

Perceived Self-Efficacy and Social Responsibility among School Counsellors in Jordan: Implications for Counselling Practice

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Article Information:

Received 2026-04-27

Accepted 2026-08-02

Published 2026-09-15

Keywords:

counselling practice, Jordan, self-efficacy, social responsibility, professional development

Abstract

School counsellors' confidence in their professional capabilities and their sense of social responsibility may shape how they respond to students' needs and fulfil their counselling roles. However, empirical evidence on the relationship between perceived self-efficacy and social responsibility among school counsellors remains limited, particularly in the Jordanian context. This study examined the levels of perceived self-efficacy and social responsibility among school counsellors in Karak Governorate, Jordan, their relationship, and differences according to selected demographic and professional characteristics. A descriptive-correlational design was employed with 171 school counsellors. Data were collected using the Perceived Self-Efficacy Scale and Social Responsibility Scale, which demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .85 to .91. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, and multivariate analyses were used. Multivariate analyses indicated significant differences in perceived self-efficacy according to gender, educational qualification, and years of professional experience. Follow-up analyses showed differences in professional competence according to gender and educational qualification, and in mental competence according to years of experience. Social responsibility differed according to years of professional experience, whereas no significant differences were observed according to gender or educational qualification. These findings indicate that counsellors who report greater confidence in their professional capabilities also tend to report stronger social responsibility. Although the correlational design precludes causal inference, the findings highlight the relevance of self-efficacy and social responsibility to counsellor professional development and suggest that both constructs should be considered in training and support initiatives aimed at strengthening school counselling practice.

INTRODUCTION

School counsellors play an important role in supporting students' academic development, mental health, career planning, social adjustment, and overall wellbeing. Their responsibilities extend beyond providing academic guidance and increasingly require sound professional judgement, ethical decision-making, interpersonal competence, and the capacity to respond to diverse student needs. Understanding the psychological and professional attributes that may support counsellors in fulfilling these responsibilities is therefore important for counsellor

How to cite:

Majali, S. F. A., Albakour, M. F. M., Alhawarneh, I. N. S., Alkhatib, L. I. A., Al-Hamdan, M. H. M., & Al-Tarawneh, A. M. A. (2026). Perceived Self-Efficacy and Social Responsibility among School Counsellors in Jordan: Implications for Counselling Practice. *Islamic Guidance and Counseling Journal*, 9(2). <https://doi.org/10.25217/0020269824400>

E-ISSN:

2614-1566

Published by:

Institut Agama Islam Ma'arif NU (IAIMNU) Metro Lampung

preparation, professional development, and the quality of school counselling services (Bodenhorn & Skaggs, 2005; Aslan & Padır, 2023).

One attribute that has received considerable attention is perceived self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capacity to organise and perform the actions required to achieve desired outcomes in a particular context. In counselling, these beliefs may influence how confidently counsellors approach professional tasks, persist when difficulties arise, solve problems, and engage with challenging counselling situations (Larson & Daniels, 1998). Previous research has linked stronger counsellor self-efficacy with professional competence, adaptability, and counselling performance (Mullen et al., 2014; Aslan & Padır, 2023). More broadly, self-efficacy has also been associated with favourable psychological and educational outcomes, including adjustment, emotional wellbeing, and academic functioning (Eren et al., 2025; Smadi & Hwatmeh, 2020).

The relevance of self-efficacy to professional behaviour is also consistent with Social Cognitive Career Theory, which proposes that self-efficacy beliefs influence behavioural choices, persistence, and performance through individuals' expectations about their capacity to perform successfully (Lent et al., 2017; Al-Kasasbeh, 2022). Applied to school counselling, counsellors who perceive themselves as capable of managing professional demands may be more willing to address complex student needs, persist in difficult situations, collaborate with others, and engage actively in their professional roles. Self-efficacy may therefore be relevant not only to perceived competence but also to how counsellors enact broader professional responsibilities within the school environment.

