# Online Shaming

Exploring factors behind online shaming
perpetration as well as its prevalence in adults

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# Foreword

This thesis represents the final part of my study of Victimology and Criminal Justice at the University of Tilburg. In this short time I have learned a great deal not only about the subject matter itself, but also in my approach to tackling problems within society.

The choice of online shaming reflects a fascination I have with technology, the behaviour that it can elicit, and how victimisation can grow and emerge from this seemingly 'Wild West' frontier. The dynamics that drive individuals to perpetrate shaming leads to victimisation both on the small and large scale. The method to tackle this growing phenomenon is unknown, and taps into one of the reasons why the study of victimology is so important.

I would like to thank those who partook in my survey, for without them I would simply have theories and conjecture to work with. Additionally Prof. Pemberton and Pien van de Ven for supervising this paper, and for their advice. Lastly I would like to extend my appreciation to Merel, for putting up with my many hours stuck behind the computer typing away or battling with statistics.

# Abstract

This study focuses on the factors that lay behind an individual carrying out shaming on the internet as well as the prevalence of online shaming activity. After a thorough literature review a model has been constructed with the factors established, utilising the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1989). Its focus is on individual personal, environmental and behavioural factors, and takes into account online shaming over the previous two months. To investigate and test such a model, an anonymous self-report survey has been constructed to evaluate the relationships hypothesised. This was conducted online and the data collection occurred during November 2016 with a total of 223 respondents in total.

From the literature review carried out, eight factors were established as being connected to the act of online shaming perpetration. The personal factors included demographics, internet self-efficacy, shame proneness, social comparison, perceived anonymity and prior experience of online shaming victimisation. The environmental factors were social norm and culture (masculinity, power distance, uncertainty avoidance and collectivism). A model has been constructed to describe the relationship these factors have in regards to the likelihood of online shaming perpetration behaviour. Furthermore existing literature was used to establish indicators that together define the phenomena of online shaming in a measurable manner.

The results of this study found that online shaming perpetration was being committed by a majority of the sample population (60.3%) over the last two months. In the same period those who were victimised by the behaviour was around half that amount (30.5%). Furthermore a quarter of sample population (25.1%) were both perpetrator and victim of online shaming. When testing the results against the constructed model, it was found that prior experience of online shaming victimisation was a highly important factor in the likelihood of an individual perpetrating online shaming. Additional tests were carried out through the adjustment of the model and certain variables providing supplementary avenues for future research.

This study provides an initial inquiry into online shaming utilising a theoretically backed model and up-to-date data to map out trends. The high numbers of those perpetrating online shaming, as well as the potential cycle created from victimisation suggest patterns that should be investigated further.

# Contents

# Introduction

## Background

Technology and its uses are on an ever-shifting foundation, based on innovation and habits evolving at a lightening pace. The so called 'Web 2.0' is at the heart of this change. Not only does it encompass the most well-known social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter but also many of the other community driven platforms. This includes collaborative projects such as YouTube with their user driven and created "production, diffusion and consumption" (Fuchs, Boersma, Albrechtslund, & Sandoval, 2013, p. 3). This 'diffusion and consumption' has utilised the strides in technology with 'sousveillance'. This is a term coined by Steve Mann stating a reality, whereby ordinary citizens can capture and record their daily lives and experiences with minimal effort instantaneously (Mann, 2004).

This change has led to the progression of social norm enforcement; the prerequisites are no longer only in the hands of authority figures. Everyday citizens can utilise web 2.0 to enforce social norms in new ways to restrict behaviour (Klonick, 2015). Mass availability and access combined with anonymity has led to the removal of the "natural checks" (Klonick, 2015, p. 2) of shaming.

This convergence of mass recording and dissemination of data in an instant has had a profound effect on the power of shaming and its rising position in daily society. Shaming as a punishment is often seen as a method by which the shamed individual will eventually reintegrate into regular society and be accepted by the community once more (Massaro, 1997). Yet the core part of shaming, shame itself, is a rather difficult concept to define (Klonick, 2015). Past research into online behaviours in areas similar to online shaming have focused on bullying or harassment, yet shaming does not easily fit into these categories. Online shaming is, at its heart, the perceived violation of a social norm by the offender. This could be the posting of discriminatory comments on social media for example. Furthermore online shaming can be a precursor to more serious online harassment or bullying (Klonick, 2015).

Online shaming occurs when the individual perpetrating the shaming believes the person on the receiving end has broken a social norm such as posting a racist comment, or stating an extreme political view.

The modern use of shaming may have the goal of enforcing social norm, but can end up isolating those at the receiving end. There may not be a chance for rehabilitation involved in this action, and those who join with this mass shaming (enabled by the internet) often do not

care about this fact (Massaro, 1997). What is it about individuals that can lead them to shame others online? What is it about the internet that opens the door to this behaviour, where face-to-face situations would often be handled differently?

This paper will present an examination of shaming that occurs in the online world. Past research on this topic is minimal at best, with cyberbullying and cyber harassment having a much larger profile. As online shaming is such a vast and complex topic this study will focus upon the individual characteristics of those who are victims and/or perpetrators of online shaming, as well as their environment. When evaluating these characteristics, theoretical foundations will be used to predict their relationships to the behaviour of online shaming itself.

## Aim and relevance of the study

### Political and social relevance

Laws provide a necessary boundary with which authorities can take action against an individual. But legislation can only guide a society so much. We would not want all actions and norms to be legislated. Some are so minor that we rely on social norms for their enforcement. Yet the internet does not seem to follow these established boundaries. Online shaming can be a social menace when its punishment has an unknown social meaning as well as being an unrestrained form of penalty. There is no procedure that can guarantee that those who are shamed are the intended target, or that the time was taken to judge the context of the perceived violation of norms (Klonick, 2015).

This research can enable an evaluation of how different types of people fare in a world with online shaming. Theoretical predictions of this relationship in similar areas such as cyberbullying exist, but quantitative data is scarce. This is particularly true for at risk individuals. Without further exploratory development, supplementary research cannot take place and effective policy making regarding the future of internet legislation will become outdated.

The process of legislating methods that could counter the negative effects of online shaming have met fierce criticism. The European Union's 'General Data Protection Regulation' includes article 17 which puts forth the 'right to be forgotten' (de Hert & Papakonstantinou, 2016). Yet this was met with much apprehension and anger (Frantziou, 2014). By establishing more comprehensive data on victims and perpetrators, as well as the underlying trends, better understanding of the issue is possible. This can then be studied further and the findings used by policy makers, and the public at large, to enable discourse based on empirical evidence as well as theory.

### Academic relevance

Online shaming has received little scientific attention in the past. This is surprising since its effects can be so public and devastating. The internet is a norm driven entity, yet the methods and the means through which norms are enforced evolve rapidly. Whilst bullying and harassment have been subject to a substantial amount of research, cyber harassment and bullying have only received scant attention to date. This is exacerbated for online shaming where there are few instances of it being focused upon in academia as a separate issue. Consequently in-depth examination of this phenomenon has not been the subject of academic inquiry. Therefore exploratory research can enable the uncovering of the dimensions and the

characteristics of individuals vulnerable to this phenomenon, as well as those perpetrating online shaming.

## Research Question

The overall research question being examined in this paper is:

***How do personal and environmental factors affect the likelihood of online shaming?***

This study will explore this central question to create a causal understanding of any possible relationship found between factors of an individual and their likelihood to commit online shaming. To achieve this a theoretical framework is developed. The starting point for this framework is the Social Cognitive Theory (explained in detail within the theoretical section). Relationships between the individual independent variables and the dependent variable of perpetrating online shaming will be explored, in order to examine the varying effects they can have on the likelihood of perpetrating online shaming.

An additional goal of this study is to provide a basic overview of the current state of online shaming among online users. This can provide an up-to-date window to different forms of online shaming that is not available to date. Therefore the secondary research question is as follows:

***What is the current prevalence rate of different forms of online shaming for online users?***

# Literature Review

This section will provide an overview of and in-depth discussion of online shaming utilising academic sources. This will cover multiple aspects of online shaming: the attempts at creating a definition of the phenomenon in academic literature, the history of shaming in society and it transition to the online space, the possible causes of online shaming, its different forms and prevalence as seen in previous literature and finally its negative and positive associations. This will provide a strong understanding of the current academic viewpoints in terms of online shaming, and act as the foundation upon which theoretical framework and testing can occur.

## Online Shaming

### What is the definition of online shaming?

There is no conclusive definition of online shaming in academic literature. The modernity of the phenomena and its subjectivity has led to the term being used interchangeably with cyber harassment (or as a part of it), cyberbullying and trolling. The fundamental aspect of shaming, as defined by Braithwaite, is the "societal processes of expressing social disapproval" (Braithwaite, 1989, p. 100) with the result of regret in the offender and/or disapproval from their peers (Harris & Maruna, 2005, p. 453). Skoric (2010) emphasises that it is citizens who now utilise technological means to social police "shaming transgressions" (Skoric, Chua, Liew, Wong, & Yeo, 2010, p. 181) by way of the internet. Klonick (2015) states that online shaming is based around the idea of social norms.

Social norms are at the heart of the online shaming, in that they provide a boundary with which to differentiate the motivational basis for online shaming from other activities such as cyberbullying or cyber harassment. Dohrenwend (1959) states that a social norm is a rule which over time can restrict "the overt behavior of each individual in an aggregate of two or more individuals" (Dohrenwend, 1959, p. 587). The core characteristics of a social norm include being known to (two or more) members of a social collective. Furthermore the social norm should be able to regulate behaviour of an individual. This includes the individual internalising the social norm and punishment from the social collective or an authority outside the social collective (Dohrenwend, 1959).

The form online shaming takes can involve 'verbal' aggression, but must have the element of a "real, or perceived, violation of a social norm" (Klonick, 2015, p. 8). Online shaming has also been described as individuals engaging in 'social policing' by shaming 'transgressions' via the internet (Skoric et al., 2010). A real or perceived violation of a social norm can be

exceptionally subjective notion, but is a necessary component to any definition of online shaming. It is the observer who decides when a social norm is broken.

## Origins of Public Shaming and its progression to Online Shaming

In his recent book '*So you've Been Publically Shamed*', Jon Ronson (2015) stated that online shaming has its roots in the past. The United States government had previously used public shaming as a state enforced punishment, however this was almost completely abolished in the nineteenth century. Examples of former methods included the stockade and public whippings. An important fact stated is that the reasoning behind the abolishment was that such punishments were too brutal. To publically shame an individual is to remove their self-respect, and that they can never re-enter 'good society' again. There is no redemption from such a punishment (Ronson, 2015). John Braithwaite (1989) detailed the theory of reintegrative shaming where the 'offender' can be deterred from the problematic behaviour via their own "moral conscience" (Williams, 2006) rather than other punishment methods. When family and community are important to an individual, they can act as a deterrent to what is seen a criminality or deviant behaviour away from the norm. Countries where this is the case include Japan and Singapore. Skoric (2010) puts a similar case forward stating that values are can be regarded more important than moral conscience in terms of behaviour. 'Asian values', with the need for agreement and peace, are what drive the need for social norms to be upheld. Failure to comply will bring shame to the individual breaking such norms (Skoric et al., 2010).

Moving to the modern online landscape, the re-emergence of shaming in the online world has required a new framework around which it can be understood. Williams (2006) states that stimulating internalised guilt from the 'offender' can be difficult if there is not a close tie between an individual's online persona and the person themselves. Yet in a world of social media platforms, our online presence is in many ways a part of our person. For online shaming to fit into Braithwaite's idea of reintegrative shaming, there must be a focus on the act itself. A slightly different perspective comes from Klonick (2015) who sees online shaming as a form of 'social norm enforcement', not just a re-emergence of public shaming on a new medium. The internet and the platforms within it have changed the "social conditions" (Klonick, 2015, p. 18) and has fundamentally changed the way people communicate and socialise. Therefore the way society perceives and enforces social norms itself has changed (Klonick, 2015). This necessity of norm enforcement through online shaming changes the dynamic from the origins of public shaming, and therefore Klonick's viewpoint will be used this study. Braithwaite and Ronson also looked at the government and their official sanctions for crimes. These crimes may have

been a violation of norms, but they still were crimes. The modern day online landscape however can bring social norms, which are rules "without an official source" (Klonick, 2015, p. 8) into the spotlight more than ever.

## Causes of online shaming

One of the defining features of the internet landscape is the apparent anonymity it offers to the user. Anonymity on the internet can be a tricky concept to nail down. In reality there are levels of anonymity, even though many people seem to believe the internet allows anonymity unless the user intentionally gives it away (Morio & Buchholz, 2009). Morio and Buchholz (2009) state that there are three levels of anonymity when dealing with computer mediated communication (CMC). This distinction of communication based on computers is important, as this form can often lack the "nonverbal information that is communicated between individuals" (Morio & Buchholz, 2009, p. 298), and therefore affects the types of anonymity that can occur. The first level of CMC anonymity is visual anonymity, meaning that individuals can communicate without displaying their appearance. An example would be Facebook chat, where both users would see the profile picture of recipient of their messages alongside their real name. Secondly there is the "dissociation of real and online identities" (Morio & Buchholz, 2009, p. 298) that allow an individual's online actions to be separated from their 'real' selves in the physical world. Finally there is the level that demonstrates the absence of the ability to identify an individual's online behaviour from others. In terms of the degree of anonymity, visual anonymity would rank the lowest, then the dissociation of identity coming next and lack of identification being the highest degree of anonymity of the three (Morio & Buchholz, 2009, p. 299). (Morio & Buchholz, 2009).

There can also be an 'echo chamber' effect from internet platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. Users can filter out the opinions and news they don't want to see and only follow one line of opinion. This can restrict the viewpoint of the user so they cannot understand the full extent of the norm violation at hand. This can be an automated process for example, whereby the platform offers the most popular or talked about comments opinions first, with the contradictory ones effectively hidden. (Faris & Etling, 2008). This can prevent a full evaluation on the actual merit of the online shaming. For example an individual may find it difficult to effectively judge the actions of a video displaying a norm violation, when the only comments shown are filtered.

## Forms and prevalence of online shaming from previous studies

Just as there is no conclusive definition of online shaming, previous literature has not comprehensively categorised the different forms of online shaming that can occur. However there have been attempts to narrow down the methods that could be used to commit online shaming (Skoric et al., 2010). One aspect is the recording and/or sharing of the perceived norm violation. This can occur through the use of technology such as a mobile phone or camera. The form of media this could entail ranges from photos, videos and audio recordings. This is then published online through various outlets (Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat etc.). Evidence in this manner is not always needed, if the norm violation itself is text based (for example a post on Twitter or Facebook) (Skoric et al., 2010). However when it comes to online harassment and bullying there are studies that have developed a typology of incidents. The definitional line between the two can often be blurred. The move to the internet means that requirements for harassment to be classed as bullying (the need for multiple incidents, harmful intent and imbalance of power) are harder to quantify (Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2007). Certain studies use an exhaustive list of possible methods (with an open answer to capture methods not thought of) constructed after a literature review (Dreßing, Bailer, Anders, Wagner, & Gallas, 2014; Notar, Padgett, & Roden, 2013), whilst others lay out more general behaviours that could encompass multiple online methods (without specifying them for the respondent) (Pew Research Center, 2014).

Even in these more widely researched areas however, there is are drastically differing results based on the sample and method used. A survey collecting data on cyberstalking from a German social network found that 6.3% of individuals were effected (Dreßing et al., 2014), whilst the Pew Research Center found that 40% of American adults using the internet had experienced a form of online harassment (Pew Research Center, 2014). A Canadian study of cyberbullying (using a sample of 2186 school children) found that 23.8% were victims and 8% cyberbullying others (Mishna, Khoury-Kassabri, Gadalla, & Daciuk, 2012).

## Positive aspects of online shaming

Online shaming has multiple benefits as a new form of norm enforcement in society. As everybody knows, there are people every day that get away with annoying and sometimes horrible acts. For example it could be someone cutting in line or using an insult towards a stranger. Often these acts will be left unpunished, and the idea of actively confronting the individual is not common (Solove, 2007, p. 6). But the internet, and the technology that has grown around it, now allows the recording and uploading of media, fundamentally changing

this state of affairs. Citizens now have the power to fight back through online shaming and make a tangible difference through public exposure. The internet has in effect given everyone an open platform, and therefore power (Solove, 2007, p. 7). Furthermore certain individuals may maintain one persona to the outside world, whilst engaging in questionable activities in secret (Solove, 2007, p. 64). Online shaming can uncover these truths, being beneficial if there is a public interest. Whilst a single person may have little power, the accumulation of power from multiple individuals can now have a real impact through the rapid spread and impact of their information (Solove, 2007).

