



The Silent Erosion: Investigating Body Shaming's Influence on Student Self-Esteem and Its Counseling Implications at SMA PGRI Depok

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the significant contribution of body shaming to self-esteem among students at SMA PGRI Depok. This was a quantitative, correlational study that employed a simple linear regression analysis technique. A sample of 138 students from the total population in classes ten and eleven was selected using a simple random sampling method. Research instruments, in the form of questionnaires, underwent validity and reliability testing using SPSS Statistics version 20. For the body shaming instrument, all 40 items were found valid ($r > r_{table}$ (0.238), $p < 0.05$), yielding a reliability (Cronbach Alpha) of 0.950. For the self-esteem instrument, all 20 items were valid ($p < 0.05$), with a reliability of 0.888. The findings revealed that the coefficient of determination (R^2) for body shaming was 0.273. This indicated that body shaming contributed 27.3% to self-esteem, while 72.7% of the remaining variance was influenced by other factors. It was concluded that a higher experience of body shaming among students led to lower levels of self-esteem at SMA PGRI Depok.

Keywords:

Body Shaming
Self-Esteem
Adolescent Students

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Introduction

In the contemporary era, the ideal body standard has emerged as a significant social benchmark, frequently imposing considerable pressure, particularly within educational settings. This standard often dictates that females should possess a slender, curvaceous, and healthy physique, while males are considered ideal with a muscular and robust build (Kinarsih et al., 2022). Discrepancy from these societal norms often triggers body shaming, defined as the verbal humiliation directed towards an individual's body (Oxford Dictionary). Such treatment frequently has a detrimental impact on the victim's self-esteem (Nurfitri et al., 2023). Indeed, studies by Nasution & Simanjuntak (2020) have specifically indicated that body shaming significantly contributes to a decrease in adolescent self-esteem, with their findings showing it accounts for a measurable percentage of this reduction. The pervasive phenomenon of body shaming can lead to traumatic experiences for those subjected to it (Hidayat et al., 2019). Komalasari & Marwan (2021) even indicate that this behavior is prevalent in society, especially affecting women, and contributes to diminished self-confidence. Adolescents are also frequently targets of body shaming, which leads to dissatisfaction with their physical appearance (Mailiza et al., 2022). Unsolicited judgments about one's body from others pose significant problems, primarily resulting in low self-esteem and reduced self-confidence (Bahri, 2024). Murni & Ulandari (2023) affirm that body shaming profoundly affects an individual's mental and psychological state, potentially disrupting daily life.

The prevalence of body shaming is particularly acute in Indonesia. Azizah et al., (2024) reported a substantial increase in cases from 206 in 2015 to 966 in 2018. Furthermore, the ZAP Beauty Index 2020 survey indicated that 62.2% of Indonesian women had experienced body shaming (Wiliyana & Nuryadi, 2024). The impact of body

shaming is significant across psychological, physical, and emotional dimensions, primarily leading to a decline in self-esteem. This issue underscores a lack of positive affirmation received by individuals, contributing to a prevalence of low self-esteem exceeding 30% in Indonesia (Nurhidayat, 2024). Among adolescents, self-esteem levels are reported to range from low to moderate (Putri et al., 2024). Adding to its severity, body shaming is widely recognized as a form of verbal bullying that persists in various environments, including families, communities, and schools (Ningsih, 2023). Reyes and Acuña (Fitriyanti & Syahputra, 2024) state that individuals who engage in bullying are generally young people seeking to demonstrate dominance over others. They achieve this through various actions such as threats, insults, physical assaults, or continuous coercion. Furthermore, Fitriyanti & Syahputra (2024) also declare that body shaming, as a form of verbal bullying, correlates with an increased risk of poor mental health issues like impaired self-esteem and low life satisfaction.

