BULLYING CASES AMONG STUDENTS: SCHOOL PRINCIPALS’ SELF-EFFICACY

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ABSTRACT

Even though school principals have much responsibilities, dealing with destructive behavior such as bullying among students is something that cannot be avoided. Scant attention has been paid especially to sources of influence on school principal's self-efficacy regarding to dealing with bullying and what actually is their ability when they deal with this type of problem. The purpose of this study is to identify the overall source of influence that contributes to school principal's self-efficacy and what are the levels of their self-efficacy in terms of dealing with bullying in secondary schools. Responses to sources of influence and their sense of efficacy when dealing with bullying among students in secondary schools were sought from 428 in-service school principals across Malaysia by sending (mailed) questionnaires to respective respondents. Based on the result of this study the level of school principals' self-efficacy in terms of dealing with bullying in secondary school was moderate. Although there is no documented record of local research that examine the sources of influence on school principals' self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students, one clear finding that arises from this study is that, mastery experience is prominent predictor of school principals self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students in secondary schools. This result is in line with Bandura's finding (1977, 1997) where he had identified that mastery experience as the most important determinant of self-efficacy. Should there any developmental program for school principal regarding the issue of bullying among students in secondary schools, it is recommended that it should explicitly address this particular source of influence with specific types of training and educational experiences that focus on mastery building through cognitive and meta cognitive strategies as well as cultivating self-regulation competencies.

INTRODUCTION

Most of us would agree that school principal’s role is a complex mix of leadership and administration, geared toward enabling and motivating school staff to provide the best possible opportunities for student growth and achievement. Not only that, today's school principals are like the prime minister of a country, with a duty to lead the whole school in terms of vision, instructional planning, staff development, fiscal planning, and more. Synergizing the interests of all stakeholders while simultaneously being results-oriented is definitely not an easy task to carry out. Besides facing many challenges, the school principal is usually expected to improve or at least maintain levels of students achievement and their behavior. School principal together with all the teachers are trying their very best to make classrooms and school compounds safe, conducive and supportive for learning environments (Goryl, Neilsen-Hewett, & Sweller, 2013). The thing is that, whether they like it or not, as a matter of fact, secondary schools are facing a number of challenges related to disruptive and antisocial students. One of the ways to combat these challenges is for principals to become what Waters and Cameron (2007) call change-agents: Those who have the flexibility, knowledge, and beliefs to raise student achievement as well as producing balanced students. Schools that practice greater efficacy reflect the "skills curricula and standards" required of the 21st Century schoolprincipal and are "critical to effective school reform" (Schunk, 2012, p. 153). The performance of school principal is vital to the level of student outcome and their well being.

In recent years, bullying among students in schools has become recognized as an important educational problem (Carney, 2008; Cornell & Mehta, 2011; Hinduja & Patchin, 2013; Swearer et al, 2010). Bullying remains a topic often in the news, which highlights the ongoing public concern and continual need for anti-bullying work in schools (Cheng et al, 2010; Mavroveli & Sánchez-Ruiz, 2011). Several studies (e.g., Khalim, 2014; Wan Salwina et al, 2014) have shown that bullying is a significant problem in schools and that school principals play a crucial role in addressing this issue.

Keywords: Self-Efficacy, Bullying, Secondary School, School Principal
carried out regarding bullying behavior in Malaysian school particularly secondary schools showed that, it is a serious disciplinary problem that must be addressed by everybody. Bullying is defined as “a form of aggression in which one or more children intend to harm or disturb another child who is perceived as being unable to defend himself or herself” (Smokowski & Kopasz, 2005, p.101). Bullying has been identified as the current leading form of low-level violence, meaning underlying forms of violence, in schools (Rigby & Thomas, 2010). Over the past 30 years, clinicians and researchers have come to the agreement that bullying in schools is a serious threat to the healthy development of children, in addition to being a cause of school violence (Rigby, 2010; Rigby, 2012).

Bullying phenomenon in schools is actually everyone’s business. Whenever any bullying case arises in school, it will be referring either to class teacher, counselling unit, discipline teachers, or any assistants principal and most probably the next person in-charge would be the school principal of that particular school. Therefore, regardless of whatever portfolio or things the school principal is in-charge of, as long as he or she holds the so called “School Principal” titled, it is expected that he/she will be the most suitable last person to be approached whenever any case (such as bullying and other disciplinary problems) occurs outside or inside the school compound. Most probably, any serious case that could not be solved by teachers or other personnel such as discipline teachers, counselling teachers, and deputy principals, it will be automatically referred to the school principal.

