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Abstract

Throughout history, there has always been an idealized depiction of beauty. In each culture the ideal varies but the concept of exclusion is universal. The westernized portrayal of beauty is prevalent throughout and has become ingrained into the fabric of American society. In adolescence, the development of an individual's body influences their sense of self. With the growing prevalence of social media usage young adults are being introduced to a barrage of images celebrating westernized ideals of beauty. Currently, three out of every four young adults ages 18-24, use at least one social media platform (Perrin & Anderson, 2019). Recently, group of "influencers" noticed the single illustration of beauty, began to rally for change, and the body positivity movement was formed. The movement "hopes to remove the abundance of these images and replace them with images of real-life women of different shapes, sizes, ethnicities, ages, etc." (Convertino, et. al, 2016).

Body Positivity Movement: Influence of Beauty Standards on Body Image

The body positivity movement celebrates an individual's physique by changing the discussion from insecurities and scrutinizing one's appearance to focusing on radical self-love. This movement was started by a group of social media influencers who wanted to teach others about how to increase confidence and love themselves regardless of their physical appearance and proximity to beauty standards. The origins of such ideologies can be traced throughout history with decades of women refusing to adjust or define themselves based on the expected and standard parameters of beauty. As the ideal image of female beauty in America has evolved through the years, there exists an emphasis on certain characteristics such as thinness and the hourglass figure continue to persist. In the digital age, social media has undoubtedly carried the rhetoric of these beauty ideals by allowing for more images and messages to be shared to a larger audience than capable in previous decades. Images posted to social media sites are expected to withstand inspection under a microscope and portray individuals' online presence as living extravagantly, being sociable, and constantly appearing their best. As a result, social appearance comparison which reflects an individual's perception of self-worth in relation to others is more present in the development and preservation of self-esteem and overall interpretation of self. In psychology, the concept is often cited as a factor in the recent increase in rates of depression and anxiety in young adults (Convertino, et. al, 2016). Another side effect of the social media atmosphere and the subsequent underlying messages is the impact on an individual's body image. Research has found a correlation between viewing beauty standards and body dissatisfaction (Cohen, et.al, 2016) (Moreno-Dominguez, et. al, 2018). The body positivity movement encompasses aspects of history, psychology, social media presence, and change in beauty expectations to aid in improving body image. This movement appeals to those who do not

fit the mold of westernized beauty and focuses on radical self-acceptance and stands to benefit all of us as it recognizes a more individualized, unique model of beauty. This literature review will analyze the different cultural and societal parameters around standardized beauty expectations in the United States and the juxtaposition of the social media Body Positivity Movement and subsequent impact on individual body image.

Body Positivity Movement Context

Exploration of the Movement

With over 14 million posts on Instagram, the social movement referred to as the "body positivity movement" enforces and creates a message of self-love and acceptance, by rejecting the current images of beauty and embracing and reconciling with parts of oneself that was deemed unattractive under those standards. The movement creates a narrative around self-acceptance using social media sites to display images of women who have style, confidence, and beauty. The main goal is to change the rhetoric around narrow beauty standards that often exclude many groups of women (Cohen, et. al, 2016).

The movement works by encompassing any "individual or movement actions which aim to denounce the societal influences and construction of body norms, and instead promotes self-love and acceptance of bodies of any shape, size, or appearance; including rolls, dimples, cellulite, acne, hairy bodies, bleeding bodies, fat bodies, thin bodies, and (dis) abled bodies." (Cwynar-Horta, 2016, p.38). Figure 1 depicts an image of a body positivity post.

Figure 1 Lingerie Journal (n.d.) [Women in Lingerie] [Photograph]. Medium.

https://medium.com/@ashleybroadwater346/how-to-be-body-positive-without-being-ableist-

cdebceb34b59

Individuals who are interested in joining the movement can do anything as simple as post

an image of themselves which makes them feel empowered and confident to something more

confrontational by actively confronting those who shame individuals based on their physical

appearance. Posts that are related to the body positive movement also feature inspiring and

reaffirming quotes and captions about self-acceptance (Cohen, et. al, 2016).

