

DEALING WITH BULLYING AMONG STUDENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: SOURCES OF TEACHERS' SELF-EFFICACY

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ABSTRACT

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, particularly in Malaysia. There is also relatively little information about sources that have an impact on teacher self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying in school, in the local context or probably in the international arena. The source of influence is predicted to be from behavior factors (i.e. mastery experience); environmental factors (i.e. vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and contextual climate) and personal factors (i.e. demographic information, and psychological arousal). The purpose of this study was to identify the overall source of influence that contributes to teacher self-efficacy and identify which sources of influence are significant predictors of teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students in secondary schools. This quantitative research utilizes a correlation method in order to examine the relationship between various sources of influence and teacher sense of efficacy when dealing with bullying among students in secondary schools. Based on the standardized regression coefficients (β s) indices of direct effects of each predictor variable on teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students, Mastery Experience contributed the highest direct effect or influence on teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students, followed by Verbal Persuasion and Contextual Climate. Although there is no documented record of local research that examine the sources of influence on teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students, one clear finding that arises from this study is that, mastery experience and verbal persuasion are prominent predictors of teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students in secondary schools. It is recommended that teacher preparation or teacher developmental programs regarding the issue of bullying among students in secondary schools, explicitly address these two influences with specific types of training and educational experiences that focus on mastery building through cognitive and meta cognitive strategies, cultivating self-regulation competencies, and establishing a social support system.

Key words: Teacher Self-Efficacy, Dealing with bully, Secondary school students, Source of influence, Mastery Experience

Introduction

Bullying is a serious and pervasive problem in schools almost around the world. Surveys indicate that students are bullied in school at some point and bullying is still one of the major social concern in many parts of the world 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; Farrington & Tofli, 2009; Shakoor *et al.*, 2012; Rigby & Smith, 2011). For those who are the targets of bullying, the incidents can be the most painful experiences of childhood, often leaving lasting scars. Victims can experience anxiety, fear, and even depression for years to come. The possibility of being bullied can cause students to live in a state of fear, focusing on little else. Despite the pervasiveness and potential seriousness of bullying, it is a problem that often escapes detection by teachers. But at the same time, we must acknowledge that students rarely bully victims in front of their teachers. As educators, whether they like it or not, teachers certainly have an important role to play in the prevention of bullying and intervening when incidents of bullying arise, work to combat the phenomenon of bullying. As bullying is a persistent problem, which continues to evolve, dealing with it effectively remains a considerable and complex challenge especially for the teachers.

Statement of the problem

It is no doubt that, no matter what post the teachers are holding, they still play a crucial role in preventing and managing the widespread problem of bullying (Rigby, 2011; Rigby & Smith, 2011). Despite the increasing interest in teacher self-efficacy over the years, as far as the researcher is able to determine, there is no local or international published research that explores the interplay of sources and their influences on the development of teacher self-efficacy particularly regarding dealing with bullying in secondary school. There is also relatively little information about sources that have an impact on teacher self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying in school, in the local context or probably in the international context. Henson (2001) stated that prior attempts to conceptualize teacher efficacy "have all but ignored these sources of information and their relationship to efficacy and ultimate behavior" (p.7). Much still remained to be explored, especially in the local culture and educational context. As efficacy sources especially regarding dealing with bullying in school may vary across different cultural and educational settings, and the development of self-efficacy is believed to be situation-specific (Pajares, 1992), the need to undertake a systematic empirical study in the Malaysian context is essential. This is because, with the understanding of

relevant or pertinent sources that could contribute to teacher self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying in secondary school, educational effort can be aimed towards fostering positive sense of teacher self-efficacy regarding this matter.

Purposes 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 teachers self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying in secondary school (mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, physiological arousal, contextual climate, demographic information) and secondly, is to identify the relative strength of these sources of influence on teacher self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying in secondary school.

Significance of the study

As teacher self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying is developed and maintained through various sources of influence, it is important to understand the magnitude of these influences because they provide the foundation in designing future educational interventions aimed at strengthening teacher self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying in secondary school. Because this study focuses on the antecedents of teacher self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying in secondary school, the findings will supply invaluable knowledge base on the extent to which various sources of efficacy information, namely: mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, physiological arousal, contextual climate, and demographic information influence teacher self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying cases during their in-service year.

