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The Impact of Father Involvement in the Early Childhood Problematic Behavior

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ABSTRACT: Father's involvement is something that influences the child's problematic behavior. The purpose of this study is to investigate whether father involvement can influence children's problematic behavior. This study used the systematic literature review (SLR) method by referring to 10 valid articles published in the last 10 years with the publication years between 2013 - 2023. The finding of the literature shows that there is a significant impact of father involvement on the children's problematic behavior. The more the father is involved in the children's development, the lower the level of children's problematic behavior is. The image of a father as a mentor and motivator for early childhood can still be explored in depth. Because of the limitations of this study, this study suggests that future research can further discuss the impact of the father's involvement in the children's problematic behavior in a specific cultural aspect by considering cross-cultural factors. This is intended to conclude the relationship between the father's interactive situations with the impact of the father's involvement in the children's problematic behavior.

Keywords: child problematic behavior, father involvement, socio-economic status.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Early childhood behavior is an important indicator of the stage of a child's moral development. This is because, in this phase, children are entering the heteronomous morality stage. At an early age, children's moral development is shown by the act of helping others (Chomariyah et al., 2019; Nafisa, Sobah, et al., 2022), caring about friends (Nurainiah, 2022), being a good friend to their peers (Yalçın, 2021; Nafisa, Sobah, et al., 2022), and sharing with friends (Wathoni et al., 2021). However, not all children succeed in going through the stages of moral development properly, which then led to problematic behavior. A child's problematic behavior can become dangerous in the future if it is not handled immediately (Sun et al., 2022). Some of the problematic behaviors that often arise among children are aggressive behavior (Steenhoff et al., 2019), destructive behavior (Sun et al., 2022), and hyperactive behavior (Bertalanffy 1968).

A father is said to be involved in childcare when the father has a good relationship in terms of intensity (time), nature (type of activity), and quality (appreciating, loving, supporting, and protecting) with the child (Flouri et al., 2016; Lee & Schoppe-Sullivan, 2017). However, the fact shows that the father's involvement is often not as intense as the mother's involvement in a matter of childcare (Nafisah & Pranoto, 2022). Fathers find it difficult to be involved in childcare due to the workload outside the home (Zhang et al., 2019). In addition, the father's role as a breadwinner is thought to affect the intensity and quality of father involvement, because fathers have little time for their children (Nugrahani et al., 2021). Further findings Mulihatun and Santi (2022), a father who is aged less than 27 years tend to have less willingness to be involved in childcare.

The absence of a father in early childhood care will influence the child's problematic behavior (McCaig et al., 2021). Problematic behaviors that are affected include hyperactivity (Flouri et al., 2016), emotional symptoms (Torres et al., 2014), and peer problems (Sebre et al., 2015). So far, research on father involvement has focused more on its influence on aspects of child development (Nafisah et al., 2022) and child learning assistance (Setiawan et al., 2022). Unfortunately, children's problematic behavior is more associated with parental involvement, without distinguishing the different roles between the father's and mother's involvement in a family (Goddess, 2018). Because of this reason, this literature then focused on the father's involvement. The main purpose of this study is to carry out systematic research of the relevant literature and to synthesize the available evidence on the impact of the father's involvement in early childhood problematic behavior. In this study, the authors describe that father involvement influences problematic behavior in early childhood and can help the father to overcome the problems of that problematic behavior by improving parenting patterns.

2 THEORETICAL STUDY

The theoretical articles in this study consist of child problematic behavior and father involvement. The following is a more detailed explanation of the two theoretical articles.

2.1 *Problematic Behavior of Children*

Behavior is closely related to stimulus and response. Skinner (1953) in his book entitled "Science and Human Behaviors" suggests that behavior occurs because of the interaction between stimulus and response. Behavior arises from the stimulus provided by the environment. The findings from Georgea et al., (2016) and Ho et al (2022) stated that behavior is human nature and can be known through everyday life. A finding from Stachl et al (2020), and Zhang et al (2021) also mentions that the environment shapes human behavior. Behavior arises because it is affected by intrinsic factors (inherited factors) and extrinsic factors (environmental factors) (Ahmed et al., 2021). In other words, behavior is the result of the interaction between innate factors and environmental factors which are manifested in the form of knowledge, attitudes, and actions.

