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*Article*

## The Impact of Assertiveness Training on Improving Social Efficacy among Higher Basic Stage Bullied Students

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### Abstract

The study examined the effect of training on self-assertiveness on improving the social efficacy of bullying students from the upper basic stage in schools affiliated to the Directorate of Education for the first Irbid region. The study sample consisted of (30) students from the seventh and eighth grades from the Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq Basic School for Boys who obtained high scores on the scale of being a victim, and they were randomly distributed into two groups: an experimental group that included (15) students who were subjected to assertiveness training and a control group. It included (15) students who were not subjected to assertiveness training, and to achieve the objectives of the study, the social efficacy scale was used. Arithmetic averages, standard deviations, and the "T" test were used to process the statistical data. The results of the study showed that there were statistically significant differences at the significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between the experimental and control groups, and in favor of the experimental group in improving social efficacy on the total score. The results of the study also revealed that the results of the follow-up analysis of the experimental group showed the continuity of the impact of assertiveness training in improving the social efficacy of the victims of bullying.

### Keywords

Assertiveness training, Jordanian upper basic stage schools, Social efficacy, Victim students

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Bullying among school students is considered one of the serious problems which has been widely addressed in recent years (Smith et al., 2003). Bullying is one of the forms of aggressive behaviors characterized by the intention of the doer to harm others repeatedly and over a long period of time by one or several persons (Smith & Brain, 2000). This harm can be physical and direct such as pushing and kicking (Cohn & Canter, 2003), indirect like spreading rumors, sarcasm and insults (Giovazolias et al., 2010; Olsson et al., 2017). In this respect, (Bauman, 2008) pointed out that this behavior refers to the lack of equality between the bullying and the bullied in terms of strength or superiority, while (Smith et al., 2003) argued that schools are among the most common environments for this phenomenon and male students are more likely to practice bullying behavior than females.

(Timm & Eskell-Blokland, 2011) stated that domestic violence is the most important factor to develop bullying behavior while (Moradi, 2015) postulated that bullying may originate from the available dominant value system in the community as some societies may call for the control of one over the other. Affirming this, (Besag, 2006) pointed out that bullying behavior is a natural part of the evolutionary process where the desire of domination appears as a primary goal for ensuring survival. In the same line, (Timm & Eskell-Blokland, 2011) argued that bullying refers to several reasons such as poor academic achievement, influence of media, lack of family supervision, low ethical level of students, lack of social skills, and difficulties to manage anger. Nonetheless, (Yoneyama, 2015) stated that bullying may be due to the nature of relationships in school which adopts an authoritarian culture lacking any sense of forgiveness and tolerance towards others.

Several studies in the psychological literature (e.g., (Andreou, 2004; Boulton & Smith, 1994; Smith & Brain, 2000; Yoneyama, 2015) indicated that there are three contributors in the bullying process: the bully, the bullied, and the bullies-bullied students. Research has indicated that each group has its own psychological characteristics that distinguish it from other groups. For example, Smith and (Andreou, 2004) study revealed that bullies lack the positive concept of self-esteem, have a positive attitude towards aggression and control in their relationships and show low levels of empathy for others (Lewis, 1981; Nicholls et al., 2017; Peneva & Mavrodiev, 2013; Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995; Shimizu et al., 2004; Tannous & Al-Khawaldeh, 2014). As for bullied, (Bauman, 2008) stated that these are students who are targeted by aggressive behaviors; they are physically weak; they are rejected by their peers; they suffer from nervousness, anxiety and fear; they are poor problem-solvers; they show low self-esteem and feel of depression, loneliness; and they have suicidal thoughts and a sense of hopelessness. They are also characterized with irritability and a clear decline in social competence, where the proportion of these students in schools is between 15-20% (Hodges & Perry, 1999; Perry et al., 1988; Schuster, 1996; Sudha, 2019). In relation to the bullies students, (Bakema, 2010) explains that they practice bullying in some situations and they are victims in other situations. They tend to lie and argue, they have the highest levels of behavioral problems and show low levels of social efficacy.

