value caregiving and view being a father to their kids as the most important thing, spent more time with their children and took more responsibility. However, only when co parenting was positive then the identity of being a provider increased affection and if coparenting was poor, less parental involvement was noticed. Besides this, limitations in studies include the role conflict in fathers , as they struggle between being a caregiver and provider. Moreover, social and practical barriers like custody , tend to limit the level of involvement in divorced fathers.

The degree to which fathers engage in a child's life through emotions, actions and responsibility is known as father involvement. It covers the amount of time spent with kids, shared activities and fathers' perception regarding own involvement (Parung & Ferreira, 2017). Engaging

fathers benefit both the kids and themselves through better mental health, growth and better self confidence. Even though, majority of fathers try to embrace the role of a caregiver, Asian culture still supports the role of authority in fathers. This highlights the need for further study to fully comprehend the parenting practices and father's involvement in Asian countries.

Lewington et al. (2021) focused on how men deal with conflicting responsibilities of fatherhood and the influence on their identities as transitioning from the role as a man to fathers comes with rewards and challenges. After interviewing first time fathers experiences , it was found that some fathers still favour traditional fatherhood ideas like being a provider first, however they also tend to take on a new role as a father by being more engaging with the kids. Therefore, studies reveal that today's fathers move back and forth between the old and new ways of fatherhood.

According to Lee and Schoppe-Sullivan (2022) two forms of identities influence fathers involvement in childcare- role- level identity (fathers perceptions regarding specific roles like mentor ,caregiver,etc.) and status-level identity (significance of being a father to the children) which remains stable over time, whereas role identity tends to change with the growth of father, children and according to family. Research suggests that both the identities assists paternal involvement. Furthermore, fathers engagement tends to be strengthened when the mothers/wives opinion on fathers role is consistent with the opinion of fathers regarding their own role as a father. However, any discrepancy between the opinions may result in conflict and reduce paternal involvement with children. Additionally, this study focuses not only on the impact of maternal-gate closing, rather it also considers the influence of maternal gate opening on fathers' involvement. Therefore, further research needs to explore paternal identity and impact of maternal support in paternal involvement.

Majority of the identity theories suggest that the self is composed of various identities that are hierarchically arranged. Higher the identity in the hierarchy, stronger the behavior or characteristics associated to it moreover, people tend to act in accordance to the most prominent identity (Habib, 2012). However, Theoretical framework on identity formation during fatherhood lacks comprehensive understanding, however the identity theory explains that social roles and interactions influences self-identity, therefore one's perception of himself as a father impacts the level of engagement in rearing a child. Identity theory explains paternal engagement and also considers the roles of stepfathers and divorced or non-residential fathers. Despite the insights provided by identity theory, there still remains a gap regarding exploring the transition to fatherhood.

Rane and McBRIDE (2000) used identity theory as a base to understand paternal involvement. About eighty-nine married couples with young children were interviewed and surveyed regarding their parenting practices. Hereby, fathers were to rate the importance of being a worker or parent meant to them , along with how crucial caring was to their identity. It was found that the father's level of involvement remained unaffected by whether they valued being a parent or working. But fathers who valued nurturing spent more time and were more responsible toward their kids. Moreover, mothers actions and attitudes also impacted the fathers perceptions of their caregiving roles. The derived results of the study can be used to further improve parenting programs to facilitate paternal involvement.

Despite the extensive research, identity theory still does not provide a comprehensive explanation on how identities are actually formed Kushal and Adamsons (2022). Majority of research focuses on adults who have already formed identities or on teenagers who are mentally planning their future, but studies lack in examining the transition people go through. A man's views of himself as a father is often influenced by opinions of spouses, early experiences with own father or role models and by one's confidence in the ability to be a good father.

Even though identity theory explains paternal involvement, several gaps still exist. Majority of studies focus on fathers who already have formed their identities, this offers limited insights into how fatherhood identity is constructed and develops during transitioning periods and across life span. The conflict between provider and caregiver roles along with the influence of cultural norms are still understudied. Moreover, studies rarely incorporate maternal perspectives such as gatekeeping or gate opening and its impact on fathers' role salience. Additionally, stepfathers or non-residential fathers are often overlooked in fatherhood studies. Lastly, there is also a lack of longitudinal studies that tracks changes in paternal identity over the passage of time.

## **1.2 WORK LIFE BALANCE-**

When it comes to challenges and stress faced by men while managing work-life tension, this area is relatively understudied. Paternal identity and involvement of fathers in a child's life is heavily influenced by work-life balance. It is often seen that less job flexibility and work load of fathers often restrict their involvement in family life and childcare. However, if one has flexible working conditions and manageable workload then it allows fathers to be more engaging in parenting and child rearing.

In the last several decades, a significant shift in the responsibilities has been observed regarding work and family. Nowadays, fathers are expected to adopt the roles of a “modern” father or a “new father”. Which includes fathers to be more participating in sharing childcare responsibilities and also requires to nurture the child while remaining dedicated to one's career. Therefore, men are facing the same pressures as women face when they start working again. McLaughlin & Muldoon in 2014 conducted research with the aim to investigate father’s perspective on their roles and to understand how these perspectives impact their actions while managing the needs of the fatherhood roles. Findings indicated that fathers differ in the view

of their role as a father and level of commitment towards fatherhood. Moreover, a gap between new fatherhood ideology and actual fathering practices was noticed.

An exploratory study on French fathers in work organization was conducted in 2022 in order to navigate the work-life balance challenges in fathers. It consisted of in depth interviews with French working fathers, with the purpose to explore the challenges and conflicts faced by them while trying to strike the work-life balance and how men manage the work stress while being an involved father. It was found that fathers have a different ideology regarding work-life balance than women. French fathers viewed work-life balance as something that was occasional, with some flexibility at the workplace and not always expecting solutions from their organisation. However, fathers of modern times do seek more support and help from their employers in order to be more involved as a father. Tanquerel, 2022 categorised fathers into three types-the “breadwinner” father, the “caring” father and the “want to have all” father. Each with their own strategies of maintaining a work-life balance. Further the study highlights the need of organizations to understand the pressure men have while following traditional masculinity ideas and roles. Therefore, in order to support men to become better fathers, employers must create flexible policies and mentoring programs that showcase that men's role in fathering is as important as that of mothers, so the fathers are encouraged to take part in childcare.

Bahadur (2015) highlights that work-life balance is often studied in favour of women, with less focus on men's dynamic and multiple roles, such as a father, as a husband and as an employee. This study explores work-life balance by considering men's perspective and explores the factors that influence work life balance. With the help of a UK online survey on male employees, it was found that the balance mostly depended on societal perceptions and a flexible working environment. Moreover, family support was seen as one of the helping factors to strike

balance . while economic factors were viewed as an obstacle while achieving the balance between work and family.

In order to study the influence of policy support and cultural variations, families from Canada and Belgium were investigated to explore the balance of work with family life. It was seen that as both nations have less flexible job alternatives and weak childcare systems, they rely on private and family based job solutions to balance work and family (Doucet & Merla, 2007). In such a crisis, some fathers choose to be a stay-at-home dad, particularly those who have weaker job status. This implies that in the absence of policy care or support, families make sacrifices to balance work and family. It was found that not all fathers “trade cash for care”. Besides the interests of caregiving, fathers try to preserve the traditional masculinity identity by indulging in community activity and part time employment.

In 2015, executive employees at Hyundai Motors India were studied in order to understand how factors like social support and job flexibility help while managing work-life balance. Raj & Julius, highlights that , with rise in stress and job pressure in workers has led to disruption in their health and work-life unbalance. Therefore, many workers use alcohol as a stress buster. The results showed no significant connection between worker’s experience and their ideas on work-life balance, however, participants did report that their families played a major role in order for them to achieve the balance between the two worlds.

These studies indicate that even though father involvement in being studied globally, research on men's work life balance is still fragmented despite the shift in gender roles and parent engagement. These studies highlight the evolving roles and fathers involvement in childcare is influenced by several factors like nature of job, working conditions, personal traits of father, marital satisfactions and societal norms or expectations. The future research should include the challenges that men specifically face while balancing their roles as a father and an employee

along with the impact of work life balance on fathers identity. This points out that there is a need to understand how fathers manage and balance multiple roles across various life stages .

### **1.3 MARITAL SATISFACTION**

The personality of the father and the dynamics of marriage tends to change as one enters the journey of fatherhood and undergoes several transformations not only in one's identity but also in marital relationship. Father's take on a new role as a father and face new challenges and experiences with the child which impacts the couple's relationship. Even though the relationship may deepen after the child, with increased affection and care for each other, it also brings forth new challenges for the couple which might shake the harmony of the couple. Moreover, the level of marital satisfaction and harmony within a couple has a strong influence on fathers' engagement in childcare . Hence, understanding the impact of marital satisfaction on fathers' engagement in parenting is important to study.

Fathers who are satisfied and content with their relationship with their spouses are more likely to be engaging both in terms of quality and quantity. Moreover , if mothers perceive their spouse/fathers as capable caretakers, then fathers are more inclined to take active part in child rearing activities. In the year 2017, Parung and Ferreira examined the differences between UK vs Asia and Hong Kong vs Indonesia in terms of father involvement. But most importantly it studied the effect of work life balance or marital satisfaction on father involvement. To study these factors, the Inventory of Father Involvement, a 26-item questionnaire created by Hawkins et al. (2002), and the Couple Satisfaction Index (CSI-4), a four-item self-report by Funk and Rogge (2007) was used. A high correlation was found between father's involvement with child with couple satisfaction.

Despite the fact that childbirth is regarded as a joyful event and a beginning of a new chapter, it can also strain the couple's relationship. as marital satisfaction is not constant and tends to

change after some time and frequently follows a “U” shaped trajectory. As transitioning into parenthood comes with profound psychological, emotional and social changes along with increased stress, leading to decreased marital harmony. Several previously done researches also support the fact that parenthood negatively impacts the quality of marital relationship. A meta-analysis by Bogdan, Turliuc, and Candel (2022) included 49 studies (with 97 parent sample and 9 non-parent sample) with the aim to explore the changes in couple satisfaction during pregnancy and the first 24 months post birth. It was found that there was a significant drop in marital satisfaction in the first year postpartum, followed by a smaller yet persistent decline in marital quality into the second year. It also highlights that during the comparable time periods, couple satisfaction also declined slightly for the non-parent participants. This study is also indicative of the fact that partners had influence on each others experiences therefore, the decline in marital happiness for one partner, heavily influence the other partners perception on quality of relationship showing an interdependence of spouse experiences, along with the fact that marital dissatisfaction may tend to persist even after a year of postpartum.

Evidence of the role of father engagement enhancing family functioning despite low marital satisfaction was presented by Simonelli et al. (2016) using a multilevel analytic and longitudinal methodology with the aim to investigate how family relations changes from pregnancy to preschool age. The study explored how father engagement in childcare, along with couple satisfaction influences the quality of mother-father-child interactions. Just over 100 first-time parents participated and were tracked throughout the study across different points of time- at 7<sup>th</sup> month of pregnancy, 4<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> months of the infant's life, as well as during preschool years as well (36-50 months). To evaluate family interactions Lausanne Trilogue Play observational approach was used, marital satisfaction was measured by Dyadic Adjustment Scale and lastly, with the Father Involvement Questionnaire was used. The findings revealed that family relationships improve over time. An interesting finding came out,

indicating that higher quality of familial relationships were linked to low levels of couple satisfaction. This illuminates the complicated connections between family interaction and marital quality. However, even if the marriage satisfaction drops, father engagement can still improve the familial functions and interactions. Therefore, involving fathers play a key role in shaping the family dynamics.

Due to increased divorce rates in the past two decades it is important to study the impact of separation and high-conflict couples on their children. A study by Sequeira De Figueiredo et al. (2012) explored the possible differences in children's behaviour based on whether they live with parents who live together or those who are divorced and live separately. As child's behaviour is greatly influenced by their parents, therefore researcher studied in total 62 children between ages of 6-9 years old belonging to 230 divorced parents and 32 with married couples. The TRF (Teacher Form Report) was used for teachers views and to assess parents perceptions about own kids, a Portugal version of CBCL (Child Behaviour Checklist) was used. The findings indicated that high behavioural issues in kids who belonged to single/separated parents were observed by teachers. Moreover, parents also reported that children who had no siblings and had fewer father visits and fewer involving fathers, exhibited more troubling behaviour than in kids belonging to married parents.

Even though existing researches explored the impact of marital quality, separation, fathers self-efficacy on fathers engagement, however there remains a gap in the literature. Although, findings from several studies do indicate that fathers involvement is shaped by marital satisfaction and parental conflict, the factors are not well integrated as several other variables like divorce, parenting confidence or work load are not well considered while studying paternal involvement and family dynamics. While most studies focused on maternal roles and neglected paternal experiences specifically in high conflict couples or cultural diversity on the development of a child. Therefore, in order to comprehend the interrelated concepts of father

involvement , paternal self efficacy and marital satisfaction and its effects on fatherhood identity , a more holistic and longitudinal approach is required.

#### **1.4 MATERNAL GATEKEEPING-**

The term maternal gatekeeping refers to the beliefs and actions taken by the mother that can either inhibit or encourage fathers engagement in childcare. These actions may include being the primary caregiver and criticizing fathers efforts. Maternal gatekeeping plays a critical role in father's identity formation, if mothers encourage father involvement it boosts dads confidence and feel more competent while rearing a child. Thus, shaping their identity as an active and involving caregiver. However, if the mother has higher gatekeeping levels then it hinders fathers involvement, due to criticizing and controlling actions of mothers leading to weaker father's identity.

Due to alterations in the "culture of fatherhood" there has been a shift in fatherhood roles, which is evident in modern fathers who have stepped up their role and involved themselves into childcare as well. A study by McBride et al., 2005 brings forth the antecedents of father involvement, which included paternal identity and maternal influence. According to the study mothers have direct influence and control over paternal involvement. So to investigate this influence 30 families with kids aged between 2 to 3 years old took part. Interviews were conducted and both parents answered the questions. Several measures were used , such AS-Time diary interview protocol, parental responsibility scale (PRS), role investments penny sort task and lastly Role of father questionnaire (ROFQ). It was found that the level of father involvement and father commitment to their role as a father or parent was influenced by the mothers beliefs about the fathers. Hence, mothers play a significant role in influencing the fathers parenting approach.

While most of the earlier research focuses on the impact of maternal gatekeeping on father-child interaction, very little is known about the role of maternal gatekeeping in altering the perceptions in fathers regarding their own experience in family. Based on the family systems theory, the study investigated the link between dad's weekly experiences on romantic relationships and the sense of exclusion from family systems along with perceived maternal gatekeeping (Fischer et al. 2022) . The study also looked at the impact of fathers' attachment styles, especially avoidant attachment. Around 300 fathers with children under the age of 6 from Canada and Germany participated in an eight week online diary study and had to share their experiences weekly. Results showed that fathers who experienced more maternal gatekeeping reported the feeling of being excluded by family, more negative emotions and poor romantic relationship with spouse . These effects were seen to be higher in those fathers who are emotionally aloof and had avoidant attachment style. Hence, being controlled and blocked by mothers in parenting hinders the fathers connection with family.

Kwok et al., 2012 , investigated the paternal efficacy and couple satisfaction impact on fathers involvement. Researchers found that older fathers, due to higher maturity and responsibility were more engaged in child rearing. Paternal self-efficacy and couple satisfaction play key roles in fathers' involvement. As maternal satisfaction helps in greater paternal involvement, even in those fathers who had low self confidence in their abilities as a father.

Both families and children are benefited by involvement of fathers, however primary caregiver roles are played by mothers more than fathers, due to maternal gatekeeping. Many studies previously done indicate a link between maternal gatekeeping and father involvement, but lesser is known about what factors or determinants play a role that makes mothers act as gatekeepers. Schoppe-Sullivan et al. (2015) conducted a study to identify determinants of mothers gatekeeping while transitioning into parenthood. Researcher highlights various factors influencing maternal gatekeeping such as- mothers psychological functioning, expectations of

fathers parenting , stability of relationship, traditional gender roles, fathers characteristics and religiosity. In the study 182 couples who were both working parents and expecting their child participated. Both parents had to fill out a series of questionnaires in order to measure mental health, beliefs and ideologies and expectations. Furthermore, after 3 months of postpartum , mothers had to fill a survey about maternal gatekeeping beliefs and behaviour. . Higher gate closing and lesser involvement of fathers are frequently predicted by more traditional beliefs, poor maternal mental health, low fathers confidence and due to unstable relationships. however, mothers who were more religious were more likely to support the involvement of fathers. Therefore, the study indicates that fathers' traits are less indicative of maternal gatekeeping when compared to mothers' characteristics.

Despite the fact that previous studies have established the importance of maternal gatekeeping and its impact on father's involvement, still several areas remain unexplored. While most studies focus on the quantity of fathers involved, that is the behavioural outcomes , little is known about the internal experiences such as identity, emotional well being of fathers and perceived exclusion that is influenced by maternal gatekeeping. Interplay of other factors like- societal and familial expectations, personal experiences and maternal characteristics are still not well understood. Moreover, most research prioritizes the involvement of fathers and not the parenting styles that fathers adopt. Lastly, a significant gap regarding how maternal gatekeeping impacts fathering across different developmental stages, specifically during adolescence needs to be studied. Future studies should focus on psychological traits and attachment style and emotional regulation of fathers.

### **1.5 INTERGENERATIONAL PERSPECTIVE & TRADITIONAL FATHERHOOD-**

In order to get a better understanding of paternal beliefs, behaviour, values and engagement its crucial to study intergenerational fathering. As fathers mostly look back at their experience

with their fathers in earlier childhood, shapes the current parenting styles in fathers. Joyful experiences with own father may result in following own fathers steps to parent own child, however, negative or disengaging experiences leads to either completely rejecting own fathers parenting style or being subconsciously practising somewhat the same patterns as one's own father. The intergenerational process to fatherhood may result in rejecting or replicating own fathers actions. This process of imitating, disapproving or adapting to one's own experience with their fathers dictate the current parenting, even if the fathers of previous generation were in authority and disciplinarian, still for those with closer bonds traditional parenting workers but those who witnessed limited father engagement such children grown up to be fathers who are more involving and available to child and to provide the affection that they once missed. So by considering the fathers and grandfathers views on fathering becomes a significant area of study as it shapes how men perform and understand the role of a father.

In order to comprehend how gender norms are shaped and influence fatherhood, researchers draw out certain theoretical frameworks of masculinity to examine the ways in which men create their identities as fathers. Connell's Masculinity theory suggests masculinity is not fixed, rather it changes and is influenced by society. The study highlights four types of masculinity. Firstly, Hegemonic- dominant and traditional strong men. Second, Subordinate- include gay men and not dominant, Third, Complicit- not dominant yet are favoured by the privileges men have, lastly, Marginalized- socially disadvantaged ,men, in terms of race and class. Connell's perspective categorises masculinity but does not address the role of fathers. However, recent studies focus on ways fathers carry out and navigate masculinity in childcare roles. L. Wang & Keizer, 2024 investigated the role of contemporary fathers of China in urban areas and provided a framework on masculinity which aligned with china. This includes three primary types: Protective masculinity- takes the form of more traditional roles, where fathers view themselves as protector and provider. Secondly. Caring Masculinity- emotionally engaging

fathers that take part in child rearing as well. Lastly, Hybrid masculinity- which is a blend of both traditional fathers and caring fathers, hereby traditional masculinity is integrated into father's identity along with caregiving. This approach considers modern fatherhood and established gender norms. The study suggested that Chinese fathers are developing a new and hybrid form of masculinity that integrates with both modern and traditional ideology on fathers' masculinity.