This study also hopes to provide fruitful inputs for the state or federal departments of education to develop more effective model anti-bullying policies and prevention programs especially involving teachers and students. Furthermore, based on the finding of this study, maybe some new recommendations or modification regarding teachers training on addressing and tackling bullying behavior in the classroom and school compound can be made. Even though anti-bullying programs are ongoing and are integrated with the curriculum, the school's discipline policies and other violence prevention efforts at school, students are being bullied by others. One cannot simply dismiss it as inevitable part of childhood and through training, collaboration, and carefully designed programs especially involving policymakers, educators, and teachers, it is hoped that this bullying phenomenon can be reduced and eventually be under controlled particularly in Malaysia. Most importantly, based on the outcomes of this research, it is hoped that policymakers, educators, and teachers can work out something different together to ensure that schools are a conducive place where students feel welcome, safe and ready to carry on with their studies.

Teacher's self-efficacy

Consistent with the general formulation of self-efficacy, Tschanen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy 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 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 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 self-belief in one's capability as a teacher to exercise control over one's emotions in specific situations.

The involvement/engagement of teachers in school bullying

School bullying is one such type of the various disruptive behaviors that teachers are confronted with. When asked to what extent teachers feel prepared to manage classroom behaviors, almost three-quarters of secondary school teachers reported being dissatisfied with their professional training (Merrett & Wheldall, 1993). In addition, learning to manage disruptive classroom behaviors has been identified by teachers as one of their main objectives in their training of pre-service teachers (Clarke, 2001). Although school officials, teachers, parents, and students are exerting great efforts to make schools friendlier and safer places, a reduction in bullying is not always evident. These efforts are often centered on teachers' approaches to both preventing and intervening in bullying incidents that may occur throughout the school. Indeed, teachers are considered instrumental in managing bullying whereby almost every school anti-bullying program requires active participation of teachers. It is surprising, therefore, that teachers' self-efficacy have been largely neglected in studies on bullying. Although most teachers fully understand the need to prevent bullying and irrefutable damage that bullying can do, some do not know how exactly to stop it. Without proper training in prevention, identification and action techniques, teachers may be left unable to stop bullying behaviors.

There are a variety of bully prevention training programs available to teachers on local, state and national levels. Many school-wide initiatives and specific programs have been designed and implemented to control bullying. In fact, legislation in several countries (e.g., Canada, United States, and England) requires school professionals to develop policy and implement anti-bullying programs to protect students from bullying. At the center of these initiatives are teachers. Their involvement may include planning, implementing, and evaluating strategies (Glover, Cartwright, & Gleeson, 1998; Roland, 2000; Sullivan, 2000; Stevens *et al.*, 2001). They may meet regularly with consultants and school staff to discuss the nature of the problem at their school. They often attend professional development workshops and conferences to learn more about managing bullying. They

then attempt to transfer this information to their classroom by facilitating student discussions, teaching from a curriculum on bullying, actively looking for incidents on the playground, and supporting the victims and disciplining the bullies. They may also be called upon to collect data to determine the effectiveness of their efforts (Hiebert, 2003). The importance of teachers in managing day-to-day bullying problems is emphasized in one of the first bullying program evaluations that examined the process of implementing an anti-bullying program. Kallestad and Olweus (2003) found that the key determinants of a program's ability to reduce bullying are teachers' knowledge and concern. Teachers with a great deal of knowledge and concern about bullying exerted the greatest efforts in implementing anti-bullying strategies. Moreover, their students reported the greatest reduction in bullying problems. Thus, teacher awareness and commitment may be instrumental in reducing bullying behaviors at school.

Whenever a teacher engaged in a bullying problem, the seriousness of a bullying incident may impact upon the type of response a teacher might take. For example, Rigby (2002) suggests that teachers in some schools might adopt a more punitive approach where bullying behavior is perceived to be more serious, while Yoon (2004) found that teachers' perceptions of seriousness were significantly and positively correlated with both reported likelihood of intervention and empathy towards victims of bullies. Yoon and Kerber (2003) report that teachers are both less likely to intervene in situations they perceive to be less serious and when they do intervene, they use more lenient strategies in situations that are perceived to be less serious.

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 behavior 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. 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 behaviors 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.

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.

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.

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.