## Negative aspects of online shaming

There are also serious problems with the nature of public shaming, and they have an uncanny resemblance to the reasoning found in the past. The nature of shaming on the internet is often accompanied by a very uncertain timeline of any such 'punishment'. When does an individual have the right for the shaming to stop, and how is this even possible when the shaming is recorded on the internet? Whitman (1998) reinforced this point whilst also stating that the lack of guaranteed proportionality of the public shaming, and what could be deemed to be a violation of social norms to be problematic. Without a fixed regulation for such an act, a common act may not be a morally right one. Martha Nussbaum goes further to say that shaming penalties are morally wrong as they fundamentally affect a person's dignity (Nussbaum, 2009).

The sole aim of online shaming is not the simple act of producing shame in the perceived violator of social norms. Posner and Rasmusen (1999) argue that the reputation of the perpetrator may be a driving cause of online shaming rather than justice. With online platforms such as Facebook and Twitter involving large communities who can readily (and are encouraged to) see each other's activities, online shaming can be used to raise a perpetrators standing. Alternatively a sense of conformity could come into play. If someone does not shame an individual who is being targeted by their social group online, they themselves could become a target because of this. Posner and Rasmusen (1999) also express a worry at the unintended expansion of the scope of shaming. Moreover there could also be spill over consequences from online shaming. Those who are close to the victim (for example family or friends) could be punished by association as well as the intended target (Klonick, 2015).

When using online shaming as a form of punishment, there can be two main aspects that are seen as undermining its perceived nature as a positive force in the enforcement of social norms. Firstly, the core of the act, the breach of a social norm may be questionable in itself. Perhaps the original 'shamer' had a grudge against the offender and fabricated the 'offence' or the act

was misinterpreted and then that misinterpretation is said to be the truth. The nature of the internet compounds the second point: the effect of online shaming is hard to restrict or standardise. Nozick (1981) would state that such an undefined level of punishment would be classed as revenge rather than a punishment for a prior indiscretion. With anonymity, instant responses from around the world and the infinite memory of the internet, the likelihood of restraint or controlling shaming is very unlikely. Just one example is that of Justine Sacco, who sent out a tweet stating, "Going to Africa. Hope I don't get AIDS. Just kidding. I'm white!" (Klonick, 2015, p. 22) which at first seems like a very bad joke. However she became the number one trending tweet worldwide with many stating that the statement was meant in a racist way. The repercussions were devastating. She lost her job and suffered abuse as well as long lasting psychological effects (Ronson, 2015).

Incidents like this example can lead often lead the victims of online to want to retreat from the internet. This means that they may shut down personal websites and blogs and leave social media platforms. Victims can be terrorised to a greater level when shaming extends to seemly 'private' information that is gleamed from the internet and is now used to identify them in more and more detail, destroying their privacy as well as ruining their reputation within their social network. This therefore affects their social participation not only on online platforms but in offline activities too (Citron, 2009, p. 64).

The fear of shaming can also lead to more cautious behaviour in general after such events. Creating alternative names could be used subsequently to hide their gender and identity from scrutiny. The rise and general acceptance (or indifference to them) in both societal and legal spheres can restrict the "expressive autonomy and equality" (Citron, 2009, p. 98) of those effected by online shaming. Moreover the nature of online communication can lack nuance through its format (character limits on Twitter for example) or simply due to the skill of the offender to fully convey their intended message and tone (Citron, 2009). An online threat or statement could be said as a joke or with sarcasm, yet the recipient may not see this, and therefore class this communication as a possible action in real life.

Daniel Solove (2007) puts forward further negative effects that can occur from online shaming. There is the isolation that envelops the individual who has been shamed, while he also concurs with Citron that this can also involve the "impulse to cover up and hide" (Solove, 2007, p. 95). There is also the long term possibility of online shaming creating an oppressive atmosphere across the internet. The lack of proportionality and proper due process could lead to online shaming veering into the territory of bullying and vengeance (Solove, 2007).

# Theoretical Framework

## Theoretical Foundation

There are very few studies that have focused upon the link between individuals and their likelihood to be perpetrate online shaming. However by carrying out a thorough literature review, factors were identified that relate to online shaming. The theoretical foundation of Xiao & Wong's (2013) research into cyberbullying has been a base from which this paper has adapted its model. Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) is at the heart of their quantitative investigation of cyber-bullying among university students. Utilising this, a SCT framework has been constructed focusing on eight factors (13 explicit independent variables) that have seen to be fundamental in identifying the likelihood of an individual committing online shaming. . In regards to personal factors (prior experience of online shaming victimisation, internet self-efficacy and social comparison)*,* perceived anonymity and demographics (*age, sex and ethnicity*) will be tested. When looking at environmental factors, culture, and social norms will be taken into account whilst the behavioural factor will be perpetration of online shaming itself.

SCT was created by Albert Bandura, providing a framework with which to understand and predict behaviour based around three main components. Firstly there are the behavioural factors, then personal factors and finally there are the environmental factors. The development of each factor can be affected by another and vice versa. This relationship is described as "triadic reciprocal causation" (Luszczynska & Schwarzer, 2005, p. 128) in which individuals are actors at play as well as products of their environment (Luszczynska & Schwarzer, 2005). The nature of this reciprocal causation is not necessarily equal, and the time period in which the effect occurs may not be concurrent (Bandura, 1989). The framework itself can also be utilised to evaluate what possible changes would be needed to enact behavioural change, providing a solid base from which further research can be conducted (Bandura, 1997).

When looking at previous research utilising SCT, its use has been predominantly in the areas of healthcare (Anderson, Winett, & Wojcik, 2007; Conner & Norman, 2005), communication (LaRose & Eastin, 2004) and education (Schunk, 1989). SCT has also been applied to the examination and explanation of the act of bullying and harassment both offline and online (Gini, 2006; Hymel, Rocke-Henderson, & Bonanno, 2005; Pellegrini, 1998; Toblin, Schwartz, Gorman, & Abou-ezzeddine, 2005; Xiao & Wong, 2013).

The appropriateness of SCT for this study is demonstrated in both its construction and previous usage in prior academic studies in the area of bullying and harassment both online and off.
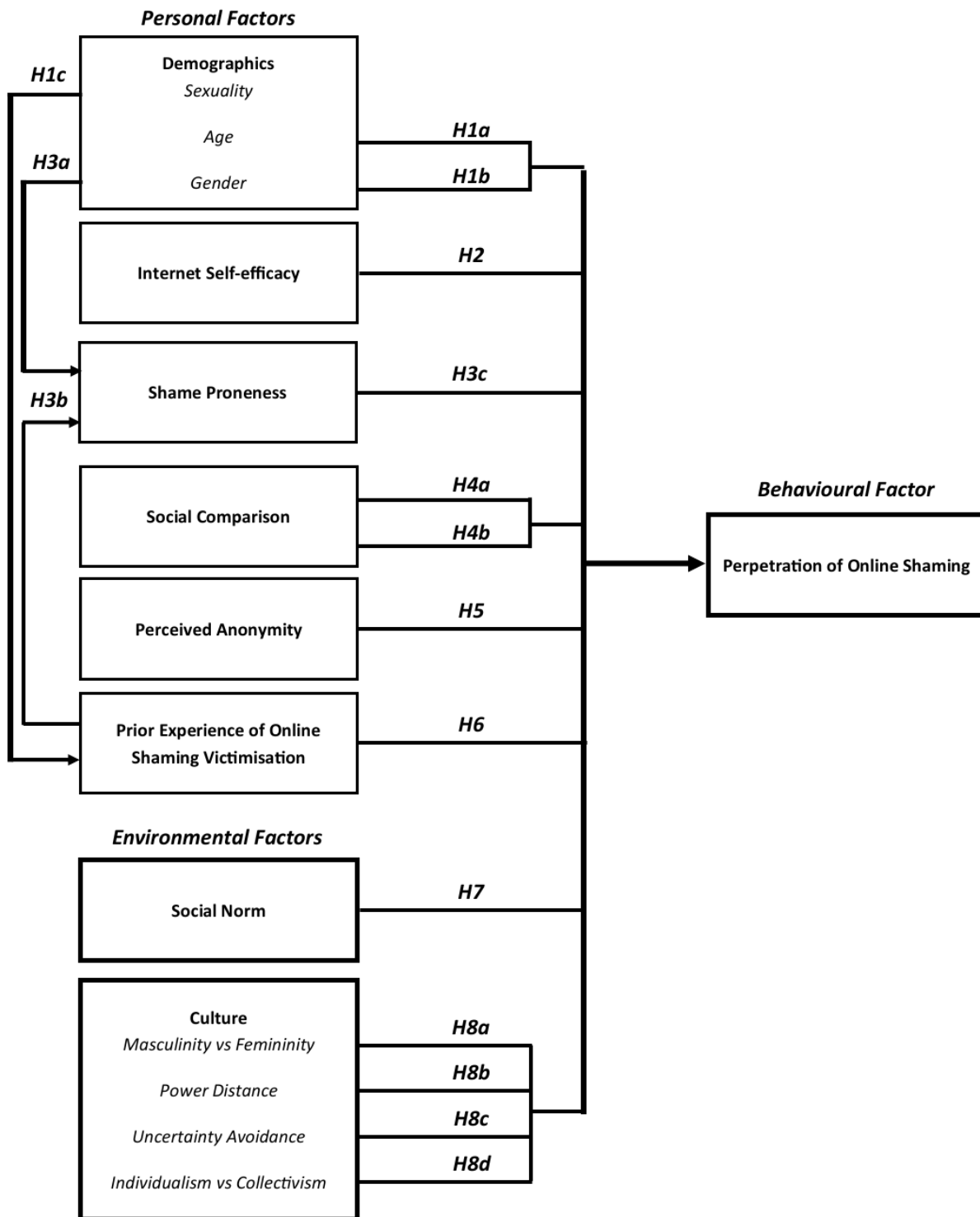
When looking at bullying, Gini (2006) states that SCT is relevant to bullying behaviour due to its explanation that moral reasoning is "linked to moral action through affective self-regulatory mechanisms by which moral agency is exercised" (Gini, 2006, p. 529). This can be related to online shaming as the moral reasoning relates to individual's determination if a norm violation has occurred. Moral action relates to behaviour that can fulfil the intent of online shaming through interacting with online platforms and communication. Furthermore SCT is based on explaining how people acquire and maintain certain behavioural patterns which fits well with the diverse range of factors that can lead to the perpetration of online shaming. However many of the previous studies utilising SCT for research on bullying and harassment (Gini, 2006; Hymel et al., 2005; Wong, 2013) class this conduct as a subcategory of aggressive behaviour. This aggression is the basis of the motivating factor behind the behaviour itself. Yet online shaming has the key differentiation of being based on a real or perceived breaking of a social norm. Online shaming is invariably linked to community and the social norms that form within it. Therefore a society based measure of motivation has been favoured within this study: social comparison.

## Hypotheses Development

Each of the factors within the SCT has been applied to the literature review on online shaming in this study. As online shaming has not been explored extensively within previous literature, much of the prior evidence utilised in putting forward hypotheses are selected from cyberbullying, cyber harassment and bullying research. The focus is on creating hypotheses that test the relationship between personal and environmental factors towards the behavioural factor of online shaming. The expected trends have been found in the literature review. However additional hypotheses involving the relationship between environmental and personal factors are put forward if there is enough evidence found within the literature. Whilst not directly the main aim of this study, it can help provide a broader picture upon which further research can be based. Below in Figure 1 there is a visual overview of the model and the hypotheses whilst Table 1 provides an overall summary of the hypotheses themselves.

## Research Model & Hypothesis summary

**Figure 1.** Model overview with hypotheses

**Table 1.** Summary of Hypotheses

| Factor | | Hypothesis |
|---|---|---|
| *Demographics* | | |
| *Age* | H1a | Individuals who are older will have a lesser likelihood of perpetrating online shaming. |
| *Gender* | H1b | Individuals who are male will have a greater likelihood of perpetrating online shaming. |
| Sexuality | H1c | Individuals who are non-heterosexual will have a higher level of prior experience of online shaming victimisation. |
| Internet Self Efficacy | H2 | Individuals with a higher level of internet self-efficacy will have a greater likelihood of perpetrating online shaming. |
| Shame Proneness | H3a | Individuals who are female will be more likely to have a higher level of shame proneness. |
| | H3b | Individuals with a higher level of prior experience of online shaming victimisation will have a greater level of shame proneness. |
| | H3c | Individuals with a higher level of shame proneness will have a greater likelihood of perpetrating online shaming. |
| Social Comparison | H4a | Individuals with higher social comparison will have higher likelihood of perpetrating online shaming. |
| | H4b | Individuals with higher social comparison will have a greater likelihood of perpetrating online shaming. |
| Perceived Anonymity | H5 | Individuals with a higher perception of anonymity will have a greater likelihood of perpetrating online shaming. |
| Prior Experience of Online Shaming Victimisation | H6 | Individuals with a higher level of prior experience of online shaming victimisation will have a greater likelihood of perpetrating online shaming. |
| Social norm | H7 | Individuals with a higher level of 'social norm' will have a greater likelihood of perpetrating online shaming. |
| *Culture* | | |
| Masculinity vs Femininity | H8a | Individuals with a higher level of masculinity will have a greater likelihood of perpetrating online shaming. |
| Power Distance | H8b | Individuals with a higher level of power distance will have a greater likelihood of perpetrating online shaming. |
| Uncertainty Avoidance | H8c | Individuals with a higher level of uncertainty avoidance will have a greater likelihood of perpetrating online shaming. |
| Individualism vs Collectivism | H8d | Individuals with a higher level of collectivism will have a greater likelihood of perpetrating online shaming. |

This section will detail demographics (*age, gender and sexual orientation*), *internet self-efficacy, shame proneness, social comparison, perceived anonymity and prior experience of online shaming victimisation* in terms of their relevance and advancing hypotheses relating to each of them influencing online shaming behaviour. Since specific empirical evidence of online shaming is vary sparse, similar phenomena may be used to provide prior evidential trends with regard to the factors.

*Demographics*

**Age**

**H1a:** Individuals who are older will have a lesser likelihood of perpetrating online shaming.

Much of the previous research in bullying is based around children and adolescents, the phenomena in adults revolving more around work place bullying and harassment. In previous studies that looked into cyberbullying there has been contradictory evidence. Studies looking into adolescents have stated that bullying behaviour can increase as they get older (e.g., Hinduja and Patchin (2008)). Yet this can be complicated by the method via which bullying can occur. Smith et al. (2008) states that methods such as text/instant messaging and bullying via images are more prevalent in older adolescents. In regards to university students, a recent study in America stated that 21% of respondents indicated that they had been cyberbullied at least once in their life. Furthermore 43% stated that the majority of the bullying took place at college (Kowalski, Giumetti, Schroeder, & Reese, 2012).

When looking at college students there is an expected higher level of cyberbullying in this period, if the geographical differences between American and Western European university students do not effect this trend.  Yet the peak age for this cyberbullying behaviour is linked to around 10-14 year olds, with a reduction after this age range (Kowalski, Giumetti, et al., 2012). Since this study will not include children it can be argued that this trend could hold as individuals grow older.

**Gender**

**H1b:** Individuals who are male will have a greater likelihood of perpetrating online shaming.

Gender plays an important role when looking at online shaming and its prevalence. Gender specific shaming has given rise to 'slut-shaming', where the social norm revolves around men being praised for sexual activity, whilst it is against the norm for women to do the same (Poole, 2013). Levmore and Nussbaum (2010) concur, stating that women are scrutinised more

carefully online than their male counterparts and denounced more aggressively than men (Levmore & Nussbaum, 2010, p. 17). Male norms are said to be amplified in environments where social groups are made up of mainly other men, however this study will not be looking into the gender makeup of the online shaming environment itself (Mahalik et al., 2003). When looking to women, there should be acknowledgement of "ingroup-damaging" behaviours that may occur within the context of online shaming. Pratto states that this process is called self-debilitation (Pratto, Sidanius, & Levin, 2006).

**Sexual orientation**

**H1c:** Individuals who are non-heterosexual will have a higher level of prior experience of online shaming victimisation.

