

## 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.

**Keywords:** Self-Efficacy, Bullying, Secondary School, School Principal

### 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 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 school principal 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)