

Impact Of Body Shaming on Self-Esteem, Self-Confidence, And Social Anxiety Among Adolescents

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Abstract—Body shaming has emerged as a significant social and psychological issue among adolescents, particularly due to increasing exposure to unrealistic beauty standards through social media, peer interactions, and societal expectations. Adolescence is a critical developmental stage in which physical appearance strongly influences self-perception, emotional well-being, and social behavior. This study examines the psychological correlates of body shaming, focusing on self-esteem, self-confidence, and social anxiety among adolescents. The research aims to investigate how experiences of body shaming affect adolescents' mental and emotional health and to identify the relationship between negative body-related comments and psychological distress. The study adopts a quantitative research approach using survey-based data collection methods. Standardized psychological assessment scales are used to measure levels of self-esteem, self-confidence, and social anxiety among adolescent participants from schools and colleges. Statistical analysis is performed to evaluate correlations between body shaming experiences and psychological outcomes. The findings indicate that adolescents who frequently experience body shaming tend to exhibit lower self-esteem and reduced self-confidence, along with higher levels of social anxiety. The study also reveals that repeated exposure to appearance-based criticism negatively impacts interpersonal relationships, academic participation, and overall emotional stability. Furthermore, the research highlights the role of family environment, peer influence, and social media exposure in intensifying body image concerns among adolescents. The study emphasizes the importance of awareness programs, counseling support, and positive body image education to reduce the harmful effects of body shaming. The proposed research contributes to understanding the psychological impact of body shaming and provides recommendations for educators, parents, mental health

professionals, and policymakers to promote healthy self-image and emotional well-being among adolescents.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background:

In contemporary society, physical appearance is often placed at the forefront of social evaluation, especially among adolescents. With the pervasive influence of media, peer pressure, and cultural expectations, adolescents today face increasing scrutiny over their physical appearance. This often manifests in the form of body shaming—a psychological and social phenomenon where individuals are subjected to negative criticism, mockery, or humiliation due to their body shape, size, weight, or overall appearance. Body shaming, whether experienced directly through verbal comments or indirectly through social media comparisons, has significant psychological implications during the critical developmental phase of adolescence.

Adolescence is a pivotal developmental stage characterized by profound physical, emotional, and psychological changes. During this period, individuals strive to forge their identity, establish autonomy, and navigate complex social landscapes. Central to this developmental journey is the formation of body image – an individual's perception, thoughts, and feelings about their own body. A positive body image is crucial for healthy psychological development, contributing to overall well-being and self-acceptance. Conversely, negative body image can have far-reaching detrimental effects, impacting mental health, social interactions, and academic performance. In contemporary society, the pressure to conform to

idealized physical appearances, often perpetuated by media and social platforms, has intensified, making adolescents particularly vulnerable to body dissatisfaction and its associated challenges.

One of the most insidious manifestations of this societal pressure is body shaming, defined as the act of humiliating someone by making mocking or critical comments about their body shape or size. Body shaming can take various forms, ranging from direct verbal insults and derogatory remarks to subtle non-verbal cues, cyberbullying, and even self-inflicted criticism stemming from internalized societal standards. With the ubiquitous presence of social media, body shaming has found new avenues for proliferation, allowing comments and images to spread rapidly and reach a wider audience, often with anonymity, exacerbating its impact. Adolescents, with their heightened sensitivity to peer perceptions and strong desire for social acceptance, are disproportionately affected by these negative interactions. The constant exposure to unrealistic body ideals and the ease with which critical comments can be shared online create an environment ripe for body shaming to flourish, leading to significant psychological distress among young individuals. The pervasive nature of body shaming in modern society underscores the urgent need to understand its psychological ramifications, particularly for adolescents who are still developing their sense of self. Cultural narratives often link physical appearance to worthiness, success, and attractiveness, inadvertently sanctioning the scrutiny and judgment of bodies that deviate from perceived norms. This societal backdrop creates fertile ground for body shaming to become a common experience, whether as a victim, a perpetrator, or an observer. The consequences of such experiences are not merely superficial; they delve deep into an individual's psyche, affecting core aspects of their personality and mental health.

Among the most critical psychological constructs impacted by body shaming are self-esteem, self-confidence, and social anxiety. Self-esteem, broadly defined as an individual's overall subjective evaluation of their own worth, is intrinsically linked to how one perceives their physical self. When adolescents are subjected to body shaming, their sense of self-worth can be severely eroded. The constant barrage of negative comments about their appearance can lead them to internalize these criticisms, fostering feelings

of inadequacy, shame, and self-dislike. This diminished self-esteem can then cascade into various aspects of their lives, affecting academic performance, relationships, and overall life satisfaction. Research consistently demonstrates a strong inverse correlation between body dissatisfaction and self-esteem, highlighting the critical role of positive body image in maintaining a healthy sense of self).