The idea that real men need to be harsh, strong and show no emotions is facilitated through traditional masculinity ideology. Such values are taught to young men at a very early age and generally transmitted from father to son. Several studies examine the role of masculine beliefs and its impact on men's mental health. However, the impact of such views on fathers' role as a caregiver or as a parent is not yet studied in depth. Researches do indicate that fathers who align with traditional masculinity tend to be less engaging with the kids and are distant which impacts child's behaviour. Moreover, less is known about how this ideology interacts with father-child play. As play time between kids and parents provides a great opportunity for them to bond and connect, yet not much is studied on paternal views on masculinity that influences the way they interact or participate with kids during playtime. Hence, Cope, 2024 highlights the research gap in the area of traditional masculinity and fatherhood. More exploration is needed in the area of how fathers interact during child play and how they bond, along with considering broader population to study this ideology in different types of races and families, including real time observation of father-child interaction.

Previous research has already established that paternal behaviours and beliefs, whether positive or negative, are passed down to further generations. These can be inherited or socially learned. Moreover, different types of fathers such as biological, stepdad or non-residential fathers exert influence on kids. Studies indicate that stepfathers can be as effective as a biological father. Similarly, non-residential fathers surprisingly tend to be more engaging and this is strongly

related to their fatherhood identity. However, limited studies focus on different types of fathers and how their fathering attitudes get transmitted. Clouthier (2020)

A study by Clouthier (2020) aimed to focus on the kind of fathering children received in their childhood and adolescence in terms of – control, support or disrespect that shapes their own fatherhood identity, including self-efficacy, role salience and satisfaction with their own role as a father. Results indicated that , new fathers with high self-efficacy received more support from their own fathers, while those who were controlled by their own fathers grow up to be less confident in their fathering practices. Even though supportive fathers positively shapes new fathers' self-efficacy, it does not guarantee commitment to the role of a father.

Men's own early experiences and interactions with their own fathers significantly influences their own ideology and approach to fathering. Those with detached fathers often develop strong attitudes and try to compensate for that missing emotional connection. Whereas, those with strong connection with their fathers tend to follow and carry same approach towards own kids. However, men with no father figure in their lives tend to have less positive perspective on fatherhood. In order to understand how fathering behaviour gets passed onto future generations, Jessee and Adamsons (2018) highlights the social learning theory, which suggests that learning occurs by observing others actions and there are three unique skills that help man in his learning process. Firstly, people learn by observing others and understand a variety of behaviours and its consequences, secondly, human have the cognitive capability to somewhat predict the consequences of the actions and lastly, one can gain control their reaction to external stimuli.so, when first time parents face new challenges or situations , people often look back upon the experiences with own parents and their actions in similar situations. According to this study, the quality of the father child relationship is inherited and passed over to the next generation. Strengthened ties by the age of 9 were found where fathers were involved with their children, this father's early engagement determines the quality of long-term connection. Hence, more

studies should be done in order to get better insight into how family dynamics and intergenerational factors play a role in father-child relationship.

Ee et al. (2021) highlight the gap in fatherhood studies in Asia, as there is a very limited research exploring both fathers and grandfathers perspective on fatherhood. This study focused on interviewing 12 grandfather- father pairs to investigate the intergenerational transmission of fathering practices in the Singaporean population. The findings indicate four main factors that influence fathering, it included- father's own personality, external influences (employment and culture) , personal parenting ideology and child's behaviour. This study emphasizes the need to consider both fathers and grandfathers perspectives in maternity and childcare, further suggesting support programs to help the two generations work collaboratively to benefit the kids.

By focusing on fathering practices , which is often neglected in research Kerr et al. (2009) conducted a study to investigate the transmission of positive parenting over three generations ( grandfathers, sons, grandchildren ) . The study indicated that grandparents (G1) who practiced supportive parenting with their own sons (G2), further became more engaging and positive fathers for their own children (G3). This bond was associated with son's healthy teen years. This demonstrates that positive fathering practices are passed down to generations which help to reduce behavioural issues in children.

There is limited research exploring men's experiences and interaction with their own fathers that shape their identity and role as fathers. The intergenerational transmission of parenting through imitation, rejection, or adaptation still remains underexplored. Additionally, little is known about how traditional masculinity beliefs influences father-child relationship. Therefore, there is a need of Comparative insights from both grandfathers and fathers in order to understand the evolving nature of fatherhood across generations.

## **1.6 RESEARCH GAP**

Over the past years, fatherhood has been defined primarily through conventional roles—where fathers' duties are seen in terms of breadwinners and protectors—with little attention on paternal involvement in caregiving and nurturing, moreover, fathers are often ignored from the developmental and emotional aspects of parenting and viewed as secondary in parenting. However, in recent decades, cultural norms and societal expectations have dramatically evolved, highlighting the value of fathers' active participation in caregiving, emotional support, and daily childcare duties.

Despite the shift in culture and society, still there remains a considerable gap in research exploring how fatherhood identities are constructed and transformed. Majority of the existing literature focuses on new fathers, especially on the early experiences and challenges of adjusting to fatherhood. Even though such studies offer insights into the initial formation of paternal identity, still it fails to capture the dynamic nature of fatherhood that evolves over time.

As children grow and go through different developmental stages such as from infancy to toddlers to adolescence or early adulthood. Similarly, fathers also adapt their roles and duties as their kids mature over time. Yet limited research focuses on how fatherhood is transformed across different life stages or how older fathers reframe their identities according to changing familial responsibilities and social contexts. Therefore, understanding the dynamic nature of fatherhood is very crucial, as it is not a fixed or static role but, it's an evolving process that is influenced by various personal and contextual factors.

Furthermore, little is known about a number of significant factors that influence paternal identity across various periods of life. Age, life experiences, marital satisfaction, work-life balance, maternal gatekeeping, traditional fatherhood ideology, and intergenerational influences are some of the factors that play a role in shaping fatherhood identity. Notably, there

remains a lack of quantitative research in this area that systematically investigates the impact of - traditional fatherhood beliefs, maternal gatekeeping, marital relationship, work-family conflict, intergenerational influence on paternal identity and involvement. Even though these factors have been qualitatively studied, there is still a lack of empirical evidence.

The present study adopts a mixed-methods approach in order to address the multidimensional research gap. Initially the concept of fatherhood identity and associated factors are qualitatively studied by interviewing fathers of different age groups. Then in the second part of the study, a quantitative examination is done using standardized scales to investigate the relationship between fatherhood identity and influencing variables. The second phase incorporates qualitative interviews from mothers/wives and grandfathers in order to gain deeper understanding into intergenerational beliefs, marital dynamics, and other external or contextual factors influencing the paternal role. This design offers a more comprehensive understanding of fatherhood that bridges personal experiences of fathers, mothers and grandfathers with objective measurement.

## **1.7 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES-**

**Study 1** - Explores paternal identity and associated factors by interviewing fathers of various age group, the objectives of the study were-

1. To explore the construction of fatherhood identity among modern fathers across different stages of child's development.
2. To identify and the factors that impact the construction of fatherhood identity in modern fathers

**Study 2-** Comprises of two phases, whereby the first phase the study quantitatively measures the relationship between paternal identity and associated factors using standardized

questionnaires that measures- fatherhood identity, traditional fatherhood beliefs, maternal gatekeeping, marital satisfaction and work-family conflict

### **1.7.1 Hypotheses:**

H1: There will be a significant relationship between father's identity and father involvement in parenting.

There will be a significant relationship between father's identity and traditional fatherhood beliefs.

H2: There will be a significant relationship between father's identity and traditional fatherhood beliefs.

H3: There will be a significant relationship between father's identity and maternal gatekeeping.

H4: There will be a significant relationship between father's identity and work-family conflict.

H5: There will be a significant relationship between father's identity and marital satisfaction.

The second phase of the study aimed for a deeper understanding of construction of fatherhood identity by incorporating both mothers (wives) and grandfathers (fathers of current fathers) perspectives. These spousal and intergenerational insights investigate how fatherhood identity is perceived, evolves and transforms over time.

### **1.7.2 Objectives:**

1. To examine mothers' perceptions related to husbands participation and paternal identity.
2. To investigate the factors associated with the construction of fatherhood identity from mothers point of view- work life balance, shared responsibility, emotional engagement and marital relationship, maternal gatekeeping.
3. To examine the intergenerational shifts in the construction of fatherhood identity.

4. To explore grandfather's perspectives and differences between traditional and modern fatherhood.

## **CHAPTER 2 : METHODOLOGY**

The Methodology chapter outlines the research design, participants, data collection procedures, and the tools used in the study. It provides a detailed explanation of how the study was conducted to explore the construction of fatherhood identity and related factors . This chapter also describes the sampling methods, data gathering techniques, along with the analytical approach

This research consisted of two studies. Study 1 was purely qualitative study and involved in depth interviews from fathers of various age groups. Whereas study 2 was conducted in separate phases. Phase 1 : quantitative data was collected using standardized questionnaires and Phase 2 : qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews from mothers/wives and grandfathers.

### **STUDY 1**

#### **2.1 PARTICIPANTS**

The study consisted of 11 married fathers between the ages of 25 to 45+. The eligibility criteria was set, whereby participants had to be a) married residential father b) having at least one child between the ages of 0 to 18 years. The participants represented a diverse group of fathers. Age-wise the majority (36.4%) were in the ages of 35 to 40 , followed by those in 25-30 and 30-35 years old (18.2% each). Lower percentages (9.1%) were in the age categories of 40-45 and (18.2%) 45+ years respectively. Most has attained masters degree (54.5%), followed by bachelors degrees (27.3%) and doctoral degrees (18.2%).

The participants belonged from various occupations, such as judiciary, agriculture, businessmen, teaching and project management. While 27.3% were self-employed, the majority of them were full-time employees (72.7%). In terms of wives, the majority worked

full-time (36.4%), while part-time workers and homemakers were 9.1% each, along with 18.2% were self-employed and 27.3% categorized as jobless.

Furthermore, the majority of the participants lived in a joint family (54.4%) and the remaining 45.5% belonged to the nuclear family.

Most participants had one or two children. Majority of the kids belonged to age groups of 2-6 years and 6-12 years while a lesser number of fathers had kids in the ages of 0-2 and 13-18 years.

## **2.2 PROCEDURE**

Each participant was asked to sign a consent form , stating the purpose of the study along with assuring the confidentiality participants responses. Basic demographic details were collected such as – age, education, occupation and number and age of children. Participants then took part in a semi-structured interview that lasted from 20-50 minutes. With each participants consent , the interview were audio-recorded and later transcribed for analysis using turboscribe app.

## **2.3 DESIGN**

Purposive sampling and qualitative approach were used to investigate how fathers create their identities. 11 married and residential fathers with at least one child between the ages of infancy and adolescence made up the sample for the study.

## **2.4 TOOLS**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted for data collection, allowing participants to reflect on personal experiences openly. The flexibility of the qualitative, semi structured interviews help in deeper understanding of the experiences of a man as a father. The interviews included a series of subjective questions to get a better understanding into the roles and factors that

influence the construction of fatherhood identity. Each interview was transcribed using the turboscribe app . Later each transcribed interview was Thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns.

## **STUDY 2- PHASE 1**

### **2.5 PARTICIPANTS**

A total of 102 married and residential fathers participated in the study and were selected using purposive sampling technique. Participants belonged to broad range of ages: 9.8% (n = 10) of the participants were between 25 and 30 years; about 24.5% (n = 25) belonged to age group of 30 and 35 years; 17.6% (n = 18) between 35 and 40 years; 18.6% (n = 19) were between the ages of 40 and 45 years; and lastly about 29% (n = 30) were 45 years and above.

Regarding the employment status, about 56 % of the participants reported to be self-employed, while 42 % engaged in a full-time job . whereas, only 2% reported to be unemployed, and only 1% worked a part-time job. The majority of fathers worked in business or agriculture. The differences in employment status provided important information about how fathers' roles and identities are influenced by various job profiles.

The basic inclusion criteria was that each participant must have at least one child between the ages of 0-18 years. 25 participants had children between 0 and 2 years , 35 had kids between the age range of 2 and 6, followed by 46 fathers with children between the age range of 6 to 12, and lastly 60 participants had children belonging to the age group of 13 to 18.

### **2.6 Procedure**

Fathers from specific age groups were approached and invited to participate in the study. Each participant was provided with a consent form stating a brief overview of the study and outlining its purpose. Participation was totally voluntary, and participants were allowed to withdraw at

any time without consequences. All responses were kept confidential. After participants consent, demographic information was collected, including age, nature of job, number of children, and children's age groups. Afterwards, each participant was asked to fill out a series of questionnaires that took about 7-10 minutes. Finally, participants were appreciated for their involvement in the study.

## **2.7 Design**

The present study followed a quantitative research design to systematically examine fathers' identities using structured instruments. Standardized questionnaires were used to collect data on various dimensions related to fatherhood. Purposive sampling was used to ensure participants relevance for the current study, as the inclusion criteria included participants to be currently married fathers with children aged between 0 to 18 years.

## **2.8 Tools Used**

For the quantitative section of the study, participants were to complete a series of questionnaires designed to measure key constructs related to fatherhood identity, role perception, work-family dynamics, and interpersonal relationships. The following instruments were used:

- 1. Traditional Fatherhood Scale** (Whatley, 2004): This 10-item test measures how fathers view traditional duties in parenthood. Items are recorded on seven points on the Likert scale, whereby 1 indicates (strongly disagree) to 7 indicating (strongly agree). The Traditional Fatherhood Scale had a Cronbach's alpha of .89, indicating strong reliability. To gauge the degree of traditional ideology among contemporary fathers, the scale's items recorded views on discipline, earning a living, and expressing emotions.
- 2. Work and Family Conflict Scale** (Haslam et al., 2014): To examine the stress and conflict experienced between professional life and family responsibilities, a 10-item scale was

administered. It measures the perceived conflict fathers experience while balancing work and family. This is a 7-point Likert scale, whereby 1 means strong disagreement and 7 indicates strong agreement. The scale demonstrated good reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.80 for both the work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict subscales.

**3. U-MICS-PI (Utrecht-Management of Identity Commitments Scale – Parental Identity)** (Piotrowski, 2017): This scale measures the strength of paternal identity on 3 dimensions commitment, in depth exploration and reconsideration of commitment. It examines the value or importance placed on paternal identity by fathers.

**4. Maternal Gatekeeping Scale** (Adapted from Allen & Hawkins, 1999; Beitel & Parke, 1998; Pinto & Coltrane, 2008): Originally a 10-item scale, , to measure the lengths to which wives/mothers control and impact father's participation in childcare and caregiving. The gatekeeping scale showed acceptable internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of .73. However for the current study only 5 item subset was used to assess fathers' version on maternal gatekeeping.

**5. Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS)** (Busby et al., 1995): This 14-item scale measures marital satisfaction and the quality of relationship. Administering this questionnaire is a vital part of study, as marital satisfaction impacts fatherhood identity and involvement in family life. The RDAS has been found to have a Cronbach's alpha (reliability) of .90

## **2.9 Analysis**

The quantitative data were analysed using JASP software. Correlation and regression analyses were done to explore the relationships between paternal identity and associated key variables, such as traditional fatherhood beliefs, work-family conflict, and marital satisfaction and maternal gatekeeping.

## **PHASE 2 –**

### **2.10 PARTICIPANTS**

A total of 15 participants were invited to participate in the qualitative phase of the study , among these 15 participants, 10 were mothers/wives and 5 were grandfathers. Six participants (60%) belonged to the age group of 35 and 40, only one participant (10%) belonged to 25 and 30 years, followed by three participants (30%) were between the ages of 40 and 45. In terms of working status, 55% reported to be housewives, 18% of the respondents were self-employed and 18% reported to a work full-time job, lastly 9% worked a part-time job. Grandfathers were also recruited from a various age groups: two participants (40%) between the ages of 75 and 85, one respondent (20%) between the age range of 45 and 55, and two grandfathers (40%) reported to be between the ages of 55 and 65. Furthermore, 80% of the total grandfathers reported being self-employed , with the remaining 20% being engaged in part-time jobs.

### **2.11 PROCEDURE**

Participants were invited to participate in the study and were given a written consent form stating the purpose of the study and assured voluntary participation and offered complete confidentiality. Once consent was obtained, participants were to give demographic information including age, occupation, and number of children or grandchildren.

Then semi-structured interviews were scheduled as per participants convenience . With the participants' permission, each interview was audio recorded and later transcribed. Lastly, each interview was thematically analysed.

### **2.12 DESIGN**

A qualitative research design along with purposive sampling was used , in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the construction of fatherhood identity from mothers and grandfathers.

This allows for a deeper exploration of personal experiences and focuses on analysing patterns and themes such as intergenerational fatherhood practices, marital relationship , shared responsibilities, and paternal involvement in child-rearing and maternal gatekeeping.

### **2.13 TOOLS**

Semi-structured interviews were used for data collect , this approach allows participants to share subjective experiences openly. The flexibility of the qualitative, semi structured interviews help in deeper understanding of the experiences of a man as a father. The interviews included a series of subjective questions to get a better understanding into the roles and factors that influence the construction of fatherhood identity. Each interview was transcribed using the turboscribe app . Later each transcribed interview was Thematic analysis to identify common themes and patterns.

## CHAPTER 3 : RESULTS

This chapter presents the results obtained from the study. It includes the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative results are obtained from the analysis of the standardized scales measuring key dimensions- paternal identity (UMICS), traditional fatherhood beliefs, marital satisfaction, maternal gatekeeping and work-family conflict. while the qualitative findings are based on fathers, mothers and grandfathers interview narratives. Together , these results complement each other and offer deeper understanding into the research objectives.

### 3.1 STUDY 1- Qualitative analysis of Fathers perspective on fatherhood identity

**Table 1 :** *Theme 1- Construction of Fatherhood identity*

<i><b>SUBTHEME</b></i>	<i><b>CODES</b></i>	<i><b>MEANING</b></i>
ROLE OF FATHER	provider, caregiver, protector, companion, motivator, mentor, role model	Being a provider as a father does not only pertain to be a financial provider, but also providing emotional support, sense of security and other needs. As a caregiver father looks after the daily needs and demands of rearing a child, such as- feeding, comforting and educating the child.
FATHERHOOD IDENTITY ACCEPTANCE	complex, gradual process, confusion to clarity & satisfaction and pleasurable experience	Fatherhood is not a onetime process and paternal identity develops over time and experience. Initially the feeling of unsurety and confusion is evoked, however gradually becoming a father becomes a joyful experience.
EVOLVING IDENTITY	caretaker to guide, change in parenting style, shift in communication way	Depending on the child and the circumstances, fathers adopt different approaches such as being a disciplinarian or a companion to child and taking on complex roles.  The identity as a father also grows along with the child. From assisting the mother to being a role model or guide , fatherhood identity witnesses evolution.

KEY MOMENT	birth of child, first words and steps, achieving milestones, proud moments and challenges	Birth of child, the initial touch and words along with the achievements and milestones of the child are life changing and an emotional experience for the fathers .
LIFES MEANING AFTER FATHERHOOD	new purpose & perspective i. life, increased maturity & responsibility, future oriented, deeper attachment	Fatherhood often accompanies deeper meaning and responsibility towards the child. Providing a purpose in life to provide and protect the child.

