



## Verbal Bullying Body-Shaming Behavior and Self-Confidence among Teenage Students in Indonesia

Claudia Ayu, Qori Ila Saidah\*, Ceria Nurhayati

STIKES, Hang Tuah Surabaya Health Science Institute, East Java 60244, Indonesia.

\*Correspondence E-mail: [qorisaidah82@stikeshangtuah-sby.ac.id](mailto:qorisaidah82@stikeshangtuah-sby.ac.id)

### Abstract

**Background:** Verbal bullying and body shaming are common phenomena among high school students. Verbal bullying can affect students' confidence. Therefore, the aim of this study was to analyze the relationship between verbal bullying, body shaming behavior, and student self-confidence. **Methods:** The study used a cross-sectional design, 267 students in one of the senior high schools in Sidoarjo, Indonesia were selected by cluster sampling. Bullying behaviour was measured by the Adolescent Peer Relations Instrument (APRI) and the Objectivity Body Consciousness Scale (OBC). Those two variables were tested by the Spearman Rho analysis test. **Results:** The results showed that most of the verbal bullying and body shaming behaviour was in the moderate category (93.3%), while most of the high school students had low self-confidence (65.2%). The Spearman Rho test indicated that the value of  $r = -0,230$ ,  $p=0,001$  ( $p < \alpha=0,05$ ) means that there is a low correlation between verbal bullying, body shaming behaviour, and self-confidence. **Conclusions** The implication of this study shows that the higher verbal bullying and body shaming, the lower the high school students' self-confidence. There are many factors that can influence students to increase their self-confidence and also prevent verbal bullying and body-shaming actions. One of them is individual counselling, in which students take counselling together with the teacher and their parents.

**Keywords:-** Body Shaming, Bullying, Self-Confidence.

### Introduction

Body Shaming, which is an act of physical humiliation aimed at words, is often encountered today. Body shaming is an important phenomenon to note because it is a form of bullying. Long-term internet use has been documented to cause problems regardless of age ([Suwarsi, & Josephine, 2021](#)). It is a criticism of one's appearance and a destructive form of social media related to ideal beauty standards ([Gulf news 2018](#)). The period of puberty makes teenagers feel psychologically burdened, so they have a tendency to be unstable and emotionally erratic. Body shame that occurs causes individuals to be vulnerable to body dysmorphic disorder (BDD). ([Pratiwi, 2019](#)). Body dysmorphic disorder causes the individual to feel that something is lacking in him. Perceived shortcomings are only in the shadows because, basically, the individual looks normal ([Durand & Barlow, 2006](#)). From the treatment of body shaming, many research results show that the treatment of body shaming has an impact on a person's negative mind set. The results show that body shaming treatment leads to poor self-assessment. If this body shaming condition continues for a long time, it will affect a person's self-esteem or self-esteem, increase isolation, and withdrawal, make a person vulnerable to stress and depression, and lack of self-confidence ([Rachmah, 2019](#)).

On the other hand, this body-shaming bullying behavior is carried out by the perpetrators, which at first seemed like just an ordinary joke, but in fact, this habit can have a fatal impact on the psychological development of the victim. Body shaming and bullying behaviours can affect the victim's psychological state, which has an impact on daily life in terms of physical, psychological, and specific withdrawal from the environment. (Lestari, 2019). Body shaming treatment is an experience that is felt by individuals when their shortcomings are seen as negative by other people because of their body shape (Pratiwi, 2019). Body shaming treatment includes verbal bullying by insulting one's body shape. The level of body shame based on gender, namely the aspect of criticizing other people's appearances without the knowledge of the person, has a high percentage of male students (64%), and female students (58%) (Rosita, Irmayanti, & Hendriana, 2019). Body shaming also affects dietary habits. The results of this study further confirmed the correlation between body-related shame and eating disorders (Chairan, 2018).

### Research Methodology

This research uses a correlation analytic method with a cross-sectional approach. The population in this study amounted to 267 high school students with age criteria of 15–18 years. The demographic data questionnaire contains data on age and class, area of residence, order of children in the family, frequency of verbal bullying, body shaming, area of residence, and past experiences.

Adolescent Peer Relations Instrument (APRI) verbal body shaming bullying questionnaire and the objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBC) in which there are 3 types of bullying behavior, namely physical (6 items), verbal (6 items), and social (6 items) with 18 items for victims of bullying. With the category of verbal bullying body shaming score, 1-18 is said to be mild bullying, 19-36 is said to be moderate bullying, and 37-54 is said to be high bullying. By dividing the score, 0 = never, 1 = sometimes, 2 = often, and 3 = very often. self-objectification category: 28–32 high category, 13–27 medium category, and 8–12 low category. A self-confidence questionnaire containing 36 questions is presented on a Likert scale. Low self-confidence 34-84 and high self-confidence 85-135.

