

SOME ASPECTS OF RESEARCH ON THE INVOLVEMENT OF FATHERS IN THE UPBRINGING OF CHILDREN

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses a basic construct in the study of contemporary fatherhood – father involvement, focusing on different methodological approaches to studying father involvement in the upbringing of children. The paper emphasizes the great importance of father’s involvement, analyzed effects and causes of (non)involvement. Various aspects of paternity research examined in numerous studies were selected and analyzed in order to suggest a new theoretical and methodological support, inspiration, as well as the directions for further research. The obtained results of the research proved that a variety of methodological approaches could be devised only by understanding the idea of the multidimensionality of the construct of father involvement in the upbringing of children. Some of the most popular quantitative and qualitative approaches and their techniques were highlighted and described in more detail. The paper highlights the limitations of both approaches, stating that a systemic perspective in understanding and in a methodological approach to measuring the involvement of fathers could be perceived as the solution. The data presented in the paper were based on the scientific knowledge. Namely, research methods may have several

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modalities, comprising a number of research techniques. The presented paper uses the method of theoretical analysis based on literature analysis of various theoretical and empirical findings of the involvement of fathers in the upbringing of children.

INTRODUCTION

The role of the father in the family has long been frequently defined as less important, biological or secondary. Actually, this definition pertains to the traditional understanding of the father's gender role. Gender is a social and cultural construct that includes society's expectations regarding the abilities, characteristics and probable behavior of men and women. Traditionally, in accordance with the gender stereotypes of society before modernity, the approach in the research on parenting was focused on the mother, just as the word 'parent' was considered synonymous with 'mother'. The role of the father in a child's life was thus insufficiently documented. It was not until the 1970s that the interest in fatherhood increased, representing the claim and later the confirmation that fathers were worth studying independently, rather than as an occasional addition to mothers, thus increasing the academic visibility of fathers (Dermott and Miller, 2015.). In recent years social welfare policies and practices have increasingly addressed the role of men as fathers. There has been a rapid increase in the number of social programs working with fathers (Curran, 2003.). It has been recognized that the roles of mother and father are neither equal nor interchangeable, but that each of them contributes to a child's development. It is true that a child needs the love of both mother and father, and that is why a father who has not built an emotional relationship with his child from the beginning will later be unable to fully fulfill his paternal duty. In their own unique way, fathers also contribute to a child's emotional, social and intellectual development, and the physical absence of a father, or even a lack of interest in fulfilling his role, often results in a disturbed emotional balance or even impaired personality development.

The father from the past, the head of the family, inaccessible and rigid, could be characterized nowadays as emotionally cold and unavailable. At the end of the 20th century, the acceptable father figure was more liberal, flexible, warmer and softer (Carpenter, 2002.). More recent research indicates that young men in particular embrace and cherish fatherhood more than previous generations (Barker, 2008.). Therefore, there is a trend of a greater involvement of fathers in family life and childcare.

Over the past few decades, many countries have witnessed an increase in the number of fathers involved in childcare, which is defined as the time that a father and a child spend together (Gauthier, Smeedeng and Furstenberg, 2004.). This change has been attributed to the increased participation of mothers in the workforce and the

expansion of gender egalitarian and intensive parenting ideologies (Esping-Andersen, 2009.). In this new model of father involvement, fathers are not only expected to act as income providers, but also to be actively engaged in the everyday care and upbringing of children (Barbeta-Viñas and Cano, 2017.). It is becoming increasingly common that mothers and fathers try to share responsibilities on a more equal basis regarding raising children, taking care of the household and providing for themselves. A gender-balanced family environment implies the development of roles and the encouragement of participation in family life based on skills, interests, agreements and respect, and not on pre-defined, stereotypical expectations about gender. There is an increasing number of programs in the world that emphasize the importance of the role of the father in the upbringing of children.

This paper discusses the fundamental construct in the study of contemporary fatherhood – father involvement, focusing on the various methodological approaches to investigating father involvement in the upbringing of children. The criteria which guided the selection of the relevant researches were formed concerning the content and methodology. The aim was to attain numerous and various contemporary researches associated with the topic of the involvement of fathers in the upbringing of children, but also, among them, those which would contribute to a complete and more diverse review in terms of different aspects of research that were discovered and summarized in this paper.

