



The Role of Body Shaming on Students' Self-Esteem at University Level

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ABSTRACT

Article History:

Received: Dec 17, 2025
Revised: Jan 18, 2026
Accepted: Jan 30, 2026
Available Online: March 30, 2026

Keywords: Body shaming, Self-esteem, Prevalence, Fat shaming, Thin shaming, Skin shaming, Hair shaming, University

Funding:

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Body shaming is a worldwide issue which is increasing rapidly in young adults due to the emergence of social media trends and cultural beauty norms. Body shaming affects the overall mental health of students including self-esteem. This research aims to study the prevalence of body shaming, to examine the role of body shaming on students' self-esteem, to examine the forms of body shaming, and to study the prevalence of body shaming with respect to demographic variables. A self-constructed questionnaire was used to collect data from a sample of 410 students from 3 public universities of Multan through convenient sampling technique. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used for data analysis. The conclusions drawn from the result revealed significant positive relationships among prevalence of body shaming, its various forms, and overall body shaming. Moreover, prevalence of body shaming significantly negatively predicts self-esteem. Similarly, fat/thin shaming also emerged as a significant negative predictor of self-esteem. Skin shaming was found to be a significant but weaker negative predictor of self-esteem, whereas hair shaming did not significantly predict self-esteem.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61503/ciissmp.v5i1.411>

Citation: Naseem, A., Munir, H., & Khadeeja. (2026). The role of body shaming on students' self-esteem at university level. *Contemporary Issues in Social Sciences and Management Practices*, 5(1), 297–314.

1.0 Introduction

Body works as a mechanism to interact with the world (De Boer & Aydin, 2025). Likewise, body has been the subject of people across all cultures to talk about, take pleasure in and disapprove. Everyone desires to get appreciated by society that whether he or she looks ‘perfect’ or not. Getting comments like “you look weak” or “you’ve gained lot of weight” while came across with someone after so long is very prevalent. These perspective and mentality are handed down in some way from generation to generation (Yadav, 2024). Similarly, body is considered an object of equal damage that takes away victims’ authority, ultimately affecting their relationship with one’s own body. Moreover, the body becomes an object of distress and uncertainty where there is no controlling on their own body (Rizk–Hildbrand et al., 2025).

In the period of rapid technology, the practice of judging someone on the basis of physical looks is increasing day by day (Ikmal & Holifah, 2024). Today’s younger generation is getting attracted by the emerging trends of beauty standards by content creators on social media which leaves negative impact on youngsters that in order to look “perfect”, one should look in a certain way. Those who do not meet societal and cultural standards were criticized due to their natural body. This mindset contributes to negative perception about body image of self and others which results in making body to an object of ridicule (Gam et al., 2020). Moreover, the physical development and societal pressure during young age is emotionally draining. Therefore youngsters in this age are very concerned about their looks (Novitasari & Hamid, 2021)

Body shaming is the action of exposing someone to guilt and censure due to his physical looks (Vijaykumar et al., 2023). Likewise, body shaming is the phenomenon of disapproving, taunting and expressing bad remarks. It also includes personal attacks and constant comparisons. It is very common in young age when self-esteem and body shape are extremely delicate concerns for everyone (Opesemowo & Taiwo, 2025). The issue of body shaming among youth has been popular for considerable period of time. Youths are repeated victims of body shaming (Radzi et al., 2021).

Self-esteem is the evaluation of an individual about oneself and how one appreciates himself, which can be good or bad. Self-esteem of an individual is shaped by the life sufferings. Among them, one is known as body shaming (Angelina et al., 2021). Self-esteem is the key element in shaping the personal identity and sense of self-worth and it has profound consequences on actions and reactions. If one learns to admire himself, he will ultimately value others (Melizza et al., 2023). Additionally, self-esteem is the indication of social inclusion. The acceptance and appreciation received from society strengthens self-esteem of an individual (Nashwa & Zuhara, 2025). Positive self-esteem brings positive outlook towards life and one can easily handle body shaming encounters and bullying threats (Saragih & Humaira, 2022).