### Result

#### Characteristics of Respondents Based on Sex

**Table 1. Characteristic respondent based on sex in High School in Sidoarjo, Indonesia**

| Sex          | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| Male         | 101           | 37.8           |
| Female       | 166           | 62.2           |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>267</b>    | <b>100</b>     |

Table 1 showed that from 267 male adolescents there were 101 students (37.8%) and 166 female adolescents (62.2%).

Characteristics of Respondents Based on Age.

**Table 2. Characteristic respondent based on age in High School in Sidoarjo, Indonesia**

| Age             | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|-----------------|---------------|----------------|
| 15 years old    | 6             | 2.2            |
| 16-17 years old | 141           | 52.8           |
| 18 years old    | 120           | 44.9           |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>267</b>    | <b>100</b>     |

Table 2 shows that from 267 adolescent respondents aged 15 years as many as 6 people (2.2%), aged 16-17 years as many as 141 people (52.8%), and 18 years as many as 120 people (44.9%).

Characteristic Respondent based on level of class

**Table 3. Characteristic Respondent based on level of class**

| Class Level in High School | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| X                          | 62            | 23.2           |
| XI                         | 204           | 99.6           |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>267</b>    | <b>100</b>     |

Table 3. shows that of the 267 adolescent respondents in class X as many as 62 people (23.2%), and class XI teenagers as many as 204 people (99.6%).

Frequency of verbal Bullying body shaming

**Table 4. Characteristic Respondent based on frequency of verbal bullying body shaming**

| Frequency bullying body shaming                 | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---------------|----------------|
| Often have experience bullying body shaming     | 90            | 33.7           |
| Sometimes have experience bullying body shaming | 86            | 32.2           |
| Never have experience bullying body shaming     | 91            | 34.1           |
| <b>Total</b>                                    | <b>267</b>    | <b>100</b>     |

Table 4 shows that from 267 adolescent respondents experienced verbal bullying among friends with a high frequency of 90 people (33.7), a moderate frequency of 86 people (32.2) and a low frequency of bullying as many as 91 people (34.1%).

**Table 5. Bullying Behavior Body Shaming Verbal in High School Students**

| Bullying Behavior Body Shaming Verbal | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Mild                                  | 14            | 5.2            |
| Moderate                              | 249           | 93.3           |
| Severe                                | 4             | 1.5            |
| <b>Total</b>                          | <b>267</b>    | <b>100</b>     |

Table 5 showed 14 people received mild body shaming bullying (5.2%), moderate verbal body shaming bullying behavior 249 people (93.3%) and severe verbal body shaming bullying behavior 4 people (1.5%).

Self Confidence Level of High school students

**Table 6. Self confidence level of high school students**

| Level of self confidence | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Low                      | 174           | 65.2           |
| High                     | 93            | 34.8           |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>267</b>    | <b>100</b>     |

Table 6 shows that of the 267 adolescent respondents who have low self-confidence as many as 174 people (65.2%) and teenagers who have high self-confidence as many as 93 people (34.8%).

Relationship of bullying body shaming behavior and self confidence level in high school students

**Table 7. Relationship of bullying body shaming behavior and self confidence level in high school students**

| Verbal Bullying Body Shaming behavior | Self-confidence Level |       |      |       | Total |      |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------|------|-------|-------|------|
|                                       | Low                   |       | High |       |       |      |
|                                       | F                     | %     | F    | %     | Σ     | %    |
| Mild                                  | 3                     | 21.4  | 11   | 78.6  | 14    | 100  |
| Moderate                              | 167                   | 67.1  | 82   | 32.9  | 249   | 100  |
| Severe                                | 4                     | 100   | 0    | 0     | 4     | 100  |
| Total                                 | 174                   | 65.2% | 93   | 34.8% | 267   | 100% |

Spearman Rho test value with value  $\rho = <0.001$  r value = -0.230

Based on table 7 shows that the relationship between verbal body shaming bullying behavior with the self-confidence of high school students in Sidoarjo. The results show that mild verbal body shaming bullying behavior is possible for teenagers to have low trust as many as 3 people (21.4%), and high trust 11 people (78.6%). Meanwhile, if the bullying behavior of verbal body shaming is moderate, it is possible that teenagers have low self-confidence 167 people (67.1%) and high self-confidence 82 people (32.9%). As well as verbal body shaming bullying behavior, it is possible that teenagers have low self-confidence as many as 4 people (100%).

Based on the results of the Spearman Rho statistical test, it was found that value = 0.000 ( $\rho < 0.05$ ) which means that there is a relationship between bullying body shaming and adolescent self-confidence. In addition, based on the results of the Spearman Rho test, the value of  $r = -0.230$  with a value of = 0.001 with a value of  $r = 0.200 - 0.400$  a weak relationship, it shows a weak relationship and statistically there is a relationship between verbal body shaming bullying behavior and the self-confidence among students.