Relying on the family systems perspective, understanding and methods, this paper perceives the family as an organized system, and the individual (father, child and mother) as an important member, part of the process that creates patterns regulating the behavior (participation) of all members. The postmodern outlook focuses on the child and their active role in the family, which considerably contributes to the direction and intensity of the child's own development. However, seen from the systemic perspective, the two-way influence of father and child is undoubtedly determined, which is the subject commonly explored by numerous contemporary authors. Researches of the father's involvement in the upbringing of children are very popular today, particularly in the west (USA, Australia and Western Europe). This paper for the most part relies on the researches conducted in the Anglo-Saxon countries.

Given the fact that the processes concerned with the bond between a parent and a child, the use of time, and the cognitive development of children are more complex in single-parent families, families that are re-formed, and the like (Hofferth, 2006.), our review is limited to the children living with both biological and co-resident parents. The research conducted by Furstenberg (Furstenberg, 1988.) shows that non-resident fathers and other father figures, such as stepfathers, relatives and non-relatives, play varied social roles in children's lives. This is the reason why we

focused mainly on the research that would include the biological father. Moreover, the studies that examined the involvement of the father in the upbringing of children of a mostly younger, preschool age were selected. However, this paper also considered the researches where the age of children extended to the age of 14 in order to avoid the specificity of the father's relationship with adolescents.

The presented research was predominantly based on the interpretative paradigm as part of the interpretative anthropology, which was applied to explain the involvement of fathers in their children's upbringing regarding various aspects and different countries. Considering the fact that the symbolic interactionism, being part of the interpretative paradigm, is neither easily determined nor explained by using a certain pattern, the paper reviewed different studies that had analyzed this issue from both theoretical and methodological, i.e. empirical aspects. The research sample comprised randomly selected researches from the 20th and 21st centuries with the purpose of establishing the difference between the traditional and contemporary family functions, as well as presenting some aspects of research on the involvement of fathers in their children's upbringing.

The involvement of father in the upbringing of children – forms of manifestation and effects

In a similar review of this research, more than 35 years ago, Lamb and the associates (Lamb et al., 1985) established a father involvement construct that included three components: (1) engagement (the direct interaction with a child in the form of care, playing and other activities), (2) accessibility (availability) to a child, and (3) responsibility (taking care of a child's safety, different from providing care, and organizing, arranging available resources for a child). Fathers should be both available and accessible, i.e. be close to children and respond to their calls and needs, and be engaged, that is, to listen to their children and to communicate with them, to pay attention to their needs and their interests and to actively guide them. The third dimension of fatherhood was conceptualized as responsibility, i.e. thinking, planning, organizing, managing children's needs, even if the parent is not physically with the child, for example, arranging play dates, choosing and buying toys or planning school consultations. It turns out to be very valuable for fathers and children if fathers regularly spend time caring for their children, because, according to Wilson and Prior (Wilson and Prior, 2011.), that time is qualitatively different from the time when the mother is present, and can be specifically important for the father-child relationship. Fathers, therefore, as one of two parents, also play an essential role in the upbringing of their children.

Although research findings indicate that fathers are even nowadays less involved than mothers (Cano, Perales and Baxter, 2019.; Craig, 2016.), the importance of the father for a child's development is undeniable. The importance of father involvement is reflected in the fact that although there are more similarities than differences between mothers and fathers, and positive parenting characteristics are the same for both, mothers and fathers tend to have different interactive styles, with fathers being more playful and mothers being more focused on care.

Playing with fathers is usually more physical, unpredictable and exciting, and children enjoy it greatly, especially boys. Experience with this type of play helps children to control intense emotions and reduce aggressive behavior, which implies both children's social skills and peer acceptance (Wilson and Prior, 2011.). Actively involved fathers have children with greater cognitive competence and academic achievements (Flouri and Buchanan, 2004.; McBride, Schoppe-Sullivan and Ho, 2005.) and a higher self-esteem (Amato, 1994.; Deutsch, Servis and Payne, 2001.), as well as less behavioral problems (Flouri and Buchanan, 2003.). Father involvement is positively correlated with children's life satisfaction, less experience of depression (Dubowitz et al., 2001.; Formoso et al., 2007.) and less psychological discomfort, but with higher levels of self-conscious happiness (Flouri, 2005.), and higher levels of self-esteem (Deutsch, Servis and Payne, 2001.). The love of the father has been shown to have an equal impact on the psychological well-being and health of offspring and on a range of psychological and behavioral problems as does maternal love (Rohner and Veneziano, 2001.; Ramchandani et al., 2013.). Fathers' involvement is positively related to children's overall social skills (Stolz, Barber and Olsen, 2005.). This impact begins early in child development. For example, Kato and the associates (Kato et al., 2002.) found the direct impact of participation of men in child rearing on children's pro-social development at the age of three. We can conclude that a unique paternal style contributes to the secure affective attachment of children.

