

Original Research Article

Prevalence and Impacts of Body Shaming on Social Media among University Students in Bangladesh

ABSTRACT

Body shaming is a social disease that has spread to different segments of society. It has been constantly growing in the hands of the media, especially social media and the commercial world.

Objective: The objectives of the study are to examine the prevalence and impacts of social media on body shaming faced by university students in Bangladesh.

Methodology: This study followed the quantitative research methodology to conduct the research. It was from 08 June 2024 to 14 June 2024, when the researcher collected the data through an online survey consisting of 35 questions. A total of 477 students participated in the study; the target population was formed with part of the students at Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur.

Results: The study found that 66.5% of the students were faced with body shaming, and 44% of these happened through social media. Female students reported a higher prevalence of body shaming (37.11%) than that of male students (29.14%). Most of the students were body shamed for their body shame and weight. Students perceive that bullying tendency, lack of understanding, jealousy, and low self-confidence are the major causes of body shaming. According to the research, the impacts of body shaming are multifaceted in most of the students; with issues such as emotional distress (47.6%), body anxiety or dissatisfaction (40.3%), depression, and inferiority (39.6%) coming up as a high rate of result. Alarmingly, 10.3% of students reported noticing suicidal tendencies in themselves due to body shaming. Female students generally reported higher rates of negative impacts compared to male students across most categories.

Conclusion: There is an urgent requirement for awareness campaigns and legal actions to be taken against body shaming on social media. Schools and universities should also introduce awareness programs for the young a lot so that they may be made aware regarding the negativity associated with body shaming.

Keywords: Body shaming, Social media, Prevalence, Impacts, Students, Bangladesh

1. INTRODUCTION

Body shaming is the act of criticizing and degrading someone for their physical characteristics, such as being 'too skinny, too fat,' etc. Starting from the larger society, family members also indulge in body shaming in various ways without being aware of it. A 2018 report from the UK revealed that 94 percent of women and 84 percent of men have experienced some form of body shaming. A study shows that, in 2019, one in every five adults felt ashamed of their physical appearance. 31 percent of boys and 37 percent of teenage girls are frustrated with their body image. Even 60% of adults feel very ashamed because of such hindrances in their minds. Alarmingly, children are not spared from such acts as body shaming as well. Many mothers in Vietnam are providing plastic surgeries as

gifts for their daughter's birthdays. In 2018, police from all over Indonesia handled 966 cases of physical humiliation or body shaming throughout that year in Indonesia (Santoso, 2018).

The media not only provides information and news but also plays an important role in society in shaping and managing public opinion. On the other hand, the media also plays a negative role in society due to biased reporting and discriminatory comments. For example, the media induces body shaming. This can cause serious physical and psychological problems for individuals (Gan & Jiang, 2022). In the digital age, body shaming is more common on media than in real life. In Indonesia, the number of perpetrators of body shaming is increasing as the number of internet users increases (Astuti & Yenny, 2019).

Body shaming is on the rise at the hands of social media and the commercial world. A look at the commercials shows that the commercial world holds tendencies to mutilate a mind against one's body in public. There are gyms for weight loss, creams for fairness, and medicines for growing taller, i.e., all the services to change one's appearance are at our fingertips. On Facebook, there's no end to trolling. Instagram photos of ones are mostly about looks-how perfect, refined, and conventionally good-looking they seem to be to others. In fact, talking about people's looks has become a trend. Especially how and in which manner women should have a perfect figure. And if not, you have to listen to the simile of fat, bamboo or elephant. Body shaming is proof of how unnecessarily critical you are as a human being (Bangalive, 2018). Most people don't feel the need to think of the person sitting on the other side as a human, when commenting on social media. The thing is like this: Some people do not see with their eyes anymore; what's the harm in saying whatever they want? (Tinni, 2018).

A private organization conducted a survey on 1,244 adolescent women (who use various social media) from a total of 20 cities in India, including the national capital regions of Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Hyderabad in India. The women who took part in the study were between the ages of 15 and 65. In this study, 90 percent of the women surveyed attributed the rise of body shaming to the influence of social media. 89 percent of the women said that they suffered from an inferiority complex after reading ugly comments and being ridiculed about their body structure and their choice of clothes on social media. 90 percent of women said that the definition of female beauty in movies and television, the way women are represented there, has changed the definition of general beauty (Tinni, 2018). Nowadays, people upload their photographs on social media, and they often succumb to different types of negative comments from other users. It's common to see people shame both men and women for their physical types (McFarland & Petrie, 2012). Women are attacked more than boys on these issues: thick bodies, less hair, and skin color. Therefore, women have to suffer the consequences (Mehedy, 2022).

