

# 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 66.45% of the students were faced with body shaming, and 42.76% of these happened through social media. Female students reported a higher prevalence of body shaming (37.11%) than that of male students (29.14%), with an odds ratio of 1.493, indicating that females were almost 1.5 times more likely to experience body shaming. Most of the students were body shamed for their body shape 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 (47.59%), body anxiety or dissatisfaction (40.25%), depression, and inferiority (39.62%) coming up as a high rate of result. Alarmingly, 10.27% 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. Educational institutions should also implement awareness programs for the younger generation to make them aware of the negative consequences of 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. According to several studies, over 45 percent of youngsters have experienced body shaming at least once in their life. In 2016, more than 4.2 million people in the United States underwent cosmetic surgery to improve their appearance with the majority of these having been due to body shaming [1] The Mental Health Foundation in the United Kingdom found that, in 2019, one in every five adults felt ashamed of their physical appearance. Thirty-one percent of

24 boys and 37 percent of teenage girls are frustrated with their body image. Even 60% of  
25 adults feel very ashamed because of such hindrances in their minds(Health and Social Care  
26 Committee, 2022). Alarmingly children are not spared from such acts as body shaming as  
27 well. Many mothers in Vietnam are providing plastic surgeries as gifts for their daughter's  
28 birthdays (Do et al., 2016). In 2018, police from all over Indonesia handled 966 cases of  
29 physical humiliation or body shaming throughout that year in Indonesia (Puluhulawa &  
30 Husain, 2021).

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

38 Body shaming is on the rise at the hands of social media and the commercial world. A look  
39 at the commercials shows that the commercial world holds tendencies to mutilate a mind  
40 against one's body in public. There are tips for weight loss, creams for fairness, and  
41 medicines for growing taller, i.e., all the services to change one's appearance are at our  
42 fingertips (Bangalive, 2018). Nowadays, people upload their photographs on social media,  
43 and they often succumb to different types of negative comments from other users. It's  
44 common to see people shame both men and women for their physical types (McFarland &  
45 Petrie, 2012). Instagram photos of ones are mostly about looks-how perfect, refined, and  
46 conventionally good-looking they seem to be to others. On Facebook, there's no end to  
47 trolling. Most people do not feel the need to think of the person sitting on the other side as a  
48 human, when commenting on social media (Tinni, 2018). In fact, talking about people's looks  
49 has become a trend. Women are attacked more than boys on these issues: thick bodies,  
50 less hair, and skin color. Especially how and in which manner women should have a perfect  
51 figure. And if not, you have to listen to the simile of fat, bamboo or elephant. Body shaming is  
52 proof of how unnecessarily critical are as a human being (Bangalive, 2018).

53 According to the Aachol Foundation, a non-governmental organization in Bangladesh, 43.89  
54 percent of young women are subjected to harassment on the internet and social media  
55 platforms, including ugly comments, image distortion, and body shaming. Most women said  
56 that they suffered from an inferiority complex after reading ugly comments and being  
57 ridiculed about their body structure and their choice of clothes on social media (Mehedy,  
58 2022). Therefore, it is mostly women who seem to be influenced by body shaming on social  
59 media platforms. Another study showed that anxiety, depression, and self-esteem among  
60 15- to 18-year-olds are strongly related to perceived body image dissatisfaction, and there  
61 has been a growing trend of body shaming among adolescents in recent years. Many young  
62 people have felt anxious and even suffered from depression because of their unconventional  
63 or socially so-called not-good-looking body shape (Shandy & Sari, 2023). Although body  
64 shaming can affect individuals of all ages, this study focused on university students.  
65 Because body shaming is a common phenomenon among young adults today as they  
66 become obsessed with diet, exercise, and fashion.

67 A BBC report in 2017, citing a survey of some Asian countries, including Bangladesh, said  
68 that the risk of cyberbullying is increasing at an alarming rate in these countries, and women  
69 and minors are the most likely victims of bullying. The first Information and Communication  
70 Technology Act (ICT Act) was enacted in Bangladesh in 2006, and this law was amended in  
71 2013. The country's only cyber tribunal was established in Dhaka the same year. In this act,  
72 the provision of 10 years imprisonment and a fine of not more than about \$8520 has been

73 made for the crime of taking private pictures or videos without the permission of someone  
74 and publishing them. However, there is still no law in the country against obscene speech or  
75 irrelevant comments in posts. Only 21 percent of victims of cybercrime in Bangladesh report  
76 it to law enforcement. And at least 72 percent of them do not get the expected remedy or  
77 result even after filing the complaint. Such information has emerged in a study report by the  
78 Cyber Crime Awareness (CAA) Foundation (Chowdhury, 2018; Uddin, 2021; Anderson,  
79 2018). However, until now, body shaming is endless and still exists in the hustle and bustle  
80 of social media existence in this era of disruption, and the percentages of body shaming  
81 incidents are increasing at an alarming rate due to the lack of laws and societal awareness.

82 Considering all these factors, it is necessary to discuss the prevalence of body shaming on  
83 social media, what kind of impacts university students are facing, and how the situation can  
84 be mitigated. The current study explores the prevalence and impacts of body shaming on  
85 social media with reference to students at Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur,  
86 Bangladesh. This study provides academic insights into the prevalence of body shaming and  
87 its negative consequences that some people may be unaware of. This study may alert  
88 students, parents, educators, legislators, policymakers, and enforcement agencies about the  
89 seriousness of the impact of body shaming.