Problematic behavior in children is a child's behavior that is unacceptable to other people (Sebre et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2021). Problematic behavior is behavior that is unacceptable or not good and that is done consistently (Asri & Suharni, 2021). Problematic behavior can happen to anyone, both children and adults. Problem behavior in children varies, including destructive behavior (Araban et al., 2020), aggressive behavior (Darley, 2020; Perry et al., 2021), and hyperactive behavior (Gustafsson et al., 2018). These three behaviors, namely destructive, aggressive, and hyperactive behavior in children arise because they are influenced by the parenting style of the father (Flouri et al., 2015; Sebre et al., 2015).

There are two types of children's problematic behavior, namely lacking behavior (deficit). It happens when a child does not want to interact and do his school assignments (Bakers, 2017). The second one is the excessive behavior. It happens when a child always throws food on the floor, cannot sit for a long time, and is not confident (Ho et al., 2022). Behavior in children does not just appear, some factors influence it. Sunaryo (2004) in his book entitled "Psychology for Education" reveals that there are two factors that influence behavior, namely internal factors, and external factors. Internal factors consist of the type of race (Gressiera et al., 2016), personality traits (Vaillancourt et al., 2017), innate talent (Flouri et al., 2016), intelligence (Tarver et al., 2019). While external factors consist of the environment (Rohmalina et al., 2019), age (Tétreault et al., 2021), education (Bakers, 2017), religion (Sucianing & Heriyanti, 2022), socioeconomic (Saida et al., 2022).

2.2 *Father Involvement*

A father is said to be involved in parenting when the father has a relationship with the child (Flouri et al., 2016; Lee & Schoppe-Sullivan, 2017). There are three dimensions in the father's involvement, namely intensity (time) (Cano et al., 2019), nature (type of activity) (Sebre et al., 2015), and qualities (appreciate, love, support, and protection) (Rohmalina et al., 2019). Father involvement affects children's cognitive and emotional development (Opondo et al., 2017; Wardani & Ayriza, 2021), children's social development (Chu & Lee, 2019; Maselko et al., 2019), children's physical condition (Walsh et al., 2017; Liu, 2019).

Father's involvement has several forms. Septiani and Nasution (2017) mention that there are three forms of father involvement, namely engagement, accessibility, and responsibility. Engagement is a direct interaction in being involved in children's activities (Frank et al., 2015; Kelly, 2018; Craig et al., 2021). The second form of father involvement is accessibility. The definition of accessibility according to (Kelly, 2018; Seymour et al., 2021) is a father who provides and gets closer to his child. The third form of father involvement is responsibility. Responsibility according to Nugrahani et al (2021) and Seymour et al (2021) is related to financial contribution.

Father involvement does not just constantly happen. Several factors influence it. These factors mentioned by Woodworth et al (1996) are personal influences, child characteristics, family influences, cultural influences, and institutional influences. Personal influences consist of abilities, personal attitudes, knowledge, paternal skills, and self-efficacy in parenting (Parung & Ferreira, 2017; Mulyani et al., 2020). Child characteristics consist of age, birth order, sex, and child temperament (Flouri et al., 2015; Bakers, 2017). Family influences include family conflict, work conflict, and father-mother relationship (Maselko et al., 2019; Mulihatun & Santi, 2022). Furthermore, cultural influences include the roles of fathers and mothers, cultural expectations, and ethnic differences (Yoon et al., 2021). Lastly, institutional influences consist of employment policies, hospital experiences, workplace politics, and treatment interventions (Kuo et al., 2018; Coates, 2019).

