



Overview of Body Shaming Experiences in Early Adolescents at Junior High School Jember

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A B S T R A C T

Early adolescents undergo numerous changes for the first time, leading them to adapt to these transformations. Among the most conspicuous changes is the physical transformation that renders adolescents susceptible to body shaming, which can have detrimental effects on their mental health. This study aims to delineate the experience of body shaming among early adolescents at one junior high school in Jember. The research employed an analytic observational design with a cross-sectional approach involving 297 respondents. Proportional stratified random sampling was utilized as the sampling technique, and a body shaming experience questionnaire was administered. The findings revealed that 167 respondents (56.2%) experienced body shaming to a moderate extent. The significance of this research lies in its potential to serve as a reference for providing health education regarding the prevalence of body shaming and its impact on mental health. Such education aims to enhance adolescent mental health within the school environment.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a transition period between childhood and adulthood marked by physiological, psychological, and emotional changes. During this stage of development, biological, cognitive, psychological, and emotional changes in the body, brain, and individual behaviour will be interconnected simultaneously to form a developmental path from childhood to adulthood ((Kaczmarek & Trambacz-Oleszak, 2021). Kartono (1990) and Nurmala et al. (2020) state that there are three phases of development in adolescents, namely early adolescence starting at the age of 12-15 years, middle adolescence starting at the age of 15-18 years, and late adolescence starting at the age of 18- 21 years (Nurmala et al., 2020). Early adolescents are at an age stage when they experience many changes for the first time, so they need to adapt to these changes (Slametiningsih et al., 2021). The changes that occur cause adolescents to become more sensitive to comments and reactions about themselves and compare themselves to others. At this time, teenagers are prone to experiencing body shaming (Alini & Meeisyalla, 2021).

Results of research by Gam et al. (2020) stated that the experience of body shaming teenagers was more common in the last school year. As many as 45.2% of respondents received body-shaming treatment, and 6.7% (24 respondents) all the time (Gam et al., 2020). Research by Setyarini and Munawaroh (2020) regarding the experience of body shaming that occurs in junior high school students, as many as 79

respondents (57.2%) are in the moderate category (Setyarini & Munawaroh, 2020). These data show that cases of bullying, especially the treatment of body shaming that occurs abroad and in Indonesia, are still relatively high. Treatment of body shaming carried out in early adolescence can occur in the male or female gender. *Body shaming* is a negative behavior that significantly impacts adolescents who experience it. This body shaming can occur due to the existence of beauty standards that apply in society, people's perceptions of body shaming as a regular thing and a joke in everyday life, equating and applying self-beauty standards to others, and lack of knowledge about the effects of treatment body shaming on other people.

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The preliminary study conducted by researchers at SMP Negeri 3 Jember interviewed counseling teachers and distributed questionnaires to 15 students. The results of distributing the questionnaire to 15 students showed that around 66.7% of students had been ridiculed for inappropriate clothing, 80% of students had been ridiculed for having a fat and thin body, 80% of students had been ridiculed for having a dark body color and pimples, 73, 3% have been called with bad nicknames and used as funny material, 60% of students feel embarrassed when criticized for their speech style or body shape, 73% of students often compare their physique, and as many as 53.3% of students have felt their friends compare -compare the physique.

Based on the background above, the purpose of this study was to describe the body shaming experience in early adolescents at SMP Negeri 3 Jember.

METHOD

This study used an analytic observational design with a cross-sectional approach. This research was conducted at a junior high school in Jember, East Java. This research was conducted from September 2022 to April 2023. The population in this study was 801 students in classes VII, VIII, and IX. In this study, a proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used in this study, which is a sampling technique when the population has unequal members or elements or is heterogeneous and proportionately stratified (Siyoto & Sodik, 2015). This study obtained a sample of 297 students who met the inclusion criteria:

active status, aged 12-15 years, and willing to become respondents. The data collection tool is a questionnaire, namely a body shaming experience questionnaire which was adopted from the previous researcher Rida Putriana Sari (2020).

The body shaming experience questionnaire has 26 question items with five answer choices: never, sometimes, rarely, often, and always. The categorization of body shaming experience is divided into three parts: low, medium, and high. This study was analysed with IBM SPSS Statistic 25 Software. The data is presented in the form of frequencies and percentages, which are presented in tables. This research received ethical approval from the Health Research Ethics Committee (KEPK) Faculty of Nursing, University of Jember on January 31, 2022, with letter number 193/UN25.1.14/KEPK/2022.

