



## The Effects of School Counseling on the General Self-efficacy among Senior High School Students

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### ABSTRACT

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This study sought to determine the effects of counseling on self-efficacy among senior high school students of a private Catholic secondary school in the City of Santiago, Philippines. It employed a quantitative, cross-sectional research design using the General Self-Efficacy Scale (Sherer, 1982) to gather data from two hundred fifteen (215) respondents. The results of the study showed that the majority of respondents were female, and had one to two counseling sessions attended in the Guidance and Counseling Center of the study site. The respondents' level of self-efficacy was found to be "high" or 3.02. The t-test findings showed sex differences, where males have significantly higher level of self-efficacy than females after attending counseling sessions. Further, students who attended 1-2 sessions and 3 and above did not show any significant differences in their self-efficacy. The study recommends that the Guidance and Counseling Center shall explore these findings to enhance the provision of counseling services and evaluate the effects of counseling on their clientele.

### KEYWORDS:

counseling, self-efficacy, senior high school

### INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has produced significant changes in the lives of every individual. This situation also affected the learning process of students as school shifted from face-to-face to modular, then modular to online. Now that classes have transitioned from online to in-person, students need more professional assistance, such as school counselors, to enhance their self-efficacy and to healthily adjust in the new set-up of the education.

### BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Counseling refers to a collaborative relationship between a trained counselor and an individual or group seeking support, guidance, and assistance in addressing personal, social, emotional, or behavioral concerns (American Counseling Association, 2014). In the Philippines, the "Guidance and Counseling Act of 2004," also known as Republic Act No. 9258, acknowledges the significance of expanding and

supporting the guidance and counseling profession by providing preventive regulatory procedures and standards of practice of school counselors.

School counselors are trained professionals who provide guidance and support to students in various aspects of their lives. They play a critical role in promoting students' academic, career, and personal/social development. Their expertise in counseling and knowledge of academic and social systems enable them to advocate for students' rights and create interventions to support their overall growth and development (American School Counselor Association, 2020b).

One critical aspect of students' development is their general self-efficacy. Bandura (1977) defines self-efficacy as a psychological construct rooted in the belief that individuals possess a cognitive appraisal of their abilities, which significantly impacts their behavior, motivation, and achievement. Bandura suggests that higher levels of self-efficacy contribute to increased effort, persistence, and resilience when facing challenges, while low self-efficacy can lead to decreased motivation and decreased performance. Counseling can help students develop a positive self-concept, enhance self-awareness, and build resilience, all of which are closely linked to self-efficacy. By addressing factors that may hinder self-beliefs and promoting positive coping strategies,

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## Andrea Feith V. Sambile et al, The Effects of School Counseling on the General Self-efficacy among Senior High School Students

counseling can potentially improve students' self-efficacy, empowering them to overcome challenges and achieve their goals.

However, a news report presented that there is a shortage of guidance counselors in the Philippines that could hamper the Department of Education's efforts to protect students' mental health, stoking the agency's fears of seeing another high number of mental health cases of students (Chi, 2023).

On the other side, a recent news in The Times of India mentioned that about one (1) student commits suicide in every fifty-five (55) minutes. In the past three years, more than twenty-six thousand (26,000) students have committed suicides due to stress, anxiety, and depression. Thus, counseling shall be given a priority as it helps in assisting the students in a proper direction so that he/she is aware of what he/she wants to do in life (Saha, 2017).

Nonetheless, few local studies concentrate on looking at the sex's and counseling session's differences in the self-efficacy among learners. Moreover, researchers in the past five years have focused more their attention on studying the effects of counseling to the self-efficacy of college students. Then, most of the previous research utilized correlation, instead of looking for the differences.

These ideas prompted the researchers to determine the Effects of School Counseling on the General Self-efficacy among senior high school students in one catholic secondary school in the City of Santiago, Philippines using quantitative, cross-sectional research design. It likewise aims to assess the extent on which the two variables differ in the self-efficacy of learners. Finally, the findings of the present study will provide necessary actions to be undertaken by the study site's Guidance and Counseling Center to enhance the counseling program.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS/OBJECTIVES

The study aimed to determine the effects of school counseling on the General self-efficacy among senior high school students. Specifically, it aims to answer the following:

1. What is the demographic profile of respondents:
  - a) Sex
  - b) Frequency of counseling session
2. What is the general level of self-efficacy of the senior high school students?
3. Is there a significant difference between the level of self-efficacy of senior high school students when grouped according to their demographic profile?