**TABLE 2 :** *Theme 2- Factors Shaping Fatherhood Identity.*

SUBTHEMES	CODES	MEANING
INFLUENCE OF FATHER'S OWN PARENTING	own father – Strict, provider, no emotional connection, aggressive, disciplinarian, current parenting – lenient, open communication, emotionally available, balanced approach, traditional masculine vs modern fathers traits	By recalling fathering experiences from own fathers are often depicted by strictness, aggressive approach and being emotionally distant. Current or modern parenting often involves open communication and emotional support with balanced parenting
FAMILY STRUCTURE & FINANCIAL STABILITY	joint family – Importance of grandparents, relationship building, nuclear – child oriented, provide better for child, financial stability as an absolute necessity	Joint families are favoured to help build values and relationships. Whereas nuclear families focus on individual and better childcare. Having financial stability is the core of fatherhood beliefs, as only then one is able to provide and take care of family
WORK PROFILE AND STRATEGIES	flexible or rigid job, boundary setting, scheduling, prioritizing quality time, fostering communication, connecting with spouse, sacrificing socialization	Fathers with self-employed or self-owned jobs tend to be more flexible and more involving. Whereas rigid jobs limit fathers' engagement and lead to work-family conflicts
MARITAL RELATIONSHIP	employed or homemaker, equal or gendered shared responsibilities, changing dynamics of relationship – Appreciation, teamwork, less	Marital satisfaction and higher companionship amongst the couple is often reflected through

	quality time, balance out each other	fathers' participation. Shared responsibilities
MATERNAL GATEKEEPING	encouraging reinforcement, restricting	positive appreciative, Maternal gatekeeping refers to the influence of mothers' attitude on fathers' involvement. Encouraging and appreciative mothers facilitate fathers' engagement and restricting mothers limit fathers' participation
GENDER OF THE BABY	no difference in role of father, indifferent approach, girl dad – more protective, responsible & sensitive, difference in anatomy	Fathering practices can be influenced by gender of the baby. Especially being a “girl dad” brings out the strong role of being protective and sensitive, while for others no difference is noted based on gender of the child
FATHER'S OWN BELIEF SYSTEM	prepping the kid for evolving world, desire to pass on legacy, disagreement with aggressive ways to raise kids, desire to inculcate learned values	Fathers' belief system influences the way one engages. Some fathers prepare their children to adapt to the changing world, some pass on the legacy, while others break the cycle to aggressive parenting

### 3.2 STUDY 2-

#### 3.2.1 QUANTITATIVE RESULTS-

To investigate the associations between the key variables of the study such as- paternal identity, traditional fatherhood beliefs, maternal gatekeeping, marital satisfaction and work-family conflict- correlation and regression were conducted.

In order to assess the relationship of the three subscales of paternal identity- commitment, in-depth exploration and reconsideration of commitment, with other variables such as- traditional fatherhood, work-family and family-work conflict, marital satisfaction and with maternal gatekeeping Pearson's correlation coefficients was computed.

Furthermore, results from the quantitative analysis that was conducted to investigate the relationship between the dependent variables- commitment and reconsideration of commitment- family-work conflict and consensus . Stepwise regression analysis was done and the results are presented in two parts- commitment and reconsideration of commitment.

**Table 3 : Pearson Correlation Coefficients Among Study Variable**

VARIABLE		V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V7	V8	V9	V10
Commitment (V1)	Pearson's r p-value	—									
In depth exploration (V2)	Pearson's r p-value	.144 1.48	—								
Reconsideration of commitment (V3)	Pearson's r p-value	-.358*** < .001	.038 .704	—							
Traditional fatherhood (V4)	Pearson's r p-value	-.304*** .002	- .041	.264** .007	—						
WFC (V5)	Pearson's r p-value	-.214* .030	.180 .071	.178 .074	—	—					
FWC (V6)	Pearson's r p-value	-.427*** <.001	.120 .230	.378*** <.001	.534** * <.001	—	—				
Consensus (V7)	Pearson's r p-value	.208* .036	- 0.29	-.340*** <.001	—	—	—	—			
Satisfaction (V8)	Pearson's r p-value	.193 .052	- .050	-.312 .001	.987** * <.001	—	—	.987** * <.001	—		
Cohesion (V9)	Pearson's r p-value	.188 .058	- .048	-.315** .001	.989** * <.001	—	—	.989** * <.001	.999* ** <.001		
Maternal gatekeeping (V10)	Pearson's r p-value	-.088 .377	.210 * .034	.225* .023							

Table 3 displays the Pearson correlation coefficients and significance levels between the important variables of the study. V1- commitment to the paternal role, V2- in-depth exploration of fatherhood identity, and V3 - reconsideration of commitment. V4 - traditional fatherhood beliefs, V5 and V6 - work-family conflict and family-work conflict, respectively. V7- consensus between partners; V8 - marital satisfaction; V9 - family cohesion; V10 - maternal gatekeeping. The symbols \*, \*\*, and \*\*\* represents the levels of statistical significance. \* Demonstrates  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , and \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . The lower the significance value, the stronger evidence against the results being by mere chance.

The results show a significant negative relationship of commitment with traditional fatherhood beliefs, work-family conflict and family-work conflict (FWC), as well as a positive correlation with consensus. Maternal gatekeeping is the only variable that is positively correlated to in-depth exploration. Lastly, reconsideration of commitment is positively associated to family-work conflict, traditional fatherhood beliefs and maternal gatekeeping, and negatively associated to consensus, satisfaction and cohesion

#### COMMITMENT-

**TABLE 4: MODEL SUMMARY - COMMITMENT and ANOVA TABLE**

<b>Model</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>RMSE</b>
M <sub>0</sub>	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.660
M <sub>1</sub>	0.427	0.182	0.174	2.418

<b>Model</b>		<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>p</b>
M <sub>1</sub>	Regression	130.267	1	130.267	22.289	<.001
	Residual	584.439	100	5.844		
	Total	714.706	101			

Table 4 shows two models,  $M_0$  which is the baseline model and no predictors and the second is  $M_1$  with predictor variable FWC ( family-work conflict ).  $R$  is the correlation between observed and predicted value and  $R^2$  refers to the proportion of variance explained by the model.  $R^2$  for  $M_0$  came to be of 0.000 and a root mean square error (RMSE) of 2.660. however , when FWC was added to  $M_1$  , the value of  $R$  came to be 0.427, that signifies a moderate positive correlation between observed and predicted values of commitment and the value to  $R^2$  increased to 0.182, which suggest 18.2% of variance in committed was due to FWC. Furthermore, the model's adjusted  $R^2$  was 0,174 and the Root Mean Square Error (RMSE) reflects the average prediction error, which came down from 2.660 to 2.148 which indicates a better-fitting model. The ANOVA results show that the Model  $M_1$  is statistically significant as  $F$  value came out to be 22.289 with  $p < .001$ . here the  $F$ -ratio tests whether the overall regression model was a good fit for the data. The results suggest that FWC significantly predicted commitment and not due to mere chance.

**TABLE 5 : COEFFICIENTS**

Model		B (Unstandardized)	SE (Standard Error)	$\beta$ (Standardized)	t	p
$M_0$	(intercept)	19.588	0.263		74.369	<.001
$M_1$	(intercept)	23.337	0.829		28.140	<.001
	FWC	-0.267	0.057	-0.427	-4.721	<.001

Table 5 Represents the coefficients of the regression model. The unstandardized coefficient explains the commitment changes per unit increase in FWC. FWC's (B) value was -0.267 with standard error of 0.057. The beta value ( $\beta$ ) was -0.427 and t-value was -4.7221, which is statistically significant at  $p < .001$ . This suggests that commitment decreases by almost 0.267

units for every increase in family-work conflict. The negative relationship suggests a strong correlation between low levels of commitment and higher levels of family-work conflict.

**RECONSIDERATION OF COMMITMENT-**

**TABLE 6: MODEL SUMMARY- RECONSIDERATION OF COMMITMENT and ANOVA TABLE**

<b>Model</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Adjusted R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>RMSE</b>
M <sub>0</sub>	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.293
M <sub>1</sub>	0.378	0.143	0.134	2.133
M <sub>2</sub>	0.464	0.215	0.199	2.051

<b>Model</b>		<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>p</b>
M <sub>1</sub>	Regression	75.809	1	75.809	16.661	< .001
	Residual	455.014	100	4.550		
	Total	530.824	101			
M <sub>2</sub>	Regression	114.299	2	57.150	13.583	< .001
	Residual	416.524	99	4.207		
	Total	530.824	101			

Table 6 shows two models, whereby M<sub>1</sub> with family-work conflict as the predictor variable and consensus is the second predictor in M<sub>2</sub>. The R value for the first model was 0.378, suggesting moderate positive correlation. R<sup>2</sup> for M<sub>1</sub> is 0.143, indicating 14.3% variance in reconsideration of commitment was associated to FWC. In M<sub>2</sub> when consensus was also added,

the explanatory power of the model improved, as  $R^2$  increased to 0.215 explaining 21.5% of the variance and adjusted  $R^2$  to 0.199. whereas the RMSE also decreased from 2.133 from  $M_1$  down to 2.051 in  $M_2$  indicating a good fitting model.

From the ANOVA results it is found that both models are statistically significant. The F-value for  $M_1$  came out to be 16.661 ( $df = 1, 100$ ),  $p < .001$ , similarly for  $M_2$  the value was 13.583 ( $df = 2, 99$ ),  $p < .001$ . These values indicate that both consensus and FWC significantly predicted reconsideration of commitment.

**TABLE 7 : COEFFICIENTS**

Model		B (Unstandardized)	SE (Standard Error)	$\beta$ (Standardized)	t	p
$M_0$	(Intercept)	5.176	0.227		22.804	< .001
$M_1$	(Intercept)	2.317	0.732		3.166	0.002
	FWC	0.204	0.050	0.378	4.082	< .001
$M_2$	(Intercept)	6.451	1.537		4.196	< .001
	FWC	0.174	0.049	0.323	3.551	< .001
	CONSENSUS	-0.162	0.054	-0.275	-3.025	0.003

Table 7 presents the coefficients of the regression models. According to  $M_2$  model, FWC showed a standardized beta ( $\beta$ ) of 0.323,  $t = 3.551$ ,  $p < .001$ , and a positive unstandardized coefficient ( $B = 0.174$ ,  $SE = 0.049$ ), suggesting that higher the family-work conflict is related to more reconsideration of commitment. On the other hand, consensus was found to be significant negative predictor ( $B = -0.162$ ,  $SE = 0.054$ ,  $\beta = -0.275$ ,  $t = -3.025$ ,  $p = .003$ ). indicating that higher the consensus or better the understanding between couples is linked to lower levels of reconsideration of commitment.

### 3.2.2 QUALITATIVE RESULTS

#### MOTHERS PRESPECTIVE-

**Table 8:** *Theme 1- Construction of Fatherhood Identity*

<b>Subtheme</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Role of Father	Provider, protector, emotional support, role model, playmate, caregiver, teacher, hero, disciplinarian, mentor, guide, friend, emotional anchor	Fathers see themselves as caregivers, mentors, providers, protectors, and heroes. fatherhood role evolves over time by being emotionally available, adapting and shaping their children's lives.
Identity of Father	Transition from partner to caregiver, emotional investment, role model, sense of responsibility, mentor, father as core identity, pride in fatherhood	Becoming a father redefines personal identity, bringing emotional connection and a deep sense of responsibility. Fathers take pride in their role and view it as focal point of paternal identity.
Evolution of Fatherhood Identity	Emotional growth, behavioural changes, adapting to child's needs, increasing responsibility, maturity, confidence, growing attentiveness	Fathers' identities transforms as they adjust to their children's needs, transitioning from confusion to confidence, gaining maturity, and becoming more responsible over time.
Key Moments Shaping Fatherhood Identity	Birth of child, first words, challenges, managing responsibilities, realization of increased responsibilities, sharing own childhood experiences, child's first milestones	Major events, such as the birth of the first child, first words or steps, milestones and challenges are the key moments shaping the father's identity.
Fatherhood Journey	Ongoing growth, continuous learning, reflecting on mistakes, evolving parenting strategies,	The journey of fatherhood is dynamic and continuous in nature, accompanying with personal growth, learning from challenges and

---

developing patience, managing experiences, adapting to new stages of challenges. parenting, and developing patience over time.

---

**Table 9:** *Theme 2 - Factors Shaping Fatherhood Identity*

<b>Subtheme</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Traditional vs. Modern Perspectives	Shift from authoritarian to nurturing style, intergenerational changes, emotional openness, rejection of physical discipline, modern-day fatherhood, increased father involvement, societal changes	Significance of open communication and emotional availability in fathers addresses the shift from traditional authoritarian roles to more affectionate and engaging roles.
Shared Responsibility and Marital Dynamics	50-50 parenting, collaborative roles, task division based on availability, marital satisfaction, teamwork in raising children, open communication, shared decision-making, joint problem solving	Shared parenting responsibilities, partnership and spousal support are crucial for effective fatherhood.
Maternal Gatekeeping	Encouragement for involvement, selective discouragement (e.g., limiting father-child activities), maternal control over disciplinary roles, fostering shared responsibilities, promoting father-child interaction	Mothers typically encourage paternal involvement in most parenting activities, however some may limit fathers participation in specific areas only.
Work-Life Balance and Coping Strategies	Balancing work demands, time management, prioritizing family time, use of technology (video calls), weekend parenting strategies, setting boundaries, quality time	Fathers do acknowledge the need to balance work and family. Despite heavy workload, fathers use strategies to ensure active involvement in child's lives

---

Parenting Style and Adaptation	Emotional availability, leniency, adaptability, playful approach, flexibility in parenting, affectionate approach, responsiveness, adjusting discipline styles	Fathers' parenting styles are flexible, adaptive, emotionally present and balancing leniency with responsibility while catering to child's changing needs.
Cultural, Societal, Family Expectations	Balancing cultural expectations with personal beliefs, societal pressures, focus on individuality, generational shifts, societal support for involvement	Fathers manage the cultural norms and societal expectations, and at the same time embracing more involving and emotionally engaged parenting styles.

**Table 10:** *Theme 3 - Impact of Modern Fatherhood*

Subtheme	Codes	Meaning
Increased Emotional Bonding	Stronger father-child bonding, children sharing feelings, children viewing fathers as heroes and role models, emotional development, involvement, children expressing love	Modern fathers develop stronger emotional bonds with their children, leading to deeper relationships and becoming role models and emotional anchors.
Increased Involvement in Daily Routines	Father participating in everyday tasks, helping with homework, caregiving, decision-making, meal prep, school activities	Fathers are more involved in child's routines, in education and also provides emotional support .

**Table 11:** *Theme 4 - Differences Between Mothers' and Fathers' Roles*

Subtheme	Codes	Meaning
Parenting Styles	Mothers as more detail-oriented, fathers as playful, lenient, emotionally expressive, fathers as “friends” or “siblings,” complementary parenting,	Mothers are often more structured and focus on disciplining the kids , while fathers take on playful,



---

Shifting Styles	Parenting Authority	vs.	Evolution from	disciplinarian fatherhood to emotionally involved and communicative parenting
Contemporary Challenges Strengths	and Technology societal adaptability	distractions, pressure,	Modern fatherhood as more involved yet more demanding due to societal and structural changes	

---

## CHAPTER 4 : DISCUSSION

### STUDY -1

#### 4.1 QUALITATIVE DISCUSSION:

Over the years the role of fathers has evolved and shifted from the traditional breadwinners into more emotionally involving roles as a caregiver, research still often focuses on the experiences of new fathers and overlooks the ways in which paternal identity changes across different life stages. Understanding how father's adapt to fatherhood roles as both they and their kids become older, along with how age, experience, work-life balance and social expectations influences the fatherhood journey. The purpose of the study was to explore how fathers of different age groups construct their identities as different developmental ages of their children and to identify the factors that play a role in construction of fatherhood identity. The study involved 11 currently married and residential fathers aged 25 to 45+ with at least one child between the ages of 0-18 years old. Purposive sampling was done to select the participants and qualitative design was used to collect data through semi-structured interviews to gain deeper insights. Each interview was thematically analysed, two major themes that emerged were - **Construction of Fatherhood Identity** and **Factors Responsible for the Construction of Father's Identity**.

##### 4.1.1 THEME 1- Construction of Fatherhood Identity

The main objective was to explore how fathers from different age groups form identity across different life spans. This theme investigates how fatherhood identity is shaped in relation to paternal responsibilities and roles. As fatherhood identity is dynamic in nature it was found that fathers' identities and roles shifted according to growing children and their needs. This theme includes five subthemes- role of father, identity acceptance, evolving fatherhood identity, key moments shaping father's identity and life's meaning after fatherhood.

**Role of Father:** Fathers take on multiple roles, it can be of a provider, nurturer, disciplinarian, protector, role model, a mentor and even an emotional support for the child. Fathers take on a caregiving role during infancy (0-2), later being a guide and mentor in middle childhood and during adolescence fathers provide emotional support. F7 of the age group of 40-45 reported “*a father in my opinion is a role model, as kids see you every moment*”. Similarly according to F6 the role is “*to guide in the way of life and provide facilities which they require to be a good human being*”. F2 described his role as, “*I am more protective to them and treat them as friends*”. F8-“*I aim to nurture my child's growth, create a safe space for her and still value to help her navigate life.*”

Fathers have a flexible and multifaceted role. From being early childhood caregivers to serving the role of a mentor and emotional pillar during adolescence. This reflects the adapting nature of fatherhood that is based on child's developmental stages and situational demands. Sharma (2019) outlines the transition in roles of fathers as the children grow older. Initially the role is to provide security and comfort to being a guide and playmate for toddlers and lastly providing emotional support and guidance to young adolescents. Purwani and Hasanah (2023) highlights the role of fathers during early childhood emotional development. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with fathers and the results showed that paternal engagement is not only about physical care but also includes emotional availability and having open communication with kids. The findings suggest the holistic nature of father's involvement, which is crucial for child's emotional well-being.

**Fatherhood Identity Acceptance:** The process of identity acceptance was often described to be gradual and complex. During initial stages, fathers experienced confusion, but over time, they found satisfaction in their roles. F9 noted, “*Initially, I could not feel any change, and the sense of being a father came very gradually over the years. It's a different kind of feeling being a father.*” Another father in the 40-45 age group described a similar experience F7: “*At first,*

*it's very confusing as you have a lot of responsibilities, but later it becomes clearer and is a very pleasurable experience.” . Similarly, F11-“ My first thought when I got the news that my wife was pregnant was that I was pretty scared. And I basically got goosebumps. I didn't know how to react because I couldn't process my emotions, whether I was happy or sad. But eventually within a few days or weeks, I got to realize that this is something very special, And that basically changed my mindset. And since that day, I, and until now and for future as well, I thrive to be a good father for my child.”*

Paternal identity often shapes gradually, initially starting with confusion and slowly evolves into a deeper emotional connection once the fathers starts to settle into their roles over time .Study highlights unique experiences of men transitioning into fatherhood , which includes gradual formation of paternal identity that does not take shape after one single moment . According to Škvařil and Presslerová (2024) fathers undergo a series of emotional and psychological adjustments to accept the new identity and tackle the challenges of being a father. Similarly, Koyuncu and K1ssal (2025) investigated first-time fathers who were transitioning into fatherhood. even though fathers initially felt uncertain, excluded and lacked support, however gradually their roles as provider and caregiver develop.the study also suggests that father-child bond starts to develop during pregnancy and it is both a cause and consequence of development of paternal roles.

**Evolving Identity:** In order to meet the demands and needs of the children, fathers often reported their identities being evolved over time in accordance to the needs, approach and situation in hand. F6 from the 35-40 age group explained: *“I think you need to change every year, as per the requirements of your child.”* The change in communication style was also highlighted, by adjusting their approach to reach out to kids. *“I see myself doing a change in*

*my communication style,” explained F11. According to F10-“ When a child is a newborn or very few months old, then all the take care of the child is done by his mother only. A father can only assist a mother in doing things. When a child grows, the role of a father becomes more broader. So, it depends on the needs of the child. What the child needs at that particular time, the role of a father changes according to that.”*

Fatherhood identity is not static in nature, rather it changes and shapes according to the changing needs of children, which encourages fathers to alter communication styles and approach towards fathering.

Odenweller et al. (2013) investigated the change in communication patterns of fathers over time. Advocating that modification in fathering approach and alteration in interaction style is [positively reflected in child’s development, which reflects that adaption is a part of evolution of fatherhood identity.