People who hold strong self-efficacy beliefs tend to be more satisfied with their job (Trentham, Silvern, & Brogdon, 1985) demonstrate more commitment (Trentham, *et al.* 1985), and have lower absenteeism (McDonald & Siegall, 1993). For teachers who have high self-efficacy, they tend to persist in failure situations (Gibson & Dembo, 1984), take more risks with the curriculum (Guskey, 1988), use new teaching approaches (Gibson & Dembo, 1984), get better gains in children's achievement (Brookover *et al.*, 1979) and have more motivated students (Midgely *et al.*, 1989).

Subjects

The targeted population for this study consisted of all in-service teachers currently teaching or serving in secondary schools in West and East Malaysia. *Stratified Random Sampling* had been used in order to select a sample of individuals from the accessible population of this study. It is often useful to combine cluster random sampling with the individual random sampling (accomplished by *stratified random sampling*) in order to avoid a common error, whereby, a researcher randomly selecting only one cluster as a sample. Even if there was a large number of individuals within the cluster, it is the cluster that has been randomly selected, rather than individuals, and hence the researcher is not entitled to draw conclusions about the target population of such group (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2007). Using the *stratified random sampling* the researcher had selected six states randomly from the population of fourteen states in Malaysia for example, Kedah, Pahang, Selangor/Wilayah Persekutuan, Johor, Sarawak and Sabah. Then, the researcher randomly selected 20 schools from each state. After that, 16 teachers from each school had been selected using *simple random sampling* techniques. All together they were 1920 teachers involved in this study.

Instrument

A questionnaire was utilized in this study in order to gather necessary data or relevant information. After testing for validity and reliability as well as the factor analysis of the instrument, the revised questionnaire had been administered to the actual samples of this study. The researcher had sought written permission from the Educational Planning and Research Division, Ministry of Education, Malaysia, to conduct the study. Upon approval, consent letter had been sought from each of the State Educational Director of all the five states (Kedah, Pahang, Selangor/Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, Johor, and Sarawak) which involved in this study. There were three sections in the questionnaire. **Section A** consisted of the *Sources of Influence on Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale Regarding Dealing with Bullying in Secondary School* with 40 self-constructed items. The 40 self-constructed items regarding this matter has been developed by the researcher since there is no prior study has been done to determine the sources of influence on teacher self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying in school. **Section B** comprised the *Teacher 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**, was aimed to get several relevant demographic information of the participants. The Participants indicated the degree of agreement or disagreement with the statements by responding to a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1(*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Data analysis

The quantitative data were entered into the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences version 20.0 (SPSS 20.0) for the purpose of analysis of the data collected.

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

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 teacher self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying, as criterion variable. Additionally, variables were examined for assumptions underlying multivariate analysis such as normality, independence, and multicollinearity.

In order to examine the amount of variance contributed by each of the hypothesized sources in determining teacher self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying in secondary school, standard multiple regression strategy was employed. Multiple regression analysis provides a means of objectively assessing the magnitude and direction (positive and negative) of each independent variable's relationship (Hair *et al.*, 1998). Specifically, the assessment of unique and collective contributions made by each variable from demographic information, mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, physiological arousal, and contextual climate to explain the variability in teacher self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying in secondary school, involved using multiple regression. The order of entry for the variables reflects Bandura's (1986, 1997) theoretical description of their relative strength in determining self-efficacy. In order to determine the generalizability of results to the population, significant test of regression coefficients will also be conducted using *F*-ratio test.

Findings

Table 1 shows the overall percentages, mean scores and standard deviations comparison of the five sources of influence on teacher self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying in secondary school. The overall mean was calculated for each subscale by dividing the total mean for the particular subscale with the number of items available for that subscale. A mean score of 3.00 was used as the mid-point to determine whether the participants agree or disagree with the statement. A mean score of 3.00 represents neutral influence on teacher 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 1: Overall Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for each Subscales of the Sources of Influence on Teacher Self-Efficacy Regarding Dealing With Bullying

| Subscale | <i>M</i> | <i>Influence</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-----------------------|----------|------------------|-----------|
| Mastery Experience | 3.88 | Strong | 0.90 |
| Verbal Persuasion | 3.75 | Strong | 0.94 |
| Contextual Climate | 3.54 | Strong | 1.07 |
| Physiological Arousal | 3.46 | Strong | 0.97 |
| Vicarious Experience | 3.40 | Strong | 0.95 |

N = 1920,

Cronbach's Alpha = .98

Based on the result showed on Table 1, all the five mean scores fell between the range of 3.40 up to 3.88. 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 and Mastery Experience showed the highest source of influence followed by Verbal Persuasion, Physiological Arousal and Vicarious Experience.