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Sherer and colleagues (1982) define self-efficacy as the extent to which people feel in control of their actions and outcomes or attribute outcomes to chance or luck is a crucial driver of behavioral change.

In a most recent study, Gielnik et al. (2020) adopted the concept of Bandura on self-efficacy as an individual's belief

in their capability to perform behaviors essential to produce definite performance achievements. Learners develop a high level of confidence when they apply skills and knowledge effectively in ever changing learning circumstances. Thus, when a student becomes skilled in one area of his or her learning capabilities and innovation, there could be an increased confidence in dealing with learning difficulties and challenges.

According to an article published by the American School Counselor Association or ASCA (2020a), school counseling is defined as "a comprehensive program that focuses on the academic, career, and personal/social development of all students." School counselors deal with students, their families, and other school stakeholders in providing different guidance and counseling programs and services that support students' growth and success in school and in life.

The research incorporates Bandura's social cognitive theory, which emphasizes the importance of self-efficacy in human behavior. According to this theory, a person's motivation, effort, and persistence in pursuing objectives are influenced by their self-efficacy beliefs. Counseling interventions can contribute to the development of self-efficacy by offering students support, direction, and opportunities for skill development and mastery experiences. By emphasizing self-efficacy in counseling, practitioners can increase students' confidence in their abilities and promote positive behavior.

#### Sex differences in self-efficacy

In the separate study conducted by Cai, Wu, & Wen (2018) and Baji (2019), they have found that both male and female students experienced significant improvements in their career decision self-efficacy after receiving counseling, indicating that counseling interventions can enhance self-efficacy regardless of gender.

Focusing specifically on female students, Doğan & Totan (2015) investigated the effect of a guidance program on the self-efficacy beliefs of students. The results demonstrate that after participating in the guidance program, female students exhibited significant improvements in their academic self-efficacy. This suggests that counseling interventions tailored to the needs of female students can positively impact their self-efficacy.

However, the above findings do not hold for all other foreign studies. Previous studies have proven that female students have significantly lower self-efficacy level and self-efficacy strength than their male peers (Wilson et al. 2015; Fallan & Opstad, 2016; Cwik & Singh, 2022; and Allaire-Duquette et al., 2022). Counseling interventions that target self-efficacy may therefore be highly beneficial to male students.

#### Counseling Session and Self-efficacy

On the other side, school counselors are considered to have a significant contribution in helping students learn how to strengthen their sense of self-efficacy. Castillo & Cohen (2020) examined the impact of counseling on the self-efficacy of middle school students in the United States. The

## Andrea Feith V. Sambile et al, The Effects of School Counseling on the General Self-efficacy among Senior High School Students

results indicate that students who participated in counseling demonstrated significant increases in their self-efficacy beliefs compared to a control group.

Merrell, Buchanan, & Tran (2019) evaluate a tier 2 intervention program that focuses on enhancing self-efficacy in at-risk middle school students. The results revealed that the intervention had a positive impact on students' self-efficacy beliefs, suggesting that targeted counseling interventions can effectively improve self-efficacy in secondary students.

### Local studies

Cebu (2023) investigates the correlation between Filipino college students' demographics and self-efficacy, including age, gender, and year level. The results showed that there is no significant relationship between gender and self-efficacy of the students, thus making the hypothesis accepted.

### Research Paradigm

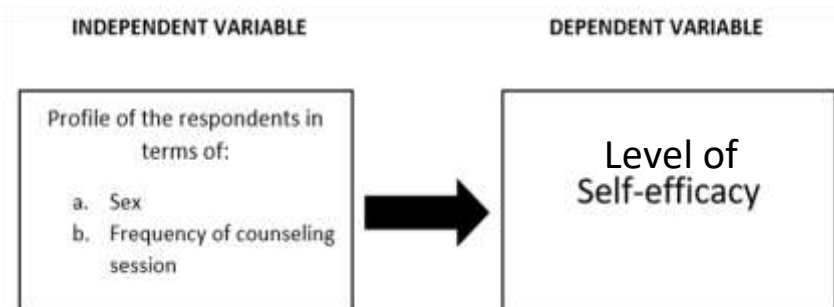


Figure 1. The schematic diagram of the Independent and Dependent Variables of the Study

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of the study. It shows the independent and dependent variables of the study. This proposed framework posits that counseling can positively impact the self-efficacy of the senior high school students by providing them with guidance, support, and strategies to improve their approach towards personal, social, academic, and career needs. Specifically, the model suggests that respondents' demographic profile, such as their sex and frequency of counseling sessions, may impact their self-efficacy.

