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Two sides to every tweet: Exploring the framing, predictors, and associated consequences of online shaming

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Declaration

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made. This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university. The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007; updated May 2018). The research studies received human research ethics approval from the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (EC00262); approval number: HRE2019-0697 (see Appendix A), and amendment numbers: HRE2019-0697-05 (see Appendix B), HRE2019-0697-06 (see Appendix C), HRE2019-0697-10 (see Appendix D), and HRE2019-0697-11 (see Appendix E).

Signature: 

Date: 10th of February 2023

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge that Curtin University works across hundreds of traditional lands and custodial groups in Australia, and with First Nations people around the globe. We wish to pay our deepest respects to their ancestors and members of their communities, past, present, and to their emerging leaders. Our passion and commitment to work with all Australians and peoples from across the world, including our First Nations peoples are at the core of the work we do, reflective of our institutions' values and commitment to our role as leaders in the Reconciliation space in Australia.

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Publications

Muir, S. R., Roberts, L. D., & Sheridan, L. P. (2021). The portrayal of online shaming in contemporary online news media: A media framing analysis. *Computers in Human Behavior Reports, 3*, 100051. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chbr.2020.100051

Muir, S. R., Roberts, L. D., Sheridan, L. P., & Coleman, A. R. (2023). Examining the role of moral, emotional, behavioural, and personality factors in predicting online shaming. *PLOS ONE, 18*, e0279750. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0279750

Conference presentations

Muir, S. R. (2022, February 16-19). *Examining the role of moral, emotional, behavioural, and personality factors in predicting online shaming* [Oral presentation]. Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP) Annual Convention, San Francisco.

Muir, S. R. (2023, July 23-26). *A qualitative exploration of the experience and associated impacts of being shamed online* [Oral presentation]. 19th biennial conference of the International Society for Justice Research (ISJR), Munich.

List of author contributions

The portrayal of online shaming in contemporary online news media: A media framing analysis

My contributions for this paper included: conceptualisation, methodology, formal analysis, investigation, writing (original draft), and writing (reviewing and editing). Lynne Robert's contributions for this paper included: supervision, conceptualisation, methodology, and writing (reviewing and editing). Lorraine Sheridan's contributions for this paper included: supervision, conceptualisation, methodology, and writing (reviewing and editing).

Examining the role of moral, emotional, behavioural, and personality factors in predicting online shaming

My contributions for this paper included: conceptualisation, methodology, formal analysis, investigation, writing (original draft), and writing (reviewing and editing). Lynne Robert's contributions for this paper included: supervision, conceptualisation, methodology, and writing (reviewing and editing). Lorraine Sheridan's contributions for this paper included: supervision, conceptualisation, methodology, and writing (reviewing and editing). Amy Coleman's contributions for this paper included: formal analysis, writing (original draft), and writing (reviewing and editing).

Online shaming engagement across contexts: Exploring the role of virality, relational proximity, and discrimination type

My contributions for this paper included: conceptualisation, methodology, formal analysis, investigation, writing (original draft), and writing (reviewing and editing). Lynne Robert's contributions for this paper included: supervision, conceptualisation, methodology, and writing (reviewing and editing). Robert Kane's contributions for this paper included: conceptualisation, methodology, formal analysis, and writing (reviewing and editing). Peter McEvoy's contributions for this paper included: supervision and writing (reviewing and editing). David Garratt-Reed's contributions for this paper included: supervision and writing (reviewing and editing).

A qualitative exploration of the experience and associated impacts of being shamed online

My contributions for this paper included: conceptualisation, methodology, formal analysis, investigation, writing (original draft), and writing (reviewing and editing). Lynne Robert's contributions for this paper included: supervision, conceptualisation, methodology, and writing (reviewing and editing).

Overall abstract

Online shaming can broadly be defined as an umbrella term for behaviours involving individuals or groups shaming others via the internet, social media, and other digital technologies, over real or perceived violations of social norms. This contemporary manifestation of public shaming is a widespread form of social policing that is restrained by almost no locational or geographical boundaries, and is now capable of permeating the lives of virtually all members of society. Online shaming has become a well-known phenomenon in recent years, and has been associated with a multitude of negative, long-lasting, and wide-reaching consequences. Despite this, existing discussion and debate on this topic has been largely driven purely by anecdotal and media-based sources, with current literature on online shaming oftentimes non-empirical in nature, and overall scarce. The overarching aim of this thesis was to explore the framing, predictors, and associated consequences of online shaming, which was achieved via a mixed-methods research project comprising four studies. The aims and findings of the studies in this thesis are introduced below, followed by an outline of the overall implications of these thesis findings in combination.

In the first study, the construction of online shaming in contemporary online news media was qualitatively explored. A media framing analysis was completed on 69 contemporary online news articles from around the world concerning online shaming, from which two overarching representations of online shaming were uncovered: a dominant framing of online shaming as a dangerous threat with serious consequences, and a smaller framing representing online shaming instead as constructive and capable of resulting in positive outcomes. Further, there were variations in conditions presented, as well as several rationalisations, consequences, and recommendations posed for mitigating online shaming embedded within the articles that collectively represented online shaming as a multifaceted and morally ambiguous phenomenon.

In the second study, a mixed-methods online survey was used to quantitatively assess whether moral grandstanding, moral disengagement, emotional reactivity, empathy, social vigilantism, online disinhibition, machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy would predict a primarily Australian sample's (*N* = 411) likelihood to engage in online shaming (after partialing out the effects of gender, daily online hours, daily social media hours, having shamed someone online before, and social desirability). Results indicated that these predictors significantly accounted for approximately two-fifths of the variance in participants'

likelihood to engage in online shaming, and one-fifth of the variance in perceived deservedness of online shaming. Additionally, a mixed content analysis of an open-ended question offered further insights into public opinions about online shaming. These qualitative findings included the perception of online shaming as a form of accountability, the perceived destructive effects of online shaming, the assumed role of anonymity in online shaming, online shaming as a form of entertainment, online shaming involving 'two sides to every story', the notion that 'hurt people hurt people', online shaming as now a social norm, and distinctions made between the online shaming of public and private figures.

In the third study, a quantitative experimental vignette study via an online survey was used to assess a primarily Australian sample's (N = 385) likelihood to engage in additional online shaming or supporting behaviours (via liking, retweeting, and making additional comments) when responding to vignettes depicting an individual being shamed online via comment for making a discriminatory online post, which were depicted as being either a) viral or not viral, b) either a hypothetical friend or stranger to the participant had already shamed the individual via comment, and c) the discriminatory post was either racist, sexist, or homophobic in nature (after partialing out the effects of age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, years of education, daily online hours, daily social media hours, having been online before, and having shamed someone online before). Results revealed a significant main effect for virality and shaming via retweeting, with those in the viral condition more likely to retweet with shaming intent than their counterparts in the non-viral condition. There were also main effects for post discrimination type and shaming via liking, shaming via commenting, supporting via liking, supporting via retweeting, and supporting via commenting, with participants more likely to shame and less likely to support the racist post compared to the sexist and homophobic post.

In the fourth and final study, 22 qualitative interviews with a largely Australian sample featuring individuals who had been subjected to online shaming were conducted to explore how they describe their experiences of being shamed online, as well as its various associated impacts. Inductive thematic analysis was employed to construct the following findings: an array of emotional reactions and thought processes after the shaming events occurred; various ways of reacting to being shamed online; changes to perceptions of the self, other people, and online spaces; participants struggling with how they understood their experiences, with many describing competing beliefs and difficulties in consolidating how

exactly they felt about their online shaming events; beneficial coping mechanisms; and some opportunities for growth that were identified as positive by-products of being shamed online. Overall, being someone who had been shamed online was constructed as a nuanced, but largely negative experience with adverse consequences that varied in intensity, frequency, and duration.

Examining the framing, predictors, and associated consequences of online shaming is important for increasing public understandings and discussion (especially with those who may engage in, be subjected to, or witness online shaming), as well as informing academic discourse and empirically substantiating current theoretical musings. It is also essential to provide insight to those with decision making capacity in the area of online shaming, such as policymakers, educators, and those tasked with intervention initiatives. Lastly, service providers, such as psychologists and other professionals in related areas, also need to be informed when working with individuals who may have been subjected to or involved in online shaming in some capacity.

Author's note

This thesis is structured in a hybrid format, with chapters two to five featuring four papers presented as journal articles that have been either accepted or submitted for publication. As each individual chapter is an embedded part of an overall body of work, all chapters are preceded by a short introduction linking the chapters together. As chapters two to five feature standalone journal articles, there is understandably some overlap throughout the thesis (e.g., in the introduction sections across the papers). Given this, an overall literature review chapter has not been included as to avoid unnecessary repetition, however some introductory literature has been included at the beginning of the introduction chapter (chapter one) to introduce the thesis topic and orient the reader for the remaining chapters (which does contain some inevitable parallels to the literature discussed in the introduction sections of later chapters). Efforts have also been made to provide concise, novel, and synthesised insights in the general discussion chapter (chapter six) rather than simply repeating the same content in the individual discussion sections featured in chapters two to five.

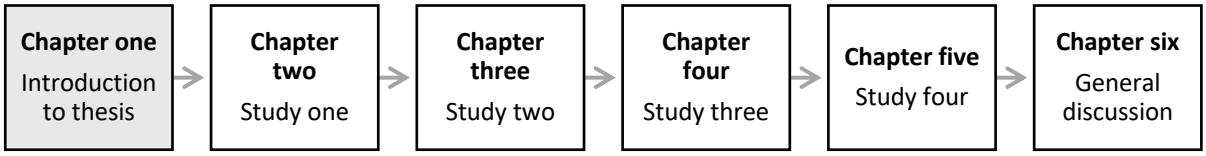
Some minor changes have been made to the journal article chapters (e.g., referencing style and formatting) from the published and submitted for publication versions to allow for consistency in presentation throughout the current document. Table and figure numbers for the journal article chapters have also been altered from their published and submitted for publication versions to instead be labelled as part of a single consecutive list (which is inclusive of all tables and figures presented in this thesis, except for those featured in the appendices). Individual reference lists have also been omitted from the journal article chapters, with all references instead presented at the end of the thesis in a single combined reference list.

Chapter one: Introduction to thesis

Introduction to chapter one

Chapter one provides an overarching introduction to this thesis. This chapter begins with an overview of the topic of interest for this research, online shaming, by first outlining shame as an emotion, as well as public shaming as a social act, before finally introducing online shaming specifically, and its associated virtues and vices. This is followed by an outline of the overall aims and purpose of this thesis, as well as a brief introduction to all remaining chapters. This includes a summary of chapters two to five, which contain the four studies featured in this thesis, and chapter six, which is a general discussion in which chapters two to five are synthesised. Figure 1 demonstrates where this chapter fits within the overall structure of this thesis.

Figure 1
Flow diagram of thesis structure: Introduction to thesis



Introduction to thesis

Conceptualising shame

Shame has been defined in the psychological literature as a self-conscious moral-based emotion that occurs when an individual internalises feelings of disapproval from others (Svindseth & Crawford, 2019). While shame is likened and oftentimes used interchangeably with other emotions like guilt and embarrassment (Tangney et al., 1996), there are some important distinctions to be made between these terms. When comparing shame and guilt, one longstanding understanding in the literature is that shame is more of a public emotion than guilt, with shame typically being an affective response following public exposure and condemnation of some transgression or perceived failing, and guilt instead being a more internal, conscience-led feeling of having breached one's own personal standards (Tangney et al., 1996). Scholars also argue that guilt tends to relate to and arise from a specific behaviour, whereas feelings of shame typically lead to one self-criticising their entire being (i.e., 'I have done a bad thing' vs. 'I am a bad person'; Leach, 2017; Tangney et al., 1996). Hence, guilt is often conceptualised as one negatively evaluating their own actions, whereas shame serves to signal to the self that one, at their core, has some form of inherent shortcoming (Makogon & Enikolopov, 2013).

Shame and embarrassment are also terms that are often used interchangeably, even more so than shame and guilt (Tangney et al., 1996). Although some scholars have argued that embarrassment is merely a facet within or variant of shame (e.g., Izard, 1977), others argue the following distinctions: a) that shame and embarrassment are dissimilar, in that shame is a more intense emotion than embarrassment (i.e., feeling 'immoral' rather than simply feeling 'awkward'), b) shame results from more serious transgressions or shortcomings than embarrassment, c) shame can occur in both public and private settings, whilst embarrassment requires an audience present to be felt, and d) that shame is tied more closely to one's core self, with embarrassment instead tied more to situation-specific or transient occurrences (Massaro, 1997; Tangney et al., 1996). Taking these considerations into account, shame is typically understood to be a more serious and damaging emotion than both guilt and embarrassment (Tangney et al., 1996).

Although the above conceptualisations of shame are widely employed across the shaming literature, it is important to also acknowledge the longstanding disagreement amongst researchers as to what shame actually is (e.g., Scheff, 2015; Thomason, 2015), with

Maley (2015, p. 33) noting how, even now, "the nature of shame is poorly understood". Likewise, Solomon (2008, p. 3) notes, "just when it seems that an adequate definition is in place, some new theory rears its unwelcome head and challenges our understanding". For example, Sartre (1943/1993) made the claim that in order for shame to exist, one must experience being perceived as dishonourable by another, and opposed those who believed that shame stemmed purely from self-reflection. However, Taylor (1985) disagreed with Sartre's (1943/1993) suggestion that an audience is a necessary requisite for shame to occur, instead contending that shame is inherently grounded in self-judgment. Katz (1999, p. 147) also wrote that "the experience of shame refracts in so many shades of feeling and takes such diverse metaphoric shapes that the literature is filled with contrasting definitions of the phenomena, each definition stressing elements that assist the author's objectives for shaping therapy, developing sociological or psychological theory, or making a philosophical argument".

Additionally, when considering how one should define shame, it is also important to note that some critics also argue that certain less contemporary conceptualisations of shame are oversimplified and overlook the multidimensional nature of shame. It has also been argued that shame has often previously been conceptualised primarily only at the individual level, with shame researchers failing to sufficiently consider the cultural and social contexts in which shame is embedded (Furukawa et al., 2012). That is, some authors contend that experiences of shame are heavily influenced by cultural values, social norms, and relationships with others, all of which can significantly shape the outcomes of these shame experiences (e.g., Stadter, 2020). Whilst the aim of this thesis is not to contribute to further defining the parameters of shame itself, it is nonetheless still important to be aware of and to explicitly acknowledge the existence of these tensions when contributing to this research domain.

Shaming as a social act

Shaming as a behaviour can be conceptualised as a "process by which citizens publicly and self-consciously draw attention to the bad dispositions or actions of an offender, as a way of punishing [them] for having those dispositions or engaging in those actions" (Kahan & Posner, 1999, p. 368). Whilst it has been argued that it is possible for shame as an emotion to be felt in private settings without an audience, publicity is a key element when it comes to the act of shaming itself (de Vries, 2015). Cohen (2020) explains

that shame has been present since early human communities, and was evolutionarily advantageous due to functioning as a mechanism for social conformity and deterring others from engaging in the same deviant behaviours considered to be shame worthy. Similarly, Wettlaufer (2016, p. 50) notes that "moral emotions play a crucial role in the enforcement of normative behavior in groups, they are firmly established in adaptive cultural domains like religion, law, and education".

Shame has been highlighted in the criminal justice literature as a successful mechanism for enforcing social norms and appropriate behaviour, with public shaming as a punishment seen as highly effective, as "the focus of shame on the self is acute and painful, which immediately causes the individual to seek refuge from the stares of others" (Coontz, 2015, p. 444). However, others argue that, overall, shame is a far less helpful emotion than guilt, for instance, because it is not as constructive in nature, with shame instead "thought to be an "externalization" of the felt inadequacy in the form of angry hostility toward those aware of one's failure or otherwise vulnerable to one's wrath" (Leach, 2017, p. 18). Further, humiliation is said to be a key component of public shaming as a form of punishment, with this humiliation involving expressions of contempt towards the wrongdoer, as well as social ostracism from the broader community (Massaro, 1997; Ronson, 2015). Beyond humiliating the individual into complying to group norms, shaming also disgraces the shamed individual's status and brings their virtues into question, resulting in other community members aligning them with this tainted reputation long after the act of the punishment itself has ended (Garvey, 1998; Ronson, 2015). Public shaming effectively strips the offender of their dignity, and oftentimes renders them unable to redeem themselves or ever re-enter 'normal' society again (Garvey, 1998; Ronson, 2015).

The practice of public shaming as a form of punishment has an extensive history, with the stockade in the town square, public floggings, stoning, branding, the amputation of body parts, scarlet letters, and the Salem witch trials (among many other instances of public execution) being a few notable examples (de Vries, 2015; Goldman, 2015; Ronson, 2015; Solove, 2007). A central component of these oftentimes legally sanctioned punishments was that they were, by design, public spectacles (Hess & Waller, 2014). Practices like these were frequently highly effective ways to punish transgressors, and served to deter other community members from committing the same wrongdoings, particularly in close-knit communities where social stigma was an especially potent deterrent (Massaro, 1991).

However, practices like these were largely cast aside in favour of other forms of punishment by the nineteenth century after previously accepted understandings of human dignity were re-examined, and public shaming was subsequently re-evaluated as being too demeaning and inhumane (Ronson, 2015). Additionally, public shaming was also said to have fallen out of practice in part due to mass urbanisation and the disintegration of tight-knit communities, with weaker social ties meaning that the threats of diminished social standing and ostracism that often came with shaming practices no longer held the same deterring power they once had (de Vries, 2015; Gallardo, 2017; Goldman, 2015).

Institutional public shaming is still used today in less extreme forms, such as high visibility jackets being a requirement for community services, judges ordering convicted individuals to wear sandwich boards, display bumper stickers, or to be featured in newspaper advertisements detailing their wrongdoings, publishing the identities of those previously convicted of sex crimes online, court orders requiring convicted individuals to confess their crimes and/or publicly apologise on television, and the 'perpetrator walk' used across many countries (Cheung, 2014; de Vries, 2015; Klonick, 2016; Massaro, 1997). Ranking systems for best and worst performers in schools, healthcare systems, and human rights across countries is another form of modern public shaming, with varied views on the comparative benefits (Cabus & de Witte, 2012). Moreover, with rapid advances in contemporary technology, especially the use of the internet and social media platforms as a tool for digital communication and information sharing, public shaming as a form of punishment has now had a mass resurrection in modern society (Gallardo, 2017).

Shaming goes digital

As of October 2022, over five billion people around the world are reported to use the internet, with over 93% of these internet users also using social media (DataReportal, 2022). This widespread uptake of digital connectivity in the twenty first century has afforded everyday individuals the freedom and means to capture and share information, thoughts, and beliefs with others with a never-before-seen immediacy and effortlessness (Baruah, 2012; Mann, 2004). These affordances offered by technological progress have also been accompanied by a resurgence in public shaming, which, as Gallardo (2017, p. 725) states, has "evolved and made a fierce comeback in the digital age". Our everyday digital devices, such as smartphones with internet access and recording capabilities, now allow virtually anyone to observe, capture, distribute, and comment on the way other individuals choose to

present themselves and behave (de Vries, 2015; Skoric et al., 2010). Billingham and Parr (2019, p. 1) note that we now live in a time where we have "unprecedented opportunities to criticize those we consider to have done wrong", with statements or behaviours previously simply met with a judgemental look or a snide remark, now able to be spread online in an instant for the world to condemn (Klonick, 2016).

While there is no one agreed upon definition within the literature base or in current social discourse, online shaming can broadly be considered an umbrella term for behaviours involving individuals engaging in social policing by shaming other people, groups, brands, or organisations via internet technologies over real or perceived transgressions, which Cheung (2014, p. 302) labels as "for the purpose of humiliation, social condemnation and punishment". For instance, one of the most well-known examples of online shaming is that of Justine Sacco, former head of public relations for InterActiveCorp, who in 2013 destroyed both her career and personal life with a single tweet, despite only having 170 Twitter followers at the time (Ronson, 2015). Regarding her upcoming trip to South Africa, Sacco tweeted "Going to Africa. Hope I don't get AIDS. Just kidding. I'm white!" before boarding her 11-hour flight (Klonick, 2016, p. 1048). Unbeknownst to her, Sacco's careless joke soon became the number one globally trending tweet, with a firestorm of abuse labelling her a racist, calls for her resignation, and threats of violence waiting for her by the time she landed (Ronson, 2015). Despite Sacco later explaining that the post was intended to be a satire on white privilege, she swiftly lost her job and has suffered long-lasting psychological effects since, with the fallout from a single joke made in poor taste still impacting her life many years later (Ronson, 2015).

Although there is some conceptual overlap with online shaming and other online phenomena, like cyberbullying and online harassment, in that they can all involve "repeated verbal aggression" and "threats of violence, privacy invasions, reputation-harming lies, calls for strangers to physically harm victims, and technological attacks", it is the expression of social disapproval over real or apparent violations of social norms (such as the outrage expressed over Sacco's racist joke; Ronson, 2015) that distinguishes online shaming from other forms of online victimisation (see Billingham & Parr, 2019; Cheung, 2014; Gallardo, 2017; Klonick, 2016, p. 1034; Laidlaw, 2017). However, it is also important to note that the lines between these differing online behaviours are often still blurred (e.g., body shaming could be conceptualised as both a form of online shaming, or as cyberbullying/digital

harassment). Instances of online shaming will typically first involve exposing and disseminating information relating to the person or group being shamed (as well as their apparent wrongdoings), before varying levels of outbursts and other displays of online aggression from others 'piling on' also follow suit (e.g., name-calling, threats of physical or sexual violence; Laidlaw, 2017). Online shaming can be instigated and perpetuated through the creation of shaming posts, comments, direct messages, likes, memes, photos, and videos shared about, or even directly to, the shamed individual online (Billingham & Parr, 2019; Klonick, 2016; Laidlaw, 2017). This may also include exposing personal information of the shaming targets, and can escalate into the real world (e.g., in-person altercations, stalking, vandalism; Cheung, 2014; Skoric et al., 2010; Solove, 2007).

The violations of social norms that trigger instances of online shaming can manifest in both offline (e.g., poor public etiquette) and online settings (e.g., Sacco's racist tweet), and unlike state-sanctioned public shaming, the act being shamed can be both illegal (e.g., vandalism) and legal (e.g., unsatisfactory customer service; Gallardo, 2017; Klonick, 2016; Skoric et al., 2010; Ronson, 2015). Another distinction between traditional public shaming and online shaming is that involvement from authority figures, state officials, and mass media is no longer a prerequisite of social norm enforcement, with members of the public now having an unparalleled agency to observe, judge, and reprimand others through peer surveillance as a means of social control (Ingraham & Reeves, 2016; Klonick, 2016; Skoric et al., 2010). With that being said, online shaming perpetrated by everyday individuals also can, and often does, become even more intensified once the mass media and other high visibility avenues provide further exposure and commentary on said shaming (de Vries, 2015; Hess & Waller, 2014). The calling out of others online over perceived moral infractions in this manner is quite a perplexing moral dilemma, in that whilst the shaming act in question might be beneficial for the broader community, and prevent harm at a societal level (Cialdini et al., 1990; Fehr & Fischbacher, 2004; Gerber et al., 2008), at the same time it undoubtedly can, and often does, create harm for the individual person being shamed (Laidlaw, 2017; Ronson, 2015). Thus, online shaming presents as a multifaceted moral issue with both virtues and vices, a notion that has been acknowledged so far in previous literature, and is also outlined below.

Online shaming as a double-edged sword

Some scholars in the online shaming literature note that online shaming can function as a positive social regulator, with individuals who participate in online shaming having a desire to assist in upholding social order and promote normative behaviours, meaning in some ways, online shaming can be argued as being for justified reasons (Billingham & Parr, 2019; Solove, 2007). Exposing poor behaviour can encourage those who have committed wrongdoings to demonstrate feelings of remorse and afford them an opportunity to re-evaluate their behaviours (Smith et al., 2002). Through highlighting social norms and the possible penalties that can come from diverging from them, online shaming can bolster public awareness of certain transgressions and ultimately discourage other individuals from committing them also, and is especially beneficial where certain behaviours that previously would have remained unacknowledged and unpunished altogether are concerned (Solove, 2007). Hence, online shaming can afford people the opportunity, and perhaps also the obligation, to inhibit others from engaging in harmful behaviours (e.g., hate speech), and no longer remain silent when it comes to witnessing injustice (Graham et al., 2011; Janoff-Bulman & Carnes, 2013).

With the accessibility of the online world, everyday people are now partaking in social control through peer surveillance (Skoric et al., 2010), with institution-led regulation no longer a requirement of social norm enforcement (Crockett, 2017; Klonick, 2016). Online shaming instead draws from decentralised power, allowing many traditionally powerless and disadvantaged groups to have a voice, which promotes both individual empowerment and greater involvement at a community level (Crockett, 2017; Skoric et al., 2010). Given this, online shaming is sometimes instead framed as activism, social vigilantism, or as a means of informal justice, as opposed to it being understood as an unpredictable and oftentimes severe form of punishment for wrongdoers (Fileborn, 2017; Mendes et al., 2018). Some well-known examples of this include the calls for justice for survivors of sexual assault and the countless stories of rape culture shared online as part of the worldwide #MeToo movement (Traister, 2018), as well as the outrage over racist police brutality that ignited the #BlackLivesMatter movement (Hoffman et al., 2016). Overall, online shaming can be conceptualised as a tool that encourages people to enforce both moral and legal behaviours, with some arguing that it contributes to greater institutional transparency and overall societal reform (Laidlaw, 2017; Solove, 2007). However, there is also ample academic and

public discourse to suggest that the negative consequences of online shaming far outweigh any positive ones.

Several academics (e.g., Cheung, 2014; Skoric et al., 2010) argue that whilst those who choose to participate in online shaming might only have the intention to call out a norm violation and hold the shamed individual to account, online shaming can morph into many different types of harmful and abusive behaviour (e.g., bullying, offline harassment, doxing, death threats; Gallardo, 2017) that then become "punishable in its own right" (Klonick, 2016, p. 1029). Ingraham and Reeves (2016, p. 456) reflect on the negative impact modern shaming can have on people, expressing, "the police and the courts are often unable to mete out punishments as severe or intimidating as the ostracism, job loss, death threats, and physical attacks that can accompany what Urry (1999) calls our increasingly mediated culture of shame". Both anecdotally, in the literature, and in mass media, online shaming for those on the receiving end has been associated with emotional distress in numerous forms (e.g., depression, anxiety, shame, regret, panic, guilt, humiliation, helplessness, insomnia, suicide; Billingham & Parr, 2019; Jacquet, 2015; Laidlaw, 2017; Muir et al., 2021), as well as damage to personal relationships (Ronson, 2015), and much like traditional public shaming, the desire to socially isolate from the rest of the world (Jacquet, 2015; Solove, 2007).

It is important to also consider the distinction between disintegrative and reintegrative shaming when it comes to shaming in digital spaces. Braithwaite (1989) explains how, on the one hand, disintegrative shaming involves isolating and stigmatising those who are perceived to have committed some sort of 'wrongdoing', with the aim of condemning, permanently labelling, and socially excluding the targets of such shaming. Reintegrative shaming, on the other hand, is described by Braithwaite (1989) as addressing the wrongdoing by condemning the behaviour, whilst simultaneously still maintaining social bonds and allowing reintegration into the community by affording opportunities for repentance, reconciliation, and forgiveness. With Braithwaite's (1989) framework in mind, shaming in the online world can be understood as largely manifesting in the form of disintegrative, rather than reintegrative, shaming. For instance, online shaming is said to oftentimes come with seemingly irreparable impairment to one's reputation, which Solove (2007, p. 94) labels as "permanent digital baggage". Several scholars have highlighted how the shaming content will oftentimes be forevermore only a Google search away, meaning it is always accessible to others, and thus, the harm to the shamed individual can be seemingly

endless (Gallardo, 2017; Klonick, 2016; Laidlaw, 2017; Skoric et al., 2010). Online shaming also has links to financial losses, such as losing employment, ruined careers, and being turned down for future job prospects (Ronson, 2015). Given the permanent and widespread nature of online shaming punishments, shamed individuals are often regarded as unable to redeem themselves or be afforded the opportunity to ever participate in 'normal' society the same way again (Ronson, 2015).

Many scholars argue that online shaming often tends to be disproportionate to the perceived or real social norm violation it was first incited by (Billingham & Parr, 2019; Gallardo, 2017; Klonick, 2016; Laidlaw, 2017). The ways in which individuals express outrage online towards a wrongdoer is, by design, relatively little effort, oftentimes anonymous, and generally carries a lower risk of retaliation than in offline settings (Crockett, 2017). This means that people often express feeling outraged by others online even when they may not actually be authentically outraged, which Crockett (2017, p. 371) effectively summarises in the rhetorical question, "if moral outrage is a fire, is the internet like gasoline?" It is also important to note that online shaming is currently not controlled by any widely accepted norms, laws, or regulations, meaning that there are few limitations surrounding the ways in which members of the public can participate in it (Laidlaw, 2017; Skoric et al., 2010). Rather, it is up to each individual participating in the shaming to use their subjective judgement, which means that the very same social norm violation can result in different volumes of online shaming from case to case (Goldman, 2015). This also means that a person who has made a bad joke online, or another comparatively minor antisocial act, can possibly go on to receive far more online hate and other follow-on effects than someone else who would typically be considered as more deserving, such as those complicit in serious crimes (Crockett, 2017). Inevitably, there are also instances of online shaming in which the recipient of the shaming would be considered (at least by most) as not deserving of being shamed at all, such as when individuals are shamed online merely due to their appearance (e.g., body shaming; Muir et al., 2021).

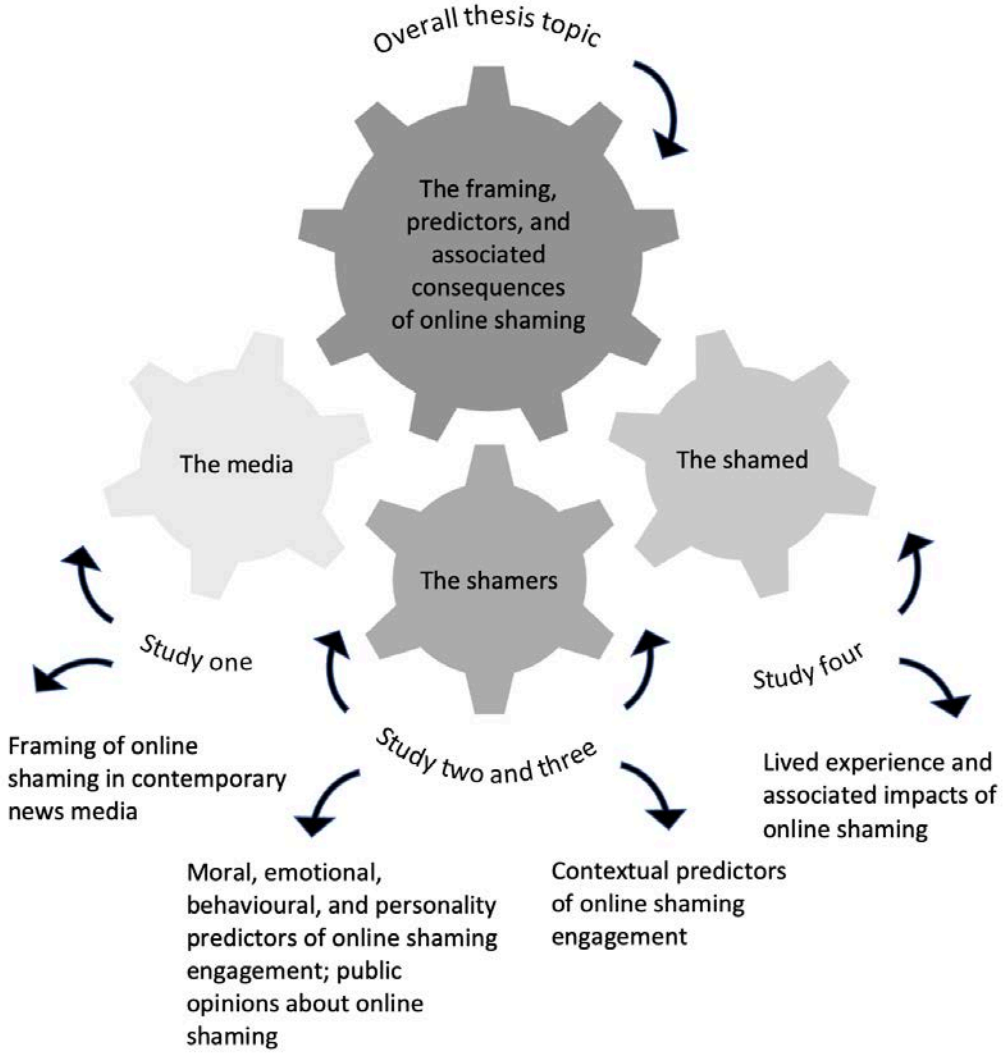
Online shaming is almost impossible to predict, and it can be even harder to control (Klonick, 2016; Laidlaw, 2017; Skoric et al., 2010; Solove, 2007). Many also discuss how, unlike being tried by the judicial system, online shaming lacks due process (Gallardo, 2017; Skoric et al., 2010; Solove, 2007). For instance, Detel (2013) points out that the shamed acts or statements can often be taken out of context (e.g., Sacco's joke meant as light-hearted

satire, which instead resulted in her being branded a racist; Ronson, 2015), which can then distort the reality of what has happened and the facts that are essential for objectivity to be upheld. This lack of due process means that oftentimes the shaming content is taken at face value, with the truthfulness or accuracy of any accusations not examined, and any notions of 'innocent until proven guilty' nowhere to be found (Gallardo, 2017; Solove, 2007).

The current thesis

To date, limited empirical evidence exists regarding how online shaming is constructed, as well as the explanations for, and associated outcomes of this phenomenon, which is surprising given the consequences are said to be oftentimes devastating and virtually uncontrollable. A lot of existing academic discussion relating to online shaming provides theoretical musings for online shaming without substantiating it with empirical support, and current discussion on the predictors and consequences of online shaming is largely anecdotal or driven by the media. Online spaces are constantly informed and reshaped by social norms, which often evolve rapidly and unpredictably, meaning online shaming is an increasingly relevant problem that now permeates almost all levels of society. It is crucial to systematically analyse and disseminate any harmful impacts, predictors, and other underlying trends of online shaming in order to establish a more comprehensive, empirical understanding of this issue. To assist in this endeavour, the overarching aim of the current four-part, mixed-methods PhD project was to explore the framing, predictors, and associated consequences of online shaming. While the specific rationales for each thesis study are embedded in the introduction sections of their respective papers, a brief overview of this thesis, and the four studies that address its objectives, is presented in text below. These studies, and how they relate to the overall aims of this thesis, are also depicted visually in Figure 2.

Figure 2
Conceptual model of thesis studies



Chapter two

In chapter two, the first study of this thesis is presented, titled 'The portrayal of online shaming in contemporary online news media: A media framing analysis'. The purpose of this qualitative study was to demonstrate how online shaming is constructed in contemporary online news media. This chapter has been published as a journal article in a peer-reviewed journal.

Chapter three

In chapter three, the second study of this thesis is presented, titled 'Examining the role of moral, emotional, behavioural, and personality factors in predicting online shaming'. The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to firstly quantitatively assess whether moral grandstanding, moral disengagement, emotional reactivity, empathy, social vigilantism, online disinhibition, machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy predict participants'

likelihood to engage in online shaming (after partialing out the effects of gender, daily online hours, daily social media hours, having shamed someone online before, and social desirability). The aim of the smaller, qualitative strand of this study was to gain further insights into public opinions about online shaming. This chapter has been published as a journal article in a peer-reviewed journal.

Chapter four

In chapter four, the third study of this thesis is presented, titled 'Online shaming engagement across contexts: Exploring the role of virality, relational proximity, and discrimination type'. The purpose of this quantitative experimental study was to explore subsequent online shaming behaviours when participants were presented with hypothetical discriminatory social media posts depicting a) the social media post having either received limited interaction so far or having gone viral, b) either a friend of or a stranger to the participant having already shamed the original poster through commenting, and c) the messaging in the shamed social media post was either racist, sexist, or homophobic in nature (whilst also partialing out the effects of age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, years of education, daily online hours, daily social media hours, having been online before, and having shamed someone online before). This chapter has been submitted for publication as a journal article to a peer-reviewed journal.

Chapter five

In chapter five, the fourth study of this thesis is presented, titled 'A qualitative exploration of the experience and associated impacts of being shamed online'. The aim of this qualitative study was to explore how people who have been shamed online conceptualise this experience, and how they describe any psychological, behavioural, social, or other impacts associated with their online shaming encounters. This chapter has been submitted for publication as a journal article to a peer-reviewed journal.

Chapter six

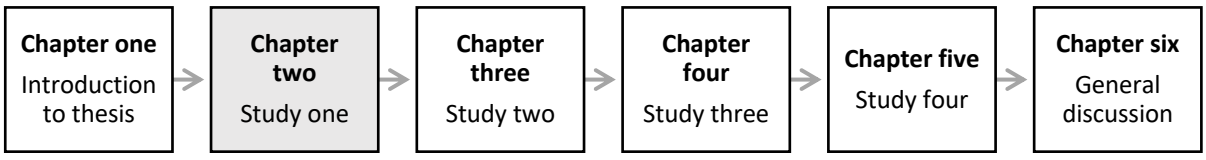
Chapter six features a general discussion and conclusion of this thesis, whereby the key findings from the studies presented in chapters two to five are synthesised. An integrated account of the strengths and limitations of this research, and suggestions for future research going forward are also provided. Lastly, this chapter ends with a description of the overarching implications of these studies, as well as final concluding remarks.

Chapter two: The portrayal of online shaming in contemporary online news media: A media framing analysis

Introduction to chapter two

Chapter two features the first study of this thesis, a qualitative examination of how online shaming is constructed in contemporary online news media. Deconstructing how online news media portrays online shaming to the public was chosen as the starting point of this thesis due to current discourse surrounding online shaming largely stemming from and being inextricably tied to mass media. Media framing has been shown to influence public understandings of social issues, as well as being capable of shaping various government decisions and policy support, which arguably would also be the case when online shaming is presented in media reports. This study highlights current depictions and perceptions of online shaming through the lens of the media, providing a glimpse into the societal discourse surrounding this phenomenon at present. It also sets the scene for the subsequent studies in this thesis (studies two, three, and four), where I determine the extent to which certain depictions of online shaming offered by the media actually hold up when tested empirically. This chapter is published in a peer-reviewed journal, Computers in Human Behavior Reports, as an open access journal article. A copy of the ethics approval letter relating to the study in this chapter can be found in Appendix A, and the journal's open access policy can be found in Appendix F. Figure 3 demonstrates where this chapter fits within the overall structure of this thesis.

Figure 3
Flow diagram of thesis structure: Study one



Citation for the published paper in this chapter

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Abstract

Online shaming, where individuals participate in social policing by shaming supposed wrongdoings on the internet, is a rapidly increasing and global phenomenon. The potential impacts of online shaming are said to be extensive and wide-reaching, however minimal empirical research on this topic has been conducted to date, with existing coverage being largely anecdotal and media-based. The current study aims to demonstrate how online shaming is constructed in contemporary online news media. Qualitative analysis using Giles and Shaw's (2009) media framing analysis was completed on 69 online news articles published within the last two years concerning online shaming. Two overarching representations of online shaming were uncovered: a dominant narrative framing online shaming as a dangerous threat with serious consequences, and a smaller frame representing online shaming as more constructive and capable of resulting in positive outcomes. Variations in conditions presented, as well as the many rationalisations, consequences, and recommendations posed for mitigating online shaming embedded within the articles collectively represent online shaming as a multifaceted and morally ambiguous phenomenon. Understanding media depictions of online shaming is important, as it may have broader implications for public perceptions, debate, and support of policies and other related processes.

Keywords: online shaming, public shaming, online news media, media framing, qualitative analysis

Introduction

Shaming in the digital realm

Engagement in public shaming has a long-standing history, with well-known examples of state administered shaming including scarlet letters, the stockade, branding, and public whippings (Goldman, 2015; Ronson, 2015; Solove, 2007). Though these punishments were often effective and operated as successful deterrents for the broader community, public shaming was more or less eradicated by the nineteenth century as it was largely considered to be too humiliating and inhumane (de Vries, 2015; Ronson, 2015). More recently, the rise of the internet and related technologies in the twenty-first century (predominantly the proliferation of social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter) has enabled members of the public to capture and upload their daily lives instantaneously and with minimal effort (Mann, 2004). This has resulted in countless individuals participating in social or peer surveillance as a means of social control (Skoric et al., 2010), with enforcement from state officials, figures of authority, and the media no longer a requirement to reinforce social norms (Klonick, 2016). Instead, a redistribution of power has transpired, with individuals now armed with an unparalleled ability to watch, evaluate, and reprimand other people on the internet for supposed deviances from social norms (Ingraham & Reeves, 2016). This mass digital surveillance has had an essential role in the resurgence of shaming as a punishment tool in contemporary society. However, rather than being just a resurrection of public shaming onto a modern-day medium, internet technologies have transformed the conditions under which public shaming occurs. That is, a genuine crime no longer needs to be committed, but now perceived moral infractions and social norm violations (Klonick, 2016) are enough to be openly ridiculed on a global stage.

Using shaming as a tool to diminish undesirable actions online has occurred for almost as long as the existence of the internet itself (Goldman, 2015; Skoric et al., 2010). While difficult to define due to its wide range of presentations, online shaming can broadly be described as a phenomenon whereby individuals participate in social policing by shaming people on the internet over perceived violations of social norms or some other apparent wrongdoing (Cheung, 2014; Wall & Williams, 2007). Online shaming can manifest in a variety of ways, such as individuals sharing images or videos online of others breaking social norms in public spaces (i.e., poor driving), or people shaming others for posting discriminatory material on their social media accounts (Skoric et al., 2010). Typically, online shaming

includes exposing and circulating the material being shamed, followed by varying presentations of outbursts and aggressive actions (i.e., insults, threatening violence; Laidlaw, 2017). Revealing personally identifiable information of the shamed persons as a way of condemning and punishing them is also a common approach, with digital aggression sometimes escalating into in-person harassment also (i.e., property vandalism, stalking; Cheung, 2014; Solove, 2007). Similar to other displays of shaming, at the centre of shaming in digital spaces is the "societal processes of expressing social disapproval" (Braithwaite, 1989, p. 100), with the end product usually being remorse from the shamed person and disapproval from surrounding individuals (Harris & Maruna, 2005). There are demonstrated benefits to exposing individuals or organisations on the internet, including providing individuals a public platform where they can expose alleged injustices, and other outcomes including bolstering overall institutional transparency, revealing corruption by authority figures, and overall reform (Aman & Jayroe, 2013; Hou et al., 2017; Solove, 2007). However, the potential negative outcomes of shaming people online are said to be extensive and wide-reaching (Laidlaw, 2017; Solove, 2007). Nonetheless, existing conversation and debate concerning online shaming is currently mostly driven by the media and journalists, with majority of evidence being anecdotal at most (e.g., Ronson, 2015).

The power of media in framing online shaming

Scientific inquiry has demonstrated that analysing media reportings can uncover social, political, and cultural shifts in society (Fairclough, 1995), with the media being a powerful tool capable of shaping government decisions in its ability to represent and distribute social concerns in particular ways (Lancaster et al., 2011). Media framing refers to the process by which media stories are organised via "patterns of selection, emphasis, interpretation, and exclusion" (Caragee & Roefs, p. 216), where journalists 'frame' by highlighting certain aspects of a perceived reality regarding a social or political issue and consequently elevate their salience within a given text (Entman, 1993). Frames provide socio-political issues with meaning, promote particular interpretations and definitions, offer moral judgements and propose solutions, while also reinforcing power dynamics and maintaining the status quo (Barnett, 2016; Entman, 1993; Shah et al., 2002). Media frames are said to hold symbolic power, employ "myths, narratives and metaphors that resonate within the culture", and are considered to be "cultural rather than cognitive phenomena" (Hertog & McLeod, 2001, p. 142). Moreover, research demonstrates that by emphasising

particular aspects of media stories and encouraging readers to consider issues along certain lines, media framing plays a vital role in moulding public understandings and policy support for numerous issues (Barnett, 2016; Forsyth, 2012; McArthur, 1999), which likely also extends to debates surrounding online shaming.

A small number of studies have examined media portrayals of phenomena related to online shaming. For instance, Lumsden and Morgan (2017) examined British newspaper articles reporting on the trolling and online abuse of women, unpacking the different forms of online behaviours portrayed, as well as the 'silencing strategies' and victim blaming propagated throughout mass media. In another framing analysis, Milosevic (2015) explored the construction of cyberbullying in US mainstream media, revealing the apparent causes of online bullying, as well as the individuals, organisations, and policies held accountable for this issue as portrayed by the media. In other research by Moscato (2015), an examination of the media framing of online activism revealed how digital social movements are presented through both positive and negative framings within mainstream media. However, no known research to date has explored how online shaming is depicted in contemporary media coverage. Considering current discourse surrounding online shaming largely stems from and is inextricably tied to mass media, and that media framing has been shown to shape public understandings of issues, deconstructing how online news media portrays online shaming to the public is important. It is also important to deconstruct media representations of online shaming now as it is currently still quite a new issue of public debate. The effects of framing can vary depending on how much the public knows about an issue, in that the less familiar the public is with the topic at hand, the more likely it is that media representations will influence public perspectives (Chong & Druckman, 2007). As such, this study seeks to answer the central research question: how has online shaming been constructed in online news media in the previous two years?

Method

Design

A qualitative study guided by Giles and Shaw's (2009) media framing analysis method was employed here. Media framing analysis is a research method developed specifically for psychological research and aimed at enabling a better understanding of the influence of news media in contemporary culture, making it appropriate for the current study (Giles & Shaw, 2009).

Data

Sixty-nine media articles reporting on online shaming over the past two years (October 12, 2017 to October 11, 2019) were obtained for analysis from the databases Factiva and ProQuest using search terms relating to online shaming (including 'online', 'internet', 'social media', 'web', 'Twitter', or 'Facebook'; and 'shamed', 'shaming', or 'shame'). Due to the fast-paced and continually evolving nature of the online world, only articles published in the last two years were included to depict how online shaming is currently framed. The search was set to articles published in English, worldwide, and with the search terms appearing in the article title itself. A total of 1,100 articles were identified initially across Factiva and ProQuest (682 and 418, respectively), which was reduced to 825 articles after duplicates were identified. All articles were screened for relevance to online shaming (the first step of a media framing analysis; Giles & Shaw, 2009) and additional duplicates were removed, with only articles providing broader commentary on online shaming as a phenomenon retained for analysis. This included articles explicitly contextualising online shaming beyond a single news peg (e.g., articles detailing advantages and disadvantages of online shaming itself), rather than articles smaller in scope depicting only a single shaming case. The final 69 articles are listed in Table 1, accompanied by corresponding numbers to indicate the origins of quotes featured in the findings.

Procedure

Following ethics approval by Curtin University's Human Research Ethics Committee (approval number: HRE2019-0697), data collection and screening processes were completed. Giles and Shaw's (2009) steps (see Table 2) guided the analysis, using both manual methods and Microsoft Excel (v2019), with the researchers engaging in cross-coding activities to establish methodological triangulation. Findings were developed from codes, with all researchers reviewing and contributing to the shaping of results. A reflexive journal was utilised throughout the data handling stage to mitigate inherent biases pertaining to the topic of online shaming (Roulston, 2010), as well as an audit trail documenting information regarding decisions, responses to data, and emerging ideas throughout the research process.

Table 1

List of articles retained for analysis

	Author	Source	Date	Title
1	Jane Moore	The Sun	11 September 2019	Let's name and shame Twitter's cowardly trolls
2	Rebecca Day	Manchester Evening News	5 September 2019	Family thought tragic mum had 'laughed off' social media 'shame' - until she was found dead
3	Jesinta Burton	Busselton Dunsborough Mail	28 August 2019	Warning over naming and shaming on social media
4	Unknown	Bay of Plenty Times	12 August 2019	LETTERS Name and shame cowardly online bullies
5	Dan Wolken	USA Today	12 August 2019	Opinion: Don't blame or shame Tate Martell on social media. It's not his fault
6	Helena Frith Powell	The Times	29 July 2019	Liberté, égalité — modestie? Why French women don't sunbathe topless any more
7	Eva Wiseman	The Guardian	7 July 2019	The key to avoiding sexual shame online: reveal it all first
8	Marlene Lenthang	Mail Online	2 July 2019	'I didn't want to hurt him': Woman apologizes to homeless McDonald's worker after she posted photo online shaming him for sleeping in a booth between shifts - but her viral picture helped him receive donations, an SUV and a new job
9	Michelle Lou	CNN Wire	26 June 2019	After a Facebook post shamed a man for sleeping in McDonald's, people helped him get back on his feet
10	Sue-Ann Cheow	The New Paper	25 June 2019	Youth fear online shaming: Survey
11	Max Fawcett	The Globe and Mail	21 June 2019	The upside of being social-media shamed; Right-wing activist Kyle Kashuv spun Max Fawcett's dumb tweet into online hellfire. Now Kashuv is the target – and Fawcett knows firsthand it's a moment of growth
12	Stephen McGowan	Daily Mail	15 June 2019	RED CARD
13	Ashwini Gangal and Abid Hussain Barlaskar	afaqs!	13 June 2019	Twitter's first ad campaign for India is out: No, it doesn't shame the trolls
14	Sue Scheff	Orlando Sentinel	7 June 2019	Why online public shaming shouldn't be your parenting tool; guest columnist
15	Siobhan O'Connor	The Daily Mirror	1 June 2019	Public shaming by social media has fuelled her rage, had she accepted it was a mistake & said sorry then it would've been yesterday's news
16	E. Corderro Armbrister	The Bahamas Weekly	15 May 2019	DNA discourages Public Shaming via Social Media
17	Tracy Connor	The Daily Beast	12 May 2019	Writer Who Shamed Black Transit Worker May Lose Book Deal
18	Joe Duggan	The Scottish Sun	10 May 2019	BAKER OFF Exasperated Danny Baker says 'it's not me!' as Twitter trolls confuse him with Shamed BBC star
19	Jerry Lawton	Daily Star	25 April 2019	MUM IN DRUG DEATH AFTER ONLINE SHAME
20	Isobel Asher Hamilton	Business Insider	29 March 2019	Twitter wants to label tweets from public figures that break its rules - and even Trump could be named and shamed

21	Johnson T. A.	Indian Express	5 March 2019	Friends call me disturbed to stop further shaming, says lecturer made to kneel down over Facebook post
22	Natalie Proulx	The New York Times	20 February 2019	Does Online Public Shaming Prevent Us From Being Able to Grow and Change?
23	May Warren	Toronto Star	15 February 2019	On social media, 'nothing disappears'; Why online shaming may have consequences for the #chairgirl
24	Alex Ross	Bradford Telegraph and Argus	8 February 2019	Concerns raised over 'Prick Advisor' Facebook groups which encourage women to 'name and shame' ex partners
25	Nerima Wako-Ojiwa	The East African	7 February 2019	On social media, it's women who carry the burden of shame
26	Clare Kelly	Wigan Evening Post	1 February 2019	'Name and shame abusive web trolls'
27	Alwyn Lau	Malay Mail	14 January 2019	Online/public shaming and how it kills community
28	David Eddie	The Globe and Mail	18 December 2018	Should I social-media shame someone who refused to help an elderly woman with dementia?
29	Unknown	U-Wire	15 November 2018	The Weekly: Social media shaming isn’t appropriate
30	Janet Otieno-Prosper	The Citizen	3 November 2018	Avoid online shaming
31	Brandon Ambrosino	The Globe and Mail	27 October 2018	Online shame, IRL aftermath
32	Claire Anderson	Mail Online	6 October 2018	Transgender taxi driver who won £4million on a scratch card says she has been BANNED from Facebook for shaming a man who 'took the mick out of the LGBT community'
33	Unknown	Sputnik News Service	8 September 2018	Twitter Shaming Helped Unlucky Actor Get Back on Stage
34	Olivia Tobin	London Evening Standard Online	5 September 2018	'Devastated' former Cosby Show actor Geoffery Owens quits grocery store job after being 'shamed' online
35	Marc Richardson	The Gazette	4 September 2018	Millennials are relatively cautious thanks to fear of shaming on social media
36	John Shammas	The Scottish Sun	30 August 2018	BULLY BEAT DOWN How Geordie earning minimum wage rose to become one of Facebook’s biggest stars with 800k followers by shaming Britain’s bullies on camera
37	Bridie Pearson-Jones	Mail Online	11 August 2018	Angry 'moral mobs' who shame others on social media are MORE LIKELY to solicit sympathy for those being targeted, says new research
38	Sarah Knapton	The Telegraph Online	10 August 2018	Public mass shaming on social media brings sympathy for original villain, warns Stanford
39	Jessica Guynn	USA Today	24 July 2018	Anti-social media
40	Joanne McCarthy	Parkes Champion Post	6 July 2018	Why you should not share that ‘name and shame’ post on social media
41	Mark Molloy	The Telegraph Online	25 June 2018	Online shaming: The dangerous rise of the internet pitchfork mob
42	Amelia Tait	New Statesman	1 June 2018	The shaming of a 14-year-old schoolgirl exposed everything that's terrible about the internet
43	Tom Bull	Daily Star	28 May 2018	Stag dos DYING OUT as blokes fear being SHAMED for boozy antics online
44	Wil Crisp	The Daily Telegraph	28 May 2018	Men fear being shamed online at stag parties
45	Rana Ayyub	The Mercury	25 May 2018	Targeted, shamed on social media

46	Somdatta Basu and Dwaipayan Ghosh	The Times of India	5 May 2018	Debate shifts to Facebook, netizens name and shame ‘attackers’
47	Mila Koumpilova	Star-Tribune	30 April 2018	A PUSH AGAINST ONLINE SHAMING
48	Calvin Yang	The Straits Times	22 April 2018	The lure of the shame game: Are online vigilantes going too far?
49	Karen Fricker	The Toronto Star	17 April 2018	When it comes to social media shaming we are all complicit, playwrights say
50	Sheryl Ubelacker	Victoria Times Colonist	3 April 2018	Parents urged to avoid shame game; Social media punishment for misdeeds can cause emotional harm, experts suggest
51	Allan Crow	Fife Free Press	8 March 2018	Corrosive impact of online naming and shaming
52	Tom Payn	Daily Mail	8 March 2018	Student couldn't live with his shame
53	Natasha Lee	Mail Online	24 February 2018	'There were a couple of death threats': Emma Freedman reveals online trolls wished her unborn child would get a degenerative disease... after being accused of victim shaming following THAT AFL nude photo scandal
54	Ziyad Marar	Irish Independent	21 February 2018	Trial by social media: raising kids in a culture of shame
55	Mandy Stadtmiller	The Daily Beast	11 February 2018	Was ‘Mean Girls’ Producer Jill Messick Shamed into Suicide?
56	Ciaran Barnes	Belfast Telegraph	11 February 2018	SINS OF THE LYNCH MOB
57	Anita Maidens	Derby Evening Telegraph	8 February 2018	It’s time to name and shame vile online trolls
58	Unknown	Metro	6 February 2018	Twitter shaming's gone too far
59	Shruti Kedia	Your Story	5 February 2018	These teenagers are making social media safe by fighting bullying, body shaming
60	Ellie Cambridge	The Scottish Sun	1 February 2018	NUTTY PROFESSOR Professor Robert Winston posts pic of mum on train to shame her being on phone – and Twitter ISN’T happy
61	Siobhan O'Connor	The Daily Mirror	27 January 2018	The Me Too campaign has descended into a cult-like public shaming social media frenzy…
62	Kerri-Anne Mesner	The Morning Bulletin	18 January 2018	Why naming and shaming online is a bad idea
63	Siobhan O’Connor	The Daily Mirror	13 January 2018	Al's sentence far outweighed the crime, if he was a nobody would everyone be talking about it?
64	Kara Alaimo	Irish Independent	7 December 2017	Social media shaming can be force for good when used properly
65	Joe Humphreys	The Irish Times	5 December 2017	Is online shaming a threat to free speech?
66	Rupert Myers	Evening Standard	27 November 2017	Being publicly shamed pushed me to the edge
67	Chris Stokel-Walker	The Telegraph Online	24 November 2017	Who hasn't been a fool on social media? Why 'Tweet shaming' has to stop
68	Miriam Stoppard	The Mirror	17 November 2017	Women must stop this vile shaming of fellow pregnant women online
69	Unknown	Indian Express	25 October 2017	Internet torn over crowd-sourced name and shame list of sexual harassers in Indian universities

Table 2
Giles and Shaw's (2009) steps of a media framing analysis

Step	Title	Description
1	Screening	Data screened for relevance to online shaming.
2	Identifying story	Identifying a distinctive 'news peg' or what makes the online shaming story timely/newsworthy (e.g., the main shaming event featured in the story) and separating the shaming articles into different categories (e.g., body shaming, parent shaming).
3	Identifying character	Identifying key types of individuals who recur frequently in the online shaming articles, as well as performing a character analysis on the individuals/groups referred to in the online shaming stories.
4	Reader identification	Determining which characters in the story the audience is invited to identify with (e.g., the person responsible for the online shaming or the person being shamed online).
5	Narrative form	Analysing the narrative structure and forms used to present the online shaming story to the media consumer.
6	Analysis of language categories	Thoroughly examining the language used to describe key characters and events in the stories of online shaming (drawing on content analysis processes by counting instances of specific terms or 'central categories') to inform debates around online shaming.
7	Generalisation	Placing the story of online shaming in a wider social and cultural context by examining references to broader debates (e.g., government-led shaming), long-standing stories (e.g., well-known cases like Justine Sacco; Ronson, 2015), and prior media coverage.

