

## TEACHERS' SELF-EFFICACY IN DEALING WITH BULLYING AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOLS STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA

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### ABSTRACT

*It is no doubt that bullying has a lot of negative consequences on students and the most worrying part is that some victims of bullying even took away their own life or thinking about committing suicide. Evidences from a number of studies suggest that generally teachers are not very effective when they address or deal with cases of bullying in schools. Although there is now a considerable literature on the steps schools can take in dealing with cases of bullying, curiously enough there is little information available about what school teachers actually feel, think, and do when bullying is going on at their schools. Scant attention has been paid to school teachers' self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying particularly in Malaysia. The purpose of this study was to identify the levels of secondary schools teachers' self-efficacy (behavioral, Cognitive, and Emotional) in terms of dealing with bullying among students. Responses to sense of efficacy when dealing with bullying among students in secondary schools were sought from 1920 in-service teachers from 120 secondary schools which had been randomly selected from 6 out of 13 states in Malaysia. Based on the finding of this study, Behavioral Self- Efficacy has the highest overall mean followed by Cognitive Self-efficacy and Emotional Self-efficacy. However, the level of agreement towards teacher's Behavioral Efficacy in dealing with bullying, from both students and parents involved in this study is considered quite low. With better training opportunities and ongoing professional development for teachers to enhanced their behavioral, cognitive, and emotional efficacy in dealing with bullying hopefully will help to ease the problem of bullying in schools.*

Keywords : Self-Efficacy, Bullying, Secondary School, Teachers,

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### Introduction

Since Dan Olweus pioneering the research on bullying in the 1970s in Scandinavia, bullying is still one of the major social concern in many parts of the world and 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; Shakoor *et al.*, 2012; Rigby & Smith, 2011). Bullying among students in schools is an acknowledged phenomenon worldwide (Martinez, 2014; Mestry & Khumalo, 2012). Bullying has been defined as purposefully harming another person repeatedly over time (Olweus, 1994), power imbalance and is repeated multiple times (Kantor & Gladden, 2014), aggressive behavior, which can be either physical or psychological, performed repeatedly with a victim and aims to make them feel uncomfortable, insecure, and isolated from those around them (Khalim & Norshidah, 2007), direct actions such as stealing or damaging other learners' belongings or hurting them emotionally, name calling, teasing, taunting, mocking, as well as intimidating other learners (James, 2010; Marais & Meier, 2010). A few decades ago, most of bullying incidents normally took place at school or in the neighborhood at home, but now it is happening in more places than ever before. Today, with the increased use of the internet and social media, students are now being bullied in all locations, at all times. Bullying on social media has become a serious problem and may have greater effect on a

person rather than traditional bullying (Bauman & Newman, 2013). This has created an epidemic that must be stopped if students are to live a normal life be it in schools or at homes and hopefully develop into fully-functional adults.

Among the consequences of being bullied is that the victims suffered from depression, have low self-esteem, anxiety, having psychosomatic symptoms such as headaches, sleep or feed problems, having interpersonal difficulties, higher school absenteeism and lower academic competence (James 2010; Olweus & Limber 2010 ;Martinez, 2014). Bullying behavior can also lead to serious injury or even death (Wan-Salwina *et al.*, 2014) and this is something that really worried the parents as well as the teachers in schools. Every student has the right to feel safe at school and bullying erodes those feelings of safety. Teachers and school administrators are given the responsibility to look after the safeness of the students in schools and they must ensure that these rights are upheld. Although there is now quite a lot of literatures on how or what schools can do in dealing with cases of bullying, curiously enough there is little information available about what teachers actually feel, think, and do when bullying is going on at their school. Many researchers have provided suggestions for important components of bully prevention and intervention programs, but few have actually collected data with regard to teachers self-efficacy in dealing with bullying. Despite this, scant attention has been paid to teachers' self-efficacy regarding bullying and what actually are their ability when they deal with this type of problem, particular in Malaysia. How teachers' perceived their self-efficacy (behavioral, Cognitive, and Emotional) in dealing with bullying is discussed further in this article.