Sabilah N., H., Syahputra Y., Mulyadi M. (2025) stated that self-esteem is a crucial factor determining a person's success in interacting and adapting within their social environment. How individuals evaluate themselves directly impacts their social interactions and adjustments. People with high self-esteem tend to be satisfied with their own capabilities and feel positively appreciated by those around them, which ultimately facilitates their social adaptation. Moreover, Sabilah N., H., Syahputra Y., Mulyadi M., (2025) emphasize that self-esteem cannot be formed without an individual's self-respect. They stress that self-esteem is not a commodity that can be bought or sold, nor can its value be determined by monetary worth. Instead, a person's level of self-esteem stems from how they learn to respect and treat themselves through life's various experiences. Building on this understanding, other prominent scholars have also defined and elucidated the components of self-esteem.

Rosenberg (Mruk, 2006) defined it as a self-evaluation encompassing a sense of appreciation for and belief in one's capabilities. Branden (Mruk, 2006) identified two primary components of self-esteem: competence and a sense of being worthy of respect. Adolescents with high self-esteem tend to be confident and maintain a positive outlook, whereas low self-esteem can manifest as feelings of worthlessness, social withdrawal, and hindered personal development. Self-esteem is also considered a fundamental element in personality formation; an inability to value oneself can impede an individual from gaining respect from others (Rachel, 2018). Positive evaluations from one's environment can foster healthy self-esteem, conversely, a lack of appreciation and acceptance can lead to low self-esteem (Nuraeni & Mastari, 2022). Muris & Otgaar (2023) further posited that self-esteem serves as an emotional gauge, continuously monitoring and reacting to signals of social acceptance or rejection.

Various factors influence self-esteem, including parenting styles, social interactions, school environment, personal beliefs, and life experiences (Angelina et al., 2021). Kim and Moore (Tanoko, 2021) asserted that low self-esteem can precipitate anxiety, depression, eating disorders, loneliness, and a negative self-perception, leading individuals to feel rejected. Among these factors, body shaming stands out as a significant cause of declining self-esteem in schools, where physical taunts such as "fat" or "skinny" can be psychologically damaging (Murni & Ulandari, 2023). Frederick and Robert (Maimunah, 2023) indicated that body shaming causes individuals to feel they do not conform to societal standards, thereby diminishing their self-perception. While prior research, such as that by Nasution & Simanjuntak (2020) on junior high school students, has established the detrimental link between body shaming and self-esteem, there remains a specific gap in understanding this dynamic within the distinct context of senior high school students at SMA PGRI Depok. Furthermore, this study aims to provide localized insights that can directly inform and strengthen guidance and counseling interventions specifically tailored for students in this particular educational setting.

Given the urgency of this issue, this research aims to analyze the influence of body shaming on student self-esteem and its implications for guidance and counseling. This study is crucial for a deeper understanding of how negative interactions, specifically body shaming, affect the psychological well-being and self-esteem of students, particularly within the school setting. Furthermore, this research will explore how guidance and counseling interventions can be effectively designed and implemented to mitigate the detrimental effects of body shaming and support the enhancement of student self-esteem. We hypothesize that body shaming has a significant negative influence on student self-esteem. In this study, body shaming will be investigated as the independent variable, while student self-esteem will serve as the dependent variable. This research will employ a quantitative approach, utilizing questionnaire instruments administered to students via Google Forms for data collection. The findings from this study are expected to contribute significantly to the development of more comprehensive

guidance and counseling programs and to foster greater awareness within schools regarding the importance of cultivating an inclusive environment that values individuals and their mental health.

Methods

This study employed a quantitative, correlational design conducted among students at SMA PGRI Depok. The study's population comprised all 211 students in classes X and XI at SMA PGRI Depok. A sample of 138 students was selected from this population using a simple random sampling technique, which ensured that each student had an equal probability of inclusion in the sample. The sample size of 138 was determined by calculating from the total population of 211 students using Slovin's formula. Data collection was facilitated through the distribution of online questionnaires via Google Forms. The questionnaire consisted of two primary instruments: a body shaming scale and a self-esteem scale. Both questionnaires utilized a 4-point Likert scale, with response options indicating levels of agreement or frequency, such as "Strongly Agree," "Agree," "Disagree," and "Strongly Disagree" or their equivalent.

