School Refusal Behavior of Primary First Class Pupils in Baghdad

سلوك رفض المدرسة لدى تلاميذ الصف الأول في المدارس الأبتدائية في بغداد

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المستخلص

الهدف: تهدف الدراسة إلى تقييم سلوك رفض المدرسة لدى تلاميذ الصف الأول في المدارس الابتدائية في مدينة بغداد وتحديد العلاقة بين سلوك رفض المدرسة وبعض الخصائص الاجتماعية والديموغرافية لهؤلاء التلاميذ.

المنهجية : دراسة وصفية تحليلية بدأت في الاول من شهر تشرين الثاني ٢٠١٢ ولغاية الاول من شهر نيسان ٢٠١٣. تم اختيار العينة بطريقة عشوائية من ٤١١ طالب من كلا الجنسين بطريقة العينة الاحتمالية الطبقية من ١٧ مدرسة ابتدائية في اربع قطاعات سكنية في بغداد من الرصافة والكرخ. تم استخدام الاستبانة الذاتية (نسخة الاباء) من قبل الباحث للدراسة الحالية والتي تتضمن من جزئين: المعلومات الديمغرافية للطلاب، و الفقرات الخاصة بمقياس سلوك رفض المدرسة. تم تحديد صلاحية المحتوى من خلال الاستعانة بالخبراء. وتم تحديد الاتساق الداخلي للاستبانة من خلال حساب معامل ارتباط ألفا والتي كانت مقبولة احصائيا (r=0.77). تم تحليل البيانات من خلال تطبيق الاحصاء الوصفي والاحصاء التطبيقي وبأستخدام برنامج الحزمة الاحصائية للعلوم الاجتماعية النسخة ١٦.٠.

النتائج: كشفت نتائج الدراسة بأن معظم التلاميذ هم من الذكور البكر لأسر صغيرة متكونة من ١-٣ اطفال ويعيشون في مدينة مزدحمة. لم يسبق لهم الذهاب الى رياض الاطفال وليس لديهم أقران في نفس المدرسة. وقد تبين بأن مسنوى سلوك رفض المدرسة منخفض بين التلاميذ. هناك علاقة إيجابية بين الجنس وتسلسل الطفل في العائلة وهناك علاقة معتدلة بين المتغيرات الأخرى. هناك علاقة إيجابية بين سلوكرفض المدرسة، نوع الأسرة، ومكان الإقامة في حين أن هناك علاقة سلبية بين سلوك رفض المدرسة وعدد الأطفال. كشفت النتائج أيضا عن علاقة سلبية بين مكان الإقامة ونوع الأسرة.

التوصيات: أوصت الدراسة على إجراء البحوث بمتغيرات مختلفة على عينة كبيرة لتكون مسح وطني لتقييم سلوك رفض المدرسة واستكشاف سلوك رفض المدرسة المرتبطة بالمشاكل النفسية كاضطراب ثنائي القطب، الاكتئاب واضطرابات القلق الانفصالي.

Abstract

Objectives: The study aims to assess the school refusal behavior of first class pupils at primary schools and identifying the relationship between the school refusal behavior and some of socio-demographic characteristics for the pupils.

Methodology: A descriptive-analytic study was initiated from November 1st, 2012 to April 1st, 2013. A random sample of 411 students is selected from a probability stratified sample of 17 primary schools for both sexes in 4 sectors in Baghdad Al-Rasafa and Al-Karkh districts which are selected randomly from first class of primary school. A Self administrative questionnaire (Parents' Version) which constructed by the researcher includes two parts: the socio-demographic variables of the pupils and school refusal behavior scale items. Content validity was determined through the use of panel experts. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined through the computation of Alpha Correlation Coefficient which is statistically acceptable (r = 0.77). Data are analyzed through the application of descriptive and inferential statistical approaches by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 16.0.