Social responsibility represents another important dimension of professional counselling practice. It reflects a professional's sense of ethical obligation, accountability, concern for others, and commitment to contributing positively to the wider community. In school settings, socially responsible counselling may be reflected in efforts to protect student wellbeing, collaborate with teachers and families, promote equitable educational opportunities, and contribute constructively to the school community (Davis et al., 2021; Choi & Lee, 2023). Educational research similarly emphasises the importance of responsible professional practice in supporting inclusive, ethical, and socially responsive educational environments (Duobliené et al., 2020; Valdivia et al., 2020; Ooi et al., 2021).

Although perceived self-efficacy and social responsibility are conceptually distinct, they may be related in professional practice. Counsellors who feel more capable of performing their professional roles may also be more prepared to assume responsibility, respond consistently to students' needs, participate collaboratively in school communities, and manage ethical challenges. Conversely, fulfilling socially responsible professional roles may require confidence in one's ability to act effectively under demanding circumstances. Previous research suggests that efficacy beliefs can be associated with responsible professional behaviour (Hur et al., 2022; Setiyowati et al., 2025). However, because the relationship may be reciprocal and context dependent, it should be examined empirically rather than assuming that self-efficacy directly produces socially responsible behaviour.

Despite increasing attention to counsellor self-efficacy and professional responsibility, several gaps remain. First, these constructs have commonly been examined separately or in relation to other psychological and professional outcomes, while their direct relationship among school counsellors has received comparatively limited attention. Second, evidence from Jordan remains limited. School counsellors operate within specific cultural, institutional, and professional contexts that may shape both their perceptions of professional competence and their understanding of social responsibility. Findings from other educational systems may therefore not fully reflect the experiences of counsellors working in Jordanian schools. Third, previous studies have reported inconsistent findings regarding differences in counsellor self-

efficacy and related professional characteristics according to gender, educational qualification, and professional experience (Mullen et al., 2014; Aslan & Padır, 2023; Eren et al., 2025).

Accordingly, the present study examined perceived self-efficacy and social responsibility among school counsellors in Karak Governorate, Jordan. Specifically, it investigated the levels of perceived self-efficacy and social responsibility, the association between these constructs, and whether they differed according to selected demographic and professional characteristics, including gender, educational qualification, and years of experience. By examining these relationships within the Jordanian school context, the study seeks to extend the evidence on counsellor professional functioning and to inform counsellor preparation, professional development, and institutional support for effective and socially responsible school counselling practice.

METHODS

Design

This study employed a quantitative, descriptive-correlational design to examine perceived self-efficacy and social responsibility among school counsellors in Karak Governorate, Jordan. Descriptive analyses were used to characterise levels of perceived self-efficacy and social responsibility, while Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine the association between the two constructs. Differences in perceived self-efficacy and social responsibility according to gender, educational qualification, and years of professional experience.

Participants

The study population comprised 218 male and female school counsellors working across the four educational directorates of Karak Governorate: Karak, Southern Mazar, Al-Qasr, and Southern Ghor, according to statistics for the 2024/2025 academic year. Because the population was relatively small, all 218 counsellors were invited to participate. A total of 191 questionnaires were returned. Following data screening, 171 complete and usable questionnaires were retained for the final analysis, representing 78.4% of the target population. A separate pilot sample of 20 school counsellors who were not included in the main analytic sample was used to evaluate the psychometric properties of the study instruments. The final sample consisted of 72 male (42.1%) and 99 female (57.9%) counsellors. Most participants held a bachelor's degree ($n = 130$, 76.0%), while 41 (24.0%) held a postgraduate qualification. Regarding professional experience, 74 participants (43.3%) had five years or less of experience, 54 (31.6%) had between six and fewer than ten years, and 43 (25.1%) had ten years or more.

Table 1. Distribution of Participants Characteristics ($n = 171$)

Variable	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	72	42.1
	Female	99	57.9
Educational qualification	Bachelor's degree	130	76.0
	Postgraduate qualification	41	24.0
Years of experience	≤5 years	74	43.3
	6–<10 years	54	31.6
	≥10 years	43	25.1

Instruments

Two instruments were used to assess perceived self-efficacy and social responsibility. Both instruments were reviewed by experts in educational counselling to assess the relevance, clarity, and appropriateness of their items for school counsellors. Their psychometric properties were further evaluated using a pilot sample of 20 counsellors who were not included in the main study. Responses to both instruments were recorded on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging

from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with higher scores indicating higher levels of the respective construct.

