Father Involvement During Early Childhood with Disabilities: A Systematic Review

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Submission date: 15-Oct-2023 04:29AM (UTC-0400)
Submission ID: 2195998775
File name: JURNAL_FIX_-_Copy.docx (87.52K)
Word count: 4186
Character count: 25134

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Abstract

It is incredibly beneficial for fathers to be involved in their children's upbringing and growth. Finding the factors that affect father involvement in the lives of young children with impairments is the aim of this study. The PICO framework was used to design the study's inclusion and exclusion criteria as well as the systematic review methodology. Using Web of Science, Proquest, and Science, 50 publications from pertinent journals were located. These publications were then picked for this investigation from Direct and Sagepub. The top six publications were chosen by the researchers for study. According to the findings of a comprehensive review, father factors, mother factors, contextual variables, parent-child linkages, and child factors are deemed to be the determining factors for father engagement. The findings of this study should be applicable to other fields, making significant improvements possible.

Keywords: *father involvement; early childhood; disabilities.*

Introduction

Since it is critical to address how children interact with their fathers, father engagement has received a lot of attention lately. The growth and development of children with disabilities is directly correlated with father participation. Social, economic and cultural changes have an influence on society in perceiving the role of father figures in the care and development of children. Although research on fathers has continued to increase over the past three decades, research that discusses the family has focused more on the mother figure (Parmanti & Purnamasari, 2015). Disability affects vulnerable population members with physical, mental, and intellectual disabilities (Rahma et al., 2022). IDEA (2019) outlines a variety of categories for the ailments that impact children with disabilities, including traumatic brain injuries, hearing, speech, and visual impairments, autism, orthopedic illnesses, and intellectual abnormalities. This definition is consistent with the UN convention on the rights of individuals with disabilities, which defines individuals with disabilities as having physical, mental, or intellectual impairments that may make it challenging for them to interact with the community and distinguish them from other children generally (Nations, 2013).

The number of individuals with disabilities in the global population is projected to be 25% (UNICEF, 2013). Using prevalence statistics from the GBD, Murray et al., (2020) calculated that 7.5% of children under the age of five (or 49.8 million individuals) had mild to severe impairments. According to UNICEF (2022) 49.8 million children under the age of five have mild to severe impairments. Children 650.000, or 0.79% of the total 84.4 million children, are deemed to be handicapped (UNICEF, 2022).

WHO (2013) lists poverty, stigma, discrimination, strained parent-child connections, institutionalization, violence, abuse, and neglect as disproportionate risk factors for early-life impairment. However, the early childhood period—which begins during pregnancy and lasts until the child is eight years old—is a crucial time for growth and development since childhood experiences can have an impact on a child's results in the future (Risdal & Singer in Tuso, 2019). Depending on the child's developmental stage, parents may have an impact on their child's mental health by altering their behavior and social circumstances (Vincent, 2023). At this point of their development, it is crucial to provide disabled children with access to environmental therapies that may help them lead fulfilling lives through nurturing (Risdal & Singer in Tuso, 2019). Therefore, it will have an effect on life in the future if children with impairments do not receive the best care during the "golden age" era. Therefore, it will have an effect on life in the future if children with impairments do not receive the best care during the so-called "golden age" era. Sairah & Chandra (2022) a child needs to receive proper care in the first three years because this period is a critical period for the child's growth and development. Father's involvement also occurs at a long and intensive frequency in establishing relationships and utilizing all resources, both affective, physical and cognitive (Istiyati et al, 2020).

Fathers are the primary provider of support for the family and are crucial to the child's successful development, hence it is crucial that they are involved. Caregiving is essential for children with disabilities (Cabrera et al., 2014, 2018). Poor father involvement in young impaired children can affect the children's socioemotional development, educational success, and mental health in the long run (Gillette & Gudmunson, 2014). Father involvement can take many different forms, such as fathers who actively involve themselves in the lives of young children with disabilities or fathers who have little control over those children's lives (Emily & Eva, 2017). Prastiyani (2017) research reveals a number of aspects of father engagement in parenting, including control facets, caring facets, warmth facets, involvement facets, and responsibility facets. According to research by Maya et al., (2019) fathers who are involved in raising children with disabilities take care of them, meet their needs, guide them, help them learn, and motivate them. This is consistent

with research by Aryanti (2017) who found that dads' active involvement in parenting can have positive effects on children's cognitive, affective, and physical development.