When looking to the literature there are inferences that the emphasis of online shaming on vulnerable groups will extend to multiple areas. For this study sexuality's relationship to perpetration of online shaming will also be hypothesised on, as this has been specifically mentioned by Citron (2009). The nature of online shaming can lead to groups that are traditionally targeted being even more susceptible to online shaming including "gays, and lesbians" (Citron, 2009, p. 64).  An individual's non-heterosexual orientation can be used by others to judge them and this can extend into an online space (Nussbaum, 2009, p. 225). Bullying and harassment is more likely for these individuals both offline and online, and this factor therefore should be taken into account when examining online shaming (Hinduja & Patchin, 2011; Wiederhold, 2014). Through this hypothesis it can be evaluated if these trends carry through to experience of online shaming victimisation as well.

*Internet self-efficacy*

**H2:** Individuals with a higher level of internet self-efficacy will have a greater likelihood of perpetrating online shaming.

Self-efficacy is a core element of SCT. This perceived self-efficacy is an individual's "judgment of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required" to then be able to ascertain the "designated types of performance" (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). Put simply this means that individuals are "more likely to engage in certain behaviors when they believe they're capable of executing the behaviors successfully" (Ormrod, 2008, p. 127). This is further narrowed down when looking at internet self-efficacy, where the organisation and execution elements revolve around "internet actions" (Hsu & Chiu, 2004, p. 1) only. This therefore means the internet self-efficacy is the "perception or judgment […] to accomplish tasks across internet

application domains" (Xiao & Wong, 2013, p. 40). This definition was first established by Marakas, Yi, and Johnson (1998) and utilised in multiple studies henceforth (Agarwal, Sambamurthy, & Stair, 2000; Hsu & Chiu, 2004; Marakas et al., 1998; Xiao & Wong, 2013). Therefore internet self-efficacy is the "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute courses of Internet actions required to produce given attainments" (Eastin & LaRose, 2000).

This belief in one's capabilities is important when examining the behaviour of online shaming. When an individual's self-efficacy with regards to the internet is high, their belief in that they will achieve targeted goals will also be higher. This means that the individual has a higher level of understanding in terms of the technology underlying online communication and social networks. This will then have the knock-on effect of encouraging more of this usage, as they will have a higher sense of confidence (LaRose & Eastin, 2004). This confidence can have effect on an individual's bullying perpetration likelihood as bore out in previous research, which has linked those with higher levels of perceived internet self-efficacy with more propensity to bullying online (Xiao & Wong, 2013). This paper infers that a similar relationship shall be found for online shaming, as comparable factors are needed to understand the context and abilities that online platforms provide for effective shaming.

### *Shame Proneness*

**H3a**: Individuals who are female will be more likely to have a higher level of shame proneness.

**H3b**: Individuals with a higher level of prior experience of online shaming victimisation will have a greater level of shame proneness.

**H3c**: Individuals with a higher level of shame proneness will have a greater likelihood of perpetrating online shaming.

In determining the dynamics of the perpetration of online shaming, an individual's tendency to react and be affected by shaming situations should be evaluated (Strömsten, 2011). This 'proneness' could manifest in different ways in terms of online shaming, yet its relationship to the different aspects of the SCT model are unknown. When looking to analyse shame proneness different approaches have been utilised, with some presenting scenarios from which an individual is judged on their "anticipated distress" to assess their 'state' shame (Goss, Gilbert, & Allan, 1994, p. 713; Johnson et al., 1987; Tangney, Wagner, & Gramzow, 1992). Alternatively there is the idea of 'trait' shame, that focuses on an individual's more "global self-evaluation" (Goss et al., 1994, p. 173), with Donald Cook's *Internalized Shame Scale* instrument being a prime example.

However this study will have a strong focus on how others assess oneself, and not on internalised shame aspects, or the response to possible shameful events. This is more appropriate for the environment of the internet, as shaming and its proneness often relies on the sharing of information or activities across a broad spectrum of platforms. The exposure of the internet across a global audience intensifies the 'looking glass self' concept of Charles Cooley where the feeling of shame manifests from the condescension of others (Matos, Pinto-Gouveia, Gilbert, Duarte, & Figueiredo, 2015). This form of shame proneness measurement also forms an important link to mental health afflictions that have been mentioned previously as a result of online shaming. These include the chilling affect mentioned by Parsons (2012) for those affected, and this therefore provides a strong foundation for further research in the future.

Looking to possible hypotheses it had been stated that women may have a higher shame proneness in comparison to men (Matos et al., 2015, p. 7). The relationship between previous experiences of trauma and the level of shame proneness has also been mentioned. Therefore to explore any possible relationship, it has been hypothesised that those who have higher levels of prior online shaming experience will have also had higher levels of shame proneness (Matos et al., 2015). In terms of shame proneness in relation to perpetration, previous research has stated that there is a positive relationship (Ahmed & Braithwaite, 2004). This study focused on children at school, and found this trend once guilt-proneness was controlled for.

*Social Comparison*

**H4a:** Individuals with higher social comparison will have higher likelihood of perpetrating online shaming.

**H4b:** Individuals with a higher social comparison status will have a greater likelihood of perpetrating online shaming.

In Xiao & Wong's (2013) SCT model for cyberbullying perpertration, motivation was a personal factor that focused upon the agression that is present in cyberbullying. This was seen to stem from three main aspects: power, attention and aceptence taken from Reiss's theory of basic desires (Reiss, 2004; Xiao & Wong, 2013). Yet aggression does not seem like the best fit for a phenomenon such as Internet based shaming. As previously mentioned, motivation has been replaced with social comparison within this study's implementation of SCT in regards to online shaming.

The principle of comparing oneself to others in society is an important part of social relations. Its relevance to the topic of shaming stems from its role in the behaviours manifesting of and

between both individuals and crowds (Allan & Gilbert, 1995, p. 293). This social comparison occurs in both directions (higher or lower) with the aim to "self-enhance, self-improve or avoid shame" (Allan & Gilbert, 1995, p. 293). Social comparison and its relation to shame is apparent and deep-rooted, with the feelings of inferiority and attractiveness as well as behaviours aspects such as subordination and submission (Gilbert & Miles, 2000, p. 759). This urge for comparison could stem from the need to equate skills or the attitudes of others to determine one's own achievements or as a learning mechanism through the knowledge derived from others is utilised to "derive coping strategies" (Schneider & Schupp, 2011, p. 11).

The link towards social comparison and the dynamic between hierarchical levels can be seen in that those in a higher position feel more entitled to challenge those perceived to be more fragile than themselves, whilst those lower down submit to those higher up the chain (Hinde, 1987). When looking to online shaming this is pertinent as this "preparedness to challenge and engage in confident displays" (Allan & Gilbert, 1995, p. 293) could translate to a trend between social comparison and experiences of online shaming both as a victim and perpetrator. Those with a high perceived social status could feel confident in their actions due to their social level and therefore find it easier to not just shame. This could also manifest in shaming that goes beyond conventional 'polite' forms. For some low status individuals who feel they are "excluded regardless of his/her actions" (Åslund, Starrin, Leppert, & Nilsson, 2009, p. 2), this behaviour could also be apparent. This kind of behaviour can be characterised by the somewhat paradoxical nature of online shaming, where it is ok to intimidate, humiliate and vilify an individual for a perceived breaking of a social norm, when the 'shamer' themselves are breaking social norms in doing so in such a manner. The hierarchical relationship between individuals could be indicative of the activities online by which shaming can occur. Åslund (2009) talks of 'threats' from those lower down, that can lead to acts of aggression as well as a restriction of resources. This power imbalance relates to cyberbullying where this is seen as a key component, and may overlap with the dynamics of shaming as well, where those who rank higher socially in a virtual community can utilise this for shaming, or feel more enabled to do so (Menesini & Nocentini, 2009; Pieschl, Porsch, Kahl, & Klockenbusch, 2013).

Furthermore those with a higher social status may feel more compelled to protect their position and the related benefits that occur with this. The 'chilling effect', in this context referring to individuals or groups withdrawing from online communities (Parsons, 2012), could be a consequence of such a social dynamic online. This indicates personal damage that extends beyond just the act of shaming. Moreover those that feel that they have the 'right' position on

the matter, which could be the majority view will act out against those who do not follow this, as it acts as a challenge to their world view point.

When looking at individuals with a low level of perceived social rank, there is said to be the inclination to self-monitor their activities and act more compliant (Cheung, Gilbert, & Irons, 2004, p. 1144). In relation to online shaming, this could contribute to the chilling effect, whereas there is a fear of being on the receiving end of humiliation possibly leading to a lower level of shaming experienced in the past, as well as perpetration.

## *Perceived Anonymity*

**H5:** Individuals with a higher perception of anonymity will have a greater likelihood of perpetrating online shaming.

Anonymity is described by Wallace (1999) as the "noncoordinatability of traits in a given respect" (Wallace, 1999, p. 24). In a broader sense this conveys the idea of an individual lacking distinction, or identifiable characteristics. In previous studies where anonymity has been a dimension, it has been seen as "dichotomous and objective" variable (Hite, Voelker, & Robertson, 2014, p. 23), with a direct definition being assumed as inherently obvious to the reader. A consequence of anonymity, the manifestation of collectivist behaviours, gave rise to multiple avenues of thinking explaining the movement from anonymity to certain behaviour. One example of this includes Suler (2009), who talks of the "Online Disinhibition Effect", which can lead individuals to manifest positive (revealing inhibited emotions, selflessness and kindness) and negative (offensive, intimidating or disapproving) behaviours which are labelled 'benign' and 'toxic' disinhibition respectively (Suler, 2004, p. 184). These act as exceptions to the norm enabled by anonymity. Others have stated that 'social identity theory' provides a better explanation (Moral-Toranzo, Canto-Ortiz, & Gómez-Jacinto, 2007; Postmes, 2001). This theoretical backing states that anonymity again leads to a lack of individual distinctiveness, yet from this rises a social identity, one that "reinforces situational group norms" (Hite et al., 2014, p. 25). Through this reinforcement, behaviours therefore follow a normative pattern.

This study will focus upon a different vision of anonymity, perceived anonymity, one that is suited to the modern era of technology and communication. In this current world of technological innovation and communication development (smartphones being a prime example), true anonymity is difficult, if not impossible to maintain (Hite et al., 2014, p. 22). Individuals, when acting on the internet, feel that these activities can be anonymous to a certain extent (Ben-Ze'ev, 2003; Carvalheira & Gomes, 2003; Hite et al., 2014, p. 22; McKenna &

Bargh, 2000; Suler, 2004). Hite et al (2014) focus on an "internalized view of anonymity" (Hite et al., 2014, p. 236) with the perceived anonymity occurring on a continuum, as suggested by Scott (1998).

When looking at anonymity from a perception point-of-view, the definition of Hite et al. will be utilised for this study: "the extent to which individuals perceive that their personal identity is unknown to others or that they are unidentifiable as an individual" (Hite et al., 2014, p. 26). Looking at the dynamics that are involved with definition of perceived anonymity, the feeling of blending in with the 'crowd' or abstracting your identity led to this hypothesis being established.

*Prior Experience of Online Shaming Victimisation*

**H6:** Individuals with a higher level of prior experience of online shaming victimisation will have a greater likelihood of perpetrating online shaming.

It is important to take into account an individual's previous experiences of online shaming when examining the perpetration of this phenomena. This can provide a background with which to see how earlier experiences (or lack thereof) can affect the future perpetration of online shaming, in conjunction with other factors. Social learning theory outlined by Bandura (1977, 1978) states that learning itself can manifest from the observation of behaviours and/or their consequences. From this "vicarious reinforcement" (Bandura, 1978, p. 14) there is the evaluation of the behaviour from the individual. This extends to not only observing experiences of others, but also themselves (Mishna, McInroy, Lacombe-Duncan, & Daciuk, 2015). Therefore prior experience plays an important role in the SCT model as a key pillar of the 'reciprocal determinism' that occurs between personal characteristics, environmental and behavioural factors (Bandura, 1989; Glanz, Rimer, & Viswanath, 2008; Jaishankar, 2011, p. 66).

In regards to previous studies, aggression is often used as a basis for behaviour such as cyberbullying. There is evidence of a cyclical nature to behaviour such as this, where those who have been the victim of aggressive behaviour will be more likely to go on to perform similar actions (Burgess, Hartman, & McCormack, 1987; Mishna et al., 2015; Xiao & Wong, 2013). When looking further at cyberbullying behaviour, there is evidence that cyberbullying victimisation experience can lead to higher levels of subsequent cyberbullying behaviour (Espelage, Mebane, & Swearer, 2004; Li, 2007; Xiao & Wong, 2013). This hypothesis will test whether this trend is upheld when motivation is substituted for social comparison.

## Environmental Factors

This section will detail *Social norm* and Culture (*masculinity, power distance, uncertainty avoidance and individualism*) in terms of their relevance whilst also advancing hypotheses relating to how each of them could influence online shaming behaviour.

### *Social Norm*

**H7:** Individuals with a higher level of 'social norm' will have a greater likelihood of perpetrating online shaming.

Social cognitive theory states that there could be a link between factors within an individual's environment that can influence their behaviour. Bandura (1986, 1995) himself explicitly points towards the idea of social influence in relation to efficacy, with an example of the social influence that occurs from one's friends in predicting the act of smoking (Bandura, 1995, p. 297). The idea of this kind of social influence can be equated to the concept of social norm (Festl & Quandt, 2013; Xiao & Wong, 2013), which is a "rule which… proves binding on the overt behavior of each individual in an aggregate of two or more individuals" (Gibbs, 1965, p. 587). These social norms are core to human behaviours (Elster, 2000; Güth & Napel, 2006; Rost, Stahel, & Frey, 2016), and are shared across society or groups with their continuing influence structured partly around individuals "approval and disapproval" (Elster, 2000, p. 99). The creation of social norms occurs due to the belief in a benefit that will occur for the group the social norm has influence over. It is stressed however that "contextual variables and the engagement of certain types of individuals" (Rost et al., 2016, p. 3) are the determinants of whether this collective nature is promoted or not. Examples include the actual opportunity to participate (such as having a social network account), the presence of leadership (a figure head such as an individual with a large number of followers) or the popularity of an individual (Ostrom, 2014). Yet, social norms do not always benefit the community it covers as they can act as a barrier, highlighting and supporting one group's benefit over others (Rost et al., 2016).

When looking to those who would be inclined to act as norm enforcers, those who exhibit self-interest and wish to exploit utility for themselves may let others perform this action for the group. This allows them to benefit from the enforcement, without any risk to themselves (Opp, 2002; Posner & Rasmusen, 1999; Rost et al., 2016). In general, social networks and internet platforms provide a low cost form of norm enforcement (to differing degrees) in comparison to offline norm enforcement in person (Rost et al., 2016, p. 3). A simple example would be an individual using rude language in public. In a real-life situation, say in a restaurant, an individual may feel it's inappropriate to use such language. Yet the cost of calling out an

individual breaking a norm could be great. The norm violator could turn aggressive in response or those surrounding the 'shamer' could view his norm enforcement as unnecessary. Online however, responding to such a comment is easy and instant with often little risk. Furthermore there could be additional factors that can motivate norm enforcers, such as an up-vote system within a comment section of a website or the like system found with Facebook. If social enforcement is seen by others, and can be represented in a fashion such as this, the act of norm enforcement is incentivised (Opp, 2002; Rost et al., 2016).

*Culture*

**H8a:** Individuals with a higher level of masculinity will have a greater likelihood of perpetrating online shaming.

**H8b:** Individuals with a higher level of power distance will have a greater likelihood of perpetrating online shaming.

**H8c:** Individuals with a higher level of uncertainty avoidance will have a greater likelihood of perpetrating online shaming.

**H8d:** Individuals with a higher level of collectivism will have a greater likelihood of perpetrating online shaming.

The culture which an individual identifies with, and is surrounded by, can play a large role in both their experience of shaming and the social ramifications, the online kind included. It can be stated that an individual's self-identity "varies as a function of culture" (Strömsten, 2011, p. 10), meaning that culture and the values that stem from it guide what behaviours could be considered shameful (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Strömsten, 2011). Therefore culture plays a key role in guiding one's behaviour, including the act of online shaming, and the differences hold a much more geographically categorisation.