Findings

Online shaming as destructive

Overall construction

The majority of news articles (79.7%) framed online shaming in a partly or entirely negative manner, for the most part constructing this phenomenon as a widespread, dangerous, and continually increasing issue. Whilst many articles were centred around the online shaming of a single individual, making reference to several other well-known online shaming cases to demonstrate the prevalence of the issue was a common approach. For example, the inclusion of, "Amongst the suicides linked to public shamings recently, off the top of his head Ronson lists August Ames, Carl Sargeant, Dan Johnson, Ariel Ronis, and Tiziana Cantone…"[55] depicts online shaming as both ubiquitous, and as having consequences as serious as suicide. This seriousness was often also substantiated through the inclusion of statements from those considered to be experts (i.e., academics, psychologists), who were quoted discussing the harmful effects of shaming on individuals. The following examples, "…the ramifications for individuals can last a lifetime, explains Dr Guy Aitchison, an Irish Research Council Fellow at University College Dublin…"[41], and "Lawyer Lionel Tan… said

victims of online vigilantism may feel shame or even face difficulties in finding a job…"[48], both function to further fortify and legitimise the authors' condemnation of online shaming.

Online shaming was often represented as being dehumanising for the shamed person and contradictory to notions of justice, with many articles using metaphors relating to the legal system to portray this. Examples include, "The entertainer's sentence far outweighed his crime…"[63], and "…[online shaming] has turned into a mob-like machine metaphorically stoning the accused without due process"[61]. Some articles also claimed that online shaming was a punishment far more severe than any court could mete out, for example, "The judge believes trial by social media is far more destructive than we realise… You don't have any rights when you're accused on the internet. And the consequences are worse, it's worldwide forever"[63].

Similarities between historical public shaming and online shaming were often highlighted. Firstly, this enabled online shaming to be presented as a contemporary manifestation of a long-standing social behaviour, rather than an occurrence unique to the digital age (i.e., "…throughout human history, she said, shaming was local- for example, if someone was put in stocks in the town square. Technology is bringing that back on a wider scale…"[23]). Secondly, the contrast between traditional and online shaming also encourages the view that online shaming is more dangerous because of the wider audience it can reach, and the ease of now only needing "…a keyboard and a few followers, and the consequences for those targeted can be devastating"[65]. Another key distinction made here, unlike public shaming historically, is the perceived permanency of online shaming: "Unlike tarring and feathering someone, digital punishments don't occur in specific times and places. A shaming tweet lasts forever and follows you wherever you go"[15].

Although the articles themselves were largely positioned as being opposed to online shaming, many depicted the issue as being polarising, reporting on a variety of perspectives said to be held by the public. For example, one author wrote, "…one person's shaming is another's "holding to account" and the practice can target a variety of behaviours, from the downright criminal to the mildly offensive… shaming can be used to expose wrongdoing, or simply to bully. How does one distinguish good shaming from bad?" [65]. This highlights how internet users are framed to be divided by the moral ambiguity of online shaming, and invite the audience to consider whether the many nuances from case-to-case may make it difficult to ascribe to a 'right-versus-wrong' dichotomy here.

Central narratives

In news articles where online shaming was framed negatively, there were three overarching frames identified: 'fall', 'cautionary tale', and 'tragedy' (with some articles classified into more than one frame).

Fall. Almost two-thirds (65%) of the articles were centred around the narrative of an individual who was shamed online (usually due to a perceived violation of a social norm), with a major focus on their subsequent downfall. This typically included various forms of online abuse, followed by social ostracism, a tainted reputation, and other consequences ranging in severity (e.g., job loss, mental health issues). Those who had been shamed online were largely characterised as victims, and portrayed in a way that made them likable (e.g., described as brave; honest; family man), encouraged sympathy within the reader (e.g., embarrassed; distressed; devastated), and were either not at fault or were deserving of forgiveness (e.g., they were simply naïve or ill-advised; misunderstood; apologetic). Despite positioning the audience to be sympathetic towards the shamed, many articles simultaneously perpetuated a sense of victim blaming and exhibited the rhetoric of 'owning up to one's mistakes', as depicted here, "If she could just accept the shame and say she made a mistake this would be yesterday's news… As a result the public backlash is only growing legs"[15].

The perpetrators of online shaming were largely cast as villains, constructed as a single entity or "online mob"[48] acting in unison rather than as individual people, who were collectively guilty of enacting "…horrific online bullying…"[53] and described as a "…gleeful, cheering, liking, sharing, commenting, hating audience"[15]. Dramatic visualisation and hyperbole was often used to further vilify this collective character, for example, "…the lynchmob no longer carries pitchforks. It wields smart phones instead"[51]. In another instance, online shaming is likened to the movie The Purge (where killer characters vent their anger by murdering people), with the writer stating both "…dehumanises people, while making them feel good and superior about it. We feel smug and "safe" because we have helped destroy that oh-so-wrong person who violated our community's norms, without noticing the darkness bred inside us"[27]. This association frames online shaming as destructive, and those responsible for online shaming as self-righteous and disingenuous in their motives.

Cautionary tale. Just over a third (36.2%) of articles were framed as a cautionary tale, warning the reader of the supposed dangers that come with online shaming. Somewhat overlapping with the 'fall' narrative, this frame usually featured a depiction of a character's demise after being shamed online (but sometimes a hypothetical or potential fall), followed by either an explicit or implicit warning directed towards the reader against online shaming. Inclusions of expert statements (e.g., "Curtin University media law expert Joseph Fernandez urged people to think carefully about what they chose to publish, confirming that both a post writer and those who publish a post could be held liable for the defamatory comments made on it"[3]) and sensationalised imagery (e.g., "This comes even as experts warn of real-world ramifications for victims of such online witch-hunts"[48]) both assist in the portrayal of online shaming as something to be afraid of and avoided. The implied aims of the cautionary tale frame in these articles are twofold: firstly, to discourage the reader from engaging in the online shaming of others, and secondly, to dissuade them from engaging in any activities that may in turn result in them being shamed online themselves, as depicted in, "Both the people in the videos and the ones taping them should think twice before posting, McEwen said. "What happens when the mob gets it can get quite ugly, and then it's too late…""[23].

Tragedy. In instances (7.3% of articles) where an author featured a story of online shaming ending in the death of the shamed character/s (i.e., by suicide; honour killing), this was portrayed as a solemn and tragic event. The shamed individuals were constructed as compassionate, respectable characters with "…so much to live for…"[2] (i.e., "…loving wife and partner, a dear friend to many…"[55]) who were entirely victimised and blameless, inviting sympathy within the audience. Causal inferences were made between the deaths of characters and the online shaming event, as depicted in, "I mean unless you're someone who is incapable of feeling shame, it can be devastating. And that's why so many people kill themselves"[55], and "The video began to circulate… When faces were recognised in the grainy footage, those involved were imprisoned for weeks and tortured by their own families"[25]. The 'villains' of these narratives were never explored in great detail, nor was the online shaming event itself, enabling the focus to be purely on the tragic loss of the main character/s. Graphic descriptions of the victims' deaths (i.e., "…'bubbly' mum from Oldham hanged herself in her bedroom…"[2]; "The five young women had boiling hot water poured on them before they were killed…"[25]) provided the articles with shock value and further contributed to the tragic framing of these narratives.

Online shaming as constructive

About one fifth of articles (20.3%) framed online shaming more optimistically, with shaming events framed as having either partly or entirely positive outcomes.

Central narratives

In news articles depicting online shaming as more constructive, there were three overarching frames identified: 'rise', 'overcoming the monster', and 'maturation'.

Rise. Four articles (5.8%) constructed online shaming as resulting in positive consequences. For instance, online shaming was portrayed as having potentially fruitful outcomes for the individual conducting the online shaming, as depicted in, "A GEORDIE earning minimum wage became a viral Facebook sensation by shaming bullies – allowing him to quit his job and make a living out of social media full time"[36]. Here, the person conducting the shaming is characterised as a hero defeating villainised 'bullies', with online shaming constructed as their weapon of choice, and consequently being rewarded for their heroic actions with money and fame.

Online shaming was also constructed as having potentially positive outcomes for the shamed individual. In these cases, whilst the initial online shaming was constructed as unjust and devastating for the shamed, the exposure eventuated in people rallying behind the shamed to 'lend a helping hand', which ultimately further highlights the supposed duality of online shaming and how it can present as a double-edged sword (i.e., "While her post was scathing, it ended up changing Childs' life… Following the viral photo, the local Georgia community rallied behind him and donated a new wardrobe, a free haircut, and helped him land a job at a construction site"[8]).

Overcoming the monster. Six (8.7%) articles presented 'feel good' narratives centred around the defeat of a villain. Sometimes the protagonists and antagonists were not boldly defined, again serving to represent online shaming as morally ambiguous. In other instances, the villain role was clearly cast to either the characters conducting online shaming (i.e., labelled 'trolls'), or online shaming itself (i.e., described as "vile online abuse"[57] and the "…dark side…"[13] of social media), with those working to overcome these villains depicted as heroes (e.g., "…fifty spirited teenagers who have faced cyber bullying, battled body shaming and trolls, came together…"[59]). Majority of stories here presented the reader with a happy ending where the online shaming was resolved (e.g., "Bella Thorne, who tweeted that a hacker was blackmailing her with stolen pictures, but that she was taking her power back…

By sharing the pictures, she removed the shame, and defused the bomb…"[7]) or was at least in the process of being vanquished (i.e., "…building a Twitter free of abuse, spam and other things that distract from the public conversation is our top priority. Since then, we've made strides in creating a healthier service..."[13]).

Maturation. In five articles (7.2%), online shaming was again constructed as having destructive impacts on the lives of the shamed individuals initially, however here the shamed characters were depicted as afterwards being able to reflect on their misdeeds, recognising the experience as a learning opportunity and attaining some sort of personal growth as a result of the shaming. Common to this frame was the portrayal of the shamed characters as having done something wrong (i.e., posting discriminatory material) but being remorseful for their actions and experiencing some sort of tangible loss as a consequence (i.e., being fired; losing a place at Harvard University), making them easier characters for the audience to sympathise with. Afterwards came the depiction of these characters having learnt from their mistakes and their declaration of being a changed person (i.e., "…I expressed deep regret and remorse at the time and the person I am now is unrecognisable to the person I was then"[12]).

Online shaming as conditional

Spectrum of deservedness

Identity driven deservedness. Evident throughout the dataset was varying degrees of perceived deservedness of the shamed characters and supposed personal responsibility for their online shaming. For example, politicians, celebrities, and companies were largely depicted as more deserving and responsible for their shaming compared to every-day people. This positioning was justified using a certain level of victim blaming, with the argument that well-known figures willingly put themselves 'in the spotlight' and therefore are inherently accountable recipients of criticism, as depicted in, "…we ought to refrain from behaviour that recklessly incites shaming against private persons… There may be more latitude in the case of politicians and other public figures who wield power and put themselves forward for mass public scrutiny"[65]. In contrast, children and teenagers who were shamed online were afforded complete immunity from any perceived deservedness or responsibility, casting them as 'pure' victims, and instead diverting the blame onto social media companies, parents, or educators (i.e., "Lauren's story demonstrates that the education system is failing British children… Tech giants similarly fail these kids"[42]).

Context driven deservedness. Perceived deservedness and responsibility was not only dependent on the identity of the shamed person, but several surrounding contextual nuances also. One illustration of this is the differential framing dependent on what the shamed individual had been accused of doing wrong. For instance, the sympathetic framing of celebrity Jesy Nelson being body shamed online (i.e., "Jesy, 28, who is entirely normal in size, has bravely spoken of attempting suicide over the relentless online bullying about her appearance"[1]) is a stark contrast from the shaming of podcaster Mike Enoch for his discriminatory posts (e.g., "Enoch, who peddles horrific racism and anti-Semitism, deserved to be called out for his abuse…"[64]), and demonstrates how some shaming was framed as more warranted than others based on the severity of the shamed character's supposed social norm violation. In articles depicting severe consequences for the shamed character (i.e., suicides featured in the 'tragedy' frames), the online shaming was also constructed as far more unwarranted than in cases presenting comparatively inconsequential outcomes (e.g., reputational damage). In some instances, the shamed person was constructed as less deserving and eligible for forgiveness if they had apologised and taken responsibility for their perceived 'wrongdoings', whereas in other instances an apology did not appear to make a difference (e.g., "…[I] apologized publicly to Mr. Kashuv. It didn't matter, of course. When people participate in an online mob, they aren't interested in nuance or apologies or commitments to personal improvement"[11]), highlighting the overall inconsistencies in perceived deservedness and responsibility across the articles.

Gendered nature of online shaming

Shaming women. Females were constructed as being especially susceptible to online shaming, with the online shaming of women depicted as a dangerously rising phenomenon having both devastating and long-lasting effects. Females were said to be recipients of harsher and many more types of online shaming than males, with various online shaming occurrences typically reserved for females only (such as body shaming, slut shaming, revenge porn, threats of rape, doctored pornographic videos, and false prostitution advertisements). While depictions were usually sympathetic, there was still victim blaming rhetoric evident throughout (e.g., [about revenge porn] "Women should uphold themselves to higher standards and always make wise decisions that will not lead to regret in future"[30]). The framing of shaming events here also reproduced existing notions of sexism and misogyny, mirroring the dominant cultural landscape in which the construction of the

submissive, objectified woman is normalised. For instance, this is evident when online shaming was constructed as a tool to silence the voices of women and limit their involvement in online public spaces (e.g., journalist Rana Ayyub being slut shamed online in an orchestrated attack to diminish her reputability and discontinue her politically-oriented news writing). Women within a cultural minority were portrayed as an even more victimised subgroup, represented as experiencing a greater level of shame, harsher online and offline backlash (i.e., the honour killings highlighted in the 'tragedy' frame), and additional barriers when seeking help, as depicted here, "…Somali and other immigrant victims can face steeper hurdles in asking for help- and especially devastating consequences from humiliation on the internet"[47]. Lastly, as for the people conducting the online shaming of women, while the perpetrators of revenge porn were presumed to be implicitly male, other articles portrayed both males and females as potentially complicit in the shaming of women online.

Shaming men. In instances where an individual had been wrongly accused of a crime and subsequently shamed online for it, the shamed characters were males only, and appeared to be handled with a 'guilty until proven innocent' approach. Another occurrence of online shaming that appeared to be unique to men in this dataset was being shamed for perceived status or employment (i.e., a celebrity now working at a supermarket; shamed for being homeless; a football player shamed for not being selected by a football team), seemingly perpetuating established cultural norms surrounding gender roles and reinforcing the idea that the ultimate shame for a male is to fail as the 'bread winner'.

Rationalisations for online shaming

Key reasons portrayed in news articles for conducting online shaming are presented in Table 3. Varying notions of social policing were commonly mentioned throughout the articles. An array of emotive and other psychological explanations for why people chose to engage in online shaming were also explored, which included both individual factors and reference to social psychology rationalisations. Lastly, other explanations for online shaming that were more antagonistic or callous in nature are also described.

Outcomes of online shaming

Key outcomes of online shaming as represented in news articles are listed in Table 4. Central consequences for individuals who were shamed online included damage to mental and social wellbeing, financial/employment losses, persecution beyond the internet into their every-day lives, and prevention from growth (these effects were typically present in

narratives where online shaming was depicted as destructive, such as in the 'fall' frame). More positive outcomes for those who were subjected to online shaming include redemption, growth, and financial/employment gain (usually found in more constructive frames of online shaming, like in the 'rise' frame). The main after-effects of online shaming for those who conducted the shaming were remorse and being subjected to shaming themselves (both of which were typically found in destructive narratives of online shaming), as well as gaining eminence for calling out perceived wrongdoings (which was present in some cases where online shaming was framed as more constructive). The impacts of online shaming on society as depicted in the articles included several notable disruptions to existing cultural norms, traditions, and myths. Also present here was the notion that online shaming has now become a contemporary social norm in itself.

Accountability and mitigation of online shaming

The various players portrayed as accountable, and recommendations for how these players can mitigate online shaming, are featured in Table 5. This includes social media companies, social media users, and people in positions capable of both providing change and education in relation to online shaming.

Table 3

Social policing, emotive and psychological, and callous rationalisations for conducting online shaming

Rationalisation	Description	Example quotes
Social policing		
Accountability/ deterrence	People shaming others online was often described as a way of holding them accountable for their perceived wrongdoings and discouraging others from doing the same.	"I suppose one could argue this realization is a powerful deterrent against bad behaviour: Don't mess up or we won't let you live it down."[15]
Justice	Everyday citizens taking 'justice' into their own hands, implying that the justice system is not adequately doing this. Situations where social norms, not laws, were being broken were often highlighted. There were also reports of people wanting to simply assist the justice system, but often simultaneously disregarded the notion of 'innocent until proven guilty' and 'due process'.	"He believes online shaming is thriving today because "politics has left people disempowered" and they "want to feel like they are fighting bad behaviour and injustice"."[41]
Surveillance	Twenty-first century technology (i.e., smartphones; social media) has resulted in a rise in social surveillance, including online shaming as a way of reinforcing social norms.	"…people should expect a level of surveillance everywhere in public spaces, now that everyone has a smartphone. "We are surrounded by all of these little brothers and little sisters,"…"[23]
Freedom of speech	Reports of people perceiving they have the right to shame others online as a form of freedom of speech, however this was often highlighted as problematic by authors, with a call to 'strike a balance' between free speech and hate speech.	"People often take full advantage of their freedom of expression rights and invite problems when they misunderstand the extent of their freedom to speak out, particularly when the attack on other individuals is unjustified or unsupported by facts…"[3]
Empowerment	Descriptions of online shaming giving people a sense of agency and a means in which they have a platform to enact social change. For example, calling out demonstrations of racism, homophobia, and rape culture (i.e., the #MeToo movement).	"Certainly, it can deliver an addictive hit of empowerment, which is not unlike being physically present at a protest or a political meeting."[65]
Emotive and psychological		
Outrage	Outrage at a perceived 'wrongdoer' was a commonly reported reason for people choosing to engage in online shaming. However, some authors also alluded to this outrage being insincere and less genuine than offline displays of anger.	"…flooded with angry comments, before protesters gathered outside his office to express their outrage over the incident…"[41] "Last week, there was 'outrage' - of the manufactured, online kind…"[51]
'Kneejerk' reaction	People engaging in online shaming were often depicted as impulsive, with their shaming contributions seen as emotionally reactive and almost automatic rather than well-thought out or based on logical reasoning.	"We don't pause to check if the claims are authentic before joining the knee-jerk brigade all venting their instant disapproval and demanding the 'SOMETHING BE DONE!!!'"[51]

Anonymity	Some articles reported that people may shame others online due to the supposed anonymity that comes with the internet, resulting in bolder online engagement and a perceived lack of accountability.	"…"The mistaken sense of anonymity drives some of this behaviour, that they can do what they feel is right without being held accountable."…"[48]
Online disinhibition	Online disinhibition, the tendency for people to express themselves in a less restrained manner when online and believe their actions to be less damaging compared to 'the real world', was described as a contributing factor to online shaming in some articles.	"There is also evidence from psychology studies that online interactions are experienced as less 'real' and consequential than face-to-face ones, not least because people can't pick up on the emotional and social cues of others. It follows that shamers often under-estimate the destructive impact their actions can have."[65]
Cognitive dissonance	Cognitive dissonance was mentioned in some articles, where it was described that people who had engaged in online shaming minimised the impact of their actions in order to ease the burden of having contributed to the harm done to the shamed individual.	"He talks about the notion of "cognitive dissonance" and says it's "stressful and painful for us to hold two contradictory ideas at the same time like the idea that we're kind people and the idea that we've just destroyed someone. "To ease the pain we create illusory ways to justify our contradictory behaviour.""[63]
Mob mentality	Those engaging in online shaming were often described as a mob, in which they were portrayed as sharing a universal disdain for the person being shamed, lacking both individuality and personal responsibility for the shaming.	"Surely the lynch mob mentality on social media needs to be policed."[63]
Callous reasons		
Entertainment	Online shaming was depicted as irrefutably for entertainment purposes, for both those who conduct the shaming, and for those who observe it.	"Whatever else social-media shaming might be, it will always be entertainment first."[15]
Whistle blowing	Online shaming was sometimes regarded as an act of whistle blowing, in which those who online shame call out others for violating social norms not only due to a sense of social responsibility, but also due to the sense of moral superiority it affords them.	"No doubt many people who take part in online pile-ons with abuse, harassment and even 'doxing'… think they are acting morally. In that sense, it recalls Nietzsche's critique of moralism and the ways in which people disguise their cruelty and desire to feel superior under the guise of upholding moral values."[65]
Schadenfreude	Particular articles claimed that the satisfaction from witnessing another person's downfall after being shamed online was motivation for some.	"…there are also darker motivations at work: the psychic pleasure in seeing someone else brought low and humiliated…"[41]
Demonstrating intellect	There were reports that some people shamed others online simply as a demonstration of how intelligent they were (i.e., in being able to 'dig up' private information on the person; doxing).	"…some netizens desire to feel the satisfaction of helping a cause, while others just want to show how smart they are."[48]
Revenge	Exacting revenge included revenge for strangers who had apparently violated perceived social norms, and although less commonly, also featured cases where revenge was sought with someone known to the person conducting the shaming (i.e., spreading falsehoods online about an ex-partner).	"Online vigilantes instigating others to go too far to exact revenge on alleged wrongdoers…"[48] "…aware of concerns that some women have used the groups to post falsehoods about men they have fallen out with."[24]

Table 4

Outcomes of online shaming for the shamed, those who shame, and society

Outcome	Description	Example quotes
For the shamed		
Mental health	Online shaming was framed as resulting in an array of detrimental mental health outcomes, with both immediate (i.e., feeling upset, ashamed, remorseful, dehumanised, lonely) and longer lasting impacts (i.e., depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, suicide) portrayed.	"…the upset, depressed, and rejected Siddhant…"[59] "Such episodes can be so harrowing that they cause post-traumatic stress disorder…"[64]
Social	People who were shamed online were commonly framed as having experienced social ostracism, damage to their reputations (even in instances of 'mistaken identity' cases), as well as strains on intimate, family, and social relationships.	"I would argue that shaming involves not merely public criticism or calling attention to misdeeds, but an attack on someone's character that paints them as morally deviant and tainted. It therefore has close links to the idea of social ostracism."[65]
Financial/ employment loss	Employment (both current employment and future endeavours), as well as other financial and opportunity losses (i.e., losing book deals, not standing for re-election) were also described as consequences for those shamed online.	"Ms Stone, and her colleague that took the picture, both lost their jobs following an ardent online campaign."[37]
Persecution offline	Particular articles also detailed consequences that moved beyond just online, with some shamed individuals receiving threats of or actually being targeted in person.	"Some have lost their jobs, received death threats and left the country with their families to escape the relentless persecution."[48]
Prevention from growth	It was often depicted that being shamed online rendered people incapable of personal growth in the eyes of others, leaving their reputations constructed entirely from the instance in which they were shamed. For example, when someone was shamed for questionable online activity from many years prior (i.e., discriminatory posts from when they were a teenager), those who shamed them would be positioned as not believing they could have grown in time from those instances.	"Digital shaming is arguably the only punishment that does not have a statute of limitations. Do we really want to live in a culture like this? Where no one has the room to grow or change or become a new version of him or herself? I'd like to think that the differences between me in 2019 and me in 2004 is a sign that we all can. The question is whether we can give one another the generosity to do so."[22]
Redemption	Some articles instead portrayed those shamed online as capable of redeeming themselves and receiving forgiveness from others (as long as they apologise and make up for their 'wrongdoings'), exhibiting the rhetoric of 'we all make mistakes' to encourage this same forgiveness within the reader.	"…he'll rise from the ashes and come back stronger."[63] "People can make mistakes. I don't think mistakes make you irredeemable."[11]
Growth	In a smaller number of articles, online shaming was portrayed as being a catalyst for personal growth within the person who was shamed online.	"I have been presented with the opportunity to re-assess incidents in my past. This has led me to ask searching questions of my character… I'm doing my level best to make sure that I do not fail again."[66]

Financial/ employment gain	Some articles described how there could also be positive financial and employment outcomes after being shamed online where the shaming was considered to be unjust.	"However, the post also helped Childs, who has since received donations, a free hair cut and a new job at a construction site."[8]
For those who shame		
Remorse	Characters who had conducted the online shaming were sometimes framed as regretful and apologetic for the damage it had inflicted upon the shamed person, with cases having varying degrees of presumed sincerity.	"The woman who uploaded a degrading photo of a homeless McDonald's worker sleeping in one of the restaurant's booths is apologizing for her deed saying, 'I didn't want to hurt him.'"[8]
Counter shaming	Particular articles discussed how sometimes an individual who had shamed someone online ended up being shamed online themselves as well as a result (typically in cases where the original shaming was perceived to be cruel or unnecessary).	"PROFESSOR Robert Winston has come under fire for posting shaming pictures of a mum chatting on her phone while on a train this morning."[60]
Eminence	For some people who shamed others online, this resulted in them gaining fame, money, and status for doing so (framed here as a hero 'taking down bad guys' rather than as a villain).	"Robin Armstrong, 27, now boasts more than 800,000 followers… thanks to his powerful posts about tackling bullies across Britain."[36]
For society		
Disrupting existing cultural norms, traditions, and myths	Throughout the articles, several transitions in cultural norms, traditions, and myths were portrayed. Many 'real life' behaviours were reported to be decreasing due to fears of being ridiculed online (i.e., 'stag dos', sunbathing topless, bystander intervention). Contemporary norms unique to online technologies were also introduced (i.e., some parents now shaming their children online as a 'virtual strap' punishment; people using social media to call out injustices or disrupt inappropriate behaviour such as seen with #MeToo and rape culture). Also present was a shift in 'coming-of-age' narratives, with adolescents now seemingly facing different problems growing up (e.g., revenge porn) compared to previous generations due to online shaming. The way differing generations interacted with online shaming was also presented, with young people portrayed to be much more careful online having grown up with social media and knowing the power and dangers it brings. Older people, however, were constructed as hypocritical and out of touch, being less careful online and more likely to engage in online shaming, despite seemingly believing they knew better than young people.	"Facebook and social media is playing a part in changing the traditional stag party culture because men fear the backlash they'd receive for their holiday antics."[44] "…she's hardly alone in her decision to wield social media as a virtual strap. There are reportedly more than 30,000 YouTube videos in which parents use public shaming in a bid to make their kids shape up."[50] "At the heart of the generational difference is an aversion to risk and public shaming, driven, ironically, by the thing our generation is often associated with: social media… younger generations know that the power of social media can turn bad decisions into ones that ostracize us."[35]
Shaming culture	More broadly, online shaming itself was constructed as a normative behaviour, now embedded in contemporary culture. The potential societal consequences of this cultural shift were contemplated by some. For instance, online shaming was presented as a threat to freedom of speech, with people supposedly already more careful now of what they say online than during social media's infancy, and discussion of people eventually becoming too scared to 'speak out' at all due to fears of digital retaliation.	"…is engaging in criticism an essential part of digital citizenship today? … What's it like to be a teenager in today's culture of online public shaming?"[22] "A culture of shaming imperils public debate as people will be driven to self-censor and avoid controversial topics."[22]

	"…Twitter was also used differently in its infancy… I think Twitter is now much more sanitised."[67]

Table 5

Recommendations for the various players held accountable for online shaming

Player	Description	Example quotes
Social media	Social media was often depicted as an 'entity' to blame for the existence of online shaming, with a 'person versus technology' rhetoric sometimes portrayed (technology here being social media, smartphones, etc.). Social media companies themselves were sometimes portrayed as complicit also due to a) encouraging online outrage because it raises revenue for them, and b) the lack of action taken to prevent online shaming from occurring. Main recommendations here for social media companies included an increase in regulations regarding the user interactions on their platforms (e.g., making everyone identifiable by signing up with their real names) and more actively enforcing the already existing rules against negative behaviours on their platforms.	"Dr Aitchison believes that social media companies "encourage" online shaming, explaining "more outrage means more clicks and more revenue through advertising"."[41] "The social media companies could do more to enforce existing rules against threats, harassment, privacy breaches and other abuses…"[41] "Anyone using social media should be obliged to sign up only under their real name and we should demand those running these sites change the situation for the better."[57]
Social media users	In other instances, blaming social media itself was seen as the 'easy way out', with the authors reminding the reader that we are what make up the 'online mob', and therefore social media users are inherently complicit and should take accountability for their actions. Various authors called for a more 'humanist approach' from social media users, inviting the reader themselves to be more empathetic and forgiving, while also reinforcing notions of 'behaviour is bad, not people' and reminding us that we all make mistakes. Further, some asked for the public to stop reinforcing online shaming altogether (i.e., no longer sharing shaming posts), whilst another made suggestions for how online shaming could be conducted more tastefully (i.e., making sure one has their 'facts straight'; considering whether the shamed behaviour is a fair indication of that individual's character; be civil/act rationally when explaining why someone is in the wrong).	"Actually, it's all of us. We're all complicit. Because the issue actually isn't about putting a photo online or not. It's about how we react to that."[49] "Maybe it's time we put Me Too to bed and took a more humanist approach."[61] "In all instances, we must be civil. We shouldn't call people names. Rather, we should rationally argue why we think they're wrong. Let the person who has never had a bad day be the first to tweet."[64]
People with influence	People in positions of power to educate or enact change regarding online shaming were also held to account. Key recommendations for policy makers included legislative revision that included penalties for engaging in online shaming, increasing awareness about online shaming, and implementing prevention strategies. Meanwhile, parents and those within the education system were portrayed as accountable for ensuring young people understood the potential consequences of online engagement.	"…Parliamentarians… should champion legislation with penalties as well as agitate, foster and implement programs which create increased awareness…"[16] "Lauren's story demonstrates that the education system is failing British children… because no one is properly teaching children the consequences of how they act online."[42] "He also encouraged parents to educate youngsters…"[47]

Discussion

The current research drew on Giles and Shaw's (2009) media framing analysis method to explore the contemporary portrayal and framing of online shaming in digital news media. General findings reveal a dominant frame where online shaming is constructed as a destructive and serious threat with severe consequences (i.e., as featured in the central narratives 'fall', 'cautionary tale', and 'tragedy'). Also presented was a secondary counter frame, where in a minority of stories online shaming is represented far more favourably (i.e., as depicted in the frames 'rise', 'overcoming the monster', and 'maturation'), highlighting the ways in which online shaming can be constructive and result in positive outcomes. Many nuances and inconsistencies in shaming appeared across the news articles, including variations in apparent deservedness and responsibility for being shamed as determined by conditions related to identity, context, and gender. A range of rationalisations, consequences, and recommendations posed for mitigating online shaming were also presented, which combined all contribute to an overall construction of online shaming as a multifaceted phenomenon unable to be conclusively positioned as either good or bad.

There are several overlaps between the current framing of online shaming and constructions of related phenomena (i.e., cyberbullying; trolling and online abuse of women). For instance, cyberbullying was also largely framed as a novel but destructive manifestation of an age-old practice, and exacerbated by the wide reach and anonymity online mediums afford (Milosevic, 2015). Interestingly, in a small number of articles cyberbullying was framed instead as a harmless issue, mirroring the current study's division into a major negative frame and a minor positive frame (Milosevic, 2015). Other commonalities included some of the conditions placed within stories (i.e., celebrities being inherently more deserving; Milosevic, 2015), females being more susceptible (Lumsden & Morgan, 2017; Milosevic, 2015) and being subjected to different types of behaviours (i.e., body shaming, rape threats; Lumsden & Morgan, 2017), certain rationalisations for shaming (i.e., freedom of speech; Lumsden & Morgan, 2017; Milosevic, 2015), serious consequences (i.e., depression, suicide; Milosevic, 2015), and the players held responsible (i.e., educators, figures in power, social media companies; Milosevic, 2015). Some aspects of the current findings are also discussed within related literature, such as social policing (i.e., Skoric et al., 2010), whistle-blowing (i.e., Dozier & Miceli, 1985; Skoric et al., 2010), anonymity (i.e., Morio & Buchholz, 2009), online disinhibition (i.e., Chang & Poon, 2017), and mob mentality (i.e.,

Bakshy et al., 2012). However, many of these claims and rationalisations have merely been put forward as explanations for online shaming rather than actually tested empirically, or at least not evidenced within the context of online shaming specifically.

Strengths, limitations, and future research

This study is the only known research to explore portrayals of online shaming in digital news media, rendering its originality a major strength. The use of Giles and Shaw's (2009) media framing analysis steps allowed for a comprehensive investigation of the framing of online shaming as it is a systematic process aimed at unpacking the influence of news media in contemporary culture and was designed with psychological research in mind. Another strength was that the dataset was not confined to a single country or location, making it ecologically congruent with the worldwide nature of the internet and online shaming itself. However, this may also present as a limitation as it cannot serve to elucidate how online shaming is presented to any one particular geographical subsection of the public. To address this, future research could examine the construction of online shaming in or across specific localities of press coverage. This analysis is also limited by its two-year time period, and consequently cannot claim to represent prior or shifts in constructions of online shaming. Similarly, with the continually evolving nature of the internet and online shaming itself, these findings may only be transferable to future media representations of online shaming to a certain extent. To account for these temporal boundaries, future studies could explore media portrayals of online shaming both historically, as well as continuing to examine this phenomenon as it evolves. It should also be acknowledged that the search terms used in this study, which were variants of the words 'online' and 'shaming', would not have comprehensively captured news representations where instances of online shaming were not explicitly framed as such, but ultimately still could be considered shaming behaviours (e.g., cases framing online shaming as activism). Future endeavours may wish to broaden the scope of search terms to unpack alternate framings not overtly labelled as online shaming.

As the nature of media analyses only allows the effects of framing on the public to be inferred, an experimental study using vignettes of fabricated news articles to prime beliefs about online shaming (and subsequently determine if public beliefs are altered) may be a worthwhile pursuit. Additionally, given that both online shaming and discourse relating to online shaming occurs largely on social media platforms, an analysis of online discourse on

social media would give further insight into how this phenomenon is framed, beyond what is presented solely in traditional mass media. Discursive analysis or Foucauldian discourse analysis may also be beneficial approaches to further deconstruct the language associated with online shaming.

More broadly, it is important to reiterate that media discussions of online shaming are largely driven by non-evidenced journalist assumptions, yet broadcast as factual claims. This also extends to the empirical realm, with majority of existing research and academic discussion posing theoretical explanations for online shaming without actually testing it. Given this, and the fact that online shaming is a relatively new and unexplored research domain, there are many potentially fruitful avenues for scientific enquiry yet to be explored (e.g., the psychological predictors and contextual factors to influence online shaming engagement; or unpacking the impacts to individuals subjected to online shaming).

Implications and conclusions

The primary implication of this research stems from media framing playing an important role in forming public understandings and policy support for social issues (Barnett, 2016; Forsyth, 2012; McArthur, 1999). Considering the majority of news articles portrayed online shaming in a negative light, one can assume that similar sentiments may be echoed within consumers of this press coverage, contributing to subsequent public support for prospective policies and processes aimed at reducing the occurrence of or mitigating the impacts of online shaming. However, given that a minority of articles were organised in a way that highlighted the positive by-products of online shaming, readers already in support of or undecided about online shaming practices may choose to instead adopt a confirmation bias where they focus on these positive stories, in turn trivialising the instances where the negative impacts of online shaming are represented.

Another implication of this study is that particular media representations here appeared to mirror and perpetuate several dominant discourses in society. For instance, victim blaming was evident within many news stories (with the shamed character often framed as partly or entirely at fault for being shamed), which becomes problematic when one considers the message this sends to media consumers who may themselves have been shamed online. News articles also reinforced various antiquated gender stereotypes, such as the normalisation of the submissive, objectified woman, and males as providers or innately guilty parties when a crime has been committed. Online shaming itself was also presented as

a normalised behaviour now entrenched in contemporary society, which also encourages a public understanding that online shaming has become an expected, if not acceptable, standard when engaging in online participation.

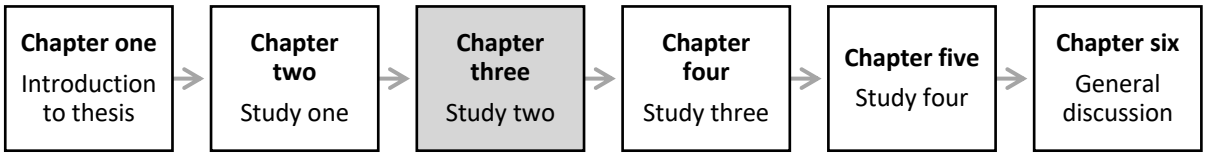
Ultimately, this research offers an important and unique contribution to the currently sparse body of literature relating to online shaming. This analysis has demonstrated how the current framing of online shaming comprises both positive and negative depictions, with various inconsistencies across news stories relating to conditions, rationalisations, outcomes, and suggestions proposed. Together, this creates the impression that online shaming is a multifaceted social issue containing many perceptual nuances and moral uncertainties. Given framings in press coverage can inform and shape public understandings of social issues, this has implications for public debate and potential policy support surrounding online shaming. Although this study provides an empirical foundation for future research to engage with discourse surrounding the contemporary issue of shaming in digital spaces, substantial further inquiry into this domain more broadly is also necessary.

Chapter three: Examining the role of moral, emotional, behavioural, and personality factors in predicting online shaming

Introduction to chapter three

In the previous chapter, we learned that online shaming has been constructed in the media in a variety of different and oftentimes competing ways, with many nuances and differences across media articles. One important finding noted in study one was the many rationalisations as to why individuals supposedly choose to engage in online shaming. However, these current understandings of why people decide to shame others online are largely still anecdotal, theoretical, or media-driven, which brings us to the current chapter. Chapter three, containing the second study of this thesis, moves beyond merely theorised or assumed explanations for online shaming behaviours, to instead empirically examine the utility of several moral, emotional, behavioural, and personality factors in predicting online shaming engagement, as well as an exploratory glimpse into public attitudes towards this phenomenon. This chapter has been published in a peer-reviewed journal, PLOS ONE, as an open access journal article. A copy of the ethics approval letter relating to the study in this chapter can be found in Appendix A. The social media research page made for study recruitment, recruitment materials, participant information and consent forms, and data collection materials can be found in Appendices G, H, and I, respectively. Various supplementary materials (created for the published article at the request of a peer reviewer) and the journal's open access policy can be found in Appendices J, K, L, and M, respectively. A copy of distress resources provided to participants can be found in Appendix S. Figure 4 demonstrates where this chapter fits within the overall structure of this thesis.

Figure 4
Flow diagram of thesis structure: Study two



Citation for the published paper in this chapter

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Abstract

Online shaming, where people engage in social policing by shaming perceived transgressions via the internet, is a widespread global phenomenon. Despite its negative consequences, scarce research has been conducted and existing knowledge is largely anecdotal. Using a primarily correlational online survey, this mixed-method study firstly assessed whether moral grandstanding, moral disengagement, emotional reactivity, empathy, social vigilantism, online disinhibition, machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy predict participants' (N = 411; aged 15-78) likelihood to engage in online shaming (after controlling for gender, daily online hours, daily social media hours, having shamed someone online before, and social desirability). Two hierarchical multiple regression analyses revealed these predictors significantly accounted for 39% of the variance in online shaming intentions, and 20% of the variance in perceived deservedness of online shaming (f^2= .25 and .64 respectively, p < .001). A content analysis of an open-ended question offered further insights into public opinions about online shaming. These qualitative findings included the perception of online shaming as a form of accountability, online shaming described as having destructive effects, the role of anonymity in online shaming, online shaming as a form of entertainment, online shaming involving 'two sides to every story', the notion that 'hurt people hurt people', online shaming as now a social norm, and the distinction between the online shaming of public and private figures. Combined, these findings can be used to inform the general public and advise appropriate responses from service providers, policy makers, and educators to mitigate damaging impacts of this phenomenon.

Keywords: online shaming, moral beliefs, emotions, online behaviour, personality, mixed-methods

Introduction

The use of shaming to mitigate undesirable behaviours online has been evident since the internet was first popularised (Skoric et al., 2010). Whilst there is no widely accepted definition of online shaming, it can broadly be considered a phenomenon where people engage in social policing by shaming perceived transgressions via social media and other internet technologies (Cheung, 2014). Online shaming can take many forms, with common examples including people ridiculing discriminatory posts on social media, or recording and sharing photos or videos of people breaking social norms (e.g., unsafe driving) in public (Skoric et al., 2010). Much like other forms of shaming, at the heart of this vigilante behaviour lies expressions of social disapproval, with the outcome usually being remorse from the 'offender' and disapproval from peers (Harris & Maruna, 2005).

While online shaming is largely depicted as having palpable and far-reaching negative impacts (Laidlaw, 2017; Solove, 2007), the perceived benefits to exposing people or organisations online have also been highlighted. For instance, online shaming affords everyday people a platform where they can voice their disapproval of perceived injustices and a multitude of inappropriate behaviours, where these behaviours may have previously remained unpunished or unacknowledged (Solove, 2007). Online shaming is said to empower individuals to enforce laws and prosocial behaviours, as well as contribute to overall societal reform, and greater institutional transparency (Laidlaw, 2017; Solove, 2007).

Online shaming typically involves exposing and distributing the content being shamed, followed by various displays of aggression (e.g., insults, threats) and outbursts (Laidlaw, 2017). Revealing the shamed individuals' personally identifiable information as a means of condemnation and punishment is also common, with online aggression sometimes evolving into offline harassment (e.g., stalking, vandalising property) afterwards (Cheung, 2014; Solove, 2007). Whilst one person may have little influence, the collective power from many individuals combined can have a devastating and pervasive impact through the rapid and broad transmission of information online, essentially becoming an online mob trial without due process and no locational or geographical restrictions (Cheung, 2014; Solove, 2007).

Ingraham and Reeves (2016, p. 456) reflect on the destructive impact modern shaming can have, stating, "the police and the courts are often unable to mete out punishments as severe or intimidating as the ostracism, job loss, death threats, and physical

attacks that can accompany what Urry (1999) calls our increasingly mediated culture of shame". Others discuss the isolation that surrounds the shamed individual and the "impulse to cover up and hide" (Solove, 2007, p. 95). There often is no chance for rehabilitation for those who are shamed, especially given the relative permanency and uncertain timeline of punishments in the online world, however those responsible for the mass shaming are said to often not consider or care about this (Massaro, 1997). More broadly, there is also the possibility that online shaming will contribute to generating an oppressive atmosphere in the online world. This may be amplified due to the absence of proper due processes and lack of guaranteed proportionality, potentially resulting in online shaming becoming increasingly likened to vengeance and bullying (Solove, 2007). At present, research in this area is still in its infancy, with existing discussion regarding online shaming largely driven by the media and journalists rather than evidenced through empirical inquiry.

Shaming reimagined

The practice of public shaming has an extensive history, with notable examples of state enforced punishments including public whippings, branding, scarlet letters, and the stockade (Ronson, 2015; Solove, 2007). Although these practices often served as an effective punishment and deterrent for the wider community, this was all but abolished in the nineteenth century due to being considered too cruel, humiliating, and largely inhumane (Ronson, 2015). Public shaming is said to remove the offender's dignity, and renders them unable to redeem themselves or ever re-enter 'normal' society (Garvey, 1998; Ronson, 2015).

As for the online world, the proliferation of internet technologies in the twenty-first century (particularly the rise of social networking websites like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter) has galvanised individuals' ability to capture and share their day-to-day lives instantly and with ease (Mann, 2004). This has led to many members of the public engaging in social or peer surveillance as a form of social control (Skoric et al., 2010), with involvement from authority figures, state officials, and mass media no longer a prerequisite of social norm enforcement (Klonick, 2016). Instead, individuals today have an unparalleled agency to observe, judge, and reprimand other internet users for perceived moral infractions (Ingraham & Reeves, 2016). This mass online surveillance has had a pivotal role in the resurrection of shaming as a form of punishment in contemporary society. Further, rather than being simply a re-emergence of public shaming on a contemporary medium, the

internet has altered the prerequisites and social conditions needed for public shaming to occur. That is, it is no longer necessary for an actual crime to be committed, but now perceived deviations from social norms are enough to warrant public ridicule for the world to see (Klonick, 2016).

Explaining online shaming

It has been argued that online shaming can be a way for individuals to indicate their non-support for certain socially offensive behaviours, effectively seeking social status by signalling to others their own credibility (Gallardo, 2017). Labelled virtue signalling in mass media, and termed moral grandstanding in the literature, this factor has been put forward as a theoretical explanation for online shaming (e.g., Spring et al., 2018), but has yet to be examined empirically. Similarly, moral disengagement (convincing oneself that certain ethical standards do not apply to them due to perceived extenuating circumstances) has been demonstrated to be a consistent positive predictor of other acts of online aggression (e.g., cyberbullying; Kowalski et al., 2014), but currently has not been tested in relation to online shaming specifically. Again based on comparable online behaviours and media reportings of online shaming (see Muir et al., 2021), other potentially useful but currently unexamined predictors of online shaming engagement include higher emotional reactivity (Mason et al., 2017) and lower empathy (Ang & Goh, 2010).

Research by Skoric et al. (2010) suggests people who shame others online often do not perceive themselves to be shaming individuals, but rather view their activities as a way of contributing to society by reinforcing social norms and deterring others from committing the same ‘offence’. Online shaming is also seen as a way of exerting social control or ‘social policing’, with the aim of deterring deviance and fostering group solidarity (Muir et al., 2021). It is the reinforcement of social norms and social control that differentiates online shaming from other online phenomena such as cyber-harassment or online bullying (Smallridge et al., 2016). The intention behind online shaming is said to be to identify and punish social norm violations (Skoric et al., 2010), whereas cyberbullying is instead typically considered to be a repeated personal online attack on an individual (making these online behaviours comparable, but ultimately distinct from each other). Online shaming can also be considered a type of social vigilantism, in that individuals are autonomous, acting spontaneously, and free from organisational or state input to restore justice on their own accord (Smallridge et al., 2016). In this sense, online shaming can be seen as a type of

punishment, with shaming enforced by everyday people, and transpiring as a reaction to individuals' dissatisfaction with already established methods of punishment (or lack thereof) for certain acts or behaviours (Skoric et al., 2010).

Another proposed contributing factor of online shaming is online disinhibition (Muir et al., 2021), which is a phenomenon whereby people feel less restrained and are more willing to express themselves freely on the internet (e.g., harsher criticisms, threats) than in person (Chang & Poon, 2017). A multitude of studies have empirically demonstrated increased aggression and hostile behaviours in computer-mediated interactions compared to face-to-face interactions (e.g., Dubrovsky et al., 1991), which may also contribute to the 'mob mentality' often seen online. Similarly, various personality factors (e.g., psychopathy, sadistic traits) have been shown to predict the likelihood of engaging in aggressive online behaviours (Kurek et al., 2019), and likewise may play a role in online shaming. Collectively, it is evident there are numerous possibly fruitful but currently untested avenues of investigation for researchers wishing to explain and predict online shaming.

Significance

To date, little evidence exists regarding the motivations for online shaming, which is surprising given the effects can be so devasting and uncontrollable. As previously mentioned, a lot of existing studies pose various concepts as explanations for online shaming without actually testing these, and current discussion regarding the impacts of online shaming is largely anecdotal or media-driven. The online world is fuelled by social norms, however the means through which these norms are regulated evolve rapidly and unpredictably, rendering online shaming an increasingly pervasive and relevant societal problem. Despite this, current legislative attempts to mitigate the negative effects of online shaming have faced harsh criticism. For example, whilst the European Union's 'right to be forgotten' article, which was put forth in the 'General Data Protection Regulation' (de Hert & Papakonstantinou, 2016), was met with some support, it largely faced disapproval and outrage (Frantziou, 2014). Depending on the jurisdiction and the specific case, there may be several viable legal claims for the person being shamed online (e.g., defamation, criminal hate speech, and use of a telecommunications device to abuse, threaten or harass), however the person conducting the shaming is often not identifiable or there may be too many culpable parties to enact legal consequences against (Laidlaw, 2017). Whilst there have been cases where legal solutions have been afforded, such as successful defamation lawsuits

(Laidlaw, 2017), it is still largely unclear what legal actions are available to those who have been subjected to online shaming. It is essential to systematically analyse and disseminate the motivators and underlying trends of online shaming to establish a more comprehensive understanding of this issue. By doing so, the findings can be used by policy makers to inform appropriate legislation, by service providers to advise appropriate responses, and by psychologists and other health professionals when working with victims of online shaming. Further, findings can also be dispersed to the public to encourage discourse based on empirical support rather than just theoretical and anecdotal speculation.

The present study

The overarching aim of the present study was to expand upon currently scarce understandings of, and provide empirical evidence for, the motivators behind participation in online shaming. In this paper, we firstly present the utility of several moral, emotional, behavioural, and personality factors in predicting online shaming engagement, followed by an exploratory qualitative account of public opinions regarding online shaming. For the quantitative aspect of this research, the following hypothesis was posited: moral grandstanding, moral disengagement, emotional reactivity, social vigilantism, online disinhibition, machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy will be positive predictors, and empathy be a negative predictor, of likelihood to engage in online shaming. There was no specific research question for the qualitative component of this study, with participants simply asked to share their opinions on online shaming.

Method

Research design

A cross-sectional, correlational design was employed using an online survey (with a small qualitative component embedded via an open ended-question). The quantitative predictors were moral grandstanding, moral disengagement, emotional reactivity, empathy, social vigilantism, online disinhibition, machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy. The criterion was likelihood to engage in online shaming (separated into two subscales). Social desirability was included as a control variable to statistically account for participants possibly providing responses they deem to be more desirable. Several demographic variables were also later included as control variables (namely gender, daily online hours, daily social media hours, and having shamed someone online before). The purpose of the qualitative component was to afford participants the opportunity to share additional thoughts about

online shaming not captured within the quantitative strand. The qualitative and quantitative findings have been integrated in the discussion section where appropriate, via a weaving narrative approach.

Participants

A convenience sample of 411 participants (311 women, 96 men, and 4 identifying as another gender) between 15 and 78 years old (*M* = 24.76, *SD* = 9.59) completed this research, with an average of 14.73 (*SD* = 3.30) years of formal education, and almost half (49%) identifying as Caucasian. The majority of respondents were from Australia (77%), were students (75%), and were employed (60%). The most commonly reported religions were none or Atheist (44%), Catholic (15%), and Christian (15%). On average, participants spent approximately six hours online daily (*SD* = 2.86) and approximately three hours on social media daily (*SD* = 2.14). About 20% (*n* = 84) of participants indicated they had been shamed online before, around 62% (*n* = 256) stated they had not been shamed online before, and just over 17% indicated they were not sure (*n* = 71). For those participants who had been shamed online before and elaborated on their experiences, 25% (*n* = 22) reported being shamed about their appearance (e.g., weight, clothing) and 19% (*n* = 17) reflected they were shamed for having a differing opinion (e.g., views on vaccinations, veganism). Additionally, 7% (*n* = 6) disclosed they were shamed for their political views, and 2% (*n* = 2) were shamed for their skin colour. Almost 15% (*n* = 60) of all participants indicated they had shamed someone else online before, around 75% (*n* = 308) stated they had not shamed someone else online before, and just over 10% indicated they were uncertain (*n* = 43). For those who elaborated on their experiences, approximately 22% (*n* = 13) of these participants reported shaming another for holding opposing or differing views, and 19% (*n* = 12) revealed having shamed another over a discriminatory post made by that person (e.g., racist posts). Moreover, 10% (*n* = 6) of these participants reported shaming an individual due to their political views, and 5% (*n* = 3) stated they shamed another over their appearance.

Recruitment methods included advertising on a social networking website (where snowballing occurred with other users sharing the post onto their pages; *n* = 152) and a university participant pool (*n* = 259). The opportunity to enter a prize draw was also offered to participants not within the university participant pool, with the only inclusion criteria being that participants needed to be at least 14 years old (to meet the minimum age requirements of most social media platforms). An a-priori power analysis using G*Power 3.1

indicated that for multiple regression, a minimum sample of 114 participants was necessary for a medium effect size, with a power of .80 and significance level of .05 (Faul et al., 2007). A medium effect size was chosen based on recent comparable research (e.g., Ge, 2020). Based on Kline's (2005) criteria of 20 participants per free parameter, a minimum of 180 participants was necessary to adequately test the factor structure of the Online Shaming Scale. Hence, the obtained sample of 411 participants was deemed adequate to achieve meaningful analyses.

Measures

Criterion variables

Previous measures of online shaming have generally used single or few items to assess online shaming behaviours, which impedes statistical testing and reduces variance (e.g., Blackwell et al., 2018). The Online Shaming Scale was developed by the authors for the purposes of this study (and subsequent research) to assess participant likelihood of engaging in online shaming. Based on principal axis factoring with promax rotation of an initial pool of 12 items (using a randomised half of the sample; *n* = 206), followed by confirmatory factor analysis in EQS (with the remaining half; *n* = 205), the final scale features nine items capturing various hypothetical shaming responses and opinions after a perceived social norm is violated online. All items assess level of agreement via a seven-point Likert-type scale ranging from one (strongly disagree) to seven (strongly agree). Scores are summed to produce a total online shaming score ranging between 9 and 63, with higher scores indicating a higher likelihood of engaging in online shaming. Total scores were also computed for the two subscales: 'online shaming intentions' (items 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 12) and 'online shaming perceived deservedness' (items 1, 6, 9), which were used separately in subsequent analyses. See Appendix J for further details pertaining to the development of this measure.

Predictor and scale control variables

Pre-existing measures for predictor variables (moral grandstanding, moral disengagement, emotional reactivity, empathy, social vigilantism, online disinhibition, machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy) and the control variable social desirability are detailed in Table 6. All items in the Moral Grandstanding Scale (Grubbs et al., 2019, p. 9) were adapted so that they only asked about moral beliefs instead of moral and political beliefs combined (e.g., in the item "I hope that my moral/political beliefs cause other people to want to share those beliefs", "/political" was removed). For the Perth Emotional Reactivity

Scale- Short Form (Preece et al., 2018), only the items relating to negative emotional reactivity were used (as positive emotional reactivity was not expected to be related to online shaming). Question 14 in the Social Vigilantism Scale (Saucier & Webster, 2010, p. 22) was adapted from "I frequently consider writing a letter to the editor" to "I frequently consider writing a product or service review" to reflect contemporary media. Question 1 in the Online Disinhibition Scale (Udris, 2014, p. 256) was also adapted from "It is easier to connect with others through ICTs than talking in person" to "It is easier to connect with others online than talking in person" to reflect contemporary language.

Demographic variables

Single-item questions concerning demographics (age, gender, country of residence, religion, ethnicity, education attainment level, occupation, daily hours spent online, daily hours spent on social media, previously been shamed online before, and previously shamed someone else online before) were collected to describe the sample and to be assessed as potential control variables.

Qualitative question

Participants also had the opportunity to respond to the optional open-ended qualitative question, "Is there anything you would like to say about online shaming?".