3 METHOD

This study uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method. The stages by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA)(Higgins & Green, 2008; Moher et al., 2009) are as follows: Eligibility criteria. At this stage, articles as references were selected based on the following criteria: a.) reporting the influence of the father's involvement on the child's problematic behavior, b.) using articles in English and Indonesian, c.) referring to articles published in the last 10 years, with the publication year of 2013-2023, and d.) implementing Indonesian and abroad setting of writing. Furthermore, articles were not included in the review based on the following exclusion criteria: a.) articles did not report the influence of the father's involvement on the child's problematic behavior, b.) articles were not written in English nor Indonesian, c.) articles were published under the last 10 years, before 2013, d.) articles do not present relevant data.

Information sources and search strategies. A source was carried out through the Google Scholar site and Publish or Perish 8 from October to December 2022. The data source was searched by using the keywords of father involvement and child problematic behavior. Study selection. The search strategy is applied to each database. Next, the identified records are downloaded and combined into a single library in Mendeley. The duplicate articles (those identified by search strategies across multiple databases) were eliminated, and the title and abstract notes were filtered out twice. The articles which deemed ineligible by both reviewers (by title and abstract) were excluded. The eligible

articles were included in the final review. The articles that do not meet the requirements are officially excluded (with exception reasons).

Data collection and quality assessment. A data extraction table was created to assist with the synthesis of eligible articles. The table includes article publication characteristics (author, year, country), sample characteristics (fathers, mothers, and early childhood teachers), trait measures, main findings of writing, self-identified limitations, and quality rating scores. The author uses the AXIS tool to critically assess the quality and transparency of all eligible articles in this study. This tool consists of a twenty-point checklist that requires a yes, no, or do not know answer (for calculation purposes, yes = 1, no/do not know = 0), and has been designed to be used. A quality score of 20 was then identified based on the subjective interpretation of the quality score according to the AXIS tool. Scores 1–7 indicate low quality, and scores 8–14 (moderate quality).

