

THE DIARY OF BIDA-BIDA: UNDERSTANDING THE CONSEQUENCES OF 'SMART SHAMING' AMONG SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERS

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Available Online: May 2024
Revised: April 2024
Accepted: March 2024
Received: April 2024

Volume 2 Issue 2 (2024)
DOI: **10.5281/zenodo.12072900**
E-ISSN: 2984-7184
P-ISSN: 2984-7176
<https://getinternational.org/research/>

Abstract

Academic excellence and intelligence are commonly lauded as commendable attributes synonymous with success. However, a disconcerting trend has surfaced within educational institutions, challenging the prevailing narrative of scholastic accomplishment—smart shaming. This research delves into the increasing concern of smart shaming within educational settings, particularly at Immaculate Conception College of Balayan, Inc., questioning the predominant emphasis on academic excellence and intelligence. A qualitative case study design, along with judgmental sampling, was employed to examine fifteen (15) student leaders who had experienced smart shaming on campus. Thematic analysis revealed that sarcastic remarks including "edi wow," "Okay ikaw na matalino," "bida-bida," and "sipsip" were a prevalent manifestation of smart shaming, adversely affecting emotional well-being, academic and leadership prowess, mental health, and self-perception. Coping mechanisms, predominantly centered around ignoring and focusing on goals, were identified. The findings underscore the imperative for educators to remain vigilant regarding instances of smart shaming in classrooms, promoting open communication to ensure student well-being. Additionally, guidance counselors play a pivotal role in aiding students in effectively navigating the repercussions of smart shaming. This study advocates for proactive programs and interventions to address and alleviate the deleterious effects of smart shaming on students.

Keywords: *Smart shaming, Academic excellence, Student leaders, Coping mechanisms, Educational interventions.*

Recommended Citation:

Untalan, A., Abanes, A., Bambao, N., Baon, L., Barrientos, J. C., Carenan, J. C., Lanic, R. J., Ortego, T. C., Bayugo, L. A., Espole, S., Sale, N., Samillano, J., Simballa, C. R., & Mangarin, J. (2024). THE DIARY OF BIDA-BIDA: UNDERSTANDING THE CONSEQUENCES OF 'SMART SHAMING' AMONG SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERS. GUILD OF EDUCATORS IN TESOL INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL, 2(2), 47–60. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.12072900>

Introduction

In contemporary society, academic excellence and intelligence are often celebrated as admirable qualities, equated with success and prosperity. However, an alarming phenomenon has emerged within educational institutions that challenges the prevailing narrative of scholastic achievement—smart shaming. Smart shaming, a manifestation of anti-intellectualism, represents a disturbing trend where individuals, despite their exceptional intellect, are subjected to mockery and ridicule (One Down, 2023). This extends beyond mere teasing, targeting those who exhibit a fervent interest in acquiring knowledge (Calipayan et al., 2021).

The implications of smart shaming are far-reaching, as it highlights a pro-ignorance stance present in society where intelligence is deemed embarrassing, forcing individuals of high intellectual caliber to conceal their abilities to avoid ridicule (Pieraz, 2018). Unfortunately, this issue is not confined to a specific region, as it permeates across various cultures, including the Philippines (Biana, 2019).

In the Philippines, smart shaming takes on distinctive forms, encapsulated in derogatory phrases like "E di wow!" (O Wow!), "Ikaw na magaling" (Sure! The smart one here is you), "Ikaw na!" (Good for you!), and "Bobo na ako, siges na!" (I'm the fool here, Okay!) (Dela Cruz, 2018). Furthermore, uttering "Nosebleed!" when someone speaks fluent English further perpetuates the notion that exhibiting intellectual traits is grounds for shame (One Down, 2023). These phrases collectively aim to shame individuals expressing traits of intellectualism, whether they relate to profound insights or intelligent discourse on topics such as politics, philosophy, and current issues (Biana, 2019).

