

# Peer Victimization and Social Skills of Freshmen Students in College

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**Abstract:** This study determined which domain of peer victimization best influenced the social skills of first year college students. The research designs used in this study are non-experimental quantitative and descriptive-correlational technique, utilizing random sampling procedure. The total respondents were 100 first year college students enrolled in a local college at Governor Generoso, Davao Oriental. Survey questionnaires on peer victimization and social skills were used as the research instrument in data gathering. Results revealed that peer victimization was assessed at a moderate level, on the other hand, social skills was assessed at a high level. Moreover, data showed that peer victimization had no significant influence on the social skills of first year college students. Moreover, verbal victimization tends to have possible best influenced social skills among all the domains of peer victimization.

**Keywords:** Peer Victimization, Social Skills Freshmen, Philippines.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Social skills are the various kinds of social behaviors to bargain felicitously with interpersonal instances' requisition in the adeptness of each individual (Del Prette, 2001). It has been suggested however, that victims of peer victimization are socially unskilled; their qualities which involve daily's social interactions are dearthing and their social skills' level is dangerously low, they are not skilled in making others laugh, they possess juvenile delinquency and are not able to relax in everyday life (Elliott, Malecki, & Demaray, 2001). Findings by Postigo (2012) showed that students who professed altitudinous level of peer victimization were calibrated poor in both popularity and social skills. Hence, students isolate themselves from others inside the classroom which is an indication of antisocial behavior; this make them lose the chance for social exchange of helpful academic information. On the other hand, positive encounters with groupmates during activities particular in academics, may help students to develop their problem-solving and critical thinking skills (Webb, 2009). More recently, however, there has been a general trend toward a more integrative approach to understanding social skills (Hammerstein, 2003).

Social skills are important to achieve triumphant academic and social functioning of all learners and showcase meaningful function in dodging and precluding negative replies from peers (Gresham & Elliot, 2000). It involves the way of communicating, behaving, interacting and listening skills of every individual (Walker, 2009). One must involve

learned behaviors when interacting with others, because this enables them to perform given social tasks capably (Cook, Williams, & Guerra, 2010). Such concepts extrapolate a describable phase on the verbal and non-verbal demeanor showcased in each distinct interpersonal instances of every individual (Graziano, 2007).

Mindful of the importance of the studies on social skills, the researcher made an extensive review of literature for possible variables associated with it. Peer victimization was one of the closest variables considered to be relevant. It is labeled harassment or bullying most of the time: psychological, physical or verbal vituperation of victims by offenders who cause others torment intentionally (Olweus, 2002). Cook et al. (2010) postulated that a higher level of peer victimization leads to poorer social skills. Hence, the problems in social skills experienced by perpetrators and peer victimization - victims might recommence in adolescence and engender lifelong cynical upshots, such as low level of self-regard and self-confidence (Nansel, 2001) which leads children to become anti-social. Throughout middle childhood, chances of peer victimization from peers is elevated, a moment for the spirited fabrication of self-cognitions both positively and negatively (Ladd & Troop-Gordon, 2003; Pellegrini & Bartini, 2000; Smith, Shu, & Madsen, 2001). Peer victimization is not only pervasive; but also, a host of adaptation of hurdles is acquainted with it (Juvonen & Graham, 2001).

Understanding the value of research on professionalism, the researcher has conducted a thorough literature study to identify potential contributing factors. Teachers in particular need to possess the knowledge (metacognitive awareness), dispositions (socialization), as well as the behaviors, attitudes, and qualities (professionalism) necessary to start a profession in teaching and complete the tasks in all the situation they come across (Vermunt, Vrikki, Warwick, & Mercer, 2017; Odike & Nnaekwe, 2018). In other words, teacher's metacognitive awareness is regarded as the first relevant variable. It is crucial for learning to be successful (Akben, 2020), productive instruction (Bagci & Unveren, 2020) and is necessary to advancing an educator's career (Backfisch, Lachner, Hische, Loose, & Scheiter, 2020). In this connection, the researcher found that socialization is also a significant variable. It is an effort that denotes the procedures for demonstrating that something has been done or accomplished to achieve higher standards of performance or quality (Salisu, Nayeri, Yakubu, & Ebrahimpour, 2019).

It should be mentioned that issues related to teacher professionalism are becoming more increasingly prevalent in various parts of the world (Boniface & Ngalawa, 2021). But there still lacks an investigation concerning variables like socialization and metacognitive awareness as characteristics that indicate professionalism. Despite this, teachers' metacognitive awareness offers a more effective means of understanding the goal of education (Haddad, Tabieh, Alsmadi, Mansour, & Al-Shalabi, 2022). Teachers must learn to socialize, which includes watching other instructors teach, getting feedback from their peers, building collegial relationships, and taking part in situations that promote lifelong learning (Salisu, et al., 2019). Therefore, the researcher wants to determine if socialization and metacognitive awareness aid in teachers' professional development. In the aforementioned setting, the researcher became interested in investigating if metacognitive awareness and socialization are predictive of teacher's professionalism. As a result, this study represents an era of current knowledge with particular significance to the discipline of education.

Furthermore, the most important objective of the research is to determine which domain of peer victimization best influences the social skills of first year college students.

## II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### A. Peer victimization

The disparaging attributes that determine peer victimization from uncomplicated assent between individuals are the aspiration to hurt other people. It is the disparity of supremacy between the aggressor and the peer victimization – victim whacking, calling undesirable names, menacing, race-related defamation, outspreading of hearsays and social expulsion by substantial individuals are precedents of demeanors that comprise peer victimization; the stipulation and cornerstone is further on the archetypal and extensive category of peer aggravation that influences many juvenescence's lives (Sanders & Phye, 2004). Particularly in their social skills, at some point during students' school

career, it is reckoned that 40 to 80 percent of the youth face peer victimization.

