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Body Positivity Movement: Influence of Beauty Standards on Body Image

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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.
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
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.

![Twiggy](https://www.mirror.co.uk/3am/celebrity-news/twiggy-once-famously-turned-down-22511479)

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

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. 

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 one’s 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.

![Aerie Real Advertisement](image_url)


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 oneself (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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