

The Impact of Social Perception on Body Shaming Among Filipino Men

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Abstract

Body shaming has become a popular issue and is commonly experienced by young adults in their daily lives. However, people overlook the fact that men as well are victims of body shaming. This research paper aims to determine its impact and whether social perception is a predictor of the body shaming experiences of Filipino men. The multiple regression analysis has been used to calculate the impact of body shaming on social perception. The respondents scores from the test results have the p-value of 0.746 which the significance is > 0.5 shows there is no significant impact. While the social perception of body shaming has a p-value of 0.0002 which has the significance of < 0.5 has stated that there is significant impact. The result from the chi-squared test, that tested the hypothesis of this study if the social perception has significant relationship to body shaming, rejected the H_0 (see table 13). The findings show that there is a significant relationship between social perception and body shaming. The results also show that social perception is a predictor of the existence of body shaming experience of Filipino men. Therefore, body shaming has minimal impact on Filipino men, but because of the high level of sensitivity from social perception towards their body, Filipino men give more attention to what other people think about their physical appearance. Hence, social perception has an impact on the existence of body shaming experience of Filipino men.

Keywords: Body Shaming, Social Perception, Impact, Filipino Men, Verbal Impression

Introduction

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, according to Margaret Wolfe Hungerford in her book titled “Molly”. Currently, body-shaming is one of the most popular issues that the majority of young adults experience in their everyday life. In relation to this, social perception towards a person’s body-image brings an immense impact on a person’s life. Hence, this sensitive issue is common in young adults as young adulthood is the chapter where individuals begin maturing. Furthermore, social, emotional, and cognitive maturation occurs. It also emphasizes the transition of adolescents with consistent and gradual changes in their physical appearance, as well as being conscious of their physical appearance.

The study of McCreary (2011) stated that men have a higher level of general body satisfaction. Little by little, they have noticed that the question they ask men is about the weight and body fat percentage which is more appropriate to assess the body image of women. The focus of a man’s social standard to the “ideal man” is about masculinity that drives men to aim for improvement of their lean muscle mass and not on losing weight. Since social perception becomes more centered as boys and girls reach adolescence, these expectations weigh heavily as desperation leads them to prove themselves to have more impressionable appearance in the society’s portrayal of the norm. As a

result, their perception is inherently skewed and they become dissatisfied with their surroundings as the catalyst for them to begin chasing their perfect lives, starting with their body image. This could have drastic effects on their mental health as they progress to adulthood, while maintaining or believing in these norms (Rogers, 2020).

The human standard of beauty is based on norms and influence of celebrities. Because of the cultural and media representation of a beautiful physical appearance of an individual, the ideal concept of the human body, either male or female, has shaped the expectations of modern society. Social perception based on societal standards are the main supplement on why body shaming exists. Opinion that an individual throws to another person’s physical appearance leads to a negative impact towards the receiver which stands as a product of body shaming. From TV commercials, advertisements, beauty products for the perfectly clear skin, healthy hair, and even the development of cleaner, whiter complexions, the visual representation that is projected onto its consumers has taken a toll on how people perceive themselves.

In a generation that is constantly exposed to various forms of media, insecurity for one’s self-image is only worsened by the presence of these platforms, which drives their agenda further into their personal lives. As such, directly harming these groups of people who

cannot escape this societal pressure offline, are beginning to experience even having an effect online. Social media

platforms are a prime example of this case, where people share photos of themselves with the world, and being judged by the amount of shares, likes, or comments that they receive, yet may face overwhelming amounts of hate through negative comments that attack their physical appearance.

In line with this issue, this research paper has focused on the social perception of body shaming and has determined its impact on Filipino men, as well as to help them feel confident with their bodies. It also aimed to disseminate knowledge about body image strategies that will help men cope with their body-shaming experience.

The result and findings of this study will serve as an essential information for the following people: (1) Filipino Men, this research will enable them to be more knowledgeable about body shaming and its impact as well as learn some body image strategies that will help them cope with their body-shaming experience; (2) Students, this study will help them understand how body shaming can affect one's well-being; (3) Parents, will learn and have a wider perspective on how body shaming affects a person's well-being as well as serve as an awareness for parents to be fully aware of their children's welfare and to be able to protect them from this kind of personal humiliation and harassment; (4) Mental Health Professionals, the results of the study can be used as a support in forming new strategies and techniques for helping individuals or victims of body shaming, and (5) Future Researcher, this study provides additional information that will serve as a reference for future research related to the subject matter.

Research Questions

1. What rating do the respondents give to themselves in terms of:
 - 1.1 social perception; and
 - 1.2 body shaming?
2. Is there a significant relationship between social perception and body shaming?
3. Is there a significant impact in the social perception on body shaming experience of Filipino Men?