Another study showed that anxiety, depression, and self-esteem among 15- to 18-year-olds are strongly related to perceived body image dissatisfaction, and there has been a growing trend of body shaming among adolescents in recent years. Many young people have felt anxious and even suffered from depression because of their unconventional or socially so-called not-good-looking body shape (Shandy & Sari, 2023). Although body shaming can affect individuals of all ages, this study focused on university students. Because body shaming is a common phenomenon among young adults today as they become obsessed with diet, exercise, and fashion.

A BBC report in 2017, citing a survey of some Asian countries, including Bangladesh, said that the risk of cyberbullying is increasing at an alarming rate in these countries, and women and minors are the most likely victims of bullying. The first Information and Communication Technology Act (ICT Act) was enacted in Bangladesh in 2006, and this law was amended in

2013. The country's only cyber tribunal was established in Dhaka the same year. In this act, the provision of 10 years imprisonment and a fine of not more than 10 lakh taka has been made for the crime of taking private pictures or videos without the permission of someone and publishing them. However, there is still no law in the country against obscene speech or irrelevant comments in posts. Only 21 percent of victims of cybercrime in Bangladesh report it to law enforcement. And at least 72 percent of them do not get the expected remedy or result even after filing the complaint. Such information has emerged in a study report by the Cyber Crime Awareness (CAA) Foundation (Chowdhury, 2018; Uddin, 2021; Anderson, 2018). However, until now, body shaming is endless and still exists in the hustle and bustle of social media existence in this era of disruption, and the percentages of body shaming incidents are increasing at an alarming rate due to the lack of laws and other societal negligence.

Considering all these factors, it is necessary to discuss the prevalence of body shaming on social media, what kind of impacts university students are facing, and how the situation can be mitigated. The current study explores the prevalence and impacts of body shaming on social media with reference to students at Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur, Bangladesh. This study contributes in the academic arena to knowing the causative and rational arguments for body shaming. The concerned authority can come up with a solution to address the ongoing crises due to body shaming hurdles in Bangladesh. This study is also useful for students and policymakers to come up with a decision to deal with the crisis systematically.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Gam et al. examined the prevalence and predictors of body shaming among school-going adolescents. Using a cross-sectional study, they gathered data from 359 students in 4 schools in Lucknow and found that a total of 44.9 percent of participants responded to having been body shamed at least once in the past year (Gam et al., 2020).

Okoli et al. carried out a study on the prevalence and effects of body-shaming on social media among undergraduates in Nigeria. They collected 300 surveys to accomplish this study. The study found that most female undergraduates faced different types of body-shaming compared to their male counterparts at the university. More than 88.5% of the respondents believed that body-shaming could be the cause of eating disorders, anxiety, disturbed body image, sadness, and trauma. The study recommended that the government needs to support initiatives that raise public awareness of the harmful impacts of body shaming (Okoli et al., 2023).

Mumu and Rashid investigate the prevalence and varieties of body shaming practiced via memes in Bangladesh on five Facebook pages. Purposive sampling was used to select five Facebook pages, and data was collected from October 1, 2021, to September 30, 2022. The findings have shown that there were more comments on masculinity, size, skin tone, and height in memes. Body-shaming memes target not only females but also male counterparts and transgender individuals (Mumu & Rashid, 2023).

Ramadhany and Putri accomplished a study on the effect of body shaming on student's confidence. They chose a quantitative research methodology to complete the study. Using an online survey method, they gathered data from 37 students and found that body shaming on Instagram affects female students' self-confidence by 6.9% with a shallow category, and the rest is influenced by other factors outside of this study, such as the psychological component (Ramadhany & Putri, 2021).

The Anchal Foundation of Bangladesh, a private organization, published a study titled 'Social context of young women and its impact on mental health' The organization reached this conclusion by surveying 1,140 young women. It was found that 69.92% of young women were victims of negative comments about their physical appearance. It also revealed that 37.24% of young women are being verbally abused by their relatives regarding their body shape, structure, and appearance. 22% of women have been victims of body shaming by friends. And 14.25% have heard heinous shaming words from their own family members. 11.85% of young women had to hear negative words about their physical appearance from passersby (Mehedy, 2022).

Sadia, Jibon, and Parvez outlined research on the effects of media advertisement representation of women's body images on violence against women in Bangladesh. This study also highlights how the younger generation is influenced by the media. They followed quantitative approaches, and their study areas included Khulna University of Engineering and Technology and Khulna University. It has been found that the majority of advertisements in Bangladesh's newspapers, magazines, and national television channels portrayed women's bodies as objects for sexual things. Over 80% of women were victims of sexual assault, and more than 77.5 percent of women were subjected to body shaming. Women are usually cautious about having a thin-shaped body; therefore, they were dissatisfied with their body shape. This study found that the perception of women was centered on how society was shown in media advertisements (Sadia et al., 2022).