**Key Moments in Shaping Fatherhood Identity:** key moments in parenting such as the birth of the child, milestones, or facing challenges play an crucial role in shaping fathers’ identities. F9 shared: *“As soon as I reach home after work, they are at the door, and that totally changes my stress from the office.”* The first time a father held his child also had a lasting impact, F2 in the 45+ age group expressed: *“When I held my elder daughter in my hands for the first time, it was a moment that completely changed my perspective on life.”* F1-“ *the first smile, the first laugh you know the first cry, the happiest moment in my life so far. Now watching your child take steps, moving forward moving on bed you know, smiling like, and then so these are the very important and these are the very happy moments for me seeing your child develop,*

Pivotal events like birth of children, first words, challenges , bonding moments, and everyday interactions significantly shapes fathers’ self-perception and boosts their commitment towards their parenting role. For most men, the birth of the child signified and legitimized their paternal

identity and at that moment they knew they became fathers, especially when they were able to touch their child and hear the baby cry. Škvařil and Presslerová (2024). A study on black south African fathers was conducted to examine the paternal identity despite the economic and cultural challenges. The finding indicated that fathers were able to balance typical provider role and at the same time were emotionally invested. So despite the financial and other difficulties, higher commitment towards fatherhood role was noticed. (Bitalo et al., 2024)

**Life's Meaning After Fatherhood:** Fatherhood brought about a new sense of purpose, the majority of the fathers reported increased maturity, responsibility, and the emotional bond with their children over time. F8 reported, *“I have started respecting life now because I have to take care of my kids.”* F3 noted: *“The level of responsibility and maturity has changed, but my basic nature as a person is the same.”* Similarly, F2 described - *“Now I have become more responsible for my children. And for the consequence of my actions which I have done. Okay. I experience the fears that I don't have earlier. And I feel more engaged to the world and committed to the future.”*

Becoming a father comes with great responsibility, maturity and emotional growth, leading fathers to focus on main priorities. This develops a new sense of self and renewed purpose in life that is dedicated towards children.

A qualitative study by Solberg et al. (2022) illuminates on how fathers view life differently after the birth of their child. The perspective and opinions change and prioritize the need and safety of the child. Along with an optimistic outlook on life, fathers also reported being more responsible and protective. Ncayiyane and Nel (2023) qualitatively conducted a study on black south African fathers, a major theme that emerged was “renewed sense of self”, whereby, fathers experienced new purpose and meaning in life and redefined their identity

#### 4.1.2 THEME 2- Factors Influencing Fatherhood Identity

The second research objective was to identify the factors influencing the construction of fatherhood identity. The study suggest that not only internal but also external determinants play significant roles in shaping fathers' identities. This themes includes seven subthemes- influence of own parenting, financial stability and structure of family, marital relationship and shared responsibilities, work-life balance and strategies, maternal gatekeeping, gender of baby and lastly, fathers personal beliefs.

**Influence of Father's Own Parenting:** Fathers' own parenting styles is often determined by the way they were raised by their fathers. Many fathers mentioned following or adjusting their own fathers' parenting styles. According to F2 , *"My father was not so strict, but I am more strict as compared to him."* F11 in the 25-30 age group explained, *"My father and I had a very friendly relationship, and I would also like to take on that role for my child."*, F6 reported-*"With the change of generation, when I was a kid, I felt that my parents are not communicating with me so much when I was a kid. Maybe it's a generation gap. Today's generation fathers are more caring towards their kids than earlier."* These responses demonstrate how fathers' own experiences with their fathers informed their approaches to parenting.

Fathers' approach towards parenting is often shaped by their own upbringing and experiences with their own father. Highlighting the intergenerational experiences influencing modern fathering identity and style.

A study by Hofferth et al. (2012) indicates that fathers who themselves had positive fathering experiences , tend to have a similar positive parenting approach towards their own children while aligning their fatherhood practices and adjusting roles according to their own upbringing. Guzzo (2011) collected data from 3,500 first time fathers, the study supports that men with involving fathers tend to see fathers as caregivers and as authority figures, moreover value

fatherhood more. Whereas, those first-time fathers who had distant or absent fathers were less likely to hold such perspective. Therefore, the study indicates the affect of own fathers involvement on attitudes of new fathers.

**Family Structure and Financial Stability:** The family structure and financial stability also impacts paternal role . Fathers in joint families reported being advantageous due to shared responsibilities. F10 reported, *“I personally enjoy the benefit of both, like having nuclear or joint family.”*. however, F11 favoured nuclear family system and emphasized *“ I do feel that there is a massive effect whether your upbringing is in a nuclear family compared to joint family”*. Furthermore, F7 described- *“financial stability will empower father to take decisions, if there is no financial stability then you have to be restricted in terms of giving even basic necessities to kids.”*

Joint families were reported to lessen the burden of fathers responsibilities due to shared responsibilities, while the nuclear family system demands for more active parenting. Moreover, financial stability empowers fathers and impacts their capacity to provide for their family.

A study highlights the necessity of financial stability amongst fathers even from nuclear families, who tend to have loads of responsibilities to fulfil the needs of the entire family. Hamm et al. (2018) found that the majority of fathers reported the urge to achieve financial stability before having a kid. Which shows how fatherhood intentions and attitudes are shaped by external factors.

**Work Profile and Strategies:** The work environment was another key factor in shaping fatherhood identity. Fathers with flexible jobs tend to engage with their children more , while those with rigid work schedules face challenges in balancing work and family life. F4 with a flexible work schedule explained, *“I have a pretty flexible work life, as we own factories, and*

*it's a joint family business, so it's easy for me to maintain work-life balance.*" Similarly F4 responded- "*So I am a farmer. We have our own land and most of the land is on lease. I just have to supervise. So I have flexible working hours and it's manageable for me to balance my role as a father and husband and a son*" Conversely, F6 with a government job said, "*I have a government job with regular transfers, so whenever I get quality time, I play games with them and try to have more and more open communication.*"

Fathers with a flexible working environment report higher involvement, while those with demanding jobs often limit fathers engagement levels. Highlighting how nature of employment impacts fatherhood practices and involvement.

Both earning and caregiving roles are crucial parts of modern fatherhood, however balancing the both sides can be stressful (Kuo et al., 2017). Some fathers sacrifice their involvement with their child in order to provide more and take on extra work load. However, some fathers prioritize spending time with kids more than others. Allen and Finkelstein (2014) studied about 700 married employees and found that with increasing age, the work-family conflict decreases and it also varies children age. Work-family conflict was observed to be highest when kids were of age 5 or below and lower conflict during empty stage. During teenage children, fathers reported more work interference with family.

**Marital Relationship and Shared Responsibility:** The quality and satisfaction among the couple was crucial to the fatherhood experience. Fathers valued shared responsibilities, F2 noting, "*We try to balance out each other's approach.*" And F10 said- "*So we have to do things in a shared manner. Whatever he needs, so we have to provide that to the child. When my wife is cooking, then totally things come on me. So I have to take care of that.*" Cooperation was key, even in more traditional roles, as F7 shared, "*She makes breakfast while I get our daughter*

*ready for school.*” Despite challenges with time management, mutual support strengthened their parenting roles.

Supportive marital relationship includes shared responsibilities, cooperation and partnership among the couples, which facilitates fathers' involvement and satisfaction regarding parental role. Whereas, conflicting and strained relationships tend to lower fathers' participation.

Galovan et al. (2013) found that if the father took active part in childrearing and family tasks, both parents felt higher levels of happiness and satisfaction from their relationship. Moreover, wives highly value those fathers that are more engaging, have shared responsibilities and have partnership, all these factors tend to improve both marital quality and parenting. Iwasa et al. (2024) aimed to explore the relationship between partners support and marital satisfaction, the findings indicated the spousal support positively influences the partners well-being,

**Maternal Gatekeeping:** The study also found that maternal gatekeeping—mothers beliefs and actions that either encourage or restrict fathers' involvement in caregiving—was a significant factor in shaping fatherhood identity. F3 of the 35-40 age group mentioned feeling restricted when his wife criticized his way of feeding their children: *“I feel restricted when my wife asks me to feed the kids, I give them small portions, and she gets upset that I'm not feeding them enough.”* F5 described- *“For most of the time I feel encouraged by my wife but in one area and only in one area I feel restricted that is when I have to involve myself in his studies you see I'm very short-tempered and when I have to teach him I lose my temper a little bit so there my wife says that I should not involve myself with him in his studies because in that way he would lose his self-esteem and she likes to involve herself in his academic life.”*

In contrast, F2 shared a more positive experience: *“I feel encouraged and appreciated by my wife while sharing responsibilities for our daughter, which encourages me more to be involved”*.

Mothers' attitudes either facilitate or restrict fathers' engagement in shared responsibilities while child rearing . Encouragement tends to enhance parental self-efficacy, while constant criticism or maternal control lowers fathers participation and hinders identity development.

Schoppe-Sullivan et al. (2008) studied the effects of mother's behavior on fathers involvement in child rearing. It was found that encouraging mothers lead to more involving and confident fathers. However, more criticism from mothers side lead to low father participation. The study indicates mothers strong influence on fathers involvement in child care. Furthermore, a study on Chinese fathers found that fathers confidence and beliefs on paternal roles were directly associated to paternal involvement. It was found that maternal-gate opening positively influenced paternal engagement and maternal gate-closing shoed no significant influence. (Liu et al., 2022)

**Gender of the Baby:** Fathers also reported different approaches based on the gender of their children. Fathers of daughters often felt a heightened sense of protection and responsibility. F2 expressed: *"I think it's very much different being a boy dad from a girl dad. As you have to be more protective if you are a girl dad."* In contrast, F8 in the 35-40 age group emphasized a gender-neutral approach: *"There must be a sense of equality, even if it's a boy or a girl."*

According to Planalp and Braungart-Rieker (2015) the gender of the child influences the level of fathers involvement. It was found that the engagement of fathers varies and depends on having a son or daughter. Some studies also indicate that fathers spend more time with sons especially in physical and outdoor activities. While other studies suggest that it is the temperament of the child that plays a crucial role.

**Father's Own Belief System :** Fathers' personal beliefs significantly shaped their parenting. Many expressed a desire to prepare their children for life's challenges, F4 stated, *"I want my kids to be capable of building their own life."* They also aimed to pass on values and legacies,

rejecting aggressive parenting styles in favor of emotionally supportive approaches. F11 said, *“I want my child to be helpful to everyone, regardless of the situation.”*

Fathers approach is strongly influenced by personal beliefs and values, such as rejecting authoritarianism and promoting independence in kids, by inculcating values in children that would help them become better people. This brings out the significance of the internal belief system that defines paternal identity.

Altenburger and Schoppe-Sullivan (2020) found that specific fatherhood traits like being intuitive, open to new experience and being more conscientious, yields high-quality fatherhood practices which further determines the level of father engagement with the child.

## **STUDY 2-**

### **4.2 PHASE-1 : QUANTITATIVE DISCUSSION-**

The current study explores the multifaceted nature of fatherhood identity by investigating three components of paternal identity- commitment, In-depth exploration and reconsideration of commitment- in relation with traditional fatherhood, work-family conflict, maternal gatekeeping and marital satisfaction. The main objective of the study is to measure fatherhood identity and related factors that help construct paternal identities across different life stages of fathers and their children. The findings offer insight into how modern fathers' sense of identity and involvement are shaped by these relational and contextual elements.

#### **Commitment-**

Commitment refers to the sense of belongingness and emotional investment in one's role as a father. Generally, fathers with higher commitment tend to have low levels of work-family conflict and low traditional fatherhood beliefs. Significant correlation of commitment with the following variables was found-

Traditional fatherhood was negatively correlated to commitment, which means that fathers with traditional ideology of being a breadwinner or being emotionally distant were less committed to paternal identity. Whereas fathers with lesser traditional ideology were more committed to fatherhood identity. Suggesting that even though modern fatherhood actively emphasizes on emotional involvement and shared caregiving, still may face conflicts with the conventional gendered expectations which tends to weaken paternal commitment to one's role.

Moreover, both WFC and FWC were negatively associated with commitment. Work-to-conflict (WFC) being negatively correlated, means that fathers who merge their work problems with family life, show low level of commitment as inflexible working hours and work load tends to decrease fathers participation in child rearing. Similarly, negative correlation of Family-to-work (FWC) with commitment, suggests that when family related responsibilities interfered with fathers work, they were less likely to be committed to fatherhood identity, possibly due to stress, guilt and frustration. whereas fathers feel higher belonging to paternal identity when there are lower levels of family related issues hindering work. Using a comparative approach Duckworth & Buzzanell in 2009 conducted interviews with 18 fathers in order to examine how fathers manage work and family and how they view their roles as a father. The results indicated that participants viewed work-life balance as a combination of decisions about work and life, however fathers prioritised family by attaching meaning to their line of work. Therefore, being a father meant being more caring, responsible, mature and a problem solver. The findings are indicative of the fact that ideology on masculine fatherhood is changing and evolving in the modern times, which impacts how men's role in society is viewed and also illuminates the change in work-life practices

Interestingly, among all the marital variables, only Consensus- (defined as the agreements within partners or couple related to decision making, values and affection) was seen to be positively related to commitment, which means that fathers who had more agreement and

partnership with their spouses had stronger identity as a father. Parung & Ferreira in 2017 aimed to study father involvement differences between Asia and UK, between Indonesian and Hong Kong and lastly to study the contributing factors like marital satisfaction or work-life balance that impacts fathers engagement in family and childcare. After including 256 fathers in an online survey, findings indicated that there was not a significant difference between fathers from the UK and Asia. However, significant differences were observed between fathers from Hong Kong and Indonesia when it comes to fathers' involvement. Lastly, marital or couple satisfaction was a key mediator between fathers engagement and work life balance. Therefore, suggesting that both social and personal factors impact the level of fathers engagement

Other variables like couple satisfaction , cohesiveness and maternal gatekeeping were not significantly correlated to commitment. overall results suggest that- more committed fathers have fewer traditional views, less conflicted work and family relation, less interference of family into work. However, more commitment is noticed where there is better agreement within the couple.

Regression analyses further provided clarity by determining which factors or variables predict commitment. The analysis indicated that commitment is strongly and significantly predicted by family-work conflict. Which means that commitment tends to decrease due to increase in FWC. So , those fathers who are less invested in their role as a father are because of the family related issues that interfere with their professional lives. Therefore, fathers who face lower levels of family interruption at the workplace are more committed to the role of a father.

### **In depth exploration-**

In depth exploration refers to the degree to which fathers actively reflect on and question the true nature of being a parent or father. Only one noteworthy correlation with in depth

exploration was revealed and that was maternal gatekeeping. Maternal gatekeeping refers to mothers' beliefs and actions that either facilitate or restrict fathers' involvement. A positive correlation was found, which suggests that fathers who perceived getting higher levels of maternal control were more likely to engage in deeper reflection into their roles as fathers. This represents that father-in-depth exploration and reflection is to establish their identity in reaction to maternal barriers.

In simpler terms, fathers tend to explore their identities more deeply when they witness higher levels of maternal gatekeeping behaviours. However, no relationship of in-depth exploration was found with traditional fatherhood, WFC, FWC, relationship satisfaction, consensus and with cohesion. This suggests that reflection into one's own identity as fathers is particularly influenced by dynamics of one's partner and not by relationship quality or work-family conflict and other external stressors.

Schoppe-Sullivan et al. (2008) investigated the impact of "maternal gatekeeping" on fathers' involvement and competence during the childcare process. About 100 families with young children were studied. Parents were questioned at 3.5 months postpartum about their perceptions on maternal gatekeeping behaviour and coparenting between parents while rearing the child. Furthermore, researchers assess fathers' involvement using various parent report and observational measures. The study used What is a Father? Questionnaire (WIAF), Parenting Alliance Inventory (PAI), Who Does What? Questionnaire, Parental Regulation Inventory (PRI) and lastly, father engagement and competence was measured through a onesie-change task. The findings indicated that maternal support, rather than criticism, was linked with higher father participation and engagement in childcare, especially when the coparenting relationship was strong. The study highlights a crucial truth, that mothers have a significant influence on the participation of fathers in childcare, either by facilitating or discouraging them.

## **Reconsideration of commitment-**

Reflects the degree to which fathers questions, doubts or reevaluates paternal roles and identity refers to reconsideration of commitment. It was significantly correlated to the following variables.

Traditional fatherhood and reconsideration of commitment were positively correlated to each other. It means that fathers who have more traditional fatherhood ideologies are more likely to have conflicted feelings and unsurety about their role as a father . Family-to-work conflict (FWC) also had a positive relationship , suggesting that fathers who are often disrupted at work by family related responsibilities are highly likely to have doubts about their paternal identity. Lastly maternal gatekeeping also came out to be positively associated with reconsideration of commitment. Therefore fathers who had controlling wives or were undermined by spouses reported more doubts regarding one's identity as a father. This pattern indicates the rigidity of gendered roles, family to work interference and exclusion from parenting roles , all these contribute to higher insecurity in paternal identity further prompting internal doubts and uncertainty regation fatherhood roles

Conversely, marital quality was negatively correlated to reconsideration of commitment. Which means when fathers were able to make decisions based on partnership with their partner ( consensus) were less likely to question one's identity. Similarly, higher levels of relationship satisfaction and cohesion or shared responsibilities/activities with one's spouse lead to stronger and secure fatherhood identity. Kwok et al., 2012 conducted a study to explore the level of marital agreement and satisfactions among fathers and fathering self-efficacy, along with how these factors influence father's involvement in childcare, in order to examine whether marital harmony boosts the impact of parenting confidence. More than 2,000 fathers from Hong Kong participated with children from the ages of 2 to 6 years. Three primary tools used in the survey

were, Inventory of Father Involvement (IFI-26) , the Index of Marital Satisfaction (IMS) , and the self-efficacy subscale of the Parenting Sense of Competence Scale. It was found that fathers are more engaging with their kids when they feel confident in their parenting and are happy in their marriage. Indicating the fact that in order to encourage the paternal involvement, it is crucial to boost father's self-efficacy and marital satisfaction

The regression findings for reconsideration of commitment showed that both family-work conflict (FWC) and consensus are the significant predictors. The first model with FWC as a predictor , was found to be a significant determinant which explains the fathers' doubts related to fatherhood identity. Whereas, when consensus was also added on , the model tends to improve and enhances the explanatory power of the model . It was found that FWC increases reconsideration, which means that when family related issues hinder fathers' work life, then fathers tend to question the fatherhood role and reconsider commitment to paternal role. On the other hand, higher levels of consensus between the parties tends to lower the reconsideration levels, indicating that when couples have mutual understanding and partnership , fathers feel confident in their fatherhood roles and feel more settled in their identity.

The findings of the study suggest that paternal identity is shaped by several components. Fathers are more committed to their role when they do not hold the traditional fatherhood roles, have balance between work and family and share a healthy relationship with spouses. When fathers are restricted or feel controlled by one's partner, they tend to reconsider their role commitment and increase doubts about being a father especially when family related issues hinder professional life . however, due to partnership and mutual understanding within partners, these doubts and uncertainties tend to lower down. Overall, the study suggests that fatherhood is not only about conventional fatherhood ideas . it is influenced and shaped by one's personal beliefs, work and family balance and quality of marital relationship.

## **PHASE-2 : QUALITATIVE DISCUSSION**

### **4.3 MOTHERS PERSPECTIVES-**

In Depth interviews were conducted with the mothers to gain their perspective on modern fatherhood identity. After thematic analysis of each interview, common themes emerged across all participants, it was revealed that fatherhood was not static but its is dynamic and is gradually formed along with the influence of socio-cultural norms, life transitions and experiences and relationships. This section of the study covers the key themes and subthemes that emerged from the data.

#### **4.3.1 THEME 1 : Construction of fatherhood identity**

Most mothers on being interviewed expressed that , rather than solely being a biological father, fatherhood identity is constructed by experiences, personal growth and interpersonal interactions. This theme captures how fathers learn and understand their roles as a father over time. This theme includes five subthemes- perceived roles of father, identity of father, adaption to identity, key moments shaping fathers identity and fatherhood journey.