Literature Review

Body Shaming

Body shaming is done when someone gives a hateful impression to body shape or body type. Body shaming in practice has existed for a year and up until now. People have a definite concept of "beauty" that defines standards of skin color, body dimensions or something that is connected to physical appearance (Times Now Digital, 2018).

In light of Filipinos being more familiar with the body shaming experience of women there are only a few related literature and studies recorded in the Philippines that specifically address the body shaming experience of Filipino. As stated by Edwards (2019), men encounter body shaming as well, but not as transparent as women, resulting in increased stigmatization about the manifestation of body image concerns in men. Women's struggles on body image and body shaming have been well-documented, but body shaming among men has recently developed disturbingly. On the same token, Ugochukwu (2018), stated that men are also victims of body shaming, but people seemed to disregard this focus. A masculine body with abs is being

fantasized by society and this perception leads men to experience body dissatisfaction. Thus, some men refuse to admit that there is something wrong that "*men are ashamed to admit to being body-shamed*" and avoid seeking for health care.

The unpleasant experience of social perception towards the physical appearance of men led them to see their body image negatively. People who see their body appearance negatively tend to fast dieting which is dieting at any given time and not nutritionally, eating disorder, exercise addiction, and steroid abuse - which a person relies on taking drugs to attain muscle growth and reduce body fat Better Health Channel (2020). Seeking for a perfect body shape is one of the most prevalent issues today, tough experiences and uncountable judgement are faced by many individuals all over the world regardless of what race they belong.

Social Perception

According to Dan (2021), in his article entitled "Fat/Skinny Shaming in Filipino Culture: When Friends or Families Take Notice of Your Weight (Part 1/2)", Filipinos are very observational and they always notice things that change to a person upon seeing them after a short or long time. It became normal for Filipinos to mention the obvious when having a small interaction with someone upon seeing them. Filipino greetings are commonly followed by "*Uy, ang laki/ payat mo na ha!*" This word will be, Hi! How are you?

Oh - you're big or skinny now!", if translated in English. This article supports Reportr (2020), that Filipinos have their own sets of standards when it comes to beauty. Most people in this country had experienced being blown with criticisms as such when talking about body size. Furthermore, the so called "*Pintasera Culture*" has been faced by ordinary people and to those who has a name in some known industries are attacked not only by posting videos and photos in different social media, but also in personal and getting hate comments such as "*Tabachoy, lumba-lumba, dabiana, baboy*" some Tagalog insulting words that is usually heard by many.

It is innate for an individual to react towards a certain behavior, but it is more expected for someone to be affected when other people put a socially evaluative body image threat to them Lamarche, et. Al. (2017) has mentioned that in a situation wherein body image is involved in a social- evaluative threat, men became concerned about failure to meet the societal muscular idea and worried that they will be viewed as less favorably when it comes to physical appearance and more subjected to social rejection.

Men are always viewed as strong people, with lean and muscular bodies. But, for Filipino men, masculinity is not an indication only for having toned muscles, and consuming food that somehow contributes to their masculinity, instead men are noted to be seen as a great eater of a larger portion of food (Winter, 2017).

Impact to Filipino Men

Body shaming can affect everyone, especially their health, regardless of their gender. Eliasdottir (2016) found out that women are more inclined to admit that their health is in not good condition compared to men. But men are more likely to get a higher score on the body shame scale and report that they have physical illness due to body shaming experience compared to women. Hence, this study proves that even if women are more vocal regarding their poor health condition men on the other hand reported experiencing physical illness. This study will strengthen the fact that men as well acquire health problems from their body-shaming experience. Moreover, this study recommends that further research must be conducted to have a better understanding of the relationship between body shame and physical illness.

Over-exercising, the extreme pursuit of muscle growth, abuse of steroids, and eating disorders have also been on the rise among men. It was also reported that men who are suffering from binge eating are

almost at the same rate as women. (Edwards, 2019) Body shaming can affect everyone, especially their health, regardless of their gender. Eliasdottir (2016) found out that women are more inclined to admit that their health is in not good condition compared to men. But men are more likely to get a higher score on the body shame scale and report that they have physical illness due to body shaming experience compared to women. Hence, this study proves that even if women are more vocal regarding their poor health condition men on the other hand reported experiencing physical illness.