### Statement of the problem

Students spent most of their quality time at school. School should create an environment whereby children feel safe or secured. The education system is still one where aggression and violence are dominant. The popular students tend to be the jocks, those with sporting prowess, especially in those activities which require physical strength. In classes, the most aggressive pupil tends to be the one around who all others cluster. Those children who are non-violent, not physically strong, or physically small, are always vulnerable; their needs are often overlooked, as are their talents. It's the non-violent children who will go on to make the biggest contribution to the society. School environments tend to be one of "exclusion" rather than "inclusion". Children are left to form their own groups, or gangs, and the children are either "in" or "out". This phenomenon could also happen in any schools be it in Malaysia or other countries over the world. Because it is happening in the school, teachers have no excuse not to deal with it. Even though there is no doubt that much good work has been done on addressing and dealing with bullying in schools, much remains to be done. Besides teaching and other administrative works, teachers are also often been involved directly or indirectly, or responsible for, implementing anti-bullying action (Swearer *et al.*, 2010). Bullying is a serious issue of concern to educators including teachers in Malaysia because it has the potential to seriously affect students' academic and social development (Wan-Salwina *et al.*, 2014; Khalim, 2014). Whether they like it or not, as teachers it is also part of their duties and responsible to tackle any bullying case. One of the reasons why so many victims feel helpless following the bullying incident may well be the result of the widespread skepticism on the part of teachers and school administrators in regard to bullying and its seriousness (Ellis & Shute, 2007) and their inability or unwillingness to support and protect bully victims. There is also tendency for teachers to underestimate bullying as a problem and to dismiss most bullying incidents as 'trivial' and not worth 'making much fuss' about. Actually, the sense of responsibility of teachers to deal and prevent bullying in the classroom or in the school compound play a very important role besides other factors (Olweus & Limber, 2010) in order to cope with bullying incidents especially in secondary school. Teachers may in fact respond differently in real-life situations. How they respond or feel and what actually are their self-efficacy when intervene or dealing with bullying is very important (Yoon, 2004). James (2010) even suggested that training should be made available to teachers and other school staff in how to recognize bullying, and how to intervene effectively.

### Purposes of the study

There are two primary purposes in this study. Firstly, the purpose of this study is to determine the level of teachers' behavioural self-efficacy, cognitive self-efficacy, and emotional self-efficacy in dealing with bullying in secondary school, among in-service teacher and secondly, is to determine whether there is any significant teacher self-efficacy (behavioural self-efficacy, cognitive self-efficacy, and emotional self-efficacy) difference in dealing with bullying in terms of post they are holding (senior assistant teachers, discipline teachers, counseling teachers, academic teachers). It is hoped that the results may add to the present understanding of teachers' involvement regarding bullying and by adding to this knowledge, help to reduce the insidious problem of bullying among students particularly in secondary schools.

### Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is defined as people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave. Such beliefs produce these diverse effects through four major processes. They include cognitive, motivational, affective and selection processes. The theoretical foundation of self-efficacy is found in social cognitive theory, developed by former APA president (1974) and current Stanford professor Albert Bandura (1977, 1997). Social cognitive theory assumes that people are capable of human agency, or intentional pursuit of courses of action, and that such agency operates in a process called triadic reciprocal causation. Reciprocal causation is a multi-directional model suggesting that our agency results in future behavior as a function of three interrelated forces: environmental influences, our behavior, and internal personal factors such as cognitive, affective, and biological processes.

Consistent with the general formulation of self-efficacy, Tschannen-Moran, WoolfolkHoy and Hoy (1998) defined teacher self-efficacy as a teacher's "judgment of his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated." The definition and meaning of teacher self-efficacy in this study subscribes to the one that was postulated by Gibbs (2000) which was based on Bandura's (1986, 1997) theoretical framework. As such, the important indicators of teacher capability that will be taken into account in this study would be;

- a) Behavioral Self-Efficacy as a Teacher
  - *Behavioral self-efficacy (BSE) as a teacher* is the self-belief in one's capability as a teacher to perform specific actions to deal with specific situations, in this study, would be bullying.
- b) Cognitive Self-Efficacy as a Teacher
  - *Cognitive self-efficacy (CSE) as a teacher* is the self-belief in one's capability as a teacher to exercise control over one's thinking in specific situations.
- c) Emotional Self-Efficacy as a Teacher
  - *Emotional self-efficacy (ESE) as a teacher* is the self-belief in one's capability as a teacher to exercise control over one's emotions in specific situations.

### **Malaysian secondary school's policy in dealing with bullying cases among students**

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 notified and a formal letter signed by the school principal will be issued and sent to them. Parents of the students will have to go to the school and meet the school's disciplinary committee (consists of principal, deputy 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 change. 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 notified 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.