The body shaming instrument was adapted and modified based on the internal and external body shaming aspects delineated by Duarte et al., (2017). Conceptualized as the act of demeaning or negatively commenting on someone's physical appearance, this scale measures two primary aspects: (a) external body shaming, which encompasses negative judgments, criticism, or humiliation received from others regarding one's physical appearance; and (b) internal body shaming, referring to an individual's self-directed negative thoughts or feelings about their own body, including discomfort, shame, or dissatisfaction that may lead to social avoidance.

The self-esteem instrument was adapted from Rosenberg's scale, which was subsequently modified to reflect individual self-acceptance and self-worth aspects. This scale measures self-esteem as an individual's overall attitude towards themselves, encompassing both positive and negative evaluations. Specifically, it assesses two key aspects: (a) self-competence, defined as an individual's ability to accept themselves with their strengths and weaknesses, independent of external standards or criticism; and (b) self-liking, which is the belief in one's inherent value, competence, and deservingness of respect and recognition.

Prior to the main data collection, the instruments underwent validity and reliability testing using SPSS Statistics version 20 software. For the body shaming instrument, all 40 items were found valid ($r > r_{table}$ (0.238), $p < 0.05$), and its reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.950, indicating excellent internal consistency (exceeding the 0.60 criterion). Similarly, the reliability analysis for the self-esteem instrument, all 20 items were found valid ($r > r_{table}$ (0.238), $p < 0.05$), with a reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) of 0.888. This demonstrated that the self-esteem instrument was also highly reliable and of good quality for measuring the respective variable. Following data collection, analysis was performed using SPSS software, employing simple linear regression analysis to quantify the influence of body shaming on student self-esteem.

Results and Discussion

The results of this study include a description of the characteristics of the body shaming variable and the self-esteem variable, as well as an analysis of the influence of body shaming on self-esteem, which will be tested using simple linear regression as a hypothesis test. However, before that, the data distribution characteristics based on students' self-esteem scores can be visually examined through the following table of categorization of data on body shaming which presented in table 1.

Table 1. Categorization of Body Shaming

Category	Interval Score	Frequency	(%)
Very High	≥ 135	4	3
High	112-135	42	30
Moderate	88-111	43	31
Low	64-87	41	30
Very Low	≤ 64	8	6
Jumlah		138	100

Source: Primary Data from Researcher



Based on Table 1, it was determined that 4 students (3%) experienced very high body shaming, 42 students (30%) experienced high body shaming, 43 students (31%) experienced moderate body shaming, while 41 students (30%) experienced low body shaming, and 8 students (6%) experienced very low body shaming. It can be concluded that the majority of students fell into the moderate to high categories of body shaming experience, with a combined total of 89 students (64.5%). This indicates that the phenomenon of body shaming is considerably prevalent among students at moderate to high levels.

Specifically, students categorized with a moderate level of body shaming likely experience occasional negative comments or a noticeable degree of self-dissatisfaction related to their body. Those in the high category are subjected to more frequent or impactful body-shaming behaviors from others, or harbor significant internal dissatisfaction. Meanwhile, students in the very high category are likely enduring severe and persistent forms of body shaming, which may significantly impact their psychological well-being and daily functioning.

Table 2. *Categorizations of Self-Esteem*

Category	Interval Score	Frequency	(%)
Very High	≥ 67	3	2%
High	56-67	26	19%
Moderate	44-55	49	36%
Low	33-43	57	41%
Very Low	≤ 32	3	2%
Jumlah		138	100%

Source: Primary Data from Researcher

Based on Table 2, it was found that 3 students (2%) exhibited very high self-esteem, 26 students (19%) had high self-esteem, 49 students (36%) possessed moderate self-esteem, 57 students (41%) had low self-esteem, and 3 students (2%) displayed very low self-esteem. It is concluded that students' self-esteem levels predominantly fall into the low to moderate categories, with 41% of students reporting low self-esteem and 36% at a moderate level. This indicates that a substantial proportion of students have not yet developed strong self-esteem or self-worth. These findings suggest a potential correlation between high body shaming experiences and lower levels of self-esteem among students.