**Perceived Role of the Father-** some mothers initially described their husbands role as a father in traditional terms, such as financial provider, protector and disciplinarian. However, others reported them to be emotionally available, nurturing, role model, mentor and as involving fathers. Mothers also shared that the husbands role was beyond just providing for family to attending parent-teacher meeting, feeding children , participating in bed time routines and being a playmate .

M1 *“My husband is, he has a very, you know, hands-on father. He helps in everything. Right from changing diapers to getting up at night and you know, helping with the kids”*

M3 *“he is a very responsible father. He takes care of the kids really nicely and when it comes to emotional part also, he gives proper care”*

M7- *“ He will provide a protector to the kid and a role model for the kids”*

This illustrates a hands-on , emotionally involving and engaging fatherhood, whereby active participation, caregiving and being emotionally available , redefines paternal roles.

Research on perceptions of first-time fathers regarding parenting skills during early transition into fatherhood, indicated that fathers engagement in childcare activities was linked to higher self-efficacy in one's parenting. This underscores the transition from traditional to more hands on role in parenting(Barry et al., 2011).

Sriyasak et al. (2024) conducted a mixed method study on Thai fathers to examine the involvement levels in early childcare . The study highlighted that fathers perceived themselves as responsible caretakers, actively participating in feeding and playing with kids along with being a disciplinarian for kids. Shared responsibilities,perceived childcareing abilities and marital quality influenced paternal involvement.

**Identity of Father**-from mothers perspective, fathers identities are tied closely to the level of paternal involvement with the kids. Some reported that husbands identity as father revolves around being a role model for kids, sacrificing and investing time and effort in child rearing along with prioritizing kids , resulting in a stronger sense of fatherhood . Conversely, those who saw themselves as financial providers, remained distant and tended to struggle to connect with one's identity as a father.

M5- *“considering he's a father now, he has started to take care of himself as well, so that he can be there more for us and, like, for the family.”*

M6-“*earlier he was not involved in the family matters. Now he is emotionally attached with the children. He is more connected with family matters.*”

M8-“*He became more disciplined, Because, specially kids see a father as a role model.*”

These illustrations suggest that becoming a father promotes- maturity, increased responsibility, self growth and discipline among fathers. Paternal identity, as perceived by mothers, is constructed by their emotional investment and active participation in their child’s daily lives, which are the markers of identity development.

Studies reveal that fathers with stronger sense of paternal identity are highly likely to positively engage and participate in childcare, furthermore maternal gate opening enhances this positive involvement of fathers (Lee and Schoppe-Sullivan , 2022). Similarly, Habib (2012) examined how fathers' identity transitions . Using identity theory the researcher explains that fathers participation is influenced by the role salience and centrality of fathers identity . So if men prioritize the paternal role , they are more likely to be actively involved in caregiving.

### **Adaptation to Identity**

According to most Mothers adaptation to fatherhood was not always smooth and was described as a roller coaster ride with its ups and downs. Many fathers experienced initial discomfort, lacking understanding in early child birth years. However, mothers reported that over the passage of time and after gaining experience fathers tend to adapt to a child's need, mature over time and become more responsible towards kids. Many also reported change in fathers approach towards kids over time. Therefore adapting to fatherhood identity is a gradual yet a complex process .

M7 –“*He is more responsible now. Sharing his responsibilities. Giving priority to kids.*”

M4- *“Yes, he has evolved as an individual. He has become more patient. He tries to bend his routine according to the needs of the children.”*

M1- *“his identity solely is, now 70% he is a father and 30% he is a husband”*

Adapting to fatherhood is described as a gradual learning process. Whereby, discomfort and confusion among fathers was reported during the initial phases, however, over time fathers integrated into their roles with more responsibility, maturity and being emotionally attached to kids.

Nurumal et al. (2024) identified themes like adaptation and changes, father engagement, challenges faced and coping strategies or support needs of first-time fathers. Often, at initial stages of fatherhood , men face several challenges while adjusting to new role as after and responsibilities that come along with it, however fathers also demonstrated positive coping strategies and growth and maturity over time .

Škvařil and Presslerová (2024) explored fatherhood transition experiences of fathers through interviews. Key themes that emerged were- growing responsibility, formation of paternal identity, comparison with motherhood , changes in marital dynamics and adaption to paternal role. The finding suggested that fatherhood is a gradual process that accompanies personal and relational changes over time.

### **Key Moments Shaping Father’s Identity**

Several transformative moments were reported , such as the birth of the child, the child's first words, securing child future or significant parenting decisions, addressing challenges related to child were repeatedly cited as turning points which shaped the identities of fathers . Mothers explained that such moments help to build deeper emotional connection which leads to a stronger father-child bond and improves fathers' self efficacy and confidence in their own abilities as a parent.

M3-“ *yes, it has changed immensely because then when he has to take care of the education part, then he really goes into that aspect of it as a father, being the security and the growth of the child. And he really studies it well.*”

M10-“ *My husband had great experiences like when my son was born and during his childbirth, he held him for the first time in his arms and I think he had happy tears. He had happy tears that he's become a father.*”

M5- “*when our son first started, like, saying the words, papa, papa, that was actually a very emotional moment for him*”

These examples of pivotal events like birth of children, challenges , first words, bonding moments, and everyday interactions reinforces fathers’ self-perception and boosts their commitment towards their parenting role

Škvařil and Presslerová (2024) highlights that childbirth acts as a significant point in fatherhood journey. Fathers often go through intense emotional journeys which also helps to enhance a couple 's relationship and bond between father and child. Such emotional experiences and attachment leads to deeper connection with ones children

A study explores the emotional changes in new fathers and found that fathers tend to shift focus from themselves towards the child and start caring more for family rather than just themselves. During this process of adaptation, several fathers undergo several emotions, such as joy, love, shame and feeling left out which are often hidden by men but are a normal part of fatherhood especially in early years. (Solberg et al., 2022b)

### **Fatherhood Journey**

Almost each mother described the fatherhood journey as an evolving process, often starting with uncertainty and gradually transitioning to confidence and fulfillment. Some reported that

their husbands became "better fathers with time," especially when encouraged and involved from the beginning. During this journey fathers underwent growth and developed responsibility and maturity. Most wives reported this journey as a positive one whereby, most fathers are still in the learning process of being a better father for their kids. This journey is influenced by changes in the child's developmental stage, marital relationship, and external factors such as work, fathers own experience and cultural or societal norms.

M9-*"development wale phase mein hai jahan par bahut sari cheeze learn krr raha hai aur maybe he will get 1 or 2 months more to learn a lot of things ki bache ko sambhal na kaise hai."*

M10-*"I would say it was a roller coaster ride. During the initial years, it was a big challenge for both of us because we were being parents for the first time. So, we didn't know how to deal with the different situati"*

M1-*"I said that evolution has been very, very, that progression and evolution has been very beautiful and very, you know, he has worked really hard to become a good father. "*

These narrative portray fatherhood as full of challenges, constant learning and growth. Fathers were described to be on a developmental path to fatherhood, as they evolve through experiences, challenges and mistakes along with gaining confidence in own abilities as a parent, which strengthens father-child bond over time.

A study by White and Jarvis (2024) investigated men's experiences during transition to fatherhood. It was found that fathers go through a journey, which includes several adjustments, growth and need for support during the transition period.

Similarly Smith et al. (2022) highlights that fathers express their concerns regarding mental health, finances, interpersonal relations and bonding with the child. Even though fatherhood is full of excitement, regret and other emotions accompany this journey.

### **4.3.2 THEME 2: Factors Responsible for Shaping Father's Identity**

This theme represents the external and internal influences that mothers believed shaped their husbands roles and identities as fathers. Under this theme, six subthemes are identified- Traditional or Intergenerational Perspective, marital relation and shared responsibilities, maternal gatekeeping, work-life balance and strategies, father's parenting style and lastly the role of cultural, social and familial expectations.

#### **Traditional or Intergenerational Perspective**

a generational gap between modern and traditional fathers was acknowledged . according to mothers, traditional fathers were distant , controlling and less involving. However, modern father and emotionally involved and take on caregiver roles as well along with active participation . most participants reported the need of balanced approach to fatherhood, that has qualities of both generation of fathers so there could be a optimal parenting in modern times.

M6-*"Because earlier, the fathers were not involved in the family matters much. But nowadays, the fathers are involved in all the family matters. They take care of the kids. And they think about their well-being in every way."*

M8-*"For me, I think old practices should be there because what environment we used to live in, that was very important. A parent as a friend is good but it is not important. A child might take it in a different way. A child might take it for granted"*

M10- *"So there's a lot of difference between how we were brought up by our parents and how we are bringing up our parents. In the traditional, in the you can say when we were as kids, our parents were more strict with us. So we couldn't open up with them. But now we are more friendly with them"*

Most mothers clearly recognized the shift in fatherhood, from being traditional fathers who were emotionally distant and emphasized on solely disciplining the kids, to more involved and nurturing fathers in modern times. Highlighting the need to balance both sides of fatherhood.

A study surveyed about 300 pairs of mothers and fathers about perception of parenting styles. Authoritarian and permissive styles were found to be passed down to generations, especially continuity between fathers and sons, however, discontinuity of authoritative parenting was noticed (Campbell & Gilmore, 2007). Suggesting that differing interpretation across generations and reflects shift towards more liberal parenting.

According to Sharma (2023), highlights the differences in child rearing between ancient time and the digital era. Evolving childcare practices has been noted, earlier practices lacked development knowledge related to kids and now in modern time, primary focus is on child's education, work involvement and disciplining the children. Even though the digital age is flexible, it also has its own challenges especially for working parents.

### **Shared Responsibilities and Marital Relations**

Mothers linked their husbands role as a father to the quality of their marital relationship. Majority reported mutual respect, open communication, and shared parenting responsibilities, partnership and teamwork in parenting, then fathers seemed more invested and comfortable in their role. Several mothers pointed out that collaborative decision-making and planning of routines, along with mutual appreciation reinforced a sense of partnership. Conversely, in an imbalanced relationship, fathers are disengaged with family and kids which also evokes frustration and conflicts in marriage, further affecting fatherhood identity.

M9-*“toh I am doing a lot of work with him, mei uska soobha se shaam tk dekh rahi hoi take care kr rahi hoi. Sometimes I get irritated, so responsibility hai usko solana, doodh peelana*

*aur bache k saath khelna, baat krna yeh sabh mei krr rahi hoi. jo mei bolti hui woh karte hai, woh apne hisab se kuch nahi karte hai, jo mei batata hui vo vhi krte hai.”*

M10-*“Now we meet half way, like I am more into the emotional well-being of the children and my husband is more into disciplining the children. So that's how we both co-parent our children.”*

M8-*“It's a 50-50 thing.”*

Mothers emphasized that collaborative parenting and shared duties with husbands regarding childcare increased fathers commitment towards their role. Moreover, supportive marital relationship strengthens paternal identity , while unequal workload lead disengagement.

Studies support the fact that , when wives view their husbands as more engaging in childcare, both partners tend to report higher levels of marital satisfaction, as there is satisfaction among couples regarding division of responsibilities while working together.(Galovan et al., 2013). Similarly, deMontigny et al. (2020) found that paternal involvement reduces maternal depression and stress levels by enhancing the relationship quality.

### **Maternal Gatekeeping**

Maternal gatekeeping emerged to be a complex factor, most mothers consciously encouraged paternal participation in almost every area and pushed their husbands to involve especially emotionally with kids. However, some mothers admitted to unintentionally limiting their husbands' involvement in areas like feeding , emotional bonding with children or the kind of stuff fathers bought for children, as they felt that they themselves are better at taking care of certain things.

M1-*“Sometimes yes, especially regarding the eating habits. I am much more focused on healthy habits and healthy eating but he is like once in a while we can have some junk or we can have some biscuits. So these are things that I discourage.”*

M4-*“ Sometimes when the child is going through a meltdown. Right. Then I sometimes feel he is unable to bend down to the child's level. Sometimes he might act stubborn”*

M7-*“I definitely encourage the kids. But at the same time, discourage the unneeded expenditures. He acts on the kids like buying toys which are no longer required”*

These statements reflect that mothers described themselves to be encouraging and supporting their husbands participation, but also admitted to selectively limit paternal involvement only, often due to maternal concerns regarding competence of fathers or maybe due to differing priorities.

A study by Schoppe-Sullivan et al. (2008) found that fathers participation and competence level increased when mothers were encouraged of fathers involvement in childcare. Moreover, low maternal criticism and higher coparenting supported greater parental involvement, suggesting that mothers attitudes and actions influence fatherhood identity, similarly, Fagan and Barnett (2003) indicated that gatekeeping plays a crucial role while determining parental involvement

### **Work-Life Balance and Strategies**

the professional life of fathers was seen as both a hindrance and a context for construction of fatherhood identity . Fathers with inflexible or long work hours were naturally reported to be less available, often struggling to connect and participate in daily parenting. In contrast, those with flexible job profiles or those who had active strategies to prioritize family , clear boundaries and quality time with kids were reported to be more engaging.

Some mothers noted that even in demanding jobs, proper planning and boundary-setting allowed husbands to actively take part in their child's life . These fathers were seen as someone who valued their identity beyond financial provider , which in return had a positive impact on family dynamics.

M10-*“he doesn't want his professional life to be having an impact as a father because he wants to go out for family vacations, for family dinners so he says he knows how to balance his professional and personal life. So pretty much he has clear boundaries with his work”*

M7-*“My husband is staying in some other city. So, he doesn't have much time to spend with the kids during the weekdays as he visits them during the weekends only.”*

M8- *“work is always a pressure for a husband. For a father. Because he has to prioritize what is important at a particular situation. So at that time, he has to take decision according to the situation”*

These insights bring a contrast between fathers who prioritize family despite the professional demands versus those fathers whose availability is limited by the workload. This indicates the nature of the job can either facilitate or hinder paternal engagement and identity.

Ewald et al. (2020) Looked into the working conditions of fathers, which was found to be incomplete and scattered. Factors like weak policies, strict working conditions , gender roles and social class made it harder for fathers to be more involved with family. It was also reported that those fathers often felt judged or ignored who wanted to take part in caregiving roles.

A study by Kasamatsu et al. (2023) , suggests that the time restrictions due to longer and demanding working hours, act as a major contributing factor that discourages fathers involvement in childrearing.

**Fathers' Parenting Style-** it was noted that fathers' parenting styles varied—ranging from authoritative to lenient and affectionate. Most fathers were described to be more relaxed and playful, often engaging with children through leisure activities, humour, sports, or storytelling.

However, a few mothers expressed concerns about inconsistencies in fathering or lack of discipline from fathers' side. However, all in all, the majority of mothers perceived their husbands' fathering style to be somewhat balanced and being a situation based approach but more inclined towards being lenient and relaxed parenting.

M2-*“Sometimes, he is very strict. Sometimes, he tries to shower a lot of love and care towards his daughter. And sometimes, more or less, he doesn't share a lot.”*

M4-*“ I think he has a moderate fathering, fatherhood style. He is not very strict. Sometimes when the children are not able to comprehend something, he does try to change the situation in a more jolly way. So, he is not strict.”*

M6-*“ He makes adjustments according to the situation. He is very flexible in nature. If he thinks that the children need him more, then he can adjust his time according to the situation. He is affectionate and disciplinarian more”*

These experts reveal the flexibility of modern fathering, as they balance affection with occasional discipline which is often a situation based approach. Mothers view this adaptability as a desirable trait among modern fathers.

A study by Fernandes, Monteiro, Santos, & Branco in 2017 summarized that fathers who have higher education and flexible job profiles are more engaging, especially in play and social activities with kids. Such fathers adopt an authoritative approach, which includes warmth, affection and a clear set of rules.

## **Role of Societal, Cultural, and Familial Expectations-**

majority of the mothers reported that fathers own perception and individual belief system and personality matter more than external influences of culture or societal norms. Some reported that only family expectations can influence fathers identity. While very few reported the traditional cultural beliefs or norms regarding fatherhood , such as- mother must be primary caregiver not fathers, or fathers must not pamper their children especially daughters.

M9-*“apne cultural differences batta skti hui ki bacha maa sambhaligi , baap thodi sambhal lega.”*

M8-*“It is an individual personality. Why does he wants to be what other people perceive for himself, for him? That is not a good thing,”*

M4- *“I can't say he's that kind of father, but yes, what expectations a child has from a father or a mother, that does shape or is shaping his fatherhood, not the societal pressures.”*

These views suggest that even though cultural norms do exist, it's the fathers personal belief and the family's expectation or child's needs that are more influential. This indicates the prioritization of individualized approach over social conformity.

Goel and Mishra (2023) examined fatherhood in India from the perspectives of both fathers and children. Children's perspectives revealed that fathers were involved as a playmate , role models and proctor . The findings provide a cultural perspective on Indian fatherhood, and aims to improve parenting practices and policies. Furthermore, Motwani (2023) found that fathers from urban India are becoming more engaging in child rearing practices, along with gradual changes in gender norms. As fathers are taking on more responsibilities although several tasks are still associated with mothers' role only.

### 4.3.3 THEME 3: Impact of Modern or Involved Fathers

Mothers widely acknowledged the positive impact of involving fathers. Modern fatherhood is seen in terms of as emotional availability towards kids, sensitive towards child's needs, and willing to learn and adapt. This involvement improves child's development and lead to stronger bonds and relationship between father and child.

However, some mothers also highlighted the need for fathers' involvement in disciplining the child. Moreover, modern parents were reported to be oversensitive and overprotective of their children which was not seen in entirely good terms by one of the participants. Overall, mothers reported gratitude for their husband's active role as a father, and expressed that the kids also reciprocated to fathers involvement by admiring them, viewing fathers as role models or a "hero".

M7-*"They are more involved with the kids."*

M1-*"Not only for stronger family bonds but also I think if a father is involved it helps the child to become much more independent and confident and have a better future."*

M2-*"They think of their father as a very supportive, caring man. Right. They try to share a very close bond with their father"*

M3-*"they think that the father in their life is the biggest, you know, emotional supporter or caregiver."*

Modern fathering positively contributes to child growth and leads to stronger family bonds, due to more emotionally involving and adaptive fathers. To this children often view their fathers to be role models and supporters. However, mothers reported that being overprotective parents is a drawback. Overall, active fathering roles were appreciated by most mothers.

Brown et al. (2012) explored how fathers engagement and sensitivity affects the father-child relationship. At 13 months, the connection was seen to be weak, however by the age of 3 , more involved and sensitive fathers had stronger father-child bonds. Indicating that early secure attachments led to stronger fathering , overall the time spent and sensitivity of fathers regarding caregiving determined stronger father-child relationship.

Choi et al. (2021) conducted a study that followed men from the USA for over 30 years in order to investigate how paternal involvement during childhood affected stress hormone levels in adulthood. The results indicated that those children who had engaging fathers , had healthier stress regulation during adulthood years. Overall the study suggests that involving fathers had a long lasting positive influence on sons behaviour and health.

#### **4.3.4 THEME 4: Differences Between Mothers' and Fathers' Parenting Styles**

While differences in parenting styles were noted by most mothers, which were not necessarily seen as problematic . typically, Mothers described themselves as more structured, emotionally understanding , caretaker , disciplining the kids

Fathers, by contrast, were often characterized as relaxed and playful , lenient, and fun-oriented.

Such contrasting styles sometimes led to disagreements within parents , particularly in areas like screen time, discipline, or diet. However, most mothers viewed the differences as complementary, which helped in balancing out each other's approach and providing the best of two sides.

M8-*"He is a mixture of both. Right, ma'am. At times, he is lenient."*

M5-*"Since mostly I am like there at home during the day, so I seem to take care of all the things that need to be done during the day and, you know, as much as I can. And he usually takes care of the things that are usually done at night."*

M4-*“Sometimes, when the children are not listening, they are being persistent or nagging about something, then he can't handle it. Then he says, "you handle it.”*

Mothers frequently described themselves as more nurturing, disciplinarian and structured, while fathers were viewed as lenient and playful as they were more likely to engage in leisure activities. Even though most partners compliment and balance out each other's roles, the difference in parenting style sometimes led to disagreements.