Perceived Self-Efficacy Scale

Perceived self-efficacy was assessed using a 24-item scale comprising three dimensions: professional competence, mental competence, and social competence, with eight items in each dimension. This structure is consistent with the school-counsellor self-efficacy measure reported by Saadeh and Shaheen (2024). A total score was calculated to represent overall perceived self-efficacy. Construct validity was examined in the pilot sample by calculating correlations between individual items and their corresponding dimensions and total scale scores. All retained item correlations exceeded .30, indicating satisfactory item-scale consistency. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and test-retest reliability. The instrument was readministered to the pilot participants after a two-week interval. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were .88 for professional competence, .86 for mental competence, .85 for social competence, and .90 for the total scale. Corresponding test-retest coefficients were .84, .83, .84, and .86, respectively.

Table 2. Reliability Coefficients for the Perceived Self-Efficacy Scale

Dimension	Cronbach's α	Test-retest r
Professional competence	.88	.84
Mental competence	.86	.83
Social competence	.85	.84
Total scale	.90	.86

Social Responsibility Scale

Social responsibility was assessed using a 40-item scale comprising four dimensions: personal responsibility, collective responsibility, religious and moral responsibility, and national responsibility. These dimensions reflect established conceptualisations of social responsibility used in Arabic-language educational and counselling research. Higher scores indicated greater perceived social responsibility. Construct validity was examined using item-dimension and item-total correlations in the pilot sample, with all retained coefficients exceeding .30. Reliability was assessed using internal consistency and test-retest procedures. The scale was readministered after a two-week interval. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were .89 for personal responsibility, .86 for collective responsibility, .87 for religious and moral responsibility, .90 for national responsibility, and .91 for the total scale. Test-retest coefficients ranged from .84 to .88.

Table 3. Reliability Coefficients for the Social Responsibility Scale

Dimension	Cronbach's α	Test-retest r
Personal responsibility	.89	.87
Collective responsibility	.86	.84
Religious and moral responsibility	.87	.85
National responsibility	.90	.88
Total scale	.91	.88

Procedure and Ethical Considerations

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the relevant educational authorities and participating schools before data collection. Eligible school counsellors were informed about the purpose of the study and invited to participate voluntarily. Informed consent was obtained before questionnaire completion. Participants were informed that participation was

voluntary and that their responses would remain confidential and be used solely for research purposes.

Data Analysis

Data were coded and analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics. Means and standard deviations were calculated to describe perceived self-efficacy and social responsibility. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was used to examine the association between overall perceived self-efficacy and social responsibility. MANOVA was used to examine differences in perceived self-efficacy and social responsibility dimensions according to gender, educational qualification, and years of professional experience. Where significant multivariate effects were identified, follow-up univariate analyses were conducted. Scheffé post hoc comparisons were used where appropriate for variables containing more than two categories. Partial eta squared (η^2) was reported as an estimate of effect size. Assumptions relevant to the inferential analyses, including normality, linearity, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and absence of problematic multicollinearity, were assessed before analysis and considered acceptable. Statistical significance was set at $p < .05$.

RESULTS

Descriptive Results

Descriptive analysis indicated generally high levels of perceived self-efficacy and social responsibility among school counsellors in Karak Governorate. This pattern was observed across the three dimensions of perceived self-efficacy, namely professional competence, mental competence, and social competence, as well as across the four dimensions of social responsibility: personal responsibility, collective responsibility, religious and moral responsibility, and national responsibility.

Association Between Perceived Self-Efficacy and Social Responsibility

Pearson's product-moment correlation analysis was conducted to examine the association between perceived self-efficacy and social responsibility. As shown in Table 4, all dimensions of perceived self-efficacy were positively and significantly correlated with the dimensions of social responsibility. At the overall scale level, perceived self-efficacy was strongly and positively correlated with social responsibility ($r = .817$, $p < .001$). Across the individual dimensions, correlation coefficients ranged from .384 to .801, with all associations statistically significant at $p < .001$. As presented in Table 4, mental competence showed particularly strong correlations with collective responsibility ($r = .801$) and religious and moral responsibility ($r = .729$), while total self-efficacy was also strongly correlated with collective responsibility ($r = .798$).