Fathers and mothers, therefore, tend to spend time with their children in different ways: mothers spend most of their time on routine care, while fathers spend more time on playfulness and educational activities (Craig and Mullan, 2011.). Children who have involved fathers are exposed to more diverse stimuli, which can lead to better cognitive outcomes (Lamb, 2010.). Thus, for example, fathers and mothers speak differently to children and about different topics of conversation (Pancsofar and Vernon-Feagans, 2006.). When compared to mothers, fathers' conversations with little children are characterized with more wh- (e.g.: what, where, etc.) questions, which requires that children assume more conversational responsibilities in the interaction. This encourages little children to speak more, use a more diverse vocabulary, and speak longer in interactions with their fathers (Rowe, Coker, and Pan, 2004.). Playing with fathers is very stimulating and helps children to see the world around them and

within themselves more broadly, which could be attributed primarily to the result of the interaction with two parents with different values, behaviors, vocabulary and parenting styles.

Not every shared activity will have the same effects on a child's development. When a child and a father (or a mother) spend their time together in unstructured activities (e.g. watching television or using a computer) or routine care (e.g. washing up or dressing), their interactions may become progressively less intense and consequently contribute less to children's cognitive development (Lamb, 2010.; Hsin and Felfe, 2014.), because, for example, a father would communicate less with a child while they are watching TV together as opposed to when they are playing board games together. Research (Fiorini and Keane, 2014.) showed that the following situations are related hierarchically with the verbal abilities of children from the most to the least effective ones: time spent in educational activities with parents, time spent in educational activities with persons other than parents, time with the media, time with friends, time spent generally with parents, time spent generally with people other than parents, time spent sleeping, and time at school.

Although researchers focus more on the direct impact of father participation on child development outcomes, it appears that fathers are an important source of indirect effects on child development outcomes, too. Thus, father participation contributes, for example, to maternal mental health and marital satisfaction (Fagan and Cabrera, 2012.; Laxman et al., 2015.), which then increase the quality of the mother-child relationship, thereby facilitating healthy child development outcomes (Lamb, 2000.). Allen and Daly (2007.) also emphasize that fathers indirectly influence their children through the accumulation of their own social capital, access to privileges, income and social networks.

Causes of the (non) involvement of fathers – balance between family and work

The causes of the (non) involvement of fathers could be socio-economic factors. It has been proven that the amount of time a parent would spend with their children and the way that time is spent differs significantly from the social stratum (Craig and Mullan, 2011.). In that aspect, highly educated parents spend more time with their children than less educated parents (Craig and Mullan, 2011.; Craig, Powell and Smyth, 2014.; Cano, Perales and Baxter, 2019.).

Research also shows that marital union plays a major role in fathers' behavior, and this is proving to be an important context for the quality of a man's experience as a father. The quality of marriage is positively related to the level of father involvement

(Bouchard and Lee, 2000.). For example, inter-parental conflicts are negatively related to the quality of fatherhood in families in which only one member has an income (Formoso et al., 2007.). In contrast, a strong parental union is positively associated with the quality of fatherhood. Thus, strengthening inter-parental relationships can improve the quality of fatherhood (Formoso et al., 2007.). Therefore, the involvement of both parents in the upbringing of a child is an important component for the well-being of the whole family.

Fathers' views on the importance of their paternal role could greatly shape their future involvement in parenthood. Thus, it turned out that fathers who consider their role in the upbringing of children important are more willing to take on their role of a parent and better care for a child. However, mothers' attitudes about father involvement in parenting arise as a problem, which is why fathers choose to exclude themselves from child care because they feel and see that mothers leave them with children unwillingly and are reluctant to seek their help (Wong et al., 2009.). The level of participation of fathers, therefore, is determined by mothers' beliefs regarding the role of the father. As Allen and Hawkins (1999.) pointed out, mothers can serve as guards for the father-child relationship. Many women are ambivalent about the greater father involvement for a variety of reasons, and this includes concern about their husbands' childcare competencies and the fear of losing control, for they are well-prepared to have a great control power, and the unwillingness to change their standards they have set regarding housework and childcare. Thus, the father involvement in childcare is to some extent determined by a degree to which a mother allows his participation (Allen and Hawkins, 1999.), which is just one example of the interaction of members of the family system.

