



## Peer Social Support for Adolescent Victims of Bullying

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### **Abstract**

Bullying in schools generally occurs during adolescence. Bullying has a negative impact on victims which can interfere with their activities as students at school and at home. Peers are the closest environment that is able to provide social support for students who are victims of bullying. This study discusses peer social support for adolescent victims of bullying. It is a qualitative study that utilizes case studies design through literature review, documentation, and interview techniques. The objective is to provide an overall picture of bullying behavior that occurs in State Junior High School X (SMPN X) and shed some light on the form of peer social support that is available for adolescent victims of bullying. The results of the study show that victims students are considered weak and unable to fight back. They repeatedly received various forms of physical, verbal and non-verbal violence from students in class and from seniors. Students who are victims of bullying do not report to their parents or teachers at school because they are afraid that they will get more severe treatment from the perpetrators. Although the school has established regulations concerning sanctions for bullying, there has been inconsistency in implementing these regulations. The Counseling Guidance teacher available to assist students who experience bullying, there is a need for a report from the victim. The study reveals that peer support plays a significant role in providing social support that encompasses informative support among others, by providing information to teachers about bullying faced by victims, so that the victim student is assisted by the school. Instrumental support by defending the victim when the perpetrators start to harass the victim by providing ways to fight offenders or ignore perpetrators. Emotional support by being a place to share. With this social support, victims feel there are friends who help find solutions, restore self-confidence and return to social functioning in their environment.

**Keywords:** *Social Support; Bullying; Bullying in Schools; Peers; adolescent; Senior high school*

### **Introduction**

The phenomenon of violence against children in educational institutions is referred to as bullying. Bullying behavior seldom gets less attention because they are considered by many as normal occurrences in schools. The Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) states that there had been an increase of reports on violence against children.

The following is a table regarding complaint cases from KPAI (Indonesian Child Protection Commission) (Fig.1). However, in fact, the number of bullying cases is much higher than the cases released by KPAI, because many cases occur but are not reported to KPAI, or do not appear in the media.

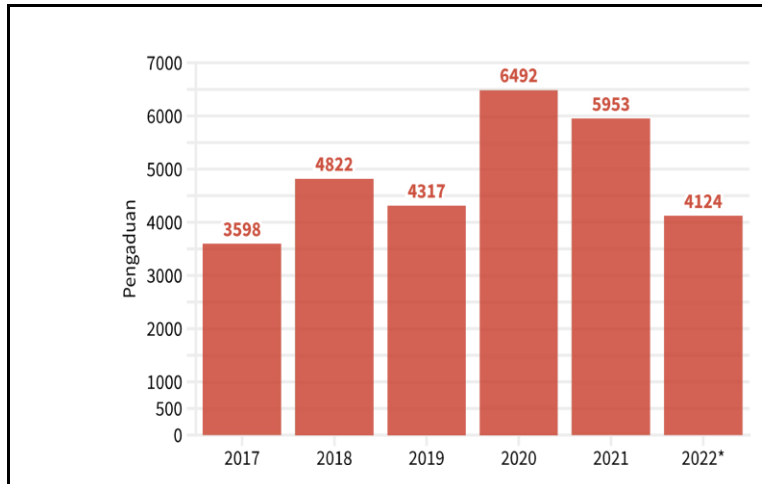


Fig.1 Complaint cases from 2017-2022\*  
Source: Central Bureau of Statistics  
\* Januari – November 2022

KPAI data was obtained from various sources from direct complaints, news coverage in print and electronic media, to direct monitoring and supervision in the field.

Bullying as an act of intimidation that is carried out intentionally and repeatedly by a stronger party against a weaker one with the aim of injuring the victim physically and emotionally (Coloroso, 2007). Furthermore, Sheras (2002) states that “bullying situations are complex and painful and can be difficult to resolve”. Bullying is something that often befalls adolescents in schools, and it is committed in the name of seniority. This is due to the imbalance of power where some students abuse their perceived seniority and commit violent acts against their hapless juniors. Coloroso (2007) argues that the element of oppression in this case encompasses the imbalance of power, wherein; 1) the oppressor is most likely somebody who is older, bigger, and stronger; 2) the oppressor is someone with a willful intent to cause harm both physically and emotionally; 3) and the oppressor is threatening to carry out further aggression and is carried out repeatedly.

Bullying that occurs in school may be perpetrated by friends, teachers, or academic staff; however, most often the bullies are friends of the victims. Bullying by friends of the victims involves a number of people, and it may occur in groups or individual settings (Kusumasari Kartika, Hima Darmayanti, Farida Kurniawati, 2019).