Table 6

Predictor and control variable measures

Construct/s	Measure	Factors	Items	Responses	Reversed items	Scoring	α	Example items
Moral grandstanding	Moral Grandstanding Scale (Grubbs et al., 2019)	2	10	1-7 (strongly disagree to strongly agree)	-	Mean scores from 1-7	.81-.95	"My moral beliefs should be inspiring to others"
Moral disengagement	Propensity to Morally Disengage Scale (Moore et al., 2012)	8	16	1-7 (strongly disagree to strongly agree)	-	Mean scores from 1-7	.88	"It's okay to gloss over certain facts to make your point"
Emotional Reactivity	The Perth Emotional Reactivity Scale- Short Form (Preece et al., 2018)	3	9	1-5 (very unlike me to very like me)	-	Total scores from 9-45	.76-.91	"I tend to get upset very easily"
Empathy	Basic Empathy Scale (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006)	2	20	1-5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree)	1, 6, 7, 8, 13, 18, 19, 20	Total scores from 20-100	.85-.91	"My friends' emotions don't affect me much"
Social vigilantism	Social Vigilantism Scale (Saucier & Webster, 2010)	1	14	1-9 (disagree very strongly to agree very strongly)	-	Mean scores from 1-9	.81-.88	"I feel as if it is my duty to enlighten other people"
Online disinhibition	Online Disinhibition Scale (Udris, 2014)	2	11	0-3 (disagree to agree)	-	Total scores from 0-33	.81-.85	"I feel like a different person online"
Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy	The Short Dark Triad (Jones & Paulhus, 2014)	3	27	1-5 (disagree strongly to agree strongly)	2, 6, 8 (N) 2, 7 (P)	Mean scores for each factor from 1-5	.71-.77	"It's not wise to tell your secrets" (M) "People see me as a natural leader" (N) "People often say I'm out of control" (P)
Social desirability	Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale- Adapted Version (Denton & Burleson, 2007; Strahan & Gerbasi, 1972)	1	13	True or false	1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12	Total scores from 0-13	.74	"I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive"

Note. Measures presented here are self-report scales with higher scores indicating higher levels of each construct. All scoring instructions have been followed according to each measures' respective author guidelines. α = Cronbach's Alpha; M = machiavellianism; N = narcissism; P = psychopathy.

Procedure

Following ethics approval by Curtin University's Human Research Ethics Committee (approval number: HRE2019-0697), the survey was piloted (i.e., a few individuals were asked to complete the survey first to ensure comprehension) before data collection took place (between January 23 and September 4, 2020) via a 30-minute online survey. Participants were first directed to a participant information sheet and consent form hosted by Qualtrics.com. After providing informed consent (by ticking a box) and completing validity questions to ensure they understood the contents of the survey, participants were presented with the demographic items, quantitative measures (which were randomised), and open-ended question. Afterwards, participants were debriefed and thanked for their time, and information regarding free online resources in the event of distress were provided. Upon completion, participants were redirected to either a page providing them the opportunity to enter a competition to win a gift voucher by submitting their email address, or a page where they could submit their enrolment details if they were from the university participant pool.

Data were downloaded from Qualtrics.com into IBM SPSS Statistics (v28) to be analysed, with qualitative responses transferred into a Microsoft Excel (v16.68) spreadsheet for analysis. While 500 individuals started the survey, 89 were removed from the quantitative analysis as they either did not complete any items for one or more scales, were found to be duplicates (i.e., had identical IP addresses with the same answers) or were patterned responses. As such, data from 411 participants were retained for quantitative analysis, and 153 qualitative responses for qualitative analysis. After screening and reverse coding, a missing values analysis indicated that data were missing completely at random, with no variable having missing data exceeding 0.5% (Little's MCAR test: $\chi 2(1130) = 1065.98$, $p = .913$). Consequently, the expectation-maximisation method was deemed appropriate for replacing missing values (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Mean and total scores were computed where relevant and categorical variables were dummy coded prior to analysis.

Results

Quantitative results

Table 7 provides descriptive statistics and correlations between predictor, criterion, control, and relevant demographic variables.

Table 7

Descriptive statistics and correlations between predictor, criterion, control, and relevant demographic variables (N = 411)

Variable	Descriptives			Correlations																		
	M	*SD*	α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1. OSS total	23.12	9.17	.84	-																			
2. OSS intention	13.20	6.87	.86	.93**	-																		
3. OSS PD	9.92	3.81	.65	.74**	.43**	-																	
4. Moral grandstanding	3.53	0.81	.79	.43**	.42**	.28**	-																
5. Moral disengagement	2.47	0.86	.89	.47**	.44**	.34**	.35**	-															
6. Emotional reactivity	27.66	8.39	.91	.14**	.09	.19**	.08	.12*	-														
7. Empathy	77.60	10.10	.89	-.24**	-.26**	-.11*	-.07	-.37**	.15**	-													
8. Social vigilantism	5.17	1.10	.85	.45**	.42**	.33**	.58**	.42**	.15**	-.05	-												
9. Online disinhibition	12.34	5.34	.76	.31**	.32**	.16**	.28**	.40**	.26**	-.11*	.33**	-											
10. Machiavellianism	2.77	0.64	.79	.38**	.33**	.31**	.32**	.60**	.18**	-.25**	.45**	.41**	-										
11. Narcissism	2.60	0.58	.72	.25**	.24**	.17**	.29**	.26**	-.06	-.18**	.41**	.15**	.36**	-									
12. Psychopathy	2.04	0.60	.76	.43**	.45**	.24**	.21**	.57**	.19**	-.33**	.30**	.27**	.50**	.37**	-								
13. Social desirability	5.67	2.57	.64	-.13*	-.09	-.15**	-.10*	-.26**	-.35**	-.07	-.23**	-.22**	-.29**	-.10	-.26**	-							
14. Age	24.76	9.59	-	.04	.08	-.07	-.13**	-.22**	-.19**	<-.01	-.07	-.16**	-.09	-.05	-.12*	.17**	-						
15. Gender	-	-	-	-.13**	-.16**	-.04	-.02	-.23**	.12*	.28**	-.09	-.15**	_.15**	-.15**	-.27**	.04	.02	-					
16. Years of education	14.73	3.30	-	.01	.01	-.01	-.05	.11*	-.05	.05	-.03	-.15**	<.01	-.02	-.09	.05	.34**	.03	-				
17. Daily online hours	6.11	2.86	-	.12*	.11*	.09	.03	.12*	.16**	-.07	.07	.11*	.12*	.07	.15**	-.12*	-.18**	-.06	-.02	-			
18. Daily SM hours	3.16	2.14	-	.12*	.12*	.07	.17**	.15**	.21**	.10*	.19**	.21**	.11*	.10*	.10*	-.13**	-.26**	.13**	-.09	.55**	-		
19. Been OS	-	-	-	.03	.06	-.02	.05	-.08	.05	.15**	.06	<.01	-.11*	.11*	.04	-.12*	.09	.08	-.03	.02	.04	-	
20. OS someone	-	-	-	.28**	.29*	.15**	.20**	.12*	.06	.03	.17**	.06	.11*	.11*	.21**	-.17**	.11*	-.07	-.02	.08	.01	.27**	-

Note. Gender was coded as 0 = not women, 1 = women. Been online shamed and online shamed someone were coded as 0 = no or unsure, 1 = yes. *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; α = Cronbach's Alpha; OSS = Online Shaming Scale; PD = perceived deservedness; SM = social media; OS = online shamed.

*p < .05. **p < .01.

Hypothesis testing

To test the overarching quantitative hypothesis, that moral grandstanding, moral disengagement, emotional reactivity, social vigilantism, online disinhibition, machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy would be positive predictors, and empathy would be a negative predictor of likelihood to engage in online shaming, two hierarchical multiple regression analyses (HMRAs) were completed (separate regressions for the online shaming subscales were conducted as differences between subscales in the correlation matrix were noted). The correlation matrix also revealed associations between online shaming and gender, daily online hours, daily social media hours, having shamed someone online before, and social desirability, and therefore these variables were used as control variables. All demographic control variables were entered into step one of both regressions, with social desirability entered as another control variable in step two, and the study predictors entered altogether in step three (in no particular order as there was no theoretically driven reason to do so). Assumptions underlying multiple regression were evaluated, with all relevant variables approximating normality except for the online shaming intentions subscale, which approximated an L-shaped distribution and had heteroscedastic residuals (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Data transformation following guidelines by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) were conducted to remedy this, however this did not alter the overall findings or improve the skewness of the variable, so the original data were retained for analysis. See Appendix K for all normality plots. Univariate outliers were reduced to the most extreme non-outlier values plus one unit to maintain rank order (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), and no highly influential multivariate outliers were present. All other assumptions were met, and statistical significance for this hypothesis testing was evaluated at $\alpha = .05$.

The first HMRA was conducted to assess the proportion of variance in online shaming intentions that could be accounted for by moral grandstanding, moral disengagement, emotional reactivity, empathy, social vigilantism, online disinhibition, machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy (after controlling for gender, daily online hours, daily social media hours, having shamed someone online before, and social desirability). On step one of this HMRA, gender, daily online hours, daily social media hours, and having shamed someone online before collectively accounted for a significant 12% of the variance in online shaming intentions, $R^2 = .12$, adjusted $R^2 = .11$, $F(4, 406) = 14.03$, $p < .001$. On step two, social desirability was added to the regression model, accounting for a non-significant additional

<.01% of the variance in online shaming intentions, ΔR^2 = .00, $\Delta F(1, 405)$ = .10, p = .748. These five variables in combination still explained 12% of the variance in online shaming intentions, R^2 = .12, adjusted R^2 = .11, $F(1, 405)$ = 11.22, p < .001. On step three, moral grandstanding, moral disengagement, emotional reactivity, empathy, social vigilantism, online disinhibition, machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy were added to the regression model, accounting for a significant additional 27% of the variance in online shaming intentions, ΔR^2 = .27, $\Delta F(9, 396)$ = 19.60, p < .001. All variables in combination explained 39% of the variance in online shaming intentions, R^2 = .39, adjusted R^2 = .37, $F(9, 396)$ = 18.27, p < .001. This is a large effect by Cohen's (1988) conventions (f^2= .64).

The second HMRA was conducted to assess the proportion of variance in perceived deservedness of online shaming that could be accounted for by moral grandstanding, moral disengagement, emotional reactivity, empathy, social vigilantism, online disinhibition, machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy (after controlling for gender, daily online hours, daily social media hours, and having shamed someone online before, and social desirability). On step one of this HMRA, gender, daily online hours, daily social media hours, and having shamed someone online before collectively accounted for a significant 3% of the variance in perceived deservedness of online shaming, R^2 = .03, adjusted R^2 = .02, $F(4, 406)$ = 3.27, p = .012. On step two, social desirability was added to the regression model, accounting for a significant additional 1% of variance in perceived deservedness of online shaming, ΔR^2 = .01, $\Delta F(1, 405)$ = 5.56, p = .019. These five variables in combination explained 4% of the variance in perceived deservedness of online shaming, R^2 = .04, adjusted R^2 = .03, $F(1, 405)$ = 3.76, p = .002. On step three, moral grandstanding, moral disengagement, emotional reactivity, empathy, social vigilantism, online disinhibition, machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy were added to the regression model, accounting for a significant additional 16% of the variance in perceived deservedness of online shaming, ΔR^2 = .16, $\Delta F(9, 396)$ = 8.70, p < .001. All variables in combination explained 20% of the variance in perceived deservedness of online shaming, R^2 = .20, adjusted R^2 = .17, $F(9, 396)$ = 7.17, p < .001. This is a medium effect by Cohen's (1988) conventions (f^2= .25). Regression coefficients, squared semi-partial correlations, and confidence intervals for both models are displayed in Table 8. Additionally, see Appendix L for a comparison between the current linear regressions and post hoc Ridge regressions (as an additional robustness check of the current findings).

Table 8

Summary of regression coefficients and squared semi-partial correlations (sr^2) for two hierarchical regression models predicting online shaming intentions and perceived deservedness (N = 411)

Predictors	OSS intentions					OSS perceived deservedness				
	Coefficient		95% CI Around B		sr^2	Coefficient		95% CI Around B		sr^2
	B	β	LB	UB		*B*	β	LB	UB	
Step 1										
Gender	-2.47	-.16	-3.96**	-.98**	.02	-.27	-.03	-1.15	.60	<.01
Daily online hours	.03	.01	-.23	-.98	<.01	.07	.05	-.09	.22	<.01
Daily SM hours	.38	.12	.03*	.74*	<.01	.09	.05	-.12	.30	<.01
OS someone	5.41	.28	3.63**	7.19**	.08	1.54	.14	.50**	2.59**	.02
Step 2										
Gender	-2.46	-.15	-3.95**	-.97**	.02	-.23	-.03	-1.10	.63	<.01
Daily online hours	.03	.01	-.23	.30	<.01	.06	.05	.09	.22	<.01
Daily SM hours	.38	.12	.02*	.73*	<.01	.07	.04	-.14	.28	<.01
OS someone	5.36	.28	3.56**	7.17**	.07	1.33	.12	.28*	2.39*	.02
Social desirability	-.04	-.02	-.29	.21	<.01	-.17	-.12	-.32*	-.03*	.01
Step 3										
Gender	<.01	<.01	-1.35	1.36	<.01	.30	.03	-.57	1.12	<.01
Daily online hours	.07	.03	-.16	.30	<.01	.08	.06	-.07	.22	<.01
Daily SM hours	<.01	<.01	-.32	.32	<.01	-.10	-.05	-.30	.11	<.01
OS someone	3.51	.18	1.93**	5.09**	.03	.72	.07	-.29	1.73	<.01
Social desirability	.26	.10	.03*	.49*	<.01	.02	.01	-.13	.17	<.01
Moral grandstanding	1.50	.18	.68**	2.32**	.02	.52	.11	<-.01	1.04	<.01
Moral disengagement	.92	.11	.01*	1.83*	<.01	.88	.20	.30**	1.47**	.02
Emotional reactivity	<-.01	<-.01	-.08	.07	<.01	.06	.14	.02*	.11*	.01
Empathy	-.08	-.12	-.14*	-.02*	<.01	-.01	-.03	-.05	.03	<.01
Social vigilantism	1.13	.18	.46**	1.80**	.02	.52	.15	.09*	.95*	.01
Online disinhibition	.16	.12	.04**	.28**	.01	-.05	-.06	-.12	.03	<.01
Machiavellianism	-.55	-.05	-1.69	.60	<.01	.59	.10	-.14	1.32	<.01
Narcissism	-.48	-.04	-1.57	.61	<.01	.02	<.01	-.68	.72	<.01
Psychopathy	2.77	.24	1.57**	3.97**	.03	-.06	-.01	-.83	.71	<.01

Note. CI = confidence interval; OSS = Online Shaming Scale; *B* = unstandardised coefficient; β = standardised coefficient; LB = lower bound; UB = upper bound.

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$

Qualitative findings

A mixed (conventional and summative) content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) was used to analyse the open-ended survey question "is there anything you would like to say about online shaming?". The conventional approach was used to describe emergent categories, with the summative approach used to quantify the frequency of responses within each category (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). All participant responses were first read in their entirety by one researcher, before open coding was conducted with relevant meaningful

responses noted and afterwards assigned a phrase or key word summarising each response. After two rounds of open coding, categories were created and then split, combined, or expanded upon where necessary. The summative aspect involved tallying the frequency with which the final categories occurred in the dataset, with words or phrases with interchangeable meanings also included within this count. To assess inter-rater reliability, approximately 10% of statements were classified as either in support of each category or against by two researchers using IBM SPSS Statistics (v28). Both coders have been trained in and have experience conducting qualitative analysis. An excellent level of inter-rater agreement ($\kappa = .75$) was found (Fleiss, 1981, as cited in Robson, 2002).

Holding people accountable, depicting online shaming as having destructive effects, and perceived anonymity afforded by the online world were the most frequent categories to emerge. Multiple participants also explored online shaming as a form of entertainment, as a phenomenon with multiple perspectives, and as often perpetrated by individuals coming from a place of shame or hurt. Some participants also regarded online shaming as now a social norm, as well as exploring perceived differences between public and private figures being shamed online. The complete findings of this content analysis are displayed in Table 9.

Table 9

Content analysis of what participants have to say about online shaming (n = 153)

Category	*n*	Description	Example quotes
Accountability	10	Online shaming is deemed acceptable and encouraged in certain settings when undertaken to hold an individual or group of individuals accountable and/or to raise awareness. Some participants appeared to view engaging in online shaming as serving the greater good, as it allows individuals to be informed and hold the shamed individual responsible for their actions online.	"I only participate in shaming behaviour if I know for a fact that they're acting abusive and needs to be held accountable for it."
Destructive effects	7	Participants referenced the harmful impacts of online shaming in a general sense (but tended to avoid specific details). This may indicate that while there is a level of public awareness, people may not be aware of the specific, tangible consequences of online shaming.	"Its very dangerous and can cause a lot of harm"
Anonymity	7	Anonymity provided through being online and the use of private accounts was noted as making people feel more comfortable and safer to engage in online shaming. This sense of anonymity may afford people perceived power, which may embolden them to engage in online shaming. Participants directly contrasted online shaming to face-to-face bullying and suggested this would not occur in the latter setting.	"people feel they are anonymous online and feel safe to write evil hurtful things"
Entertainment	6	This category describes online shaming, including the use of memes, as a form of entertainment. Participants also articulated that online shaming and sharing memes may serve as a way to engage with friends and other community members.	"I only online shame them so that other people (who follow my private account) are aware of the things they say and we can laugh about it."
Two sides to every story	6	While there are 'two sides to every story', participants articulated that individuals should have the ability to express their opinion without being shamed. Online shaming and freedom of speech appears almost paradoxical; people expressing their opinion without worrying about being shamed is freedom of speech, but opposingly freedom of speech is also having the right to shame someone if you do not agree with them.	"There is always 2 sides to every story and everyone has the right to their own opinion."
"Hurt people hurt people"	4	Some participants referenced that being shamed online may cause a victim of online shaming to turn into a perpetrator. There was a belief that the perpetrator of online shaming may engage in this behaviour due to insecurities or past experiences with being shamed.	"It is a vicious cycle of people being online shamed and then going on to online shame others"
Social norm	3	Multiple participants referenced that online shaming has become a social norm.	"Online shaming is considered a social norm"
Public versus private figures	3	Participants reflected that individuals are held to different standards, depending on whether they are "public figures" or 'everyday' people. Public figures appear to be more readily online shamed, with some suggesting they are more deserving of this, due to having chosen to become a public figure or having a public platform.	"I am quick to call public figures out, as they have chosen a position of influence. With random people, I'm more restrictive."

Note. Single participant responses were able to be coded into multiple categories.

Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to assess the utility of several currently untested predictors of online shaming, and given this research area is still in its infancy, we also sought to qualitatively capture general public opinions about online shaming. Quantitative results indicated that in combination, moral grandstanding, moral disengagement, emotional reactivity, empathy, social vigilantism, online disinhibition, machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy accounted for approximately two fifths of the variance in intentions to engage in online shaming, and one fifth of the variance in perceived deservedness of online shaming (after controlling for gender, daily online hours, daily social media hours, having shamed someone online before, and social desirability). Some qualitative responses converged with quantitative findings regarding moral disengagement, empathy, social vigilantism, and online disinhibition, whilst other qualitative responses suggested alternative or divergent understandings of online shaming. These findings are contextualised and explored in detail below.

Contextualising the current findings

Scores for the intentions subscale of the Online Shaming Scale indicated that on average, participants 'disagreed' with the notion of intending to shame someone online. Scores for the perceived deservedness subscale were slightly higher, with participants on average only 'somewhat disagreeing' that people who were shamed online deserved it. With the two subscales combined, participant total scores for online shaming fell between 'disagree' and 'slightly disagree', indicating an overall trend towards not engaging in online shaming. Interestingly, the two subscales of the Online Shaming Scale only had a moderate positive correlation with each other, which combined with the slightly higher perceived deservedness scores, indicates that perhaps while some individuals may believe people to be deserving of being shamed online, they may be less willing to conduct the actual shaming themselves. From a measurement standpoint, this also supports the inclusion of both online shaming subscales rather than just one or the other.

Demographic data indicated that approximately one fifth of participants reported having been subjected to online shaming before, and slightly less than one fifth of participants reported having shamed someone else online before. In comparable research (e.g., exploring online harassment, cyberbullying), whilst some results indicate lower rates, many report higher (see Finn, 2004; MacDonald & Roberts-Pittman, 2010; Xiao & Wong,

2013). The comparatively lower prevalence of online shaming in the current study may not be due to an actual lack of online shaming occurring, but as echoed previously within the literature (e.g., Skoric et al., 2010), participants may instead just not label their actions as online shaming. Instead, people may consider their actions to be simply a social deterrent and a mechanism to bolster accountability, a notion which was also salient within the current qualitative findings. Moreover, previous engagement with online shaming victimisation and perpetration were both only measured using a single item rather than measuring various types online shaming separately, indicating a lack of specificity which may also explain possibly understated rates of online shaming. The notion of online shaming now being considered a common and expected behaviour in society, which is reflected in both previous literature (e.g., Klonick, 2016) and the current qualitative findings, also serves to contrast these lower reports of online shaming. Another noteworthy finding is that prior online shaming had no significant relationship with any other demographic variable, which is interesting considering factors such as the gendered nature of online shaming (e.g., slut shaming, body shaming) often reported in previous literature (e.g., Poole, 2013; Muir et al., 2021). There was also no significant relationship between online shaming victimisation and perpetration, which also contrasts related claims (i.e., the cybervictimisation to cyberbullying cycle often reported in cyberbullying literature) in similar studies (e.g., Xiao & Wong, 2013), as well as contrasting participant perceptions offered in the current qualitative findings. These inconsistencies between the demographics in the current study and that of previous literature may simply be an indication of sample specific findings, or otherwise perhaps due to measurement differences between online shaming studies, or changing trends in online shaming. Regardless, this warrants further investigation into the relationship between demographic differences and online shaming in future research.

Whilst there were no significant associations between intentions to online shame and age, years of education, having been subjected to online shaming before, and social desirability, men and those who spent more hours online and on social media each week were slightly more likely to intend to engage in online shaming. There was also a moderate positive relationship between having shamed someone online before previously and future intentions to online shame. Although this was used as a control variable for subsequent hypothesis testing, previous online shaming actually accounted for the same unique variance in online shaming intentions as the strongest predictor, which echoes the age-old sentiment

of 'the best predictor of future behaviour being past behaviour'. As for the second online shaming subscale, there were also no significant associations between perceived deservedness of online shaming and age, gender, years of education, daily hours online and on social media, and having been subjected to online shaming before. However, there was a small positive relationship between perceived deservedness of online shaming and having shamed someone online before previously, as well as a small negative correlation between perceived deservedness and social desirability. As for the predictors in this study, there were significant relationships (ranging from small to large) between all predictors and both online shaming subscales, with the exception of online shaming intentions and emotional reactivity. The predictive utility of these variables are further deconstructed below.

Moral predictors: Moral grandstanding and moral disengagement

Moral grandstanding and moral disengagement both had moderate positive correlations with both online shaming factors, indicating that participants with a stronger desire to appear morally credible to others and a propensity to convince themselves that ethical standards do not apply to them due to apparent extenuating factors were more likely to engage in online shaming and believe those who are shamed are deserving of this treatment. These findings are consistent with current theoretical musings relating to online shaming (e.g., Gallardo, 2017; Spring et al., 2018), the cyberbullying literature (e.g., Kowalski et al., 2014), as well as some sentiments expressed by participants in the current qualitative findings. In the regression models, both moral predictors accounted for unique variance in intentions to online shame, however only moral disengagement (and not moral grandstanding) accounted for unique variance in perceived deservedness of online shaming (with moral disengagement being the strongest predictor of perceived deservedness).

Emotion predictors: Emotional reactivity and empathy

Emotional reactivity had a small positive correlation with perceived deservedness of online shaming, however it did not correlate significantly with intentions to online shame, suggesting that while participants who are more emotionally reactive may be more likely to believe people to be deserving of online shaming, this does not appear to impact their decision to actually engage in online shaming or not. This contradicts the notion of online shaming being a 'knee-jerk' reaction, as previously depicted in news media (Muir et al., 2021), which represents a potential discrepancy between the explanations hyper-publicised news stories provide for online shaming and what is actually occurring. Empathy however,

was negatively correlated with both perceived deservedness and online shaming intentions (with the associations being small and small-to-medium in size, respectively), indicating empathy may be a protective factor against both believing people to be deserving of online shaming and intending to online shame. This coincides with studies on related online behaviours (e.g., Ang & Goh, 2010), and is reinforced by participant concerns over the destructive effects of online shaming illustrated within the qualitative findings. In the regressions, emotional reactivity accounted for unique variance in perceived deservedness of online shaming, but not intentions to online shame. For empathy the opposite occurred, accounting for unique variance in intentions to online shame but not perceived deservedness.

Behavioural predictors: Social vigilantism and online disinhibition

Social vigilantism had medium positive correlations with both deservedness of online shaming and intentions to online shame, indicating that participants with a higher superiority of beliefs and perceived responsibility to propagate these beliefs were more likely to intend to engage in online shaming and believe victims of online shaming to be deserving of it. This aligns with literature that links online shaming to social vigilantism (e.g., Skoric et al., 2010; Smallridge et al., 2016), with some current qualitative responses relating to accountability also converging with this notion. Online disinhibition had a moderate positive association with intentions to online shame, and a small positive correlation with perceived deservedness, demonstrating that those who feel more willing to express themselves freely on the internet and experience a lack of restraint online compared to in-person interactions are more likely to intend to online shame and perceive those who are shamed online to be deserving. Online disinhibition is often discussed in media reports as a potential contributor to online shaming (see Muir et al., 2021), as well as within related literature (e.g., Chang & Poon, 2017). Online disinhibition also overlaps with the notions of anonymity presented within the qualitative findings. In the regression models, social vigilantism was one of the largest unique predictors of online shaming intentions, and also accounted for unique variance in perceived deservedness. As for online disinhibition, it also accounted for unique variance in intentions to online shame, but not perceived deservedness.

Personality predictors: Machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy

Machiavellianism had moderate positive correlations with both online shaming subscales, narcissism had small positive associations with both subscales, and psychopathy

had a moderate to large positive relationship with online shaming intentions and a small positive relationship with perceived deservedness. This suggests participants who are more inclined to be deceitful, and exploitative to meet their goals (machiavellianism), who possess a sense of entitlement and a tendency for grandiose self-promoting (narcissism), and are characterised by a higher degree of impulsiveness, callousness, and selfishness (psychopathy), may be more likely to engage in online shaming and believe people to be deserving of online shaming. This also aligns with previous related research (e.g., Kurek et al., 2019) and has similarities to some notions described within reports (e.g., links to schadenfreude) in the media (Muir et al., 2021). In the regression models, psychopathy was the largest unique predictor of intentions to online shame. However, no other personality predictor accounted for unique variance in either subscale, indicating psychopathic tendencies appear to be the most important dark personality trait assessed here for predicting online shaming.

Strengths, limitations, and future research

As the current paper is the first known study to empirically examine several currently untested predictors of online shaming, this research is strengthened by its originality. Considering empirical research in this domain is currently limited, another key strength was the inclusion of an array of potential predictors from various domains, and this study is also bolstered by the completion of pilot testing prior to data collection taking place. Given research (i.e., Lovakov & Agadullina, 2021) suggests effect sizes within social psychology research are typically small to medium, by Cohen's (1988) conventions, the medium and large effect sizes reported in this study make a worthwhile contribution to understanding why online shaming occurs. Other notable strengths include statistically controlling for social desirability, as well as advertising the study as 'online engagement' rather than 'online shaming' to minimise potential biases that may accompany the idea of shaming others. Sampling was not bound by any geographical restrictions (mirroring the globally accessible nature of the internet), which enhances the ecological validity of the current study. However, it should be noted that the current sample was skewed towards younger, Caucasian Australian university students who were employed and women. Future studies should endeavour to recruit more representative samples to gather a more generalisable understanding of online shaming engagement.

Given that, anecdotally, there are many differing understandings of what online shaming is, this study is also strengthened by the decision to provide participants with a definition of online shaming before completing questions relating to online shaming. However, given a specific shaming scenario was not used it is likely participants were envisioning different examples of online shaming when responding, in line with the availability heuristic (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). Future exploration comparing different types of specific online shaming scenarios would be beneficial (e.g., featuring vignettes of different online shaming victims or varying social norm violations, or perhaps comparing online shaming across different social media platforms). The notion within the qualitative findings that people are held to differing standards when it comes to online shaming (e.g., being willing to shame public figures online but not everyday people) also substantiates this need to explore what conditions need to be met for people to be willing to engage in online shaming. It should also be noted that the moral choices individuals make in real life tend to be more self-serving than what hypothetical choices in research might capture (see FeldmanHall et al., 2012). Likewise, there is ongoing debate surrounding whether it is best to capture participant behaviours through self-reported intentions or via experimental means, as the use of hypothetical scenarios has historically been criticised as an inaccurate way to measure behaviour (Yun & Park, 2011). Given this, future research using experimental methodologies (i.e., simulated online shaming scenarios where participants can respond as if the posts were real) may produce more accurate reflections of online shaming participation.

Although the qualitative strand of this study provides some interesting and novel findings that could not be captured by the quantitative strand alone, the use of a short open-ended question does not allow for any clarification of participant meanings, and the depth of responses is limited. For instance, while participants mentioned that online shaming had destructive effects, there was no opportunity to uncover what exactly these consequences were perceived to be. Additionally, it should be noted that not all participants in this study completed the open-ended question, meaning some self-selection bias may be present in the qualitative dataset (e.g., some participants who chose to take the additional time to provide a qualitative response may have done so due to feeling more strongly about certain views, having personal experience with online shaming, etc.). Semi-structured interviews exploring a range of perceptions and experiences of online shaming would allow for a deeper account of the complexities of this phenomenon.

Implications and conclusions

A key implication arising from this study is that the findings substantiate many previously posed but untested theoretical and media-driven explanations for online shaming, demonstrating the importance of multiple different factors in understanding this phenomenon. This provides academic and public discourse surrounding online shaming with a much-needed empirical basis and shift away from the current overreliance on purely theoretical and anecdotal speculation. This paper also offers a new validated measure to capture online shaming engagement, with two subscales which demonstrate that certain underlying mechanisms appear to be differentially responsible for a) individuals believing people to be deserving of being shamed online, and b) being willing to actually conduct online shaming.

As for practical implications, having an evidence-based understanding of what drives online shaming is an essential first step for policy makers to appropriately inform legislation. Additionally, when establishing formal guidelines and educational campaigns, the predictors tested in this study should be taken into consideration. For example, interventions could be designed (e.g., by social media companies themselves) to encourage empathy for others online, to remind users to think before posting, and that the individual being shamed is in fact a real person. While psychologists and other health professionals also need to have a comprehensive understanding when working with victims of online shaming, these findings may also be utilised to develop strategies to assist people and companies wanting to avoid being subjected to online shaming in the future, as well as provide the broader public a better understanding of why so many of us participate in online shaming ourselves.

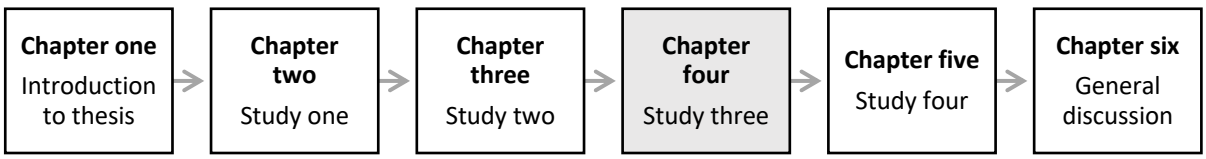
Combined, this mixed-methods paper offers an original and significant contribution to the currently limited online shaming literature. This study has provided empirical support for several previously untested psychological explanations of shaming engagement in digital spaces, as well as qualitative insights into public opinions surrounding potential origins, concerns, and various other perceptual nuances of this phenomenon. Whilst the current findings can be utilised to inform public understandings, policy makers, educators, and health professionals, considerable further investigation into this research domain is still needed.

Chapter four: Online shaming engagement across contexts: Exploring the role of virality, relational proximity, and discrimination type

Introduction to chapter four

In the previous chapter, the predictive utility of several individual factors associated with online shaming was demonstrated. However, online shaming is a complex behaviour, and cannot be explained by individual factors alone. Studies one and two both featured qualitative data to suggest that it is also important to consider context when predicting whether individuals will choose to engage in online shaming. For instance, in study one we learned that sometimes people are framed as inherently more or less deserving of being shamed online based on their identities, as well as the specifics of their 'wrongdoings'. However, empirical accounts of these differing contextual nuances are currently largely unexplored, which brings us to the focus of this next chapter. Chapter four, which features the third study of this thesis, begins to unpack some of the contextual nuances surrounding online shaming cases by exploring the relationship between a) virality, b) relational proximity to an existing shamer, and c) differences in the content people may be shamed online for, and likelihood to engage in additional online shaming or supporting behaviours. This chapter has been submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. A copy of the ethics approval letter relating to the study in this chapter (and an accompanying approval letter for an ethics amendment) can be found in Appendices A and D. Recruitment materials, participant information and consent forms, and data collection materials are in Appendices N and O, respectively. A copy of distress resources provided to participants can be found in Appendix S. Figure 5 demonstrates where this chapter fits within the overall structure of this thesis.

Figure 5
Flow diagram of thesis structure: Study three



Citation for the paper in this chapter submitted for publication

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Abstract

Online shaming, whereby individuals call out real or perceived wrongdoings online, has become an ever-increasing, global form of social policing. Despite the negative consequences associated with this phenomenon for those subjected to it, most existing knowledge is anecdotal and media-based, with current understandings of what predicts online shaming limited and largely non-empirical. Using a quantitative online survey, this experimental vignette study assessed 385 17-54 year old participants' likelihood to engage in additional online shaming or supporting behaviours (via liking, retweeting, and commenting) when responding to vignettes depicting an individual being shamed online for making a discriminatory online post. Posts were depicted as being either a) viral or not viral, b) a hypothetical friend or stranger to the participant who had shamed them, and c) racist, sexist, or homophobic in nature (with the effects of various demographic variables also partialed out). Six generalised linear mixed models revealed a significant main effect of virality on shaming via retweeting ($p < .001$), with those in the viral condition more likely to retweet with shaming intent than their non-viral condition counterparts. There were also main effects of post discrimination type on shaming via liking, shaming via commenting, supporting via liking, supporting via retweeting, and supporting via commenting ($p < .001$-.004), with participants more likely to shame and less likely to support the racist post compared to the sexist and homophobic posts. Implications and recommendations for future research, educators, those in charge of intervention initiatives, policymakers, various service providers, and public perceptions are also discussed.

Keywords: online shaming, viral outrage, relational proximity, discriminatory online posts, experimental vignette study

Introduction

Public shaming, a social act with a long-standing history, can be defined as a "process by which citizens publicly and self-consciously draw attention to the bad dispositions or actions of an offender, as a way of punishing [them] for having those dispositions or engaging in those actions" (Kahan & Posner, 1999, p. 368). Traditional forms of public shaming (e.g., public whippings, scarlet letters, the stockade) were often used throughout history as effective punishments and deterrents for other community members (Goldman, 2015; Solove, 2007), although these methods were all but abandoned by the nineteenth century due to being considered too dehumanising (de Vries, 2015; Ronson, 2015). However, with modern advances in technology, particularly the widespread use of the internet as an instrument for digital communication, public shaming as a punishment tool has had a mass resurgence in contemporary society (Gallardo, 2017). While there is no one agreed upon definition of online shaming, this phenomenon can broadly be described as behaviours involving people using social media and other digital technologies to shame perceived transgressions, as a form of social policing and a public demonstration of disapproval (Cheung, 2014). Notably, it is the enforcement of perceived or actual transgressions of social norms that distinguishes online shaming from other related online behaviours, such as cyberbullying or online harassment (Klonick, 2016).

Online shaming can manifest in a variety of different ways, for various perceived or real social norm violations. For instance, the person or people being condemned online might be 'under fire' over either legal or illegal apparent transgressions (e.g., talking loudly on the phone whilst on public transport versus vandalism), and can be incited by both online and offline behaviours (e.g., posting derogatory remarks on social media versus bad parking; Klonick, 2016; Skoric et al., 2010). Typically, instances of online shaming will begin with the exposing and distribution of the shaming content, which is subsequently followed by varying degrees of online outrage and aggression from other social media users (Laidlaw, 2017). This digital condemnation most commonly manifests in the form of public posts, comments, likes, messages, and memes circulated online about the shamed person or group (Billingham & Parr, 2019; Klonick, 2016; Laidlaw, 2017). This can also involve revealing and disseminating the target's personal information (e.g., via distributing contact details, personal images, and videos), and may spread into the real world as well (e.g., damage to property; intimidation tactics; Cheung, 2014; Skoric et al., 2010; Solove, 2007).

Within media representations, anecdotal reports, and throughout related literature, online shaming victimisation has been linked to various negative outcomes for the shamed individuals. For instance, this can include presentations of emotional distress varying greatly by type and severity (e.g., anxiety, panic, depression, humiliation, shame, regret, guilt, feeling victimised and powerless, insomnia, and even suicide), as well as detrimental impacts to one's self-beliefs, perceptions of others, and broader worldviews (Billingham & Parr, 2019; Jacquet, 2015; Laidlaw, 2017; Muir et al., 2021; Muir & Roberts, 2023; Ronson, 2015). Social withdrawal and damage to relationships is also often reported, as is reputational damage and financial strain (e.g., job loss, career downfall, not being considered for future employment prospects; Jacquet, 2015; Muir & Roberts, 2023; Ronson, 2015; Solove, 2007). Despite the clear negative effects that online shaming can have on those in the 'firing line', the situational and contextual factors impacting whether individuals choose to engage in online shaming or not are currently largely under-researched, despite suggestions that contextual nuances are important when individuals decide if someone is deserving of online shaming (Muir et al., 2021). Whilst the nuances of online shaming cases are multifaceted, with many different potentially influential contextual factors at play (Muir et al., 2021), three potentially important factors of interest are the virality of the shaming content, relational proximity to the shamer, and differences in the actual content being condemned online (e.g., posts being either racist, sexist, or homophobic in nature). These are explored in the context of the literature below.

Virality of the shamed content

One situational factor that appears to influence an individual's likelihood of engaging in online shaming behaviours is whether or not the offending online material has already been condemned by many others after having gone 'viral'. Virality is the term given to a distinct pattern of online content sharing, characterised by a broad circulation of information (both geographically, across many networks, and to a vast number of individuals) in a short amount of time (with this rapidness being the key distinction between 'viral' content and content that is simply 'popular'; Nahon & Hemsley, 2013). In the context of online shaming specifically, whereby one person's shaming can spiral into hundreds of thousands of online users 'piling on' with additional shaming and disapproval (Ronson, 2015), several group psychology theories can be employed when aiming to understand why this might occur. For instance, seminal research on conformity and the power of normative

social influence (Asch, 1956), as well as social proof (Cialdini, 1993), applied to this context helps explain why others might feel inclined to contribute to online shaming upon witnessing public online displays of disapproval from others. Moreover, contagion theory (Sampson, 2012) and mob mentality (Muir et al., 2021) have similarly been linked to explanations of online shaming, with the suggestion that the virality of online shaming cases may be in part simply due to individuals copying behaviours from others in the same vicinity as them. This is evidenced through Bakshy et al.'s (2012) research, for example, which demonstrated people were seven times more likely to share content online when they saw other people sharing it. Key to this idea is the notion that collective online behaviour tends to become emotional and irrational, with individual behaviour therefore a result of the contagious influence of online crowds (Sampson, 2012).

Considering the above theories, it is reasonable to assume that as social media users express more condemnation of a particular target of online shaming (with this being perceived as the majority, or normative reaction), this would increasingly encourage others to 'pile on' and further contribute to engaging in the same online shaming behaviour, leading shamers to feel more justified in their actions, and further solidifying beliefs that the original 'offender' is deserving of more severe punishment (Carlsmith et al., 2002; Tetlock et al., 2000). However, it appears at a certain point online shaming itself becomes a severe punishment in its own right. Whilst a single shamer may have little impact, the combined power from many users contributing to additional shaming when shaming content goes viral can often have a destructive and long-lasting impact on the shamed individual, transforming into a digital mob trial with no due process nor geographical boundaries (Cheung, 2014; Solove, 2007). Hence, rather than additional outrage, viral online shaming events can often instead result in sympathy for the shamed individual (Sawaoka & Monin, 2018). While this may appear to contradict previously mentioned expectations of group psychology theories, this has been evidenced via anecdotal accounts (e.g., Ronson, 2015), where viral online shaming has been described as a cruel and largely disproportionate punishment, with the shamed individual therefore less deserving of condemnation as sympathy increases. This seemingly contradictory phenomenon has also been demonstrated empirically by Sawaoka and Monin (2018), who found that compared to a non-viral condition, individuals subjected to online shaming were viewed with more sympathy, and online shaming perpetrators were viewed more negatively, when hypothetical online posts had gone viral and were shamed by

many. However, Sawaoka and Monin's (2018) research focused on participants' perceptions of the shamers and shamed individuals, instead of exploring intentions to further contribute to shaming the person themselves in viral versus non-viral conditions, which limits our understanding of factors driving shaming behaviour.

Johnen et al. (2018) also demonstrated that in viral conditions, participants were less willing to participate in additional hypothetical shaming, however here, they still agreed with the overarching opinions and tonality of the shaming comments. With these findings, Johnen et al. (2018) argued that instead of individuals not wanting to contribute to additional shaming of already viral comments due to sympathy for the shamed individual, it may instead be due to a lack of personal reputational payoff when virality is high. That is, when social media users participate in online shaming events, they selectively contribute shaming comments where social recognition can be gained, which becomes undermined and ultimately unworthwhile in viral cases where condemnation has already been expressed by many others, and their comments would be unlikely to stand out from the crowd (Johnen et al., 2018). Puryear (2020) argues that whilst this reasoning is likely partly true, individuals may simply realise additional shaming becomes unnecessary once a transgression has already been condemned by many others. Interestingly, Puryear's (2020) findings contradicted that of Sawaoka and Monin's (2018) and Johnen et al.'s (2018) research, instead reporting that participants in a viral condition were more likely to disclose feeling outraged by and having a desire to act (i.e., feeling the need to speak up; being more likely to have written a comment reply to the offending post) compared to their counterparts in a non-viral condition (which aligns more with understandings of group psychology theories). However, it is important to note that the 'desire to act' items included in Puryear's (2020) research did not allow for a distinction between individuals writing comment replies with the intent to shame the individual further, or to defend them, making it impossible to know the nature of each participant's actual intentions. This is a noteworthy limitation, and also a distinction that should be made in future research. Collectively, the current literature relating to virality and online shaming is inconsistent when it comes to the differences in the directionally of attitudes and behaviours towards already shamed content when virality is manipulated, as well as the accompanying explanations assigned to these disparities, and are also somewhat limited in terms of the scope of the outcome variables employed.

Therefore, further research is still needed to more directly assess responses to both viral and non-viral depictions of online shaming.

Relational proximity to the shamer

Another situational factor that may influence an individual's likelihood of engaging in online shaming behaviours is whether or not the offending online material has already been shamed by someone who is known to and close with the person witnessing the online shaming content. Research suggests people tend to gravitate towards friendships with others who have similar beliefs and values to their own (e.g., see Bahns et al., 2017), so it can be argued that the same online material might be considered offensive (and perhaps deserving of being shamed) among friends. Personalities also tend to be similar within friendship groups (Bahns et al., 2017), and several personality factors have been linked to a higher likelihood of online shaming engagement (e.g., increased openness, machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy; Muir et al., in press; Skoric et al., 2010). Given this, it can also be argued that those who choose to engage in the shaming of online content perceived by them to be offensive or worthy of condemnation might also have friends who would similarly join in on shaming such content.

Social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) suggests that when individuals are exposed to content that has already been shamed by people with whom they identify and have relational proximity to (i.e., the 'in-group', such as friends), online users would typically be more likely to conform and also engage in online shaming. Similarly, DeScioli and Kurzban's (2013) side-taking model of morality states that people often align with sides based on who they have pre-existing alliances with, and Brady et al.'s (2020) motivation, attention, and design (MAD) model of moral contagion also notes how moralised content is partly spread through online social networks due to people being motivated to maintain positive reputations within their in-groups. In uncertain circumstances, people often look to the reactions of others with whom they typically share similar views with (McGarty et al., 1993). This may be especially true for online shaming as it is often considered to be an inherently morally ambiguous phenomenon (Muir et al., 2021), which can also assist in explaining why people may be more likely to engage with shaming content already engaged with by their friends.

Whilst no known research has already directly compared differences in subsequent online shaming responses when a friend or stranger has already shamed someone, there are

notable related findings within the cyberbullying literature. For instance, Jones et al. (2011) reported that cyberbullying bystanders were more likely to join in on cyberbullying someone when they identified more with the aggressive group members. Similarly, Bastiaensens et al.'s (2014) findings demonstrated that cyberbullying bystanders were more likely to reinforce cyberbullying upon discovering their close friends had already reinforced the cyberbullying perpetrator's behaviour. Patterson et al. (2017) also found that cyberbullying bystanders were less likely to ignore the situation when the cyberbullying perpetrator was a close friend compared to a stranger. Further research is needed to assess whether these findings also translate to the online shaming context.

Context of the shamed content

Another gap in the online shaming literature is an exploration into the types of online content more likely to elicit online shaming engagement, such as comparisons between the shaming of discriminatory discourse stemming from different social injustices. Discriminatory remarks are commonplace across the online sphere, with some of the most common discriminatory content being racist, sexist, and homophobic in nature (Parrot, 2016). Parrot (2016) noted that approximately one in four online comedic videos currently include racist, sexist, or homophobic content, which demonstrates just how ingrained discriminatory discourse is on the internet and suggests that with the high frequency of discriminatory online content also comes the inevitable online shaming of such content. Whilst existing experimental research on online shaming often features multiple examples of hypothetical online content varying in discrimination or offense type (e.g., racist, sexist, and unpatriotic; Sawaoka & Monin; 2018), no known research has directly compared online shaming responses to these offense types themselves. Interestingly, in Sawaoka and Monin's (2018) research, there were notable differences in the average perceived offensiveness of hypothetical sexist (M = 3.95) and racist (M = 6.44) online posts subjected to online shaming, but the disparities between these discrimination types were never compared statistically. Moreover, multiple authors have called for future research to explore differences in online shaming across different offense types (e.g., racist, sexist, homophobic) and various other potential boundary parameters (e.g., Blackwell et al., 2018; Sawaoka & Monin, 2018).

Significance

The negative effects of online shaming are reported to be oftentimes devasting, permanent, and largely uncontrollable (Muir et al., 2021; Ronson, 2015), however existing

research exploring what situational factors might predict online shaming engagement is currently limited. There appears to be an understanding in the media, anecdotal discussions, and existing literature that the severity and magnitude of online shaming cases is often at least partly dependent on certain contextual and situational nuances (Muir et al., 2021; Ronson, 2015). However, empirical examination into exactly what these contextual factors are, and which ones are most influential, remains largely unexplored. Therefore, the aim of the current study was to explore the utility of several contextual factors frequently seen in real online shaming events, namely virality, relational proximity to the shamer, and differing types of discriminatory online content in predicting responses to cases of online shaming. Methodically analysing and disseminating the underlying contextual trends of online shaming engagement is important for informing policy makers, service providers, and educators working in this and related spaces. A more comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon is also essential for informing public discourse, particularly for those who might engage in online shaming perpetration, and those who instead find themselves on the receiving end of online condemnation.

The current study

An experimental design (3x2x2) featuring both between- and within-groups components was employed in this study via an online survey. Each participant was shown three hypothetical social media posts depicting a scenario where someone had been shamed online through a shaming comment after having made a discriminatory post, with the three posts varying in discriminatory content type (racist, sexist, or homophobic). The three posts differing by discrimination type were presented in random order to each participant and is the within-groups component of this design. All three vignettes participants saw also varied by virality (with the discriminatory post depicted as either having gone viral or instead having received little attention) and relational proximity of themselves to the shamer of the post (with a description that either the participant's hypothetical friend or a stranger to them had made the shaming comment), with participants randomly assigned to these between-groups components. For each hypothetical social media post, participants were asked a) how likely they would be to contribute to additional online shaming of the person who made the discriminatory post via liking the shaming comment, sharing/retweeting, and/or commenting on the post, and b) how likely they would be to show support for the person who made the discriminatory post by liking the original post, sharing/retweeting,

and/or commenting on the post (with this making up six criterion variables in total). Hypotheses are listed below.

Hypothesis one (H1)

Online shaming behaviours (shaming via liking, retweeting, and commenting) will significantly differ by virality (viral, non-viral), by the relational proximity to the existing shamer of the post (hypothetical friend, stranger), and the discrimination type depicted in the shamed social media post (racist, sexist, homophobic). Whilst online shaming behaviours are expected to be higher in the friend compared to stranger condition, the non-viral compared to viral condition is more exploratory in nature (given the inconsistencies across prior findings), with comparisons between discrimination types more exploratory in nature also.

Hypothesis two (H2)

Online supporting behaviours (supporting via liking, retweeting, and commenting) will significantly differ by virality (viral, non-viral), by the relational proximity to the existing shamer of the post (hypothetical friend, stranger), and the discrimination type depicted in the shamed social media post (racist, sexist, homophobic). Whilst online supporting behaviours are expected to be lower in the friend compared to stranger condition, the non-viral compared to viral condition is again more exploratory in nature, as are the comparisons between discrimination types. For both H1 and H2, two-way and three-way interaction effects are also examined.

Method

Participants

A convenience sample of 385 undergraduate university students (280 women, 97 men, and 8 describing their gender in a different way) between 17 and 54 years old (M = 22.75, SD = 7.03) completed this study, with a mean of 14.49 (SD = 2.50) years of formal education, and approximately two-thirds (65%) identifying as Caucasian. Most respondents were currently residing in Australia (96%), were employed (80%), and identified as heterosexual (78%). Over half (55%) of participants reported not being religious, with the next most common reported response being Christian (30%). On average, participants reported spending just over six daily hours online (SD = 2.71) and just over three daily hours on social media (SD = 1.99). Almost 19% of respondents indicated they had been subjected to online shaming before, 65% stated they had not been shamed online before, and just over

16% indicated they were not sure. For those who reported having been shamed online before who also provided written detail on their experiences (*n* = 66), the most common open-ended responses included being shamed about having differing opinions or beliefs (*n* = 19; e.g., shamed about "moral or political viewpoints"), being insulted (*n* = 11; e.g., receiving "offensive comments" or "personal attacks"), and various forms of online behaviour (*n* = 8; e.g., "being made fun of for what I post"). Almost 13% of participants indicated they had engaged in shaming someone else online before, around 79% stated they had not shamed someone else online before, and just under 9% indicated they were uncertain. For those who reported having engaged in online shaming before who also elaborated on their experiences (*n* = 45), the most frequent open-ended responses included having shamed someone online due to having differing opinions or beliefs (*n* = 18; e.g., "calling out people who were being racist, or other forms of discrimination"), condemning various forms of online behaviour (*n* = 13; e.g., shaming someone over their "inability to perform their roles in computer games" or "general shitpost-y behaviour"), and shaming someone as a way of defending someone else (*n* = 7; e.g., "shaming an individual who shamed another just out of spite").

Participants were recruited through a university participation pool (involving students participating in research as part of a course requirement), with the study topic advertised as being about 'online engagement' instead of 'online shaming' (as the latter term can have negative connotations that might have otherwise influenced participant responses). There were no explicit exclusion criteria. An a-priori power analysis conducted using G*Power 3.1 (Faul et al., 2007) indicated that to detect possible small (i.e., *d* = .14) effect sizes (based on recent comparable research; e.g., Sawaoka & Monin, 2018) with a significance level of .05 and a power of .80, a minimum sample of 223 respondents was needed to adequately test this study's hypotheses. Hence, the obtained sample of 385 participants was deemed sufficient.

Measures

Vignettes

Twelve unique vignettes in total (3x2x2; see Figures 6 to 8) were created for the purposes of this study. The vignettes differed by virality (2 = non-viral or viral), relational proximity to the existing shamer of the post (2 = hypothetical friend of or stranger to the participant), and the discrimination type depicted in the shamed social media post (3 =

either racist, sexist, or homophobic). Each hypothetical social media post was preceded by a short description of the post, which was altered to reflect the particulars of each vignette condition (i.e., viral or not viral, whether a friend or stranger had already shamed the person responsible for creating the discriminatory post). An example vignette description (depicting the viral x friend x racist condition) is provided below:

You come across someone named Mo's social media post, displayed below. After reading it, you notice 978 people have commented on the post, mainly shaming Mo for the post's contents. You notice one comment in particular that your close friend Ali has posted, reading, "Disgusting! Sexists like you are what's wrong with this world." After seeing this, what would you do in this scenario?

Inspiration was taken from real discriminatory online posts when creating the content for the vignettes to increase ecological validity. An effort was made to include gender neutral names and pronouns for those depicted in the posts, as well as ambiguous profile pictures to limit potential confounding factors. All vignettes were subjected to pilot testing where individuals were asked to review and provide feedback on the vignettes (as well as the accompanying vignette descriptions) to ensure comprehension and appropriateness, with the aim of bolstering construct validity (e.g., providing input as to how much post interaction is needed to be considered viral or not viral; ensuring the racist, sexist, and homophobic vignettes were all considered equally offensive).

Figure 6

Racist non-viral and viral vignettes

Figure 7
Sexist non-viral and viral vignettes

Figure 8
Homophobic non-viral and viral vignettes

Criterion items

Six questions for six unique ordinal criterion variables were presented after each of the vignettes. Participants responded to each criterion item using a 6-point Likert scale ranging from one (strongly disagree) to six (strongly agree), with higher scores indicating a higher level of agreeance with each item. The first three questions related to online shaming behaviours, and were as follows: 1) "I would show my support for punishing Alex by pressing 'like' on this comment (or multiple comments) shaming them", 2) "I would show my disapproval by reposting/retweeting this thread to call Alex out for what they did", and 3) "I would make my own comment on Alex's post to also show my disapproval". The last three questions related to whether participants would show support for the shamed person, and were as follows: 4) "I would show my agreeance with Alex's post by pressing 'like' on the original post", 5) "I would repost/retweet Alex's original post to show my support", and 6) "I

would make my own comment on Alex's post to let Alex know I am on their side". These criterion items were identical for all vignettes, except for the names being altered to match that of their accompanying vignettes. Liking, sharing, and commenting behaviours were all included here, rather than focusing on a single online behaviour, to capture some of multiple different ways individuals can choose to interact with and respond to online content, and ultimately increase the content validity of this study. Whilst these behaviours are conceptually related, they are not necessarily expected to be statistically related. Like the vignettes, these criterion items were also subjected to pilot testing to ensure comprehension and appropriateness, with the aim of bolstering construct validity.

Demographic variables

Single-item measures of age, gender, country of residence, religion, ethnicity, education attainment level, occupation status, daily hours spent online, daily hours spent on social media, whether the participant had ever previously been shamed online before (and if so, what happened), and whether the participant had ever previously shamed someone else online before (and if so, what happened) were included in the survey to describe the sample.

Procedure

This research was first approved by Curtin University's Human Research Ethics Committee (approval number: HRE2019-0697) before pilot testing of the vignettes and criterion items. Data collection occurred between October 8, 2021 and June 10, 2022 via an online survey on Qualtrics.com, with the survey taking participants, on average, less than 10 minutes to complete. At the beginning of the survey, participants first read an online participant information sheet and consent form and were required to provide informed consent by ticking a checkbox. Participants were also required to correctly answer two validity questions to ensure they understood the survey requirements and contents, before being presented with the demographic items, three randomised vignettes and accompanying descriptions, and the criterion items. Participants were then debriefed, provided with information and links to free online distress resources, and thanked for their time. Lastly, participants were redirected to a page where they could submit their enrolment details to obtain course points. After the cessation of data collection, data were downloaded from Qualtrics.com into IBM SPSS Statistics (v28) to be analysed.

Results

After four partially completed responses were removed, data from 385 participants were retained for analysis, with no missing data in the final dataset. After screening and cleaning the data, categorical demographic variables were dummy coded and the dataset was converted to long form. Six Generalised Linear Mixed Models (GLMMs) were conducted, one each for the criterion variables: shaming via liking, shaming via retweeting, shaming via commenting, supporting via liking, supporting via retweeting, and supporting via commenting. Each GLMM included participants as a nominal random factor, three fixed effects (virality of post [either non-viral or viral], relational proximity to the existing shamer of the post [either a hypothetical friend of or stranger to the participant], and post discrimination type [either racist, sexist, or homophobic]), three two-way interactions (virality x relational proximity, virality x discrimination type, relational proximity x discrimination type), and a three-way interaction (virality x relational proximity x discrimination type). Robust statistics were used throughout, and due to all criterions (except shaming via liking) being positively skewed, Gamma was selected as the distribution with Log as the link function to account for this. As there were small correlations between some of the demographic variables and the main variables of interest, age, gender, sexual orientation, country, background, religion, years of education, daily hours online, daily hours on social media, having been shamed online before, and having shamed someone else online before were included in all GLMMs as control variables. Statistical significance for all hypothesis testing in this study was evaluated at $\alpha = .05$. See Table 10 for descriptive statistics and correlations for between-groups predictors, criterions, and demographic variables.