Specifically, students displaying low self-esteem likely exhibit significant self-doubt, feelings of inadequacy, and may be highly sensitive to negative evaluations from others. Those with very low self-esteem would likely experience profound feelings of worthlessness and may struggle significantly with self-acceptance. Students with moderate self-esteem probably possess a foundational sense of self-worth but might still be somewhat susceptible to external influences or occasional self-doubt. While a smaller proportion, students with high or very high self-esteem generally demonstrate strong confidence in their abilities and value, showing resilience to challenges and a consistent sense of self-acceptance. These findings suggest a potential correlation between high body shaming experiences and lower levels of self-esteem among students.

Table 3. *Coefficient of Determination Table Results*

Model Summary		
Model	R	R Square
1	.0483	.273

Source: Researcher (SPSS Version 20)

Based on the model summary table above, the influence of body shaming on self-esteem is indicated by an R-value of 0.483. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination, or R-Square, was found to be 0.273, which signifies that body shaming accounts for 27.3% of the variance in self-esteem. The remaining 72.7% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study.

Table 4. Simple Linear Regression Table Results

ANOVA ^a					
Model		Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	189.013	189.013	11.683	.000 ^b
	Residual	15270.704	112.285		
Total		15459.717			

Source: Researcher (SPSS Version 20)

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that the output yielded an F-value of 11.683 with a significance level of 0.000, which is less than 0.005. Therefore, the results of this regression model signify a discernible influence of body shaming on students' self-esteem. The simple linear regression analysis, demonstrating a negative regression coefficient (-0.106) and a significance value of $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, indicates that body shaming significantly impacts students' self-esteem. Furthermore, this negative relationship implies that as students' experiences of body shaming increase, their self-esteem levels tend to decrease.

Table 5. Regression Equation Table Results

Coefficients ^a					
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t
1	(Constant)	56.414	4.122		13.687
	BS	-.106	.082	-.111	-1.297

Source: Researcher (SPSS Version 20)

From the regression equation above, the constant value was determined to be 56.414. This constant indicates that when the body shaming variable is zero, self-esteem maintains a constant value of 56.414. Additionally, the regression coefficient was found to be -0.106, implying a direct inverse relationship between body shaming and self-esteem. Specifically, every one-unit increase in body shaming leads to a decrease in self-esteem scores by -0.106. Based on the data, it can be concluded that body shaming significantly contributes to the self-esteem of students at SMA PGRI Depok.

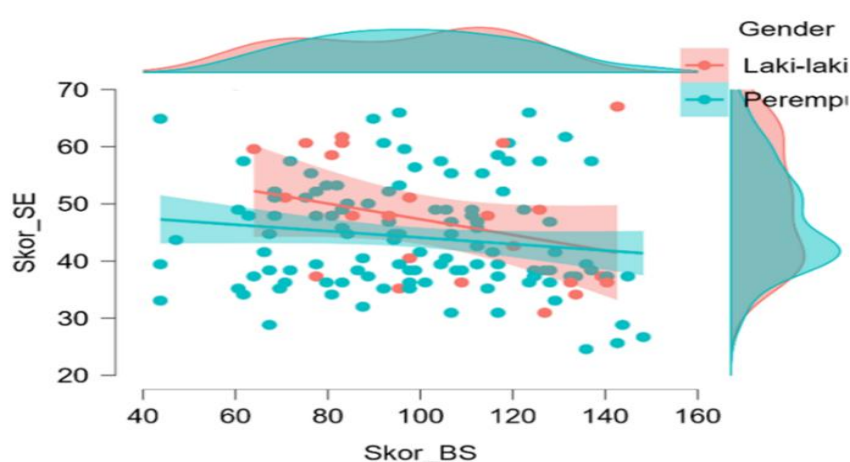


Figure 1. Scatter Plot of Body Shaming – Self-Esteem Based on Gender

The scatter plot above visualizes the distribution and relationship pattern between body shaming and self-esteem among students. The plot displays body shaming on the horizontal axis and self-esteem on the vertical

axis, with color differentiation based on gender: males (orange) and females (blue). Although data points are scattered across the entire plot area, a clear trend emerges, further illustrated by the visual lines formed for each gender.