The results regarding agreement and disagreement of nine items regarding Mastery Experience revealed that experiences dealing with certain bullying cases have the strongest influence among all mastery experiences with quite a high mean of 4.35 ($SD=1.79$). The participants experiences dealing with certain bullying cases which made them know and understand more about bullying phenomena in school as well as made them feel confidence to deal with it, also yielded a high mean of 4.32 ($SD = 1.34$). On the basis of findings presented in Table 2, there seemed to be a general agreement that mastery experience contributed a strong influence towards teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students in secondary school. An analysis of data revealed that experiences dealing with certain bullying cases have the strongest influence among all mastery experiences with quite a high mean of 4.35 ($SD=1.79$). The participants experiences dealing with certain bullying cases which made them know and understand more about bullying phenomena in school as well as made them feel confidence to deal with it, also yielded a high mean of 4.32 ($SD = 1.34$). More than fifty percent of the participants ($N=1920$) agreed that: (1)The experiences gained during their practicum training (trainee teacher) has adequately prepared them to face the challenges of dealing with bullying among students in school (sixty four point five eight percent); (2)whenever they came across a difficult bullying case, they never gave up and dealt with it successfully (seventy four point four three percent); (3)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 (fifty five point two one percent) Nevertheless, sixty five point two six percent of the participants agreed that dealing with problematic, defiant, rebellious, stubborn students, who are involved in bullying cases has always been quite a difficult situation for them.

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

| Item # | Disagree | Neutral Frequency (Percentage) | Agree | M | SD |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|------|------|
| 1. The experiences gained during my practicum training (trainee teacher) has adequately prepared me to face the challenges of dealing with bullying among students in school. | 333 (17.34) | 347 (18.07) | 1240 (64.58) | 3.88 | 1.02 |
| 6. * Dealing with problematic, defiant, rebellious, and stubborn students, who are involved in bullying cases has always been quite a difficult situation for me. | 307 (15.99) | 360 (18.75) | 1253 (65.26) | 3.89 | 1.00 |
| 10. My experiences handling several bullying cases in school helped enhance my self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying. | 93 (4.84) | 102 (5.31) | 1725 (89.84) | 4.35 | 1.09 |
| 11. 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. | 533 (27.76) | 327 (17.03) | 1060 (55.21) | 3.68 | 1.03 |
| 16. When I came across a difficult bullying case, I never gave up and dealt with it successfully. | 130 (6.77) | 361 (18.80) | 1429 (74.43) | 4.08 | 1.07 |
| 21. I am proud of the SKT (<i>Sasaran Kerja Tahunan</i>) mark that I received for my yearly performance in the school. | 201 (10.47) | 439 (22.86) | 1280 (66.67) | 3.91 | 1.13 |
| 26. I have previously received award/recognition due to my outstanding performance especially regarding dealing with problematic students in my school. | 892 (46.46) | 296 (15.42) | 732 (38.12) | 3.33 | 1.12 |
| 30. When I was a student in secondary school, I was usually at ease when facing with bullying incident or when someone wanted to bully me. | 744 (38.75) | 401 (20.89) | 775 (40.36) | 3.41 | 1.01 |
| 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. | 96 (5.00) | 104 (5.42) | 1720 (89.58) | 4.32 | 1.04 |

Mastery Experience Mean = 3.88 ($SD = 0.90$)
 $N = 1920$

* Negative item

Cronbach's Alpha = .98

Looking at Table 3, an analysis of data revealed that positive feedback received from school principal or senior assistants regarding teacher's ability in dealing with bullying case among the students in the school, has the strongest influence among all verbal persuasions with a high mean score of 4.26 ($SD=1.23$). Besides that, sufficient moral support given by the school principal where dealing with bullying in school among students is concerned, has also influence teacher's self-efficacy in dealing with bullying case among the students in the school, with a mean score of 4.16 ($SD=1.52$).