Additionally, it is determined that the prevalence of entanglement in victimization varies considerably ranging from 20 to 30% (Juvonen, Graham & Schuster, 2003) to a lurching 75 percent (Glover, Gough, Johnson, & Cartwright, 2000) among children necessitated as peer – victims, assailant or both in a given period of time. Hence, these percentages are distinctly agitating in reference to the various undesirable impacts connected with participation in victim-aggressor interlinkage, which include social coordinates, academic, and poor mental health (Card & Hodges, 2008).

Peer victimization has been described as a comparatively recurrent issue amid youngsters: approximates depend not only on age but also on gender, even so, research has proposed that between 5% and 30% of children and adolescents have experienced peer victimization (Eslea et al., 2004; Stasen & Berger, 2007). Other postulations have explained that outlay of peer victimization may rate as high as 32 percent and 60 percent in an economical to socio-economical realm (Currie & Vogl, 2013; Fleming & Jacobsen, 2010).

In addition, experiences of peer victimization are linked with a scope of physical, verbal and social manipulation, and attacks on property which lead to behavioral problems. Some meta analyses and systematic exploration have shown that peer-victims predominantly show problems with their social skills; they tend to have lower standard of living and suffer from poor self-worth (Hawker & Boulton, 2010); endure unhappiness and abandonment (Storch & Masia-Warner, 2004); increased psychosomatic complaints (Gini & Pozzoli, 2009); high level of disquietude and despondency (Hawker & Boulton, 2010); have higher chances for suicidal acts and behaviors (van Geel, Assies, Wanders, & Barth, 2014); more capable in problems such as misconduct, aggression and delinquency (Reijntjes, Kamphuis, & Prinzie, 2011); and technically speaking they do not perform well in academic aspects (Nakamoto & Schwartz, 2010) compared to those who did not experience peer victimization.

In peer victimization, the emotional hardship encountered from childhood through adolescence might bring about unwanted results in adulthood (McDougall & Vaillancourt, 2015). Hence, it is a subject of curiosity for some professionals and educators of what and how effective interventions should be given to youngsters who have been peer-victimized (Crothers & Levinson, 2004). To flourish intercession and gauge triumph it is compulsory to precisely, authentically, and extensively evaluate peer victimization.

Further, various self-report measures have been devised by some researchers. 41 distinctive appraisals of peer victimization have been identified in recent literature. While these has the advantage of permitting choice over instrument selection, it has simultaneously resulted in significant inconsistencies in measurement that can contribute to conflicting prevalence estimates and research results (Vivolo-Kantor, Holt, & Massetti, 2014). None of the aforesaid

measures are inclusively acknowledged as the tool of choice, even though some tools are utilized more constantly than others.

The first indicator is physical victimization. It refers to either physical or relational hostility which is linked with significant adaptability of predicaments such as externalizing internalizing problems and social hardships. Previous research produced vigorous affirmation that peer victimization within a group milieu is connected to various significant hardships such as social dilemmas which include peer-rejection, depression, and lack of self-restraint (Crick & Bigbee, 2000). In addition, another study explored the nature of physically-victimized youngsters' responses to individuals' hostility; and significance to reduce continuous peer-victimization. "Fighting back" strategies were more observed in boys in relation with continued peer victimization, while "asking help from friends" reduced the continuous experience of victimization. The aforementioned outcomes produce substantive attestation that other victimized youngsters obtain advantage from friends (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 2001).

Furthermore, physical victimization that has been experienced by students for gender identity and self-expression (Fields et al., 2013) are valuable contemplation in research into suicide attempts. Studies have proposed that including trans-men and trans-women; the population is prone to alarmingly high rates of different forms of peer victimization based on their genders which includes rejection, discrimination, and violence (Clements-Nolle, Marx, & Katz, 2006; Kenagy, 2005; Nuttbrock et al., 2010). Alternatively, race-post prejudice and gender-post prejudice is a huge nuisance that obstructively affects health. People who consequently undergo prejudice and experience that their identity has been under attack are more prone to engage in suicidal behaviors and thoughts (Haas et al., 2011; Herek, Gillis, & Cogan, 1999).

Nonetheless, numerous researches have connected different aspects of gender-post prejudice between sexual minorities to suicidal behavior (House, 2011). This study suggested that transgender undergo peer victimization in the form of prejudice linked as interpersonal trauma with their gender identity. It has been found that histories of both physical victimization such as gender-post prejudice and forced sexual activities were solely linked with ventured suicide among transgender people (Clements-Nolle et al., 2006).

The second indicator is verbal victimization. It refers to childhood emotional and verbal abuse experienced, which contributes to the enhancement of cynical social interaction ability and dejected traits in youngsters (Rose & Abramson, 2002). As claimed by the Hopelessness Theory of Depression (Abramson, Alloy, & Metalsky, 1988), people who intend to ascribe cynical instances to substantial, exhaustive causes and who gravitate to surmise dismissive upshots and cynical characteristics accompanying these events must be at heightened peril for evolving depression.

In addition, in support of the hypothesis of Rose and Abramson numerous research have discovered consequential connection among the social skills of adults and their records of childhood verbal victimization experiences (Gibb, Alloy, Abrahamson, & Marx, 2003; Hankin, 2005). There is also evidence that underdeveloped social skills are rated as more connected to childhood histories like verbal victimization experiences than to most types of unpleasant life circumstances (Gibb et al., 2003; Gibb, Butler, & Beck, 2003; Hankin, 2005; Stone, 1993).

The constraint of this research is that it entirely pays attention to the retrospective records of adults with reference to their childhood history. Hence, it is difficult to unveil if verbal victimization has literally prophesized changes in the inferential styles or depressive symptoms of the youngsters. Lately, though, a research found that youngsters' records of verbal victimization actually foresee changes in the youngsters' inferences for the principles of instances as well as changes in their social skills, over a 6-month follow-up (Gibb & Alloy, 2006). One limitation of the aforesaid research with youngsters was that they solely scrutinized depressed genic inferential style about causes. Inclined that this hopelessness theory formulates that lower level of social skills of a person may bestow on helplessness to depression, it is very important that the study focuses on finding if verbal victimization experiences is as well linked with future changes in the social skills of an individual (Gibb & Alloy, 2006).