As mentioned by Samuel (2021), Filipinos are not fully educated with the term body shaming and this can be observed in Filipino culture and for Abello (2019), the mockery of fat-shaming (this included in body shaming) has a long-term impact on those who have experienced it. Furthermore, underlying studies have shown that stigma is one of the leading risk factors that contribute to poor mental health. According to Sweeney (2020), stigma is a social disease, and the cure is education. In addition, weight stigma can take on many forms. It can seem like a denial of health care or having called different names and labels based on one's body size. Body shaming has underlying consequences for everyone. It is more harmful and painful for people with bigger bodies. Body shaming will never be inspirational, it is unhealthy.

Methodology

Research Design

This research utilizes the non-experimental quantitative approach with predictive research design. The Quantitative research approach is applied in this study to generate knowledge and understanding towards the subject matter. Non-experimental type of research is utilized in this study to measure the natural occurrence of the body shaming and social perception variables without involving any kind of manipulation.

Moreover, the researchers believe that predictive research is appropriate to be used in this study as its concern is forecasting effects, outcomes, costs or consequences in a way that it will try to extrapolate an analysis of existing event, policies, or other operation to be able to predict something that never been proposed nor tried and tested before (Wollman, 2012).

Research Locale

The research setting used in this study is the country Philippines. The researchers have used social media platform Facebook to gather data. The participants were only Filipino men who reside in the Philippines with an age range of 18 to 25 years old. It has been relevant to gather data in a social media platform since most of the Filipino men today engage a lot of their time online and as to consider the current situation of the state facing the COVID - 19 pandemic.

Population and Sampling

The participants of this study consist of Filipino men with an age range of 18 to 25 years old. The total number of participants in this study are 235 Filipino men. The researchers excluded men who have suffered or been diagnosed to have eating disorders and obesity, for the reason that they have a high level of consciousness with their body image that might negatively affect the result of this research.

This study has used simple random sampling as a sampling technique in selecting the respondents of this study. The sampling technique is used to assure that the respondents have an equal opportunity to participate in this study. The researchers believe that this sampling technique is appropriate to be used in this study as it provides plausible and factual information that encompasses their natural experience of body shaming.

Research Ethics

To ensure that the researchers ethically administer this study, researchers acquire a permission before formally conducting the study. Plagiarism is strictly avoided by the researchers as they used a plagiarism online checker to eliminate academic dishonesty and breach of journalistic ethics. Additionally, researchers ensure that participants are not forced into being involved in any form. It is the right of the participants to withdraw their participation at any time with no pressure placed on those who wish not to continue any further (American Psychology Association, 2017). On the same token, the researchers guarantee the confidentiality and anonymity of their research participants to protect their privacy and identity are assured to remain unknown. In this way, the research participants are comfortable in giving valuable information during data gathering.

Furthermore, the researchers present and explain to the respondents the purpose of conducting this research and explain the valuable contribution of their participation. It also serves as a basis that the

respondents understand the nature of the study and voluntarily agree to it and continue to voluntarily participate throughout the conduct of the study.

Research Instrument

The research instrument of this study consists of two parts, the first part is the demographic parameter of the respondent and for the second part, the standardized test consist of: The Social Appearance Anxiety Scale (SAAS), State Self-Esteem Scale(SSES) Brief Stigmatizing Situation Inventory(BSSI) and Perception of Teasing Scale (POTS) and that was adopted from the previous research-related articles that were used for the basis of this paper in this research.

Social Appearance Anxiety Scale (SAAS) is a self-reported scale made up of 16 items with a five - point scale which measures the level of anxiety of a person based on the negative evaluations from other people towards their overall physical appearance (Hart, et.al, 2008).

State Self-Esteem Scale (SSES) are used to measure an individual's self-esteem at a given point in time. The 20-item scale is subdivided into three (3) components of self-esteem: 1. Performance Self-Esteem 2. Social Self-Esteem 3. Appearance Self-Esteem. All items are answerable using a five point scale that measures the respondent's state of self - esteem.

The Brief Stigmatizing Situation Inventory (BSSI) is a 10-item short form of the full Stigmatizing Situations Inventory by Myers & Rosen, V. (1999) as cited in Vartarian(2015) Participants are instructed to rate the frequency of their experiences of a certain situation in the test items using a 9-point Likert Scale which measures the higher and lower level of stigmatizing experience.

Perception of Teasing Scale (POTS) points out the correlations between teasing frequency, body image, and eating disturbance. This scale has 14 item questions; the first scale which contains 6 questions for Weight Teasing are used in this study. Respondents are instructed to rate the items based on a selection of frequency choices using a 5-point scale which present the teasing experience of the respondents and how this affects them.

Data Collection

In this study, the researchers set a parameter to measure the impact of social perception on body shaming among Filipino men. The research instrument was administered via google form through the medium

of an online-based platform considering the current situation of the state. The first part of the instrument presents the informed consent given to the participants to ensure that they understand the purpose of the research study and to ensure that the participants willingly participate in the study. The second part of the research instrument are the questions regarding the demographic profile of the respondents and followed by the chosen standardized test.