Literature Review

The culture and way of life are highly developed over the course of time, from before the discovery of writing to today’s digital world. In a similar way, humans have always been mesmerized and get attracted to good looking things which vary from art to body image (Kinarish et al., 2022). Alluhidan et al. (2025) described in this regard that the criteria of beauty standards

are not fixed but keep getting transformed with the passage of time. It is not necessary that today's trends were also appreciated in the earlier times (Ifitania, 2021). In addition to this, beauty is indefinable. It varies across culture and transformed over the decade (Sangaralingam, 2022). Similarly, Siregar (2023) mentioned that, anyone with different background and age can become a victim of body shaming. It could happen directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously. In addition to this, Schulter et al. (2023) stated that body shaming varies from friendly suggestions to nasty comments. It could happen physically or virtually.

Moreover, Liu and Tang (2024) stated that the billboards, bulletins, latest fashion evolution and societal trends are continuously framing and inculcate convincing perception in people about flawless and idealistic figure. The standardized good looks for women is having a fair complexion, a pointed nose, a thin waist, breasts and buttocks that are well-balanced while beauty standardization in men are having a high body, slim and longer neck, hands, feet, hips, back and fine shoulders (Firdaus et al., 2023).

Body shaming comprises of unpleasant words and critique used to put others in shame and discomfort. The bad remarks include “your skin is too shiny!”, “you’re too short and ugly “, “you’re getting a bowl fuller and looking scarier to others now!”, “you’ve to exercise daily to be a little thin” and so forth (Shah et al., 2022). Likewise, some other examples may consist of mocking an individual for having below-average height, brown complexion or passing negative remarks for being fatty or skinny such as “if you fall, you’ll blow up like a balloon” (Lestari et al., 2023). Additionally, different kind of hurtful words such as overweight, acne prone, black person and other derogatory names are passed on someone’s physique. Similarly the different remarks one gets, changes according to body type which ranges from unappealing or unattractive facial features to a body that is obese or fatty (Ayu et al., 2022).

Body shaming occurs at all times without even knowing its impact on one’s feelings and emotions. The body shaming remarks becomes very heavy for anyone and nobody has an idea of sensitivity of the feelings of the victim (Dewi & Arsyi, 2022). In addition to this, body shaming comments make someone feel neglected and excluded. This rejection results in decreasing self-esteem. Thereby, the act of body shaming is regarded as the root cause of decreasing self-esteem (Nashwa & Zuhara, 2025). In a similar way, Tama and Baturaba (2024) also stated that younger generations who encountered body shaming feels dishonored, imperfect and they also face difficulty in connecting with other people due to low self-esteem which leads them to isolate themselves from the social gatherings. Due to the greater prevalence of body shaming in the society, people tend to have lower self-esteem (Wan, 2023). A research was conducted in this regard, researcher believed that body shaming negatively affects self-esteem of an individual which results in dissatisfaction among victims with their body shape and size (Evelianti et al., 2020).

Fauzia and Rahmiaji (2019) categorized body shaming into four forms. Fat shaming which consists of giving unfavorable remarks to those who have excess weight or obese physical shape whereas, thin shaming is the opposite of fat shaming. It includes negative comments directed to those who are underweight. Hair shaming based on passing negative remarks to those who have

excessive hair on their body, most particularly on arms and legs. Skin shaming involves judgment based on skin tone such as dark complexion and pale color.

Faisyah et.al (2025) conducted study at SMA PGRI Depok to investigate body shaming impact on self-esteem of students and its counseling implications. They mentioned that body shaming contributed 27.3% to self-esteem. Students who suffer from low self-esteem have lack of confidence, intense uncertainty and profound insecurity and become extremely delicate to negative assessment of their body from society. Moreover, body shaming is not cheerful taunting but it brings massive mental health issues. A survey conducted by Alini and Meisyalla (2021) noticed that all participants were involved in body shaming behavior either they are victim or perpetrators. This shows that most of the people are engaged in body shaming intentionally or unintentionally, by being a part of it or by suffering from it. Moreover, a study was conducted on youngsters in the Municipality of Midsayap to study the deleterious effect of body shaming. The findings revealed that body shaming brings chronic distress in mental, physical and social life of victim. Excessive or less body weight, irregular eating patterns, humiliating remarks, reduced self-esteem, mental problems and diverted mindset towards educational activities are some of the obstacles one came across due to body shaming (Pana et al., 2023).