The economic support for the family is an indirect but important way in which fathers can contribute to child development (just as mothers). Research shows that men perceive the fact that they are insufficiently involved in the life of their child because of work as a deficit rather than a privilege (Bailey, 2015.). Namely, the fathers who do not contribute economically to the family are more likely to be less involved in other aspects of their child's life than the fathers who contribute economically (Christiansen and Palkovitz, 2001.). The balance between family and work relationships is based on the quality of leisure time spent with the family. Employed fathers are probably better organized knowing that a little time they have after work is actually the only time they can devote to their family. It can be explained with theories of role spillover (Sieber, 1974.; Zedeck, 1987.), according to which what happens at work spills over into family life. Thus, if a person is satisfied at work, he or she will be satisfied at home or a person who has a tedious job may become lazy at work, and then, based on the newly acquired skills, avoid performing various family duties.

There is a number of employment factors that affect the level of the involvement of fathers with their children. Mother's work status plays an important role in father involvement in childrearing (Menéndez et al., 2011.). Lamb (2000.) reports that, in families with two parents in which mothers are employed, fathers are more involved with their children, compared to families where mothers are unemployed. When mothers earn more money than fathers, then fathers are more likely to devote more time caring for their children (Casper and O'Connell, 1998.). Also, in dual-earner families, the father's participation is more necessary than voluntary, and is therefore more independent of facilitating factors. These differential patterns are so solid from an empirical point of view that it is advisable to work separately with the two types of families when analyzing data. When this strategy is adopted, results reflect how father involvement has different profiles in single- and dual-earner families.

When designing research, it is important to understand the reasons for low and high levels of the involvement of parents. For example, a father may be very involved in a child's life because he is unemployed, but would rather reduce his level of involvement in order to better support his child financially. In addition, it is important to move discussion beyond the investigation of family structure and the absence of father, and to focus on family context, family processes and patterns of interaction. The role of the father and his involvement in the upbringing of children should be understood as multidimensional and research should be designed in accordance with such an understanding.

Research paths (the multidimensional concept)

When discussing methodological issues and topics that arise during the design and conduct of research on fathers, it is reasonable to assume that many methods used to study mothers and motherhood may be adapted to study fathers, but it is equally reasonable to expect that new questions and problems unique to the study of fathers would arise. The essential difficulty that researchers face when attempting to study fathers is that most of the literature on parenting is framed by the concept of motherhood built around parenting or such as the »mother pattern« (Marsiglio et al., 2000.). Using the methodological »mother pattern« may be useful initially for exploring the similarities and differences between parents that may contribute to our understanding of family systems or outcomes in children. However, in some ways, using these patterns may create as many problems as they solve in connection to the systematic research of fathers.

Upon examining the literature, the focus on fatherhood could be identified in at least four essential ways. Firstly, fatherhood has been studied by theoreticians

as a cultural expression that is manifested through different sociocultural processes and embedded in a broader environmental context. Secondly, researchers have conceptualized and examined different forms of fatherhood and father involvement. Thirdly, an attempt has been made to determine the connections between the dimensions of the father-child relationship and the developmental outcomes among children and fathers. Fourthly, scholars have explored the identity of the father as a part of the reciprocal process consisting of men, children, mothers, and other interested parties (Marsiglio et al., 2000.). As the research on fatherhood has progressed, there has been an ongoing concern about how the involvement of fathers should be defined.

The approach in research that focuses on the relationship between father involvement and different outcomes implies that father involvement is a one-dimensional construct. The direct connection is most dominant when assessing the involvement of fathers (Allen and Daly, 2007.). Elaborating on the complicated nature of the involvement of fathers has opened the debate about the importance of considering the involvement of fathers as a multidimensional construct (Schoppe-Sullivan, McBride and Ho, 2004.). This means that the involvement of fathers in the upbringing of children does not only entail the direct influence on the development and achievements of children, but also implies a number of other, both direct and indirect contributions of father involvement which may be defined in various ways in order to operationalize research tasks.

In formulating the overall construct of father involvement and its components, Lamb and the associates (Lamb et al., 1985.) wanted to draw attention to the aspects of fatherhood that had not been previously identified in the research on parenting, but which now appear to reflect on social changes that were happening in the role of the father. The component of engagement (the first component of the construct) actually referred to a growing social concern about whether some fathers have worked enough while being parents, especially in the context of increasing mothers' employment rates. Methodologically, the component of engagement was based on research using journals. Using this methodology, researchers began to report findings on the time fathers spent in activities with their children. In addition, some journal studies coded a father's time in activities where his child was simply with the father but did not participate in activities with the father. This last measure was the methodological source of the construct on availability (accessibility – the second component of the construct). The availability corresponded to fathers »being on duty« with their child. However, availability received relatively little attention and is no longer discussed further. The accountability component (the third component of the construct) had no specific methodological monitoring. This first concept of fatherhood has inspired the later authors to be as specific and comprehensive as possible in their defining,

which created a more realistic image of the aspects of father involvement, and a theoretical base for more representative results in future research.