Smart shaming predominantly transpires within educational institutions, notably in schools and classrooms, resulting in victims experiencing fear and shyness when expressing their thoughts and ideas (Gozum et al., 2019). The shaming tactics employed, including terms like "pabibo," "edi ikaw na magaling," and "edi wow," can induce feelings of insecurity among academically gifted students (Domingo, 2022). While it may not necessarily impact their academic performance, smart shaming undeniably inflicts detrimental blows to their self-esteem (Cantonjos, 2019). Remarkably, smart shaming continues to persist, affecting not only academically proficient students but also student leaders (Pieraz, 2018).

Student leaders, by definition, bear the responsibility of inspiring, organizing events, and providing support to their peers (The SU University of Bath, 2023). They serve as beacons of guidance, with the privilege of influencing others and acting as role models (Bennet, 2019). However, student leaders encounter various challenges, including the problem between academic goals and leadership responsibilities that are hindered by the lack of collaboration among other student leaders, and a lack of understanding of school rules and regulations (Murage et al., 2019).

Despite the burgeoning literature on smart shaming among academically accomplished students, scant research has been conducted on smart shaming among senior high school student leaders, particularly in the context of Immaculate Conception College of Balayan, Inc. This study aims to bridge this knowledge gap by: 1. Understanding the experiences of student leaders regarding smart shaming; 2. Investigating the impact of smart shaming on student leaders; 3. Identifying coping mechanisms employed by student leaders who have been victims

of smart shaming; and 4. Proposing programs and interventions to address the issue of smart shaming within the institution.

In addressing these objectives, this research seeks to shed light on the often-overlooked issue of smart shaming, providing valuable insights into its prevalence and consequences among student leaders at the Immaculate Conception College of Balayan, Inc. Additionally, the findings of this study could be helpful in the creation of plans and programs about creating wide and supportive learning surroundings for academically gifted student leaders.

Statement of the Problem

This study centers on investigating the adverse effects of smart shaming on student leaders. Specifically, it aims to address the following key questions:

1. What instances of smart shaming are encountered by the participants of this study?
2. How does smart shaming impact the well-being and performance of the participants?
3. What coping mechanism do the participants use to cope with the challenges posed by smart shaming?
4. Based on the findings, what Facebook page/post may be developed towards the increasing awareness of smart shaming?

Methodology

This study used a qualitative case study design, utilizing non-numerical data. The aim is to understand social phenomena by delving into how individuals interpret their experiences, recognizing knowledge as personally situated. As highlighted by the University New South Wales (2023), this approach proves advantageous in encouraging students to apply their understanding of acquired knowledge to real-world situations such as smart shaming. Consequently, the investigation seeks to explore the phenomenon within its natural context, providing a deeper understanding of the issue, as emphasized by Heale and Twycross (2017). Moreover, the researchers are attuned to the coping mechanisms employed by student leaders who have encountered smart shaming, with a specific focus on unraveling the effects of smart shaming on these student leaders.

Population and Sampling

This research enlisted the participation of fifteen carefully chosen student leaders from the senior high school department of Immaculate Conception College of Balayan, Inc. The selection method employed was judgmental sampling, known for its efficacy in identifying unique individuals who might have been challenging to locate and reach within a specific community and for pinpointing participants who aligned with specific criteria (Olaf College, 2013). The outlined criteria for selection included being senior high school student leaders, encompassing roles such as Augustinian Recollect Sisters Crusaders (ARSC) officers, Confraternity of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel (COLC) officers, club officers, Girl Scouts of the Philippines (GSP) and Boys Scouts of the Philippines (BSP) officers, classroom officers, group leaders, and other leadership roles. Moreover, it was crucial that these participants were currently grappling with instances of "smart shaming" within the school environment.

Instrumentations

The research utilized a semi-structured interview as the primary data-gathering instrument. This method was essential for eliciting insights from the participants and for evaluating the adverse effects of smart shaming on those involved. The use of semi-structured interviews offered valuable guidance to the research team in their endeavor to delve into the perspectives of the participants (Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik, 2021). In addition, Mangarin (2023) recommended in his study the use of this kind of instrument owing to its characteristics in delving into students' experiences.

