

## Impact of Family Conflict and Religious- Emphasis upon School refusal behavior at primary Schools in Holy Kerbala city: A case - control study

Huda M, Altai, MSN, MOH<sup>1</sup>, Prof. Dr. Ali K. Al- Juboori PhD<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>(Scientific Associate at the Institute of Higher Health Professions, Iraq).

<sup>2</sup>(Dean of Nursing College- University of Kerbala, Iraq)

Corresponding Author: \* Huda M, Altai

### Abstract:

**objective:** The study aims to examine the impact of the family conflict and religious- emphasis upon the school refusal behavior among the pupils, assess the school refusal behavior at primary schools, and find out the relationship between school refusal behavior and socio-demographic characteristics of parent(level of education, occupation status, marital relationship) and pupils gender.

**Methodology:** A case - control study was conducted on a "non probability" (purposive sample). The study was conducted at 38 primary schools (boys / girls) in the Kerbala holy city. The study was carried out on the first class pupils who have school refusal behavior and non- have school refusal behavior of pupils. The study was conducted during period of November 20<sup>th</sup> 2016 to July12<sup>th</sup> 2017. Questionnaires was used as a tool of data collection to consisted of three parts: Demographic Characteristic of pupils and parents, the second questionnaire school refusal behavior was measured via the School Refusal Assessment Scale-Revised (parent versions) , and the third questionnaire family environment was measured via subscales on the Family Environment Scale (FES) which are distributed as the following domains related to the family conflict, religious emphasis impact school refusal. The validity of the instrument was determined by using of face validity through the panel of experts. Determination of reliability of instrument items was based on internal consistency of the questionnaire by calculating split- half technique and cronbachs, alpha coefficient.

**Results:** The result of the study found that the highest percentage (52.4%) cases sample was females, (84.1%) in cases , were Urban please(table 1) and (31.0 %) in cases of them to level of education father it's Secondary graduate . Table(.3 ) shows that the school refusal level towards pupils are moderate. Tables (4) Show that the level conflict domain of pupils with school refusal are moderate in cases sample. The results revealed that there were significant differences in school refusal level among pupils with regard to their religious- emphasis and conflict at  $p \leq 0.05$  .

**Conclusions:** There are high percentage ( more than half) of the parents of the pupils with school refusal behavior have primary school education and below. The level of school refusal was similar to the level of family conflict, Religious- Emphasis of pupils with school refusal. The level of school refusal behavior are significantly effected by the level of pupils` fathers education.

**Recommendations:** Awareness needs to be raised about the importance of education and is it influence on child rearing practices for families, and society. The researcher suggests conducting further studies and research to find out more of the reasons behind the refusal behavior of the school. The researcher suggests encouraging the families to enter their children in kindergartens to know child to new environment, which will spend most of his time in it

**Key word:** impact, family conflict, family Religious- Emphasis, school refusal, primary schools

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### I. Introduction

School refusal can be defined as the 'child motivated refusal to attend school or difficulties remaining in school for an entire day' (Lyons et al 2007). Research has struggled to supply a consistent school refusal form due to the complexity in quantifying school refusal behaviors, other than a general consensus suggests a prevalence of approximately 1-5% of all school aged children and young people (<sup>2,3</sup>). School refusal can occur through the entire range of school years but there are noticeable peaks around certain ages (i.e. usually between 5-6years and 10-11years) and transitions (i.e. starting primary school and starting high school)<sup>(3,4)</sup>. There are many reasons why a student may refuse to attend school or remain in school. In addition, there may be family and community based concerns which make it hard for a student to leave the family home to attend school for

fear that something may happen to a parent or loved one whilst they are away. A student may also choose to stay away from school as the alternatives are more attractive at that time. Whatever the reason, school refusal is a significant difficulty affecting many students, families and schools<sup>(5)</sup>. Marvel(2012)stated, attendance problems are the result of dysfunctional family environments. The trend of the negative family circumstances leading to school refusal. Family relationship is one of the significant properties of the family environment<sup>(7)</sup>. Some studies have associated these aspects of family relationship with externalizing behaviors<sup>(8)</sup>. For example, research has established associations between conflictual and aversive family relationships and the development of externalizing behaviors in kids and adolescents<sup>(9-10)</sup>. Cohesion plays a significant role in the creation of synergism within the family and acts as a protective device for family members<sup>(11)</sup>. Conflict is a known risk factor that discovers to adjustment problems. kids who live in family context that are filled with conflict report significantly more adjustment difficulties than those from healthy family environments<sup>(12)</sup>, family relations, as indicated by inter parental conflict and parent-children conflicts, are contributors to adjustment problems among adolescents<sup>(13)</sup>.