Palkovitz (1997.) expanded the concept by highlighting 15 categories of father involvement that included: communication (listening, talking, showing love), learning (respectable model, encouraging activities and interests), monitoring (friends, homework), cognitive processes (caring, planning, pleading), providing care (food, bathing), common interests (reading together), availability, planning (activities, birthdays), shared activities (shopping, playing together), providing (food, clothing), emotions, protection, and emotional support (encouragement of the child). Pleck (Pleck, 2010.; 2012.) suggested criteria for describing a good parental relationship: positive engagement in activities (participating in activities that benefit a child's favorable development); caring and responding (showing affection and responding to a child's needs); control (handling difficult situations well in the interaction with a child); indirect care, both social (promotion of a child's social repertoire) and material (promotion of important goods and services for a child's development); and responsibility (recognizing and taking action to meet a child's needs).

Efforts to build a pragmatic but also a valid and credible measure of father involvement have met challenges and balanced the need to encompass the complex dimensions of father involvement and the practical problem – resulting in a format not as long and bulky as too large for participants (Schoppe-Sullivan, McBride and Ho, 2004.). The challenge with this measure continues to be an unfinished task with notable efforts including: the 9-factor model that estimates direct and indirect effects, as well as behavioral, cognitive, affective, moral and ethical aspects of involvement (Hawkins et al., 2002.) and the 6-factor model which includes responsibility, love, talking to the child, home activities, a child's activities and cognitive monitoring (Schoppe-Sullivan, McBride and Ho, 2004.). Nevertheless, significant challenges of measurement lie in the attempt to capture the multidimensional nature of father involvement.

In the 21st century, an increasing number of researchers is expanding the scope of research, including not only the direct influence of father involvement on child development, but also the factors that influence father involvement and the influence of father involvement on marital and mutual relationships, and so on. There is a growing number of scientific and systematic studies on various factors of father involvement in the upbringing of children.

An overview of research methodology of father involvement

In the early 1980s, with the establishment of the family system theory, fathers began to be considered an important factor in family education, coming into view of researchers, who began to study the role of fathers. However, these studies were largely simplified at the time. The scope of research was narrower and the research method was single. In the 21st century, many researchers have drawn attention to fathers and separated the influence of father involvement on early child development from the influence of social classes and family structures. The scope of research has gradually expanded, not only from the importance of father involvement in the upbringing to their own role, but also to the factors that influence father involvement and the impact of father involvement on marital and mutual relationships, and so on. We can notice that the research methods have liberated themselves from previous theoretical research methods and empirical testing methods, adopting many types of research methods, such as single-case, experiment, monitoring, and so on, and a more scientific and systematic research is now emerging on different factors of father involvement in the upbringing of children.

In the light of some of the complex qualitative approaches that examine the construction of the experience of fathers, methodological approaches of a grounded theory (Daly, 2002.; Matta and Knudson-Martin, 2006.), in-depth interviewing (Marsiglio and Cohan, 2000.; Marsiglio, 2004.; Montigny et al., 2020.) and narrative approaches were used (Dollahite, 2004.; Pleck and Stueve, 2004.). Although fewer in number, there are studies that look at the attitudes of fathers about the importance of their role in the upbringing of children, which in turn shape their involvement in different parenting activities. Such research is based on the views they have on the involvement of fathers in the upbringing of children, which may represent an internal working model of the parental role of the father.

More than half a century ago, researchers became more interested in the quantification of concepts such as father involvement, which were partly motivated by the emergence and popularity of the methodology of time use (Lamb, 2000.). This encouraged a shift from the focus on qualitative dimensions (such as masculinity and domination) to the focus on measurable dimensions (the amount of time fathers spend with their children). Yet, the narrowly focused view on fatherhood that arose (the limited focus on parental care) ignored the subcultural variation in defining and understanding paternity. Researchers today are beginning to seek a broader and more integrated understanding of paternal endeavors that should allow for a deeper exploration of the impact of variations in performing relevant roles.