Closely related to self-esteem is self-confidence, which refers to an individual's belief in their own abilities, qualities, and judgment. Body shaming can significantly undermine an adolescent's self-confidence, especially in situations where physical appearance is perceived as relevant. If an adolescent is constantly made to feel inadequate about their body, they may become hesitant to engage in activities, express opinions, or pursue goals, fearing further judgment or ridicule. This can manifest as a reluctance to participate in sports, social events, or even classroom discussions, thereby limiting their opportunities for growth and skill development. The erosion of self-confidence can create a vicious cycle, where avoidance of situations due to appearance concerns further reinforces feelings of inadequacy, making it harder to break free from the negative impact of body shaming.

Furthermore, body shaming is a significant precursor to increased social anxiety. Social anxiety disorder, or social phobia, is characterized by an intense fear of social situations, particularly those involving scrutiny or judgment. Adolescents who experience body shaming may develop a heightened self-consciousness about their appearance in social settings, leading to a pervasive fear of negative evaluation. They might constantly worry about how others perceive their body, leading to avoidance of social gatherings, withdrawal from peer groups, and difficulties forming meaningful relationships. The fear of being judged for their physical appearance can become so overwhelming that it interferes with daily functioning, causing significant distress and impairment in academic, social, and recreational activities.

While existing literature has broadly addressed the impact of body image on adolescent mental health, there remains a need for a focused investigation into the specific psychological correlates of body shaming, particularly how it distinctly influences self-esteem, self-confidence, and social anxiety within this critical developmental period. Previous studies often examine

body image dissatisfaction as a general construct, without specifically isolating the direct effects of body shaming as a form of interpersonal aggression and judgment. Understanding these specific links is crucial for developing targeted interventions and support systems. This study aims to bridge this gap by systematically exploring the relationship between experiences of body shaming and the levels of self-esteem, self-confidence, and social anxiety among adolescents.

Therefore, the primary objective of this research is to investigate the psychological correlates of body shaming among adolescents, specifically examining its association with self-esteem, self-confidence, and social anxiety. This study hypothesizes that adolescents who report higher experiences of body shaming will exhibit lower levels of self-esteem and self-confidence, and higher levels of social anxiety. The findings from this research are expected to contribute significantly to the existing body of knowledge on adolescent mental health and body image. By shedding light on the specific psychological impacts of body shaming, this study can inform the development of more effective prevention programs, educational initiatives, and therapeutic interventions aimed at fostering positive body image, enhancing psychological resilience, and promoting overall well-being among young people. Ultimately, this research seeks to underscore the critical importance of addressing body shaming as a public health concern and advocating for environments that celebrate body diversity and promote self-acceptance.

B. Need of study

The need for studying body shaming and its psychological correlates, specifically self-esteem, self-confidence, and social anxiety, among adolescents is paramount and well-supported by existing research. Here's a breakdown of why such a study is crucial:

High Prevalence and Vulnerability of Adolescents:

- Adolescence is a critical developmental stage characterized by significant physical, mental, sexual, psychological, and social changes. During this period, individuals are highly susceptible to external influences and social comparisons, making them particularly vulnerable to the negative impacts of body shaming.

- Studies consistently show a high prevalence of body shaming among adolescents, with many reporting experiencing it from peers, family members, and even through social media.

Significant Negative Psychological Impact:

- Self-esteem: Body shaming is directly linked to low self-esteem and body dissatisfaction. Adolescents who are shamed for their appearance often internalize these negative comments, leading to a diminished sense of self-worth.
- Self-confidence: As a direct consequence of low self-esteem, body shaming can severely erode an adolescent's self-confidence. This can impact their willingness to participate in social activities, academic performance, and overall engagement with the world.
- Social Anxiety: The fear of judgment and ridicule related to their appearance can lead to heightened social anxiety among adolescents. They may avoid social situations, withdraw from friends, and experience distress in public settings.
- Other psychological issues: Beyond the immediate correlates, body shaming has been linked to a range of other serious psychological consequences, including:
 - Eating disorders (anorexia nervosa, bulimia, disordered eating patterns)
 - Depression and depressive symptoms
 - Increased stress levels
 - Internalized weight bias
 - Self-harm and suicidal ideation (in severe cases)

C. Motivation

The increasing prevalence of body shaming among adolescents has become a major psychological and social concern in modern society. Rapid exposure to unrealistic beauty standards through social media, peer interactions, entertainment platforms, and societal expectations has intensified appearance-related criticism among young individuals. Adolescents are particularly vulnerable during this developmental stage because they are forming their identity, self-image, and emotional stability. Negative comments regarding body shape, weight, height, complexion, or physical appearance can deeply affect their mental well-being. Body shaming not only influences how adolescents perceive themselves but also impacts their

confidence, social participation, and emotional health. Many adolescents who experience body shaming develop feelings of inferiority, low self-worth, embarrassment, and fear of social judgment. Such experiences may gradually lead to psychological problems including low self-esteem, reduced self-confidence, anxiety, stress, depression, and social withdrawal. Despite the growing discussion on body image issues, there is still a need for focused research examining the direct psychological effects of body shaming among adolescents. This study is therefore motivated by the need to understand how body shaming affects self-esteem, self-confidence, and social anxiety among young individuals. The research also aims to create awareness among parents, teachers, counsellors, and society regarding the harmful psychological consequences of appearance-based criticism and the importance of promoting body positivity and emotional well-being among adolescents.

D. Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the relationship between body shaming and self-esteem among adolescents.
2. To assess the impact of body shaming on self-confidence among adolescents.
3. To investigate the relationship between body shaming and social anxiety among adolescents.
4. To explore gender differences in the experience of body shaming and its psychological correlates.
5. To examine whether the level of body shaming can predict the levels of self-esteem, self-confidence, and social anxiety among adolescents.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Tita et. al. (2019) study aims to describe the students' body shame in class X students at SMAN 5 Cimahi. Body shame is a person's shame in one part of his body and this often occurs during puberty in early adolescence, because in early adolescence many changes in body shape began. This study uses a survey method. The population in this study were students of SMAN 5 Cimahi with a total of 341 people, 150 male students and 191 female students. The sampling technique in this study is nonprobability sampling, so that the sample in this study were all students of class X SMAN 5 Cimahi. The results showed that the level

of body shame of all class X students of SMAN 5 Cimahi showed that the highest percentage aspect was criticizing the appearance of others without the knowledge of the person. Then, the next category is the aspect of criticizing the appearance of others in front of the person. The aspect of criticizing one's own appearance through assessment or comparison with other people has a low category compared to other aspects. The description of the profile of body shame based on sex, namely the aspect of criticizing the appearance of others without the knowledge of the person has a high percentage of male students 64% and in the same aspect the low percentage is 36%; 58% female students and in the same aspect the low percentage is 42%.

Safarina et. al. (2021) aimed to determine and analyze the influence of self-acceptance on self-esteem on the victim of body shaming in SMAN 1 Lhokseumawe. The approach of this study was a quantitative correlational method. The samples of this study were 75 students of SMAN 1 Lhokseumawe, and ever be the victim of body shaming. This study uses the purposive sampling technique. This study's data collection methods were used two scales, namely scale of self-acceptance and self-esteem scale. Then, the data were analysed by using simple linear regression. The result of this study indicates a correlation between self-acceptance and self-esteem variables. The constant value shows that the coefficient is positive and has a positive or consistent correlation. There is an influence between self-acceptance of self-esteem by using formula t-table and t-count to test the hypothesis, and the result is the same. The initial hypothesis is acceptable. That is mean the hypothesis in this study can be accepted.

Dwivedi et. al. (2021) states that Self-Objectification is the tendency to encounter one's body principally as an item, to be assessed for its appearance rather than for its effectiveness. The objectification theory suggests that females more so than males consider a spectator's viewpoint as their primary view on their actual selves. This self-objectification often prompts expanded sensations of shame, anxiety, and disgust toward oneself. It decreases opportunities for top inspirational states, and reduces familiarity with inner bodily states. Self-objectification is fundamentally a manifestation of sexual objectification which is highly prevalent in the society. Calogero (2005) claimed that the females view themselves through the lens of an

external spectator and this habitual monitoring leads to body shame, appearance anxiety, depression and disordered eating. Adolescents and specially females are more worried about their physical appearance as opposed to their merits and capabilities. The Aim of this study was to assess the level of Self Objectification among 100 adolescent girls of Uttar Pradesh. The data was collected using Objectified Body Consciousness Scale by McKinley, N.M., & Hyde, J.S. (1996). A comparative analysis of the level of self-objectification in adolescent girls of Lucknow and Agra was also conducted. The results revealed that 77% of girls fall under the category of moderately high objectification and the adolescent girls of Lucknow city are scored more on self-objectification as compared to the adolescent girls of Agra. The subscales used in the OBC scale are (a) surveillance (viewing the body as an outside observer), (b) body shame (feeling shame when the body does not conform), and (c) appearance control beliefs. The scores were obtained separately for the three sub scales. The study points towards the need for Intervention at the school level for empowering the females to focus their attention on their inner capabilities rather than external appearances.

Iqra et. al. (2021) states that in the modern era the technological and mass media advancement gave rise to various trends that growing rapidly in society. Especially the trend around lifestyle in among teenagers, including about beauty, body care, and about health. The rise use of social media among Teenagers also brings up a lot advertisements or accounts about beauty, body care, or health. This is one of the factors which encourages young people to follow trends so you don't miss out. Regarding the matter of the body, lifestyle incarnate become a commodity and consumed by those who consider that the concept of care body as anxiousness in adolescence it happens rapid changes both physically as well as psychologically. The term body shaming is intended to mock those who have physical appearance which is considered quite different from society in general. An example of body shaming is the mention of fat, pug, conjuring, and so on related to physical appearance. Body shaming or commenting other people's physical shortcomings without realizing it are often done by people. Although it is not physical contact that is harmful, body shaming is a type of bullying verbally or through words. Even in everyday

communication, it is not uncommon to slip jokes that lead to body shaming. Body shaming behavior can make a person feel more insecure and uncomfortable with his physical appearance and begin to close himself both to the environment and to people. On the other hand, the existence of body shaming also gave rise to the term body positivity, which is a form of human appreciation for the shape of their body and how they accept their body shape as it is. The term is now a social movement that encourages everyone to have a positive assessment of their body, accept their own body shape and also other people's bodies without judgment.