Radzi et al. (2021) examine the perceptions of body image and body shaming among Malaysian Undergraduates. The objectives of the study are to identify the undergraduates' perceptions of body image and body shaming. The data collection technique used in this study was a questionnaire that the respondents were provided with to complete via Google Form. This survey had a total of 227 respondents, with 143 females and 84 males. The research indicates that the majority of respondents had no negative views or perceptions about other people's body image. This study also explored that other people's judgments of their body image had some effects on the responders, and the majority of them tried to improve themselves for the better.

Jiotsa et al. (2021) explore the association between social media exposure and the presence of body dissatisfaction and body image disorders. The researcher followed an online questionnaire to investigate the association between how often one compares their physical appearance to that of the people they follow on social media and one's body dissatisfaction and drive for thinness.

Smriti & Nahar (2019) completed research on cyberbullying and preventive measures, with a focus on Bangladesh. They explored the reasons and outcomes of cyberbullying. In this study, the researchers discussed the legal issues to address this catastrophe and found that there is no clear definition of cyberbullying; hence there is controversy in the implementation of this law.

A study was conducted by Puluhalawa and Riski Husain with the title "Body Shaming through Social Media as a Digital Crime in the Era of Disruption." In this study, data collection techniques were carried out with a review of libraries aimed at providing clues and ideas for formulating and solving problems. To evaluate the data, researchers deployed a descriptive-analytical approach that provides a comprehensive explanation or picture of body shaming as a digital crime. Researchers suggest that improved rules, as well as the role of the press and the general public, can affect people's attitudes about body-shaming behavior (Puluhalawa & Husain, 2021).

The available literature contains studies that have explored body-shaming; none have investigated the prevalence and impacts of body shaming on social media among university students in Bangladesh's context. The present study seeks to fill this gap.

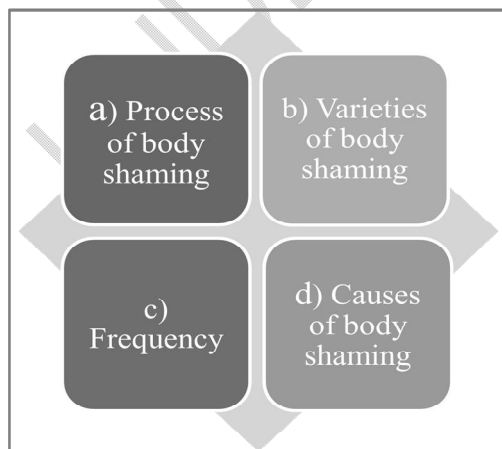
3. CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW

3.1 Body shaming: Body shaming is when someone publicly criticizes or comments on someone's body size, size, or weight in a way that shames or humiliates them. Body shaming can take many forms. The most common examples are described when people refer to someone by their names as fat, thin, pigmy, etc. For instance, statements like "when did you become so fat?", and "it would be nice if your skin color was a little brighter", like this- if you make any comments or make criticism about someone's body size, volume, or weight in such a way that the person feels ashamed or humiliated, then it is body shaming. Also, bashing about one's external beauty, belittling oneself in comparison with someone else, and making negative comments about one's physical shape behind someone's back are also forms of body shaming. For example, they look like wrestlers. But the more horrible examples are, 'a person who looks like a carpet knight, then there is a probability of the following incident: no girl will look at that person?'

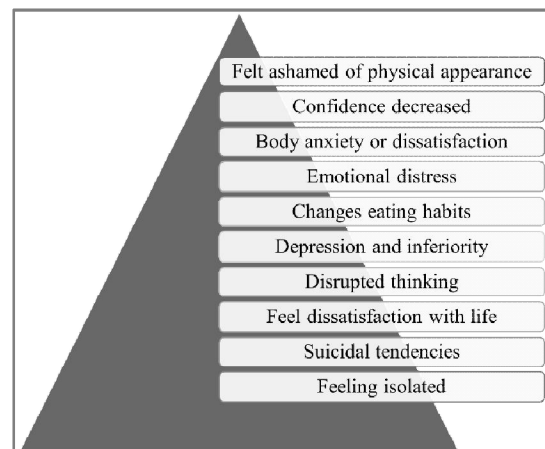
There are three types of people who are involved in body shaming. Firstly, People who is suffering from extreme inferiority and who find peace by hurting others (usually victims of body shaming). Secondly, oblivious people who are unable or unwilling to understand the consequences of saying something. These types of people do not think about the consequences of the words that come out of them. Thirdly, really bad people who love to hurt people for no reason. Most of us fall into category number two regarding body shaming. After saying a word, there is no headache about its consequences. But they don't care how much the words influence others for their irrelevant and unwise reactions (Tinni, 2018).