Whilst the internet is for the most part borderless, individuals live within societies that do have varying cultural characterises, and this could have an effect on online shaming activities (Skoric et al., 2010). Western cultures are seen as independent with achievements accredited to talent, whilst collectivist cultures, such as in Eastern Asia, have self-identity that is "interdependent and… connected to other people" (Strömsten, 2011, p. 8). This creates a situation where achievements are now communal. An example of shaming, in this more collective culture, is the recent murder of Qandeel Baloch in Pakistan by her brother. She was a "social media celebrity" (BBC Asia, 2016), and posted online regularly including controversial material, "raunchy" (BBC Asia, 2016) images and commentary. The nature of the murder was

stated as being honour related, as her actions broke social norms prevalent in the area in regards to sexuality and how women should act (Qarni, 2016).

When examining online shaming in this study, identifying the cultural bedrock of an individual is important in evaluating how they may perceive situations, both when receiving and dolling out shame. The very limited number of studies regarding online shaming have often assumed one kind of cultural background. By factoring this dimension into the analysis, a more nuanced picture can be gathered that can try to identify underlying factors contributing to trends.

Since this study will look at individuals from the internet, the types of culture they associate with and draw from when acting out behaviours will be diverse. When looking at culture and shame, gender can play a very important role, transcending cross-cultural differences, with females having a higher level of reported shame in comparison to men (Lewis, Haviland-Jones, & Barrett, 2010, pp. 395-408; Strömsten, 2011; Woien, Ernst, Patock-Peckham, & Nagoshi, 2003). Moreover men report that they feel higher levels of pride than females (Brebner, 2003; Strömsten, 2011).

This study has chosen to use Hofstede's six cultural dimensions as a theoretical basis. Therefore the following hypotheses have been formulated after operationalising the variable of culture using the CVSCALE. The more detailed reasoning behind this measurement choice will be discussed further in the measures section.

It has been stated that within more feminine cultures (such as Sweden), individuals would not exhibit as much aggression as well as assertive and dominating behaviours within social relations in comparison to more masculine cultures, for example Japan (Einarsen, 2000). Furthermore Bayraktar (2015) stated that looking at the previous academic literature, cyberbullying would be more prevalent with higher levels of masculinity (Bayraktar, 2015, p. 164). The combination of assertiveness as well as the prevalence of dominating behaviour could suggest that similar trends are found for the phenomena of online shaming perpetration. In study this has been taken to the level of an individual.

Looking to power distance, lower levels of power distance (at a national level) have been associated with a lower prevalence of harassment (Einarsen, 2000). Although harassment is a step further than simple online shaming, it can be a consequence leading from it, thereby indicating a possible link. A more solid connection to power distance is the central theme of conformity behind that lies behind it. Those who personally exhibit a high power distance may

therefore conform to social norms and be more likely to enforce these norms (Matusitz & Musambira, 2013).

Regarding uncertainty avoidance in relation to online shaming, there are very few sources to rely upon. However when looking to the business organisational application of Hofstede's dimensions, it has been said that those with a high level of uncertainty avoidance are more likely to find deviations from group norms unacceptable. As norms provide the core definitional basis for online shaming, it could be said that this would be mirrored in individuals when confronted by a perceived breaking of norms online (Vitell, Nwachukwu, & Barnes, 1993).

When studying the individualism-collectivism dimension of culture, it can be said that those who lean towards the individualist end of the spectrum would want to look after themselves and those in their immediate relation (direct family). Collectivism on the other extreme represents a society in which an individual is born into and then strongly integrated within in-groups (Khan, 2014). Furthermore an individual with a high level of individualism would also indicate more openness to the "right to a private life" and displaying a "personal opinion" (Power et al., 2009, p. 3). This is countered by the view that memberships within societal group is very important, and that bullying behaviours can be acceptable protect to this (Power et al., 2009). Therefore this paper extends these views to online shaming, by postulating that the enforcement of norms in the form of shaming online have a higher likelihood in individuals with a higher collectivism level.

## Behavioural Factor

### *Perpetration of online shaming*

Finding a previously used scale to measure the perpetration of online shaming has proven not possible (as of writing). Therefore a scale will have to be constructed for this study. To expedite the process of creation, previously used scale items will be utilised to describe the types of incidents that could occur online, which are classed as shaming. In this process it is evident that cyber harassment and cyberbullying often overlap in term of the types of incidents. Therefore previous examples of measurement instruments for these phenomena will be referenced. However to overcome the differences between these and online shaming in the respondents mind, explanatory text will be used as well as modifications to the measurement formats. A full overview of the measurement form constructed can be found in the measure section.

# Method

## Participants

In total the 251 participants completed surveys for this study, with 223 being valid (125 women and 98 men). The mean age of respondents was found to be 26.8 years old and had a standard deviation of 8.776. The self-report survey was placed on Facebook and Reddit publically, and there were no restrictions to those who could complete the survey apart from being over the age of 18. The chosen form of data collection was therefore a convenience sample, due to the resources and time available.

## Measures

The participants completed a self-report survey specifically constructed for this study. This self-report survey has been constructed from various different instruments, with most being already validated from other studies.

There were nine sections in total, each representing a different set of survey questions. The exception is the first of these sections, the introduction. This stated the overall idea of the survey as well as estimated time frame for finishing the survey and thanking the respondent for their time. It also made clear that only those who were 18 years old or above could participate (as they can fully understand and give consent to conduct the survey), that all answers would be private and that they consented to the data being used upon completion of the survey. The full survey items for each section can be found in the appendix of this study.

## Demographics

*Age & Gender*

- Age asked for with the following open question: Please state how old you are: ___ years old
- Gender was requested with the following dichotomous question (with males coded as 0, whilst females are 1): What is your gender?

*Highest Level of Education obtained*

The method used to record the highest level of education a respondent has completed comes from UNESCO. The International Standard Classification of Education (UNESCO, 2011) provides a standard classification of education levels that can be applied across international systems. Therefore due to the potential international respondent sample this has been deemed the most valid method to utilise (UNESCO, 2011). From the nine levels in total the earliest (Early childhood education) has been omitted. Furthermore certain category wording has been deemed far too unclear for potential respondents. 'Lower secondary education' and 'Upper

secondary education' has been combined in a single category called 'Secondary education'. In terms of post-secondary education that is not classed as tertiary education (Post-secondary non-tertiary education and Short-cycle tertiary education), these have been combined into a single category called 'Post-secondary education vocational qualifications'. Further changes to this question were carried out due to feedback from the pre-test of the survey, details of which are discussion in the 'survey pre-test and adjustment' section.

*Sexual orientation*

In creating this aspect of the survey, methodological approaches from the UK government's Office of National Statistics (ONS) were used. Their report into measuring sexuality identified four main aspects (sexual attraction, sexual behaviour, sexual identity and sexual orientation) that make up sexual orientation as a whole. In concurrence for the motivation of this paper, the ONS has "deemed sexual identity the most relevant dimension of sexual orientation" (Office for National Statistics, 2010, p. 6) as it delves into the individual's prior knowledge and encounters with "disadvantage and discrimination" (Office for National Statistics, 2010, p. 6). Therefore this aspect will be the focus in this study (Office for National Statistics, 2010). Therefore to measure this variable, the question structure and wording found in the government methodological research will be used (adapted slightly from face to face question format used):

Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?

- Heterosexual / straight
- Gay / Lesbian
- Bisexual
- Transsexual
- Other (please specify)

For option 2 (Gay/Lesbian), the respondents answer to the gender question will be used in conjunction with the answer to divide gay and lesbian individuals in data analysis.

All demographic items are found in section 1 of the self-report survey in the appendix.

## Internet Self-efficacy

Due to the rapidly changing nature of the internet, deviation from Xiao & Wong's (2013) choice of measurement was deemed necessary (a modified selection from Hsu and Chiu's 'Internet self-efficacy and electronic service acceptance' article). Instead the Internet Self-efficacy Scale (ISS) has been utilised, and modified to fit this paper (Kim & Glassman, 2013).

This scale is comprised of 17 items based around five factors (Reactive/generative self-efficacy, Differentiation self-efficacy, Organization self-efficacy, Communication self-efficacy and Search self-efficacy). Due to this paper requiring a short and easy to complete self-report survey, the decision was made to choose one item from each factor. The final scale is therefore made up of five items on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

All internet self-efficacy items are found in section 3 of the self-report survey in the appendix.

### Shame Proneness

When looking to shame proneness, the instrument utilised in this study is *The Other as Shamer* scale (Goss et al., 1994). This aims to evaluate how "one sees others as judging the self" (Goss et al., 1994, p. 716). This instrument in particular was chosen as it was seen as highly correlated to self-judgements, which matches the nature of online behaviours such as posting comments, as well as the reactions that occur from behaviours of others regards an individual's actions (Goss et al., 1994, p. 716). The method used was to employ items from the *Internalized Shame Scale* (Cook, 1996) with modified wording, so to establish the focus on how others see oneself.

In order to incorporate this scale within the study, a shortened version has been utilised from Matos et al. (2015) named *OAS2*. The reason for doing so is to create a self-report survey as short as possible whilst ensuring validity, so to attract the largest number of respondents. There are eight items within this five point scale, with options ranging from never, seldom, sometimes, frequently and almost always. One adjustment made to each item is to clearly state that the situation is within the setting of the internet.

The exact wording of each of these items can be found in section 5 of the self-report survey found in the appendix.

### Social Comparison

As an added variable to the model of Xiao & Wong, a scale had to be found independently for social comparison. The Iowa-Netherlands Comparison Orientation Measure was chosen as the scale to accomplish this measurement. This scale consists of 11 items, each having a Likert point system of five ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. This scale was chosen due to it being already tested for reliability and validity, as well as the numerous times it has been evaluated and used in the United State, Netherlands and Germany.  Originally created by Gibbons and Buunk (1999), they saw two underlying dimensions to social comparison,

comparison of abilities (items 1-6) and comparison of opinions (items 7-11) (Schneider & Schupp, 2011).

Schneider & Schupp (2011) have created a shortened version of the scale however, taking six item (three from each dimension). This shortened version of the scale is used in this paper to evaluate Social Comparison of the respondents.

All social comparison items are found in section 6 of the self-report survey in the appendix.

### Perceived Anonymity

For the variable of perceived anonymity, the instrument developed by Hite et al. (2014) will be used. This instrument is designed around discovering the relationships that lie between perceived anonymity and the behaviours that can stem from it. Therefore it provides a good fit for the model presented in this paper, whilst also providing a measure of reliability and validity, from the testing that has been already performed on this particular instrument.

The instrument consists of five items in total with the respondent given a 7 point Likert scale choice for each, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. A contextual scenario is given prior to the questions, as suggested by the creators of the instrument. For this paper, 'When interacting with others and/or commenting on the internet I feel…' has been used. This scenario is used as is explicitly states interactions with others, and therefore cannot be mistaken for activities such as internet banking, which is not relevant to this study.

All perceived anonymity items are found in section 4 of the self-report survey in the appendix.

### Social Norm

In order to comprehensively evaluate the respondent's social norm acceptance, a wide ranging and detailed instrument is required. As the social norms lie at the heart of online shaming, the three item scale utilised by Xiao & Wong (2013) is seen as somewhat insufficient. Therefore *The Social-Norm Espousal Scale* has been chosen as it is a valid and reliable measure for the "extent to which people believe in and value social norms" (Bizer, Magin, & Levine, 2014). Alternative scales that measure an individual's acceptance of social do exist, yet often have a focus upon the extreme end of the spectrum, and not on a broader, more general range. The *Levensen Self-Report Psychopathy Scale* (Levensen, Kiehl, & Fitzpatrick, 1995) and the *Psychological Inventory of Criminal Thinking Styles* (Walters, 1995) are a couple of examples of this (Bizer et al., 2014, p. 107).

The scale itself consists of 14 items, and the respondent can answer by choosing one answer ranging from Extremely uncharacteristic, Somewhat uncharacteristic, Uncertain, Somewhat characteristic and Extremely characteristic (1-5).

All social norm items are found in section 7 of the self-report survey in the appendix.

## Culture

When looking to operationalise culture as a variable, Hofstede's (1984) theory of cultural dimensions cannot be ignored. The dimensions of individualism-collectivism; masculinity-femininity; power distance; uncertainty avoidance; indulgence vs restraint; and long- vs short-term orientation persist in some form in almost all measures of culture up to this day. Taras, Rowney and Steel (2009), in their comprehensive review of 121 measures of culture found that "97.5% of all reviewed measures contain at least some dimensions that are conceptually similar to those introduced by Hofstede" (Taras, Rowney, & Steel, 2009, p. 360)". Furthermore the form of a self-report survey fits well with the measurement of culture due to time and resource restrictions (Taras et al., 2009).

The internet however is seen as a 'global village', and the regular geographically divide of culture does not always fit this online world (Morio & Buchholz, 2009). Therefore Yoo, Donthu, and Lenartowicz (2011) CVSCALE has been chosen to assess the individual cultural alignment of respondents, enabling analysis of culture on a person-to-person basis. Whilst not containing the newest dimensional addition to Hofstede's theory, indulgence vs restraint, this scale has been tested across multiple nations (Brazil, Poland, South Korea and the United States), providing some reassurance of its compatibility for individuals from different backgrounds. From the five dimensions measured in the CVSCALE, four have been utilised in this study, with long-term orientation deemed not as relevant to online shaming as the four other dimensions within the scale. However even with only four dimensions, this scale is made up of 20 items, and the decision has therefore been made to shorten this down to 12 items in total. These items are in a five point Likert scale format from strongly disagree to strongly agree as originally conceived in the CVSCALE. The shortened scale can be found in section 2 of the self-report survey in the appendix.

## Perpetration of online shaming & prior experience of online shaming victimisation

As mentioned previously in this paper, the definition of online shaming is very much a fluid entity, yet an explicit and sometimes underlying consensus is the real or perceived violation of norms within society. Ideally a previous survey that included a scale covering the range of

online shaming activities would have been used. However such a scale does not seem to exist currently for online shaming. There are those that cover personal experiences of shame (Andrews, Qian, & Valentine, 2002), or those that cover different cyberbullying incidents for individuals (Stewart, Drescher, Maack, Ebesutani, & Young, 2014)

As stated earlier, online shaming shares aspects of cyberbullying and instruments measuring this phenomena have been utilised to construct the items that provide a range of online shaming incidents. The seven core subcategories of cyberbullying are stated as 'text message bullying', 'Picture/ Video Clip bullying (via mobile phone cameras)', 'Phone call bullying (via mobile phones)', 'Email bullying/Chat-room bullying', 'Bullying through instant messaging' and 'Bullying via websites' (Smith, Mahdavi, Carvalho, & Tippett, 2006). The report from which these sub-categories originate have been cited by many subsequent articles regarding cyberbullying activities (Görzig & Ólafsson, 2013; Kowalski, Limber, Limber, & Agatston, 2012; Völlink, Bolman, Dehue, & Jacobs, 2013; Wingate, Minney, & Guadagno, 2013). However Citron (2009) states that defamation, as well as deliberate attacks causing misery, technological hacking or damage as well as employment opportunity interference can all be the outcome of online attacks. More serious activities such as serious online death threats, or threats of harm for instance would be seen as cyber-harassment, and not online shaming (Klonick, 2015, p. 8). It was deemed applicable to take items from cyberbullying and cyber-harassment prevalence scales where appropriate, and then adapt their wording for online shaming and include them into a new single scale that will measure incidents of online shaming.

To make sure that these items are valid for online shaming, a statement in this section of the survey will state that all activities must be a result of a real or perceived breaking of a social norm ('Online shaming occurs when the individual perpetrating the shaming believes the person on the receiving end has broken a social norm such as posting a racist comment, or stating an extreme political view'). This will act as the key differentiator (as stated by Klonick (2015) in his definition of online shaming) from cyberbullying or harassment, as it will exclude results that does not conform to the accepted definitional core of online shaming. Furthermore, when looking at the prevalence of the particular activity, multiple occurrences are not required for it to be classed online shaming, unlike bullying or harassment often is.

Items A through H are modified versions from the cyberbullying/victimisation scale of Menesini, Nocentini, and Calussi (2011), who based them upon Smith's seven sub-categories (Menesini et al., 2011). The items I and J have been created for this paper to include some of

Citron (2009) relevant instances online attacks. Finally option K is an open ended question, allowing the respondent to fill in any other forms of shaming that they feel is relevant. This has been included due to the emerging nature of online shaming, and the expanding forms of technology used to enact it.

