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# BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION AMONG SCHOOL COUNSELORS IN MASAFI FUJAIRAH UNITED ARAB EMIRATES



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ALHEFEITI WEDAD ALI HASSAN SAEED

SULTAN IDRIS EDUCATION UNIVERSITY

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**BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION AMONG  
SCHOOL COUNSELORS IN MASAFI FUJAIRAH  
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

**ALHEFEITI WEDAD ALI HASSAN SAEED**



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**DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO QUALIFY FOR A MASTER OF EDUCATION  
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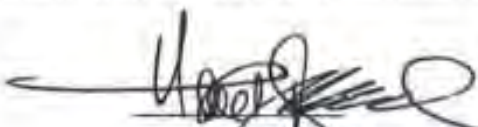
  
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## ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore bullying prevention and intervention among school counselors in Masafi-Fujairah schools, UAE. A descriptive design using qualitative case studies was used on several Masafi-Fujairah schools. The study participants were seven counselors in all four schools within the selected area. Interview techniques were used to collect data and analyzed through thematic analysis using NVivo-10 software. Findings show that school counselors' definitions of bullying vary according to their experience and context. Study participants said verbal bullying was the most preventable, and the counselors noted the increasing rate of cyberbullying. The study also found that some students report bullying cases to teachers, especially to counsellors. Moreover, it was found that counselors have the necessary training to handle bullying and employ educational programs, awareness campaigns, student development programs, and teacher-oriented programs. Study participants also mentioned most unreported bullying is detected through building rapport, regular observation, and secure communication between counsellors and students. Study participants also have a view to preventing reported bullying cases through school and individual-level interventions. The findings of the study show that counsellors are able to deal with bullying behavior creatively through direct and indirect intervention. The implications of the study show that schools should have a policy to manage bullying through systematic prevention and intervention methods.





## **PENCEGAHAN DAN INTERVENSI BULI DALAM KALANGAN KAUNSELOR SEKOLAH DI MASAFI FUJAIRAH-UAE**

### **ABSTRAK**

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk meneroka pencegahan dan intervensi buli dalam kalangan kaunselor sekolah di sekolah Masafi-Fujairah, UAE. Reka bentuk deskriptif menggunakan kajian kes kualitatif telah digunakan di beberapa sekolah Masafi-Fujairah. Peserta kajian terdiri daripada tujuh orang kaunselor di empat buah sekolah dalam kawasan yang terpilih. Teknik temu bual digunakan untuk mengumpul data dan dianalisis melalui analisis tematik menggunakan perisian NVivo-10. Dapatan menunjukkan bahawa definisi buli berdasarkan pandangan kaunselor sekolah adalah berbeza mengikut pengalaman dan konteks mereka bekerja. Peserta kajian telah berkongsi, pola kejadian buli di sekolah menunjukkan samada semakin meningkat atau berkurangan. Peserta kajian berpendapat bahawa buli lisan adalah paling mudah untuk dicegah, dan mereka mengatakan bahawa terdapat peningkatan dalam buli siber. Kajian ini mendapati bahawa sesetengah pelajar melaporkan kes buli kepada guru, terutamanya kepada kaunselor. Selain itu, kajian mendapati bahawa kaunselor mempunyai latihan yang diperlukan untuk mengendalikan buli melalui program pendidikan, kempen kesedaran, program pembangunan pelajar, dan program berorientasikan guru. Peserta kajian juga menjelaskan kebanyakan kejadian buli yang tidak dilaporkan dikesan melalui hubungan erat, pemerhatian dan komunikasi antara kaunselor dan murid. Peserta kajian juga berpandangan bahawa pencegahan kes buli yang dilaporkan adalah melalui intervensi di peringkat sekolah dan individu. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa kaunselor berupaya menangani tingkah laku buli secara kreatif melalui intervensi secara langsung dan tidak langsung. Implikasi kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa sekolah harus mempunyai dasar untuk menguruskan buli melalui kaedah pencegahan dan intervensi secara sistematik.