Bullying has a negative impact on all aspects of the victims' life (physical, psychological, and social), specifically among adolescents. It creates a feeling of insecurity, anxiety, and trepidation, it lowers a person's self-esteem, it inhibits the concentration on their studies, it makes them unenthusiastic to socialize with their surroundings, it makes them reluctant to go to school, and it hinders their ability to think clearly and that in turn may be detrimental to their academic achievement. In fact, bullying will instill in a child a negative image of themselves and can ultimately lead to mental disorders such as stress and depression (Sejiwa, 2008).

This is in line with Fekkes's opinion that states frequent bullying will have an impact on the victim's mental development. The victims will experience a higher level of mental, emotional, and psychological problems than children who grow up in a normal and conducive environment. Adolescent victims of bullying are more likely to suffer from recurring headaches, insomnia, anxiety, dejection, and poor appetite. Moreover, the level of depression among children who are victims of bullying will increase when they are in a situation of being bullied. Additionally, victims of bullying will also have a very low self-esteem and many of them are often thinking of committing suicide (Dake et al, 2003; Rivers & Noret, 2010, in Losey, 2011).

The act of bullying affects not only the victim but also the perpetrator of the act itself. The so-called victim-perpetrator is a term that refers to the persons who perpetrated the act of bullying, and they were themselves victims of bullying in the past (Slee & Skrzypiec, 2012). The findings of a study by Skrzypiec et al. (2012) reveal that the negative impact of bullying is felt not only by the victim but also by the perpetrator and the victim-perpetrator. The aforementioned study uses what is referred to as the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ, Goodman, 1997 in Skrzypiec et al., 2012). The result of this study shows that the victim, the perpetrator, and victim-perpetrator all experience mental health disorders (Skrzypiec et al., 2012). The study asserts that all of them are experiencing abnormal, hyperactive, and pro-social behaviors when interacting in a social process.

With regard to the victims of bullying, a study by Skrzypiec places the victims in a position between the perpetrator and victim-perpetrator. The victims are weighed down with mental health disorders, specifically emotional symptoms (Skrzypiec et al., 2012). Time and again, the findings show that the victims are socially isolated; they do not have close friends and are not close to their parents (Rosen et al., 2017 in Tobing, 2021).

A different study by Casas et al. (2013) shows that empathy is something that may actually affect bullying incidents. An individual who cares about the victim's condition or is able to appreciate the victim's feeling and understand the impact that transpires as a result of a violent behavior will be more inclined to refrain from committing a violent act. Based on this statement, bullies have a low intensity of empathy in social interaction. Empathy, abnormal behavior, hyperactive behavior, and pro-social behavior are closely related to the perpetrator's response when he is interacting with his surroundings. In contrast, in the case of a victim-perpetrator, the level of their mental disorder is greater than bullies or victims of bullying. In other words, bullying in schools is a symptom that has a negative impact on the students involved, either as a perpetrator or as a victim. The impact may even turn the victims into bullies themselves as the cycle of violence escalated unchecked (Adilla, 2009).

In the case of bullying at schools, the victims rarely, if ever, report the incidents to the adults (parents or teachers) that they have been victimized or bullied (Coloroso, 2007). The silence of bullying victims is generally based on the belief that neither the parents nor teachers will be able to handle the bullying situation. The distrust of teachers is rooted in the logic that if the teacher takes action against the bully, the result will actually exacerbate the bullying situation for the victim. By the same token, distrust of parents is based on the perception that parents are never in school. Victims of bullying think that their parents will not be able to understand the problem, let alone be able to handle it (Sejiwa, 2008). Moreover, the victims also feel ashamed because they have become victims and they are haunted by the threat of more violence, because perpetrators or the bullies often intimidate their victims with threats of more violence, both implicitly and explicitly (Coloroso, 2007).

Bullying at schools is generally known by the other students or the victims' peers at school. They have a better chance of witnessing and helping the victims of bullying than any adults. Santrock (2009) states that peer group is a group of adolescents of the same age or the same level of maturity. Peers can be

a major source of social support and agents of socialization. Sullivan (in Santrock, 2009) also argues that in the early adolescent stage, the psychological influence and intimacy of close friends tend to increase. Peers play an important role in fostering the feeling of well-being and development of adolescents. Friendship also shows a different function with support from the family (Santrock, 2009).

According to Gotmann & Parker (1987, in Santrock, 2003) the role of peers, among others, is to be friends in common collaborative endeavors, as a stimulus in providing information, as a source of support, as a source of affection that provides warmth, and ultimately to build a mutual trust that will allow them to open up to each other.