Results: The finding of the study revealed that Most of the pupils are firstborn male live in nuclear family with 1-3 children in the family resident in crowded city; they do not attend preschool or kindergarten. The school refusal behavior has been shown to be low level among pupils. There is positive relationship between gender and child's order and there is moderate relationship among other variables. There is positive relationship between school refusal behavior, family type, and residency place while there is negative relationship between school refusal behavior and numbers of children. The findings reveal also negative relationship between residency place and family type.

Recommendations: The study recommended to conduct research with different variables on a large sample to be national survey for assessing school refusal behavior and exploring school refusal behavior associated with psychiatric problems such as bipolar disorder, depressive disorder and separation anxiety disorder.

Key Words: School Refusal behavior, First Class Pupils, Primary Schools.

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Introduction

School's attendance may be rejected by children for many reasons. Studies have found that multiple clinical problems (e.g., anxiety, depression, conduct problems) are associated with school refusal behavior. Given the heterogeneity of the problems linked with or contributing to school refusal behavior, developing an appropriate treatment plan can be challenging [1].

Although the occurrence of some negative feelings about school is normal, the constant refusal to go to school because of these negative emotions can be damaging to social and educational development, and can put children at danger for adverse long-term outcomes [2].

Numerous studies found that children with school refusal behavior show a number of internalizing and externalizing problems. Internalizing problems include general and social anxiety, fear, fatigue, sociality, and somatic complaints. Externalizing problems comprise noncompliance with parent and teacher commands, defiance and aggression, running away from school or home, clinging, and temper tantrums [3].

Clinicians and researchers have commonly divided children who fail to go to school into two groups: those who stay home from school because of fear or anxiety, and those who skip school because of a lack of interest in school and/or defiance of adult authority [4].

Hersov's conclusion that refusal to attend school is not a separate clinical thing but rather an aspect of behavior in either an emotional disorder or a behavioral disorder. This is reflected in the *DSM,* where anxious school refusal and truancy are symptoms, rather than distinct diagnoses [5].

The researcher tend to explore the school refusal among primary schools' pupils especially the first class because of significant influences of the school refusal that has on school attendance which affect the academic functioning among these pupils.

Methodology

A descriptive cross-sectional study initiated from November 1st, 2012 to April 1st, 2013. A random sample of 411 students is selected from a probability stratified sample of primary schools for both sexes in Baghdad Al-Rasafa and Al-Karkh districts which are selected randomly. The study is conducted on the pupils of the first class at 17 primary schools in 4 sector areas distributed throughout Baghdad Educational Directorate of Al-Rusafa

and Educational Directorate of Al- Karkh; Baghdad Al-Jedeeda, Al-Sadir City, Palestine's Street and all around, Al-Amin, Al-Sho'ala, Al-Jawadain, Al-Ataifiya, Al-Tobchi, Al-Mansor, Al-Harthiya which are selected randomly. These schools are considered the most appropriate settings in which the subjects for the study can be selected. The permission has been granted from Ministry of Education/ Educational Directorate of Al. Karkh and Educational Directorate of Al. Rusafa.

Self administrative questionnaire (Parents' Version) was constructed by the researcher for the present study through review of available literature and the related previous studies scale such as school refusal assessment scale. The constructed questionnaire compromised of two parts: the first contains the socio-demographic characteristic of the pupils; the Second contains 18 items which measure school refusal behavior. These items are rated to three levels of likert scale and scored the follows: always (3), sometimes (2), and never (1). Content validity for the instrument is determined through the use of panel experts to investigate the clarity, relevancy, and adequacy of the questionnaire in order to achieve the present study's objectives. In addition to the experts' responses, their suggestions are taken into consideration. So far, modifications are employed and the final copy of the constructed instrument was completed to be an appropriate tool for conducting study. A pilot study has been carried out for the period from October 16th , 2012 to October 30th, 2012 and conducted on 30 students who are selected randomly for the purpose of the questionnaire's reliability determination. The internal consistency of the instrument is determined through the pilot study and the computation of Alpha Correlation Coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha). The result of the reliability is (r = 0.77) which is statistically adequate.