Even though school principal is the highest in command structure of a school, his/her self-efficacy has the potential to contribute greatly towards his/her leadership and success. The level of principal self-efficacy is a possible factor contributing to the effectiveness of school administrators, and in this case his/her self-efficacy in dealing with bullying cases in the school. Self-efficacy relates to a belief system in which an individual believes that he/she is capable of performing a specific task. This study investigates the various sources that could be influencing school principals’ self-efficacy (mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, physiological arousal, contextual climate, demographic information) regarding dealing with bullying in secondary and secondly, is to determine the level of school principals’ self-efficacy (behavioural, cognitive, emotional) in dealing with bullying in secondary school.

**School’s Policy Dealing With Bullying Among Students in Malaysian School**

Among the challenges that school teachers and administrator can encounter is the complexand evolving problem of bullying among students and whether they like it or not it is actually everyone’s business. In order to deal with any disciplinary problem in secondary school such as bullying or any other destructive behaviors, the policy taken by the school concerned is to give first warning, second warning, third warning, last warning, school suspension and expulsion. For each warning, the parents of the students will be notify and a formal letter signed by the school principal will be issued and send to them. Parents of the students will have to go to the school and meet the school’s disciplinary committee (consists of principal, assistant principals, discipline teachers, guidance and counselling teachers, class teacher, and Parent & Teacher Association’s representative) if the case is quite serious and needs immediate attention as well as solution. Whenever the first warning is issued, students will be referred to “Guidance and Counselling” unit for counselling session. Normally, there will be at least three counselling sessions carried out by the school counsellor; hopefully to change or modify the destructive behaviors of the students. For recurring cases, the second warning letter will be issued and the parent will be called up to discuss and ratify an agreement to assure their children will behave well and do not repeat the offence in future. Students will again be referred to “Guidance and Counselling” unit for counselling session. If behavior (bullying) continues, student will be most probably facing a corporal punishment (caned on the buttock) with the concerned of the parent and approval from the principal. Only the school principal is allowed to carry out the punishment in his office or designated room and must be witnessed by the members of the disciplinary committee of the school. On the other hand, the school principal is allowed to appoint (authorization letter must be issued and signed by principal) any deputy principals or discipline teachers to carry out the punishment. After the punishment, the student will be referred to “Guidance and Counselling” unit for counselling sessions as usual. The student will be suspended from school for one week (first suspension) and two weeks (second suspension) if he/she does not changed. Only the principal of the school is given the authority to suspend the student. Each time any student being suspended from school, the parents will be notify and have to sign a consent or agreement letter guaranteeing that their son or daughter will not repeat the same offence (bullying) in future. The student will have to undergo several counselling sessions after the suspension. Expulsion with the approval of the principal will be only the last resort after student undergone all the above mentioned processes, but still not encourage by the Ministry of Education Malaysia.

**Purpose of the Study**

There are two primary purposes in this study. Firstly, the purpose of this study is to identify various sources that could be influencing school principals’ self-efficacy (mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, physiological arousal, contextual climate, demographic information) regarding dealing with bullying in secondary and secondly, is to determine the level of school principals’ self-efficacy (behavioural, cognitive, emotional) in dealing with bullying in secondary school.

**Research Questions**

The research questions of this study are as follows:

1) What are the sources of influence are judged as important in estimating school principals’ self-efficacy in dealing with bullying in secondary school?

2) What are the levels of school principals’ self-efficacy (behavioural, cognitive, emotional) regarding dealing with bullying in secondary school?