Goblet et. al. (2021) states that Slut shaming is defined as the stigmatization of an individual based on his or her appearance, sexual availability, and actual or perceived sexual behavior. It can take place in physical or virtual spaces. The present study questions the impact of this form of sexism in virtual spaces on girls and interrogates the interaction between the values that girls integrate through their life experiences, especially in the family sphere, and slut shaming victimization. We conducted a paper pencil questionnaire with 605 girls between the ages of 10 and 18 (average age: 15.18 years). Our data confirm the impact of slut shaming on the physical and psychological well-being of young girls as early as adolescence. Second, mediation analyses provide insights into the revictimization and Poly-victimization processes, from childhood adverse experiences to sexist victimization in virtual spaces and their combined impact on the physical and psychic health of girls. address prevention strategies and the involvement of socializing institutions in the deconstruction of gender stereotypes.

Hariyati et. al. (2022) states that teenagers often become victims and perpetrators of body shaming carried out by those closest to them, such as family, community, and friends, by joking. Ignorant adolescents will not respond to these comments, but adolescents who cannot accept comments from their environment tend to blame themselves. This study aims to determine the effect of body shaming on self-blaming in students of SMP Negeri 27 Banjarmasin. This study used an observational method with a cross-sectional design and random sampling and obtained 239 samples. The analysis technique uses simple linear regression. The instruments used in this study were the body shaming scale by Vargas and the self-

blaming scale by Coleman. The independent variable in this study is body shaming, and the dependent variable is self-blame. The results showed that there was an effect of body shaming on self-blaming in students of SMP Negeri 27 Banjarmasin. This study concluded that body shaming by students of SMP Negeri 27 Banjarmasin was classified as very high and resulted in students who were victims of body shaming experiencing moderate self-blaming. There is a significant influence between body shaming and self-blaming on students.

Elfitasari et. al. (2022) study aims to (1) empirically test the influence of body shaming with social anxiety, (2) empirically test the influence of body shaming with social anxiety mediated by self-esteem. The subjects in this study were 141 undergraduate students of the Department of Aquaculture where the data collection method was carried out by chance. The research data was collected using three scales, (1) the social anxiety scale, (2) the body shaming scale, and (3) the self-esteem scale. The collected data is analysed using regression and path analysis. The results showed that (1) body shaming affects social anxiety and (2) self-esteem mediates the influence of body shaming on social anxiety. Based on the results of this study, it is recommended to develop self-esteem because it is proven to be able to mediate the emergence of social anxiety in victims of body shaming.

Vijaykumar et. al. (2023) states that According to this study, BS has ramifications for an individual. Based on the data, it can be concluded that body shame has a mental impact on some individuals. Some people actively highlight another person's anxieties with BS. Study findings reveal that having more regard for oneself and feeling self-conscious about our looks is a method to how self-compassion copes with being body shamed. Individuals require a better understanding of their own and other people's desires rather than harshly evaluating their own and others' appearances. This study included a small group of medical students, so a large multicentre survey is to be conducted to determine the impact of BS on Mental health.

Frederick et. al. (2023) states that this qualitative phenomenological study aimed to describe body shaming experiences among senior high school students at Mintal Comprehensive Senior High School in Davao City, Philippines. Fifteen students with a BMI range of 25-30 or greater were chosen through purposive sampling. Data collection involved in-depth

interviews, observations, and field notes, conducted with ethical considerations. The study ensured trustworthiness through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Findings revealed that victims experienced name-calling, body shaming at school, home, and family, and body shaming as jokes. Coping mechanisms included nonchalance, self-distraction, and peer support. The study highlighted the impact of body shaming on self-esteem, the need to combat body shaming, and the importance of preventive measures in educational institutions. A call is being made to address this issue for the creation of a supportive learning environment. Singh et. al. (2023) states that adolescence is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the period of life that occurs between the ages of 10 and 19 and is considered to be the transitional period between childhood and adulthood. This stage is characterized by considerable growth on both a physical and psychological level. A variety of physical changes, including weight increase, the growth of body and facial hair, changes in female breast size, changes in masculine voice, etc., are brought on by hormonal changes during adolescence. Increased self-consciousness about their physical appearance is frequently the result of these changes. In this time of adolescence, people frequently strive for perfection in a variety of spheres of their lives, including their pursuit of what is considered to be the "perfect body shape." People in their environment or other peers may make body shaming comments to those who fall short of this standard. The act of making derogatory remarks about someone's body size, shape, or attractiveness in personal interactions or on social media is known as body shaming. Such situations frequently occur among adolescents. However, as more women strive to have a body that is picture-perfect, there have been increased reports of female body shaming in newspapers, news, social media, etc. Body shaming has a huge impact on the mental health of the adolescents as they may suffer from low self-esteem, diminished self-image, social isolation etc. In today's age of social media and globalization, the concept of a natural, unaltered body has become less prevalent. Unfortunately, this pursuit frequently exposes adolescents to body shaming and criticism, which is the first focus of the current study. The second aspect addressed in this study pertains to the personal

challenges that adolescent girls encounter as they navigate the complexities of growing up.

