

# UNDERSTANDING STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS RAGGING IN THE UNIVERSITY OF DHAKA

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## ABSTRACT

The traditional practice of ragging has been spreading towards tertiary educational institutions continuing a cycle of abuse. More often than not students of university are in the trap of ragging which is a tool of torture indeed. The present study aimed to explore the issue from the context of the University of Dhaka. The phenomenon is very pronounced but no broad-scale study has been carried out to explore student's perception of ragging here. A cross-sectional survey design was used to capture the whole scenario. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected from 418 students of the university (58.4% male, 41.6% female) through self-responsive online questionnaire. Content analysis was adopted for analyzing qualitative data. The quantitative part was analyzed through t-test, F-test, Chi-square-test, Pearson-Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient and regression analysis via SPSS. Results found significant gender differences in students' perception of ragging. Aggression, negative self-esteem and emotional-unresponsiveness were correlated with that perception. Findings suggested a clear lack of administrative control over the practice. Addressing the issue for ensuring a healthy educational atmosphere in the university is now a mammoth task.

**KEYWORDS:** ragging, cycle of abuse, aggression, negative self-esteem, emotional-unresponsiveness

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## Introduction

Ragging or hazing has become a widespread phenomenon nowadays in higher educational institutions impacting students on their academic performance and psychosocial lives. Ragging is considered as a subset of bullying, where freshers of any university or equivalent educational institutions are humiliated, degraded, abused or endangered by the seniors, regardless of their willingness to participate in it (Maharashtra Prohibition of Ragging Act, 1999). One of the definitions of ragging given by the Indian act is relevant here: "Ragging means display of disorderly conduct, doing of any act which causes or is likely to cause physical or psychological harm or raise apprehension or fear or shame or embarrassment to a student in any educational institution" (Maharashtra Prohibition of Ragging Act, 1999). Another broad definition was promoted by Indian researchers in 2007. "Ragging is an act of aggression committed by an individual or a group of individuals over another individual or a group of individuals where the former, by virtue of their being senior to the latter, somehow gets the authority and audacity to commit the act and the latter, by virtue of their being new to the institution, are automatic victims" (Coalition to Uproot Ragging from Education, 2007).

Ragging, a psychosocial menace has become a burning question today. A survey conducted by educational researchers at the University of Maine in 2011 on undergraduate students found that 55 percent of all students experienced ragging or hazing (similar to ragging used in Western countries). Moreover, the study also indicated that only 5 percent of the phenomena were

reported and came to light in fact (StopHazing Research Lab, 2020).

The historical backdrop of ragging denotes that the act has its origin in ancient Greece when it was limited to warriors and soldiers only. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Europe and the USA had already become fenceless under the oppression of ragging. Finally, during the 20<sup>th</sup> century ragging as a cultural syndrome spread all over the world. At present ragging is sabotaging more than 40 countries across the world in various magnitudes. According to the literature, Sri Lanka is the worst affected country by ragging in the world following India in the next position. In Sri Lanka verbal and emotional abuse are more rampant than physical or sexual abuse (Gunatilaka, 2019). A very recent qualitative study of Sri Lanka narrating the perception of students on university ragging proved that, it could no more be trivialized that, ragging is a cycle of abuse or violence. The study tried to link the praxis of ragging and intersectionality in the university which is indulged by the ethnic diversities. This in turn fosters social dominance and power practice which ultimately mirror the factors behind ragging. But it is surprising that students did not think of ragging as a harmful issue at all, rather accepted it as a simple tradition (Wickramasinghe et al., 2022).

Physical, sexual, verbal and emotional ragging are de facto scenarios in most of the universities and medical colleges of India (Rao et al., 2015). Moreover, the country addressed ragging as a public health issue for more than a decade (Mohua,

2019). Shame, humiliation, anger and helplessness are the results of such pennialism among them (Manani, 2014). Even suicidal attempts along with serious emotional and psychiatric issues were addressed being unable to tolerate the ordeal (Allan & Madden, 2008). The largest Indian study on ragging in the selected universities found that most of the students were ignorant of the criteria of ragging until it reached sexual or physical versions. They often failed to differentiate between the welcoming attitudes in university life and ragging if the latter one is not so severe, suggesting that there should be some mild events like introducing them to the university atmosphere, but not in a harsh way (Rao et al., 2015).