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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION



#### 1.1

#### Introduction



Bullying within school environments is prevalent today, leaving victims with low self-esteem, mental health issues, poor academic performance, and even school drop-out. In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the average bullying rate is about 31% (Sanderson, 2019). The figures mean that around three students are bullied in a class of 10. The latter is a considerable number that demands direct intervention. Swank et al. (2019) asserted increased interest in bullying research worldwide. However, this interest has not been captured by researchers from all countries. The fight against bullying in schools is vital; in most cases, this fight is spearheaded by school counselors. School counselors are trained mental health professionals aware of how damaging bullying can be to the educational environment. Their role in the intervention and prevention of school bullying is significant. In the United Arab





Emirates, school counseling was newly integrated into the scholar system (Kamal, 2018). Since this introduction is very recent, the role of school counselors in general and in the fight against bullying in specific is still not clear (Darmaki et al., 2012). Thus, this study assessed counselors' opinions on integrating anti-bullying programs in their Masafai Fujairah school premises. This chapter introduces the research by providing background, study problem, rationale, objectives, research questions, and significance.

## 1.2 Background of the Study

Over the last two decades, academic attention on school vices like bullying has witnessed a considerable increase due to the growing awareness of the consequences of bullying to the youths in particular and the broader social environment. Gregory (2016) stated that before the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, bullying was regarded as an acceptable school vice among students, which is part of every child's experience. There was this belief that bullying is not harmful. Instead, it is part of the youths' growth and helps their character building. In recent years, the high prevalence and adverse effects of bullying have called for broad recognition of the need to devise prevention and intervention strategies to curb the act (Padgett & Notar, 2013). Galal et al. (2019) recorded the World Health Organization [WHO] data that there was 29.9% moderate and frequent involvement in bullying. By 2019, they found that the prevalence rate was 77.8% for the sample they studied and that 57.8% reported being bullying victims.





Bullying in schools is a global issue on both national and international levels. According to Al-Ali and Shattnaw (2018), no community is immune to bullying despite the anti-bullying programs implemented practically everywhere. The researcher asserts that studies on bullying have produced reliable evidence regarding the nature of bullying, the causes of bullying, the traits of a bully and the victim, and the adverse effects of bullying on one's physical, social, mental, and academic well-being (Al-Ali & Shattnaw, 2018). More so, data from the WHO Global School-based Student Health Survey [GSHS] and Health Behaviour in School-aged Children [HBSC] state that bullying prevalence rates were high in Sub-Saharan Africa at 48.2%, North Africa, 42.7%, and in the Middle East, 41.1%. Other regions, such as North America (31.7%), South America (30.2%), and Central America (22.8%), have lower bullying prevalence rates. Data collected between 2002 and 2017 also revealed changes in bullying rates over time. For example, the prevalence rate of 35 out of 72 countries surveyed has increased, and 31 countries showed a decrease in bullying, whereas 24 showed no change (United Nations Education and Scientific Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2019). However, Al Mulhim et al. (2018) studied 400 college students in Saudi Arabia and found that 49% of the population surveyed had previously experienced bullying by their peers during school.

The Development Services Group, Inc. (2013) noted that while bullying rates in this dataset have mainly stayed consistent since 2005 ("Indicators"), rates fluctuate across studies depending on how bullying is quantified and at what level it occurs, classroom or school. Bullying among students ranges from 10 to 50 percent among children and teens across studies (Cook et al., 2010) while cyberbullying among students can reach up to 30 percent (Mishna et al., 2012). According to a systematic





review of the literature conducted by Modecki et al. (2014), bullying rates for students between the ages of 12 and 18 were 35% for traditional bullying and 15% for cyberbullying, with rates ranging from 9 to 98% across all survey studies. Furthermore, it can be challenging to measure bullying accurately because victims may be unwilling to disclose it, and self-reporting may understate the extent of bullying (Goodwin, 2011). According to data from the United States for the 2010–2011 academic year, 27.8% of pupils between the ages of 12 and 18 reported experiencing bullying at school (Development Services Group Inc., 2013). In addition, over 5 percent of these youth said being excluded from activities; five percent reported being threatened with harm; over three percent reported being forced to do things they didn't want to do; almost three percent had property destroyed; and nine percent of students reported being bullied and nearly 18 percent of these youth also reported being the target of rumors (Development Services Group, 2013).