### **Theoretical framework of the study**

The theoretical foundation of self-efficacy is found in Social Cognitive Theory, developed by former APA president (1974) and current Stanford professor Albert Bandura (1977, 1997). Social Cognitive Theory assumes that people are capable of human agency, or intentional pursuit of courses of action, and that such agency operates in a process called triadic reciprocal causation. Reciprocal causation is a multi-directional model suggesting that our agency results in future behavior as a function of three interrelated forces: environmental influences, our behavior, and internal personal factors such as cognitive, affective, and biological processes. This trinity mutually impacts its members, determines what we come to believe about ourselves, and affects the choices we make and actions we take. Human beings are not the products of the environment. They are not products of their biology. Instead, human beings are products of the dynamic interplay between the external, the internal, and our current and past behavior. Central to Bandura's (1997) framework is his concept of self-efficacy. Bandura's aspirations about self-efficacy were grand, as reflected in the title of his 1977 article "Self-Efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioral Change." In this seminal work, Bandura defined self-efficacy as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p.3). Self-efficacy beliefs were characterized as the major mediators for our behavior, and importantly, behavioral change. Self-efficacy beliefs can enhance human accomplishment and well-being in countless ways. They influence the choices people make and the courses of action they pursue. Individuals tend to select tasks and activities in which they feel competent and confident and avoid those in which they do not. Unless people believe that their actions will have the desired consequences, they have little incentive to engage in those actions. How effective an unconfident teacher deals with any bullying incident? Whatever factors operate to influence behavior, they are rooted in the core belief that one has the capability to accomplish that behavior.

## Participants

The sample consisted of a total of 1920 in-service teachers from 120 secondary schools randomly selected from 6 states out of 14 states in Malaysia, mean age of 34.38 years,  $SD = 11.21$ , their ages spanning from 25 to 58 years. There were more females than males teachers as is typical in this career, with 1299 female teachers (mean age of 38.56 years,  $SD = 10.22$ ) and 621 male teachers (mean age of 36.87,  $SD = 10.18$ ). The mean years of teaching experience was 15.25 years,  $SD = 11.22$ , ranging from 12 months to 35 years. The teachers were all qualified teachers most of which held Bachelors in Education (72.12%), but with 18.73% holding a Diploma and 9.15% holding a Masters in Education. In addition to classroom teachers (academic teachers) some of the teachers were in positions of responsibility, including discipline teachers, counselling teachers, and senior assistant (deputy principals). Teachers were representative of all teaching year levels of schooling, from transition class up to upper form class (Form Five and Form Six). Approximately 65.27 % of the sample teachers taught in lower form (Form One –Form Three), 32.78% taught in upper form (Form Four – Form Five), and 1.95% taught Form Six students. All of them had not engaged in any professional development activities on bullying over the past five years. This study also involved 3748 secondary school students (Form One – Form Five) and 798 parents (mean age of 36.46,  $SD = 9.56$ ) from the same schools involved in this study. They were all selected randomly.

## Data collection and analysis

After the researcher sought written permission from the Educational Planning and Research Division, Ministry of Education Malaysia, as well as consent letters from each of the State Educational Director of all the six states (Kedah, Kelantan, Pahang, Selangor/Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, Johor, and Sarawak), data were collected with the help of four teachers from each states. Data were collected from teachers, administrators (deputy principals), students and parents who send their children to schools involved in this study. All the respondents received oral instructions to complete the questionnaire. They were informed that the data would be used to help improve the general knowledge base regarding bullying and bullying prevention programs in the future. There were two phases of collecting data in this study. The first phase was only involving teachers of the selected schools and then following by the second phase which involving students and their parents of the same schools two months after that. Based on the analysis on teachers self-efficacy (after two months) which showed that Behavioral Self-Efficacy has the highest overall mean, the questionnaire for the students and parents were administered in order to get their level of agreement towards teachers efficacy (behavioral efficacy) in dealing with bullying in their schools. After the students completed the questionnaires given to them (sealed in an envelope) and returned them to their teachers, they were given another set of questionnaires to bring back home and give them to their parents to answer. They were instructed to pass the questionnaire to their teachers the next day. Out of 1500 questionnaires given out to the parents through their children, only 798 parents responded.