Once the participants are done answering the research instrument, the researchers gather the data and proceed to computing, analyzing and interpreting the statistical significance of the data to properly determine the hypothesis of the study whether this research were be able to prove that social perception towards body shaming has a significant effect on Filipino men.

Results

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of data gathered with the end in view of answering the problems of this research work.

Body Shaming and Social Perception

Table 1 shows the summary of tests in social perception and body shaming. For social perception, the Social Appearance Anxiety Scale (SAAS) got a mean of 2.79 or moderate characteristics of me and State Self-Esteem Scale (SSES) with a mean of 3.10 or somewhat. In terms of Body shaming, the Brief Stigmatizing Situations Inventory (BSSI) has a mean of 0.99 or never as the verbal interpretation and Perception of Teasing Scale (POTS) with a mean of 1.78 or never.

This overall result reveals that respondents have a moderate social appearance anxiety and their self-esteem remains at a moderate level despite having body shaming experience. According to Toledo Center (2019), a negative body image can potentially produce feelings of anxiety and shame, which may lead to low self-esteem, and other negative impact to the suffering individual. This implies that social perception still has an impact on Filipino men since male with body shaming experience do not have an above average self-esteem and they are still anxious towards their physique despite. On the other hand, the stigmatizing experience and teasing experience of the respondents may not appear to be immensely admitted to their response. As stated by Edwards (2019), men encounter body shaming as well, but not as transparent as women and one of the differences in body image concerns

between men and women is that men do not normally discuss it. It supports the findings that it becomes apparent at some point that they are still having those experiences, perhaps to a lesser extent.

Table 1. *Summary of Social Perception and Body Shaming*

	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
<i>Social Appearance Anxiety Scale</i>	2.85	Moderately Characteristics of me
<i>State Self-Esteem Scale</i>	3.10	Somewhat
<i>Brief Stigmatizing Situations Inventory</i>	0.99	Never
<i>Perception of Teasing Scale</i>	1.78	Never

The Relationship Between Social Perception and Body Shaming

Testing the significant relationship between social perception and body shaming was shown in table 2. As to Social Appearance Anxiety Scale, the chi-square computed value of

89.21 is greater than the tabular value of 79.08 with 60 df, which shows a significant relationship at 0.05 level of significance. Similar to State Self-Esteem Scale and Brief Stigmatizing Situations Inventory, with a computed value of 97.56 and 111.03, which is also greater than tabular value of

97.31 and 102.51, with 76 and 81 df, respectively, resulting to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is significant relationship. Meanwhile, with a computed value of 35.22 for Perception of Teasing Scale which is also greater than the tabular value of 31.41 with df of 20 shows a significant relationship at 0.05 level of significance. To summarize, there is a significant relationship between social perception and body shaming.

The findings reveal that even though there is a weak relationship between social perception and body-shaming, there is still a significant relationship between the two variables that are supported by the study of Barnes et al. (2020), that body dissatisfaction is linked to depression as well as anxiety. Body dissatisfaction affects one's life as it is tagged as a negative type of perception. Prior to this, social perception is associated as one of the triggering factors of body dissatisfaction, on how other people react and sets of expectations to a certain person.

Table 2. Relationship between social perception and body shaming

	χ^2 computed	χ^2 tabulated	df	Interpretation
Social Appearance Anxiety Scale	89.21	79.08	60	Reject Ho
State Self-Esteem Scale	97.56	97.31	76	Reject Ho
Brief Stigmatizing Situations Inventory	111.03	102.51	81	Reject Ho
Perception of Teasing Scale	35.22	31.41	20	Reject Ho
Reject H ₀ if χ^2 computed > χ^2 tabular				

The Significant Impact in the Social Perception on Body Shaming Experience of Filipino Men

Table 3 shows the Multiple Regression Analysis to test the significant impact in the social perception on body shaming experience of Filipino men. With a value of 0.80 in R^2 , the result shows there is a good fit to the data. This also implies based on table 15 that there is a significant impact in social perception having p-value of 0.0002 less than the level of significance (0.05) while there is no impact for body shaming experience of Filipino men with a value of 0.746 at 5% level of significance.