It is very surprising that although ragging is an unhealthy practice and has deleterious effects on students, some of them have reported that, they enjoyed it and considered the act as a medium of making friendships and growing confidence, not a felony at all (Manani, 2014; Nallapu, 2013)! Mixed attitudes have been shown in the case of approaching a junior to be ragged by others. Some became empathetic, some intervened to dissuade those raggers and some were just immutable in spite of understanding the situation. Another significant point concerning pennialism is the teacher's perception. An Indian study found that some teachers expected it to be stopped; again some myopic faculties remained silent to this formidable act. These morally slumbered persons referred to the excruciating act as a beneficial psychological treatment for the newcomers (Rao et al., 2015).

In the current study, ragging is defined operationally as a cycle of abuse that gives rise to violence in an educational institution suffering the newcomers in the name of welcoming them or getting them acquainted with the university culture. Assessing the attitude of students toward the practice is the motive behind the research. The sadistic pleasure gained from ragging often encourages the vicious culture to be continued (Rao et al., 2015). In Bangladesh, the impact of negative personality disposition on student's attitude towards ragging is yet to be found. The present study aimed to fill a gap in this area.

### **Objectives of the Study**

This study investigated the effect of negative personality disposition on student's attitude toward ragging. To address the objectives, the following research questions have been identified:

1. Is there any significant gender difference in student's attitude toward ragging?
2. Is there any spatial effect on the attitude of the students toward ragging?
3. Do personality dispositions associate with the attitude of the students toward ragging?
4. Does negative personality disposition predict students' attitude towards ragging?
5. How do students of the University of Dhaka react and perceive ragging in their academic and social life?

## **Methods**

### **Study Design**

The current study employed a cross-sectional survey design as it provides valuable insights into a population's characteristics, and attitudes at a single point in time.

### **Study Participants**

The target population was the present students of the University of Dhaka, one of the leading educational organizations of Bangladesh. The study recruited 418 students (41.6% female and 58.4% male) of the University through purposive sampling method. Sample size was determined following Cochran's Sample Size Formula (Cochran, 1977) (where a minimum of 384 participants were the requirement at 95% confidence level). All of the students were from undergraduate to graduate levels (Bachelor first year = 17%, second year = 19.1%, third year = 9.1%, fourth year = 34.4% and Masters = 19.1%) and their age ranged from 19-25 years.

### **Procedure**

Questionnaire was developed by the help of literature review and information explored from exploratory case studies. Then quantitative data were collected from the sample using two questionnaires: Attitude towards ragging Scale (ARS) and adult version of the Personality Assessment Questionnaire (Adult PAQ). Attitude towards ragging Scale (ARS) was developed one and Personality Assessment Questionnaire (Adult PAQ) was adapted. The questionnaire also includes an open-ended item to get flexible information regarding students' attitude toward ragging. Data were collected on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2023. An online-based survey was developed and participants were recruited via social media (e.g., Facebook and WhatsApp) and e-mail. There was an automatic method for capturing the responses of the participants. Each participant received BDT 50 mobile recharge as incentive upon submission of their response. The only inclusion criterion for the participants was that they must be from the University of Dhaka.

### **Ethics**

The study adhered to the guidelines of the Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. The study was also approved by the Ethical Review Committee of the Department of Psychology, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh (PSY 23/03/030). It was an 'open survey' for each visitor of the survey link. The initial contact with the potential participants was made on the Internet. All the participants were provided informed consent electronically. They were provided with information about the nature and purpose of the study and ensured the anonymity and confidentiality of their data, and their right to withdraw at any time.