The visual lines for both genders showing a negative relationship between body shaming and self-esteem. This pattern means that the higher the body shaming experienced by students, the lower their self-esteem. The consistency of this finding aligns with various literature stating that body shaming negatively impacts victims' self-esteem, making them feel inadequate compared to social standards and lowering their self-perception.

Visually, the trend for the male group (orange) appears slightly less steep compared to the female group (blue), although both show the same negative direction. This suggests a difference in how body shaming affects self-esteem between genders, yet the general downward trend still applies. The distribution presented in the density plots at the top and right of the main plot also provides additional information regarding score dispersion. On the horizontal axis (body shaming), females tend to have a wider spread of scores. Meanwhile, on the vertical axis (self-esteem), females also show a relatively lower concentration of scores compared to males. This reinforces the finding that body shaming can affect an individual's mental and psychological state, including a decrease in self-esteem. Previous research by Nasution & Simanjuntak (2020) "The Influence of Body Shaming on Self-Esteem in Middle School Students," also supports that body shaming significantly contributes to a decrease in student self-esteem. They found that body shaming accounted for 20.7% of the reduction in adolescent self-esteem, though most of the variation in self-esteem was influenced by other factors. This condition arises because an intense negative view of one's own body can cause individuals to become overly focused on and distressed by their appearance.

Overall, from the pattern of this scatter plot, it can be concluded that there is a clear and consistent negative relationship between body shaming and self-esteem among students. The more intense the experience of body shaming, the more significant the decline in students' self-esteem. This pattern strengthens the results of the regression analysis, which showed a significant influence of body shaming on self-esteem.

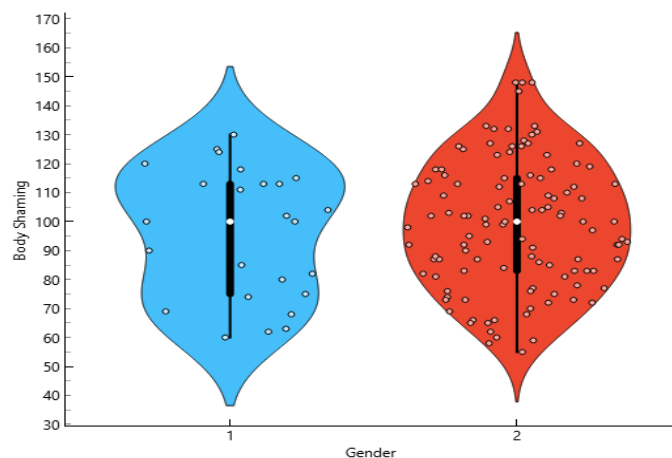


Figure 2. Violin Plot of Body Shaming Based on Gender

Figure 2 displays the violin plot for body shaming, which clearly illustrates distinct distribution differences based on gender—blue for male students and red for female students. A notable observation is that female students exhibit a higher concentration of body shaming scores, alongside a wider dispersion across the score range, when compared to their male counterparts. This particular finding suggests a heightened vulnerability among females to experiencing body shaming, indicating that they may encounter it with greater intensity and at a higher frequency. The broader distribution for females also implies a more varied range of experiences, from low to very high levels of body shaming. Given this vulnerability, it's crucial to develop prevention and awareness initiatives within the school environment. This approach is relevant to Fitriyanti & Syahputra (2024) findings, which highlight the effectiveness of anti-bullying programs—specifically those addressing verbal bullying related to body shaming—in raising community awareness, a principle that can be adapted for educational contexts.