As the body positivity movement continues to grow in popularity it has faced its share of

criticism and naysayers. One of the largest arguments against the movement is that it glamorizes

obesity and does not encourage followers to "live a healthy lifestyle". The obesity epidemic

within the United States continues to grow and many believe that the body positivity movement

plays a role in continuing the trend (Haye, 2019). The movement has been accused of spreading

information that can be detrimental to an individual's health, in addition to praising unhealthy

standards (Haye, 2019). In October 2018, plus size model Tess Holliday was featured on the

cover of Cosmopolitan. The magazine which is famous for glossy images of celebrities or

models on the cover received heavy negative backlash as well as praise. In the issue, "Holliday

discussed her self-love journey and frustration with negative comments regarding her choice of

clothing on her social media accounts" (Callahan, 2018). While many found the cover and

interview inspiring and an example of progress towards positive change, there were many people

who thought that the magazine should remove the issue due to its inferred commentary on health.

The movement has also faced criticism over its overall lack of inclusivity to all identities.

While some images and authors recognize this movement to include all bodies that are outside of

current beauty standards, most focus on the aspect of weight (Hayes, 2019). The belief around

the lack of inclusivity of all bodies has led to an argument that the movement should be referred

to as "fat positivity" (Hayes, 2019). The language around fat positivity has been criticized by

some as damaging to individuals who have an eating disorder, but these voices have been given a

solid platform to voice these concerns (Hayes, 2019). Those with diagnosis such as anorexia

nervosa may struggle to find empathy and support if they were to try to participate or become

involved in the movement.

Within body positivity social media and advertising, another criticism is that BIPOC

women are often ignored and underrepresented in favor of their white counterparts. The

importance of intersectional identities has not yet been realized by the mainstream movement.

While the movements message of beauty at any size, shape, or color is held as the truth, most

successful body positivity influencers are still considered conventionally attractive in regard to

their hourglass figure, ethnicity, and face shape (Yeboah, 2017). As a result, the

#BodyPositivityinColor campaign was started after actress and body positivity enthusiast

Jameela Jamil stole concepts and speech from Stephanie Yeboah, a black plus size model

without credit (Johnson, 2019). The founders of the campaign created it "as a way to reclaim it

from white, cisgender, heterosexual, thin women who dominate the discussions around body

positivity" (Johnson, 2019). While the original, more mainstream body positivity movement

hopes to improve body image, the #bodypositivityincolor campaign wants to challenge societal

discrimination in the form of racism, fatphobia, and sexism to establish a holistic approach to

self-acceptance.

While the body positivity movement has started a positive conversation surrounding

beauty standards and acceptance, the lack of understanding of intersecting identities and the

exclusion of many more has led the movement to splinter into a range of different groups and

separate groups. This splintering is representatives of the complexities that are inherit in a

society that is steeped in beauty standards that are often dictated by those who have held control

over media enterprises mainly rich older white men.

History of Beauty Trends

Before the 19th century the ideal women's body was often depicted as fuller and was

meant to show wealth and fertility. Philosophers of this time period such as Christoph Meiners

and Johann Blumenbach believed that Caucasian women were the most beautiful compared to

other ethnicities in another argument to show off their "superiority" (Donella, 2019). Throughout

the 19th century, the use of garments such as corsets were used to give the illusion of the now

popular hourglass figure. The design of the corset allowed the wearer to obtain a thin waistline

while also simultaneously lifting the breasts (Kunzle, 2004). Due to the expense of the materials

and necessary components to complete the ensemble the look was also a status symbol. The

1950s-60s idolized movie star, Marilyn Monroe is the pinnacle of beauty. Her appearance

established the popular blonde bombshell look which consists of voluminous blonde hair, fair

skin, blue eyes, fuller lips, and an hourglass figure with larger breasts and buttocks (Chalker,

2020). Marilyn Monroe continues to persist as a symbol of beauty and sex within American

society. In 1966, the United States debuted model Twiggy beginning a new era of ideal image.

Figure 2 is a photo of the British model Twiggy who popularized the now thin-ideal image.