Table 3. Multiple Regression Analysis in the social perception on body shaming experience of Filipino men

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.89
R square	0.80
Adjusted R square	0.75
Standard Error	2.206
Observations	58

Table 4 shows the significant impact in the social perception on body shaming experience of Filipino men. Multiple regression analysis was performed to calculate the influence of body shaming on social perception among the respondents in order to describe the impact and link of social perception and body-shaming among the respondents. The test findings have a p-value of 0.746, which is more than 0.5, indicating that there is no significant impact between body shaming towards social perception. The p-value of 0.0002, implies that there is a substantial influence, and significant impact between social perception towards body shaming. In line with the aforementioned statement, there is a significant relationship between social perception and body shaming resulting in rejecting the H_0 . The findings demonstrated that social perception is a predictor of Filipino men's experience with body shaming.

Table 4. Significant impact in the social perception on body shaming experience of Filipino men

	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
Intercept	90.192		4.047	22.2862	0.0000	81.6897 98.6945
Social	-3.859		1.0428	-3.7	0.0002	-6.0499 -1.6682
Perception						
Body Shaming	0.2327		0.7081	0.3285	0.746	-1.255 1.7204

Reject H_0 if p-value < 0.05

Discussion

Based on the findings of this study, in terms of demographic profile of the respondents, this study is mainly focused on Filipino male young adults who genuinely participated. Filipino men are also affected by the body shaming issue and they are prone to acquire the same negative impact and risk factors from the body shaming experience of women. In terms of their age, the majority was in the age range of 21 to 22 years old, which implies as the most common age wherein men become more sensitive and conscious of their body image. When it comes to their height, the majority of the respondents have a height ranging from 5'0 to 5'9 which covers the standard height of Filipino men. With regards to their weight, the majority of the respondents have met the normal range of weight. In terms of their Body Mass Index, the majority fall in the normal range. As a result, it can be stated that men who are subjected to body shaming fall into any type of body size which may be a contributing reason to their insecurity and shameful experiences. Implying that body shaming is not limited to a specific body type or size.

The findings indicate that most of the respondents have claimed to experience body shaming in actual scenarios through verbal impressions. This indication suggests that respondents may have commonly encountered being body shamed in actual, face-to-face situations rather online. In relation to the previous literature of this study regarding body shaming, it was observed that men are labeled to act manly which symbolized their masculinity. Likewise, it was observed that most young adults tend to tolerate or deny their body shaming experiences. Furthermore, as shown in the result of the Perception of Teasing Scale, respondents experience being made fun of because of their body size, pertaining to the teasing culture of Filipinos. The findings implies that Filipino men, especially those who have experienced body shaming, are sensitive to other people's comments about their physical appearance, although men can be less likely to express their feelings openly as they tend to brush it off because they feel shy and discouraged from doing

so.

Respondents who have admitted to experiencing body shaming came from different body sizes and shapes. This implies that most people are not aware that body shaming happens to all people of all shapes and sizes, and that it is described as an unpleasant experience that may occur towards skinny, healthy, or even athletic individuals. Despite their body shaming experiences, the findings indicate that their anxiety level appears to be moderate and does not correlate with their self-esteem. This suggests that although they appear to be comfortable and somewhat satisfied with how they appear to others regardless of their body shaming encounters, they are still greatly affected by other people's perception towards their own physical appearance.

Conclusion

This study aims to determine the impact of social perception on body shaming among Filipino men. Based on the result of the study, it is clear that body shaming happens to everyone and this has no limitations to whatever gender.

The overall result of this study reveals that there is a significant impact in the social perception on body shaming among Filipino men. Therefore, the researchers reject the null hypothesis of this study. Moreover, it is presented in the result that even though social media was very popular in posting videos, pictures and updating social status, Filipino men commonly experienced body shaming in actual settings. Furthermore, Filipino men are also conscious of their physical appearance and they observe people who are looking at them in public places even though most of the respondents belong to normal body size. Additionally, Filipino men that are in the age range of 21 to 23 years old are the most frequent age that appear in the data who experience body shaming.

Regardless of the respondents' body shaming experiences, most of them have confidence with their abilities which appears that their body shaming experiences has minimal impact or does not serve as a hindrance in showing their potentiality. Additionally, respondents remain comfortable with their physique, although they appear to be sensitive and conscious of other people's jokes and comments about their body which easily allows them to feel upset.

On the same token, this study reveals that body shaming is not limited to one type of body shape and

size. The social perception towards Filipino men was very sensitive in giving evaluation about other people's gestures, looks, thoughts and words especially if it's about their body appearance. Consequently, body shaming has minimal impact on Filipino men, but it also reveals that because of the high level of sensitivity from social perception towards their body, Filipino men give more attention to what other people think about their physical appearance. This information reveals that social perception has an impact on the existence of body shaming experience of Filipino men.

Future researchers can consider using a different method that can focus more on the subjective perspective of an individual that has a direct experience of body shaming.

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