### **Measures**

All participants in this research responded to two self-report questionnaires along with the personal information form. Additionally, they were asked seven close-ended questions about their experience of ragging, place of being ragged, type of ragging experienced (i.e., mental, physical, both) etc. Finally, an open-ended item in the questionnaire was included for collecting flexible opinions from the students regarding university ragging. A description of the measurement tools is in the following section:

**Personal Information Form (PIF)**

The PIF elicited demographic, personal, and social information about respondents. Students provided information about their gender, age, department, faculty, current class etc.

**Attitude towards Ragging Scale (ARS)**

A Bangla questionnaire was developed and used as a research instrument to measure students' attitude towards ragging. Several steps were taken to develop the Attitude toward Ragging Scale. First, we performed a literature review related to attitudes toward ragging. Second, based on the literature review we developed a questionnaire that was administered through a small-scale interview with 10 students of Dhaka University. Third, based on the interview, we developed items that could measure attitude towards ragging. In that step, we developed 18 relevant items. Fourth, the 18-item scale was pretested on 20 students to obtain an initial assessment of the scale. A four-point Likert-type scale was used to test whether the individuals understood the items. Also, an individual cognitive interview was implemented on the same pretest participants to explore their thoughts about each scale item and their responses. Based on the feedback during pretesting, a slight modification was made and the final version was developed. After all, the scale included 18 items. Each item is rated on a four-point Likert scale (1-4): strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), agree (3), and strongly agree (4). A higher score on this scale indicates a negative attitude towards ragging. The internal consistency reliability of ARS is .90 (Coefficient Alpha). According to item analysis, item total correlation for the items no 2, 3 and 17 was very low, so these three items have been eliminated from the final version of the questionnaire. The analysis of items indicated that the value of corrected Item-Total Correlation ranges from  $r=.285$  (item no. 18) to  $r=.770$  (item no. 15). The possible range of the items is 15 (minimum) to 60 (maximum). The higher the score, the more is the negative attitude towards ragging.

**Adult Version of the Personality Assessment Questionnaire (Adult PAQ)**

PAQ is a self-report questionnaire designed to assess individuals' perceptions of their psychological adjustment/maladjustment (Rohner & Khaleque, 2005; Rohner, 2020). The questionnaire consists of seven subscales

related to seven personality dispositions: hostility/aggression, dependency, negative self-esteem, negative self-adequacy, emotional unresponsiveness, emotional instability, and negative worldview). The entire scale consists of 42 items, 6 items for each of the seven subscales. The items of the entire scale are rated on a four-point Likert scale ranging from almost always true (4) to almost never true (1). A higher total score in all seven sub-scales indicates lower psychological maladjustment and vice-versa. The sum of scores on the PAQ can spread from a low of 42 (indicating high psychological adjustment) to a high of 168 (indicating serious psychological maladjustment) The measure is designed in such a way that scores at or above the test's midpoint of 105 reveal psychological maladjustment and any score below the midpoint reveals psychological adjustment. Extensive evidence reports indicated the robust reliability and validity of the Adult PAQ for use in cross-cultural research (Uddin and Akter, 2014b). The reliability and validity of the Bangla version were found to be consistent with the original study. The internal consistency reliability of PAQ for the sample of the present study is .89 which is excellent reliability.

**Results****Quantitative Part**

Descriptive statistics (Mean, median, frequency, and percentage), Independent Sample t test, chi-square test, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and multiple regression analysis were performed to analyze quantitative data.

Among 418 university students, 58.4% are male and 41.6% are female. 52.2% came from villages, 10.8% from towns (i.e., comparatively less developed, less populated and smaller areas than cities), 23.2% from cities (i.e., having much higher population density and have much larger areas), and 13.6% of them reside in the capital (Dhaka). 69.6% of them are currently staying in the university hall, 16% in their residence and rest of the 14.1% are staying in other places except hall or home; it could be either hostel, mess, or relatives' house. The academic years of students range from undergraduate to post-graduate levels. Fourth year students outnumbered other years (35.4%) followed by first year (19.1%), masters (19.1%), second year (17%), and third year (9.3%).