To ensure the validity of the research instruments rigorous validation process was undertaken. Content and face validation were conducted by two experts (validators). Subsequent to assessment, revisions were implemented based on the valuable feedback provided by the validators.

Data Collection

The researchers initiated the process by formally requesting permission from the school administrator at Immaculate Conception College of Balayan, Inc. Once permission was granted, the researchers prepared and issued consent letters to the selected participants. These letters played a crucial role in securing informed consent, clearly articulating the purpose and objectives of the study. Additionally, the letters underscored ethical considerations, providing an in-depth discussion of the ethical factors that participants needed to acknowledge and comprehend before engaging in the interviews. This thorough approach ensured that all necessary ethical and administrative steps were taken, fostering a transparent and responsible research environment (Smith et al., 2020).

Data Analysis

For the evaluation of qualitative information, the researchers used open-ended questions to determine every smart shaming experience in the participants. Therefore, three different coding was employed, which are the open, axial and selective coding—thematic coding. It identifies different approaches of various participants to determine similar themes and it critically studies the data (Marshall, 2023). The researchers discussed the adverse effects of smart shaming found in the textual data by reading and listening to the recorded interviews of the participants. After analyzing and evaluating the data, the findings of the study are the result of a Facebook page called "Pabida Archives."

Ethical Considerations

After receiving all the needed letters, the researchers took all reasonable precautions to preserve the participants' identities and confidentiality, including the following: (1) providing participants with code names or numbers that were employed on all research notes and documents. (2) Notes, transcripts of interviews, and any other information that could have been used to identify a participant were kept in a secure location or on a safe drive. (3) Except in circumstances where the researcher was legally compelled to report specific incidents, the data of participants was kept private. These things include, but are not limited to, abuses, abuse of power, and the risk of suicide.

The participation of the participants in this study was voluntary. They have to determine whether or not to participate in this research. The participants were asked to sign a consent form if they chose to participate in this study. They still have the right to withdraw their approval at any time and without explanation after submitting a signed consent form. The relationship the researcher had, if any, with the participants was unaffected by their withdrawal from this study. If participants leave the research before data collection is finished, the information will be destroyed or given back to them.

Results and Discussions

In this part, it emphasizes discussing the data with fifteen participants involved. The research employed qualitative-case study research design.

Instances of smart shaming are encountered by the participants of this study

After discussing the data from the interview of 15 participants in the study of instances of smart shaming they encountered, the following theme has emerged:

1. Sarcastic Remarks
2. Undermining Academic Achievements
3. Smart Shaming in Leadership Roles
4. Name-Calling and Body Shaming

Students who demonstrate leadership abilities are often subjected to ridicule and sarcasm, a phenomenon known as "smart shaming." Some students have shared their experiences of smart shaming in the classroom, including remarks such as "When I participated, they said 'Siya nanaman' and when I am helping them, they told me 'Dami mo namang alam.'" (P2), "Others will call me bida-bida when I was answering in class." (P3), "Someone told me my classmate called me bida-bida behind my back." (P9), and "When I was explaining, I received a phrase like 'Edi ikaw na.'" (P15). Additionally, comments like "They will say 'Okay ikaw na matalino' when I am correcting them." (P4). Moreover, student leaders face mockery while fulfilling their leadership duties, as expressed by P7: "I got phrases like 'ayan nanaman siya,' 'edi wow,' when I am leading." stated by P10: "I was called sipsip for being class president; they called me bida-bida in class.", and P12 remarked : "Teachers focused on me as a student leader, leading to gossip." Some students are belittled collectively, as P11 stated that "Others insulted me as bida-bida, mocking my contributions." These experiences are consistent with findings from Gozum et al. (2019), who highlight smart shaming as a prevalent issue in educational settings, particularly in schools and classrooms. Furthermore, as noted by Dela Cruz (2018), smart shaming manifests in various derogatory phrases like "Oh wow!", "You're the smart one," "Good for you!" and "I'm the fool here, okay!"