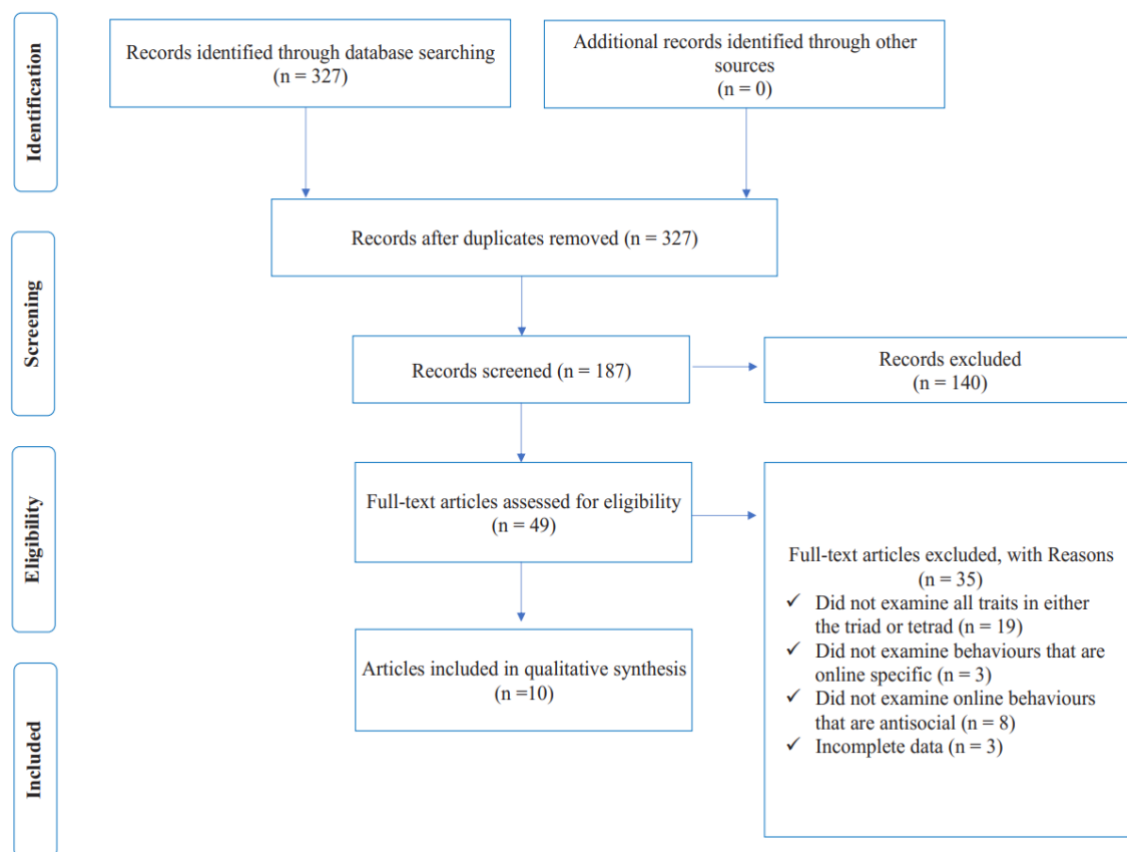


Figure 1. PRISMA flow chart depicting the article selection process.

4 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Result

Study selection. The initial search found 327 articles. After the titles and abstracts were filtered, there were 49 which met the criteria. Moreover, 10 articles met the inclusion criteria (the specifications of the search selection process as illustrated in Figure 1. PRISMA flow chart depicting the article selection process).

Study characteristics. All those 10 articles which meet the criteria are published between 2013 and 2023. They reflect the impact of the father's involvement in the child's problematic behavior. The following presents a synthesis of the relevant data from the eligible studies.

Table 1. Synthesis of relevant information taken from articles

Author (Year)	Country	Main Findings	Quality Rating (20)
Flouri et al., (2016)	English	Father's involvement affects social adjustment and problematic behavior in children. At the age of 5 years, the level of correlation for problematic behavior is 0.09, hyperactivity is 0.08, emotional symptom is 0.07, and peer problem is 0.04. Meanwhile, at the age of 7 years, the level of correlation for problematic behavior is 0.06, hyperactivity is 0.03, emotional symptom is 0.03, and peer problem is 0.05.	17
Torres et al., (2014)	Europe	Father's involvement affects lower social competence and external problematic behavior, especially in sons. The occurrence of father's involvement in direct care ($F[1.297] = 10.26, = 0.002, = 0.03$) when the mother was a full-time worker ($M = 2.4, SD = 0.5$) or if the father was unemployed ($M = 2.5, SD = 0.4$).	16
Flouri et al., (2015)	English	Father's absence is the main cause of child problematic behavior with a high influence on sons with details of sons: $B = 0.15, SE = 0.04, P < 0.04$ 0.001; girls: $B = 0.04, SE = 0.04, P = 0.33$, chi-square difference = 4.93, $P = 0.03$).	18
Lee & Schoppe-Sullivan, (2017)	America Union	Father involvement can be a protective factor for children's problematic behavior. Problematic behaviors of children that appear in this finding are anxious, withdrawn, somatic ($= 0.84$), and aggressive behavior ($= 0.89$).	17
Georgea et al., (2016)	-	Father involvement affects problematic behavior in children. Father involvement is positively correlated with emotional symptoms with a score of $r = 0.42, p = 0.05$, problematic behavior $r = 0.51, p = 0.01$, hyperactivity $r = 0.56, p = 0.01$, and prosocial $r = 0.42, p = 0.05$. Fathers are more involved in raising daughters with a score of $M = 5.29, SD = 0.49$ than sons $M = 4.38, SD = 1.07$.	17
Bakers, (2017)	America Union	When the father's involvement is high, the problem behavior in sons is low. Father's involvement in this finding is not significant with a score = 0.05, $p < 0.05$. Father's age also influences problematic behavior in sons with a score = .10, $p = < .01$. In contrast, father's education with a score = -.05, $p = < .05$ and parents' marital status = -.04, $p = < .05$ did not affect problem behavior in sons.	19
Braza et al., (2013)	Spanish	Father's involvement affects internal and external problematic behavior in early childhood.	16
Besnard et al., (2013)	Canada	Father's involvement influences preschoolers' destructive behavior, hyperactivity, peer problem behavior, and other problem behaviors.	16