The respondents are asked to fill in the number of times they have experienced the event described over the last two months. This is a period of time used in Menesini et al. (2011) study, and provides a stretch of time that can provide relevant results without asking too much of a respondents memory, as well as providing a time period that reflects a current technological landscape (in terms of social media/online use). This concurs with previous literature stating that shorter time periods for recollection in self-report surveys can provide more accurate results (Brener, Billy, & Grady, 2003; Center for Health and Safety Culture, 2011). The items also used their five-point scale but with modifications to have concrete boundaries: never, once; two to five times; five to nine times; more than ten instances. Measuring the number of instances differ from study to study (Menesini et al., 2011; Mitchell, Ybarra, Jones, & Espelage, 2016), yet with such limited prior studies into online shaming, the chosen range was judged to provide a broad enough selection without becoming too difficult for a respondent to decide based on their memory.

The full selection of items can be found in section 8 of the self-report survey in the appendix.

## Procedure

The survey data was collected between the dates of 4th – 30th November, 2016. The survey itself was completed at one instance by each respondent, with questions regarding online shaming asking about events that have occurred over a two month period in the respondent's past.

Google Forms was used as the method of creating and sharing the survey as it enables the creation of a survey for a respondent for free without limitations imposed. Furthermore it included tools to make sure respondents fill out every question as well as preventing bias through the randomisation of the order of certain answer choices. This aided in the elimination of missing data for the most part. Furthermore Google Forms allows the sharing of a link that would take the user straight to the survey itself (de la Fuente Valentín, Pardo, & Delgado Kloos, 2009, p. 747; Mallette & Barone, 2013; Taylor & Doehler, 2014).

The survey utilised separate sections to divide it up onto distinct screens. They were created for more than just aesthetic reasons, with this enabling a simpler format for the respondent with

instructions and a briefing on the type of questions at the beginning of each section. It also stopped users from scanning the entire survey, which can lead to them taking shortcuts (Couper, 2008, p. 10). Furthermore it is a more efficient method for users, as this format tends to be faster than a single page version (Couper, 2008, p. 15). Additionally the nature of the data analysis meant that missing data would invalidate a respondent's data whilst the ordering (and occlusion) of later questions would help prevent bias such as the 'good-subject effect' as described by Nichols and Maner (2008). This states that a survey participant can try to understand the hypotheses of a study, and try to conform to the expected position of the experimenter (Nichols & Maner, 2008, p. 161). In the same vein this can also combat social desirability bias (Spector, 1994).

## Self-report survey pre-test

The aim of the pre-test was to identify possible cognitive and situational issues that may have arisen in the creation of the survey (Brener et al., 2003, p. 437). Possible cognitive issues include the understanding of items within the survey, as well as the instructions to complete the survey. Furthermore this can also include the knowledge or memory required in the completion of certain items (Biemer, Groves, Lyberg, Mathiowetz, & Sudman, 2011, p. 128). The situational issues could include the format/location that the survey is completed in, or the sensitivity of questions being asked and the bias that could result from this, hindering the validity of the survey (Biemer et al., 2011, pp. 127-144). The strongest way to combat many situational issues is to make sure respondents feel their answers are anonymous and they are free from reprisals (Brener et al., 2003).

Before data collection was conducted on a larger scale, a pre-test was performed by five individuals. The selects participants were sent link to take them directly to the survey online. This was then completed in the same manner as the main survey would be handled. The feedback from the pre-test respondents included:

*Confusion on whether certain sections were related specifically to the internet or in general*

This point related multiple instances where the introduction to a section of questions did not exactly specify if they would relate to a respondents situation online or in person. For example when looking at perceived anonymity, if the respondent would not realise that this was specifically about online situation, it would create a validity problem. Therefore 'online community' was added to the instructions to clarify the situation.

*Confusion about the education levels given to choose from*

The ISCED classification levels used in this section were seen as too confusing for the respondents. Therefore the wording and categorisation has been simplified as well as containing additional Dutch specific examples (such as Hoger beroepsonderwijs, HBO)

*Binary choice for gender seen as possible validity/reliability issue*

When recording the gender of the respondent, an option 'other' was added to allow those who did not identify with the choices to write down their own preference.

# Data analysis and results

## Descriptive statistics

This section illustrates the descriptive statistics regarding the respondent's demographic information, as well their experiences around online shaming (both perpetration and victimisation). SPSS 23 was utilised to record data from the surveys as well as perform simple descriptive analyses on the data.

## Demographic Data

Table 2 shows that there were a total of 223 respondents. The respondents consisted of 125 females (56.1% of total) and 98 males (43.9%). Almost 80% of the respondents were between the age of 18 and 30 years old. The most common level of education attained was either secondary (36.8%) or bachelor (33.6%) education levels. Those who identified themselves as non-heterosexual made up almost 25% of the respondents.

**Table 2.** Demographics of Survey Respondents

|  |  | Amount of respondents | Percentage of total respondents |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Female | 125 | 56.1 |
|  | Male | 98 | 43.9 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Age | 18-25 years | 132 | 59.2 |
|  | 26-30 years | 46 | 20.6 |
|  | 31-35 years | 22 | 9.9 |
|  | 36-40 years | 8 | 3.6 |
|  | >40 years | 15 | 6.7 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Education | Primary | 3 | 1.3 |
|  | Secondary | 82 | 36.8 |
|  | MBO | 9 | 4.0 |
|  | HBO | 6 | 2.7 |
|  | Bachelor | 75 | 33.6 |
|  | Master | 38 | 17.0 |
|  | Doctoral | 10 | 4.5 |
|  |  |  |  |
| Sexual Orientation | Heterosexual | 168 | 75.3 |
|  | Gay / Lesbian | 10 | 4.5 |
|  | Bisexual | 39 | 17.5 |
|  | Transsexual | 6 | 0 |
|  | Other | 6 | 2.7 |

## Perpetration of online shaming and prior experience of online shaming victimisation

Table 3 demonstrates that the most prevalent type of online shaming was insults via chatrooms or message boards in terms of perpetration (25.1%) and prior victimisation (14.8%). Interestingly among the ten types of online shaming, the proportion of those stating to have perpetrated a specific act was higher than those stating to be victimised by it.

**Table 3.** Prevalence of different types of online shaming

| Online shaming activity | Online shaming victim Respondents (%) | Online shaming perpetrator Respondents (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Unwanted picture / photos / video of a violent nature sent to your phone | 10 (3.3) | 13 (5.8) |
| Unwanted picture / photos / video of an intimate nature sent to your phone | 15 (6.7) | 24 (10.8) |
| Silent / prank phone call via online service (for example a WhatsApp or Skype call) | 12 (5.3) | 15 (6.7) |
| Unwanted / rude e-mail | 19 (8.5) | 34 (15.2) |
| Insults via social media | 23 (10.3) | 40 (17.9) |
| Insults via instant messaging | 25 (11.2) | 34 (15.2) |
| Insults via chatrooms / message boards (Reddit for example) | 33 (14.8) | 56 (25.1) |
| Insults via blogs | 7 (3.1%) | 13 (5.8) |
| Unpleasant/unwanted picture/photos posted on websites | 12 (5.4) | 27 (12.1) |
| Technological sabotage (for example having your email or phone hacked) | 10 (4.5) | 17 (7.6) |

Table 4 shows the number of participants that were involved in the perpetration of online shaming; a victim of online shaming; or those involved in both. From the total of 223 respondents, more than a quarter (25.1%) were both perpetrators and victims of at least one type of online shaming act in the last two months. 60.3 % of the respondents perpetrated at least one type of online shaming. The figure for those being the victim of at least one type of online shaming was around half this at 30.5%.

**Table 4.** Online shaming roles of respondents

| Role | Respondents (%) |
|---|---|
| Online shame perpetrator (committed of at least one type) | 116 (60.3) |
| Online shame victim (victim of at least one type) | 68 (30.5) |
| Online Shame victim & perpetrator | 56 (25.1) |

The complete figures for online shaming perpetration and victimisation can be found in table 10 and 11 in the appendix.

## Assessment of measurement and structural models

SmartPLS was utilised in the validation and reliability testing of the constructs. This program was then used to perform the Partial Least Squares structural equation model (PLS-SEM) analysis of the model. PLS-SEM allows the measurement of constructs and not just variables as well as evaluate the loadings and weights of indicators from/to these constructs (Cenfetelli & Bassellier, 2009). Since there is no assumption regarding data distribution (Esposito Vinzi, Trinchera, Squillacciotti, & Tenenhaus, 2008), this technique is relevant to the study as there is little prior theoretical backing for the exact model as it has been newly constructed, as well as the need for "predictive accuracy" (Wong, 2013, p. 3) of the analysis itself.

## Measurement model

This section will evaluate the validity of the different constructs found within the overall model. First however it is important to identify the kinds of constructs found in the model itself. When looking at the constructs, a distinction can be made between those that are reflective, and those that are formative.

Reflective constructs are those that have indicators which are caused by the construct, whilst formative constructs are those whose indicators cause the construct. Therefore in reflective constructs, it would be probable that the indicators are correlated. An example of a reflective construct is Perceived Ease of Use (PEU) (Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1989) that defines the level "to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort" (Freeze & Raschke, 2007, p. 1483). This has six reflective indicators in total: easy to learn, controllable, clear and understandable, flexible, easy to become skilful, and easy to use. These indicators are all correlated as they represent the "underlying construct in a reflective model" (Freeze & Raschke, 2007, p. 1483). This high correlation means that if there is a rise in PEU, this would be reflected in all of the six indicators. This high correlation therefore allows the indicators to be "interchangeable and dropping an indicator should not alter the conceptual meaning of the construct" (Freeze & Raschke, 2007, p. 1483).

However in formative constructs this is not true, and therefore they cannot be easily interchanged with one another (Cenfetelli & Bassellier, 2009; Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2006; Xiao & Wong, 2013). An example of a formative construct is socioeconomic status which is made up of the three measure: income, education and occupation (Winkleby, Jatulis, Frank, & Fortmann, 1992, p. 186). There is not a need for "simultaneous increase in all of the indicators" (Freeze & Raschke, 2007, p. 1483) for there to be an increase in the socioeconomic status of an individual. This difference between formative and reflective constructs therefore

require different forms of testing. SmartPLS provides tools with which to accomplish this, and the following validation of both formative and reflective constructs have been completed with this toolset.

The formative constructs within this model are the perpetration of online shaming and prior experience of online shaming. As they are both formative, each indicator (a type of online shaming incident) represents part of the meaning of the overall construct. Whilst the original basis came from cyberbullying measurement, through the literature review, additional indicators were added (as well as modifications to the originals) to create indicators that represents the breadth of the overall construct of online shaming. Therefore the elimination of indicators would be only performed in extreme cases, as it may change the overall definition of the construct itself (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2006; Edwards & Bagozzi, 2000; Xiao & Wong, 2013).

*Validation of formative constructs*

Utilising the advice of Cenfetelli and Bassellier (2009) advice on formative constructs, the multicollinearity must be checked for the indicators. This is achieved by first measuring the variance inflation factor (VIF) of each of the indicators. Table 5 shows that the VIF figures range from 1.496 – 3.981 for victimisation indicators, and 1.460 – 2.419 for perpetrator indicators. The threshold for an acceptable VIF differs, with thresholds of 10 (Joe F Hair, Black, Anderson, & Tatham, 1995; Kennedy, 1992; Marquaridt, 1970; Neter, Wasserman, & Kutner, 1989), 5 (Rogerson, 2001) and 3.33 (Cenfetelli & Bassellier, 2009; Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2006; Petter, Straub, & Rai, 2007; Xiao & Wong, 2013). Two indicators (in the victimisation construct) have a VIF above the 3.33 threshold. However they only just breached the lower threshold, missing the 5 and 10 value mark. As a precaution however, and as advised in literature (Cenfetelli & Bassellier, 2009, p. 692), the bivariate correlation between the indicators as well as towards the overall construct were conducted (Figure 6 in the appendix). Upon inspection there is a high level of correlation between insults originating from blogs and emails received. However from a theoretical viewpoint insults originating from blogs and emails received are two clearly separate aspects. Therefore they were deemed to be acceptable as they did not exceed the higher VIF thresholds, and to provide as valid a construct as possible.

**Table 5.** VIF Statistics for Formative Measures

| Online shaming activities | Victim | | Perpetrator |
|---|---|---|---|
| | VIF | | VIF |
| (a) Unwanted picture / photos / video of a violent nature sent to your phone | 2.384 | 1.805 | |
| (b) Unwanted picture / photos / video of an intimate nature sent to your phone | 2.104 | 1.478 | |
| (c) Silent / prank phone call via online service (for example a WhatsApp or Skype call) | 2.734 | 1.609 | |
| (d) Unwanted / rude e-mail | 3.483 | 1.788 | |
| (e) Insults via social media | 2.749 | 2.153 | |
| (f) Insults via instant messaging | 1.778 | 1.371 | |
| (g) Insults via chatrooms / message boards (Reddit for example) | 1.607 | 1.613 | |
| (h) Insults via blogs | 3.981 | 2.470 | |
| (i) Unpleasant/unwanted picture/photos posted on websites | 3.169 | 1.460 | |
| (j) Technological sabotage (for example having your email or phone hacked) | 1.496 | 2.419 | |

Note: The figures in the body of the text are the Variance Inflation Factors taken from the SmartPLS analysis. Those in bold are VIF figures above the 3.33 threshold.

The second test for the formative constructs was the assessment of the indicator weights towards the constructs (Table 6). This brought up an issue as the weights of the indicators themselves, as they were all not significant across both constructs. As per the guidance on this situation (Cenfetelli & Bassellier, 2009, p. 692), there should be an to attempt to construct multiple constructs from the original formative construct using a theoretical basis. However in this case, there is a lack of theoretical justification to split up the types of online shaming.

Therefore the next step is to look further at the absolute contribution of the indicators (Cenfetelli & Bassellier, 2009, p. 692; J.F. Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2013, p. 148). To do this, the outer loadings of the indicators were taken into account, with those above 0.5 acceptable and therefore kept in the model. For prior experience of online shaming victimisation items 'b' (unwanted picture/photos/video of an intimate nature sent to your phone) and 'j' (technical sabotage) failed this criteria. Perpetration items 'a' (unwanted picture/photos/video of a violent nature sent to your phone) and 'b' (unwanted picture/photos/video of an intimate nature sent to your phone) also failed this criteria. For these

items the significance of these low loadings was the final check, with the victimisation indicators passing this final test. However the perpetration indicators failed this (with a p value = 0.076), but the decision has been taken to continue with these items as they are conceptually important, and it would require removal of the valid equivalent indicators from the prior victimisation construct. This will be further discussed in the limitations section during the evaluation of the model construction.

## *Validation of reflective constructs*

When looking to the validation of the reflective constructs, the reliability of items; the internal consistency and the discriminant validity were examined when testing the model (Gefen & Straub, 2005, pp. 93-94; Xiao & Wong, 2013, p. 51). When looking at the loadings of the individual items towards their constructs, Gefen and Straub (2005) states there are no current exact thresholds established. However for this study 0.55 has been taken as the absolute limit for loadings, but only if the average of the complete set of indicators for a construct is above 0.7.

To check internal consistency, the composite reliability index (CR) was examined, with a threshold of 0.7 being the point above which satisfactory reliability is achieved. This is similar to Cronbach's alpha, however whilst Chronbach's alpha takes the assumption that the indicators have the same loading towards the constructs. CR does not do this, allowing for a more accurate reliability analysis (Peterson & Kim, 2013). As seen in table 8 this was achieved for all reflective constructs.

Finally two criteria have been set out to test discriminatory validity (Xiao & Wong, 2013, p. 54). Firstly when looking at cross loadings, indicators must never load higher towards a construct other than the one it is intended for. If there are cross loadings, they must be at minimum of 0.2 below the desired loading (table 7). Secondly the constructs should illustrate a higher shared variance with its indicators that it share with alternative constructs within the model. This is measured by the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) as seen in table 9, which should be higher than the "correlations of the construct with other constructs" (Xiao & Wong, 2013, p. 54). These strict criteria has led to indicator reduction in many of the constructs to achieve the most valid result.