The data have been collected through the utilization of the self administrative questionnaire as a mean of data collection; the data are collected through the utilization of structured interviewing of the pupils' parents. Statistical analyses are conducted by using statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 16.0. Data analysis is employed through the application of descriptive and inferential statistical approaches which are performed through the computation of the following: frequencies, percentages, cumulative Percentage, means of score, standard deviations, and alpha correlation coefficient

Results

Table 1. Pupils' Socio- Demographic Characteristics

No.	Variable		F.	%
1	**Gender**			
		Male	273	66.4
		Female	138	33.6
		Total	*411*	*100*
2	**Attend Preschool/Kindergarten**			
		Yes	196	47.7
		No	215	52.3
		Total	*411*	*100*
3	**Child's Order**			
		Firstborn	141	34.3
		Second born	98	23.8
		Third born	88	21.4
		Fourth born	46	11.2
		Fifth born	22	5.4
		Sixth born	16	3.9
		Total	*411*	*100*

This table revealed that the majority of pupils were male (66.4%), the firstborn child in the family (34.4%). 52.4% of pupils were didn't attended the kindergarten.

Table 2. Pupils' Family Socio- Demographic Characteristics

No.	Variable		F.	%
1	**Family Type:**			
		Nuclear	303	73.7
		Extended	108	26.3
		Total	*411*	*100*
2	**Number of Children:**			
		1-3 children/family	231	56.2
		4-7 children/family	177	43.1
		> 7 children/family	3	0.7
		Total	*411*	*100*
3	**Residency Place**			
		Crowded city	241	58.6
		Not crowded city	170	41.4
		Total	*411*	*100*

The analysis of this table indicated that most of the pupils' families are nuclear (73.7%) with 1-3 children (56.2%) and live in crowded cities.

Table 3. School Refusal Behavior Measured by Three Points Likert Scale

No	Item	Always	Sometimes	Never	M.S	S.D	Severity Grade
1	My child has bad feelings about going to school because he/she afraid of something related to school such as test, teacher, and school alarm.	8	97	306	1.27	0.49	L
2	My child stay away from school because he/she will be sad or depressed if he/she goes.	7	46	358	1.15	0.40	L
3	My child stay away from school because he/she feel embarrassed in front of other people at school.	4	48	359	1.14	0.37	L
4	My child think about family when he is in school.	23	134	254	1.44	0.60	L
5	My child feels worse at school such as scared, nervous, or sad compared to how he/she feels at home with family and friends.	9	71	331	1.22	0.46	L
6	My child stay away from school because he/she doesn't have many friends there.	10	36	365	1.14	0.41	L
7	My child rather be with his/her family than go to school.	14	73	224	1.25	0.50	L
8	When my child is not in school during the week (Saturday & Friday), he/she enjoy doing different thing such as being with friends and going places.	12	84	315	1.26	0.50	L

9	My child stay away from certain places in school (e.g. hallways and places where certain group of people).	25	85	301	1.33	0.59	L
10	My child rather be taught by his/her parents at home than by his/her teacher.	21	110	280	1.37	0.58	L
11	My child refuses to go to school because he/she wants to have fun outside school.	25	74	312	1.30	0.58	L
12	If my child had less bad feelings about school such as scared, nervous, and sad it would be easier for him/her to go to school.	105	82	224	1.71	0.85	M
13	If it were easier for my child to make new friends, it would be easier for him/her to go to school.	113	114	184	1.83	0.83	M
14	It will be easier for my child to go to school if I went with him/her.	57	96	258	1.51	0.73	M
15	It will be easier for my child to go to school if he/she could do more things he/she likes to do after school hours such as being with friends.	84	143	184	1.76	0.77	M
16	My child has bad feelings about school such as scared, nervous, and sad compared to other kids his/her age.	17	62	332	1.23	0.51	L
17	My child stay away from people at school compared to other kids his/her age.	19	69	323	1.26	0.53	L
18	My child rather be doing fun things outside of school more than most kids his/her age.	51	145	215	1.60	0.70	M

This table shows the means of scores and standards deviations which indicate the school refusal behavior among pupils, the analysis indicated low level of school refusal behavior among all items except of items 12, 13, 14, 15, and 18 indicate moderate level of school refusal behavior among these pupils.