The previous research has addressed bullied students (e.g., (Andreou, 2004; Boulton & Smith, 1994; Fox & Boulton, 2003; Klomek et al., 2007; Sudha, 2019; Ttofi et al., 2012), the researcher noticed that bullied students are at risk of developing psychological, social, and emotional problems including depression, difficulty to make friends, loneliness, and suicide. (Guo et al., 2020) pointed out that society should pay more attention to this population of students and help them by improving and developing their social efficacy since it is one of the key pillars for social interaction and daily success in school, family and social life. It is also an essential component of social adaptation during late childhood and early adolescence (Coronel et al., 2011; Markkanen et al., 2021).

Studies in this field (e.g., (Laeheem et al., 2009) indicated that the low levels of social efficacy among bullied students creates a sense of fear and anxiety that affects their ability to learn; thus, they may develop ideas of leaving school due to fear of being harmed (Markkanen et al., 2021). This in turns prevents the development of healthy and positive relationships with their peers, limits their successful long-term social participation in society and limits their achievement of high-quality social life (Galassi & Galassi, 1978; Hosseini et al., 2020; Lewis, 1981). Therefore, examining social efficacy is considered one of the cognitive fields of psychology. According to the self-efficacy theory, it is particularly important that individuals feel efficient whenever they

engage in social life with the need to maintain social relationships with others (DeWitz & Walsh, 2002). The social efficacy concept was introduced for the first time as an independent field of the general self-efficacy theory during the development of the self-efficacy scale, and when researchers developed the general self-efficacy scale, they found during the factorial analysis processes that (6) items of the scale were associated with the social interactions of individuals.

Social efficacy is defined as the individual's beliefs in his ability to demonstrate adequate levels of successful social interactions in his/her relationships with others (Smith & Brain, 2000), while (Zhang et al., 2014) defined it as the individual's assessments of a person about his/her skills, abilities and social behavioral patterns that are capable of achieving positive levels of desired social growth outcomes. (Bandura, 2006) emphasized that an individual's adaptation of a belief that he has affects his self-efficacy to achieve the desired goals. It is one of the basic characteristics of self-asserted individual since assertiveness may be an attempt for the actual translation of positive or negative self-perceptions.

(Omura et al., 2016) indicated that assertiveness training is one of the most important educational strategies attracting the attention of researchers and students in the educational and psychological fields of study to treat those who exhibit social communication failure with their surroundings since negative communication leaves them with certain problems such as anxiety and depression. For instance, in one of the pioneering research studies, (Mueen et al., 2006) pointed out that assertiveness training enables individuals to act according to their own interests and defend themselves without worry to express their feelings honestly and to exercise their rights without denying the rights of others. Additionally, assertiveness gives them the ability to speak about their concerns and to share their own information. Alberta and (Peneva & Mavrodiev, 2013) stated that assertiveness training is a therapeutic procedure to remove the deficiency in individuals' relationship with themselves and others where it enables them to express their feelings in a healthy way.

(DeWitz & Walsh, 2002; Schwartz & Gottman, 1976) pointed out that assertive behavior has been classified as a pattern of interpersonal behavior that includes direct and sincere expressions about thoughts and feelings that are socially appropriate and conform with the society culture and the situation of individual; and that an individual who is certainly self-conscious respects the feelings of others. The interpersonal response has been divided into three forms, namely, aggressive response (represented in the individual attacks and assaults on others), negative response (represented in leaving the individual to others to invade his rights and take advantage of him), and the assertive response (represented in individual's expression in a way that respects him and others).

(Lee & Moray, 1994) stated that confident individuals trust their capabilities and have a general sense of ability to control and plan in logical and realistic ways, and whenever a confident individual fails to achieve his expectations, this does not affect his motivation, but he seeks to achieve it and accomplish other tasks unlike an unconfident individual who depends on the approval of others and their kindness, avoids engaging in discussions, withdraws from social interactions. Besides, he is unable to express his opinion and responds to insult and risk due to failure. In addition, this type of individuals is the most likely targeted by bullies. (Lee & Moray, 1994) also pointed out that aggressive and negative interpersonal interaction patterns have negative impact on an individual's personality in terms of the low levels of personal and social adaptation. (Gilbert & Allan, 1994) pointed out that assertiveness is an important aspect of the individual's psychological health since it helps in the development of self-esteem, the ability to tolerate frustration, promote emotional balance, establish successful social relationships with others and reduce anxiety and stress.