Social support from peers or close friends will foster a sense of well-being in difficult times and be able to lessen the negative effects and mitigate the symptoms such as stress caused by bullying (Espelage & Holt, 2007). Establishing a peer support group will be more effective for victims of bullying because they can communicate in their own language and the approach will be more acceptable to the victims (Sejiwa, 2008).

## ***Literature Review***

Olweus (1993) defines bullying as follows: “bullying or victimization in the general way: a student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly, and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students” (Bullying is a form of intimidation that is done repeatedly within a certain period of time either by one person or by a group of people). Additionally, Sullivan (2000) defines bullying as an aggressive behavior that is carried out consciously and intentionally by one or more people towards another person.

### **Forms of Bullying**

The act of bullying may take many forms, including verbal, physical, and relational bullying; sometimes these three forms are carried out as coalesced acts that make them more vicious (Coloroso, 2007). Verbal bullying, which is expressed through words, is the most common form of violence perpetrated by both boys and girls. Words are powerful tools, and they can break the spirit of the child who receives them. Unfortunately, verbal bullying is often considered as harmless; therefore, it is somehow allowed or accepted and something that is actually an aggressive act becomes a normal occurrence. Since the act is considered as normal, then the victim will be easier to attack without attracting attention or raising empathy from those who are within the radius of hearing.

Verbal bullying can be in the form of demeaning nicknames, rebukes, slander, vicious critics, and insults that are both personal and racist in nature or making statements with the nuances of sexual solicitation or sexual harassment. Moreover, verbal bullying may also escalate into a physical act of stealing the victim’s pocket money or personal goods, making rude telephone calls, sending intimidating or threatening emails, sending anonymous letters containing threats of violence, making false accusations, spreading vile and false rumors and fabricated gossips (Coloroso, 2007).

Verbal bullying is one of the easiest forms of bullying to carry out, and it is often provided with an opening to the other two forms of bullying and the first step toward a more vicious and demeaning violence.

Physical bullying is the most visible and the easiest to identify among other forms of bullying. It may take many forms such as physically hitting, strangling, elbowing, punching, kicking, biting, pinning, clawing, and spitting on the bullied child or even bending the child’s limbs into a painful position, even

tearing the clothes or damaging belongings of the bullied child. The stronger and the older the bully, the more dangerous this type of attack will be, even if the assailant does not really mean to cause serious harm (Coloroso, 2007).

Relational bullying is the most difficult to detect from the outside. It is the systematic weakening of the victim's self-esteem through neglect, alienation, exclusion, or avoidance. Avoidance, as an act of exclusion, is the strongest tool of oppression. Relational bullying can be used to alienate or reject a friend or it can be deliberately aimed at destroying a friendship. This behavior may include subtle postures such as giving aggressive looks, certain eye glances, sighs, shuddering shoulders, scowling, mock laughter, and rude body language (Coloroso, 2007).

### Impact of Bullying

Bullying incidents that occur in an educational institution will have an impact on the students who are involved in the incident, directly or indirectly; both the perpetrator and the victim will be affected by it. Impacts on the bully or the perpetrator include turning the bully into a person who likes to inflict pain; becoming a person with a big ego, someone without empathy for others or feelings of regret; becoming a cruel and vindictive person towards others, someone who reacts aggressively even at the slightest provocations, someone who likes to dominate, control, beat, and subjugate those who are weaker, maintain a fanatic attitude towards differences; becoming arrogant and favor seniority, thinking that they have the power to exclude, restrict, isolate, and separate others (Coloroso (2007).

In contrast, the bullying victims will be overwhelmed by a feeling of despair from being dominated by the bully (Rigby, 1996; Fontaine, 1991; Sharp & Smith, 1994, in Astuti, 2008). This will make the victim experience physical and psychological pain, a lessening of one's self-esteem, humiliated and traumatized for not being able to resist, feeling alienated and edgy, afraid to go to school (school-phobia). The condition may take a turn for the worse and the victim will eventually withdraw from school (Rigby, Acer, 1996, in Astuti, 2008), haunted by social fear, and even thinking of suicide (Field, 1999, and Murray, APAM, 1997, in Astuti, 2008).

