

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

PERCEIVED SELF-EFFICACY IN DEALING WITH  
BULLYING: THE CASE OF LEBANESE SCHOOL  
COUNSELORS

by  
MARIA HANNA EL HELOU

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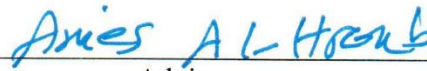
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I dedicate this thesis to:

My dear parents Hanna and Zeina

My sweet sisters Gracia and Mary

My awesome brothers Elias and Joe

My precious Zouzou

## AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Maria Hanna El Helou for Master of Arts  
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Title: Perceived Self-efficacy in Dealing with Bullying: the Case of Lebanese School

### Counselors

The purpose of the study is to examine the counselors' self-efficacy in handling bullying at schools. In other words, the study reviews how confident counselors are in their ability and knowledge to deal with bullying. Twenty counselors participated in the study from ten Lebanese private English-speaking schools.

The study is a correlational study that adopts a mixed method approach; quantitative and qualitative approaches. Two instruments (COSE and CSBI) were used in the study and interviews were conducted for the collection of data. Data analysis was done through SPSS and interpreted using descriptive statistics. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, examined for recurrent themes, coded and interpreted.

Results showed that Lebanese counselors are effective in their general counseling skills as measured by the COSE instrument. Participants reported the highest self-efficacy beliefs for the microskills dimension and the lowest for the awareness of values dimension. Similar conclusions in confidence were made when Lebanese counselors were measured for dealing with bullying using the CSBI instrument. Years of experience and professional development were found to affect the counselors' self-efficacy while training in a graduate program did not.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

School has always been regarded by parents as a secure environment where their kids feel safe and valued. However, a new form of school violence known as bullying has risen. Countries all over the world became really concerned about bullying and turned this act into an international affair following acts of violence occurring in schools located in the United States, and Norway, for example (Cascardi, Brown, Iannarone, & Cardona, 2014; Hazler, Miller, Carney, & Green, 2001) . These violent acts are called “bullying” (Hazler et al., 2001).

Hence, several studies were done to examine bullying incidents at schools across the world including Australia (Cross et al., 2011; Rigby & Slee, 1991), Ireland (Collins, MacAleavy & Adamson, 2004; McMahon, Reulbch, Keeley, Perry, & Arensman, 2010 ), United States (Kennedy, 2015; Nansel et al., 2001; Pelligrini, Bartini & Brooks, 1999), Norway (Olweus, 1993; Undheim & Sund, 2010), Finland (Salmivalli, Sainio, & Hodges, 2013), Spain (Garcia-Mona, Suominen, & Moreno, 2014), Netherland (Jansen et al., 2012), Korea (Kim, Leventhal, Koh, & Boyce, 2009), China (Wu et al., 2015), Turkey (Arslan, Hallett, & Ozlem, 2012; Piskin, 2010), South Africa (Liang, Flisher, & Lombard, 2007), Jordan (Al-Bitar, Al-Omari, Sonbol, A-Ahmad, & Cunningham, 2013), and Lebanon (Khamis, 2015; Zein, 2001),

Boulton (1997) noted that literature does not agree on the definition of bullying. However, according to Nansel et al., (2001) literature agrees on what actions constitute bullying. Nonetheless, several researchers are adopting the definition of bullying provided

by Dan Olweus, a psychology professor, regarded as the “father of bullying”. Olweus (1993, p. 9) defined bullying as: “A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students”. Bullying is an unprovoked and repetitive act of violence in which the bully purposely harms the victim. Bullying is not only verbal; it can be physical or psychological and includes an uneven distribution of power where a more capable person harasses a less capable one (Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Nansel et al., 2001; Sesar, Barisic, Pandza, & Dodaj, 2011; Veenstra et al., 2005).

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) and the United States Department of Justice stated that almost 160,000 pupils miss school daily because of bullying. Most of the children do not report bullying incidents to the teachers or any of the school staff because of the minimal protection from teachers or other staff members who will not interfere due to a lack of proficiency in these situations. In this case, the school is not considered a secure learning environment for the students because of the constant fear of bullying encounters (Mirza, 2010). Conn (2004) claimed that teachers do not intervene when bullying incidents occur since bullying most frequently appears in the psychological form of isolation and exclusion. Teachers consider this form of action less important than actual physical harm. Batsche and Knoff (1994) also claimed that teachers’ reaction towards bullying is unacceptable. They highlighted training teachers to acquire strategies to manage the behavior of the students and thus ensure a safe learning environment.

Batsche and Knoff (1994) mentioned that 15-20% of the Western students face bullying incidents during their school years while Zein (2001) stated that 23% of the Lebanese students from five private schools are involved in bullying problems and recently

Khamis (2015) found that 53.4% of the students from greater Beirut schools are involved in bullying. Bullying does not only affect the bully and the victim. It has negative consequences on the entire school. Because of increased bullying incidents, many schools have applied several procedures to reduce bullying.

Many American schools have dealt with bullying through the “No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)” (p. 60), which promotes a safe school environment for all learners where students develop citizenship and character. Through this act, the U.S. Department of Education requires that every school provide a report card on school safety issues. Students who are trapped in unsafe schools, have the opportunity to go to a better and safer public school or make use of federal funds for private tutoring (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

On the other hand, various Lebanese private schools are lacking bullying policies, but certain policies dealing with issues related to bullying do exist. Rabah (2006) mentioned that teachers and administrators from five private schools claimed that bullying is not a serious issue. They highlighted the importance of teacher interference whenever bullying occurs but teachers claimed that they needed to be trained to acquire the necessary skills for solving these sensitive issues. Therefore, bullying prevention programs are needed to deal with bullying. The review of literature in chapter 2 details several bullying prevention programs, and discusses who should take a leadership role in implementing the programs.

Literature has shown that comprehensive and long lasting programs are the most successful (Lapan, Gysbers, & Petroski, 2001; Lapan, Gysbers, & Sun, 1997; Schaefer-Schiumo & Ginsberg, 2003). Hermann and Fin (2002) believe that the quality of the

intervention is equally as important as the nature of the intervention itself to ensure the effectiveness of the prevention program. Researchers also stated that school counselors have an ethical and legal responsibility in dealing with violence at schools and ensuring a safe learning environment for the students. This puts school counselors in a favorable position to deal with bullying at school.

According to Jacobsen and Bauman (2007), it is vital to study if school counselors possess the necessary information and abilities to choose and apply effective programs to deal with bullying from the available ones. Literature details the role of teachers and administrators in dealing with bullying while the role of school counselor is not mentioned (Jacobsen & Bauman, 2007). Therefore, it is necessary to study the counselors' perceived level of self-efficacy in their information and ability to deal with bullying in the school. In addition, it is necessary to examine the aspects that improve the counselors' self-efficacy.

Bandura (1986) defined self-efficacy as, "the degree to which an individual feels confident in performing a particular task" (p. 391). Lent, Hill, and Hoffman (2003) defined the counselor self-efficacy as, "counselors' beliefs about their ability to perform counseling related behaviors or negotiate particular clinical situations" (p. 97). In addition, Counselor Self-Efficacy belief (CSE) was shown to be an essential factor of effective counseling (Larson & Daniels, 1998). Literature has shown that some factors may influence the counselors' self-efficacy. These include level of graduate training, participation in an in-service/workshop, counseling experience with specific issues, and years of work experience (Bakar, Zakaria, & Mohamed, 2011; Larson & Daniels, 1998; Lent et al., 2003; Melchert, Hays, Wiljanen, & Kolocek, 1996).

Examining counselor self-efficacy concerning bullying intervention programs is

significant since it has crucial implications for student counselors in the area of professional development such as in-service training (Jacobsen & Bauman, 2007).

### **Research Aims and Questions**

The purpose of the study was threefold: (a) exploring the counselors' perceived self-efficacy in dealing with bullying at the school, (b) exploring the counselors' perceived self-efficacy concerning their counseling skills in five aspects: microskills, process, difficult client behavior, cultural competency and awareness of their values; and (c) exploring whether years of work experience, level of training and participation in in-service/workshops affect the counselors' self-efficacy. The questions that guided the study are the following:

1. What is the extent of counselors' awareness of their capabilities concerning their counseling abilities in these five aspects: microskills, process, difficult client behavior, cultural competency and awareness of their values?
2. To what extent are the counselors' self-aware of the knowledge and capabilities for interfering during a bullying situation at school?
3. What are the effects of the following factors: (a) years of experience in the counseling area, (b) the training that counselors received during their graduate studies in the field of bullying intervention, and (c) the attendance at workshops and conferences on bullying, on a counselor's perceived efficiency in interfering with bullying situations that occur at school?

### **Rationale of the Study**

Bullying has become a prevalent issue facing school systems across all nations including Lebanon. Recent research has shown that bullying was and continues to be a

problem in the schools whether in the Arab or Western countries. Research has shown that there are some societal and cultural factors that lead to bullying in the Arab world. Bullying is the result of children being socially committed to a cultural war rather than a peace culture. Children who grow up in socio-cultural environments that are characterized highly by violence and political trouble will be aggressive. As a result, discrimination against minorities is also a major socio-cultural cause of bullying since violence is implemented in all the discriminatory acts. Also, based on the socio-cultural perspective, the mass media leads to increasing the violence behavior of the young Arab children through Turkish, and Western movies and through dramatic shows since it shows that violence is the ideal way to solve our problems. Kazarian and Ammar (2013) mentioned that religious sects, physical appearance (overweight or crooked teeth) were the cause for peer bullying in Lebanon among peers.

Literature details several studies done in the Lebanese context on bullying. For instance, Khamis (2015) found that almost 53.4% of the students from greater Beirut schools were involved in bully/victim problems. Rabah (2006) conducted a study to examine the perceptions of the teachers and administrators regarding bullying in the schools. She found that most teachers and administrators from five private schools claimed that bullying was not a serious issue. They highlighted the importance of teacher interference whenever bullying occurs but teachers claimed that they needed to be trained to acquire the necessary skills to address bullying in schools. Zein (2001) investigated the extent of bullying incidents in upper elementary, middle and high school levels in some Lebanese private schools. The study showed that 23.3% of the 561 participants from six private schools were involved in bullying. Counselors play a significant role in dealing with

bullying, however some studies were done on the role of the counselor in dealing with bullying but no studies were conducted on the counselors' self-efficacy to handle bullying and the factors that improve self-efficacy. Literature also has shown that counselors are in a favorable position to deal with bullying.

Self-efficacy is shown to affect the counselors' performance. Bandura's self-efficacy theory states that information and abilities are significant but not enough for a successful behavioral outcome. Rather efficacy expectations and outcome expectations (explained in chapter 2); two components of self-efficacy are needed. In other words, if the counselor possesses high self-efficacy beliefs in his/her knowledge and the ability to deal with bullying, then s/he will be effective in his or her counseling work and vice versa. Moreover, there are several factors that affect the counselors' self-efficacy such as level of training and years of work experience. Therefore, self-efficacy theory anticipates that counselors who acquire training and experience will gain more confidence in their professional counseling activity (Bandura, 1977, p. 195).

Despite this, are the Lebanese counselors unconfident in their knowledge and abilities to deal with bullying? Is self-efficacy related to the Lebanese counselors' performance in dealing with bullying? What are the factors that affect their self-efficacy and make them successful in their counselor performance? Are these factors years of experience and level of training? These questions represent a gap in the literature. Therefore, it is significant to study the Lebanese counselors' self-efficacy in dealing with bullying at schools and the factors that affect their self-efficacy to work on themselves and become good practitioners in the future to deal with bullying. Thus, schools will no longer



suffer from bullying incidents and will be perceived as environments where students feel safe and comfortable.

It is important to note that, Larson et al., (1992) found items in the Counseling Self-Estimate Inventory could be categorized into five factors that affect the counselors' self-efficacy. These factors include "microskills, process, difficult client behavior, cultural competency and awareness of their values" (Larson et al., 1992, p. 105). These factors are important in this study since they represent general and basic counseling skills every counselor should possess. Lent et al, (2003) found that if the counselor is not confident in his/her basic abilities to deal with counselees, then s/he will not be confident in dealing with more challenging concerns. Those who are confident in their ability to deal with challenging problems will be more confident in dealing with other issues especially the basic ones. Thus, it is important to examine the Lebanese counselors' self-efficacy concerning these five aspects that represent the general counseling abilities.

In addition to that, Charlton (2009) found that the 14 items (Questions 14 until 27) in the CSBI instrument could be categorized into three sub-factors. These sub-factors include efficacy expectations, outcome expectations and outcome values; components of self-efficacy. These factors are important to be included in this study since they are components of self-efficacy. The factor analysis showed a strong factor loadings and sufficient internal consistency for the 14 items and for the 3 sub-factors.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study intends to fill a gap in the literature concerning our understanding of the Lebanese school counselors' perceived self-efficacy in dealing with bullying in schools. In

addition, this study will increase our understanding of and present additional evidence for the importance of level of training and years of work experience on self-efficacy.

When student counselors start their counseling journey, they will be anxious because they do not have enough experience other than the practicum done in the university. The latter aims at producing effective future counselors that makes the lives of their counselees better. Therefore, it is significant to study the factors that improve the Lebanese counselors' performance. Research has shown that one of these factors is self-efficacy. As mentioned earlier, counselors who possess high self-efficacy beliefs will perform better in their counseling duties than those with low self-efficacy beliefs.

Accordingly, it is significant to study the factors that affect the Lebanese counselors' self-efficacy. So, future counselors will become knowledgeable of self-efficacy, the factors that affect their performance, and on the factors that affect their self-efficacy. Therefore, they must work to become better future practitioners and fulfill the objectives of the American School Counselor Association abbreviated by ASCA; promoting the academic achievement, personal/social development, and career planning of the students. The academic and career planning helps the students in identifying their strengths, areas of improvement and interest so that they set with their parents post-secondary goals (ASCA, 2006). In addition, this study will help the professors in understanding what can be done to equip the future counselors with the necessary skills and experiences to prepare them to address bullying at the schools effectively.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter aims to explore the literature that shapes the setting and conditions for this research about school counselor performance and competence for bullying interventions in schools. This literature review focuses on defining bullying, identifying those involved in bullying, discussing causes and consequences of bullying, describing bullying prevention programs, describing the recent nature of school counseling programs as defined by the ASCA and explaining the development of self-efficacy, counselor self-efficacy and the factors that affect self-efficacy.

#### **Bullying**

Bullying has become a major concern facing school systems around the world especially after the violent acts in the schools. Its consequences are more widely recognized nowadays (Cascardi et al., 2014; Hazler et al., 2001; Olweus, 2003). Several countries began researching bullying at their schools, the first being Norway in the early 1970s. Dan Olweus; the father of bullying and a psychology professor conducted a study in Scandinavian countries to examine bullying experiences that children face at school. The study showed that 1 in 16 children from grades 1-12 in Norway participated in bully/victim problems. In 1983, this study was initiated in Sweden and Norway after the suicide of three Norwegian boys who killed themselves because of continuous peer harassment. After the incident, the Norwegian Ministry of Education asked Dan Olweus to develop an intervention plan to deal with bullying at school. Then, the ministry started a nationwide campaign to decrease bullying at schools. Several stakeholders were involved in the

intervention including parents, teachers, students and administrators (Olweus et al., 2007). Subsequently, several countries started to study the severity of bullying in their schools. The studies have reached the same findings. The table below shows the prevalence of bullying in Lebanon, Western and Arab countries.

### Prevalence of Bullying

Table 1  
*The prevalence of Bullying across the World*

| Country                  | Participants of the Study                                      | Results of the Study                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Authors                                                       |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Western Countries</b> |                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                               |
| Australia                | 685 students aged between 6-16 years old from 4 schools        | 1 in 10 students were exposed to peer group bullying<br>Girls reported being bullied less than boys                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | (Rigby & Slee, 1991)                                          |
| Australia                | 7418 students aged between 9 and 14 years old from 106 schools | 26.7% of the Australian students were bullied while 8.8% of the participants were bullying others                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | (Cross et al., , 2011)                                        |
| Spain                    | 7580 students aged between 13 and 18 years old                 | The most common types of bullying victimization include “rumors or gossip (10%), sexual jokes (9.6%), and being called mean names or made fun in a hurtful way (9.5%)” (p. 648). Non-physical abuse is the most prevalent type of bullying among the students (14.5%) while physical abuse affects 0.3% of the participants and both types combined affect 0.1%. | (Garcia-Mona et al., 2014)                                    |
| Netherland               | 6379 students aged 5-6 years                                   | one third of the participants in Netherland were involved in bullying (4% were victims, 17% were bullies and 13% were bully-victims                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | (Jansen et al., 2012)                                         |
| Norway                   | 2,464 Norwegian students aged between 12 and 15 years old      | 10% of the participants were involved in bullying a prevalence rate considered less than the other countries                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | (Undheim & Sund, 2010)<br>(Solberg, Olweus, & Endresen, 2007) |

|                       |                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                      |                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Northern Ireland      | 1079 year 6 students and 1353 post-year 9 students from 120 schools | 40% of primary students and 30% of post-primary students were being bullied while 25% of primary students and 28% of post-primary students disclosed bullying others | (Collins, et al., 2004)   |
| Ireland               | 1870 boys                                                           | 19.4% (363 boys) of the Irish youth boys were bullied                                                                                                                | (McMahon et al., 2010)    |
| Finland               | 17,625 students from grades 3–5 and 7–8                             | 11.6% of the participants in Finland reported being victims of traditional bullying                                                                                  | (Salmivalli et al., 2013) |
| South Africa          | 5074 students from 72 public schools in Cape Town and Durban        | 36.3% of the students were involved in bully/victim problems;8.2% were bullies, 19.3% were victims and 8.7% were both bully-victims                                  | (Liang et al., 2007)      |
| China                 | 15408 students from grades 7-9 and 10-12                            | 14.5% of the Chinese participants were involved in bullying (7.1% reported bullying others, 4.8% reported being bullied and 2.6% were both bullies and victims       | (Wu et al., 2015)         |
| Korea                 | 1655 students from grade 7 and 8                                    | 11% of the Korean sample reported being victims, 17% reported being bullies and 7% reported being victim-bullies                                                     | (Kim et al., 2009)        |
| Turkey-Ankara         | 1154 children from 4 schools;grades 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8               | 35.1% of the participants reported being victims, 6.2% being bullies and 30.2% being both bullies and victims                                                        | (Piskin, 2010)            |
| Turkey                | 1,315 Turkish students from grades 5, 7 and 9                       | 20% of the participants were involved in bully-victim problems (5% were bullies, 8% were victims and 7% were bully-victims                                           | (Arslan et al., 2012)     |
| <b>Arab Countries</b> |                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                      |                           |
| Jordan-Amman          | 920 children of 6 <sup>th</sup> grade students aged 11-12 years old | 47% of Jordanian students (Amman) were involved in bullying incidents; representing a high prevalence rate                                                           | (Al-Bitar et al., 2013)   |

|         |                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                        |                          |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Iran    | 13,486 students                                                                            | 54% of the participants reported being bullied while 34% reported bullying others                                                                                      | (Sadinejad et al., 2015) |
| Lebanon | 561 students from upper elementary, middle and high school students in six private schools | 23.3% of the participants were part of bullying incidents where 8.2% of them were bullies and 14.1% were victims<br>17.1% of the students were bullying their teachers | (Zein, 2001)             |
| Lebanon | 665 children from grade 7-9 from 10 schools located in Greater Beirut                      | 53.4% of the participants were involved in bully/victim problems; 17.7% reported being bullies, 19.8% being victims and 15.8% being bully-victim                       | (Khamis, 2015)           |

Educators in the United States were not aware of the severity and consequences of bullying until recent years (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). An academic interest in bullying was shown in the U.S. after the incidents that happened between 1997 and 1998, which featured bully victims shooting guns after being bullied, threatened, or excluded by their friends at school (Olweus et al., 2007). Pelligrini et al., (1999) conducted a study in the USA to examine bullying amongst grade 5 students. The study showed that 18% of the students were victims while 14% of the sample was bullies. Nansel and her colleagues (2001) also conducted a study to investigate the prevalence of bullying in U.S. schools. The study showed that 29.9% of the participants were involved in bullying, 13% of them reported bullying others, 10.6% were reported as victims and 6.3% were reported as a combination of bullies and victims. Bullying was more evident among males than females and higher amongst younger students (grades 6-8) than older students (grades 9 and 10). In the year 2012-2013, prevalence of bullying in U.S. decreased to 21% among children aged

between 12 and 18 years (Kennedy, 2015). Although the prevalence of bullying decreased, it is still affecting a large number of students in a negative way.