### METHODS

#### Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative, cross-sectional research design as it has the nature of investigating, measuring, and describing variables. This type of research aims to examine the differences between two or more groups on one or more dependent variables (Laerd, n.d.). This is appropriate in the study as it aims to determine the prevailing characteristics in a population at a certain point in time.

#### Study Site and Participants

The study was conducted in a catholic secondary school in the City of Santiago, Philippines. The study site is located in the fourth congressional district of Isabela which

The test of significant difference, t-test for independent sample, yields p-values greater than alpha 0.05 indicating no significant difference in self-efficacy of students across sexes (Villas, 2019).

Results suggested school counseling, using adventure therapy was effective for increasing all types of self-efficacy for participants with males showing a greater increase. Implications for school counselors and future research are described (David et al., 2021).

Corpuz, Delos Reyes, and Villamor (2018) revealed that students who participated in the program showed significant improvements in their self-efficacy beliefs compared to a control group. This finding was supported by the study of Pioquinto (2020) after finding out that Grade 10 students who received the counseling intervention experienced significant improvements in self-efficacy compared to a control group.

offers Junior and/or Senior High School levels. The target population of this study were senior high school students because students have been significantly affected by the pandemic and the subsequent changes in education and social life.

The researchers use Random Sampling in determining the total number of respondents. With a population size of 1,000, the researchers identified 215 respondents with the use of Sample Size Calculator by Raosoft, Inc. with a 5 percent margin of error and 90 percent confidence level.

#### Research Instrument

The instrument used in gathering data for the present study was a survey questionnaire. Major portion of the questionnaire had been taken from the research work done by Sherer et al. (1982). However, the researchers had major revisions in the contents of the General Self-Efficacy Scale by Sherer and colleagues.

The questionnaire has two parts. Part I is consisted of questions about the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of their sex and frequency of counseling sessions. Part II pertains to the questions that determine the effects of school counseling on the general self-efficacy among senior high school students with 17 statements rated using a four-

# Andrea Feith V. Sambile et al, The Effects of School Counseling on the General Self-efficacy among Senior High School Students

point Likert Scale. Likert scales ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Reversed items were converted for scoring. The higher the score, the higher were self-efficacy expectations. The author of the instrument reported that the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients of .86 and .71 were obtained.

## Data Collection Procedure

Foremost, the researchers sought permission and approval from the school administration, including the Guidance and Counseling Center for the conduct of the study. Subsequently, in compliance with the data privacy act and ethical considerations of research, the researcher explained to each participant the purpose of the study and guaranteed them the anonymity and confidentiality of their participation and response before signing the letter of informed consent. Next, after obtaining permission, the researchers distributed the research instruments to the respondents. The respondents were given an entire day to answer the research instruments. Lastly, the researchers retrieved the questionnaires for tallying and analyzing data. To maintain the integrity of the data, the collected instruments were kept in a secure location.

## Data Analysis Procedure

The analysis and interpretation of the data were done using Descriptive statistics, such as frequency, mean, and percentage, to describe the demographic profile of the respondents (sex and frequency of counseling session/s) and to assess the level of general self-efficacy of the respondents. Further, Independent Samples T-Test was performed to determine the difference between the level of general self-efficacy and sex, as well as to the frequency of counseling sessions. Data were analyzed using the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS v 25).

## RESULTS

This section provides the findings yielded in this study as gathered and analyzed from the responses of the Senior High School students. The problems and hypotheses of this research guided the interpretations of each result. There were a total of two hundred fifteen (215) completed the survey. The responses corresponding to no records of having counseling sessions with the School Counselors were excluded.