## **II. Objective**

The study aim to examine the impact of the family conflict and religious- emphasis upon the school refusal behavior among the pupils. Assess the school refusal behavior at primary schools. find out the relationship between school refusal behavior and socio-demographic characteristics of parent(level of education, occupation status, marital relationship) and pupils gender.

## **III. Methodology:**

A study that compares between a pupils who have school refusing behavior (case) with another pupil who does not have the refusing behavior school (control), the study, using the assessment technique on the impact of family conflict, religious- emphasis upon school refusal among a primary schools in kerbala city during the period November 20/11/2016 until July 12/7/2017, the questionnaire was prepared to include Socio-demographic characteristics of the pupils and parents include gender, residential area, family size, level of education, occupation for parents and marital relationship of the parents. A questionnaire is constructed for the Fifteen questions to pupils are about school refusal. School Refusal Assessment Scale-Revised-Parent(SRAS-R-P) 16 items according to experts recommendation and suggestion the first modification was in the number of the items Item number (16) was amputated because it's similarity to item number (16) to be fifteen items was the final version that used for collecting the present study data. The second modification was on the scale ranking from six point two- four point liker scale ranging from never to always, the mean score(1-1.98) that low refusal level, (2-2.98) that moderate refusal level and that high refusal level (2.99-3.99) . Questionnaire is concerning the family context of pupils which consist of family Conflict domain(5 items)and family Religious- Emphasis domain (4 items). The items were scored and rated on the same scale, 4 for "strongly disagree",3 for "disagree",2 for "agree", and 1 for "strongly agree", the mean of score (1- 1.98) that Low level, (1.99-2.98) that moderate level, and (2.99-3.99 ) that high level . A pilot study was in primary school of holly Kerbala City during the period 16<sup>th</sup> January to 26<sup>th</sup> January 2017. Ten mothers were excluded from the original sample of the main study and selected randomly and using the same questionnaire in order to check their impact family conflict, religious- emphasis upon school refusal behavior of pupils at primary school. To determine the reliability of the questionnaire. The result of split- half was  $r= 0.780$  and of cronbachs' alpha was  $r=0.821$  which mean that the questionnaire have adequate level of internal consistency, and equivalence measurability. The study was conducted at 38 primary schools (boys / girls) in the Kerbala holy city. The study was carried out on the first class pupils who have school refusal behavior and non- have school refusal behavior of pupils. The sample of study: A purposive non probability sample of(126)case and (65) control was selected from a primary School in holy Kerbela city case, was selected randomly from different areas of Kerbala city after classifying the city schools to 2 categories: the first was 19 schools from the city center and second categories was 19 schools round the city. Methods of Data Collection: during the period February20<sup>th</sup> to March20<sup>th</sup> 2017. Data were collected through the use of the constructed questionnaire; the parent Questionnaire as a self administered Questionnaire after receiving the information and instructions required from the researcher to filling questionnaire by interviewing the parents of students who suffered from school refusal behavior about the purpose of the study. The researcher filled the structured questionnaire form developed for this study for those who were illiterate using semi structured interview . An average, each participant need approximately ( 15-20) minutes to complete the questionnaire. Statistical Analysis: the researcher applied the appropriate statistical methods in the data analysis by using SPSS version 20,which include the following statistical methods: Descriptive data analysis, this approach was performed through the determination of frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations. All these means were used to describe the study variables. Inferential data analysis, this approach was performed through the determination of it was used to find out the relationship

among the study variables especially between the impact to the family conflict, religious- emphasis upon school refusal.

**IV. Results**

**Table(1):** Distribution of pupils by their Demographic Characteristics.

No	Variable	Cases		Control		
		F	%	F	%	
1-	Gender	Male	60	47.6	30	46.2
		Female	66	<b>52.4</b>	35	<b>53.8</b>
3-	Residential area	Urban	106	<b>84.1</b>	50	<b>76.9</b>
		City outskirts	20	15.9	15	23.1
		Renting	30	23.8	19	29.2
		Shar with another	5	4.0	2	3.1
		Illegal	15	11.9	6	9.2
3-	Family size	1-3	12	9.5	10	15.4
		4-6	80	<b>63.5</b>	38	<b>58.5</b>
		7-9	30	23.8	13	20.0
		10<	4	3.2	4	6.2
		Four- six	40	31.7	24	36.9
		Seven- nine	2	1.6	3	3.1

**No: Number, F: Frequency, % Percentage .**

Table (1) revealed that nearly half of pupils of case and control were females, Most pupils of case and control were lived in urban areas (84.1%)cases, (53.8%) in controls, while 23.8% of cases were have 4-6 family member and 20.0% control have 7-9 family member.