Shyni and Bhardwaj (2025) conducted research on body shaming. Findings indicated that 67% of students encountered body shaming at least one time a year and 45% of students experienced body shaming repeatedly on daily or weekly basis. Moreover, Almas et al. (2021) stated that body shaming experiences forces people to modify their looks in order to get rid of body shaming experiences again. The modification process based on the type of body shaming that victim gets, which initiates from watching videos linked to style of living, attractiveness, skin care and beauty products to following influential person. Similarly, Hikmawati et al. (2023) conducted interviews with five respondents who described that body shaming brings negative implications on them. They declared that, with the intention of not facing body shaming experiences again and to achieve social recognition, they entangled in practices which includes looking after oneself, taking fitness supplements and even wearing double layering of clothes to look fuller.

The topic of body shaming has also become the focus of researchers in Pakistan. Waqar et al. (2023) led research to examine how emotional reactivity and body shaming affect young adults' self-esteem in the northern area "Malakand" of Pakistan. The findings showed that body shaming considerably reduced the self-esteem of youth. Further, Rafifah & Sianturi (2025) also found out significant relationship between body shaming and self-esteem. Additionally, another study conducted in Malaysia at university level to examine the experiences of victims. All the victims declared that the phenomenon of body shaming is a type of humiliation to their bodies. Moreover, body shaming has both positive and negative aspect. It relies on the victim, how they perceive this act (Sadli et al., 2022).

Statement of the Problem

In the education process, students are considered as essential component. The societal perception changes when students are in a transition period of becoming children to adults. It is

evident that physical body is observed while meeting someone. Some judgments are welcomed by others, while some are considered derogatory. These pessimistic evaluation leads to body shaming (Pulungan & Harahap, 2024). Moreover, in university setting, bodily features are getting a lot of attention as it presents an individual's whole personality. University students who are unable to meet those beauty standards receives negative comments in the form of body shaming and they started to feel insecure, less satisfied and more uncertain about their bodies (A Hamid et al., 2025).

Additionally, body shaming is a widespread issue among young adults because they are very much concerned about their diet, workout and style. Up to now, body shaming is unstoppable and continues to occur in this period of social media and disruption. The prevalence of body shaming is growing at a rapid pace because there are no policies and lack of awareness in the society. In view of all these aspects, it is essential to address the prevalence of body shaming, implications of body shaming on university students and how this issue can be resolved (Mondol, 2024). The collective effort is needed to enhance cognitive strength, self-worthiness and self-admiration among victims of body shaming (Lestari et al., 2023). Moreover, stopping the body shaming behavior also helps in breaking the widespread stigma of perfect model of body weight, established by society (Pana et al., 2023).

Further, smaller number of research is conducted at higher education in South, Punjab. This gap demands attention to investigate these variables at university level that generally remains unnoticed in comparison to teenagers. Therefore, this study aims to fill gaps in the literature by examining the role of body shaming on students' self-esteem, to study its prevalence, to examine forms of body shaming and prevalence of body shaming with respect to demographic variables.

Significance of the Study

This study assists students, educators, psychologists, parents, policy makers as well as society in reducing the impact of body shaming on students' self-esteem. Furthermore, this study also provides framework for future researchers to investigate more variables in this area of study and promote broader global awareness and targeted programs.

Research Objectives

1. To study the prevalence of body shaming among university students.
2. To examine the role of body shaming on students' self-esteem.
3. To examine the forms of body shaming experienced by university students.
4. To study the prevalence of body shaming among university students with respect to demographic variables (gender, body type and university).

Research Questions

1. How prevalent is body shaming among university students?
2. How does body shaming influence university students' self-esteem?
3. What are the forms of body shaming experienced by university students?
4. How prevalent is body shaming among students with respect to demographic variables (gender, body type and university)?