In order to describe the levels of teachers' self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying in secondary school among in-service teachers, as well as students and their parents level of agreement, descriptive statistic such as frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations had been used. In order to investigate if there were any differences between teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students and the post they are holding; namely Senior Assistant, Discipline teachers, Counseling teachers, and Academic teachers, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was computed

## Instruments

There are three types of questionnaires were utilized in this study in order to gather necessary data or relevant information. The first questionnaire is known as Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale in Dealing with Bullying (TSEDB) which has two sections. Section A comprised the *Teachers 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). Section B, aimed to get several relevant demographic information of the participants. In order to response to teachers 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). Thought-listing questionnaire from 200 teachers during the pilot test had been carried out. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) had also been carried out on all the variables (the questions) of self-efficacy scale on teachers' self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying in secondary school. Based on the factor analysis, teachers' self-efficacy scale regarding dealing with bullying in secondary school had been categorized into three criteria/sub-scales; i) Behavioral self-efficacy, ii) Cognitive self-efficacy, and (iii) Emotional self-efficacy. Internal consistency for each of the sub-scales was examined using Cronbach's alpha. The alphas were moderate: .68 for Behavioral Self-Efficacy (6 items), .60 for Cognitive Self-Efficacy (6 items), and .57 for Emotional Self-Efficacy (6 items).

The second questionnaire which is for the students in order to get their level of agreement towards teachers efficacy (behavioral efficacy) in dealing with bullying in their schools. There are six self-constructed items (to determine the level of agreement towards teachers behavioral efficacy in dealing with bullying) in this particular questionnaire, for example, "My teacher is confident in controlling bullying behavior in the classroom". In order to response to this questionnaire, students were asked to circle a response corresponding (1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neither Agree or Disagree, 4-Agree, and 5-Strongly Agree). The internal consistency was Cronbach's alpha = .77, retest reliability was .78 ( $n = 205$ ).

The third questionnaire is for the parents of the students in order to get their level of agreement towards teachers efficacy (behavioral efficacy) in dealing with bullying in their children schools. There are six self-constructed items (to determine the level of agreement towards teachers behavioral efficacy in dealing with bullying) in this particular questionnaire, for example, "The teachers in that school are confident in controlling bullying behavior in the classroom". In order to response to this questionnaire, parents were asked to circle a response corresponding (1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neither Agree or Disagree, 4- Agree, and 5- Strongly Agree). The internal consistency was Cronbach's alpha = .73, retest reliability was .68 ( $n = 150$ ).

**Findings**

Table 1.0 : Overall Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for each Subscales of Level of Behavioral Self-efficacy (BSE), Level of Cognitive Self-efficacy (CSE), and Level of Emotional Self-efficacy (ESE,) Regarding Dealing With Bullying in Secondary School.

Subscale	M	SD
Behavioural Self-Efficacy	4.31	0.91
Cognitive Self-efficacy	3.56	0.87
Emotional Self-efficacy	3.32	0.81

Overall Mean = 3.73 (SD= .78) Cronbach's Alpha = .86 N = 1920

Looking at Table 1.0, all the three (Behavioral, Cognitive and Emotional self-efficacy) mean scores fell between the range of 3.52 up to 4.31. Behavioral Self-Efficacy has the highest overall mean among them all with an overall mean of 4.31 (SD = 0.91). This is followed by Cognitive Self-efficacy with an overall mean of 3.56 (SD = 0.87), and Emotional Self-efficacy with an overall mean of 3.32 (SD = 0.81).

*Behavioral Self-Efficacy* (Table1.1). There were six statements that reflected Behavioral self-efficacy in dealing with bullying in secondary school. Item 1 yielded the highest mean score of 4.78 (SD= 0.89) whereby more than three quarter (91.98%) of the participants (N=1920) were most confident that they could control bullying behavior among students in the classroom. Participants in this study also showed a mean score of 4.72 (SD=0.77) for item 12, whereby more than three quarter (82.71%) of the participants (N=1920) have high confident that they could improve the self-esteem of victim of bullying. For item no.8, with a mean score of 4.67 (SD=1.02), more than eighty percent (85.16%) of participants have a high confident that they could calm any student in the school should he/she been bullied badly. Item 9 and item 6 have the same mean score of 3.87 (SD=0.94 and 1.04) whereby 83.80 % participants have a high confident in establishing a system or a strategy in your classroom to avoid bullying among students, and 86.98 % were confident that they are able to respond to difficult situation (e.g. suicide attempt, depression) involving bullying. When asked about how much the participants can do to make the students overcome their feeling of helplessness following the bullying incident, most of them (81.98%) showed a high level of confident with a mean score of 3.97 (SD=0.77).