Table 4. Pearson Correlations Between Perceived Self-Efficacy and Social Responsibility

Social responsibility dimension	Professional competence	Mental competence	Social competence	Total self-efficacy
Personal responsibility	.443***	.716***	.612***	.696***
Collective responsibility	.560***	.801***	.749***	.798***
Religious and moral responsibility	.488***	.729***	.589***	.710***
National responsibility	.499***	.515***	.384***	.555***
Total social responsibility	.569***	.816***	.668***	.817***

Note. *** $p < .001$.

Differences in Perceived Self-Efficacy by Demographic and Professional Characteristics

MANOVA was conducted to examine differences in perceived self-efficacy according to gender, educational qualification, and years of professional experience. As shown in Table 5,

statistically significant multivariate differences were reported for gender ($F = 2.797, p = .006$), educational qualification ($F = 3.231, p = .003$), and years of professional experience ($F = 3.791, p = .002$).

Table 5. Multivariate Analysis of Perceived Self-Efficacy by Demographic and Professional Characteristics

Variable	Hotelling's Trace	Wilks' Lambda	F	p
Gender	.913	–	2.797	.006
Educational qualification	.939	–	3.231	.003
Years of professional experience	–	.949	3.791	.002

Follow-up univariate analyses are presented in Table 6. Professional competence differed significantly according to gender ($F = 9.11, p < .001$) and educational qualification ($F = 6.82, p = .001$). No statistically significant gender or educational qualification differences were reported for mental or social competence. Years of professional experience were significantly associated with differences in mental competence ($F = 5.19, p = .001$). Differences according to years of experience were not statistically significant for professional competence ($F = 2.142, p = .094$) or social competence ($F = 1.912, p = .126$).

Table 6. Univariate Analyses of Perceived Self-Efficacy Dimensions

Source	Self-efficacy dimension	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	p
Gender	Professional competence	8.965	1	8.965	9.11	<.001
	Mental competence	3.352	1	3.352	2.645	.072
	Social competence	2.380	1	2.380	2.699	.068
Educational qualification	Professional competence	6.77	1	6.77	6.82	.001
	Mental competence	2.43	1	2.43	1.914	.148
	Social competence	1.52	1	1.52	1.721	.180
Years of professional experience	Professional competence	3.23	2	1.615	2.142	.094
	Mental competence	3.73	2	3.245	5.19	.001
	Social competence	3.14	2	1.047	1.912	.126

Because years of professional experience were significantly associated with mental competence, Scheffé post hoc comparisons were conducted. As presented in Table 7, mean mental competence scores increased from 3.70 among counsellors with five years or less of experience to 3.76 among those with six to fewer than ten years and 3.85 among those with ten years or more. The post hoc comparison indicated that counsellors with ten years or more of professional experience had significantly higher mental competence scores than those with five years or less of experience.

Table 7. Scheffé Post Hoc Comparison of Mental Competence by Years of Professional Experience

Years of professional experience	Mean
≤5 years	3.70
6–<10 years	3.76
≥10 years	3.85

Differences in Social Responsibility by Demographic and Professional Characteristics MANOVA was also conducted to examine differences in social responsibility according to gender, educational qualification, and years of professional experience. As shown in Table 8, no statistically significant multivariate differences were reported according to gender ($F = 1.389, p = .420$) or educational qualification ($F = 1.223, p = .215$). In contrast, statistically

significant differences were reported according to years of professional experience ($F = 4.501$, $p < .001$).

Table 8. Multivariate Analysis of Social Responsibility by Demographic and Professional Characteristics

Variable	Hotelling's Trace	Wilks' Lambda	F	p
Gender	.783	–	1.389	.420
Educational qualification	.752	–	1.223	.215
Years of professional experience	–	.958	4.501	<.001

Follow-up univariate analyses are presented in Table 9. No statistically significant differences were identified in any dimension of social responsibility according to gender or educational qualification. However, significant differences according to years of professional experience were reported for personal responsibility ($F = 3.27$, $p = .040$), collective responsibility ($F = 3.84$, $p = .020$), religious and moral responsibility ($F = 7.93$, $p < .001$), and national responsibility ($F = 6.53$, $p < .001$).