Figure 2 Mirrorpix (n.d.) [Image of Twiggy] [Photograph]. Mirror.

https://www.mirror.co.uk/3am/celebrity-news/twiggy-once-famously-turned-down-22511479

Twiggy's appearance was thinner than previous popular models and this developed a

trend as models became thinner than previous decades. During this time, the Black is Beautiful

movement began and gained popularity as the co-occurring civil rights movement challenged

perceptions of power and influence (Donella, 2019). Research within the 1980's found that

popular sources of inspiration such as fashion magazines and the Miss America pageant began to

reflect the change in body image ideals (Garner et.al, 1980). During this time period preference

shifted to smaller buttocks and breasts (Fallon, 1990). Towards the end of the 1980s, a wave of

more muscular images of women began to gain popularity. With the reemergence of shoulder

pads, broad shoulders with a slender body image were popularized. A 1986 research study found

that there had been decreases in the bust to waist ratio portrayed by models who appeared in

popular fashion magazines such as Vogue (Silverstein, et. al, 1986). The trend of models who

were below average weight persisted and some models fit the weight restrictions that fit the

criteria of anorexia nervosa according to the DSM-4 (Wiseman, et. al, 1992).

The images paralleled with an increase in the subject of weight loss, dieting, and exercise

found in popular women's magazines. The 1990s became synonymous with the continued

prevalence of the body image celebrating thin-ideal. The "heroin-chick" era was defined as

women with very pale skin, and extremely thin stature, model Kate Moss embodied the popular

ideal ("Science of People", n.d.). Researchers conducted a study analyzing the Miss America

contests and found that their overall BMI continued to become smaller and images within

fashion magazines continued to feature women who weighed below the national average

(Spitzer, Henderson, and Zivian 1999). During the 2000, the thin-ideal trend persisted, and the

rates of social media usage began to grow.

Contemporary Beauty Trends

The current standard of beauty reveres flat stomachs, large breasts, and buttocks, with

tanned skin ("Science of People", n.d.). This look was popularized by reality and social media

star, Kim Kardashian. To achieve this new take on the hourglass figure, many individuals are

turning to surgery and more permanent means to look the part. In 2018, more than a quarter

million procedures were performed than in the previous year (Booth, 2019). The trend of plastic

surgery has been steadily increasing for the past 5 years. According to John Hopkins Medicine,

"breast augmentation or enlargement, buttock lift, facelift (rhytidectomy), lip augmentation, nose

reshaping (rhinoplasty), and liposuction" are among the most common procedures in the United

States (2021). In addition, the usage of corsets, and waist trainers have begun to steadily rise,

which are devices sold and marketed to women to help them lose weight and obtain the wanted

hourglass figure (Saner, 2019). Another trend that has become popularized throughout the 2000s

and into the 2010s was the use of products and services to appear tanner. Kim Kardashian in

particular has often shown her skin appearing darker and at some points has appeared to be in

blackface. Throughout their fame, the Kardashian family has been in the spotlight for continuing

to appropriate black culture in form of their skin tone, hair, and outfit choices. Figure 3 shows an

example of a campaign with Kim Kardashian that darkened her skin tone.

Figure 3 KKW Beauty (2017) [Image of Kim Kardashian] [Photograph]. Marie Claire.

https://www.marieclaire.com/celebrity/a13526892/keeping-up-with-the-kardashians-kim-

kardashian-blackface-allegations/

While white women appearing darker has been a growing and continuous trend since the

2010s, Black women continue to be scrutinized for their skin. In a society where white is the

norm, women of color are often forced to adjust their appearances to better suit the colonized

western ideals of beauty that are present through history (Donnella, 2019). The historical Black

is Beautiful movement encouraged women to view themselves as beautiful and powerful and

embrace natural hairstyles in addition to culturally significant styles such as braiding and

cornrows (Donnella, 2019). Many professional and formal settings continue to scrutinize

decolonized looks for instance by requiring Black women to wear their hair in styles that

represent European standards instead of natural. The concept of changing ones looks to appeal to

the standardized and accepted beauty trends is difficult to impossible for those who are not

cisgender, white, thin, able-bodied, and young (Donnella, 2019). The exponential growth and

influence of social media on an individual's life have altered the conception of beauty and the

benefits and fame that come with those who fit into the mold.