Additionally, some students feel undervalued due to their academic achievements, as expressed by P1: "Every time I get high grades, they will say 'Honor na yan sumagot?'" Moreover, student leaders are wrongly accused, with assumptions of cheating, as articulated by P8: "They always assumed that I cheated when I got high scores." Others, like P14, feel disregarded: "They do not listen to what I have said."

In their leadership roles, student leaders may also face smart shaming. P13 shared: "I was smart shamed for being the class mayor." Similarly, P5 feels invalidated in her leadership: "They told me 'Kaya mo yan, student leader ka naman since elem, magpapatulong ka pa ba?'"

Lastly, student leaders experiencing smart shaming may also endure other forms of bullying such as name-calling and body shaming, as P6 highlighted: "I saw a post with a caption 'Bida ang saya kay Toni' because of my body." Biana (2019) notes that smart shaming practices are ingrained in Filipino popular culture and social media.

In summary, student leaders with leadership skills often face smart shaming, leading to sarcastic remarks, belittling of their academic achievements, ridicule of their leadership roles, and experiences of name-calling and body shaming.

Impacts of Smart Shaming on well-being and performance of the participants

After discussing the data from the interview of 15 participants in the study of impacts of smart shaming on well-being and performance of the student leaders, the following theme has emerged:

1. Coping Mechanisms
2. Emotional Impact
3. Academic and Leadership Challenges
4. Mental Health Struggles
5. Self-Perception and Confidence
6. Interpersonal Trust Issues
7. Burnout in Leadership Roles

Other student leaders tend to have their own coping mechanisms due to impacts of intellectual humiliation on well-being and performance of the participants; They take it in a positive way. Others make it as their motivation, as stated by P1: "I always told myself that it is okay and take their criticism as my motivation. Moreover, P13 takes smart shaming as a good way: "I take it in a good way and make it an inspiration."

Smart shaming has an emotional impact on other active student leaders. P2 and P7 experienced fear in participating in class; P2 stated, "It gave me fear and insecurity because I feel that my thoughts were invalidated." Furthermore, P7 articulated, "I feel fear, and it lowers my self-esteem and self-motivation to make efforts because they did not appreciate that." According to Gozum et al. (2019), anti-intellectualism can cause victims to experience fear and shyness when expressing their thoughts and ideas. Moreover, Domingo (2022) stated that the shaming tactics employed, including terms like "pabibo," "edi ikaw na magaling," and "edi wow," can cause feelings of insecurity among academically gifted students.

Participants have been experiencing academic and leadership challenges. P5 feels pressured due to smart shaming: "As a student leader, smart shaming puts me under pressure to decide where and when to express my opinions and insights." Additionally, P10 became shy: "It impacts me as an active student in the way of making me shy participating in class, and I limit my ability to improve in performing in front of people."

Anti-intellectualism can also cause mental health struggles for student leaders. It can trigger mental health issues of an individual, as articulated by P6: "I was diagnosed with PTSD that triggers when I experienced smart shaming, so it stressed me because it triggers my mental health." Furthermore, it causes them stress and anxiety, as stated by P11: "It has stressed me so much that it affects me in my academics. It caused me to have anxiety because of that problem."

Self-perception and confidence can also be affected by smart shaming in a negative way. It can lower someone's self-esteem, as articulated by P4: "It lowers my self-esteem, and I feel bad because I did not know if I'm being helpful." Moreover, it can also make an individual's confidence low, as stated by P8: "I lose my confidence in terms of not doing things I like because it is hard when someone is mad at you." According to Cantonjos (2019), smart shaming can affect the student's self-esteem adversely, such as decreased self-confidence in their knowledge and abilities.