The studies of (Deltidou, 2009; Pepler et al., 2004; Schwartz & Gottman, 1976) also recommended using assertiveness training as an educational program to help individuals develop their assertiveness and improve their views about themselves. Training should take the form of a lecture, an explanation and a discussion, and help recovering the bullied, improve their ability to socialize, express their feelings sincerely without denying the rights of others, being able to talk about the fears they face and share private information with their peers. This also includes training on verbal and non-verbal activities and tasks due to the fact that affirmative behavior is

totally integrated.

### Literature Review

(Koparan et al., 2009) found a positive relationship between assertiveness and social efficacy, and that bullied students lack assertiveness skills and social efficacy. They also found that highly assertive students have a better social efficacy than non-assertive students. In the same line, (Tannous & Al-Khawaldeh, 2014) examined the effectiveness of assertiveness training on improving self-esteem and adaptation among bullied students in Jordan. The sample consisted of (24) participants from sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. It was divided into an experimental group and a control group where twelve members of the experimental group underwent a training program on assertiveness skills that consisted of (12) sessions for six-weeks while the other twelve members of the controlled group were not exposed to any training programs. The study results indicated the effectiveness of informative program to improve self-esteem and adaptation among the bullied students. The results also showed that there were statistically significant differences between the means of experimental group members compared with the controlled group members.

(Nicholls et al., 2017) study could be the most relevant to the present study. He looked at the effectiveness of a training program on improving the social efficacy of mistreated late-childhood schoolgirls in Gaza. The study sample consisted of (26) female students with ages between (10.9-11.4) years who received the lowest score in social efficacy scale and the highest score on parental abuse scale. The sample members were divided into a controlled group and an experimental group where the experimental group underwent a training program while the controlled group members were not exposed to any training program. The results of the study showed statistically significant differences between the means of experimental group's scores and the means score of controlled group's members at the summative measurement on the social efficacy scale in favor of the experimental group members.

(Tavakoli et al., 2014) investigated the impact of informative training on improving self-esteem among high school female students in Iran. The study sample consisted of (60) female students for a training period of four weeks. The results of the study showed that there was a positive impact of the informative training on improving the self-esteem level among the female students of the experimental group. The follow-up results also showed that assertiveness training continued after the completion of training period for more than two weeks. In the same vein, (Keliat et al., 2015) examined the effectiveness of informative training on reducing the adolescents' bullying behavior in Indonesia where the study sample consisted of (80) adolescents. The results showed a statistically significant effect of informative training on reducing adolescents' bullying behavior.

(Moradi, 2015) examined the impact of informative training on improving self-efficacy and reducing academic procrastination among seventh grade female students in Iran. The study sample consisted of (26) randomly selected female students. The results showed that there was a statistically insignificant effect of assertiveness training on improving self-efficacy and academic procrastination. (Bauman, 2008) examined the effectiveness of a mentoring program for the development of assertive behavior and its impact on increasing self-efficacy, social efficacy and academic performance among high school students at Gaza Strip. The study sample consisted of an experimental group of (24) students and a controlled group of (24) students. The results showed the effectiveness of the training program used to develop assertive behavior. And found that there was a positive effect on increasing the effectiveness of self-esteem and social efficacy, while they did not show any impact of the program on the academic performance of the participants. (2017) aimed at uncovering the characteristics and characteristics of bullying individuals and victims of bullying in Sweden schools. The study sample consisted of (6067) secondary school students.

The result of the study revealed that bullying students and victims of bullying suffer from a low level of social competence. (Shafie et al., 2018) examined the effect of a cognitive behavioral program to improve social

competence and self-assertion among students who are victims of bullying in Indonesia. The sample consisted of (8) students who underwent (5) sessions. The results on the post test showed a high level of social competence and self-affirmation. (Sudha, 2019) examined the effectiveness of assertiveness training on improving assertiveness among bullying victims of basic school students in India. The study sample consisted of (30) students. The results showed that there was a statistically significant effect of assertiveness training on improving assertiveness among the experimental group students compared with the controlled group. The results of the follow-up on the experimental group also showed continued impact of assertiveness training on improving assertiveness among the bullying victim students.