RESULT

Table 1. Distribution of Age, Gender, Religion, Class, BMI, Class, Last Education of Parents, and Parents' Occupation of Students at SMP Negeri 3 Jember (n = 297)

Demographic Data		Frequency (f = 297)	Percentage (%)
Age	12 years old	20	6,7
	13 years old	100	33,7
	14 years old	95	32,0
	15 years old	82	27,6
Sex	Male	134	45,1
	Female	163	54,6
Religion	Islam	282	94,9
	Christian Protestant	12	4,0
	Catholic	2	0,7
	Hindu	1	0,3
Class	VII	95	32,0
	VIII	95	32,0
	IX	107	36,0
BMI	Very thin	105	35,4
	Thin	53	17,8
	Normal	122	41,1
	Fat	8	2,7
Parental Educational History	Obesity	9	3,0
	No school	1	0,3
	Elementary school	17	5,7
Parents' job	Middle school	64	21,5
	College	215	72,4
	Civil Servant	72	24,2
	Private – employee	88	33,3
	Entrepreneur / Self-Employed	71	23,9
	Farmer/Farm Laborers	4	1,3
	Other	51	17,2

Source: Researcher Primary Data, January 2023

Table 1. shows that the research respondents totalled 297 students from SMP Negeri 3 Jember. Nearly half of the respondents were 13 years old, with 100 respondents (33.7%). Most respondents were female, with 163 respondents (54.9%). Almost all respondents are Muslim, with 282 respondents (94.9%). Nearly half of the respondents came from class IX, with 107 respondents (36%). Nearly half of the respondents

had a standard body mass index, with 122 respondents (41.1%). Most respondents had a high level of parental education, with 215 respondents (72.4%), and almost half of the respondents with their parents' jobs as private employees, with 99 respondents (33.3%).

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Body Shaming Experiences for Students of SMP Negeri 3 Jember in January 2023 (n=297)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Body Shaming Experience		
Low	126	42,4
Moderate	167	56,2
High	4	1,3
Total	297	100

Source: Researcher Primary Data, January 2023

Table 2. shows that 126 respondents (42.4%) had experienced body shaming in the low category, 167 respondents (56.2%) had experienced body shaming in the medium category, and as many as four respondents (1.3%) had experienced body shaming in the high category.

Table 3. Distribution of Body Shaming Experience Indicators for Students of SMP Negeri 3 Jember in January 2023 (n=297)

Aspect	Indicator	Body Shaming Experience							
		Low		Moderate		High		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Comment on Appearance	Clothing criticism	67	22,6	217	73,1	13	4,4	297	100
	Speaking criticism	89	30,0	178	59,9	30	10,1	297	100
	Behavioural criticism	58	19,5	228	76,8	11	3,7	297	100
Physical Comparing	Gossiped by friends	131	44,1	158	53,2	8	2,7	297	100
	Comparing yourself physically with others	137	46,1	114	38,4	46	15,5	297	100
	Physical comparison with other people	198	66,7	88	29,6	11	3,7	297	100
Physical Commentary	Being called by a wrong name	83	27,9	199	67,0	15	5,1	297	100
	Physical ridicule	146	49,2	136	45,8	15	5,1	297	100

Source: Researcher Primary Data, January 2023

Table 3. shows that in the indicator of accepting criticism for how to dress, most respondents are in the medium category, namely 217 respondents (73.1%). The indicator of accepting criticism for speaking style, most respondents were in the medium category, 178 (59.9%). The indicator accepts criticism of the level of behavior of most of the respondents in the medium category, namely 228 respondents (76.8%). The indicator of obtaining gossip is that most of the respondents are in the category of 158 respondents (53.2%). The indicator of comparing oneself physically with others was that almost half of the respondents were in a low category, 137 respondents (46.1%). Compared to other people's physical indicators, most respondents were in the low category, with 198 respondents (66.7%). The indicators are called wrong; most respondents are in the medium category, with 199 respondents (67%). The indicator of being

ridiculed, which leads to the physicality of almost half of the respondents, is in a low category, namely 146 respondents (49.2%).