Sebre et al., (2015)	Latvian and Lithuania	Father's involvement influences internal and external problematic behavior in children in Latvia and Lithuania. In Latvia, father's involvement is positively correlated with internal problematic behavior in children with a score of $r = 0.32$, $p < 0.01$. Meanwhile, in Lithuania, father's involvement was negatively correlated with internal problems in children with a score of $r = 0.23$, $p < 0.05$, and a statistical difference of $z = 3.97$, $p < .001$.	17
Liu et al., (2021)	China	Higher father's involvement affects more problematic and emotional behavior in children. At a high level of father inconsistency (1 SD above the average), there is a significant influence of father's involvement on problematic behavior and children's emotions with a score of $b = 0.15$, $p = 0.08$.	18

4.1.1 Major findings

Aspect	Data Description
Engagement	One article shows that father's engagement influences the child's problematic behavior (Flouri et al., 2015; Lee & Schoppe-Sullivan, 2017; Liu et al., 2021).
Accessibility	One article shows that father's accessibility influences the child's problematic behavior (Lee & Schoppe-Sullivan, 2017; Liu et al., 2021).
Responsibilities	One article shows that father's responsibility influences the child's problematic behavior (Flouri et al., 2015; Liu et al., 2021).
External problematic behavior	One article shows that the relationship between the father's involvement and the external problematic behavior of children is $W = 0.97$, $p = 0.06$. External problematic behavior is manifested in behavior in the form of action, including aggressive behavior and hyperactive behavior (Braza et al., 2013; Liu et al., 2021).
Internal problematic behavior	One article shows that the relationship between father's involvement and children's internal problematic behavior is $W = 0.99$, $p = 0.59$. Internal problematic behavior is characterized by symptoms of anxiety, depression, fear, social withdrawal, and somatization disorder (Braza et al., 2013).
Hyperactivity	One article contains 2 findings for 5- and 7-year-old children. At the age of 5 years, the correlation of father's involvement on children's hyperactive behavior is -0.08 . Whereas at the age of 7 years, there is a correlation of father's involvement on children's hyperactive behavior of -0.03 (Flouri et al., 2016). There are also articles examining 3 findings in children aged 3, 5, and 7 years old. In children aged 3 years old, there is a correlation 21.2, while children at the age of 5 years has a correlation of 14.1, and children at the age of 7 years has a correlation of 16.4 (Flouri et al., 2015). One article showed that father's involvement influences hyperactivity (Besnard et al., 2013; Torres et al., 2014; Bakers, 2017). In addition, hyperactivity in the findings from Georgea et al., (2016) has $r = 0.56$, $p = 0.01$.
Aggressive	One article shows that father's involvement influences aggressiveness (Torres et al., 2014; Sebre et al., 2015; Bakers, 2017). One article with aggressive results was significantly has lower score ($F[1,297] = 7.39$, $p = 0.007$, $\eta^2 = 0.02$) for daughters ($M = 1.8$, $SD = 0.8$) than sons ($M = 2.1$, $SD = 0.9$) (Lee & Schoppe-Sullivan, 2017). One article shows that sons were more aggressive than daughters [$F(1, 89) = 23.43$, $p.0001$, for physical aggressiveness; $F(1, 89) = 9.73$, $p.0025$, for indirect aggressiveness (Braza et al., 2013).
Emotional symptoms	One article contains 2 findings for children aged 5- and 7-year-olds. At the age of 5 years, the correlation of father's involvement on children's emotional symptoms is -0.07 . Meanwhile, at the age of 7 years, there is a correlation of the father's involvement on the children's emotional symptoms of -0.03 (Flouri et al., 2016). There are also articles examining 3 findings in children

aged 3, 5, and 7 years old. In children aged 3 years, there is a correlation of 7.8, the age of 5 years has a correlation of 9.1, and the age of 7 years has a correlation of 11.4 (Flouri et al., 2015). One article shows that father's involvement affects emotional symptoms (Torres et al., 2014; Sebre et al., 2015; Bakers, 2017). The score of one article with emotional symptom is significantly higher ($F[1,297] = 8.76, p = 0.003, \eta^2 = 0.03$) for daughters ($M = 3.9, SD = 0.9$) than for sons ($M = 3.6, SD = 0.9$) (Lee & Schoppe-Sullivan, 2017). In addition, emotional symptoms in the findings from Georgea et al., (2016) has $r = 0.42, p = 0.05$.