Bullying negatively impacts its victims, students, or school staff members, such as low self-esteem, poor academic performance, and mental health problems (AlBuhairan et al., 2017). Long-term studies show a strong association between peer victimization, worse grade point averages, and reduced academic engagement as measured by teachers during the middle school years (Juvonen & Graham, 2014). The perception of school is two or three times worse for students who have experienced bullying than for students who have not (Craig et al., 2009, as cited in Al-Ali & Shattaw, 2018). Data from three African countries involving participants aged between 12-16 years in a trend study in math and science showed that bullying is a big issue in all three nations and is frequently linked to poor academic achievement (Anton-Erxleben et al., 2016). Evidence from the Arab world suggests that students





who claim to have been bullied exhibit signs of sadness and anxiety and do poorly in school (de Vries et al., 2017). The emotional consequences of victimization include anxiety, psychosomatic symptoms, social withdrawal, and, in some cases, provocative and aggressive behavior (Juvonen & Graham).

In the long term, longitudinal studies have demonstrated that victims of bullying experience an elevated risk for depression and other internalizing problems (Reijntjes et al., 2010). A meta-analysis of 44 program evaluations found a wide range of outcomes, but on average, anti-bullying programs decreased bullying by 20-23% and victimization by 17-20% (Ttofi & Farrington, 2011). The emotional consequences of victimization include anxiety, psychosomatic symptoms, social withdrawal, and, in some cases, provocative and aggressive behavior (Juvonen & Graham, 2014). In the long term, longitudinal studies have demonstrated that victims of bullying experience an elevated risk for depression and other internalizing problems (Reijntjes et al.). A meta-analysis of 44 program evaluations found a wide range of outcomes, but on average, anti-bullying programs decreased bullying by 20-23% and victimization by 17-20% (Ttofi & Farrington). According to the updated guide on bullying in UAE schools for parents in 2022, bullied children are at high risk of losing motivation in previously engaging activities, changes in eating and sleeping patterns, loneliness, increased sadness, anxiety, and depression (Roberts, 2020). The children also have high chances of declining school participation and academic performance, dropping out, or missing school due to affected mental health and view of self (Roberts, 2020). Children can suffer the consequences of bullying 40 years after the incident, with adverse outcomes on psychological and physical health (Roberts, 2020).





Given the diverse forms of bullying, it is sometimes challenging to identify cases, especially when victims do not open up. Given this, parents and counselors can sometimes discover such cases through physical signs or suspicion. In the view which, Tokarick (2015) postulates that every administrator, counselor, teacher, school staff member, student, and parent needs to actively get involved in the prevention of bullying in schools and be involved in preventing and responding to school bullying; although most often, these officials are generally not very effective in exercising this duty. An effective way to prevent or lessen bullying requires school counselors' commitment and intensive effort to reduce the problem. Providing interventions and strategies in schools is a helpful way to prevent harmful bullying from increasing; interventions known to decrease bullying in schools today are school-wide, classroom-level, and individual-level interventions ( Hensums et al., 2022).

According to Hensums et al., (2022) schools must combine individual, class, and whole-school level bullying interventions to manage all loopholes that allow students to bully others for positive and sustained outcomes.

Amid the above stakeholders, the primary responsibility of a school counselor is to counsel students to fully develop each student's academic, career, personal, and social abilities. A counselor participates in planning, implementing, and evaluating a comprehensive, developmental guidance program to serve all students and to address the unique needs of students; consult with a student's parent or guardian and make referrals as appropriate in consultation with the student's parent or guardian; consult with school staff, parents, and other community members to help them increase the effectiveness of student education and promote student success; coordinate people and resources in the school, home, and community; with the





assistance of school staff, interpret standardized test results and other assessment data that help a student make educational and career plans; and deliver classroom guidance activities or serve as a consultant to teachers conducting lessons based on the school's guidance curriculum (Jobomas, 2022).