Many contemporary studies of parental involvement (Fiorini and Keane, 2014.; Cano, Perales and Baxter, 2019.; O’Flaherty and Baxter, 2020.) actually use data, for example, from The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC). LSAC is a two-year study of the children of same age, which has been collecting information on Australian children and their families and teachers or educators since 2004 through a combination of face-to-face and self-completion questionnaires. LSAC is one of the only two longitudinal studies in the world (the other is the U.S. Panel Study of Income Dynamics, Child Development Supplement – PSID-CDS) for collecting 24-hour journals conducted on children on multiple occasions. Parents (or a child in college, depending on age) provide detailed information about what a child had been doing, as well as where and with whom a child had been, separating the day in 15-minute intervals. This is supposed to be recorded for 2 randomly distributed days, one weekend day and one work day (Mullan, 2014). The LSAC journal data have some advantages over the analog PSID-CDS data: they contain a much larger analytical sample (approximately 10,000 children in LSAC, compared to approximately 3,500 in PSID-CDS) and closer observation points (2 years in LSAC compared to 5 years in PSID-CDS). An example of the instrument can also be found online. Despite the strengths of LSAC studies, some authors point out potential opportunities for methodological improvement and further scientific research. Firstly, the problem with time log data, such as LSAC data, is the relatively high incidence of deficiency. For example, the problem is that it is not possible to determine what type of activity a child is performing for about 8 hours a week. This question might lead to a reduction of some estimates of the effects of the time a father and child spend together on a child’s cognitive performance. Secondly, most of data on the use of time, on the part of a father as well, is recorded by a mother. This could lead to errors in measurements of the time a father and a child spend together. Socially desirable prejudice could also lead to a reduced amount of time a father and a child spend together that is reported by mothers, who may follow the normative scripts of “women as primary caregivers” and overemphasize their involvement (Cano, Perales and Baxter, 2019:16). This is a common weakness of self-evaluation methods, but the advantage of quantitative methods (fast, cheap, simple) often prevails in the choice of method. Other popular instruments are about knowledge (Knowledge of Infant Development – KIDI), attitudes (Paternal Antenatal Attachment Scale – PAAS) and Paternal Postnatal Attachment Scale – PPAS), beliefs (Role of the Father Questionnaire – ROFQ), self-efficacy (Parenting Sense of Competence – PSOC, Karitane Parenting Confidence Scale – KPCCS, and Fathering Self-Efficacy Scale (FSES), behavior (Inventory of Father Involvement – IFI, Child-Parent Relationship Scale – CPRS, Paternal Involvement With Infants Scale – PIWIS and Parental Involvement In Childcare Questionnaire – PICQ). More information about these instruments can be

found in the work of Allport and colleagues (Allport et al., 2018.). These instruments are better measures than those based on quantity.

Some contemporary researchers go a step further, developing new strategies for investigating father involvement in child-rearing. Drawing on the innovative work of Prospère, a Quebec-based organization that brought together fathers, university researchers and health and social service workers, in a book on fatherhood the authors (Devault, Forget, and Dubeau, 2015.) provided details on innovative approaches that support the positive involvement of fathers. Numerous examples of strategies and interventions with fathers have been provided, as well as findings from these practices on how to better support vulnerable fathers and families, and detailed information on the ways of designing, implementing, evaluating, and disseminating the results of participatory action research (PAR) – the methodology that puts fathers at the center of decision-making related to the project. Action research, in addition to bringing new insights into fatherhood from a different perspective, also enhances the involvement of fathers in child-rearing and is highly relevant today (Snell, Miguel and East, 2009.; Hlavaty, 2015.). Its significance is undoubtable, and it may be assumed that this type of research will gain even more popularity within this topic in the future.

Rohner and Veneziano (Rohner and Veneziano, 2001.) note that there is a strong evidence to support the conclusion that certain types of father involvement contribute independently to the outcome of child development (there is also evidence that certain maternal participation contributes to unique outcomes); at the same time, depending on the type of parental relationship, there are interactive effects involving mothers' and fathers' contributions; and finally, there is a number of different outcomes for sons and daughters that require further research and analysis. The conclusion of researchers (Rohner and Veneziano, 2001.) is that it would be better to investigate father involvement from a triadic (mother-father-child) or systemic perspective than to focus on a dual relationship (father-child). The findings of research (Eldén, 2016.) reveal that there are significant practices and relationships of child care outside the nuclear family (e.g. grandparents). If we use research methods that are unable to capture important relationships in the lives of children, we lack the dimensions of care that are truly significant: we do not get the complete picture. From the systemic perspective, family members are interdependent. The behavior of any individual, as such, cannot be understood without considering all family members as there are direct, indirect and reciprocal impacts on individuals and subsystems in a family. By neglecting other individuals in the system, the whole range of potential parental influences on a child's development is being neglected.