Table 10

Descriptive statistics and correlations for between-groups predictors, criterions, and demographic variables (N = 385)

Variable	Descriptives		Correlations																			
	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1. Virality	-	-	-																			
2. Relational proximity	-	-	-.01	-																		
3. Shamed like	3.37	1.84	.02	-.03	-																	
4. Shamed retweet	2.26	1.48	-.01	.02	.49**	-																
5. Shamed comment	2.38	1.54	.01	<-.01	.48**	.72**	-															
6. Support like	1.31	.80	.01	-.01	-.15**	.05	.04	-														
7. Support retweet	1.24	.64	<-.01	<.01	-.11**	.11**	.08*	.80**	-													
8. Support comment	1.30	.79	.02	-.02	-.07*	.11**	.14**	.70**	.75**	-												
9. Age	22.75	7.03	-.06*	.02	-.21**	-.21**	-.07*	-.01	-.03	-.04	-											
10. Gender	-	-	.03	.00	.08**	.04	.03	-.08**	-.09**	-.04	-.07*	-										
11. Sexual orientation	-	-	-.03	-.02	-.18**	-.11**	-.10**	.13**	.10**	.11**	.10**	-.05	-									
12. Country	-	-	.06*	-.02	-.03	-.04	-.03	-.03	-.03	-.02	.02	-.10**	.05	-								
13. Background	-	-	.06*	<-.01	-.03	-.12**	-.12**	-.06*	-.05	-.04	.15**	-.08**	-.03	.23**	-							
14. Religion	-	-	.04	-.01	.09**	-.07*	-.07*	-.06*	-.01	-.09**	.11**	-.05	-.25**	.15**	.35**	-						
15. Years of education	14.49	2.50	<.01	<-.01	-.08**	-.12**	-.08*	-.04	-.02	-.04	.24**	-.02	.02	-.13**	.04	<-.01	-					
16. Employment	-		.02	-.01	-.02	-.01	-.04	.01	-.01	-.02	-.07*	.03	.03	.25**	.17**	.05	.03	-				
17. Daily online hours	6.21	2.70	-.03	-.06	.13**	.08**	.10**	-.07*	-.04	-.03	-.12**	-.05	-.10**	-.13**	-.11**	.02	-.06	-.19	-			
18. Daily SM hours	3.23	1.98	.05	-.04	.15**	.21**	.14**	-.01	.03	.03	-.26**	.16**	-.06*	-.04	-.17**	-.12**	-.10	.02	.46	-		
19. Been OS	-	-	.01	-.02	.08**	.06*	.11**	-.02	-.02	.02	.09**	-.07*	-.12**	-.10**	.03	-.02	.03	-.07	.08	<-.01	-	
20. OS someone	-	-	.03	.04	.08**	.06*	.11**	.04	.04	.08**	.05	-.03	-.11**	<.01	-.04	.03	-.03	-.01	.03	-.01	.32	-

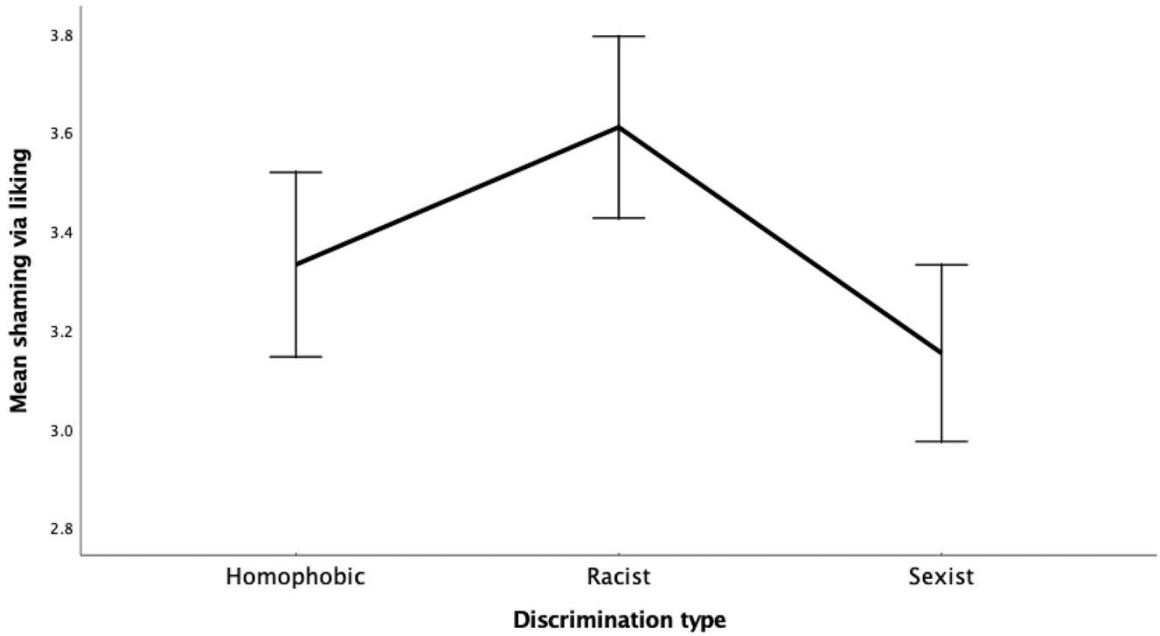
Note. Virality was coded as 0 = viral, 1 = not viral. Relational proximity was coded as 0 = stranger, 1 = friend. Gender was coded as 0 = not women, 1 = women. Sexual orientation was coded as 0 = not heterosexual, 1 = heterosexual. Country was coded as 0 = not in Australia, 1 = in Australia. Background was coded as 0 = not Caucasian, 1 = Caucasian. Religion was coded as 0 = religious, 1 = not religious. Employment was coded as 0 = not employed or other, 1 = employed. Been online shamed before and having online shamed someone else before were coded as 0 = no or unsure, 1 = yes. *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; SM = social media; OS = online shamed.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Hypothesis testing

Predicting online shaming behaviours

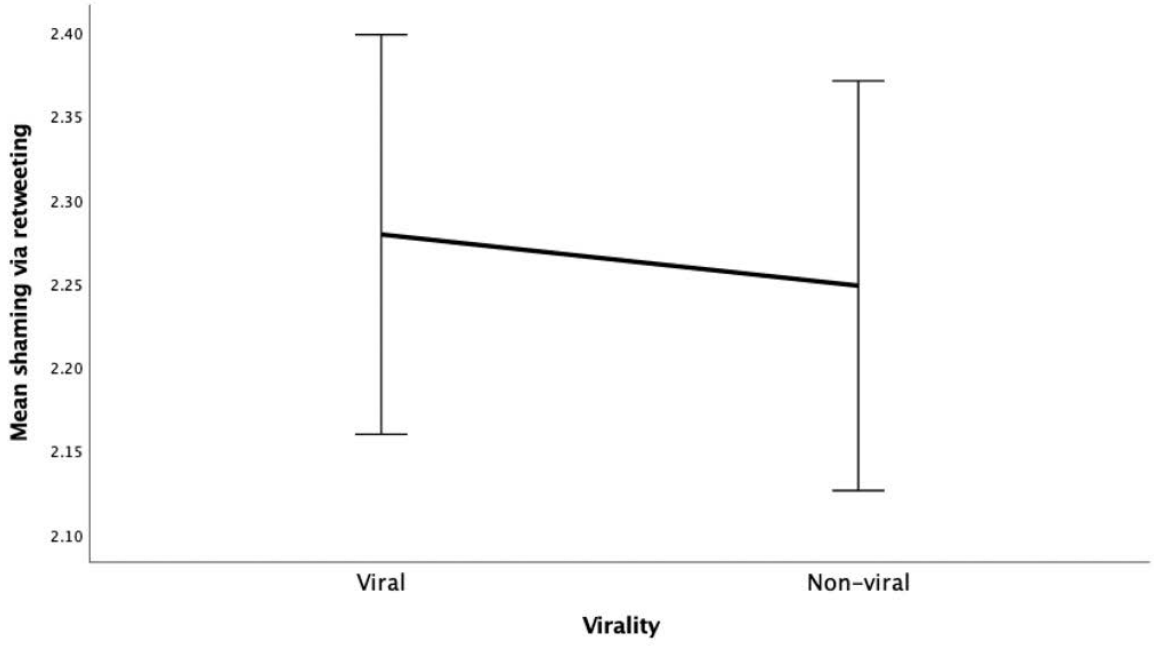
Online shaming via liking. There were no significant two-way interactions (virality x relational proximity, $F[1, 1134] = .81$, $p = .368$; virality x discrimination type, $F[2, 1134] = .74$, $p = .480$; relational proximity x discrimination type, $F[2, 1134] = .03$, $p = .970$) or three-way interaction (virality x relational proximity x discrimination type, $F[2, 1134] = .21$, $p = .815$) for shaming via liking. There were no main effects for virality ($F[1, 1134] = 1.37$, $p = .243$) or relational proximity ($F[1, 1134] = .01$, $p = .910$), however there was a main effect for discrimination type ($F[2, 1134] = 16.82$, $p < .001$; see Figure 9). This significant main effect across the racist ($M = 3.13$, $SE = 1.46$), sexist ($M = 2.71$, $SE = 1.27$), and homophobic ($M = 2.85$, $SE = 1.33$) discriminatory post types indicates partial support for H1, and was followed up with a post hoc Fisher's least significant difference (LSD) test. This revealed a significant pairwise contrast between the racist and sexist conditions ($t[1134] = 2.01$, $p = .045$), but not the racist and homophobic conditions ($t[1134] = 1.85$, $p = .064$), or the sexist and homophobic conditions ($t[1134] = -1.47$, $p = .142$).

Figure 9
Graphical depiction of shaming via liking by discrimination type



Online shaming via retweeting. There were no significant two-way interactions (virality x relational proximity, $F[1, 1134] = .86$, $p = .354$; virality x discrimination type, $F[2, 1134] = .73$, $p = .483$; relational proximity x discrimination type, $F[2, 1134] = .06$, $p = .938$) or three-way interaction (virality x relational proximity x discrimination type, $F[2, 1134] = .78$, $p = .459$) for shaming via retweeting. There were no main effects for relational proximity ($F[1, 1134] = 2.01$, $p = .156$) or discrimination type ($F[2, 1134] = 1.83$, $p = .161$), however there was a main effect for virality ($F[1, 1134] = 11.35$, $p < .001$; see Figure 10). This significant main effect across the non-viral ($M = 1.85$, $SE = .78$) and viral ($M = 1.97$, $SE = .83$) post types indicates partial support for H1, and was followed up with a post hoc Fisher's LSD test. This revealed a non-significant significant pairwise contrast between the virality conditions ($t[1134] = -1.94$, $p = .053$).

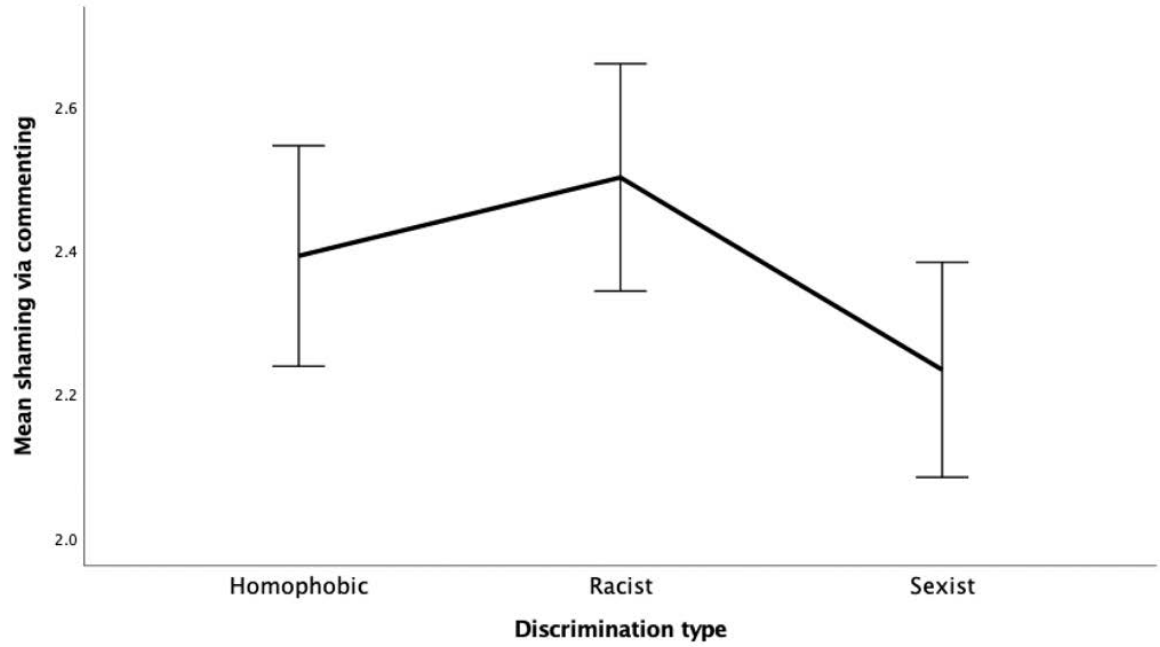
Figure 10
Graphical depiction of shaming via retweeting by virality



Online shaming via commenting. There were no significant two-way interactions (virality x relational proximity, $F[1, 1134] = 2.80$, $p = .095$; virality x discrimination type, $F[2, 1134] = .56$, $p = .572$; relational proximity x discrimination type, $F[2, 1134] = .09$, $p = .914$) or three-way interaction (virality x relational proximity x discrimination type, $F[2, 1134] = .17$, $p = .844$) for shaming via commenting. There were no main effects for virality ($F[1, 1134] = 1.20$, $p = .273$) or relational proximity ($F[1, 1134] = 2.04$, $p = .153$), however there was a main

effect for discrimination type (F[2, 1134] = 15.08, p < .001; see Figure 11). This significant main effect across the racist (M = 2.12, SE = .92), sexist (M = 1.89, SE = .83), and homophobic (M = 2.02, SE = .88) discriminatory post types indicates partial support for H1, and was followed up with a post hoc Fisher's LSD test. This revealed a significant pairwise contrast between the racist and sexist conditions (t[1134] = 2.11, p = .035), but not the racist and homophobic conditions (t[1134] = 1.56, p = .120), or the sexist and homophobic conditions (t[1134] = -1.88, p = .060).

Figure 11
Graphical depiction of shaming via commenting by discrimination type

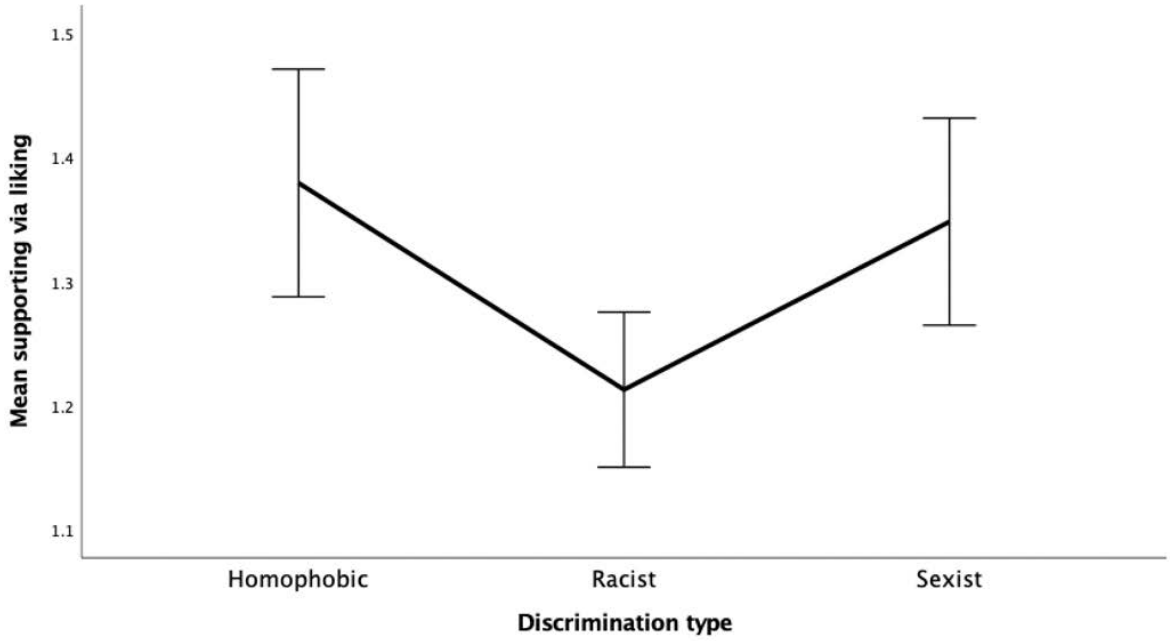


Predicting online supporting behaviours

Supporting the shamed via liking. There were no significant two-way interactions (virality x relational proximity, F[1, 1134] = .35, p = .557; virality x discrimination type, F[2, 1134] = 1.04, p = .354; relational proximity x discrimination type, F[2, 1134] = .97, p = .380) or three-way interaction (virality x relational proximity x discrimination type, F[2, 1134] = .33, p = .717) for supporting via liking. There were no main effects for virality (F[1, 1134] = 1.14, p = .286) or relational proximity (F[1, 1134] = .02, p = .879), however there was a main effect for discrimination type (F[2, 1134] = 11.15, p < .001; see Figure 12). This significant main effect across the racist (M = 1.15, SE = .32), sexist (M = 1.24, SE = .73), and homophobic (M = 1.25, SE = .34) discriminatory post types indicates partial support for H2, and was

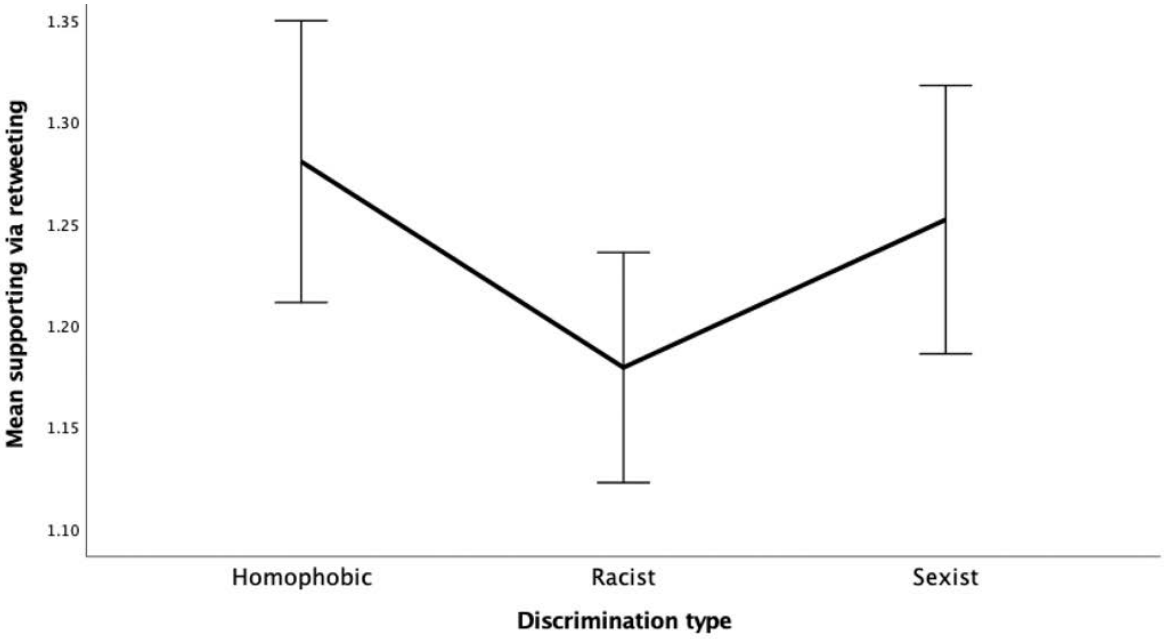
followed up with a post hoc Fisher's LSD test. This revealed significant pairwise contrasts between the racist and sexist conditions (t[1134] = -2.63, p = .009), as well as the racist and homophobic conditions (t[1134] = -2.80, p = .005), but not the sexist and homophobic conditions (t[1134] = -.59, p = .556).

Figure 12
Graphical depiction of supporting via liking by discrimination type



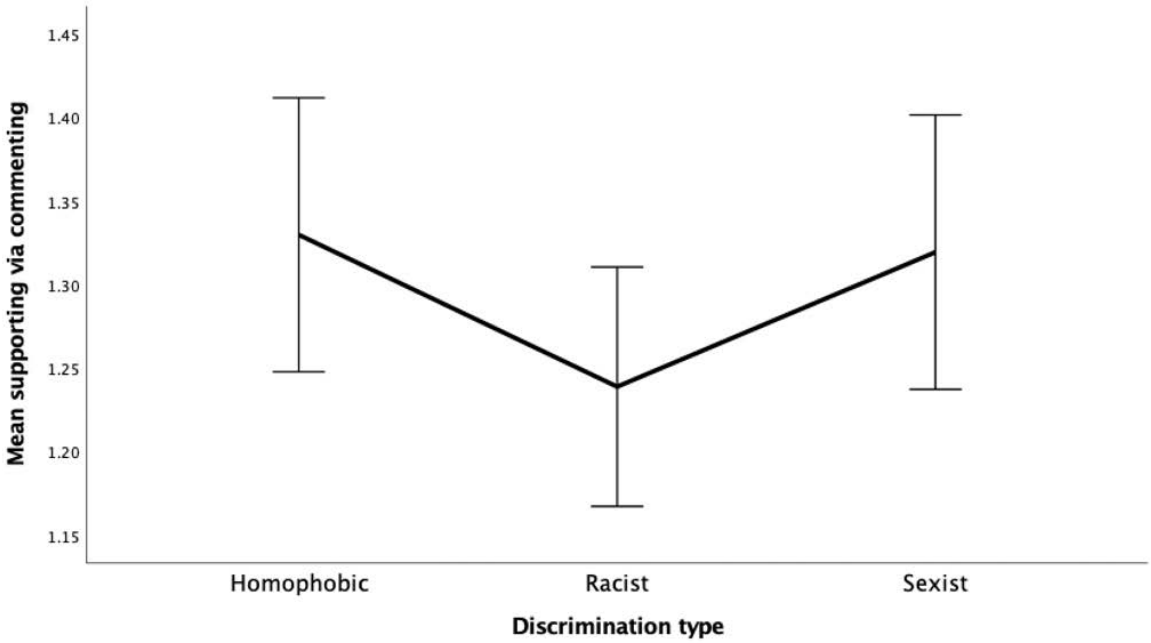
Supporting the shamed via retweeting. There were no significant two-way interactions (virality x relational proximity, F[1, 1134] = .37, p = .541; virality x discrimination type, F[2, 1134] = .30, p = .742; relational proximity x discrimination type, F[2, 1134] = 2.25, p = .105) or three-way interaction (virality x relational proximity x discrimination type, F[2, 1134] = 1.33, p = .266) for supporting via retweeting. There were no main effects for virality (F[1, 1134] = .26, p = .607) or relational proximity (F[1, 1134] = .82, p = .367), however there was a main effect for discrimination type (F[2, 1134] = 9.58, p < .001, see Figure 13). This significant main effect across the racist (M = 1.12, SE = .27), sexist (M = 1.17, SE = .28), and homophobic (M = 1.19, SE = .28) discriminatory post types indicates partial support for H2, and was followed up with a post hoc Fisher's LSD test. This revealed significant pairwise contrasts between the racist and sexist conditions (t[1134] = -2.51, p = .012), as well as the racist and homophobic conditions (t[1134] = -2.99, p = .003), but not the sexist and homophobic conditions (t[1134] = -1.07, p = .283).

Figure 13
Graphical depiction of supporting via retweeting by discrimination type



Supporting the shamed via commenting. There were no significant two-way interactions (virality x relational proximity, F[1, 1134] = .45, p = .504; virality x discrimination type, F[2, 1134] = .23, p = .794; relational proximity x discrimination type, F[2, 1134] = .46, p = .630) or three-way interaction (virality x relational proximity x discrimination type, F[2, 1134] = 2.14, p = .118) for supporting via commenting. There were no main effects for virality (F[1, 1134] = 1.80, p = .180) or relational proximity (F[1, 1134] = .05, p = .823), however there was a main effect for discrimination type (F[2, 1134] = 5.48, p = .004; see Figure 14). This significant main effect across the racist (M = 1.16, SE = .31), sexist (M = 1.21, SE = .32), and homophobic (M = 1.22, SE = .32) discriminatory post types indicates partial support for H2, and was followed up with a post hoc Fisher's LSD test. This revealed significant pairwise contrasts between the racist and sexist conditions (t[1134] = -2.18, p = .030), as well as the racist and homophobic conditions (t[1134] = -2.36, p = .019), but not the sexist and homophobic conditions (t[1134] = -.36, p = .717).

Figure 14
Graphical depiction of supporting via commenting by discrimination type



Discussion

The overall purpose of this study was to assess the relationship between participants' likelihood to engage in additional online shaming or supporting behaviours (via liking, retweeting, and making additional comments) when responding to vignettes depicting an individual being shamed online via comment for making a discriminatory online post, which featured the following experimental manipulations: the post was depicted as either a) viral or not viral, b) a hypothetical friend or stranger to the participant had already shamed the individual via comment, and c) the shamed discriminatory post was either racist, sexist, or homophobic in nature. Results revealed a significant main effect for virality and shaming via retweeting, with those in the viral condition more likely to retweet with shaming intent than their counterparts in the non-viral condition. There were also significant main effects for post discrimination type and most criterion variables, namely shaming via liking, shaming via commenting, supporting via liking, supporting via retweeting, and supporting via commenting, with participants more likely to shame and less likely to support the racist post compared to the sexist and homophobic posts. However, there were no significant main effects for a) virality and shaming via liking, shaming via commenting, supporting via liking, supporting via retweeting, and supporting via commenting, b) the relational proximity condition and any criterion variables, and c) post discrimination type and shaming via

retweeting. Combined, the findings of this study demonstrate partial support for both H1 and H2. These findings are contextualised and explored in further detail below.

Contextualising the current findings

Mean scores for the criterion variables indicated that on average, participants overall 'somewhat disagreed' that they would like the shaming comments in the vignette scenarios, and 'disagreed' that they would retweet the shaming comments with the intent of further contributing to shaming the individual or contribute to the shaming via their own additional shaming comment. As for supporting behaviours, participants were more against contributing to supporting the shamed characters than they were against contributing to any additional shaming of said individuals, with participants 'strongly disagreeing', on average, that they would ever like or retweet the shamed individual's original post to support them or choose to comment on the post to support or defend them in some way. Collectively, this indicates an overall trend in the current sample against engaging in online shaming via liking, retweeting, and commenting altogether, as well as participating in defending those subjected to online shaming through these same means, although participants were overall more likely to engage in online shaming than demonstrate support. These mean scores also demonstrate a trend of participants being more likely to engage in passive forms of online shaming and supporting, such as liking, in comparison to more active, time-consuming forms of shaming and supporting, such as commenting. Interestingly, retweeting had the lowest mean scores comparatively for both shaming and supporting behaviours, which may be due to individuals not wanting these shaming cases to be visible on their personal social media pages, and therefore be associated with them when others view their pages. Instead, individuals may just tend to find liking and commenting behaviours to be more useful tools for exhibiting their desired objectives when responding to such instances of online shaming.

The demographic data revealed that around one-fifth of participants indicated having been shamed online before, and slightly under one-fifth of participants indicated having shamed someone else online before, both of which have been reported as being higher and lower in past comparable research (e.g., Finn, 2004; MacDonald & Roberts-Pittman, 2010; Xiao & Wong, 2013), but similar to more recent findings (Muir et al., in press). With around one-fifth of participants reporting being unsure whether they had been subjected to online shaming before, and approximately one-tenth of participants reporting being unsure whether they had subjected anyone else to online shaming before, this suggests there may

currently still be a lack in understanding within the public surrounding exactly what circumstances constitute online shaming.

Findings in the context of the literature

Virality of the shamed post

There was a significant main effect for virality and shaming via retweeting, with those in the viral condition more likely to engage in online shaming via retweeting than their counterparts in the non-viral condition. The direction of this relationship is the opposite to that of Sawaoka and Monin's (2018) empirical findings. However, unlike the current study, Sawaoka and Monin's (2018) study featured participants' perceptions towards both the shamed and shamers as criterion variables, instead of assessing how participants might choose to respond to these instances of viral or non-viral online shaming. As such, this may indicate that while attitudes towards those involved in online shaming cases might be more favourable towards the shamed than the shamers in viral situations, actual additional shaming behaviours may still abide by what prior related group psychology literature would suggest, further increasing as virality increases (i.e., Asch, 1956; Bakshy et al., 2012; Carlsmith et al., 2002; Cialdini, 1993; Sampson, 2012; Tetlock et al., 2000). This is further substantiated by Puryear's (2020) research, which similarly found that participants had a greater 'desire to act' in viral compared to non-viral online shaming scenarios.

Interestingly, there was only a significant difference across the viral and non-viral conditions in the current findings when the criterion variable was shaming via retweeting, and not shaming via liking, shaming via commenting, or any of the supporting behaviours. Whilst this may be a spurious finding specific to the current sample, this could also instead indicate that different types of 'pile-on' online shaming behaviours are impacted by post virality in different ways. That is, since retweeting differs from liking and commenting in that the shamed post becomes more immediately visible on an individual's Twitter page once it has been retweeted, perhaps when shamed posts 'go viral' and have already been condemned by many others, individuals are then more personally incentivised to visibly demonstrate their condemnation to their followers through retweeting, essentially engaging in online shaming as a form of virtue signalling. Alternatively, perhaps the effect of virality is simply larger for shaming via retweeting than it is for the other response behaviours, and a larger sample size and statistical power is needed to demonstrate this relationship in the liking and commenting criterion variables.

Another noteworthy point is that Johnen et al. (2018) found significant differences in willingness to shame via commenting between what they defined as 'medium' virality (i.e., 53-510 shares, comments, and likes) and 'high' virality conditions (i.e., 513-5010 shares, comments, and likes), but not between medium virality and low virality (i.e., 5-51 shares, comments, and likes) conditions. Given the viral and non-viral conditions used in the current study would be classified as 'medium' and 'low' virality by Johnen et al.'s (2018) parameters, and that significant differences for post virality were also not found for shaming via commenting or liking in the current study, it is plausible that the parameters of post virality depicted in vignettes need to be expanded to not only be more ecologically valid, but also to be able to detect significant effects when examining liking and commenting behaviours specifically.

Relational proximity to the existing shamer

There were no significant main effects for relational proximity and any of the criterion variables, meaning that regardless of whether the vignettes' shamed characters were depicted as having already been shamed by a hypothetical friend or stranger, participants were no more or less likely to indicate shaming or supporting behaviours. This is contrary to what was predicted in the hypotheses, and what related theoretical and empirical literature would suggest (i.e., Bahns et al., 2017; Bastiaensens et al., 2014; Brady et al., 2020; DeScioli & Kurzban, 2013; Jones et al., 2011; McGarty et al., 1993; Patterson et al., 2017; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Whilst it is possible that perhaps the identity of existing shamers is simply not a factor that bears any weight on how individuals choose to respond to discriminatory online posts that have been subjected to online shaming, it is also possible that this effect does exist, and that this manipulation simply failed in the present study. For instance, the data was quite positively skewed, meaning that overall, the participants in this study were unlikely to engage in shaming or supporting behaviours at all. This lack of variance across the data makes it more difficult to detect significant effects between group conditions, as participants were unlikely to engage with the posts regardless of whether they were in the friend or stranger condition.

It is also possible that the specifics of the relational proximity manipulation were missed, or that it was too difficult for participants to imagine how they would have responded to the posts had they instead been genuine online shaming scenarios they had come across in real life. Despite attempts to make the vignettes as ecologically valid as

possible, hypothetical online posts are unlikely to have been able to induce emotional investment in the same way that a real shaming scenario including actual friends would. There has been longstanding debate among scholars regarding whether to employ hypothetical scenarios like the ones used in this study at all, with criticisms made surrounding whether hypothetical scenarios are truly indicative of how individuals tend to behave in real life (e.g., Yun & Park, 2011). Glynn et al. (1997) also argue the importance of measuring actual behaviours of interest rather than self-reported intentions to engage in said behaviours. Regardless, future research is needed for any definitive conclusions to be drawn here.

Post discrimination type

There were significant main effects for post discrimination type and most criterion variables (i.e., shaming via liking, shaming via commenting, supporting via liking, supporting via retweeting, and supporting via commenting), with participants more likely to shame and less likely to support the racist post compared to the sexist and homophobic posts. Whilst these comparisons between post discrimination types were more exploratory in nature, they do align with Sawaoka and Monin's (2018) research, who reported that hypothetical racist posts that had been subjected to online shaming were, on average, perceived by participants as more offensive than a sexist equivalent. The pattern of findings regarding post discrimination type in the current study also aligns with Kian et al.'s (2011) empirical research, which reported that posters on internet message boards would regularly be called out for making racist remarks, however sexist and homophobic statements were seldom met with any resistance from other message board members. The rise of #BlackLivesMatter (see Hoffman et al., 2016), an online social movement against racism originating around 2014 that has been reignited in more recent years by outrage over racist police brutality, may also help to explain why participants reported being more likely to shame and less likely to support racist over sexist and homophobic posts. Whilst it may be true that individuals genuinely find racism to be more inherently inducing of outrage and deserving of condemnation online than other forms of discrimination, arguments have also been made to suggest that speaking up against racism on online platforms, such as with #BlackLivesMatter, is used as a means of virtue signalling and can be ultimately more performative in nature (see McClanahan, 2021), rather than a genuine desire to contribute to meaningful social change. Whilst participants' internal motivations behind the ways in which they responded

to the differing discrimination types cannot be extrapolated from the current study, the findings do still provide preliminary empirical evidence towards the notion that individuals are more likely to shame and less likely to support certain types of discriminatory online posts.

Strengths, limitations, and future research

The current paper extends on the existing literature by exploring the utility of multiple novel contextual predictors of online shaming, rendering the originality of this study a strength, as well as addressing some of the previously mentioned limitations of prior related studies. Some methodological strengths include pilot testing the vignettes and criterion items, reducing potential confounding factors in the vignettes by utilising gender neutral names and ambiguous profile pictures, examining both shaming and supporting behaviours, including multiple types of online behaviours as criterions, designing vignettes that both looked authentic and were based on real discriminatory posts, randomisation of vignettes both within- and between-groups, and partialing out the effects of multiple statistically associated variables. During data collection, this study was also advertised to participants as 'online engagement' instead of 'online shaming' to minimise any potential biases that may accompany perpetrating shaming behaviours online.

Whilst this study was not confined to strict eligibility criteria, a university student participation pool was used for data collection, and the generalisability of the current sample is hindered by being skewed towards being lower-aged, Caucasian, Australian, women who were students and employed. The current sample was also largely unlikely to engage in either online shaming or supporting behaviours, meaning the overall spread of scores could be improved to capture a more diverse range of experiences. Moreover, given the findings featured several results that were approaching but not quite meeting statistical significance, it is plausible that more statistical power, and therefore a larger sample, was needed to detect smaller effects. Future research should aim to achieve larger and more representative samples, both demographically and in terms of capturing more responses from those more likely to engage in shaming or supporting behaviours online (e.g., recruiting participants from 'naming and shaming' Facebook pages).

This paper is also strengthened by using specific hypothetical shaming scenarios in the vignettes for participants to respond to, as otherwise participants might have had various differing examples of online shaming in mind when responding to the criterion items

(in line with the availability heuristic; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974), which increases the ecological validity of the current study. However, given the lack of significant findings across most of the main effects for virality and relational proximity, it is possible that the manipulations across the vignettes failed due to methodological restrictions. As previously mentioned, it would be beneficial to further assess any effects of post virality, but across a larger range of different virality levels. It would also be helpful to measure actual online shaming participation rather than self-reported intentions to engage in online shaming in response to hypothetical scenarios. Future research could instead explore the utility of the contextual factors from the current study using a different methodological approach, such as qualitative interviews exploring prior online shaming engagement across differing contexts. It would also be beneficial to examine additional contextual nuances in future research, whether that be again using experimental methods, or through the employment of alternative methodologies like interviewing. Examples of contextual nuances yet to be explored include potential differences across shamed individuals with differing demographic backgrounds or various other individual differences (e.g., younger vs. older shamed individuals; celebrities vs. everyday people; differences across social statuses, genders, ethnicities, etc.), and online shaming across differing social media platforms. Moreover, given discriminatory online posts are only one example of the many perceived and real norm violations that can result in online shaming, future researchers should also endeavour to explore contextual nuances across differing norm violation types. Additional responses to online shaming cases beyond liking, sharing, and commenting should also be explored as criterions of interest, particularly those commonly associated with more harm and that tend to be more hostile in nature (e.g., doxing; escalating into various offline behaviours).

Implications and conclusions

This study offers several methodological implications for related future research endeavours. Firstly, whilst the current research has empirically demonstrated the utility of virality as a predictor of shaming via retweeting, suggestions for future research have also been provided to further assess this effect with other types of online shaming behaviours. Similarly, recommendations regarding how to test the possible effect of relational proximity in future research have also been put forward, as well as additional contextual predictors that could be fruitful avenues for forthcoming studies. As for practical implications, unpacking the contextual nuances of online shaming is important for informing educators,

those tasked with intervention efforts, policy makers, and other relevant service providers. For example, social media companies could implement interventions whereby already viral online shaming cases are detected and flagged with a pop-up statement to those trying to reshare the post, such as “This post has already received significant negative attention. Are you sure you want to reshare this?”. Additionally, the current findings can also provide the general public with preliminary evidence pertaining to the some of the many contextual nuances of online shaming engagement. For instance, it would be beneficial for social media users to be aware that there are certain types of discriminatory remarks that when posted online, even if intended as a joke, might result in them being more likely to be subjected to online shaming.

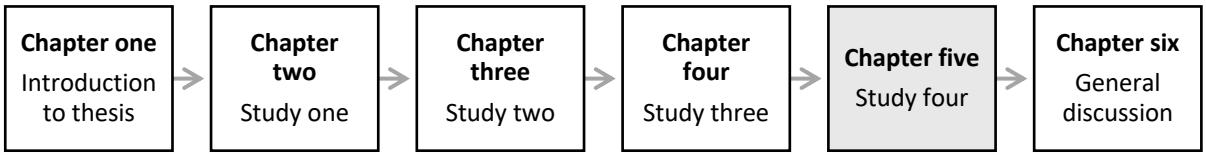
Collectively, this experimental study offers an original contribution to the currently sparse body of online shaming research, with the findings of this study providing some preliminary insights into three different contextual nuances pertaining to the online shaming of discriminatory online posts, and their predictive utility in relation to both additional shaming and supporting behaviours. The current findings can be used as a starting point for future research avenues, as well as inform understandings within those involved in related education or intervention efforts and policy decisions, related service providers, and the general public.

Chapter five: A qualitative exploration of the experience and associated impacts of being shamed online

Introduction to chapter five

In the previous chapter, we explored some of the contextual nuances that may influence how people choose to respond to instances of online shaming. Before that, we discovered how online shaming is depicted in the media, saw empirical support for multiple individual factors that can predict online shaming engagement, and had a glimpse into public opinions about online shaming. Now, moving on from the focus seen in the last two studies on predicting online shaming, the fourth and final study of this thesis instead focuses on the victims of online shaming. In studies one and two we learned that there is an understanding depicted in the media, as well as echoed in public discourse, that online shaming is a negative experience for those who are subjected to it, and is one that has many destructive effects. However, the specifics of these negative impacts were seldom elaborated on, with existing knowledge on the impacts of online shaming largely anecdotal and vague. This brings us to study four, the focus of which was to empirically examine the lived experience and associated impacts of online shaming victimisation. This chapter has been submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal. A copy of the ethics approval letter relating to the study in this chapter (and accompanying approval letters for ethics amendments) can be found in Appendices A, B, C, and E, respectively. The social media research page made for study recruitment, recruitment materials, participant information and consent forms, and data collection materials can be found in Appendices G, P, Q, and R, respectively. A copy of distress resources provided to participants can be found in Appendix S. Figure 15 demonstrates where this chapter fits within the overall structure of this thesis.

Figure 15
Flow diagram of thesis structure: Study four



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Abstract

Online shaming, where people engage in calling out perceived wrongdoings on the internet as a means of social policing, is now a widespread and pervasive worldwide phenomenon. While anecdotal evidence and theoretical speculation suggests the consequences of online shaming for those subjected to it can be extensive, long-lasting, and largely disproportionate, no known empirical research on this experience has been completed to date. Guided by a social constructionism epistemology, the current exploratory, qualitative interview study features findings from an inductive thematic analysis exploring how 22 individuals (aged 18-49) subjected to online shaming describe their shaming experiences and various associated impacts. While there were many unique experiences across participants' stories, the current findings illuminate the commonalities, including: emotional reactions and thought processes after the shaming events occurred; various ways of reacting to being shamed online; changes to perceptions of the self, other people, and online spaces; participants struggling with how they understood their experiences, with many describing competing beliefs and difficulties in consolidating how exactly they felt about their online shaming events; beneficial coping mechanisms; and some opportunities for growth that were identified as positive by-products of being shamed online. Overall, being someone who had been shamed online was constructed as a nuanced, but largely negative experience with adverse consequences that varied in intensity, frequency, and duration. Understanding the experiences and impacts of online shaming is important for informing public discourse (particularly those who engage in or are subjected to online shaming), as well as service providers, policymakers, and educators.

Keywords: online shaming, public shaming, qualitative study, interviews, inductive thematic analysis

Introduction

Public shaming has long preceded the emergence of the internet, with well-known historical examples including the stockade, public floggings, the Salem witch trials, and scarlet letters (Ronson, 2015; Solove, 2007). Whilst these traditional forms of public shaming were largely eradicated in the nineteenth century (Ronson, 2015), there have also been contemporary efforts to reintroduce public shaming as a way of punishing individuals and acting as a deterrent for the wider community. Examples include the 'perpetrator walk' used in several countries, publishing the identities of individuals previously convicted of sex crimes (Cheung, 2014), and court orders involving individuals making public apologies or confessing their crimes on television (Klonick, 2016). However, with the proliferation of internet technologies and digital communication, public shaming has since "evolved and made a fierce comeback in the digital age" (Gallardo, 2017, p. 725). Now, with current digital devices and the use of social media, it is easier than ever to publicly condemn other individuals all across the world (Ingraham & Reeves, 2016).

While there is no singularly agreed upon definition of online shaming within the literature or in contemporary societal discourse, it can broadly be considered an umbrella term for behaviours involving individuals or groups engaging in social policing by shaming others via the internet over perceived transgressions, which Cheung (2014, p. 302) describes as "for the purpose of humiliation, social condemnation and punishment". Moreover, much like other manifestations of public shaming, central to shaming on the internet is the practice of voicing social disapproval (Braithwaite, 1989). Although online shaming bears some conceptual overlap with other forms of online victimisation, such as cyberbullying and online harassment, in that they can all involve "repeated verbal aggression" and "threats of violence, privacy invasions, reputation-harming lies, calls for strangers to physically harm victims, and technological attacks" (Klonick, 2016, p. 1034), it is the enforcement of real or perceived violations of social norms that sets online shaming apart from other online phenomena. These social norm violations can manifest in both offline (e.g., poor driving) and online situations (e.g., making discriminatory comments online), and the act being shamed can be illegal (e.g., theft) or legal (e.g., unsatisfactory customer service; Klonick, 2016; Skoric et al., 2010). Generally, the online shaming itself involves revealing and disseminating the shaming information, before varying degrees of online aggression and outbursts from others, known as the 'pile on', follow suit (e.g.,

threats of violence, insults; Laidlaw, 2017). Online shaming is mainly practiced via the creation of posts, comments, messages, likes, and memes shared about or even directly to the shamed individual online (Billingham & Parr, 2019; Klonick, 2016; Laidlaw, 2017). This may also include circulating images, videos, and personal information of the targeted individuals, and sometimes also extends into the offline world as well (e.g., stalking, destruction of personal property; Cheung, 2014; Skoric et al., 2010; Solove, 2007).

Some scholars note that online shaming can serve a positive social function, with the people who partake in online shaming feeling a responsibility to assist in upholding normative behaviours and maintaining social order, meaning online shaming can be conceptualised as serving justified reasons (Billingham & Parr, 2019; Solove, 2007). Further, Crockett (2017) explains how online shaming can be important for holding people accountable for their actions and deterring other norm violations in the future (e.g., exposing and discouraging sexist and racist behaviour; Billingham & Parr, 2019). With the proliferation of the internet and social media particularly, many individuals are now participating in peer surveillance as a form of social control (Skoric et al., 2010), with institutional regulation no longer a prerequisite for social norm enforcement (Klonick, 2016). With this, Crockett (2017) argues that online shaming affords many typically disadvantaged and powerless groups a voice, which has links to fostering community involvement and individual empowerment (Skoric et al., 2010). However, there is also a multitude of scholarly and anecdotal discourse surrounding online shaming to suggest the negative ramifications far outweigh any positive outcomes.

Ingraham and Reeves (2016, p. 456) summarise the negative impact contemporary shaming can have on individuals, stating, “the police and the courts are often unable to mete out punishments as severe or intimidating as the ostracism, job loss, death threats, and physical attacks that can accompany what Urry (1999) calls our increasingly mediated culture of shame”. Within the literature, in anecdotal evidence, and in media reports, online shaming victimisation has been linked to various manifestations of emotional distress (e.g., depression, anxiety, shame, regret, panic, guilt, humiliation, helplessness, insomnia, suicide; Billingham & Parr, 2019; Jacquet, 2015; Laidlaw, 2017; Muir et al., 2021; Ronson, 2015), as well as damage to personal relationships (e.g., divorce; Ronson, 2015). Discussions of the social isolation that can come with being shamed online are also common (Jacquet, 2015;

Ronson, 2015), with the shamed individual often experiencing the impulse to hide from society and withdraw socially (Solove, 2007). Online shaming is said to be a largely dehumanising experience, removing the shamed individuals' dignity, and oftentimes rendering them ineligible for redemption or the opportunity to ever participate in 'regular' society the same way again (particularly given the permanent and widespread nature of punishments in the online sphere; Ronson, 2015). With this also comes seemingly irreparable damage to one's reputation, financial losses (e.g., losing employment, ruined careers, being turned down for future job prospects), and oftentimes also a diminished outlook on the self and the world (Ronson, 2015).

Although scholars have now dedicated a considerable amount of attention to discussing online shaming victimisation and its potential consequences, no known research to date has actually provided an empirical account of these experiences. Previous empirical research on online shaming so far has largely instead focused on the perpetrators of online shaming, rather than the victims. It is essential to empirically analyse and report on the associated impacts so that a more comprehensive understanding of the potential negative consequences resulting from online shaming engagement can be established and disseminated, beyond purely anecdotal reports and theoretical speculation. This can inform public discourse, with this being particularly important for any individuals who find themselves subjected to, a perpetrator of, or a witness to online shaming- which, with the ubiquitous nature of online world today, can now be virtually anyone. Findings can also inform policy makers when deciding upon related legislation, and can be used by service providers when working with individuals subjected to online shaming, as well as those taking on related intervention or education efforts. As such, the central research question of this study was: how do individuals who have been shamed online conceptualise their experiences of online shaming and any associated impacts?

Method

Research design

An exploratory, qualitative design was used in this study to provide insight into how being shamed online is experienced, with a particular focus on any associated impacts of having been shamed online. A social constructionism epistemological position (see Burr, 1995) guided this research, following an understanding that being shamed online is a) an inherently social event involving at least two individuals (the shamed and the shamer), but

oftentimes many more, and b) understandings of online shaming events are actively constructed, and are understood in different ways by the various players involved. Further, social constructionism allows for appropriate acknowledgement of the wide-ranging accounts of online shaming experiences depicted in the dataset, and provides explanation as to how these experiences and associated impacts of being shamed are perceived differently both across participants, and by the other individuals referred to within participants' stories.

Researcher description and relationship with participants

Both SM and LR have experience in conducting qualitative research, as well as teaching qualitative research methods and supervision of research projects with qualitative designs within psychology. No participants were personally known to the researchers prior to the interviewing taking place.

Participants

The current purposive sample comprised 22 individuals self-identifying as having been subjected to online shaming (13 women and 9 men aged 18-49; *Mage* = 25 years). All participants but one resided in Australia, reported having between 10 and 20 years of formal education (*M* = 15 years), were all university students, and half were also currently employed. Participants were primarily recruited (*n* = 20) via a university participation pool where students participate in studies to gain credit as part of a course completion. Two participants were also recruited through a dedicated research page on Facebook (shared to other related pages) and received a $20 (AUD or equivalent) voucher as recognition for the time taken to participate in the study. Data collection ceased after 22 interviews when information power (see Malterud et al., 2016) was deemed sufficient in addressing the research aims (taking into consideration that whilst the interview discourse was rich, online shaming is an innately broad topic, with considerable variability in experiences across the sample).

Interview guide

The development of a semi-structured interview guide was informed by previous literature pertaining to online shaming and research on other conceptually similar experiences (e.g., cyberbullying victimisation). After rapport building, the first question asked about participants' reasons for participating in the study, before a question asking participants to detail their online shaming experiences. Further questions asked whether there were any psychological, behavioural, social, or other impacts associated with having

been shamed online. The final questions related to perceived impacts of online shaming more broadly at a societal level and how participants believed it might progress going forward into the future (the data from these last questions were not included in the current analysis as they were deemed beyond the scope of this particular paper).

Procedure

After ethics was approved by Curtin University's Human Research Ethics Committee (approval number: HRE2019-0697), the study was posted to the university participation pool and related Facebook pages. Before being interviewed, all interested participants were first directed to a participant information sheet and consent form hosted on Qualtrics.com. After ticking a box to provide informed consent and completing validity questions to ensure they understood the contents of the participant information sheet, participants were presented with demographic items to assist with sample description (including age, gender, country of residence, years of formal education, and occupation). At the end of this survey, a link to information regarding free online resources in the event of distress was also listed. After this, SM set up interview times with participants via email, with all interviews taking place either via online videocall (e.g., Zoom) or telephone. The 22 one-on-one interviews were conducted by SM between April and October of 2020, lasting between 20 and 85 minutes (*M* = 41 minutes). Interviews began with introductions, reiterating study details and providing participants with an opportunity to ask any questions, before progressing through the interview questions and related prompts. Afterwards, participants were debriefed, with a particular focus on establishing that distress had not occurred as a result of bringing up difficult experiences. Upon completion, SM provided course points for participants who were from the university participant pool, and emailed online gift cards to those not within the participant pool. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Analysis and quality

Inductive thematic analysis was conducted by SM, using an iterative approach via the steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This analysis process first included data familiarisation by reading all transcripts, with SM then coding sections of the transcripts relating to the research question (using a combination of pen and paper methods and Microsoft Word v16). Themes were then constructed from these codes by SM, with LR also reviewing themes and cross-coding sections of the dataset as a means of methodological triangulation. A reflexive journal was used by SM throughout the research process to identify

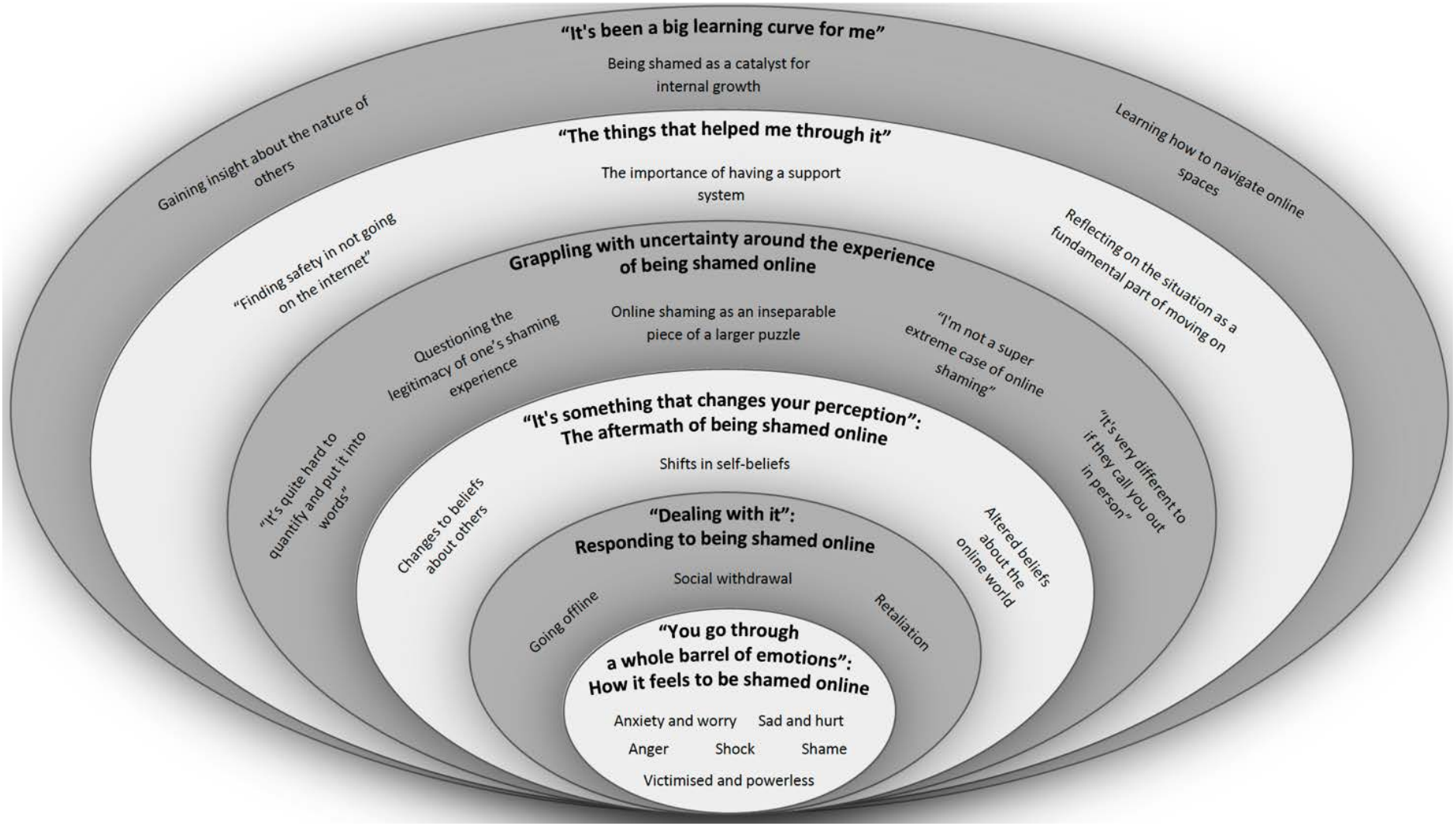
and manage inherent biases and agendas (Roulston, 2010). This entailed keeping a record of information pertaining to decisions, responses to data, and emerging ideas with the aim of increasing objectivity. An audit trail was also kept throughout the research process. At the end of each interview, all participants were offered to have a copy of their transcripts and a summary of the overall findings to review as a form of member checking.

Findings

Six overarching themes exploring participants' experiences with being shamed online were developed. Whilst each of the participants' stories of being shamed online were unique, there were also commonalities across experiences. These shared understandings are presented in the following themes: "You go through a whole barrel of emotions": How it feels to be shamed online, "Dealing with it": Responding to being shamed online, "It's something that changes your perception": The aftermath of being shamed online, Grappling with uncertainty around the experience of being shamed online, "The things that helped me through it", and "It's been a big learning curve for me". These themes are displayed visually in a thematic map (whereby the layers depicted in the map represent how some participant experiences were more immediate and overt, whilst other experiences were ones that became more apparent over time; see Figure 16), and are described in detail below. Participant quotes are identified by participant numbers (i.e., P1 refers to a quote provided by Participant 1).

Figure 16

Thematic map depicting the different layers of participants' online shaming experiences



"You go through a whole barrel of emotions": How it feels to be shamed online

This theme demonstrates the many emotional responses and thought processes participants discussed experiencing at the time of being shamed online. Whilst these perceived emotional consequences varied greatly across the dataset, most participants reported feeling many different, and oftentimes competing, emotions at once. Firstly, feelings of anxiety and worry immediately after the shaming event occurred was a central component across participants' online shaming stories, oftentimes described as a very overwhelming, and even visceral, reaction, "It was a lot of… adrenaline… a lot of anxiety, and I would get very hot and flushed… It's all over the place because you're having to deal with everything at once" (P9). For some, these feelings of being overwhelmed and not knowing how to deal with the situation escalated even further, even to the extent where suicide began to feel like the only way out, "…I felt really, really bad with myself. It made me suicidal because I was like, I can't deal with this. I don't know how to deal with this" (P17). The most recurring worry, across almost all participants' online shaming accounts, was about other people potentially witnessing the online shaming. Underlying this was the fear that one's reputation would be irreparably damaged by other people finding out about the online shaming, and that due to the nature of the online world, seemingly nothing could be done to prevent or take control of this online spread of misinformation, "…I didn't want other people to see it and have their opinion changed of me or have people think that I am this way. And then when it's out there, you just have no control over it" (P1).

