

Research Article

The Relationship Between Body Shaming and Self-esteem in Students

Nur Melizza^{1*}, Anita Rahmawati², Muhammad Ari Arfianto³, Erma Wahyu Mashfufa⁴, Anggraini Dwi Kurnia¹, and Nur Lailatul Masrurroh¹

¹Community of Health Nursing department, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia

²Nursing student, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia

³Mental Health Nursing department, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia

⁴Basic Nursing department, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia

ORCID

Nur Melizza: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5533-2561>

Abstract.

Beauty standards of a person's ideal body shape, whether male or female and regardless of age, often result in body shaming of those who do not comply with these ideal standards. If body shaming continues for a long time, it will affect one's self-esteem or self-esteem. The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between body shaming and self-esteem in students. The study used an analytic survey with a cross-sectional approach. The population in this study were 535 students of Nursing Health Sciences at the University of Muhammadiyah Malang, with a sample of 143 students who experienced body shaming. Data were collected through a body shaming questionnaire and Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (RSES) for self-esteem. Data were analyzed using Spearman. The results of the study showed that the group of respondents who experienced low body humiliation was 134 (93.7%), and respondents who experienced high self-esteem were 141 (98.6%). The results of the Spearman test showed a p-value of $0.000 < \alpha 0.05$ with a coefficient value of 0.460 and a correlation strength enough. Body shaming behavior can lead to depression and sometimes people will still feel happy even though they have received body shaming. This is related to the self-esteem of each individual. So, when the body humiliates someone, self-esteem will decrease and vice versa.

Keywords: body shaming, self-esteem, students

1. Introduction

Bullying is known as a form of oppression or violence carried out by a group of people who are stronger and more powerful against another person that is carried out intentionally and continuously with the aim of hurting others[1].

Body shaming is an action that should not be done by someone in giving a negative assessment or making comments related to physical form that will affect the level

Corresponding Author: Nur Melizza; email: melizza@umm.ac.id

Published 8 March 2023

Publishing services provided by Knowledge E

© Nur Melizza et al. This article is distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License](#), which permits unrestricted use and redistribution provided that the original author and source are credited.

Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the ICMEDH Conference Committee.

OPEN ACCESS

of self-confidence, because it does not only leave physical wounds, but can trigger psychological disorders and mental stress on the victim [2], [3]. As a result, victims of body shaming tend to experience higher levels of insecurity, anxiety, depression, loneliness, unhappiness, and self-esteem due to the experience of being bullied. In addition, victims of body shaming are more likely to experience physical health consequences including difficulty sleeping, headaches, stomachaches, and general tension [4]. Self-esteem is a term to describe oneself with personal values for individuals by appreciating oneself, appreciating and liking oneself [5].

In Indonesia, bullying cases in schools were at the top of public complaints to the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) from the education sector, which recorded 369 complaints related to bullying from January 2011 to August 2014, the number was around 25% of the total complaints in the education sector of 1,480 cases [6].

Data obtained from Sartana and Afriyeni (2017) in 2017, 41 to 50 percent of teenagers in Indonesia have experienced body shaming and these cases continue to experience a significant increase every year [7].

According to Nasution and Simanjuntak (2020) body shaming behavior causes a decrease in the level of self-esteem in adolescents because the higher the category of body shaming experienced, the lower the individual's assessment of his physical appearance [8]. Researchers are encouraged to conduct research on "knowing the relationship between body shaming and self-esteem in students".

2. Methodology

The research design used is a descriptive study using a Cross Sectional approach.

2.1. Subject

The population in this study were students of Nursing, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Muhammadiyah Malang, 2017 2018 and 2019 academic years. While the total sample obtained was 143 students. The inclusion criteria in this study included: Active students of Nursing, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Muhammadiyah Malang in class 2017, 2018 and 2019 and who were not willing to be respondents.