## 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

**Table 1.** *Distribution of the Demographic Profile of the Respondents*

Profile	Frequency n = 215	Percentage
<u>Sex</u>		
Male	87	40.46
Female	128	59.53
<u>Frequency of Counseling Session</u>		
1-2 sessions	166	77.21
3 and above sessions	49	22.79

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of respondents in terms of sex and frequency of counseling sessions. Among the 215 respondents, 128 or 59.53% are females and the males comprise 87 or 40.46%. In addition, 166 or 77.21% had an experience of one to two counseling

sessions, while 49, or 22.79% attended their counseling sessions three or more times. The distribution suggests that there are higher willingness or likelihood for female students to seek counseling services compared to males.

## 2. Level of General Self-efficacy of the Respondents

Using Mean Analysis, the level of the respondents' general self-efficacy was presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** *Respondents' Level of General Self-efficacy*

Domains	Mean	Qualitative Interpretation
1. When I make plans, I am certain I can make them work.	3.01	High
2. One of my capabilities is that I can get down to work	2.96	High
3. If I cannot do a job the first time, I keep trying until I can.	3.01	High

**Andrea Feith V. Sambile et al, The Effects of School Counseling on the General Self-efficacy among Senior High School Students**

4.	When I set important goals for myself, I rarely achieve them.	2.68	High
5.	I do not give up on things before I complete them.	3.22	High
6.	I am not afraid to face difficulties.	3.03	High
7.	If something looks too complicated, I am not bothered to take a risk.	2.89	High
8.	When I have something unpleasant to do, I stick to it until I finish it.	2.81	High
9.	When I decide to do something, I go right to work on it.	2.95	High
10.	When trying to learn something new, I keep pushing myself until I become successful on it.	3.21	High
11.	When unexpected problem occurs, I handle it very well.	2.93	High
12.	I try to learn new things even though they look too difficult for me.	3.12	High
13.	Failure just makes me try harder.	3.11	High
14.	I feel secured about my ability to do things.	3.04	High
15.	I am a self-reliant person.	3.02	High
16.	It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my personal goals.	3.00	High
17.	I am positive that I am capable of dealing with various problems that come up in life.	3.06	High
<b>Overall Score</b>		<b>3.02</b>	<b>High</b>

As indicated in Table 2, the respondents had a High level of general self-efficacy in all domains. With a mean of 3.02, the respondents were perceived to have a high sense of belief in one’s self in responding to difficult

situations and in dealing with any associated obstacles or setbacks after attending their counseling sessions with school counselors.

**3. Significant difference of the Level of General Self-Efficacy of the Respondents as to their Profile**

**Table 3. Independent Samples T-Test on General Efficacy based on Sex**

Statement	Sex	Mean	SD	t	p-value
1. When I make plans, I am certain I can make them work.	Male	3.05	0.55	0.56	0.576
	Female	2.98	0.60		
2. One of my capabilities is that I can get down to work.	Male	3.05	0.55	1.58	0.117
	Female	2.90	0.40		
3. If I cannot do a job the first time, I keep trying until I can.	Male	3.27	0.71	0.75	0.456
	Female	3.17	0.64		
4. When I set important goals for myself, I rarely achieve them.	Male	2.83	0.80	1.64	0.105
	Female	2.58	0.70		
5. I do not give up on things before I complete them.	Male	3.46	0.64	3.34	0.001
	Female	3.05	0.59		
6. I am not afraid to face difficulties.	Male	3.29	0.75	3.07	0.003
	Female	2.85	0.68		

**Andrea Feith V. Sambile et al, The Effects of School Counseling on the General Self-efficacy among Senior High School Students**

7.	If something looks too complicated, I am not bothered to take a risk.	Male	3.27	0.63	4.10	0.000
		Female	2.63	0.84		
8.	When I have something unpleasant to do, I stick to it until I finish it.	Male	2.95	0.63	1.74	0.086
		Female	2.72	0.69		
9.	When I decide to do something, I go right to work on it.	Male	3.05	0.59	1.32	0.191
		Female	2.88	0.64		
10.	When trying to learn something new, I keep pushing myself until I become successful at it.	Male	3.41	0.50	3.25	0.002
		Female	3.07	0.55		
11.	When an unexpected problem occurs, I handle it very well.	Male	3.02	0.69	1.17	0.245
		Female	2.87	0.65		
12.	I try to learn new things even though they look too difficult for me.	Male	3.12	0.64	0.04	0.966
		Female	3.12	0.58		
13.	Failure just makes me try harder.	Male	3.17	0.77	0.73	0.470
		Female	3.07	0.66		
14.	I feel secure about my ability to do things.	Male	3.15	0.73	1.45	0.150
		Female	2.97	0.52		
15.	I am a self-reliant person.	Male	3.05	0.63	0.37	0.712
		Female	3.00	0.66		
16.	It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my personal goals.	Male	3.10	0.54	1.44	0.153
		Female	2.93	0.58		
17.	I am positive that I am capable of dealing with various problems that come up in life.	Male	3.02	0.52	-0.49	0.628
		Female	3.08	0.65		
Overall		Male	3.14	0.32	2.97	0.004
		Female	2.95	0.32		