Moreover, in acquiring evidence for correlations within the three inferential dimensions self-characteristics in young adults, causes and consequences (Abela, 2001; Abela & Payne, 2003; Abela & Sarin, 2002), they searched changes in every inferential dimension individually, as well as each child's "weakest link" or most negative inferential dimension with regards to verbal victimization which affects their social skills (Abela & Sarin, 2002). Another constraint of the study is that the measurement of verbal victimization utilized records of victimizations from all accessible sources (e.g., parents and peers). Thus, it is not clear whether the findings were because of verbal abuse from parents/guardians, emotional abuse from peers or from both. Findings from a current research proposed that youngster's cognitive styles problems may be linked to verbal victimization (Gibb, Abramson, & Alloy, 2004).

The third indicator is social manipulation. This refers to the idea that a child who bullies may be different from an aggressive or conduct disordered child in terms of theory of mind ability; this rests on how social manipulation can be defined, the context in which it occurs and the roles which children assume within this context, and the skills which may be of use (Sutton, Precup, & Singh, 2009). Social manipulation findings arise not only from the behavioral vulnerabilities of victims, but could maybe because of a compromised social designation (Hodges, Martinos, Woolams, Patterson, & Adlam, 2007).

This imbalance of power signifies superiority while the more general field of aggression supremacy is linked with the

manipulation of beliefs and social skills. For example, Keating and Heltman (2004) found that preschool children, who deceived successfully, were judged as honest by adult researchers when persuading another child that a nasty-tasting drink was pleasant; they also tended to be those who terrorized the playground and were rated as dominant.

Moreover, social manipulation can be defined as the systematic abuse of power (Smith & Sharp, 2004). It occurs within social relationships (Bjorkqvist, Lagerspetz, Berts, & King, 2012) and usually with peers present (Pepler & Craig, 2005). These peers may take on several roles; in addition to Perpetrators and Victim, they may help or reinforce the bully through watching, laughing and shouting encouragement. Alternatively, they may stick up for the victim or remain resolutely uninvolved. The use of social cognition skills in peer victimization may also relate to social manipulation. Indirect or relational types of violence (Crick & Grotpeter, 2005) for instance social prohibition (Bjorkqvist et al., 2012) most of the time necessitate a maneuver of others' beliefs and mental states in the form of gossiping, spreading rumors and lies.

The fourth indicator is attacks on property. It refers to damage of stuff owned by the victim. Other forms of peer victimization are destroying possessions (Schlozman, 2013). In spite of the fact that numerous people believe that peer victimization tapers off during the high school years, it stays a major problem as well as throughout college. As stated in a finding from The University of Indiana, what can bring out old habits are full postsecondary course loads which are added stress. Peer victimization may still exist in this period of time in different forms. In college and in the workplace, peer victimization can take on other forms such as attacks on property like coercion – persuading someone to do things by using force or threats such as destroying one's professional reputation (Michaelis, 2013).

Additionally, attacks on property can happen in any number of places, contexts, or locations. Sometimes that place is outside the home such as school. Attacks on property that occurs using technology (including but not limited to hitting, calling names, forcing someone to do things that is against their will) is considered peer victimization and is viewed as a context (Gladden, Vivolo-Kantor, Hamburger, & Lumpkin, 2014). In previous research, relational and attacks on property type of peer victimization had been recognized to be significantly linked with social-psychological maladjustment, which makes the aggressor more violent. Although studied basically within the peer context, these types of victimization may transpire within twosome associations like friendships (Crick & Nelson, 2015).

### *B. Social Skills*

Social skills include appropriate conducts which will warrant many successful achievements on social function (Gresham & Elliot, 2008). This determines characteristics, social skills or tactics that entitles an individual to connect and converse triumphantly with other people in the social setting (Botsford, 2013). Learners who fall short with these desired skills might be denied by his peers from joining in

positive social interaction and problems in relationships with their instructors and/or mentors may occur, which can lead to the risk of poor academic achievement (Bloom, 2007).

In addition, learners who are socially skilled show fewer behavioral problems; in previous research, most of the time authors showed connection with the idea of competence with that of social skills (Shahrum, 2012). Social skills, paired-up with social conducts, entail understanding, planning, and performance to achieve better social interaction. Lower levels of social skills may become a cause for problems in one's demeanor (Langeveld, 2012). Social skills have a remarkable long term impact upon adaptive, psychological and academic functioning in the interpersonal relationships of individuals (Elliott et al., 2001).

A lower level of social skills and connection with peers, teachers and family - hardships are related to various kinds of psychopathology, together with depression, behavior disarray, social aversions, Aspergers syndrome and autism and untimely schizophrenia (Segrin, 2000; Gaffney & McFall, 2001; Spence, 2011; Harris, 2008; Spence, Donovan, & Brechman-Toussaint, 2009; Schulz & Koller, 2009). Further, youngsters' social skills must be examined within the social setting where the young adult functions and they recommended assessment of child functions and other variables found in context associated with it (Sheridan, Hunglemann, & Maughan, 2009). Gresham (2007) distinguishes the difference with social skill possession deficiency from social skill execution deficiency. A youngster is said to have acquisition deficiency if he or she does not possess the certain social skill within his or her behavioral range.

Alternately, (Shahrum, 2012) highlighted that performance deficiency entangles the circumstance wherein a youngster is behaving in a socially-skilled manner, yet falls short in demonstrating the same skill in one or other social circumstances. Performance deficiency may come from ranges of emotive element, distortions or cognitive deficiency, or it could be from interfering/competing problem behaviors. Apart from an affective point of view, high levels of arousal associated with anger or anxiety might hamper the utilization of relevant social skills. Irrelevant social execution might also be a result from smartly twisting the process as social skills statistics is explained or from cognitive deficiency in processing of the information; Lochman and Dodge (2004) reiterated that young adults who are aggressive mostly create misinterpretations of social instances and the demeanor of their peers; this increases the possibility that they will react in a more aggressive manner.