2.2. Instrument

The research instrument used is a questionnaire. The type of questionnaire that will be used is a closed questionnaire so that respondents can only choose the answers that have been provided by the researcher. In this study, there are two variables that will be discussed, namely body shaming and self-esteem. Therefore, there are two instruments used, namely the modified body shaming instrument from the study[9] and the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (RSES) for self-esteem. Instrument body shaming and (RSES) used a Likert scale in research[10]. The body shaming instrument has 24 questions while the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (RSES) contains 10 question items with the provisions of using alternative answers in the form of Always (SL), Often (S), Sometimes (KD), Rarely (J).

2.3. Data analysis

This study uses Spearman rank analysis test using SPSS 21 software to determine the relationship between body shaming variables and self-esteem.

3. Result

3.1. General Data

The general data in this study shows a demographic picture consisting of gender, age, height, weight, and BMI as outlined in Table 5.1, as follows:

Based on table 1 the majority of respondents are female as many as 121 (84.61%) respondents. All respondents in the category of late adolescence, according to the Indonesian Ministry of Health, ranged in age from 17 to 25 years. While the majority of respondents have normal weight as many as 65 (45.4%) respondents and respondents who feel themselves experiencing body shaming are 100 (69.9%).

The results of collecting identification data related to the level of body shaming in students of the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Muhammadiyah Malang, namely the majority experienced low body shaming as many as 134 (93.7%) respondents. While, most respondents have high self-esteem as many as 141 (98.6%).

TABLE 1: Demographics of Respondents.

Characteristics of Respondents	Category	Frequency	%
age (yo)	REarly teens (12-17 years)	0 143	0 100
	Late Adolescence (18-25 years)		
Gender	Male	22	15.38
	female	121	84.61
BMI	Underweight	16	11.1
	Normal weight	65	45.4
	Obesity	20 40	13.9 27.9
Body shaming rate	Light	134	93.7
	Currently Tall	9 0	6.3 0
Self-esteem level	Low	0 2	0 46.5
	Currently Tall	141	98.6

3.2. Body Shaming relationship with Self-esteem in Students

This research uses Spearman ranking correlation test. This is stated in table 5.4 as follows:

TABLE 2: The results of the analysis of the relationship between body shaming and self-esteem in students.

Self-esteem	Body Shaming		
	Correlation	p-Value	N
	-0.460**	0.000	143

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results of the Spearman test obtained a significance or p-value of 0.000 because the p-value is $0.000 < \alpha 0.05$, there is a significant relationship between body shaming and self-esteem. The correlation value obtained by the correlation coefficient is -0.460, then the strength of the relationship between the two variables is sufficient correlation. A negative sign on this value indicates that the variable relationship is not unidirectional, meaning that when body shaming increases, self-esteem will decrease, and vice versa.

4. Discussion

4.1. Identification of body shaming in students

The results showed that the majority of respondents experienced low body shaming, 9% of students experienced moderate body shaming. This is because in accordance

with the results of the body shaming questionnaire No. 16 which states "I always have a good attitude and consider every ridicule to be just a joke" as many as 55 (38.4) respondents who answered Sometimes and 41 (28.6%) respondents who answered frequently which caused the majority of respondents to experience low body shaming. This is because there are still many victims of body shaming who consider it as a joke to lighten the atmosphere, invite laughter to mere fad, so that in this study the majority of body shaming respondents were low. However, if the victim's body shaming is high, Unwittingly, it can have a huge negative impact on the recipients because it not only leaves physical scars, but can also trigger mental stress and psychological disorders, including a lack of self-confidence. Supported by Rahayu's research (2019), as many as 185 students experienced body shaming. This can unwittingly have a big negative impact on the recipients because it not only leaves physical scars, but can also trigger mental stress and psychological disorders, including a person's lack of self-confidence [2]. as many as 185 students who experience body shaming. This can unwittingly have a big negative impact on the recipients because it not only leaves physical scars, but can also trigger mental stress and psychological disorders including a person's lack of self-confidence [2]. as many as 185 students who experience body shaming. This can unwittingly have a big negative impact on the recipients because it not only leaves physical scars, but can also trigger mental stress and psychological disorders including a person's lack of self-confidence [2].