Students who are experiencing smart shaming can develop trust issues. Participant P9 stated: "When you have a trusted friend, but you discover that your friend is talking behind your back, so I get hurt and mentally I overthink."

In summary, smart shaming impacts the well-being and performance of the participants, by which the participants start to develop coping mechanisms, emotional impact, academic and leadership challenges, mental health struggles, self-perception and confidence, interpersonal trust issues, and burnout in leadership roles.

Coping mechanism of participants use to cope with the challenges posed by smart shaming

After discussing the data from the interview of 15 participants in the study of coping mechanism of student leaders use to cope with the challenges posed by smart shaming, the following theme has emerged:

1. Positive Reflection
2. Ignoring Smart Shaming and Focusing on Responsibilities
3. Distraction through Hobbies
4. Goal-Focused Approach
5. Confrontation
6. Self-Reflection and Music
7. Seeking Support
8. Channeling Anger
9. Motivation for Improvement
10. Non-Engagement

Some student leaders are taking smart shaming in a positive way or by having a positive reflection, in which they will let their emotions out and reflect after that, as articulated by P1: "I took it in a positive way and just cried it out. After that, I will be okay. I will just be quiet and think for a while in silence." Furthermore, some of them will convince themselves to be their motivation, as stated by P3: "I take it in a way that it can be my way to improve." As

stated by Mayo Clinic Staff (2023), practicing positive reflection can make an individual less pessimistic in their surroundings, which will help someone handle stress.

Most student leaders chose to ignore smart shaming and focus on their responsibilities. Some individuals ignore it to focus on their goal, as claimed by P2: "I just ignore it and focus on the things that I do." and also stated by P7: "I just want to keep calm instead of focusing on those things." Moreover, P8 said, "I ignore them and continue the things I do and seek support from my true friends." Some of them ignore it because they believe it will be for the best, as articulated by P4: "I just ignore it, that's the best option." In addition, P6 ignores smart shaming to avoid it: "Mostly I ignore it then I am not finding out what they said about me." According to Lambert (2016), ignoring problems can lead to serious challenges that may be hard to face because they can still cause stress, anxiety, and depression even if an individual ignores them.

To avoid the impacts of smart shaming. Others used distraction through hobbies, as expressed by P10: "I just focus on outside activities or my hobbies or interests, like church." According to Parkhurst (2021), engaging in recreational activities can improve a sense of well-being; it causes a higher positive mood while engaging in recreational activities. Moreover, Leamey (2023) claimed that hobbies can help others relax, with the benefit of lowering stress levels and blood pressure.

Some participants took smart shaming as motivation to strive and applied a goal-focused approach as their coping mechanism. Others took it as their goal to improve, as articulated by P5: "I use it as motivation to strive harder." Additionally, some focus on their goals, such as P11: "Focus on your goals and do not be affected by what you hear and see." According to Mairanz (2019), goal setting can make others explore the problem, situation, and environment. Moreover, it can help an individual avoid vices such as drinking and smoking.

Others confront the person who shamed them, such as P12: "I confront them to let them know the impact of their words." Mints (2023) stated that confrontation helps someone explain their thoughts and feelings, which makes them more open to each other. Furthermore, confrontation can make someone a leader.

Self-reflection and music can cause calmness to the participants during their problems, as articulated by P9: "When someone calls me bida-bida and that hurts and disappoints myself, I self-reflect, and I listen to music to make me feel okay."

Meanwhile, others are seeking support during their hard situations. Some of them sought support from their friends, such as P8: "I sought support from my true friends."

Channeling anger is the solution others use to solve the issue. Some of them deal with it physically, as articulated by P14: "I let my anger out on a pillow."

Some of them are taking it as motivation for improvement. Motivation is effective to do the best in academic and leadership responsibilities, as articulated by P15: "I make it my motivation to do better, and it's been really effective for me."

Despite that smart shaming, some student leaders do not engage in that kind of shame, as articulated by P13: "I just learned not to give them attention because it does not benefit me."