The first indicator is cooperation. It refers to demeanors like abiding with rules and regulations and completing given activities without asking anything from anyone (Gresham & Elliot, 2008). Emotional intelligence is suggested to be an essential basis for the enhancement of cooperative skills; this means self-awareness and self-knowledge, empathy and social awareness and reflection, only then would cognition propose that such qualities are truly important. Whether or not it is attainable to explain and gauge emotional awareness,

other fundamental specifications for cooperative performance such as exemplary communication skills and the expertise to act confidently, as opposed to being subdued, violent or cunning; demand empathy, social-awareness and self-knowledge, this means understanding how to interact productively with peers towards commonly held objectives and aims on an equal basis (Howard, 2000), otherwise known as social cooperation which integrates elements like empathic orientation, social anxiety and inhibition that motivates individuals to react in a socially responsive manner (Przybeck, 2002).

Consequently, children with peer victimization experience deficiency in social skills are deficient mostly in communication and cooperation skills, and lack capability to positively interact with peers and enhance friendships (Bilić-Prcić, 2007); problems in the realm of social skills functions, as well as peer victimization, can lead students to a lower academic performance and behavioral problems in the long-run (Wright, 2001); like lacking cooperation and social abolition. Youngsters who are socially withdrawn show less interest in cooperating with others; at some occasions they opt to isolate themselves (Rubin, Wojslawowicz, Rose-Krasnor, Booth-LaForce, & Burgess, 2006). Thus, these individuals are at heightened risks of generating inadequate demeanor and social problems (Fox, Henderson, Marshall, Nichols, & Ghera, 2005).

The second indicator is assertion. It refers to demeanors such as “asking for help” from peers when needed; and how they converse with others when problems occur (Gresham & Elliot, 2008). Assertion permits youngsters to stand firm for themselves without hesitation, to comfortably convey true emotions, to fight for their rights without neglecting those of others, and to behave in their natural best interests, (Desmond, 2009); also, it is concern to be able to convey wants and desires, wishes and emotions in an appropriate manner and is an essential interpersonal and personal skill. Between every interaction with other human being at work or at the “comfort zone” called home; be it with customers, colleagues or employers, assertion can be of a great help to individuals so they could express themselves through a reasonable, open and clear way not neglecting their own or others’ rights.

In addition, assertion is different from being aggressive; in contrast, assertion means being able to stand up for what you believe is true. Assertion is letting others hear your opinions, thoughts and emotions in the most appropriate and honest way. As assertion must be enhanced in some; it also is essential not to forget that individuals should respect one another’s belief, opinion, thoughts and feelings. Assertion permits others to claim their rights without neglecting the rights of their peers. It is believed to be an equal response, being neither aggressive nor passive, with self-esteem playing an essential role. An assertive individual reacts as balance to peers and subjects to be opened in sharing their feelings, wishes and thoughts honestly (Fritzegald, 2008).

The third indicator is self-control. It refers to demeanors such as staying serene when ridiculed; and usage of

appropriate acts when in distress. Youngsters who lack self-control and who are rebellious are most of the time incapable to sympathize with other individuals’ perceptions and feelings. They might not clearly understand cryptic social circumstances and may show malevolence. They have a tendency to provoke peers when they feel upset, rather than devise a solution to make situations better. These types of young adults most of the time fail to understand that anger is only a secondary emotion that comes from being disappointed, neglected, pained, ashamed, feared or feeling misunderstood (Gresham & Elliot, 2008).

Also, while peers referred them to as mean, they may possess that disfigured outlook that makes them really strong, admired and well-known. The teachers’ obligation is to help eliminate their misconceptions and transform students to an individual with self-control through numerous strategies and ways (Davis, 2001). It is undeniable that a student might have self-control skill deficit, this is determined when a student fails to assimilate how to control themselves due to some sort of emotional arousal. For instance, learning social skills is mostly interfered by anxiety. Moreover, self-control performance deficiency also demands interventions from emotional arousal, in this case, however, it has not intervened with the acquisition of the actuation but rather with its presentation (Gresham, 2007).

Further, cognitive skill helps youngsters realize how to govern emotions and demeanors for them to end up with good decision making, while diminishing hasty actuations and effectively dealing with exasperation (Gresmoore, 2011); and to avoid self-control skill deficit which is existing when a person does not possess the skill essential for proper social interaction. Self-control skills deficit means that others have utilized a specific learning disability when advocating the social skills deficit (Gresham & Elliott, 2010).

### C. Correlation Between Measures

A higher level of peer victimization leads to poorer social skills Cook et al. (2010). These social skills bring about distinct demeanor that will permit thriving achievements of social duty (Gresham & Elliot, 2010). Socially skilled people are those who can enhance and continuously keep friendship with peers, can tactfully resolve social problems and most importantly make their life more meaningful (Merrell & Gimpel, 2008); however, it has been said that victims of peer victimization are socially unskilled; they lack the skills that can make every social interaction easy, they do not have a sense of humor, possess lower level of social skills, have a problem in their behaviors and are not capable of handling difficult situations (Elliott et al., 2001).

Consequently, Salmivalli, Karna, and Poskiparta (2009) proposed that certain behavioral attributes can be referred to as evidence that a lower level or very poor social skills have been proven to place youngsters in a situation which makes them more prone to peer victimization. Several studies also found that peer victims tend to display ‘non-developed’ social skills (Dodge & Coie, 2013). Also it has been attested that those who suffer as peer victimization - victims experience more emotional imbalance (Pierce, 2009), they choose to be

left alone than to include themselves in a group discussion or social interaction. Hopelessness in finding help from peers in girls and counter assaultiveness in males were prospected to make peer victimization begin or continuously happen, while the needfulness of help in females and nonchalance, and the absence of counter assaultiveness in males were prospected as a means to diminish or prevent peer victimization (Salmivalli et al., 2009). Some findings have found that peer victims show a high level of vulnerability (Olweus, 2008; Troy & Sroufe, 2007).