According to research by Hidayat, Malfasari, and Herniyanti (2019), there were 53 (52.5%) respondents who received bad body shaming treatment [11]. This effect shows that body shaming treatment can have an impact on a person's negative mindset. The results show that high body shaming can lead to poor self-assessment, and vice versa. In Nasution and Simanjuntak's (2020) research, 37 (61%) students experienced body shaming in the high category [8]. This data shows that the body shaming victim's assessment of his own appearance is low. This is because the higher the category of body shaming experienced by the victim, the higher the impact experienced by the victim so that the lower the victim assesses the appearance of his own body. According to research by Hidayat, Malfasari, and Herniyanti (2019), there are 53 (52.5%) respondents who received bad body shaming treatment [11]. This effect shows that body shaming treatment can have an impact on a person's negative mindset.

The results show that high body shaming can lead to poor self-assessment, and vice versa. In Nasution and Simanjuntak's (2020) research, 37 (61%) students experienced body shaming in the high category[8]. This data shows that the body shaming victim's assessment of his own appearance is low. This is because the higher the category of

body shaming experienced by the victim, the higher the impact experienced by the victim so that the lower the victim assesses the appearance of his own body. This effect shows that body shaming treatment can have an impact on a person's negative mindset. The results show that high body shaming can lead to poor self-assessment, and vice versa. In Nasution and Simanjuntak's (2020) research, 37 (61%) students experienced body shaming in the high category [8]. This data shows that the body shaming victim's assessment of his own appearance is low. This is because the higher the category of body shaming experienced by the victim, the higher the impact experienced by the victim so that the lower the victim assesses the appearance of his own body. This effect shows that body shaming treatment can have an impact on a person's negative mindset. The results show that high body shaming can lead to poor self-assessment, and vice versa. In Nasution and Simanjuntak's (2020) research, 37 (61%) students experienced body shaming in the high category [8]. This data shows that the body shaming victim's assessment of his own appearance is low. This is because the higher the category of body shaming experienced by the victim, the higher the impact experienced by the victim so that the lower the victim assesses the appearance of his own body. vice versa. In Nasution and Simanjuntak's (2020) research, 37 (61%) students experienced body shaming in the high category [8]. This data shows that the body shaming victim's assessment of his own appearance is low. This is because the higher the category of body shaming experienced by the victim, the higher the impact experienced by the victim so that the lower the victim assesses the appearance of his own body. vice versa. In Nasution and Simanjuntak's (2020) research, 37 (61%) students experienced body shaming in the high category [8]. This data shows that the body shaming victim's assessment of his own appearance is low. This is because the higher the category of body shaming experienced by the victim, the higher the impact experienced by the victim so that the lower the victim assesses the appearance of his own body.

According to Rahayu's research (2019), the majority of respondents who received body shaming were women as many as 185 (48.19%) because women have a more sensitive nature [2]. Thus, young girls will feel less anxious about the shortcomings that exist in themselves. It is very worrying if teenage girls cannot control their feelings when they are receiving body shaming actions. While in the study Hidayat et al. (2019) the majority of respondents who experienced body shaming were women as many as 66 (64.1%) female students [11]. Many women experience body shaming, because women are more likely to appreciate subjective judgments than men.

The characteristics of the majority who experience body shaming are students with late teens 143 (100%) aged 22 years 59 (41.2%). This is because the transition from

adolescence to early adulthood occurs in the emotional process of maturity. According to research by Hidayat et al. (2019) the majority of respondents who experience body shaming are late teens aged 21-22 years[11]. Because the emotions of late adolescence to early adulthood are still unstable. Meanwhile, according to research by Wulandari and Saparwati (2020), this age is a period of transition from childhood to adulthood [12]. The transition involves changes in various aspects such as biological, psychological, and socio-cultural. In late adolescence, adolescents begin to prepare themselves to enter adulthood.