Moreover, the Semai Jiwa Amini Foundation also provides further elaboration that in many cases bullied children often feel depressed, which is manifested in a number of symptoms such as withdrawal from school (school phobia), crying, expressing the desire to change schools, diminished concentration, falling academic achievement; moreover, the bullying victims also become timid, short-tempered, and restless, have tendency to lie, lack self-confidence, develop cold sweats and self-doubting, have nightmares, and become anxious and irritable (Sejiwa, 2008). In addition, Olweus (1993) also states that bullying can have an effect on the victim's health. The apparent symptoms include, among others, stress and anxiety, deteriorating health with symptoms resembling virus infection, such as flu, high fever, coughing, lung, ear, nose, and throat infections (stress can lower the immune system), aching joints without any visible cause, recurring headaches, easily feeling tired, feeling lethargic and exhausted, sleeplessness, nightmares, recalling the events when they were bullied because bullied victims cannot forget those who have bullied them. They also sweat profusely, shake, have throbbing heart, suffer from panic attacks, become touchy or hypersensitive, and feel weak, isolated, quiet, and withdraw from people.

### Types of Social Support

According to Cohen & McKay, 1984; Curona & Russel, 1990; House, 1984; Schaefer, Coyne & Lazarus, 1981; Wills, 1984 (in Sarafino, 1994), social support can be classified into five types as follows:

- a. Emotional Support  
This includes expressions of empathy, interest, and concern for someone. This support provides a sense of comfort, consolation, sense of belonging, and a sense of being loved.
- b. Self-Esteem Support  
This is conveyed by expressing positive appreciation, encouragement, and approval of the individual's thoughts or feelings, as well as providing a positive comparison of the condition of others who have it worse than them. This support will increase a person's self-esteem, personal ability, and feelings of being respected.
- c. Instrumental Support  
This includes providing direct assistance, such as money, or assistance to relieve stress.
- d. Informative Support  
This includes giving advice, guidance, suggestions, or feedback on what the individual is doing.
- e. Network Support  
This provides a sense of membership in a group with similar interests and social activity groups.

According to Robert & Greene (2009), there are three types of social support as follows:

- a. Emotional Support  
It is defined as support from someone who is present to listen to the expression of feelings and provide comfort and encouragement.
- b. Informational Support  
It is defined as the presence of someone to teach something, provide information, or make a decision.
- c. Concrete Support  
It is defined as the presence of someone to help to do something concrete, lend something, and help with tasks.

Meanwhile, House (in Smet, 1994) classifies social support into four types as follows:

- a. Emotional Support. It covers expressions of empathy, care, and interest for the person concerned so that the person feels comfortable and cared for.
- b. Self-Esteem Support. It is provided by expressing positive appreciation to the person concerned, such as encouragement to move on or affirming the person's ideas or feelings; therefore, the person will be encouraged to move on or change into a better state.
- c. Instrumental Support. This type of support covers a direct assistance to a person, for instance, providing help to someone who is ill or helping or giving donation to victims of natural disasters. This is a form of a concrete action given to someone to help relieve the burden of individuals in need.
- d. Informational Support. It covers providing advice, guidance, suggestions, or feedback to an individual in need.

## **Research Method**

The study was conducted at SMPN X, which is a state school with an A accreditation rating and an SSN (National Standard School) status. SMPN X is one of the most popular and highly regarded schools in Jakarta. This is an interesting factor because even though it is supposed to be one of the better schools in the area and there are many prospective students trying to enroll to the institution, there are bullying incidents.

The study utilizes a qualitative research method. Creswell (2014) defines a qualitative approach as a research process with a particular methodology to explore and understand the meaning of individuals or groups that are related to the phenomena to be studied.

It is case study research, and Neuman (2013) defines case study research as an in-depth investigation of information about cases that occur in one single period or cases that span between different times. Data were collected through literature review and interviews. Sampling was collected using a purposive sampling method by interviewing students who are the victims of physical and verbal bullying at school; we also interviewed the victims' friends and the school's guidance counselor.

## **Results and Discussion**

In the study, we investigated three bullying cases that occurred to three informants in SMPN X, the victims are identified SZ, EE and SR and peers are AD, SN and RT

### **1. Forms of Bullying**

The victims have been bullied by student in the same class and by their senior. The Forms of bullying are physically and verbally. Such physical bullying are pushed around, drenched with water, hair was pulled, even the bullies tried to force to swallow some leaves and drenched with water.

“At first I was bullied when I was just entering grade 8. So at that time, I was in class and there was no teacher, I was just sitting there reading books. Suddenly someone pushed me from behind. I've also been beaten in class, and I've also had to put leaves in my mouth forcibly like that and I've also been doused with water... My neck also sometimes likes to be squeezed like that. I also didn't know the reason because I feel like I've never done anything”. (SZ, 15 years, girl)

The other victim was often ambushed while walking along the school's hallway. At first, he tried to evade, when suddenly one of the bullies smacked him into the shoulder. It gets worse as some students are joining the fray and start mocking him by calling him “devil's feces”.

Next, another victim was verbally bullied by his friends. He was ridiculed, taunted, and mocked with harsh and cruel words. He was often called “*kerempeng*” (scrawny) or “black/darkie”.