Methodology

This study adopts quantitative research approach and a descriptive survey design,

emphasizing on the collection and analysis of numerical data using quantitative techniques with SPSS.

Population

The population of this study comprised of 8,752 male and female students enrolled in BS, M.Phil or Ph.D program in Faculty of Social Sciences of three public sector universities including The Women University Multan, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan and Emerson University, Multan located in South Punjab, Pakistan.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

This study contained a sample of 410 students selected from the Faculty of Social Sciences of three universities. Total strength of students enrolled in Faculty of Social Science from all selected universities was collected from official university records. The combined strength of these students were calculated and considered as the total population for sample size determination. This overall population was entered into the RaoSoft calculator for a required sample size. The calculator showed a sample of 369 at a 95% confidence level, with 5% margin of error and 50% response distribution. The calculated sample size was 369 participants but it was extended to 410 in order to enhance the reliability of the data, to avoid difficulties related to incomplete or invalid responses and to get comprehensive data for more profound analysis of the study variables. The final sample size was then distributed proportionately among all selected universities, in accordance with their population size. Both male and female students were selected based on their availability and willingness to participate during the data collection period. However, one of the selected universities had only female students; therefore only female respondents were selected from that university. Total 190 boys and 220 girls participated in the study. Convenient sampling was used to collect data from selected sample size of students from each university.

Tool Development

The instrument was designed by the researcher herself on the basis of existing literature and previously validated tools (A Hamid et al., 2021; Faisyah et al., 2025; Gam et al., 2020; Geni & Dharnis, 2024; Jannat et al., 2025; Mustafa et al., 2022; Opesemowo & Taiwo, 2025; Rosenberg, 1965; & Tama & Baturaba, 2024). It consisted of 35 close-ended items measured on a 5-point Likert scale. It was structured into 5 sections related to research objectives. The reliability of the research instrument was ensured through pilot testing. The Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.862, which reflects good internal consistency and reliability of the instrument. The content validity was achieved through a thorough review of the research instrument by academic experts of department of education to ensure that all items were aligned with the research objectives and existing literature.

Data Collection

Data was collected from participants through a self-constructed questionnaire to examine the study variables through both in-person distribution of questionnaire and online data collection approach via Google form over the course of 1 month.

Data Analysis

Data collected from the participants were coded and entered into SPSS (Version 25).

Statistics approach is used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics like percentages and frequencies of demographic information and item-wise responses of participants were calculated. Inferential statistics like T-test, ANOVA, Correlation and regression were applied for further analysis.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1.1 Responses of the Participants to the Prevalence of Body Shaming

Items	SD f(%)	D f(%)	N f(%)	A f(%)	SA f(%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
Item 1	4(1.0%)	83(20.2%)	0	309(75.4%)	14(3.4%)	3.60	.87
Item 2	1(.2%)	122(29.8%)	8(2.0%)	267(65.1%)	12(2.9%)	3.40	.95
Item 3	1(.2%)	121(29.5%)	15(3.7%)	257(62.7%)	16(3.9%)	3.40	.96
Item 4	8(2.0%)	180(43.9%)	17(4.1%)	194(47.3%)	11(2.7%)	3.04	1.04
Item 5	4(1.0%)	199(48.5%)	7(1.7%)	180(43.9%)	20(4.9%)	3.03	1.07
Item 6	5(1.2%)	163(39.8%)	9(2.2%)	217(52.9%)	16(3.9%)	3.18	1.04
Item 7	5(1.2%)	200(48.8%)	5(1.2%)	198(48.3%)	2(.5%)	2.98	1.02
Item 8	3(.7%)	171(41.7%)	3(.7%)	215(52.4%)	18(4.4%)	3.18	1.05
Item 9	5(1.2%)	128(31.2%)	2(.5%)	257(62.7%)	18(4.4%)	3.37	1.01
Item 10	1(.2%)	98(23.9%)	4(1.0%)	285(69.5%)	22(5.4%)	3.55	.92
Item 11	4(1.0%)	145(35.4%)	1(.2%)	242(59.0%)	18(4.4%)	3.30	1.03
Item 12	1(.2%)	142(34.6%)	4(1.0%)	250(61.0%)	13(3.2%)	3.32	.99