Table 3 : General Agreement and Disagreement on Verbal Persuasion as Source of Influence on Teacher Self-Efficacy in Dealing With Bullying in Secondary School: Collapsed Columns

| Item # | Disagree | Neutral Frequency (Percentage) | Agree | M | SD |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|------|------|
| 3. My family members are proud that I am a teacher and encouraged me to take bullying problem among students, as a serious problem that need to be handled immediately and effectively. | 212 (11.04) | 436 (22.70) | 1272 (66.25) | 3.93 | 1.08 |
| 8. * I have teacher friends who often grieve over or lament about handling problematic students or any disciplinary case created by students, especially bullying among students. | 774 (40.31) | 255 (13.28) | 891 (46.41) | 3.40 | 1.17 |
| 13. I received words of encouragement from my colleagues whenever I dealt with bullying case which involved my own students. | 845 (44.01) | 381 (19.84) | 694 (36.15) | 3.32 | 1.12 |
| 18. My school principal gave sufficient moral support where dealing with bullying in school among students is concerned. | 70 (3.65) | 331 (17.23) | 1519 (79.11) | 4.16 | 1.52 |
| 23. I received "thank you" card and words of appreciation from students especially those who been involved in disciplinary cases that I dealt with. | 1089 (56.72) | 360 (18.75) | 471 (24.53) | 3.08 | 1.08 |
| 28. People I know often encourage me to become a responsible and dedicated person especially when dealing with students' problems. | 256 (13.33) | 548 (28.54) | 1116 (58.13) | 3.80 | 1.12 |
| 32. My parents/spouse are supportive whenever I talked or discuss my problem with them, especially regarding bullying phenomena in my school. | 362 (18.86) | 304 (15.83) | 1254 (65.31) | 3.88 | 1.33 |
| 34. I received positive feedback from my principal or senior assistants regarding my ability in dealing with bullying case among the students in the school. | 113 (5.89) | 158 (8.22) | 1649 (85.88) | 4.26 | 1.23 |
| 38. I received positive feedback from my colleagues regarding my ability in dealing with bullying case among the students in the school. | 251 (13.07) | 319 (16.61) | 1350 (70.31) | 3.99 | 0.98 |

Verbal Persuasion Mean = 3.75 ($SD=0.94$)

* Negative item

N = 1920

Cronbach's Alpha = .98

In terms of the significance test, the F -ratio was used to test how well the predictor variables collectively correlated with teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students. The multiple regression model with all six predictors produced $R^2 = .770$, $F(6, 1913) = 1068.705$, $p < .001$. Specifically, looking at Table 4 the F -ratio was quite large ($F=1068.705$) and highly significant ($p < .001$). This showed that there are significant relationship between all the predictor variables with teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students (Multiple $R = 0.88$). The R^2 value of .770 also showed that all the six variables (Physiological Arousal, Mastery Experience, Verbal Persuasion, Various Experience, Contextual Climate and gender) together significantly predicted teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students.

Table 4 : Anova

| Model | Sum of Square | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|--------------|---------------|------|-------------|----------|------|
| 1 Regression | 911.094 | 6 | 151.849 | 1068.705 | .000 |
| Residual | 271.812 | 1913 | .142 | | |
| Total | 1182.906 | 1919 | | | |

$P < .001$

Predictors : Contextual Climate, Gender, Physiological Arousal, Mastery Experience, Verbal Persuasion, Vicarious Experience
Dependent Variable: Teacher Self-Efficacy In Dealing With Bullying

When all the variables were entered into the equation of multiple regression analysis, only Mastery Experience, Verbal Persuasion, and Contextual Climate had significant positive regression weights (Table 5), indicating that all these three variables significantly predicted teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students. Gender, vicarious experience, and physiological arousal did not contribute to the multiple regression model.

The standardized regression coefficients (β s) are indices of direct effects of each predictor variable on teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students. As can be seen from Table 5, results indicate that Mastery Experience accounted for the highest direct effect on teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students, with beta weight of .454 at $p < .001$ ($t = 30.730$). The second direct effect on teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students is Verbal Persuasion, with beta weight of .318 at $p < .001$ ($t = 21.927$). With beta weight of .153 at $p < .001$ ($t = 10.405$) Contextual Climate yielded the third direct effect on teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students in secondary school.