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics of the attitude (towards ragging) and the personality variables

Variables	N of items	M	SD	Possible Range	Actual Range
Attitude towards Ragging	15	52.15	3.876	15-60	19-60
Personality	42	107.37	9.943	42-168	54-156

F test was performed for total ARS score to see whether students who came from village, town, city, or capital and students who are staying in university halls, own residences and places other than a hall or own residence such as hostel, mess, relative's house have a different attitude towards ragging. However, no significant difference has been found in students' attitudes toward ragging based on these factors. That is, wherever the students came from or wherever they are currently staying doesn't influence their attitude towards it.

Students were asked seven close-ended questions about their experience of ragging place of being ragged, the type of ragging experienced (i.e., mental, physical, both) etc.

A significantly lower number of students (27.3%) said "yes" in response to the question that they experienced ragging. According to the responses, 19.86% of male and 7.42% of female students have said that they experienced ragging. Of them, 21.53% stay in the university hall, 2.87% stay in their own houses, and 2.87% stay in other places than the hall and their own houses. Among students who said they experienced ragging, 14.59% came from villages, 3.35% came from town, 5.50% came from the city and 3.83% came from the capital. 3.35% students of first year, 5.26% students of second year, 1.67% students of third year, 10.53% students of fourth year and 6.46% students of master's have reported that they experienced ragging in university.

There were significant differences in students' experience of ragging in terms of their place of residence. A greater number of students staying in the university hall experienced the rage

of ragging than students staying in other places like their own houses and hostels. About 27% of students experienced ragging which mostly occurred in the university (71%). Only 15.8% said that they experienced ragging in other places in the university except hall and 13.2% experienced ragging in both places. A further question was asked about the nature of ragging they had experienced.

It's alarming to notice that the majority of students who experienced ragging said the nature of their being ragged is mental. That is, 70.2% of students said they were ragged by mental distress, 2.6% were ragged by physical suffering and 27.2% experienced both mental and physical forms of ragging. A significant number of students (73.2%) did not protest against ragging. 26.8% of respondents reported that they protested against it. The rest of the question reveals the reasons why the vast majority of students did not say a word against ragging. About 42% of students did not say any word or protest against ragging for their safety. 38.4% said that there was no opportunity to protest. 3.9% said that they also experienced it, so they took ragging as obvious. Of the respondents, a significantly greater number of students (93.5%) responded that they did not give rag.

Independent sample t-test was performed to investigate gender differences in attitude towards ragging. There is a significant gender difference in students' attitude towards ragging. Female students scored higher in this regard meaning that they have more negative attitude toward ragging than their male counterparts.

**Table 2.** Gender differences in attitude towards ragging

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t
Female	174	54.95	4.895	4.414
Male	244	51.98	7.861	

Note.  $p < .001$ ; N = 418

To estimate if personality dispositions are associated with the attitude of the students toward ragging Pearson Product-Moment correlation was used. Aggression, negative self-

esteem and emotional unresponsiveness have been found to have a significant negative correlation with students' attitude towards ragging.

**Table 3.** Correlation between personality and attitude ( $N = 418$ )

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Hostility or aggression	-								
2. Dependency	.20**	-							
3. Negative self-esteem	.41**	-.01	-						
4. Negative self-adequacy	.36**	.01	.72**	-					
5. Emotional unresponsiveness	.31**	.01	.48**	.57**	-				
6. Emotional instability	.54**	.25**	.43**	.54**	.44**	-			
7. Negative worldview	.40**	.02	.64**	.59**	.49**	.46**	-		
8. Psychological maladjustment	.67**	.31**	.77**	.79**	.67**	.78**	.77	-	
9. Attitude towards ragging	-.16**	-.03	-.12*	-.07	-.12*	.06	-.06	-.10	-

\*\*Correlation is significant at the .01 level; \*Correlation is significant at the .05 level

Multiple regression analysis was carried out to investigate if aggression, negative self-esteem, and emotional unresponsiveness predict students' attitude toward ragging. The value of  $R^2$  (.033) demonstrates that only 3% variance in

student's attitude towards ragging can be explained by these three predictors where only aggression ( $\beta = -.123$ ,  $p < .05$ ) can significantly predict attitude towards ragging.