**Theoretical Framework of the Study**

According to Bandura (1986a), self-efficacy is people’s judgement of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances. Therefore, self-efficacy has important influence on human behaviour and affect in goal setting, effort expenditure and the level of persistence in facing daily tasks. Self-efficacy helps determine what individuals do with knowledge and skills they possess in order to produce desirable outcomes. Bandura (1997) added “unless people believe they can produce desire effects by
their actions, they have little incentive to act” (page 3). In this respect, even when individuals perceived that certain actions are likely to bring about a desired behaviour, they may not engage in the behaviour or persist after initiating the behaviour if they believe that they do not possess the required knowledge or skills. In other words, self-belief is related to actions and with knowledge of that matter it will eventually easier to work it out. Thus, beliefs about one's ability to effect change will likely result in the use of behaviours that will bring about that desired change. In its application to school bullying, teachers who believe that they can have an impact on students and are confident in their ability to deal with bullying, are likely to be effective in reducing bullying. Beliefs about their efficacy can be developed by four main sources of influence. The most influential source of these beliefs is the mastery experience (Bandura, 1977, 1997). When a person believes they have what it takes to succeed, they develop a resilient sense of efficacy. If faced with difficulties or setbacks, they know that they can be successful through perseverance. The perception that one's task (dealing with any bullying case) has been successful increases efficacy beliefs raising expectations that future performances will be successful. In contrast failure, especially if it occurs early in the process of dealing with bullying experience, undermines one's sense of efficacy.

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The second influential source of these beliefs is the vicarious experience (Bandura, 1977 & 1997). It is one's direct or vicarious experience with success or failure that will most strongly influence one's self-efficacy. When a teacher sees another teacher accomplish a task, in this case any bullying case in the school, the vicarious experience of observing a model can also have a strong influence on self-efficacy. By observing others succeed, one's own self-efficacy can be raised.

There is a perception that a performance has successfully raised self-efficacy beliefs of an individual (Pajares, 2002). How teachers interpret their past successes and failures can have a dramatic impact on their self-efficacy. If teachers believe their success in dealing or handling bullying cases as the result of the skills they developed (their ability), they are much more likely to be confident about future success in that area. Attributions, identified in the ‘attribution theory’ (Weiner, 1986) play a role in developing a feeling of mastery. If the success is attributed to internal or controllable causes such as ability or effort, then self-efficacy is enhanced. But if success is attributed to luck or the intervention of others, then self-efficacy may not be strengthened (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996).

There are at least four kinds of self-efficacy that are related to teachers, each of which is instrumental in explaining how teachers act and their willingness to persist even when the odds appear to be stacked against them (Gibbs, 2000). As such, they are important indicators of teacher effectiveness:

(a) Behavioural Self-Efficacy as a Teacher Behavioural self-efficacy as a teacher is the self-belief in one’s capability as teacher to perform specific actions to deal with specific situations.

b) Cognitive Self-Efficacy as a Teacher Cognitive self-efficacy as a teacher is the self-belief in one’s capability as teacher to exercise control over one’s thinking in specific situations.

c) Emotional Self-Efficacy as a Teacher Emotional self-efficacy as a teacher is the self-belief in one's capability as a teacher to exercise control over one's emotions in specific situations.

d) Cultural Self-Efficacy as a Teacher Cultural self-efficacy as a teacher is the self-belief in one's capability as teacher to perform specific actions in culturally-appropriate ways in specific situations. This construct remains relatively unresearched.

Studies done on teacher self-efficacy has shown that teachers self-efficacy were mainly assessed using self-reported item, analyzed in two broad categories- high sense of teacher efficacy and low sense of teacher efficacy. For example, teachers with a reported high sense of efficacy are found to possess a positive set of teaching behaviour that can influence students’ outcome or achievement (Armor et al., 1976; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998). In contrast, teachers with low sense of teacher efficacy are less positive about their abilities to affect student outcomes. Teachers possessing a high sense of efficacy are valued because they tend to exhibit greater effort in planning, organizing and show enthusiasm in teaching (Allinder, 1994), persist longer with students who struggle (Gibson & Dembo, 1984) and less critical of students' error (Ashton & Webb, 1986). In other words, self-efficacy is characterized as major mediator for one's behaviour, and behaviour change.

Sample and Data Collection

The sample of this study was 428 secondary schools principals across Malaysia. A total of 500 surveys (questionnaires) were randomly mailed to 500 public secondary school (Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan) principals in Malaysia. After one month reminder postcards were mailed to the them, thanking them if they had returned the surveys or encouraging them to do so if they had not. The response rate of 85.6 percent was unexpected and considered very encouraging.

Instrument

There are three sections in the questionnaire. Section A consisted of the Sources of Influence on Principal’s Self-Efficacy Scale Regarding Dealing with Bullying in Secondary School with 40 self-constructed items. Section B comprised the Principals Sense Of Efficacy Scale Regarding Dealing with Bullying, with 18 self-constructed items (to determine the participants' level of self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying in secondary school). The last section, that is section C, aimed to get several relevant demographic information of the participants.