Feeling sad after having been shamed online was another emotional response described by participants, and was one that was identified as being due to a number of differing reasons. For some, these feelings of sadness were associated with the specific content of the shaming comments, "…I think also, I just, I was upset that someone called me gross" (P3), or simply resulting from having been mistreated by another person, "…When someone's nasty to me it hurts… Even if I know they don't know me, I still feel bad when they do it" (P20). Some discussed that it was the fact that their shamer was not a stranger to them that was the primary cause of their emotional anguish, "…I was hurt. Because a lot of these people were my friends, I thought were my friends…" (P21). For others however, while they might not have been shamed online by their own friends or other loved ones, they still felt hurt by those close to them in other ways, "I was expecting more of [my friends] to

defend me and more to support me. But most of them stayed silent, so that was hard… Because obviously their behaviour hurt" (P18).

Several participants reported varying degrees of anger after having been shamed online. For the most part, this anger was directed towards the people responsible for the online shaming, "I remember feeling really angry and wanting to fight every single person that had commented that" (P4). This anger sometimes lingered for extended periods of time, with some eventually expressing this anger in other, unrelated situations, "…I would just become very quick to get into fights, like verbal fights, just because I had everything bottled up and no one was really helping me so any little thing ticked me off" (P13). In some instances, these feelings of frustration and reactive tendencies evolved into physical aggression, "…I became very easily triggered… one time, this guy in my school… said something really derogatory that was from a group chat… so I flipped like a dime and punched him in the face" (P21).

Some participants reflected on how surprised they felt by having been shamed online. For some, the fact that someone would shame them online at all was a complete shock to them, "I was pretty surprised… I didn't think they'd be as open to shame me like that. Having people directly post online just to be like... "Look at this faggot."… at most, we'd think they'd just DM each other" (P5). In contrast, rather than being surprised by the actions of others, some participants were instead taken off-guard by their responses to being shamed online, "…I was surprised at my level of anxiety, and crossness, and shaming, because I felt shamed by her statement" (P6). Some also reflected on how shocked they were by their own responses to the shaming, such as engaging in their own online shaming of the person who had first shamed them:

> *My intent was to let [the shamer] know that I was pissed-off with her. But… it had the potential to be shaming…That's not how I roll, because I usually sit in the spot of, you don't know what people are dealing with, so just make no comment… So that was a surprise to me. (P6)*

Unsurprisingly, many participants described feeling various degrees of shame, humiliation, and guilt after their shaming experience. This was often tied to the public nature of their shaming and subsequently feeling embarrassed by other people bearing witness to the spectacle, "…sometimes it's something you don't want to be public and it's on Facebook, when you've got all your family and stuff on there… at that time you feel like it's

the worst thing ever and it's so humiliating" (P10). These feelings of shame and embarrassment were sometimes also interconnected with a sense of personal culpability for the online shaming, which was difficult for participants to reconcile internally:

> *…I felt that I had actually done something wrong… after a while of the video existing, it got to the attention of the head of the cohort… And I don't remember why, but I felt like I was going to be told off for it. And so I was adamantly forgiving, when I didn't think I had to be. (P1)*

This clear disconnect between feeling certain emotions, such as shame or guilt after having been shamed online, and a belief that they should not have to feel this way, was also felt by others, "…I certainly felt shamed, and I was angry about feeling shamed" (P6). This demonstrates that despite feeling as though they were not at fault, many participants still felt ashamed or guilty regardless, and found difficulty in letting go of these emotions.

There was also an understanding among participants that being subjected to online shaming was an inherently unfair experience, and was one that left them feeling victimised and wrong done by, "…[it's the] confusion of "Why did [the shamer] do that to me?"... I'm so sure that I really didn't do anything wrong… it was so unwarranted… I think it is an injustice and misrepresentation of the truth" (P10). Some discussed how the shaming was not necessarily grounded in truth, yet they were subjected to a disproportionate and long-lasting 'punishment' regardless, "…[it's] really poisonous. Doesn't have any fact and it just really can go on for years… Her just being pissed at me for an afternoon, just rolled into whatever it's become" (P19). Others reflected on how this sense of injustice felt "…like an attack… It continuously feels like, society wants to keep silencing you…" (P2), and also, "…I think it's dehumanising and I think that's maybe one way to put all of it, is being shamed is being dehumanised" (P20). Underlying these shaming experiences were also feelings of powerlessness and a sense of not having agency in the situation, which was overtly recognised by some, "…you feel you have no control over it… And if there's a big sort of hive mind behind it, it's like you're being kind of ganged up on and then you can't defend yourself" (P1).

"Dealing with it": Responding to being shamed online

This theme encapsulates the various responses participants had and actions they took after having been shamed online, in an attempt to deal with it or as a result of the situation. Firstly, to cope with the online shaming, participants reported disconnecting from

the online world in a number of ways. For some, this just meant deleting the offending comment or post related to the shaming, in an attempt to prevent any further 'pile on', "…I ended up deleting the comment because I was like, it's not worth it, because people were hammering me" (P4). For others, this meant staying away from or even deleting the social media platform in which the shaming had occurred, "I took Facebook off my fucking screen, my home screen on my phone…. and I didn't check it", and for others, needing to stay away from online spaces altogether, "…I just went completely vacant. I just ghosted everyone so to speak. I also stayed away from… the internet in general at the time" (P15). Central to these experiences appears to be a fear of additional shaming occurring, with going offline seen by participants as a means of self-protection. For most however, this avoidance of the digital world was only temporary, "It definitely negatively impacted my experience on these sites, but not to the point where I'd ever get off them completely or condemn them… I would have to distance myself for a bit before I could jump back on" (P16). Nevertheless, re-joining the online world after taking a break also meant that for some participants, this just opened them up to being shamed online again, " …I found myself uninstalling the apps and feeling incredibly bad about myself. And over a period of time, I'd reinstall the apps… and the same thing would happen" (P20).

Many participants reported going through a period of withdrawing themselves from those around them after their online shaming events. For some, this social avoidance only extended to certain individuals, "[I was] more reserved. Well, around my friends. Around my family… it wasn't that bad" (P13), with others finding themselves wanting to disconnect from everyone, "…I didn't really want to talk to anyone [due to being] quite upset" (P11). Some participants noted that it was wanting to evade their shamers that led them to avoiding certain situations. Whilst the avoidance of others was a temporary shift in behaviour for most participants, withdrawal was also sometimes permanent, and came at a personal cost:

> *…the pathway that I was going through for [elite sporting] was... That was my dream for a long time… at my training sessions… [the shamer's] family was there. And then it all was integrated, and it was too much… I left [the sport] because of [the online shaming]…That was just too much for me to deal with… (P7)*

There were many discussions surrounding the idea of retaliation in some way after having been shamed online. For some, standing up for themselves was integral in ensuring

they were not perceived by others as a victim, ultimately taking action to protect their own reputation:

> *At the time the most prevalent thing in my mind would have been either saying something that put [the shamer] down, or just made me not the person who is being passive or seen as the downtrodden, or the dejected… the focus was mainly on making sure that my name was clear of any slander, and also just standing up for myself… (P9)*

Some participants explained having never retaliated, and still standing by this decision now, "You never get aggressive with these people, you never engage with them" (P16). However, others who had attempted to defend themselves later came to regret this decision, "…I kept trying to make them feel what they were making me feel, but then they'd come back with something 10 times worse" (P7). In contrast, others regretted not having stood up for themselves, "I probably should have stood up for myself, to at least have defended my own honour in that regard… I think if I had, the problem would have been less severe" (P15). Interestingly, there were also some participants who did not retaliate against the shamer themselves, but expressed resisting in other ways in an attempt to somehow counter, or reconcile, the shaming experience, "…I got so sick of it that I just went along with it, I was like, "Oh you think I'm gross?… I'll give you an excuse to look more"… I would try to one up them" (P8). Some also described attempting to counteract their shaming by instead spreading some positivity, "…after that, I thought, you know what? Fuck this, we need to be kind to each other. I think the very next day [after being shamed] when I went to work I gave out chocolates… My act of resistance" (P6).

"It's something that changes your perception": The aftermath of being shamed online

This theme explores how after being shamed online, participants experienced shifts in various beliefs and former understandings, which they attributed to their shaming experience. Firstly, many participants described a shift in their sense of self after being subjected to online shaming. Being shamed led to participants beginning to question themselves, as well as their actions, with some highlighting the difficulty in resisting internalising the negative evaluations from others, "…the gaslighting, it doesn't make anyone feel good about themselves… you start to believe the other person… I wasn't happy with myself at that point because I was like, what if I did something wrong?" (P11). Whilst these destabilised self-perceptions and stages of self-doubt described among participants

were often mitigated over time, negative self-beliefs were sometimes also tied to long-lasting and harmful impacts:

> *…[After being shamed online about my body] it definitely made me feel I was too big or I was not enough for society… so then I would start to starve myself… to make myself look skinnier… my immune system's not that good anymore and it's because of how I treated my body back then. I'm very weak these days and I think it's just, I haven't been able to fully grow compared to others because I was giving myself no nutrients… (P13)*

When participants spoke about how they felt about other people after having been shamed, there were some notable differences. For some, being shamed simply further cemented existing pessimistic views about the nature of others, "…I've always known that people can be really cruel… so it just validated what I already thought" (P3), whereas others reflected on a newfound wariness of people and reluctance to put trust in others going forward. For some, this scepticism and mistrust only extended to those who shared certain characteristics with their shamers:

> *…I never thought of myself as one of those jaded people who really dislikes men, but I'm realising that I have got a bit of that and that's something that I'm actually personally trying to fix because not all men are C-U-N-Ts. So I think that that [being shamed online by men has] definitely built, not a hatred, but just a dislike of men that I never had before. (P2)*

For others, being shamed online led to proceeding with caution with everyone in general, "I started to have trust issues with people and I thought everyone was against me" (P13). Several participants also reflected on the impact being shamed online had on their existing relationships:

> *... It's still impacting the relationship I have with my parents now… they didn't understand… they didn't speak English, so they didn't know what was happening, and they never really had social media. I felt like I couldn't go to them for help… So it divided my relationship with them. (P8)*

For some, where a loved one was the person responsible for their shaming, this also had detrimental impacts on their relationship with that person. Sometimes this meant the end of the relationship with the shamer altogether, "Our friendship, it was definitely left beyond being repaired to me… I wasn't able to see him in the same way…" (P18). However,

there were also others who attempted to repair this relationship, at least to some extent, "…it's something that changes your perception of someone… Kind of forgiven, kind of haven't" (P7).

Participants also reflected on how their beliefs surrounding the internet, especially social media, had changed since being shamed online. Central to these beliefs was an understanding that the digital world is not a safe place to be, with social media use having the potential to lead to both emotional and physical harm, " …[being shamed online] opened the door to seeing how people get really upset about this stuff. And people then go ahead and hurt themselves… I can see how people get hooked in" (P6). For many, being subjected to online scrutiny led to a fear of it happening again, subsequently resulting in a lasting reluctance to post on social media, "I haven't posted anything for years… I think in a way I'm trying to protect myself… Sometimes I'll think about posting something but then I'll be scared to do it…" (P8). Some chose to still use social media going forward, but in a more self-censored way. For instance, some described becoming more careful about the type of information they willingly disclosed on the internet, "…I became much more cautious online. I tried my best not to share my personal stuff with people… anything I thought could be used against me…" (P18). However, others described no longer posting online publicly at all, now only using social media as a tool for personal communication, "The only ways I really interact now is on Messenger through Facebook for my friends and things like that…" (P3).

Grappling with uncertainty around the experience of being shamed online

This theme explores the uncertainties participants expressed relating to identifying as somebody who had been shamed online. For instance, whilst most participants were reflective and candid in describing their shaming experiences, some recognised the shaming did indeed have an impact in some way but had difficulty in identifying exactly what these impacts were, or at least in how to articulate them, "I think that it probably has [changed the way I view myself], but I'm still in a confused state about that. I'm not sure how it has, but I know it has" (P2).

Throughout some interviews, participants questioned the legitimacy of their experience of being someone who had been shamed online. For instance, some alluded to a belief that there are 'right and wrong' ways of being shamed, or certain parameters surrounding what is normal or expected of somebody in these circumstances, "I'm sorry if it's too niche of a thing for this study… I don't know if that's the right answer" (P1). There

appeared to be a belief among some participants that there is a certain type of online shaming experience that is considered 'normal', with some expressing concern over how their own shaming stories measured up in comparison, inevitably questioning the value in sharing their experiences:

> *…[before the interview] it occurred to me that, obviously my experience was unique… I also think my outlook is maybe also strange… it overall contributed to a positive outcome in me, which is a person I enjoy being today, which… is maybe not what I would imagine most people experience… [I was] worrying about how valuable what I can discuss with you here [in the interview] would be. (P15)*

When explaining the impacts associated with their online shaming experiences, participants sometimes found it difficult to definitively attribute certain outcomes solely to the shaming experience. For instance, some participants noted believing certain behaviours and aspects of their current belief systems to be resulting, at least partly, from their shaming experiences, but also acknowledging there was no way for them to ever know if they would have still been that way regardless, "I am a naturally reserved person, so I don't know if I could say definitively that it's online shaming that's done that to me. But I would certainly say it's probably an aspect that would impact how reserved I am, even more" (P9). Moreover, oftentimes the impacts of, or responses to, being shamed were exacerbated by other life circumstances:

> *I was too embarrassed to say anything because I felt like I'd done the wrong thing, and I felt I'd been a slut. I grew up in a conservative family, and so I felt like my behaviour was really inappropriate and was really wrong, so I thought it was all my fault. And then I just didn't want to feel judged by my family, or that community. (P14)*

Not only did other life experiences seem to intensify the shaming experience for some participants, but being shamed was also linked to worsening other aspects of participants' lives, effectively making this negative relationship a reciprocal one:

> *I found that after I'd had a shaming experience that it would fuel my depression… And maybe it's a bit of a chicken and egg thing because being shamed is fuelling [the depression], but it's not actually the cause of it either. It's always been there. (P20)*

Participants sometimes made remarks about their experiences not being as serious or as damaging as they could have been. Many enforced the viewpoint that online shaming

cases exist along a spectrum of severity, and by participants identifying themselves at the lesser end of this continuum, they effectively minimised their own shaming stories through the belief that others also subjected to online shaming must be 'worse off', "…I was thinking about other people who have experienced online shaming, and how their experiences are probably different, and maybe much more awful than mine" (P15). Some also reflected on how their shaming experience would have been more hurtful had they been shamed online about matters more personal to them, further reinforcing the belief that whilst being shamed online is largely a negative experience regardless, it can seemingly always be worse, "…I feel happy that they weren't racist, because all of us are Asian. So I was like, "I hope it's not about race and stuff."… [I got a] sense of relief when I realised it wasn't [about race]" (P5).

Participants also contemplated how their shaming experiences may have been different if they had been shamed in person instead of in an online setting. For some, they believed being shamed face-to-face might have been worse, with the idea that online shaming can feel less "real" than being shamed face-to-face, and therefore making it easier to disconnect from emotionally, "…it probably would've hurt me a little bit more if it was in person" (P12). Further, some pointed out how, unlike online shaming, in-person shaming can escalate to physical conflict, "Face-to-face definitely would be a lot more confronting in terms of the psychological effects and physical because obviously… you're not behind the keyboard, you could punch someone…" (P9). However, other participants believed that being shamed online instead posed additional challenges that made it more difficult to deal with than in-person shaming, highlighting not only how online shaming leaves a permanent digital trail that is seemingly inescapable, but also that some instances of shaming would never have actually happened at all in person, as well as how online shaming opens one up to a much wider audience, "…if it's face-to-face, you can just walk away from it, whereas when it's online, the only option is to deactivate things… but even then I can go back onto it and it will still be there…" (P7), also, "…you likely wouldn't say that to someone's face, I think it gives people a platform to be assholes" (P4), and, "…when things like that happen in person, it's just yourself and the other person… whereas when it's online… anyone who are friends can view it so you have a much wider audience" (P22).

“The things that helped me through it”

This theme presents the ways in which participants managed to cope with their shaming experiences. Firstly, having a support system to lean on after being shamed online was seen as instrumental, which included receiving support mostly from friends and family members, but sometimes professionals like teachers or therapists as well. For some, this just meant having somebody there who would listen, “…having people to talk to about it. That’s what helped me through it” (P11), or having others step in to defend them from the shaming, “…all my friends jumped on so quickly to defend me, that made me feel really supported, and it made me be like, "No, this isn’t true about me. This is just someone being a troll and it’s irrelevant"” (P3). On the other hand, some participants faced barriers to receiving support, such as not wanting to tell others about what had happened due to worry of further consequences or fears surrounding how they would be perceived, “…I wasn’t supposed to have social media. If my mum found out, she would’ve been really mad...” (P17). Further, some felt they did not have access to a supportive network at all, making an already difficult situation even harder to deal with, “I was feeling very alone. I felt like no one was really there to support me properly. And when I did have people there… They would just say to me, “Oh, don’t worry about it.”…” (P13).

Many participants described the benefit of staying away from social media or the online world in general after being shamed. Central to this was the notion of keeping any reminders of the shaming “out of sight, out of mind” to be able to cope, “…I found safety in not going on the internet... I think it’s important to try and find safety in those times” (P15). For others however, staying offline was only part of the solution, with some needing additional distractions to keep their mind off it, “…I was using things like exercise to not think about it… or I found myself just burying myself in uni work to shut it off” (P20). For participants, it was oftentimes a combination of different coping strategies, and not just one in isolation, that ultimately helped them deal with their shaming experiences.

Another approach to reconciling the emotional impacts associated with being shamed was participants taking time to reflect on or reframing the event in their minds. For instance, participants discussed how trying to understand the shaming from the shamers’ perspectives made it easier for them to move on, “… now understanding that [the shamers were] just doing it because they don’t understand [and not to be malicious] makes me feel better…” (P5). Further, participants also highlighted the importance of releasing any

resentment held against their shamers, however this was sometimes easier said than done, "…I still hold a grudge against some people, which I should probably just forgive and not care… I'm not going to be able to move on if I just keep holding on" (P8). Sometimes forgiveness also meant forgiving oneself, "…I think in retrospect, now that I'm older, I think now that it wasn't entirely my fault" (P14). Collectively, there is a broader understanding here that reflection is something that comes not only with time, but also considerable, and deliberate, introspection.

"It's been a big learning curve for me"

This final theme explores participant sentiments surrounding how, despite online shaming being an overall negative experience, there were also some positive outcomes stemming from being shamed. Firstly, participants reflected on how being shamed online gave them insight about themselves, and overall helped them to grow as people. Multiple participants discussed how despite the negatives associated with being shamed, they were actually "kind of glad it happened", "…I wanted to… be more independent… a bit stronger, and a bit better… And so from [being shamed], I had the motivation to become better… it contributed to how I am now, which is a person that I like" (P15).

Several participants also noted appreciating how being shamed online had taught them a lot about the motivations of others, and how to successfully navigate interacting with other people going forward, "…I've been reading a lot of… psychological books to help with understanding people… It's pushing me towards a phase where I wanted to understand how people think and why they think that way… I used it as a lesson" (P8). Others discussed how being shamed led to them reflecting on how they now perceive and interact with those around them, "…a huge growth for me was coming through [being shamed online] and realising that [people have differing understandings of the world] and that you can disagree with someone and still love them and still be friends" (P2).

Lastly, participants noted that their shaming experiences had also taught them lessons surrounding how to use the internet and social media in safer ways going forward. For instance, this included knowing they could 'give up' social media if they found it impacting them in a negative way, as well as knowing how to deal with similar situations in the event they were to face online conflict again, "I absorbed that experience, and to this day remain good… at immediately dropping the social media platforms if they're affecting

me negatively… it also helped me out nowadays to recognise when I should stand up for myself" (P15).

Discussion

The purpose of the present exploratory, qualitative study was to uncover how participants socially construct their experiences of being shamed online, and the ways in which they describe their online shaming events impacting them. These findings firstly included some of the more overtly identified and tangible experiences within participants' stories, including emotional reactions and thought processes after the shaming events occurred, as well as participants' various ways of reacting to and managing being shamed online (with some behavioural responses identified by participants as being more helpful than others). Participants also discussed changes to their belief systems, specifically in relation to how they perceived themselves, other people, and online spaces. Also present was a sense that participants often struggled with how they understood their online shaming experiences, with many describing competing beliefs and difficulties in consolidating exactly how they felt about their online shaming events. Overall, being someone who had been shamed online was constructed as a nuanced, but largely negative experience with adverse consequences that varied in intensity, frequency, and duration across participants. However, there was also an understanding that for some, with the drawbacks of their shaming experiences also came valuable lessons and opportunities for growth, which participants were appreciative of.

Findings in the context of existing literature

There are several overlaps between the current findings and existing anecdotal and theoretical discussions of the impacts of online shaming, as well as links to related bodies of literature. For instance, many of the emotional reactions and thought processes described by participants (e.g., emotional distress, anxiety, depression, feeling suicidal, fear of reputational damage, humiliation, guilt, feeling helpless and dehumanised) mirror non-empirical or theoretical discussions (e.g., Billingham & Parr, 2019; Jacquet, 2015; Laidlaw, 2017; Ronson, 2015) and media representations (e.g., Muir et al., 2021) of online shaming victimisation. There are also empirical overlaps here with the cyberbullying literature (e.g., anxiety, feeling suicidal, fear of reputational damage, anger, guilt, feeling victimised; Brandau & Rebello, 2021; Ranney et al., 2020), as well as the online harassment literature (e.g., anxiety, depression, feeling powerless; Lindsay et al., 2016). The behavioural reactions

to being shamed online described by the participants emulated that of cyberbullying victims also, with going offline, social withdrawal, and retaliation all also noted in previous cyberbullying studies (e.g., Brandau & Rebello, 2021; Ranney et al., 2020), as well as in prior discussions of online shaming (e.g., Billingham & Parr, 2019; Jacquet, 2015; Klonick, 2016; Laidlaw, 2017; Muir et al., 2021; Ronson, 2015). Shifts in beliefs about the self and others after being shamed online aligns with prior theoretical and anecdotal (e.g., Ronson, 2015) reports of online shaming, the cyberbullying literature (e.g., Brandau & Rebello, 2021), and also the long-standing literature on shame. For instance, Lynd (1958) notes that shame can act as a catalyst in significantly altering one's understandings of life, stating how shame can "shatter trust in oneself, even in one's own body and skill and identity, and in the trusted boundaries or framework of the society and the world one has known" (p. 46).

Moreover, participant reflections regarding the various uncertainties around their shaming experiences have parallels to both the current online shaming literature (e.g., wondering how it may have been different if they were instead shamed in person; Crockett, 2017; Muir et al., 2021) and cyberbullying literature (e.g., Meter et al., 2021; Ranney et al., 2020). Examples of overlaps include cyberbullying victims similarly noting how cyberbullying exists within a 'grey area' where the parameters of victimhood status is difficult to define, how cyberbullying also sits within a range of severity, and participants also drawing comparisons between online and face-to-face experiences (Meter et al., 2021; Ranney et al., 2020). As for effective ways of coping, cyberbullying victims have similarly noted the importance of social support and friends defending each other (Brandau & Rebello, 2021; Ranney et al., 2020). For some, being subjected to cyberbullying was similarly seen as a learning curve (e.g., enabling the development of strategies to better navigate online spaces going forward; Ranney et al., 2020), with growth having been depicted as an unintended by-product of online shaming victimisation previously also (Muir et al., 2021). Collectively, it appears that the present findings largely align with current anecdotal and theoretical discourse relating to online shaming. Additionally, while online shaming might differ conceptually to other instances of online victimisation (i.e., cyberbullying, online harassment), it appears there is significant overlap in associated impacts, which ultimately speaks to a certain degree of reciprocal transferability and utility of findings across these related research domains.

Strengths, limitations, and future research

This study is the only known research to offer an empirical examination of experiences and perceived impacts of being shamed online, rendering its originality a considerable strength. The use of semi-structured interviews to collect data that was analysed via inductive thematic analysis allowed for the construction of rich, in-depth themes, enabling a balance between capturing both nuance between, and consistencies across, participants' online shaming stories. Given interviews are inherently a socially constructed product between the interviewer and participant, it is possible that some participants may have been inclined to answer interview questions in a socially desirable way, or responded in a way that met what they believed the researchers' expectations to be. This may be especially true for this sample given how some participants described a fear of being evaluated negatively by others and difficulties with trusting people due to their shaming experiences. However, considerable rapport building was conducted prior to interviews and confidentiality was reassured throughout the participant engagement process to make participants feel more comfortable, and in turn hopefully more transparent and genuine when reflecting on their experiences.

This study was also strengthened by the implementation of various quality bolstering procedures as a way of acknowledging and mitigating researcher bias, and ensuring the findings remained as true to participants' accounts as possible (i.e., cross-coding, reflexive journaling, maintaining an audit trail, and offering member checking). Another strength was the nature of the current sample not being confined by restrictive eligibility criteria, meaning there were a wide variety of online shaming stories included, and in turn bolstering the potential transferability of the findings. However, this may also be considered a limitation as participants were not instructed to abide by any precise definitions of online shaming, instead self-defining their status as someone who had been shamed online. Hence, the context behind each participant's online shaming stories varied considerably. This also meant that not all participants would have explicitly met our definition of online shaming (e.g., one participant described feeling shamed by comments from someone they were conversing with on a dating app, which does not align with the public component needed to be defined as online shaming). Future research could perhaps include more strict sample inclusion parameters to examine specific types of online shaming (e.g., online body shaming;

being shamed online for posting discriminatory comments), as well as compare potential differences in any perceived impacts and support needs across these subtypes.

As online spaces continually evolve, so does online shaming. Hence, the experiences captured in the present study may only be transferable to future instances of online shaming to a certain degree. Whilst this aligns with the anti-realist assumptions embedded in social constructionism (which emphasises how socially constructed understandings of psychological phenomena are bound to the temporal and social contexts in which the research is conducted; Burr, 1995), it would be beneficial for future studies to continue to monitor associated impacts and trends of online shaming. The participants in this study were also skewed towards being a younger, primarily Australian, educated, university sample, which may limit the transferability of the current findings to some extent. Future research could quantitatively capture experiences from a more diverse sample, perhaps identifying if there are certain individuals who are more susceptible to being shamed online or more in need of support when overcoming associated impacts. It would also be beneficial to systematically examine other potential baseline characteristics, life circumstances, or psychological factors that may predict one's ability to cope with being shamed online, so that at-risk groups can be determined, and targeted support tools can be developed and disseminated.

Implications and conclusions

There are both empirical and practical implications resulting from this study. Firstly, the findings of the current research both substantiate and deepen current understandings of the impacts associated with online shaming that so far have stemmed from anecdotal reports, media-driven discussions, and speculative explanations posited in existing literature. This study also serves as a starting point for future research geared towards uncovering the associated impacts of online shaming in more depth. As for practical implications, this firstly includes informing public understandings and discourse surrounding online shaming, as Skoric et al. (2010) suggests people who shame others online often do not consider themselves to be shaming, and also may be currently unaware of just how negative the impacts associated with online shaming can be. Establishing a greater awareness of these impacts may encourage a shift away from online shaming being viewed as merely morally ambiguous, with it instead being understood more broadly as having the potential to be quite harmful (with this hopefully then facilitating a reluctance for individuals to engage in

online shaming practices in the future). The current findings may also be helpful to those who have already been shamed online, and those who will be in the future, as it illuminates an understanding to individuals subjected to online shaming that they are not alone in their experiences, and also provides some practical insights that may be helpful for coping (e.g., support seeking behaviours, distancing oneself from social media). Service providers, such as psychologists and other health professionals, would benefit from having a comprehensive understanding of the impacts of online shaming when working with those subjected to it, and may be able to take away some beneficial insights from the current findings (e.g., rebuilding a sense of agency; countering negative self-beliefs; working with clients to reframe their shaming events; facilitating self-reflection). Moreover, having an empirical understanding of the impacts of online shaming is also essential for policy makers when informing related legislation, as well as for interventions (e.g., social media platform led initiatives), and when creating educational campaigns and formal guidelines (e.g., teaching individuals about the potential harms to others that engaging in online shaming can cause; educating people about certain strategies and coping mechanisms they can implement if they find themselves subjected to online shaming).

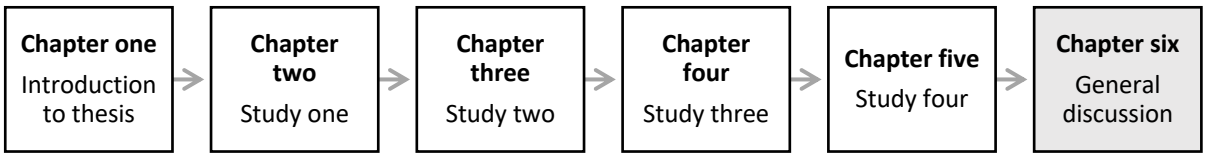
Overall, this study offers a novel and important contribution to the still emerging body of literature pertaining to online shaming. The current findings highlight various emotional reactions and thought processes, behavioural responses, ways of coping, shifts in beliefs, uncertainties, and some valued opportunities for internal growth after participants were shamed online. These findings not only provide empirical support for a so far largely anecdotal and speculative information base, but also offer practical implications relating to increasing awareness in the general public, for others also subjected to online shaming, for service providers potentially working with individuals who have been subjected to online shaming, as well as policymakers and educators. Although this research provides a valuable starting point, considerable further empirical examination is still needed to establish an understanding of experiences and impacts of being shamed online more broadly and across different contexts.

Chapter six: General discussion

Introduction to chapter six

Chapter six features a general discussion and conclusion of this thesis, which begins with a summary and synthesis of the key findings from the studies presented in chapters two to five. An integrated account of the overall strengths and limitations of this research, and suggestions for future research going forward are also provided, as well as the overarching implications of this thesis, and final concluding remarks. Figure 17 demonstrates where this chapter fits within the overall structure of this thesis.

Figure 17
Flow diagram of thesis structure: General discussion



General discussion

Summary of overall thesis aims and findings

The overarching aim of this thesis was to explore the framing, predictors, and associated consequences of online shaming via a mixed-methods project comprised of four studies. The first study in this thesis was a media framing analysis exploring how online shaming is portrayed in contemporary digital news media. The findings of this study demonstrated that whilst online shaming has been largely framed in online news articles as a destructive behaviour that oftentimes has severe negative consequences, media reports also sometimes instead depicted online shaming as a constructive behaviour resulting in positive outcomes. There were also various nuances throughout news articles, including variations in the perceived deservedness and responsibility of those being shamed, alongside a range of rationalisations, consequences, and recommendations put forward for online shaming, which collectively portrayed online shaming to media consumers as a multifaceted and morally ambiguous phenomenon.

The main goal of the second study in this thesis was to quantitatively determine the utility of several previously unassessed predictors of online shaming, with a secondary aim of this study being to qualitatively capture overall impressions of online shaming from members of the public. The quantitative findings revealed that combined, moral grandstanding, moral disengagement, emotional reactivity, empathy, social vigilantism, online disinhibition, machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy accounted for about two fifths of the variance in intentions to engage in online shaming, and one fifth of the variance in perceived deservedness of online shaming (after partialing out the effects of gender, daily online hours, daily social media hours, having shamed someone online before, and social desirability). Qualitative findings indicated that online shaming was perceived by participants to be a form of accountability, was described as having destructive effects, seen as being partly due to the perceived anonymity of the online world, was argued as sometimes used as a form of entertainment, involved ‘two sides to every story’, was in part simply because ‘hurt people hurt people’, was considered to now be a social norm, and was said to manifest differently when public figures, compared to private figures, were subjected to online shaming. Drawing parallels to the first study, this second study again demonstrated the complicated nature of online shaming, empirically substantiating some of the many

individual factors contributing to online shaming engagement, as well as highlighting some of the various ways online shaming is perceived by members of the public.

Similar to study two, the third study in this thesis also sought to quantitively predict how individuals decide to respond to online shaming, however this time with a focus on contextual rather than person-based factors. Specifically, the contextual factors assessed in this study were participants' likelihood to engage in additional online shaming or supporting behaviours (via liking, retweeting, and making additional comments) when responding to vignettes depicting an individual being shamed online via comment for making a discriminatory online post, with the vignettes depicted as being either a) viral or not viral, b) a hypothetical friend or stranger to the participant had already shamed the individual via comment, and c) the discriminatory post was either racist, sexist, or homophobic in nature (whilst also partialing out the effects of age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, years of education, daily online hours, daily social media hours, having been online before, and having shamed someone online before). The findings indicated a significant main effect for virality and shaming via retweeting, with those in the viral condition more likely to retweet with shaming intent than their counterparts in the non-viral condition. There were also significant main effects for post discrimination type and shaming via liking, shaming via commenting, supporting via liking, supporting via retweeting, and supporting via commenting, with participants more likely to shame and less likely to support the racist post compared to the sexist and homophobic post. Again with the findings of this study, is an understanding that individuals' decisions to partake in online shaming engagement is dependent on not simply one or a few factors, but many.

Moving on from the focus on predicting online shaming participation, the aim of the fourth and final study of this thesis was to explore how individuals who have been subjected to online shaming describe these experiences, as well as the ways in which these experiences may have impacted them. The findings of this study firstly included an account of the many emotional reactions and thought processes participants disclosed feeling after having been shamed online, as well as the various ways participants reacted to and managed being shamed online (with some of these behavioural responses overtly noted as being beneficial). Also discussed by participants were changes to their belief systems, including how they perceived themselves, others, and online spaces. Participants also often struggled with how they understood their online shaming experiences, with many describing

competing beliefs and difficulties in consolidating how they felt about their online shaming events. There was also an understanding that for some participants, with the drawbacks of their shaming experiences also came valuable lessons and opportunities for growth, which participants were appreciative of. Overall, mirroring previous sentiments relating to the other findings in this thesis, having been shamed online was constructed as a nuanced, but largely negative experience with adverse consequences that varied in intensity, frequency, and duration. Whilst the aims of the four studies in this thesis were distinct and designed to provide insight into online shaming from several different angles, there was also some overlap across the study findings, which highlights a degree of consistency across media representations of online shaming, empirically tested predictors, general opinions from members of the public, and insight from those most directly impacted by online shaming. These overlaps and integrated insights are summarised in text below.

Summary of synthesised thesis findings

The framing of online shaming

Overall, the notion that online shaming is a negative, harmful, and largely unfair behaviour, for a variety of differing reasons, permeated across the different studies in this thesis. Many parallels were drawn between traditional, face-to-face shaming and online shaming, and oftentimes it was suggested that the latter was more harmful than its in-person counterpart. Explanations for this include, for example, the relative permanency, and widespread and uncontrollable nature that typically accompanies shaming in digital spaces. However, it was also acknowledged that in-person shaming had its drawbacks, such as being able to escalate into physical altercations. There was also a shared understanding that online shaming is constructed as an inherently morally ambiguous and polarising phenomenon, with an acknowledgment that individuals will have differing perspectives towards instances of online shaming. That is, both the shamers, the shamed, and bystanders will often hold different beliefs about what exactly is ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ when it comes to online shaming, with individuals oftentimes holding competing beliefs within their own minds also.

As an extension of the existing dominant cultural landscape, online shaming was also understood to be innately gendered, with women and men said to be subjected to different types of online shaming, and women typically subjected to more severe, frequent, and varying types of shaming in digital spaces. With the coining of the phrase ‘shaming culture’, online shaming was also seen as having become a normative contemporary behaviour now

entrenched within society, and one that effectively disrupts previously sanctioned behaviours, traditions, myths, and the status quo as a whole, in a variety of ways. However, there were also various recommendations made for individuals involved in online shaming going forward. Firstly, this included suggestions for those seen as being able to shape and mitigate online shaming to some extent, such as social media companies, social media users who may participate in online shaming, those in power, policy makers, and educators. Secondly, there was also advice for anyone who might find themselves subjected to online shaming at some point, such as highlighting the importance of having time away from social media and the internet as a whole, having a support system to lean on, and taking time to process and reflect on the shaming situation as a fundamental part of moving on.

Predictors of online shaming

Just like more traditional forms of shaming throughout history, online shaming was also understood to be a tool for controlling the behaviour of others and holding people to account, which, also like face-to-face shaming, is argued to have both virtues and vices. However, the question of who has the 'right' to decide what constitutes 'right' and 'wrong' when it comes to online shaming does not have a simple answer, if it is even an answerable question at all. Rather than emerging from a genuine desire to 'do good', online shaming was both perceived as and empirically shown to, at least in part, stem from more hedonistic and malicious motives, such as schadenfreude, entertainment, moral grandstanding, moral disengagement, and dark personality traits. Key to these less-than-altruistic drivers of online shaming engagement appears to be a sense of both self-righteousness and disingenuity, and at the same time, shamers also feeling justified in their actions.

There was also an understanding that online shaming is perpetuated partly due to individuals feeling more disinhibited and deindividuated in online spaces, with perceived anonymity and mob mentality also both drivers of this behaviour. Certain emotional responses were also considered to contribute to individuals choosing to engage in online shaming, such as outrage, 'knee-jerk' reactions, emotional reactivity, and an overall lack of empathy for others. Additionally, beyond person-based contributors of online shaming participation, there were also many case-by-case nuances that were said to exacerbate online shaming, both in terms of the identity of the shamed individuals, as well as various contextual factors, that seemingly alter not only the extent to which individuals are shamed, but also how supposedly deserving of being shamed they are.

Experiences and associated impacts of online shaming

When it comes to unpacking the impacts of online shaming on those who are subjected to it, whilst media depictions and public perceptions reflected a broader understanding that online shaming does have harmful effects, especially relating to mental health, the specifics of these impacts, and just how damaging they were, typically were only understood comprehensively by those who had personally been subjected to online shaming. Some of the negative mental health impacts and emotions surrounding being subjected to online shaming that were outlined included feeling anxiety and worry, sad and betrayed, angry (and projecting this anger in other situations), a sense of shock and surprise at the situation, as well as suicidal ideation and dying by suicide. Concerns over reputational damage, as well as various other impacts affecting real life were also noted, such as financial and employment loss, offline persecution, and prevention from growth. Varying degrees of shame, humiliation, guilt, embarrassment, and a sense of personal culpability were unsurprisingly also considered to accompany the experience of being shamed online. Being subjected to online shaming was also understood to overall be an inherently victimising, dehumanising experience, and one that should be met with empathy from others.

Social ostracism was noted as frequently accompanying the aftermath of online shaming, with this withdrawal from others sometimes instead being instigated by the shamed individual themselves also. Similarly, damage to relationships, sometimes irreparable, was another associated impact of being subjected to online shaming, with shamed individuals describing a change of beliefs towards and general mistrust of others also. Other changes to belief systems included shifts in beliefs about the self, as well as how individuals perceived interacting with online spaces going forward. Sometimes, the specific negative impacts of online shaming seemed hard to definitively outline, as did considerations of what exactly 'counted' as online shaming or not. Regarding those perpetrating online shaming, there were an array of differing aftereffects, both negative and positive. Examples of this include being subjected to retaliation and counter shaming, experiencing remorse, and gaining exposure and fame as a result of having shamed someone online. Lastly, as for those on the receiving end of online shaming, there were also some positive by-products noted, such as public support and assistance, personal growth, and learning about others and the online world. These synthesised findings are explored in further depth in Tables 11-13, with these tables separated into the three overall areas of

interest in this thesis, namely the framing, predictors, and associated consequences of online shaming.

Table 11

Integration of thesis findings: The framing of online shaming

Topic	Study one: Media analysis	Study two: Predictors and public attitudes	Study three: Contextual factors	Study four: Impacts	Integrated insights	Associated literature examples
Overall negative construction	Online shaming is framed negatively; constructed as a widespread, dangerous, and continually increasing issue; seen as unjust, disproportionate, and having no due process; online shaming stories used as a warning to the reader against falling prey to the same fate (i.e., recommendations for people to be more careful; online shaming portrayed as something to be afraid of and avoided; discouraging the reader from engaging in the online shaming of others, and dissuading them from engaging in any activities that may in turn result in them being shamed online); perpetrators of online shaming largely cast as villains, constructed as a single entity or "online mob" acting in unison rather than as individual people, who are collectively guilty of enacting "…horrific online bullying…", and described as a "…gleeful, cheering, liking, sharing, commenting, hating audience".	Destructive effects noted in the qualitative findings.		Victimising; disproportionate; long-lasting.	Online shaming is understood overall as a negative, harmful, and unfair online behaviour (for a variety of reasons), with this reflected to varying extents in both media reports and by participants.	Cheung (2014); Laidlaw (2017); Milosevic (2015); Ronson (2015); Solove (2007).

Online shaming versus traditional and face-to-face forms of shaming	Comparisons between historical public shaming and online shaming highlighted; online shaming presented as a contemporary manifestation of a long-standing social behaviour, rather than an occurrence unique to the digital age; however, online shaming is seen as more dangerous than traditional public shaming (i.e., due to its ease, rapid spread, and permanence).	Participants directly contrasted online shaming to face-to-face encounters in the qualitative findings, suggesting it would not occur in the first place in the latter setting.	Participants having uncertainties around the experience of being shamed online (i.e., contemplating how their shaming experiences may have been different if they had been shamed in person instead of in an online setting, with it seen as both potentially better and worse for differing reasons); seemingly nothing can be done to prevent or take control of the online spread of misinformation due to inherent characteristics of the online world.	Comparisons between online shaming and traditional/face-to-face shaming were made in media articles and by participants, for the most part suggesting online shaming to be more harmful than its in-person counterpart (e.g., more permanent, widespread, easier, uncontrollable). However, some interview participants acknowledged that there were some ways in which traditional/face-to-face shaming might instead be worse (e.g., it sometimes escalates into physical altercations).	Crockett (2017); Gallardo (2017); Ingraham and Reeves (2016); Klonick (2016); Mann (2004); Meter et al. (2021); Ranney et al. (2020).
Polarising and morally ambiguous	Online shaming depicted as a polarising issue, with a variety of differing perspectives held by the public due to the perceived moral ambiguity of online shaming cases; whilst sympathetic, many articles simultaneously perpetuated a sense of victim blaming towards the shamed and exhibited the rhetoric of 'owning up to one's mistakes'.	The idea of there being 'two sides to every story' noted in the qualitative findings.	Trying to understand the shaming from the shamers' perspectives made it easier for participants to move on.	Online shaming is understood as a morally ambiguous phenomenon, with both media reports and participants acknowledging that people will have differing perspectives towards instances of online shaming. This includes differences in perspectives amongst and between the shamers, the shamed, and bystanders (with individuals oftentimes also holding competing perspectives within their own minds).	Lumsden and Morgan (2017).

The gendered nature of online shaming	Online shaming framed as a gendered phenomenon, with women constructed as being especially susceptible to online shaming, and said to be recipients of harsher and more types of shaming than men; existing notions of sexism and misogyny reproduced in shaming stories, mirroring the dominant cultural landscape in which the construction of the submissive, objectified woman is normalised; women within a cultural minority portrayed as an even more victimised subgroup; men framed as the main culprits of revenge porn; in stories where someone had been wrongly accused of a crime, or shamed over perceived status or employment, those shamed were solely men.	Quantitative findings show male participants were slightly more likely to engage in online shaming than women.		Online shaming is framed in the media as gendered, with women and men being subjected to online shaming for differing reasons. One overlap across study findings here was that men were framed in the media as being the main perpetrators of revenge porn, which aligns to some extent with study two's quantitative finding that men were slightly more likely to shame people online than women.	Lumsden and Morgan (2017); Milosevic (2015); Poole (2013).
Social norms	Online shaming constructed as now a normative behaviour embedded in contemporary culture, and one that interrupts previously socially sanctioned behaviours by disrupting existing cultural norms, traditions, and myths.	Online shaming discussed in the qualitative findings as now having become a social norm; daily online hours, daily social media hours, and having shamed someone online before was positively correlated with online shaming in the quantitative findings (suggesting that with more online exposure comes more online shaming, and that shaming seems to become a recurring behaviour).		Online shaming is discussed both in the media and by participants as now a normative behaviour embedded in society, with media reports also highlighting the ways in which it has disrupted the status quo. In light of the quantitative findings, this apparent culture of online shaming may be especially pronounced in those who spend more time online.	Klonick (2016).

Advice to all involved	Recommendations made for the various players held accountable for online shaming, including a) social media companies (e.g., should increase regulations regarding the user interactions on their platforms and more actively enforce existing rules), b) social media users (e.g., should take a more 'humanist approach', be more empathetic and forgiving, with some asking for the public to stop reinforcing online shaming altogether, and others making suggestions for how online shaming could be conducted more tastefully), and c) people with influence/in positions of power to educate or enact change regarding online shaming (i.e., legislative revision that includes penalties for engaging in online shaming, increasing awareness about online shaming, and implementing prevention strategies; parents and those within the education system also portrayed as accountable for ensuring young people understand the potential consequences of online engagement).		Having a support system to lean on after being shamed online was seen as instrumental by participants, which included receiving support mostly from friends and family members, but sometimes professionals like teachers or therapists as well; taking time to reflect on, or reframe the event in their minds seen as essential by participants for moving on and reconciling the emotional impacts associated with being shamed; many participants described going offline (i.e., deleting the shamed material; staying away from or deleting the social media platform/s that the shaming occurred on; staying away from the internet altogether) as beneficial after being shamed (with some also describing needing additional distractions to keep their mind off it).	Various recommendations made for people involved in online shaming going forward, including suggestions for those seen as being able to control online shaming to some extent (i.e., social media companies, social media users who may participate in online shaming, people in power/policy makers, educators), as well as those who might find themselves subjected to online shaming.	Brandau and Rebello (2021); Milosevic (2015); Ranney et al. (2020).

Table 12

Integration of thesis findings: Predicting online shaming

Topic	Study one: Media analysis	Study two: Predictors and public attitudes	Study three: Contextual factors	Study four: Impacts	Integrated insights	Associated literature examples
Social control	Online shaming regarded as social policing (i.e., accountability and deterrence, justice, surveillance, both a display of and threat to freedom of speech, empowerment).	Online shaming noted in the qualitative findings as a tool for accountability; freedom of speech when it comes to online shaming described in the qualitative findings as paradoxical (in that engaging in online shaming is exerting one's own freedom of speech, yet simultaneously functions to oppress another's); social vigilantism was positively correlated with online shaming in the quantitative findings.			Much like shaming throughout history, online shaming is understood both in media depictions and by participants as being a tool for controlling the behaviour of others and holding people to account, which, like traditional/face-to-face shaming, is seen to have both virtues and vices. This also begs the question of who has the 'right' to decide what constitutes right and wrong when it comes to online shaming.	Cheung (2014); Goldman (2015); Ingraham and Reeves (2016); Klonick (2016); Lumsden and Morgan (2017); Milosevic (2015); Skoric et al. (2010); Smallridge et al. (2016).
Motivators stemming from disingenuous intent	Perpetrators of online shaming framed as self-righteous and disingenuous in their motives; several callous reasons for online shaming identified (i.e., entertainment, whistle blowing, schadenfreude, demonstrating intellect, revenge, cognitive dissonance).	Online shaming noted in the qualitative findings as a form of entertainment; moral grandstanding, moral disengagement, machiavellianism, narcissism, and psychopathy was positively associated with online shaming in the quantitative findings.			Online shaming was understood both in the media and by participants as coming from various hedonistic and malicious motives, rather than a desire to 'do good'. Interestingly, central to these differing reasons is the notion that the shamer feels justified in their actions.	Gallardo (2017); Kowalski et al. (2014); Kurek et al. (2019); Spring et al. (2018).

Emotive and other internal motivators	Several emotive and psychological motivators for online shaming identified (i.e., outrage, 'kneejerk' reaction, anonymity, online disinhibition, mob mentality).	Anonymity noted in the qualitative findings as a driver of online shaming; the idea that "hurt people hurt people" noted in the qualitative findings (i.e., people will engage in online shaming because they themselves have been hurt by others); emotional reactivity and online disinhibition was positively correlated with online shaming in the quantitative findings; empathy was negatively associated with online shaming in the quantitative findings.		There were several overlaps between media depictions and the qualitative and quantitative participant data, with a combined understanding here that online shaming is perpetuated partly due to individuals feeling more disinhibited and deindividuated in online spaces, with certain emotional responses also being a risk factor to online shaming engagement. On the other hand, empathy was identified as a protective factor here.	Ang and Goh (2010); Bakshy et al. (2012); Chang and Poon (2017); Dubrovsky et al. (1991); Mason et al. (2017); Morio and Buchholz (2009); Xiao and Wong (2013).
Context matters	Some shamed individuals are depicted as being perceived as less or more deserving of, and responsible for, being shamed online depending on their identity (i.e., celebrities vs. non-celebrities; children/teenagers vs. adults); some shamed individuals are perceived as less or more deserving of, and responsible for, being shamed online depending on contextual nuances also (i.e., body shaming vs. making discriminatory posts online).	Public versus private figures discussed in the qualitative findings (i.e., the notion of people being held to different standards, with public figures deemed as inherently more deserving of online shaming).	Participants more likely to shame someone online via retweeting for creating a discriminatory online post when the post is depicted as having gone viral in comparison to those in a non-viral condition; participants also more likely to shame someone online (via liking and commenting) and less likely to support the shamed individual (via liking, commenting, and retweeting) when the shamed post is racist in nature in comparison to those sexist or homophobic in nature.	Across media representations, study two's qualitative data, and the experimental findings in study three is an understanding that there are many nuances, both in terms of the identity of the shamed individuals and the various contextual factors, that seem to alter not only the extent to which they are shamed, but also how supposedly deserving of being shamed they are.	Asch (1956); Bakshy et al. (2012); Carlsmith et al. (2002); Cialdini (1993); Johnen et al. (2018); Kian et al. (2011); McClanahan (2021); Milosevic (2015); Puryear (2020); Sampson (2012); Sawaoka and Monin (2018); Tetlock et al. (2000).

Table 13

Integration of thesis findings: Experiences and impacts of online shaming

Topic	Study one: Media analysis	Study two: Predictors and public attitudes	Study three: Contextual factors	Study four: Impacts	Integrated insights	Associated literature examples
Negative mental health outcomes	Harmful and long-lasting effects of shaming on individuals substantiated by quotes from experts (i.e., academics, psychologists); mental health consequences for online shaming discussed broadly; online shaming depicted as having serious and tragic consequences (e.g., suicide, honour killings).	Destructive effects noted in the qualitative findings.		Anxiety and worry; feeling overwhelmed; suicidal ideation; feeling sad and betrayed; feeling angry, easily triggered, projecting anger in other unrelated situations; feeling surprised (i.e., that someone would shame them; surprised by how they responded to the situation of being shamed online).	Whilst the notion of online shaming having harmful effects was noted in media reports and by participants in study two, overall only the interview participants in study four (those with a lived experience of being subjected to online shaming) went into detail about the specific mental health impacts they experienced after being shamed online (except when media articles were reporting on hyper-publicised/'worst case scenario' news stories that resulted in death).	Billingham and Parr (2019); Brandau and Rebello (2021); Jacquet (2015); Laidlaw (2017); Lindsay et al. (2016); Milosevic (2015); Ranney et al. (2020); Ronson (2015).
Branded with a Scarlet letter	Tainted reputation; prevention from growth; financial and employment loss; persecution offline.			Worry about other people potentially witnessing the online shaming and concerns over reputational damage; some mention of employment loss and other real-life impacts in the name of avoidance noted.	Concerns over reputational damage, as well as various impacts in real life, after being shamed online were noted both in media reports and by interview participants, however media reports had a higher focus on reporting stories where this long-lasting reputational damage and tangible loss had actually eventuated (potentially due to a tendency to focus more on widespread/hyper-publicised shaming cases).	Brandau and Rebello (2021); Ingraham and Reeves (2016); Ronson (2015); Solove (2007).

The inevitable shame	Triggering feelings of shame for those subjected to online shaming.		Feeling shame, humiliation, embarrassed by the public nature of the shaming; feeling guilt, feeling personal culpability (despite not wanting to feel self-blame).	Experiencing shame, and other similar emotions, was mentioned in both media reports and by interview participants, however, unsurprisingly, the way this was described was far more nuanced when described by those with a lived experience of online shaming.	Brandau and Rebello (2021); Cheung (2014); Ronson (2015).
Being victimised	Dehumanising; the shamed characterised largely as victims; sympathy encouraged within the reader; shamed individuals framed as either not at fault or at least deserving of forgiveness.	Empathy negatively associated with online shaming perpetration and perceived deservedness in the quantitative findings.	Participants describing feeling that the experience of being shamed online is unfair; victimising; disproportionate; feeling attacked; dehumanising; feelings of powerlessness and a sense of not having agency over the situation.	The notion that being subjected to online shaming is an inherently victimising, dehumanising experience, and one that should be met with empathy, was highlighted in both media depictions and participants in study four, with empathy also associated with a lower likelihood of online shaming engagement and perceived deservedness of online shaming in study two.	Lindsay et al. (2016); Ranney et al. (2020); Ronson (2015).
Becoming socially withdrawn	Depictions of social ostracism.		Social withdrawal to varying extents; negative impacts on relationships (e.g., putting a strain on, or even ending, relationships); changes in beliefs about others going forward (e.g., reluctance to put trust in people).	While being involuntarily socially ostracised by others was a noted consequence of online shaming in both media reports and by interview participants, interview participants also expressed how social withdrawal was sometimes instead a response to the situation on their part. Unlike media reports of online shaming, interview participants also went into detail about the negative impacts online shaming had on their beliefs towards, and relationships with, others going forward.	Brandau and Rebello (2021); Jacquet (2015); Ronson (2015); Solove (2007).

Disruptions to beliefs about the self and the online world				Shifts in sense of self after being shamed online described by participants (e.g., self-doubt; internalising negative evaluations from others); changes in beliefs about and interactions with the internet (e.g., the internet is not a safe place to be; leading to self-censoring online; some reporting no longer posting online publicly at all).	Interview participants disclosed feeling shifts in how they perceived both themselves and online spaces after being shamed online, which was a unique finding of study four (as neither of these shifts in beliefs were noted in any of the other studies featured in this thesis).	Brandau and Rebello (2021); Lynd (1958); Ronson (2015).
How do I know what the impacts were?	Harmful effects of online shaming mentioned, but oftentimes in a vague manner.	Destructive effects mentioned in a general sense but a lack of specific detail (perhaps indicating that while there is a level of public awareness, people may not be aware of the specific, tangible consequences of online shaming).		Having uncertainties around the experience of being shamed online (i.e., difficulty identifying exactly what the impacts were; difficulty in definitively attributing certain outcomes solely to the shaming experience).	The specific negative impacts of online shaming seem to be sometimes hard to definitively outline, with this implied through the lack of detail in media reports and participant responses in study two, as well as also more overtly evidenced through sentiments by interview participants in study four.	Meter et al. (2021); Ranney et al. (2020).
What counts as online shaming?		Some participants were unsure whether they had shamed someone else online before (17%) or been shamed online	Some participants were unsure whether they had shamed someone else online before (16%) or been shamed online	Having uncertainties around the experience of being shamed online (i.e., participants questioning the legitimacy of their experience of being	There were participants in studies two and three who were uncertain whether they had been shamed online or had shamed someone else online before, with some interview participants in study four also questioning whether their own experiences of online shaming	Meter et al. (2021); Ranney et al. (2020).

		before themselves (10%).	before themselves (9%).	someone who had been shamed online).	'counted' or not, suggesting a broader difficulty when it comes to understanding what exactly constitutes online shaming.	
What about the shamers?	Online shaming as having ramifications for the shamers (i.e., remorse, counter shaming, eminence).			Various displays of retaliation (and mixed emotions about having or not having retaliated).	Whilst media portrayals of online shaming indicated multiple different possible outcomes for the instigators of online shaming (both positive and negative), interview participants only noted one: retaliation (which has overlap with the 'counter shaming' behaviours mentioned in media reports).	Ranney et al. (2020).
The silver linings	In a minority of cases, online shaming events were framed as having constructive outcomes (i.e., shamers praised for defeating bullies and then rewarded with money and fame; people rallying behind the shamed individuals to support them, resulting in various other positive outcomes); being shamed online leading to personal growth, financial gain, or redemption for the shamed individual.			Despite online shaming being an overall negative experience, there were also some positive outcomes stemming from being shamed (i.e., gaining insight about the self and assisting with personal growth; learning a lot about the motivations of others, and how to successfully navigate interacting with other people going forward; lessons surrounding how to use the internet and social media in safer ways).	Online shaming was described as sometimes having positive by-products in both media reports and by interview participants in study four. Whilst there was some overlap (i.e., growth for the shamed individual), the positive outcomes mentioned in study four only related to benefits for the shamed individuals, whereas media reports sometimes also included benefits that were afforded to the shamers as well.	Aman and Jayroe (2013); Billingham and Parr (2019); Crockett (2017); Hou et al. (2017); Laidlaw (2017); Milosevic (2015); Ranney et al. (2020); Solove (2007).