In addition, Fox and Boulton (2005) exemplify that peer victims in the school settings were mostly observed to have higher problems in their social skills than the non-peer victims. On the other hand, a handful of Social Skills Training (SST) programs have been improvised over the past few decades such as: Skill Streaming, which must be given to the grade school students (McGinnis & Goldstein, 1997); also, Social Skills must be taught to every child (Cartledge & Milburn, 2005); this will enhance their competence socially until the adolescence period (Spence, 2005). Unluckily, social skills trainings have not given any findings or well-examined results literally essential to stabilizing of social behavior possessed by the youngsters. Moreover, other researches have proven that as a byproduct of the SST, positive changes in behavior may take place (Gresham, 2007).

The above related literature pertains to the variables of the study which are peer victimization and social skills. The findings cited works which will help to unveil possible ways in which peer victimization and social skills are related. These will also serve as a support to the presentation, results and findings of the study.

### III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed the non-experimental quantitative design utilizing the descriptive-correlational technique. There is no random task given to groups and the dependent variable of the study is not exploited (Paul & Ormrod, 2013). Descriptive research is used to acquire data that is concerned with the situation of the phenomena to delineate what exists with respect to variables or conditions in a situation (Creswell, 2018). The data of this study described the peer victimization and social skills levels of first-year college students. Also, this study is correlational because it determines whether the dependent and independent variables have significant relationships.

Descriptive-correlation research designs disclose relationships and circumstances that exist and do not exist, and they explain and interpret what is (Panda, 2022). Additionally, it is a fact-finding study that allowed the researcher to look at the traits, actions, and experiences of the research subjects (Yeoman, Nardi, Bowater, & Nguyen, 2017).

Since it evaluated the peer victimization, and social skills of Governor Generoso first year college students, the study was descriptive in character. This study employed a correlational research design, examining the potential

predictive association between his study employed the non-experimental quantitative design utilizing the descriptive-correlational technique. There is no random task given to groups and the dependent variable of the study is not exploited (Paul & Ormrod, 2013). Descriptive research is used to acquire data which is concerned with the situation of the phenomena to delineate what exists with respect to variables or conditions in a situation (Creswell, 2018). The data of this study described the peer victimization and social skills levels of first year college students. Also, this study is correlational because it determines whether the dependent and independent variable have significant relationships. Primary information was collected through a survey questionnaire.

Therefore, the aim of the study was to look into the connection between peer victimization, and social skills and the impact of these connections on the freshmen's academic performance.

This study was conducted in public schools in the municipality of Governor Generoso, Mindanao. It is located in the province of Davao Oriental, roughly at 6° 39' 17" North, 126° 4' 19" East, as seen in Figure 2. The specific locale of this study is the nine public secondary schools and one elementary school in Governor Generoso.

The respondents for this research were identified from the 127 total population of freshmen in the college at Governor Generoso's in the academic year 2021–2022. The sample respondents of the study were supposed to be 245 respondents. The researcher used Slovin's formula to determine the number of samples selected in the study.

Nonetheless, the 127 Governor Generoso college students were approved as respondents by the researcher. Therefore, Chris (2020) suggests that while conducting research including more than 600 populations, 300 respondents is likewise the optimal quantity. Furthermore, as shown in the summary of respondent distribution, stratified random sampling was employed to create a sample frame (Kimmons, 2022).

Additionally, if individuals were uncomfortable with any of the study's questions, they were free to withdraw from participating. The researcher gave their well-being and personal motives top priority.

There were three parts of two adapted from different authors that were modified by the researcher. The experts also evaluated the questionnaire construction with an overall total mean score of 4.34 and a descriptive interpretation of very good. With the assistance of knowledgeable validators, the questionnaire was created in a very detailed format to make it easy and comfortable for the respondents to answer each question and comprehend the purpose of the study.

The research questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first set was the independent variable, metacognitive awareness, which had a Cronbach's alpha of .977 greater than 0.70. It has two indicators, namely, knowledge about cognition and regulation of cognition. This was adapted from

the study of Pintrich (2002) and modified by the researcher. The first indicator, knowledge of cognition had 16 items and comprised of three sub-indicators namely: declarative knowledge, seven items; procedural knowledge, four items; and conditional knowledge, five items. The second indicator, regulation of cognition had 27 items and comprised of five sub-indicators namely: planning, eight items; information management strategy, six items; monitoring, four items; debugging strategies, four items; and evaluation, five items.

The second set was the other independent variable, socialization, which had a Cronbach's alpha of .976 greater than 0.70. The instrument was adapted from the study of Haueter, Macan, and Winter (2003) and modified by the researcher. There were three indicators in this variable: the first indicator, organization socialization, was composed of 12 items; the second indicator, group socialization, was composed of 12 items; and the third indicator, task socialization, was composed of 11 items.

The third set was the dependent variable, professionalism, which had a Cronbach's alpha result of .889 greater than 0.70. It was adapted from the study of Nebukenya (2010) and modified by the researcher. There were three indicators on this variable: the first indicator, code of conduct, was composed of seven items; the second indicator, commitment, was composed of five items; and the third indicator, perception was composed of two items.

The research variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale. Hence, Vonglao (2017) claimed that the Likert scale asked respondents to either check a box or leave blanks in response to a lot of questions about a stimulus, attitude, or object. It was customary to use averages, or, more broadly, any arithmetic operation, to treat the number that was immediately acquired from a rating scale as a measurement.