Table 5 : Coefficients

| Predictors Variables | B | Std. Error | β | t | sig. |
|-----------------------|-------|------------|---------|--------|------|
| Constant | .764 | .043 | | 17.915 | .000 |
| Verbal Persuasion | .254 | .012 | .318 | 21.927 | .000 |
| Vicarious Experience | .057 | .013 | .070 | 4.480 | .000 |
| Contextual Climate | .128 | .012 | .153 | 10.405 | .000 |
| Physiological Arousal | .064 | .012 | .084 | 5.448 | .000 |
| Mastery Experience | .364 | .012 | .454 | 30.730 | .000 |
| Gender | -.056 | .018 | -.034 | -3.066 | .002 |

Note. $N = 1920$; $R^2 = .770$; Adjusted $R^2 = .769$ $p < .001$

Dependent Variable: TSEDWBULLY (Teacher Self-Efficacy In Dealing With Bullying)

Discussion

Of all the sources of influence, Mastery Experience has the highest overall mean scores of 3.87 ($SD = 1.06$). 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. Looking at the results from the collected data, experiences dealing with certain bullying cases viewed as the most important element that can influence teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students, with almost three-quarter of the participants agreeing to it. This explains why the same number of participants agreed that whenever they came across a difficult bullying case, they never gave up and dealt with it successfully. Besides that, experiences dealing with certain bullying cases made them know and understand more about bullying phenomena in school and they feel confidence to deal with it. More than half of the participants also agreed that their experiences gained during their practicum training (trainee teacher) has adequately prepared them to face the challenges of dealing with bullying among students in school. This finding supports studies carried out by Hoy and Woolfolk (1990) who reported that pre-service teachers found actual student teaching experience impacted positively on their personal teaching efficacy.

Even though majority of the participants of this study seem to agreed that experience dealing with bullying would influence their self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students, more than half of them agreed that dealing with problematic, defiant, rebellious, stubborn students, who are involved in bullying cases has always been quite a difficult situation for them. As teachers it expected that they not only dealing with normal or simple bullying cases but it is sometimes beyond that. It is important to note that in-service teacher not only needed to experience various types of bullying cases, but they needed to experience some kind of "successful" dealing with especially difficult bullying situation. This is because Bandura (1997) emphasized that self-efficacy arose not only from mastery experience (or other efficacy sources) but also from continuous cognitive and metacognitive processing of relevant information around them. Therefore, the ministry of education must be mindful of how these sources of influence on teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying, are weighted and interpreted by in-service teacher that in turn affect their self-efficacy level when dealing with bullying in schools.

Even though Bandura (1977,1997) viewed verbal persuasion as a comparatively weak sources of efficacy information, he also again noted that if persuaders are important significant others in one's life, they can play an important parts in the development of self-efficacy. In this study, among family members, friends, school principals, other teachers, students and teachers' lecturer when they were in teacher's training college or university; verbal persuasion received from school principal or senior assistants regarding teacher's ability in dealing with bullying case among the students in the school, has the strongest influence among all verbal persuasions. This shows that, positive or encouraging verbal messages or social persuasion can influence someone or individual in the sense that, it exerts extra effort or demonstrates persistent behavior necessary to succeed when facing difficult or much more challenging tasks.

When all the variables were entered into the equation of multiple regression analysis, only Mastery Experience, Verbal Persuasion and Contextual Climate yielded significant relationship with teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students. 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. Based on the results of the multiple regression, mastery experience made most independent contribution to teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students. This means that enactive experience appeared to have the strongest impact on in-service teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students, independently. In this particular study, in-service teachers 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. These teachers were actually engage in the process of handling or dealing with several bullying cases among students. When in-service teachers are convinced that they have what it takes to succeed, they are more resilient and flexible of adversity of bullying phenomena involving students, and these teachers quickly rebound from setbacks or any obstacles. 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).

The fact that verbal persuasion also contributed direct effect to teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students, reflected the importance of positive performance feedback and encouragement especially from evaluators who were viewed as competent, important and have authority or power. Given this situation, it is especially crucial that school principals and colleagues with higher positions (e. g heads of departments) pay more attention or focus on constructive feedback highlighting some of the teachers capabilities in terms of dealing with bullying cases among students in the schools. A supportive social system whereby meaningful interactions and positive gestures will definitely leave lasting impressions, in away urging as well as influence in-service teachers to put in extra effort when carrying out their duty as teachers in combating the nonstop bullying cases among students especially in secondary schools.