Strengths, limitations, and future research directions

The individual strengths, limitations, and future research directions of the four studies comprising this thesis have been put forward in the discussion sections of their respective chapters. The overarching strengths of this thesis in its entirety firstly include the originality and novel insight offered by each of the studies, as well as the breadth of research questions addressed, with each study offering understandings of different aspects of online shaming (i.e., how it is presented in the media, the utility of several individual and contextual factors predicting online shaming engagement, public opinions about online shaming, and associated consequences for those subjected to online shaming), and covering multiple lines of inquiry within each study. There are several aforementioned methodological strengths of the studies within this thesis, with the use of rigorous qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches that were designed and chosen based on the research aims and questions for each study. Many quality processes were also employed throughout each study where appropriate to increase the rigour of the research (e.g., cross-coding, piloting, reflexive journaling, maintaining an audit trail, and various other decisions made to minimise both participant and researcher bias).

With this research area being still in its infancy, the decision was made when designing this thesis to take a broad snapshot of online shaming where possible, which, for example, informed the decision to not confine the news articles included in study one to a single country or location (which is also more ecologically congruent with the global nature of online shaming, and the internet as a whole), and to not limit the sampling in subsequent studies to any restrictive eligibility criteria (e.g., strict geographical or demographic parameters). Whilst this approach has its strengths, it can also be considered limiting as the findings do not elucidate how online shaming is framed to, predicted, or experienced by specific geographic, demographic, or other subsections of the public. It is also important to note that despite the lack of restrictive eligibility criteria, the participants who took part in the data collection for this thesis were still skewed towards being younger, Caucasian Australian university students, who were employed, and identified as women.

Whilst specific recommendations for future research have been put forward in the discussion sections of each individual study in this thesis, and some of which have subsequently been addressed by other studies in this thesis, there are some that apply across all four studies, and are applicable to both this thesis and the research domain of

online shaming as a whole. Future studies should endeavour to obtain broader and more representative datasets to extend on the generalisability and transferability of the understandings of online shaming depictions, engagement, opinions, and experiences offered within this thesis, as well as monitor online shaming over time as it continues to evolve. Given the broad conceptualisation of online shaming used in this thesis, and the many nuances demonstrated in the findings of this research, it is also important for future research to seek out data on online shaming more specific in nature, such as media framings, public responses to, and experiences of specific subtypes of online shaming.

Additionally, although the results presented in this dissertation made a considerable contribution to current understandings of online shaming, there are still many other questions yet to be answered in this still emerging area of research. For instance, there are numerous potential psychological predictors of online shaming yet to be tested (e.g., comparisons between more selfish reasons for online shaming vs. altruistic motivators; examining online shaming across groups with differing political ideologies; comparing how online shaming motivators may differ across differing types of online shaming, such as liking vs. sharing shaming behaviours), as well as a need to empirically investigate why certain individuals are more likely to be subjected to online shaming than others (e.g., testing what factors drive perceived deservedness, and any other factors that shape ones' perceptions of whether a shamed individual should be considered a 'victim' or 'villain'). Future research should also address the questions surrounding just how distinct online shaming really is from other, conceptually similar, online behaviours (e.g., cyberbullying, trolling, online harassment). Additionally, given the current findings mainly stemmed from either correlational or qualitative methodologies, it would be beneficial for future endeavours to employ experimental methodologies (i.e., with manipulation checks and other rigor bolstering design decisions) and other more concrete assessments when investigating online shaming (e.g., examining the neurophysiological effects of online shaming and its similarities to ostracism). Lastly, whilst this thesis offers a multitude of insights when it comes to explaining online shaming, another much-needed next step is empirically testing the ways a) current unhelpful perceptions of online shaming can be influenced, b) engagement in online shaming behaviours can be mitigated, and c) any associated consequences of online shaming can be managed.

Implications of overall thesis findings

Although the current findings are important for advancing academic discourse and theoretical knowledge in the online shaming literature, as well as providing a starting point for future research endeavours, one of the most significant implications of this thesis is how the findings of each study can be used to inform everyday perceptions of online shaming. For instance, given the media plays a significant role in informing members of the public about social issues, and can subsequently shape attitudes and beliefs about matters like online shaming (Barnett, 2016; Forsyth, 2012; McArthur, 1999), news articles promoting a negative framing of online shaming may be considered helpful in disseminating the destructive impacts it can have, even if these news stories are oftentimes hyper-publicised and somewhat sensationalised. This, in turn, may also encourage individuals to not engage in online shaming themselves, as well as be in support of any prospective related policies or intervention strategies aimed at mitigating the impacts of, or reducing the occurrence of, online shaming. On the other hand, when online shaming is framed more positively in the media, or paired with problematic discourses (e.g., victim blaming; harmful gender stereotypes; the notion of online shaming now being a normalised and expected behaviour), this may instead contribute to more accepting public attitudes and the perpetuation of participation in online shaming. This highlights why it is so important for the public to be informed by empirical accounts of online shaming, rather than just media-driven or anecdotal representations, which is what I set out to remedy throughout this research project.

Not only do the findings of this thesis substantiate many theoretical and media-driven explanations for online shaming that up until now had been put forward anecdotally or as theoretical musings while remaining untested, but they also provide an empirical account of the experience and impacts associated with being subjected to online shaming. Given that online shaming can essentially be perpetrated by anyone with access to a device that has internet connectivity, it is essential for members of the public to know exactly what drives online shaming participation, and how damaging it can be for those who are recipients of such treatment. This is ultimately so that people are aware of exactly what it is they are doing online, and why, with the hope that individuals will come to the decision that it is a behaviour they do not wish to participate in, tolerate, or otherwise perpetuate.

Another important implication of this thesis is the practical applicability of the findings. For instance, current legislation surrounding online shaming is presently vague at best (Laidlaw, 2017), with the online sphere sometimes described as a contemporary incarnation of the 'wild, wild West' due to its lack of rules and overall perceived lawlessness. Having an evidence-based understanding of how online shaming is framed, what underlying factors motivate individuals to participate in it, and how it impacts people, is a necessary first step for those in charge of related legislative and policy decisions. The findings of this thesis can also be utilised by those tasked with creating formal guidelines and intervention efforts, such as educators, social media companies, and other people with influence in this space. For example, given the strong relationship between past online shaming engagement and likelihood to engage in online shaming behaviours in the future (evidenced in study two), creators of educational campaigns could design interventions targeted towards those who have perpetrated online shaming before already, or perhaps social media companies themselves could use artificial intelligence to implement warnings to those detected to have engaged in shaming behaviours online previously (which is also consistent with other moderation efforts already conducted by social media companies; Mosseri, 2019). Another example of how the findings of this thesis can be used in an educational and intervention capacity is through the dissemination of the negative impacts of online shaming, such as those provided in study four, to encourage empathy within social media users (given empathy was shown to be a protective factor against engaging in online shaming behaviours in study two). The current findings are also beneficial for affording service providers (e.g., psychologists and other professionals who may come across online shaming in a professional capacity) a comprehensive understanding of how online shaming is portrayed to the public, several reasons as to why individuals engage in it, and some of the ways in which it can impact individuals. Above all, the findings in this thesis have given a lot of food for thought for individuals who might find themselves engaging in or subjected to online shaming at some point, which at this stage could potentially be any of us.

Concluding remarks

Collectively, the four studies featured in this thesis offer several novel contributions to the currently under-researched but important area of online shaming. In this thesis I firstly demonstrated that in contemporary depictions of online shaming in news media, online shaming is oftentimes constructed as a negative behaviour, but is sometimes also

depicted more positively. Various inconsistencies across media articles relating to conditions, rationalisations, outcomes, and recommendations for dealing with online shaming were also present, together ultimately framing online shaming as a multi-layered social issue that elicits an array of differing perceptual responses and moral uncertainties. Next, I demonstrated the predictive utility of a battery of previously unassessed moral, emotional, behavioural, and personality factors in explaining shaming participation in the online sphere, as well as providing preliminary qualitative insights into some of the potential origins, concerns, and various other perceptual nuances of online shaming, as communicated by members of the public. I also explored the predictive utility of three contextual factors (namely post virality, relational proximity to an existing shamer, and discrimination type depicted in the shamed content) in explaining how participants choose to respond to cases of online shaming. Lastly, in this thesis I also offered insight into some of the many emotional responses and thought processes, behavioural reactions, ways of managing, changes to beliefs, uncertainties, and silver linings that participants reported experiencing after being shamed online.

Through these four studies and their respective aims and findings, this thesis assists in empirically substantiating a so far largely media-driven, anecdotal, and speculative area of interest. The findings of these studies can be utilised to inform understandings, debate, policy support, and behaviours within the public (particularly those who might engage in, witness, or find themselves subjected to online shaming at some point). Further, this research project also provides insight for those working in related spaces, such as professionals assisting those who have been subjected to online shaming, those working within a legislative capacity, and others tasked with associated education or intervention efforts. Ultimately, this thesis has offered a valuable contribution to the task of unveiling how online shaming is constructed, why people choose to engage in the online shaming of others, and the impacts it has on those who find themselves on the receiving end. However, given there is still much to be learned about this multifaceted and ubiquitous contemporary phenomenon, substantial further academic inquiry into this research domain is necessary.

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Note. Every reasonable effort has been made to acknowledge the owners of copyright material. I would be pleased to hear from any copyright owner who has been omitted or incorrectly acknowledged.

Appendix A: HRE2019-0697 ethics application approval letter

The ethics approval letter below details the approval of a low-risk ethics application processed by the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee. This ethics approval is inclusive of all four studies presented in this thesis.

Research Office at Curtin

GPO Box U1987
Perth Western Australia 6845

Telephone +61 8 9266 7863
Facsimile +61 8 9266 3793
Web research.curtin.edu.au

15-Oct-2019

Name: Lynne Roberts
Department/School: School of Psychology
Email: Lynne.Roberts@curtin.edu.au

Dear Lynne Roberts

RE: Ethics approval
Approval number: HRE2019-0697

Thank you for submitting your application to the Human Research Ethics Office for the project **Exploring the Nature, Motivations, and Consequences of Online Shaming**.

Your application was reviewed by the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee at their meeting on **03-Sep-2019**.

The review outcome is: **Approved**.

Your proposal meets the requirements described in National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC) *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)*.

Approval is granted for a period of one year from **15-Oct-2019** to **15-Oct-2020**. Continuation of approval will be granted on an annual basis following submission of an annual report.

Personnel authorised to work on this project:

Name	Role
Muir, Shannon	Student
Roberts, Lynne	CI
Sheridan, Lorraine	Co-Inv
McEvoy, Peter	Co-Inv

Standard conditions of approval

1. Research must be conducted according to the approved proposal
2. Report in a timely manner anything that might warrant review of ethical approval of the project including:
   - proposed changes to the approved proposal or conduct of the study
   - unanticipated problems that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project
   - major deviations from the approved proposal and/or regulatory guidelines
   - serious adverse events
3. Amendments to the proposal must be approved by the Human Research Ethics Office before they are implemented (except where an amendment is undertaken to eliminate an immediate risk to participants)
4. An annual progress report must be submitted to the Human Research Ethics Office on or before the anniversary of approval and a completion report submitted on completion of the project

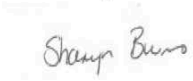
5. Personnel working on this project must be adequately qualified by education, training and experience for their role, or supervised
6. Personnel must disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest, including any financial or other interest or affiliation, that bears on this project
7. Changes to personnel working on this project must be reported to the Human Research Ethics Office
8. Data and primary materials must be retained and stored in accordance with the Western Australian University Sector Disposal Authority (WAUSDA) and the Curtin University Research Data and Primary Materials policy
9. Where practicable, results of the research should be made available to the research participants in a timely and clear manner
10. Unless prohibited by contractual obligations, results of the research should be disseminated in a manner that will allow public scrutiny; the Human Research Ethics Office must be informed of any constraints on publication
11. Ethics approval is dependent upon ongoing compliance of the research with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, applicable legal requirements, and with Curtin University policies, procedures and governance requirements
12. The Human Research Ethics Office may conduct audits on a portion of approved projects.

Special Conditions of Approval

This letter constitutes ethical approval only. This project may not proceed until you have met all of the Curtin University research governance requirements.

Should you have any queries regarding consideration of your project, please contact the Ethics Support Officer for your faculty or the Ethics Office at hrec@curtin.edu.au or on 9266 2784.

Yours sincerely



Associate Professor Sharyn Burns
Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee

Appendix B: HRE2019-0697-05 ethics amendment approval letter

The ethics approval letter below details the approval of an amendment made to the original ethics application for this thesis (shown in Appendix A). This amendment involved some minor additions to the questions in the interview guide for study four (featured in chapter five).

Curtin University

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20-Mar-2020

Name: Lynne Roberts
Department/School: School of Psychology
Email: Lynne.Roberts@curtin.edu.au

Dear Lynne Roberts

RE: Amendment approval
Approval number: HRE2019-0697

Thank you for submitting an amendment request to the Human Research Ethics Office for the project **Exploring the Nature, Motivations, and Consequences of Online Shaming**.

Your amendment request has been reviewed and the review outcome is: **Approved**

The amendment approval number is HRE2019-0697-05 approved on 20-Mar-2020.

The following amendments were approved:
Minor additions to the interview guide for Study 4 phase 1.

Any special conditions noted in the original approval letter still apply.

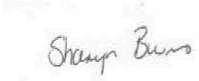
Standard conditions of approval

1. Research must be conducted according to the approved proposal
2. Report in a timely manner anything that might warrant review of ethical approval of the project including:
   - proposed changes to the approved proposal or conduct of the study
   - unanticipated problems that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project
   - major deviations from the approved proposal and/or regulatory guidelines
   - serious adverse events
3. Amendments to the proposal must be approved by the Human Research Ethics Office before they are implemented (except where an amendment is undertaken to eliminate an immediate risk to participants)
4. An annual progress report must be submitted to the Human Research Ethics Office on or before the anniversary of approval and a completion report submitted on completion of the project
5. Personnel working on this project must be adequately qualified by education, training and experience for their role, or supervised
6. Personnel must disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest, including any financial or other interest or affiliation, that bears on this project
7. Changes to personnel working on this project must be reported to the Human Research Ethics Office
8. Data and primary materials must be retained and stored in accordance with the Western Australian University Sector Disposal Authority (WAUSDA) and the Curtin University Research Data and Primary Materials policy
9. Where practicable, results of the research should be made available to the research participants in a timely and clear manner
10. Unless prohibited by contractual obligations, results of the research should be disseminated in a manner that will allow public scrutiny; the Human Research Ethics Office must be informed of any constraints on publication
11. Ethics approval is dependent upon ongoing compliance of the research with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, applicable legal requirements, and with Curtin University policies, procedures and governance requirements

12. The Human Research Ethics Office may conduct audits on a portion of approved projects.

Should you have any queries regarding consideration of your project, please contact the Ethics Support Officer for your faculty or the Ethics Office at hrec@curtin.edu.au or on 9266 2784.

Yours sincerely



Associate Professor Sharyn Burns
Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee

Appendix C: HRE2019-0697-06 ethics amendment approval letter

The ethics approval letter below details the approval of an amendment made to the original ethics application for this thesis (shown in Appendix A). This amendment involved changing the data collection method for the interviews in study four (featured in chapter five) from primarily face-to-face to purely online methods (i.e., video chat and telephone) to abide by pandemic related social distancing measures. Slight wording changes were made to the participant forms to reflect this change, and an online survey using Qualtrics.com was created where participants could digitally view the participant information form, sign the consent form, and enter their demographic information.

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24-Mar-2020

Name: Lynne Roberts
Department/School: School of Psychology
Email: Lynne.Roberts@curtin.edu.au

Dear Lynne Roberts

RE: Amendment approval
Approval number: HRE2019-0697

Thank you for submitting an amendment request to the Human Research Ethics Office for the project **Exploring the Nature, Motivations, and Consequences of Online Shaming**.

Your amendment request has been reviewed and the review outcome is: **Approved**

The amendment approval number is HRE2019-0697-06 approved on 24-Mar-2020.

The following amendments were approved:

- Study 4 phase 1 interviews will now all be conducted using online methods (i.e., Skype, telephone, or similar) given the current recommendations regarding social distancing.
- slight wording changes to the participant form have been made to reflect this, creation of an online survey using Qualtrics.com where participants can digitally view the participant information form, sign the consent form, and enter their demographic information.
- a version for both public participants and participation pool participants (SONA) have been made.

Any special conditions noted in the original approval letter still apply.

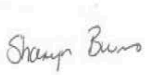
Standard conditions of approval

1. Research must be conducted according to the approved proposal
2. Report in a timely manner anything that might warrant review of ethical approval of the project including:
   - proposed changes to the approved proposal or conduct of the study
   - unanticipated problems that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project
   - major deviations from the approved proposal and/or regulatory guidelines
   - serious adverse events
3. Amendments to the proposal must be approved by the Human Research Ethics Office before they are implemented (except where an amendment is undertaken to eliminate an immediate risk to participants)
4. An annual progress report must be submitted to the Human Research Ethics Office on or before the anniversary of approval and a completion report submitted on completion of the project
5. Personnel working on this project must be adequately qualified by education, training and experience for their role, or supervised
6. Personnel must disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest, including any financial or other interest or affiliation, that bears on this project
7. Changes to personnel working on this project must be reported to the Human Research Ethics Office
8. Data and primary materials must be retained and stored in accordance with the Western Australian University Sector Disposal Authority (WAUSDA) and the Curtin University Research Data and Primary Materials policy

9. Where practicable, results of the research should be made available to the research participants in a timely and clear manner
10. Unless prohibited by contractual obligations, results of the research should be disseminated in a manner that will allow public scrutiny; the Human Research Ethics Office must be informed of any constraints on publication
11. Ethics approval is dependent upon ongoing compliance of the research with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, applicable legal requirements, and with Curtin University policies, procedures and governance requirements
12. The Human Research Ethics Office may conduct audits on a portion of approved projects.

Should you have any queries regarding consideration of your project, please contact the Ethics Support Officer for your faculty or the Ethics Office at hrec@curtin.edu.au or on 9266 2784.

Yours sincerely



Associate Professor Sharyn Burns
Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee

Appendix D: HRE2019-0697-10 ethics amendment approval letter

The ethics approval letter below details the approval of an amendment made to the original ethics application for this thesis (shown in Appendix A). This amendment involved submitting the vignettes and accompanying measures for study three (featured in chapter four) for ethics approval, as they were not yet finalised when the original ethics application was approved.

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08-Sep-2021

Name: Lynne Roberts
Department/School: School of Psychology
Email: Lynne.Roberts@curtin.edu.au

Dear Lynne Roberts

RE: Amendment approval
Approval number: HRE2019-0697

Thank you for submitting an amendment request to the Human Research Ethics Office for the project **Exploring the Nature, Motivations, and Consequences of Online Shaming**.

Your amendment request has been reviewed and the review outcome is: **Approved**

The amendment approval number is HRE2019-0697-10 approved on 08-Sep-2021.

The following amendments were approved:
Vignettes and accompanying measures for Study 3 that have been designed since initial approval was granted.

Any special conditions noted in the original approval letter still apply.

Standard conditions of approval

1. Research must be conducted according to the approved proposal
2. Report in a timely manner anything that might warrant review of ethical approval of the project including:
   - proposed changes to the approved proposal or conduct of the study
   - unanticipated problems that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project
   - major deviations from the approved proposal and/or regulatory guidelines
   - serious adverse events
3. Amendments to the proposal must be approved by the Human Research Ethics Office before they are implemented (except where an amendment is undertaken to eliminate an immediate risk to participants)
4. An annual progress report must be submitted to the Human Research Ethics Office on or before the anniversary of approval and a completion report submitted on completion of the project
5. Personnel working on this project must be adequately qualified by education, training and experience for their role, or supervised
6. Personnel must disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest, including any financial or other interest or affiliation, that bears on this project
7. Changes to personnel working on this project must be reported to the Human Research Ethics Office
8. Data and primary materials must be retained and stored in accordance with the Western Australian University Sector Disposal Authority (WAUSDA) and the Curtin University Research Data and Primary Materials policy
9. Where practicable, results of the research should be made available to the research participants in a timely and clear manner
10. Unless prohibited by contractual obligations, results of the research should be disseminated in a manner that will allow public scrutiny; the Human Research Ethics Office must be informed of any constraints on publication
11. Ethics approval is dependent upon ongoing compliance of the research with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, applicable legal requirements, and with Curtin University policies, procedures and governance requirements
12. The Human Research Ethics Office may conduct audits on a portion of approved projects.

Yours sincerely

Professor Sharyn Burns
Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee

Appendix E: HRE2019-0697-11 ethics amendment approval letter

The ethics approval letter below details the approval of an amendment made to the original ethics application for this thesis (shown in Appendix A). This amendment involved changing the data analysis method for the interviews in study four (featured in chapter five) from phenomenology to an inductive thematic analysis due to it being more appropriate for the data collected and overall aims of the study.

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13-Sep-2021

Name: Lynne Roberts
Department/School: School of Psychology
Email: Lynne.Roberts@curtin.edu.au

Dear Lynne Roberts

RE: Amendment approval
Approval number: HRE2019-0697

Thank you for submitting an amendment request to the Human Research Ethics Office for the project **Exploring the Nature, Motivations, and Consequences of Online Shaming**.

Your amendment request has been reviewed and the review outcome is: **Approved**

The amendment approval number is HRE2019-0697-11 approved on 13-Sep-2021.

The following amendments were approved:

Change in the method of data analysis from phenomenology to inductive reflexive thematic analysis.

Any special conditions noted in the original approval letter still apply.

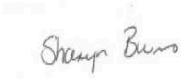
Standard conditions of approval

1. Research must be conducted according to the approved proposal
2. Report in a timely manner anything that might warrant review of ethical approval of the project including:
   - proposed changes to the approved proposal or conduct of the study
   - unanticipated problems that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project
   - major deviations from the approved proposal and/or regulatory guidelines
   - serious adverse events
3. Amendments to the proposal must be approved by the Human Research Ethics Office before they are implemented (except where an amendment is undertaken to eliminate an immediate risk to participants)
4. An annual progress report must be submitted to the Human Research Ethics Office on or before the anniversary of approval and a completion report submitted on completion of the project
5. Personnel working on this project must be adequately qualified by education, training and experience for their role, or supervised
6. Personnel must disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest, including any financial or other interest or affiliation, that bears on this project
7. Changes to personnel working on this project must be reported to the Human Research Ethics Office
8. Data and primary materials must be retained and stored in accordance with the Western Australian University Sector Disposal Authority (WAUSDA) and the Curtin University Research Data and Primary Materials policy
9. Where practicable, results of the research should be made available to the research participants in a timely and clear manner
10. Unless prohibited by contractual obligations, results of the research should be disseminated in a manner that will allow public scrutiny; the Human Research Ethics Office must be informed of any constraints on publication

11. Ethics approval is dependent upon ongoing compliance of the research with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, applicable legal requirements, and with Curtin University policies, procedures and governance requirements
12. The Human Research Ethics Office may conduct audits on a portion of approved projects.

Should you have any queries regarding consideration of your project, please contact the Ethics Support Officer for your faculty or the Ethics Office at hrec@curtin.edu.au or on 9266 2784.

Yours sincerely



Professor Sharyn Burns
Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee

Appendix F: Open access policy for Computers in Human Behavior Reports for study one

The open access policy for Computers in Human Behavior Reports shown below pertains to the paper presented in chapter two, 'The portrayal of online shaming in contemporary online news media: A media framing analysis' (which was published Computers in Human Behavior Reports). The image below was retrieved from https://www.elsevier.com/journals/computers-in-human-behavior-reports/2451-9588/open-access-journal.

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Submit your paper >

Guide for authors >

Track your paper >

View articles >

Abstracting >

Editorial board >

Browse journals > Computers in Human Behavior Reports > Open access journal

Open access journal

Computers in Human Behavior Reports is a peer reviewed, open access journal.

User rights

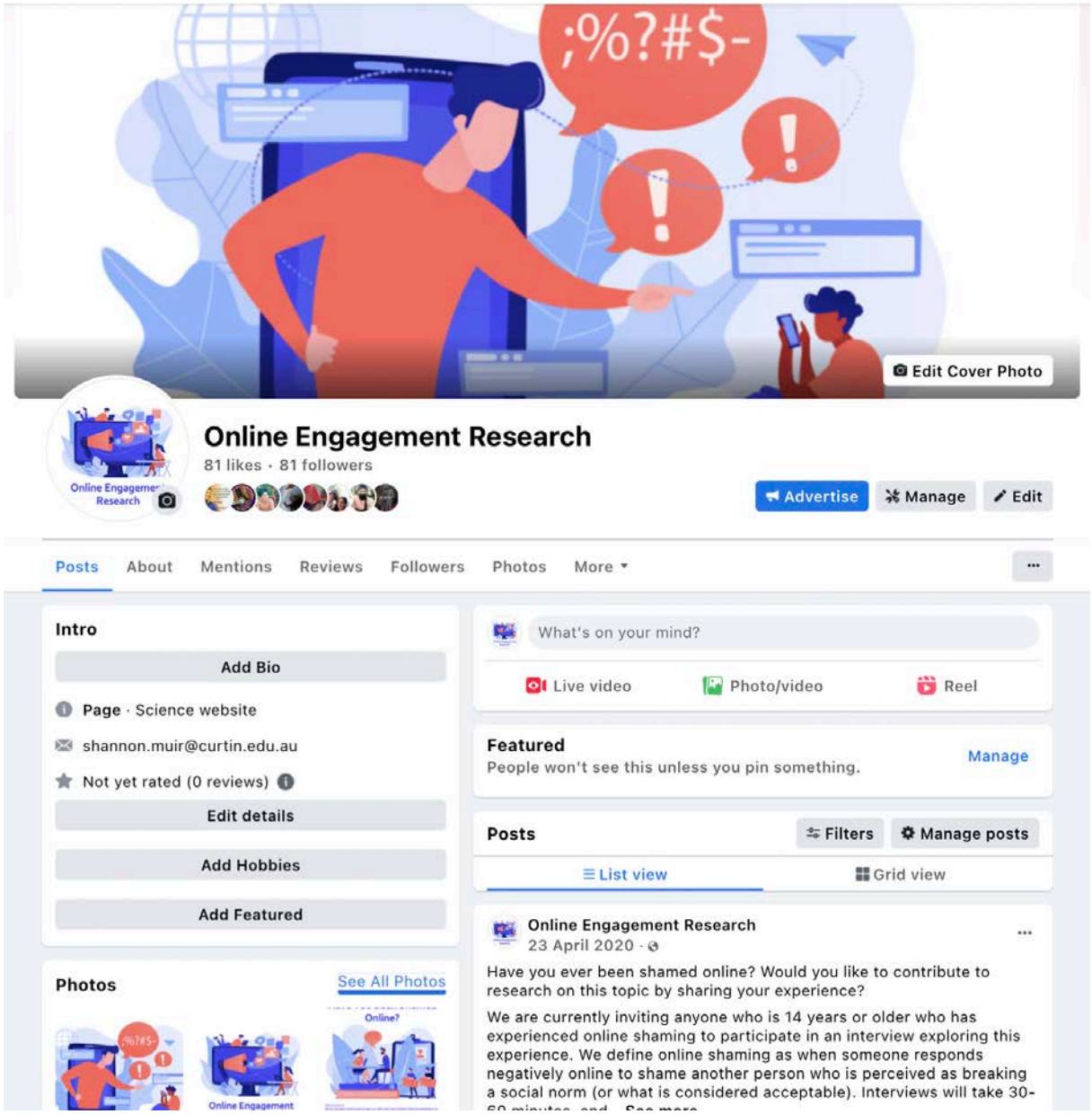
All articles published open access will be immediately and permanently free for everyone to read, download, copy and distribute. Permitted reuse is defined by your choice of one of the following user licenses:

Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY): lets others distribute and copy the article, to create extracts, abstracts, and other revised versions, adaptations or derivative works of or from an article (such as a translation), to include in a collective work (such as an anthology), to text or data mine the article, even for commercial purposes, as long as they credit the author(s), do not represent the author as endorsing their adaptation of the article, and do not modify the article in such a way as to damage the author's honor or reputation.

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs (CC BY-NC-ND): for non-commercial purposes, lets others distribute and copy the article, and to include in a collective work (such as an anthology), as long as they credit the author(s) and provided they do not alter or modify the article.

Appendix G: Social media research page for study two and four recruitment

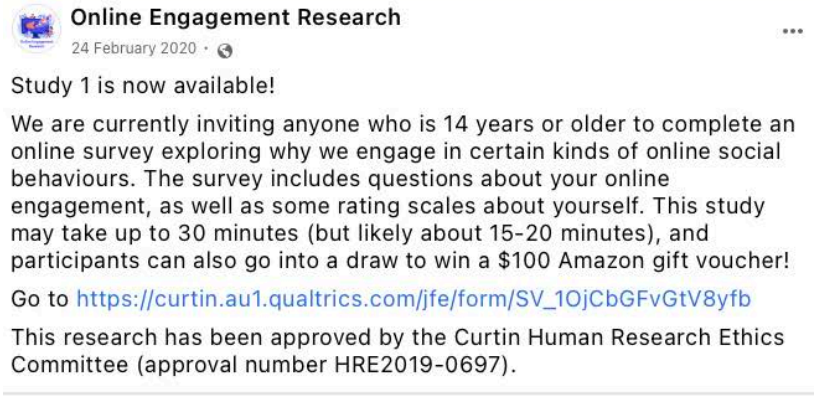
The image shown below depicts the dedicated social media research page on Facebook created and used for the recruitment of members of the public in study two (featured in chapter three) and study four (featured in chapter five).



Appendix H: Recruitment materials (public Facebook post and university pool) for study two

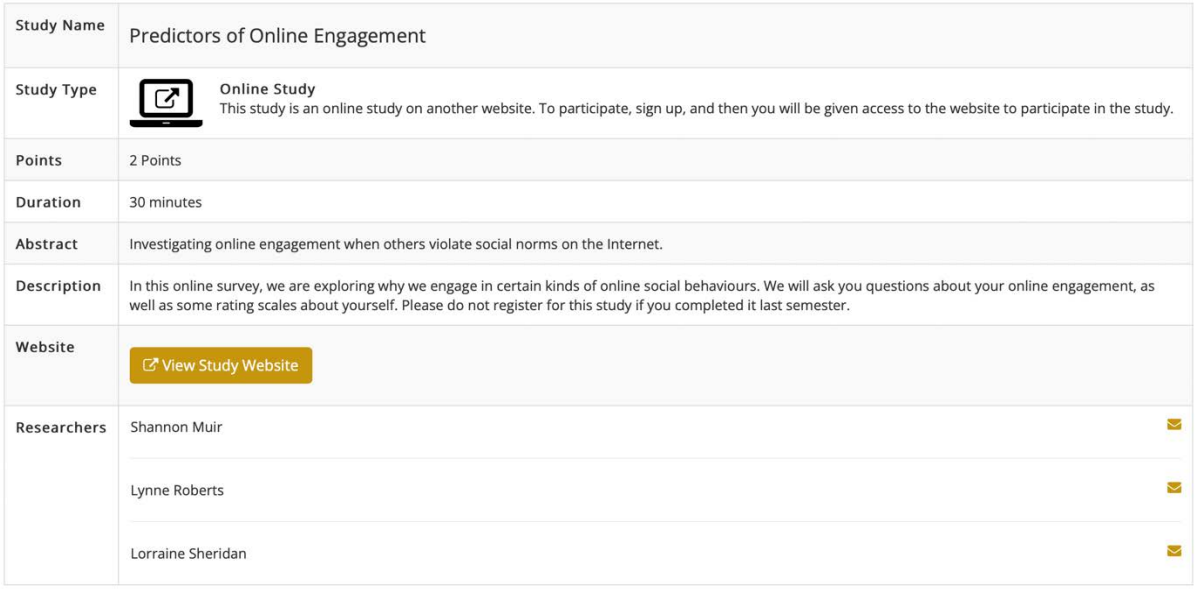
Public Facebook post recruitment

The image shown below depicts the recruitment post featured on the dedicated social media research Facebook page (shown in Appendix G) used for the recruitment of members of the public in study two (featured in chapter three).



University pool recruitment

The image shown below depicts the recruitment post featured on Curtin University's student research participation pool website, SONA. Alongside the recruitment post featured on the dedicated social media research Facebook page (shown in Appendix H), this website was also used for the recruitment of university students as participants in study two (featured in chapter three).



Study Name	Predictors of Online Engagement
Study Type	**Online Study** This study is an online study on another website. To participate, sign up, and then you will be given access to the website to participate in the study.
Points	2 Points
Duration	30 minutes
Abstract	Investigating online engagement when others violate social norms on the Internet.
Description	In this online survey, we are exploring why we engage in certain kinds of online social behaviours. We will ask you questions about your online engagement, as well as some rating scales about yourself. Please do not register for this study if you completed it last semester.
Website	View Study Website
Researchers	Shannon Muir Lynne Roberts Lorraine Sheridan

Appendix I: Participant information and consent forms and questionnaires for study two

This appendix features participant information and consent forms, questionnaires, and debrief messages (all hosted on Qualtrics.com) that were used for data collection in study two (featured in chapter three) for both the general public and university pool.

Participant information and consent form for study two general public recruitment

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

HREC Project Number:	HRE2019-0697
Project Title:	Predictors of Online Engagement
Principal Investigator:	Lynne Roberts, Lorraine Sheridan (Associate Professors)
Student researcher:	Shannon Muir (PhD Candidate)
Version Number:	1.0
Version Date:	08/JAN/2020

Who is doing the research and what is the project about?
My name is Shannon Muir and I am currently completing my PhD in Psychology at Curtin University. I am conducting research that is investigating online engagement when others violate social norms on the Internet. I would like to invite you to take part in this research.

What will I have to do?
This research involves completing an online questionnaire that will ask questions regarding your online engagement, as well as some rating scales about yourself. The survey will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Are there any benefits or risks to being in the research project?
Your completion of this survey will make you eligible to go into the draw to win a $100 gift voucher (please follow the link at the end of the survey to enter). Other than this, participation in this research may not benefit you directly, however the information you provide will help further the development of the research field regarding the factors that contribute to certain types of online engagement. The results obtained from this survey might be reported in future academic conferences and publications. Although this survey has been designed in a careful manner to ensure the questions contained are not upsetting, if you do choose to participate and find yourself psychologically or emotionally upset by any of the content within this survey, there are online resources accessible at the end of this survey where you can seek assistance.

Do I have to take part in the research project?
Your participation is entirely voluntary and you are able to withdraw from the study at any time prior to submitting your survey. You will not be asked to provide any identifying information except for the purposes of allocating prize draws and expressing interest in future research, and all identifying information will be kept confidential and destroyed afterwards. Consent for me to use your data in this research will be assumed upon clicking "submit" after reading the participant form.

Who will have access to my information?
Your data will be kept strictly confidential with only myself, my supervisors, and other research staff potentially working on the project having access to it. Data will be stored on a secure research drive at Curtin University and in a secure cabinet at Curtin University for up to 25 years (under 18) or 7 years (adults), at which point it will be disposed of in an ethical manner. In accordance with the requirements of some scientific journals and organisations, your coded data may be shared with other researchers. Your coded data may be used in other, related studies (i.e., additional studies added to the current research project or for use with Honours students). A copy of the coded data will remain in the custody of Associate Professor Lynne Roberts. If you have any questions before, during or after the survey, please contact myself or my primary supervisor by email: shannon.r.muir@postgrad.curtin.edu.au or lynne.roberts@curtin.edu.au.

Will you tell me the results of the research?
If you would like to access the results of this research project, an overall key summary of the findings will be sent to you upon request. By sending an email to myself at shannon.r.muir@postgrad.curtin.edu.au, non-identifiable overall group results will be forwarded on to you.

What happens next and who can I contact about the research?
Thank you very much for considering taking part in this research. If you would like to participate in this study, please answer the questions below by clicking on the appropriate answers. This is to ensure you have read this participant information statement and you understand what this study is about and what you are required to do, which is essential for you to be able to proceed to the questionnaire. Afterwards, please follow the link to proceed to the questionnaire. By completing and submitting the questionnaire you will be consenting to your data being used in this research.

Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has approved this study (HREC number HRE2019-0697). Should you wish to discuss the study with someone not directly involved, in particular, any matters concerning the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, or you wish to make a confidential complaint, you may contact the Ethics Officer on (08) 9266 9223 or the Manager, Research Integrity on (08) 9266 7093 or email hrec@curtin.edu.au.

Participant information and consent form for study two university pool recruitment

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

HREC Project Number:	**HRE2019-0697**
Project Title:	**Predictors of Online Engagement**
Principal Investigator:	**Lynne Roberts, Lorraine Sheridan (Associate Professors)**
Student researcher:	**Shannon Muir (PhD Candidate)**
Version Number:	**1.0**
Version Date:	**08/JAN/2020**

Who is doing the research and what is the project about?
My name is Shannon Muir and I am currently completing my PhD in Psychology at Curtin University. I am conducting research that is investigating online engagement when others violate social norms on the Internet. I would like to invite you to take part in this research.

What will I have to do?
This research involves completing an online questionnaire that will ask questions regarding your online engagement, as well as some rating scales about yourself. The survey will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Are there any benefits or risks to being in the research project?
As you are completing this survey as part of a participant pool course requirement, you will be awarded two points on SONA upon completion (please follow the link at the end of the survey to provide the relevant details). Other than this, participation in this research may not benefit you directly, however the information you provide will help further the development of the research field regarding the factors that contribute to certain types of online engagement. The results obtained from this survey might be reported in future academic conferences and publications. Although this survey has been designed in a careful manner to ensure the questions contained are not upsetting, if you do choose to participate and find yourself psychologically or emotionally upset by any of the content within this survey, there are online resources accessible at the end of this survey where you can seek assistance.

Do I have to take part in the research project?
Your participation is entirely voluntary and you are able to withdraw from the study at any time prior to submitting your survey. You will not be asked to provide any identifying information except for the purposes of allocating SONA points and expressing interest in future research, and all identifying information will be kept confidential and destroyed afterwards. Consent for me to use your data in this research will be assumed upon clicking "submit" after reading the participant form.

Who will have access to my information?
Your data will be kept strictly confidential with only myself, my supervisors, and other research staff potentially working on the project having access to it. Data will be stored on a secure research drive at Curtin University and in a secure cabinet at Curtin University for up to 25 years (under 18) or 7 years (adults), at which point it will be disposed of in an ethical manner. In accordance with the requirements of some scientific journals and organisations, your coded data may be shared with other researchers. Your coded data may be used in other, related studies (i.e., additional studies added to the current research project or for use with Honours students). A copy of the coded data will remain in the custody of Associate Professor Lynne Roberts. If you have any questions before, during or after the survey, please contact myself or my primary supervisor by email: shannon.r.muir@postgrad.curtin.edu.au or lynne.roberts@curtin.edu.au.

Will you tell me the results of the research?
If you would like to access the results of this research project, an overall key summary of the findings will be sent to you upon request. By sending an email to myself at shannon.r.muir@postgrad.curtin.edu.au, non-identifiable overall group results will be forwarded on to you.

What happens next and who can I contact about the research?
Thank you very much for considering taking part in this research. If you would like to participate in this study, please answer the questions below by clicking on the appropriate answers. This is to ensure you have read this participant information statement and you understand what this study is about and what you are required to do, which is essential for you to be able to proceed to the questionnaire. Afterwards, please follow the link to proceed to the questionnaire. By completing and submitting the questionnaire you will be consenting to your data being used in this research.

Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has approved this study (HREC number HRE2019-0697). Should you wish to discuss the study with someone not directly involved, in particular, any matters concerning the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, or you wish to make a confidential complaint, you may contact the Ethics Officer on (08) 9266 9223 or the Manager, Research Integrity on (08) 9266 7093 or email hrec@curtin.edu.au.

Validity check questions featured at the end of both participant forms

Participant Information Statement Question 1

What is this study about?

- ○ Physical activity levels in older adults across Australia
- ○ Online engagement when others violate social norms on the Internet
- ○ Australian university students binge drinking behaviours

Participant Information Statement Question 2

What do participants have to do in this study?

- ○ An online questionnaire
- ○ Be interviewed
- ○ Participate in an experiment in a lab setting

Study two questionnaire items for both recruitment types

Demographic Information Questions

Please select your age (in years) from the drop box below.

Please select your gender.

- Male
- Female
- Another gender (please specify by typing in the space below)

Please type your country of residence in the space provided below.

Please type your religion in the space provided below.

Please type your ethnicity in the space provided below.

Please select the total years of formal education you have completed (including primary, secondary, tertiary, etc.) from the drop box below.

Please select your occupation (you can select multiple options).

- Employed full time
- Employed part time
- Unemployed looking for work
- Unemployed not looking for work
- Retired
- Full time student
- Part time student
- Caring for children
- Caring for another person
- Living with a disability
- Other (please specify by typing in the space below)

Please select the average amount of time you spend online per day in total (in hours) from the drop box below.

Out of this time spent online, please select the average amount of time you spend on social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, or other) per day in total (in hours) from the drop box below.

The last two demographic questions refer to 'online shaming'. Online shaming is where an individual responds negatively online to shame another person who is perceived as breaking a social norm (what is considered acceptable).

Have you ever been shamed online?

- ○ Yes (please provide a short description of the instance/s of online shaming by typing in the space below)
- ○ No
- ○ Unsure

Have you ever shamed someone else online?

- ○ Yes (please provide a short description of the instance/s of online shaming by typing in the space below)
- ○ No
- ○ Unsure

The following questions refer to 'online shaming'. Online shaming is where an individual responds negatively online to shame another person who is perceived as breaking a social norm (what is considered acceptable). Please complete this questionnaire by selecting your agreement with the statements below in relation to online shaming.

If someone posts something inappropriate or breaks a social norm online:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. They deserve what is coming for them.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2. I would not post about the person online as a way of embarrassing them for what they did.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
3. I would show my support for punishing that person by commenting on posts shaming that person.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
4. I would comment directly on the person's post to show my disapproval.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
5. I would not click "like" on posts shaming that person.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
6. They do not deserve to be ridiculed for it.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
7. I would make negative or mean comments on the person's updates, photos, or tags to make them feel bad for what they did.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
8. I would post about it as a way of letting others know what that person did wrong.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
9. They should not have their name dragged across the Internet, even if that person makes a bad mistake.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
10. I would create a meme or edit a photo making fun of that person and then post it online for others to see as a way to punish them.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
11. I would not message them to insult them.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
12. I would show my disapproval by sharing posts that call them out for what they did.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Below are a series of questions regarding your opinions and beliefs about morals. Please complete this questionnaire by selecting your agreement with the statements below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. I hope that my moral beliefs cause other people to want to share those beliefs.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2. I am particularly good at sharing my moral beliefs.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
3. My moral beliefs should be inspiring to others.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
4. I often share my moral beliefs in the hope of inspiring people to be more passionate about their beliefs.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
5. When I share my moral beliefs, I do so to show people who disagree with me that I am better than them.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
6. I share my moral beliefs to make people who disagree with me feel bad.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
7. When I share my moral beliefs, I do so to shame people who do not share those beliefs.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
8. When I share my moral beliefs, I do so in the hope that people different than me will feel ashamed of their beliefs.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
9. I want to be on the right side of history about moral issues.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
10. Even if expressing my moral views does not help anyone, it is important that I share them.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Below are a series of questions regarding your opinions and beliefs about morals. Please complete this questionnaire by selecting your agreement with the statements below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. It is okay to spread rumours to defend those you care about.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2. It is alright to lie to keep your friends out of trouble.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
3. Taking something without the owner's permission is okay as long as you're just borrowing it.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
4. It's okay to gloss over certain facts to make your point.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
5. Considering the ways people grossly misrepresent themselves, it's hardly a sin to inflate your own credentials a bit.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
6. Compared to other illegal things people do, taking something small from a store without paying for it isn't worth worrying about.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
7. People shouldn't be held accountable for doing questionable things when they were just doing what an authority figure told them to do.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
8. People cannot be blamed for misbehaving if their friends pressured them to do it.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
9. People can't be blamed for doing things that are technically wrong when all their friends are doing it too.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
10. It's okay to tell a lie if the group agrees that it's the best way to handle the situation.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
11. Taking personal credit for ideas that were not your own is no big deal.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
12. Walking away from a store with some extra change doesn't cause any harm.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

13. Some people have to be treated roughly because they lack feelings that can be hurt.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
14. It's okay to treat badly somebody who behaves like scum.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
15. People who get mistreated have usually done something to bring it on themselves.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
16. If a business makes a billing mistake in your favour, it's okay not to tell them about it because it was their fault.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Below are a series of questions regarding your emotional responses. Please complete this questionnaire by selecting your agreement with the statements below.

	Very unlike me	Somewhat unlike me	Neither like or unlike me	Somewhat like me	Very like me
1. I tend to get upset very easily.	○	○	○	○	○
2. When I'm upset, it takes me quite a while to snap out of it.	○	○	○	○	○
3. If I'm upset, I feel it more intensely than everyone else.	○	○	○	○	○
4. I tend to get disappointed very easily.	○	○	○	○	○
5. It's hard for me to recover from frustration.	○	○	○	○	○
6. Normally, when I'm unhappy I feel it very strongly.	○	○	○	○	○
7. I tend to get pessimistic about negative things very quickly.	○	○	○	○	○
8. Once in a negative mood, it's hard to snap out of it.	○	○	○	○	○
9. My negative feelings feel very intense.	○	○	○	○	○

Below are a series of questions regarding your emotional responses. Please complete this questionnaire by selecting your agreement with the statements below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. My friends' emotions don't affect me much.	○	○	○	○	○
2. After being with a friend who is sad about something, I usually feel sad.	○	○	○	○	○
3. I can understand my friend's happiness when she/he does well at something.	○	○	○	○	○
4. I get frightened when I watch characters in a good scary movie.	○	○	○	○	○
5. I get caught up in other people's feelings easily.	○	○	○	○	○
6. I find it hard to know when my friends are frightened.	○	○	○	○	○
7. I don't become sad when I see other people crying.	○	○	○	○	○
8. Other people's feelings don't bother me at all.	○	○	○	○	○
9. When someone is feeling 'down' I can usually understand how they feel.	○	○	○	○	○
10. I can usually work out when my friends are scared.	○	○	○	○	○
11. I often become sad when watching sad things on TV or in films.	○	○	○	○	○
12. I can often understand how people are feeling even before they tell me.	○	○	○	○	○
13. Seeing a person who has been angered has no effect on my feelings.	○	○	○	○	○

14. I can usually work out when people are cheerful.	○	○	○	○	○
15. I tend to feel scared when I am with friends who are afraid.	○	○	○	○	○
16. I can usually realise quickly when a friend is angry.	○	○	○	○	○
17. I often get swept up in my friends' feelings.	○	○	○	○	○
18. My friend's unhappiness doesn't make me feel anything.	○	○	○	○	○
19. I am not usually aware of my friends' feelings.	○	○	○	○	○
20. I have trouble figuring out when my friends are happy.	○	○	○	○	○

Below are a series of questions regarding your opinions and beliefs about interacting with others. Please complete this questionnaire by selecting your agreement with the statements below.

	Disagree very strongly	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Agree strongly	Agree very strongly
1. I feel as if it is my duty to enlighten other people.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2. I feel that my ideas should be used to educate others.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
3. I feel a social obligation to voice my opinion.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
4. I need to win any argument about how people should live their lives.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
5. Those people who are more intelligent and informed have a responsibility to educate the people around them who are less intelligent and informed.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
6. I like to imagine myself in a position of authority so that I could make the important decisions around here.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
7. I try to get people to listen to me, because what I have to say makes a lot of sense.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
8. Some people just believe stupid things.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
9. There are a lot of ignorant people in society.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
10. I think that some people need to be told that their point of view is wrong.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
11. If everyone saw things the way that I do, the world would be a better place.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
12. It frustrates me that many people fail to consider the finer points of an issue when they take a side.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
13. I often feel that other people do not base their opinions on good evidence.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
14. I frequently consider writing a product or service review.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Below are a series of questions regarding your opinions and beliefs about interacting when online. Please complete this questionnaire by selecting your agreement with the statements below.

	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree
1. It is easier to connect with others online than talking in person.	○	○	○	○
2. The Internet is anonymous so it is easier for me to express my true feelings or thoughts.	○	○	○	○
3. It is easier to write things online that would be hard to say in real life because you don't see the other's face.	○	○	○	○

4. It is easier to communicate online because you can reply anytime you like.	○	○	○	○	
5. I have an image of the other person in my head when I read their e-mail or messages online.	○	○	○	○	
6. I feel like a different person online.	○	○	○	○	
7. I feel that online I can communicate on the same level with others who are older or have higher status.	○	○	○	○	
8. I don't mind writing insulting things about others online, because it's anonymous.	○	○	○	○	
9. It is easy to write insulting things online because there are no repercussions.	○	○	○	○	
10. There are no rules online therefore you can do whatever you want.	○	○	○	○	
11. Writing insulting things online is not bullying.	○	○	○	○	

Below are a series of questions regarding your opinions and beliefs about yourself. Please complete this questionnaire by selecting your agreement with the statements below.

	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Agree strongly
1. It's not wise to tell your secrets.	○	○	○	○	○
2. I like to use clever manipulation to get my way.	○	○	○	○	○
3. Whatever it takes, you must get the important people on your side.	○	○	○	○	○
4. Avoid direct conflict with others because they may be useful in the future.	○	○	○	○	○
5. It's wise to keep track of information that you can use against people later.	○	○	○	○	○
6. You should wait for the right time to get back at people.	○	○	○	○	○
7. There are things you should hide from other people to preserve your reputation.	○	○	○	○	○
8. Make sure your plans benefit yourself, not others.	○	○	○	○	○
9. Most people can be manipulated.	○	○	○	○	○
10. People see me as a natural leader.	○	○	○	○	○
11. I hate being the center of attention.	○	○	○	○	○
12. Many group activities tend to be dull without me.	○	○	○	○	○
13. I know that I am special because everyone keeps telling me so.	○	○	○	○	○
14. I like to get acquainted with important people.	○	○	○	○	○
15. I feel embarrassed if someone compliments me.	○	○	○	○	○
16. I have been compared to famous people.	○	○	○	○	○
17. I am an average person.	○	○	○	○	○
18. I insist on getting the respect I deserve.	○	○	○	○	○
19. I like to get revenge on authorities.	○	○	○	○	○
20. I avoid dangerous situations.	○	○	○	○	○
21. Payback needs to be quick and nasty.	○	○	○	○	○
22. People often say I'm out of control.	○	○	○	○	○

23. It's true that I can be mean to others.					
24. People who mess with me always regret it.					
25. I have never gotten into trouble with the law.					
26. I enjoy having sex with people I hardly know.					
27. I'll say anything to get what I want.					

Below are a series of questions regarding your opinions and beliefs about yourself. Please complete this questionnaire by selecting your agreement with the statements below.

	True	False
1. On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability.		
2. I can remember "playing sick" to get out of something.		
3. I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake.		
4. There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right.		
5. There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.		
6. When I don't know something I don't at all mind admitting it.		
7. I sometimes try to get even rather than forgive.		
8. I have almost never felt the urge to tell someone off.		
9. I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.		
10. No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener.		
11. There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others.		
12. I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favours of me.		
13. I have never deliberately said something that hurt someone's feelings.		

Block 3

Thank you for your time and efforts in participating in this research, your contribution is greatly appreciated!

As a final question, is there anything you would like to say about online shaming? Please respond by typing in the space below (this question is optional).

Would you be interested in being contacted in the future to participate in additional research related to online shaming? We will be conducting another online survey about online shaming (anyone over 14 can participate), as well as interviews specifically with people who have experienced online shaming.

- [ ] I would be interested in both (please provide your email by typing in the space below)
- [ ] I would be interested in the survey only (please provide your email by typing in the space below)
- [ ] I would be interested in the interview only (please provide your email by typing in the space below)
- [ ] No

Debrief message at end of the survey for study two (general public recruitment)

Although this survey has been designed in a careful manner to ensure the questions contained do not cause any suffering, if you have found yourself psychologically or emotionally upset by any of the content within this survey, there are many free online resources you can access. If you would like to access a pdf list of free resources available to you, please click either of the blue links below (these links will open in a new tab):

Helpful resources for people anywhere in the world

Helpful resources for people in Australia

By clicking on the final submit button below, your answers will be submitted and you will be directed to a separate page where you can enter the draw to win a $100 (AUD equivalent) Amazon.com voucher if you would like to do so.

Prize draw survey for study two (general public recruitment)

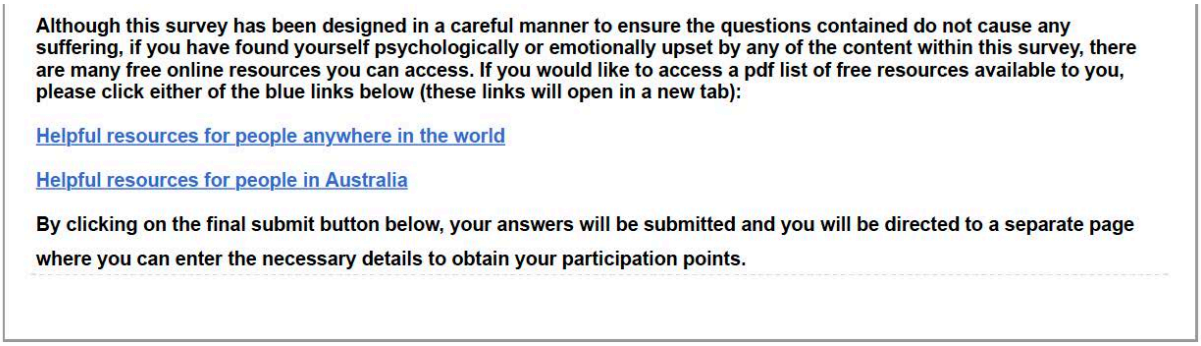
Terms and Conditions for this Survey

Please enter your email below and click submit after reading the terms and conditions of this prize draw.

1. Instructions on how to enter and other details contained within promotional advertisements for this competition form part of the conditions of entry.
2. By entering the competition, entrants agree to abide by these Terms and Conditions.
3. The Terms and Conditions of this competition are governed by the laws of the State of Western Australia.
4. The competition is being run by Curtin University, GPO Box U1987, Perth, Western Australia, 6102 ("Curtin University").
5. The Predictors of Online Engagement study ("the competition") commences in January 2020.
6. The closing time for entering the competition has yet to be established, but will be mid 2020.
7. Entry to the competition is limited to anyone over the age of 14.
8. To enter the competition, the entrant must:
(a) complete the survey at hand and
(b) supply a valid contact email once finished
9. Entry to the competition is free. Entrants will be responsible for all costs associated with entering the competition, which may include costs associated with accessing the Internet.
10. Entrants may only enter the competition once.
11. Staff employed by Curtin University and their immediate family members are not eligible to enter the competition.
12. There will be five (5) prizes. These prizes will be a $100 (AUD equivalent) Amazon.com voucher.
13. There will be five (5) draws at 9.00AM Australian Western Standard Time on July 31st 2020.
14. The prize winners will be contacted within seven (7) days of the draw by the email address supplied by the entrants on the event registration form.
15. If the prize winners do not respond to accept their prize within (21) days of the draw, a re-draw will be conducted within (30) days of the original draw date, in the same location, and with the same method. Redraws will continue in the same manner until all prizes have been claimed by prize winners.
16. The prizes will be sent electronically via email once a prize acceptance email has been sent by the prize winners.
17. The prize winners may be required to provide evidence of their identity (such as photographic ID, birth certificate or current passport) when receiving the prize.
18. The prize winners will be responsible for all costs associated with collecting and using the prize.
19. By entering the competition the entrant agrees that they are over the age of 14 years.
20. The prizes are not redeemable for cash or an alternative prize.
21. The prizes are not transferrable.
22. Curtin University is not responsible in any manner whatsoever for any problems or any financial costs incurred, or any combination thereof, including any injury or damage to participants or any other persons related to or resulting from participation in this competition.
23. Curtin University accepts no responsibility and shall not be held legally liable or responsible for any accident, loss, injury or damage to any individual or property whether direct or indirect, whether in contract, tort, negligence or otherwise arising out of or in connection with the competition or the prize, either during or after the competition.
24. Entry into the competition signifies acceptance of all conditions. Entrants are required to abide by the Terms and Conditions as presented.
25. Curtin University's decision will be final and no correspondence will be entered into.
26. Personal information provided by an entrant to Curtin University for the purpose of entering the Competition will be collected, used and disclosed in accordance with Curtin University's Privacy Statement. A copy of the privacy statement is available at http://rim.curtin.edu.au/privacy/. Personal information collected will be kept strictly confidential and will not be sold, reused, rented, loaned or otherwise disclosed to any third party otherwise than in accordance with the privacy statement and these Terms and Conditions.