The five orderable gradations of peer victimization awareness with their respective range of means and descriptions were as follows: a range of means around 4.20 – 5.00 with descriptive level as very high means that the mentioned item manifested at all times; range of means around 3.40 – 4.19 with descriptive level as high means that the mentioned item is manifested most of the time; a range of means around 2.60 – 3.39 with descriptive level as moderate means that the mentioned item is manifested occasionally; a range of means around 1.80 – 2.59 with descriptive level as low means that the mentioned item is manifested in few instances; and a range of means around 1.00 – 1.79 with descriptive level as very low means that the mentioned item is not manifested at all.

In addition, the required information obtained through a methodical process. Initially, the researcher requested permission for conducting the study through a letter sent to the Local Government Unit. Additionally, the researcher requested permission to conduct the survey among the students in from the the college president covered by this study by means of a letter submitted to the principals. In September 2022, the survey was approved and questionnaires were distributed to the public secondary and elementary teachers in Governor Generoso. To provide respondents with questionnaires, the researcher personally visited several public secondary schools as well as elementary schools.

Further, one week after the distribution, the researcher personally collected the surveys to give the respondents ample opportunity to respond. Fortunately, all the distributed questionnaires were successfully retrieved. The completed results were checked and tallied. Finally, after all the results had tallied, these were analyzed and interpreted based on the purpose of the study.

The following statistical tools were used for a more thorough interpretation and analysis of the data: regression analysis was used to determine whether metacognitive awareness and socialization influence teachers' professionalism; mean was used to determine the level of metacognitive awareness of public teachers, level of socialization, and level of professionalism to answer problems 1, 2, and 3; and pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to determine if the relationship between metacognitive awareness, socialization, and teachers' professionalism is really significant.

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data which was obtained from the study participants is presented in this section. Based on the results, the data collected on peer victimization, and social skills of college students are interpreted. The level of peer victimization of teachers; level of social skills of teachers; significance of the relationship between peer victimization and socialization; and social skills are the order in which the information gathered and the topics discussed are arranged.

The level of peer victimization with an overall mean score of 3.20, had the descriptive interpretation of moderate as presented in Table 1. This meant that the respondents experienced the items on peer victimization occasionally. This overall mean was the total result gathered from the mean scores of 3.24 or moderate for physical victimization, 3.07 or moderate for verbal victimization, 3.21 or moderate for social manipulation, and 3.29 or moderate for attacks on property.

Table 1: Peer Victimization

Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Physical Victimization	1.332	3.24	Moderate
Verbal Victimization	0.942	3.07	Moderate
Social Manipulation	1.096	3.21	Moderate
Attacks on property	1.162	3.29	Moderate
Overall	0.969	3.20	Moderate

The indicator with the highest mean was attacks on property; followed by physical victimization; and verbal victimization got the lowest mean. Thus, the moderate level of interpretation on the mean scores of every indicators exemplify that the first year college students experienced the statements in peer victimization sometimes.

#### ➤ *Victimization*

The level of the experience of peer victimization was moderate. This means that peer victimization occasionally affects the social skills of the students. Furthermore, this implies that the first year college students occasionally agree and favour the items specified in every indicator under peer victimization. Thus, all indicators for peer victimization were found moderate in their mean scores.

Peer victimization is an unwanted experience which occasionally affects the learners as observed based on the responses. This is congruent with the findings of Hawker and Boulton (2010), stating that some systematic revisions and meta-analyses have showcased that peer victims generally have a poor standard of life and low self-confidence experience. The result is also related to the study of Crick and Bigbee (2000) which provides proof that peer victimization within a set contexture, is linked to various serious adjustments in difficulties which includes social problems such as peer-rejection, depression, and lack of self-restraint. The result also shows that the students have experienced how to be peer victimized physically, abused through words or verbally, manipulated by peers socially and some properties had been damaged.

Physical victimization was rated moderate among first year college students, meaning they have experiences related to physical aggression at some point in their lives. Based on the findings, the first year college students tend to have been punched, kicked, have been hurt physically in some ways and had experienced beating up by peers regardless of gender. This affirms the pronouncement of House (2011) that

numerous researches have connected suicidal behavior to different aspects of gender-post humiliation within the sexual minorities. Also the result is in consonance with the proposition of Sanders and Phye (2004) that physical victimization or any common and extensive kinds of peer victimization can dramatically change the life of many children.

Also, verbal victimization was found to be moderate as an imperative dimension of peer victimization. This is because students believe that the use of words had been abused by some of their peers. This also shows how they have experience being: called names; laughed at because of their physical aspects; laughed at for other causes; and cursed. This affirms the conclusion of Hankin (2005) that a history of an emotional abuse experienced by children can be related with diagnoses of symptoms and depressive cognitions. Additionally, this is congruent to the study of Gibb, Abramson, and Alloy (2004) which proposed that youngsters' cognitive ways problems may linked to verbal victimization.

Furthermore, social manipulation obtained a moderate mean score, suggesting that the experience of being manipulated socially by peers was experienced occasionally. First year college students believe that some of their peers manipulate others to hate them which means that; because of their peers, they have gone through getting into trouble with their friends; experience how their friends turn against them; refused talking to them; and have other people ignore them. The result coincides with the findings of Hodges et al. (2007) that peer victimization is a product of the peer victims poor standard of living and to an intermediate social position. Additionally, Keating and Heltman (2004) stated that imbalance of power means superiority and in contrast with the more general field of aggression superiority is most of the time linked with social skills and exploitation of belief.

Moreover, attacks on property have the highest mean score among the four indicators of peer victimization based



on the responses of the students. This means that peer victimization is more prevalent through property damaging. The result shows how the students experience the following from their peers taking something from them without permission; breaking something of theirs; stealing something from them; and deliberately damaging some property theirs. The result confirmed the study of Gladden et al. (2014) stated that attack on property can happen in any number of places, contexts, or locations. Sometimes that place is online or through a cell phone. Additionally, Crick and Nelson (2015) found that attack on property forms of peer victimization have been identified that have been shown to be significantly associated with social-psychological maladjustment. These types of peer victimization, even though researched basically within the peer context of a group, can come with dyadic connections like friendships.