### **Bullying: Definition and Participants**

Bullying is not considered a new trend in schools (Sesar et al., 2012); yet, it is recently perceived as a persistent form of violence in the schools (Batsche & Knoff, 1994). Educators are now giving more attention to bullying since its prevalence rate is almost 30% at schools (Nansel et al., 2001). Bullying affects the bully, the victim and the entire school climate. Thus, schools should implement bullying prevention programs and policies (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). Research discusses several bullying prevention programs. Nonetheless, the question remains in how confident and knowledgeable school counselors are in handling bullying in schools.

**What is bullying?** There is a considerable debate concerning what acts define bullying (Boulton, 1997). According to Nansel and her colleagues (2001) and Sesar et al., (2011) research agrees on what acts define bullying (stated below in the next paragraph). Nonetheless, several researchers have adopted the definition of bullying provided by Dan Olweus who is considered the “father of bullying”. Olweus (1993) suggested that “A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students” (p. 9).

Nansel et al. (2001) defined bullying as “a specific type of aggression in which (1) the behavior is intended to harm or disturb, (2) the behavior occurs repeatedly over time, and (3) there is an imbalance of power, with a more powerful person or group attacking a less powerful one. This asymmetry of power may be physical or psychological, and the aggressive behavior may be verbal (e.g., name-calling, threats), physical (eg, hitting), or

psychological (eg, rumors, shunning/exclusion)” (p. 2094). Sesar et al., (2012, p. 132) defined bullying as “firstly, different patterns of behavior that are repeated over time with the intent to hurt or disturb one or more students by one or more other students. Secondly, there must be a perceived imbalance of power between the bully and the victim which allows one student to dominate over others.” This definition is similar to that of Nansel et al. (2001). Veenstra et al., (2005) shared the definition of Nansel et al., (2001). Other researchers defined bullying as “aggressive goal-oriented behavior that harms another individual within the context of a power imbalance” (Volk, Dane, & Marini, 2014, p. 328).

Bullying can be direct or indirect (Olweus, 1993). Direct bullying involves a victim that is being psychologically and physiologically assaulted by a bully. Indirect bullying also called relational bullying appears “in the form of social isolation and intentional exclusion from a group” (Olweus, 1993, p. 10).

It is important to distinguish between bullying and aggressive behavior. One aspect that differentiates between them is that bullying occurs for an extensive period of time (Olweus, 1991). Another aspect is the “imbalance of power” between the victim and the bully (Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Nansel et al., 2001).

Participants in bullying. Three types of individuals are involved in bullying: the bully, the victim and the bystander. Children do not exhibit the same roles; they can change among them. In other words, the roles are not fixed. For instance, the bystander and the victim might become bullies in the future. In order to understand the overall definition of bullying we need to explore the dimensions of each role.

***The bully.*** A bully is “a person who is habitually cruel or overbearing, especially to smaller or weaker people” (American Heritage Dictionary, n.d.). According to bullies,



bullying is connected to popularity and the improvement of social standing (Espelage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2001). Moreover, bullies victimize other people if they annoy them or if they do not like them (Boulton & Underwood, 1992). The feeling of power that bullies get leads them to believe that they have the upper hand in everything, and are simply unbreakable (Batsche & Knoff, 1994).

Bullies display the following characteristics: defensive and aggressive behaviors against adults, teachers, peers, siblings, (Olweus, 1991), excessive smoking and drinking, withdrawal from or skipping school, taking others' possession, tending to be famous and psychologically strong and revealing little anxiety or lack of confidence . They are also impetuous, bossy, rebellious, and not cooperative with their friends. Bullies have average or high self-esteem, good grades in the elementary levels, but their grades deteriorate, and they become less popular in the intermediate levels (Aluede, Adeleke, Omoike, & Afen-Akapaida, 2008; Craig, 1998; Kumpulainen et al., 1998; Nansel et al., 2001). According to Nansel et al. (2001), bullies are at greater ease in making friends than victims. So, bullies are not considered socially isolated. According to Espelage et al., (2001), bullies possess high social skills. They have the ability to attract or manipulate others. All bullies exhibit an aggressive type of personality.

There is an association between students who demonstrate an aggressive behavior and those who bully (Olweus, 1991). Male teenagers who bully others show more aggressiveness than those who do not bully (Roland, 2002).

Research shows that parents who favor physical discipline, lack a systematic approach to solve problems, accept aggressiveness in their child's conduct and even teach him/her to hit back if someone annoys him/her (Demaray & Malecki, 2003) raise bullies.

***The victim.*** Victims show signs of poor psychosocial functioning. They are typically depressed, anxious, quiet, insecure, cautious and withdrawn (Aluede et al., 2008; Veenstra et al., 2005, p. 673). They also tend to be less prosocial than children who are not victims of bullying (Schwartz, 2000). In addition, victims feel unhappy at school, experience loneliness and shyness, have few good friends, possess negative self-image and are less confident than other students (Aluede et al., 2008; Boulton & Underwood, 1992; Nansel et al., 2001). Victims are less popular than bullies and are frequently socially isolated. They display an air of insecurity and weakness and are considered physically weaker than bullies (Aluede et al., 2008).

Olweus (1991) identified different types of victims: “passive victims and provocative victims” (p. 424). The first type perceives the bully to be their role model and aims toward gaining their respect and acceptance. They do not initiate the fight with bullies nor hit back. They experience loneliness and have a small number of friends if any. The second type of victim has features of restlessness and anxiousness. When the bullies attack them, they hit back (Olweus, 1991, 1993).

***The bystander.*** Bystanders are individuals who observe bullying (Orpinas & Horne, 2006). They can influence the bullying incidents in either a negative or a positive manner (Thornberg et al., 2012). Examples of negatively contributing to bullying are watching the incident passively and encouraging fighting or hitting back without interfering to stop the fight. Conversely, they contribute in a positive way by reporting to the teacher or an adult in the school to disseminate the incident or even become friends with the victims. Many bystanders do not possess the knowledge and abilities to interfere in the bullying incidents, which make them, feel guilty, embarrassed, anxious and worried because of not being able

to calm down the bullies and victims (Orpinas & Horne, 2006). By not interfering, bystanders signal the acceptance of the bullying behavior. Some bystanders laugh and join in bullying by providing positive feedback to the bully such as making gestures. Therefore, these bystanders are reinforcing the bullying behavior. Hence, bystanders are at risk of becoming aggressive in the future (Education Development Center, 2013).

### **Causes of Bullying**

There is no single cause for bullying, but bullying has been linked to certain risk factors, instilling a sustained aggressiveness in the child (Olweus, 1991). Orpinas and Horne (2006) defined risk factors as “characteristics of an individual or an environment that increase the likelihood that the individual will behave in a certain way.” (p. 34). For example, bullies come from families where parents favor physical discipline as a form of punishment and accept the aggressive behavior (Veenstra et al., 2005).

Three factors related to rearing practices correlated with the development of an aggressive personality (Olweus, 1991).

- a) Caregiver’s emotional attitudes: if the caregiver has a negative emotional attitude where warmth and involvement are absent.
- b) Acceptance of aggressive behavior: if the caregiver does not set limits for aggressiveness.
- c) If caregivers use methods such as physical discipline as a form of punishment or aggressive emotional outbreak.

Literature has illustrated that bullying is shown as a learnt reaction that occurs because of rearing practices to which the child is subjected (Ross, 1996). Research has investigated the relationship between the child and his parents and discovered that the

child/parent relationship is negative for bullies when compared with non-bullies. Bullies come from families where parents are authoritarian, lack problem solving skills, and show little supervision for their kids (Batche & Knoff, 1994; Olweus, 1993). Moreover, some family factors were shown to cause bullying such as lack of parenting skills. For example, when a mother does not show love or affection to her child, this will result in the development of a future potential bully.

A study was done in the United States to investigate bullying behaviors of middle school students. The study showed that students, who come from families where parents favor physical discipline as a form of punishment to correct the wrong behavior, reported higher rates of bullying than for students whose parents do not use physical discipline. They also found that bullying behavior would not occur with children who come from families who do not favor physical discipline as a form of punishment and spend more time with their children (Espelage et al., 2001).

A relation between socioeconomic status and bullying was also shown. Children of low socioeconomic families are at a higher risk of being engaged in bullying than those of high socioeconomic families (Jansen et al., 2012). Children of single, young age and low educational level parents are at higher risk of being bullies and bully-victims (Elgar, Craig, Boyce, Morgan, & Vella-Zarb, 2009; Jansen et al., 2012; Wolke, Woods, Stanford, & Schulz, 2001). Children of low maternal and paternal education (Analitis et al., 2009; Jansen et al., 2012; Nordhagen et al., 2005), and single parents set the kids at a high risk of being victimized (Due, Damsgaard, Lund, & Holstein, 2009; Nordhagen, Nielsen, Stigum, & Kohler, 2005). The low socioeconomic status affects the pupils' engagement in victimization and bullying for several reasons. The educational level of parents reveals

features that are in relation to child rearing practices and to the social development of the children. These features include “intellectual resources, norms and values, general and specific information, literacy and problem solving skills” (Jansen et al., 2012, p. 6).

Bandura (1986) believes that external surroundings, whether in the school or at home add to the attainment and utilization of aggression. According to him, individuals learn new behaviors and enlarge their behavioral repertoires by viewing the behaviors of other individuals. Observation is a powerful learning behavior. In addition to that, modeling and child rearing practices increase the level of aggressive behavior. Television is an example of modeling that increases the likelihood of aggressive behavior. For instance, literature has shown that children of less educated parents watch television more than those of high-educated parents (Certain & Kahn, 2002; Tremblay & Willms, 2003). Children who watch violent television programs will be stimulated to become violent and aggressive (Manganello & Taylor, 2009). Single parents interact with their children less than other parents do. They do not have time to talk to their children about their problems. This will give them less control over their children’s behavior. In addition, single parent families cultivate stress for the children because of the broken family status. Finally, unemployment is also associated with bullying. Children of unemployed parents are at higher risk of engaging in bullying (Jansen et al., 2012).

Researchers tried to identify a correlation between victimization and parenting style. Victims are children of parents that are overprotective and whose children identify poorly with them (Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Bowers, Smith, & Binney, 1994; Olweus, 1993). A researcher noted that victimization has been linked to being raised in families that are overprotective with boys, that do not give complete affection or reject girls, or that are

highly involved in school (Finnegan, Hodges, & Perry, 1998). Families of victims indicate that their children show sensitivity and cautiousness from a young age (Olweus, 1991). According to Olweus (1993), students will perceive the school as a fearful, anxious and insecure learning environment. Such behaviors do not develop throughout the school years but earlier in life.

### **Consequences of Bullying**

Bullying negatively affects those who participate in it and the entire school climate (Hernandez & Seem, 2004; Thornberg, 2010). Victims suffer from low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, loneliness, poor academic performance, poor health, social adjustment and mistrust by others (Aluede et al., 2008; Beran, 2009; Cassidy, 2009; Connors-Burrow, Johnson, Whiteide-Manselle, Mckelvey, & Gargus, 2009; DeRosier & Mercer, 2009; Fleming & Jacobsen, 2009; Ranta, Kaltiala-Heino, Pelkonen, & Marttunen, 2009; Thijs & Verkuyten, 2008). Victims come to school afraid of being harassed or humiliated (Aluede et al., 2008). Research has shown that victims of relational bullying are at higher risk than victims of direct bullying of facing isolation and other emotional problems (Woods, Done, & Kalsi, 2009).

Bullies also face negative consequences. They are at danger of developing a criminal behavior (Aluede et al., 2008). They detest school and might engage in harmful behaviors such as smoking, drinking alcohol excessively (Olweus et al., 2007), carrying weapons to school, and engaging in antisocial behaviors such as breaching rules, stealing, and damaging property. In addition, students, particularly boys, will continue engaging in antisocial behavior such as crime and substance abuse in adulthood. Students who are bullies and victims are the most ones in danger of developing psychological problems and

poor social adjustment (Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O'Brennan, 2009; Connors-Burrow et al., 2009; Olweus et al., 2007). Bystanders suffer from negative consequences of bullying as well. They feel anxious, guilty, weak and ineffective to modify the situation. Bystanders might feel terrible after engaging in bullying incidents.

When bullying is accepted in the school, the environment will be negatively affected by disrespect and fear. Students will feel anxious and insecure spending their time in the school. When school staff do not intervene to prevent bullying situations, students will feel that the former do not have any control over the pupils and are not concerned about bullying (Olweus et al., 2007).

### **Prevention Programs that Deal with Bullying**

Many Western schools have dealt with bullying using metal detectors, employing security guards or developing policies against bullying, but victims still reported that the school personal reaction to bullying was not efficient (Garrity, Jens, Porter, Sagar, & Short-Camilli, 1997). Some schools have not even dealt with bullying some of which are private schools located in Lebanon.

Rabah (2006) examined the teachers' and administrators' perspectives and attitudes on bullying. The questionnaire used in her study involved both open-ended and close-ended questions. The interviewed teachers claimed that there is bullying at their schools but it is not considered a serious issue. Although, policies dealing with bullying are absent from various schools, policies for issues concerning bullying exist. In other words, these schools only addressed the issue surrounding the concept of bullying, but did not tackle bullying itself as a recurrent problem. Their policy towards dealing with bullying was vague and inconclusive. The interviewed administrators and teachers claimed the importance of the

teachers' role in avoiding bullying and interfering in any bully/victim incident. The teachers noted that they needed training to be able to acquire the skills needed for interference in bullying incidents.

San Antonio and Salzfass (2007) stated that the school policy is the base for bullying prevention programs. The policy should involve:

a school wide commitment to address bullying; a statement of rights and responsibilities for all members of the school community; a definition of bullying, including types and dynamics; the process for identifying and reporting bullying; expected ways for students and staff to respond to bullying; strategies that will be implemented; and a way to assess the effectiveness of anti-bullying efforts (p. 13).

There are two kinds of measures dealing with bullying at schools: "punitive measures and non-punitive developmental/guidance measures" (Mirza, 2010, p. 40). The guidance measures emphasize guidance in dealing with bullying at the school. This measure involves regular meetings between staff members and the teachers to talk about the behaviors of the students. The principal sends articles about bullying to instructors. Then, the counselor or psychologist at the school meets with the teachers to train and guide them on ways to deal with the children involved in bullying.

On the other hand, there are measures that emphasize punishment. Even though, the school principal interviewed in Mirza's study did not support the usage of punishment at the school, she believed that students only respond to punishment. The principal noted that the punishment measure that is frequently utilized at the school is called the "Time Out" measure. This measure is a punishment where the misbehaving students stand next to the



wall for 5-10 minutes before going to recess (Mirza, 2010). The school used several measures to tackle bullying and deal with the bullies and victimized students to make the school a safe learning environment. These measures included: “setting a discipline policy for the school, setting procedures to report bullying behavior, general measures to deal with reported bullying acts, measures to deal with bullying outside the classroom, measures to deal with bullying inside the classroom, and specifying a role for parents to prevent and address school bullying” (Mirza, 2010, p. 40).

Batsche and Knoff (1994) reported that 40-60% of high school students in the U.S. reported that teachers ignore bullying. Due to such ignorance, victims do not report bullying incidents since they believe that adults are not empathetic with them thus conveying a message that bullying is acceptable in the school. As a result, victims will feel intimidated, worried, and will avoid coming to school. According to Olweus et al. (2007) when the school allows bullying to proceed, the whole school climate is influenced negatively.

Olweus et al. (2007) consider that bullying is a problematic issue that needs a comprehensive bullying prevention program that tackles the individual, family and community. Literature has shown that successful programs have to be comprehensive in nature (Lapan et al., 2001; Lapan et al., 1997), should be implemented for the long-term (Schaefer-Schiomo & Ginsberg, 2003) and should alter the whole school climate (Olweus, 1991). Lapan et al., (2001) conducted a study in Missouri to examine the effect of more fully implemented comprehensive guidance and counseling programs on student (a) perceptions of safety in school, (b) satisfaction with their education, (c)

grades, (d) perceptions of their relationships with teachers, and (e) perceptions of the importance and relevance of education to their future” (p. 322).

The results of the study showed that grade 7 students who were involved in the program reported feeling safer at the school, showed better relationship with teachers, perceived their education as more relevant and significant to their future, earned better grades, and became more satisfied with the quality of education given in the school and displayed less physical and interpersonal problems in their schools.

### **Bullying Prevention Programs**

Literature details several bullying prevention programs. These include “Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, Bully Proofing Your School, Second Step, Resolving Conflicts Creatively and Bully Proof”. Hermann and Fin (2002, p. 51) believe that the quality of the intervention is equally important as the intervention itself. This will determine the effectiveness level of the program.

**Olweus bullying prevention program (OBPP).** Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is a comprehensive program that targets systems and individuals. The program is based on the results of several studies done in Norway (Olweus, et al., 2007). Its purpose is to: decrease bullying between students, avoid the development of new bullying incidents, augment relationship between friends, improve school environment, and create a positive learning environment that does not favor aggressiveness (Olweus et al., 2007). Any place that accepts aggressive behavior will have increased bullying situations as a consequence (Olweus et al., 2007).

This program was examined in a various number of countries: United States, Canada, England, Mexico, Iceland, Germany, Sweden, Norway and Croatia (Olweus et al.,

2007). The “Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence” in Colorado has identified this program as one of only eleven “Blueprints Model Programs for violence prevention” as well as an exemplary program for violence prevention by the “Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)” (Olweus et al., 2007, p. xi).

There are four principles that are essential for the achievement of an efficient bullying-prevention program (Olweus et al., 2007)

- 1) Develop a home and school environment that is portrayed by affection, contribution from adults and positive interest.
- 2) Put restrictions for improper behaviors.
- 3) Develop an environment that is free from violence and includes punishment for breaching those boundaries.
- 4) Develop a positive atmosphere where adults at home and school are viewed as authority figures

The essential components of the program include interventions at several levels: individual, school, class, and community levels. In addition to that, it is significant to include the parents in the intervention (Olweus et al., 2007) to observe children’s activities, spend more time with children, aid children to develop proper behavior, request professional help when needed, strengthen family bullying policies, and provide children with positive rewards for proper behavior (Olweus, 1993).