Note. SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N= Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree; f = frequency; % = percentage

Table 1.1 shows responses of the participants to the prevalence of body shaming. Item 1 and Item 2 received general agreement responses; suggesting that more participants experienced body shaming and they have been compared because of their physical appearance. Item 3 demonstrates a moderate level of agreement among the participants related to statement about people’s judgment by their expressions. Item 4 and Item 5 indicates a neutral to slightly positive response from the participants related to statements about avoidance of social events and feeling pressurized of using beauty products. Item 6 shows a tendency toward agreement with the statement related to staying away from perpetrators. Item 7 indicates that respondents neither clearly agreed nor disagreed with the statement related to discrimination by teachers. Item 8 reflects a slightly positive perception among the participants related to statement about judgment based on physical looks instead of participants’ abilities. Item 9 suggests a clear tendency toward agreement among the participants related to statement about adoption of particular dressing styles. Item 10 shows a moderate high level of agreement with the statement related to belief about physical appearance. Item 11 demonstrates a positive attitude of participants toward the statement related to getting nick names. Item 12 suggests that participants had a reasonably positive perception of the statement related to impact on social interaction.

Table 1.2: Responses of the Participants to the Items of Forms of Body Shaming

Items	SD f(%)	D f(%)	N f(%)	A f(%)	SA f(%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
Item 13	4(1.0%)	181(44.1%)	3(.7%)	199(48.5%)	23(5.6%)	3.13	1.08
Item 14	4(1.0%)	183(44.6%)	2(.5%)	203(49.5%)	18(4.4%)	3.11	1.07
Item 15	6(1.5%)	230(56.1%)	7(1.7%)	162(39.5%)	5(1.2%)	2.82	1.01
Item 16	9(2.2%)	188(45.9%)	4(1.0%)	200(48.8%)	9(2.2%)	3.02	1.06
Item 17	3(.7%)	201(49.0%)	2(.5%)	197(48.0%)	7(1.7%)	3.00	1.03
Item 18	0(0%)	145(35.4%)	3(.7%)	250(61.0%)	12(2.9%)	3.31	.99

Note. SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N= Neutral, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree; f = frequency; % = percentage

Table 1.2 shows responses of the participants to the items of forms of body shaming. Item 13 and Item 14 demonstrates a slight positive attitude of participants toward the statements related to eating and exercising patterns and desire for changing looks. Item 15 indicates a slightly negative response, suggesting that respondents tend to disagree with the statement related to hair shaming. Item 16 demonstrates a neutral to slightly favorable attitude towards the statement about feeling less attractive due to prominent body hair. Item 17 indicates a balanced opinion among the participants related to statement about skin shaming. Item 18 suggests a slight tendency toward agreement among the participants towards the statement related to unwanted advices for improving skin tone.

Inferential Statistics

Table 2: Correlation between Body Shaming and Self-Esteem (N=410)

S.N	Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Prevalence		.575**	.230**	.362**	.581**	.907**	-.728**
2	Fat/thin shaming			.040	.259**	.667**	.651**	-.522**
3	Hair shaming				.302**	.639**	.390**	-.157**
4	Skin shaming					.742**	.545**	-.332**
5	Forms of body shaming						.782**	-.504**
6	Body shaming							-.717**
7	Self-esteem							

Note. N = 410. $p < .01$ (2-tailed). ** indicates statistical significance at the .01 level