**Table(2):** Distribution of parents by their Demographic Characteristics.

No	Variable	Cases		Control		
		F	%	F	%	
1-	Level of education(father)	Unable to read and write	11	8.7	7	10.8
		Read and write	16	12.7	11	16.9
		Primary	35	27.8	21	<b>32.3</b>
		Secondary	39	<b>31.0</b>	15	23.1
		Graduate of college of institutes	23	18.3	9	13.8
		Advance of graduate	2	1.6	2	3.1
2-	Level of education mother	Unable to read and write	11	8.7	6	9.2
		Read and write	26	20.6	13	20.0
		Primary	40	<b>31.7</b>	21	<b>32.3</b>
		Secondary	32	25.4	18	27.7
		Graduate of college of institutes	17	13.5	7	10.8
		Employee	56	44.4	30	46.2
3-	Occupation of father	Retirement	3	2.4	1	1.5
		Private work	58	<b>46.0</b>	31	<b>47.7</b>
		Unemployed	9	7.1	3	4.6
		Housewife	114	<b>90.5</b>	54	83.1
4-	Occupation (Mother)	Employee	10	7.9	10	15.4
		Private Work	2	1.6	1	1.5
		Very Good	44	34.9	32	<b>49.2</b>
5-	Marital Relationship	Good	59	<b>46.8</b>	22	33.8
		Normal	16	12.7	11	16.9
		Divorce	4	3.2	1	1.5

**No: Number, F: Frequency, % Percentage**

Table (2 ) Concerning education, results indicate that the(31%) of the father are secondary school graduate in cases samples but found the controls samples are the (32.3%) primary school graduate, while the found the nearly were in the level education in both cases, controls, that primary school graduate. Regarding occupation of the mother, result indicate most of the mother occupation in both cases and controls (90.5%) are housewife. In addition result indicate (46%) of cases and, (47.7%) of controls of the father are private work occupation.

Regarding marital relationship existing(46.8%) of the cases were good marital relationship between parents. (49.2%) of the controls were very good marital relationship between parents.

**Table.3:** The level of school refusal behavior of the pupil

No	Items of variable	M.S	St.	Level
1-	My child has bad feeling about going to school because he/she afraid of something related to school such as class room	1.67	.987	L
2-	My child stay away from school because he/she will be sad or depressed if he/she goes	1.97	1.080	L
3-	My child stay away from school because he/she feel embarrassed in front of other people at school	2.16	1.196	M
4-	My child feels worse at school such as scared, nervous, or sad compared to how he/she feels at home with family and friend	1.88	1.093	L
5-	My child stay away from school because he/she doesn't have many friends there	2.08	1.121	M
6-	My child rather be with his/her family than go to school	2.79	1.195	M
7-	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	2.94	1.141	
8-	My child stay away from certain places in school(e.g. certain group of people).	1.72	.977	L
9-	My child refuses to go to school because he/she wants to have fun outside school	1.90	1.084	L
10-	Your child says his school friends are having problems	2.23	1.154	M
11-	If my child had less bad feeling about school such as scared, nervous, and sad it would be easier for him/her to go to school.	2.43	1.148	M
12 -	If it were easier for my child to make new friends, it would be easier for him/her to go to school.	1.98	1.117	L
13-	It will be easier for my child to go to school if I went with him/her	2.03	1.073	M
14 -	It will be easier for your 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.	2.41	1.298	M
15-	My child rather be doing fun things outside of school more than most kids his/her age	2.22	1.186	M
	Average mean	2.15		M

Table.(3 ) shows that the school refusal level of pupils are moderate in items ( 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15 ) and school refusal of pupil level are low in items ( 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 12 ).

**Table 4:** Family Conflicts of pupils with school refusal

No	Items	Mean	Level
1-	Our family is quarreling a lot	Cases 2.90	M
2-	Our family sometimes are very angry	Cases 2.57	M
3-	Everyone in our family is losing their temper quickly	Cases 2.68	M
4-	Our family sometimes hit each other	Cases 2.92	M
5-	Our family members rarely criticize one Another	Cases 2.66	M
	Conflict	Cases 2.74	M

Tables (4) Show that the family conflict level of pupils with school refuse moderate in cases sample

**Table 5:** Family Religious-Emphasis of pupils with school refusal

No	Items	Mean		Level
1-	Families are interested in religious events	Cases	3.36	H
2-	Family members do not pray	Cases	2.92	H
3-	We talk a lot about religious concepts on many religious occasions	Cases	3.16	H
4-	Family is interested in reading religious books	Cases	3.06	H
H	3.12	Cases	Religious	

Tables ( 5) Show that the family religious-emphasis level religious of pupils with school refuse high in cases sample.