This program has been evaluated in several countries to examine its effectiveness in decreasing bullying at schools. It has been shown to be successful in lessening bullying behaviors (Olweus et al., 2007). For instance, a study was done on Iranian boys and showed that OBPP decreased bullying significantly among Iranian boys after the implementation of

the program. The results were sustained for 6 months as a follow up (Esteki Azad & Amiri, 2012). The effectiveness of OBPP was evaluated in the U.S. in various settings (Limber, 2011). Daugherty (2011) mentioned that the surveyed and interviewed principals and teachers from three schools located in North Georgia found OBPP to be effective in decreasing the prevalence of bullying in their schools. Similarly, a study was done during the academic year 2012-2013 to examine the effectiveness of OBPP in decreasing bullying in the United States in a small urban/suburban catholic 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade middle school in northeast the U.S.A and the report has showed positive results for grade 7 female U.S. students in decreasing prevalence of bullying and for grade 7 teachers in identifying bullying and talking with the bullies and victims. However, the study showed negative results for grade 8 females and grade 7 males. These results might be due to gender differences in responding to OBPP. Further research is needed in this area (Bowllan, 2011). Ttofi and Farrington (2011) conducted a meta-analysis and found that bullying was reduced by 20-23% and victimization by 17-20% after the implementation of the program. Ttofi and Farrington (2009, 2011) suggested that the programs that are most effective are those including “parent training, improved playground supervision, disciplinary methods, school conferences, videos, information for parents, work with peers, classroom rules and classroom management.” (p. 13); components Of Olweus Bullying Prevention Program.

**Bully proofing your school (BPYS).** Bully Proofing Your School is a bullying prevention program that uses a comprehensive approach aiming at teaching conflict resolution skills, training for school staff, teaching victims social skills, teaching bullies positive leadership skills, providing intervention approaches to bystanders and emphasizing the importance of parental support. The National School Safety Center (NSSC), the U.S.

Department of Justice's office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the U.S Department of Education's safe and Drug free claimed this program effective in dealing with bullying (Arnette & Wasleben, 1998). The aim of the program is to highlight the significance of identifying and using various "styles, strengths, and experiences of staff members" (p. 186). Every person plays a major role and contributes to the effectiveness of the program in decreasing bullying in the school (Garrity et al., 2004). The aim of the program is to transfer the power from the bully to the other students so that they are equipped with the ability to develop a positive learning environment.

The program is based on three major principles: first, it aims at increasing awareness about bullying and developing rules that ban bullying. Second, the program teaches students ways to resist and support the victims of bullying as well as equipping them with protective skills necessary for dealing with bullying. Third, it develops a positive school climate via employing a "caring majority" in the school (Menard & Grotmeter, 2014, p. 192) that works to change the behavior of bystanders. The program involves providing teachers with all the necessary knowledge and approaches to aid them in first identifying and then properly dealing with bullying incidents (Garrity et al., 2004). The program also includes teaching students assertiveness and avoidance skills and helps them identify when it is appropriate to employ these skills. In addition, BPYS provides bullying consultation sessions to the parents of bullies, victims and bystanders (Menard & Grotmeter, 2014).

BPYS is composed of a classroom level curriculum involving six sessions (Garrity et al., 2004). A teacher is assigned to teach the curriculum based on the students' age once a week for 30-45 minutes. After that, training in bullying prevention strengthens the empathetic and loving behavior of most of the children who are against bullying. Teachers

hold meetings on a weekly basis to talk about the students' behaviors the previous week. Students who behave in a proper, caring and positive manner are rewarded. All of the information composing the program is provided to parents (Menard & Grotmeter, 2014).

Execution of BPYS takes 3 years. The first year involves teaching the curriculum and the last two years are composed of booster sessions to strengthen what has been taught in the first year (Menard & Grotmeter, 2014).

According to the evaluation done by Ttofi and Farrington (2009), there are specific programs' components that lead to a decrease in bullying. Some of the components are present in BPYS while others are not. BPYS includes "classroom rules, classroom management, information for parents, parent training (consultation), intensity for teachers (15 hours or more), duration (270 days or more) for pupils and teachers" (Menard & Grotmeter, 2014, p. 193). On the other hand, it does not include "increased playground supervision, videos, more harsh disciplinary methods, work with peers and school conferences" (Menard & Grotmeter, 2014; p. 13).

**Second Step.** A violence prevention curriculum created for ages 4-13. This program focuses on teaching positive social skills through role-playing. "Positive skills include: anger management, empathy, problem solving, and impulse control" (Strawhun, Hoff, & Peterson, 2014, p. 1). Cognitive behavioral methods, Social Learning Theory and models of information processing are the foundations for this program (Fitzgerald & Van Schoiack Edstrom, 2012 cited in Strawhun et al., 2014). The second step is based on the idea that individuals' thoughts influence social interactions. This explains why the first chapter in this curriculum is about teaching empathy skills (Committee for Children, 2002). The second step stresses that empathy combined with learned impulse control and problem

solving are significant measures to be taken for children to be successful in violence prevention.

Literature has shown that empathy is significant for academic achievement and is a significant factor of competency and emotional intelligence (Izard et al, 2001). The Committee for Children (2014) defines empathy as, “feeling and understanding what someone else is feeling” (p. 12).

There are conflicting results concerning the effectiveness of the program in decreasing violence at school. For instance, a study found that the program was not efficient in decreasing bullying and victimization in the participating schools; but successful in decreasing the prevalence of sexual-harassment by 39% and in homophobic name-calling by 56% among grade 6 and 7 students (Espelage, Low, Polanin, & Brown, 2015). The results are not surprising given the findings of Ttofi and Farrington (2009, 2011) that point towards some components in the programs (discussed above) that lead to decreased levels of bullying and victimization (Espelage et al., 2015). The reason for having mixed results also might be due to what Yeager et al (2014) mentioned about bullying prevention programs. Anti-bullying programs are mostly effective until grade 7. The anti-bullying programs become ineffective from grade 8 and above. Another study examined the effectiveness of the program in decreasing bullying among first graders. The study found that the students’ attitudes and behaviors have improved following the implementation of the program. The findings have showed improvement in the learning skills for prevention in violence, prosocial attitudes and student behavior (Neace & Munoz, 2012). A third examined the effectiveness of the program on preschoolers and students throughout grade four. The findings showed improvements in the knowledge of the

students' social and emotional skills but not in their behavioral and emotional functioning. The study has conversely shown increased behavioral and emotional problems among grade 3 students after the intervention (Brown, Jimerson, Dowdy, Gonzalez, & Stewart, 2012). Hence, further research is needed to examine the effectiveness of the prevention programs that involve social-emotional learning approaches in dealing with bullying in schools.

**Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP).** This program started in 1985 by “New York City Public Schools Educators for Social Responsibility’s New York chapter” (p. 59); a program that has been implemented for a long period in the U.S. It emphasizes preventing violence alongside the development of a safe and positive learning environment for the students. It emphasizes teaching students’ necessary skills to decrease violence and simultaneously develop caring relations and healthy lifestyles (Selfridge, 2004). This program takes a holistic approach since it supports community, family, school staff members and parents through training them so that they are equipped with conflict resolution skills (Selfridge, 2004).

Several studies were done to examine the effectiveness of RCCP. For instance, a study done in New York City with 15 elementary schools. This study is considered the largest scientific evaluation of a conflict-resolution program. The results of the study showed that children, who have been taught an average of 25 RCCP lessons, exhibited a positive view of their social world. They also believed that violence is not acceptable for resolving conflicts, and hence resorted to nonviolent ways for conflict resolution. Moreover, based on teachers’ self-reports, students’ social behaviors improved positively. In addition to that, students who learnt the RCCP curriculum achieved better scores on



standardized academic achievement tests (Selfridge, 2004). Another study done in Atlanta, Georgia yielded similar results. Teachers reported that RCCP led to a decrease in violence in classes and better student collaboration. Students indicated that they had a more positive perception of the self. Additionally, parents indicated that their children had improved in communication and problem solving skills (Selfridge, 2004).

**Bully Proof.** Bully Proof is a bullying- prevention program that emphasizes teaching conflict resolution skills using entertainment such as music, plays and puppets (Kanegis, 2013). Bully Proof takes a creative approach for dealing with conflicts. “Bully Proof focuses on preventing bullying behaviors, increasing assertiveness in victims, and broadening a sense of responsibility to include bystanders” (Hallford, Borntrager, & Davis, 2006, p.94). It focuses on educating young students so that they are equipped with life skills aiding them with conflict resolutions through a 10-step process represented by the word BULLYPROOF (Kanegis, 2013).

- B- Bust Out - from fighting and make other choice
- U- Understand- why the bully, bullies
- L- Listen- to what’s being said
- L- Love- don’t dislike the bully, look for something good in the bully
- Y-Ying Yang Yak- use the energy from the situation to balance you
- P-Picture- your own happy ending; how things “should” be
- R-Respect- yourself and the person behind the bullying behaviors
- O-Originiate – create a “win/win” situation
- O-Oversee – bad with good
- F-Fearless – stay fearless and create a positive situation without violence

In an attempt to study the effectiveness of Bully Proof, a study was done in Southwestern United States in a public elementary school with grades 4 and 5 students to examine the frequency of bullying at the school and the attitudes of students towards bullying. The results were compared before and after the implementation of the program and showed that there was a slight change in the frequency of observed bullying incidents and a significant improvement in the attitudes of the students towards bullying. In addition, students felt that they possessed the necessary skills and were experiencing a sense of responsibility towards handling bullying (Hallford et al., 2006).

The section above presented several bullying prevention programs. However, the programs did not specify who should lead the implementation process. The criteria listed by the School Violence Resource Center for bullying-prevention programs match with the national standards for professional school counselors developed by ASCA. Thus, we can conclude that the counselor is the most qualified person to undertake this leadership role (Charlton, 2009).

### **Professional School Counseling**

This section discusses the professional school counseling programs, the role of the professional school counselor, the effectiveness of intervention programs, the relationship between the ASCA national model, the bullying-prevention program criteria listed by the School Violence Resource Center and the school counselors' self-efficacy for dealing with bullying.

Vocational or guidance programs, now called school counseling programs, were updated several times because of the ASCA national reform agenda and the development of national standards for professional school counseling programs. Thus, with these

improvements school counseling programs became an integrated and an independent part of the educational system (Gysbers & Henderson, 1994) by maintaining the overall mission of the school and supporting “academic achievement, personal/social development and career planning” (p. 165) of the students (ASCA, 2003). Therefore, we can conclude that school counseling programs are the most favorable environments for the implementation of bullying-prevention programs.

The “ASCA National Model” was developed to “create one vision and one voice for school counseling programs” (ASCA, 2003, p. 8). Comprehensive school counseling programs should promote the “academic achievement, personal/social development and career planning” (p. 166) of the students. Despite this, the primary objective of the counseling program is to support the academic mission of the school (ASCA, 2003, p. 165) and the academic achievement of the students (ASCA, 2003).

The ASCA national model for school counseling programs is a framework that includes components of the program that provide a comprehensive approach promoting “a foundation and a delivery system sustained by proper management and accountability” (p. 165). In addition to that, it guides the designation, coordination, implementation, management and evaluation of intervention programs for student success. The goal of the school counseling program is to provide all of the students with the most inclusive opportunities possible to make sure that they are equipped with the necessary skills to succeed academically, socially, personally, and professionally. In the meanwhile, the counselor should be planning to provide 80% of his/her time, direct and indirect services at the school (ASCA, 2003).

**Professional school counseling programs.** According to ASCA, professional school counseling programs should have the following characteristics: being inclusive in scope, being preventive in design and being developmental in nature. Bullying prevention programs are well suited to ASCA plans and recommendations. Bullying-prevention programs and school counseling programs should not be directed towards selectively providing services to some students; rather, they should provide a program that includes services for all learners (ASCA, 2003).

ASCA National Model: A Framework for School Counseling Programs provides a guide for counselors at schools to design and deliver counseling programs that have the characteristics stated above. The ASCA national model includes components of a comprehensive school counseling program. Moreover, the model unites the counselors having one voice and one vision towards achieving the main goal: improving academic achievement of the students. The programs emphasize collaboration between parents, counselors and other educators to promote academic achievement in the students. The components of the ASCA national model are “Foundation, Management, Delivery and Accountability” (ASCA, 2003, p. 165).

Foundation refers to beliefs that the counselor should develop professionally in order to implement programs that benefit all students. The counselor develops a mission statement aligned with the school’s mission, which includes the purpose and goals of the program. Implementation shortly follows (ASCA, 2003).

The management component includes the following steps:

- Counselor self-assessments to identify his/her strengths and weaknesses and to evaluate program activities.

- Suggestions for the counselor to spend at least 80% of the time providing direct and indirect services to students.
- Agreement between school counselors and the administration at the beginning of the year tackling how the program will be implemented and what goals will be achieved.
- Revision and recommendations from counselors, parents, teachers, students, administrators and community members about the school community programs and the results.
- Providing developmental, preventive and intervention activities and services to measure student skills and their influence on students' achievements, attendance and behavior.
- Creating annual and weekly calendars to keep administrators, parents, teachers and students equally informed and to encourage participation in the program.
- Usage of data to evaluate the outcomes of the program and to enhance the ability of each student to graduate and be ready for his or her chosen career.

The Delivery System includes services provided to students, parents, school staff and the community. Two types of services are included: "Direct and Indirect Student Services".

Direct Student Services include "School Counseling Core Curriculum, Individual Student Planning and Responsive Services" (ASCA, 2016, Direct Student Services, para.1-2-3).

The curriculum involves structured lessons to help every student acquire the necessary skills appropriate for their developmental level. This curriculum is not a separate one;

rather, it is incorporated into the school curriculum. Individual Student Planning includes activities designed by counselors to help students develop their personal goals and plans. Responsive Services consist of activities to meet the needs and concerns of the students. Such activities include “individual counseling, or small group settings, or crisis response” (ASCA, 2016, Responsive services, para. 1). Indirect Student Services are specialized to support individual student cases by collaboration between the school counselors and other stakeholders. These services include referrals for extra support, cooperation and consultation with parents, teachers and other educators and community organizations (ASCA, 2016). The Accountability system is designed to examine how the program influences students. Moreover, it analyzes the program assessments and improves them to benefit all students. The performance of the counselor is also evaluated (ASCA, 2003).

**The professional school counselor.** In the 20th century, the school counselor’s role and function have undergone many changes to meet the needs of the students (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). The role of the school counselor focused on vocational guidance before the 1950s, nurtured personal development during the 1950s, improved individual development during the 1960s and recently the role of the school counselor has been focused on designing and implementing comprehensive school counseling programs (Keys, Bemack, & lockhart, 1998). School counseling has changed from being an area reliant on teachers to an area consisting of a supplementary group of programs that are an integral component of education designed and implemented by school counselors based on a developmental framework (Galassi & Akos, 2004).

The ASCA National Standards are the basis for developing a “comprehensive, developmental and data driven school counseling program” (Stevens & Wilkerson, 2010, p.

229) that are based on the ASCA national model (Stevens & Wilkerson, 2010). The ASCA National Standards connect school counseling programs to the schools' needs and to its academic mission. Those standards give the school counselor a leadership role in education reform initiatives (Galassi & Akos, 2004). This gives, school counselors the ability to play a vital role in applying bullying prevention programs. School counselors may shift from providing additional services (ex: administrative services) to becoming a full partner in the education process (Johnson, 2000). School counselors should hold a leadership role for their programs, embody their occupation and be advocates for students and counseling (Gysbers & Henderson, 2001). According to Dollarhide (2003), the nature of the ASCA national model sets the stage for initiating change and makes school counselors accountable for holding a leadership role in promoting a safe learning environment for the students where bullying is not present. School counselors are considered the link between parents, administrators, teachers and students.

According to Hermann and Finn (2002), the school counselor's role is unique in that it is focused on decreasing bullying at schools. They believe that school counselors are responsible enough to handle school violence. School administrators have given counselors the responsibility to identify students at risk for violent behaviors and to provide intervention accordingly. Moreover, literature has shown the way school counselors should deal with aggression at schools through ensuring a positive school climate. Other strategies dealing with aggression involve "skills-training, behavior monitoring and reinforcement, cooperative learning, bullying prevention and parent education" (Hermann & Fin, 2002, p. 50).

Literature has shown that the role that administrators and teachers dealing with bullying at schools is more prevalent than the role of the school counselor (Jacobsen & Bauman, 2007). It is important to examine whether school counselors are confident in their ability to deal with bullying at schools, and whether they possess the necessary knowledge and skills to implement bullying intervention programs.

**Effectiveness of intervention programs.** Literature indicated that many schools are starting to take a proactive approach rather than a reactive approach to deal with bullying in Oklahoma, Alaska, and Connecticut states. These schools are applying procedures and policies that ban bullying acts (Elinoff et al., 2004). Many American states have implemented bullying prevention rules in the schools. For instance, the “School Bullying Prevention Act” (Elinoff et al., 2004, p. 892) executed by Oklahoma necessitates every school to develop a “Safe School Committee” (Elinoff et al., 2004, p. 892). This committee involves parents, teachers and students. It examines bullying issues at the school, evaluates prevention approaches and makes suggestions to the principal (Elinoff et al., 2004).

Orpinas, Horne and Staniszewski (2003) noted that some schools are implementing either a “targeted” or “universal” (p. 432) program to deal with violence at schools. The targeted programs are developed for groups of students who are at high risk for engaging in violent behaviors or for those who have already engaged in violent behaviors. These programs decrease risk factors and enhance protective features to decrease violence. The universal programs are developed to prevent violence by training the students or at often times the school staff members. These programs influence all the school members whether staff or students.



Literature has demonstrated that counselor-focused interventions such as peer-mediation have a positive effect in dealing with bullying and violence at schools (Foster, Krenz, Pogoloff, Callahan, & Krenz, 2003). Schellenberg, Parks-Savage and Rehfuss (2007) studied the effectiveness of a peer mediation program in a diverse suburban elementary school with 825 students. The results showed positive outcomes after the implementation of the program; violent behaviors were reduced and the students perceived the program to be valuable. Moreover, Sink and Spencer (2005) found in their study with 418 students from 20 schools that a counseling program that emphasizes teaching social and coping skills leads to reduced aggressive behaviors and a more positive school environment. Moreover, literature has shown that counseling interventions, which emphasize teaching students specific skills connected with school success, can improve the academic achievement and social performance of the students (Webb, Brigman, & Campbell, 2005).

There are many bullying interventions detailed in the literature. Counselors can apply them at school in various ways. However, the self-efficacy of the counselors, defined as their ability and their knowledge to implement bullying interventions, is still understudied. Research has shown that the counselors' self-efficacy affects their performance (Sipps, Sugden, & Faiver, 1988). Examining counselors' self-efficacy concerning bullying intervention programs is significant since it has crucial implications for student counselors in the area of professional development such as in-service training (Jacobsen & Bauman, 2007).

## **Self-Efficacy**

Bandura (1997) 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 is based on the Social Cognitive theory of Albert Bandura. This theory states that individuals are capable of controlling their thoughts, actions and motivations (Bandura 1977). Larson and Daniels (1998) defined self-efficacy as “the degree to which individuals consider themselves capable of performing a particular activity” (p.2).