The characteristics of the majority of respondents have a normal body weight of 65 (45.4%), while obesity as many as 40 (27.9%) students. This is because someone who feels he is fat, becomes less confident because He feels that he is far from ideal and the perception that is still embedded in the perpetrators of this body shaming is what makes fat people an ingredient. According to research by Wulandari, Arifianto, and Aini (2018), 46 respondents (44.7%)[13]. Respondents who feel they are fat, become less confident because they feel that they are far from ideal. According to the research of Wulandari et al. (2018) the BMI category affects the body shaming treatment of someone who is thin or fat, this makes respondents more often ridiculed for having a disproportionate body than someone who has a normal weight body because it is considered ideal[13].

4.2. Identification of Self-esteem in Students

The results showed that the majority of respondents experienced high self-esteem as many as 141 (98.6%). In addition, there are only 2 (1.3%) respondents with moderate self-esteem and no respondents with low self-esteem. Self-esteem is seen as one of the important aspects in the formation of one's personality. When a person cannot respect himself, it will be difficult for him to be able to respect the people around him. Thus self-esteem is one of the important elements for the formation of a person's self-concept, and will have a broad impact on attitudes and behavior. This is supported by the research of Nasution and Simanjuntak (2020) which obtained a data score of 25 (41.7%) which shows that the self-esteem of victims of body shaming is in the low category[8]. This affects the feeling of someone's worth with a low category as many as 32 (53.3%) respondents. From these results it can be seen that the body shaming respondent's sense of worth is in the low category due to high body shaming. Vice versa, if someone's body shaming is low, then their self-esteem assessment will be higher.

The result of this research is the majority of respondents with high self-esteem as many as 143 (100%) in late teens. According to research by Ismi Isnani Kamila and Mukhlis (2018), self-esteem in early to mid-adolescence in girls ranging from 12 to 17 years of age has decreased, which eventually increased in late adolescence and in boys aged 12 to 14 years, it increased. which then decreased at the age of 16 years and before finally increasing again at the age of 17 years until the end of adolescence. At the age of 30 years, a person's self-esteem will level off, increase again at the age of 50 years to 60 years then decline at the age of 70 years to 80 years [14]. The results of the study were obtained in the BMI category, the majority of respondents were normal weight as much as 65 (45.4%). Respondents with obesity were 40 (27.9%). Respondents who feel they are fat, become less confident because they feel that they are far from ideal. According to the research of Wulandari et al. (2018), as many as 47 (55.3%) late adolescent respondents were obese with a high frequency of self-esteem as many as 48 (56.5%) [13]. According to Wulandari et al. (2018) respondents with obesity have a negative impact on social interactions and mental health. Obesity in adolescents is a troubling problem because it makes adolescents feel inferior in relationships and will withdraw from the group [13].

Obesity has a short-term and long-term impact on health because obesity can affect a person's self-esteem towards individual judgments regarding the suitability of behavior to the ideal. The results showed that 2 (2%) women experienced moderate self-esteem when getting moderate body shaming. According to Febrina, Suharso, and Saleh (2018) related to gender factors, self-esteem in adolescence affects gender[15]. This is because self-esteem in each sex has a different response. Self-esteem for boys is related to the development of competence as evidenced by their achievements or achievements in something, while self-esteem in adolescent girls is related to feeling valued and accepted related to their physical appearance. The results showed that 2 (2%) women experienced moderate self-esteem when getting moderate body shaming. According to Febrina, Suharso, and Saleh (2018) related to gender factors, self-esteem in adolescence affects gender[15]. This is because self-esteem in each sex has a different response. Self-esteem for boys is related to the development of competence as evidenced by their achievements or achievements in something, while self-esteem in adolescent girls is related to feeling valued and accepted related to their physical appearance. The results showed that 2 (2%) women experienced moderate self-esteem when getting moderate body shaming. According to Febrina, Suharso, and Saleh (2018) related to gender factors, self-esteem in adolescence affects gender[15]. This is because self-esteem in each sex has a different response. Self-esteem for boys is related to the

development of competence as evidenced by their achievements or achievements in something, while self-esteem in adolescent girls is related to feeling valued and accepted related to their physical appearance.