“I am often bullied, there are three people... Almost every day I get bullied.” (SR, 14 years, girl)  
To make matters worse, some if not most of the students regard physical and verbal bullying as something mundane, something that is commonplace among adolescence as a form of a prank. The bullies said that the victims fit their image of how a victim is supposed to look like; therefore, they start harassing, abusing, and intimidating them.

One of the peer informants told a harrowing story, when he had to pull the victim to prevent him from committing suicide by jumping from the school's third floor balcony, and he then reported the incident to the school. This statement is supported by what was conveyed by peer. He stated that as a result of the bullying he had experienced, and wanted to end his life because he was no longer strong with what he had felt so far.

Field findings show that chronologically, a bullying incident usually occurs in locations that are not supervised by a teacher, including, ironically, the classrooms, or the school's cafeteria and hallways. The incidents usually occur in the classroom at the change of class when no teacher is present. When the teacher left the classroom. These locations are used by the perpetrator or the bullies to carry out their act

due to the lack of teachers' present there; thus, it provides an opportunity for the perpetrators to carry out their acts.

Typically, the victims are not willing to report the incident to the school, and they decided to keep silent. The silence of bullying victims is mostly derived from the belief that neither parents nor teachers will be able to handle the situation faced by the victim. One of the supports that a peer may provide is to convey the information to the homeroom teacher by recounting the chronology of the bullying incidents. Furthermore, peer informants may even encourage the victim to be courageous and tell the school what has happened.

They warned him that if he dared to report the incident to the teacher they would not hesitate to strike again. The threat is enough to scare the victim, so he is afraid to report the incident.

"If he reports to the Counseling teacher, then he will complain about it and his parents will find out. And later on, it will be long". (AD,15 years, girl)

"I never told my parents ... I'm just afraid that later the problem will spread from parent to parent ... So it's a long problem... If in the past my mother said, every time you get bullied, just let it go... find another good friend ... Mama also wanted to come over and that surprised me, sis. I'm afraid the longer the story, the later I'll be called jealous... So I'm most comfortable just confiding in my friends." (AD,15 years, girl)

As a result of the bullying, SZ finds it difficult to concentrate while studying in class, she is overwhelmed by anxiety and dread, and when the teacher is handing out group assignments to the students, she feels uncomfortable and stressed out. The overwhelming feeling of anxiety and dread has affected her physical condition. She is experiencing cold sweat; she is having headache and fever. What is more, her experience as a bullying victim has even made her thinking of committing suicide, because she felt she could no longer endure the ordeal.

Meanwhile, EE is also overwhelmed by something similar. She is afraid to go to school (school phobia), as she finds it difficult to focus and that in turn is affecting her concentration during studying. EE also often feels uneasy and troubled by the threats and intimidations. She becomes unfocused and scared when the recess bell rings. She becomes nervous when the senior who bullies her come to class with her friends. All of these eventually are affecting her body, as she often feels nauseous and ill, and she feels hot and then cold. In the end, EE even considering not going to school, because she simply dreads the prospect of running into the bullies again.

The impact on SR is that he is experiencing learning difficulties. Every so often, she feels apprehensive whenever she has to give his opinion or just to start a conversation. Our informant feels unsure and thinks that actually her friends are just pretending and they do not really want her to be in the study group and as a result she is withdrawing from the group and does not actively participate in class-group assignment.

The impact of bullying as experienced by the victims, as stated by Olweus (1993), affects the health of the victims. They become stressed out, and anxious, they suffering from headaches, fever, hypersensitivity, and they are frequently haunted by the events, then they withdraw from social interaction. The most apparent impact on the victim is the feeling of depression because they realize that they are under the control of the perpetrators (Rigby, 1996; Fontaine, 1991; Sharp & Smith, 1994, in Astuti, 2008). This awareness in turn causes the victim to experience physical and psychological pain, including a lessening of one's self-esteem, feeling humiliated and traumatized for not being able to resist,



feeling alienated and edgy, afraid to go to school (school-phobia). The condition may take a turn for the worse and the victim will eventually withdraw from school (Rigby, Acer, 1996, in Astuti, 2008), haunted by social fear and even thinking of committing suicide (Field, 1999, and Murray, APAM, 1997, in Astuti, 2008). The desire to commit suicide is felt by SZ and SR, because they felt they could no longer endure the ordeal due to the constant pressure and fear.