In conclusion, the coping mechanism do the participants use to cope with the challenges posed by smart shaming are through positive reflection, ignoring and focusing, distractions through hobbies, a goal-focused approach, confrontation, self-reflection and music, seeking support, channeling anger, motivation for improvement, and non-engagement.

Facebook Page Objectives

To spread awareness regarding smart shaming, a Facebook page was created named "Pabida Archives." The word "Pabida" came from the word "bida-bida," which is a commonly used phrase in smart shaming, while archives is defined as a collection of documents. Therefore, Pabida Archives is a documentation of different information on smart shaming, such as stories, quotes, advice, and messages, to help all smart-shamed students.

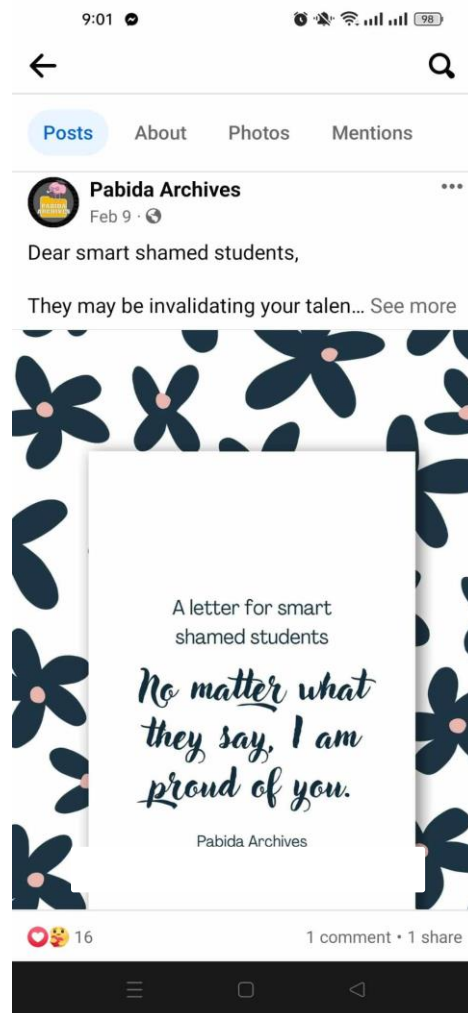
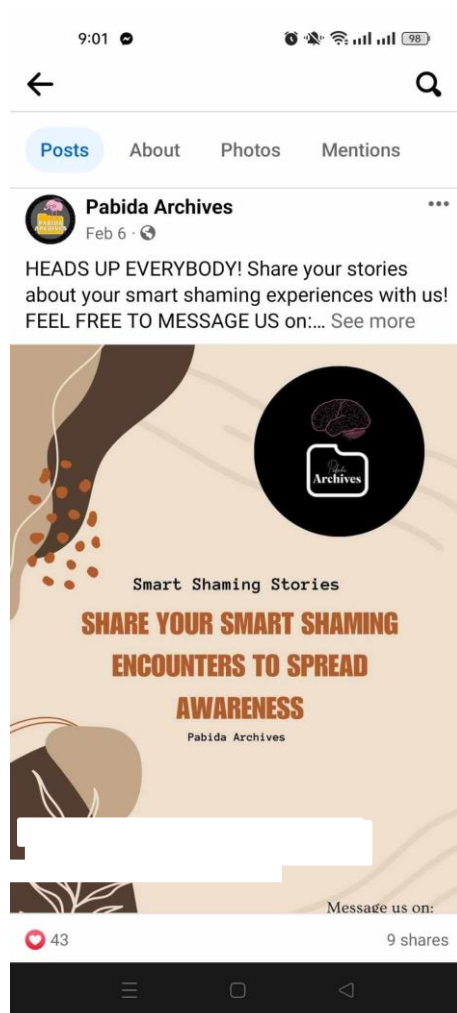
Facebook page link to access: <https://www.facebook.com/pabidaarchives?mibextid=ZbWKwL>