The examination of other aspects of the family system is, therefore, significant when the attempt is being made to understand the intriguing system of relationships that serve as an important context for child development. In particular, a level of father

involvement is associated with the adaptive behavior that may vary according to the type of involvement and for families with different employment patterns. Numerous studies reveal a connection between father involvement and marital satisfaction which depends on a family employment status (whether one or both parents are employed) (Lee and Doherty, 2007.; Buckley and Schoppe-Sullivan, 2010.). As Lamb (1997.) argues, the benefits that children with highly involved fathers get could mostly be attributed to the fact that high levels of father involvement have created family contexts in which parents feel good about their marriages and child care arrangements and were able to work outside their home. Therefore, it is imperative that researchers continue to consider the broader family context, including, thereby, the quality of the relationship with relatives and other family relationships, when they are examining the behavior of fathers and concluding about the implications of father involvement on child development and functioning.

The examination of significant methodologies reveals that the modernization of methods and techniques for investigating father involvement in the upbringing of children has contributed to the fact that contemporary research on father involvement has finally acquired a more complex connotation. With the increasing use of methods such as single-case, experiment, monitoring and so on, and with the increasing use of systematic scientific endeavors, the research on father involvement is more likely to produce more meaningful results that can raise the awareness of all parents willing to work on themselves.

CONCLUDING CONSIDERATIONS

This paper focused on the review of some contemporary researches and different methodological approaches in studying father involvement in the upbringing of children. Based on the knowledge gained from studying professional and scientific papers on father involvement, it can be concluded that a significant progress has been made in understanding both the complexity of the notion of father involvement in the upbringing of children and the complexity of the issue of researching it. In addition, a significant progress has been made in the diversity of approaches to research, that is, the development of a scientific methodology in this type of research.

Research on father involvement in child-rearing has multiple implications, beginning with the importance of father involvement in various activities with children, through highlighting the importance of the effect of the involvement of fathers on children's development and progress. Highlighting the results of such research raises expert awareness of the importance of the active role of the father, and it should result in further research worldwide, which results could be implemented in various ways in practice, for example, through new and different educational programs for parents.

The research of the issue of father involvement in the upbringing of children has been developing methodologically for only half a century. Due to the increasing popularity of this topic and, consequently, the extensive research around the world, the methodology for exploring this type of problem has been developing, including methods, techniques and instruments. Referring to the initial models of research on father involvement in the upbringing of children, it can be concluded that they started from understanding father involvement as a one-dimensional construct, which resulted in an adequate methodology – simple, simplified research models that paid attention to the direct relationship between father involvement and different outcomes. Recognizing the fact that father involvement is a multidimensional construct, a number of methods began to develop, starting with theoretical ones, in which father involvement was theoretically considered and discussed, the complexity of father involvement defined, and then critically considered. The diversity of empirical research on father involvement/participation in child-rearing/activities with children/the lives of children does not allow accurate systematization in stating, but it could generally be claimed that the quantitative ones are present – they are higher in numbers today, but the qualitative ones are present as well (among them there are deeper interviewing and narrative approaches). More than half a century ago, the onset and popularity of time-use methodology prompted a shift of focus from qualitative to measurable dimensions (the amount of time fathers spend with their children). The dominant techniques nowadays are surveys and scaling, and among them mostly diary keeping by parents. In this paper, two of the most well-known longitudinal studies that are based on several years of 24-hour journaling are mentioned. Self-assessment methods are very helpful in gathering information on objective events, although they sometimes display weaknesses, such as bias and partiality. The novelty of the approach is action research, which, in addition to obtaining new knowledge on fatherhood from a different perspective, also enhances the involvement of fathers in the upbringing of children, and is very relevant today.

Although much has been discovered and learned about father involvement over the last few decades, it is clear that there are limitations to the methodology that stem from a narrow understanding of the concept of fatherhood. Not only should the direct interaction between fathers and children be considered but also other roles and responsibilities of fathers. His intentional and unintentional influence on the development of children is of particular importance, mediated by the quality of the relationship with mothers. The influence on children is likely to vary not only depending on the way fathers perform different functions, but also on the extent that their behavior matches the role of the father as perceived by relevant family members and others in the immediate community. It is necessary to move away from gender stereotypes and develop roles based on skills, interests, agreements and

respect. The role of fathers in relation to mothers is definitely specific. They make unique contributions to a child's development, and his role is very significant, even when he is not a biological father. In fact, being the biological father of a child is one thing, and it is extremely different to remaining a parent through active participation. Often, the adopter, foster, and even stepfather, because of his active role, presence and educational activity, has a more important role in the life and development of the child than the biological father. However, the selection of research in this paper excludes research which specifically explored the role of the non-biological father in the education of the child because it would open some new topics for which probably there would not be enough space in this paper.