**Development of self-efficacy.** According to Bandura (1977), there are four sources of information through which the individual develops his or her self-efficacy. These include “performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and affective arousal” (p. 195).

Personal experiences are the basis for personal accomplishments. Achievement increases self-efficacy expectations and repetitive failures decrease self-efficacy expectations. However, when self-efficacy is developed through direct achievements, the influence of some failures has the minimum result on it. For example, when the counselor is successful in dealing with bullying incidents at the school, s/he will generalize this to successes in addressing future bullying incidents.

Vicarious experiences happen when the individual observes another person addressing the incident and witnesses how one could address the same types of incidents (Bandura, 1986). When school counselors observe another counselor addressing a bullying incident in a positive and proper manner, the former will believe that s/he will also be successful in addressing bullying (Bandura, 1977). Bandura believes that self-efficacy

through personal accomplishments leads to stronger influence than self-efficacy developed through vicarious experiences (Bandura, 1977).

Verbal Persuasion occurs when individuals are guided by a suggestion that they will succeed in dealing with an incident in which they have failed to address previously. Verbal persuasion has a weak influence on self-efficacy expectations and is unsuccessful in maintaining long-term effects since it is not a direct experience. Failed experiences can destroy our expectations in being successful. However, if verbal persuasion is combined with successful performance, it exerts a positive influence on self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986).

The fourth source of self-efficacy is affective arousal. The individual's physical and emotional reaction to a situation influences his /her self-efficacy. For example, if the individual feels anxious in a certain situation, this negative feeling may decrease his/her self-efficacy. On the other hand, if the individual is always successful in a given situation, feelings of anxiety will decrease and hence self-efficacy will increase (Larson & Daniels, 1998). When work becomes more difficult, anxiety levels increase lowering feelings of self-efficacy, which explains why school counselors may feel anxious when they experience challenging bullying incidents. Individuals entail a positive sense of self-efficacy and as a result, school counselors should have a positive sense of self-efficacy concerning appliance of bullying intervention programs (Bandura, 1986).

The components of self-efficacy are the following: efficacy expectations, outcome expectations, and outcome values. Efficacy expectations are the individual's judgments about his/her ability to perform a certain task and obtain a certain result. The higher the efficacy expectations, the more likely the individual will put forth the effort to deal with a challenging situation to attain specific results. Hence, if school counselors have high

efficacy expectations in dealing with bullying, they will invest more effort in the application of the program until the desired outcomes are obtained (Bandura, 1977).

Outcome expectations are expectations about a specific behavior posed to target a specific outcome. Outcome values describe the degree of importance regarding the outcome expectation for a specific behavior. Therefore, individuals will become more involved and will maintain their effort with tasks that have high outcome value and expectations. “ The perceived level of self-efficacy determines the course of action that individuals will take, how long they will continue at the task, how much effort they will expend and for how long they will sustain this effort in the face of obstacles, and how much their thought patterns and emotions will be influenced” (Bandura, 1986).

**Counselor self-efficacy.** Lent et al., (2003, p. 97) defined counselor self-efficacy as “counselors’ beliefs about their ability to perform counseling related behaviors or negotiate particular clinical situations.” Counselor Self-Efficacy belief (CSE) was shown to be the major fundamental determinant of efficient counseling (Larson & Daniels, 1998). In addition to that, CSE was shown to be significant to counselor trainees (Bandura, 1977, 1986).

Literature details studies on counselor trainees and on aspects contributing to better self-efficacy (Sutton & Fall, 1995; King, Price, Telljoham, & Wahl, 1999). Sutton and Fall (1995) surveyed school counselors to examine the relationship of Bandura's concept of self-efficacy with school climate, counselor roles, and a variety of demographic variables by using the Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (CSS). The study showed that colleague and administrator support were the strongest predictors of high counselor efficacy and outcome expectancies. The lack of support from administration is related to negative counselor’s

self-efficacy. King et al., (1999) conducted a study to assess high school counselors' perceived self-efficacy in recognizing students at risk for suicide. The King instrument questionnaire was used for this study to assess efficacy expectations, outcome expectations and outcome values of high school counselors. The questionnaire was developed based on Bandura's self-efficacy model. The study has shown that counselors who possess high efficacy-expectations were those who had a crisis intervention team.

Moreover, Melchert et al., (1996) created the Counselor Self Efficacy Scale (CSES) to examine the relationship between self-efficacy and level of training and amount of clinical experience (p. 642). The questionnaire was administered to student counselors. The results of the study have shown that the greater the years of experience, the more counselors demonstrated confidence and the more were they able to carry out counseling activities.

**Factors that affect self-efficacy.** A great deal of research was conducted to examine the relationship between the level of counselor training and experience, and self-efficacy. The findings of the studies yielded mixed results.

Thompson (1986) found that counseling beginner students possess higher level of anxiety than those who are more trained. Similarly, another study found that premaster trainees experience more anxiety than the master level trainees. Master level beginner trainees show more anxiety than the advanced students and show more emphasis on techniques used in the counseling process (Reising & Daniels, 1983). Conversely, Goreczny, Hamilton, Lubinski, and Pasquinelli (2015) found that counselor self-efficacy follows a "curvilinear pattern" (p. 90). Undergraduate counselors who have no advanced training possess higher self-efficacy beliefs than beginner level graduate students.

Meanwhile, the advanced level graduate students possess the highest self-efficacy beliefs. The results of this study are consistent with those of Sipps, Sugden, and Faiver (1988). The findings have shown that the first year graduate counselors exhibit higher levels of self-efficacy than the second year graduate students do. Self-efficacy increased more for those in the third and fourth year.

Larson et al (1992) found that counseling psychologists and master level counselors possess higher counseling self-efficacy beliefs than bachelor degree counselor trainees. They also found that practitioners with counseling experience possess higher counseling self-efficacy beliefs than those without experience (Larson et al. 1992; Larson & Daniels, 1998). These results are similar to those obtained by Bakar, Zakaria, and Mohamed (2011). Their study has shown that there are two factors that affect the counselors' self-efficacy. These include educational level and years of work experience. Graduate counselors showed higher self-efficacy levels than those earning an undergraduate degree.

Al-Darmaki (2004) found that beginner counselor trainees experience doubts concerning their counseling skills and abilities. They exhibit feelings of fear and anxiety because corresponding to a lack of counseling skills and the fear of damaging the counselees. The results of this study are consistent with those of Stoltenberg, and McNeill (2011). They found that beginner trainees possess higher levels of anxiety due to the lack of confidence in their ability to counsel and because of an absence of counseling skills. They also fear negative evaluations from the counselees. When they gain more experience, they become more informed about the counseling process, which in turn reduces their anxiety level and improves their self-efficacy about their counseling skills. Al-Darmaki (2004)

found that the trainees' counseling self-efficacy improved and their anxiety level decreased because of training. Students who received training reported less anxiety levels and more self-efficacy after training.

In their study, Melchert et al. (1996) reported that counselor self-efficacy was correlated with the counseling experience and level of training. These results are similar to the study done by Barbee et al. (2003). The findings have shown that previous counseling experiences and the number of credit hours spent in a counseling course are major predictors of the counselor self-efficacy of the pre-practicum counsel trainees.

Larson and Daniels (1998) found a positive correlation between counselor self-efficacy and outcome expectations and efficacy expectations, and a negative relationship between counselor self-efficacy and anxiety level. Student counselors who think that they performed well possess high self-efficacy beliefs. These results are consistent with those obtained by Sharpley and Ridgeway (1993) and Sipps et al. (1988).

Direct successful experiences are the most successful means in improving self-efficacy. Vicarious experiences have shown to be positively correlated with self-efficacy with individuals with whom one has identified strongly (Hayden, Cook, Gracia, Silva, & Cadet, 2015). According to Bandura (1994), using a skill that resulted in success is the most effective means for improving self-efficacy. Instructors aid the student counselors by providing effective experiences that help them acquire the necessary counseling skills and the ways of applying them in practical situations. In fact, verbal persuasion, support, and encouragement from someone who is successful are also positively correlated with self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994).

Finally, Charlton (2009) shared results similar to the above studies. She showed that when elementary counselors gained more experience, their self-efficacy improved. The results concerning the level of training are mixed. However, she did not find a relation between participation in the in-service training/workshops and self-efficacy. Professional development is an example of vicarious learning. Therefore, it is inconsistent with what Bandura (1986) stated; vicarious experience has the strongest influence on self-efficacy after direct personal accomplishments. Larson et al. (1992) found that modeling which is considered a vicarious experience has a positive effect on self-efficacy. Charlton (2009) reported that these inconsistencies might be due to the quality of professional development that the counselors have received. As a result, further research is needed in this area.

Lent et al. (2003) found that counselors who had no confidence in their basic abilities to deal with counselees, would not be confident in their abilities to deal with challenging issues, while those who are confident in their ability and knowledge to deal with challenging issues, would be more confident in dealing with basic less challenging counseling issues.

### **Summary**

Bullying is everywhere and continues to be widely present in schools across all nations. It negatively affects the bully, victim, bystander and the entire school climate. Literature details several bullying prevention programs. The results on the effectiveness of these programs are mixed. So, further research is needed in this area. Tofi and Farrington (2009) suggested that the most effective programs are those that involve the following components: “parent training, improved playground supervision, disciplinary methods,



school conferences, videos, information for parents, work with peers, classroom rules and classroom management.” (p. 13). Despite the numerous prevention programs detailed in the literature, what is still unclear is the school counselor’s role in implementing these programs. As shown above, the role of the school counselor was not clear for decades. ASCA has undergone changes to make the school counselor’s role clear. These changes qualified the counselor for a position to deal with bullying at school. Nevertheless, there is a gap in the literature concerning the school counselor’s role in dealing with bullying. So, it is significant to examine the self-efficacy of the counselor in dealing with bullying in the school. Literature has shown the relationship between the counselor’s self-efficacy and performance in the context of career counseling, gay, lesbian and bisexual counselees, and suicidal counselees (Dillon & Worthington, 2003; King et al. 1999; Larson & Daniels, 1998), self-efficacy of counselors in dealing with bullying at the elementary level (Charlton, 2009). It is significant to examine the effect of self-efficacy on the Lebanese counselors’ abilities to implement bullying prevention programs.

Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to produce given attainments.” (p. 3). Larson and Daniels (1998) reported that counselor self-efficacy affects the counseling trainees. Thus, if one can identify the factors that improve self-efficacy, this study will be valuable. It will help in the preparation and professional development of student counselors to become good practitioners in the future. Thus, they will be able to deal effectively with bullying in the schools and make school a safe learning environment for all the students.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

This section discusses the approach and techniques used in the research. It gives information about the research design, sampling method, participants, and the tools and techniques used to collect and analyze data. This research study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the extent of counselors' awareness of their capabilities concerning their counseling abilities in these five aspects: microskills, process, difficult client behavior, cultural competency and awareness of their values?
2. To what extent are the counselors' self-aware of the knowledge and capabilities for interfering during a bullying situation at school?
3. What are the effects of the following factors: (a) years of experience in the counseling area, (b) the training that counselors received during their graduate studies in the field of bullying intervention, and (c) the attendance at workshops and conferences on bullying, on a counselor's perceived efficiency in interfering with bullying situations that occur at school?

#### **Research Design**

This study is a correlational study. Correlational studies are frequently used in psychological studies to collect data when experiments are not possible (Cherry, 2015). This type of research aims at investigating whether a relationship exists between two or more variables. The study adopts a mixed method approach (quantitative and qualitative approaches) including the usage of survey research methods that are considered non-

experimental in nature. In addition, interviews will be conducted with the participants to get a deeper understanding of the variables studied. Mixed method approaches compensate for the weaknesses for each of the qualitative and quantitative methods alone. For instance, the weaknesses of qualitative research are the possible biased nature of the interpretations of the researcher and the inability to generalize the findings of the study to another group of people because of a smaller sample size. So, the quantitative approach offsets these weaknesses. On the other hand, quantitative research makes it difficult for the researcher to understand the context in which the participants talk and the exact meanings they assign to terms and concepts they use. Also, when using quantitative methods, the researcher is in the background, his/her personal interpretations and biases are rarely discussed. Qualitative research does not have these weaknesses. Thus, the quantitative and qualitative methods complement each other in mixed methods research to increase the validity of research findings. Mixed method approaches are convenient because the researcher can utilize all the methods that help in tackling the research problem. In addition, individuals solve their problems using both inductive and deductive thinking, apply skills that examine individuals and record their behaviors. Thus, a mixed method approach for research is a preferred mode to understand the world better (Creswell, 2011).

### **Method and Variables of the study**

The independent variables are the counselor's: experience in the counseling area, training received during graduate studies in the field of bullying-intervention, and attending workshops and other personal development opportunities. While, the dependent variable is the counselor's self-efficacy in particular: efficacy expectations, outcome expectations and

outcome values.

Efficacy expectation is the individual's judgment about his/her ability to perform a certain task to produce a certain result (Bandura, 1977). Outcome expectations are expectations that a specific behavior will reach a specific outcome. Outcome values describe the degree of importance given to the outcome expectation for a specific behavior (Bandura, 1986).

Another category of variables examined using the COSE instrument are included in the study where the independent variables are: "micro skills, process, difficult client behavior, cultural competence, and awareness of values" (Larson et al., 1992, p. 105) and the dependent variable is self-efficacy.

- Counseling microskills are essential skills that the counselor can use alone or in combination to aid the counsees in accessing effectively their deepest thoughts or to make their future goals clear. Micro skills include "basic questioning skills, attending skills, confrontation, focusing, reflection of meaning and influencing skills" (Evans, Hearn, Uhlemann, & Ivey, 1998, p. 1). Attending skills are important since they motivate the counsees to share, and portray that what is being said in the session and are important for the counselor to know. Basic questioning skills are significant since they guide the counseling session and can help in enriching the counselee's experience. Responding is significant since the counselor is showing the counselee that s/he is being listened to and understood. Noting and reflecting are utilized in a counseling session to access the underlying feelings of the counselee. Confrontation is utilized when the counselor detects mixed messages in the counselee's behavior, feelings and thoughts. It is used only when a trust and

friendly relationship is present between the counselor and the counselee. Focusing helps the counselor to direct the conversation of the counselee to particular areas. Influencing: is utilized when the counselees are investigating alternative ways to change the way they think and act.

- Process: this variable discusses the counselor's self-efficacy concerning what happens in the counseling session; flow of the counseling process including the relationship between the counselor and the counselee (Larson et al., 1992).
- Difficult client behavior: this variable examines the counselor's self-efficacy in dealing with various and difficult counselee behaviors that are considered challenging to the counselor (Larson et al., 1992).
- Cultural Competence: this variable investigates the counselor's self-efficacy when corresponding with counselors from various ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds (Larson et al., 1992).
- Awareness of values: this variable consists of items that are related to counter-transference. Although research on counter-transference is minimal, professors teach the future counselors to become aware and deal with their biases and values so that they do not affect the counselees (Larson et al., 1992).

### ***Participants***

The population of the study is composed of school counselors from various grade levels (Elementary, Middle and High levels) working in Lebanese private schools. The sample for this study is 20 school counselors working in 10 private schools located in Beirut and the Greater Beirut area. Nineteen of these counselors are females while one is a

male. All of the counselors have Master's degree.

The researcher used purposive and convenient sampling to select the schools because not all schools have counselors, and some schools did not allow access to counselors when they have them. In addition, some schools claimed that they have counselors but in fact do not. Schools that adopt English, as their language of instruction were selected because of the researcher's lack of proficiency in French. Therefore, the researcher selected private schools in which English is the language of instruction. Public schools were not chosen to participate in the study because it was difficult to these schools. Moreover, Beirut areas are within the researcher's proximity and therefore more reachable than other areas. Therefore, priority was given to schools located in Beirut area then to those located in Greater Beirut area.

To protect the privacy of the participants, every counselor had a code consisting of a letter and a number. The letter is the grade level the counselor works in. The number represents the year of experiences as a school counselor. For instance, M01 means that the participant is a middle school counselor with one year of experience. A10 means that the counselor works across all grade levels in the school and has ten years of experience.

### ***Instruments***

Counseling self-efficacy is defined as "counselors' beliefs about their ability to perform counseling related behaviors or negotiate particular clinical situations" (Lent et al., 2003, p. 97). The three instruments that were used in the study are "Counseling Self-Estimate Inventory" (COSE) , "Counselor Self-Efficacy and Bullying Intervention Scale-CSBI" and semi-structured interviews .

**Counseling self-estimate inventory (COSE)** (Appendix A). The COSE is the oldest and most widely used instrument to determine the counselor's self-efficacy and is based on Bandura's self-efficacy theory (Larson & Daniels, 1998). The items study the counselor's awareness of his/her ability in "executing microskills, attending to process, addressing a difficult client behavior, behaving in a culturally competent way and be conscious of our own values" (Larson et al., 1992, p. 105). Larson and Daniels (1998) found that COSE predicts the performance of the counselor and shows initial construct validity via factor analysis and sufficient test and retest reliability.

This instrument consists of 37 positive and negative items concerning counseling self-efficacy. Each of the items is rated on a Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to strongly agree (6). The counselors rate their answers "according to the extent to which they agreed that the items reflected their actual estimate of how they would perform in a counseling situation at the present time." (Larson et al., 1992, p. 107). The score of each item and a total score are calculated: "*microskills* (12 items); *process* (10 items); *difficult client behaviors* (7 items); *cultural competence* (4 items); and *awareness of values* (4 items)" (Larson et al., 1992, p. 109).

**Reliability and validity.** Internal consistency was calculated for the total score of COSE and for each of the five aspects. The items were internally consistent "COSE total score: Alpha-  $\alpha = 0.93$ ; microskills  $\alpha = 0.88$ ; Process  $\alpha = 0.87$ ; Difficult client behavior  $\alpha = 0.80$ ; cultural competence  $\alpha = 0.78$ ; awareness of values  $\alpha = 0.62$ " (Larson et al., 1992, p. 109). These items were found to be internally consistent and stable over 3 weeks. The 3 weeks test re-test reliability of the COSE was shown to be sufficient "total score  $r = 0.87$ ; microskills  $r = 0.68$ ; process  $r = 0.74$ ; difficult student behavior  $r = 0.80$ ; cultural

competence  $r = 0.71$ ; awareness of values  $r = 0.83$ ” (Larson et al., 1992, p. 112).

Convergent Validity has indicated that COSE is positively correlated with the “counselor’s performance, self-concept, problem-solving appraisal, performance expectations, and class satisfaction”, and negatively correlated with “state and trait anxiety” (Larson et al., 1992, p. 105).

Criterion and convergent validity of the COSE has been reported with the “State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), Satisfaction with Course Performance (SCP), and the Behavioral Rating Form (BRF)” (p. 116). The COSE and the STAI were significant predictors of the BRF. As measured by the BRF and stated by self-efficacy theory, trait anxiety and self-efficacy influence greatly the counselor’s performance (Larson et al., 1992).