Implications and suggestions for educational practice

As noted earlier, the findings of this study showed that mastery experience consistently remained a crucial source of influence on teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students. Therefore, training for teachers as well as in-house training for in-service teachers, should focus on acquiring self-regulatory competence so that teachers 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 behavioral 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 behavioral 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, selecting and organizing information (Zimmerman, 1994); (ii) learners consciously regulate their own behavior by doing self-evaluation, self-monitoring and self-reaction (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).

The findings of this study indicate that verbal persuasion has the second highest effect on teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying level. As noted by Woolfolk Hoy (2000), perceptions of support available such as from the administrators, colleagues, parents, and the community shaped teachers' sense of competence. Results of the present study showed that besides parents and family members, colleagues and school principals were most influential sources on their self-efficacy in dealing with bullying cases among students in secondary schools. School principals are viewed as more important persuaders as compared to colleagues in the development of teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students in secondary schools. School principals who have contact with in-service teachers at a personal level especially when dealing with particular bullying case, should aware of these findings because negative appraisals weakened self-efficacy beliefs much easier than the strengthening of self-efficacy through verbal support and encouragement. School principals should give genuine guidance or realistic feedbacks to in-service teachers and not to confuse them with imprudent praise or blank encouraging conversations. Regularity and immediacy of feedback could also help to create higher perceptions of personal capabilities. Bandura (1997) noted that the impact of verbal persuasion on self-efficacy is only as strong as the receiver's confidence in the person who issues them.

A social support system could be encouraged in schools for in-service teachers especially the newly posted teachers. Informal social support from school principals, senior assistants, and colleagues could complement the existing formal support by veteran teachers or seniors in the schools. Gray and Gray (1985) reported that 92% of the new teachers do not directly seek help form colleagues except indirectly by swapping stories about personal experiences. The researchers stated that "more

experience swapping is needed; a sense of community must be established, consisting of interdependency, shared concern, a sense of common fate, and a sense that others 'stand by' when one is under stress of uncertainty about what to do" (p.43).

With today's technological and electronic networking advancement, teacher networks and virtual learning communities can be established among teachers to bring together like-minded individuals in a non-evaluative environment for support. It would be a brilliant and smart move if the ministry of Education of Malaysia to initiate an e-community between all teachers and all schools in the country, whereby educators in general, with new teachers as recipients, can form groups of discussion or forum to support each other by exchanging success stories (e.g. bullying cases that they managed to solved in their schools), resources and ideas regarding bullying phenomena, air grievances or frustrations regarding dealing with bullying cases, and so on. By using e-mails, online discussion boards or chat sessions, the interrelated communities of teachers (in-service teachers as well as those who had retired) can provide a forum for meaningful and rewarding teacher growth and development.

It is obvious that, this study has been self-report, survey, and co-relational in nature. According to Henson (2001), the experimental or quasi-experimental and/or long term designs are near absent in the literature, leaving cross-sectional snapshots of teacher perceptions of their capabilities and such designs (self-report, survey, and co-relational) are unlikely to shed much light on the complex interplay of self-efficacy information and self-efficacy development. As in any self-reported data, responses from the participants may be influenced by social desirability, that is, reluctance to endorse unpopular beliefs, or endorse items perceived to be "correct". Therefore, that the validity of the findings might be limited by the truthfulness of such self-reported responses by the participants. This study is limited to the six categories of predictor variables in affecting teacher self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying in secondary school. To fully understand the factors that account for variance in teacher self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying in secondary school, the situation is definitely more complex. Nonetheless, this study offers the initial step towards an understanding of the factors that are likely to influence teacher self-efficacy regarding dealing with bullying in secondary school.

Additional research methods such as structured interviews and direct observations should be conducted to be further understand the extent or level of influence these efficacy sources (mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, physiological arousal, and contextual climate) have on teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students in secondary schools. It could be useful to explore in greater depths the complex interplay between the antecedents of teacher self-efficacy in dealing with bullying among students, particularly from the cultural and historical perspectives. Furthermore, this will be a good opportunity to investigate how efficacy sources regarding this matter(dealing with bullying among students) are processed cognitively, weighed and interpreted to affects any teacher's sense of personal efficacy in dealing with bullying cases among students.

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