3.2 Social media: Social media refers to human-to-human interaction through virtual communication and networks. That is, the medium that people use to create, share, or exchange anything to communicate and express themselves using information and communication technology is called social media or social networking sites. Some such sites are Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp, X, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Instagram, Flickr, etc (Dollarhide, 2024).

Prevalence of body shaming



Impacts of body shaming



4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study's theoretical framework was the cultivation theory, which Professor George Gerbner et al. developed in the 1960s and 1970s. The cultivation theory contends that consistent media exposure alters viewers' perceptions of reality and behavior. The theory also asserts that as people use social media more frequently, they are more likely to adopt a reality-based perspective comparable to that of social media. The theory went on to say that because the audience is passive, repeated exposure will have an impact on them. The cultivation theory also contends that the more frequently people are exposed to images of the perfect body, the less conscious they will be of their unrealistic nature (Haider & Samin, 2015). The researcher felt this theory may provide an academic framework to reach any conclusion on this issue.

5. METHODOLOGY

The researcher followed a quantitative methodology to accomplish the research. The online survey questionnaire is designed for a quantitative study. The researcher collected consent from the students before collecting the data and information from them. This study was conducted, representing the opinions of 477 students, including female (252), male (224), and others (01) from different departments of Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur, Bangladesh.

5.1 Target population: This research has been conducted on the students at Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur.

5.2 Study duration: Data collection was conducted from June 8, 2024, to June 14, 2024, for one week.

5.3 Survey tool: The survey was designed as a closed-ended questionnaire with 35 questions, including demographic inquiries.

5.4 Data collection: The researcher served the questionnaire created through Google Forms in each department of Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur where questionnaires were served to the students who were available at the time. During the survey, a total of 477 responses were collected.

5.5 Data analysis: This study uses a statistical software package followed by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 26 version). It has been used in frequency distribution and correlation in order to highlight the graphical and tabular representation of data and information in the research.

5.6 Ethical Issues: The study maintained ethical guidelines throughout the whole research. On the other hand, it was ensured proper channels and consent from the students throughout the data collection process.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the demographic details of the 477 students in the survey, which produces a differentiated profile of the participants across sexes, age groups, and different educational levels. The data reveals a slight female majority, accounting for 52.8% of the total; 252 of these were females, while 224 (47%) were males. and 0.2% of the sample represented other sexes.

Table 1: Demographic information of the students

Variables	Response	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Sex	Female	252	52.8
	Male	224	47.0
	Others	1	0.2
Education Levels	Honors 1st Year	138	28.9
	Honors 2nd Year	132	27.7
	Honors 3rd Year	85	17.8
	Honors 4th Year	30	6.3
	Masters	92	19.3
Age Group	17-18 Years	11	2.3
	19-20 Years	74	15.5
	21-22 Years	227	47.6
	23-24 Years	153	32.1
	25-26 Years+	12	2.5

In terms of educational background, the largest proportion were relatively new university students (28.9% with 138 for Honors 1st Year and 27.7% with 132 for Honors 2nd Year). Only 17.8%, with 85, participated in Honors 3rd Year, and 6.3%, with 30, participated in Honors 4th Year. It's worth mentioning that 19.3% (92) of the students are masters' students, showing a significant number of advanced-level students. The 21–22 years age group had the most significant proportion at 47.6% (227), closely followed by the 23–24 years (153) group at 32.1%. There were only very small numbers of both student groups, at 2.3% aged 17–18 years and 2.5% aged 25–26+ years.

Table 2: Social media usage patterns of the students

Variables	Response	F	%
Do you have social media accounts?	Yes	473	99.2
	No	3	0.6
	Not applicable	1	0.2
Which social media are you using more?	Facebook	402	84.3
	YouTube	39	8.2
	WhatsApp	19	4.0
	Instagram	14	2.9
	Others	3	0.6
How much time (approximate) do you spend daily on social media?	Less Than 1 Hour	11	2.3
	1-2 Hours	84	17.6
	2-4 Hours	202	42.3
	4-6 Hours	115	24.1
	6 Hours+	65	13.6

Table 2 illustrates the details regarding the patterns of use of social media by the students. An overwhelming majority, 99.2%, have accounts on social media; only 0.6% do not have profiles on such media, while 0.2% marked not applicable. On preferred social media platforms, most of the students indicated that they used Facebook 402 (84.3%), followed by 8.2% on YouTube, 4.0% on WhatsApp, 2.9% using Instagram, and 0.6% who use others. Only 2.3% of the students reported a daily usage time of less than 1 hour on social media. Those who use it for 1-2 hours make up a total of 17.6% of the students, whereas 42.3% use

it for 2-4 hours daily. 24.1% use social media for 4-6 hours a day, whereas 13.6% use it for more than 6 hours a day. This data indicated that almost all students use social media; out of these, Facebook was the most popular platform. Most of the students spent a considerable amount of time on it every day, while some even used it for hours, just going on to prove that the engagement of students with social media is very high.