DISCUSSION

Most respondents experienced body shaming in the moderate category, namely 167 respondents (56.2%). The results of this study align with research by Fauzy & Putri (2021), which states that most junior high school students have a moderate level of body shaming behaviour, namely 30 respondents (60%) out of 50 respondents. Unknowingly, body shaming often occurs in everyday life. Even though this treatment did not have a physical impact, body shaming is included in verbal bullying (Fauzy & Putri, 2021). Body Shaming can decrease the body's responsiveness to disease or the ability to detect disease symptoms. In addition, it can also reduce the value and attention to bodily functions. This body function has a role in providing important information about physical health (Lamont, 2018).

One factor that can affect body shaming is age. In this study, almost half of the respondents with moderate body shaming experience were 14 years old, with 58 respondents (34.7%), followed by 13 with 55 respondents (32.9%). Research by Nafingah & Suroso (2020) stated that victims of bullying were more common at the age of 13 with nine respondents (30%) and 15 years with nine respondents (30%) (Nafingah & Suroso, 2020). In this teenage period, they focus on their appearance, so teenagers often feel worried about the physical changes that occur when they are disproportionate. Teenagers tend to feel insecure when their body shape and size are considered not ideal by the standards that apply in their environment (Tatirah & Mukharomah, 2019). Researchers assume that this study shows that the difference in the incidence of body shaming between the ages of 13 and 14 is fragile. This is because that age is still in the range of early adolescence, where at that age, they experience physical changes for the first time. Thus, early adolescents are vulnerable to experiencing body shaming because of the physical changes that occur.

The next factor that influences body shaming is gender. Most respondents with medium-category body shaming experience were women, as many as 101 respondents (60.5%). Teenage girls tend to be more sensitive than boys. It is easy for them to feel anxious when there are things that they cannot achieve or do not meet their expectations. This sensitive nature can cause young women to be unable to control their feelings when they get body shaming from other people (Rahayu, 2019). Researchers assume that female adolescents experience more body shaming because their body fat increases during puberty. Hence, they will likely feel ashamed of their bodies and generate negative comments from others.

The next factor that can affect body shaming is body mass index. Nearly half of the respondents with moderate body shaming experience with a fragile body mass index were 57 (34.1%), and an average of 75 respondents (44.9%). Research conducted by Utami et al. (2020) stated that adolescents with unhealthy

eating patterns had abnormal nutritional status in 34 respondents (38.6%). Consumption of low-quality and low-nutrition foods can result in malnutrition (Utami et al., 2020). Unhealthy eating habits such as frequent snacks outside the home and not having breakfast in the morning before going to school lead to the unfulfilled nutritional status of adolescents. So this causes early adolescents to have a fragile body mass index (Hafiza et al., 2020).

Researchers assume that teenagers who experience body shaming in the moderate category *mostly* have fragile bodies and are also expected. Teenagers with a fragile body mass index get body shaming because their body size is skinny and does not match ideal standards. Other people think they have a thin body because they do not eat enough or do not like to eat, even though it can be due to genetic factors. This is what causes them to feel insecure because they have a thin body and have the potential to get body shaming. Adolescents with an average body mass index experience body shaming due to their strange appearance according to their surroundings. For example, it can be in the form of their strange clothing style, behavior, or speech style so that teenagers with an average body mass index can also experience body shaming.

Body shaming badly influences one's health, especially mental health. In dealing with this, it is necessary to try that nurses can do to reduce the impact that arises as a result of body shaming in schools. One role the nurse can play is as an educator by providing health education about body shaming and its impact on a person's mental health. In addition, it also provides counselling for victims of body shaming if the impact is disturbing their daily lives and to find out their feelings and conditions when they receive body shaming so that they can provide solutions to deal with the effects of body shaming (Rusyda et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

The conclusion obtained in this study is that most respondents experience body shaming in the moderate category, namely 167 respondents (56.2%). In the aspect of commenting on appearance, the most frequent indicator is the indicator of receiving criticism on how to dress; most of the respondents are in the medium category, namely 217 respondents (73.1%), and the indicator of receiving criticism, the level of behavior of most of the respondents is in the medium category, namely 228 respondents (76,8%). In the aspect of physical comparison, the most frequent indicator is an indicator of physical comparison by other people; most respondents are in the low category of 198 respondents (66.7%). Regarding physical commenting, the most frequent indicator is the indicator of being called wrong; most respondents are in the medium category, with 199 respondents (67%).

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