Generally, the four indicators of the peer victimization were unquestionably experienced, which means that the current context somehow affects the social skills of the students. As Bloom (2007) punctuated; learners who possess lower lever of social skills might not be included from peers' positive interactions and problems in linkages with their teachers are maybe at hand, which can cause them to perform poorly in academics.

The second objective was to ascertain the level with the overall mean score of 3.73 had a descriptive interpretation of high as shown on Table 2. This meant that the items on social skills are observed by the respondents most of the time. This overall mean was the total result gathered from the mean scores of: 3.76 or high for cooperation; 3.66 or high for assertion; and 3.78 or high for self-control.

The indicator with the highest mean was self-control, followed by cooperation and assertion got the lowest mean. Thus, the high level of interpretation on the mean scores of each indicator showed that the items on social skills are most of the time observed by the first-year college students.

The level of the nature of social skills extracted from the responses of first year college students, is high. This means that the first year college students are cooperative, assertive and possess self-control. The result also signifies that the first year college students most likely tend to agree and favor the items that have been specified in every indicator under social skills. Thus, all of the indicators were found high in their average mean scores.

The result of the study is parallel with the proposition of Botsford (2013) that characteristics, social skills or means that permits peers to convers and create a linkage triumphantly with people around them. In addition, Shahrum (2012) found that learners with higher level of social skills showcase lesser behavioural problems.

On the other hand, the result of the study contrasts with the study of Lochman and Dodge (2004) that youngsters who are aggressive seemed to have misinterpretations on social happenings and the behavior displayed by peers; this could elevate increase the possibility that they might react in a more violent way.

Cooperation is high based from the responses of the first year college students. This means that the first year college students are active in terms of: finishing given tasks within deadlines; using free time correctly other than waiting for somebody to help them; following direction; ignoring any bafflement while doing works related to class; and keeping desk neat and clean without further instructions. The result is in accordance with the study of Howard (2000) which states that cooperation means understanding how to function correctly when interacting with others on a balanced basis through a common aim and objective. Also the postulation of Przybeck (2002) implies that social cooperation which connects aspects such as inhibition, empathic orientation and social anxiety that influence youngsters' drive to react in a more significant manner.

Furthermore, assertion obtained a high mean score on the result of the survey.

This signifies that the first year college students are fond of introducing themselves to new people without being instructed; questioning rules that may seem unfair in an appropriate manner; inviting others to join activities; making friends easily; and initiating conversation with peers. This is similar with the study of Desmond (2009) which found that assertion permits youngsters to comfortably showcase honest emotions, to stand up for personal rights not neglecting the rights of others and to act out their possessed best interests. Finally, self-control obtained the highest mean score among all other indicators, as extracted from the responses of the students. The result exemplifies that first year college students are capable of controlling their temper when conflict with peers occurs; capable of responding correctly when being teased by peers; capable on controlling their temper when conflict with adults occurs accept peers' perceptions for group activities; and get along with people who are different. In connection with the study of Gresham and Elliot (2008) that self – control refers to demeanor like staying cool when being teased by peers; and display of behaviors in an appropriate manner when upset.

Table 2: Social Skills

Indicators	SD	Mean	Descriptive Level
Cooperation	0.647	3.76	High
Assertion	0.667	3.66	High
Self-Control	0.677	3.78	High
Overall	0.576	3.73	High

The third objective was to find the significant relationship between the independent variable which is peer victimization and the dependent variable which is the social skills of the study: peer victimization had the following domains: physical victimization; verbal victimization, social manipulation; and attacks on property and social skills had the following domains: cooperation; assertion; and self-control.

Based on the Pearson's *r* test conducted among the indicators of the two variables, the overall correlation had a computed over-all *r*-value 0.156 and a *p*-value greater than 0.05; thus, there is no significant relationship between peer victimization and social skills of the first year college students. Doing a pairwise correlation between the indicators, the independent variable and overall social skills computed *r*-values ranged from 0.079 to 0.181. This meant that there is no positive correlation between peer victimization and social skills of first year college students.

As shown in Table 3, physical victimization, verbal victimization, social manipulation, and attacks on property

have different *p*-values of 0.044, 0.620, 0.046, and 0.054 signifying that there is no positive relationship between variables and their *r*-values of 0.125, 0.079, 0.181, and 0.142 respectively.

Further, the dedication, perspective, and self-control required of instructors in their area of work constitute their professionalism. It supports the statement made by Habibi, Hartinah, Umam, Syazali, Lestari, Abdurrahman, and Jauhariyah (2019) that teachers needed to develop a set of skills, such as mastery of the curriculum, subject matter of each lesson, methods of assessment, and strategies, commitment to work, and discipline in its broadest sense. Teachers play an important role because, as one information source states, they are real people who act as role models for their students (Abdurrahman, Saregar, & Umam, 2018). This is also consistent with the findings of the Syahrir et al. (2018) study, which showed that a teacher's professionalism was defined as their commitment to professional concepts and behaviors.

Table 3: Significance on the Relationship between Peer Victimization and Social Skills

Peer Victimization	Social Skills			
	Cooperation	Assertion	Self-Control	Overall Social Skills
Physical Victimization	0.202* (0.044)	0.023 (0.821)	0.102 (0.311)	0.125 (0.217)
Verbal Victimization	0.050 (0.620)	0.031 (0.757)	0.122 (0.227)	0.079 (0.437)
Social Manipulation	0.200* (0.046)	0.064 (0.527)	0.209* (0.037)	0.181 (0.071)
Attacks on property	0.193 (0.054)	0.001 (0.995)	0.178 (0.076)	0.142 (0.158)
Overall Peer-Victimization	0.196 (0.051)	0.034 (0.739)	0.177 (0.077)	0.156 (0.121)

Taking into accounts all indicators of peer-victimization and social skills, there was no significant relationship between the two variables as the overall p-value was not .05, but the multiple regression analysis which shows the predictive ability of peer-victimization and social skills of first year college students was still computed. The analysis showed that when factors in Peer victimization were regressed on social skills, it produced a p-value 0.469. This meant that the indicators of peer victimization have not significantly influenced the social skills in their capacity combined. The R<sup>2</sup> of 0.190 showed that only 19% of the variability of social skills is due to the variability of peer victimization. The rest is 81 % variation which can possibly be attributed to the variables that were not involved in the study. All p values were greater than 0.05, therefore no domain of peer victimization significantly influenced the social skills of the first year college students. Peer victimization was found to have no positive and significant correlation with the social skills of first year college students. These findings contradict the research findings of Fox and Boulton (2005) which exemplifies that peer victims of peer victimization in the school setting were prospected to have huge social skill problems than students who have not experienced peer victimization at all.