Gvozdenović and Bandalović (2024) interviewed fathers and mothers in Croatia in order to explore the parenting styles. It was found that fathers were more stricter and mothers were more involving and lenient . both parents were seen to work together while making parenting decisions and incorporated warmth and discipline both. Indicating that today's parents tend to have balanced approach. Studies done on parenting during 1990-2020 showed that mothers are more supporting, responsive and more involved than fathers. Moreover, mothers have authoritative approach whereas fathers tend to be be more authoritarian. (Yaffe, 2020)

In conclusion, the study incorporates the complexity and the evolving nature of paternal identity in modern times viewed through lens of mothers. The construction of fatherhood identity is not an overnight or one time process, it is more than a personal journey that includes several factors like, marital dynamics, intergenerational influence, societal shift etc. Mothers viewpoints highlights both progress and challenges that fathers face while shaping paternal identities.

#### **4.4 GRANDFATHER'S PERSPECTIVE-**

This section of the current study offers a comprehensive understanding into the intergenerational perspective of fatherhood based on narratives of the participants, emphasizing on the evolving and dynamic concept of fatherhood by incorporating grandfathers perspectives. Three main themes that surfaced from the in depth interview are 1) role and belief as a

grandfather 2) fatherhood experience and associated factors and 3) difference between own and son's parenting. Each theme is further discussed along with related subthemes.

**4.4.1 THEME 1- Role and Belief as a Grandfather-** refers to the perceptions that grandfathers hold about themselves, their position and purpose within family, along with their belief systems regarding societal, cultural and generational differences' on fatherhood. This major theme further includes three subthemes- role as grandfather, belief system and advise to modern fathers.

**Role as Grandfather-** participants collectively explained their role as a grandfather to be a rewarding and emotionally freeing role. This stage was often seen in terms of enjoyment without any pressure and responsibilities that come with being a father. Grandfathers positioned themselves as agents of intergenerational continuity by being a moral guide, storytelling, and educating about family history. The lack of disciplinarian duties allowed grandfathers to be more engaging, affectionate and build a legacy for future generations.

GF1 stated *"I can enjoy my grandchildren's company without any pressure to discipline them. And I can give them more time now."* According to GF2 *"It is very different. In old age, as a grandfather, I came on the second seat. My son is on the first seat."*

Most grandfathers perceived their roles to be free of responsibility and more emotionally fulfilling, leading to deeper connections with grandkids by morally guiding them and through cultural transmission.

Studies- (Ruiz et al., 2024) investigated how grandparents serve as educators and moral guides through shared leisure activities with grandkids like- storytelling, board games and by sharing cultural experiences, which helps strengthening familial bonds. Similarly, Park (2018) examined the relationship between grandparents involvement and their psychological well being. It was found that greater life satisfaction and renewed sense of purpose was found in

engaging grandparents, as they viewed their role as a way to further impart values, traditions and wisdom to next generation.

**Belief System and the Shift in Fatherhood-** most grandfathers agreed on the fact that the belief system related to fatherhood has significantly changed over the years. Conventionally, fathers main role was seen in terms of provision, power and discipline. However due to modernization and passage of time the cultural and societal expectations and gendered norms have changed. bringing the qualities of open communication and co-parenting in modern fathers. However, the core principles like hard work, respect and discipline are very crucial and remain essential.

GF1 mentioned *"Huge change in modern fatherhood as compared to when I was a child. And the male members of the family definitely seem to be much more approachable in every way possible for their children, which is a very positive thing."* GF3 also added that *"In today's time, society and parents need such types of fathers."* GF4 reflected that *"Now the children got more experience than us. Like during science and the telephone, like the media, they are more active than what I think."*

Overall, grandfathers observed a positive transformation in fatherhood and witnessed a change from authority and discipline to more engaging , emotionally available and shared parenting, while still keeping the traditional virtues like respect, discipline and hard work.

(Motwani, 2023) focused on urban India and included in depth interviews with two generations of fathers. The study highlights the rise in fathers' involvement levels in childcare. Generational shift was noted, whereby younger fathers tend to have active participation in parenting , which reflects changes in gendered norms and a drift from conventional patriarchal roles of fathers.

**Advice to Modern Fathers-** participants emphasized the significance of having work and family balance in modern fatherhood. Most grandfathers had a common agreement on having

a balanced approach towards parenting , that is to balance between the rules of being affectionate and disciplinarian. Advice to present day fathers is to avoid overreliance on modern and digital means along with being more present with kids . All in all, recurrent advice included more emotional involvement , patience and value based upbringing.

GF4 advised father to *"Clearly love them, don't hate them, just if there is anything wrong, talk to them, make them understand politely."* Whereas, GF3 reported that *"Most important lesson I learnt is that if you parent right and your children always benefit from it. Advice I would give to fathers to be patient and available for the kids."*

Grandfathers favoured emotional availability , patience, and value-based parenting, and at the same time cautioning the young fathers about the overdependence on technology and urging to create a balance between affection and discipline while parenting.

A study by Diniz et al. (2023) explored the effect of work-related stress on fathers' involvement through parenting styles. The study revealed that work-family imbalance leads to ineffective fathering, whereas flexible and positive work experiences enhances paternal involvement. The finding from this study supports the advice to fathers to balance work and family and to be emotionally present or available for the kids

**4.4.2 THEME 2- Fatherhood Experience and Associated Factors-** included how individuals recalled and interpreted their journey as fathers along with the factors that shaped them as fathers. This also incorporates grandfather's own upbringing, relationship with own father, financial responsibilities as fathers and personal experience of being a father. It includes three subthemes- traditional and intergenerational perspective, financial responsibility and own fatherhood experience.

**Traditional and intergenerational perspective-** a significant impact on paternal experience was seen regarding participants' own upbringing and relationship with their own fathers. Many

admitted that they followed their fathers approach to parenthood , especially those who had a positive relationship with their own fathers and showed continuation of generational practices. However, some deliberately chose different paths, as they witnessed strict and authoritative parenting, so they chose to be emotionally present and supportive for their children. This implies that fatherhood is not just a personal role , but is influenced by intergenerational practices and learning.

GF1 reflected that *"The authority within the household definitely belonged to my father, but because of the age gap between my father and myself, we could never communicate in any shape or form."* Whereas, for GF5- *"That time was very very simple as compared to our next generation. Very positive. Very loving."* Furthermore GF2 added that *"It is almost the influence of my parents. I should keep my family. Because of their guidance and help, I grow up and see my ideas pervades with some changes in society."*

Experiences with their own fathers' influenced their parenting approach, with some continuing positive approaches and others consciously rejecting the strict, distant styles of their own fathers and later becoming emotionally involved with their own children .

According to Hofferth et al. (2012) men who had positively involving fathers during their own upbringing are highly likely to exhibit more positive fathering behaviors with their own children. Roskam (2013) assessed patterns of parenting across three generations and found out that parenting behaviors are somewhat transmitted from one generation to another through social learning that includes modelling and observation.

**Financial Responsibility-** one of the important factors that impacts the fathering behavior was found to be the financial obligations. Most grandfathers faced difficulties as a father to balance between work commitment and engaging with their children. Financial limitations often hindered fathers from being fully involved and active in parenting. However, those with joint

families reported that paternal participation was possible due to shared responsibilities among all family members. On the other hand, those with nuclear families or inflexible working hours were dependent on their wives regarding nurturing the children and faced additional strains related to work life balance.

GF3 stated that *"I was into agriculture, so I didn't have much time to interact with them, but my wife definitely had a very big hand in raising them."* Similarly, according to GF2: *"To make a balance between them, parents, family, children, factory, to make a balance is the most difficult, I think."* GF5 further explained - *"We are in a joint family. So if I am doing something, I have to do it for the whole family. Not just for my kids and my grandkids."*

Financial demands and Work load limited the involvement of most grandfathers, especially in nuclear families. This highlights the economic pressures or burden on fathers to provide for their family which affected father-child engagement.

(Diniz et al., 2023) highlights the association between work stress and father involvement. It was found that work related stress negatively influences paternal involvement in childrearing. Therefore, those with demanding job profiles reported lower levels of engagement with children. Moreover, economic hardships can also hinder work family balance leading to less effective fathering. Fathers availability is often committed by financial strains.

**Perspective on my own fatherhood experience** – being a father was often described to be a life-changing experience that increased the sense of maturity and accountability. Participants reported the sacrifices and the responsibilities they took on as father to provide best for their children, such as adjusting one career needs in order to provide a comfortable life to kids. Nonetheless, the sacrifices and hard work of fathers was viewed as meaningful and fathers took pride in their child's accomplishments. These changes and transformations continued even after

their children grew up . And as grandfathers they look back upon the fatherhood experience and perceived roles.

GF3 reflected that - *"Becoming a father, it changed how I viewed the world. And it felt like a deep responsibility to raise my child and provide them with everything."* GF1 also shared that *"As a father, I try to be very loving and caring as compared to today's generation."* And according to GF1 – *"I had to be a father, mother and a provider and a protector."*

Fatherhood was viewed as a life-changing experience that brought a sense of duty and personal growth. Participants found great meaning and pride in their parental roles and duties, despite all the sacrifices.

A study explored men's perception on fatherhood along with mothers viewpoints through in depth interviews. The findings revealed that fathers often see themselves as provider, protector and nurturer. These perceptions were influenced by the societal and cultural norms. Indicating the traditional viewpoints of fathers regarding paternal roles(Gurkan et al., 2021)

**4.4.3 THEME 3- Difference Between Own and Son's Parenting-** this theme highlights the differences that grandfathers perceive in their own approach towards parenting with modern fathers such as their sons approach to fathering, who tend to be more adaptable, involving and also a caregiver. 2 major subthemes are identified- comparison between traditional and modern fathers and challenges and advantages of modern father's.

**Comparison between traditional and modern fathers** – the shift in parenting styles and the generational was highlighted . clear differences between modern and traditional fathers were noticed. Modern fathers are seen to be more- collaborative, emotionally available, adaptive to child needs, balanced and lenient, they roles varied from being a provider to protector and a caregiver also . on the other hand , traditional fathers were more emotionally distant, authoritative and disciplinarian with strong financial provider identity and less involving in

child's life. Moreover, the father-child relationship has changed, from a strict to friendship based relation. Grandfathers noted that ,modern fathers are more caring and connected , indicating a big difference from the past fathering styles.

GF3 shared that - *"In my time, being a father was about providing financially. Right. And fathers were not active in parenting in those days. But today, I see my son doing things I never thought of. Right. Like being actively involved in the kids' education, sharing responsibilities with his partner, and being much more emotionally available."*

GF1 reported - *"It has a little bit changed with the time. Which is necessary for the modern time to change yourself."* Lastly according to GF2:- *"Generation gap is always there, it's very difficult now. It's difficult. In old times, it was very easy... It has changed a little bit with the time. Which is necessary for the modern time to change yourself."*

Grandfathers recognize the need for modern fathers to adapt according to modern times and kids. They also noted that today's fathers are more caring , emotionally available, and egalitarian, when compared with their own parenting approach, which was a more authoritarian style with the primary role of being a provider only.

A study Bosoni and Mazzucchelli (2019) explores the changing fatherhood roles, suggesting that even though traditional models of fatherhood still persist, contemporary fatherhood tend to increasingly define their roles, emphasize on emotional connection and engaging in childcare responsibilities unlike previous generations of fathers

Herskovitz-Freudenthal and Lavenda (2024), identifies the factors that impact modern fatherhood practices and beliefs. Findings were indicative of the fact that, modern fathers are emotionally more involved in child's life , placing child needs before any other need, including parents own needs.

**Challenges and advantages of modern fathers-** grandfathers reported greater psychological and practical challenges regarding modern fatherhood. Due to increasing need and demands of children, lower social support and substance or technological distractions it has become harder for modern fathers to discipline the kids . however, modern fatherhood is positively viewed in terms of involvement, caregiving role, father-child bond, emotional attachment and shared caretaking responsibilities despite the rising challenges .for most, the change and shift in fatherhood approach turns out to be advantageous , while some reported more challenges in modern fathering that were not witnessed by previous generations of fathers.

According to GF5 -"*Our times were much better compared to today's. Quality of life was much better in our time than today's. Today's kids are not approachable. They don't listen to their parents.*"

however GF2 reported that- "*Actually, modern life is good. It suits modern people who take the idea, modern ideas with them. It's good for them.*"

GF1 added that "*So the disadvantage at the moment is lack of resources. But the advantages on the other side can be that I feel that the world is a much smaller place at the moment. So with the right qualities and the right upbringing, life I think can get much easier, much more accessible just because of technology.*"

Grandfathers acknowledged the emotional benefits of contemporary fathering, but at the same time they noted the new obstacles and advancements that lead to increased stress, fewer support networks, and difficulty in disciplining the kids. Therefore, reflecting on both the progress and the challenges faced.

Rilling and Hadley (2023) explored the practical and the psychological challenges that are faced by modern fathers, such as work-family conflict, financial provision and declining marital quality. Whereas the study highlights the rewarding aspects of fatherhood are personal

growth and sense of purpose in fathers life, witnessing child's achievements. Ghaleiha et al. (2022) examined how new fathers cope with fatherhood challenges. Most fathers reported their role as provider and emotional supporter , however this was accompanied by stress and anxiety, for which many relied on spouse support but felt uncomfortable while seeking help. Thus the study highlights the stress related to balancing one's role as a father while keeping up with work and family demands.

#### **4.5 GENERAL DISCUSSION-**

The beginning of construction of fatherhood identity often begins during pregnancy or infancy and then continues to evolve through child's development into adolescence and beyond, and that was one of the main purposes of studying fathers across various age groups. As fathers from ages 25-30 years are in early stages of parenting with young children between the ages 0-2 . They are still in the process of adjusting to the needs of fatherhood and their main role at this stage is to take care of the child and assist the mother. Those between the ages 30–35 years have slightly older children, 2–6 years and become a little self-reliant. Challenges and duties of a father in this stage is to supervise kids and balance work and family. Furthermore, fathers from the age group of 35-40 typically have pre-adolescent kids, most likely between the ages of 6-12 years.by this time fathers are much more mature in terms of responsibilities and handling challenges like disciplining kids , monitoring peer interaction etc. the role of the father is shaped by child needs and demands. Lastly, fathers from 40-45+ are likely to have kids in the age range of 12-18 years. By this age children are independent and self-reliant, even though fathers in this age group are most experienced and mature, but still face certain technicalities and so fathers modify and adapt their parenting approach accordingly. Hereby, the role of father is less of physical care and more of mentoring and guiding the children.

Interviews with fathers revealed certain themes and trends, these included – fathers' understanding about their role, acceptance of identity, experience of shift or transformation of paternal identity and key moments shaping fatherhood identity. Along with a variety of factors that shapes fathers identity such as- marital relationship, maternal gatekeeping, work life balance , fathers relationship or experience with their own fathers, gender of the baby and personal belief systems, tend to influence the process of finding new meaning in life during pivotal moments in fatherhood. Each of these factors were later explored quantitatively, overall fatherhood revealed itself to be a dynamic process and a lifelong journey that grows and adapts with aging fathers and their children.

Moreover, for deeper insights into the complexities of fatherhood and to understand its dynamic nature, mother/wives and grandfathers perspectives were incorporated, which highlighted the transforming roles of fatherhood . According to mothers , modern fatherhood identity is shaped by balancing traditional and modern fathering expectations, by family dynamic and most importantly by emotional involvement and shared responsibilities of fathers regarding childcare. Grandfathers, also noted a generational shift in modern and conventional fatherhood practices by observing the change in parenting style and approach towards kids, furthermore addressing the potential advantages and challenges of modern fathering. A recurring pattern in all the narratives emerged and that was the dynamic and continuous involvement in paternal identity , due to personal experiences, family dynamic and demands and by cultural or societal expectation placed on fatherhood. this illustrates the complexities and depths of fatherhood in the modern world that demands for constant adoption in one's roles and identities.

The findings from both qualitative and quantitative analyses offer a comprehensive understanding of the construction and evolution of paternal identity, especially in regard to involvement, commitment and through the impact of contextual and relational factors. By using triangulation, the conclusions drawn from both methods enhances the validity , by converging

the key themes of fatherhood identity, marital dynamics, maternal gatekeeping, work-family conflict and intergenerational influence on paternal identity

The quantitative findings indicate that fathers who believe in modern parenting ideologies, experience lower family-work conflict (FWC), and maintain a collaborative marital relationship show higher commitment to their fatherhood roles . This finding is supported by the qualitative data, whereby fathers reported their involvement in caregiving tasks, emotional support , and the gradual process of forming a deeper emotional connection with their kids. Fathers who had flexible work environment and engaged in collaborative decision-making with their spouses reported greater marital satisfaction along with commitment to their fatherhood role, echoing the quantitative conclusion that work-family balance and marital consensus are crucial for sustaining paternal identity, thus, confirming from qualitative findings that suggest that lower levels of family-work conflict (FWC) leads to more commitment to one's role as a father , which further enhances shared decision making or higher consensus among partners which is vital for sustaining paternal identity.

Moreover, mothers also reported witnessing changes in their husband's emotional commitment, moving from provider role to emotionally involving one, being a hands-on parent, indicates that modern fatherhood is characterised by fathers emotional availability. In addition, several fathers also described the feeling of being more emotionally sensitive and a growing sense of responsibility towards kids. This shift plays a crucial role in commitment to one's fatherhood identity.

Through the quantitative analysis maternal gatekeeping was found to be positively correlated with father's in depth exploration of paternal role. This suggests that mothers tend to impose limits or restrict paternal involvement, which led to greater self-reflection among fathers in order to redefine their role. These findings are supported by qualitative findings, whereby both

fathers and mothers reported the effects of maternal gatekeeping. Even though most mothers encourage and support their husbands participation, however some incidents were noted where mothers either consciously or unconsciously limited husbands involvement in particular parenting activities and decisions. Fathers also reported that maternal support or restriction does impact their participation. This indicates a complex relationship between fatherhood identity and maternal gatekeeping.

The quantitative findings suggest that father's commitment is negatively impacted by both work-to-family conflict (WFC) and family-to-work conflict (FWC). This shows that fathers' emotional investment in their roles decreases and fathers start to question or reconsider their commitment towards paternal roles when they undergo stress while trying to balance work and family life, especially when they face family-to-work conflict. Qualitative findings from both mothers and fathers resonate with quantitative results. Fathers as well as grandfathers reported having difficulties while juggling work and family obligation, especially when they had inflexible or demanding working conditions. Moreover, fathers of both generations had low availability in childcare due to demanding occupations. Whereas, those fathers and grandfathers who had flexible working schedules and supportive families were able to take an active role in child rearing by incorporating strategies to balance both sides.

The significance of work-life balance was also emphasized by mothers, who pointed out that those fathers who were able to manage and balance work with family were more engaged and emotionally present. The perspective of fathers, grandfathers and mothers very well align with quantitative finding that suggest that fathers commitment and involvement increases due the balance between work and family, whereas those who cannot balance the two sides tend to have uncertainties and doubts regarding ones fatherhood identity.

Another important finding in both qualitative and quantitative analyses was the influence of marital consensus on paternal commitment. Fathers who were more dedicated to paternal roles, reported to have higher levels of marital agreement, mutual support and collaborative decision-making with their spouses. This also aligned with qualitative findings, which indicate that fatherhood engagement was positively influenced by healthy marital relationship for both mothers and fathers. Fathers highlighted that support from spouses along with partnership helped them feel more confident and secure in terms of their paternal identity. Similarly, mothers described that when their husbands felt supported by them, then fathers were more likely to engage in parenting responsibilities.