The results indicated that prevalence of body shaming was positively and significantly associated with fat/thin shaming ($r = .58, p < .01$), hair shaming ($r = .23, p < .01$), skin shaming ($r = .36, p < .01$), overall forms of body shaming ($r = .58, p < .01$) and body shaming ($r = .91, p < .01$). Furthermore, prevalence of body shaming was negatively associated with self-esteem ($r = -.73, p < .01$). Fat/thin shaming demonstrated significant positive correlations with skin shaming ($r = .26, p < .01$), overall forms of body shaming ($r = .67, p < .01$), and body shaming ($r = .65, p < .01$). However, its relationship with hair shaming was not significant ($r = .04, p = .414$). Fat/thin shaming was also negatively correlated with self-esteem ($r = -.52, p < .01$). Hair shaming was positively associated with skin shaming ($r = .30, p < .01$), overall forms of body shaming ($r = .64, p < .01$) and body shaming ($r = .39, p < .01$). A weak but significant negative relationship was found between hair shaming and self-esteem ($r = -.16, p = .001$). Skin shaming was positively correlated with overall forms of body shaming ($r = .74, p < .01$) and body shaming ($r = .55, p <$

.01), while showing a significant negative association with self-esteem ($r = -.33, p < .01$). Overall forms of body shaming exhibited a strong positive relationship with body shaming ($r = .78, p < .01$) and a moderate negative relationship with self-esteem ($r = -.50, p < .01$). In addition, body shaming was strongly and negatively associated with self-esteem ($r = -.71, p < .01$).

Overall, the results indicate that participants who experienced higher levels of body shaming and its different forms tended to have lower self-esteem. The strongest negative relationship was observed between prevalence of body shaming and self-esteem ($r = -.73$), showing that as experiences of body shaming increase, self-esteem tends to decrease.

Table 3.1 Model Summary of Multiple Regression Predicting Self-Esteem (SE)

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SE of Estimate
.742	.551	.547	4.67

Note. Dependent Variable = Self-Esteem. R = Multiple Correlation Coefficient; R² = Coefficient of Determination; Adjusted R² = Adjusted Coefficient of Determination; SE = Standard Error of the Estimate

Table 3.1 shows the model summary of the regression analysis. The findings indicate that prevalence of body shaming, fat/thin shaming, hair shaming, and skin shaming were strongly associated with self-esteem. Together, these variables explained 55.1% of the variation in self-esteem among participants.

Table 3.2 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Multiple Regression Predicting Self-Esteem

Source	SS	df	MS	F	<i>p</i>
Regression	10846.01	4	2711.50	124.30	<.001
Residual	8834.82	405	21.81	—	—
Total	19680.82	409	—	—	—

Note. Dependent Variable = Self-Esteem. SS = Sum of Squares; df = Degrees of Freedom; MS = Mean Square; F = F Statistic; *p* = Probability Value

Table 3.2 shows the results of the ANOVA test for the regression model. The findings showed that the overall model was statistically significant, $F(4,405) = 124.30, p < .001$. This means that prevalence of body shaming, fat/thin shaming, hair shaming, and skin shaming together significantly predicted self-esteem.

Table 3.3: Regression Coefficients for Predicting Self-Esteem (N=410)

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	<i>p</i>	95% CI	
						LL	UL
Constant	56.53	1.31	—	43.09	<.001	53.95	59.11
Prevalence	-0.548	0.038	-.620	-14.43	<.001	-0.62	-0.47
Fat/thin shaming	-0.494	0.139	-.147	-3.57	<.001	-0.77	-0.22
Hair shaming	0.052	0.132	.014	0.40	.693	-0.21	0.31
Skin shaming	-0.285	0.143	-.074	-2.00	.046	-0.57	-.005

Note. Dependent Variable = Self-Esteem. B = Unstandardized Regression Coefficient, SE B = Standard Error of B; β = Standardized Regression Coefficient; t = t Statistic; *p* = Probability Value; CI = Confidence Interval; LL = Lower Limit; UL = Upper Limit

Table 3.3 presents the regression coefficients for the predictors of self-esteem. The results

showed that prevalence of body shaming significantly and negatively predicted self-esteem ($\beta = -.620, p < .001$), indicating that higher levels of body shaming were associated with lower self-esteem. Fat/thin shaming also significantly and negatively predicted self-esteem ($\beta = -.147, p < .001$). Similarly, skin shaming was a significant negative predictor of self-esteem ($\beta = -.074, p = .046$). However, hair shaming was not a significant predictor of self-esteem ($\beta = .014, p = .693$). Overall, the findings indicate that prevalence of body shaming, fat/thin shaming, and skin shaming were associated with lower self-esteem, whereas hair shaming was not significantly associated with self-esteem.