**Table 4.** Regression of aggression, negative self-esteem, and emotional unresponsiveness on attitude towards ragging

Model	B	$\beta$	$t$	$p$
Aggression	-.246	-.123	-2.293	.022
Negative self-esteem	-.081	-.113	-.711	.447
Emotional unresponsiveness	-.153	-.067	-1.202	.230

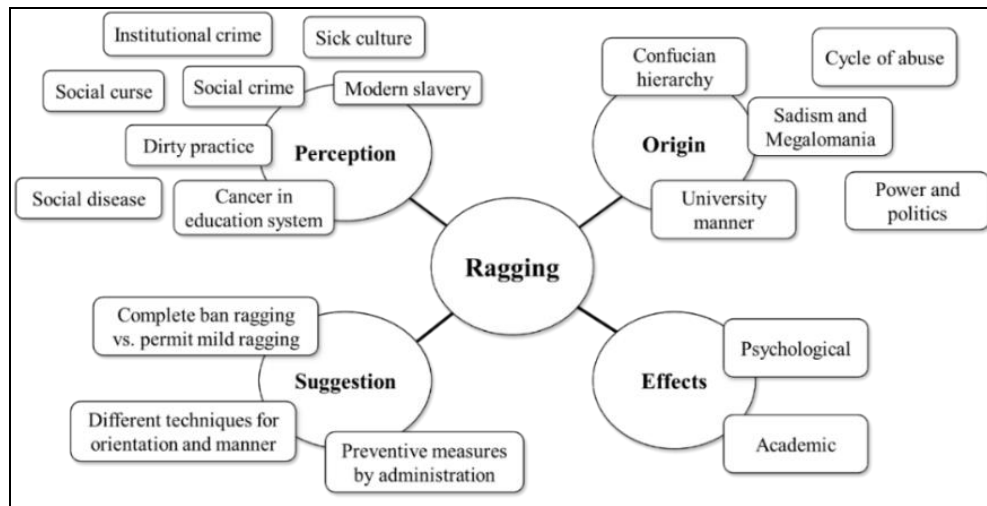
\* $R^2 = .033$ ,  $p < .005$

#### Qualitative Part

One open-ended item in the questionnaire survey was left for flexible opinions of the students regarding university ragging. The qualitative data were analyzed and coded in the form of

content analysis. Four broad themes or categories were generated by analyzing the data which were further divided into 18 sub-categories and elaborated based on similarity and frequency—the two general laws of content analysis.





**Figure 1.** Students' Attitude toward Ragging

### **Origin of Ragging**

**Confucian Hierarchy:** Some think that ragging as a culture originated from the philosophy of Confucianism especially, the Confucian hierarchy which refers to the norm of respecting the elders and commanding the younger.

**Cycle of Abuse:** Ragging is not an exclusive practice rather it is contagious by nature as one student paves the way for ragging for his or her next batch. Once a student is ragged, he or she puts his or her fingers in the pie of ragging to their next juniors letting them endure and experience the same pain. This vicious cyclical process acts as a form of unintentional learning, continuing abuses and often, violence as well.

**Power and Politics:** The origin of ragging lies in the superiority complex of demonstrating power that ultimately fosters students' engagement in politics. The residential issues in the university hall further fuel the 'guest-room' culture and ragging.

**Sadism:** Sadistic pleasure and the megalomaniac feeling of superiority often accelerate the desire to be involved in ragging.

**University Manner:** Some students just consider ragging as a conventional way of orienting newcomers to university manners. They take ragging as a medium of being familiar with the university atmosphere and so, manipulate power upon the juniors in the name of teaching manners.

### **Perception toward Ragging**

**Attitude of Atypical Mentality:** It is next to nothing that ragging is an abnormal attitude because having a healthy personality; a student cannot exercise such a cruel deed.