According to Garbarino and DeLara (2002), when a child is abandoned or neglected by his friends, the impact can be quite serious, because human beings as social creatures and at certain ages, especially during the adolescent years, need a definite circle of friendship-

The victims never shared their experience of being bullied to their parents, due to the concern that if they talked to their parents, it would only exacerbate the problem. As a matter of fact, when the bullying took place, a number of students witnessed the incidents. Some of them tried to help by distracting the bullies; however, most of them simply watched without attempting to help. According to Garbarino and DeLara (2002), when a child is abandoned or neglected by his friends, the impact can be quite serious because human beings as social creatures and at certain ages, especially during the adolescent years, need a definite circle of friendship-

Coloroso (2005) **mentions** that friends who know and witness bullying incidents are bystanders. They play the least active role, bystanders are a critical element in bullying. With peers looking on and providing at least tacit support, the bully is no longer acting alone. The bystanders have become allies to the point of magnifying the supposed negative attributes of the target. If the bullying cycle is to be broken, the role of the bystander must be changed by starting with the four reasons bystanders give for not taking a stand against bullying: fear of getting hurt, fear of becoming a new target for the bully, fear of making the situation worse, and simply not knowing what to do. Talked about openly, these four reasons for remaining on the sidelines can be starting points for convincing bystanders to accept responsibility for recognizing bullying, refusing to be part of it, responding effectively, and reporting it to proper authorities.

### Peers Social Support

Coloroso claims that there is another party in a bullying incident; she calls it the bystander, which she defines as somebody who either watches the bullying, or looks away. Our findings show that more often than not victims of bullying share their experience with their peers. They are the supporting cast who aid and abet the bully, through acts of omission and commission. They stand idly by or look away, or they can actively encourage the bully or join in and become one of a bunch of bullies. Injustice overlooked or ignored becomes a contagion that infects even those who thought they could turn away.

Kärnä, Voeten, Poskiparta, and Salmivalli (in Sharon Padgett, Charles E. Notar, 2013) examined whether Bystanders have immense power to intervene and effectively stop bullying; yet, few children actually do so according to Siegel, and Blank, et al. There must be a change in the behavior of bystanders. Slaby (as cited in CQ Researcher, says bystanders are the most pivotal group of bullying influencers, since youth are so heavily influenced by their peers. If one stands by and watches bullying, then they are letting it happen in their community. However, if one stands up, the bullies do not experience success because there will be no acceptance of their behavior from peers. Peer relationships are like oxygen that allows bullying breath and spread. However, even one good friend to a victim of bullying can help assuage the harmful consequences of harassment.

Social support may come from anybody. One of such support is the support offered by one's peers. Friends are very important sources of social support in the life cycle. Sullivan (2005) argues that in the

early adolescence years, the psychological influence and intimacy of close friends tend to increase. He argues that peers play an important role in building the well-being and development of children and adolescents (in Santrock, 2003).

Gotmann & Parker (1987, in Santrock, 2003) also categorize the role of peers into several groups, one of which is in their role in providing resources and assistance needed by someone, affirming the position of an adolescent among his/her peers and whether he or she is okay compared to the rest of the flock. To provide a warm, close, and trusting relationship and a connection that will allow them to open up to each other. Peers are considered as parties who play a very important role in bridging the communication between the victims of bullying and the school, providing assistance when victims are bullied, providing advice, and being somebody who can accompany the victims to spend time together, as well as playing a role in monitoring and reporting on how the victims are coping with the ordeal—because the teacher is responsible for the whole class and not just a single student; therefore, he/she is unable to provide a constant supervision to the victim.

This is supported by statements from the victims who point out that the resolution of their case is inextricable from the role played by their peers, as in the case with the victims, the peers will only be identified by peers and they provide a great deal of assistance and social support to the victims.

Sarason (Smet, 1994) defines social support as an interpersonal transaction that is indicated by providing assistance to other individuals, wherein the assistance is generally obtained from people who are important to the individual concerned. Social support can be in the form of information, behavioral assistance, or material assistance, which is obtained from close social relationships that can make an individual feel cared for, valued, and loved.

"When she confides in me, she usually starts crying right away, and I immediately hug him to provide comfort and support. I allow her to cry until he truly stops because it is evident that he is deeply hurt."

"So if she cries I always give him encouragement and ask " Are you still strong or not? Do they want to be left alone or reported?" I've been asked that many times (AD,15 years, girl).

House (in Smet, 1994) defines emotional support as something that encompasses expressions of empathy, interest, and concern for someone. This support provides a sense of comfort, consolation, a sense of belonging, and a sense of being loved. Emotional support by peers includes accompanying the victim during recess hours, visiting the victim's class, or going to the cafeteria together and being a good listener when the victim is sharing her bullying incident.