## 90 **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

91 Gam et al. (2020) examined the prevalence and predictors of body shaming among school-  
92 going adolescents. Using a cross-sectional study, they gathered data from 800 students in 4  
93 schools of Lucknow in India and found that a total of 44.9 percent of participants responded  
94 to having been body shamed at least once in the past year. Okoli et al. (2023) carried out a  
95 study on the prevalence and effects of body-shaming on social media among  
96 undergraduates in Nigeria. They collected 300 surveys to accomplish this study. The study  
97 found that most female undergraduates faced different types of body-shaming compared to  
98 their male counterparts at the university. More than 88.5% of the respondents believed that  
99 body-shaming could be the cause of eating disorders, anxiety, disturbed body image,  
100 sadness, and trauma. The study recommended that the government needs to support  
101 initiatives that raise public awareness of the harmful impacts of body shaming.

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

108 The Aachol Foundation of Bangladesh published a study titled 'Social context of young  
109 women and its impact on mental health'. This organization surveyed 1,040 young women  
110 between the ages of 18 and 30, and found that young women are increasingly being  
111 sexually abused, harassed, and body shamed in Bangladesh. According to the study,  
112 69.92% of young women experience body shaming, and 65.58% are frequently subjected to  
113 various forms of sexual harassment. It began with the family, but this unpleasant trend has  
114 spread rapidly because of social media. It also revealed that 37.24% of women are verbally  
115 abused by their relatives regarding their body shape, structure, and appearance. Twenty-two  
116 percent of women have been victims of body shaming by friends, 14.25% have heard  
117 heinous shaming words from their own family members and 11.85% of young women had to  
118 hear negative words about their physical appearance from passersby. Because of this, most  
119 young women experience behavioral disorders or other mental health problems, and they  
120 notice suicidal tendencies in themselves (Mehedy, 2022).

121 Sadia, Jibon, and Parvez outlined research on the effects of media advertisement  
122 representation of women's body images on violence against women in Bangladesh. This  
123 study also highlights how the younger generation is influenced by the media. This  
124 quantitative study was conducted where 80 male and female students were randomly  
125 selected from the two reputed universities at Khulna in Bangladesh. It has been found that  
126 some of the advertisements and media content have shown specific body shapes as an  
127 ideal. For that reason, women faced contemptible body shaming and verbal attacks; more  
128 than 80% of women answered that they have faced verbal or physical sexual assault. This  
129 research has also shown that about 70% of women were unhappy with their body shape and  
130 tried to get the ideal shape as shown in the media (Sadia et al., 2022).

131 Siyu Wan analyzed the impact of social media on body shame in China. The researcher  
132 used a literature review approach to examine the information regarding body shame. She  
133 found that the abundance of body-shaming content in the media led young people to focus  
134 on body shame, which could lead to more serious physical and psychological problems  
135 (Wan, 2023). Another study in Indonesia of over 50 undergraduates revealed that body  
136 shaming treatments were also received in the form of insults, mockery and insinuation,  
137 leading to the students being stressed, embarrassed, insecure and downgrading their  
138 confidence level (Trisna, 2019). Mustafa et al. (2022) examined youth awareness of body  
139 shaming issues in Malaysia. Using a mixed-method approach, they gathered data and found  
140 that the youth are well aware of the impact of body shaming. A study conducted by Melizza  
141 et al. (2023) found that there is a significant relationship between body shaming and self-  
142 esteem in students of Indonesia. Because when someone is insulted about their body, it  
143 affects one's self-esteem.

144 Zulkifli et al. (2023) investigated students' awareness of the implications of body shaming  
145 and their perspectives regarding their body image. Using an online questionnaire, the data  
146 was collected from 50 public university students in Malaysia and found that the majority of  
147 students acknowledged the implications of body shaming on victims, with more than half  
148 expressing a negative perception of their bodies. Jiotsa et al. (2021) explored the association  
149 between social media exposure and the presence of body dissatisfaction and body image  
150 disorders. The researcher followed an online questionnaire to investigate the association  
151 between how often one compares their physical appearance to that of the people they follow  
152 on social media and one's body dissatisfaction and drive for thinness.

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

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

### 165 **3. CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW**

#### 167 **3.1 Body Shaming**

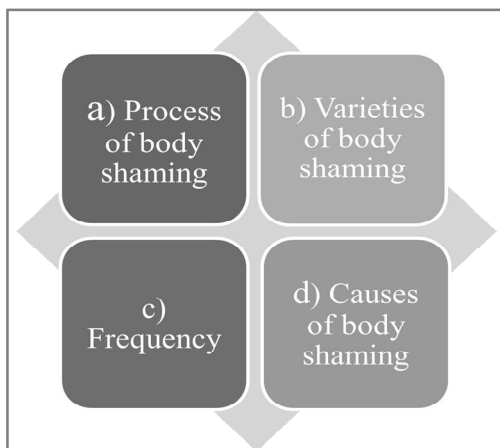
168 Body shaming is when someone publicly criticizes or comments on someone's body size,  
 169 size, or weight in a way that shames or humiliates them. Body shaming can take many  
 170 forms. The most common examples are described when people refer to someone by their  
 171 names as fat, thin, pigmy, etc. For instance, statements like "when did you become so fat?",  
 172 and "it would be nice if your skin color was a little brighter", like this- if you make any  
 173 comments or make criticism about someone's body size, volume, or weight in such a way  
 174 that the person feels ashamed or humiliated, then it is body shaming. Also, bashing about  
 175 one's external beauty, belittling oneself in comparison with someone else, and making  
 176 negative comments about one's physical shape behind someone's back are also forms of  
 177 body shaming. There are three types of people who participate in body shaming. Firstly,  
 178 People who is suffering from extreme inferiority and who find peace by hurting others  
 179 (usually victims of body shaming). Secondly, oblivious people who are unable or unwilling to  
 180 understand the consequences of saying something. These types of people do not think  
 181 about the consequences of the words that come out of them. Thirdly, really bad people who  
 182 love to hurt people for no reason. Most of us fall into category number two regarding body  
 183 shaming. After saying a word, there is no headache about its consequences. But they don't  
 184 care how much the words influence others for their irrelevant and unwise reactions (Tinni,  
 185 2018).