**Table 6.** Online shaming activities (formative): Weight, Loadings and T-values

| Online Shaming Activities | Online Shaming Victim | | | Online Shaming Perpetrator | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | T-Statistic | Weight | Loading | T-Statistic | Weight | Loading |
| (a) Unwanted picture / photos / video of a violent nature sent to your phone | 0.272 | 0.061 | 0.644 | 0.522 | -0.075 | 0.432 |
| (b) Unwanted picture / photos / video of an intimate nature sent to your phone | 1.472 | -0.219 | 0.439 | 1.208 | -0.098 | 0.339 |
| (c) Silent / prank phone call via online service (for example a WhatsApp or Skype call) | 0.444 | 0.129 | 0.612 | 1.595 | 0.346 | 0.687 |
| (d) Unwanted / rude e-mail | 1.009 | -0.137 | 0.680 | 0.864 | -0.086 | 0.540 |
| (e) Insults via social media | 1.52 | 0.318 | 0.859 | 1.109 | 0.24 | 0.725 |
| (f) Insults via instant messaging | 1.316 | 0.401 | 0.759 | 1.266 | 0.394 | 0.711 |
| (g) Insults via chatrooms / message boards (Reddit for example) | 0.748 | 0.212 | 0.702 | 0.508 | 0.112 | 0.579 |
| (h) Insults via blogs | 0.774 | 0.347 | 0.819 | 0.324 | 0.117 | 0.714 |
| (i) Unpleasant/unwanted picture/photos posted on websites | 0.734 | 0.125 | 0.733 | 1.451 | 0.14 | 0.555 |
| (j) Technological sabotage (for example having your email or phone hacked) | 0.541 | -0.084 | 0.377 | 1.856 | 0.283 | 0.684 |

**Table 7.** Loading and Cross Loading of measures

| | Culture Power Distance | Culture Uncertainty Avoidance | Culture Collectivism | Culture Masculinity | Internet Self-efficacy | Perceived Anonymity | Shame Proneness | Social Comparison | Social Norm |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CulturePD1 | **0.554** | -0.005 | 0.078 | 0.265 | -0.035 | -0.026 | -0.035 | -0.045 | -0.117 |
| CulturePD2 | **0.877** | 0.140 | 0.154 | 0.323 | -0.142 | 0.019 | -0.142 | 0.044 | 0.076 |
| CulturePD3 | **0.905** | 0.146 | 0.046 | 0.248 | -0.137 | -0.020 | -0.137 | 0.089 | 0.067 |
| CultureUA1 | 0.094 | **0.854** | 0.022 | 0.084 | 0.039 | -0.019 | 0.039 | 0.121 | 0.043 |
| CultureUA2 | 0.144 | **0.622** | 0.089 | -0.018 | 0.091 | -0.112 | 0.091 | 0.050 | 0.024 |
| CultureUA3 | 0.171 | **0.826** | 0.002 | -0.039 | 0.083 | -0.062 | 0.083 | 0.065 | 0.185 |
| CultureCol1 | 0.163 | -0.005 | **0.805** | 0.177 | -0.224 | 0.013 | -0.224 | 0.112 | -0.006 |
| CultureCol2 | 0.081 | -0.005 | **0.827** | 0.134 | -0.034 | 0.030 | -0.034 | 0.133 | 0.138 |
| CultureCol3 | 0.027 | 0.056 | **0.902** | 0.101 | -0.060 | 0.000 | -0.060 | 0.134 | 0.054 |
| CultureMas1 | 0.281 | 0.039 | 0.118 | **0.851** | -0.188 | -0.004 | -0.188 | 0.046 | 0.027 |
| CultureMas2 | 0.336 | 0.048 | 0.143 | **0.923** | -0.203 | 0.056 | -0.203 | 0.016 | -0.030 |
| CultureMas3 | 0.213 | -0.020 | 0.177 | **0.872** | -0.210 | 0.168 | -0.210 | -0.017 | -0.065 |
| ISEb | -0.159 | 0.112 | -0.083 | -0.189 | **0.676** | 0.064 | 0.676 | 0.007 | -0.010 |
| ISEc | -0.100 | 0.043 | -0.121 | -0.235 | **0.881** | 0.085 | 0.881 | 0.060 | 0.075 |
| ISEe | -0.144 | 0.059 | -0.118 | -0.166 | **0.905** | 0.061 | 0.905 | 0.020 | -0.020 |
| Pac | 0.120 | 0.042 | 0.039 | 0.069 | -0.014 | **0.685** | -0.014 | 0.036 | 0.025 |
| Pad | -0.020 | -0.055 | 0.011 | 0.091 | 0.075 | **0.987** | 0.075 | 0.019 | -0.103 |
| Pae | 0.065 | 0.042 | 0.023 | 0.168 | -0.085 | **0.735** | -0.085 | 0.014 | -0.039 |
| SPa | 0.017 | 0.104 | 0.171 | -0.029 | -0.038 | 0.010 | **-0.038** | 0.843 | 0.172 |
| SPb | 0.035 | 0.191 | 0.104 | -0.031 | 0.124 | 0.009 | **0.124** | 0.781 | 0.103 |
| SPc | 0.083 | 0.150 | 0.182 | 0.042 | 0.068 | 0.034 | **0.068** | 0.794 | 0.070 |
| SPd | 0.037 | 0.115 | 0.133 | -0.017 | 0.135 | 0.037 | **0.135** | 0.806 | 0.111 |
| SPe | 0.045 | 0.036 | 0.095 | -0.097 | 0.104 | -0.042 | **0.104** | 0.835 | 0.144 |
| SPg | 0.128 | 0.033 | 0.083 | 0.111 | -0.039 | 0.011 | **-0.039** | 0.836 | 0.111 |
| SPh | 0.057 | 0.087 | 0.072 | 0.056 | 0.035 | 0.068 | **0.035** | 0.806 | 0.134 |
| SCd | 0.027 | 0.077 | -0.022 | -0.049 | 0.032 | -0.172 | 0.032 | **0.121** | 0.864 |
| SCe | 0.103 | 0.153 | 0.107 | -0.011 | 0.026 | -0.103 | 0.026 | **0.155** | 0.892 |
| SCf | 0.045 | 0.073 | 0.096 | 0.005 | -0.031 | 0.117 | -0.031 | **0.103** | 0.680 |
| SNd | 0.191 | 0.173 | 0.022 | 0.235 | -0.026 | -0.065 | -0.026 | 0.099 | **0.097** |
| SNf | 0.115 | 0.073 | 0.122 | 0.081 | -0.098 | -0.122 | -0.098 | 0.072 | **0.123** |
| SNn | 0.265 | 0.143 | 0.152 | -0.007 | -0.102 | -0.176 | -0.102 | 0.105 | **0.222** |

**Note:** PD = Power Distance; UA = Uncertainty Avoidance; Col = Collectivism; Mas = Masculinity; ISE = Internet Self-efficacy; PA = Perceived Anonymity; SP = Shame Proneness; SC = Social Comparison; SN = Social Norm

**Table 8**. Validity of Reflective Constructs - Internal Consistency

|  | Cronbach's Alpha | Composite Reliability | AVE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Culture: Collectivism | 0.800 | 0.882 | 0.715 |
| Culture: Masculinity | 0.860 | 0.913 | 0.779 |
| Culture: Power distance | 0.757 | 0.832 | 0.632 |
| Culture: Uncertainty Avoidance | 0.732 | 0.815 | 0.599 |
| Internet Self-efficacy | 0.785 | 0.865 | 0.684 |
| Perceived Anonymity | 0.853 | 0.851 | 0.681 |
| Shame Proneness | 0.919 | 0.932 | 0.664 |
| Social Comparison | 0.750 | 0.856 | 0.668 |
| Social Norm | 0.603 | 0.778 | 0.542 |

**Table 9.** Validity of Reflective Constructs - Discriminatory validity

|  | Culture_Col | Culture_Mas | Culture_PD | Culture_UA | ISE | PA | SP | SC | SN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Culture_Col | **0.845** | | | | | | | | |
| Culture_Mas | 0.164 | **0.882** | | | | | | | |
| Culture_PD | 0.109 | 0.321 | **0.795** | | | | | | |
| Culture_UA | 0.019 | 0.030 | 0.157 | **0.774** | | | | | |
| ISE | -0.132 | -0.226 | -0.154 | 0.073 | **0.827** | | | | |
| PA | 0.016 | 0.079 | -0.003 | -0.051 | 0.082 | **0.813** | | | |
| SP | 0.149 | 0.017 | 0.072 | 0.112 | 0.037 | 0.024 | **0.815** | | |
| SC | 0.068 | -0.026 | 0.073 | 0.127 | 0.017 | -0.090 | 0.156 | **0.817** | |
| SN | 0.108 | 0.176 | 0.246 | 0.181 | -0.086 | -0.143 | 0.122 | 0.178 | **0.736** |

**Note:** PD = Power Distance; UA = Uncertainty Avoidance; Col = Collectivism; Mas = Masculinity; ISE = Internet Self-efficacy; PA = Perceived Anonymity; SP = Shame Proneness; SC = Social Comparison; SN = Social Norm

## Assessment of Structural Model

Figure 2 below portrays the overview of the main PLS structural equation modelling analysis. The personal and environmental factors are analysed to discover their relationship towards online shame perpetration in the form of t-statistics. This will then provide the ability to see if these relationships are significant. The explained variance of the relationships towards online shaming perpetration was 0.756, therefore 75.6% of the variance is explained by the independent variables used within this model.

**Figure 2.** Overview of main PLS-SEM model
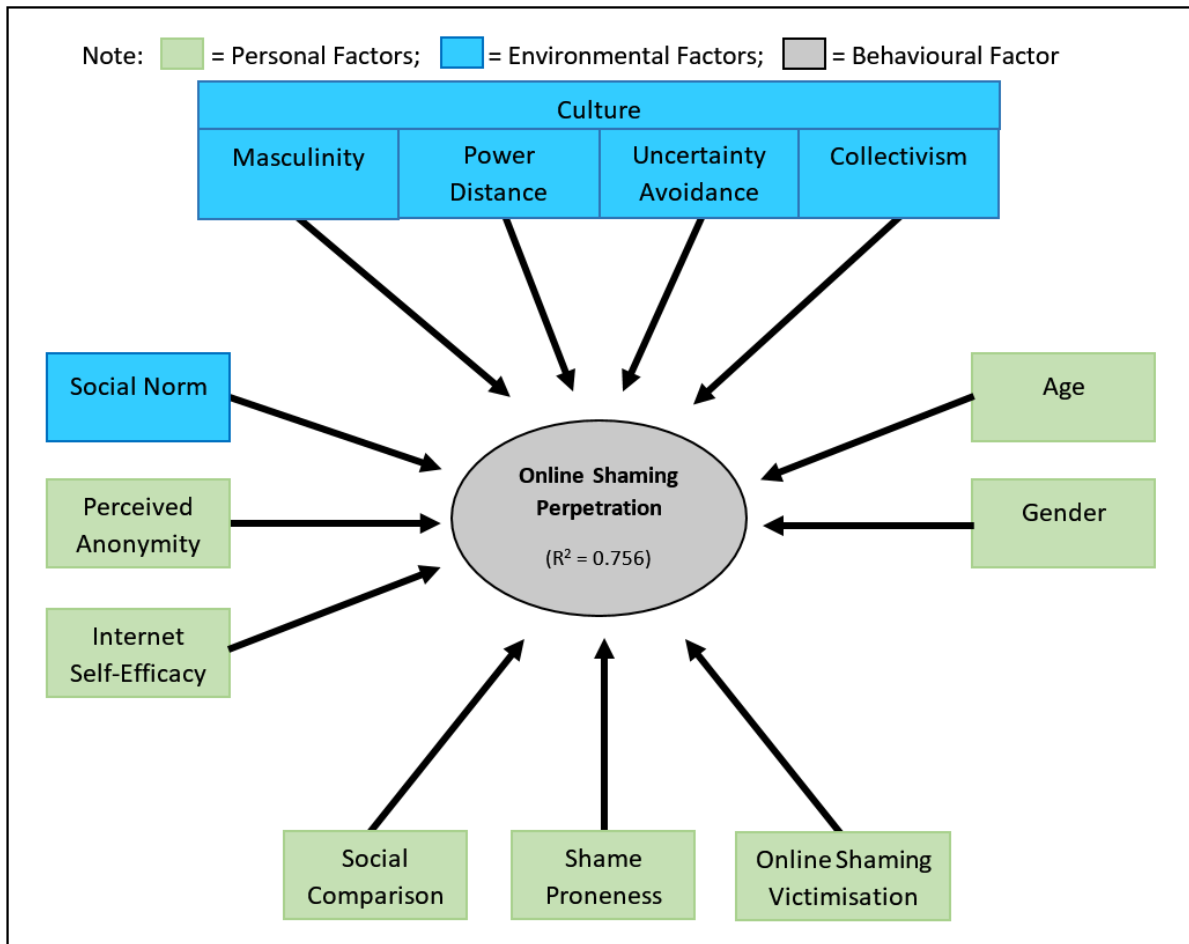
Figure 3 illustrates additional relationships tested towards shame proneness (2.7% variance explained) and prior experience of online shaming victimisation (1.4% variance explained).

**Figure 3.** Overview of additional PLS-SEM analysis
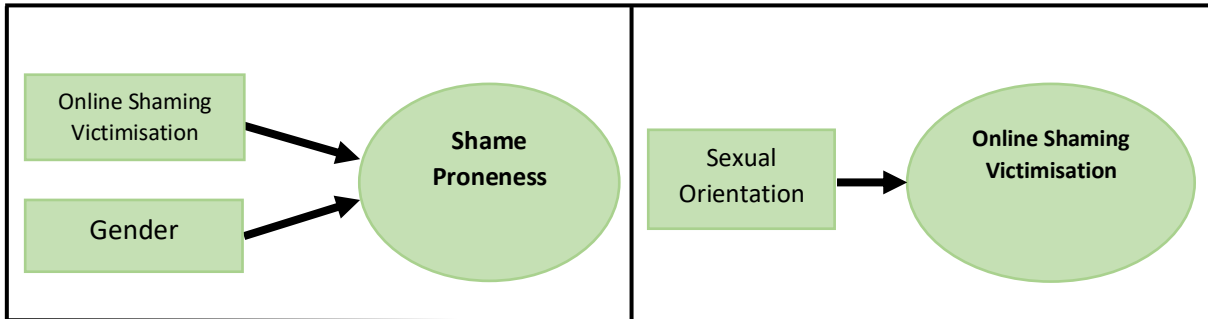


*Hypotheses towards online shaming perpetration (1a, 1b, 2, 3c, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8)*

The results from figure 4 shows that the only significant relationship was an individual's prior experience of online shaming towards perpetration of online shaming ($\beta = 0.838$; $\rho < 0.0005$). There is a significant positive effect on the likelihood of perpetrating online shaming towards others when an individual has a higher level of prior victimisation in terms of online shaming.

The relationships for the Age ($\beta = 0.042$, $\rho = 0.951$), Gender ($\beta = 0.037$, $\rho = 0.873$), Culture (Power distance $\beta = -0.074$, $\rho = 0.121$; Uncertainty Avoidance $\beta = 0.034$, $\rho = 0.436$; Collectivism $\beta = -0.008$, $\rho = 0.869$; Masculinity $\beta = 0.020$, $\rho = 0.634$), Social Norm ($\beta = 0.013$, $\rho = 0.807$), Perceived Anonymity ($\beta = 0.014$, $\rho = 0.758$), Internet Self-Efficacy ($\beta = -0.033$, $\rho = 0.531$), Social Comparison ($\beta = 0.055$, $\rho = 0.199$) and Shame Proneness ($\beta = 0.083$, $\rho = 0.179$) towards the online shaming perpetration are not significant. Therefore the hypotheses are not been confirmed and no relationship to the likelihood of perpetrating online shaming was found.