**Table 6:** Family Conflict, Religious level of pupils with school refusal

Control (n= 65)		Cases(n= 126)		Family Conflict, Religious
S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	
3.092	13.94	3.436	13.75	Conflict
2.140	9.37	1.721	8.40	Religious Emphasis
	M	2.93	Cases	average mean

The most important statement is that all means in the controls were consistently much higher about 1 point in means compared to cases. While the average of all family Conflict, Religious Emphasis level were moderate.

**Table 7:** One way analysis of variance in school refusal among pupils with regard to their family conflict, religious-emphasis

Sig. p< 0.05	F	Mean Squares	df.	Sum of Squares	Variance type	Family context of pupils
.000	3.047	193.105	15	2896.581	Between Groups	Conflict
		63.386	110	6972.411	Within Groups	
		71.422	115	8213.551	Within Groups	
		71.290	116	8269.669	Within Groups	
.001	3.354	222.826	10	2228.257	Between Groups	Religious-Emphasis
		66.441	115	7640.735	Within Groups	
		75.697	92	6964.164	Within Groups	
		76.343	113	8626.722	Within Groups	
		81.678	115	9392.972	Within Groups	
		68.230	113	7710.035	Within Groups	

The results revealed that there were significant differences in school refusal level among pupils with regard to their family conflict, religious-emphasis at  $p \leq 0.05$ .

### V. Discussion:

The (165) cases were school refusal matched to the (65) control pupils on gender thus, nearly half of pupils of case and control were females (52.4%) in the cases, and (53.8%) in the controls. This result come with the study of Brand<sup>(14)</sup>, who reported in their experience that girls express more school refusal than boys. The majority (84.1%) of case and (76.9) of control of the sample lived in urban places ( table 1).The study of Mohammed<sup>(15)</sup>, found. Concerning the family size, the majority of the sample case (63.5) are with 4-6 members, and (58.5%) of the control group. This result supported by the study of Romero<sup>(16)</sup> who indicated that(15%) of children living in homes with 4 or more members. Regarding educational level of parents, (31%) of cases father and (23.1%) of control have secondary educational level, the percentage less serious for mother, (31.7%) of cases mothers, and (32.3%) of control mothers have primary level of education (table 2). This result agrees with the study of Hatab<sup>(17)</sup> that reported (50%) of parents of students in public schools do not exceed their educational level to Primary or intermediate, whether parents or mothers. Concerning the occupation status of parents of child, the finding of the present study show that(46% ) of cases fathers and (47.7%) of control fathers have private works. This result was supported by the study of Chang<sup>(18)</sup> who reported the parent who hold multiple

jobs contribute to chronic absenteeism, and the highest percentage of cases and of control of occupation mother were housewives (90.5% ) ( table.2). Romero <sup>(16)</sup> reveals that (15%) children living with unemployed mother were chronically absent, compare to(8%) children living with employed mother. This result consistent by the study of Brill <sup>(19)</sup> who indicated that unemployed mother or father may be less likely to stress the importance of an education to their children and may not hold their children accountable for attending school on a regular. In regard to marital relationship, the findings of study indicate that the majority of the sample cases were good (46.8%) whereas (49.2%) of control were very good. This result was supported by the study of Hatab<sup>(17)</sup> who found that (86.4%) were good marital relationship. Regarding school refusal of the pupils finding of the present study indicated that there is moderate level of school refusal behavior among these pupils(table 3 ). This result agrees with study of the Thabit <sup>(19)</sup> who revealed moderate level of school refusal behavior among his pupils. The result of the present study reported the average mean score (2.93)in cases have moderate level Schafer <sup>(20)</sup> agree with the present finding, who reported that there was moderate level. The result revealed that there were significant differences in school refusal level among pupils with regard to family Conflict. Schafer <sup>(21)</sup> found that higher levels of family conflict were found to be predictive of higher rates of absenteeism. Which is consistent with the present finding. Regarding the family religious- emphasis the results of the present study illustrated that there were significant difference. This result agree with Schafer <sup>(21)</sup> he found that significant difference of family religious- emphasis.

## VI. Conclusions

There are high percentage ( more than half) of the parents of the pupils with school refusal behavior have primary school education and below. The level of school refusal was similar to the level of family conflict, Religious- Emphasis of pupils with school refusal. The level of school refusal behavior are significantly affected be the level of pupils fathers education.

## VII. Recommendations

Awareness needs to be raised about the importance of education and is it influence on child rearing practices for families, and society. Emphasizing the need to incorporate children in comprehensive programs that develop society skills for them. strengthened of counseling on parenting and involvement of families and non- governmental organizations in the rehabilitation efforts of pupils. The researcher suggests conducting further studies and research to find out more of the reasons behind the refusal behavior of the school. The researcher suggests encouraging the families to enter their children in kindergartens to know child to new environment, which will spend most of his time in it

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