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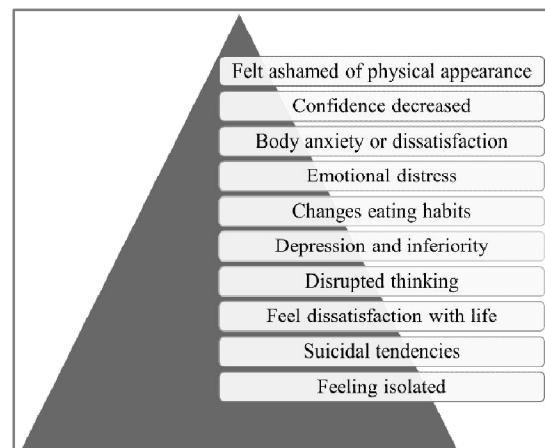
### 3.2 SocialMedia

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

193 **Fig 1: Prevalence of body shaming**



**Fig 2 Impacts of body shaming**



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### 4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Cultivation theory has been used as a theoretical framework for the study. This theory was first proposed in the 1960s by George Gerbner, an American professor, to examine the influence of television on viewers (Gerbner, 1969). His findings were further expanded and developed by American screenwriter Larry Gross (Gerbner and Gross, 1972). Cultivation theory was originally conceived on the effects of television but applies in many ways to social media. According to cultivation theory in social media, long-term exposure to social

202 media platforms shapes the perception of reality among its users, just like the effect of  
203 watching television over a longer period. Social media sites provide information,  
204 entertainment, and social interaction nowadays, much like television in the past. If people  
205 have started spending more time on social media, then they are exposed continuously to  
206 perfect content, and often portraying idealistic or distorted reality-like the perfect body image,  
207 luxurious lifestyle, or extreme opinions. According to cultivation theory, the more students  
208 are exposed to such content, the greater the chance that they will begin to accept these  
209 ideals as reality and judge both themselves and others based on these standards. This could  
210 give rise to other negative psychological effects, such as body dissatisfaction, low self-  
211 esteem, depression, that subsequently lead to body shaming or unhealthy comparisons. For  
212 example, if social media continuously portray a certain body type as ideal or perfect, then  
213 eventually, through such portrayals, the users would begin to internalize these ideals.  
214 Logically, cultivation theory posits that social media can cultivate a particular worldview  
215 among its users, just like television did, but maybe with much more influence because of the  
216 interactivity and pervasiveness of this media. The researcher felt this theory may provide an  
217 academic framework to reach any conclusion on this issue.

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## 219 **5. METHODOLOGY**

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

### 227 **5.1 Target Population**

228 This research has been conducted on the students at Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur  
229 (BRUR). According to the BRUR website, there are 22 departments under six faculties, with  
230 a total population of approximately 8,000. The Krejcie and Morgan sampling formula helps in  
231 determining the sample size needed to make accurate inferences about the population. This  
232 sampling formula states that if the population is 8000, sampling 381 respondents will  
233 normally give a fairly accurate result.

### 234 **5.2 Study Duration**

235 Data collection was conducted from June 8, 2024, to June 14, 2024, for one week.

### 236 **5.3 Survey Tool**

237 The survey was designed as a closed-ended questionnaire with 35 questions, including  
238 demographic inquiries.

### 239 **5.4 Data Collection**

240 The researcher distributed the questionnaire created through Google form to her known  
241 students and colleagues in each department of BRUR via the WhatsApp application. Those  
242 students and colleagues provide the link to students in their respective departments. During  
243 the survey, a total of 477 responses were collected.

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### 245 **5.5 Data Analysis**

246 This study uses a statistical software package followed by the Statistical Package for the  
 247 Social Sciences (SPSS 29 version). It has been used in frequency distribution, biplot, odds  
 248 ratio, correlation, and principal component analysis (PCA) in order to highlight the graphical  
 249 and tabular representation of data and information in the research.

## 250 5.6 Ethical Issues

251 The study maintained ethical guidelines throughout the whole research. On the other hand, it  
 252 was ensured proper channels and consent from the students throughout the data collection  
 253 process.

## 254 6. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

255 **Table 1. Demographic information of the students**

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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

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258 Table 1 presents the demographic details of the 477 students in the survey, which produces  
 259 a differentiated profile of the participants across sexes, age groups, and different educational  
 260 levels. The data reveals a slight female majority, accounting for 52.8% of the total; 252 of  
 261 these were females, while 224 (47%) were males. and 0.2% of the sample represented other  
 262 sexes. In terms of educational background, the largest proportion were relatively new  
 263 university students (28.9% with 138 for Honors 1st Year and 27.7% with 132 for Honors 2nd  
 264 Year). Only 17.8%, with 85, participated in Honors 3rd Year, and 6.3%, with 30, participated  
 265 in Honors 4th Year. It's worth mentioning that 19.3% (92) of the students are masters'  
 266 students, showing a significant number of advanced-level students. The 21–22 years age  
 267 group had the most significant proportion at 47.6% (227), closely followed by the 23–24  
 268 years (153) group at 32.1%. There were only very small numbers of both student groups, at  
 269 2.3% aged 17–18 years and 2.5% aged 25–26+ years.