The findings contrast with the proposition of Salmivalli et al. (2009) stating that personalities can serve as a sign that

lower levels of social skills have been found to place children in a situation where they get a lot easier to be peer victimized. Also, the result contradicts the research findings of Schwartz (2009) that victims of peer victimization intend to be silently alone and isolated which is in the way they interact with peers, they tend to avoid group interactions and do not involve themselves in group activities. Furthermore, the result of the study does not support the findings of Postigo (2012) that students who experienced higher levels of peer victimization scored poorly both in social skills and fame.

The link within the scope of peer victimization warrants the determination of the domain which best influences students' social skills. Regression analysis revealed that peer victimization could be one of the factors causing an incremental effect on social skills of first year college students in a combined capacity.

Focusing on the individual determination of the domains of peer victimization, it is implied that verbal victimization could possibly influence social skills development. This means that among the four domains of peer victimization, no domain had influence on the social skills of first year college students. The rest of the indicators need each other's support to influence social skills of the students. The result of the study contradicts the conclusion of Cook et al., (2010) that higher level of peer victimization leads to poorer social skills.

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Table 4: Significance on the Influence of Peer-Victimization on Social Skills

Social Skills				
Indicators	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Physical Victimization	0.0116	0.0602	0.19	0.847
Verbal Victimization	-0.051	0.0869	-0.59	0.557
Social Manipulation	0.1027	0.0947	1.08	0.281
Attacks on property	0.0148	0.0807	0.18	0.855
<i>R</i>	0.036			
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	0.19			
<i>F</i>	0.9			
<i>P</i>	0.469			

The overall level of peer victimization which is derived from physical victimization, verbal victimization, social manipulation and attacks on property means that students sometimes experience the following indicators. However, among the moderate levels of mean scores of the four domains, attacks on property ranked as the highest. With this, teachers and parents should always be attuned to the emotional behavior of the students for them to understand their needs. They must also find ways to make the students talk to them about their problems related to experiences of peer victimization for the school to take proper measures. Further, values integration in all the subjects taught would be very helpful in the sense that educating the heart is necessary just like how educating the mind is important. In addition, it is also recommended that the guidance counselor upgrade professionally so that students would be guided accordingly.

Moreover, the high level of social skills derived from high levels of domains such as cooperation, assertion and self-control denote that social skills of first year college students were often times observed. However, assertion obtained the lowest score.

Furthermore, future researchers may take into consideration the findings of the study for them to find more accurate results with regards to how peer victimization influences social skills.

Also, teachers may encourage students to be more assertive by planning strategies that would help learners boost their confidence and self-esteem. The above findings also necessitate encouragement of the students to engage in different activities and expose themselves to learn more on the different conceptual understandings that will boost their skills.

This research presented that some of the indicators of peer victimization could possibly influence the social skills of first year college students in some instances. With this, it is recommended that school administrators of different schools

may take into consideration their guidance counseling time which will be helpful to students who are peer victimized.

Furthermore, the high standards of devotion, perception, and code of conduct contributed to the professionalism of teachers. This indicates that public secondary teachers always observe professionalism. Perception also had the lowest ranking among the indicators. Therefore, in order for teachers to progress professionally, they must be encouraged to take part in numerous trainings and programs or even pursue a professional next-level degree.

Moreover, this research presented that variable such as metacognitive awareness may have an impact on a teacher's professionalism. However, variable such as socialization are unlikely to have an impact on a teacher's professionalism. The aforementioned results also demonstrated that professional teachers were seen to be content with their work, to apply suitable values and beliefs to their career, and to have a good outlook on teaching and learning.

Furthermore, future researchers may take into consideration for further studies in order to arrive at more precise conclusions about the ways in which socialization and metacognitive awareness affect the professionalism of public secondary teachers. In light of this, it is advised that school administrators support teachers in their efforts to advance academically and professionally by encouraging them to participate in a variety of seminars, training courses, and graduate-level coursework. This helps teachers and students become more metacognitive aware of their own learning, which in turn promotes academic growth.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This academic investigation revealed a moderate level of peer victimization experiences which includes moderate level for all domains, namely; physical victimization, verbal victimization, social manipulation, and attacks on property.

On the other hand, the overall level of social skills of first year college students is found to be high as well as the domains which comprise it, such as cooperation, assertion and self-control. However, the study does not reveal clear connection between peer victimization and social skills.

The result supports the proposition of Dinner (2015) that relationship between social skills and peer victimization is non-significant, given the idea in his study that only one among the indicators serves to bring about influence in the relationship between the remaining variables. However, Crowne and Marlowe (2006) reiterated that there is a possibility that learners may have not accurately rated themselves on their extent peer victimization experiences and social skills because of the infamous social desires like the possibility to react in a way that is socially and culturally acceptable; this is congruent to the findings of Fox and Boulton (2005), wherein self-narrate information were significant with information from different group of respondents in determining the relationship between peer victimization and social skill.

The overall peer victimization experiences have not shown clear significance towards the social skills of first year college students. Furthermore, when the elements of peer-victimization were further analysed, only attacks on property was found to have possible influence towards the social skills of first year college.

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