**Counselor self-efficacy and bullying intervention scale** (Appendix B). The instrument was designed to examine the elementary school counselors’ self-efficacy to handle bullying at the school. It is divided into 3 subscales. The first subscale consists of six questions each of which can be answered: yes or no to examine the school counselors’ experience with bullying. The second subscale measures: efficacy expectations, outcome expectations and outcome values which are components of self-efficacy as determined by Bandura (1977, 1986). The efficacy expectations and outcome expectations involve 6 items each, while the outcome value involves two items. The last subscale consists of nine demographic questions. Question 42 is modified slightly. The word “elementary” was removed since in this study the researcher is examining the counselor’s self-efficacy in dealing with bullying across all grade levels. Question 74 will not be included because it is not an important question to be asked to the counselors. Also, question 75 and the last



choice of question 69 will be removed because they do not apply to the Lebanese context. The items are rated on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 7= strongly agree (Charlton, 2009). In this study the items will be rated on a five point Likert scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree since it is more feasible than the seven point Likert scale (there is no difference between moderately agree and agree or moderately disagree and disagree).

***Reliability and validity.*** Psychometric properties reported by King et al., (1999) for the King instrument include satisfactory stability reliability with a “Pearson correlation coefficient of  $r = 0.71$  for efficacy expectations,  $r = 0.63$  for outcome expectations;  $r = 0.67$  for outcome values and  $r = 0.65$  for the overall instrument”. Moreover, internal consistency measures (using Cronbach Alpha) for King Instrument have shown: “ $\alpha = 0.84$  for efficacy expectations,  $\alpha = 0.89$  for outcome expectations and  $0.60$  for outcome values”. Furthermore, construct validity was done for the instrument and indicated that the instrument measured three separate factors of self-efficacy. The items of each factor showed high correlation for its anticipated subscale. The three factors achieved 63% of the variance (King et al., 1999, Instrument Development, para. 3).

**Semi-structured interviews.** One-to-one interviews were conducted with ten counselors from all grade levels to answer research question three. The interview involved six open-ended questions to examine what factors affect the counselors’ self-efficacy and their level of confidence in their abilities to deal with bullying. The interview questions were piloted to ensure their feasibility and improve the content. Member checking was used to make sure that there are no misunderstandings. The questions were: (1) Have you participated in any professional development activity concerning bullying? (2) Does your

school train counselors and other school staff on bullying prevention? Did you receive yourself any school training? (3) Does your university educational program train interns on bullying prevention? Have you dealt with bullying incidents during your practicum? (4) Do you think there are other factors that helped you to deal with bullying? (5) If you have engaged in any of the activities mentioned above or other activities that helped you in improving your self-efficacy as a counselor in dealing with bullying, discuss how they helped in dealing with bullying at the school? and (6) To what extent you are confident in your knowledge and abilities to deal with bullying (very confident or low confident)? Explain.

***Demographic information.*** The purpose of the demographic questions was to collect a detailed account of the participants in the study. The demographics involve gender, level of education, age, years of experience as a counselor and at the present school and the geographical location of the school (King et al., 1999).

### **Data Collection**

After receiving the IRB approval, the researcher delivered in person a formal letter to the sample of selected schools to ask whether they are interested to participate in the study. The letter included the purpose of the study and a response form in which recipients specify their willingness or unwillingness to participate in the study (Appendix C). The principals were given two days to decide whether they agree or disagree to participate in the study.

The researcher got oral consent of the counselors of the participated schools. A

copy of the consent script was left with the participants (Appendix D). The consent form discusses the voluntary nature of participation. The form also ensures that all information provided by the counselors will be kept confidential including the counselors' names or any other identifying information. The counselors were given 48 hours to check their willingness or unwillingness to participate in the study. The counselors who accepted to participate in the study filled out two questionnaires at the school in a private setting with the administration's permission. Those who did not have time to fill the questionnaires, arranged with the co-investigator date and time for filling them. After that, semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten counselors across all grade levels to get a deeper understanding of the variables studied.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis was performed by using descriptive statistics to answer research questions one (What is the extent of counselors' awareness of their capabilities concerning their counseling abilities in five aspects: microskills, process, difficult client behavior, cultural competency and awareness of their values?) and two (To what extent are the counselors self-aware of the knowledge and capabilities for interfering during a bullying situation at school?). The responses to the questionnaire items were analysed to acquire means and standard deviations for each item of the questionnaire. The author of the COSE instrument provided the researcher with the negative items. The scores of the latter were reversed on SPSS and analyzed accordingly.

Relying on previous studies, diagnostic cut-off scores were established to analyse the quantitative data (Al-Hroub, 2010). Al-Hroub created three index levels that are used in

this study since they pertain to the 5-point Likert scale. The index levels include:

- Two and a half or below ( $x \leq 2.5$ ) = Disagreement
- Above two and a half or below three and a half ( $2.5 < x < 3.5$ ) = Neutral
- Three and a half or above ( $x \geq 3.5$ ) = Agreement

Interviews transcripts were analyze to answer question 3 (What are the effects of the following factors: (a) years of experience in the counseling area, (b) the training that counselors received during their graduate studies in the field of bullying intervention, and (c) the attendance at workshops and conferences on bullying, on a counselor's perceived efficiency in interfering with bullying situations that occur at school?). The collected data were recorded, transcribed, examined for recurrent themes, coded and interpreted.

Individual interviews were transcribed. Then, coding was initiated. Charmaz (2006) describes coding as defining the data through classifying every segment of it. Coding is a significant part of the data analysis since it connects the data and the theory. It involves highlighting, splitting and arranging the data to analyze it. Coding involves studying the data segments that includes lines, words and sentences. The researcher chose codes in this stage and assessed them with the data collected in the study. The labels must classify, compile and describe appropriately the data segment (Charmaz, 2006). In this study, every sentence was analyzed. The researcher took notes with the first reading of the responses. As a result, common patterns and themes emerged .The themes that emerged were already those that are mentioned in the literature: participation in professional development/in-service, training in graduate school and years of work experience. No new themes emerged. The themes were validated through member-checking to guarantee that there is no

misunderstanding (Merriam, 1998). To avoid the subjective bias, the advisor was asked to code a random sample of six counselors to guarantee inter-rater reliability. Finally, the researcher compared the themes with the literature review to check for similarities and differences.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

This chapter reports the results of the analysis of the data collected to examine the counselors' self-efficacy in dealing with bullying. Data collected from the COSE and CSBI instruments were analyzed to get means and standard deviations for every item, dimension, and for the instruments overall. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, examined for recurrent themes, coded and interpreted. The analysis aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the extent of counselors' awareness of their capabilities concerning their counseling abilities in these five aspects: microskills, process, difficult client behavior, cultural competency and awareness of their values?
2. To what extent are the counselors' self-aware of the knowledge and capabilities for interfering during a bullying situation at school?
3. What are the effects of the following factors: (a) years of experience in the counseling area, (b) the training that counselors received during their graduate studies in the field of bullying intervention, and (c) the attendance at workshops and conferences on bullying, on a counselor's perceived efficiency in interfering with bullying situations that occur at school?

#### **Counselors' Awareness of their General Counseling Capabilities Measured in Five Aspects**

This section examines the counselors' self-efficacy concerning their general

counseling abilities using the COSE instrument. Detailed descriptions on every sub-factor and on the overall instrument are provided in the tables below.

***Microskills.*** Microskills are the basic and essential counseling skills taught to the students, which (Larson et al., 1992) include confrontation, probing, questioning skills, and reflection of meaning (Evans, Hearn, Uhlemann, & Ivey, 1998; Larson et al., 1992). The mean is based on the sum of 12 items. The mean for microskills subscale is 4.3, and the SD is 0.6. According to Larson et al., 1992) the focus of the items for this dimension is on the quality of the counselor's responses in terms of clarity, conciseness and brevity. This dimension emphasizes the delivery of the counselor's responses.

Counselors rated themselves the most effective on this dimension among the 4 other sub-factors (process, cultural competence, dealing with difficult client behavior and awareness of values). Counselors perceived themselves effective in their abilities regarding their responses to counselees (item 4;  $M= 4.55$ ), confrontation, probing, reflection of feeling skills (item 10;  $M= 4.50$ ), and how to initiate and end the session (item 3;  $M= 4.50$ ). Therefore, the counselors are confident in using these abilities and employing them during the counseling session. Counselors rated themselves as least effective concerning their confrontation responses and the wording of their interpretation (item 17,  $M= 3.90$ ). Despite this, the counselors' mean responses were greater than 3.5 points ( $X \geq 3.5$ ). The average item response is 4.3 indicating that counselors are confident and rated themselves effective for the items on the microskills dimension.

Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics for Microskills Subscale*

| <b>Microskills</b>                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>Min.</b> | <b>Max.</b> | <b>M</b> | <b>SD</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|----------|-----------|
| <b>Q1:</b> When using responses like reflection of feeling, active listening, clarification, probing, I am confident I will be concise and to the point                               | 3.0         | 5.0         | 4.40     | .60       |
| <b>Q3:</b> When I initiate the end of a session, I am positive it will be in a manner that is not abrupt or brusque and that I will end the session on time.                          | 3.0         | 5.0         | 4.50     | .61       |
| <b>Q4:</b> I am confident that I will respond appropriately to the client in view of what the client will express                                                                     | 4.0         | 5.0         | 4.55     | .51       |
| <b>Q5:</b> I am certain that my interpretation and confrontation responses will be concise and to the point.                                                                          | 3.0         | 5.0         | 4.25     | .79       |
| <b>Q8:</b> I feel I will respond to the client in an appropriate length of time                                                                                                       | 3.0         | 5.0         | 4.30     | .73       |
| <b>Q10:</b> I am sure the content of my responses, i.e., reflection of feeling, clarification, and probing, will be consistent with and not discrepant from what the client is saying | 3.0         | 5.0         | 4.50     | .61       |
| <b>Q11:</b> I feel confident that I will appear competent and earn the respect of my client                                                                                           | 3.0         | 5.0         | 4.40     | .68       |
| <b>Q12:</b> I am confident that my interpretation and confrontation responses will be effective in that they will be validated by the client's immediate response.                    | 3.0         | 5.0         | 4.25     | .72       |
| <b>Q14:</b> I feel that the content of my interpretation and confrontation responses will be consistent with and not discrepant from what the client is saying                        | 2.0         | 5.0         | 3.95     | 1.15      |
| <b>Q17:</b> I am confident that the wording of my interpretation and confrontation responses will be clear and easy to understand                                                     | 2.0         | 5.0         | 3.90     | 1.17      |



|                                                                                              |             |            |             |            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| <b>Q32:</b> I am confident that I will be able to conceptualize my client's problems.        | 3.0         | 5.0        | 4.35        | .59        |
| <b>Q34:</b> I am confident that I can assess my client's readiness and commitment to change. | 3.0         | 5.0        | 4.25        | .72        |
| <b>Average Item Response for Microskills</b>                                                 | <b>2.67</b> | <b>5.0</b> | <b>4.30</b> | <b>.59</b> |

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*N*=20

**Process.** Process discusses the counselor's self-efficacy concerning what happens during the counseling session. A flow in the counseling process includes the relationship between the counselor and the counselee (Larson et al., 1992). The items in this dimension represent the counselor's actions over a series of responses. Some of these items depend on the counselor-counselee feedback loop. Finally, some of these items are hard to operationalize. Process is concerned with integrating the counselor's responses in working with counselees (Larson et al., 1992). The items in this sub-factor are negative items. Thus, the scores are reversed. A higher score indicates that the counselors are more efficient in their counseling sessions. The mean of this sub-factor is 3.99 and SD is 0.73.

Counselors perceived a high level of confidence in confronting and challenging the counselees appropriately (item 22, *M*= 4.40) and in maintaining the intensity and energy level to produce the counselees' confidence (item 16, *M*= 4.30).

Counselors perceived a lower level of confidence regarding their responses skills (items 9 (*M*= 3.65) and 6 (*M*= 3.75)). Accordingly, counselors rated themselves least effective in their interpretation, reflection of feeling, probing and clarification abilities. The average item response is 3.99 indicating that counselors perceived themselves effective for this dimension.

Table 3

*Descriptive Statistics for Process Subscale*

| <b>Process</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <b>Min.</b> | <b>Max.</b> | <b>M</b>    | <b>SD</b>  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| <b>Q6:</b> I am worried that the wording of my responses (e.g., reflection of feeling, clarification, and probing) may be confusing and hard to understand                                                             | 1.00        | 5.00        | 3.75        | 1.20       |
| <b>Q9:</b> I am worried that the type of response I use at a particular time, i.e., reflection of feeling, interpretation, etc., may not be the appropriate response                                                   | 2.00        | 5.00        | 3.65        | 1.27       |
| <b>Q16:</b> I may not be able to maintain the intensity and energy level needed to produce client confidence and active participation                                                                                  | 3.00        | 5.00        | 4.30        | .66        |
| <b>Q18:</b> I am not sure that in a counseling relationship I will express myself in a way that is natural without deliberating over every response or action                                                          | 2.00        | 5.00        | 4.05        | 1.05       |
| <b>Q19:</b> I am afraid that I may not understand and properly determine probable meanings of the client's nonverbal behaviors.                                                                                        | 2.00        | 5.00        | 4.00        | .86        |
| <b>Q21:</b> My assessments of client problems may not be as accurate as I would like them to be                                                                                                                        | 2.00        | 5.00        | 4.05        | .83        |
| <b>Q22:</b> I am uncertain as to whether I will be able to appropriately confront and challenge my client in therapy                                                                                                   | 4.00        | 5.00        | 4.40        | .50        |
| <b>Q23:</b> When giving responses, i.e., reflection of feeling, active listening, clarification, probing, I'm afraid that they may not be effective in that they won't be validated by the client's immediate response | 1.00        | 5.00        | 3.85        | 1.35       |
| <b>Q31:</b> I am worried that my interpretation and confrontation responses may not over time assist the client to be more specific in defining and clarifying their problem                                           | 1.00        | 5.00        | 4.05        | 1.05       |
| <b>Q33:</b> I am unsure as to how I will lead my client towards the development and selection of concrete goals to work towards                                                                                        | 1.00        | 5.00        | 3.85        | 1.27       |
| <b>Average Item Response for Process</b>                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>2.00</b> | <b>5.00</b> | <b>3.99</b> | <b>.73</b> |

*N*=20

***Dealing with difficult client behaviors.*** Difficult Client Behavior examines the counselor’s self-efficacy in dealing with various and difficult counselee behaviors that are considered challenging to the counselor such as unmotivated, suicidal, alcoholic etc... (Larson et al., 1992). This sub-factor includes 3 positive and 4 negative items. Thus, reversed scores were used for the negative items. A higher score shows that the counselors are more effective in dealing with difficult client behaviors. The mean for this dimension is 3.78 and the *SD* is 0.86.

As shown in the table 4 items with the highest means are those related to the counselors’ knowledge to do effective counseling (Item 15) and to their probing and questioning skills (item 20, *M*= 4.05).

Counselors rated themselves as neutrally effective in dealing with unmotivated counsees (Item 26, *M*= 3.45) and counsees who do not verbalize their thoughts (item 27, *M*= 3.50). The average item response is 3.8. This means that school counselors rated themselves effective on this dimension since the average item response is more than 3.5.

Table 4

*Descriptive Statistics for Dealing with Difficult Client Behaviors Subscale*

| <b>Difficult Client Behavior</b>                                                                                                                                     | <i>Min.</i> | <i>Max.</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|----------|-----------|
| <b>Q15:</b> I feel that I have enough fundamental knowledge to do effective counseling                                                                               | 1.0         | 5.0         | 4.05     | 1.23      |
| <b>Q20:</b> I am confident that I will know when to use open or closed-ended probes and that these probes will reflect the concerns of the client and not be trivial | 2.0         | 5.0         | 4.05     | .94       |

|                                                                                                                                                                         |            |            |             |            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| <b>Q24:</b> I do not feel that I possess a large enough repertoire of techniques to deal with the different problems my clients may present                             | 2.0        | 5.0        | 3.80        | 1.24       |
| <b>Q25:</b> I feel competent regarding my abilities to deal with crisis situations that may arise during the counseling sessions—e.g., suicide, alcoholism, abuse, etc. | 2.0        | 5.0        | 3.90        | 1.07       |
| <b>Q26:</b> I am uncomfortable about dealing with clients who appear unmotivated to work towards mutually determined goals                                              | 1.0        | 5.0        | 3.45        | 1.19       |
| <b>Q27:</b> I may have difficulty dealing with clients who do not verbalize their thoughts during the counseling session.                                               | 1.0        | 5.0        | 3.50        | 1.10       |
| <b>Q28:</b> I am unsure as to how to deal with clients who appear noncommittal and indecisive                                                                           | 1.0        | 5.0        | 3.65        | 1.18       |
| <b>Average item response for Dealing with Difficult Client Behaviors</b>                                                                                                | <b>1.4</b> | <b>5.0</b> | <b>3.78</b> | <b>.86</b> |
| <b>Subscale</b>                                                                                                                                                         |            |            |             |            |

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*N*=20

**Cultural competence.** This variable examines the counselors' self-efficacy for dealing with counselors from various ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds (Larson et al., 1992). This dimension consists of 4 items, 2 positive items and 2 negative items. The mean for this sub-factor is the sum of all the items related to this dimension. Therefore, the mean is 4.28 and *SD* is 0.61.

The counselors' means on every item was above 3.5, this means that they are confident in working with counselors from different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Counselors are highly confident in relating to someone of lower socioeconomic status (*M*=4.70). They perceived also a high level of confidence in bridging the cultural differences (*M*= 4.25). Finally, counselors showed lower levels of confidence in working

with counselees from different social classes and cultures ( $M= 4.10$ ). Despite this, counselors hold high self-efficacy beliefs since the average item response is more than 3.5. The average item response for the dimension is 4.28 indicating that counselors rated themselves the highest for this dimension following microskills.

Table 5

*Descriptive Statistics for Cultural Competence Subscale*

| <b>Cultural Competence</b>                                                                                                                          | <b>Min.</b> | <b>Max.</b> | <b>M</b>    | <b>SD</b>  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| <b>Q29:</b> When working with ethnic minorities clients I am confident that I will be able to bridge cultural differences in the counseling process | 2.0         | 5.0         | 4.25        | .85        |
| <b>Q30:</b> I will be an effective counselor with clients of a different social class                                                               | 1.0         | 5.0         | 4.10        | 1.20       |
| <b>Q36:</b> In working with culturally different clients I may have a difficult time viewing situations from their perspective                      | 1.0         | 5.0         | 4.10        | 1.07       |
| <b>Q37:</b> I am afraid that I may not be able to effectively relate to someone of lower socioeconomic status than me                               | 4.0         | 5.0         | 4.70        | .47        |
| <b>Average item response for Cultural Competence</b>                                                                                                | <b>2.0</b>  | <b>5.0</b>  | <b>4.28</b> | <b>.61</b> |

$N=20$

**Awareness of values.** This variable consists of items that are related to counter-transference. Although research on counter-transference is minimal, professors teach future counselors to become aware of it and deal with their biases and values (Larson et al., 1992). This dimension involves 4 items, 3 are negative sentences and 1 is positive. Thus, the scores are reversed for the negative items so that the scale is the same as the original one. Hence, higher scores show that the counselors are efficient. The mean is the sum of the 4 items related to this dimension,  $M= 3.46$  and  $SD= 1.07$ . Similar to the other dimensions, a higher score shows that counselors are efficient.