Role and Impact of Social Media on Beauty Trends and Imagery

Widespread usage of social media

In 2019, Pew Research Center compiled their data from that year and found that 75% of

18-24-year-olds use the social media app Instagram, 76% use Facebook, and 73% use Snapchat

(2019). These percentages are roughly 15% higher than their five-year older counterparts (Perrin

& Anderson, 2019). Those who use social media are often likely to check the service at least

daily and 51% of adults check Facebook multiple times a day; and 42% of adults check

Instagram multiple times a day (Perrin & Anderson, 2019). On the social media platform

Instagram, 95 million photos and videos are shared everyday (Perrin & Anderson, 2019). The

short video application, TikTok has an average of 1 billion active users monthly with 100 million

in the United States (Doyle, 2021). These statistics show high levels of social media

consumption and the potential for social influence. Another aspect of the consumption of social media is the type of social media that is favored; media sites that are image content heavy have the largest percentage of users. For example, in the 18-24 age demographic the platform Instagram which is image content heavy has a usage rate of 75% compared to Twitter which is word dense with a usage rate of 44% (Perrin &Anderson, 2019). Women were more likely to use image based social media sites such as Facebook or Instagram when compared to men (Perrin & Anderson, 2019). Over the last two decades, usage of media sources has changed as the type of media available continuously evolves.

Relationship between popular media imagery and body image

Traditional media such as television and film are known to influence the opinion of the viewers regarding their personal body image; because of their similarity social media is suspected to correspond in the same manner and garner similar reactions from viewers (Saiphoo & Vahedi, 2019). Photo-based social media sites are being reviewed by researchers with an overall conclusion that participants are more likely to have negative body image (Oakes, 2019). This conclusion has many potential sources for the influence over user's perception of self. A survey given to US college students found that 227 females compared their appearance to others such as influencers and peers (Oakes, 2019). Another study completed in the UK in 2017, 160 undergraduates were asked to view fit inspiration posts, self-compassion quotes or both. Those who viewed solely dieting and #fitspo had the lowest score on self-compassion scales (Oakes, 2019). Yet another study that took place in Canada invited participants to take a selfie; one group had to post the first photo they took, and the second group was allowed to take multiple photos and use editing software before uploading (Mills, 2017). The findings showed that all participants left the study with poorer body image than when they had begun. The range of

research around body image and social media have a similar story, there is a negative effect that

can have profound consequences. While those who have higher rates of self-appearance

comparison are affected the most, it is difficult to escape from the barrage of images perpetuating

unhealthy and unrealistic standards. Algorithms used in apps such as Instagram and TikTok track

user's activity to determine which content and content creators the individual will interact with

and be interested in viewing again (Kaufman, 2020). The purpose of these algorithms are to

improve the users experience on the app, but once an individual clicks on one example of thin

ideals, dieting, fitspiration, etc. it can entirely alter the content they are showed. This can be

incredibly harmful to those recovering from eating disorders, those with low self-esteem, and

individuals struggling to find confidence in their physical appearance. Currently, social media

algorithms created to remove nudity favor images of thin women and forcibly remove plus size

images of women (Drewett, 2020). Popular user and famous singer, Lizzo has repeatedly called

out the discrepancies in photos flagged for nudity depending on the individual's size (Wheeler,

2020). The complex system of algorithms created by extensive teams of people continue to

perpetuate thin ideal standards due to their apparent popularity with users. The social shift that

the body positivity movement has created, influences many of the images shown to those who

choose to interact with the movement and the creators who post related content. While thin ideal

is still a dominant component of social media sites and larger society, the body positivity

movement has also grown to influence the massively influential advertisement industry.

Inclusion of advertisement and entertainment

With the growing popularity of the Body Positivity Movement, companies have begun to

capitalize on the movement to gain popularity with activist women. Companies that sell beauty

related merchandise have begun to include more diverse models that represent what the

"average" women appears as. One of the first companies to hop on the bandwagon was Aerie, the lingerie and undergarment retailer owned by the American Eagle Outfitters Corporation. In 2014, the "Aerie Real" campaign launched as a supposed opposition to the highly photoshopped and edited images used in lingerie advertisements (Luck, 2016). Figure 4 displays an example of one of the advertisement images from the "Aerie Real" campaign.