**Cancer in the Education System:** To some students ragging being an inhuman torture is regarded as a cancer in the education system since it leaves scars in their academic lives. It ruins the dreams of young adults from the very early days. So, ragging is a carcinogen against a healthy academic life.

**Irrational Practice:** Although ragging has a linkage with age-old traditions, it is an irrational practice amidst the education system, in the name of demonstrating manners to the juniors.

**Institutional Crime:** Ragging is labeled as a brutal and shameful institutional crime. It has its origin and expansion within the university atmosphere and runs cyclically.

**Modern Slavery:** Antipathy toward ragging culture elicits students' response denoting it as modern slavery! From this view, it is legible how forceful the practice is since it snatches human rights and freedom.

**Bizarre Culture:** The abnormal attitude of ragging is considered a bizarre culture as there is nothing logical in the practice. In the name of ice-breaking sessions, junior students are being tortured by the senior students of the university.

**Social Crime:** According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, "crime is the intentional commission of an act usually deemed socially harmful or dangerous, prohibited, and punishable under criminal law." Some of the respondents viewed the whimsical tradition of ragging as a form of recidivism.

**Social Disease:** Ragging is not just a dirty tradition or university custom of ice-breaking, it is rather a social infection that diffuses like a disease affecting the youths from the very days of their tertiary education.

### **Effects of Ragging**

**Academic:** Academic impact of ragging depends on the magnitude of ragging. It disturbs the flow of concentration to the study and interferes with the healthy environment of studying.

**Psychological:** Effects of ragging on psychological health of the ragged students are very much severe. Anxiety, phobia, trauma, frustration, depression etc. are the common outcomes of ragging. This kind of abuse also affects the neuropsychological conditions of the ragged like hampering creativity. Some rare cases of suicidal ideations are evident.

### **Suggestion about Banning or Controlling Ragging**

**Complete ban ragging vs. permit mild ragging:** Although ragging is undoubtedly a loom large for education and vicious practice some of the respondents opined that mild ragging is acceptable for guiding and introducing freshers with the university atmosphere. However, it is just a side of the river and grasses on the other side are not as greener as this, representing the polar opposite view of ragging and suggesting stopping or banning the practice completely.

**Different techniques for orientation and demonstrating manner:** There should be other rational ways and methods of orientation

and intro-sessions for the freshers to welcome and let them know the university atmosphere instead of this malicious hazing.

Preventive measures by administration including punishments: The respondents who wish strictly to ban ragging suggested that university administration should take initiatives to saddle on the right horse exhibiting a token of cost of ragging from the ragger's side. Besides, this irrational practice must come to an end by and the central university as well.

## Discussion

This study aspired to understand the attitude towards ragging and the role of negative personality disposition as a contributing factor of attitude towards ragging. The study also aimed to investigate the spatial effect on students' attitude towards ragging. We also aimed to see the difference of male and female students' attitude towards ragging in the university.

Table 3 revealed the answer of the third research question. It revealed that aggression, negative self-esteem and emotional unresponsiveness have significant negative correlation with students' attitude towards ragging. It has long been assumed that low or negative self-esteem is the root of several externalizing problems such as aggression Donnellan et. al. (2005). It is conceivable that individuals with low self-esteem protect themselves against feeling inadequacy by externalizing blame for their problems leading to aggression and violence toward others (Ostrowsky, 2010). Emotionally responsive individuals adopt the perspective of others and feel empathy for them and so are more likely to refrain from behaving in ways that may cause harm to other people (Eisenberg, 2000). Individuals, who show, even occasionally, a higher level of aggressive behavior, express lower empathic concern Bush et. al., (2000).

Consistent with the fourth research question, Table 4 demonstrated that attitude towards ragging can be explained by negative personality disposition. Though, it described only 3% variation of students' attitude towards ragging. Further research could find out the possible other factors that could be the contributing factors of student's attitude towards ragging.