Counselors agreed that they are able to respond to clients in a non-judgmental way , do not impose their values on the counsees, and resolve their personal conflicts that would influence their counseling abilities (Items 2, 7 and 13,  $M= 3.90$ ). Counselors are least effective in giving advice (item 35;  $M= 2.15$ ). The average item response is 3.5, the lowest among all the other dimensions indicating that counselors rated themselves as the least effective for this subscale.

Table 6

*Descriptive Statistics for Awareness of Values Subscale*

| <b>Awareness of Values</b>                                                                                                                    | <i>Min.</i> | <i>Max.</i> | <i>M</i>    | <i>SD</i>   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Q2:</b> I am likely to impose my values on the client during the interview                                                                 | 1.0         | 5.0         | 3.90        | 1.33        |
| <b>Q7:</b> I feel that I will not be able to respond to the client in a non-judgmental way with respect to the client's values, beliefs, etc. | 1.0         | 5.0         | 3.90        | 1.44        |
| <b>Q13:</b> I feel confident that I have resolved conflicts in my personal life so that they will not interfere with my counseling abilities. | 1.0         | 5.0         | 3.90        | 1.37        |
| <b>Q35:</b> I feel I may give advice                                                                                                          | 1.0         | 5.0         | 2.15        | 1.26        |
| <b>Average item response for Awareness of Values</b>                                                                                          | <b>1.0</b>  | <b>5.0</b>  | <b>3.46</b> | <b>1.07</b> |

$N=20$

**Overall instrument.** Microskills is the dimension with the highest average item response ( $M= 4.30$ ). This indicates that counselors consider themselves the most confident in their microskills that they are going to employ during the counseling session. Then, comes the cultural competence dimension ( $M= 4.28$ ) whose average is close to the microskills dimension. Counsees agreed that they are confident when dealing with counsees from different ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Process dimension is in the third highest category of confidence with an average item response of  $M= 3.99$ . The

counselors are confident in their abilities, in their knowledge concerning what happens and in how the session flows. Difficult client behavior ranked fourth with an average item response of  $M= 3.78$ . Counselors rated themselves less confident in this dimension, dealing with challenging counselees, than in any other dimension listed above. Finally, counselors rated themselves the least effective and least confident for the awareness of values dimension ( $M= 3.46$ ).

Table 7

*Descriptive Statistics for the total COSE Instrument*

|                                  | <i>Rank</i> | <i>M.</i> | <i>SD.</i> |
|----------------------------------|-------------|-----------|------------|
| <b>Microskills</b>               | 1           | 4.30      | .59        |
| <b>Cultural Competence</b>       | 2           | 4.28      | .61        |
| <b>Process</b>                   | 3           | 3.99      | .72        |
| <b>Difficult Client Behavior</b> | 4           | 3.77      | .85        |
| <b>Awareness of Values</b>       | 5           | 3.46      | 1.07       |

$N=20$

### **Counselors' Awareness of their Knowledge and Capabilities to Handle Bullying at Schools**

This section examines the counselors' self-efficacy concerning their knowledge and capabilities in handling bullying at schools. Detailed descriptions on every sub-factor and on the overall instrument in the tables below are provided.

***Efficacy expectations.*** The aim of this subscale is to examine the counselors' efficacy expectations concerning how they handle bullying. Efficacy expectations are the individual's judgment about his/her ability to perform a certain task to produce a certain

result (Bandura, 1977). This subscale is rated on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The mean is 4.34 and the  $SD= 0.46$ . Since the average mean is above 3.5, this means that counselors perceived high self-efficacy beliefs for this dimension.

As shown in Table 4.6, counselors rated themselves high on all the items in this dimension. Counselors reported being most effective in asking a student if s/he is involved in bullying (item 17,  $M= 4.50$ ). Counselors also indicated they felt a high level of self-efficacy in supporting the students involved in the bullying situations and referring them to an outside agency (Q 18 and 19;  $M= 4.45$ ). Counselors felt less confident when talking to the parent or guardians of the counselees to determine whether the student is at risk for becoming a bully or a victim. In other words, counselors were less confident in their ability to recognize students at risk for being involved in bullying as bullies or victims.

Table 8

*Descriptive Statistics for Efficacy Expectations Subscale*

| <b>Efficacy Expectations</b>                                                                                                                                             | <i>Min.</i> | <i>Max.</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|----------|-----------|
| <b>Q 14:</b> I believe I can recognize a student that is at risk for becoming either a bully or a victim of bullying.                                                    | 3.0         | 5.0         | 4.15     | .48       |
| <b>Q15:</b> I believe I can talk with teachers at my school to help determine whether or not a student is at risk for bullying issues either as a bully or victim.       | 4.0         | 5.0         | 4.40     | .50       |
| <b>Q16:</b> I believe that I can talk with the parent(s)/guardian of a student to help determine whether or not the student is at risk for becoming a bully or a victim. | 3.0         | 5.0         | 4.10     | .71       |
| <b>Q17:</b> I believe I can ask a student at risk for being a bully or a victim if he/she is involved in a bullying situation.                                           | 3.0         | 5.0         | 4.50     | .60       |



|                                                                                                                                                                |             |            |             |            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| <b>Q18:</b> I believe I can effectively offer support to a student at risk for being involved in a bullying situation either as a bully or a victim.           | 4.0         | 5.0        | 4.45        | .51        |
| <b>Q19:</b> I believe I can refer a student at risk for serious emotional problems as a result of being involved in a bullying situation to an outside agency. | 2.0         | 5.0        | 4.45        | .75        |
| <b>Average item response for Efficacy Expectations Subscale</b>                                                                                                | <b>3.16</b> | <b>5.0</b> | <b>4.34</b> | <b>.46</b> |

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*N*=20

**Outcome expectations.** Outcome expectations are expectations that a specific behavior will reach a specific outcome (Bandura, 1986). The aim of this subscale is to examine the counselor’s outcome expectations concerning bullying intervention. The mean is 3.99, and the *SD* is 0.59. Counselors perceived high self-efficacy beliefs for this dimension since the average mean is more than 3.5.

As shown in Table 4.8, counselors rated themselves high on item 20 (*M*= 4.30) that discusses the belief about the effect of recognizing a student at risk for being involved in bullying “I believe if I recognize a student at risk for becoming a bully or a victim, it will reduce the chance that a student will experience negative consequences from being involved in a bullying situation”. Counselors also indicated they felt a high level of self-efficacy for the following items 24 and 25 (*M*= 4.25). Item 24 discusses the belief about the effect of offering support to those involved in bullying “I believe if I effectively offer support to a student at risk for being involved in a bullying situation, it will reduce the chance that the student will become a victim or a bully”. Item 25 discusses the belief about the effect of referring a student at risk for becoming involved in bullying “I believe that if a student is at risk for becoming a bully or victim and is referred to the school counselor it will reduce the chance that the student will be involved in bullying situations”. The participants rated themselves almost neutrally effective for items 21 and 23 (*M*= 3.65). Q

21 discusses the belief about the effect of talking to the parents of the students or other staff members at the school, “I believe if I talk with teachers or other staff members at my school to help determine whether a student is at risk of being involved in a bullying situation, it will reduce the chance that the student will be involved with bullying problems”. Q 23 discusses the belief about the effect of asking a student at risk for becoming a bully or a victim, “I believe if I ask a student at risk for becoming a bully or victim, if he/she is involved in a bullying situation it will reduce the chance that the student will continue to become involved in the bullying situation”.

Table 9

*Descriptive Statistics for Outcome Expectations Subscale*

| <b>Outcome Expectations</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <i>Min.</i> | <i>Max.</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|----------|-----------|
| <b>Q20:</b> I believe if I recognize a student at risk for becoming a bully or a victim, it will reduce the chance that a student will experience negative consequences from being involved in a bullying situation.                                            | 3.00        | 5.00        | 4.30     | .65       |
| <b>Q21:</b> I believe if I talk with teachers or other staff members at my school to help determine whether a student is at risk of being involved in a bullying situation, it will reduce the chance that the student will be involved with bullying problems. | 2.00        | 5.00        | 3.65     | .98       |
| <b>Q22:</b> I believe if I talk with the parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student to help determine whether a student is at risk of becoming a bully or a victim, it will reduce the chance that the student will be involved with bullying problems.                 | 3.00        | 5.00        | 3.85     | .67       |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |             |            |             |            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| <b>Q23:</b> I believe if I ask a student at risk for becoming a bully or victim, if he/she is involved in a bullying situation it will reduce the chance that the student will continue to be involved in the bullying situation. | 2.00        | 5.00       | 3.65        | .81        |
| <b>Q24:</b> I believe if I effectively offer support to a student at risk for being involved in a bullying situation, it will reduce the chance that the student will become a victim or a bully.                                 | 3.00        | 5.00       | 4.25        | .55        |
| <b>Q25:</b> I believe if a student at risk for becoming a bully or victim is referred to the school counselor it will reduce the chance that the student will be involved in bullying situations.                                 | 3.00        | 5.00       | 4.25        | .71        |
| <b>Average item response for Outcome Expectations Subscale</b>                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>2.66</b> | <b>5.0</b> | <b>3.99</b> | <b>.59</b> |

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*N*=20

**Outcome values.** Outcome values describe the degree of importance, which is given to the outcome expectation for a specific behavior (Bandura, 1986). The aim of this subscale is to examine the counselor’s outcome values concerning bullying intervention. The mean is 4.57 and the *SD*= 0.46. Counselors rated themselves high on both items. This indicates that the most important thing the counselor should do is to prevent students from being involved in bullying (Q26; *M*= 4.45) and the school system can establish a program to recognize the bullies and victims and provide intervention programs (Q27; *M*=4.70).

Table 10

*Descriptive Statistics for Outcome Values Subscale*

| <b>Outcome Values</b>                                                                                                                                                                                  | <i>Min.</i> | <i>Max.</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|----------|-----------|
| <b>Q26:</b> I believe as a school counselor, one of the most important things I could ever do would be to prevent a student from being involved in a bullying situation as either a victim or a bully. | 3.00        | 5.00        | 4.45     | .60       |

**Q27:** I believe one of the most important things a school system could do is to establish a program to help recognize potential victims and bullies and provide effective prevention/intervention programs.

4.00    5.00    4.70    .47

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*N*=20

**Overall instrument.** Outcome values is the dimension with the highest average item response (*M*= 4.57). This indicates that counselors are very confident concerning their beliefs regarding the most important things that they and the school can do to prevent bullying. Then, comes the efficacy expectations dimension (*M*= 4.34). Counselors judged themselves as being confident and efficacious in their ability to handle bullying at schools. Finally, counselors rated themselves the least effective and confident for the outcome expectations dimension (*M*= 3.99). Counselors rated themselves the least effective for this dimension yet they are confident in their expectations about the important things to be done to decrease bullying.

Table 11

*Descriptive Statistics for the total CSBI Instrument*

|                              | <i>Rank</i> | <i>M.</i> | <i>SD.</i> |
|------------------------------|-------------|-----------|------------|
| <b>Outcome Values</b>        | 1           | 4.57      | .46        |
| <b>Efficacy Expectations</b> | 2           | 4.34      | .46        |
| <b>Outcome Expectations</b>  | 3           | 1.52      | .15        |

---

*N*=20

### **Variables that Affect Self-Efficacy**

Correlational analysis was conducted using SPSS to examine whether the independent variables; years of experience in the counseling area, the training that

counselors receive during their graduate studies, and the participation in professional development/in-service training are correlated with efficacy expectations, outcome expectations and outcome values.

***Relationship between the Independent Variables and the Dependent Variable***

As shown in Table 12, correlation existed between the subscales *outcome values* and *efficacy expectations* ( $r= 0.48, p < 0.05$ ) and *outcome values* and *outcome expectations* ( $r= 0.44, p < 0.05$ ). The correlations were found to be positive even with small Beta coefficients and the limited number of participants. If the sample size was bigger, more positive correlations might have emerged.

No significant relationship was found between the independent variables; years of experience as a school counselor, training about bullying in the graduate program and participation in professional development/in-service training with the two sub-scales *efficacy expectations* and *outcome values*. There exists a correlation between *outcome expectations* and participation in professional development / in-service training ( $r=0.49, p < 0.05$ ) but no significant correlation was found between *outcome expectations* and the other independent variables.

Table 12

***Correlational Matrix***

|                                       | 1    | 2  | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---------------------------------------|------|----|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Years of experience as a counselor | --   |    |   |   |   |   |
| 2. Training on Bullying               | -.32 | -- |   |   |   |   |

|                                        |      |      |       |      |      |    |
|----------------------------------------|------|------|-------|------|------|----|
| 3. Professional Development/In-service | -.39 | .31  | --    |      |      |    |
| 4. Efficacy Expectations               | .14  | -.21 | -.24  | --   |      |    |
| 5. Outcome Expectations                | -.22 | -.13 | .49*  | .19  | --   |    |
| 6. Outcome Values                      | -.04 | .006 | -.006 | .48* | .44* | -- |

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*Note: \*p < 0.05 Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level*

### **Effect of Years of Experience, Training, Participation in Professional Development**

This section examines the effect of (a) years of experience as a school counselor, (b) training that counselors received during their graduate studies, and (c) participation in professional development/in-service training on the counselor’s self-efficacy for handling bullying. Interestingly, only the counselors with twenty, fifteen and seven years of experience mentioned that they are very confident in their abilities and knowledge for dealing with bullying while others mentioned that they are confident but need more experience.

Eight out of ten interviewed counselors claimed that years of experience is the most important factor for increasing their self-efficacy and helping them deal with bullying in the school. They noted the importance of learning and improving from their experiences. They all agreed that training during graduate school is the least significant factor affecting their self-efficacy.

Respondent A15 is a counselor with fifteen years of experience said : “years of experience is the most important thing. Workshops are important but not sufficient. You need to live it, to experience it, to deal with it”. M20, middle school counselor with twenty

years of experience indicated that: “What makes me very confident is the experience that I’ve got from these twenty years. Experience is the most important factor. This does not mean that training and professional development are not. We should always stay up to date on literature but you learn and improve from your experiences”. M07, Another Middle school counselor with seven years of experience mentioned:

Personal experience and the skill to be a counselor are the most important factors that help me in boosting my self-esteem. Either the individual has the skill to be a counselor or no. S/he should be someone who listens carefully to the kids. When they talk to you, you need to dig deep to be successful in helping them. I did training on bullying in my graduate program but it was so brief. It equipped me with the basic skills and knowledge. The base is important but not sufficient.

Respondent E01, elementary counselor with one year of experience considered:

When you learn something, you learn it in theory. Practice is much more important. When you practice, you realize the areas of strengths and weaknesses while in theory, you don’t learn like that. Thus, you know the more you work, you manage your time in a better way. Training is not much useful. Professional Development is important to stay updated with literature such as ..now you have new type of bullying called cyberbullying...+ you stay connected with other experts and counselors .. you share ideas and learn from them.

Two counselors found that participation in professional development/in-service

training is more significant than experience. A01, a counselor with one year of experience reflected:

Professional development is the most important since it adds to my knowledge and makes me sure that what I know is good and will lead to results. Then, experience because it solidifies my knowledge. It provides me with more to know what to do. Training in graduate school is useless. It did not help me in anything.

The second counselor, H03 considered:

Training in graduate school was so brief. We discussed bullying in two chapters only without practice. I prefer PDs, workshops because it keeps me updated on strategies, how to deal with bullying, new bullying (cyber-bullying). The last factor is experience because you learn from it. You learn from your mistakes. When you are successful the first time, you will be more confident that you will succeed the next time. PDs also make me more confident than experience because they will reassure me whether what I am doing is correct or no. Professional Developments reflect on my experiences.

### Key Findings

The reporting results revolving around the counselor's self-efficacy were collected using COSE and CSBI instruments. The findings to the research questions were as follows. The counselors are confident in their effectiveness for microskills, process, dealing with difficult client behaviors, and cultural competence while moderately effective for awareness of values. The high self-confidence in these areas correlates with high ratings on



the COSE. Of all these skills microskills was the dimension with the highest average item response ( $M= 4.30$ ); the lowest being in awareness of values ( $M=3.46$ ).

Counselors perceived high self-efficacy beliefs concerning how well they handle bullying with an average mean above 3.5 on the subscale. Outcome expectations concerning bullying interventions carried out by counselors yielded high self-efficacy beliefs with an average mean above 3.5. When counselors are aware of the effects of certain behaviors in decreasing bullying or its negative consequences, they are better able to support the students in case they suspect them at risk of becoming a bully or a victim. The outcome expectations for bullying preventions were given a high value of importance by the counselors with a mean at 4.57 and  $SD=0.46$ . The most important action a counselor can take against bullying according to the outcome values is prevent students from being involved in bullying (Q26;  $M= 4.45$ ) and implementing schoolwide intervention programs about bullying. The outcome values has the highest average item response indicating that counselors are very confident concerning their beliefs regarding the most important actions for bully prevention.

There exists a relationship between outcome values and efficacy, and outcome expectations. There exists a correlation between *outcome expectations* and participation in professional development / in-service training ( $r=0.49$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). No significant relationship was found between the independent variables; years of experience as a school counselor, training about bullying in the graduate program and participation in professional development/in-service training with the two sub-scales *efficacy expectations* and *outcome values*. Overall, the majority of counselors stated that their practicum experience during graduate studies had no effect on their current strategies against bullying, but practicing

counseling in the field is what gave them the self-efficacy especially regarding bullying that they currently have.

## CHAPTER V

## DISCUSSION

This chapter consists of the interpretation of the results pertaining to the three research questions in comparison to the literature review. Moreover, the conclusion, implications, recommendations and limitations of the study are discussed in this chapter.

### **Counselors' Awareness of their General Counseling Capabilities Measured in Five Aspects**

The results revealed that out of the 5 dimensions, counselors rated themselves most effective in microskills ( $M=4.30$ ), followed by being culturally competent ( $M=4.28$ ), attending to the process ( $M=3.99$ ), dealing with difficult client behaviors ( $M=3.78$ ), and finally being aware of their own values ( $M=3.46$ ). Students do not need time and experience to master microskills (Kozina, Grabovari, De Stefano, & Drapeau, 2010). In Kozina's study, the findings showed that unlike the other dimensions, the counselor trainees were able to master the techniques needed in the microskills dimension early in their training process. This indicates that graduate programs are achieving their goals by preparing students who are equipped with the microskills necessary for efficient counseling (Ivey, Bradford-Ivey, & Zalaquett, 2009).

The findings revealed that Lebanese counselors are culturally competent. According to Hays (2005), cultural competence is a gradual and slow process that needs experience and time. Typically, counseling programs are successful in producing culturally competent counselors who are aware of their values and biases concerning their cultural background.

The findings of this study showed that process and dealing with difficult client behavior are at the third and fourth general counseling skill rankings on the COSE. The reason being that these skills require more experience and time to be mastered (Kozina et al., 2010).

In this study, awareness of values is the dimension with the lowest self-efficacy beliefs since counselors need time to challenge their biases, notions and stereotypes while working with their counselees (Kozina et al., 2010). Thus, counselors need more experience to engage in more opportunities to make them question their values.

Interestingly, some similarities were found in the ranking of the COSE general counseling skills between this study and Charlton's study. In Charlton's study, the findings showed that the elementary counselors rated themselves the highest for being most effective in cultural competence, followed by microskills, dealing with difficult client behavior, attending to process and finally awareness of values (Charlton, 2009). Microskills and Cultural competence were the highest subscales while awareness of values was the lowest one in both studies.