Therefore, school counselors can successfully help students deal with the aftermath of bullying through prevention and intervention strategies. Schools are implementing dynamic strategies to curb bullying by introducing anti-bullying interventions with students individually, as a classroom, and even the entire school (Cakata, 2022). Until now, studies have highlighted various forms of bullying among school students and adolescents. Even adults suffer from bullying, making it a dire need for attention (Stone, 2020).



In the UAE, policies have been enacted by the National Education Chiefs to curb bullying (Almarzooqi, 2019). The policies include the creation of the "New Child Protection Unit" to clamp down on bullying and abuse. According to Almarzooqi, bullying can be reduced to a degree at least, hopefully increasing the students' well-being if the classrooms can be controlled. As such, much should be done by all stakeholders to ensure that measures are consistently enforced in schools to prevent and intervene in bullying. The UN Convention of Children (2018) states that every child has the right to feel safe at home, school, or community. The goal seems unachievable, with rising cases of bullying in schools worldwide and in the UAE precisely. Sanderson (2019) reports findings from the organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) global research showing that 31% of victims are bullied several times each month in the UAE (Sanderson). The





percentage is slightly higher, 8 points above the most elevated rate worldwide (Sanderson). Also, results of the international survey recorded that nearly one-third of students have been habitually targeted by bullies in UAE (Sanderson), as such schools are called to protect children from bullying.

Consistent with this, in a new social media campaign on "Say No to Bullying," the Ministry of Interior (MoI) warned that any form of bullying: physical, psychological, verbal, and online, is a crime in the UAE (Sebugwaawo, 2021). As such, teachers, students, and parents are urged to report bullying and other child harassment via the Child Protection Centres (CPC) Hotline 116111 and other means like the website or the Hemayati Smart Phone application. Still, to tackle this vice, National Bullying Prevention Week has been created to stem the malignant habit that is so prevalent among schools in the UAE. The Ministry of Education, on the occasion of the 4<sup>th</sup> National Bullying Prevention Week, raised awareness of bullying across the UAE in collaboration with the Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood and in partnership with more than 28 Federal and local entities (Gulf Today Report, 2020). Prominent in this campaign is addressing the electronic phenomenon of bullying among school students at various educational levels, presenting both preventive methods and correction methods, the role played by the professionals in educational institutions in preventing bullying, and the relationship between COVID-19 and cyberbullying.

Since the UAE attaches great importance to the child's welfare and well-being by enacting legislation, issuing policies, establishing mechanisms, and setting up systems and procedures to ensure the child's right to live in a safe environment and





stimulate physical, intellectual, emotional, and social development, it is essential to understand the role school counselors play as protectors of the school as well as the prevention and intervention programs and interventions they use. This study examines the prevention and intervention strategies developed by school counselors to tackle such happenings.

According to Paolini (2018), school counselors are in a position to address warning signs, risk factors, and outcomes of bullying by involving parents, teachers, students, and other stakeholders. Research hardly expresses the self-efficacy of a school counselor when dealing with bullying cases in school, particularly secondary school. Counselors or counseling teachers are critical in the behavioral management of students because of their understanding of bullying dynamics, skills, and competence to diagnose risky behaviors and vulnerability to bullying (Saldiraner & Gizir, 2021)). Undoubtedly, school counselors use the approach of identifying threats to bullying and actual cases in preventing and managing the widespread problem of bullying (Paolini, 2018).

Based on this, it is evident that there is a need to undertake empirical studies on the prevention and intervention strategies to address the problem of bullying within the school environment in the UAE as a whole and Fujairah. "The UAE's education authorities promote a zero-tolerance approach to bullying in schools, and school leaders certainly talk the talk, with varying levels of effective action and results" (Roberts, 2022). There is a dire need for studies on bullying prevention and intervention by school counselors within the regions in the Emirates to understand the strategies that have been implored by school counselors to address the phenomenon.