Peer problems

One article contains 2 findings for children aged 5 and 7 years old. At the age of 5 years, the correlation of father's involvement with children's peer problems is -0.04 . Meanwhile, at the age of 7 years, there is a correlation between father's involvement and peer-to-peer problems of -0.05 (Flouri et al., 2016). There are also articles examined 3 findings in children aged 3, 5, and 7 years old. In children aged 3 years old, there is a correlation 23.3, the age of 5 years has a correlation of 14.1, and the age of 7 years has a correlation of 15.0 (Flouri et al., 2015). One article shows that father's involvement influences peer problems (Besnard et al., 2013; Torres et al., 2014; Sebre et al., 2015; Bakers, 2017).

4.2 Discussion

This article aims to systematically review the existing evidence that has explored the influence of a father's involvement on a child's problematic behavior. Most of the findings found these traits to have a significant effect on the behavior investigated ($n = 10$). Father's involvement itself consists of engagement, accessibility, and responsibility. This finding occurred in eight countries.

4.2.1 Synthesis of major findings.

The literature shows that there is a significant impact of father involvement on the children's problematic behavior. The more the father is involved in the children's development, the lower the level of children's problematic behavior is. These two results are categories of findings that must be in the results section and must be discussed per sub-chapter in the discussion and analyzed with the latest findings of other people from highly reputable journals such as. A meta-analysis of the relationship between father involvement and problem behavior among preschool children (Zhang et al., 2021).

The synthesized evidence shows that father involvement influences child problematic behavior. Father's involvement in this finding can be seen from the frequency of reading stories, storytelling, doing musical activities, drawing/painting, playing indoors, and taking children to the playground (Flouri et al., 2016). In their research, Torres et al (2014) shows that the father's involvement affects social competence, as well as lower external problematic behavior, especially in boys. The father's involvement variable that was measured in this study was the father's employment status. In addition to the father's employment status, another variable that is controlled is the sex of the child. Father's involvement has a significant effect on social competence and external problematic behavior in boys. These problematic behaviors are aggressive, hyperactive, emotional symptoms, peer problems, and lower social competence. The younger age of the child

when entering preschool is the cause of lower social competence and higher anger aggressiveness. In addition, the amount of time children spend at school causes higher anger aggressiveness.

Father's absence is the main cause of child problematic behavior with a high influence on boys (Flouri et al., 2015). The absence of a father in a 3-year-old child will have an impact on severe hyperactivity problematic behavior, emotional symptoms, and peer problems when the child is growing into 5 years old. Father's absence is influenced by marital status, number of children, family poverty, and father's education level. Father's involvement in this finding is engagement and responsibility including singing with his children, telling stories, playing indoors with toys such as blocks or Legos, telling children that he appreciates something that children do, playing in the yard, park, or playground with children, and taking children for outings, such as shopping, go to restaurants, churches, or museums.

The result of a study by Lee and Schoppe-Sullivan (2017) shows that a father's involvement can be a protective factor (a factor that can reduce the negative impact of existing threats) for children's problematic behavior. Father's involvement reduces internal problematic behavior in children. Problematic behaviors of children that emerged in this study were anxiety, withdrawal, somatic, and aggressive behavior. While the father's involvement in this research includes engagement and accessibility. This includes singing with children, telling stories, playing indoors with toys such as blocks or Legos, telling children that he appreciates something that children do, playing in the yard, park, or playground with children, and taking children for outings, such as shopping, go to restaurants, churches, or museums.