**Figure 4.** Path coefficients and t-values of main PLS-SEM model
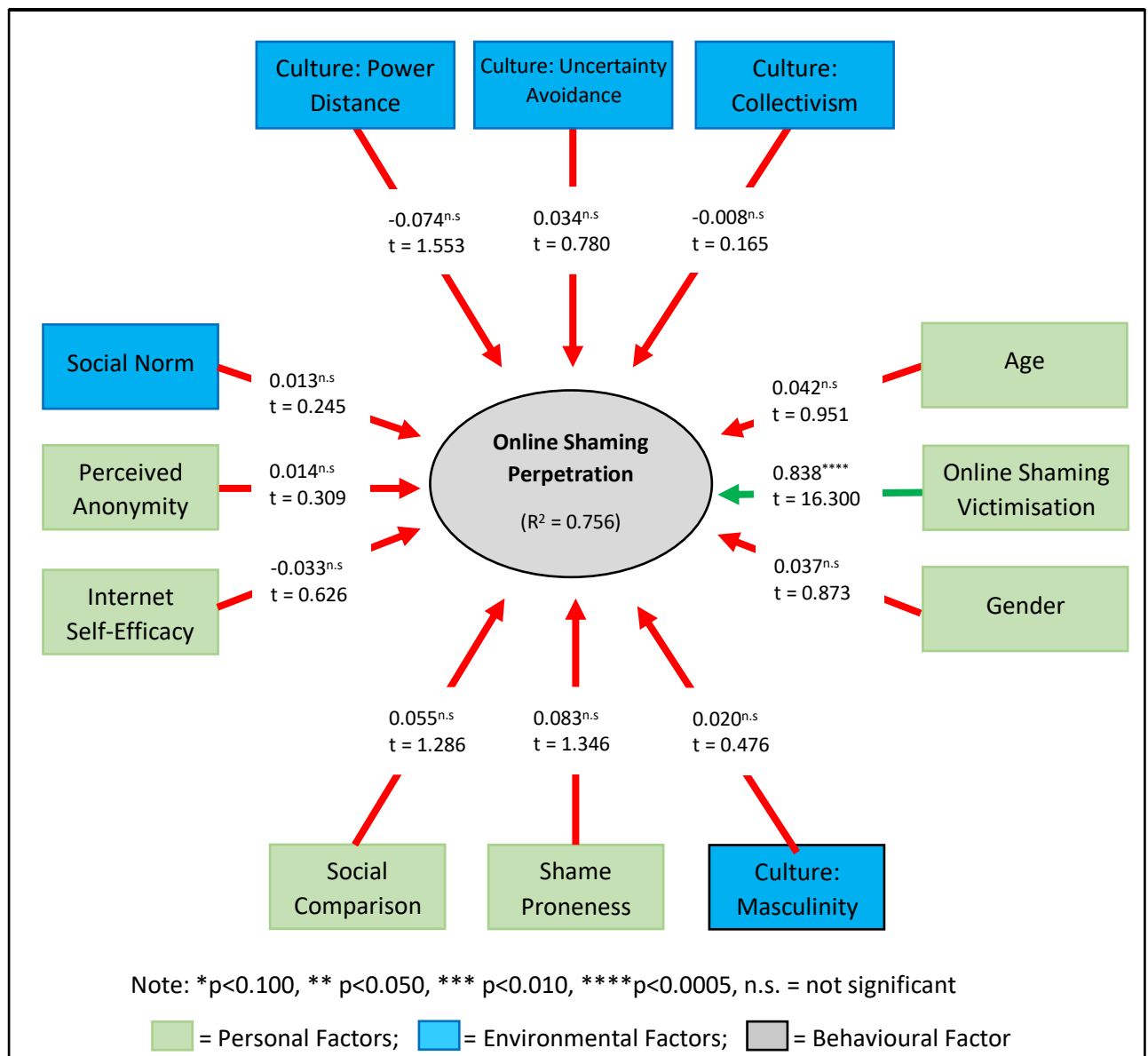


*Hypotheses towards shame proneness (3a & b)*

Furthermore the relationship for gender ($\beta = -0.043$, $\rho = 0.653$) and prior victimisation with regards to online shaming ($\beta = 0.162$, $\rho = 0.207$) towards shame proneness (hypothesis 3a and b) prove to be not significant. Therefore the hypotheses have not been confirmed and the data reveals no relationship between them and shame proneness. Furthermore the explained variance is 0.027 meaning that prior victimisation explains 2.7% of the variance seen. These results can be seen below in figure 5.

**Figure 5**. Hypotheses 3a & b PLS-SEM results
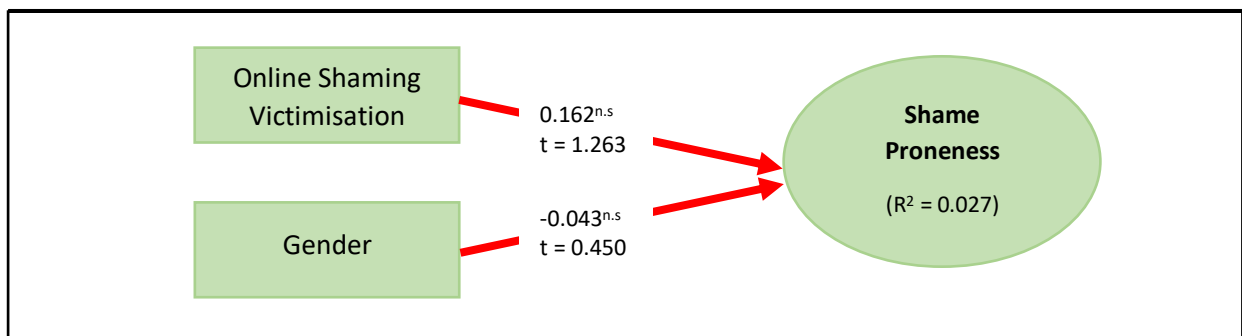


*Hypothesis towards prior experience of online shaming victimisation (1c)*

The relationship for sexual orientation ($\beta = 0.082$, $\rho = 0.314$) towards prior experience of online shaming victimisation proves to be not significant and therefore the hypotheses have not been confirmed. The data reveals no relationship between sexual orientation and the prior experience of online shaming victimisation. Furthermore the explained variance is 0.014 meaning that prior victimisation explains 1.4% of the variance seen. These results can be seen below in figure 6.

**Figure 6.** Hypotheses 1c PLS-SEM results
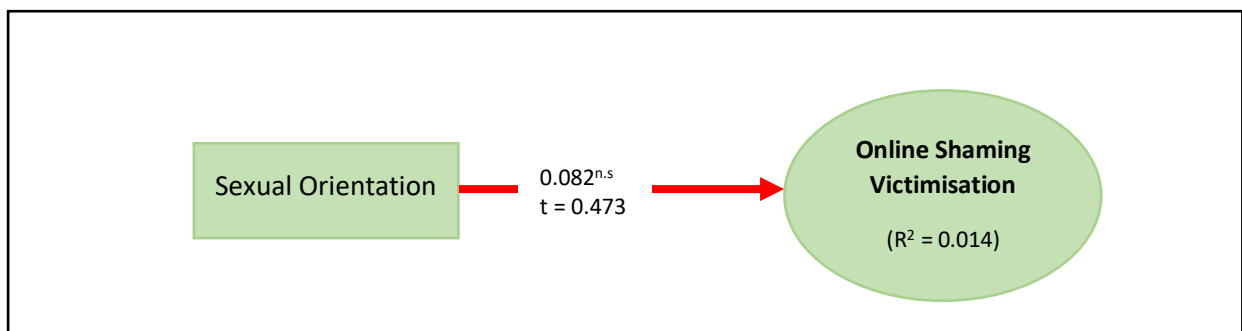


Additional Testing

Upon considering the results from the main model constructed, it was decided to carry out additional tests to further explore the survey data.

*Prior experience of online shaming victimisation action as a mediator*

The strong predictive relationship between victimisation and perpetration raised some questions regarding the model, and how it could differ from the theoretical underpinning that is present in the Xiao and Wong (2013) study of cyberbullying. It was postulated that perhaps victimisation could have a mediation effect on the personal and environmental factors of online shaming, instead of being a personal factor itself. This was tested for all the variables towards online shaming perpetration with prior victimisation acting as the mediation variable.

This was achieved by testing an adjusted model in SmartPLS and by utilising the Sobel test (J.F. Hair et al., 2013, p. 223). After performing the calculations (Sobel, 2016) it was found there was full mediation for the masculinity dimension of culture (Sobel test statistic of 2.77) and shame proneness (Sobel test statistic of 1.96).

*Utilisation of dichotomous indicators for prior online shaming victimisation and perpetration*
A further readjustment of the model was undertaken to create dichotomous indicators for both online shaming victimisation and perpetration. This allowed the examination of the data with a stronger divide for each type between having no perpetration/victimisation incidents occurring and those who did. This created new significant relationships for online shaming victimisation towards shame proneness ($\beta = 0.183$, $\rho = 0.019$) and shame proneness towards online shaming perpetration ($\beta = 0.164$, $\rho = 0.019$).

# Discussion

The main aim of this study was to explore and detail the factors behind the perpetration of online shaming, whilst also gathering an up-to-date picture of the its prevalence in adults. To achieve this a model would be constructed using the social cognitive theory, whilst establishing new variables underlying the phenomena based around academic literature. This involved utilising established measurement instruments, as well as creating formative constructs that would embody what online shaming is.

The results from the data collection show that previous online shaming victimisation is a very strong and important predictor of online shaming perpetration. This provides a link to previous research into cyberbullying which stated that prior victimisation can be a powerful factor in influencing future perpetration (Burgess et al., 1987; Espelage et al., 2004; Mishna et al., 2015). Since this study looked into the previous two months of a respondent's online activity, conclusions taken from the results should take this into account. It could be an indication of the ease at which individuals feel it is acceptable to retaliate with online shaming upon others when in an online situation. The prevalence of concurrent victims and 'shamers' via chatrooms and instant messaging could point towards the instantaneous nature of the internet communication itself (A. S. Cheung, 2014, p. 319).

However when looking to the other personal and environmental factors within this model, the results are inconclusive and any findings do not have statistically significant relevance. Nevertheless as this is one of the first studies to examine online shaming, utilising a model constructed solely for this purpose, the trends discovered in the results should be discussed.

Firstly when looking to gender from both the total sample population, as well as those who had at least one incident of victimisation or perpetration, there were not many large differences in the amount of shaming across the differing types. This is interesting as the literature made reference to gender specific shaming that could occur, especially with the rise of 'slut-shaming' in the public consciousness (Poole, 2013). Insults occurring on social media, instant messaging and chatrooms/message boards were most prevalent across both genders. This provides an interesting question as to why higher numbers occur within these specific types of online shaming.

In terms of perpetration, overall the amount of occurrences are much higher across almost all types of shaming, but particularly insults via social media and chatrooms/message boards. Knowing that victimisation was a significant predictor of perpetration behaviour, this could

point towards the cyclical nature of victimisation and perpetration. However the convenience sample gathered for this study had a heavy skew towards young adults (see figure 7 in appendix), those who also had in general a very high internet self-efficacy. Therefore higher usage of the internet and more ability to use it may enable these individuals to perpetrate online shaming, whilst knowing how to avoid situations that would lead to victimisation. This could explain the higher levels of perpetration in comparison to victimisation.

When looking at the roles of online shaming perpetrator/victim or both, the percentages compared to the total sample are interesting. Other studies that have looked at cyberbullying and harassment have percentages that are in some cases higher (Xiao & Wong, 2013, p. 49), whilst others are lower (Finn, 2004; MacDonald & Roberts-Pittman, 2010). In addition the 'good-subject effect' (Nichols & Maner, 2008) does not seem to be in effect as there is almost double the number of respondents who have perpetrated a form of online shaming in comparison to victimisation.


After examining the results from the constructed model, two additional tests were carried out that adjusted aspects of the original model. Firstly due to the large predictive positive relationship that prior online shaming victimisation had on perpetration, it was put forward that it may in fact be a mediating variable. The results showed that there was full mediation for both the masculinity dimension of culture as well as shame proneness. This could be utilised in consideration of future models of online shaming, when perpetration is the behavioural aspect being examined. Secondly when only looking at respondents who did or did not have an incident of online shaming victimisation/perpetration, significant relationships for online shaming victimisation towards shame proneness and shame proneness towards online shaming perpetration emerged. Whilst this version of the model does not take into account the intensity of victimisation or perpetration, it does reinforce Matos et al. (2015) opinion that prior trauma can make it more likely to have a higher level of shame proneness. Furthermore it could indicate that Ahmed & Braithwaite's (2004) investigation into children's shame management when it comes to bullying could be applicable to adults and their handling with online shaming. This could form the basis for adjustments in future studies.

The second main aim of this study was to gain an initial snapshot at the current state of online shaming, in terms of the types that occur and their intensity. In that regard, the results provide

an intriguing outlook on events. Firstly there seems to be a higher number of individuals who perpetrate online shaming than there are victims. Could this be a symptom of 'mob justice' (Solove, 2007, p. 78) whereby shaming is more often a group activity on the internet, and the victims alone? Furthermore when looking at those who were not heterosexual, results were generally similar to the total population with two glaring exceptions. The incidents of insults via chatrooms occurred across 27.3% of the non-heterosexual population, with around a third of them having this happen ten or more times within a two month period. Nonetheless perpetration by these individuals of this same shaming activity is 43.6%, a vast increase of the heterosexual sample population (19.1%). This could again indicate the idea that individuals who are seen as, or perceive themselves to be lower down in the social scale will feel little risk shaming others online, as they simply have nothing to lose (Åslund et al., 2009, p. 2). However with the small number of non-heterosexual individuals in the sample, the figures are too small to provide conclusive answers. Yet it offers tantalising questions that could be answered in future research.

This study provides a first tentative step in looking into the dynamics of online shaming perpetration. There are many areas that need to be tested further to be able to fully understand and generalise testing procedure. The current understanding of online shaming needs to be scrutinised and updated to reflect the current online landscape and usage habits of the online population. Furthermore the established models developed for cyberbullying and harassment should be adapted if they wish to include online shaming, as this phenomena has dynamics that require tailored testing methods.

# Limitations and recommendations

The design decision to collect data from using a convenience sample might be a less strong aspect of this study. When utilising a path model such as PLS-SEM the suggested minimum is 100 to 200 respondents (Marcoulides & Saunders, 2006; Wong, 2013, p. 5). Due to the time and resource limitations however this was deemed to be the most efficient way to achieve a high number of respondents. This impacted the study through the methods by which the self-report survey was distributed via Facebook and Reddit. Trends such as the young age of respondents as well as the high level of internet self-efficacy could be attributed to this. Therefore future studies could push towards more representative data collection methods, or utilise additional data sources to compare and corroborate respondent's answers (Jupp, 2006, p. 276).

When looking to the self-report survey format itself, there was the inherent reliance on the memory of the respondent when detailing incidents of victimisation/perpetration of online shaming. However even with a limited time frame of two months, memory errors could have occurred. Firstly forgetting events can lead to underreporting, whilst 'telescoping' (accidently pushing events that occurred further back into the two month period) can lead to over-reporting (Adams, Soumerai, Lomas, & Ross-Degnan, 1999). This again could be combatted through the use of alternative data sources to corroborate the information. Likewise the time period of two months limits the nature of relationships to the relative short-term. But the use of other data sources could extend this period to provide a longer outlook on the relationships.

Additionally the use of ordinal measures for the online shaming incidents meant that certain types of analysis were not possible. With the use of multiple data sources, or direct information gathering from the sources of online shaming (i.e. comment sections) this could be eliminated, and more precise figures gathered. Finally when utilising existing measures, compromises were made to shorten the item number before including them in the model. For future studies with more time and resources the measures could be kept in their entirety. This could take the form of a physical survey, or include respondents who were incentivised to finish a longer survey and therefore avoid the need for a short survey format.

Moreover using alternative data collection sources, the targets of the shaming could be analysed creating a better picture of the situation involved. Are big corporations with their many customer-facing portals on Facebook and Twitter easier targets? Does the kind and

intensity of online shaming change based on the target? These kinds of questions can be explored further through the use of more extensive data collection methods.

In addition when looking at the construction of the formative constructs (prior victimisation and perpetration of online shaming), not all of the indicators (two from perpetration) were of high quality according to the procedures laid out for PLS-SEM (J.F. Hair et al., 2013, p. 148). This calls into question the conceptualisation of this construct from the literature review. However this was not wholly unexpected due to this being an initial attempt at building an up-to-date online shaming construct. To improve this aspect of the model there should be an assessment of the indicators from the point of view of the perception of users. This is important as aspects of the internet can be perceived very different. For example can Twitter or Snapchat be a blog? Or are these forms of Social media? Whilst there wasn't collinearity seen in the results from this study, this could cloud results, and as technologies move forward and adopt aspects from different platforms this will only grow as a problem. Having a clear understanding of the user's perception of online based services can help differentiate them.

# Conclusion

This study has provided insight into what online shaming is from the perspective of current academic literature, and tested this through the use of a newly constructed model. This included the environmental and personal factors that are seen to be linked with this phenomena on an individual level. However upon analysis of the results, many of the hypotheses were inconclusive. Yet it can be said that the victimisation is a key factor, and a large predictor of online shaming. When looking to the prevalence of online shaming behaviour, it presents a rather widespread issue that affected almost a third of the respondents, whilst over two-thirds perpetrated this behaviour. It would not be appropriate to generalise this to the wider population, due to the collection methods and the limited sample size, yet it provides a clear window into a potentially large scale problem. Looking at online shaming on an empirical and large scale whilst focusing on factors connected to individuals simply has not been addressed fully. Theoretical musings and hyper-publicised news stories of online shaming cannot fully explore the pervasive effect it can have on everyday life. Studies such as this can add a page to the history of online shaming for future authors to add to, and look back upon.