Overall, there are some limitations in understanding father involvement and aspects of research. It is clear that attention should be paid to measures, samples, and problems of social classes, in order to take into consideration direct and indirect effects and the multidimensionality of father involvement in the context of other influences and relationships, to explore the impact of structural parameters on involvement, such as the employment conditions, and find better ways to understand the presence of father.

Also, the characteristics of our sample limit the generalizability of our findings. We have limited our sample of research to mainly Anglo-Saxon areas, and the scope of work in this sense is geographically and culturally limited and cannot be generalized in other areas. Time is also limited in the sense that this paper included research of mostly recent date – the last two decades. Also, it is about community families headed by two married or cohabitating parents. Therefore, we are unable to generalize the results of our study to families like divorced families; or to families with nonresidential fathers (for more on this, see the decade-in-review articles: Fingerman, Huo, and Birditt, 2020.; Raley and Sweeney, 2020.). Father involvement is likely different in these families, and in this paper, there was not enough space to include all the differences in structure and specific forms of functioning of modern families, which might be of more interest to social workers, but a review of research on the role of the father where everything is seemingly normal gives us the basis and perhaps the scope of what can be expected in higher-risk families. The future research should address these issues and broaden the scope of our knowledge. New researches can continue to build the literature on father involvement in the upbringing of children by addressing these limitations.

The contribution of this paper to a further study of this issue is reflected in the use of various theoretical and empirical results with the purpose of understanding the involvement of fathers over a longer period of time. The limitations of this research reside in the fact that it reviewed the fathers' involvement only in Anglo-Saxon countries. The data were obtained by the theoretical analysis of randomly selected relevant

studies and papers, which represented the research sample that was reviewed and beneficial for any further study of this issue. As regards future researches and practical application of the results obtained, it is recommended that this issue be discussed and examined using a different methodology, such as the comparative analysis of various cultures that would explore the involvement of fathers in their children's upbringing more clearly and thoroughly. On the other hand, regarding methodology, it is suggested that this issue be examined empirically, providing certain quantitative indicators, because it is the only way in which the results may be generalized to include not only the sample but also the whole population. Therefore, the comparative analysis of the empirical findings obtained in other countries and those obtained in the research conducted in the Republic of Serbia is highly recommended. This issue has always been important to explore since it proposes numerous possibilities for further analytical researches.

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NEKI ASPEKTI UKLJUČENOSTI OČEVA U ODGOJ DJECE

SAŽETAK

U radu se raspravlja o osnovnom konstrukt u proučavanju suvremenog očinstva – uključenosti očeva, usmjerenona različite metodološke pristupe proučavanju uključenosti očeva u odgoj djece. Rad naglašava veliku važnost uključenosti očeva i analizira učinke i uzroke (ne)uključenosti. Različiti aspekti proučavanja očinstva u brojnim istraživanjima odabrani su i analizirali kako bi se pružila nova teorijska i metodološka podrška i inspiracija, kao i smjernice za daljnje istraživanje. Dobiveni rezultati istraživanja pokazali su da se niz metodoloških pristupa može ostvariti samo uz razumijevanje ideje multidimenzionalnosti konstrukta uključenosti očeva u odgoj djece. Naglašavaju se i detaljnije opisuju neki od najpopularnijih kvantitativnih i kvalitativnih pristupa kao i njihove tehnike. Rad ukazuje na ograničenja oba pristupa i utvrđuje kako bi se sistemska perspektiva razumijevanja i metodološki pristup mjerenju uključenosti očeva mogli smatrati rješenjima. Podatci prikazani u radu temelje se na znanstvenoj spoznaji. Naime, metode istraživanja mogu imati nekoliko modaliteta te sadržavati niz tehnika istraživanja. U prikazanom radu korištena je metoda teorijske analize koja se temelji na analizi literature različitih teorijskih i empirijskih nalaza o uključenosti očeva u odgoj djece.

Ključne riječi: metodološki pristupi, uključenost očeva, vrste uključenosti očeva



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