Table 3: The prevalence of body shaming among students

Variables	Response	F	%
Have you faced body shaming?	Yes	317	66.5
	No	137	28.7
	Not applicable	23	4.8
Through what means have you faced body shaming?	Social Media	210	44.0
	Face to Face	113	23.7
	Others	69	14.5
	Not applicable	85	17.8
what have you been body shamed for?	Body shape	75	15.7
	Skin color	49	10.3
	Weight	77	16.1
	Height	40	8.4
	Others	106	22.2
	Not applicable	130	27.3
How frequently have you experienced body shaming on social media?	Always	3	0.6
	Often	17	3.6
	Sometimes	99	20.8
	Rarely	139	29.1
	Not applicable	219	45.9

Table 3 presents the prevalence of body shaming among students. The number of students who faced body shaming is 66.5% (317). About 28.7% (137) of the students reported that they were not facing any incidents like body shaming. According to the research, 210 (44%) of the students admitted to body shaming on social media, 23.7% (113) face-to-face, and 14.5% (69) were exposed to it in other ways. The study found that 15.7% of the students were body shamed for their body shape, 10.3% for skin color, 16.1% for weight, 8.4% for height, and 22.2% mentioned other ways, whereas 27.3% of the students answered that this was not applicable. When asked how frequently you have experienced body shaming on social media; 0.6% of the students said always, 3.6% often, 20.8% sometimes, and 29.1% of students rarely subjected themselves to body shaming on social media, while 45.9% found it not applicable.

Table 4: Who faces body shaming more frequently on social media?

Response		Yes	No	Not applicable	Total
Female	F	177	63	12	252
	%	37.11%	13.21%	2.52%	52.83%
Male	F	139	74	11	224
	%	29.14%	15.51%	2.31%	46.96%

Others	F	1	0	0	1
	%	0.21%	0.00%	0.00%	0.21%

Table 4 illustrates the frequency of body shaming among students. Among the 252 female students, 37.11% answered that they suffer more frequently from body shaming on social media, while 13.21% answered “No”, and 2.52% marked “Not applicable”. For 224 males, 29.14% answered that they suffer body shaming more frequently, 15.51% responded with a “No”, and 2.31% marked “Not applicable”. Besides that, ‘Others’ students representing 0.21% of the total, who answered “Yes”. The data clearly indicates that females having experienced body shaming on social media is higher than males.

Table 5: Process of body shaming between female and male

Variables	Response	F (%)	Response	F (%)
Body shaming through comments	Yes	111 (23.3)	Female	47 (42.3)
	No	298 (62.5)	Male	64 (57.7)
	Not applicable	68 (14.3)		
Body shaming through text messages	Yes	165 (34.6)	Female	96 (58.2)
	No	241 (50.5)	Male	69(41.8)
	Not applicable	71 (14.9)		
Body shaming through sending audio/videos	Yes	85 (17.8)	Female	42 (49.4)
	No	317 (66.5)	Male	43 (50.6)
	Not applicable	75 (15.7)		
Body shaming through sending photos	Yes	122 (25.6)	Female	51 (41.8)
	No	289 (60.6)	Male	71 (58.2)
	Not applicable	66 (13.8)		
Body shaming by relatives/friends through social media comments, text, audio, or video messages	Yes	171 (35.8)	Female	100 (58.5)
	No	243 (50.9)	Male	71 (48.5)
	Not applicable	63 (13.2)		
Experienced face-to-face body shaming by relatives/friends after seeing your video, photo, or any post on social media	Yes	160 (33.5)	Female	85 (53.1)
	No	249 (52.2)	Male	75 (46.9)
	Not applicable	68 (14.3)		

Table 5 presents the details of various process through which body shaming takes place and compares the responses of female and male. As no one of others genders answered 'Yes',

the data has been presented, excluding 'others' genders from the Table. This research has revealed that males face more body shaming in the form of comments. 64 (57.7%) males, compared to 47 (42.3%) females, reported this form of shaming. The study also found that 96 (58.2%) female students and 41.8% (69) male students admitted to body shaming through text messages, 42 (49.4%) females, and 43 (50.6%) males through audio or video messages. Body shaming through sending photos is reported by 51 females, accounting for 41.8%, and by 71 males, accounting for 58.2%. In addition, 100 (58.5%) females and 71 (48.5%) males indicated that they were body shamed by relatives or friends due to other exposure to different social media platforms. Finally, body shaming that was done face-to-face by relatives or friends due to posts on social media is documented in 85 (53.1%) females and 75 (46.9%) males. In general, although body shaming affects both sexes, females had a higher percent of occurrence in nearly all categories.