### Verbal bullying and body-shaming behavior among high school students

Based on the results of the study in table 5.10, shows that some teenagers have moderate levels of bullying behavior as many as 249 people (93.3%) and severe verbal body shaming bullying behavior of 4 people (1.5%). The assessment of verbal body shaming bullying behavior was obtained using the APRI questionnaire and The Objectivity Body Consciousness Scale (OBC).

This study shows that the dominant behavior of verbal bullying is body shaming. This is shown in the answer to the questionnaire with the highest score from question no. 2 "A student once commented on my body part roughly". Based on research data, it shows that teenagers choose the answer very often as many as 2 people (7%), often as many as 203 people (76%), sometimes as many as 50 people (18.7%), and never as many as 12 people (4.5%). High school and junior high school teenagers who experience body shaming bullying come from their school friends (Fajariani Fauzia & Ratri Rahmijai, 2019). The forms of body shaming that are despised are fat, acne, black, and other bad calls related to the body. The comments received by each individual vary, ranging from comments on an unattractive body and a face that is considered ugly and beautiful, to a body that is too fat or fat. In the analysis of adolescent researchers who experienced verbal body shaming bullying, the perpetrators were their shadow friends or were still in the same school, whether the intention was joking or not, of course, it was not justified.

In this study, the results showed that there were teenagers who experienced severe verbal body shaming with a total of 4 people (1.5%). Where there is an influence on self-concept and gender in adolescents who are victims of verbal body shaming bullying. Body shame is a concept used for a self-conscious, negative emotional response to oneself (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) (Chairani, 2018). Women's bodies are often considered as a public domain that is continuously seen, documented, and evaluated by many people, causing women to be initiated by sexual objectification (Evans, 2010).

Women will make changes, namely efforts to form an ideal body shape so that perpetrators stop bullying and verbal body shaming and stop commenting about their body condition.

Based on the results of the Questionnaire of the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBC) number 14 "When my body does not match my body size in general, I feel ashamed". The answers to these questions show that of the 267 respondents, most of the teenagers chose to agree with as many as 189 people (70.8%), strongly agree with 25 people (9.4%), and disagree with 53 people (19.9%). To become women with ideal criteria, women adopt the perspectives of others. This adaptation process is due to the many evaluations that are carried out continuously so that habituation occurs accompanied by an internalization process. The process of internalizing the objectification culture is what makes individuals do self-objectification ([Ratih, 2015](#)). Self-objectification is an important role in physical aspects that appear (such as skin color, and body shape) rather than aspects of physical competence that are not visible (such as health, and stamina) in determining the quality of one's body. ([Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997](#)). Analysis of female researchers who are objects to be seen and judged/commented on about the appearance of an ideal body tries to follow the standards in the environment in which they live and even in various ways will change the shape of the body that is considered not up to standard.

### **Self-confidence level of high school students in Sidoarjo**

The results showed that among 267 adolescent respondents who had low self-confidence as many as 174 people (65.2%) and teenagers who had high self-confidence as many as 93 people (34.8). This study shows that adolescents have low self-confidence. This is shown based on the results of the answers to the question "I don't feel confident with my current body shape" where 267 teenagers chose the agreed answer as many as 110 people (41.2%) and 89 people chose the answer to disagree (33.3%). Individuals who do not have self-confidence will tend to weaken their enthusiasm for life, such as feeling inferior to others ([Dariyo, 2007](#)). The individual can change parts of his body to make it look attractive in front of others to be accepted in the community. That self-confidence is a person's self-confidence in the abilities and skills that already exist in him so that it can help him to see positively about himself. The existence of high self-confidence will make individuals feel optimistic, and this optimism will have a great influence on the development of personality and the life they live. A person who has high self-confidence is aware of his abilities ([Hamdan, 2009](#)). The researcher's analysis can be influenced because the object who is the victim of verbal body shaming bullying that is addressed to him while at school by some of his friends, feels insecure about his current body condition.

This study shows that adolescents who have low self-confidence are mostly female. This is evidenced by Table 1 which shows that among 267 male adolescents there were 101 students (37.8%) and 166 female adolescents (62.2%). The low self-confidence of a woman about her body shape. Individuals who have an ideal body are considered more friendly, have a healthy soul and mentality as well as intelligent. Everyone believes that they meet the ideal physical standards, as desired by everyone, then the individual also gets psychological benefits and self-confidence. Lack of or low self-confidence has been shown to harm a person ([Zurisatia, 2016](#)). Analysis of female researchers sometimes compares themselves with other people, she will follow the standards that exist in the object that is made this comparison so that she can be accepted in her environment and not become the object of verbal body shaming bullying anymore.