The literature shows that the majority of the studies have examined the impact of assertiveness training on improving self-esteem and adaptation (e.g., (Tannous & Al-Khawaldeh, 2014), the improvement of self-esteem (Tavakoli et al., 2014), the reduction of bullying (e.g.(Keliat et al., 2015), the improvement of self-efficacy and reduction of academic procrastination (e.g., (Moradi, 2015), the improvement of self-effectiveness, social efficacy, and academic performance (e.g., (Lewis, 1981) and the improvement of assertiveness among bullied (Shafie et al., 2018). (Sudha, 2019) was the only one examining the impact of assertiveness training on improving social efficacy, even though it was not conducted on bullied students. Additionally, it is noticed that attempts to improve the social efficacy of bullied students are scarce and limited, regardless of their importance with the exception of (Bandura, 2006) study where the sample was from the abused female students.

Several studies confirmed that there is an increasing and noticeable growth in the phenomenon of bullying. This negative phenomenon has been troubling teachers in schools as well as parents and society as a whole (Gómez-Ortiz et al., 2017; Jenkins et al., 2016). Studies confirm that among the reasons that lead to bullying is the low level of social competence which in turn makes students, especially victims of bullying, suffer psychologically and socially. It prevents them from their achieving levels of psychological and social adjustment, feeling insecure and high level of anxiety and rejection from peers which has recently increased. Victims of bullying often feel lonely and excluded from social situations which make their lives an unbearable hell. Therefore, it has become very necessary to search for educational and psychological mechanisms to develop bullied students' social competence because it represents an important and essential element of the student's personality. Social competence makes the student more effective in dealing with others, confronting them and building successful relationships with them.

Therefore, the present study, to the researcher's best knowledge, is a pioneering attempt to investigate the impact of assertiveness training on increasing social efficacy of bullied students from the high school basic level students which can help this group and improve its psychological and social aspects to achieve better levels of psychological health. This is considered an educational and ethical duty to take the bullying victim students into safety.

The researcher sought to use affirmative training as a treatment method for the bullying phenomenon after showing its effectiveness in improving multiple aspects of the targeted sample's personality, so the current study could be the first of its kind in Jordan that has attempted to help students who are victims of bullying to improve their level of social competence by training them on the skills and methods of self-assertion. The study attempted to answer the following two questions:

1. Are there statistically significant differences at the level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between the total means scores of bullied students on the social efficacy scale ( pretest vs. posttest) due to group (control vs. experimental)?
2. Are there statistically significant differences at the level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in the experimental group total means scores of bullied students on the social efficacy scale (posttest vs. follow-up).

In the current study the operational definitions of the two terms is as follows:

- *Assertiveness Training*: It is a set of procedures targeting to modify the cognition and behavior of bullied students, train them express their feelings, ideas, and opinions, defend their rights, and confront bullies in an appropriate way without violating the rights of others) (Speed et al., 2018)).
- *Social Efficacy*: It is the confidence that an individual possesses in demonstrating the suitable social

behavior in certain social situations (Smith & Betz, 2000).

## Method

### Research Design

In order to answer the questions of the study, semi-experimental approach was used by testing the effect of assertiveness training as an independent variable on the social efficacy as a dependent variable; therefore, the used design is an initial-summative design for a two equal groups as follows:

G1: O X O

G2: O – O

Experimental Group (G1)

Controlled Group (G2)

Self-Efficacy Scale (O)

Processing (Assertiveness training) X

The study included the following variables:

- Independent variable: it represents assertiveness training
- Dependent variable: it represents the social efficacy

To answer the questions of the study, means, standard deviations and t-test were employed.