Table 4

Independent Sample T-test based on Gender of Participants (N=410)

Variables	Male (n=190)		Female (n=220)		Std.Error Mean		t(408)	P
	M	SD	M	SD	Male	Female		
Body Shaming	76.87	11.28	81.90	11.32	.81	.76	-4.49	.00
Prevalence of Body shaming	38.40	7.38	40.26	8.15	.53	.54	-2.41	.01

Table 4 shows the result of independent sample t-test which examine gender difference in body shaming and prevalence of body shaming. The results indicates the statistically gender difference in body shaming scores. Female participants (mean=81.90, SD=11.32) reported significantly higher body shaming scores as compared to male participants (M=76.87, SD=11.28). Similarly, a significant gender difference was found in the prevalence of body shaming. Female participants (M=40.26, SD=8.15) reports significantly higher on prevalence of body shaming than male participants (M=38.40, SD=7.38). Overall, the findings suggest that female participants experience greater body shaming and higher prevalence of body shaming as compared to male participants.

Table 5 *One-way ANOVA Analysis for BODY TYPE (N=410)*

Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Between Groups	3489.91	3	1163.30	21.72	.00
Prevalence of Body Shaming	Within Groups	21744.68	406	53.55		
	Total	25234.59	409			

Table 5 shows One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine differences in prevalence of body shaming across body type categories (underweight, normal, overweight and obese). The results revealed a statistically significant effect of body type on prevalence of body shaming, $F(3,406) = 21.72, p < .00$ $F(3,406) = 21.72, p < .00$ $F(3,406) = 21.72,$

$p < .00$. This indicates that at least one body type group differed significantly from the others in terms of perceived prevalence of body shaming.

Table 6 *Post-Hoc Analysis for Differences in Body Type (N=410)*

Variables	Groups Comparison		MD	SE	95% CI	
					LL	UL
Prevalence of Body Shaming	Underweight	Normal	5.14*	0.90	2.81	7.47
	Normal	Overweight	-5.75*	0.95	-8.20	-3.31
	Overweight	Obese	-8.20*	1.71	-12.62	-3.79

Post-Hoc comparisons using Tukey’s HSD test were conducted to determine which body type groups differed significantly in prevalence of body shaming. The results indicated that participants with a normal body type reported significantly lower prevalence of body shaming as compared to underweight, overweight and obese participants ($p < .001$). Additionally, underweight participants reported significantly higher prevalence of body shaming as compared to normal-weight participants ($p < .001$). Overall, these findings suggest that body type is a significant factor in the perceived prevalence of body shaming, with normal-weight individuals reporting comparatively lower level.

Table 7 *One-way ANOVA for Prevalence of Body Shaming across Universities (N=410)*

Variables		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Prevalence of body shaming	Between Groups	852.76	2	426.38	7.11	.001
	Within Groups	24381.83	407	59.90		
	Total	25234.59	409			

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine differences in the prevalence of body shaming across universities. The results indicated a statistically significant difference among universities, $F(2,407) = 7.11, p = .001$. This suggests that the prevalence of body shaming varies significantly depending on the university attended by students.

Table 8: Tukey HSD Post-Hoc Comparisons for Prevalence of Body Shaming across Universities (N=410)

Variables	Group Comparison	MD	SE	LL	95% CI UL
Prevalence of body shaming	The Women University, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan	3.53*	.93	1.32	5.73
	Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan	-3.53*	.93	-5.73	-1.32

Tukey HSD post-Hoc test was conducted to further examine pairwise differences in the prevalence of body shaming across universities. The results indicated a statistically significant difference between The Women University, Multan and Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan (Mean Difference = 3.53, $p = .001$, 95% CI [1.32, 5.73]). This suggests that students from The Women University, Multan reported significantly higher prevalence of body shaming as compared to Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan.