Research has shown that pre-practicum counselors perceived microskills as an important element in their educational program since it is one of the dimensions that increased their self-efficacy. Hence, microskills lead them to positive outcomes in the counseling session (Flasch, Bloom, & Holladay, 2016). Several studies were done to examine the changes in counselor self-efficacy beliefs during training. The results have shown that there is a significant increase in general self-efficacy beliefs. Microskills is the dimension that changed the most during training (Kozina et al., 2010; Rushlau, 1998). This

indicates that university programs are equipping counseling students with the necessary skills and experience to become confident and successful.

These basic skills build the foundation for successful counseling. Research has shown that if the counselor is not confident in his/her basic abilities to deal with counselees, then s/he will not be confident in dealing with more challenging issues (Lent et al., 2003). It is significant for Lebanese counselors to be effective in their counseling abilities since Larson and Daniels (1998) mentioned that counseling self-efficacy is a key element for effective counseling. When individuals hold high efficacy expectations, they will put and sustain their effort in handling challenging issues to achieve certain results (Bandura, 1977). This sets the stage for Lebanese counselors to be successful in their counseling career at the schools because of the strong self-efficacy beliefs they hold regarding their basic abilities. Therefore, they will maintain their effort to employ their microskills and abilities to decrease bullying in schools.

On the other hand, counselors rated themselves moderately effective concerning their abilities relating to their awareness of values. This indicates that the Lebanese counselors possess moderate self-efficacy beliefs when using the skills involved in this dimension. Giving advice is the item with the lowest mean across all dimensions ( $M=2.15$ ). This means that the majority of the participating counselors feel that they may give advice. In the field of counseling, counselors should refrain from giving advice (Corey, 2013). The author said that one of the most challenges for beginning counselors is to refrain from giving advice. It is a sign that counselors are not well trained or prepared to deal with counseling issues. As counselors, we should differentiate between giving advice and dispensing information. Counselors aid the counselees with finding solutions, and

becoming aware of their freedom to act. Counselors can help the counsees in developing independent choices and in turn, counsees hold accountable for their choices (Corey, 2013).

Giving advice is also enhanced in collectivist cultures such as Lebanon. For instance, the individualistic culture emphasizes independent and autonomous behaviors. Giving advice is a sign of parental insensitivity and mistrust. While, the collectivist culture promotes advice giving. In collectivist cultures, people seek advice from their family members or from professionals (counselors) to solve their own problems (Tavakoli, 2013). This might be the reason why Lebanese counselors give advice to counsees.

The standard deviation of some of the items in the microskills (items 14 and 17), process, dealing with difficult client behavior (item 20) and cultural competence dimensions, show a large disparity across the answers of the counselors. This shows that the self-efficacy beliefs of counselors are highly different. Some counselors hold high self-efficacy beliefs while others low levels of self-efficacy beliefs. These results might be due to the years of experience as school counselors. Counselors with more years of experience hold higher self-efficacy beliefs than those with less years of experience. Moreover, counselors who participate in professional development hold stronger self-efficacy beliefs than those who do not since professional development has a strong influence on self-efficacy after direct experiences where counselors reflect on their experiences, areas of strengths and weaknesses. On the other hand, the awareness of values is the only dimension with close measures of standard deviation since the majority of the counselors agreed that they are least effective in this dimension because they need more experiences to be effective in dealing with their values.

## **Counselors' Awareness of their Knowledge and Capabilities to Handle Bullying at School**

The analysis showed that counselors are effective in handling bullying at school. Participants rated themselves highest on the outcome values subscale ( $M= 4.5$  out of 5) followed by efficacy expectations ( $M= 4.3$  out of 5) and least effective on the outcome expectation subscale ( $M= 3.9$  out of 5). The measures of standard deviations show that the counselors hold high self-efficacy beliefs in handling bullying since there is no disparity across any item. These findings are inconsistent with those of Charlton (2009). In Charlton study, the elementary counselors held the highest self-efficacy beliefs for efficacy expectations ( $M=5.3$  out of 6) and outcome values ( $M=5.2$  out of 6) followed by outcome expectations ( $M=4.8$  out of 6). The participants in Charlton's study are more confident in their abilities to deal with bullying at schools. The reason may be due to the educational programs that tackle bullying in the curriculum used by the Charlton study in combination with the counselors' familiarity of these prevention programs. Unfortunately, such programs are absent in the Lebanese educational curriculum.

Bandura (1986) believes that humans need a positive sense of self-efficacy. Thus, counselors should hold optimistic self-efficacy beliefs concerning bullying interventions at the school. Furthermore, a person's self-efficacy beliefs concerning a certain task are reflected by how well this person can accomplish the task (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005). This means that Lebanese counselors are using effective interventions to handle bullying at the schools since they hold high self-efficacy beliefs for bullying prevention as measured by the CSBI instrument. According to Lent et al., (2006) counselors who possess stronger

self-efficacy beliefs produce more useful counseling responses, maintain and persist their efforts in the face of obstacles, and appear more balanced in the sessions.

Outcome values describe the degree of importance regarding the outcome expectation for a specific behavior (Bandura, 1986). Counselors rated themselves the highest and the most confident for this dimension amongst the three dimensions. Similar to Charlton (2009), the counselors in this study are aware of the most important actions that should be done by the school and counselor to prevent the students from being involved in a bullying situation as either a victim or a bully. Since counselors are aware of what needs to be done and value its degree of importance in decreasing bullying, they will sustain their effort in these tasks to achieve the desired outcome; decreased bullying. This is consistent with Bandura (1986) who believe that individuals will sustain their effort in tasks that have high outcome values and expectations.

Efficacy expectations are the individual's judgments about his/her ability to perform a certain task and obtain a certain result. Counselors hold high self-efficacy beliefs concerning their abilities to decrease bullying. Counselors will not use strategies if they don't believe in their abilities to deliver them effectively to the counselees (Akpanudo et al., 2009) or activities they believe are above their capabilities (Wood & Bandura, 1989).

Outcome expectations are expectations that a specific behavior will reach a specific outcome (Bandura, 1986). Participants noted that they are least effective in this dimension but still hold high self-efficacy beliefs ( $M= 3.99$ ). According to Scarborough and Culbreth (2008) higher outcome expectations lead to an increased delivery of interventions among counselors.



Our findings are aligned with Lunenburg (2011) and Bandura (1986, 1997). They believe that individuals might not have the abilities to perform the task, but still have confidence in their abilities to work hard to perform the task. Motivation is the key for perseverance to achieve desired outcomes. Counselors reported that they possess high self-efficacy beliefs concerning the outcome expectation for recognizing a student at risk for becoming a bully or a victim; lead to reducing the chance that the student will experience negative consequences from being involved in a bullying situation. On the other hand, counselors are less effective regarding their expectations with teachers or other staff members at the school for help in determining whether a student is at risk of being involved in a bullying situation. The reason for this as Khamis (2015) indicated might be because teachers have a small role in intervening or will not intervene at all to stop the bullying. Teachers usually do not intervene because they need in-service training to acquire the skills needed to deal with bullying (Batsche & Knoff, 1994; Rabah, 2006). Bandura (1997) believes that individuals who hold high self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations are likely to take action since the effort is worthwhile. They expect certain behaviors to reach certain outcomes and believe in their abilities to execute these actions. To attain the desired result, counselors should acquire the necessary skills and beliefs in their abilities. Thus, Lebanese counselors are somehow effective in addressing bullying at schools according to their self-reporting answers.

### **Effect of Years of Experience, Training, and Professional Development**

This study has shown that years of experience is the most important factor that affects the counselor's self-efficacy based on their self-reporting answers. Counselors with more years of experience held higher self-efficacy beliefs than those with less experience.

The results of this study are consistent with previous studies (Bakar, Zakaria, & Mohamed, 2011; Bandura, 1977, 1986; Barbee et al., 2003; Charlton, 2009; Larson et al., 1992; Larson & Daniels, 1998; Lent et al., 2003, 2006; Melchert et al., 2003; Tang et al., 2004) since years of experience is an example of performance accomplishments. Bandura (1977) believes that performance accomplishments have the strongest influence on self-efficacy. Therefore, more years of experience means more direct personal experiences and thus an increased level of self-efficacy in that area.

Based on the counselors' self-reporting answers, this study has shown that professional development is the second factor that influences the Lebanese counselors' self-efficacy after years of experience. Professional development is an example of modeling which is considered a method of vicarious learning. According to Bandura (1986) and Larson et al., (1992) a vicarious experience has the strongest positive influence on self-efficacy after direct personal accomplishments. This is consistent with our results since the majority of the Lebanese counselors rated years of experience as the most important factor followed by professional development. Curran (2009) found that years of experience as a school counselor affected the beliefs of the counselors concerning the importance of professional development areas in Missouri. The counselors with more years of experience valued the importance of professional development because schools do not always provide enough training for them. Therefore, they engage in professional development activities as a personal effort. On the other hand, the results are inconsistent with Charlton (2009). In Charlton study, the findings revealed that professional development does not affect counselor self-efficacy. She reported that these inconsistencies might be instead due to the quality of professional development that the counselors have received.

The Lebanese counselors rated training in graduate school as the lowest factor in affecting their self-efficacy since they considered it “useless”. Others also mentioned that it does not involve a rich practical experience. Training in graduate school is also considered a vicarious experience. The findings of this study are inconsistent with Bandura (1986) and Larson et al., (1992) yet consistent with Charlton (2009). One possible explanation for these inconsistencies is the quantity and quality of these trainings. Most Lebanese educational programs do not provide bullying training. Neither theoretical nor practical training involving bullying was introduced in the curriculum. The absence of bullying theoretically and practically from some educational programs might explain the inconsistencies in the results. In addition, some educational programs are more theoretically grounded and neglect the practical part. The theoretical part is necessary but not sufficient because direct experiences strongly affect self-efficacy of counselors more than vicarious experiences do. Restructuring of the educational program is needed to balance between the theoretical and practical parts.

In addition, literature shows conflicting findings on the effect of training on counselors’ self-efficacy. This study has shown that training does not affect the Lebanese counselor’s self-efficacy. Al-Darmaki (2004) found that beginner counselor trainees experience doubts concerning their counseling skills and abilities. They exhibit feelings of fear and anxiety corresponding to a lack of counseling skills and the fear of damaging the counselees. The results of Al-Darmaki’s study are consistent with those of Stoltenberg, and McNeill (2011) who found that beginner trainees possess higher levels of anxiety due to the lack of confidence in their ability to counsel because of the absence of counseling skills. They also fear negative evaluations from the counselees. When they gain more experience,

they become more informed about the counseling process, which in turn reduces their anxiety level and improves their self-efficacy about their counseling skills. Al-Darmaki (2004) found that the trainees' counseling self-efficacy improved and their anxiety level decreased because of training. Students who received training reported less anxiety levels and more self-efficacy. These results are consistent with Johnson et al., (1989) and Urbani et al., (2002) findings.

### **Relationship between the Variables**

Student counselors live their first counseling experience during their training in the educational programs to prepare them to become effective future counselors. They benefit from dealing with some issues and getting feedback from the supervisor on areas of improvement and strengths. The programs equip the students with the necessary skills needed for efficient counseling. Yet, it is considered a limited experience since the practicum is done at schools where confidentiality prevails and because of the limited number of hours, the student counselors spend there. Nevertheless, some educational programs do not have the practical part. When the student counselors graduate, their self-efficacy beliefs will be low since they do not have experience other than the practicum done. With more years of experience, counselors will become more confident and thus effective in dealing with counseling issues such as bullying. They will experience success and failures where they will learn and improve. At this stage, it is significant for counselors to stay updated on the literature by participating in professional development/workshops to share ideas and stay connected with experts in the field. More years of experience and participation in professional development will increase the counselor self-efficacy beliefs. As a result, counselors will become effective in handling counseling issues since research

have shown that self-efficacy is a key element for effective counseling. It is a round cycle that never ends.

### **Conclusions, Implications, Recommendations and Limitations**

**Conclusions:** Several conclusions can be drawn from this study. This study showed that Lebanese counselors consider themselves adequate in the counseling skills they employ when addressing bullying. More specifically, the Lebanese counselors are mostly effective in executing microskills. This shows that the university counseling programs in Lebanon are providing the necessary experiences and skills needed to master them. On the other hand, counselors are not adequate in their awareness of values. This is not surprising since this dimension needs time and experience to be mastered where counselors challenge their values and biases when working with the counselees.

The study has also shown that there a strong correlation between training in graduate program and self-efficacy does not exist firstly because the period of training was so brief and that secondly, the counselors found them “not very helpful”. Therefore, some changes need to be made in the educational program and internship experiences to better equip the student counselors with the necessary training. Thus, student counselors will become more knowledgeable, therefore more confident and effective dealing with this issue. When student counselors deal with bullying during their practicum, it is considered a direct experience. Direct experiences have the strongest influence on self-efficacy (Baandura, 1986). Also, counselor educators should assess the quality and quantity of the internships and include bullying prevention programs in the educational curriculum.

Moreover, this study has shown that years of experience have the strongest influence on self-efficacy followed by professional development.

**Implications and Recommendations:** There is a great deal of research on self-efficacy and on bullying, but the research combining both is very limited. Therefore, further research is needed in this area. As an example of what further research can be done on combining self-efficacy and bullying, a study on the kinds of barriers that counselors face while implementing bullying prevention programs in the Lebanese context would be helpful for counselors in this area.

In addition, further research is needed to examine other independent variables that affect counselors' self-efficacy such as school climate and supervision on counselor trainees. This information will help professors to plan and organize graduate program and internships, which will contribute to the counselors' self-efficacy.

The educational programs should further emphasize the idea of counselors refraining from giving advice since counselors are not well trained in this area for dealing with counseling issues. Additionally, bullying prevention programs should be included in the curriculum so that counselors become knowledgeable and employ them at their schools.

Given the importance of professional development in affecting the counselors' self-efficacy, schools can engage their counselors in professional development/in-service training activities on bullying, self-efficacy and how does self-efficacy affect the counselors' performance. Schools can also provide training to teachers and staff members to deal with bullying and thus counselors can collaborate with them for example in identifying the students at risk for being involved in bullying.

The Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education can perform workshops on anti-bullying programs. The funds can be used to develop an educational psychology-school guidance program in the Lebanese university. The ministry can also collaborate with the Center for Research and Development to offer PDs for counselors and the school staff on dealing with bullying in Lebanon and the Arab world where experts from different countries share and exchange ideas and stay connected.

School counselors agreed on the effectiveness of staying up-to-date concerning the school counseling literature. They need to make sure that the programs they employ at schools involve the components of effective bullying prevention programs as cited by the literature; comprehensive and long lasting. Therefore, school counselors should participate in professional developments that emphasize and highlight these types of trainings; effective bullying prevention programs such as Olweus Bullying Prevention Program.

**Limitations of the Study:** The first limitation is that the data collected is from a “self-report” questionnaire. This type of questionnaire leads to distorted information since the participants will answer in a socially acceptable way rather than admit their actual feelings due to social desirability (Ferrari, Bristow & Cowman, 2005). The second limitation is the limited number of participants. The sample size was only twenty Lebanese counselors. However, selecting a large sample size was beyond the researcher’s control because of the limited number of schools counselors in Beirut. In addition, it was difficult to obtain the schools’ and counselors’ consent to participate in this study, given the topic of the study: bullying. Schools have some kind of fear to reveal bullying within their premises. The third limitation is the length of the survey. It was mentioned in the consent forms that both questionnaires take 30 minutes to be completed. The instruments involve

73 items. Two instruments were involved in the study since the researcher was not able to find one questionnaire that examines bullying intervention and the counselors' self-efficacy. The fourth limitation is the limited number of participants, which made it difficult for the researcher to employ a multiple regression analysis better to answer the third research question.



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## APPENDIX A

### COUNSELING SELF-ESTIMATE INVENTORY

- (1) Strongly disagree
- (2) Disagree
- (3) Neutral
- (4) Agree
- (5) Strongly Agree

1. When using responses like reflection of feeling, active listening, clarification, probing, I am confident I will be concise and to the point.
2. I am likely to impose my values on the client during the interview.
3. When I initiate the end of a session I am positive it will be in a manner that is not abrupt or brusque and that I will end the session on time.
4. I am confident that I will respond appropriately to the client in view of what the client will express (e.g., my questions will be meaningful and not concerned with trivia and minutia).
5. I am certain that my interpretation and confrontation responses will be concise and to the point.
6. I am worried that the wording of my responses (e.g., reflection of feeling, clarification, and probing) may be confusing and hard to understand.
7. I feel that I will not be able to respond to the client in a non-judgmental way with respect to the client's values, beliefs, etc.
8. I feel I will respond to the client in an appropriate length of time (neither interrupting the client nor waiting too long to respond).

9. I am worried that the type of response I use at a particular time, i.e., reflection of feeling, interpretation, etc., may not be the appropriate response.
10. I am sure that the content of my responses, i.e., reflection of feeling, clarification, and probing, will be consistent with and not discrepant from what the client is saying.
11. I feel confident that I will appear competent and earn the respect of my client.
12. I am confident that my interpretation and confrontation responses will be effective in that they will be validated by the client's immediate response.
13. I feel confident that I have resolved conflicts in my personal life so that they will not interfere with my counseling abilities.
14. I feel that the content of my interpretation and confrontation responses will be consistent with and not discrepant from what the client is saying.
15. I feel that I have enough fundamental knowledge to do effective counseling.
16. I may not be able to maintain the intensity and energy level needed to produce client confidence and active participation.
17. I am confident that the wording of my interpretation and confrontation responses will be clear and easy to understand.
18. I am not sure that in a counseling relationship I will express myself in a way that is natural without deliberating over every response or action.
19. I am afraid that I may not understand and properly determine probable meanings of the client's nonverbal behaviors.
20. I am confident that I will know when to use open or closed-ended probes and that these probes will reflect the concerns of the client and not be trivial.
21. My assessments of client problems may not be as accurate as I would like them to be.

22. I am uncertain as to whether I will be able to appropriately confront and challenge my client in therapy.
23. When giving responses, i.e., reflection of feeling, active listening, clarification, probing, I'm afraid that they may not be effective in that they won't be validated by the client's immediate response.
24. I do not feel that I possess a large enough repertoire of techniques to deal with the different problems my clients may present.
25. I feel competent regarding my abilities to deal with crisis situations that may arise during the counseling sessions—e.g., suicide, alcoholism, abuse, etc.
26. I am uncomfortable about dealing with clients who appear unmotivated to work towards mutually determined goals.
27. I may have difficulty dealing with clients who do not verbalize their thoughts during the counseling session.
28. I am unsure as to how to deal with clients who appear noncommittal and indecisive.
29. When working with ethnic minorities clients I am confident that I will be able to bridge cultural differences in the counseling process.
30. I will be an effective counselor with clients of a different social class.
31. I am worried that my interpretation and confrontation responses may not over time assist the client to be more specific in defining and clarifying their problem.
32. I am confident that I will be able to conceptualize my client's problems.
33. I am unsure as to how I will lead my client towards the development and selection of concrete goals to work towards.
34. I am confident that I can assess my client's readiness and commitment to change.