Father's involvement in the child's problematic behavior is also influenced by the sex of the child. This kind of research has been conducted by Georgea et al., (2016) that father's involvement influences problematic behavior in children. In this finding, the father's involvement referred to involve in playing with blocks and dolls with children. The more the father is involved in parenting, the less emotional problems and hyperactive behavior the child has. The influence of gender, especially boys, can also encourage child problematic behavior if it is associated with the father's involvement. The findings from Bakers (2017), when a father's involvement is high, then the problematic behavior in boys is low. Not only influenced by the sex of the child, but the father's age also influences problematic behavior in boys. In contrast, the father's education and parents' marital status did not influence problematic behavior in boys.

A similar finding is explained by Braza et al., (2013) which shows that the father's involvement influences internal and external problematic behavior in early childhood. Father's involvement with a permissive parenting style combined with the mother's involvement with an authoritarian parenting style influences internal problematic behavior in girls and influences external problematic behavior in both girls and boys.

Meanwhile, when a father and a mother use the same parenting style, namely permissiveness, it affects external problematic behavior in girls.

Zhang et al (2019) show that there is a low negative correlation between positive father involvement and preschoolers' external problematic behavior. This applied the same with the correlation between the father's involvement and preschoolers' internal problematic behavior. There are 3 types of father involvement in this finding, namely direct involvement, indirect involvement, and full involvement. The differences in the father's residence status also affect problematic behavior in children. For instance, fathers who stay at home can reduce children's problematic behavior. The differences in the father's cultural background and gender influence problematic behavior in children. The father's absence for sons had a significant negative correlation with anger and aggressiveness, but for daughters the correlation was small.

In his findings, Besnard et al (2013) showed that the father's involvement influences preschoolers' destructive behavior, hyperactivity, peer problematic behavior, and other problematic behaviors. One that influences problematic behavior in children is the father's education level. When the father's educational level is higher, the child's problem behavior is lower, and vice versa. This is in line with the findings by Liu et al (2021) that father's involvement in this matter of engagement, accessibility, and responsibility higher effect on external and emotionally problematic behavior in children. It is influenced by the higher father's inconsistency and the father's bad relationship with his son.

The study of the father's involvement related to the culture of problematic child behavior was carried out by Sebre et al (2015) that the father's involvement influences internal and external problematic behavior in children. The main father's involvement is the relationship between father and child. If the relationship is built well, it will also have a good effect on the child's personality and vice versa. Problematic behavior in children is influenced by culture. In Latvia, the culture of parenting is carried out with the habit of scolding, spanking, and punishing. Whereas in Lithuania fathers are emotionally caring and involved in child raising.

4.2.2 Limitations and future directions

The limitation of the literature related to the measurement of father's involvement forms is that there is only one form in general and not explained one by one (Besnard et al., 2013; Braza et al., 2013; Torres et al., 2014; Sebre et al., 2015; Flouri et al., 2016; Georgea et al., 2016; Bakers, 2017). Another limitation in the literature is on sampling. No studies were conducted with respondents outside of the United States, China, Latvia, Lithuania, Canada, Spain, the United Kingdom, and Europe. Thus, the results and conclusions drawn about the influence of fathers' involvement on children's problematic behavior cannot be generalized broadly beyond these geographic locations. Future research should also acknowledge culturally specific fathers' involvement and the problematic behavior of children needs to be validated cross-culturally. This allows

concluding situations that interact with the influence of the father's involvement on the child's problematic behavior.

5 CONCLUSION

Evidence shows that every father's involvement indicators consist of *engagement*, *accessibility*, and *responsibility* influence children's problematic behavior. Children's problematic behavior, in this case, is external problematic behavior (aggressive behavior and hyperactive behavior) and internal problematic behavior (symptoms of anxiety, depression, fear, social withdrawal, and somatization disorders). Looking at the sex, there is a different way of how father's involvement influence daughters' and sons' behavior. That is, it depends on how much stimulus (father's involvement) the father gives and the response (behavior) that the child generates. The results of this literature help provide support to fathers to be involved in childcare in a way that is appropriate to the current cultural context and situation. This is one way to reduce problematic behavior in children. The results of this research help to support every father out there to be actively involved in the development of their children, especially in a way that is more appropriate to the current context and cultural situation.

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