### Sample

The study sample included bullied students from seventh and eighth grades at Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq Basic School for Boys in Irbid - Jordan after applying the victimization scale on all (285) male students. After the administration of the bullying scale, the highest students on the victimization domain of the total scale were taken as the final sample of the study consisted of (30) students. They were randomly assigned in (2) study groups (experimental, control), each consisted of (15) bullied students.

### Instruments

The study employed two scales (i) Bullying Scale (ii) Self Efficacy Scale. Bullying scale was used to collect data and measure assertiveness training effect on improving social efficacy. The bullying scale (victimization domain) was developed by (Jardat, 2008). The scale consisted of (10) items that measured the victimization level of classmates. This includes the behaviors of beatings, rumors, nicknaming, damaging possessions, harassment, seizing possessions, ignoring, social exclusion, ridicule and threats. The members of the sample were asked to specify how often they were deliberately exposed to each behavior during the past 30 days. A (7) point Likert scale was used for scoring the responses of the sampled students. (Jardat, 2008) verified the face validity and construct validity of the scale, where the items correlation coefficients with the scale were between (0.42 - 0.74), indicating an adequate level of construct validity of the instrument. Internal consistency reliability coefficients (Cronbach Alpha) were calculated ( $\alpha = 0.80$ ). In the current study, internal consistency reliability coefficients (Cronbach alpha) were calculated ( $\alpha = 0.85$ ), which means that the scale has adequate levels of internal consistency reliability.

The second instrument used in this study was the social efficacy scale developed by S(Smith & Betz, 2000; Smith & Brain, 2000). The scale was translated by the researcher from English into Arabic, and then was given to (3) English expert psychologists to ensure the accuracy of the translation. The scale consisted of (25) items

### Research Procedure

An assertiveness training program was developed after reviewing previous relevant literature (Galassi &

Galassi, 1978; Keliat et al., 2015; Mueen et al., 2006). The training program contained (12) training sessions that were developed by the researcher based on assertiveness skills. Assertiveness training aimed to develop assertiveness skills of bullied students at the higher basic school since they could help them promote their social efficacy. The assertiveness training program educated bullied students about the importance of proper expression of feelings and how to defend their fundamental rights without invading the rights of others. It also helped them to say "no", and start, continue, and end a public conversation, reject other people's requests, express the positive feelings and express anger and resentment. Assertiveness training consisted of (12) training sessions were administrated over (6) weeks and the duration of each session was (50) minutes. It was distributed in the following order:

- *First session:* It was an overview of the program and its objectives. Students met each other to be familiar with each other and the trainer (the researcher). The session aimed to promote closeness between the participants and create an atmosphere of warmth and comfort. It also aimed to introduce students to the assertiveness training program. The bullying scale was administrated in this session.
- *Second session:* In this session, assertiveness as a concept was introduced to students and they distinguished between the assertive and non-assertive or negative behavior. Student were given the needed information to recognize aggressive behavior and bullying behaviors. Here, any questions or suggestions were discussed after students presented their responses on the different situations.
- *Third session:* In this session, students become more aware of their assertive and non-assertive behaviors by displaying different categories of behaviors.
- *Fourth session:* It helped students to recognize their irrational beliefs and negative self-expressions that prevent them from affirming themselves, discuss the logical reasons of assertive behaviors and illustrate their impact on non-assertiveness of self and present models that emphasize the role of positive expressions in assertiveness and improvement of social interaction.
- *Fifth session:* It helped students to develop self-awareness of their legitimate rights and enabled them to affirm themselves by presenting examples of traditional assumptions and legitimate rights.
- *Sixth session:* It helped students to say "no" in the situations that require it. It aimed at encouraging them to say "yes" according to the situation that requires that, determining the difference between assertive and non-assertive behaviors, facing aggressive behavior by saying "no". Students were trained on this by presenting them a group of cards and discuss with them the possibilities of the members' responses, and its impact on their feelings and the results of saying "no".
- *Seventh session:* Student should know the "no" rules by presenting the best way to say "no" and also show the way to say "no".
- *Eighth session:* Students should learn how to deal with problems in an assertive way by presenting examples and asking students to react to these situations.
- *Ninth session:* Students should be trained on how to deal with the problem in an assertive way by explaining the six-role plan (check, arrange, select, describe, express and enhance) presented by the researcher and discussing with students its importance on the assertive behavior.
- *Tenth session:* Students should be trained to deal with the manipulation methods that they may face whenever they engage in an assertive behavior.
- *Eleventh session:* Students were trained on the cooperation methods and on resolving conflict among themselves in a way that helps them to reach assertiveness.
- *Twelve session:* Students summarized the content of activities and exercises provided to them, talked about the flow of meetings, listened to any comments that students want to talk about and finally end the program and say goodbye to the participants.