Bhatnagar et. al. (2024) trying to attract people using social media, and cyberbullying has become a thumping issue. With the help of social media, everyone wants to stay connected with each other thereby getting addicted to it eventually leading to FOMO (fear of missing out). Sometimes this desire leads to negative consequences including Cyberbullying which is a type of bullying that includes using technology or digital devices which comprises SMS, gaming platforms, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, telegram, etc. The study works to demonstrate the impact and psychological consequences of cyberbullying on the self-esteem of young adults. The term "self-esteem" describes a person's overall perception of their own value or worth. It can be defined as an individual's level of self-worth, self-approval, self-prize, or self-like. The study examines how cyberbullying affects a person's self-esteem using 30 studies from reliable databases and journals, and the results show that there is a negative correlation between the two. Cyberbullying leads to victims experiencing a lack of self-worth, anxiety, frustration, low self-confidence, diminished interest, low emotional intelligence, manipulating behaviour, loneliness, aggressive nature, self-doubt, the feeling of inadequacy, and sometimes depression or suicidal thoughts, antisocial behaviour, avoidance to academics and also the inability to form a healthy relationship.

Pulungan et. al. (2024) an experimental approach aims to determine the effectiveness of group counselling using a client-centered approach to increase the self-confidence of students who are victims of body shaming at MTs 2 Medan. The study population consisted of 150 students, and the sample was taken using purposive sampling. Data was collected by performing pre-tests and post-tests before and after the group counselling sessions using the client-centered approach. The data were analyzed using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test with SPSS. The results showed that after the group counselling sessions, there was an increase in self-confidence among the students: 5 students experienced an increase in self-confidence to the high category, and three other students experienced an increase to the very high category. The data analysis using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test revealed that the sig (2-tailed) value was less than

0.05, specifically 0.011, indicating that group counselling using the client-centered technique effectively enhances the self-confidence of students who experience body shaming.

Wahyuni et. al. (2024) states that adolescence is characterized as a transitional phase between childhood and adulthood. Therefore, individuals undergo numerous adaptations necessary to successfully navigate developmental tasks associated with adolescence. Adolescents experience various physical, emotional, and social changes, which, if misaligned with their expectations, can lead to psychological challenges, particularly stress. This study investigates the stress levels among adolescents who have experienced body shaming at SMP N 2 Dawan. This study was a quantitative study with a cross-sectional method conducted among adolescents who experienced body shaming. The study sample consisted of 101 participants selected through purposive sampling based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Data were collected using the Adolescent Stress Questionnaire-27 (ASQ-27) and analyzed using a computerized program. The results revealed that a significant proportion of respondents (69.3%) experienced moderate levels of stress. The primary sources of stress were identified in the domains of teacher interactions and home life. These findings highlight the need for effective stress alleviation strategies to promote improved mental health outcomes among adolescents.

Valsalan et. al. (2024) assesses the relationship between appearance anxiety and self-esteem among young adults. The study also assesses whether there are significant differences in gender with respect to appearance anxiety and self-esteem. A sample of 300 young adults aged between 18-25 years participated in the study. The Appearance Anxiety Inventory (AAI) by Veale et al. and The Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) by Rosenberg M. were used to measure the variables in the study. The data was statistically analysed using the independent sample t-test and spearman rank correlation. According to the results, appearance anxiety and self-esteem have a moderate positive correlation. Appearance anxiety and self-esteem in males and females does not significantly differ based on gender

Zeinab et. al. (2024) predicts mental health and self-esteem based on perceived social support in youth with physical-motor disabilities in Tehran. The

findings of this study indicated that the components of family, others, and perceived social support can predict mental health. The findings showed that perceived social support ($b = 2.170$) was determined as the strongest predictor of mental health. As expected, the findings showed that the mental health of youth with disabilities improves with increased perception and understanding of the level of social support received from family, friends, and significant others, and their mental health is at risk with the reduction of support resources. One significant finding of the study is that higher levels of social support are received from family members compared to friends and others. This finding is particularly important considering that the youth with physical-motor disabilities in the study are in their young age, during which emotional connections with friends and significant others in their lives are expected to be strong. It seems that the intimate family environment in Iran still serves as a valuable source of emotional social support for children.

Ayed et.al. (2024) states that social anxiety disorder is the third most common disorder in the general population. Social phobia has a significant impact on nursing colleagues' self-esteem. The purpose of the current study was to assess social anxiety and its relation to self-esteem among nursing students. The study was a cross-sectional study. Data were collected from 231 nursing students through a convenience sampling method. The instruments of the study included "Social Phobia Inventory (SPIN)" and the "Rosenberg self-esteem scale." The results indicated that the social anxiety mean was 15.1 ± 11.1 (ranging from 0 to 68) and the self-esteem was 19.9 ± 4.5 (ranging from 0 to 30). The current study indicates that female and social anxiety are predictors of self-esteem among nursing students. Also, the present study concludes that lower social anxiety is associated significantly with higher self-esteem among Palestinian undergraduate nursing students ($r = -.35$, P Putek et. al. (2024) states that piercing is a form of body modification that involves puncturing particular parts of the human body and inserting jewelry or implants. The most widespread types of piercing are ear and nose piercing, which are well documented in historical records. One of the oldest representations of human piercing was the mummified body of the Ötzi the Iceman, discovered in Italy and dated to 3350 BC. Ear, nose, lip, tongue, nipple, or genital piercings are

practiced by various cultures around the world, such as African tribes, inhabitants of the Middle East, Ancient Rome, Ancient Egypt, and Ancient India. Ear piercing has been practiced all around the world since ancient times. It is worth noting that in Europe, earrings are not popular among women because styles of clothing and hair tend to obscure ears. Moreover, ear piercings were even more common among men. Explorers and sailors in the European Middle Ages tended to pierce their ears according to the superstitious belief that one pierced ear improved long-distance vision.