Both qualitative and quantitative results, point out the shift in the construction of fatherhood identity over generations. Grandfathers reflected their personal experiences and shared that caregiving and emotional availability of fathers are important aspects of modern parenting and not associated with traditional fatherhood roles, suggesting that modern fatherhood has moved beyond conventional expectations. Quantitative findings revealed that typical fatherhood beliefs were negatively correlated with commitment. This supports the notion that fathers who believe in traditional, provider-centric views related to fatherhood were less likely to be committed to paternal roles and were seen to be less involved in child's life as well. This aligns with observations of grandfathers who reported witnessing a generational transformation in fatherhood practices and perceptions, whereby modern fathers are taking on more flexible and emotionally engaging roles.

Additionally, grandfathers perceive modern fathers such as their sons, to be more emotionally connected and available or present for the kids along with adapting in accordance to the child's needs. This confirms the fact that fatherhood identity is not static, rather it evolves across generations in response to shifting societal expectations.

Therefore, the integration of quantitative and qualitative findings provide a deeper understanding of fatherhood identity., highlighting the significance of contextual factors such as family-work conflict, maternal gatekeeping, marital dynamics and intergenerational changes. It became evident that fathers who adhere to the contemporary parenting approach , have marital satisfaction along with lesser work-family conflict are more likely to be dedicated towards paternal identity. Moreover, generational changes reflect societal shift towards emotional engagement and involving fatherhood practices. Maternal gatekeeping has a complex impact on fathers involvement. Overall, the findings support that fatherhood identity is dynamic , that is influenced by personal beliefs, interpersonal dynamics and societal expectations.

## **CHAPTER 5 : CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

This chapter of the study summarizes the key findings and outlines the limitations of the present study. This part also suggests directions for future studies and lastly, the practical implications of the study are discussed.

### **5.1 CONCLUSION**

The present study offers a comprehensive understanding into the construction of fatherhood identity by combining quantitative and qualitative perspectives, highlighting the complex and dynamic nature of fatherhood. Quantitative findings demonstrated that – traditional fatherhood beliefs, family-work conflict, maternal gatekeeping and marital relationships, especially consensus, significantly shaped paternal identity- captured through commitment, in-depth exploration and reconsideration of commitment. Those fathers who endorsed less conventional views and experienced lower family-work conflict reported higher commitment level towards paternal identity. On the other hand those who experienced higher maternal gatekeeping and family-work stress were more likely to doubt their paternal roles, suggesting external influences and its impact on construction of fatherhood identity. Crucially, cooperative marriages seemed to reduce the doubts and uncertainties in fathers regarding their role and increased commitment towards one's identity, highlighting the role of spousal support.

Qualitative insights from fathers experiences revealed that fatherhood identity does not shape over-night, rather it evolves over time and is characterized by multiple roles such as — provider, caregiver, guide, and emotional support—which shifts according to children's developmental needs. Identity acceptance was described to be a gradual journey, strengthened by emotional connection and caregiving. Other external influences included fathers' own upbringing, marital dynamics, maternal gatekeeping, work environment, and gender of the

child. Fatherhood was viewed as a meaningful role which is accompanied by increased responsibility and purpose.

Furthermore, grandfathers reported generational shifts, noting a shift from traditional, authoritative roles to more emotionally involving and communicative or supportive fathering. By reflecting on their own experiences, grandfathers viewed modern fatherhood as more participatory but at the same time demanding also.

Similarly, mothers' perspectives revealed these themes, describing increasing partner involvement, emotionally connected, and adaptability. Key influences identified by mothers were- marital dynamics, maternal gatekeeping or encouragement, work-life balance, and shifting gender norms. Mothers emphasized that involving fathers has deeper emotional bonds with children and family.

Overall, fatherhood identity is a dynamic process that is influenced by broader sociocultural influences, family and marital dynamics and by personal beliefs. It evolves with the phases of life and keeps redefining itself in the context of modern parenting.

## **5.2 LIMITATIONS**

The current study has several limitations. First, it did not consider the perspectives of children across various developmental stages. Kids' viewpoints on relationship with their fathers and perceived fatherhood roles could have contributed significantly to the understanding of fatherhood. Secondly, even though the study qualitatively incorporated both fathers and mothers perspectives, it did not employ quantitative dyadic analysis. This approach analyses data from both partners in a systematic and in a comparative way which could have strengthened the findings of the present study, by identifying patterns of agreement, conflict or interactions between the expectations and paternal roles.

Furthermore, the study incorporated participants only from upper-middle class families from northern Indian cultural region. This limited demographic focus restricts the wide applicability of results to other cultural or economics groups, as fatherhood is influenced by justintv social pressures, expectations and values that may vary across different cultures and classes of society. Lastly, the fathers were not categorized in the quantitative component according to the age of their children. The segmentation of different age groups could have shown a significant difference in the ways fatherhood identity evolves over time in response to children in their different developmental stages, as differences might come up in terms of whether fathers are parenting an infant or an adolescent. However, future research must address these gaps in order to gain more comprehensive understanding of fatherhood.

### **5.3 FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Future research should focus on incorporating children's perspectives, using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Observational studies involving real-life interaction between father and child can also be included in order to gain deeper and comprehensive understanding of children 's perspectives and experience of fatherhood across different developmental stages . furthermore, using a dyadic quantitative design that analyses both fathers and mothers perspectives in relation to one another, which can offer more complex and deeper insights into paternal roles and dynamics.

As fatherhood identity is an evolving process and alters dramatically during various life stages , due to changes in maturity, marital relationship, life experiences and due to shifting responsibilities, therefore researchers should focus Segregating fathers according to various age groups . Moreover, the demographic scope should also be broadened and incorporate participants from different socioeconomic backgrounds and various cultural contexts to improve the generalizability of the findings and to take into consideration the range of paternal

experiences. Finally, longitudinal studies should also be incorporated , that would allow to track the evolution and transformation of paternal identity over time. This approach captures a shift in fatherhood ideologies and attitudes along with the changing father-child relationship while both grow older.

#### **5.4 IMPLICATIONS**

The findings of the study carry significant implications for policy, practice and for future interventions that aim to support and strengthen fatherhood identity. First, more awareness must be promoted among fathers, regarding the evolving and complex nature of fatherhood and the importance of being an involved and active parent with emotional engagement with the child. In order to assist fathers in navigating fatherhood duties and associated challenges and issues regarding work life balance, emotional expression and time management. Therefore, parenting workshops or parent coaching programs can be developed. Secondly, organizations should introduce flexible workplace practices, such as remote work choice or work from home, flexible scheduling and paternity leaves to support fathers in balancing their work and family. Such policies not only contribute to fathers well being , but at the same time also encourages equitable involvement in childrearing. Third, initiatives towards collaborative parenting must be encouraged through various programs that facilitate shared parenting responsibilities and enhance parental communication. Lastly, Establishing community-based support or peer groups for parents can offer a safe space, especially for fathers to open about the experiences and the challenges of fatherhood and at the same time receive emotional support and strategies or tactics related to healthier parenting practices and family relationships.

## REFERENCES

1. Adler, M. A. (2021). Active Fathers in the United States: Caught between De- Gendering care and caring masculinities. *Journal of Family Issues*, 44(5), 1177–1196. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513x211055510>
2. Allen, T. D., & Finkelstein, L. M. (2014). Work–family conflict among members of full-time dual-earner couples: An examination of family life stage, gender, and age. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 19(3), 376–384. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0036941>
3. Altenburger, L. E., & Schoppe-Sullivan, S. J. (2020). New fathers' parenting quality: Personal, contextual, and child precursors. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 34(7), 857–866. <https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000753>
4. Anthony Raj, I. A. E., & Julius, S. (2015). Working father and their perceived work–life balance with special reference to Hyundai Motors (I) Private Limited at Chennai. *International Journal of Advanced Scientific Research & Development*, 2(1), 54–63. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329129418>
5. Barry, A. A., Smith, J. Z., Deutsch, F. M., & Perry-Jenkins, M. (2011). Fathers' involvement in child care and perceptions of parenting skill over the transition to parenthood. *Journal of Family Issues*, 32(11), 1500–1521. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513x11406229>
6. Bitalo, D. W., Piotrowski, K., & Naudé, L. (2024). Fatherhood, manhood, and personhood: South African fathers' experiences of parental identity development. *Journal of Family Studies*, 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13229400.2024.2398579>

7. Bogdan, I., Turliuc, M. N., & Candel, O. S. (2022). Transition to Parenthood and Marital Satisfaction: A Meta-Analysis. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.901362>
8. Bosoni, M. L., & Mazzucchelli, S. (2019). Generations comparison: father role representations in the 1980s and the New Millennium. *Genealogy*, 3(2), 17. <https://doi.org/10.3390/genealogy3020017>
9. Brown, G. L., Mangelsdorf, S. C., & Neff, C. (2012). Father involvement, paternal sensitivity, and father-child attachment security in the first 3 years. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 26(3), 421–430. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0027836>
10. Busby, D. M., Christensen, C., Crane, D. R., & Larson, J. H. (1995). A revision of the dyadic adjustment scale for use with distressed and nondistressed couples: Construct hierarchy and multidimensional scales. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 21(3), 289-308.
11. Campbell, J., & Gilmore, L. (2007). Intergenerational continuities and discontinuities in parenting styles. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 59(3), 140–150. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00049530701449471>
12. Carlson, J., Kendall, A., & Edleson, J. L. (2015). Becoming a Good Father: The Developmental engine of First-Time Fatherhood. *Fathering*, 13(3), 182. <http://mensstudies.info/OJS/index.php/FATHERING/article/view/745>
13. Choi, J., Kim, H. K., Capaldi, D. M., & Snodgrass, J. J. (2021). Long-term effects of father involvement in childhood on their son's physiological stress regulation system in adulthood. *Developmental Psychobiology*, 63(6). <https://doi.org/10.1002/dev.22152>

14. Clouthier, S. T. (2020). *Retrospective reports of fathering and new fathers' parenting identities* (Master's thesis, University of Tennessee). TRACE: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. [https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk\\_gradthes/5610](https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_gradthes/5610)
15. deMontigny, F., Gervais, C., Pierce, T., & Lavigne, G. (2020). Perceived Paternal involvement, relationship satisfaction, mothers' mental health and parenting stress: A Multi-Sample Path Analysis. *Frontiers in Psychiatry, 11*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2020.578682>
16. Diniz, E., Monteiro, L., & Veríssimo, M. (2023). Work gains and strains on father involvement: the mediating role of parenting styles. *Children, 10*(8), 1357. <https://doi.org/10.3390/children10081357>
17. Doucet, A., & Merla, L. (2007). Stay-at-home fathering: A strategy for balancing work and home in Canadian and Belgian families. *Community, Work & Family, 10*(4), 455–473. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13668800701575101>
18. Duckworth, J. D., & Buzzanell, P. M. (2009). Constructing Work-Life Balance and Fatherhood: Men's framing of the meanings of Both Work and Family. *Communication Studies, 60*(5), 558–573. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10510970903260392>
19. Ee, C. H., Wen, S. Q., & Shorey, S. (2021). Intergenerational Perspectives of Paternal Parenting Practices: A Descriptive Qualitative study. *Journal of Family Issues, 43*(1), 259–279. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513x21994152>
20. Ewald, A., Gilbert, E., & Huppertz, K. (2020). Fathering and Flexible Working Arrangements: A Systematic Interdisciplinary review. *Journal of Family Theory & Review, 12*(1), 27–40. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12363>

21. Fagan, J., & Barnett, M. (2003). The Relationship between Maternal Gatekeeping, Paternal Competence, Mothers' Attitudes about the Father Role, and Father Involvement. *Journal of Family Issues*, 24(8), 1020–1043. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513x03256397>
22. Fernandes, M., Monteiro, L., Santos, C., & Branco, I. (2017, April). *Fathers' parenting styles and their involvement in childcare: The moderating roles of fathers' education and working hours*. Paper presented at the 2017 SRCD Biennial Meeting. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315932732>
23. Fischer, R. A., Johnson, M. D., Stertz, A. M., Sherlock, S. N., & Wiese, B. S. (2022). *How perceived maternal gatekeeping affects fathers: An 8-week study*. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 37(2), 232–242. <https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0001053>
24. Galovan, A. M., Holmes, E. K., Schramm, D. G., & Lee, T. R. (2013). *Father involvement, Father–Child relationship quality, and satisfaction with family work*. *Journal of Family Issues*, 35(13), 1846–1867. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513x13479948>
25. Ghaleiha, A., Barber, C., Tamatea, A. J., & Bird, A. (2022). *Fathers' help seeking behavior and attitudes during their transition to parenthood*. *Infant Mental Health Journal*, 43(5), 756–768. <https://doi.org/10.1002/imhj.22008>
26. Goel, Y., & Mishra, S. (2023). *Cultural understandings of fathering and fatherhood in India: An exploration of lived experiences*. *Culture & Psychology*, 30(2), 245–278. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067x231154006>
27. Guzzo, K. B. (2011). *New Fathers' Experiences with Their Own Fathers and Attitudes Toward Fathering*. *Fathering: A Journal of Theory, Research, and Practice About Men as Fathers*, 9(3), 268–290. <https://doi.org/10.3149/fth.0903.268>

28. Gurkan, T., Ummanel, A., & Koran, N. (2021). *A qualitative study on the perception of fatherhood*. *European Journal of Educational Sciences*, 8(2), 42–59. <https://doi.org/10.19044/ejes.v8no2a42>
29. Gvozdrenović, A., & Bandalović, G. (2024). *Differences in mothers' and fathers' parenting styles*. *St Open*, 5, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.48188/so.5.3>
30. Habib, C. (2012). *The transition to fatherhood: A literature review exploring paternal involvement with identity theory*. *Journal of Family Studies*, 2606–2639. <https://doi.org/10.5172/jfs.2012.2606>
31. Hamm, M., Miller, E., Foster, L. J., Browne, M., & Borrero, S. (2018). “*The financial is the main issue, it's not even the child*”: Exploring the role of finances in men's concepts of fatherhood and fertility intention. *American Journal of Men S Health*, 12(4), 1074–1083. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1557988318775189>
32. Han, Y., Liu, K., & Xie, Y. (2023). *Factors affecting father involvement in parenting and solutions*. *Journal of Education Humanities and Social Sciences*, 8, 1969–1975. <https://doi.org/10.54097/ehss.v8i.4624>
33. Haslam, D., Filus, A., Morawska, A., Sanders, M. R., & Fletcher, R. (2014). The Work–Family Conflict Scale (WAFCS): Development and Initial Validation of a Self-report Measure of Work–Family Conflict for Use with Parents. *Child Psychiatry & Human Development*, 46(3), 346–357. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10578-014-0476-0>
34. Hershkovitz-Freudenthal, A., & Lavenda, O. (2024). *Factors associated with contemporary fatherhood*. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1403955>

35. Hofferth, S. L., Pleck, J. H., & Vesely, C. K. (2012). *The Transmission of Parenting from Fathers to Sons*. *Parenting*, 12(4), 282–305. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15295192.2012.709153>
36. Iwasa, H., Yoshida, Y., & Ishii, K. (2024). *Association of Spousal Social Support in Child-Rearing and Marital Satisfaction with Subjective Well-Being among Fathers and Mothers*. *Behavioral Sciences*, 14(2), 106. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14020106>
37. Jessee, V., & Adamsons, K. (2018). *Father involvement and Father–Child relationship quality: an Intergenerational perspective*. *Parenting*, 18(1), 28–44. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15295192.2018.1405700>
38. Kasamatsu, H., Tsuchida, A., Matsumura, K., Hamazaki, K., Inoue, M., & Inadera, H. (2023). *Impact of longer working hours on fathers' parenting behavior when their infants are 6 months old: The Japan Environment and Children's Study*. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 11. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1100923>
39. Kerr, D. C. R., Capaldi, D. M., Pears, K. C., & Owen, L. D. (2009). *A prospective three generational study of fathers' constructive parenting: Influences from family of origin, adolescent adjustment, and offspring temperament*. *Developmental Psychology*, 45(5), 1257–1273. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015863>
40. Koyuncu, S., & KISSAL, A. (2025). *Experiences of first-time fathers in the transition to parenting: a qualitative study*. *Midwifery*, 142, 104284. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.midw.2025.104284>
41. Kuscul, G. H., & Adamsons, K. (2022). *A personal and relational model of father identity construction*. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 14(2), 191–206. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jftr.12451>

42. Kuo, P. X., Volling, B. L., & Gonzalez, R. (2017). *Gender role beliefs, work–family conflict, and father involvement after the birth of a second child*. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, 19(2), 243–256. <https://doi.org/10.1037/men0000101>
43. Kwok, S. Y. C. L., Ling, C. C. Y., Leung, C. L. K., & Li, J. C. M. (2012). Fathering Self-Efficacy, marital satisfaction and father involvement in Hong Kong. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 22(8), 1051–1060. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-012-9666-1>
44. Lee, J., & Schoppe-Sullivan, S. J. (2022). Paternal identity, maternal gate opening, and fathers’ longitudinal positive engagement. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 37(2), 243–255. <https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0001028>
45. Lewington, L., Lee, J., & Sebar, B. (2021). “I’m not just a babysitter”: Masculinity and men’s experiences of first-time fatherhood. *Men and Masculinities*, 24(4), 571–589. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184x21993884>
46. Liu, Y., Haslam, D. M., Dittman, C. K., Guo, M., & Morawska, A. (2022). Predicting Chinese father involvement: Parental role beliefs, fathering self-efficacy and maternal gatekeeping. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1066876>
47. McBride, B. A., Brown, G. L., Bost, K. K., Shin, N., Vaughn, B., & Korth, B. (2005). Paternal identity, maternal gatekeeping, and father involvement. *Family Relations*, 54(3), 360–372. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2005.00323.x>
48. McLaughlin, K., & Muldoon, O. (2014). Father identity, involvement and work–family balance: An in-depth interview study. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 24(5), 439–452. <https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.2183>

49. Motwani, A. (2023). Fathers and childcare: Are gender social norms in India changing? *Sociology Compass*, 18(1). <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.13161>
50. Ncayiyane, Z., & Nel, L. (2023). Young Black fathers' perceptions of fatherhood: A family systems account. *Journal of Family Issues*, 45(6), 1431–1452. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513x231172955>
51. Neppl, T. K., Senia, J. M., & Donnellan, M. B. (2015). Effects of economic hardship: Testing the family stress model over time. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 30(1), 12–21. <https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000168>
52. Noh, N. I. (2021). First-time fathers' experiences during their transition to parenthood: A study of Korean fathers. *Child Health Nursing Research*, 27(3), 286–296. <https://doi.org/10.4094/chnr.2021.27.3.286>
53. Nurumal, M. S., Rohim, M. A., Jamaludin, S., Shorey, S., & Noviani, W. (2024). The first-time fathers' experiences in early fatherhood: A descriptive qualitative study. *International Journal of Care Scholars*, 7(2), 56–68. <https://doi.org/10.31436/ijcs.v7i2.362>
54. Odenweller, K. G., Rittenour, C. E., Myers, S. A., & Brann, M. (2013). Father-son family communication patterns and gender ideologies: A modeling and compensation analysis. *Journal of Family Communication*, 13(4), 340–357. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15267431.2013.823432>
55. Offer, S., & Kaplan, D. (2021). The “new father” between ideals and practices: New masculinity ideology, gender role attitudes, and fathers' involvement in childcare. *Social Problems*, 68(1). <https://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spab015>