To achieve the purpose of current study, the researcher verified the validity of the assertiveness training program by giving it to a panel of (8) specialists in psychology and counseling at Yarmouk University and Al-

Balqa Applied University. They were asked to give their remarks on the appropriate level of program content with the objectives and skills used for training, and the implementation level of program. Remarks were taken into consideration and the final format of the assertiveness training program was developed.

## Results

### Social Efficacy Scale

Smith & Betz (2000) verified the validity of scale using the concurrent validity indicators by calculating the correlation coefficients between the total score of social efficacy scale and the total score of the social shyness scale. The correlation coefficient value of the present study was (0.57), which indicated that the scale had an acceptable degree for the study purposes. (Smith & Betz, 2000) verified the reliability of scale using a pilot study of (109) students (Test-retest reliability), and then calculated the reliability coefficients (Pearson's correlation coefficients) between their estimates on the two administration (test-retest reliability = 0.82). Internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach Alpha) were also calculated at ( $\alpha = 0.94$ ).

To verify the face validity of social efficacy scale in this study, the scale in its initial form was presented to (8) reviewers who are specialized in the fields of educational psychology, scale and evaluation, and psychological counseling at Yarmouk University. They were asked to express their opinions about the scale, in terms of language formulation and its clarity, and any other modifications they see appropriate. Based on the agreement of (7) specialists, five items were deleted, some items were reworded and the scale in its final format consisted of (20) items. Face validity was obtained through using a pilot sample of (50) students of the sixth, seventh and eighth grades to verify the validity indicators of social efficacy scale items that consisted of (20) items in its final form. It calculated Pearson's correlation coefficients values between the item and the overall degree of scale as shown in table 1.

**Table 1.** *Pearson Correlation Coefficient Values for Each Item of Social Efficacy Scale with Overall Degree of Scale*

<i>Item</i>	<i>Pearson</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Pearson</i>
1	0.462*	11	0.467*
2	0.517*	12	0.534*
3	0.473*	13	0.548*
4	0.561*	14	0.669*
5	0.519*	15	0.676*
6	0.612*	16	0.723*
7	0.493*	17	0.495*
8	0.398*	18	0.743*
9	0.447*	19	0.586*
10	0.431*	20	0.675*

Table 1 showed that all corrected correlation coefficients for the items were larger than (0.20). According to (Cohen, 1992), items having a correlation coefficient of ( $\alpha = 0.20$ ) are described as valid. Pearson correlation coefficient values for the items listed in table 1 were (0.723 - 0.398), which were all statistically significant at the level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), and confirmed that the instrument had an acceptable indicators of validity. Reliability indicators of social efficacy scale were verified using test-retest method, where it was implemented on a pilot sample consisting of (50) students from the study population who were not included in the study real sample. The same scale was administrated to the pilot sample within a two-week interval. Then, Person correlation coefficient between the two administrations were calculated at (0.87). This value showed that scale had an appropriate degree of validity for the purposes of the current study.



To verify the groups' equivalence, the means and standard deviations of initial study individuals' estimates were calculated on the social efficacy scale according to the group variable (experimental vs. control). The t-test was used to show the statistical differences between the two means scores as illustrated in table 2.

**Table 2.** *Individuals' Estimates on The Social Efficacy Scale According to The Group Variable (Experimental, Controlled)*

		No.	Means	SD	T-value
Initial	Experimental	15	2.95	0.430	-1.081
	Controlled	15	3.15	0.543	

Table 2 showed that statistical significance value (0.289) was greater than the level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) which means the non-existence of statistically significant difference between the means of initial study individuals' estimates on the social efficacy scale, and indicated the equality of two study groups on the initial social efficacy scale.