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271 **Table 2. Social media usage patterns of the students**

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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	Facebook	402	84.3

using more?	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

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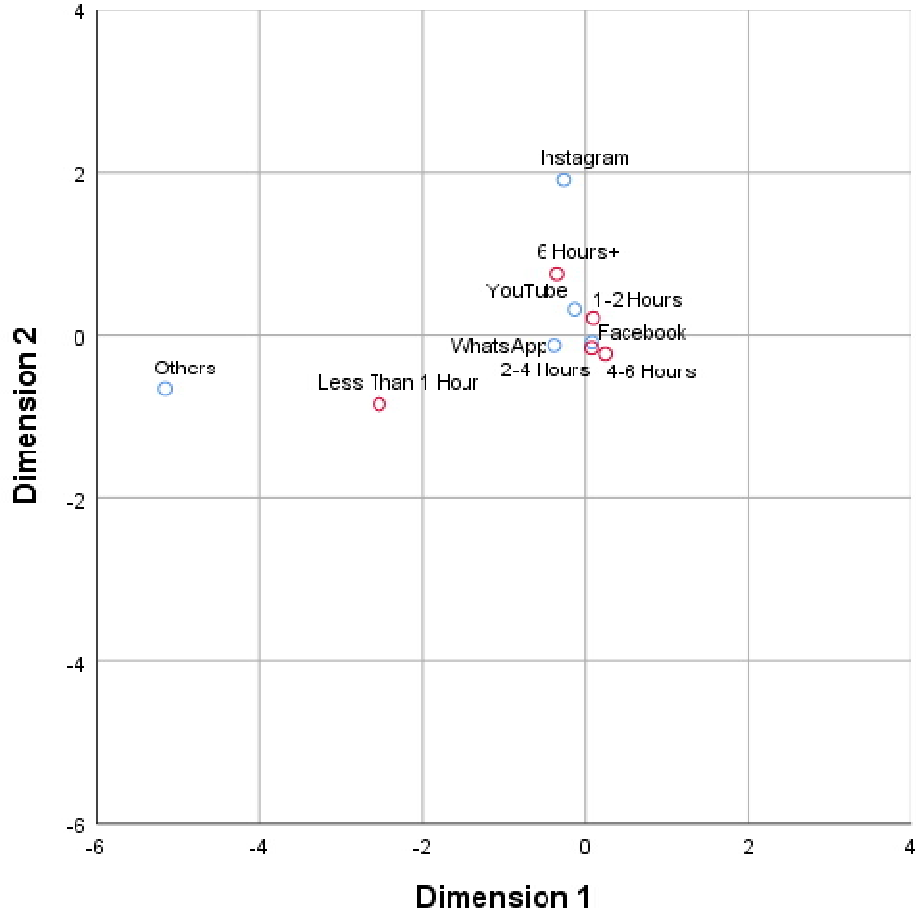
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Table 2 illustrates the details regarding the patterns of use of social media by the students. An overwhelming majority, 99.2%, have accounts on social media; only 0.6% do not have profiles on such media, while 0.2% marked not applicable. On preferred 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.

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**Chart 1. Correspondence analysis of social media usage versus time spent by students**



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289 The Correspondence Analysis Biplot shows diverse patterns in social media usage based on  
 290 how much time users spend on each platform. Instagram is noticeably segregated,  
 291 demonstrating a distinct usage pattern as compared to other platforms. Facebook is strongly  
 292 associated with longer usage times, particularly among users who spend 1-2 hours, 2-4  
 293 hours, and 4-6 hours or more online, indicating that this site dominates protracted  
 294 involvement. YouTube is closely associated with users who spend 6 hours or more on social  
 295 media, suggesting that this platform is favored by heavy users. WhatsApp is associated with  
 296 moderate usage, often about 2-4 hours, although the 'Less Than 1 Hour' and 'Others' groups  
 297 are separated from the main cluster, indicating a more infrequent usage pattern. This biplot  
 298 demonstrates the many links between social media platforms and user engagement levels,  
 299 providing insights into platform preferences depending on time spent online.

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**Table 3. The prevalence of body shaming among students**

Variables	Response	Through what means have you faced body shaming?				Total (%)
		Social media (%)	Face to face (%)	Others (%)	Not applicable (%)	

Have you faced body shaming?	Yes	204 (42.76)	102 (21.38)	10 (2.09)	1 (0.20)	317 (66.45)
	No	3 (0.62)	8 (1.67)	52 (10.90)	74 (15.51)	137 (28.72)
	Not applicable	3 (0.62)	3 (0.62)	7 (1.46)	10 (2.09)	23 (4.82)
What have you been body shamed for?	Body shape	54 (11.32)	18 (3.77)	3 (0.62)	0 (0)	75 (15.72)
	Skin color	29 (6.07)	15 (3.14)	5 (1.04)	0 (0)	49 (10.27)
	Weight	47 (9.85)	24 (5.03)	5 (1.04)	1 (0.20)	77 (16.14)
	Height	25 (5.24)	14 (2.93)	1 (0.20)	0 (0)	40 (8.38)
	Others	36 (7.54)	16 (3.35)	53 (11.11)	1 (0.20)	106 (22.22)
	Not applicable	19 (3.98)	26 (5.45)	2 (0.41)	83 (17.40)	130 (27.25)
How frequently have you experienced body shaming?	Always	3 (0.62)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (0.62)
	Often	11 (2.30)	6 (1.25)	0 (0)	0 (0)	17 (3.56)
	Sometimes	68 (14.25)	23 (4.82)	7 (1.46)	1 (0.20)	99 (20.75)
	Rarely	76 (15.93)	44 (9.22)	15 (3.14)	4 (0.83)	139 (29.14)
	Not applicable	52 (10.90)	40 (8.38)	47 (9.85)	80 (16.77)	219 (45.91)

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Table 3 shows that 66.45% (317) of students have faced body shaming and 28.7% (137) of students have never faced body shaming. Among them, most students, 42.76 % (204) faced body shaming through social media, 21.38% (102) face to face and 2.09% (10) through other means. The survey asked students why they faced body shaming. Most students, 11.32% (54) reported that they were body shamed for their body shape, 6.07% (29) for skin color, 9.85% (47) for weight, 5.24% (25) for height on social media as a high rate of result. When asked how frequently you have experienced body shaming; 0.62% (3) of the students said they faced body shaming always on social media. Besides that, 2.30% (11) often, 14.25% (68) sometimes, and 15.93% (76) of students rarely subjected themselves to body shaming on social media; with 9.22% (44) saying it rarely happens and 4.82% (23) of students saying it sometimes happens face to face.

