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**Current advances on school refusal and other attendance
problems: An international perspective**

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PROFILES OF SCHOOL REFUSAL BEHAVIOR AND SOCIAL FUNCTIONING IN SPANISH CHILDREN

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A lack of consensus regarding the identification of different school refusal behavior profiles is a reality today. The functional model of school refusal behavior propose a classification approach with four functional conditions that underlie school refusal behavior: I. Avoidance of school-based stimuli that provoke negative affectivity, 2. Escape from aversive social and/or evaluative situations, III. Pursuit of attention from significant others and IV. Pursuit of tangible reinforcers outside of school. The aim of this study was to verify whether there are different school refusal behavior profiles with respect to the four functional conditions mentioned, and examine their scores on social functioning (i.e., School Performance, Peers Relationships, Family Relationships, and Home Duties/Self-Care). The sample consisted of 1254 Spanish primary education students between the ages of 8 and 12. The School Refusal Assessment Scale-Revised and the Child and Adolescent Social Adaptive Functioning Scale were used. Latent Class Analysis was performed to identify the different school refusal behavior profiles and analysis of variance, as well as effect sizes analysis were applied to examine the inter-class differences in the obtained scores on social functioning. To identify the characteristics of the most maladaptive profiles students should be considered a key element in the design of school refusal behavior prevention or treatment programs.

Keywords: school refusal behavior profiles, social functioning, childhood, latent class analysis.

FAMILY ACCOMODATION IN ANXIETY DISORDERED CHILDREN WITH SCHOOL REFUSAL IN COMPARISON WITH ANXIETY DISORDERED CHILDREN WHO ATTEND SCHOOL

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Parents' modification of their behaviors or routines (e.g., sleep with child at bedtime) to reduce their child's anxiety, are viewed as "accommodations." Research shows parental factors maintain school refusal behavior. These parental factors are often viewed from the functional perspective of positive and/or negative reinforcement (Kearney & Silverman, 1993). In this study we broadened the functional perspective by framing it within the theoretical/empirical lens of family accommodation. We measured family accommodation by administering the Family Accommodation Scale – Anxiety (FASA) (Lebowitz, et al., 2013) to parents of 343 anxious children (ages 6 to 17 years old) who presented to a child anxiety disorders clinic. Ten percent of the children were absent or partially absent for at least 10% of the academic year. Multiple regression analyses revealed parents of anxious children with school absenteeism difficulties rated themselves significantly more accommodating on the FASA than parents of children without school absenteeism difficulties ($\beta = 7.76, p < .01$), after controlling for child age, sex, and anxiety severity. Multiple regression analyses using FASA subscale scores, again controlling for age, sex, and anxiety severity, revealed parents of children with school absenteeism difficulties rated themselves significantly higher in Participation of their child's anxious behaviors ($\beta = 3.74, p < .01$), and significantly higher in Modification of their own behaviors compared with parents of anxious children without school absenteeism difficulties ($\beta = 4.02, p < .01$). Additional data will be presented focusing on sociodemographic and clinical characteristics of these two groups of children; and theoretical, empirical, and clinical implications will be discussed.

EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROBLEMS: DUTCH POLICY AND INITIATIVES