For sources of influence on school principal’s self-efficacy, participants were asked to circle a response corresponding (1-strongly disagree, 2-diagree, 3-nuetral, 4-agree, 5-strongly agree) to their beliefs about each statement. In order to response to school principal’s self-efficacy scale regarding dealing with bullying, participants were asked to circle a response corresponding (1-nothing,
2-very little, 3-some influences, 4- quite a bit, 5-a great deal).

Based on the factor analysis, the sources of influence on school principal's self-efficacy have been grouped into five factors (mastery experience, verbal persuasion, contextual climate, physiological arousal, and vicarious experience). The principal's self-efficacy scale regarding dealing with bullying in secondary school had been categorized into three criteria: i) behavioural self-efficacy, ii) cognitive self-efficacy, and (iii) emotional self-efficacy. Principal Component Analysis has been chosen because the nature of the factor to be extracted and the common error variance are not known yet.

Data Analysis

In order to describe the various sources that could be influencing school principals' self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying in secondary school and the levels of school principals' self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying in secondary school, descriptive statistic such as frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations had been used to report the level of agreement of the respondents.

Based on the above finding, all the five mean scores fell between the range of 3.12 up to 4.60. This showed that all five factors generally contributed positively as strong sources of influence on teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying in secondary school. Based on the above results, Mastery Experience showed the highest source of influence on school principals' self-efficacy in dealing with bullying for the participants in this study with an overall mean of 4.60 (SD = 1.22). This is followed by Vicarious Experience, Verbal Persuasion, Contextual Climate, and Physiological Arousal.

There were seven statements that reflected Mastery Experience as a source of influence on school principals self-efficacy in dealing with bullying in secondary school. The results regarding agreement and disagreement for these seven items have been compiled into Table 2. Scales 1 and 2 were shrunk to show general disagreement and scale 4 and 5 were shrunk to show general agreement for each of the statement regarding Mastery Experience as a source of influence on school principals' self-efficacy in dealing with bullying in secondary school. The middle scale (scale 3) represents neutrality.

On the basis of findings presented in Table 2, there seemed to be a general agreement that mastery experience contributed a strong influence towards school principals' self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students in secondary school. An analysis of data revealed that more than eighty percent of the respondents agreed that; their experiences gained when they were an ordinary teacher has adequately prepared them to face the challenges of dealing with bullying among students in school, experiences handling several bullying cases in school helped to enhance their self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying, and experiences dealing with certain bullying cases made them know and understand more about bullying phenomena in school which in a way made them feel confidence and never gave up to deal with it successfully. More than fifty percent of the participants (N=428) agreed that; (i) during their school days (secondary), they received praises from their teachers for informing him/her about bullying incident among my classmates or others students in their school (65.42%), (ii) they have previously received award/recognition due to my outstanding performance especially regarding ) dealing with problematic students in their school (56.07%), and (iii) when they were students in secondary school, they were usually at ease when facing with bullying incident or when someone wanted to bully them (70.09%).

When all the variables were entered into the equation of multiple regression analysis, only Mastery Experience, and Vicarious Experience showed significant positive regression weights (Table 3), indicating that all these two variables significantly predicted school principals' self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students. Verbal persuasion, contextual climate, and physiological arousal did not contribute to the multiple regression model.

The standardized regression coefficients (βs) are indices of direct effects of each predictor variable on school principals in dealing with bullying among students. As can be seen from Table 3, results indicate that Mastery Experience accounted for the highest direct effect on A correlation matrix was then computed to examine the inter-correlation among predictor variables and the criterions measures. The hypothesized sources of influence served as predictor variables and school principal's self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying, as criterion variable. Additionally, variables were examined for assumptions underlying multivariate analysis such as normality, independence, and multi-collinearity. In order to examine the amount of variance contributed by each of the hypothesized sources in determining school principal's self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying in secondary school, standard multiple regression strategy was employed.