III. IMPACT OF THE STUDY

This research on body shaming and its psychological correlates among adolescents holds significant implications across several domains, contributing to both academic understanding and practical interventions. The findings are poised to have a substantial impact on our comprehension of adolescent mental health, educational practices, and the development of targeted support systems.

Firstly, by specifically investigating the direct links between body shaming experiences and self-esteem, self-confidence, and social anxiety, this study addresses a crucial gap in existing literature. While the broader concept of body dissatisfaction has been extensively researched, the unique and acute effects of explicit body shaming as a form of interpersonal judgment and aggression often remain underexplored. By isolating these specific psychological correlates, the research will provide a more nuanced and precise understanding of how negative comments about one's body directly erode an adolescent's sense of worth, diminish their belief in their capabilities, and heighten their fear of social scrutiny. This refined understanding is vital for moving beyond general observations to pinpoint the exact mechanisms through which body shaming inflicts psychological harm.

Secondly, the insights garnered from this study will be instrumental in informing the development of more effective prevention programs and educational initiatives. Recognizing the specific psychological vulnerabilities exposed by body shaming can help educators, parents, and mental health professionals design curricula and workshops that directly address these issues. For instance, if the study demonstrates a

strong link between body shaming and social anxiety, interventions can be tailored to equip adolescents with coping strategies for social situations, challenge negative self-perceptions, and build resilience against peer pressure. Educational programs can focus on promoting media literacy, encouraging critical thinking about idealized body images, and fostering an environment that celebrates body diversity and self-acceptance from an early age.

Furthermore, the research will directly contribute to enhancing therapeutic interventions for adolescents struggling with the aftermath of body shaming. Mental health practitioners will gain a clearer picture of the specific psychological distress points – be it low self-esteem, lack of confidence, or debilitating social anxiety – that require focused attention. This can lead to the development of more targeted cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) techniques, mindfulness practices, or group therapy models designed to help adolescents rebuild their self-worth, restore their confidence, and navigate social interactions more comfortably. Understanding the specific psychological landscape shaped by body shaming will enable therapists to provide more empathetic and effective support.

Beyond individual-level interventions, the findings can also influence broader policy discussions and societal awareness campaigns. By providing empirical evidence of the detrimental psychological impact of body shaming, this study can serve as a powerful advocacy tool. It can encourage social media platforms to implement stricter policies against body shaming content and foster a more responsible online environment. Public awareness campaigns can leverage these findings to highlight the severity of body shaming, challenge societal norms that perpetuate appearance-based judgment, and promote a culture of respect and inclusivity regarding body diversity.

Finally, this research lays a foundational groundwork for future studies. The identification of specific psychological correlates can open avenues for longitudinal studies to track the long-term effects of body shaming, explore mediating and moderating factors (e.g., parental support, peer relationships), and investigate the efficacy of various intervention

strategies over time. It can also prompt cross-cultural comparisons to understand how body shaming manifests and impacts adolescents in different societal contexts.

In essence, this study is not merely an academic exercise; it is a critical step towards creating safer, more supportive, and mentally healthier environments for adolescents. By illuminating the profound psychological impact of body shaming, it empowers communities, institutions, and individuals to take proactive measures, fostering a generation that values self-acceptance, celebrates diversity, and thrives free from the burden of appearance-based judgment.

A. Physical Factors:

Body Shaming: Body shaming refers to the act of criticizing or mocking someone based on their physical appearance, particularly when it deviates from societal beauty ideals. This pervasive phenomenon is not confined to a single setting but can occur in various contexts, making it a ubiquitous threat to psychological well-being. It can originate from seemingly innocuous comments from peers at school, where developmental insecurities are high and social hierarchies are often established through appearance. More painfully, it can come from family members, whose words carry significant weight and can deeply impact an individual's sense of belonging and worth within their primary support system. Strangers in public spaces or online forums can also perpetrate body shaming through unsolicited remarks or stares. Increasingly, digital platforms have become a breeding ground for body shaming, allowing for widespread dissemination of critical comments, often under the cloak of anonymity, which emboldens perpetrators and amplifies the reach of negative messages. Adolescents, being in a vulnerable stage of identity formation and self-exploration, are especially susceptible to internalizing such negative messages. Their developing cognitive frameworks may lead them to interpret these criticisms as absolute truths about their self-worth, rather than as reflections of the biases or insecurities of the shamer. Repeated exposure to body shaming may lead to the development of a deeply ingrained negative body image, characterized by dissatisfaction, self-objectification, and a distorted perception of one's own body. This can, in turn, precipitate serious

consequences such as disordered eating behaviors (e.g., restrictive eating, binge eating, purging) and a wide array of psychological challenges including depression, anxiety disorders, social isolation, and in severe cases, self-harm ideation.