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

Variables	Yes %	No %	Not applicable %	Odds (Yes/No)
Female	177 (37.11)	63 (13.21)	12 (2.52)	2.810
Male	139 (29.14)	74 (15.51)	11 (2.31)	1.878
Others	1 (0.21)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0.000

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318 Table 4 shows which students are more likely to face body shaming on social media among  
 319 females, males, and others. Here, 137 (37.11%) female students answered that they have  
 320 faced body shaming on social media, while 139 (29.14%) students and 1 (0.21%) students  
 321 of other gender have faced body shaming. Also, the odds of females saying yes to no  
 322  $177/63 = 2.810$ . Males' odds are  $139/74 = 1.878$ . Therefore, the odds ratio (OR) for females  
 323 saying 'yes' compared to 'no' is 1.493. Females were almost 1.5 times more likely to say yes  
 324 to body shaming on social media than males were.

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**Table 5. Process of body shaming on social media**

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Variables	Response	Yes	No	Not applicable	Odds (Yes/No)
Body shaming through comments	Female	47	166	39	0.283
	Male	64	131	29	0.489
	Others	0	1	0	0.000
	Total (%)	111 (23.27)	298 (62.47)	68 (14.26)	0.372
Body shaming through text messages	Female	96	118	38	0.814
	Male	69	122	33	0.566
	Others	0	1	0	0.000
	Total (%)	165 (34.59)	241 (50.52)	71 (14.88)	0.685
Body shaming through sending audio/videos	Female	42	172	38	0.244
	Male	43	144	37	0.299
	Others	0	1	0	0.000
	Total (%)	85 (17.82)	317 (66.46)	75 (15.72)	0.268
Body shaming through sending photos	Female	51	166	35	0.307
	Male	71	122	31	0.582
	Others	0	1	0	0.000
	Total (%)	122 (25.58)	289 (60.59)	66 (13.84)	0.422
Body shaming by relatives/friends through social media comments, text, audio, or video messages	Female	100	120	32	0.833
	Male	71	122	31	0.582
	Others	0	1	0	0.000
	Total (%)	171 (35.85)	243 (50.94)	63 (13.21)	0.704
Experienced face-to-face body shaming by relatives/friends after seeing your video, photo, or any post on social media	Female	85	134	33	0.634
	Male	75	114	35	0.658
	Others	0	1	0	0.000
	Total (%)	160 (33.54)	249 (52.20)	68 (14.26)	0.643

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Table 5 presents the details of various process through which body shaming takes place and compares the responses of females and males. This research has revealed that 23.27% of

330 students were faced with body shaming through comments, 34.59% through text messages,  
 331 17.82% through sending audio/videos, 25.58% through sending photos, 35.85% were faced  
 332 by relatives/friends through social media comments, text, audio, or video messages, and  
 333 33.54% were faced body shaming relatives/friends after seeing your video, photo, or any  
 334 post on social media. Also, the odds of females saying body shaming through text message  
 335 yes to no  $96/118 = 0.814$ . Males' odds are  $69/122 = 0.566$ . Therefore, the female odds ratio  
 336 (female/male) through text message is  $0.814/0.566 = 1.438$ , and relatives/friends'  
 337 comments, text, audio, or video messages is  $0.833/0.582 = 1.431$ , which indicates that  
 338 females were faced almost 1.5 times more body shaming through text message and  
 339 relatives/friends' comments, text, audio, or video messages on social media than males. On  
 340 the other hand, male odds ratios (male/female) are more likely to notice through comments  
 341 (OR =  $0.489/0.283 = 1.728$ ), sending audio/videos (OR =  $0.299/0.244 = 1.225$ ), sending only  
 342 photos (OR =  $0.582/0.307 = 1.896$ ), and experienced face-to-face body shaming by  
 343 relatives/friends after seeing your video, photo, or any post on social media (OR =  
 344  $0.658/0.634 = 1.038$ ). The finding indicates that males faced more than 1.5 times body  
 345 shaming through comments and sending audio/videos than females.

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 347 **Table 6. Impacts of body shaming on social media**  
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Variables	Response	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not applicable (%)	Odds (Yes/No)
Felt ashamed of your physical appearance because of body shaming (I1)	Female	103 (21.59)	90 (18.87)	59 (12.37)	1.144
	Male	79 (16.56)	94 (19.71)	51 (10.69)	0.840
	Others	0 (0.00)	1 (0.21)	0 (0.00)	0.000
	Total	182 (38.16)	185 (38.78)	110 (23.06)	1.985
Confidence decreased because of body shaming (I2)	Female	88 (18.45)	121 (25.37)	43 (9.01)	0.727
	Male	59 (12.37)	123 (25.79)	42 (8.81)	0.480
	Others	1 (0.21)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0.000
	Total	148 (31.03)	244 (51.15)	85 (17.82)	1.207
Suffered from body anxiety or dissatisfaction because of body shaming (I3)	Female	109 (22.85)	105 (22.01)	38 (7.97)	1.038
	Male	83 (17.40)	103 (21.59)	38 (7.97)	0.806
	Others	0 (0.00)	1 (0.21)	0 (0.00)	0.000
	Total	192 (40.25)	209 (43.82)	76 (15.93)	1.844
Suffered from emotional distress because of body shaming (I4)	Female	129 (27.04)	89 (18.66)	34 (7.13)	1.449
	Male	98 (20.55)	87 (18.24)	39 (8.18)	1.126
	Others	0 (0.00)	1 (0.21)	0 (0.00)	0.000
	Total	227 (47.59)	177 (37.11)	73 (15.30)	2.576
Any changes in your eating habits (I5)	Female	77 (16.14)	137 (28.72)	38 (7.97)	0.562
	Male	59 (12.37)	122 (25.58)	43 (9.01)	0.484
	Others	1 (0.21)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	0.000
	Total	137 (28.72)	259 (54.30)	81 (16.98)	1.046
Suffered from depression and inferiority (I6)	Female	115 (24.11)	103 (21.59)	34 (7.13)	1.117
	Male	74 (15.51)	112 (23.48)	38 (7.97)	0.661
	Others	0 (0.00)	1 (0.21)	0 (0.00)	0.000
	Total	189 (39.62)	216 (45.28)	72 (15.09)	1.777
Suffered from disrupted thinking (I7)	Female	110 (23.06)	107 (22.43)	35 (7.34)	1.028
	Male	79 (16.56)	106 (22.22)	39 (8.18)	0.745
	Others	0 (0.00)	1 (0.21)	0 (0.00)	0.000
	Total	189 (39.62)	214 (44.86)	74 (15.51)	1.773