Table 6: Impacts of body shaming on social media

Variables	Response	F (%)	Response	F (%)
Felt ashamed of your physical appearance because of body shaming (I1)	Yes	182 (38.2)	Female	103 (56.6)
			Male	79 (43.4)
			Others	0 (0)
	No	185 (38.8)		
	Not applicable	110 (23.0)		
Confidence decreased because of body shaming (I2)	Yes	148 (31.0)	Female	88 (59.5)
			Male	59 (39.8)
			Others	1 (0.7)
	No	244 (51.2)		
	Not applicable	85 (17.8)		
Suffered from body anxiety or dissatisfaction because of body shaming (I3)	Yes	192 (40.3)	Female	109 (56.8)
			Male	83 (43.2)
			Others	0 (0)
	No	209 (43.8)		
	Not applicable	76 (15.9)		
Suffered from emotional distress because of body shaming (I4)	Yes	227 (47.6)	Female	129 (56.8)
			Male	98 (43.2)
			Others	0 (0)
	No	177 (37.1)		
	Not applicable	73 (15.3)		
Any changes in your eating habits (I5)	Yes	137 (28.7)	Female	77 (56.2)
			Male	59 (43.1)
			Others	1 (0.7)
	No	259 (54.3)		
	Not applicable	81 (17.0)		
Suffered from	Yes	189 (39.6)	Female	115 (60.8)

depression and inferiority (I6)			Male	74 (39.2)
			Others	0 (0)
	No	216 (45.3)		
	Not applicable	72 (15.1)		
Suffered from disrupted thinking (I7)			Female	110 (58.2)
	Yes	189 (39.6)	Male	79 (41.8)
			Others	0 (0)
	No	214 (44.9)		
	Not applicable	74 (15.5)		
Feel dissatisfaction with life (I8)			Female	88 (59.9)
	Yes	147 (30.8)	Male	59 (40.1)
			Others	0 (0)
	No	260 (54.5)		
	Not applicable	70 (14.7)		
Noticed any suicidal tendencies in yourself (I9)			Female	25 (51.0)
	Yes	49 (10.3)	Male	24 (49.0)
			Others	0 (0)
	No	352 (73.8)		
	Not applicable	76 (15.9)		
Feeling isolated from relatives/friends (I10)			Female	102 (57.3)
	Yes	178 (37.3)	Male	76 (42.7)
			Others	0 (0)
	No	230 (48.2)		
	Not applicable	69 (14.5)		

Table 6 shows the psychological and behavioral impacts of body shaming on students. Feeling ashamed about one's physical appearance as a result of body shaming was shared by a large number of students. For example, females constitute 56.6% and males 43.4% with this impact. Moreover, a decrease in the level of confidence was reported by 59.5% of females, 39.8% of males, and 0.7% of others. Body anxiety or dissatisfaction is found in 56.8% of females and 43.2% of males. The emotional distress due to body shaming is faced by 56.8% of females and 43.2% of males. Changes in eating habits were reported by 56.2% of females, 43.1% of males, and 0.7% of others. Depression and inferiority are felt by 60.8% of females and 39.2% of males. Lastly, disrupted thinking is experienced by 58.2% of females and 41.8% of males. Moreover, the percentage of females is 59.9%, while that of males is 40.1% pertaining to dissatisfaction with life. Suicidal tendencies are observed in 51% of females and 49% of males. Lastly, feelings of isolation from relatives or friends are reported by 57.3% of females and 42.7% of males. The observation derived from the data is that though there are major negative impacts of body shaming on social media on both sexes, it is felt more by females on most counts.

Table 7: Correlation analysis of impacts of body shaming

Variables	I1	I2	I3	I4	I5	I6	I7	I8	I9	I10
I1	1									
I2	.730**	1								
I3	.730**	.735**	1							
I4	.659**	.690**	.774**	1						
I5	.618**	.604**	.655**	.682**	1					
I6	.667**	.755**	.790**	.830**	.683**	1				
I7	.613**	.678**	.728**	.749**	.625**	.790**	1			
I8	.644**	.727**	.782**	.770**	.639**	.794**	.781**	1		
I9	.510**	.544**	.608**	.630**	.564**	.659**	.637**	.701**	1	
I10	.651**	.656**	.734**	.737**	.592**	.763**	.738**	.776**	.653**	1

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

Table 7 represents the Pearson Correlations between different psychological and behavioral impacts of body shaming between pairs of variables. Correlations significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) are marked. Strong positive correlations can be seen between quite a few impacts, which means that the experience of one impact of body shaming strongly predicts the experience of other impacts. For instance, there is a high positive correlation considered between reduced confidence and both the shame of physical appearance and body anxiety, as $r = 0.730$. On the other hand, emotional distress has high correlations with its remaining impacts, including depression with $r = 0.830$, and disrupted thinking with $r = 0.749$. It further brought out prominent interrelations between the feeling isolated from relatives or friends and other impacts, for instance, life dissatisfaction with $r = 0.776$ and disrupted thinking with $r = 0.763$. This clearly establishes interlinkages for most of the negative body shaming outcomes, hence their pervasive impacts on both psychological and behavioral well-being.