35. I feel I may give advice.

36. In working with culturally different clients I may have a difficult time viewing situations from their perspective.

37. I am afraid that I may not be able to effectively relate to someone of lower socioeconomic status than me.

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## APPENDIX B

### COUNSELOR SELF-EFFICACY AND BULLYING INTERVENTION SCALE

#### Demographic Information

1. How many total years have you been a school counselor? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many years have you been at your current site as a school counselor?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What is your educational level and qualifications? (please indicate your highest educational level)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Master's Degree  
\_\_\_\_\_ Master's Degree plus additional coursework  
\_\_\_\_\_ Educational Specialist Degree  
\_\_\_\_\_ Doctoral Degree  
\_\_\_\_\_ Doctoral Degree plus additional coursework
4. Did you receive any training on how to address bullying in your graduate program?  
\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
5. Have you participated in any professional development activities or in-services on bullying? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
6. How many students are enrolled in your school? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What is your current status at your school? \_\_\_\_\_ Part Time \_\_\_\_\_ Full Time

#### **Please circle the best response**

8. Do you believe it is the role of elementary school counselors to identify students at risk for involvement in bullying situations as the bully or the victim?  
**Yes** **No**
9. Does your school have an intervention team at the school to handle bully situations?  
**Yes** **No**
10. Does your school include teaching about bullying prevention/interventions in its curriculum?  
**Yes** **No**

11. Has your school offered an in-service to teachers and staff on bullying prevention/intervention programs in the past five years?

**Yes**

**No**

12. Has a student(s) from your school ever been involved in a physical altercation as a result of being bullied?

**Yes**

**No**

13. Has a student ever expressed concerns related to problems at school with a bully?

**Yes**

**No**

**Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements: (please circle the responses that best represent your opinions)**

14. I believe I can recognize a student that is at risk for becoming either a bully or a victim of bullying.

**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

**5**

**Strongly disagree**

**Disagree**

**neutral**

**Agree**

**strongly agree**

15. I believe I can talk with teachers at my school to help determine whether or not a student is at risk for bullying issues either as a bully or victim.

**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

**5**

**Strongly disagree**

**neutral**

**strongly agree**

16. I believe that I can talk with the parent(s)/guardian of a student to help determine whether or not the student is at risk for becoming a bully or a victim.

**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

**5**

**Strongly disagree**

**neutral**

**strongly agree**

17. I believe I can ask a student at risk for being a bully or a victim if he/she is involved in a bullying situation

**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

**5**

**Strongly disagree**

**neutral**

**strongly agree**

18. I believe I can effectively offer support to a student at risk for being involved in a bullying situation either as a bully or a victim.

**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

**5**

**Strongly disagree**

**neutral**

**strongly agree**

19. I believe I can refer a student at risk for serious emotional problems as a result of being involved in a bullying situation to an outside agency.

**1**                      **2**                      **3**                      **4**                      **5**

**Strongly disagree**                      **neutral**                      **strongly agree**

20. I believe if I recognize a student at risk for becoming a bully or a victim, it will reduce the chance that a student will experience negative consequences from being involved in a bullying situation.

**1**                      **2**                      **3**                      **4**                      **5**

**Strongly disagree**                      **neutral**                      **strongly agree**

21. I believe if I talk with teachers or other staff members at my school to help determine whether a student is at risk of being involved in a bullying situation, it will reduce the chance that the student will be involved with bullying problems.

**1**                      **2**                      **3**                      **4**                      **5**

**Strongly disagree**                      **neutral**                      **strongly agree**

22. I believe if I talk with the parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student to help determine whether a student is at risk of becoming a bully or a victim, it will reduce the chance that the student will be involved with bullying problems.

**1**                      **2**                      **3**                      **4**                      **5**

**Strongly disagree**                      **neutral**                      **strongly agree**

23. I believe if I ask a student at risk for becoming a bully or victim, if he/she is involved in a bullying situation it will reduce the chance that the student will continue to be involved in the bullying situation.

**1**                      **2**                      **3**                      **4**                      **5**

**Strongly disagree**                      **neutral**                      **strongly agree**

24. I believe if I effectively offer support to a student at risk for being involved in a bullying situation, it will reduce the chance that the student will become a victim or a bully.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
**Strongly disagree**                      **neutral**                      **strongly agree**

25. I believe if a student at risk for becoming a bully or victim is referred to the school counselor it will reduce the chance that the student will be involved in bullying situations.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
**Strongly disagree**                      **neutral**                      **strongly agree**

26. I believe as a school counselor, one of the most important things I could ever do would be to prevent a student from being involved in a bullying situation as either a victim or a bully.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
**Strongly disagree**                      **neutral**                      **strongly agree**

27. I believe one of the most important things a school system could do is to establish a program to help recognize potential victims and bullies and provide effective prevention/intervention programs.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
**Strongly disagree**                      **neutral**                      **strongly agree**

**Please Check All that Apply.**

**28. Which of the following are risk factors for a student being a bully?**

\_\_\_\_\_ A student who regularly engages in teasing, name calling, and intimidation of others.

\_\_\_\_\_ A student who believes he/she is superior to other students.

\_\_\_\_\_ A student who frequently initiates fights with others who are or believed to be weaker.

\_\_\_\_\_ A student who has little empathy for others.

\_\_\_\_\_ A student who has low self-esteem.

\_\_\_\_\_ A student who has low grades.

**29. Which of the following are risk factors for a student becoming a victim?**

\_\_\_\_\_ A student who is non-assertive and appears weak or is dominated by others.

\_\_\_\_\_ A student who is a social isolate or has few friends.

\_\_\_\_\_ A student who is frequently chosen last for activities.

\_\_\_\_\_ A student who may often stay close to adults or teachers during recess or breaks to avoid isolated areas.

\_\_\_\_\_ A student who appears sad, depressed, or moody.

\_\_\_\_\_ A student who has low self-esteem.

**30. Which of the following do you think would be an appropriate response to a bullying situation?**

\_\_\_\_\_ Forming an intervention plan.

\_\_\_\_\_ Having a school-wide awareness plan.

\_\_\_\_\_ Offering individual or group counseling.

\_\_\_\_\_ Consultation

\_\_\_\_\_ Crisis counseling/response

\_\_\_\_\_ Referrals

\_\_\_\_\_ Peer facilitation

\_\_\_\_\_ Providing teachers with facts on bullying and school violence.

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**Please check the best response.**

**31. Which of the following criteria do you feel a bullying intervention program should contain?**

**Please check all that apply**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Comprehensive
- \_\_\_\_\_ Change the entire school climate
- \_\_\_\_\_ Teach social and conflict resolution skills
- \_\_\_\_\_ Establish and reinforce anti-bullying rules
- \_\_\_\_\_ Involve the entire school staff, parents, and students
- \_\_\_\_\_ Empower bystanders
- \_\_\_\_\_ Reform bullies
- \_\_\_\_\_ Strengthen victims
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bullying preventions for the home
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bullying preventions for the school
- \_\_\_\_\_ Bullying preventions for the community
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other – please list

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**32. Which of the following criteria does your current bullying intervention program contain?**

**Please check all that apply.**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Comprehensive
- \_\_\_\_\_ Change the entire school climate

- Teach social and conflict resolution skills
  - Establish and reinforce anti-bullying rules
  - Involve the entire school staff, parents, and students
  - Empower bystanders
  - Reform bullies
  - Strengthen victims
  - Bullying preventions for the home
  - Bullying preventions for the school
  - Bullying preventions for the community
  - I do not have a bullying intervention program
  - Other – please list
- 
- 
- 

**33. Do you implement any of the following programs at your school?**

**Please check all that apply.**

- Olweus Bullying Prevention Program
  - Bully Proofing your school
  - Second Step
  - Resolving Conflicts Creatively
  - BULLYPROOF
  - Other – please list
- 
- 
- 

**34. How do you currently deliver bullying interventions to students at your school?**

**Please check all that apply.**

\_\_\_\_\_ School Guidance Curriculum (e.g., classroom instruction, interdisciplinary curriculum, group activities, and parent workshops and instructions)

\_\_\_\_\_ Individual Student Planning (e.g., individual or small group appraisal/advisement)

\_\_\_\_\_ Responsive Services (e.g., consultation, individual and small group counseling, crisis counseling/response, referrals, peer facilitation)

\_\_\_\_\_ Other – please list

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**35. Which method do you employ to establish, maintain, and enhance, the total school counseling program?**

**Please check all that apply.**

\_\_\_\_\_ Professional Development Activities

\_\_\_\_\_ In-service Training

\_\_\_\_\_ Professional Association Membership

\_\_\_\_\_ Post Graduate Education

\_\_\_\_\_ Consultation, collaboration, and teaming

\_\_\_\_\_ Other – please list

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**36. Which method do you employ to establish, maintain, and enhance your knowledge of bullying interventions?**

**Please check all that apply.**

\_\_\_\_\_ Professional Development Activities

\_\_\_\_\_ In-service Training

\_\_\_\_\_ Professional Association Membership

\_\_\_\_\_ Post Graduate Education

\_\_\_\_\_ Consultation, collaboration, and teaming

\_\_\_\_\_ Other – please list

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## APPENDIX C

### PRINCIPAL CONSENT FORM

**Study Title: Perceived Self-Efficacy in Dealing with Bullying: The Case of Lebanese School Counselors**

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Anies Al-Hroub  
**Address:** American University of Beirut (AUB)  
Beirut- Lebanon  
Chairperson of the Education Department  
Associate Professor of Educational Psychology & Special  
Education  
Phone: (01) 350 000 Ext: 3060  
Email: [aa111@aub.edu.lb](mailto:aa111@aub.edu.lb)

**Co-Investigator:** Maria El Helou  
**Address:** American University of Beirut (AUB)  
Beirut – Lebanon  
Phone: (03) 022247  
Email: [mhe28@mail.aub.edu](mailto:mhe28@mail.aub.edu)

Dear School Principal,

We would like your school to participate in a research study. This participation is voluntary. Detailed information is provided below. Please do not hesitate to ask any questions you might have.

#### **Project Description**

1. This research study is conducted to examine the school counselor's perceived self-efficacy to deal with bullying at the school. It aims at examining the counselor's self-efficacy concerning their general counseling abilities. In addition, it aims at examining whether: years of experience in the counseling area, training that counselors received during their graduate studies, attending workshops and conferences on bullying, and counseling experience with specific issues influence

counselor self-efficacy in dealing with bullying at the school and whether there are additional factors other than the ones mentioned in the literature. This study is conducted for a Masters Degree in Educational Psychology-School Guidance at the American University of Beirut. The study will involve 30 school counselors working in private English speaking schools from various grade levels (Elementary, Middle and High levels). Interviews will be conducted with 6 counselors, 2 from each grade level. Results of the questionnaires will be available at the AUB Library under the form of a thesis.

2. Direct approach will be used for the recruitment procedure. The co-investigator will contact the principal and the counselor(s) in person. The co-investigator will provide the principal a permission letter in person explaining the study, its purpose and whether the principal would like his/her counselor(s) to participate in the study. Participation is voluntary. The principal will be given 48 hours to make his/her decision regarding the participation in the study. After 2 days, the co-investigator will contact the school to check the decision of the principal. If the latter is willing to participate in the study, the researcher will consent orally the counselors. The counselors also will be given 48 hours to check their willingness or unwillingness to participate in the study. After 2 days, the researcher will contact the counselors to check their decision. The researcher will collect demographic information about the counselors and distribute the questionnaires to the participants. The participants will fill the questionnaires in a private setting in the school with the administration's permission. If one or more participant(s) do not have time to fill the questionnaires, the co-investigator will arrange with the counselor(s) date and time so that she will come back to the school to give the questionnaires to the counselors who did not fill them. Then, dates and times will be arranged with 6 counselors, 2 from each grade level for conducting semi-structured interviews. Participation is voluntary. You will get a copy of the signed consent form. The counselors will get a copy of the consent script.
3. Counselors from all grade levels will be asked to participate in the study. Two instruments will be administered to the participants to fill them in a private setting

in the school with the administration's permission. The questionnaires gather descriptive and exploratory data.

4. The questionnaires should take almost 30 minutes. They are rated on a 5 point Likert scale. The questionnaires are intended to answer the research questions.
5. Interviews will be done with 6 counselors, 2 from each grade level to get a deeper understanding of the variables studied. The researcher will record the responses on a notebook.

#### **A. Risks and Benefits**

Participation in this study does not involve any risks to the participants beyond the risks of daily life. They can withdraw their consent or stop their participation for any reason at any time. This will not affect their relationship with AUB. Even if the principal does not accept to participate in the study, this will not influence his/her relationship with AUB. At the same time, there are no direct benefits to the school. However, the participation of counselors helps research in examining the counselor self-efficacy in dealing with bullying at the schools and the factors that improve self-efficacy to increase awareness about bullying and self-efficacy to be effective in decreasing the prevalence of bullying at the schools.

#### **B. Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is maintained in the study. All the information including names and other identifying information will not be mentioned in the discussions. No school names will be recorded and no specific information about the counselors' answers will be shared with the school/principal. The data will be reviewed by the co-investigator and principal investigator only. IRB may audit the records while assuring confidentiality. Records will be retained for at least 3 years after the completion of the research. Then, the data will be shredded and destroyed.

#### **C. Contact Information**

- 1) Please do not hesitate to ask any questions or concerns you have about the research. You may call Dr. Anies Al-Hroub at 01-350000 ext. 3060 or contact him by email: [aa111@aub.edu.lb](mailto:aa111@aub.edu.lb) or Ms. Maria El Helou at 03-022247 or by email: [mhe28@mail.aub.edu](mailto:mhe28@mail.aub.edu)

- 2) If you feel that your questions have not been answered, or if you have any questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a participant in this research, do not hesitate to contact the Social and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board at AUB at 01-350000 or 01- 374374, Ext: 5445 or by email: [irb@mail.aub.edu](mailto:irb@mail.aub.edu).

**D. Participant Rights**

Participation in this study is voluntary. There are no financial rewards for participating in the study. You may stop participating in the study at any time for any reason. Even if you refuse to participate in the study, this will not influence your relationship with AUB.

You will get a copy of this consent form. Counselors may skip any question they don't like to answer.

Please do not hesitate to ask any questions concerning your rights. You may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at AUB on 01- 350000 ext. 5445.

**If you agree to permit counselors in your school to participate in the study, please sign below:**

Consent of the school principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Co-Investigator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX D

### COUNSELOR CONSENT FORM

**Study Title: Perceived Self-Efficacy in Dealing with Bullying: The Case of Lebanese School Counselors**

**Principal Investigator:** Dr. Anies Al-Hroub  
**Address:** American University of Beirut (AUB)  
Beirut- Lebanon  
Chairperson of the Education Department  
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Phone: (01) 350 000 Ext: 3060  
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**Co-Investigator:** Maria El Helou  
**Address:** American University of Beirut (AUB)  
Beirut – Lebanon  
Phone: (03) 022247  
Email: [mhe28@mail.aub.edu](mailto:mhe28@mail.aub.edu)

Dear Counselor,

We would like you to participate in a research study. This participation is voluntary. Detailed information is provided below. Please do not hesitate to ask any questions you might have.

#### **Project Description**

1. This research study is conducted to examine the school counselor's self-efficacy to deal with bullying at the school. It aims at examining the counselor's self-efficacy concerning their general counseling abilities. In addition, it aims at examining whether years of experience in the counseling area, training that counselors received during their graduate studies, attending workshops and conferences on bullying, and counseling experience with specific issues influence counselor self-efficacy in dealing with bullying at the school and whether there are additional factors other than those mentioned in the literature. This study is conducted for a

Masters Degree in Educational Psychology-School Guidance at the American University of Beirut. The co-investigator will not ask sensitive or personal questions. The expected number of participants is 30 school counselors working in private English speaking schools from various grade levels (Elementary, Middle and High levels). Interviews will be conducted with 6 counselors, 2 from each grade level. Results of the questionnaires will be available at the AUB Library under the form of a thesis.

2. Direct approach will be used for the recruitment procedure. The co-investigator will contact the principal and the counselor(s) in person. The co-investigator will provide the principal a permission letter in person explaining the study, its purpose and whether the principal would like his/her counselor(s) to participate in the study. Participation is voluntary. The principal will be given 48 hours to make his/her decision regarding the participation in the study. After 2 days, the co-investigator will contact the school to check the decision of the principal. If the latter is willing to participate in the study, the researcher will consent orally the counselors. The counselors also will be given 48 hours to check their willingness or unwillingness to participate in the study. After 2 days, the researcher will contact the counselors to check their decision. The researcher will collect demographic information about the counselors and distribute the questionnaires to the participants. The participants will fill the questionnaires in a private setting in the school with the administration's permission. If one or more participant(s) do not have time to fill the questionnaires, the co-investigator will arrange with the counselor(s) date and time so that she will come back to the school to give the questionnaires to the counselors who did not fill them. Then, dates and times will be arranged with 6 counselors, 2 from each grade level for conducting semi-structured interviews. Participation is voluntary. The participants will get a copy of the consent script.
3. Counselors from various grade levels will be asked if they are willing to participate in the study.

4. The questionnaires take almost 30 minutes. Counselors will fill the questionnaires in a private setting in the school with the administration's permission.
5. Dates and times will be arranged with the counselors who accept to participate in the semi-structured interviews.
6. The interviews will be done on individual basis and the counselors' responses will be recorded on a notebook.
7. The interviews will be done in an empty room in the school after getting the permission of the principal.
8. The estimated time of the interview is 30 minutes.
9. If you agree to participate in the study, you will get a copy of the consent form and of the interview questions.

#### **E. Risks and Benefits**

The participation in this study does not involve any risks to the participants beyond the risks of daily life. They can withdraw the consent or stop their participation for any reason at any time. This will not affect their relationship with AUB. Even if the counselor does not accept to participate in the study, this will not influence his/her relationship with AUB. This study is significant in increasing awareness among counselors and society about bullying and self-efficacy. Thus, counselors will be successful in dealing with bullying at the schools.

#### **F. Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is maintained in the study. All the information including your name and the school's name or any other data will not be mentioned in the discussions. The data will be reviewed by the co-investigator and principal investigator only. The data will be stored with the principal investigator. IRB may audit the records while assuring confidentiality. Records will be retained for at least 3 years after the completion of the research. Then, the data will be shredded and destroyed.

#### **G. Contact Information**



Please do not hesitate to ask any question you have about the research. You may call Dr. Anies Al-Hroub at 01-350000 ext. 3060 or contact him by email: [aa111@aub.edu.lb](mailto:aa111@aub.edu.lb) or Ms. Maria El Helou at 03-022247 or by email: [mhe28@mail.aub.edu](mailto:mhe28@mail.aub.edu)

If you feel that your questions have not been answered, or if you have any question, concerns or complaints about your rights as a participant in this research, do not hesitate to contact the Social and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board at AUB at 01- 350000 or 01-374374, Ext: 5445 or by email: [irb@mail.aub.edu](mailto:irb@mail.aub.edu).

### H. Participant Rights

Participation in this study is voluntary. There are no financial rewards for participating in the study. You may stop participating in the study at any time for any reason. Even if you refuse to participate in the study, this will not influence your relationship with AUB. You will get a copy of this consent form. You may skip any question you don't like to answer. Please do not hesitate to ask any questions concerning your rights. You may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at AUB on 01- 350000 ext. 5445.

I agree to participate in the questionnaire part of the study Yes  No   
I agree to be interviewed Yes  No

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Co-Investigator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_