Findings

(i) Sources of Influence on School Principals' Self-efficacy

Table 1 shows the overall mean scores and standard deviations comparison of the five sources of influence on school principals' self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying in secondary school. A mean score of 3.00 represents neutral influence on school principals' self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying; a score less than 3.00 indicates weak influence and a score of more than 3.00 represents strong influence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Influence</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mastery Experience</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicarious Experience</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Persuasion</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>Strong0.92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual Climate</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>1.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physiological Arousal</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>1.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the above finding, all the five mean scores fell between the range of 3.12 up to 4.60. This showed that all five factors generally contributed positively as strong sources of influence on teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying in secondary school. Based on the above results, Mastery Experience showed the highest source of influence on school principals' self-efficacy in dealing with bullying for the participants in this study with an overall mean of 4.60 (SD = 1.22). This is followed by Vicarious Experience, Verbal Persuasion, Contextual Climate, and Physiological Arousal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>960</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The standardized regression coefficients (βs) are indices of direct effects of each predictor variable on school principals in dealing with bullying among students. As can be seen from Table 3, results indicate that Mastery Experience accounted for the highest direct effect on
deputy principals’ self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students, with beta weight of .478 at \( p < .001 \) (\( t = 29.811 \)). The second direct effect on school principals’ self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students is VicariousExperience, with beta weight of .158 at \( p < .001 \) (\( t = 9.382 \)).

**Table 2: General Agreement and Disagreement on Mastery Experience as A Source of Influence on School Principals’ Self-Efficacy in Dealing With Bullying:Collapsed Columns**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The experiences gained when I was an ordinary teacher has adequately prepared me to face the challenges of dealing with bullying among students in school.</td>
<td>1550363</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My experiences handling several bullying cases in school helped enhance my self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. During my school days (secondary), I received praises from my teacher for informing him/her about bullying incident among my classmates or others students in my school.</td>
<td>17131280</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. When I came across a difficult bullying case, I never gave up and dealt with it successfully.</td>
<td>1266350</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I have previously received award/recognition due to my outstanding performance especially regarding dealing with problematic students in my school.</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. When I was a student in secondary school, I was usually at ease when facing bullying incident or when someone wanted to bully me.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. My experiences dealing with certain bullying cases made me know and understand more about bullying phenomena in school and I feel confidence to deal with it.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. My experiences dealing with certain bullying cases made me know and understand more about bullying phenomena in school and I feel confidence to deal with it.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mastery Experience**

\( \text{Mean} = 4.60, (SD = 1.22) \)

**Table 3 Coefficients**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors Variables</th>
<th>( B )</th>
<th>( \text{Std. Error} )</th>
<th>( \beta )</th>
<th>( t )</th>
<th>sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>.783</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td>18.932</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Persuasion</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.073</td>
<td>8.763</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vicarious Experience</td>
<td>.143</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.1589382</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual Climate</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.097</td>
<td>9.102</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physiological Arousal</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.0766323</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mastery Experience</td>
<td>.368</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.47829.811</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( N = 428; \quad R^2 = .747; \quad \text{Adjusted} \ R^2 = .746 \quad p < .001 \)

**School Principals’ Self-Efficacy Level Regarding Dealing With Bullying Among Students in Secondary School.**

Table 4 displays data concerning the frequencies and percentages distributions of participants perceived level of self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying among students in secondary school. The possible scores ranged from 1.00 to 5.00. Based on the frequency of the data collected from the participants, a mean score from scales 1.00 to 2.33 indicates low level of self-efficacy in dealing with bullying; 2.34 to 3.67 indicates moderate level, and 3.68 to 5.00 indicates high level.
Looking at Table 5, all the three (Behavioural, Cognitive and Emotional self-efficacy) mean scores fell between the range of 3.08 up to 4.16. Behavioural Self-Efficacy has the highest overall mean among them all with an overall mean of 4.16 ($SD = 1.03$), then followed by Cognitive Self-efficacy and Emotional Self-efficacy.

There were six statements that reflected school principals’ Behavioural self-efficacy in dealing with bullying in secondary school (Table 6). Item 1 yielded the highest mean score of 4.52 ($SD = 0.94$) whereby more than three quarter (91.12%) of the school principals ($N = 428$) were most confident that they could control bullying behavior among students in the school. This study also showed that more than eighty percent of all the school principals have high self-efficacy level that they can; improve the self-esteem of victim of bullying, calm any student in the school should he/she been bullied badly, establish a system or a strategy in their school to avoid bullying among students, respond to difficult situation (e.g. suicide attempt, depression) involving bullying, and help students to overcome their feeling of helplessness following the bullying incident.