Feel dissatisfaction with life (I8)	Female	88 (18.45)	129 (27.04)	35 (7.34)	0.682
	Male	59 (12.37)	130 (27.25)	35 (7.34)	0.454
	Others	0 (0.00)	1 (0.21)	0 (0.00)	0.000
	Total	147 (30.82)	260 (54.51)	70 (14.68)	1.136
Noticed any suicidal tendencies in yourself (I9)	Female	25 (5.24)	190 (39.83)	37 (7.76)	0.132
	Male	24 (5.03)	161 (33.75)	39 (8.18)	0.149
	Others	0 (0.00)	1 (0.21)	0 (0.00)	0.000
	Total	49 (10.27)	352 (73.79)	76 (15.93)	0.281
Feeling isolated from relatives/friends (I10)	Female	102 (21.38)	115 (24.11)	35 (7.34)	0.887
	Male	76 (15.93)	114 (23.90)	34 (7.13)	0.667
	Others	0 (0.00)	1 (0.21)	0 (0.00)	0.000
	Total	178 (37.32)	230 (48.22)	69 (14.47)	1.554

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Table 6 depicts that there are major negative impacts of body shaming on social media, while (47.59%) reported experiencing emotional distress as a direct result of body shaming. Furthermore, significant percentages of students reported feeling ashamed of their physical appearance (38.16%), decreased confidence (31.03%), body anxiety or dissatisfaction (40.25%), changing in eating habits (28.72%), depression and inferiority (39.62%), disrupted thinking (39.62%), feeling dissatisfaction with life (30.82%), noticing suicidal tendencies (10.27%), and feeling isolated from relatives/friends (37.32%). Also, the odds ratios (OR) comparing females and males experiencing various impacts of body shaming on social media. Further, when it is calculated the female to male odds ratio (female/male), it is found that females are more likely to say yes to a feeling ashamed of their physical appearance (OR = 1.144/0.840 = 1.362), decreased confidence (OR = 0.727/0.480 = 1.515), body anxiety or dissatisfaction (OR = 1.038/0.806 = 1.288), emotional distress (OR = 1.449/1.126 = 1.287), changing eating habits (OR = 0.562/0.484 = 1.161), depression and inferiority (OR = 1.117/0.661 = 1.690), disrupted thinking (OR = 1.028/0.745 = 1.380), feeling dissatisfaction with life (OR = 0.682/0.454 = 1.502), and feeling isolated from relatives/friends (OR = 0.887/0.667 = 1.330). On the other hand, male odds ratios (male/female) are more likely to notice suicidal tendencies (OR = 0.149/0.132 = 1.129) compared to females. These discrepancies highlight how body shaming impacts females and males differently, with females being more than 1.5 times more likely to report confidence decreased, suffering from depression, and feeling dissatisfaction with life, while males are more likely to report suicidal thoughts.

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**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).

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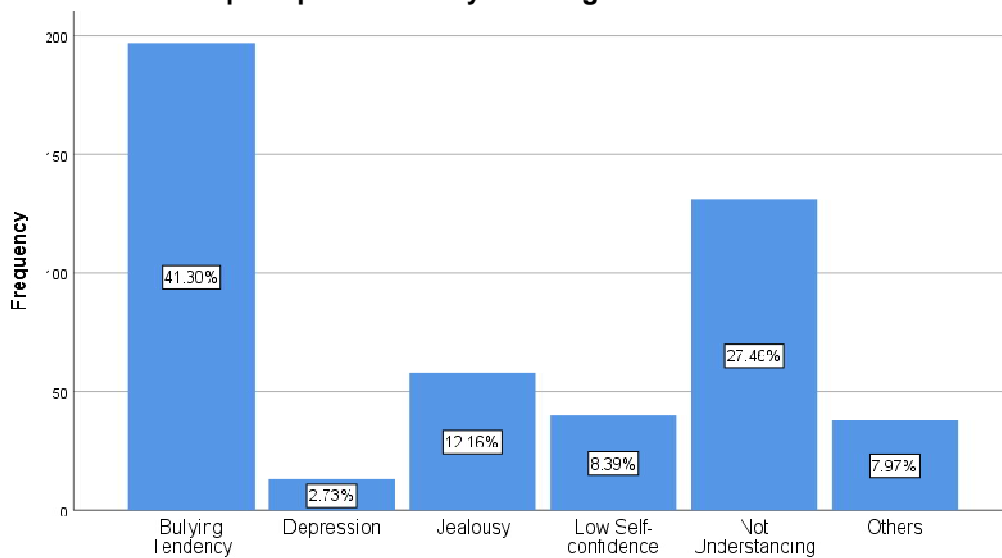
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Table 7 represents the Pearson correlations between different impacts of body shaming between pairs of variables. The finding shows that there is a high positive correlation between decreased confidence and both the shame of physical appearance and 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  $r = 0.749$ . The analysis also indicates that eating habits changes are often related with emotional distress ( $r = 0.682$ ) and body anxiety ( $r = 0.655$ ), suggesting that body shaming can lead to unhealthy eating patterns. It further brings out prominent interrelations between the feeling isolated from relatives or friends and other impacts, for instance, life dissatisfaction with  $r = 0.776$ , body anxiety or dissatisfaction with  $r = 0.734$ , and emotional distress with  $r = 0.737$ . This clearly establishes interlinkages for most of the negative body shaming outcomes, which have their pervasive impacts on both psychological and behavioral well-being.