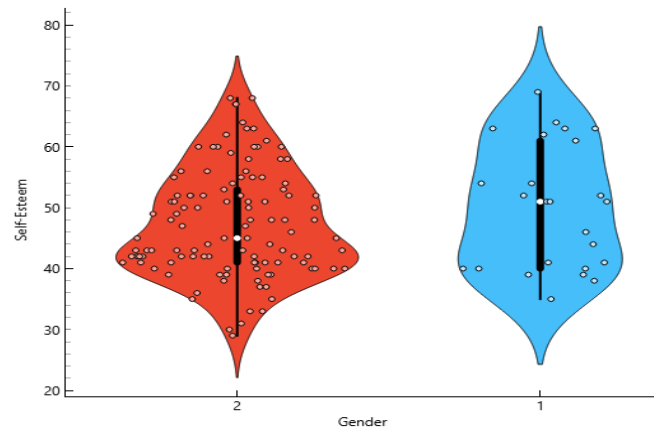


Figure 3. *Violin Plot of Self-Esteem Based on Gender*

Figure 3 presents the violin plot for the self-esteem variable, further examined by gender. This visualization reveals that male students (represented in blue) consistently demonstrate relatively higher self-esteem scores than female students (represented in red). Specifically, the median self-esteem for males tends to be elevated, accompanied by a broader spread of scores extending towards higher self-esteem values. Conversely, female students generally show a lower median self-esteem score and a narrower spread of scores concentrated at the lower end, reflecting a larger proportion of female students reporting diminished self-esteem. The consistency of this finding aligns with existing academic literature, which posits that body shaming exerts a more significantly detrimental impact on female self-esteem compared to male self-esteem. The finding that students exhibit relatively low self-esteem aligns with various studies identifying factors that contribute to decreased self-esteem in adolescents. For instance, research by Sabilah N., H., Syahputra Y., Mulyadi M. (2025) on excessive gadget and social media use, which is common among teenagers, has been shown to significantly impact self-esteem through social comparison mechanisms. In such cases, continuous exposure to idealized images can erode one's positive self-perception. This suggests that body shaming is one of several potential factors contributing to lower self-esteem in this era.

The findings of this study directly address the critical question posed in the Introduction: Does body shaming affect students' self-esteem? The results unequivocally demonstrate a significant negative influence of body shaming on self-esteem, supporting the initial hypothesis. The high prevalence of body shaming experiences in the moderate to high categories (64.5%) among students, coupled with the dominance of moderate to low self-esteem levels (77%), underscores a critical issue within the school environment. This aligns with previous research by Nurfitri et al., (2023) and Bahri (2024), which also found detrimental impacts of body shaming on individuals' self-worth, self-perception, and self-confidence. The strong correlation and significant regression results reinforce the view that body shaming is a substantial factor contributing to decreased self-esteem in adolescents, consistent with Muris & Otgaar's (2023) observations regarding the close relationship between these two constructs.

The observed high categorization of body shaming experiences among students at SMA PGRI Depok can be attributed to several interacting factors inherent to the adolescent developmental stage and the broader socio-cultural context. Adolescence is a period marked by heightened self-consciousness and a strong reliance on peer validation, rendering students particularly susceptible to societal beauty standards and external judgments (Mailiza et al., 2022). Furthermore, the pervasive influence of digital media, specifically social media platforms, plays a significant role in amplifying appearance-related pressures and facilitating negative commentary, thereby exacerbating body shaming behaviors and experiences both within and beyond school settings (Wiliyana & Nuryadi, 2024). It is also plausible that the absence of comprehensive, proactive educational programs or awareness campaigns specifically designed to address and mitigate body shaming within the school environment contributes to its persistent prevalence.