When the victim is crying, peer always tries to mention positive things about the victim. This aims to increase his self-confidence and convince the victim that there are actually many people who really care about him.

"I also conveyed to her, 'I'm just confident you know, in my opinion you are a cool person. They are like that because they don't even know you, so they are only judges from the outside. It's really old to judge physically, my body is also thin... Don't think about it too much'" (RT,14 years, girl).

According to Sarafino (2011), social support can take many forms including informative support, instrumental support, and emotional support. Informative support is something that comprises providing advice, instructions, suggestions or feedback to the individuals in need. House (in Smet, 1994) also stated

that informational support is the presence of someone to teach something, provide information, or help to make a decision.

“ As for advice, I always say, “It's been a long time since you've been like this. It's been one semester, it's quite long. You have to report it to the teacher so you can get a solution. Miss Z is good, you know.” I kept inviting him, sis... Because at that time I was also shocked when he said that he almost wanted to kill himself. I'm so confused, what should I do, okay? “. After trying to persuade and convince the victim report this to the BK teacher, SZ was finally willing to report it. Peer also accompanied her because the victim was afraid to come to the counseling room alone”. (AD,15 years, girl)

One of the supports that a peer may provide is to convey the information to the homeroom teacher by recounting the chronology of the bullying incidents. Furthermore, peer informants may even encourage the victim to be courageous and tell the school what has happened.

Peers provide a great deal of informative support in the form of advice or suggestions to help victims of bullying when they are facing the dilemma on how to cope with bullying.

Moreover, peer informants may also provide instructions on some resistance techniques that can be used, especially when the perpetrator or the bully starts to bully the victim physically. These techniques include, for example, how to fend off the attempt by the bully to grab the victim's hair, how to steer clear when the perpetrator tries to bully him or her again, and how to reason when the bully is forcing him to do all the group assignments.

Peer shows self-defense techniques that must be used when the perpetrator tries to water them or forces them to eat leaves. Not only that, AD also helped victim to be able to have the courage to argue when the perpetrators forced him to do group assignments alone.

“If he pushes you, you block his hand like this. If for example he dares to flush you, take your drinking water and then you flush it back to him. Anyway, don't stay silent” (AD,15 years, girl).

Other peer informants may advise the victim to ignore the bully, because when the victim reacts, the bully becomes more determined to carry out their aggression.

"I've also given advice, if for example right in the corridor you pass by or meet them again, and they start making fun of you, just pretend it's not for you. Don't put on a tense or angry face. Just relax like nothing happened. Even if you can just smile back at them” (SN,14 years, girl)

According to Sheras (2002), bullying incidents often occur in schools, specifically in unsupervised locations, such as play areas, bathrooms, changing rooms, and school backyards. Therefore, victims are advised to avoid going to these locations on their own or find other routes, and immediately move away when they start to see a group of bullies gathering. This is to prevent the perpetrators from repeating their bullying actions, which will only make this problem worse.

Kelly and Hansen (1987, in Desmita, 2013) argue that one the benefits of peer support is that they can provide solutions by talking it through and having a light discussion with the victims. For instance, peer informants encouraged one of the quiet victims to interact more with other students, the more time he spends with others and the more friends he will have, and this will ultimately boost his confidence, and it can be one of the solutions, i.e. to make him less attractive to bullies.

“She's hard to hang out with. So I invite her sometimes when I take a break. I also say it's like trying to start hanging out a lot, chatting with others. You don't have to go far, for example, a friend in front or behind your seat. If you talk a lot, you'll be close after a while, right? Because it's just a group of people who bully, right? The others are fine”(RT, 14 years, girl).

Peers provide a great deal of informative support in the form of advice or suggestions to help victims of bullying when they are facing the dilemma on how to cope with bullying. The victims are encouraged to sign up and participate in one of the many extracurricular activities offered by the school. By participating in extracurricular activities, the victims will become more active and expand his circle of friends not only with his classmates but also with students from other classes or even his seniors. What is more, participation in extracurricular activities will help the victims to channel their negative thoughts into more positive energy.

Then I asked him to register for basketball as well so that later she could get to know lots of people, not just friends in class. And as far as I know, SR doesn't have any friends in other classes at all. So I often say let's join a basketball extracurricular so that I can get to know a lot of my seniors and other students from other classes." (RT,14 years, girl)

"If you join extracurricular activities like this, it's fun, sis. We'll be busier, for example, like busy practicing or busy competing. So I don't think about weird things and just feel more relaxed because I've run out of energy for sports." (RT,14 years, girl)

This view is in line with an observation expressed by Kelly and Hansen (1987, in Desmita, 2013) that stated that one of the benefits of peer social support is that it can provide emotional and social encouragement so that a person can become more independent and can take on their new roles and responsibilities.