Self-Esteem: Self-esteem is the evaluative component of the self, representing an individual's overall subjective sense of personal worth or value. It is a fundamental pillar of mental health, influencing how individuals perceive their capabilities, relationships, and future prospects. High self-esteem serves as a crucial protective factor for mental health, fostering resilience, promoting healthy coping mechanisms, and encouraging individuals to pursue goals and navigate challenges effectively. Conversely, low self-esteem is often strongly associated with a spectrum of psychological distress, including clinical depression, generalized anxiety, and social withdrawal. Body shaming can severely undermine adolescents' self-esteem by making them feel inadequate or unworthy based on appearance-related standards. When an adolescent is repeatedly told or made to feel that their body is "wrong" or "unacceptable," they may begin to internalize these external judgments. This internalization process leads to a cognitive shift where they start to believe these negative evaluations, viewing themselves as inherently flawed or less valuable simply because of their physical appearance. This reduction in self-worth can permeate various aspects of their lives, affecting their academic engagement, their willingness to form new friendships, and their overall satisfaction with life.

Self-Confidence: Self-confidence refers to the belief in one's own abilities, competence, and judgment. It is closely related to, but distinct from, self-esteem. While self-esteem is about "how much" a person likes themselves (their overall sense of worth), self-confidence focuses on "how well" a person thinks they can perform or succeed in specific tasks or situations. Body shaming may lead to a significant decline in self-confidence, particularly in social and academic situations where physical appearance might be perceived as relevant or subject to scrutiny. Adolescents who are victims of body shaming may feel profound embarrassment or fear intense judgment from others. This can manifest as a reluctance to engage in activities that require public interaction or

visibility, such as giving presentations in class, participating in sports, performing in school plays, or even initiating conversations in social settings. A negative self-perception related to body image can result in pervasive avoidance behaviours, where adolescents actively withdraw from opportunities that could otherwise foster growth and positive experiences. This erosion of self-confidence can create a self-fulfilling prophecy, where their avoidance of challenges prevents them from experiencing success, thereby reinforcing their initial lack of belief in their capabilities.

Social Anxiety: Social anxiety is characterized by a persistent and intense fear of being judged, evaluated, or rejected in social or performance situations. This fear often extends to a concern about embarrassing oneself or appearing awkward. Among adolescents who experience body shaming, the fear of being negatively evaluated based on their appearance can become deeply entrenched and disproportionately amplified. They may develop a hyper-vigilance regarding how their body is perceived by others, leading to constant self-monitoring and rumination about their physical attributes. This pervasive anxiety may lead to heightened levels of social anxiety, wherein individuals actively avoid social gatherings, public speaking engagements, or even routine interactions with peers and teachers for fear of criticism, mockery, or negative attention directed at their appearance. The development of social anxiety can further impair academic performance, as participation in group projects or classroom discussions becomes daunting. It can also severely hinder the formation and maintenance of healthy peer relationships, leading to isolation and loneliness, and ultimately impacting overall emotional well-being and psychological development.

Adolescents and Vulnerability: Adolescence is a formative stage marked by rapid physical, emotional, and cognitive changes, making it a period of heightened vulnerability. Physically, adolescents undergo significant growth spurts and pubertal changes, often leading to self-consciousness about their developing bodies. Emotionally, they experience intense fluctuations in mood and are highly sensitive to external validation and criticism. Cognitively, while their abstract thinking skills are developing, they are

still prone to egocentric biases, often believing that others are scrutinizing them more than they actually are. During this period, individuals are especially sensitive to peer perceptions and external evaluations, as they strive to establish their identity and find their place within social groups. The inherent desire for social acceptance, combined with the omnipresent pressure to conform to often unrealistic idealized body images, makes adolescents particularly susceptible to the detrimental effects of body shaming. The psychological impact is further compounded by the exponential rise of social media, where curated and edited images create an illusion of perfection, fostering unhealthy comparisons and intensifying body dissatisfaction. The instant feedback mechanisms (likes, comments) on these platforms can either provide fleeting validation or deliver crushing blows in the form of critical remarks, making adolescents' self-worth precariously dependent on external, often superficial, validation.

Rationale for the Study: Given the rising prevalence of body shaming in both offline and online environments and its profound potential psychological consequences, there is a critical and urgent need to understand precisely how such experiences impact adolescents' mental health. While general studies on body image dissatisfaction exist, a focused investigation specifically exploring the direct relationship between experiences of body shaming and its key psychological correlates namely self-esteem, self-confidence, and social anxiety—among adolescents is essential. Identifying and quantifying these specific relationships can provide invaluable empirical data. This data will serve as a robust foundation to inform the design and implementation of more targeted and effective interventions within educational settings, mental health services, and community programs. Such interventions can aim at promoting resilience against appearance-based pressures, fostering genuine body positivity that celebrates diversity, and enhancing the overall emotional well-being of adolescents as they navigate this crucial developmental stage. Ultimately, this study seeks to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms through which body shaming harms young people, thereby advocating for environments that prioritize psychological safety and self-acceptance over superficial appearance ideals.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