According to research done in Indonesia by Septiani & Nasution (2017) father engagement affects children's capacity for emotional self-control by 56%. Since emotional awareness starts to emerge around the age of four, early emotional development in children with disabilities affects sentiments later. A Purwindarini et al., (2014) study found that 73.2% of fathers actively participate in child care. The father's engagement in three areas—spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, and physical—is revealed by this study. The father's participation in this study has an impact on the learning outcomes for the kids.

According to a study by Sari et al., (2023) 43.60% of parents who participate in early childhood care have an influence on that care. According to some, a father's obligation to his impaired child includes taking part in family events, particularly those that are connected to his kids' extracurricular pursuits. Special needs kids require their fathers' love and support. For instance, children lose their father figures and are referred to as fatherless when fathers routinely commute outside of the city and leave the house. Fatherlessness is the absence of a father's influence and physical involvement in a child's life. Children that experience this have low self-esteem and negative emotions including rage, loneliness, jealousy, and embarrassment. This awful incident has made us more aware of how important fathers are.

This study aims to identify the variables that affect father engagement in young children with impairments based on the aforementioned logic. We'll carefully examine these contributing factors in relation to the dynamics that fathers encounter when raising children. The study's findings will help in the development of the best interventions to promote father involvement in families, especially for fathers and children with disabilities.

Methodology

A method known as a systematic literature review was employed in this study, which comprises locating, perusing, analyzing, and interpreting all of the research that is currently available. The websites sciencedirect, proquest, web of science, and sagepub were used for source searches. Search phrases like father involvement, early childhood, disability, and "father involvement factor" were used to find studies relevant to this one. Based on the pertinent articles that were located throughout the search, these keywords were chosen. In order to collect information that is nearly equivalent, this study does not restrict the year that papers were published. The PICO framework, which consists of population, intervention, control, and outcome (Pollock & Berge, 2017), is the foundation for the inclusion criteria. Participants in the study were fathers of young children under the age of five. The following were the steps of the systematic review for this study:



Figure 1. Research stages

Finding the criteria for the data is the next stage in determining whether it is appropriate for use as a source of research data. The prerequisites or criteria for articles used in this study are papers written in both Indonesian and English, papers with young children as the research subjects who have disabilities, and factors affecting fathers in parenting. Additionally, both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies will be used. In a narrative review that came after the examination of the data, the findings of the statistical analysis were then explained, along with the methodology. According to Pollock & Berge (2017), it is possible to glean important knowledge from this study that can be applied in later investigations by combining these data and generating inferences.

Results and Discussion

The researchers' thorough search yielded 50 journal papers. The researcher obtained 6 publications that would be looked into in this study after re-identifying them with the study's goal in mind the engagement of dads in young children with impairments. The following magazines were consulted for this investigation:

"It's the most important thing – I mean, the schooling": Father involvement in the education of children with autism **(Potter, 2016)**

Using a semi-structured interviewing technique, this study was conducted in England with 25 fathers of autistic children as participants. Qualitative research methodology is employed. This study discovered that parents' direct and indirect engagement in their children's life is beneficial. By participating in meetings and events held at schools, children can indirectly participate in the administrative procedures required to obtain appropriate educational placements, everyday amenities, access to schools, and general support for their advancement. On the other hand, direct parental participation means helping with schoolwork and performing school-related duties at home. Using a gender-diverse methodology, the research's implication—higher father involvement with autistic children—is examined.