Figure 4 American Eagle Outfitters (2018) [Image of Aerie Advertisement] [Photograph]. The Baby Perks. http://www.thebabyperks.com/2018/

The advertisement campaign promised to use real women instead of models and not edit any of the advertisements to improve the appearance (Luck, 2016). The campaign received large amounts of positive regard from media outlets and continues to use this marketing strategy currently. The women who were used in the first series of advertisements for the campaign however, still fit the westernized beauty standards that were present during the early to mid-

2010s. Net revenue for the Aerie company has continued to increase and has seen an annual

increase of around 25% in the last two fiscal years (*"AEO Investor Relations"*, 2020). Using this

marketing strategy has greatly increased profit margins for the American Eagle Outfitters

corporation. Coinciding with the release of the popular "Aerie Real" campaign corporations that

had previously established themselves as lingerie and undergarment powerhouses began to see

decreases in their annual revenue. In the early 2000s one of these lingerie powerhouses, Victoria

Secret was incredibly successful and saw a large increase in sales while simultaneously

producing a successful yearly fashion show that at its peak saw 10 million viewers. In 2015,

sales began to decrease, and this year net sales fell 46% in the first fiscal quarter (Ettinger,

McDowell, 2020). Figure 5 presents a typical Victoria Secret advertisement image.

Figure 5 Victoria Secret (2010) [Image of Love My Body Campaign] [Photograph]. InStyle.

https://www.instyle.com/news/victorias-secret-launches-i-love-my-body-campaign

While Victoria's Secret has managed to stay relevant for the better of two decades, it is

more frequently in the headlines for a scandal rather than the company or products sold. In 2018,

Vogue interviewed Ed Razek, the chief marketing officer of L Brands and Monica Mitro,

executive vice president of public relations at Victoria Secret about the upcoming fashion show

and growing calls for larger variety of models. Ed Razek said, "It's like, why doesn't your show

do this? Shouldn't you have transsexuals in the show? No. No, I don't think we should. Well,

why not? Because the show is a fantasy." (Phelps, 2018). In the interview he also stated that he

would not be letting any plus size models into the show. These comments faced extreme

backlash, Razek's position was terminated at the company and in May of 2019 regular Victoria

Secret model, Shanina Shaik, revealed that there would not be a televised fashion show that year

(Lopez, 2019). Many brands have taken notice to the mistakes of Victoria Secret and now there

is more inclusive sizing and lines by a large influx of companies including Target, Universal

Standard, and many smaller clothing brands. Similar to social media, advertisements influence

an individual's self-image and how they perceive themselves. The larger range of models used in

advertising campaigns may work to improve body image especially in those with higher rates of

social appearance comparison.

Sense of Self

Social Appearance Comparison

In a process referred to as social appearance comparison, an individual will compare

themselves to the standards that are produced on social media (Convertino et. al, 2016).

Developed in 1945 by social psychologist Leon Festinger, social comparison theory states that

individuals strive to obtain accurate self-evaluation (Wills, 1981). This theory was influenced by

social rhetoric to analyze the phenomenon seen when an individual began to compare themselves

to images on social media thus the social appearance comparison theory was developed. Those

who display higher levels of social appearance comparison are more likely to display the product

of exposure to images in the media. (Convertino et.al, 2016). High levels of social appearance

comparison have been linked to lower levels of self-esteem and mood (Convertino, et.al, 2016).

Those who are heavily invested in social media specifically emotionally are more likely to report

higher levels of depression and anxiety (Woods & Scott, 2016). The effects of a high level of

investment in the material that is available on social media sites directly connects to an

individual's self-esteem. Another theory that affects self-esteem primarily in women is the

objectification theory. The objectification theory states that the sexualization of females and their

bodies establish the idea that women are meant to be looked at and that appearance correlates

with their worth (Cohen, et. al, 2016). This creates an inner monologue in women referred to as

self-objectification that greatly affects self-esteem as appearance is valued higher. (Cohen, et. al,

2016). These theories reflect the negative inner thought processes that are influenced by external

factors to impact an individual's perception of self.