4.3. The Relationship Between Body Shaming and Self-Esteem in Students

The results of this study indicate that there is a relationship between body shaming and self-esteem in students. The correlation between body shaming and self-esteem is sufficient and the direction of the relationship is negative or not in the same direction, meaning that when body shaming increases, self-esteem will decrease, and vice versa. This is supported by research by Nasution and Simanjuntak (2020) that there is an influence between body shaming on self-esteem. Based on this research, it turns out that body shaming only slightly affects the decline in the level of adolescent self-esteem[8]. However, it cannot be ignored that body shaming takes part in lowering the self-esteem level of adolescents. When individuals develop a very negative view of their own body, they become preoccupied and depressed by their appearance. In extreme cases this will cause individuals to experience impaired psychosocial functioning, low self-esteem, anxiety, major depression, and other psychological disorders.

According to Nasution and Simanjuntak's (2020) research, the majority of respondents with body shaming have a high category[8]. This shows that the assessment of someone who experiences body shaming related to his appearance is low because the higher the category of body shaming experienced by the victim, the lower the victim evaluates his own body appearance. This is supported by Nasrul and Rinaldi (2020) that someone who experiences body shaming causes self-examination to tend to be bad, this can affect their physical health so that victims tend to try to follow what other people say about how ideal body conditions should be which can lead to irregular eating behavior[16]. According to Lating (2016) an individual who has or is experiencing body shaming treatment will feel depressed[17]. According to Aini (2018), the handling of body shaming cases can be prevented from individuals and their environment. Prevention of individual self is to increase self-esteem[18]. This is to increase social interaction, self-confidence appears, and help increase initiative[19]. While low self-esteem makes someone have a low view of themselves and others[19]. Based on the results of the above analysis, it can be concluded that body shaming behavior can cause a person to experience depression. Someone who experiences body shaming results in a bad self-assessment that can affect physical health. This can be prevented by increasing

self-esteem in a person. Thus, there is a relationship between body shaming and self-esteem in students.

5. Conclusions and limitations

Based on the results of research and discussion, it can be concluded that there is a relationship between body shaming and self-esteem in Nursing students, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Muhammadiyah Malang with the strength of the relationship between the two variables being a sufficient correlation. The variable relationship is not unidirectional, meaning that when body shaming increases, self-esteem will decrease, and vice versa.

In this study there are limitations including: (a) Regarding the proportion of sampling only carried out in the Nursing Science Study Program, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Muhammadiyah Malang, so that the results of body shaming are less diverse due to the limited sample, (b) The number of respondents cannot meet the minimum number of samples determined because the number of respondents who have or are experiencing body shaming is limited to the population that is the target of the study, (c) Researchers do not explore other variables that can be related to this study, (d) In this study, did not use accidental sampling technique, so that respondents who filled in did not coincide with what the researcher wanted.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia, which has provided support in this research and to the student respondents who were willing and took the time to participate in this research.

References

- [1] Styana ZD, Nurkhasanah Y, Hidayanti E. Bimbingan Rohani Islam Dalam Menumbuhkan Respon Spiritual Adaptif Bagi Pasien Stroke Di Rumah Sakit Islam Jakarta Cempaka Putih. *J. Ilmu Dakwah*. 2017;36(1):45.
- [2] Rahayu EP. Dampak Penerimaan Pesan Berisi “Body Shaming” Terhadap ‘Self Confidence’ Remaja Perempuan di Media Sosial Instagram. *Commercium*. 2019;02(01):78–82.