**DISCUSSION**

Of all the sources of influence on school principals’ self-efficacy when dealing with bullying in secondary school, Mastery Experience has the highest overall mean scores of 4.60 ($SD = 1.22$). Based on multiple regression analysis, Mastery Experience has the highest direct effect on school principal self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students in secondary school. This result is in line with Bandura’s finding (1977, 1997) where he had identified that mastery experience is the most important determinant of self-efficacy. This findings appeared to be congruent with the findings did by Anderson and Betz (2001) when they found only mastery experience had significant incremental variance on social self-efficacy. Similarly, the study on Math self-efficacy by Lopez and Lent (1992) revealed that only mastery experience explained unique variance.

In the present study, slightly more than half of the school principals (60.05%) were reported to fall into the high sense of school principals’ self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students in secondary school, range (3.68 – 5.00). This suggests that most of the in-service school principals were very confident of themselves in having the ability to successfully perform their duty or responsibility in dealing with bullying cases among students in secondary school. The overall mean score of 3.47, with a standard deviation of 1.12, indicated a moderate level of school principals’ self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students, among the participants in this study. This can be considered as a healthy level of self-efficacy in dealing with bullying in secondary school for our in-service school principals particularly in Malaysia and hopefully it will be improved into high level in future.

**LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

As expected this particular study had several limitations. In terms of the number of the participants that involved in this study, it is only limited to 428 in-service school principals from secondary schools had been randomly selected from 6 out of 13 states in Malaysia. Ideally, participants of this study should consist of the entire population. However, due to limited time and cost or budget constraints, purposive and simple random of the individuals sample had been exercised.

In order to determine level of school principal’ self-efficacy in dealing with school bullying in secondary school, it is only limited to three criteria; behavioural, cognitive, and emotional. To fully understand the factors or elements that account for the variance in school principals’ self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying in secondary school, the scenario could be or definitely more complex. In future it is hope that other elements or factors that are relevant could be included in this study.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Findings from this study can be used as a reference or extra input for the design of educational interventions in school principals preparation programs (e.g the National Professional Qualification for Educational Leaders (NPQEL) conducted by the Ministry of Education...
Malaysia) as well as school principals' development programs that support and strengthen the development of school principals' self-efficacy especially in dealing with bullying among students. As noted earlier, the findings of this study show that mastery experience consistently remained a crucial source of influence on deputy principals' self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students. Therefore, there should be any courses or seminars conducted either by the Ministry of Education, the District Education Department or any Non-governmental organization such as National Teachers Union, Parent Teacher Association etc., which involving the school principals, it should be focusing more on acquiring self-regulatory competence so that school principals are able to monitor their own performances. This would provide an important mastery building opportunity for self-efficacy enhancement. Self-regulated learning is a deliberate planning and monitoring of cognitive, affective and behavioural processes to successfully complete a given task (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990). It involves taking charge of one's own learning, making accurate assessments of how one is doing and how one might improve. In keeping with Bandura's (1986, 1997) triadic view that personal processes, environmental and behavioural events operate interactively, learners who use self-regulatory strategies are actively involved in regulating three different types of processes: (i) regulating personal processes involved goal setting and planning, managing time, and organizing information (Zimmerman, 1994); (ii) learners consciously regulate their own behaviour by doing self-evaluation, self-monitoring and self-reactance (Bandura, 1986; Schunk, 1990); and (iii) learners actively interact with their learning environment such as seeking peer or adult assistance and social environmental structuring in order to optimize acquisition of skills (Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1990).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the multiple regression, mastery experience made most independent contribution to school principals' self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students. This means that enactive experience appeared to have the strongest impact on in-service school principals' perceptions of their self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students, independently. This finding is in keeping with Bandura's (1986,1997) theoretical framework and previous empirical studies that enactive mastery experience consistently makes the largest contribution to self-efficacy beliefs (Betz & Hackett, 1981; Lopez & Lent, 1992; Zeldin, 2000). In this particular study, in-service school principals' preconceptions of their capabilities in dealing with bullying cases among students, mainly drawn from their experiences dealing with certain bullying cases, which also involving different type of students (problematic, defiant, rebellious, and stubborn students) before. When in-service school principals are convinced that they have what it takes to succeed, they are more resilient and flexible of adversity of bullying phenomena involving students, and hopefully they will quickly rebound from setbacks or any obstacles that they had faced before.

REFERENCES

Choi/Bullying Cases Among Students: School Principals’ Self-Efficacy