Table 1.1: Level of Behavioral Self-efficacy (BSE) of Teachers Regarding dealing with bullying among students in secondary school

Item #	Low	Moderate Frequency (Percentage)	High	M	SD
1. How confident are you in controlling bullying behavior in the classroom ?	56 (2.92)	98 (5.10)	1766 (91.98)	4.78	0.89
5. How much can you do to make the students to overcome their feeling of helplessness following the bullying incident ?	56 (2.92)	290 (15.10)	1574 (81.98)	3.97	0.77
6. How well can you respond to difficult situation (e. g suicide attempt, depression) involving bullying?	100 (5.20)	150 (7.81)	1670 (86.98)	3.87	1.04
8. How much can you do to calm a student who had been bullied badly ?	82 (4.27)	203 (10.57)	1635 (85.16)	4.67	1.02
9. How well can you establish a system or a strategy in your classroom to avoid bullying among students ?	61 (3.18)	250 (13.02)	1609 (83.80)	3.87	0.94
12. How much can you do to improve the self esteem of victims of bullying ?	76 (3.96)	256 (13.33)	1588 (82.71)	4.72	0.77

Mean = 4.38, SD = 0.91 Cronbach's Alpha = .86 N = 1920

Table 1.2 : Students Level of Agreement Towards Teachers' Behavioral Efficacy in Dealing with Bullying

Item #	Low	Moderate Frequency (Percentage)	High	M	SD
1. My teacher is confident in controlling bullying behavior in the classroom.	2436 (65.00)	870 (23.22)	442 (11.78)	2.78	1.89
2. My teacher can make me overcome my feeling of helplessness following the bullying incident	2358 (62.92)	828 (22.10)	62 (14.98)	2.93	0.87
3. My teacher will respond very well to difficult situation (e.g suicide attempt, depression) involving bullying.	2818 (75.20)	668 (17.81)	262 (6.99)	3.02	0.97
4. My teacher is able to calm any student who had been bullied badly.	2034 (54.23)	1521 (40.57)	193 (5.20)	3.41	1.02
5. My teacher can establish a system or a strategy in his/her classroom in order to avoid bullying among students, very well.	1993 (53.18)	518 (13.82)	1237 (33.80)	3.17	1.94
6. My teacher can improve the self-esteem of victims of bullying very much.	2198 (58.67)	1363 (36.38)	187 (4.95)	2.76	1.56

$N = 3748$      $M = 3.01$      $SD = 1.68$

Table 1.3 : Parents Level of Agreement Towards Teachers' Behavioral Efficacy in Dealing with Bullying

Item #	Low	Moderate Frequency (Percentage)	High	M	SD
1. The teacher is confident in controlling bullying behavior in the classroom.	535 (67.00)	146 (18.28)	117 (14.72)	2.32	1.09
2. The teacher can make my children overcome their feeling of helplessness following the bullying incident	558 (69.92)	97 (12.10)	143 (17.98)	2.14	1.06
3. The teacher will respond very well to difficult situation (e.g suicide attempt, depression) involving bullying.	440 (55.20)	217 (27.24)	140 (17.56)	2.97	0.97
4. The teacher is able to calm any student who had been bullied badly.	512 (64.18)	196 (24.57)	90 (11.25)	2.48	1.42
5. The teacher can establish a system or a strategy in his/her classroom in order to avoid bullying among students, very well.	504 (63.18)	166 (20.82)	128 (16.00)	3.07	1.64
6. The teacher can improve the self-esteem of victims of bullying very much.	468 (58.67)	210 (26.38)	120 (14.95)	2.26	1.26

$N = 798$      $M = 2.54$      $SD = 1.53$

Even though most of the teachers perceived their behavioral self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students in secondary schools as moderately high with an overall mean = 4.38,  $SD = 0.91$ , respond or feedback from students and parents turned out slightly the otherwise. Based on result indicated in Table 1.2 and Table 1.3, more than half of students and parents participated in this study disagree that teachers ; (i) confident in controlling bullying behavior among students in the classroom, (ii) can calm any student in the school should he/she been bullied badly, (iii) have high confident in establishing a system or a strategy in their classroom in order to avoid bullying among students, (iv) confident that they are able to respond to difficult situation (e.g. suicide attempt, depression) involving bullying, (v) can make the students overcome their feeling of helplessness following the bullying incident, and (vi) improve the self-esteem of victims of bullying.