- [3] Fauzia T, Rahmiaji L. Memahami Pengalaman Body Shaming pada Remaja Perempuan. 2019. pp. 4–5.
- [4] Miyairi M, Reel JJ, Próspero M. Exploring Associations between Teasing as a Form of Bullying, Body Esteem, and Self-esteem. *Health Behav Policy Rev.* 2016;3(2):144–52.
- [5] Rubinsky V, Hosek AM, Hudak N. “It’s Better to Be Depressed Skinny than Happy Fat:” College Women’s Memorable Body Messages and Their Impact on Body Image, Self-Esteem, and Rape Myth Acceptance. *Health Commun.* 2019 Nov;34(13):1555–63.
- [6] Saniya S. Dampak Perilaku Bullying Terhadap Harga Diri (Self Esteem) Remaja Di Pekanbaru. *J. Keperawatan Abdurrah.* 2019;3(1):8–16.
- [7] Sartana T and N. Afriyeni. Perilaku Perundung Maya(Cyberbullying) Pada Remaja Awal. *J. Psikologis Insight.* 2017;1(1):25–39.
- [8] Nasution NB, Simanjuntak E. Pengaruh Body Shaming terhadap Self-Esteem Siswa SMP. *J. Pendidik. Teor. Penelitian, dan Pengemb.* 2020;5(7):962. <https://doi.org/10.17977/jptpp.v5i7.13770>.
- [9] Sari RP. Hubungan body shaming dengan interaksi sosial teman sebaya di smkn 7 tangerang selatan. Skripsi/Thesis. Fakultas Ilmu dakwah dan Komunikasi. Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah. 2020
- [10] Boursier V, Gioia F, Griffiths MD. Objectified Body Consciousness, Body Image Control in Photos, and Problematic Social Networking: The Role of Appearance Control Beliefs. *Front Psychol.* 2020 Feb;11(February):147.
- [11] Hidayat R, Malfasari E, Herniyanti R. Hubungan Perlakuan Body Shaming Dengan Citra Diri Mahasiswa. *J. Keperawatan Jiwa.* 2019;7(1):79.
- [12] Puspa Siwi Wulandari and M. Saparwati. Hubungan dukungan teman sebaya dengan harga diri pada remaja korban bullying. 2020. pp. 92–8.
- [13] Wulandari P, Arifianto A, Aini N. Hubungan Obesitas dengan Harga Diri (*self-esteem*) pada Remaja Putri SMA Negeri 13 Semarang. *J. Keperawatan Soedirman.* 2018;11(2):81.
- [14] Ismi IK, Mukhlis, Perbedaan Harga Diri (Self Esteem) Remaja Ditinjau dari Keberadaan Ayah. *J. Psikol. UIN Sultan Syarif Kasim Riau.* 2013;9:100–112.
- [15] Febrina DT, Suharso PL, Saleh AY. Self-Esteem Remaja Awal: Temuan Baseline Dari Rencana Program Self-Instructional Training Kompetensi Diri. *J. Psikol. Insight.* 2018;2(1):43–56.
- [16] R. F. Nasrul, Rinaldi. Hubungan body shame dengan kepercayaan diri pada siswa SMA N 5 Pariaman. *J. Ris. Psikol.* 2020;4(2):1–14.

- [17] Lating AD. Konflik Sosial Remaja Akhir (Studi Psikologi Perkembangan Masyarakat Negeri Maamala Dan Morella Kecamatan Leihitu Kabupaten Maluku Tengah). *J. Fikratuna*. 2016;8(1):23–35.
- [18] Aini DF. “Self Esteem Pada Anak Usia Sekolah Dasar Untuk Pencegahan Kasus Bullying,” *J. Pemikir. dan Pengemb. Sekol. Dasar*. 2018;6(1):36.
- [19] Srisayekti W, Setiady DA. Harga-diri (Self-esteem) Terancam dan Perilaku Menghindar. *J. Psikol*. 2015;42(2):141.