Upward and Downward Comparison

The process by which an individual compares themselves to another to determine where

they align is using upward and downward social appearance comparison (Wills, 1981).

Developed by psychologist Thomas Wills in 1981, the process of downward comparison is a

means to determine self-worth. Downward comparison is comparing yourself to those deemed as

lesser than, this has been shown to improve an individual's feelings on their current status (Wills,

1981). This process can be applied to a multitude of settings of a competitive nature, whether

intended or not. The opposite thought process, upward comparison is looking at those who are

superior to one's-self and further analyzing hierarchical placement. The upward comparison

process is the one used when individuals view social media and thin imagery and compare these

standards to their own body. As downward comparison seemingly correlates with higher self-

regard, upward comparison has the opposite effect, usually producing a lower regard for ones-

self (Wills, 1981). However, this is not always the case as upward comparison thought processes

in an individual may lead them to recognize similarities between themselves and the believed to

be superior class. This leads to an individual trying to change aspects of their life to closer align

with a believed to be higher status individual (Suls et. al, 2002). This is reflected by those closely

following models and dieting campaigns as a form of motivation to alter their appearance to

resemble beauty standards (Collins, 1995) more closely. As stated previously those with higher

self esteem are less likely to be severely influenced by downward or upward appearance

comparisons. However, those with negative body image may be more likely to be negatively

influenced by these thought processes furthering any dissatisfaction they have with their physical

appearance (Convertino, Rodgers, Franko, Jodoin, 2016). The concepts of upward and

downward social appearance comparison are utilized by members of the body positivity

movement to influence and improve negative thought patterns regarding self-image.

Influence of the movement on body image

The body positive movement is a platform to effectively promote positive body image

and increase self-esteem in females (Cohen, et.al, 2016). A study completed in 2019, showed the

relationship between imagery and self-esteem; specifically, thin-ideal versus body positive social

media posts (Cohen, et. al 2016). Participants of the study were college students between the

ages of 18-30. The study used an array of different measurements to operationalize body image

satisfaction in participants, an example of one of the measures is a computer based Visual

Analogue Scale (VAS) and had participants complete a pre-posttest. Those in the study were

randomly assigned to three categories: body positive, neutral, or thin-ideal imagery (Cohen, et.al,

2016). The study found that the group that viewed thin-ideal imagery reported lower body

satisfaction after viewing the images (Cohen, et. al, 2016). The results also showed a correlation

between viewing body positive content and an increase in overall body satisfaction and mood

(Cohen, et. al, 2016).

Other studies have found similar results. For instance, Moreno-Dominguez, et. al (2018) reviewed the relationship between body dissatisfaction and exposure to images of thin versus plus-size models. Participants who were exposed to images of thin models showed higher rates of body dissatisfaction from pretest to posttest. Another study examining the relationship between media exposure and body satisfaction found that regardless of type of media post the exposure to thin ideal versus body positive content affected the participants self-esteem (Bell & Dittmar, 2011). Yet another study asked participants to view advertisements from the brand Aerie (Convertino, et. al, 2016). The participants either viewed regular Aerie advertisements or the Aerie real advertisement which had models with a larger range of sizes and shapes. The participants who viewed the Aerie real campaign had higher levels of body satisfaction compared to those who viewed the regular advertising material (Convertino, et. al, 2016). The real campaign featured a more inclusive range of women including size but also age, ethnicity, ability, etc. This campaign was unique in some ways, many similar campaigns did not have a range of different model backgrounds and this leads to complications in drawing parallels with other studies. Of the studies that were reviewed none were able to predict if length of exposure mediated that outcome, or if the outcomes of the study could produce long term effects.