### 1.3 Problem Statement

Bullying within the school milieu is not a new phenomenon. It has existed in times past and persists despite prevention programs over decades (Saldiraner & Gizir, 2021). According to Rigby (2022a), whenever bullying in schools occur, it results into negative health outcomes of the children especially those who are bullied persistently by peers. In his further investigations, Rigby (2020a) associated bullying in schools to low levels of social adjustment and psychological well-being and increased psychological distress and adverse symptoms of physical health. The study by Al-Darmaki et al. (2022) that examined the OECD reports revealed that the prevalence of bullying in UAE represents 31% which is equal to a third of students population in the country. Though there have been significant studies that have examined the subject of bullying, limited research is available on most prevalent forms of bullying that occur in schools in UAE. Majority of the sources have examined forms of bullying that occur in general with little or no focus on schools, hence the need for investigation.

Due to increased levels of bullying, education authorities use different strategies to promote zero-tolerance of bullying (Robert, 2022). The school leaders deploy different action levels with positive results in bullying prevention and intervention (Robert). Some of the measures that Rigby (2021b) identify as preventive and interceptive to bullying include strengthening the victim, mediation, restorative practice, the support group method, and the method of shared concerned. These approaches are aimed at helping victims of bullying develop and use appropriate social skills that help them confidently to issues of bullying such as insults without being upset (Rigby, 2020b).





While there is global attention on the need to address the issue of bullying in educational settings, the necessity becomes more pressing because bullying behavior does not usually go away on its own and often gets worse with time; as such, it needs to be dealt with directly. Worse to note is that despite policy measures to curb bullying in schools in the UAE (Child-Safety, 2020), some victims are reluctant to share their experiences. As such, there should be whole-hearted efforts to instill confidence and self-esteem in the victims and encourage them to seek positive friendships. According to Rigby (2021a), the ability to reduce bullying in schools involves the combined efforts of teachers, parents, and psychologists through their experience to provide an environment that promotes the well-being and safety of students. Educators and parents have often been left alone in trying to solve this challenging issue, even when they lack enough evidence to support the remedies that have been suggested (Rigby, 2021c). Rigby (2022c) recommends the involvement of professionals with the required expertise to address the issues of bullying and mistreatment in schools. The author argues that psychologists such as counselors empower students in schools to deal with bullies by helping them see the positive role of their peers in influencing their success while supporting the school through developing effective programs for anti-bullying (Rigby, 2022b). Such measures can best be undertaken by school counselors who appear to be probable in alleviating the challenge of school bullying due to their ability to assist students in fully developing their academic, career, personal, and social skills. The National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS, 2021) posits that school counselors might manage school bullying by intervening immediately and or taking preventative steps to stop the behavior from happening in the future.





Conversely, Rumaitha Al Ansariah School was created in 1976; which contains schools at various levels, including elementary school, prep school, and junior high school, serving Masafi, Fujairah, Ras Al Khaimah, Al Khaimah, Al Khaimah, Asama, Dafta and many other areas (Al Hefaiti & Jusoh, 2023). The school has 660 students from 1st to 6th grade, with 63 faculty members (Al Hefaiti & Jusoh, 2023). Rigby (2022c) called for the need to involve every individual, including the parents, teaching staff, non-teaching staff, school counselors, and other administrators when it comes to the response and prevention of bullying in schools. Amidst these stakeholders, Lee and Loh (2015) contend that school counselors have a unique role because of their training and perspectives that put them in a position to better the school regarding bullying.



Further studies, including Yosep et al. (2023b), supported the roles of school counselors, including uncovering bullying incidents especially if the victims cannot report for fear of being targeted again. However, even with these important roles played by counselors, little has been documented on how they perform this function, creating a gap in this knowledge area worth attending to scientifically. Also, few studies have examined the prevalence of bullying and established rates in other regions of the Emirates, such as in Masafi-Fujairah schools, despite the frequent occurrence recorded in this educational setting. Similarly, evidence on how counselors remedy the cases of bullying among students in Masafi-Fujairah schools is absent, calling for much research.