The results of the questionnaire from question number 18 "I feel that my current appearance is less attractive". The answers to these questions show that from 267 adolescents, 100 people (37.5%) agreed with the answer and 52 people answered strongly agree (19.5). Individuals with negative feelings about themselves, feel that they are not accepted by society by their less than ideal physical appearance, are more prone to being in a state of being obsessed with physical perfection and will reflect feelings of worthlessness in seeing themselves. ([Furnham A., Badmin N., 2002](#)). The analysis of the individual researcher feels that this is because the standards that have developed in the environment he lives in, for example, are beautiful women with an ideal body, long hair, etc. and handsome men with proportional bodies, tall bodies, and masculine faces, etc. By accepting one's own

physical condition and processing good stress coping, adolescents will be able to accept their current physical condition.

### **Relationship of Verbal body shaming behavior and self-confidence level of high school students**

Based on the results from Table 7, the results of the Spearman Rho test using the SPSS 25 program show that  $p = 0.001$ . There is a relationship between verbal body shaming bullying behavior and students' self-confidence. In addition, the results of the correlation coefficient value of  $-0.230$  which means that there is a low relationship between verbal body shaming bullying behavior and students' self-confidence, the higher the bullying experienced, the lower the self-confidence of adolescents.

The results that gender was associated with verbal body shaming bullying with self-confidence where women who had low self-confidence were 123 people (74.1%) and 43 people had high self-confidence (25.9%). Meanwhile, 51 people (29.3%) have low self-confidence and 50 (49.5%). This can be influenced by gender ([Nurika, 2016](#)). Specifically, this study states that the male gender has a higher level of self-confidence than the female. There are differences in the level of self-confidence according to gender. It was further explained that gender is related to the role that will be played, so that men tend to feel more confident because from the beginning of childhood they are aware that the role of men gives more respectable dignity than the role of women, on the other hand women are considered weak and have many rules. which must be obeyed. Women are identical with the body-focused beauty self-ideal, so that women's self-confidence becomes more vulnerable to body shaming bullying.

Table 2 shows that from 267 adolescent respondents aged 15 years as many as 6 people (2.2%), aged 16-17 years as many as 141 people (52.8%), and 18 years as many as 120 people (44.9%). Moderate verbal body shaming with low self-confidence is related to age. Physical Changes The most obvious series of changes in adolescents that appear to be experienced by adolescents are biological and physiological changes ([Dariyo, 2003](#)). Feelings of hurt in adolescents due to body shape dissatisfaction may be caused by adolescent efforts to change their appearance and body shape to be more attractive and also one of the characteristics of adolescents is as an unrealistic period, so they will be more easily hurt and disappointed if they do not can achieve what you want, in this case is the ideal physical appearance. The age of 17-18 years is a vulnerable age, adolescents are more concerned with their body as a form of self-concept and ideal self to be achieved. Emotional instability in this phase greatly affects the self-confidence of adolescents towards their bodies.

Table 3 shows that of the 267 adolescent respondents in class X as many as 62 people (23.2%), and class XI teenagers as many as 204 people (99.6%). This shows the results where adolescents who are in grade 11 have a high level of verbal body shaming bullying. On average, verbal bodyshaming bullying behavior is carried out by students who are more senior in the sense of a higher class to their younger classmates, or it can also be interpreted as students with an older age who commit physical and non-physical violence to other students with a younger age. ([Masrurroh, Mufidah & Rizky, 2016](#)). The results of other studies also show that children or adolescents at lower grade levels seek help more than children at higher grade levels (McConville & Cornell, 2003). Bullying is carried out against other people who are considered weaker and more vulnerable, but it is not uncommon for bullying to be carried out by teenagers of the same age who feel more dominant than the victim.

Although there are many factors that affect a person's self-confidence due to verbal body shaming bullying, the factors of parenting and interaction at an early age are very basic factors for the formation of self-confidence ([Urip, 2014](#)). The researcher's analysis that the more frequent the intensity of talking in a family contributes to the development of adolescent self-confidence. The existence of moral support from both parents can make teenagers increase their self-confidence which can be brought to social life in the environment. Children who are full of confidence tend to be calmer than those who are less confident in their abilities. They don't seem nervous about facing problems or changes in the environment, because they feel they can quite master the problem or environment. In addition, children will have a greater ability to take risks and try new things. Adolescents who have a positive self-concept



in mental health will be better at perceiving themselves as a whole which in turn will make the adolescent's confidence high (Nurika, 2016).

### Conclusion

Verbal bullying and body shaming can affect self-confidence among teenage students. The higher the bullying received by the teenager will affect the lower self-confidence of the teenager. Recommendations that can be given for this research are how to manage stress coping in adolescents. Provide individual therapy or group therapy for adolescents who experience a decrease in self-confidence due to verbal bodyshaming bullying.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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