56. Park, E. (2018). For grandparents' sake: The relationship between grandparenting involvement and psychological well-being. *Ageing International*, 43(3), 297–320. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12126-017-9320-8>
57. Parung, G. E., & Ferreira, N. (2017). Work-life balance, couple satisfaction, and father involvement: A cross-cultural study. *ANIMA Indonesian Psychological Journal*, 32(4), 201–216. <https://doi.org/10.24123/aipj.v32i4.851>
58. Paterna, C., & Martínez, C. (2006). Fathers and gender traditionalism: Perception of inequality and life roles. *The Spanish Journal of Psychology*, 9(2), 171–181. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1138741600006077>
59. Petren, R. E., & Ferraro, A. J. (2023). Fathers' status and role identities and involvement shortly after divorce. *Family Relations*, 73(2), 1401–1422. <https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12921>
60. Pinto, K. M., & Coltrane, S. (2008). Divisions of labor in Mexican origin and Anglo Families: structure and culture. *Sex Roles*, 60(7–8), 482–495. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-008-9549-5>
61. Piotrowski, K. (2020). The Utrecht-Management of Identity Commitments Scale—Parental Identity (U-MICS-PI). SWPS University. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339796306\\_The\\_Utrecht-Management\\_of\\_Identity\\_Commitments\\_Scale-Parental\\_Identity\\_U-MICS-PI](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339796306_The_Utrecht-Management_of_Identity_Commitments_Scale-Parental_Identity_U-MICS-PI)
62. Planalp, E. M., & Braungart-Rieker, J. M. (2015). Determinants of father involvement with young children: Evidence from the early childhood longitudinal study—birth cohort. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 30(1), 135–146. <https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000156>

63. Purwani, A., & Hasanah, I. U. (2023). Paternal involvement: The central role of fathers in managing children's emotions. *Atfalunā Journal of Islamic Early Childhood Education*, 6(2), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.32505/atfaluna.v6i2.7086>
64. Rane, T. R., & McBride, B. A. (2000). Identity theory as a guide to understanding fathers' involvement with their children. *Journal of Family Issues*, 21(3), 347–366. <https://doi.org/10.1177/019251300021003004>
65. Rilling, J. K., & Hadley, C. (2023). A mixed methods study of the challenges and rewards of fatherhood in a diverse sample of U.S. fathers. *SAGE Open*, 13(3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231193939>
66. Roskam, I. (2013). The transmission of parenting behaviour within the family: An empirical study across three generations. *Psychologica Belgica*, 53(3), 49. <https://doi.org/10.5334/pb-53-3-49>
67. Ruiz, R. A. A., Arazuri, E. S., De Jubera Ocón, M. S., Emeterio, M. Á. V. S., & De León Elizondo, A. P. (2024). Do grandparents contribute to their grandchildren's learning through shared leisure activities? *Education Sciences*, 14(1), 84. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14010084>
68. Schoppe-Sullivan, S. J., Altenburger, L. E., Lee, M. A., Bower, D. J., & Dush, C. M. K. (2015). Who are the gatekeepers? Predictors of maternal gatekeeping. *Parenting*, 15(3), 166–186. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15295192.2015.1053321>
69. Schoppe-Sullivan, S. J., Brown, G. L., Cannon, E. A., Mangelsdorf, S. C., & Sokolowski, M. S. (2008). Maternal gatekeeping, coparenting quality, and fathering behavior in families with infants. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 22(3), 389–398. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.22.3.389>

70. Schoppe-Sullivan, S. J., Donithen, R. W., Lee, J., Simon, L. T., & Wang, J. (2021). The best and worst of times: Predictors of new fathers' parenting satisfaction and stress. *Adversity and Resilience Science*, 2(2), 71–83. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42844-021-00032-y>
71. Sequeira De Figueiredo, C. R., Valadão Dias, F., & Instituto Universitário de Psicologia Aplicada (IU); Research Unit in Psychology and Health (UIPES). (2012). Families: Influences in children's development and behaviour, from parents and teachers' point of view. *Psychology Research*, 2(12), 693–705. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED539404.pdf>
72. Sharma, B. (2023, October). The evolution of parenting styles: Traditional vs. modern approaches to child rearing. *ResearchGate*. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/374589219\\_The\\_Evolution\\_of\\_Parenting\\_Styles\\_Traditional\\_vs\\_Modern\\_Approaches\\_to\\_Child\\_Rearing\\_Abstract](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/374589219_The_Evolution_of_Parenting_Styles_Traditional_vs_Modern_Approaches_to_Child_Rearing_Abstract)
73. Sharma, S. (2019). Father's role in effective parenting. *International Journal in Management and Social Science*. [https://www.academia.edu/39501539/FATHERS\\_ROLE\\_IN\\_EFFECTIVE\\_PARENTING](https://www.academia.edu/39501539/FATHERS_ROLE_IN_EFFECTIVE_PARENTING)
74. Simonelli, A., Parolin, M., Sacchi, C., De Palo, F., & Vieno, A. (2016). The role of father involvement and marital satisfaction in the development of family interactive abilities: A multilevel approach. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.01725>
75. Škvařil, V., & Presslerová, P. (2024). Becoming a father: A qualitative study on the journey to fatherhood. *Health Psychology Report*. <https://doi.org/10.5114/hpr/176082>

76. Smith, I., Youssef, G. J., Shatte, A., Teague, S. J., Knight, T., & Macdonald, J. A. (2022). "You are not alone": A big data and qualitative analysis of men's unintended fatherhood. *SSM - Qualitative Research in Health*, 2, 100085. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmqr.2022.100085>
77. Solberg, B., Glavin, K., Berg, R. C., & Olsvold, N. (2022). "Opening up a well of emotions": A qualitative study of men's emotional experiences in the transition to fatherhood. *Nursing Open*, 10(4), 2282–2294. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nop2.1482>
78. Sriyasak, A., Howharn, C., Chookunhom, P., Ket-In, V., & Sarakshetrin, A. (2024). Thai fathers' involvement in childcare during early childhood: A mixed-methods study. *American Journal of Men's Health*, 18(6). <https://doi.org/10.1177/15579883241301830>
79. Tanquerel, S. (2021). French fathers in work organizations: Navigating work-life balance challenges. In *Contributions to Management Science* (pp. 213–229). [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-75645-1\\_12](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-75645-1_12)
80. Van Holland De Graaf, J., Hoogenboom, M., De Roos, S., & Bucx, F. (2018). Socio-demographic correlates of fathers' and mothers' parenting behaviors. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 27(7), 2315–2327. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-018-1059-7>
81. Wang, L., & Keizer, R. (2024). 'I am a traditional but caring father': Narratives of paternal masculinity in urban Chinese families. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 33(6), 851–866. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2023.2300426>
82. Whatley, M. A., & Knox, D. (2005). Scales for measuring college student views of traditional motherhood and fatherhood. *College Student Journal*, 39(3), 588–593. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/284030902\\_Scales\\_for\\_Measuring\\_College\\_Student\\_Views\\_of\\_Traditional\\_Motherhood\\_and\\_Fatherhood](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/284030902_Scales_for_Measuring_College_Student_Views_of_Traditional_Motherhood_and_Fatherhood)

83. White, C., & Jarvis, K. (2024). Men's experiences of the transition to fatherhood during the first postnatal year: A qualitative systematic review. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 87(11), 661–672. <https://doi.org/10.1177/03080226241258577>
84. Yaffe, Y. (2020). Systematic review of the differences between mothers and fathers in parenting styles and practices. *Current Psychology*, 42(19), 16011–16024. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-020-01014-6>

## **APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORMS**

### **CONSENT FORM FOR FATHER'S**

Title of Study: Construction of Father's Identity

You are invited to participate in a research study that aims to explore the roles and identities of fathers in modern society. This study is being conducted by Mehar Sekhon, a student in the M.A. Psychology program at Thapar School of Liberal Arts & Sciences (TSLAS), Thapar Institute of Engineering and Technology, Patiala, under the supervision of Dr. Kriti Vyas, Assistant Professor at TSLAS.

Purpose of the Study:

The main objective is to examine fathers' perceptions, experiences, and feelings about their roles within their families. By gathering insights from fathers like you, we hope to deepen our understanding of fatherhood and its changing dynamics in today's world.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Married residential fathers (living with their families)
- Must have at least one child aged between 0 and 18 years

If you meet these criteria, you are invited to participate.

Participation Details:

Participation involves a one-on-one interview session where you will answer subjective questions. The interview will be audio recorded for research purposes and will last about 15 to 20 minutes.

Your participation is confidential and anonymous. Use only your initials on this form. You can withdraw at any time without consequences.

Contact Information:

Mehar Sekhon – msekhon\_ma23@thapar.edu (M.A. Student, TSLAS)

Dr. Kriti Vyas – kriti.vyas@thapar.edu (Assistant Professor, TSLAS)

Consent Statement:

I have read the guidelines and agree to participate in the study.

Yes       No

1. Name Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Date and Place: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Preferred Mode of Interview:

Phone Call       Google Meet

4. Contact Information (Phone No. or Email ID): \_\_\_\_\_

5. Preferred Date & Time for Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Participant Information:

6. Name Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Age Group:

25–30       30–35       35–40       40–45       45+

8. Highest Level of Education Completed:

Less than High School

High School Diploma

Bachelor's Degree

Master's Degree

Doctorate

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Job Profile (Occupation): \_\_\_\_\_

10. Nature of Job:

Full-time

Part-time

Self-employed

Unemployed

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Spouse's Job Profile/Status:

Full-time

- Part-time
- Self-employed
- Unemployed
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Children's Information (Number of Children by Age Category):

Age Range	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3
0-2 years	_____	_____	_____
2-6 years	_____	_____	_____
6-12 years	_____	_____	_____
13-18 years	_____	_____	_____

13. Family Type/Structure:

- Nuclear family       Joint family       Other: \_\_\_\_\_

14. Additional Information:

What activities do you typically engage in with your children? (Select all that apply)

- Outdoor play
- Educational activities (e.g., reading, homework)
- Sports or physical activities
- Arts and crafts
- Screen time (TV, video games)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your participation! Your insights as a father are valuable and greatly appreciated.

## CONSENT FORM FOR MOTHER'S

Title of Study: Construction of Father's Identity – A Perspective of Wives

You are invited to participate in a research study to explore the roles and identities of fathers from their wives' perspectives. This study is conducted by Mehar Sekhon, M.A. Psychology student at TSLAS, under supervision of Dr. Kriti Vyas.

Purpose of the Study:

To examine how fathers' roles and identities are perceived by their wives and how these identities evolve over time.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Married women living with their husbands and children
- Must have at least one child aged 0–18 years

Participation Details:

One-on-one interview with subjective questions, audio recorded. Takes approximately 20–30 minutes. Participation is voluntary and confidential.

Contact Information:

Mehar Sekhon – msekhon\_ma23@thapar.edu

Dr. Kriti Vyas – kriti.vyas@thapar.edu

Consent Confirmation:

I have read the guidelines and agree to participate.

Yes       No

1. Preferred Mode of Interview:

Phone Call       Google Meet

2. Phone No. / Email ID for Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Preferred Date & Time for Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Details:

4. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Age Group:

25–30     30–35     35–40     40–45     45+

6. Nature of Job:

Self-employed

Full-time

Part-time

Homemaker

7. Children's Information (Number of Children by Age Group):

Age Range    Child 1    Child 2    Child 3

0–2 years    \_\_\_\_\_    \_\_\_\_\_    \_\_\_\_\_

2–6 years    \_\_\_\_\_    \_\_\_\_\_    \_\_\_\_\_

6–12 years    \_\_\_\_\_    \_\_\_\_\_    \_\_\_\_\_

12–18 years    \_\_\_\_\_    \_\_\_\_\_    \_\_\_\_\_

**CONSENT FORM FOR GRANDFATHER'S**

Title of Study: Grandfathers' Perspectives on Modern Fatherhood

You are invited to participate in a research study exploring grandfathers' perspectives on modern fatherhood. Conducted by Mehar Sekhon (M.A. Psychology student, TSLAS) under supervision of Dr. Kriti Vyas.

Purpose of the Study:

To understand how grandfathers perceive the roles and identities of modern fathers, comparing their experiences with current fatherhood.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Married men with at least one grandchild

- Experience raising children and observing their sons or sons-in-law as fathers

Participation Details:

Interview with subjective questions, audio recorded, about 20–30 minutes. Participation is voluntary and confidential.

Contact Information:

Mehar Sekhon – msekhon\_ma23@thapar.edu

Dr. Kriti Vyas – kriti.vyas@thapar.edu

Consent Confirmation:

I have read the guidelines and agree to participate.

Yes       No

1. Preferred Date & Time for Interview: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Preferred Mode of Interview:

Phone Call       Google Meet

3. Phone Number or Email ID for Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Demographic Profile:

4. Name: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Age Group:

45–55       55–65       65–75       75–85       85+

6. Nature of Job:

Self-employed

Full-time

Part-time

Unemployed

7. Grandchildren's Information (Number of Grandchildren by Age Group):

Age Range Grandchild 1 Grandchild 2 Grandchild 3

0–2 years \_\_\_\_\_

2–6 years \_\_\_\_\_

6–12 years \_\_\_\_\_

12–18 years \_\_\_\_\_









## APPENDIX E : Maternal Gatekeeping Scale (Father's Version)

### Instructions:

Please indicate how true each of the following statements is for you by selecting the response that best reflects your experience.

### Scale:

1 = Very False      2 = Somewhat False      3 = Somewhat True      4 = Very True

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4
1	Your (wife/partner) frequently re-did some household tasks that you had not done well.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	You had higher standards than your (wife/partner) did for how well cared-for the house should be.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	You had higher standards than your (wife/partner) did for how well cared-for the children should be.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Your (wife/partner) liked being in charge when it came to household tasks and caring for the children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Your (wife/partner) scheduled household tasks and childcare for you.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## APPENDIX F: UMICS:PI – Parenting Identity Scale

### Instructions:

Below are a number of statements about you and your parenting. For each statement, indicate how much you agree or disagree using the scale below:

1 = Completely Untrue    2 = Untrue    3 = Sometimes True / Sometimes Untrue    4 = True    5 = Completely True

No. Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1 Being a parent gives me security in life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Being a parent gives me self-confidence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Being a parent makes me feel sure of myself	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Being a parent gives me security for the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Being a parent allows me to face the future with optimism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 I try to find out a lot about my child/children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 I often reflect on my child/children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 I make a lot of effort to keep finding out new things about my child/children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 I often try to find out what other people think about my child/children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 I often talk with other people about my child/children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 I often think it would have been better not to have had any children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12 I often think that not having a child/children would have made my life more interesting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13 In fact, I believe that it would have been better for me not to have been a parent at all	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## APPENDIX G: List of Qualitative Interview Questions

### Father Interview Questions

#### Warm-up Questions

- I. How are you these days?
- II. Can you briefly describe a little about yourself?
- III. How many kids do you have and at what age did you become a parent? How would you explain that experience?

#### Interview Questions

1. How would you personally define your identity as a father?
  - a) What is your role as father to your child?
  - b) How satisfied are you with your role?
  - c) What aspects of being a father are most joyous or challenging?
2. How do you balance your role as father, a partner, and a professional?
  - a) What strategies do you use to maintain a healthy work-life balance?
  - b) Are there times where you had a conflict between your job responsibilities and role as a father?
3. Can you please describe your upbringing and relationship with your own father?
  - a) Keeping in mind your relationship with your father, can you describe how it influences your current parenting style?
  - b) What do you think are the traits of typical traditional masculine fathers vs modern fathers such as yourself?
  - c) Can you tell what specific traits of traditional masculine fatherhood roles you consciously or voluntarily choose to reject?
  - d) What values would you like to pass on to your child that you once learned from your own upbringing?
4. How do you adapt your identity as a father when your child reaches a significant milestone?
  - a) What is your most proud moment as a father?
  - b) What key moments stand out in shaping who you are as a father?
  - c) How has your identity as a father evolved over the years?
5. How much involved are you in your child's emotional, physical, social, and intellectual life?
  - a) Do you feel fathers' involvement is necessary in child development? How?
  - b) How does your partner's job status and parenting approach shape your identity as a father?
  - c) Describe your shared responsibilities as a parent with your spouse.
  - d) Do you feel encouraged or restricted while sharing responsibilities of the child with your wife?
  - e) How has your relationship changed or evolved with your partner after becoming a father?

6. Do you think that a father's financial stability and structure of the family (nuclear or joint family) has an effect on the father's role?
  - a) Do you think that being a boy dad is any different from being a girl dad? Do you feel that the role of father is different for a boy child vs girl child? Please exemplify.
7. Since your child's birth, how has your understanding of life's meaning evolved or changed? Can you share an experience?

## **Wives Questions on Fatherhood**

### 1. Wives Perception of Fatherhood

- a) How would you describe your husband's role as a father? Are you satisfied with it?
- b) What do you think defines a good father in your opinion and in your husband's perspective?
- c) How has your husband's role as a father evolved over time?
- d) Are there traditional fatherhood practices you feel are missing in modern parenting, and how do modern fatherhood practices contribute to stronger family bonds?
- e) How do you encourage or discourage your husband's participation in certain parenting activities? OR Can you share an example where you consciously facilitated or restricted your husband's involvement in parenting?

### 2. Involvement with Children

- a) Can you describe your husband's involvement in your children's daily lives? And activities or responsibilities he particularly enjoys or avoids as a father?
- b) How does he handle different developmental stages of your children?
- c) How do you and your husband share parenting responsibilities? And activities or responsibilities he particularly enjoys or avoids as a father?

### 3. Fatherhood and Work-Life Balance

- a) How does your husband's work or professional life impact his role as a father?
- b) Does he ever express concerns about balancing his responsibilities as a father and his professional life? OR How does your husband balance being a father, a partner, and other roles? What strategies does he use to maintain a healthy work life balance?

### 4. Evolving Roles Over Time

- a) How did your husband initially react to becoming a father, and how has his perspective on fatherhood changed since then?
- b) How do you think his role as a father has shifted as your children have grown older or faced new challenges?
- c) Do you think there is a generational difference when it comes to fatherhood? OR How does your husband's role as a father compare to his own father or father figures in his life?

## 5. Identity Formation

- a) How do you think becoming a father has changed your husband's sense of identity or priorities?
- b) Are there particular experiences that you believe have shaped his identity as a father?
- c) How do cultural, societal, or familial expectations influence his identity as a father?
- d) How do you support your husband in his role as a father?

## 6. Children's Influence

- a) How do you think your children view their father's role in their lives?
- b) What is his parenting style and how does he adapt his parenting style to different children or situations?

## 7. Concluding Part

- a) If you were to describe your husband's journey as a father in one sentence, what would it be? OR In what ways do you think fatherhood has brought positive changes to your husband and your family as a whole?

## **Interview Questions for Grandfathers**

### 1. Personal Experience as a Father

- a) How would you describe your role and identity as a father when your children were growing up, and what values or practices were most important to you?
- b) How did becoming a father influence your identity and sense of self?

### 2. Balancing Fatherhood and Work-Life Responsibilities

- a) How did you balance fatherhood with professional and other responsibilities?
- b) Did your children's needs ever influence your career decisions or professional priorities? What strategies did you use to maintain a work-life balance?

### 3. Influence of Own Father

- a) How did your relationship with your father shape your approach to parenting, and what values or lessons did you pass on to your children?
- b) Were there aspects of your father's parenting style that you chose to carry on or avoid?

### 4. Changes in Fatherhood Over Generations

- a) How has fatherhood evolved between your generation and your son's, particularly regarding societal or cultural expectations?
- b) What differences do you observe between your parenting style and your children's, and how has your own parenting style changed over the years?
- c) Are there family traditions or values related to fatherhood that you've consciously passed down, and how do you see your influence reflected in your children's parenting styles?
- d) What were the most rewarding aspects of fatherhood for you, and what challenges do you think fathers face today that you didn't?

### 5. Evolving Role as a Grandfather

- a) How does your role as a grandfather differ from your role as a father, and how has it shaped your perspective on fatherhood?
- b) What do you enjoy most about being a grandfather?

### 6. Other Influences

- a) What cultural, religious, or societal norms shaped your role as a father, and how have they changed?
- b) Which cultural or familial fatherhood practices do you believe should be preserved?
- c) How do financial stability and family structure affect a father's role?

### 7. Concluding Part

- a) Do you think modern fathers face more challenges or advantages compared to your time?
- b) What is the most important lesson you learned as a father, and what advice would you give to the next generation of fathers?