Discussion

The results of this study align with the quantitative study. The results revealed that several students at campus experienced fat shaming and thin shaming from public at large and also encountered negative review about their body shape. These experiences reduced self-esteem of students and they started to feel embarrassed (Fadhillah, 2025). Similar findings were reported by Hidayat et al. (2019) that body shaming leaves undesirable effect on those who have been victimized. The experiences of body shaming influenced eating patterns and develop feeling of inadequacy among participants. In the same way, the results of this study also aligns with Rahmadhani (2023) who reported that different people received different kinds of humiliation or sarcasm and other offensive remarks based on their physical looks (for being fatty or skinny or having dark complexion). Body shaming has an impact on behaviors of participants. They maintain distance from the person who ridicules them. Further, participants wished to improve their outer look because they were embarrassed of their bodies due to frequent exposure of mocking.

The findings are also comparable to Geni and Daharnis (2024). They concluded that, the students who encountered body shaming frequently has low self-confidence as compared to those who are not being body shamed. Moreover, this study is in line with the work of Kamila (2023) who stated that body shaming has negative consequences which includes isolating oneself from social relationship and stop loving one self. In a similar way, This study is also in support with Saifudin et al. (2022) who observed that different forms of body shaming like fat shaming, hair shaming and height or weight shaming are prevalent and people are mocked, embarrassed and teased due to their body size.

Similar findings were reported by Okoli et al. (2023) that the prevalence of body shaming in girls is higher than boys. Further, the findings are also similar with Bharadwaj et al. (2022) that

most of the individual received unsolicited advices to improve their looks just because their body type is fatty or skinny or unbalanced. This study also agrees with the work of Chirayath and Premamalini (2024) that body shaming triggers self-esteem. About 60% of the participants admit that they compare their bodies to others and face social anxiety. Moreover, this study is also comparable to Femi-Aderinto (2025) who found that respondents questioned their self-identity and sense of self-worth, faced profound sentiments and behavioral ramifications, often sinks into despair or in dark mood and their participation in community is reduced. In the same manner, the findings of this study were in agreement with a study of Azzahra and Daulay (2025). Their findings showed meaningful relationship between self-esteem and body shaming such as increasing body shaming behavior will result in decreasing self-esteem

Furthermore, the findings of this study are consistent with Astuti and Daud (2024). Based on their findings, 74% participants encountered body shaming in face-to-face conversation. Different forms of body shaming were also common such as participants were body shamed due to their fatty body, skinny body and due to their skin tone. As a result, respondents pursued severe diet, do not like physique of their body, not confident and self-doubted their bodies. However, the results of this study differ from the study of Derang et al. (2023) which concluded that there is no relationship between body shaming and self-esteem in students.

Limitations

This study is limited by a specific time frame of M.Phil degree which restricts to examine the long-term observation of body shaming on self-esteem. This study used self-administered questionnaire to collect data from students which can be biased and limits the ability to represent actual behavior and feelings of participants. This study is also limited by small sample size due to limited resources which may affect the generalizability of the findings.

Conclusion

The results revealed significant positive relationships among prevalence of body shaming, its various forms, and overall body shaming. Moreover, prevalence of body shaming and fat/thin shaming significantly negatively predicts self-esteem. Skin shaming was found to be a significant but weaker negative predictor of self-esteem, whereas hair shaming did not significantly predict self-esteem. These findings suggest that greater experiences of body shaming are associated with lower levels of self-esteem among participants.

Furthermore, it was also found that female participants face more body shaming experiences than male participants. The results also reported that participants with a normal body type showed significantly lower prevalence of body shaming as compared to underweight, overweight and obese participants. Furthermore, students from The Women University, Multan reported significantly higher prevalence of body shaming as compared to Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan.

Recommendations

Based on findings it is recommended that universities should arrange educational programs and workshops to bring awareness in students about the detrimental effects of body shaming. Counseling and mental health services should be offered to those students who possess low self-

esteem due to frequent body shaming. Educational institutions should promote inclusivity and implement strict disciplinary actions against perpetrators of body shaming.

Contribution

Ayesha Naseem: Problem Identification and Theoretical Framework

Hina Munir: Methodology and Drafting

Khadeeja: Data Analysis

Conflict of Interests/Disclosures

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest in this article's research, authorship, and publication.

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