After you enter your email in the space below and click submit, this will tell us that you have agreed to the terms and conditions of this prize draw and your entry will be finalised. Thank you again for your time!

Debrief message at end of the survey for study two (university pool recruitment)



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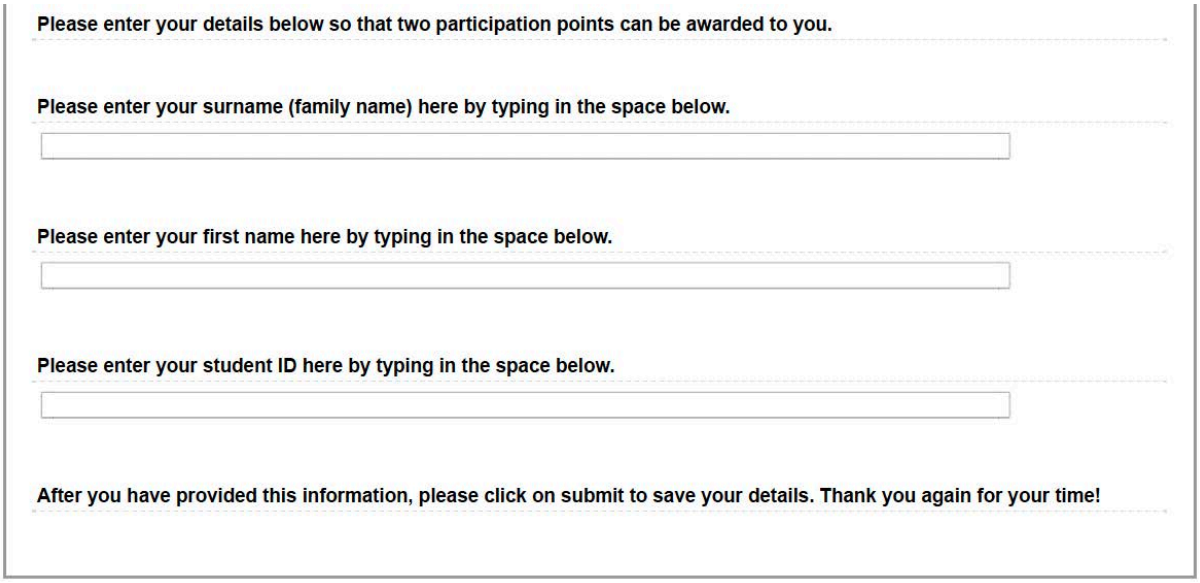
Helpful resources for people anywhere in the world

Helpful resources for people in Australia

By clicking on the final submit button below, your answers will be submitted and you will be directed to a separate page where you can enter the necessary details to obtain your participation points.

Participation point allocation survey for study two (university pool recruitment)



Please enter your details below so that two participation points can be awarded to you.

Please enter your surname (family name) here by typing in the space below.

Please enter your first name here by typing in the space below.

Please enter your student ID here by typing in the space below.

After you have provided this information, please click on submit to save your details. Thank you again for your time!

Appendix J: Additional information for the development of the Online Shaming Scale used in study two

This appendix features additional information related to the development of the Online Shaming Scale (OSS), which was created for and used in study two (featured in chapter three). This information was included in the supplementary materials of this study in its published form (at the request of one of the peer reviewers). See below for a) all measure items and factor loadings for an exploratory factor analysis (after principal axis factoring with promax rotation) using a randomised half of study two's sample (see Table 1), and b) fit indices for a confirmatory factor analysis (see Table 2) and a visual depiction of the best fit model (a higher order confirmatory factor analysis model; see Figure 1) used with the remaining half of study two's sample.

Table 1

Promax rotated factor loadings (after principal axis factoring) for the 9-item Online Shaming Scale (N = 206)

	Scale Item	Factor	
		I	PD
7.	I would make negative or mean comments on the person's updates, photos, or tags to make them feel bad for what they did.	.84	
3.	I would show my support for punishing that person by commenting on posts shaming that person.	.73	
8.	I would post about it as a way of letting others know what that person did wrong.	.73	
10.	I would create a meme or edit a photo making fun of that person and then post it online for others to see as a way to punish them.	.71	
4.	I would comment directly on the person's post to show my disapproval.	.62	
12.	I would show my disapproval by sharing posts that call them out for what they did.	.53	
6.	They do not deserve to be ridiculed for it. [a]		.89
1.	They deserve what is coming for them.		.56
9.	They should not have their name dragged across the internet, even if that person makes a bad mistake. [a]		.44

Note. Factor loadings < .3 are not shown. Items 2 ("I would not post about the person online as a way of embarrassing them for what they did."), 5 ("I would not click "like" on posts shaming that person."), and 11 ("I would not message them to insult them.") were removed due to poor loadings/cross-loadings. I = intentions. PD = perceived deservedness. [a] = Item responses were reverse coded prior to analysis.

Table 2

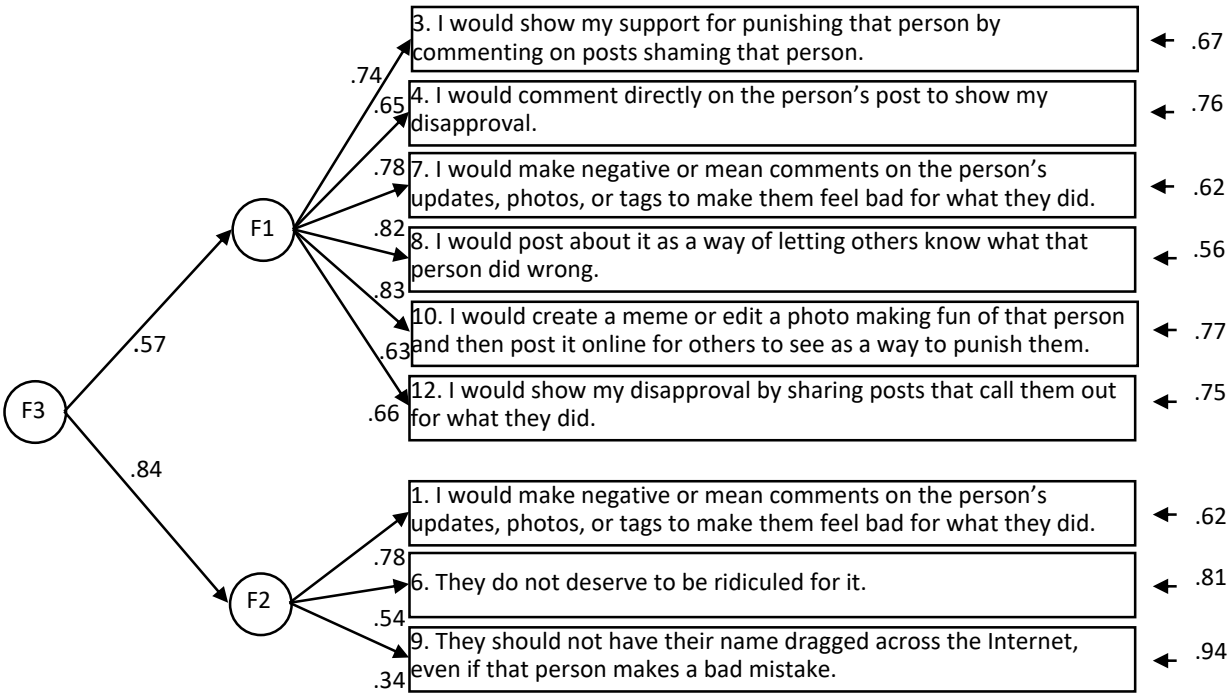
Fit indices for confirmatory factor analyses for the OSS with Kline's (2005) cut-off criteria (robust statistics)

Model	NFI	NNFI	CFI	RMSEA[90% CI]	S-Bχ^2/*df*
Cut-off criteria	≥.95	≥.90	≥.95	<.08	≤3.0
Higher order model	.90	.91	.94	.08[.05, .10]	2.18
One-factor model	.82	.82	.86	.11[.09, .14]	3.51
Correlated two-factor model	.89	.91	.93	.08[.05, .11]	2.27
Uncorrelated two-factor model	.85	.86	.90	.10[.07, .12]	2.90

Note. OSS = Online Shaming Scale; NFI = normed fit index; NNFI = non-normed fit index; CFI = comparative fit index; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation; CI = confidence interval; S-Bχ^2 = Satorra-Bentler chi-squared; *df* = degrees of freedom.

Figure 1

Higher order confirmatory factor analysis model of the OSS

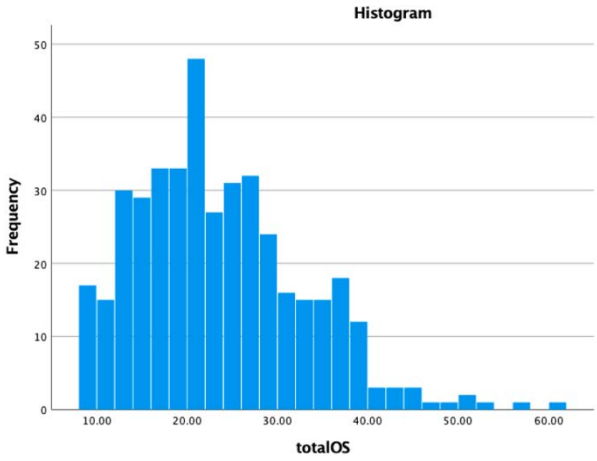


Appendix K: Normality plots for all scale measures in study two

This appendix features normality plots for all scale measures used in the linear regressions for study two (featured in chapter three), as well as a normality plot for the Online Shaming Scale (OSS) intentions subscale plot after transformation was made in an attempt to reduce the skew. This information was included in the supplementary materials of this study in its published form (at the request of one of the peer reviewers).

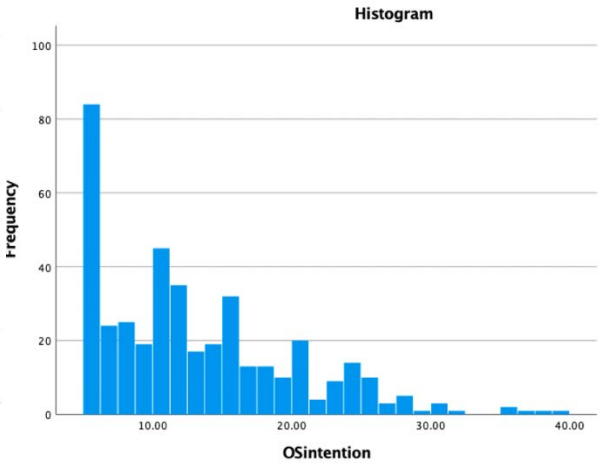
Plot 1

Total OSS plot



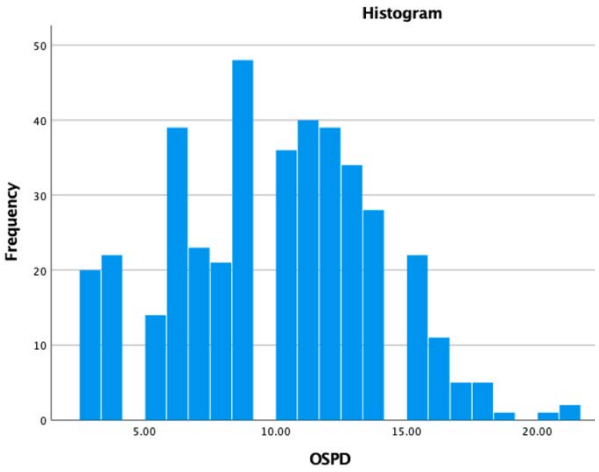
Plot 2

OSS intentions subscale plot



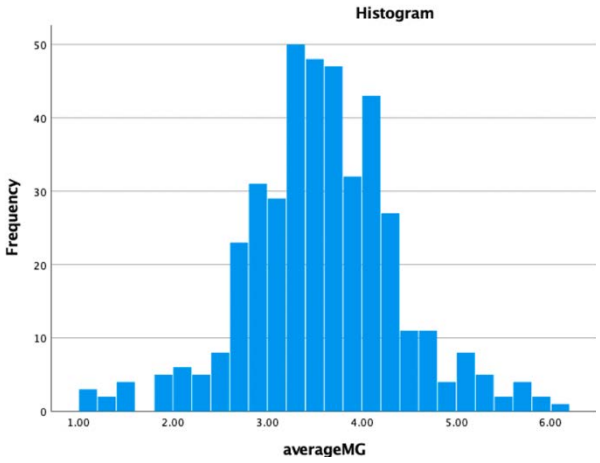
Plot 3

OSS perceived deservedness subscale plot



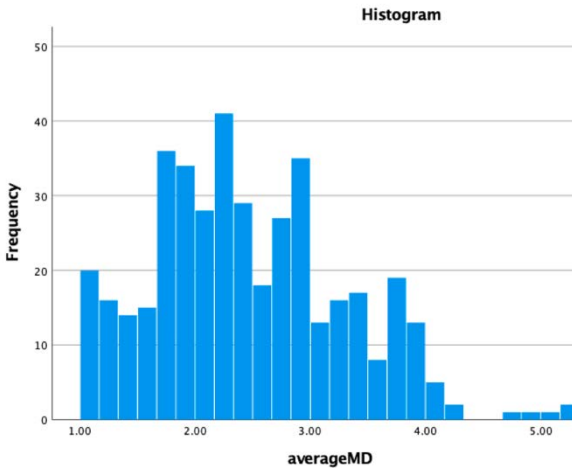
Plot 4

Moral grandstanding plot



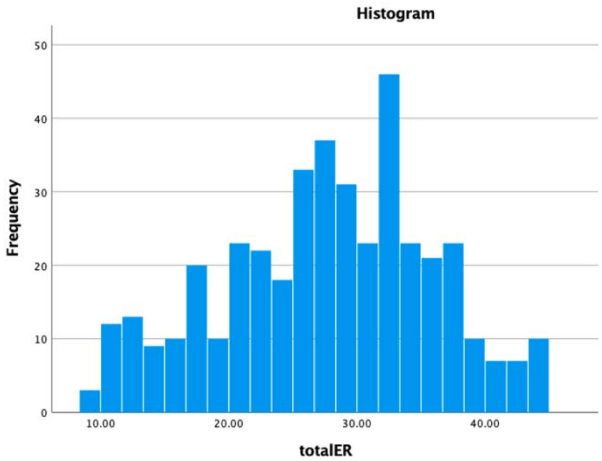
Plot 5

Moral disengagement plot



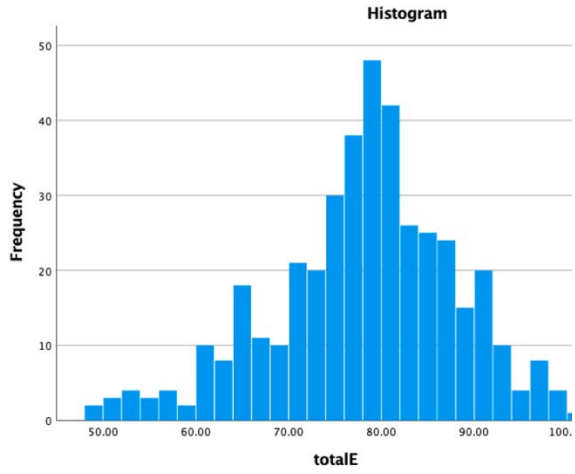
Plot 6

Emotional reactivity plot



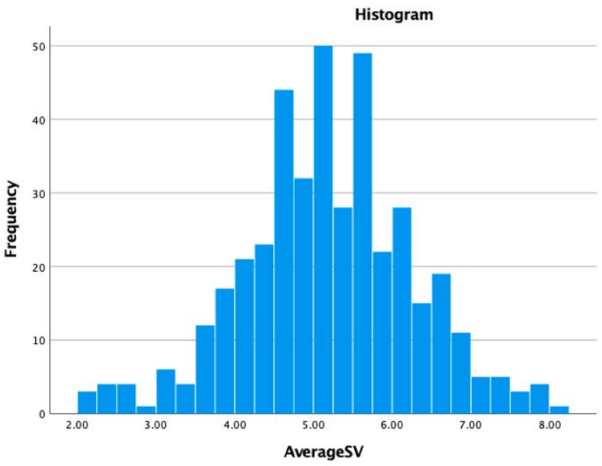
Plot 7

Empathy plot



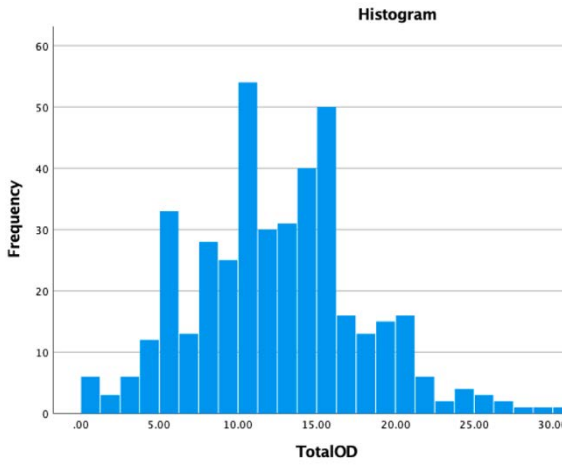
Plot 8

Social vigilantism plot



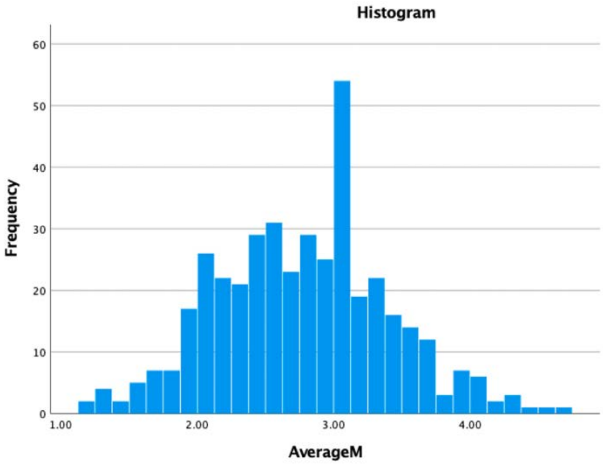
Plot 9

Online disinhibition plot



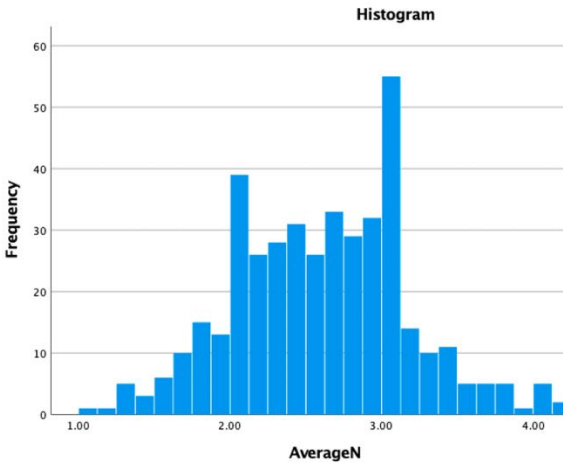
Plot 10

Machiavellianism plot



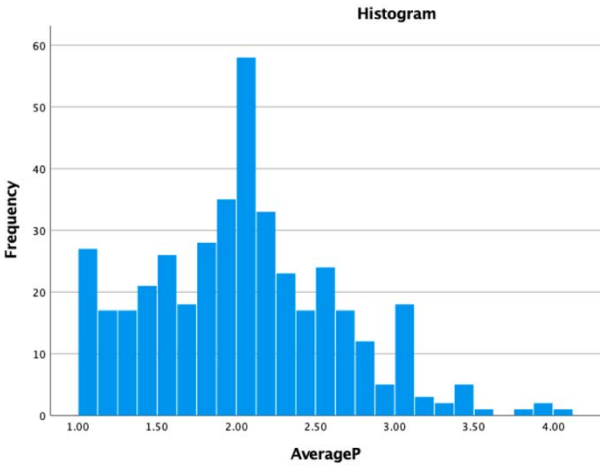
Plot 11

Narcissism plot



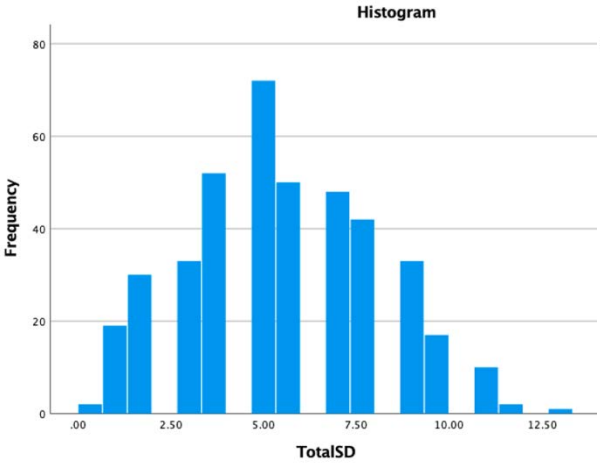
Plot 12

Psychopathy plot



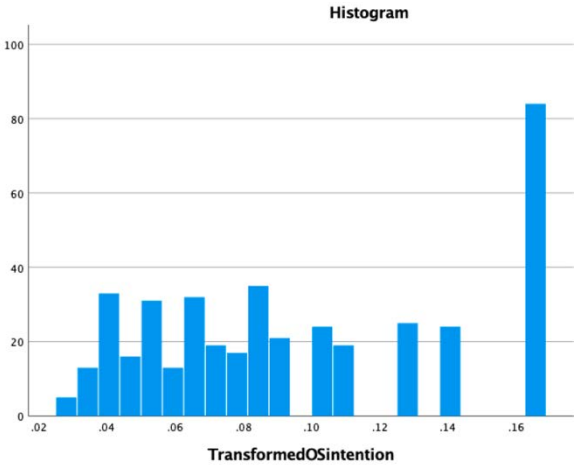
Plot 13

Social desirability plot



Plot 14

OSS intentions plot after transformation



Appendix L: Linear and Ridge regressions using R for study two

This appendix features comparisons between the two linear regressions included in the findings section of study two (featured in chapter three) and two post hoc Ridge regressions conducted using the same dataset (with the accompanying output for these analyses conducted in R also included in this appendix afterwards). These additional analyses were conducted and included in the supplementary materials of this study in its published form (at the request of one of the peer reviewers).

Overall comparison between linear and Ridge regressions

To assess the robustness of the two hierarchical multiple regression analyses (HMRAs) featured in the current findings, two post hoc Ridge regressions were also conducted using the same data (see Table 1 for a summary of relevant statistics for both regression types). Whilst the Akaike information criterion (AIC) and the Bayesian information criterion (BIC) values were lower for the Ridge regressions compared to the linear regressions (suggesting the Ridge regressions were comparatively better-fit models), the R^2 and adjusted R^2 (AR^2) values were the same for both regression types when predicting the online shaming intentions subscale, and were also almost identical when predicting the online shaming perceived deservedness subscale. This consistency across both regression types regarding the proportion of variance in the criterion variables accounted for by the predictor variables supports the robustness of the original findings.

The mean-squared error (MSE) traced by lambda plots (featured in the Ridge regression output below) for both Ridge regressions demonstrate that the error does decrease slightly when applying some bias to the predictors. However, since the bias needed to slightly decrease this error is small, this highlights that the linear regressions are already quite strong, and therefore supports the use of the original regressions. The log lambda-coefficients plots and the Ridge regression coefficients (also featured in the Ridge regression output below) also demonstrate the same overarching findings as the original HMRAs regarding which predictors are most important in predicting the two criterion variables. For example, in both regression types, the three most important variables in predicting online shaming intentions are a) whether the participant has already shamed someone online before, b) psychopathy, and c) moral grandstanding. This consistency in the overall pattern of predictor coefficients both with and without bias applied further supports the robustness of the current findings.

Table 1

Summary of R^2, adjusted R^2, AIC, and BIC values for linear and Ridge regressions

		Linear regressions				Ridge regressions			
		R^2	AR^2	AIC	BIC	R^2	AR^2	AIC	BIC
OSI									
	Step 1	.12	.11	2705	2729	-	-	-	-
	Step 2	.12	.11	2707	2735	-	-	-	-
	Step 3	.39	.37	2573	2638	.39	.37	-6230	-6175
OSPD									
	Step 1	.03	.02	2265	2289	-	-	-	-
	Step 2	.04	.03	2261	2289	-	-	-	-
	Step 3	.20	.17	2205	2269	.19	.16	-681	-626

Note. AIC = Akaike information criterion. BIC = Bayesian information criterion. AR^2 = adjusted R^2. OSI = online shaming intentions; OSPD = online shaming perceived deservedness.

Predicting online shaming intentions using linear regression in R (output)

```
> rm(list=ls())# This just clears the environment
> options(scipen=999)
> options(digits=4)
> data_folder <- dirname(rstudioapi::getSourceEditorContext()$path)
> setwd(data_folder)
> # For reproducible results
> set.seed(123)
> library(readr)
> data_Long <- as.data.frame(read_csv("Long.csv"))
Rows: 411 Columns: 17

── Column specification ────────────────────────────────────────────────────────
Delimiter: ","
chr  (1): CASE_LBL
dbl (16): OSintention, OSPD, gender_dummy, Daily_hours_online, Daily_hours_sm, shamed_someone_d...

ℹ Use `spec()` to retrieve the full column specification for this data.
ℹ Specify the column types or set `show_col_types = FALSE` to quiet this message.
> #load packages
> library(car)
Loading required package: carData
> library(glmnet)
Loading required package: Matrix
Loaded glmnet 4.1-4
> library(dplyr)

Attaching package: ‘dplyr’

The following object is masked from ‘package:car’:

    recode

The following objects are masked from ‘package:stats’:

    filter, lag

The following objects are masked from ‘package:base’:

    intersect, setdiff, setequal, union

> library(ggplot2)
> lbs_fun <- function(fit, offset_x=1, ...) {
+   L <- length(fit$lambda)
+   x <- log(fit$lambda[L])+ offset_x
+   y <- fit$beta[, L]
+   labs <- names(y)
```

```
+   text(x, y, labels=labs, ...)
+ }
> glmnet_cv_aicc <- function(fit, lambda = 'lambda.1se'){
+   whlm <- which(fit$lambda == fit[[lambda]])
+   with(fit$glmnet.fit,
+        {
+          tLL <- nulldev - nulldev * (1 - dev.ratio)[whlm]
+          k <- df[whlm]
+          n <- nobs
+          return(list('AICc' = - tLL + 2 * k + 2 * k * (k + 1) / (n - k - 1),
+                      'BIC' = log(n) * k - tLL))
+        })
+ }
> New_labels<- c("ID","OSintention", "OSPD","gender","Hours_online", "Hours_sm","Shamed", "SD", "MG","M
D","ER","E","SV","OD","M","N","P")
> colnames(data_Long)<- New_labels
> # Regress all the predictor variables onto "OSintention" response variable
> res <- lm(OSintention~MG + MD + ER+ E+
+             SV + OD + M + N + P+ gender +
+             Hours_online + Shamed + SD +
+             Hours_sm, data=data_Long)
> summary(res)
```

Step 1

```
> # Regress step 1 predictor variables onto "OSintention" response variable
> res <- lm(OSintention~gender + Hours_online + Hours_sm + Shamed, data=data_Long)
> summary(res)

Call:
lm(formula = OSintention ~ gender + Hours_online + Hours_sm +
    Shamed, data = data_Long)

Residuals:
   Min     1Q Median     3Q    Max
-14.46  -4.84  -1.44   3.88  24.88

Coefficients:
             Estimate Std. Error t value             Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept)   12.8600     0.9676   13.29 < 0.0000000000000002 ***
gender        -2.4694     0.7574   -3.26               0.0012 **
Hours_online   0.0335     0.1350    0.25               0.8041
Hours_sm       0.3811     0.1813    2.10               0.0361 *
Shamed         5.4127     0.9051    5.98         0.0000000049 ***
---
Signif. codes:  0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1

Residual standard error: 6.44 on 406 degrees of freedom
Multiple R-squared:  0.121,     Adjusted R-squared:  0.113
F-statistic:   14 on 4 and 406 DF,  p-value: 0.0000000000983

> AIC(res)
[1] 2705
> BIC(res)
[1] 2729
```

Step 2

```
> # Regress step 2 predictor variables onto "OSintention" response variable
> res <- lm(OSintention~gender + Hours_online + Hours_sm + Shamed + SD, data=data_Long)
> summary(res)

Call:
lm(formula = OSintention ~ gender + Hours_online + Hours_sm +
    Shamed + SD, data = data_Long)
```

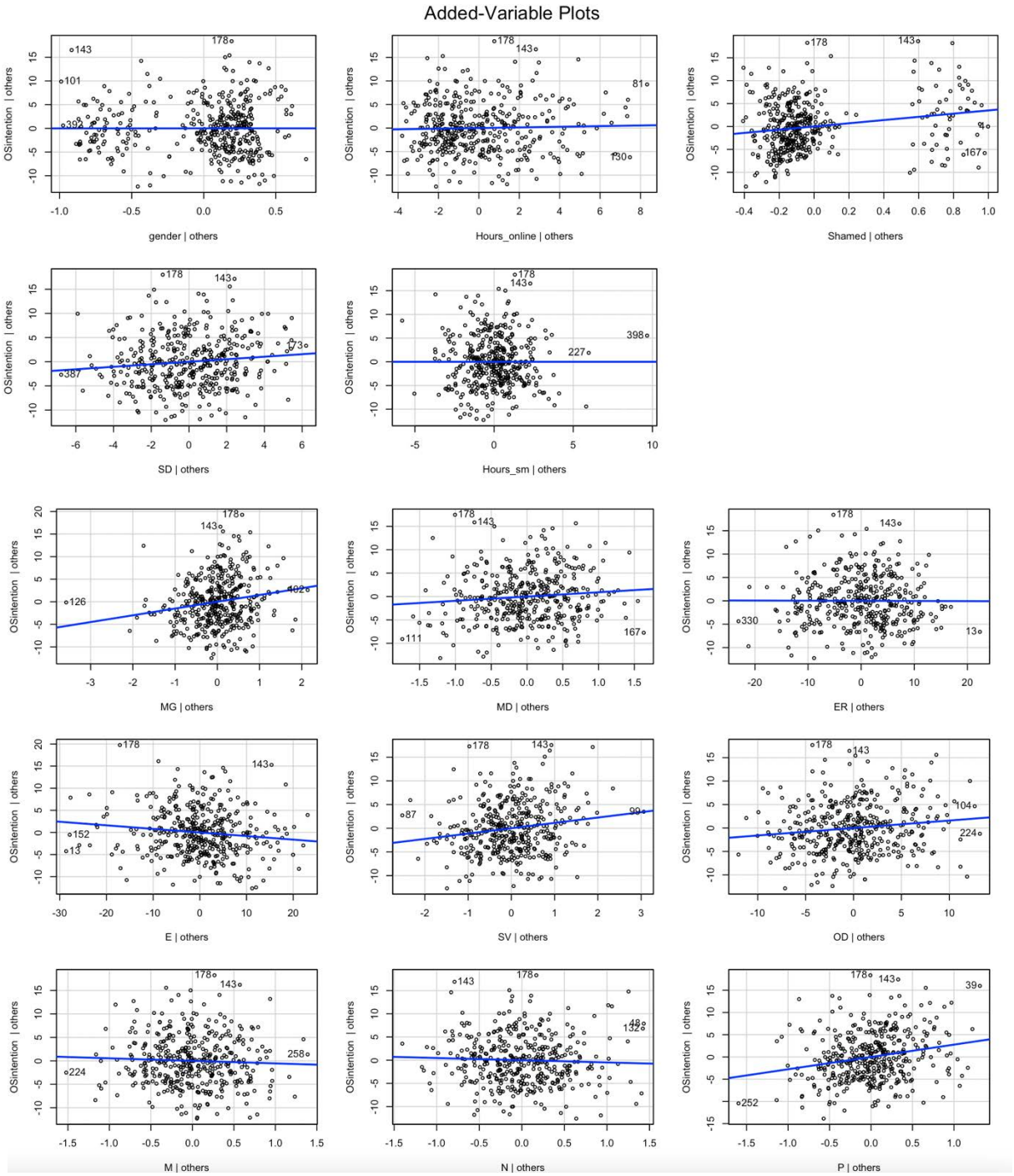
```
Residuals:
   Min     1Q Median     3Q    Max
-14.36  -4.84  -1.48   3.89  24.96

Coefficients:
             Estimate Std. Error t value             Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept)   13.1196     1.2606   10.41 < 0.0000000000000002 ***
gender        -2.4600     0.7588   -3.24               0.0013 **
Hours_online   0.0317     0.1352    0.23               0.8146
Hours_sm       0.3757     0.1822    2.06               0.0399 *
Shamed         5.3637     0.9188    5.84          0.000000011 ***
SD            -0.0409     0.1270   -0.32               0.7477
---
Signif. codes:  0 ‘***’ 0.001 ‘**’ 0.01 ‘*’ 0.05 ‘.’ 0.1 ‘ ’ 1

Residual standard error: 6.45 on 405 degrees of freedom
Multiple R-squared:  0.122,     Adjusted R-squared:  0.111
F-statistic: 11.2 on 5 and 405 DF,  p-value: 0.00000000038

> AIC(res)
[1] 2707
> BIC(res)
[1] 2735
```

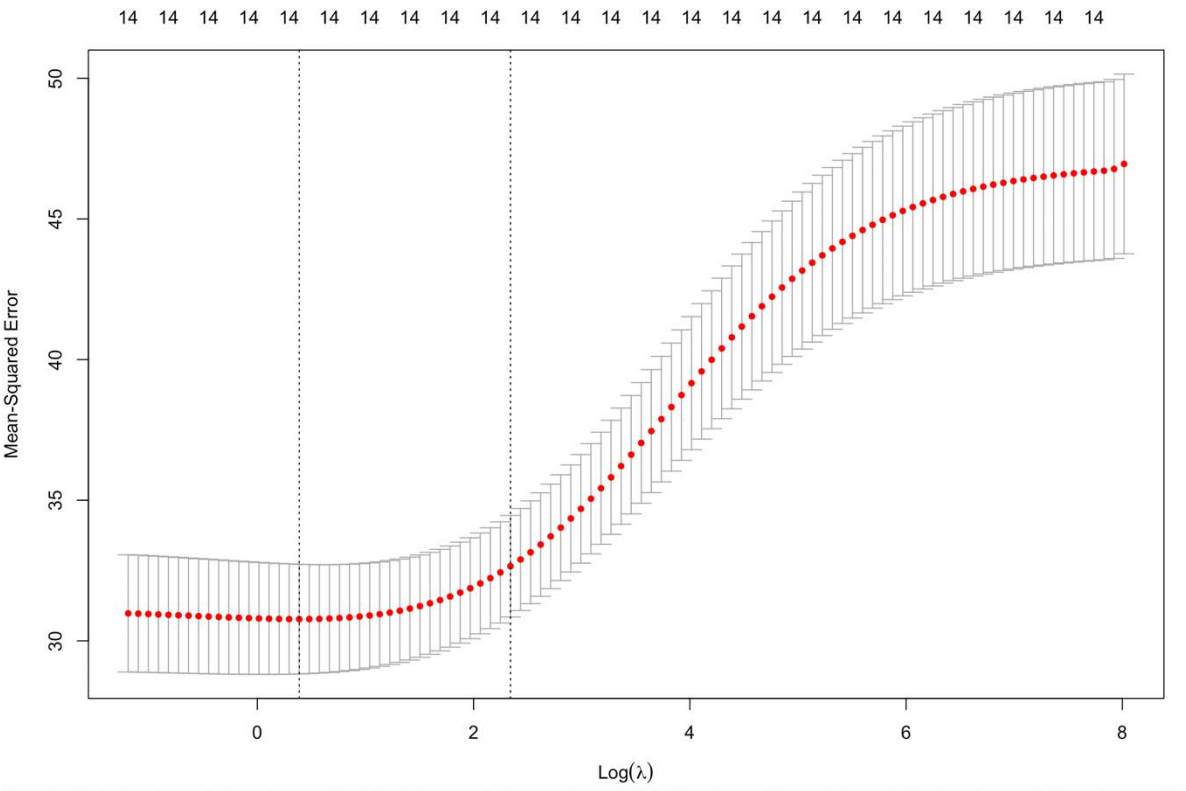
Step 3

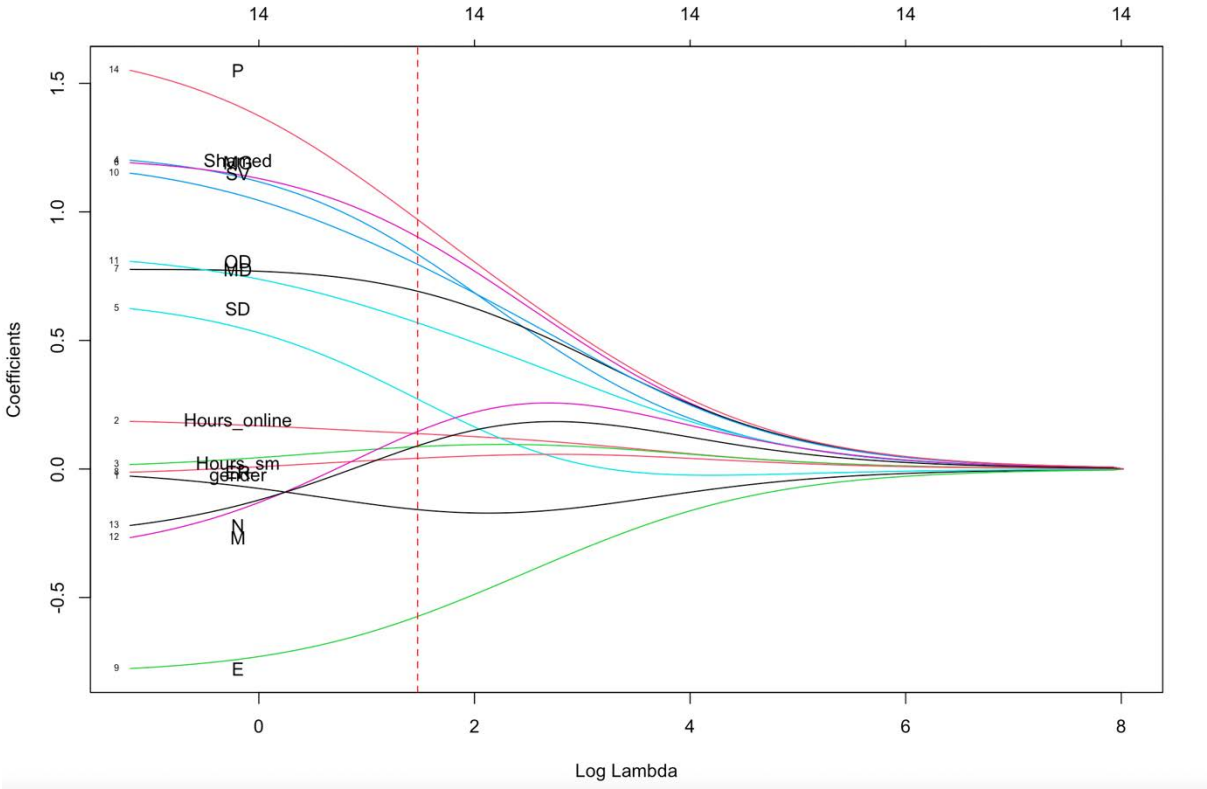
```
Call:
lm(formula = OSintention ~ MG + MD + ER + E + SV + OD + M + N +
    P + gender + Hours_online + Shamed + SD + Hours_sm, data = data_Long)

Residuals:
   Min     1Q Median     3Q    Max
-12.28  -3.74  -0.25   3.01  18.39

Coefficients:
              Estimate Std. Error t value  Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept) -1.093995   3.765548   -0.29   0.77156
MG           1.500586   0.417557    3.59   0.00037 ***
MD           0.919302   0.462546    1.99   0.04756 *
ER          -0.003322   0.036965   -0.09   0.92844
E           -0.081074   0.032199   -2.52   0.01220 *
SV           1.130270   0.342201    3.30   0.00104 **
OD           0.159811   0.059456    2.69   0.00749 **
M           -0.547050   0.581234   -0.94   0.34718
N           -0.483655   0.554276   -0.87   0.38342
P            2.767793   0.611897    4.52 0.0000081 ***
gender       0.004220   0.689501    0.01   0.99512
Hours_online 0.068961   0.116158    0.59   0.55306
Shamed       3.507336   0.804382    4.36 0.0000166 ***
SD           0.261039   0.118489    2.20   0.02817 *
Hours_sm    -0.000213   0.161737    0.00   0.99895
---
Signif. codes:  0 ‘***’ 0.001 ‘**’ 0.01 ‘*’ 0.05 ‘.’ 0.1 ‘ ’ 1

Residual standard error: 5.43 on 396 degrees of freedom
Multiple R-squared:  0.392,     Adjusted R-squared:  0.371
F-statistic: 18.3 on 14 and 396 DF,  p-value: <0.0000000000000002

> AIC(res)
[1] 2573
> BIC(res)
[1] 2638
> #produce added variable plots
> avPlots(res)
Hit <Return> to see next plot:
Hit <Return> to see next plot:
> data_long_OSintention<- data_Long[, c(2,4:17)]### Selecting variables for first outcome measure to pred
ict
```

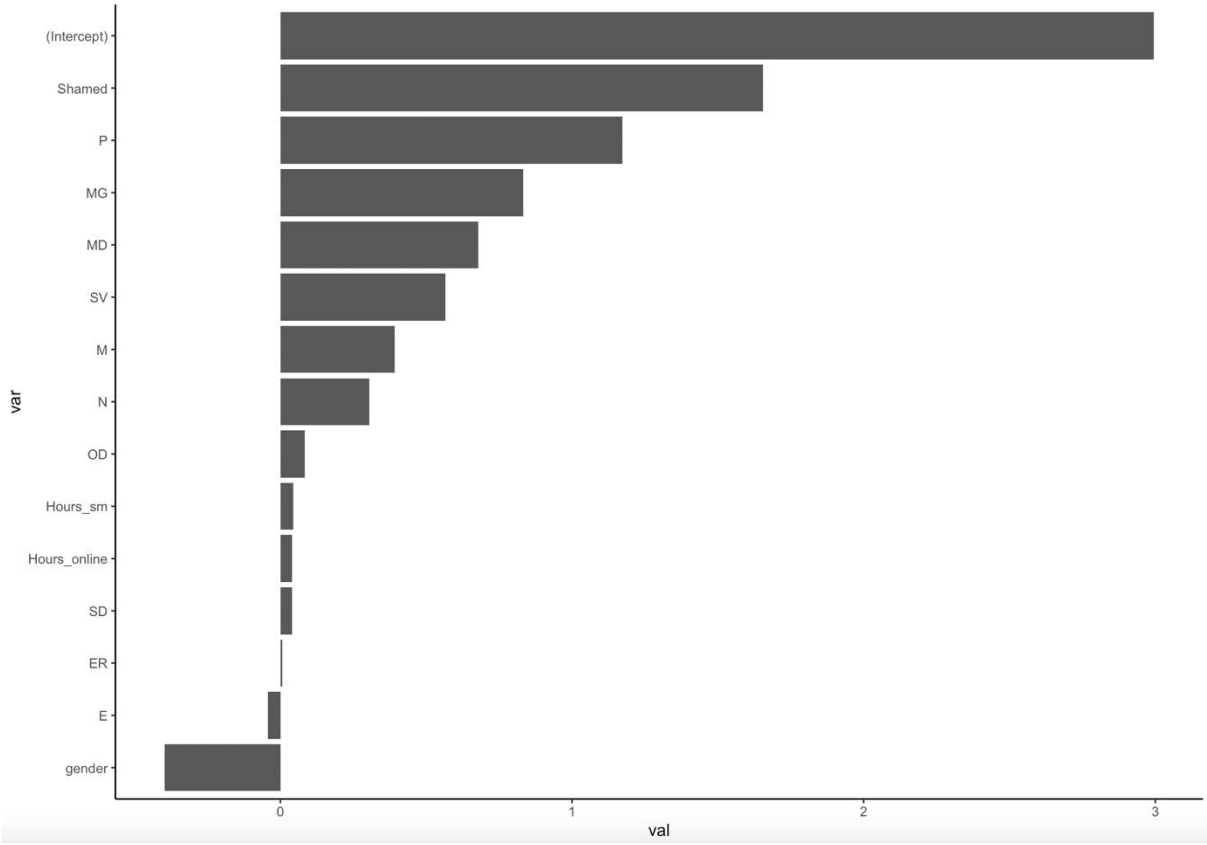
```
> varmtx <- model.matrix(OSintention~.-1, data=data_long_OSintention)
> response <- data_Long$OSintention
> # alpha=0 means ridge regression. This is just normal validation. Below you have cross validation
> ridge <- glmnet(scale(varmtx), response, alpha=0)
> # Cross validation to find the optimal lambda penalization
> cv.ridge <- cv.glmnet(varmtx, response, alpha=0)
> plot(cv.ridge, xvar = "lambda", label=T)
```

Predicting online shaming intentions using Ridge regression in R (output)




14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14
Mean-Squared Error
50
45
40
35
30
0
2
4
6
8
Log(λ)


14 14 14 14 14
Coefficients
1.5
1.0
0.5
0.0
-0.5
P
SV
MD
SD
Hours_online
N
M
E
0
2
4
6
8
Log Lambda




```
> ridge.model_R2 <- glmnet(varmtx, response, alpha=0, lambda = cv.ridge$lambda.min)
> ridge.model_R2$dev.ratio # This is the R squared from the fitted model. I used the lambda from the cross-va
lidated model to calculate the bext model
[1] 0.3863
> ############################
> plot(cv.ridge, xvar = "lambda", label=T)
There were 12 warnings (use warnings() to see them)
> glmnet_cv_aicc(cv.ridge)
$AICc
[1] -6230

$BIC
[1] -6175

           var       val
1   (Intercept)  2.994116
2        Shamed  1.653975
3             P  1.172955
4            MG  0.832469
5            MD  0.679359
6            SV  0.565733
7        gender -0.396029
8             M  0.391290
9             N  0.305130
10           OD  0.082712
11     Hours_sm  0.044565
12            E -0.043428
13 Hours_online  0.041018
14           SD  0.039780
15           ER  0.006537
> order_coef_Ridge$var <- factor(order_coef_Ridge$var, levels = order_coef_Ridge$var[order(order_coef_Rid
ge$val)])
> ggplot(data=order_coef_Ridge, aes(x=var, y=val)) +
+   geom_bar(stat="identity") + coord_flip()+theme_classic()
```

Predicting online shaming perceived deservedness using linear regression in R (output)

Step 1

```
> # Regress step 1 predictor variables onto "OSPD" response variable
> res2 <- lm(OSPD~gender + Hours_online + Hours_sm + Shamed, data=data_Long)
> summary(res2)

Call:
lm(formula = OSPD ~ gender + Hours_online + Hours_sm + Shamed,
    data = data_Long)

Residuals:
   Min     1Q Median     3Q    Max
-8.432 -3.038  0.122  2.621  9.464

Coefficients:
             Estimate Std. Error t value            Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept)    9.1949     0.5666   16.23 <0.0000000000000002 ***
gender        -0.2732     0.4435   -0.62               0.5382
Hours_online   0.0683     0.0790    0.86               0.3880
Hours_sm       0.0920     0.1061    0.87               0.3868
Shamed         1.5430     0.5300    2.91               0.0038 **
---
Signif. codes:  0 ‘***’ 0.001 ‘**’ 0.01 ‘*’ 0.05 ‘.’ 0.1 ‘ ’ 1

Residual standard error: 3.77 on 406 degrees of freedom
Multiple R-squared:  0.0312,    Adjusted R-squared:  0.0217
F-statistic: 3.27 on 4 and 406 DF,  p-value: 0.0117

> AIC(res2)
[1] 2265
> BIC(res2)
[1] 2289
```

Step 2

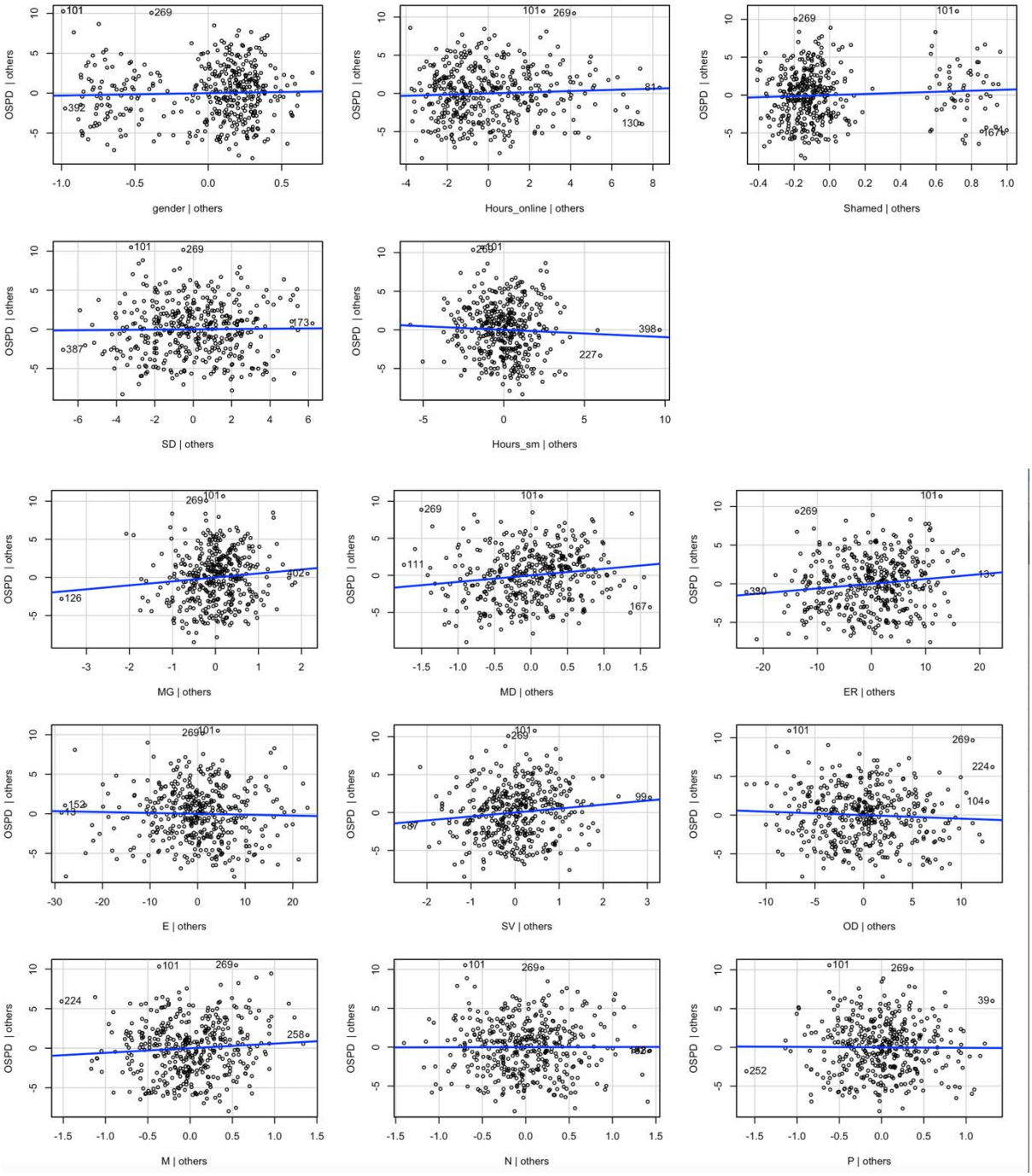
```
> # Regress step 2 predictor variables onto "OSPD" response variable
> res2 <- lm(OSPD~gender + Hours_online + Hours_sm + Shamed + SD, data=data_Long)
> summary(res2)

Call:
lm(formula = OSPD ~ gender + Hours_online + Hours_sm + Shamed +
    SD, data = data_Long)

Residuals:
   Min     1Q Median     3Q    Max
-8.399 -3.043  0.239  2.722  8.854

Coefficients:
             Estimate Std. Error t value            Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept)   10.3014     0.7332   14.05 <0.0000000000000002 ***
gender        -0.2333     0.4413   -0.53               0.597
Hours_online   0.0607     0.0787    0.77               0.441
Hours_sm       0.0691     0.1060    0.65               0.515
Shamed         1.3340     0.5344    2.50               0.013 *
SD            -0.1742     0.0739   -2.36               0.019 *
---
Signif. codes:  0 ‘***’ 0.001 ‘**’ 0.01 ‘*’ 0.05 ‘.’ 0.1 ‘ ’ 1

Residual standard error: 3.75 on 405 degrees of freedom
Multiple R-squared:  0.0444,    Adjusted R-squared:  0.0326
F-statistic: 3.76 on 5 and 405 DF,  p-value: 0.00244
```

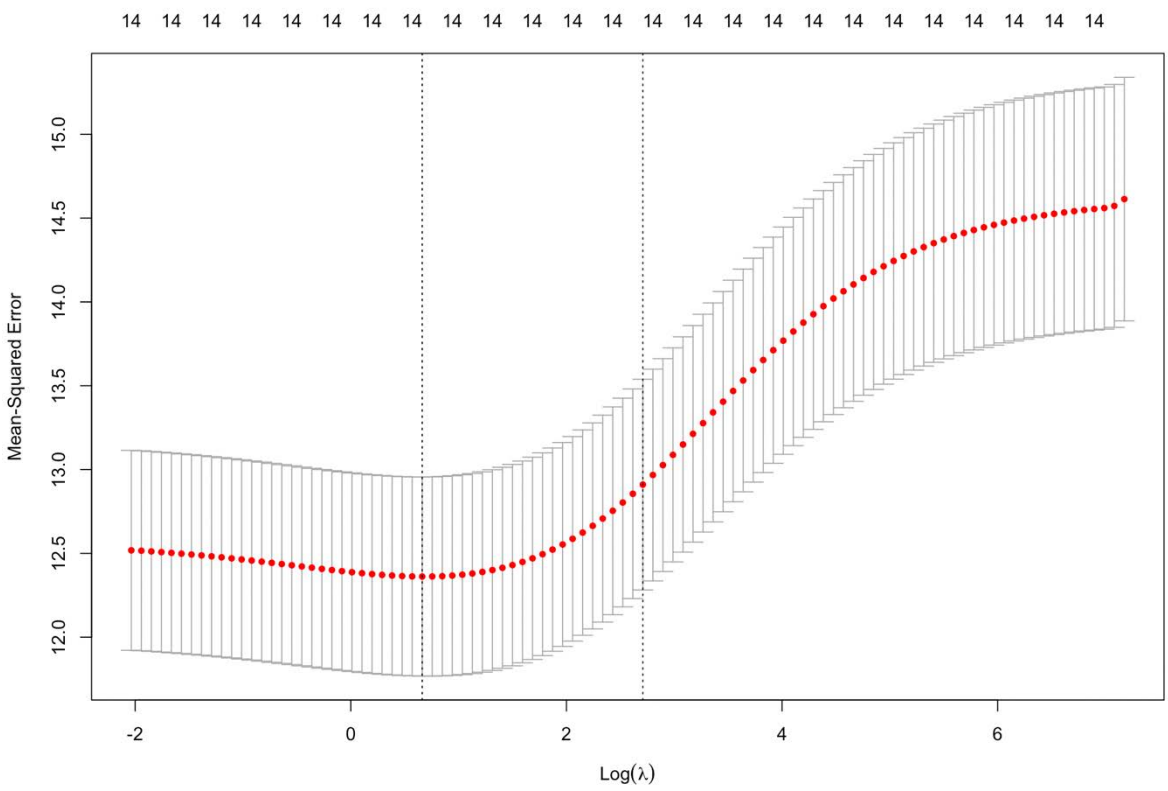
```
> AIC(res2)
[1] 2261
> BIC(res2)
[1] 2289
```