Table 9. Univariate Analyses of Social Responsibility Dimensions

Source	Social responsibility dimension	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	p
Gender	Personal responsibility	.001	1	.001	.001	.990
	Collective responsibility	1.048	1	1.048	1.071	.343
	Religious and moral responsibility	.194	1	.194	.193	.825
	National responsibility	1.080	1	1.080	.967	.383
Educational qualification	Personal responsibility	1.292	1	1.292	.870	.580
	Collective responsibility	.938	1	.938	.633	.590
	Religious and moral responsibility	.700	1	.700	.465	.700
	National responsibility	1.090	1	1.090	.645	.580
Years of professional experience	Personal responsibility	3.125	2	1.563	3.27	.040
	Collective responsibility	3.612	2	1.806	3.84	.020
	Religious and moral responsibility	7.136	2	3.568	7.93	<.001
	National responsibility	6.734	2	3.367	6.53	<.001

Scheffé post hoc comparisons were conducted to further examine the differences according to years of professional experience. As shown in Table 10, counsellors with ten years or more of professional experience reported higher mean scores than those with five years or less across all four dimensions of social responsibility. Personal responsibility increased from 3.72 to 3.83, collective responsibility from 3.52 to 3.66, religious and moral responsibility from 3.77 to 3.91, and national responsibility from 3.64 to 3.80. The reported Scheffé comparisons indicated significant differences between counsellors with five years or less of experience and those with ten years or more across all four dimensions.

Table 10. Social Responsibility Scores by Years of Professional Experience

Social responsibility dimension	≤5 years	6–<10 years	≥10 years
Personal responsibility	3.72	3.75	3.83
Collective responsibility	3.52	3.59	3.66
Religious and moral responsibility	3.77	3.84	3.91
National responsibility	3.64	3.72	3.80

DISCUSSION

The present study examined perceived self-efficacy and social responsibility among school counsellors in Karak Governorate, Jordan. The findings showed a strong positive association between overall perceived self-efficacy and social responsibility ($r = .817$, $p < .001$), with positive correlations also observed across all dimensions of the two constructs. In addition,

differences in perceived self-efficacy were identified according to selected demographic and professional characteristics, while differences in social responsibility were primarily associated with years of professional experience.

The strong positive association between perceived self-efficacy and social responsibility suggests that school counsellors who perceive themselves as more capable of fulfilling their professional roles also tend to report greater responsibility towards students, schools, and the wider community. This pattern is consistent with social cognitive perspectives, in which efficacy beliefs are associated with persistence, professional engagement, and confidence in managing demanding tasks (Lent et al., 2017; Yendi et al., 2025). Within school counselling, stronger efficacy beliefs may therefore accompany greater willingness to engage with complex student needs, collaborate with others, and assume responsibility within the school environment. However, because the present study used a cross-sectional correlational design, the direction of this relationship cannot be established.

The findings are also broadly consistent with previous research emphasising the relevance of self-efficacy to counsellor functioning. Bodenhorn and Skaggs (2005) linked stronger counselling self-efficacy with greater confidence in performing counselling responsibilities, while Mullen et al. (2014) reported that counselling self-efficacy may develop through professional experience and is associated with counselling performance. Larson and Daniels (1998) similarly identified self-efficacy as an important component of counsellors' confidence in applying professional knowledge and making counselling decisions. The present findings extend this literature by showing that perceived self-efficacy is also closely associated with how school counsellors perceive their broader social responsibilities.

Participants also reported generally high perceived self-efficacy across professional, mental, and social competence. One possible explanation is that school counsellors routinely engage in tasks requiring professional judgement, problem solving, interpersonal communication, and responses to educational and psychological concerns. Repeated exposure to such professional demands may contribute to stronger perceptions of competence. This interpretation is consistent with Aslan and Padır (2023), who emphasised the contribution of professional knowledge, training, and experience to counselling self-efficacy, and with Sutton and Fall (1995), who highlighted the importance of supportive school environments for counsellors' efficacy beliefs.

Social responsibility was likewise reported at a generally high level. School counselling inherently involves responsibilities extending beyond individual counselling interactions, including ethical practice, collaboration with teachers and families, concern for student wellbeing, and participation in the wider school community. The multidimensional pattern observed in this study, encompassing personal, collective, religious and moral, and national responsibility, is consistent with the broader view of social responsibility as involving accountability, ethical conduct, and concern for others (Davis et al., 2021; Wihartati et al., 2026).