Table 3 shows the significant difference between respondents' biological sex and their general self-efficacy using Independent Sample T-test. It was found that male-respondents (M= 3.46, S.D. = 0.64) expressed higher confidence in not giving up on things before completing any task than their female counterpart (M= 3.05, S.D. = 0.59), ( $t = 3.34, p= 0.001$ ). In the same manner, males (M= 3.29, S.D.= 0.75) are more confident to face difficulties than females (M= 2.85, S.D.= 0.68), ( $t = 3.07, p= 0.003$ ). Similarly, it was found that males (M= 3.27, S.D. 0.63) have greater confidence to take risks than their counterparts (M= 2.63, S.D.= 0.84), ( $t =$

4.10,  $p= 0.000$ ). Likewise, males (M= 3.41, S.D.= 0.50) motivate themselves to learn new things to succeed more than females (M= 3.07, S.D.= 0.55), ( $t = 3.25, p= 0.002$ ) after attending their counseling sessions.

In general, the researchers found that there is a significant difference in the level of general self-efficacy of male and female respondents ( $t = 2.97, p= 0.004$ ). Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference between the sexes and the level of general self-efficacy of the respondents after attending counseling sessions with the school counselor.

**Andrea Feith V. Sambile et al, The Effects of School Counseling on the General Self-efficacy among Senior High School Students**

**Table 4. Independent Samples T-Test on General Efficacy based on Sessions**

Statement	Sessions	Mean	SD	t	p-value
1. When I make plans, I am certain I can make them work.	1-2	3.05	0.55	1.34	0.184
	3 & above	2.87	0.60		
2. One of my capabilities is that I can get down to work.	1-2	2.97	0.55	0.55	0.583
	3 & above	2.91	0.40		
3. If I cannot do a job the first time, I keep trying until I can.	1-2	2.26	0.71	1.35	0.180
	3 & above	3.04	0.64		
4. When I set important goals for myself, I rarely achieve them.	1-2	2.64	0.80	-1.04	0.299
	3 & above	2.83	0.70		
5. I do not give up on things before I complete them.	1-2	3.23	0.64	0.37	0.711
	3 & above	3.17	0.59		
6. I am not afraid to face difficulties.	1-2	3.08	0.75	1.18	0.240
	3 & above	2.87	0.68		
7. If something looks too complicated, I am not bothered to take a risk.	1-2	2.94	0.63	1.01	0.316
	3 & above	2.74	0.84		
8. When I have something unpleasant to do, I stick to it until I finish it.	1-2	2.83	0.63	0.59	0.558
	3 & above	2.74	0.69		
9. When I decide to do something, I go right to work on it.	1-2	2.97	0.59	0.71	0.481
	3 & above	2.87	0.64		
10. When trying to learn something new, I keep pushing myself until I become successful at it.	1-2	3.23	0.50	0.76	0.448
	3 & above	3.13	0.55		
11. When an unexpected problem occurs, I handle it very well.	1-2	2.91	0.69	-0.57	0.573
	3 & above	3.00	0.65		
12. I try to learn new things even though they look too difficult for me.	1-2	3.17	0.64	1.47	0.144
	3 & above	2.96	0.58		
13. Failure just makes me try harder.	1-2	3.21	0.77	2.60	0.011
	3 & above	2.78	0.66		
14. I feel secure about my ability to do things.	1-2	3.64	0.73	1.74	0.464
	3 & above	2.96	0.52		
15. I am a self-reliant person.	1-2	2.99	0.63	-0.93	0.354
	3 & above	3.13	0.66		
16. It is easy for me to stick to my aims and accomplish my personal goals.	1-2	3.01	0.54	0.42	0.677
	3 & above	2.96	0.58		
17. I am positive that I am capable of dealing with various problems that come up in life.	1-2	3.04	0.52	-0.65	0.519
	3 & above	3.13	0.65		
Overall	1-2	3.04	0.32	0.40	0.693
	3 & above	3.00	0.32		

Table 4 presents the difference between the general self-efficacy of the respondents and the frequency of counseling sessions using Independent Sample T-test.