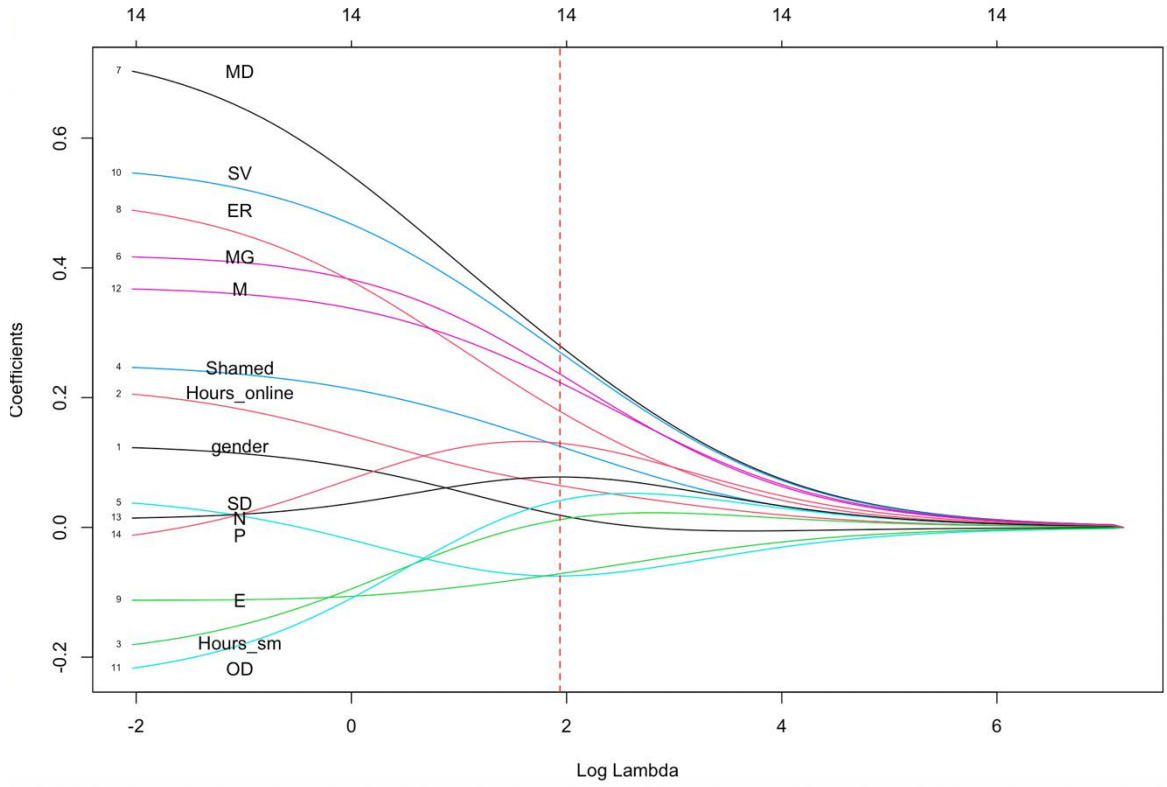
Step 3

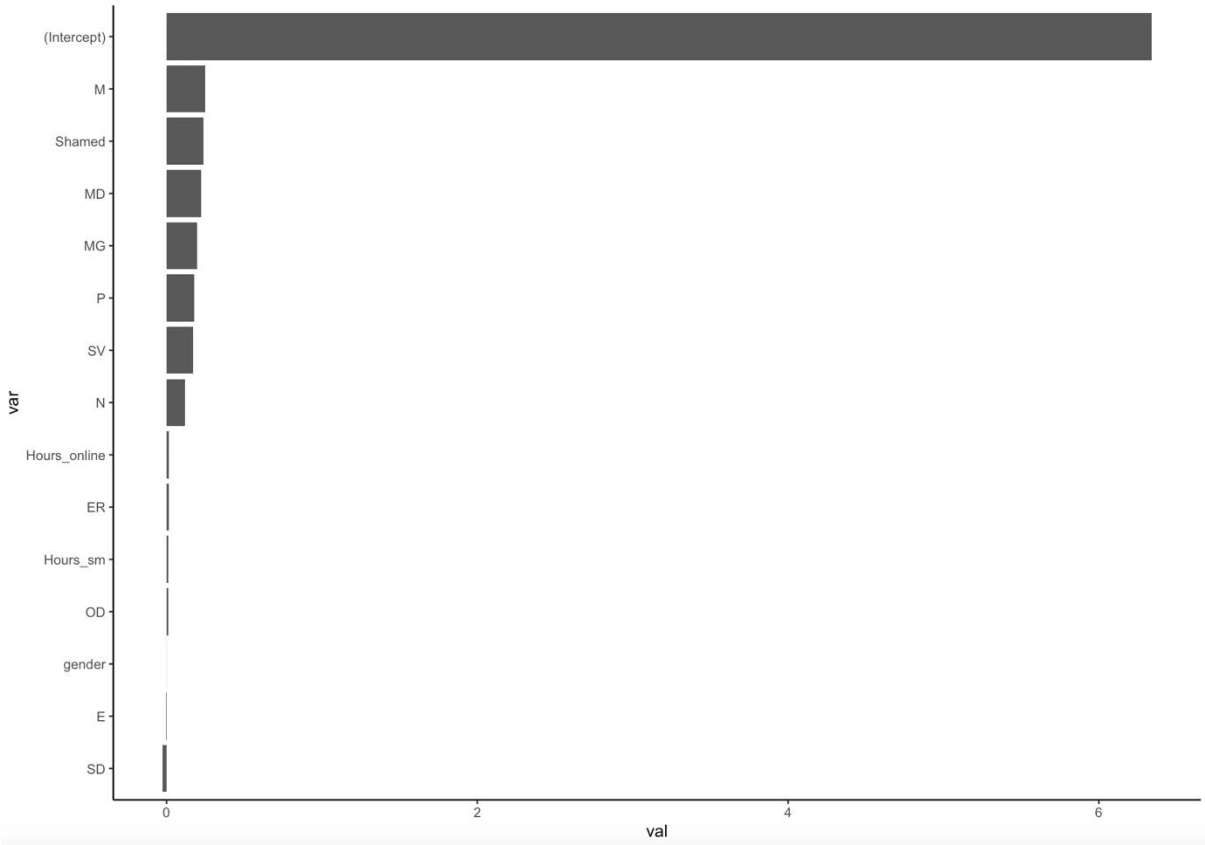
```
> # Regress all the predictor variables onto "OSPD" response variable
> res2 <- lm(OSPD~MG + MD + ER+ E+
+             SV + OD + M + N + P+ gender +
+             Hours_online + Shamed + SD +
+             Hours_sm, data=data_Long)
> summary(res2)

Call:
lm(formula = OSPD ~ MG + MD + ER + E + SV + OD + M + N + P +
    gender + Hours_online + Shamed + SD + Hours_sm, data = data_Long)

Residuals:
   Min     1Q Median     3Q    Max
-8.234 -2.498  0.093  2.215 10.551

Coefficients:
             Estimate Std. Error t value Pr(>|t|)
(Intercept)    0.7819     2.4060    0.32   0.7454
MG             0.5186     0.2668    1.94   0.0526 .
MD             0.8836     0.2955    2.99   0.0030 **
ER             0.0612     0.0236    2.59   0.0099 **
E             -0.0114     0.0206   -0.55   0.5808
SV             0.5235     0.2187    2.39   0.0171 *
OD            -0.0455     0.0380   -1.20   0.2317
M              0.5865     0.3714    1.58   0.1151
N              0.0205     0.3542    0.06   0.9538
P             -0.0613     0.3910   -0.16   0.8755
gender         0.2997     0.4406    0.68   0.4967
Hours_online   0.0777     0.0742    1.05   0.2960
Shamed         0.7170     0.5140    1.40   0.1638
SD             0.0201     0.0757    0.27   0.7905
Hours_sm      -0.0946     0.1033   -0.92   0.3604
---
Signif. codes:  0 ‘***’ 0.001 ‘**’ 0.01 ‘*’ 0.05 ‘.’ 0.1 ‘ ’ 1

Residual standard error: 3.47 on 396 degrees of freedom
Multiple R-squared:  0.202,     Adjusted R-squared:  0.174
F-statistic: 7.17 on 14 and 396 DF,  p-value: 0.000000000000272

> AIC(res2)
[1] 2205
> BIC(res2)
[1] 2269
> #produce added variable plots
> avPlots(res2)
```

Predicting online shaming perceived deservedness using Ridge regression in R (output)




14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14 14
Mean-Squared Error
12.0
12.5
13.0
13.5
14.0
14.5
15.0
-2
0
2
4
6
Log(λ)


14 14 14 14 14
Coefficients
-0.2
0.0
0.2
0.4
0.6
MD
SV
ER
MG
M
Shamed
Hours_online
gender
SD
N
P
E
Hours_sm
OD
-2
0
2
4
6
Log Lambda




```
> ridge.model_R2 <- glmnet(varmtx, response, alpha=0, family="gaussian",lambda = cv.ridge$lambda.min)
> ridge.model_R2$dev.ratio # This is the R squared from the fitted model. I used the lambda from the cross-va
lidated model to calculate the bext model
[1] 0.1931
> glmnet_cv_aicc(cv.ridge)
$AICc
[1] -681

$BIC
[1] -625.8
```

```
> plot(ridge, xvar = "lambda", label=T)
> lbs_fun(ridge)
> abline(v=cv.ridge$lambda.min, col = "red", lty=2)
> abline(v=cv.ridge$lambda.1se, col="blue", lty=2)
> coefListRidge <- coef(cv.ridge, s='lambda.1se')
> coefListRidge <- data.frame(coefListRidge@Dimnames[[1]][coefListRidge@i+1],coefListRidge@x)
> names(coefListRidge) <- c('var','val')
> order_coef_Ridge<- coefListRidge %>%
+   arrange(-abs(val))
> order_coef_Ridge
            var        val
1   (Intercept)  6.3384393
2             M  0.2496357
3        Shamed  0.2367968
4            MD  0.2218683
5            MG  0.1966812
6             P  0.1764151
7            SV  0.1694858
8             N  0.1184757
9            SD -0.0249489
10 Hours_online  0.0156252
11           ER  0.0133918
12     Hours_sm  0.0105182
13           OD  0.0098476
14            E -0.0052569
15       gender  0.0007711
```

Appendix M: Open access policy for PLOS ONE for study two

The open access policy for PLOS ONE shown below pertains to the paper presented in chapter three, 'Examining the role of moral, emotional, behavioural, and personality factors in predicting online shaming' (which was published in PLOS ONE). The images below were retrieved from https://journals.plos.org/plosone/s/journal-information#loc-open-access and https://plos.org/open-science/open-access/.

Open Access

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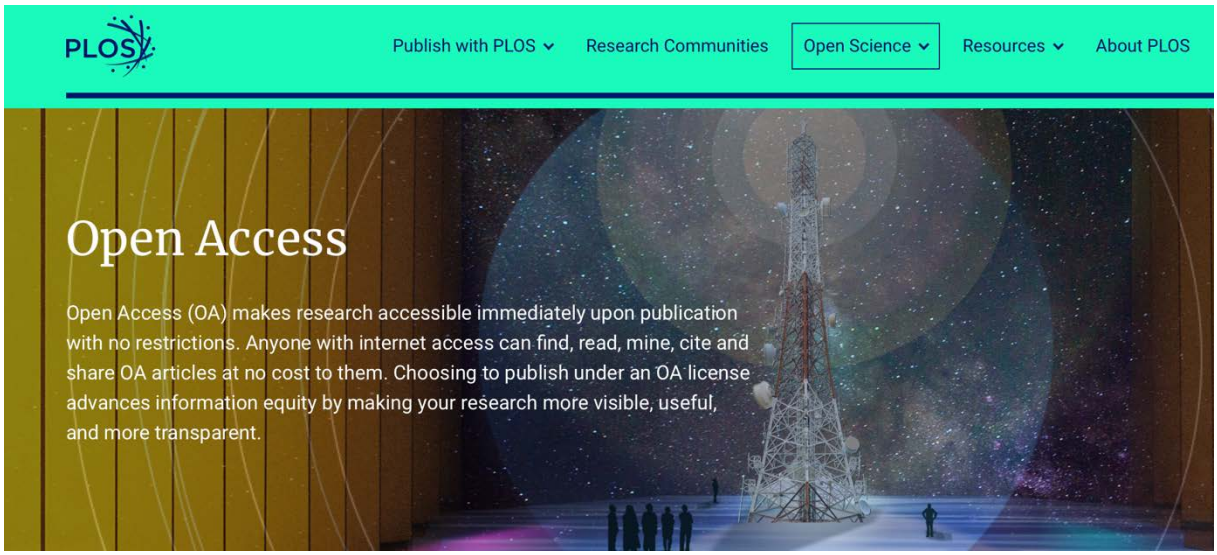
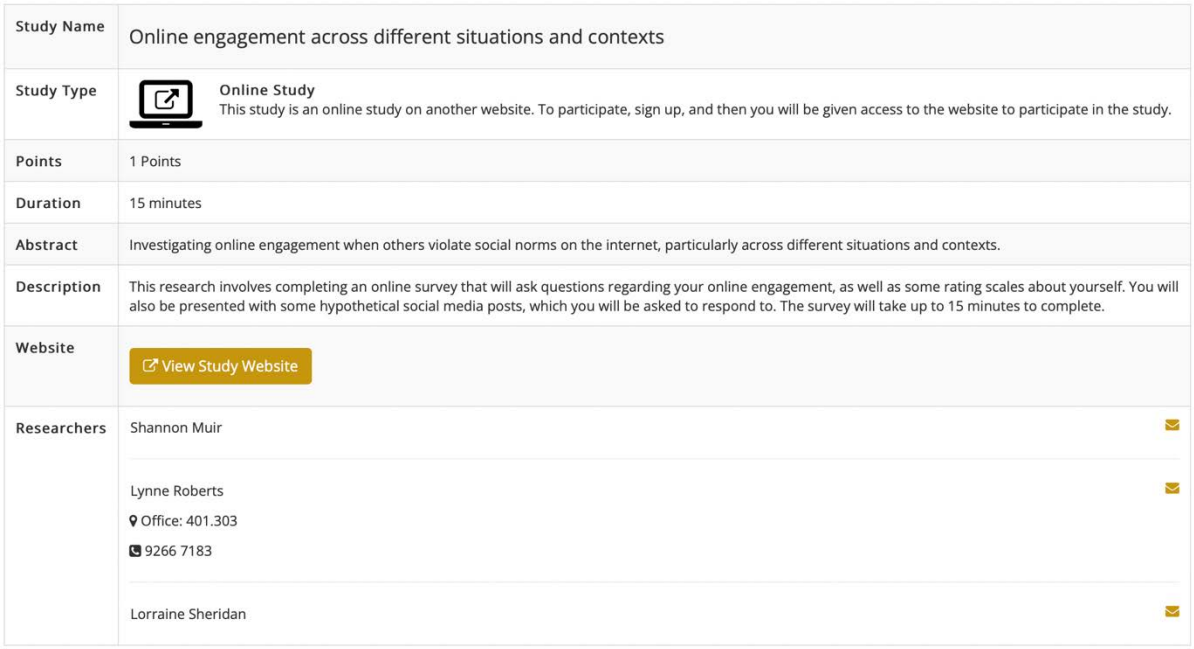


Appendix N: University pool recruitment for study three

The image shown below depicts the recruitment post featured on Curtin University's student research participation pool website, SONA. This website was used as the sole recruitment method for the recruitment of university students as participants in study three (featured in chapter four).



Study Name	Online engagement across different situations and contexts
Study Type	**Online Study** This study is an online study on another website. To participate, sign up, and then you will be given access to the website to participate in the study.
Points	1 Points
Duration	15 minutes
Abstract	Investigating online engagement when others violate social norms on the internet, particularly across different situations and contexts.
Description	This research involves completing an online survey that will ask questions regarding your online engagement, as well as some rating scales about yourself. You will also be presented with some hypothetical social media posts, which you will be asked to respond to. The survey will take up to 15 minutes to complete.
Website	View Study Website
Researchers	Shannon Muir Lynne Roberts Office: 401.303 9266 7183 Lorraine Sheridan

Appendix O: Participant information and consent form and questionnaire for study three

This appendix features the participant information and consent form, questionnaire, and debrief message (all hosted on Qualtrics.com) used for data collection (via the university pool) in study three (featured in chapter four).

Participant information and consent form

Participant information form

HREC project number:	**HRE2019-0697**
Project title:	**Online engagement across different situations and contexts**
Principal investigator:	**Lynne Roberts, Lorraine Sheridan (Associate Professors)**
Student researcher:	**Shannon Muir (PhD candidate)**
Version number:	**1.0**
Version date:	**30/AUG/2021**

Who is doing the research and what is the project about?
My name is Shannon Muir and I am currently completing my PhD in Psychology at Curtin University. I am conducting research that is investigating online engagement when others violate social norms on the internet. I would like to invite you to take part in this research.

What will I have to do?
This research involves completing an online questionnaire that will ask questions regarding your online engagement, as well as some rating scales about yourself. You will also be presented with some hypothetical social media posts, which you will be asked to respond to. The survey will take up to 15 minutes to complete.

Are there any benefits or risks to being in the research project?
Your completion of this survey will make you eligible to receive 1 SONA point (please follow the link at the end of the survey to enter your personal details so this can be awarded to you). Other than this, participation in this research may not benefit you directly, however the information you provide will help further the development of the research field regarding the factors that contribute to certain types of online engagement. The results obtained from this survey might be reported in future academic conferences and publications. Although this survey has been designed in a careful manner to ensure the questions contained are not upsetting, if you do choose to participate and find yourself psychologically or emotionally upset by any of the content within this survey, there are online resources accessible at the end of this survey where you can seek assistance.

Do I have to take part in the research project?
Your participation is entirely voluntary and you are able to withdraw from the study at any time prior to submitting your survey. You will not be asked to provide any identifying information except for the purposes of allocating SONA points, and all identifying information will be kept confidential and destroyed afterwards. Consent for me to use your data in this research will be assumed upon clicking "submit" after reading the participant form.

Who will have access to my information?
Your data will be kept strictly confidential with only myself, my supervisors, and other research staff potentially working on the project having access to it. Data will be stored on a secure research drive at Curtin University and in a secure cabinet at Curtin University for up to 25 years (under 18) or 7 years (adults), at which point it will be disposed of in an ethical manner. In accordance with the requirements of some scientific journals and organisations, your coded data may be shared with other researchers. Your coded data may be used in other, related studies (i.e., additional studies added to the current research project or for use with Honours students). A copy of the coded data will remain in the custody of Associate Professor Lynne Roberts. If you have any questions before, during or after the survey, please contact myself or my primary supervisor by email: shannon.r.muir@postgrad.curtin.edu.au or lynne.roberts@curtin.edu.au.

Will you tell me the results of the research?
If you would like to access the results of this research project, an overall key summary of the findings will be sent to you upon request. By sending an email to myself at shannon.r.muir@postgrad.curtin.edu.au, non-identifiable overall group results will be forwarded on to you when available.

What happens next and who can I contact about the research?
Thank you very much for considering taking part in this research. If you would like to participate in this study, please answer the questions below by clicking on the appropriate answers. This is to ensure you have read this participant information form and you understand what this study is about and what you are required to do, which is essential for you to be able to proceed to the questionnaire. Afterwards, please follow the link to proceed to the questionnaire. By completing and submitting the questionnaire you will be consenting to your data being used in this research.

Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has approved this study (HREC number HRE2019-0697). Should you wish to discuss the study with someone not directly involved, in particular, any matters concerning the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, or you wish to make a confidential complaint, you may contact the Ethics Officer on (08) 9266 9223 or the Manager of Research Integrity on (08) 9266 7093 or email hrec@curtin.edu.au.

Validity check questions featured at the end of the participant form

Participant Information Statement Question 1

What is this study about?

- ○ Physical activity levels in older adults across Australia
- ○ Online engagement when others violate social norms on the Internet
- ○ Australian university students binge drinking behaviours

Participant Information Statement Question 2

What do participants have to do in this study?

- ○ An online questionnaire
- ○ Be interviewed
- ○ Participate in an experiment in a lab setting

Study three questionnaire items and vignettes

Questions about yourself

Please select your age (in years) from the drop box below.

Please select your gender from the options below.

- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Man
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Transgender
- ☐ I describe my gender in a different way (please specify by typing in the space below)

Which of the following would best describe your sexual orientation? Please select from the options below.

- ○ Gay
- ○ Lesbian
- ○ Bisexual
- ○ Pansexual
- ○ Asexual
- ○ Queer
- ○ Straight/heterosexual
- ○ I describe my sexual orientation in a different way (please specify by typing in the space below)

Please select your country of residence (where you usually live) from the drop box below.

Which of the following would best describe your background? Please select from the options below.

- ○ Indigenous Australian (e.g., Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander)
- ○ Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin (e.g., Mexican or Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Salvadoran, Dominican, Colombian, etc.)
- ○ Black or African American (e.g., African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somalian, etc.)
- ○ Asian (e.g., Chinese, Filipino, Asian Indian, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, etc.)

- American Indian or Alaska Native (e.g., Navajo nation, Blackfeet tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village or Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, etc.)
- Middle Eastern or North African (e.g., Lebanese, Iranian, Egyptian, Syrian, Moroccan, Algerian, etc.)
- Native Hawaiian or another Pacific Islander (e.g., Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorro, Tongan, Fijian, etc.)
- White or Caucasian (e.g., German, Irish, English, Italian, Polish, French, etc.)
- I describe my background in a different way (please specify by typing in the space below)

Which of the following would best describe your religion? Please select from the options below.

- Christianity
- Islam
- Nonreligious (Secular/Agnostic/Atheist)
- Hinduism
- Chinese traditional religion
- Buddhism
- I describe my religion in a different way (please specify by typing in the space below)

Please select the total years of formal education you have completed (including primary, secondary, tertiary, etc.) from the drop box below.

Please select your occupation (you can select multiple options).

- Employed full time
- Employed part time
- Employed casually
- Unemployed looking for work
- Unemployed not looking for work
- Retired
- Full time student
- Part time student
- Caring for children
- Caring for another person
- Living with a disability and unable to work
- I describe my occupation in a different way (please specify by typing in the space below)

Please select the average amount of time you spend online per day in total (in hours) from the drop box below.

Out of this time spent online, please select the average amount of time you spend on social media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, or other) per day in total (in hours) from the drop box below.

The last two demographic questions refer to 'online shaming'. Online shaming is where an individual responds negatively online to shame another person who is perceived as breaking a social norm (what is considered acceptable).

Have you ever been shamed online?

- Yes (please provide a short description of the instance/s of online shaming by typing in the space below)
- No
- I am not sure

Have you ever shamed someone else online?

- ○ Yes (please provide a short description of the instance/s of online shaming by typing in the space below)
- ○ No
- ○ I am not sure

Homophobic vignettes

You come across someone named Alex's social media post, displayed below. After reading it, you notice 4 people have commented on the post, mainly shaming Alex for the post's contents. You notice one comment in particular that your close friend Taylor has posted, reading, "This is so homophobic! What the hell is wrong with you?"

After seeing this, what would you do in this scenario? Please indicate by responding to the items below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I would show my support for punishing Alex by pressing 'like' on this comment (or multiple comments) shaming them.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would show my disapproval by reposting/retweeting this thread to call Alex out for what they did.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would make my own comment on Alex's post to also show my disapproval.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would show my agreeance with Alex's post by pressing 'like' on the original post.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would repost/retweet Alex's original post to show my support.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would make my own comment on Alex's post to let Alex know I am on their side.	○	○	○	○	○	○

You come across someone named Alex's social media post, displayed below. After reading it, you notice 4 people have commented on the post, mainly shaming Alex for the post's contents. You notice one comment in particular that a stranger named Taylor has posted, reading, "This is so homophobic! What the hell is wrong with you?"

After seeing this, what would you do in this scenario? Please indicate by responding to the items below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I would show my support for punishing Alex by pressing 'like' on this comment (or multiple comments) shaming them.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would show my disapproval by reposting/retweeting this thread to call Alex out for what they did.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would make my own comment on Alex's post to also show my disapproval.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would show my agreeance with Alex's post by pressing 'like' on the original post.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would repost/retweet Alex's original post to show my support.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would make my own comment on Alex's post to let Alex know I am on their side.	○	○	○	○	○	○

You come across someone named Alex's social media post, displayed below. After reading it, you notice 972 people have commented on the post, mainly shaming Alex for the post's contents. You notice one comment in particular that your close friend Taylor has posted, reading, "This is so homophobic! What the hell is wrong with you?"

After seeing this, what would you do in this scenario? Please indicate by responding to the items below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I would show my support for punishing Alex by pressing 'like' on this comment (or multiple comments) shaming them.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would show my disapproval by reposting/retweeting this thread to call Alex out for what they did.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would make my own comment on Alex's post to also show my disapproval.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would show my agreeance with Alex's post by pressing 'like' on the original post.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would repost/retweet Alex's original post to show my support.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would make my own comment on Alex's post to let Alex know I am on their side.	○	○	○	○	○	○

You come across someone named Alex's social media post, displayed below. After reading it, you notice 972 people have commented on the post, mainly shaming Alex for the post's contents. You notice one comment in particular that a stranger named Taylor has posted, reading, "This is so homophobic! What the hell is wrong with you?"

After seeing this, what would you do in this scenario? Please indicate by responding to the items below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I would show my support for punishing Alex by pressing 'like' on this comment (or multiple comments) shaming them.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would show my disapproval by reposting/retweeting this thread to call Alex out for what they did.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would make my own comment on Alex's post to also show my disapproval.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would show my agreeance with Alex's post by pressing 'like' on the original post.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would repost/retweet Alex's original post to show my support.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would make my own comment on Alex's post to let Alex know I am on their side.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Racist vignettes

You come across someone named Jamie's social media post, displayed below. After reading it, you notice 5 people have commented on the post, mainly shaming Jamie for the post's contents. You notice one comment in particular that your close friend Ash has posted, reading, "I can't believe you wrote this. You're a racist idiot!"

After seeing this, what would you do in this scenario? Please indicate by responding to the items below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I would show my support for punishing Jamie by pressing 'like' on Ash's comment shaming them.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would show my disapproval by reposting/retweeting this thread to call Jamie out for what they did.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would make my own comment on Jamie's post to also show my disapproval.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would show my agreeance with Jamie's post by pressing 'like' on the original post.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would repost/retweet Jamie's original post to show my support.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would make my own comment on Jamie's post to let Jamie know I am on their side.	○	○	○	○	○	○

You come across someone named Jamie's social media post, displayed below. After reading it, you notice 5 people have commented on the post, mainly shaming Jamie for the post's contents. You notice one comment in particular that a stranger named Ash has posted, reading, "I can't believe you wrote this. You're a racist idiot!"

After seeing this, what would you do in this scenario? Please indicate by responding to the items below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I would show my support for punishing Jamie by pressing 'like' on Ash's comment shaming them.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would show my disapproval by reposting/retweeting this thread to call Jamie out for what they did.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would make my own comment on Jamie's post to also show my disapproval.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would show my agreeance with Jamie's post by pressing 'like' on the original post.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would repost/retweet Jamie's original post to show my support.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would make my own comment on Jamie's post to let Jamie know I am on their side.	○	○	○	○	○	○

You come across someone named Jamie's social media post, displayed below. After reading it, you notice 969 people have commented on the post, mainly shaming Jamie for the post's contents. You notice one comment in particular that your close friend Ash has posted, reading, "I can't believe you wrote this. You're a racist idiot!"

After seeing this, what would you do in this scenario? Please indicate by responding to the items below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I would show my support for punishing Jamie by pressing 'like' on Ash's comment shaming them.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would show my disapproval by reposting/retweeting this thread to call Jamie out for what they did.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would make my own comment on Jamie's post to also show my disapproval.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would show my agreeance with Jamie's post by pressing 'like' on the original post.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would repost/retweet Jamie's original post to show my support.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would make my own comment on Jamie's post to let Jamie know I am on their side.	○	○	○	○	○	○

You come across someone named Jamie's social media post, displayed below. After reading it, you notice 969 people have commented on the post, mainly shaming Jamie for the post's contents. You notice one comment in particular that a stranger named Ash has posted, reading, "I can't believe you wrote this. You're a racist idiot!"

After seeing this, what would you do in this scenario? Please indicate by responding to the items below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I would show my support for punishing Jamie by pressing 'like' on Ash's comment shaming them.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would show my disapproval by reposting/retweeting this thread to call Jamie out for what they did.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would make my own comment on Jamie's post to also show my disapproval.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would show my agreeance with Jamie's post by pressing 'like' on the original post.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would repost/retweet Jamie's original post to show my support.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would make my own comment on Jamie's post to let Jamie know I am on their side.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Sexist vignettes

You come across someone named Mo's social media post, displayed below. After reading it, you notice 6 people have commented on the post, mainly shaming Mo for the post's contents. You notice one comment in particular that your close friend Ali has posted, reading, "Disgusting! Sexists like you are what's wrong with this world."

After seeing this, what would you do in this scenario? Please indicate by responding to the items below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I would show my support for punishing Mo by pressing 'like' on Ali's comment shaming them.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would show my disapproval by reposting/retweeting this thread to call Mo out for what they did.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would make my own comment on Mo's post to also show my disapproval.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would show my agreeance with Mo's post by pressing 'like' on the original post.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would repost/retweet Mo's original post to show my support.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would make my own comment on Mo's post to let Mo know I am on their side.	○	○	○	○	○	○

You come across someone named Mo's social media post, displayed below. After reading it, you notice 6 people have commented on the post, mainly shaming Mo for the post's contents. You notice one comment in particular that a stranger named Ali has posted, reading, "Disgusting! Sexists like you are what's wrong with this world."

After seeing this, what would you do in this scenario? Please indicate by responding to the items below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I would show my support for punishing Mo by pressing 'like' on Ali's comment shaming them.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would show my disapproval by reposting/retweeting this thread to call Mo out for what they did.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would make my own comment on Mo's post to also show my disapproval.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would show my agreeance with Mo's post by pressing 'like' on the original post.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would repost/retweet Mo's original post to show my support.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would make my own comment on Mo's post to let Mo know I am on their side.	○	○	○	○	○	○

You come across someone named Mo's social media post, displayed below. After reading it, you notice 978 people have commented on the post, mainly shaming Mo for the post's contents. You notice one comment in particular that your close friend Ali has posted, reading, "Disgusting! Sexists like you are what's wrong with this world."

After seeing this, what would you do in this scenario? Please indicate by responding to the items below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I would show my support for punishing Mo by pressing 'like' on Ali's comment shaming them.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would show my disapproval by reposting/retweeting this thread to call Mo out for what they did.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would make my own comment on Mo's post to also show my disapproval.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would show my agreeance with Mo's post by pressing 'like' on the original post.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would repost/retweet Mo's original post to show my support.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would make my own comment on Mo's post to let Mo know I am on their side.	○	○	○	○	○	○

You come across someone named Mo's social media post, displayed below. After reading it, you notice 978 people have commented on the post, mainly shaming Mo for the post's contents. You notice one comment in particular that a stranger named Ali has posted, reading, "Disgusting! Sexists like you are what's wrong with this world."

After seeing this, what would you do in this scenario? Please indicate by responding to the items below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I would show my support for punishing Mo by pressing 'like' on Ali's comment shaming them.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would show my disapproval by reposting/retweeting this thread to call Mo out for what they did.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would make my own comment on Mo's post to also show my disapproval.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would show my agreeance with Mo's post by pressing 'like' on the original post.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would repost/retweet Mo's original post to show my support.	○	○	○	○	○	○
I would make my own comment on Mo's post to let Mo know I am on their side.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Debrief message at end of the survey for study three

Thank you for your time and efforts in participating in this research, your contribution is greatly appreciated! Although this survey has been designed in a careful manner to ensure the questions contained do not cause any suffering, if you have found yourself psychologically or emotionally upset by any of the content within this survey, there are many free online resources you can access. If you would like to access a pdf list of free resources available to you, please click either of the blue links below (these links will open in a new tab):

Helpful resources for people anywhere in the world

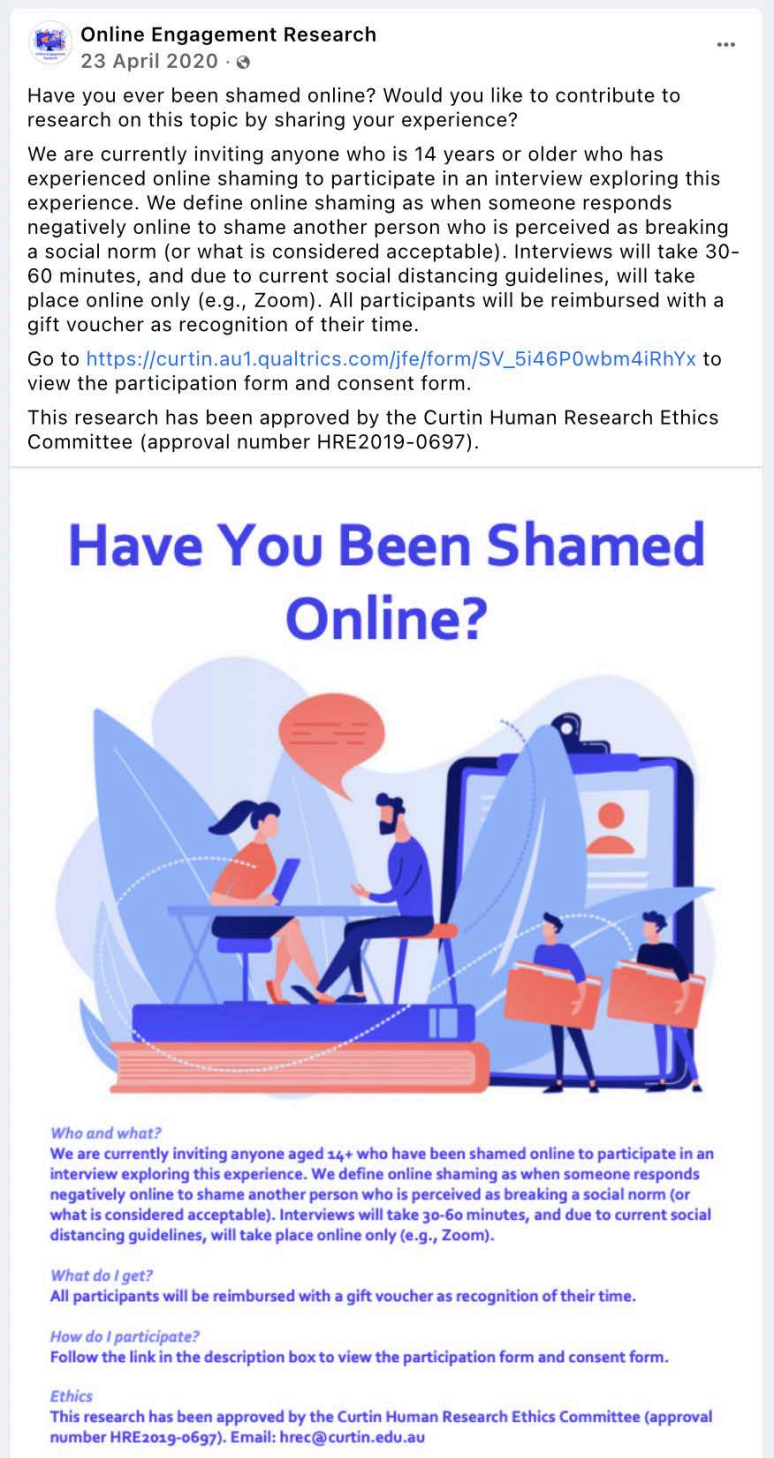
Helpful resources for people in Australia

By clicking on the final submit button below, your answers will be submitted and you will be directed to a separate page where you can enter your personal details so that your SONA point can be awarded to you.

Appendix P: Recruitment materials (public Facebook post and university pool) for study four

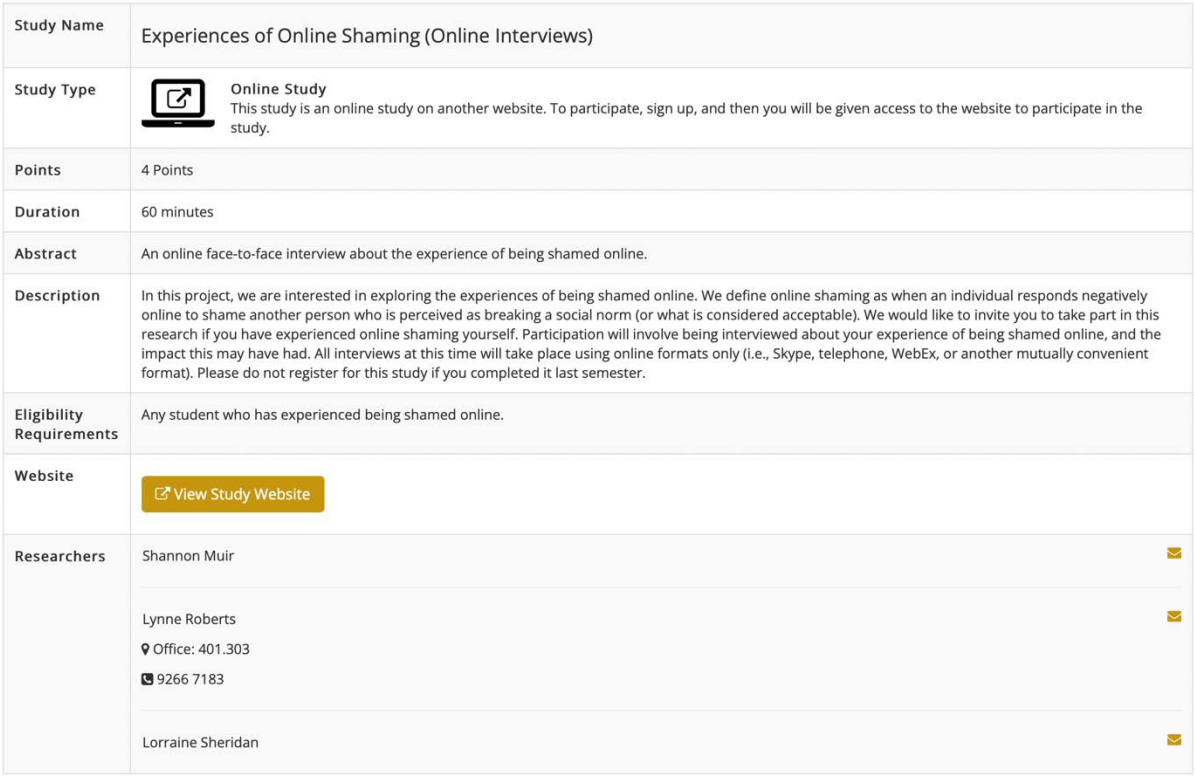
Public Facebook post recruitment

The image shown below depicts the recruitment post featured on the dedicated social media research Facebook page (shown in Appendix G) used for the recruitment of members of the public in study four (featured in chapter five).



University pool recruitment

The image shown below depicts the recruitment post featured on Curtin University's student research participation pool website, SONA. Alongside the recruitment post featured on the dedicated social media research Facebook page (shown in Appendix P), this website was also used for the recruitment of university students as participants in study four (featured in chapter five).



Study Name	Experiences of Online Shaming (Online Interviews)
Study Type	**Online Study** This study is an online study on another website. To participate, sign up, and then you will be given access to the website to participate in the study.
Points	4 Points
Duration	60 minutes
Abstract	An online face-to-face interview about the experience of being shamed online.
Description	In this project, we are interested in exploring the experiences of being shamed online. We define online shaming as when an individual responds negatively online to shame another person who is perceived as breaking a social norm (or what is considered acceptable). We would like to invite you to take part in this research if you have experienced online shaming yourself. Participation will involve being interviewed about your experience of being shamed online, and the impact this may have had. All interviews at this time will take place using online formats only (i.e., Skype, telephone, WebEx, or another mutually convenient format). Please do not register for this study if you completed it last semester.
Eligibility Requirements	Any student who has experienced being shamed online.
Website	View Study Website
Researchers	Shannon Muir Lynne Roberts Office: 401.303 9266 7183 Lorraine Sheridan

Appendix Q: Participant information and consent forms and questionnaire for study four

This appendix features participant information and consent forms, questionnaires, and debrief messages (all hosted on Qualtrics.com) that were used for data collection in study four (featured in chapter five) for both the general public and university pool.

Participant information form for study four general public recruitment

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

HREC Project Number:	**HRE2019-0697**
Project Title:	**Exploring the Experiences of Individuals Who Have Been Shamed Online**
Principal Investigators:	**Lynne Roberts, Lorraine Sheridan (Associate Professors)**
Student researcher:	**Shannon Muir (PhD Candidate)**
Version Number:	**2.0**
Version Date:	**18/MAR/2020**

Who is doing the research and what is the project about?
My name is Shannon Muir and I am currently completing my PhD in Psychology at Curtin University. I am conducting research that is investigating experiences of being shamed online. I would like to invite you to take part in this research if you have experienced online shaming and are at least 14 years old.

What will I have to do?
If you choose to participate in this research, it will involve being interviewed about your experience of being shamed online. Due to current recommendations regarding social distancing, all interviews at this time will take place using online formats only (i.e., Skype, telephone, or another mutually convenient format) and will take approximately 45-60 minutes. We will ask to make a digital audio recording of the interview, and transcribe a written copy afterwards.

Are there any benefits or risks to being in the research project?
All participants in this research will be reimbursed for their time with a $20 (AUD equivalent) gift voucher. Other than this, participation in this research may not benefit you directly, however the information you provide will help further the development of the research field regarding the experiences and potential impacts of being shamed online. The results obtained from this research might be reported in future academic conferences and publications. Although this research has been designed in a careful manner to ensure the questions asked are not upsetting, if you do choose to participate and find yourself psychologically or emotionally upset by any of the content within your interview, we will have appropriate resources available for you to seek assistance.

Do I have to take part in the research project?
Your participation is entirely voluntary and you are be able to withdraw from the study at any time prior to or during your interview. If you decide to take part and then change your mind, that is okay. You will not be asked to provide any identifying information except for communication purposes for the current research and/or future research if you express interest, and all identifying information will be kept confidential and destroyed afterwards. Consent for me to use your responses in this research will be granted upon you reading this participant form and digitally signing the consent form on the next page.

Who will have access to my information?
Your data will be kept strictly confidential with only myself, my supervisors, and other research staff potentially working on the project having access to it. Data will be stored on a secure research drive at Curtin University and in a secure cabinet at Curtin University for up to 25 years (under 18) or 7 years (adults), at which point it will be disposed of in an ethical manner. In accordance with the requirements of some scientific journals and organisations, your coded data may be shared with other researchers. Your coded data may be used in other, related studies (i.e., additional studies added to the current research project or for use with undergraduate students). A copy of the coded data will remain in the custody of Associate Professor Lynne Roberts. If you have any questions before, during or after the interview, please contact myself or my primary supervisor by email: shannon.r.muir@postgrad.curtin.edu.au or lynne.roberts@curtin.edu.au.

Will you tell me the results of the research?
If you would like to access the results of this research project, an overall key summary of the findings will be sent to you upon request. By sending an email to myself at shannon.r.muir@postgrad.curtin.edu.au, non-identifiable overall group results will be forwarded on to you.

What happens next and who can I contact about the research?
Thank you very much for considering taking part in this research. If you would like to participate in this study, please first answer the questions below by clicking on the appropriate answers. This is to ensure you have read this participant information statement and you understand what this study is about and what you are required to do, which is essential for you to be able to participate in the interview. By digitally signing the consent form below, this indicates that you agree to be in the research project and for your data to be used in this research. There are also some basic demographic questions on this survey to be filled out. Please take your time and ask any questions you have before you decide what to do. If you have not already been in direct contact with me, please contact me via email (shannon.r.muir@postgrad.curtin.edu.au) to arrange a suitable time and communication format for the interview.

Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has approved this study (HREC number HRE2019-0697). Should you wish to discuss the study with someone not directly involved, in particular, any matters concerning the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, or you wish to make a confidential complaint, you may contact the Ethics Officer on (08) 9266 9223 or the Manager, Research Integrity on (08) 9266 7093 or email hrec@curtin.edu.au.

Participant information form for study four university pool recruitment

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

HREC Project Number:	HRE2019-0697
Project Title:	Exploring the Experiences of Individuals Who Have Been Shamed Online
Principal Investigators:	Lynne Roberts, Lorraine Sheridan (Associate Professors)
Student researcher:	Shannon Muir (PhD Candidate)
Version Number:	2.0
Version Date:	18/MAR/2020

Who is doing the research and what is the project about?
My name is Shannon Muir and I am currently completing my PhD in Psychology at Curtin University. I am conducting research that is investigating experiences of being shamed online. I would like to invite you to take part in this research if you have experienced online shaming and are at least 14 years old.

What will I have to do?
If you choose to participate in this research, it will involve being interviewed about your experience of being shamed online. Due to current recommendations regarding social distancing, all interviews at this time will take place using online formats only (i.e., Skype, telephone, or another mutually convenient format) and will take approximately 45-60 minutes. We will ask to make a digital audio recording of the interview, and transcribe a written copy afterwards.

Are there any benefits or risks to being in the research project?
As you are completing this interview as part of a participant pool course requirement, you will be awarded four points on SONA upon completion (the relevant details for SONA point allocation will be collected at the end of the interview). Other than this, participation in this research may not benefit you directly, however the information you provide will help further the development of the research field regarding the experiences and potential impacts of being shamed online. The results obtained from this research might be reported in future academic conferences and publications. Although this research has been designed in a careful manner to ensure the questions asked are not upsetting, if you do choose to participate and find yourself psychologically or emotionally upset by any of the content within your interview, we will have appropriate resources available for you to seek assistance.

Do I have to take part in the research project?
Your participation is entirely voluntary and you are be able to withdraw from the study at any time prior to or during your interview. If you decide to take part and then change your mind, that is okay. You will not be asked to provide any identifying information except for communication purposes for the current research and/or future research if you express interest, and all identifying information will be kept confidential and destroyed afterwards. Consent for me to use your responses in this research will be granted upon you reading this participant form and digitally signing the consent form on the next page.

Who will have access to my information?
Your data will be kept strictly confidential with only myself, my supervisors, and other research staff potentially working on the project having access to it. Data will be stored on a secure research drive at Curtin University and in a secure cabinet at Curtin University for up to 25 years (under 18) or 7 years (adults), at which point it will be disposed of in an ethical manner. In accordance with the requirements of some scientific journals and organisations, your coded data may be shared with other researchers. Your coded data may be used in other, related studies (i.e., additional studies added to the current research project or for use with undergraduate students). A copy of the coded data will remain in the custody of Associate Professor Lynne Roberts. If you have any questions before, during or after the interview, please contact myself or my primary supervisor by email: shannon.r.muir@postgrad.curtin.edu.au or lynne.roberts@curtin.edu.au.

Will you tell me the results of the research?
If you would like to access the results of this research project, an overall key summary of the findings will be sent to you upon request. By sending an email to myself at shannon.r.muir@postgrad.curtin.edu.au, non-identifiable overall group results will be forwarded on to you.

What happens next and who can I contact about the research?
Thank you very much for considering taking part in this research. If you would like to participate in this study, please first answer the questions below by clicking on the appropriate answers. This is to ensure you have read this participant information statement and you understand what this study is about and what you are required to do, which is essential for you to be able to participate in the interview. By digitally signing the consent form below, this indicates that you agree to be in the research project and for your data to be used in this research. There are also some basic demographic questions on this survey to be filled out. Please take your time and ask any questions you have before you decide what to do. If you have not already been in direct contact with me, please contact me via email (shannon.r.muir@postgrad.curtin.edu.au) to arrange a suitable time and communication format for the interview.

Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has approved this study (HREC number HRE2019-0697). Should you wish to discuss the study with someone not directly involved, in particular, any matters concerning the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, or you wish to make a confidential complaint, you may contact the Ethics Officer on (08) 9266 9223 or the Manager, Research Integrity on (08) 9266 7093 or email hrec@curtin.edu.au.

Validity check questions featured at the end of both participant forms

Participant Information Statement Question 1

What is this study about?

- ○ Physical activity levels in older adults across Australia
- ○ Online shaming
- ○ Australian university students binge drinking behaviours

Participant Information Statement Question 2

What do participants have to do in this study?

- ○ An online questionnaire
- ○ Be interviewed
- ○ Participate in an experiment in a lab setting

Consent form for study four general public recruitment

CONSENT FORM

HREC Project Number:	**HRE2019-0697**
Project Title:	**Exploring the Experiences of Individuals Who Have Been Shamed Online**
Principal Investigator:	**Lynne Roberts, Lorraine Sheridan (Associate Professors)**
Student researcher:	**Shannon Muir (PhD Candidate)**
Version Number:	**2.0**
Version Date:	**18/MAR/2020**

1. I have read the Participant Information Statement version listed on the previous page and I understand its contents.
2. I believe I understand the purpose, extent and possible risks of my involvement in this project.
3. I voluntarily consent to take part in this research project.
4. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and I am satisfied with the answers I have received.
5. I understand that this project has been approved by Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee and will be carried out in line with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).
6. I understand I will receive a copy of this Participant Information Statement if requested.
7. I understand the interview will be audio-recorded.
8. I understand I will receive a gift voucher to the value of $20 (AUD equivalent) as compensation for my time.

Declaration by researcher: I have supplied a digital Participant Information Statement and Consent Form to the participant who will sign below, and believe that they understand the purpose and extent of their involvement in this project.

Please type your full name in the space below to indicate your consent.

Consent information form for study four university pool recruitment

CONSENT FORM

HREC Project Number:	**HRE2019-0697**
Project Title:	**Exploring the Experiences of Individuals Who Have Been Shamed Online**
Principal Investigator:	**Lynne Roberts, Lorraine Sheridan (Associate Professors)**
Student researcher:	**Shannon Muir (PhD Candidate)**
Version Number:	**2.0**
Version Date:	**18/MAR/2020**

1. I have read the Participant Information Statement version listed on the previous page and I understand its contents.
2. I believe I understand the purpose, extent and possible risks of my involvement in this project.
3. I voluntarily consent to take part in this research project.
4. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and I am satisfied with the answers I have received.
5. I understand that this project has been approved by Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee and will be carried out in line with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).
6. I understand I will receive a copy of this Participant Information Statement if requested.
7. I understand the interview will be audio-recorded.
8. I understand I will receive four SONA points as recognition of my time.

Declaration by researcher: I have supplied a digital Participant Information Statement and Consent Form to the participant who will sign below, and believe that they understand the purpose and extent of their involvement in this project.

Please type your full name in the space below to indicate your consent.

Study four demographic items for both recruitment types

Demographic Information Questions

Please select your age (in years) from the drop box below.

Please select your gender.

- Male
- Female
- Another gender (please specify by typing in the space below)

Please type your country of residence in the space provided below.

Please type your religion in the space provided below.

Please type your ethnicity in the space provided below.

Please select the total years of formal education you have completed (including primary, secondary, tertiary, etc.) from the drop box below.

Please select your occupation (you can select multiple options).

- Employed full time
- Employed part time
- Unemployed looking for work
- Unemployed not looking for work
- Retired
- Full time student
- Part time student
- Caring for children
- Caring for another person
- Living with a disability
- Other (please specify by typing in the space below)

You are now ready to start your interview! If you are not currently in touch with the primary researcher, please email shannon.r.muir@postgrad.curtin.edu.au to set up your interview, and enter your email in the space below. After you have provided this information, please click on submit to save your details.

Appendix R: Semi-structured interview guide for study four

This appendix features the semi-structured interview guide used for data collection in study four (featured in chapter five) for both the general public and university pool.

Interview guide

Beginning of interview

Thank you for agreeing to speak with me today. So just to give you an overview of the interview, the overall purpose here is to explore individuals' experiences of being shamed online. I'm going to ask you about what happened during your experience of being shamed online, as well as how this may have affected you, both mentally and possibly in other areas of your life. Just a reminder as well, you can withdraw from the interview at any stage if you would like to. Did you have any questions for me at all before we begin?

And are you okay with me recording the interview today? (Great, I'll start the recording now).

Start audio recording

1. Firstly, can you tell me what made you interested in taking part in this study?

2. Can you tell me about your experience or experiences of being shamed online?

Prompts: What were the key events that took place, people involved, how did you respond, what factors influenced this, anything else you remember, etc.? Can you think of any key differences between your experience of being shamed online compared to if you had been shamed offline? (or similarities?)

3. How would you describe the impact the online shaming event/s had on you emotionally?

Prompts: Do you remember how you were feeling when the event took place, what thoughts were going through your mind, how you were feeling/what you were thinking after the event settled down, how you feel now looking back about what happened, any lasting mental health impacts, anything that helped you to deal with it (i.e., coping strategies) etc.?

4. How would you describe the impact the online shaming event/s had on your beliefs?

Prompts: Has it changed your beliefs about the world? Has it changed your beliefs about yourself (i.e., self-concept, reputation)? Has it changed your beliefs about others?

5. How would you describe the impact the online shaming event/s had on your behaviour?

Prompts: How would you describe your online behaviour now- has it changed since the online shaming event/s took place, has your behaviour offline (in your day-to-day life) changed at all, is there anything you do or don't do now as a result, etc.?

6. How would you describe the impact the online shaming event/s had on you socially?

Prompts: Has it impacted how you interact with people online, has it impacted how you interact with people offline, has it impacted how people interact with you, has it impacted any of your relationships, etc.?

7. How would you describe the impact the online shaming event/s had on you financially?

Prompts: Did it have any impact on your workplace, job prospects, or your ability to financially support yourself or others in any other way, etc.?

8. Are there any other ways that the online shaming event/s has impacted your life?

9. More broadly, how would you describe the impact online shaming has at a societal level?

Prompt: What do you think online shaming will look like in the future? What sort of things would you like to see changed for the future?

10. How are you feeling now, having told your story about your experience being shamed online?

Prompt: (If participant is distressed) Is there anything you did back when you were first shamed that you found helpful (i.e., coping strategies) at the time that you could do now? What have you got planned for the rest of the day? How distressed are you feeling right now? Is there anything we can do now that would help to lower your level of distress?

End of interview

So that brings me pretty much to the end of my questions. Did you have any further comments or questions at all? Well thank you again for speaking with me today. Before I let you go, would you like me to send you a written copy of this interview to check over? And did you want a summary of the research findings when they're completed?

Appendix S: Distress resources for both participation pools for studies two, three, and four

This appendix features two lists of distress resources (one pertaining to resources available globally and the other featuring resources specific to Australia) that were provided to participants after data collection for studies two, three, and four (featured in chapters three, four, and five, respectively) for both the general public and university pool.

Helpful resources for people anywhere in the world

Befrienders

https://www.befrienders.org

This website provides emotional support to prevent suicide worldwide and allows users to search for helplines by country.

Lifeline International

http://www.lifelinenetwork.org

Lifeline provide 24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention services.

IMALIVE

https://www.imalive.org

A service of with a focus on suicide intervention, prevention, awareness, and education. IMALIVE provide help and hope through online crisis chat, college campus and high school events and other educational programs.

7 Cups of Tea

https://www.7cups.com

Connects people to caring listeners for free emotional support.

Your Life Counts

https://yourlifecounts.org/find-help/

Global list of Crisis Lines searchable by location.

Psycom

https://www.psycom.net

General information and self-assessment about a variety of mental health issues.

International Suicide Hotlines

http://www.suicide.org/international-suicide-hotlines.html

Global list of suicide hotlines searchable by location.

International Association for Suicide Prevention- Resources: Crisis Centres

https://www.iasp.info/resources/Crisis_Centres/

Interactive global map of crisis centres in Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, Oceania, and South America.

Helpful resources for people in Australia

Emergency numbers

Lifeline Australia

13 11 14

Lifeline provide 24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention services.

Kids Helpline

1800 55 1800

Kids Helpline is Australia's only national 24/7 telephone and online counselling and support service for young people aged between 5 and 25 years.

Samaritans

13 52 47

The Samaritans is a Western Australian based not for profit organisation to prevent suicides. Services are available to callers both locally and nationally.

Emergency Services

000

The primary national emergency number in Australia intended only for use in life-threatening or time-critical emergencies (police, fire, and ambulance).

Websites

Your Health In Mind

https://www.yourhealthinmind.org

This website provides expert information about mental illness, treatments, psychiatrists, and how to get help (i.e., the difference between a psychiatrist and a psychologist; what psychiatrists do and how they can help with mental health problems; what happens when you visit a psychiatrist; how to find and get in touch with a psychiatrist). It is written in plain English, based on the best available evidence.

Kids Helpline

https://kidshelpline.com.au

Kids Helpline is Australia's only national 24/7 telephone and online counselling and support service for young people aged between 5 and 25 years.

Lifeline

https://www.lifeline.org.au

Lifeline provide 24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention services.

Sane

https://www.sane.org

Helping all Australians affected by mental illness lead a better life.

Black Dog Institute

https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au

Information about depression and bipolar disorder including symptoms, causes, treatments, Q & As, self-assessment tools, and getting help.

Headspace

https://headspace.org.au

Headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation, who help young people who are going through a tough time.

ReachOut

https://au.reachout.com

Resource for young people finding themselves and their place in society.

Mindhealthconnect

https://headtohealth.gov.au/?utm_source=mindhealthconnect&utm_medium=301

Mindhealthconnect is the easy way to find mental health and wellbeing information, support, and services from Australia's leading health providers, together in one place.