Table 1.4 : Overall Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Teachers Behavioral Self-Efficacy in Dealing with Bullying Among Students prior to post they are holding

Post	N	M	SD
Senior Assistants	480	4.13	0.77
Discipline teachers	480	3.91	0.84
Counseling teachers	480	3.74	0.83
Academic teachers	480	3.53	0.79
Overall Mean = 3.83 (SD= .80) N = 1920			Cronbach's Alpha = .86

The result presented in Table 1.4 showed that Senior Assistants yielded the highest overall mean score of 4.13 ( $SD=0.77$ ), followed by Discipline Teachers ( $M = 3.91, SD=0.84$ ), and Counseling Teachers ( $M = 3.74, SD=0.83$ ). Academic Teachers have the lowest of them all with overall mean score of 3.53 ( $SD=0.79$ ). In order to investigate if there were any differences between behavioral teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students and the post they are holding; namely Senior Assistants, Discipline teachers, Counseling teachers, and Academic teachers, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was computed. The one-way, between-subjects analysis of variance (Table 1.5) revealed that a reliable effect of different post on teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying in secondary school,  $F(3, 1916) = 52.416, p < .001, \alpha = .05$ . That is, there is an evidence to claim that there is a significant difference ( $p < .001$ ) within comparisons of teacher behavioral self-efficacy in dealing with bullying, among the four different post that the teachers are holding.

Table 1.5 : One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA): Differences in Teacher Self- Efficacy in dealing with Bullying in Secondary School by Post they are Holding (senior assistant, discipline teachers, counseling teachers, academic teachers)

Teacher Self-Efficacy	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	89.793	3	29.931	52.416	.000
Within Groups	1094.088	1916	.571		
Total	1183.882	1919			

$p < .001$

Table 1.6 : Overall Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of Students and Parents Level of Agreement Towards Teacher's Behavioral Efficacy in Dealing with Bullying Among Students prior to post they are holding

Respondents	Senior Assistant		Discipline Teacher		Counseling Teacher		Academic Teacher		
	N	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Students	3748	4.2	1.09	3.8	1.38	2.3	1.23	2.7	1.07
Parents	798	3.8	0.94	3.6	1.87	1.5	0.96	2.3	1.16

Cronbach's Alpha = .79

## Discussion

In the present study, all the three sub-scales (behavioral self-efficacy, cognitive self-efficacy, and emotional self-efficacy) in dealing with bullying considered as moderate. This suggests that in terms of behavioral cognitive, and emotional aspect, majority of the in-service teachers were quite confidence enough of themselves in having the ability to successfully perform their duty or responsibility in dealing with bullying cases among students in secondary school. Even though this can be considered as a healthy level of self-efficacy for our in-service teachers, hence, this does not mean that it is considered as sufficient enough. Therefore in order to sustain the existing level or may be push it up to a better level of teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students, focus should be given to nourish and encourage more professional development, physiological coping and establishing a social support system in the school organization.

Of all the three sub-scales, behavioral self-efficacy has the highest overall mean scores ( $M=4.38, SD=0.91$ ). This result (moderate level of teacher behavioral self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students) also proved that teachers in the present study are quite confidence and know what to do or what they are doing whenever they are facing with bullying cases among students. Even though most of the teachers perceived their behavioral self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students in secondary schools as moderately high, respond or feedback from students and parents turned out slightly the

otherwise, and this is something that really need to be taken into account in order to at least ease the problem of bullying among students in secondary schools.