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**Chart 2. Students' perceptions of body shaming for various reasons**



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A 6 items question was asked to understand students' perceptions of why people engage in body shaming. Chart 2 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, while 7.97% found it others way. The findings indicate that bullying tendencies, lack of understanding, jealousy, and a lack of self-confidence are the primary causes of body shaming.

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**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 (P1)	204	42.77	208	43.61	55	11.53	10	2.10	0	0.00

Body shaming situation is increasing day by day even offline due to social media (P2)	189	39.62	221	46.33	54	11.32	13	2.73	0	0.00
Body shaming affected a person's self-esteem (P3)	244	51.15	194	40.67	34	7.13	4	0.84	1	0.21
Body shaming lead to eating disorders, anxiety, body shape disturbances, depression, and trauma (P4)	234	49.06	195	40.88	42	8.81	6	1.26	0	0.00
Possible to mitigate body shaming situations on social media (P5)	154	32.29	226	47.38	66	13.84	28	5.87	3	0.63
Need laws to regulate body shaming situations through social media (P6)	224	46.96	186	38.99	55	11.53	11	2.31	1	0.21
Need awareness to control body shaming situations on social media (P7)	284	59.54	166	34.80	23	4.82	2	0.42	2	0.42
Necessary to take educational activities at school, college, university level to create awareness about body shaming (P8)	290	60.80	158	33.12	25	5.24	2	0.42	2	0.42

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Table 8 presents a clear and detailed overview of the students' perception regarding the prevalence and impact of body shaming on social media, showing a high level of concern and a perceived need for intervention. For instance, most of the students (strongly agree 42.77%, and agree 43.61%) 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 39.62% and agreed by 46.33%. Besides, 51.15% of the students strongly agreed and 40.67% agreed 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 49.06% strongly agree and 40.88% 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 32.29% who strongly agree and 47.38% agree, while a disproportionate extent of students (46.96% strongly agree and 38.99% agree) feel that laws are needed to regulate such situations. Moreover, the need for awareness campaigns is shown by 59.54% strongly agree, 34.80% agree, and 60.80% strongly agree that educational activities at school, college, and university levels are necessary to create awareness about body shaming.

**Table 9. Varimax rotated principal components analysis of the student' perceptions of body shaming**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Factors</b>
Body shaming situation is increasing day by day due to social media (P1)	0.727
Body shaming situation is increasing day by day even offline due to social media (P2)	0.768
Body shaming affected a person's self-esteem (P3)	0.693
Body shaming lead to eating disorders, anxiety, body shape disturbances, depression and trauma (P4)	0.740
Possible to mitigate body shaming situations on social media (P5)	0.561
Need laws to regulate body shaming situations through social media (P6)	0.738
Need awareness to control body shaming situations on social media (P7)	0.788
Necessary to take educational activities at school, college, university level to create awareness about body shaming (P8)	0.740

Initial Eigenvalues	4.175
% of Variance	52.184
Cumulative %	52.184

Scale: 1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neither agree nor disagree,  
4= Agree, 5= Strongly agree

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422 Table 9 presents the results of a Varimax rotated principal components analysis (PCA),  
 423 which was used to examine the correlation between students' perceptions about body  
 424 shaming on social media. In general, the loading scores are divided into three categories:  
 425 strong (>0.75), moderate (0.75-0.50), and weak (0.50-0.30). The highest loading factors  
 426 include the perception that awareness is needed to control body shaming situations on  
 427 social media (P7 = 0.788, strong) and body shaming situations are increasing day by day  
 428 even offline due to social media (P2 = 0.768, strong). Other significant factors include the  
 429 belief that body shaming affects a person's self-esteem (P3 = 0.693, moderate), can lead to  
 430 serious issues like eating disorders, anxiety, and depression (P4 = 0.740, moderate), the  
 431 necessity of laws to regulate body shaming through social media (P6 = 0.738, moderate)  
 432 and the importance of awareness and educational activities to control and mitigate body  
 433 shaming (P8 = 0.740, moderate) respectively. The PCA explained 52.184% of the total  
 434 variance, showing that these factors have a moderate influence on students' perceptions of  
 435 body shaming. The initial eigenvalue of 4.175 indicates that these components together  
 436 have a moderately significant explanatory power for students' attitudes towards body  
 437 shaming.

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## 7. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

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This study found that body shaming is a widespread problem among university students, with the majority of 66.45% reported having experienced it. The focus of this phenomenon is strongly associated with social media, particularly Facebook, where students are most likely to experience body shaming. The prevalence is aggravated by students' high engagement with social media platforms, with 42.3% spending 2-4 hours online and a significant number (13.6%) spending more than 6 hours per day. According to this study, 42.76% experienced body shaming on social media platforms, while 21.38% experienced it in face to face, 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. For university students, who are often active and engaged users of social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, this theory posits that their ongoing exposure to content that glorifies certain body types can cultivate a perception. This can be explained by several factors that may be responsible for the growing body-shaming on social media. Firstly, anonymity and detachment of online interactions make it much easier for people to get involved in body shaming. Secondly, these ideal body images, as depicted on social media, constantly expose users to negative body comparisons that further lead to the perpetuation of body shaming and internalization of these harmful standards by victims. These subjects create an environment where body shaming becomes normalized, further entrenching it as a societal issue.