While many researchers have examined the role of schools' counsellors when it comes to addressing the problem of bullying, there has been little focus on how





counsellors are able to achieve this. Majority of the studies available only focus on measures taken in general including legal suits and compensation for victims. However, no information is explicitly presented on the approaches that counsellors undertake to address the increased cases of bullying in school hence the need for investigation in this study. Besides, research has revealed that most cases of bullying go undetected which require extra steps to identify and act on them. However, there is no information on how counsellors are able to identify the undetected cases of bullying which requires further research to bridge the gap. Hence, this study examined bullying intervention and prevention among school counselors in Masafi-Fujairah schools with a specific interest in the forms of bullying exhibited in these schools, how counselors prevent the occurrence of bullying among students, how they detect unreported cases of bullying among students and how the counselors remedy the cases of bullying among students in Masafi-Fujairah schools. This study addressed these novel aspects through a qualitative research approach to bridge the identified gaps.

#### 1.4 Research Questions

This study, therefore, addressed the following questions.

1. What is the prevalence and types of bullying that occur in Masafi-Fujairah schools that require intervention from counselors?
2. How do counsellors engage in interventions of bullying among students in Masafi-Fujairah schools in Fujairah?
3. How do counselors in Masafi-Fujairah schools employ interventions to detect unreported cases of bullying among students?
4. How do counsellors engage in prevention of detected cases of bullying among students in Masafi-Fujairah schools School-Fujairah?





## 1.5 Research Objectives

The study's main objective was to explore bullying prevention and intervention among counselors in Masafi-Fujairah schools.

### Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were:

1. Explore the prevalence and types of bullying occurring in Masafi-Fujairah schools - Fujairah.
2. Explore how counselors engage in intervention of bullying cases reported among students in Masafi-Fujairah schools - Fujairah.
3. Assess how counselors in Masafi-Fujairah schools employ bullying intervention to detect unreported cases of bullying among students.
4. Investigate how Masafi-Fujairah school counselors engage in prevention of detected cases of bullying among students.

## 1.6 Operational Definitions

This section explained the two main concepts of the study. It is divided into bullying, prevention and intervention, and school counseling.





### 1.6.1 Bullying

Bullying refers to engaging in acts of unprovoked aggression repeatedly by aggressors with more strength, resulting in psychological or physical damage to the victim (Herkama et al., 2022). Bullying involves acts of violence against a colleague in a group organization or classroom when they cannot defend themselves. There are various types of bullying including social, verbal, physical, and prejudicial bullying. In the context of this study, the types of bullying identified relate to those that occur in schools. In the context of this study, the term bullying is used to measure the acts of violence or aggression that students in schools in Masafi Fujairah engage in against others with fewer strengths and unable to defend them. This term is used in this study to examine the extent to which school counselors can act to limit such instances of harassment for students in the identified schools. The current study refers to verbal, physical, cyber, psychological, and social/relational bullying.

### 1.6.2 Bullying Intervention

Bullying intervention involves the act of interfering with the course or outcomes especially of a process or condition (Christaki, 2020). Bullying interventions entails teaching or employing skills that would enable detection and identification of bullying behaviors, signs, and actions (Panfilova et al., 2021). In the context of this study, bullying intervention entails focusing on identifying the expected bullying behaviors.





### 1.6.3 Bullying Prevention

Bullying prevention is the act of stopping bullying from occurring in schools (Panfilova et al., 2021). This study defined bullying prevention as averting any possible bullying in schools by recognizing and addressing risks before they materialize. In the context of this study, bullying prevention measures the ability which the school counselors in Masafi Fujairah have been able to stop bullying in schools by adopting the relevant strategies.

### 1.6.4 School Counselor

A school counselor works in schools to provide academic, career, college access/affordability/admission, and social-emotional competencies to all students through a school counseling program (Paolini, 2018). They undertake the counseling role. School counseling as a specialty area of the counseling profession emerged and continues to evolve due to social, educational, political, and economic trends (Yondem, 2016). Specifically, at the beginning of the twentieth century, divergent needs of public school populations required the inclusion of specialized assistance for students beyond that which was commonly and previously offered by teachers. In the context of this study, school counselors refer to the trained psychological professionals practicing in Masafi-Fujairah schools with the primary role of supporting the social-emotional development of students by providing direct instruction. These school counselors engage students who undergo bullying or are





targeted by bullies through various steps to protect them and help them develop skills and ability to respond to such incidences and avoid them.