Chart 1: Students' perception of body shaming for various reasons

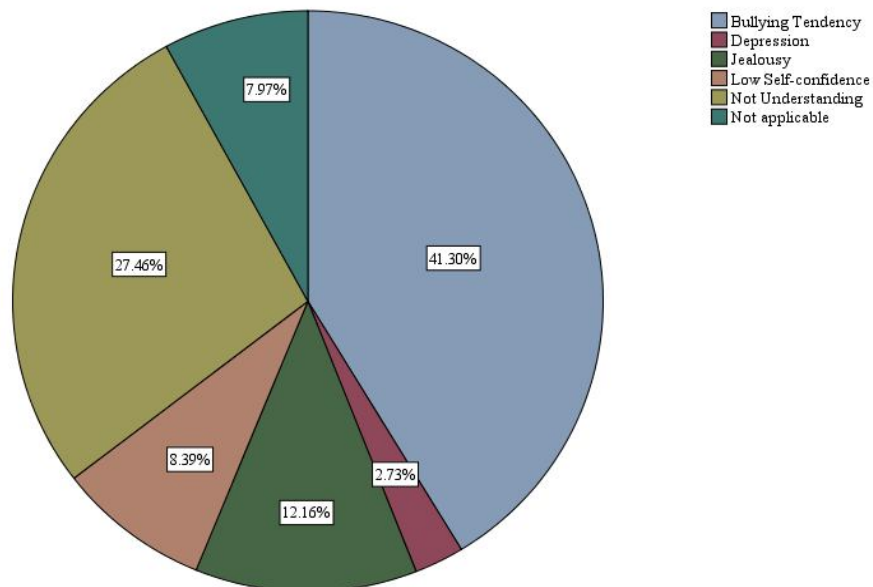


Chart 1 shows that the majority of students, 41.30%, believe that body shaming comes as a result of having a bullying tendency toward others. Another 12.16% of students think it's

because of jealousy, 8.39% have low self-confidence, 27.46% believe that many people do body shaming unknowingly, and 2.73% believe that body shaming occurs when someone is depressed. The findings indicate that bullying tendencies, lack of understanding, jealousy, and a lack of self-confidence are the primary causes of body shaming.

Table 8: Student' perceptions of the prevalence and impact of body shaming on social media

Variables	Strongly agree		Agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Body shaming situation is increasing day by day due to social media	204	42.8	208	43.6	55	11.5	10	2.1	0	0
Body shaming situation is increasing day by day even offline due to social media	189	39.6	221	46.3	54	11.3	13	2.7	0	0
Body shaming affected a person's self-esteem	244	51.2	194	40.7	34	7.1	4	0.8	1	0.2
Body shaming lead to eating disorders, anxiety, body shape disturbances, depression, and trauma	234	49.1	195	40.9	42	8.8	6	1.3	0	0
Possible to mitigate body shaming situations on social media	154	32.3	226	47.4	66	13.8	28	5.9	3	0.6
Need laws to regulate body shaming situations through social media	224	47.0	186	39.0	55	11.5	11	2.3	1	0.2
Need awareness to control body shaming situations on social media	284	59.5	166	34.8	23	4.8	2	0.4	2	0.4
Necessary to take educational activities at school, college, university level to create awareness about body shaming	290	60.8	158	33.1	25	5.2	2	0.4	2	0.4

Table 8 presents a clear and detailed overview of the students' perception with regard to the prevalence and impact of body shaming on social media, showing a high level of concern and a perceived need for intervention. For instance, the majority of the students either strongly agree (42.8%) or agree (43.6%) that situations of body shaming are increasing day by day because of social media, while the same trend is extended to offline, as strongly agreed by 39.6% and agreed by 46.3%. This is keenly felt in terms of self-esteem, as indicated by 51.2% who strongly agree and 40.7% who agree that body shaming has a negative impact on the self-esteem of people. The link between body shaming and severe mental health problems is further recognized since almost 90% of the students, with 49.1% strongly agree and 40.9% agree, body shaming can eventually cause eating disorders, anxiety, body shape disturbances, depression, and trauma. The possibility of mitigating body shaming on social media is supported by 32.3% strongly agree and 47.4% agree, while a

disproportionate extent of the students (47.0% strongly agree and 39.0% agree) feel that laws are needed to regulate such situations. Moreover, the need for awareness campaigns is shown by 59.5% strongly agree, 34.8% agree, and 60.8% strongly agree that educational activities at the school, college, and university levels are necessary to create awareness about body shaming.