Imperfections of the Body positivity movement

Limitations of who is included in this movement

Simply put the body positivity movement fails to address the concept and importance of intersectionality. The movement which began as an inspiring and uplifting message to all has been morphed into solely supporting and uplifting white, cisgender, able-bodied plus size women of a certain age, while everyone else becomes invisible. Posts with #bodypositivity are most often associated with women who may not fit the thin ideal but still closely align with other

beauty standards. Women of color, especially Black women are underrepresented, and their thoughts and ideas are stolen and repackaged as original content by white influencers. The University of Nottingham conducted a poll on Instagram and found that of the 70 participants, 73% felt that the movement did not represent people of color ("IMPACT", 2019). These findings are not unique as it is apparent that white privilege extends and influences the message of the body positivity movement. Similar to the larger society, the role of a token person of color exists to show that the campaign or advertisement is diverse and representative of everyone while still maintaining the white majority.

Another group that is often left out of the movement are those who are disabled. Ableism, the discrimination of those who are disabled to favor those who are able-bodied is often seen in posts that ask viewers to love their body based on all of the functions it supposedly is capable of (Broadwater, 2020). Every individual is unique and therefore is capable of different things, by quantifying body image and self-acceptance as extension of what the body can do this fails to acknowledge the stories and lived experiences of those who are disabled. Many social media campaigns and advertisements fail to include those who are not able bodied in favor of those who are, effectively excluding models that would have represented the true message of body positivity. Companies who have rebranded to seemingly represent an interest in being inclusive continue to create environments and products that are not always accessible to those who are disabled.

The examples of discrimination in the movement is applicable to a large variety of individuals who may agree with the original message of self-love and acceptance but are not represented in the contemporary movement. The movement is unable to display and uplift the importance of intersectionality without regarding the larger societal influences that create

barriers and trauma towards minority groups. The movement as a whole has failed to analyze the different identities that an individual encapsulates. These identities affect how they view themselves and by extension their physical appearance. This narrow approach to acceptance continues to perpetuate barriers that prevent minority groups from freely participating.

Limitations of the Current Movement

In addition to the overall lack of significance given to intersecting identities there are numerous limitations of the current movement as it stands. The first limitation is the speed of change on social media. Social media has grown to be incredibly influential especially in younger generations, but the rate at which it is growing, and evolving is exceptionally fast and difficult for most individuals to maintain and keep up with. This rate is seen in this literature analysis with the increase of popularity of TikTok. When the project began TikTok was still relatively obscure but in the past few years has grown to be one of the most utilized apps of Generation Z. Due to this speed it is relatively impossible to predict what the movement will look like in a few years and for content creators it can be difficult to produce and predict what will be popular and what will become irrelevant.

Another potential limitation of the movement is the involvement of businesses and advertisements that cater towards body positive movement members. With the increase of those ascribing to the values of the movement, more companies have rebranded to an inclusive brand look. However, the intentions behind this move are profit and may not be beneficial in improving self-image. Companies like Aerie that now have a strong emphasis on providing products and campaigns that embrace inclusivity continue to carry sizes XXS-XXL which does not include everyone. The inclusion of capitalism and money into the movement may negatively influence the original message of self-acceptance and skew it to pander to a larger audience than

previously before. The body positivity movement in its current state is relatively new so the

impact of these and other influences are hard to predict what the produced outcome will be.

Future Expectations

The future of the movement is fluid; there are many different subgroups, and the larger

societal influences will impact what the body positivity movement becomes. I believe that the

body positivity movement will be unable to truly represent all people until they address the

inequities within the movement and the harm that this has caused. Overall, I believe that the

movement is a great opportunity to influence a new generation in how they view themselves and

work towards creating confident and secure youth. As I explored in this analysis, having a

negative self-image influences thought perception and leads to negative outcome factors

increasing. I do believe that the movement will continue to grow but with the lack of significance

given to intersectionality it is likely that the movement will permanently splinter to represent

body positivity in specific groups.

The body positivity movement was created to directly oppose the notion that women

needed to appear a certain way to be considered beautiful and furthermore regarded with respect

and dignity. In the "Curvy Confession" interview Stephanie Yeboah stated, "You have to have

the belief that you deserve to be here. You deserve to wear what you want, and you deserve to be

treated with respect that everyone else deserves." This sentiment is the true meaning behind the

body positivity movement, that everyone has the right to be confident and loved as they are.

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