It was found that the respondents who underwent 1-2 sessions (M= 3.21, S.D. = 0.77) have high sense of self-belief to try harder when faced with failures than respondents

## Andrea Feith V. Sambile et al, The Effects of School Counseling on the General Self-efficacy among Senior High School Students

who had 3 and above sessions ( $M= 2.78$ ,  $S.D. =0.66$ ), ( $t = 2.60$ ,  $p= 0.011$ ). However, in general, the result reveals that there is no significant difference in the general self-efficacy level between respondents who had 1-2 counseling sessions ( $t= 0.40$ ,  $p= 0.693$ ) and those who attended 3 and more counseling sessions. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted at 0.05 level of significance.

### DISCUSSION

This quantitative, cross-sectional study aimed to determine the effects of counseling in the self-efficacy of senior high school students in a private catholic secondary school. The researchers first identified the level of general self-efficacy of the respondents using the modified General Self-Efficacy Scale and found that students have a high level of self-efficacy. The result implies that the senior high school students have a high sense of belief in themselves that they can cope with a particular task. This contradicts the result of the study of Sawari & Mansor (2013) when they revealed that learners have only a moderate level of self-efficacy.

The finding on the level of self-efficacy and sexes among respondents is supported by several studies (Wilson et al., 2015; Fallan & Opstad, 2016; Cwik & Singh, 2022; and Allaire-Duquette et al., 2022) that male students have higher self-efficacy than their female counterpart. This implies that males tend to manage their concerns more confidently, and that they have a stronger belief in their ability to persevere and overcome challenges after attending their counseling session with the school counselors than their female counterpart in the study site. However, it is contrary to the result in the study of Ifdil (2016) & Bhagat (2016) that male students have significantly lower self-efficacy level than female peers.

Interestingly, the results revealed that the frequency of attending counseling sessions has no effect on the self-efficacy of the learners in the senior high school. This contradicts the previous study of Devi et al. (2013) and Crowe et al. (2022) saying that when counselors provide counseling services to students more than once, it will help improve and develop students' self-efficacy. This pictures show that respondents, either attend once or more times in counseling, will not assure of the increased self-efficacy of learners. Hence, dependency of learners to counseling sessions shall be observed. Hence, the quality of counseling, the content covered in the sessions, the rapport between the counselor and the student, or external influences on the student's life, could be investigated to better understand why there was no observable effect on self-efficacy.

### CONCLUSION

This study assessed the level of general self-efficacy of senior high school students at a private catholic secondary school to contribute to the literature on the effects of counseling on students' self-efficacy in the Cagayan Valley

Region, Philippines. In addition, the study determined a significant difference in the level of general self-efficacy among senior high school students based on specific variables. This study concludes that senior high students marked a "high" self-efficacy level after counseling sessions. Further, it found that the level of self-efficacy varies between sexes. Finally, the study identified no significant difference in the number of counseling sessions students attended and their self-efficacy.

### RECOMMENDATION

The findings of the present study can be applied to determine opportunities for improving the counseling program of the study site. Regular conduct of counseling sessions may be proposed based on the profile of the respondents. For instance, the Guidance Office can now determine the effects of conducting counseling to students, regardless of sexes and number of sessions. Through this intervention, students could be aided in increasing their self-efficacy level after counseling sessions. Such activities could be helpful to both sexes having equal opportunities to be invited or do self-referral in availing counseling program. Since the result found no differences in the frequency of counseling sessions and self-efficacy, school counselors may assess the quality of counseling session, content discussed in the session/s, and if clients become dependent on counseling as they receive more sessions to avoid "transference."

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## Andrea Feith V. Sambile et al, The Effects of School Counseling on the General Self-efficacy among Senior High School Students

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**Andrea Feith V. Sambile et al, The Effects of School Counseling on the General Self-efficacy among Senior High School Students**

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