Years of professional experience emerged as particularly relevant to several study outcomes. Counsellors with ten years or more of experience reported higher mental competence than those with five years or less. They also reported higher scores across all four dimensions of social responsibility. These differences may reflect the accumulation of professional experience through repeated exposure to counselling situations, decision-making demands, and interactions with students, families, and school personnel. From a social cognitive perspective, repeated successful professional experiences may strengthen efficacy beliefs and confidence in managing increasingly complex situations (Lent et al., 2017; Jarwan & Al-frehat, 2020; Al-Hawarnah, 2023). The findings should nevertheless be interpreted as group differences rather

than evidence that professional experience directly causes higher self-efficacy or social responsibility.

The findings for gender and educational qualification were more specific. Gender differences were identified for professional competence but not for mental or social competence, while educational qualification was also associated with professional competence but not with the other self-efficacy dimensions. Neither gender nor educational qualification was significantly associated with the dimensions of social responsibility. These results suggest that demographic and educational characteristics may not operate uniformly across all aspects of counsellor functioning. Instead, their relevance may depend on the particular professional competency being examined.

The study contributes to the school counselling literature by examining perceived self-efficacy and social responsibility simultaneously within the Jordanian educational context. Previous research has more commonly considered these constructs separately or in relation to other professional and psychological outcomes. The strong association identified here suggests that perceptions of professional capability and socially responsible practice are closely connected aspects of counsellor functioning, although their causal relationship remains unknown.

The findings also have implications for counsellor preparation and professional development. Training and continuing professional education may benefit from addressing both professional competence and socially responsible practice rather than treating them as separate areas. Opportunities for supervised practice, mentoring, collaborative problem solving, ethical decision-making, and engagement with school communities may be particularly relevant. Such approaches are consistent with recommendations for comprehensive school counsellor preparation and professional collaboration (Ieva et al., 2021; Oehrtman & Dollarhide, 2022).

Several limitations should be considered. First, the cross-sectional correlational design does not permit causal or directional conclusions regarding the relationship between perceived self-efficacy and social responsibility. Second, the study was conducted only among school counsellors in Karak Governorate, which may limit the applicability of the findings to counsellors in other regions or educational systems. Third, both constructs were assessed using self-report measures and may therefore be affected by response tendencies, including social desirability.

Future research could examine these relationships using longitudinal or mixed-methods designs to better understand how perceived self-efficacy and social responsibility develop over time and interact within professional practice. Studies involving counsellors from other regions of Jordan and different educational and cultural contexts would also help determine the consistency of the present findings. Additional professional and organisational factors, including supervision, organisational support, workload, resilience, professional identity, and school climate, could also be examined as potential correlates of counsellor self-efficacy and social responsibility.

CONCLUSION

This study examined perceived self-efficacy and social responsibility among school counsellors in Karak Governorate, Jordan. A strong positive association was found between the two constructs, indicating that counsellors who reported greater confidence in their professional capabilities also tended to report greater social responsibility. Differences in perceived self-efficacy were identified across selected demographic and professional characteristics, with professional competence differing according to gender and educational qualification and mental competence differing according to years of professional experience. Social responsibility differed according to years of professional experience but not gender or educational qualification. These findings highlight the relevance of both self-efficacy and social

responsibility to school counsellor professional functioning. Counsellor preparation and professional development may therefore benefit from integrating opportunities to strengthen professional competence, ethical decision-making, collaboration, and socially responsible practice. Given the correlational design, however, the findings should not be interpreted as evidence that greater self-efficacy causes greater social responsibility. Further longitudinal and contextually diverse research is needed to clarify how these constructs relate and develop across school counselling practice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank the participating school counsellors and the relevant educational authorities and schools in Karak Governorate for their cooperation and support during the study.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

All authors contributed to the conception and design of the study, interpretation of the findings, and preparation and revision of the manuscript. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript and agreed to be accountable for the work.

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<https://doi.org/10.25217/0020258593400>

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Islamic Guidance and Counseling Journal

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