### **1.6.5 Masafi Fujairah**

Masafi Fujairah was the scope of this study in population and measured the area where the participants for the study were obtained. This study defined Masafi Fujairah as the region covering the whole of Masafi town and Fujairah city. Part of Masafi extends to Fujairah city from Ras al-Khaimah Emirate. As a result, the study involved two parts from different Emirates, Ras al-Khaimah and Fujairah. Masafi Fujairah-UAE schools were defined as schools within Masafi town and Fujairah city.



### **1.6.6 Masafi schools**

The term was used to refer to specific schools in Masafi Fujairah that were used as the sample to measure the extent of bullying in UAE and the role played by school counselors. The term “Masafi Schools” measured four schools from Masafi Fujairah that were involved in this study, including Rumaitha ALAnsaria Cycle 1, Masafi Secondary School for girls, Masafi Secondary School for boys, and Masafi Kindergarten. The students for the population for Rumaitha ALAnsaria Cycle 1 include 630 students with 43 teachers and 2 school counselors. Masafi Secondary School for girls has 545 students with 53 teachers and 2 counselors as well. For Masafi Secondary School for boys, the school has 503 students, 54 teachers, and 2





school counselors. Finally, Masafi Kindergarten has 320 students, 27 teachers, and 1 school counselor. Therefore, all Masafi schools in this study have school counselors whose role is to address issues around bullying of students.

## 1.7 Scope of the Study

The study is delimited in different aspects: geographical, concept, theory, and time. In the case study, the experiences and opinions of school counselors, students, and other administrators on the intervention and participants were to be studied only within Masafi-Fujairah schools in UAE. Also, counselors would be purposively selected based on their experiences with bullying intervention, prevention, and document analysis. The study dwells on critical concepts like bullying intervention, bullying prevention, and the detection/identification of unreported cases. Only interviews and document analysis would be used to collect study data to obtain in-depth knowledge from participants. The Choice Theory and social-ecological theories were perceived to be directly related to this study and will supply the necessary scientific knowledge. The socio-ecological approach is suitable in that the structure or location factors in Masafi-Fujairah schools in which their students have direct contact like peers, family, community (microsystem), the relationship between family and school such as parental involvement in their children's school (mesosystem), the perception of the teacher, counselor or staff about the school environment (ecosystem), the social structure in which students live (macrosystem), and changes in family structure through divorce, displacement, or death (chronosystem) are essential in preventing bullying behavior in the school. Also, Choice theory serves as a foundation to explain





human behaviors in the context of choosing to indulge in bullying or not since students are more in control of their lives than they realize.

## 1.8 Significance/Importance of the Study

The literature established the rate of bullying in schools worldwide. Thus, this study is believed to be timely in addressing the situation in Masafi-Fujairah schools. There is limited evidence of studies conducted in the UAE on how school counselors perceive their role in bullying prevention and intervention, especially in schools like Masafi-Fujairah schools with reported cases of bullying. Thus, this study's results will help further assess the situation and information gathering. Furthermore, this study model will permit the assessment of the utilized prevention methodology and its efficiency. The results of this study could open real doors to further investigations and intervention planning for the issue previously stated.

Also, from the statement of the problem and based on the objectives of this study, more research is needed to explore the prevalence of bullying in Masafi-Fujairah schools, how school counsellor prevent the occurrence of bullying among students in this school, how they detect unreported cases of bullying among students and which intervention measures they use to remedy the instances of bullying among students in Masafi-Fujairah schools Finally, the current study examines Bullying Preventions and Intervention in Masafi-Fujairah schools in UAE; providing new information to reinforce counsellor prevention and intervention strategies as bullying is concerned in schools. Thus, this qualitative research explored crucial issues of





bullying prevention and intervention in the school by counsellor. Results could assist school administrators, school counsellors, and researchers in preventing bullying in schools. In a broader sense, the entire community could benefit from the study's findings directly and indirectly as it improves the school system in the UAE.