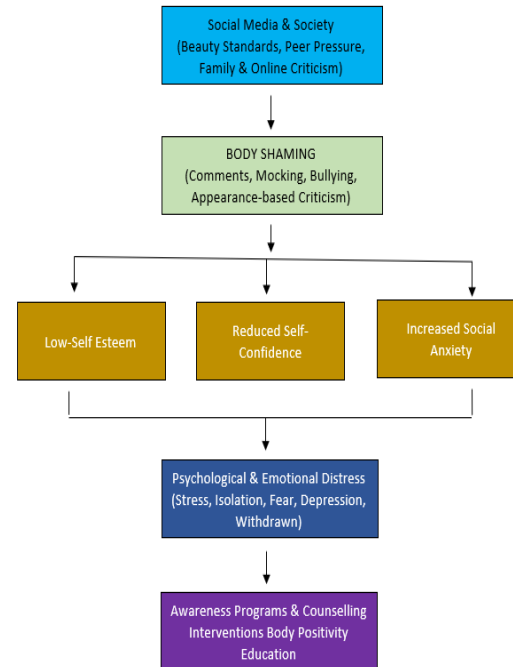


Fig. 1 Architecture of proposed system

A. Research Design

The present study employs a quantitative, correlational, and comparative research design. It seeks to:

- Explore the relationships (correlations) among body shaming, self-esteem, self-confidence, and social anxiety.
- Compare gender differences on these variables.
- Assess the predictive power of body shaming on psychological outcomes.

Population and Sample

Target Population:

- Adolescents (aged 13–19 years)
- From urban and semi-urban secondary schools or junior colleges
- Inclusive of both male and female participants

Sampling Method:

- Stratified Random Sampling To ensure representation across gender and grade/class level
- Within each stratum (e.g., gender), participants will be selected randomly

Sample Size:

- Total: N = 300 adolescents
 - Males: 150
 - Females: 150
- This sample size is adequate for correlation, t-tests, and multiple regression analysis (as per Cohen's power criteria: medium effect size, $\alpha = 0.05$, power = 0.80)

B. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**Inclusion Criteria:**

- Adolescents enrolled in schools/colleges
- Aged 13–19 years
- Ability to understand the survey language (English or regional)

Exclusion Criteria:

- Adolescents with diagnosed psychological disorders (self-reported)
- Incomplete or inconsistent responses

C. Variables and Tools

Variable	Tool/Scale	Author/Developer
Body Shaming	Body Shaming Questionnaire (BSQ)	Vartanian, L. R.
Self-Esteem	Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)	Morris Rosenberg
Self-Confidence	Self-Confidence Inventory	Agnihotri
Social Anxiety	Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents (SASA)	La Greca & Lopez

Procedure

- Ethical approval will be obtained from the institutional review board.
- Informed consent will be taken from schools, parents, and assent from students.
- Standardized questionnaires will be administered in group settings during school hours.
- Participants will complete the survey anonymously to reduce response bias.
- Data collection expected to take 30–40 minutes per group.

D. Statistical Analysis

Data will be analysed using SPSS / R / JASP software.

Descriptive Statistics:

- Mean, SD, skewness, and kurtosis for all variables
- Frequency distribution by gender and class

V. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The study is expected to reveal a significant relationship between body shaming and the psychological well-being of adolescents. It is anticipated that adolescents who frequently experience body shaming will demonstrate lower levels of self-esteem and self-confidence, along with higher levels of social anxiety. The research is also expected to show that repeated exposure to appearance-based criticism negatively affects interpersonal relationships, classroom participation, and overall emotional stability. Furthermore, the findings may indicate that female adolescents are more vulnerable to body shaming experiences and their psychological consequences compared to male adolescents. The study is expected to establish body shaming as an important predictor of emotional distress and social discomfort among adolescents. The outcomes of this research may help educational institutions, mental health professionals, and policymakers develop effective awareness programs, counselling strategies, and body positivity campaigns. The study is also expected to contribute to the existing literature on adolescent mental health and encourage future research on body image issues, cyberbullying, and psychological resilience.

VI. CONCLUSION

Body shaming has emerged as a serious psychological and social issue affecting adolescents in contemporary society. The study concludes that negative comments and criticism regarding physical appearance significantly influence adolescents' mental and emotional well-being. Experiences of body shaming are strongly associated with lower self-esteem, reduced self-confidence, and increased social anxiety among adolescents. The findings emphasize that adolescence is a highly sensitive developmental period in which external opinions and societal standards can shape self-perception and emotional health. Continuous exposure to body shaming through peers, family members, and social media can create long-term psychological distress, leading to social withdrawal, emotional insecurity, and reduced quality

of life. The study highlights the urgent need for awareness programs, positive body image education, emotional support systems, and counselling interventions within schools and communities. Parents, educators, mental health professionals, and society must work together to create a supportive environment that encourages self-acceptance, confidence, and respect for body diversity. Overall, this research contributes to a better understanding of the psychological correlates of body shaming and provides valuable insights for developing preventive measures and mental health support strategies for adolescents.

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