Table 4. Correlation Between School Refusal Behavior and Pupils' Socio-demographics Variables

Correlation	Gender	Attending Preschool/ Kindergarten	Child's Order	School Refusal
Gender	1.000			
Attending Preschool/ Kindergarten	-0.0105*	1.000		
Child's Order	0.001	0.076	1.000	
School Refusal	0.085	0.089	0.109*	1.000

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

This table indicated that there is positive relationship between gender and child's order and there is moderate relationship among other variables (p ≤ 0. 05).

Table 5. Correlation Between School Refusal Behavior and Pupils' Family Socio-demographics Variables

Correlation	Family Type	Numbers of Children	Residency Place	School Refusal
Family Type	1.000			
Numbers of Children	0.269**	1.000		
Residency Place	-0.052	-0.152**	1.000	
School Refusal	0.005	-0.005	0.055	1.000

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

      This table reveal that there is positive relationship between school refusal behavior, family type, and residency place while there is negative relationship between school refusal and numbers of children. The finding reveal also negative relationship between residency place and family type (p ≤ 0. 05).

Discussion

      The analysis of the study findings (table 1) reveals that the majority of the pupils in the current study are males, the firstborn child in the family who didn't attend the kindergarten before the school. Such findings indicate that the male: female ratio is about 3:1 which means that the delivery rate is higher with males than females. These findings are slightly different from the findings of Kearney and Bates [3] who report that the gender is equal for males and females.

      Table 2 indicates that most of the pupils' families are nuclear who having 1-3 children per family and living in the crowded cities. Such findings could be explained that the newly families are seeking to live independently and separated from the main families which may lead to crowded city with these families who beget three children and less. The low socioeconomic status of these families that made them to live in closed popular cities than open cities which may be more expensive to live. These finding are agreed with Kearney[6] and disagreed with Marie and others [7].

      The findings of the table (3) shows the means of scores and the standards deviations of the school refusal behavior which indicates that pupils are associated with low level of school refusal behavior among all items except of the items (12, 13, 14, 15 and 18). This means that school refusal and fear of school attendance are less in pupil due to their familiarity and social interaction with peers; moreover, the result of table (1) reveals the residency place that may be an important factor in reducing school refusal, the findings of this table could be supported by the findings of the above tables. The findings are consistent with the finding of Kearney's study [6] who find fairly school refusal among the sample. The findings are inconsistent with the study of Kearney [8] who find acute school refusal among pupils. Additional supporting of findings are made by Tahiroglu & Bahali [9].

      It has been known out of the finding (table 4) that there is positive relationship between gender and child's order and there is moderate

relationship among other variables. This finding could be explained by the findings of the sample distribution in which most of them are first born males. The gender and birth order are influence the personality, therefore, the firstborn usually influences on the personalities of the younger children. The above influences can give an explanation for the relationship between gender and child's order. The findings are supported by Emerson and his findings [10].

Table 5 reveals that there is positive relationship between school refusal behavior, family type, and residency place. This finding could be explained by the variation of the nature of family in which the family that are lived in the popular and closed cities are less influencing at all because they are tend to be more social than these families that are lived in the more civilized cities which are influenced easily because they are more closed, so, its not surprising for the positive relationship described above. The findings of the table 5 reveals also a negative relationship between school refusal and numbers of children and also a negative relationship between residency place and family type. Such relationship can be elucidated by the knowledge and experience can be gained by large family for how can they deal with the first day in the school for each child they have, in contrast with small family that they didn't experience such situation before. Therefore, whenever the number of children is less it will associated negatively with the school refusal behavior. These findings are supported by Kearney and Bates[3] who report the relationship between the school refusal behavior and other variables. Additional support for the findings of the study is conducted by Lee and Mittenberger [11].

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