Father involvement and maternal depressive sysmptoms in families of children with disabilities or delays **(Laxman et al., 2015)**

This nationwide study included 3,550 children (1,850 boys and 1,700 girls) and their biological parents as research participants. This longitudinal study included the children at around 9 months, 2 years, and 4 years of age. This study used the depression scale, a demographic survey, and a questionnaire about parental engagement. The overall population of the study consists of children who were born in the United States in 2001 and lived with their biological parents for the first four years of their life.

This study found an association between responsive fatherly parenting and a decrease in depressive symptoms in mothers of handicapped children. These findings suggest that higher father involvement may be advantageous for families with impaired children and highlight the need for service providers to encourage and promote father involvement in the care of children with impairments.

It's a School but it's not a School: understanding father involvement in the Schooling of children with intellectual disabilities in Kenya **(Karisa et al., 2021)**

83% of the kids at the institution in Kenya where this study was conducted had intellectual disabilities. There were 232 pupils (145 men and 87 women) and 9 teachers (seven women and two men) in total. The students' ages range from 4 to 34. The study's instructor subjects were included to help present a more complete picture of dads' involvement in the educational process. Dads, teachers, and deputy principals took part in one-on-one interviews for this study that lasted around an hour each. The focus group discussions that came next lasted 80 minutes apiece. To round out the data, focus groups, interviews, and document evaluations were also held. The information gained through focus group discussions, document reviews, and interviews was assessed using systematic critical theory.

This survey found that parents prefer that their disabled children attend school since it will give them the knowledge and training they need to live independently. The value of education and the best ways for society to educate children may not always be shared by fathers. Dads' participation in their children's schooling may vary, but it is always present for children with special needs. The research's limitation—that it solely focuses on one specific school—means that only that institution can employ the concept

Father involvement in the care, play, and education of children with autism **(C. A. Potter, 2017)**

In England, a study with 306 dads of autistic children was conducted. The sample for this study consisted of the biological dads and adoptive fathers of children with autism or Asperger's syndrome. This research approach makes use of cross-sectional data. As part of the data gathering procedure, fathers of autistic children complete an online survey that is available via a website that is provided by email.

54% of fathers of autistic children between the ages of 0 and 5 played with their children every day, per the study's findings. Their fathers encourage all of their children's initiatives, including their extracurricular and academic activities. Additionally, they spend more time playing with their kids than doing anything else. The benefits of their engagement for autistic children are numerous. The flaw in this study is that it cannot tell boys from girls with autism apart from each other. It is necessary to conduct research on gender disparities in children as well as how fathers support their autistic children in seeking work.

Father's experience of involvement in the daily care of their child with a developmental disability in a Chinese context **(Huang et al., 2013)**

Samples from 16 parents were specifically gathered from a hospital in central Taiwan to conduct this investigation in China. Using qualitative research techniques and a hermeneutic phenomenological perspective, this study examines and interprets dads' experiences in raising kids with impairments. Two in-depth interviews and one semi-structured interview were conducted with each research subject. Transcripts of interviews and journal entries were analyzed using a hermeneutic approach.

Life expectancy was dropped, media care quality was a worry, and family function was enhanced, according to an analysis of dads' opinions about their experiences raising kids with impairments. Parents should be hopeful about the futures of both their kids and themselves. Hope is still important, but it is diminished when the child with the handicap receives poor medical care or when the father is unable to provide for the child's needs. Dads never stop striving to improve their homes, society, and their children.

Fathers' involvement in rearing children with profound intellectual and multiple disabilities **(Sato & Araki, 2022)**

This investigation was done in Japan with 7 fathers. Dads' descriptions of kids with severe intellectual disabilities and other multiple disabilities were examined using a qualitative study design. The seven father participants put in 12 hours a day on average. They were between the ages of 31 and 38. In-depth, semi-structured face-to-face interviews with participants in outpatient clinics or at their homes were a part of the data collection process. The elements of father involvement described by Pleck (2012) were used to design the interview guide, including the father's involvement in positive activities, warmth and responsiveness, control, indirect attention, and responsibility processes. The analytical approach adopted, qualitative inductive analysis, results in fathers strengthening their self-confidence in parenting by talking and sharing conditions and caring with their spouses. On the other side, fathers worry about how to manage work and family obligations, how to balance their own futures, and the future of their challenged children as well as their own chances.