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The findings of this study reveal significant gender differences in the experiences of body shaming. Specifically, 37.11% of the female students reported experiences related to body shaming on social media, compared to 29.14% of male students. Female to male students had an odds ratio of 1.493 regarding the experience of body shaming; in other words, female were almost 1.5 times more likely to experience body shaming compared to males. The most frequently reported reasons for body shaming were body shape (11.32%), weight

466 (9.85%), and height (5.24%), with social media being a particularly prevalent platform for  
467 these forms of shaming. The study also found that females were more likely to face body  
468 shaming through text messages and comments from relatives or friends on social media,  
469 with odds ratios of 1.438 and 1.431, respectively. Conversely, males were more likely to  
470 experience body shaming through comments (OR = 1.728) and sending audio/videos (OR =  
471 1.225). This disparity can be explained by the fact that women are subject to many societal  
472 expectations and pressures of compliance with certain physical standards. Women are  
473 judged more by their appearance, which shows in the higher rates of body shaming they  
474 experience. In patriarchal societies, such attitudes towards women have existed worldwide  
475 since ancient times, creating inferior images of women.

476 In this study, the impacts of body shaming were multifaceted. Nearly half of the students  
477 (47.59%) reported emotional distress, while 40.25% experienced body anxiety or  
478 dissatisfaction, 39.62% suffered from depression and inferiority and dissatisfaction with life  
479 (30.82%). The study found that female students not only face body shaming more frequently  
480 but also suffer more impacts. Females are 1.5 times more likely to suffer from decreased  
481 confidence, depression, and dissatisfaction with life due to body shaming compared to  
482 males. On the other hand, while male students reported body shaming less frequently, the  
483 study highlights a troubling trend where they are more likely to experience suicidal  
484 tendencies as a result of body shaming. This points to a different but equally serious  
485 psychological impact, suggesting that while the nature of body shaming might differ by  
486 gender, the consequences are universally damaging. The study's findings also highlight a  
487 concerning link between body shaming and suicidal tendencies, particularly among male  
488 students. The correlation analysis further supports the application of cultivation theory. There  
489 were strong correlations between decreased confidence and body anxiety or dissatisfaction,  
490 with  $r = 0.730$ , and emotional distress and depression, with  $r = 0.830$ . The correlation  
491 indicates that the extent to which students are increasingly exposed to body shaming  
492 content has the likelihood to cause them to internalize negative beliefs regarding their  
493 bodies, which leads to significant impacts. According to this discussion, cultivation theory  
494 provides a framework for understanding how media consumption can shape social reality  
495 and influence public perceptions over time.

496 Students' perceptions of body shaming revealed that 41.30% believed it stems from a  
497 bullying tendency towards others, while 27.46% believed that many people do body shaming  
498 unknowingly. A majority of the students strongly agreed and agreed, 51.15% and 40.67%,  
499 respectively, that body shaming is a serious issue that affects self-esteem and may further  
500 lead to serious mental health problems like eating disorders, anxiety, and depression. Most  
501 students have expressed their opinions that there ought to be legal provisions to deal with  
502 and limit body shaming on these social media sites. There is a strong consensus among  
503 students for increasing awareness and educational initiatives on the issue to combat body  
504 shaming. The strongest factor identified was the need for awareness to control body  
505 shaming situations on social media ( $P7 = 0.788$ ). Other significant factors included the belief  
506 that body shaming is increasing due to social media, both online and offline ( $P2 = 0.768$ ),  
507 and the necessity for laws to regulate body shaming ( $P6 = 0.738$ ). The PCA indicated that  
508 awareness, education, and legal measures are perceived as crucial in addressing body  
509 shaming among students.

## 510 **8. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

511 The world and the era that we live in have already turned into an age of information with the  
512 rapid exploration of information and communication technology (ICT). People are observing  
513 the positive and negative side impacts of ICT and different types of social media (Jaijaidin,

2023). The present study highlighted these negative aspects of social media in body shaming among students. In this study, social media have been identified as a significant catalyst in the increase in body shaming incidents. This detailed analysis delves into the prevalence, impacts, gender-differences experiences and students' perceptions of body shaming among 477 university students. This study found that body shaming is a prevalent issue among university students, particularly exacerbated by social media. Most female students who are active on social media often face body shaming more than male students. This research has shown that body shaming not only affects a large portion of the student community but also has severe impacts, especially in the case of female students. A majority of students stated that body shaming is on the rise due to social media, with which 42.77% have strongly agreed, and 43.61% have agreed. The findings of this study therefore slightly correlate with the findings in the studies conducted by Gam et al. (2020), Okoli et al. (2023), Mehedy (2022), Trisna (2019) and Melizza et al. (2023). The study not only identifies the prevalence and impacts of body shaming but also highlights the urgent need for multifaceted interventions to address this growing problem.

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.

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#### 544 **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

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

552

#### 553 **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

554

555 The researcher would like to thank the students at Begum Rokeya University, Rangpur for  
556 participating in this study and to be successfully completing the research within the time limit.  
557 The funding for this study was provided by Begum Rokeya University Rangpur, Bangladesh.

558 **DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)**

559

560 The researcher declares that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language  
561 Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc.) and text-to-image generators have been used during the  
562 writing or editing of manuscripts.

563

564 **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

565

566 The author declares that she has no conflict of interest.

567

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