The negative direction of the relationship (regression coefficient of -0.106) indicates that an increase in exposure to body shaming correlates with a decrease in self-esteem. This finding is consistent with theoretical frameworks suggesting that negative external evaluations, particularly those related to physical appearance, can profoundly erode an individual's self-worth (Maimunah, 2023). The underlying mechanism often involves the

internalization of these critical messages. When students are subjected to body shaming, either through direct verbal remarks from peers or by internalizing broader societal ideals, these negative inputs directly challenge their self-competence and self-liking—the two core aspects of self-esteem. Repeated exposure to such judgments can lead to self-doubt, feelings of shame regarding their physical appearance, and a diminished sense of personal value. This psychological impact can initiate a detrimental cycle where lower self-esteem may, in turn, increase an individual's vulnerability and sensitivity to future body shaming, further exacerbating their negative self-perception and potentially leading to social withdrawal and impaired psychological well-being. The contribution of body shaming to self-esteem variation in this study was 27.3%. This shows that there are other element factors that also play a role in shaping individual self-esteem that researchers have not studied, such as social interactions, family environment, and personal beliefs (Angelina et al., 2021).

These findings have significant clinical and practical relevance for school counseling services. Syahputra, Y (2020) states that guidance and counseling are integral components of the education system, playing a crucial role in achieving educational goals. As an essential element, guidance and counseling services make a significant contribution to facilitating the development of students' personalities for the future, specifically fostering positive student personalities that are far removed from acts of body shaming towards peers. The data strongly indicate the necessity for targeted interventions to reduce body shaming behaviors and enhance self-esteem among students. Given that most students experience body shaming and exhibit low self-esteem, counseling programs can play a vital role in fostering a more positive body image, promoting self-acceptance, and teaching coping mechanisms for negative peer comments. This supports the argument that creating a supportive school environment is crucial for mental health (Tanoko, 2021).

Despite yielding clear findings, this study has limitations. First, it was conducted at a single institution, SMA PGRI Depok, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to the broader Indonesian student population. Although simple random sampling was applied within the context of this school, expanding the research to various schools or regions could provide a more comprehensive understanding. Second, this study relied solely on self-report questionnaires, which may be susceptible to social desirability bias. Future research could explore qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus group discussions, to gain more in-depth insights into students' experiences with body shaming and its nuanced impact on self-esteem. Additionally, longitudinal studies could track changes in self-esteem in response to body shaming over time. Further investigation into specific mediating or moderating variables (e.g., peer support, parental influence, media literacy) that might affect the relationship between body shaming and self-esteem would also enrich the understanding of this complex issue.

Equations, and formulas

Simple linear regression is conducted to determine the significance of the correlation coefficient between body shaming and self-esteem. To measure the significance of the correlation coefficient, the following formula for simple regression analysis is used:

$$\hat{Y} = \alpha - bX \quad (1)$$

The regression equation is therefore: $\hat{Y} = 56.414 - 0.106X$. This regression formula indicates that for every one-point increase in body shaming, there is a decrease of 0.106 in self-esteem. The regression coefficient is negative, indicating that the influence of the body shaming variable on self-esteem is negative. This means that an increase in students' body shaming will result in a decrease in their self-esteem.

Conclusion

Based on comprehensive data analysis, this study concludes that the majority of students at SMA PGRI Depok have experienced body shaming, either directly or indirectly, which significantly contributes to their lower self-esteem. This finding confirms that body shaming is not merely lighthearted banter but carries serious psychological consequences. The study's results, with a significance of $p < 0.005$, demonstrate through a simple linear regression test that body shaming has a negative influence (-0.106) on student self-esteem, meaning an increase in body shaming experiences leads to a decrease in self-esteem.



These findings hold significant relevance for school counseling services, highlighting the urgent need for targeted interventions to mitigate body shaming behaviors and enhance student self-esteem. Given the observed prevalence of body shaming and its association with lower self-esteem among students, counseling programs can play a crucial role in fostering positive body image, promoting self-acceptance, and equipping students with effective coping mechanisms against negative peer comments. Ultimately, this emphasizes that creating a supportive school environment is essential for students' mental well-being.

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