Rationale

The idea of "Pabida Archives" was created because of statement no. 4. The page contains a lot of awareness-raising ideas that can catch the attention of every netizen, such as different smart shaming stories, which can spread awareness that smart shaming should be taken seriously. Additionally, information about different

instances and consequences is posted on the page, along with messages for those who are experiencing smart shaming. With the use of an app called “NGL,” the researchers received different messages and advice about smart shaming because it is popular and convincing to most of the Facebook users. Also, the admins allow everybody to send them information on their page about smart shaming, such as poems, drawings, observations, and perspectives; in other words, they encourage them to express their talents to spread awareness with them. Facebook pages are good for raising awareness because they are accessible to most people, especially students, to share their thoughts and opinions about certain things. “Pabida Archives” is a page for smart-shamed students to share their stories, so the issue of smart shaming will be solved. Furthermore, it is for the encouragement of everyone to be aware of their actions and to educate others so that smart shaming awareness can grow.



Conclusions

Significant key emerged from the findings. Particularly, most student leaders received sarcastic remarks from their classmates during their class participation, leadership, and contributions. In addition, some of them

receive mockery when they are helping others to understand certain facts or lessons. These highlights the instances of smart shaming that are encountered by the participants.

Moreover, according to the results of the study, various smart shaming impacts in well-being and performance were found, including developing coping mechanisms of other participants where they took the shame into their motivation and inspiration, while it gave some participants an emotional impact where they felt fear. Meanwhile, others received academic and leadership challenges in the way of being pressured and conscious that hinders them from being an active student. Additionally, they developed mental health struggles that trigger them and cause anxiety. It also affects their self-perception and confidence when they are conscious about what others think of them.

Lastly, most participants cope with the adverse effects of anti-intellectualism by ignoring and focusing on their responsibilities. Some of their strategies to ignore and focus on important things, they calm themselves down. This emphasizes the coping mechanism the participants use to cope with the challenges posed by smart shaming.

Recommendations

Smart shaming has been an issue in educational settings that most active students encounter. Furthermore, this study became a way to increase awareness and help other students who were experiencing smart shaming. Additionally, the findings provide more facts about smart shaming that help others be attuned to the problem.

Future researchers should explore other parts of smart shaming in a qualitative-case study design; they should understand smart shaming outcomes among non-achiever students in 15 participants. This suggested study will help to raise awareness among others and can fill the gaps in the issue. Moreover, it will help other students handle smart-shaming situations.

When it comes to the learning environment, teachers should check every student's well-being by communicating with them. Moreover, they should be aware of smart-shaming instances in the classroom. Therefore, she can educate and help the students be attuned to the issue of smart shaming. Communicating with students regarding the issue can create an open-minded environment in educational settings.

In handling the consequences of smart shaming, guidance counselors should help students endure the impacts effectively. This will guide the learners to handle smart shaming efficiently and to be more focused on their academic and leadership responsibilities. Coping mechanisms are not always helpful or healthy, so students need guidance to find better coping strategies.

Parents and guardians should observe and be aware of their children's behavior. Moreover, communicating with their children and asking them about what happened at the school would be helpful for parents and guardians to be informed if their children are experiencing smart shaming. Communication with guardians can help the smart-shamed student leader solve the issue of smart-shaming.

The institution of Immaculate Conception College of Balayan, Inc. should implement a program about smart shaming among student leaders, such as leadership training and seminars. Fun activities and programs can educate

students and raise awareness about the institution. Therefore, the issue of smart shaming can spread around the campus.

Students should visit and participate on the Facebook page for awareness about smart shaming that was created by the researchers called “Pabida Archives,” where other smart shaming students can share their smart shaming encounters. Moreover, creative awareness-raising posts will appear on that page. Posting smart shaming awareness on social media can help other people understand the issue of smart shaming. Moreover, “Pabida Archives” is one of the ways to help other people who are experiencing smart shaming.

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