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Early identification of school attendance problems (SAPs) is important. Failure to identify emerging SAPs increases the likelihood that they become established. In the short-term, SAPs can contribute to academic and social-emotional problems for the young person and stress for the family. They also place demands upon school resources. In the longer-term, SAPs can lead to school drop-out, contributing to problems for the community. Mandated early identification can help prevent the short- and long-term problems associated with SAPs. It prompts school personnel and other professionals from education, health, and policy-making to develop and implement guidelines and procedures for identifying emerging SAPs. This paper reviews Dutch policy on the identification of SAPs, highlighting recent changes. The paper then describes various initiatives in the Netherlands that are intended to support the early identification of SAPs. We consider the strengths and weaknesses of current Dutch policy, with particular attention to the question of whether the policy stimulates early identification. We also consider the likely benefits and shortcomings of Dutch initiatives for early identification. Our evaluation of Dutch policy and initiatives draws on international reports on the early identification of SAPs. We conclude with recommendations about ways to improve early identification in the Netherlands.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROBLEM IN JAPANESE COMPULSORY EDUCATION: THE CURRENT SITUATION IN A PUBLIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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The present study focuses on school attendance problem (SAP) in Japanese compulsory education. SAP in Japan has been considered a serious social issue in the past few decades. Regarding the study of SAP, Japan has a long history and a huge number of Japanese literatures have been published since 1960s about it. Nevertheless, there are limited number of literatures written in English, most of which are not only omitted school-based accurate data but also basic information about Japanese education system which may be intimately associated with the development of SAP. In addition, most English-writing literatures about Japanese SAP are in clinical settings, consequently there have been few studies regarding the situation of SAP in school settings. The aim of this study is twofold. Firstly, it is introduced the Japanese compulsory education system. Secondly, it is intended to examine the current situation of SAP through the data of a Japanese local junior high school enrolled in 424 students. Thirty-six SAP youths within the school are examined with their SAP-related factors such as SAP types, attendance record in the previous year, youth's willingness to solve the problem among other variables of interest.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MENTAL HEALTH AND SCHOOL ABSENTEEISM IN A COMMUNITY SAMPLE OF FRENCH SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS: FOUR PROFILES DERIVED FROM CLUSTER ANALYSIS

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School absenteeism is a serious problem among youths varying in etiology and presentation. Youths presenting high levels of absence have previously been linked to mental health problems, academic difficulties and dropout, highlighting the need for early identification and intervention. The aim of this study is twofold: first, to identify profiles among a community sample of secondary school students based on school absence and internalizing and externalizing behavior using the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL-YSR). Second, to examine the relationship between profiles regarding mental health problems based on the dimensions of the CBCL-YSR (withdrawn, somatic complaints, anxious/depressed, social problems, thought problems, attention problems, delinquent behavior, aggressive behavior, internalizing problems) and the function of their school absence using the School Refusal Assessment Scale (SRAS). The profiles are compared on demographic variables, family characteristics, school performance and bullying. A community sample of 469 youths (11-16 years) from five French secondary schools participated in this study. Using cluster analysis, four distinctive profiles were identified. The clusters differed significantly on school absence, internalizing problems, externalizing problems, dimensions of the CBCL-YSR, and their function of absence on the SRAS. Clusters differed significantly on several demographical variables, school level, grade, repetition and bullying. The distinctions between the four profiles and their relevance are discussed.

Keywords: School absence, SRAS, CBCL-YSR, Bullying, Cluster analysis

THE MALAY SELF-EFFICACY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SCHOOL SITUATIONS: VALIDATION AMONG EARLY ADOLESCENTS ATTENDING PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KOTABHARU, KELANTAN

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Low perceived self-efficacy for responding to school-related situations is posited to underlie school refusal (SR). The Self-Efficacy Questionnaire for School Situations (SEQ-SS) has been used to measure self-efficacy (SE) among youth with SR. This study examined the validity and reliability of the Malay version of the SEQ-SS among early adolescents in primary schools of Kota Bharu. The English version of the 25-item SEQ-SS was translated into Malay using a forward backward translation procedure. Employing a cross-sectional design, students aged ten and eleven years from five randomly selected schools were recruited via proportionate cluster sampling method. Two hundred and

fifteen students (65% female) completed the Malay SEQ-SS. The validity of the Malay SEQ-SS was examined with exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Cronbach's alpha was used to determine its internal consistency. Mean and standard deviation were used to describe the total and subscale scores. EFA analyses yielded four factors which differed slightly from the SEQ-SS-25. A total of 19 items remained, clustering into "SE in socially challenging situations", "SE in personally challenging situations", "SE in separation situations" and "SE in situations of disengagement from school". Internal consistencies were acceptable with Cronbach's alpha between 0.64 and 0.69. The Malay SEQ-SS appears to be a promising measure of SE for school situations among school-going early adolescents. Its four-factor solution could enable identification of specific domains of low SE which could inform individualized interventions.

Key words: self-efficacy, school absenteeism, adolescents, Malay, reliability and validity.

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