This study marks a starting point which can be adapted and expanded upon to move towards research that expands on the trends theorised. Diversification of the sample in terms of location could be implemented as well as a more representative survey sample and increased size (Wong, 2013, p. 5). Also by only looking at certain types of online platforms, its idiosyncrasies can be taken into account during data collection, providing a companion piece to wider studies such as this.

The 'internet generation' is becoming a thing of the past. Almost everyone interacts with some kind of internet enabled services, whether to check the news, see holiday snaps or to contact others across the world. The services that enable this interconnection will only grow, and with the shifting cultural and social zeitgeist moving to this platform, online shaming will continue to have a sharper impact. The continued examination and evaluation of what causes this phenomena are crucial in not only understanding it, but combatting the issues that can occur. Online shaming has traditionally been associated with justice, bullying or vengeance. The internet is seen by many as a beacon, one that allows freedom of expression like no other place. But how and to what extent should this freedom be limited if it becomes destructive? Through the understanding of the causes and effects truly effective guidelines and policies

can be established. This is not only important from a sociological point of view, it can also have a direct impact on the very nature of the internet and its platforms, increasing the protection for users all over the world.

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Additional figures and tables

**Figure 6.** Bivariate correlations between prior online shaming victimisation indicators and mean score (N = 223)

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Unwanted phone picture / photos / videos of a violent nature sent via the internet | 1 | .505** | .397** | .515** | .534** | .426** | .388** | .693** | 614 | 329 | 700 |
| 2. Unwanted phone picture / photos / videos of an intimate nature sent via the internet | .505** | 1 | .480** | .474** | .429** | .519** | .326** | .602** | 354 | 446 | 640 |
| 3. Silent / prank phone call via online service | .397** | .480** | 1 | .701** | .616** | .294** | .471** | .584** | 671 | 486 | 739 |
| 4. Unwanted / rude e-mail | .515** | .474** | .701** | 1 | .670** | .412** | .509** | .750** | 728 | 456 | 833 |
| 5. Insults via social media | .534** | .429** | .616** | .670** | 1 | .528** | .571** | .689** | 647 | 452 | 845 |
| 6. Insults via instant messaging | .426** | .519** | .294** | .412** | .528** | 1 | .376** | .545** | 398 | 268 | 677 |
| 7. Insults via chatrooms | .388** | .326** | .471** | .509** | .571** | .376** | 1 | .522** | 489 | 339 | 726 |
| 8. Insults via blogs | .693** | .602** | .584** | .750** | .689** | .545** | .522** | 1 | 647 | 481 | 862 |
| 9. Unpleasant or unwanted pictures / photos on websites | .614** | .354** | .671** | .728** | .647** | .398** | .489** | .647** | 1 | 386 | 796 |
| 10. Technological sabotage | .329** | .446** | .486** | .456** | .452** | .268** | .339** | .481** | 386 | 1 | 566 |
| 11. Mean prior online shaming victimisation | .700** | .640** | .739** | .833** | .845** | .677** | .726** | .862** | 796 | 566 | 1 |

**p < .01 (two-tailed)

**Figure 7.** Age of respondent frequency graph
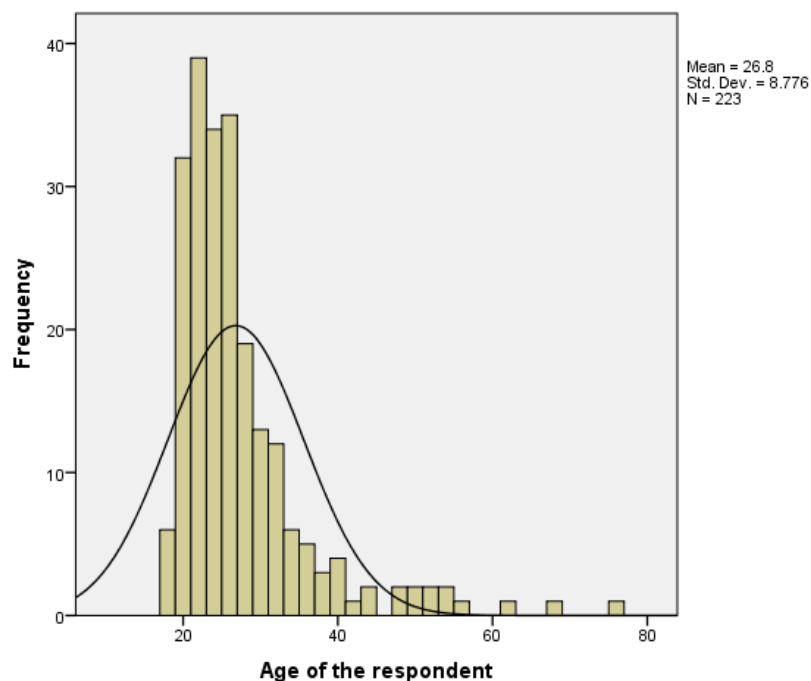


**Table 10.** Online shaming victimisation

| Type of Online Shaming Incident | Frequency in past two months | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | None | Once | 2 – 5 times | 5 – 9 times | 10 or more |
| Unwanted phone picture / photos / videos of a violent nature sent via the internet | 213 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| Unwanted phone picture / photos / videos of an intimate nature sent via the internet | 208 | 11 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Silent / prank phone call via online service | 211 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| Unwanted / rude e-mail | 204 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 4 |
| Insults via social media | 200 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 6 |
| Insults via instant messaging | 198 | 5 | 11 | 0 | 9 |
| Insults via chatrooms | 190 | 9 | 10 | 4 | 10 |
| Insults via blogs | 216 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Unpleasant or unwanted pictures / photos on websites | 211 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 3 |
| Technological sabotage | 213 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

**Table 11.** Online shaming perpetration

| Type of Online Shaming Incident | Frequency in past two months | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | None | Once | 2 – 5 times | 5 – 9 times | 10 or more |
| Unwanted phone picture / photos / videos of a violent nature sent via the internet | 210 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| Unwanted phone picture / photos / videos of an intimate nature sent via the internet | 199 | 11 | 11 | 1 | 1 |
| Silent / prank phone call via online service | 208 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| Unwanted / rude e-mail | 189 | 11 | 12 | 5 | 6 |
| Insults via social media | 183 | 10 | 15 | 5 | 10 |
| Insults via instant messaging | 189 | 11 | 12 | 3 | 8 |
| Insults via chatrooms | 167 | 9 | 26 | 8 | 13 |
| Insults via blogs | 210 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| Unpleasant or unwanted pictures / photos on websites | 196 | 10 | 10 | 3 | 4 |
| Technological sabotage | 206 | 15 | 1 | 0 | 1 |

# Master Thesis data collection: Shaming Behaviour Online

By completing this survey you will be part of a master thesis aiming to understand shaming behaviour online. Upon starting the survey you provide permission for the use of data collected for this purpose.

The internet represents a rapidly changing environment where individuals socialise and interact. This has led to people utilising this technology to shame others, in ways that can differ from face-to-face interactions in both its manner and frequency. This study aims to find out the dynamics that lie behind this phenomena, its frequency and the people it affects.

The estimated time to fully complete this survey is approximately 10 minutes. Furthermore it should be emphasised that this survey is completely anonymous and no uniquely identifying information will be asked for.

Finally let me say a huge thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

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**Section 1 – Background Questions**

This section will ask you to provide general information about yourself. This does also include your sexual identity, as this has been put forward as having an impact on an interactions online. We would like to emphasise that this survey is completely anonymous.

Please state how old you are *

Your answer

What is your gender? *

○ Male

○ Female

○ Other: _____

What is the highest level of education you have completed? *

○ Primary education

○ Secondary Education (High school)

○ MBO (Dutch qualification) / Apprenticeship / Traineeship

○ HBO (Dutch qualification)

○ Bachelor

○ Master or equivalent

○ Doctoral (PhD) or equivalent

Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself? *

○ Heterosexual / Straight

○ Gay / Lesbian

○ Bisexual

○ Other: _____

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## Section 2 – Culture

This section will assess dynamics regarding culture

**People in higher positions should make most decisions without consulting people in lower positions** *

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2A | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**People in lower positions should not disagree with decisions by people in higher positions** *

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2B | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**People in higher positions should not delegate important tasks to people in lower positions** *

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2C | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**It is important to have instructions spelled out in detail so that I always know what I'm expected to do** *

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2D | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**Rules and regulations are important because they inform me of what is expected of me** *

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2E | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**It is important to closely follow instructions and procedures** *

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2F | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**Group loyalty should be encouraged even if individual goals suffer** *

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2G | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**Group success is more important than individual success** *

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2H | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**Individuals should only pursue their goals after considering the welfare of the group** *

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2I | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**Solving difficult problems usually requires an active, forcible approach, which is typical of men** *

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2J | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**Men usually solve problems with logical analysis; women usually solve problems with intuition** *

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2K | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**It is more important for men to have a professional career than it is for women** *

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2L | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

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## Section 3 – Internet usage

This section will assess your internet usage in different areas

**I can be very effective using blogging sites like blogger ***

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3A | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**I can use hyperlinks (a link activated by clicking on a highlighted word or image) to find information that is important to me ***

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3B | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**I can use the Internet to answer my own questions in a productive way ***

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3C | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**I can be very effective communicating using social networking sites like Facebook ***

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3D | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**I can use the Internet to find good information about topics that are important to me ***

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3E | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

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## Section 4 – Perceived Anonymity

This section deals with how you feel online in terms of your anonymity (the idea of being unknown to those around you in an online community). Answer the following in regards tot he sentence below:

When interacting with others and/or commenting on the internet I feel…

**I am confident that others do not know who I am ***

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4A | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**I believe that my personal identity remains unknown to others ***

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4B | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**I am easily identified as an individual by others ***

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4C | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**Others are likely to know who I am ***

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4D | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**My personal identity is known to others ***

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Somewhat Agree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4E | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

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## Section 5 – Shame

This section will assess how you feel about shame on the internet. All statements refer to how you feel when on the internet.

### I feel other people see me as not good enough *

| | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Frequently | Almost Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5A | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

### Other people see me as small and insignificant *

| | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Frequently | Almost Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5B | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

### People see me as unimportant compared to others *

| | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Frequently | Almost Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5C | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

### Other people see me as not measuring up to them *

| | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Frequently | Almost Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5D | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

### I think that other people look down on me *

| | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Frequently | Almost Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5E | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

### I feel insecure about others opinions of me *

| | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Frequently | Almost Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5F | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

### Others think there is something missing in me *

| | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Frequently | Almost Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5G | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

### Other people see me as somehow defective as a person *

| | Never | Seldom | Sometimes | Frequently | Almost Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5H | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

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## Section 6 – Social Comparison

This section will gather information on your opinion with regards to comparisons with others in your surroundings. . All statements refer to how you feel when on the internet.

### I always pay a lot of attention to how I do things compared with how others do things *

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6A | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

### I often compare how I am doing socially (e.g., social skills, popularity) with other people *

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6B | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

### I am not the type of person who compares often with others *

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6C | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

### I often try to find out what others think who face similar problems as I face *

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6D | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

### I always like to know what others in a similar situation would do *

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6E | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

### If I want to learn more about something, I try to find out what others think about it *

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neither Agree or Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6F | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

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## Section 7 – Social Norm

This section aims to identify how you feel about social norms on the internet, and how people you know can affect this. A social norm is what people in a community believe to be normal, typical and/or acceptable action within that group. All statements refer to how you feel when on the internet.

**I go out of my way to follow social norms ***

|     | Extremely uncharacteristic | Somewhat uncharacteristic | Uncertain | Somewhat characteristic | Extremely characteristic |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 7A  | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**We shouldn't always have to follow a set of social rules ***

|     | Extremely uncharacteristic | Somewhat uncharacteristic | Uncertain | Somewhat characteristic | Extremely characteristic |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 7B  | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**People should always be able to behave as they wish rather than trying to fit the norm ***

|     | Extremely uncharacteristic | Somewhat uncharacteristic | Uncertain | Somewhat characteristic | Extremely characteristic |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 7C  | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**There is a correct way to behave in every situation. ***

|     | Extremely uncharacteristic | Somewhat uncharacteristic | Uncertain | Somewhat characteristic | Extremely characteristic |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 7D  | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**If more people followed society's rules, the world would be a better place ***

|     | Extremely uncharacteristic | Somewhat uncharacteristic | Uncertain | Somewhat characteristic | Extremely characteristic |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 7E  | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**People need to follow life's unwritten rules every bit as strictly as they follow the written rules ***

|     | Extremely uncharacteristic | Somewhat uncharacteristic | Uncertain | Somewhat characteristic | Extremely characteristic |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 7F  | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**There are lots of vital customs that people should follow as members of society ***

|     | Extremely uncharacteristic | Somewhat uncharacteristic | Uncertain | Somewhat characteristic | Extremely characteristic |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 7G  | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**The standards that society expects us to meet are far too restrictive ***

|     | Extremely uncharacteristic | Somewhat uncharacteristic | Uncertain | Somewhat characteristic | Extremely characteristic |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 7H  | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**People who do what society expects of them lead happier lives ***

|     | Extremely uncharacteristic | Somewhat uncharacteristic | Uncertain | Somewhat characteristic | Extremely characteristic |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 7I  | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**Our society is built on unwritten rules that members need to follow ***

|     | Extremely uncharacteristic | Somewhat uncharacteristic | Uncertain | Somewhat characteristic | Extremely characteristic |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 7J  | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**I am at ease only when everyone around me is adhering to society's norms ***

|     | Extremely uncharacteristic | Somewhat uncharacteristic | Uncertain | Somewhat characteristic | Extremely characteristic |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 7K  | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**We would be happier if we didn't try to follow society's norms ***

|     | Extremely uncharacteristic | Somewhat uncharacteristic | Uncertain | Somewhat characteristic | Extremely characteristic |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 7L  | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**My idea of a perfect world would be one with few social expectations ***

|     | Extremely uncharacteristic | Somewhat uncharacteristic | Uncertain | Somewhat characteristic | Extremely characteristic |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 7M  | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**I always do my best to follow society's rules ***

|     | Extremely uncharacteristic | Somewhat uncharacteristic | Uncertain | Somewhat characteristic | Extremely characteristic |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 7N  | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

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This section is about your experiences with online shaming. There is a list below that contains the different kinds of online behaviours that can be used to shame an individual via the internet.

For each type of behaviour, please think back over the last 2 months, and select the option that represents the number of times you: A) Performed this action and B) Have been on the receiving end of such an action after a perceived or real breaking of a social norm.

To be classified as a case of online shaming, this action must have taken place because of a perceived (based on their opinion) or real breaking of a social norm. A social norm is what people in a community believe to be normal, typical and/or acceptable action within that group.

Please remember than this survey is completely anonymous, so answer as truthfully as possible.

A: Number of times you have done this to someone else in the past 2 months *

|  | None | Once | 2 - 5 times | 5 - 9 times | 10 or more |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unwanted picture / photos / video of a violent nature sent to your phone | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Unwanted picture / photos / video of an intimate nature sent to your phone | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Silent / prank phone call via online service (for example a Whatsapp or Skype call) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Unwanted / rude e-mail | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Insults via social media | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Insults via instant messaging | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Insults via chatrooms / message boards (Reddit for example) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Insults via blogs | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Unpleasant/unwanted picture/photos posted on websites | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Technological sabotage (for example having your email or phone hacked) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Alternative type of incident involving the internet? Please state what happened along with the number of incidences in the past 2 months.

Your answer

B: Number of times in the past 2 months this has happened to you *

|  | None | Once | 2 - 5 times | 5 - 9 times | 10 or more |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Unwanted picture / photos / video of a violent nature sent to your phone | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Unwanted picture / photos / video of an intimate nature sent to your phone | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Silent / prank phone call via online service (for example a Whatsapp or Skype call) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Unwanted / rude e-mail | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Insults via social media | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Insults via instant messaging | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Insults via chatrooms / message boards (Reddit for example) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Insults via blogs | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Unpleasant/unwanted picture/photos posted on websites | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| Technological sabotage (for example having your email or phone hacked) | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ | ○ |

Alternative type of incident involving the internet? Please state what happened along with the number of incidences in the past 2 months.

Your answer

BACK    SUBMIT