In term of difference in dealing with bullying prior to the post that the teachers are holding (senior assistant teachers, discipline teachers, counseling teachers, academic teachers), results from the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed that there is a significant difference ( $p < .001$ ) within comparisons of teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying, among the four different post that the teachers are holding. This implies that in-service teachers in secondary schools, with difference post, would perform or demonstrate difference level of teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students in secondary schools. As expected, Senior assistants demonstrated the highest level of teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students in the present study, could be due to certain factors. Whenever there is a disciplinary case, the first person that the teachers would think of will be either discipline teacher or senior assistants of the school. Sometimes, due to the teaching work loads that the discipline teachers have to bear, the next choice would be the senior assistants of the school. It does not mean that the rest of the teachers did not care about the students. It just that, sometimes because of the teaching process or a lot of paper works to do, teachers tend to send or let the senior assistants (especially senior assistant of student's affair) to handle some of the disciplinary problems caused by the students. Senior assistants normally have less teaching hours compare to other teachers and even though they have some administrative works to deal with. Perhaps this can explain why senior assistants of the present study had the highest mean score of teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying.

Based on the result of the present study, the mean score of the level of teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students for discipline teachers is slightly lower than the mean score of senior assistants. Discipline teachers are actually academic teachers whose had been appointed by the school administrative (normally the school's principal) as discipline teachers and given the authority to handle or deal with disciplinary problems created by the students. Discipline teachers also given the authority by the school's principal to punish the students if they are found guilty. With that mandate, discipline teachers are the most sought person besides senior assistants whenever disciplinary case arise.

In terms of level of agreement towards teachers behavioral self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students from students and parents, prior to the post they are holding, Senior Assistants and discipline teachers have quite high overall mean compare to Counseling teachers and Academic teachers (Table 1.6). This showed that, even though overall half of the students and parents did not agree that teachers have high behavioral efficacy in dealing with bullying among students, they somehow agreed that Senior Assistants and discipline teachers play an important role towards this matter. Even though teachers have optimistic self-efficacy which in a way can enhance or impede their motivation towards dealing with bullying cases in school, feedback regarding teachers' efficacy from stakeholders especially from the students and parents could be a true mirror which actually reflects teachers' efficacy in this matter.

#### **Implications and suggestions for educational practice**

From a social cognitive perspective, individuals are actively analyzing information around them through cognitive and metacognitive processes, causing them to alter or adjust their thinking and behavior accordingly. To smooth the progress of improvements in their self-efficacy (in dealing with bullying), in-service teachers can be encouraged or supported to develop an awareness of their own cognitive process. Self-monitoring of their own performance could be deliberated through self-reflective strategies such as journal or log writing during staffs meeting or special meeting with the school principal regarding bullying cases or disciplinary problems. Such strategies will help in-service teachers to focus their attention on past success and failure, and at the same time discriminate or differentiate between effective and ineffective performance of dealing with bullying cases among students, hence, monitoring their own progress. However, the use of journal or log writing as an instrument for reflective thinking must take into account that journal or log writing will only be affective in promoting self-reflection when: (i) teachers know or have the appropriate techniques or procedures (for example, what questions to ask) that will encourage thoughtful reflective writing, and (ii) teachers are given meaningful and thoughtful feedback about the content of their entries. Although this requires an investment of time and effort from in-service teachers and other teachers or the school principals, it could be a powerful instrument for increasing in-service teachers' efficacy beliefs about their capabilities in dealing with bullying among students, and of course for the betterment and wellbeing of our future generation. Thus, it is strongly recommended that in-service teachers should have reflective practice of their performance of involvement (directly or indirectly) in dealing with bullying cases among students in secondary schools. This is essential because it can provide specific influence on the development of their beliefs regarding their ability in dealing with bullying cases among students, especially if they question themselves and reflect on how they handle or deal with various bullying cases among students.

Different teachers could have different personality traits and this could also affect teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students. So it is worth to examine the link between teacher personality traits and teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students. An established personality inventory could be used to examine if there is any significant difference between the variables. This could be one of the important components that can be used by the Ministry of Education in order to evaluate teachers' performance (dealing with disciplinary problems among students in schools) when they apply for a higher promotion or post.

It is expected that this study would have several limitations. In term of the number of the participants that will be involved in this study, it is only limited to 1920 in-service secondary school teachers, 3748 students, and 798 parents from 120 schools which involves only 6 states in Malaysia. This impinges upon being able to generalize the results to the wider population. Ideally, participants of this study should consist of the entire population to strengthen the findings of this study and to extend upon what has been revealed. Access to on-line questionnaires may assist in improving the response rate. In order to determine



the level of teachers' self-efficacy in dealing with school bullying in secondary school, it is only limited to three criteria; behavioral, cognitive, and emotional. To fully understand the factors or elements that account for the variance in school teachers' 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.

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