From the open-ended item, a great deal of information about students' perception towards ragging has been found. The reaction of students towards ragging is quite alarming. Most of them think that ragging is a heinous act that continued in the university for several years. Freshers are the main victim of ragging. They are being ragged by the name of "guest room manner". Teaching manner continued as a cycle of abuse. One student was ragged and next year that student became the ragger. This form of cycle of abuse has also been found in the study of Rao et al. (2015). Most students think that the origin of ragging lies in the superiority thinking of the seniors, of their being the senior. Power and politics are the main reason behind this vicious culture to be continued. Students perceive ragging as a cancer in the education system, attitude of abnormal mentality, dirty practice and social crime. This perception answers our research question about their reaction and perception of ragging.

Almost all students perceive ragging as a negative issue. They don't support it but they also don't protest against it because of their own safety! But few students thought that mild ragging is necessary to teach students manners and to make them familiar with university culture. Ragging also helps fresher cope up with future stress. But extreme form is detrimental to the students, both for academic and personal life. This finding is consistent

with the findings of Nallapu (2013) and Manani (2014). Here, students hold mixed attitudes towards ragging. In terms of the effects of ragging, students agreed that ragging has both academic and psychological effects on students. Victims of ragging lose concentration on their study and also their academic performance becomes hampered. According to students' responses, students whose personality type is extrovert can easily cope up with the effect and become normal with time, but introverts are the sufferers of the effect of ragging. They cannot cope up easily and become mentally depressed. Trauma, anxiety, and frustration are the common outcomes. Manani (2014) has found similar findings.

Our findings have shown that ragging has psychological effects such as anxiety, depression. If a student is ragged in a continuous manner, he or she develops low self-esteem about himself/herself. Similar findings were found in a study by Ghosh (2024). He also found that ragging in educational institutions can have profound and detrimental effects on the mental health of students who are subjected to it such as anxiety. Prolong exposure to ragging leads to depression and low self-esteem and low confidence (Ghosh, 2024).

Ragging also affects students' social life and well-being, according to students' responses. They feel lonely and gradually become depressed, that results in suicidal ideation. Allan and Madden (2008) also found suicidal evidence as a result of ragging. Students' perception about the origin of ragging, effect of ragging has clearly shown that ragging is present and spreading its notorious claws among students. Hence, this should not be continued for a healthy environment of learning and also for students' mental, physical and social well-being. Students gave some suggestions about banning ragging that we found important. The first thing to be done is to mitigate the accommodation crisis for fresher. This will help reduce the magnitude of ragging a lot. Second, university administration should be strict in punishing the ragers and should take proper steps to stop the vicious culture.

Further research might be conducted involving variables like family dynamics, social environment etc. in relation to student's attitude towards ragging. Additionally, sample size should be increased to be representative of the population being studied. Furthermore, students' mental health, psychological distress, perceived stress might affect the findings. So, future researchers should take these variables into account too.

The findings of the study have implications for educators, psychologists, counselors, administrators. Understanding the reasons behind ragging in educational institutions might help combat or intervene it. Appropriate intervention programs can be designed to make the academic institutions conducive to learning thereby saving dropouts.

## Ethical Approval

The study adhered to the guidelines of the Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. The study was also approved by the Ethical Review Committee of the Department of Psychology, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh (PSY 23/03/030). The initial contact with the potential participants was made via Internet. All the participants were provided informed consent along with a self-report questionnaire electronically. They were provided with information about the nature and purpose of the study and ensured the anonymity and confidentiality of their data, and their right to withdraw at any time.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no conflict of interest.

## Data Availability Statement

Data associated with this study will be available to share if asked for by the journal authority.

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## Authors' Contributions

All three authors jointly developed the conceptual framework; KA collected the data; and MU, TA and KA jointly performed the formal analysis of the data. MU crafted their methodological approach. KA penned the initial manuscript, translating the complex data into an accessible and informative original draft. MU and TA then meticulously reviewed and edited the draft, refining the narrative and ensuring the clarity and precision of the final submission.

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