Instrumental support is a direct and tangible form of social support, including assistance in the form of time, services, and intervention explicitly on behalf of the individual (House in Smet 1994). It may also take form as direct assistance, such as money, or it may help to relieve stress. Instrumental support is provided by peers in the form of assistance or direct action to help the victims of bullying when they are being harassed or mistreated by other children. Some of the assistance provided by peers to the victims of bullying includes reporting the incident to school, accompanying the victim when facing the Counseling Guidance teacher and helping to recount the chronology of the incident. In the event that the bullies or perpetrators continue to bully the victims, peer support also may take it on themselves to report the incident to the homeroom teacher or the Counseling Guidance teacher.

"In the end, she wants to report it, because all this time I've always persuaded and told her to report this to the teacher. When we reported to the counseling teacher, in the end, the two of us went to the counseling teacher to tell directly about SZ's bullying, and I told the full incident” (AD,15 years, girl)

Self-esteem support, according to Cohen & McKay et al., positive encouragement such as praise is a form of self-esteem support that makes a person feel valued and full with positive encouragement. The purpose is to boost one's self-esteem, capacity, and feeling of respect. Sejiwa (2008) argued that victims of bullying often feel inferior and think that they are worthless. They frequently isolate themselves from social life, because of the perception that if they tried to socialize, they would be disappointed because they would be rejected by their circle. What peers of the victim can do in this case is to provide the victims with motivation in academic field and convince the victim that there are many people who care about him.

House (in Smet, 1994) defines emotional support as something that encompasses expressions of empathy, interest, and concern for someone. This support provides a sense of comfort, consolation, a sense of belonging, and a sense of being loved. Emotional support by peers including accompanying the victim during recess hours, visiting the victim's class, or going to the cafeteria together and being a good listener when the victim is sharing her bullying incident. For instance, AD first had to calm SZ when she was crying while recounting her ordeal. One of the peers also visited the victim's home several times and encouraged her to talk about other things other than the bullying incidents, among others; they discussed religious activities and SZ's favorite things, namely drawing and anime to keep her from being lonely.

## **Conclusion**

Bullying incidents that occur in SMPN X encompass spectrum, physical and verbal bullying. Weak supervision from the school is one of the factors that makes bullying incidents more prevalent and regrettably makes them more acceptable. The school only found out about the incident after the friends of the bullied reported the incidents to the school.

The victims never reported the incidents to the adults (parents and teachers) that they have been bullied by their friends at school. The incidents occur in locations that are not supervised, such as play areas, bathrooms, changing rooms, or the school's backyard. The ordeals impact not only the victims' health but also their academic achievement, and some have even attempted suicide. They did not report the incidents to their parents or the school because of the threat of more violence from their oppressors. Therefore, their peers who witnessed the incidents first hand have a greater chance of rectifying the damage by providing assistance to the victims than any adults.

In dealing with these problems, peers are considered to be the groups who play a considerable role in providing support to the victims. This is because each day when carrying out their school activities, the victims will spend most of their times with their peers. Peer social support encompasses the following:

- a. Information support, specifically by encouraging and helping the victims to report the bullying incident to the teacher, i.e. to be the link that connects the information between the school and the victims, and advising the victims on what steps they should take when the bullies are at it again.
- b. Emotional support, specifically by talking to the victims about their condition and feeling, to be the place where the victims can pour their feelings and grief without being judged, and to be the calming voice that soothes the victims when they are overwhelmed by fear, apprehension, and anxiety.
- c. Self-esteem support, specifically by providing encouragement to achieve positive things and motivate the victims to maintain the learning spirit in their studies to show the bullies that the victims have many good things going in for them.
- d. Instrumental support, in addition to reporting the bullying incidents to the school, the peers can also stand up and defend the victims when the bullies start acting out, harassing the victims or screaming profanities, and admonish the bullies and warn them that what they are doing is wrong.

Peer support is considered as highly beneficial to the victims. The victims acknowledged that the support they received from their peers had a significant impact on them. Thanks to this support, the victims feel that there is someone who can protect them, accompany them, and hear their grievances.

Truth be told, the victims need more than protection from their friends. The important thing here is the school should clean up its act and gain the courage to protect its students from violent behaviors.

School should not wait for its students to report that they have been bullied. The homeroom teacher should be watchful when observing the interaction among the students inside and outside of the classroom and see how things develop; therefore, the school can take preventive measures and stop bullying cases before they occur. It is quite clear that a school can prevent bullying incidents by implementing strict supervision and acting proactively to protect its students.

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