Doherty et al., (1998) categorized the factors that influence father engagement into the following six categories based on the six studies they examined: father variables, mother variables, contextual variables, parental relationship variables, and kid variables. This is how it goes:

Father factors

The involvement of a father in raising a kid with a disability can strengthen the link between father and child and promote the child's growth and development. A father's

engagement in the home affects a child's character development, emotional development, social development, and cognitive development. According to (Cabrera et al., 2018). there is a link between a father's involvement in raising a child with a disability and three other factors: paternal responsibility, which refers to the father's understanding of how to meet the child's needs, paternal engagement, which refers to the father's experience interacting with the child and taking part in activities with them, and paternal accessibility, which refers to the father's presence in the needs and activities of the child. Aspects that can influence behavior include responsiveness, abrasiveness, behavioral engagement, and affective participation (Fox & Bruce, 2001).

Mother factors

Men and women are increasingly sharing childcare responsibilities, per research by by Murshid (2016). The mother's engagement in child care is essential because of the close bond that forms from birth and the fact that she has more influence over household decisions than the father (Dumbaugh et al., 2014). Mothers undertake prenatal checkups more frequently because they have more control over family decisions. These studies collectively show that mothers frequently do not require the support of fathers when parenting affords opportunities for independence. Doherty et al., (1998), found that a range of parameters can be used to explain the relationship between dads' and mothers' engagement in parenting. Mothers prioritize their physical health and the health of their children more than fathers do because they have a high level of self-efficacy in their parenting roles. The second is that mothers frequently care more about their kids' health than do fathers. In turn, this has an impact on how much time men spend raising their kids.

Contextual factors

The relationships between family members, such as those between the mother, children, siblings, and grandparents; the family's financial position; and having a family member with a disability are among the family contextual factors (Cabrera et al., 2018). Both the mother's characteristics—such as her age, occupation, and education—and the child's characteristics—such as gender, age, and handicap. A father's parenting style is influenced by a variety of factors, including culture, biological history, parenting style, parenting attributes, personality, familial ties, socioeconomics, social networks, and job. The family's environment changes as the family's traits do. As children gain a deeper understanding of themselves and others, their internal perceptions of their parents and other family members shift (Ammaniti, 2014).

Parental relationship factors

The bioecological hypothesis predicts that the father will assume the mother's functions and vice versa (Cabrera et al., 2018). When the environment calls for adaptation, such as when both parents are employed or when the father is the main caregiver, this happens. Father involvement in parenting lowers depression among mothers who find it difficult to care for their newborns, according to studies (Lewin et al., 2015). According to Trahan (2018) research, the presence of internal components, particularly self-efficacy, has a bigger impact than the presence of external components, like the relationship between the father and mother or parenting components. Researchers (McLeod & Tirmazi, 2017) discovered that the mother-father bond affected children more than the strength of the bond.

Children factors

This study found a connection between father involvement in parenting and features of children with disabilities, despite the fact that it is rarely highlighted. Fathers' involvement in raising children with disabilities is significantly influenced by a child's

characteristics, such as age, gender, or temperament (Emily & Eva, 2017).). Numerous research also highlight a conflict between father involvement and child characteristics, particularly child age

Conclusion

Researchers got to the conclusion that there is a link between father involvement and parenting of children with impairments after completing a careful analysis. A detailed analysis revealed that the mother variables, environmental factors, parental relationship factors, and child factors are all related to father engagement. Other elements that influence how children are raised include the child's gender, age, location of employment, and educational background.

Acknowledgment

I would want to convey my thanks to my supervisors, the psychology faculty lecturers, my fellow students in the master's program, and the entire academic community at Airlangga University.

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