The research questions of the current study need to be mentioned here.

RQ1. Are there statistically significant differences at the level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between the summative means of bullying victim students on the social efficacy scale, due to the (controlled, experimental) groups variable?

To answer this question, the t-test was implemented on the summative means of study members' estimates (victims of bullying) on the social efficacy scale, according to the group variable (experimental, controlled) as illustrated in table (3) below:

**Table 3.** *Members' Estimates on The Social Efficacy Scale, According to The Group Variable (Experimental, Controlled).*

		Number	Mean	STDEV	T-value	F	Seg
Summative	Experimental	15	4.03	0.39	3.600	28	0.001
	Controlled	15	3.49	0.43			

Table 3 showed the existence of a statistically significant difference at the level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between the two means due to the impact of group and the differences came in favor of the experimental group.

RQ2. Are there a statistically significant difference at the level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between the student estimates of performance on the formative scale due to the measurement variable (summative, formative)?

To answer this question, the t-test was implemented on the means of experimental group members' estimates (victims of bullying) on the social efficacy scale, according to the scale variable (summative, formative) as illustrated in table (4) below:

**Table 4.** *Members Estimates on The Social Efficacy Scale According to The Scale Variable (Summative, Formative)*

Scale	Number	Means	STDEV	T-value	F	Seg
Summative	15	4.03	0.394	-0.288	14	0.778
Formative	15	40.5	0.286			

Table (4) shows the non-existence of a statistically significant difference at the level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) between the two means of study members' estimates on the social efficacy scale due to the scale variable (summative, formative).

## Discussion

The results related to the first question indicated that there were statistically significant differences between the averages of the experimental and control group on the social efficacy scale favor of the experimental group. This result is attributed to the fact that activities and tasks which make up assertiveness training have a clear impact on students' performance by introducing them through stages gradually which has positively affected the bullying victim students who participated in the various training activities and tasks. The most important of these activities and tasks are expressing the feelings and opinions freely, defending the fundamental rights without overstepping on the rights of others, helping students to say "no", starting, continuing, and ending a public conversation, rejecting the demands of others, expressing the positive feelings, expressing anger and resentment, solving social problems, and communicating with others. The researcher also played an important role within the group by developing relationships and employing certain skills, such as acceptance, respect, sympathy, and built trust among students in a safe environment. This agrees in part with the results of (Lee & Crockett, 1994) study which indicated the impact of assertiveness training on improving social efficacy. It is also consistent with the study of (Bakema, 2010) which indicated the impact of educational programs on the improvement of social efficacy.

With regard to the second question, the result indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between the two means of the study members' estimates on the social competence scale due to the measurement variable (postpartum, follow-up). This can be attributed this the effectiveness of tasks and activities that assertiveness training included for the bullying victim students which relatively showed its impact on the retention of study members in the formative scale to some of the gains made in the summative scale, but it failed to continue students' improvement and development on the overall level of social efficacy measure. This finding came in disagreement with the results of (Sudha, 2019; Tavakoli et al., 2014) studies which indicated the impact of affirmative training after completing the training period of more than two weeks.

## Conclusion, Recommendations and Implications

The importance of this study stems from its attempt to investigate the impact of assertiveness training to increase the social efficacy of bullied students at basic schools. This issue has not been fully addressed in psychological literature. It is also expected from these training programs to help bullied students defend themselves and express their opinions and feelings freely in order to fulfill their social functions, and feel satisfied and comfortable.. The results of this study will hopefully provide teachers, school counselors and parents with an assertiveness training program that can help bullied students to express their opinions and defend their rights

In light of the results, the study made the following recommendations:

1. Schools should employ assertiveness training in to benefit from it in developing social competence among students of different age groups who are victims of bullying.
2. School counselors should apply assertiveness training programs to female victims of bullying. .
3. Future studies can investigate the personality of bullying victim students at basic schools, such as styles of thinking, personality, family climate, and psychological rigidity.

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