7. KEY FINDINGS

The study, carried out at Begum Rokeya University in Rangpur, Bangladesh, included a total of 477 students, with 52.8% being female, 47.0% being male, and 0.2% identifying as other genders. Most of the students were young university students, predominantly in the age range of 21-22 years (47.6%). Social media usage was nearly universal among participants, with 99.2% having social media accounts. Facebook was the most popular platform, used by 84.3% of students. A significant portion (42.3%) reported spending 2-4 hours daily on social media.

Body shaming was prevalent, as 66.5% of students reported experiencing it. Out of all these incidents, 44% took place on social media platforms which could be caused by heavy exposure to the social media as stated by the cultivation theory that constant media exposure modifies viewers' perceptions of reality and behavior, and the more people are exposed to images of the perfect body, the less conscious they are of their unrealistic character.

According to the study, female students exhibited a higher prevalence of body shaming (37.11%) in comparison to male students (29.14%). Most of the students were body shamed for their body shape (15.7%), weight (16.1%), and skin color (10.3%). The most common process of body shaming that was examined in the study was text messaging. Females reported higher rates of body shaming through text messages (58.2%) compared to males (41.8%). Other processes included comments, photos, and audio or video messages. Notably, body shaming also occurred face-to-face by relatives or friends after seeing a video, photo, or any post on social media.

The impacts of body shaming were significant and multifaceted. Psychological effects included feeling ashamed of one's physical appearance (38.2%), decreased confidence (31.0%), body anxiety or dissatisfaction (40.3%), emotional distress (47.6%), depression and inferiority (39.6%), and disrupted thinking (39.6%). Behavioral impacts included changes in eating habits (28.7%) and feeling isolated from relatives/friends (37.3%). Alarmingly, 10.3% of students reported noticing suicidal tendencies in themselves due to body shaming. Female students generally reported higher rates of negative impacts compared to male students across most categories. This theory helps to show how social media contributes to shaping students' psychological and behavioral changes about body image, potentially influencing self-esteem, and mental health.

Students' perceptions of body shaming revealed that 41.30% believed it stems from a bullying tendency towards others, while 27.46% believe that many people do body shaming unknowingly. Other reasons included jealousy (12.16%), low self-confidence (8.39%), and depression (2.73%). The study found strong agreement among students about the increasing prevalence of body shaming due to social media, both online (86.4% agree or strongly agree) and offline (85.9% agree or strongly agree). There was also strong consensus about the negative impacts of body shaming, with 91.9% agreeing or strongly agreeing that it affects a person's self-esteem, and 90% agreeing or strongly agreeing that it can lead to eating disorders, anxiety, body shape disturbances, depression, and trauma.

Students showed strong support for measures to address body shaming. 94.3% agreed or strongly agreed on the need for awareness campaigns, 93.9% supported educational activities at school, college, and university levels; and 86% believed laws are needed to regulate body shaming situations on social media.

8. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The world and the era that we live in have already turned into an age of information with the rapid exploration of information and communication technology (ICT). People are observing the positive and negative side impacts of ICT and different types of social media. This study found that body shaming on social media is an inclusive factor in the lives of university students in Bangladesh, one that produces deep, negative impacts on mental health and self-esteem. Most female students who are active on social media often face body shaming more than male students which hampers their positive thinking and undermines their personal development.

This research emphasizes the requirement for a multi-faceted approach toward this particular problem. First and foremost, educational institutions need to sensitize students through workshops and programs that aim to improve their self-esteem, self-identity, and confidence. The government should encourage public awareness campaigns about the negative impacts of body shaming in order to create a helpful and conscious community. Thirdly, laws such as the ICT Act censor content that may lead to body shaming. Integrating body shaming into some chapters in textbooks may sow the seed of awareness and sensitization at an early stage. Therefore, we require nothing less than comprehensive awareness and sensitivity to the context of family, education, and culture. It may be effective at a personal level to disregard body shaming through self-confidence, positivity, and ignoring negative comments. To prevent body shaming, we need to address both online and offline factors, such as media and public campaigns, counseling, support, education sector reforms, and positive online content. By combining these strategies, we can create a more sensitive and resilient community that is willing to address body shaming.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although body shaming can impact people of any age, this study has just focused on university students at tertiary public institutes in Bangladesh. Aside from that, this study centered only on Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur, where students of this university were the respondents to this research. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized to all students at public and private universities in Bangladesh. Nonetheless, this study provides a significant finding about the prevalence and impact of body shaming among students.

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