Positive Body Image

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION
The popularization of the body positivity movement on social media (Cohen et al., 2020) as well as the increased attention to positive body image development in psychology (e.g., Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015a) give reason for the potential inclusion of television messages that can potentially benefit viewers’ body image (i.e., positive body image messages). Yet, prior studies exploring appearance messages on television have predominantly paid attention to harmful messages, including stigmatizing remarks towards characters not adhering to beauty ideals (e.g., Northup & Liebler, 2010; Eisenberg et al., 2015). One can question whether the exclusive focus on identifying negative appearance messages provides an accurate representation of viewers’ true experiences with the television landscape. We therefore presented a tested new instrument to analyze the presence of positive body image (PBI) messages on television, aligning with theoretical conceptualizations of positive body image in the literature (e.g., Maes et al., 2021).

FIELD OF APPLICATION/THEORETICAL FOUNDATION
The PBI messages measurement instrument relies on theoretical conceptualizations of positive body image development, which include self-care (i.e., individuals’ attunement and appropriate responses to changing body characteristics and personal hygiene) (Maes et al., 2021), body appreciation (i.e., the acceptance of one’s own body and others’ bodies, typically expressed through self-love and respect for others’ uniqueness) (e.g., Maes et al., 2021; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015b; Tylka & Iannantuono, 2016), and resilience against body image threatening messages (i.e., negative appearance remarks, body ideals, and pubertal changes) (Maes et al., 2021). The final component is expressed through coping strategies, such as rationalization, ignoring, and distraction. The instrument more specifically allows to explore the presence of PBI messages in television series and movies and can be used at a scene level (i.e., presence of messages per scene) and character level (i.e., presence of PBI component in unique television character).

REFERENCES/COMBINATION WITH OTHER METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION
Prior research exists that has departed from a negative perspective when exploring the presence of appearance messages on television. For instance, research has coded the presence of characters adhering to beauty ideals (e.g., Northup & Liebler, 2010), of stigmatizing appearance-related comments and the targets of these comments (Eisenberg et al., 2015), and conversations surrounding appearance (Lauzen & Dozier, 2008). Yet, the presence of negative appearance messages is entirely different from the presence of positive body image messages, which departs from the theoretical conceptualization of developing a positive body image (e.g., Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015a). Hence, these codes are not comparable. When it comes to the presence of positive body image messages, only the study of Maes and Vandenbosch (2021) have developed and tested the measurement instrument and its variables. They have used the instrument in their content analytical work on youth-oriented television series.

Example study: Maes and Vandenbosch (2021)

INFORMATION ON MAES AND VANDENBOSCH (2021)
Authors: Chelly Maes, & Laura Vandenbosch
Research questions: RQ1: How frequently do youth-oriented television series convey PBI mes-
sages, reflected by the three positive body image components? RQ2: Do PBI and negative body image messages co-occur in scenes in youth-oriented television series? RQ3: Do PBI messages in youth-oriented television series vary by character gender? RQ4: Do PBI messages in youth-oriented television series vary by character body size? **Object of analysis:** The codes were applied to explore the presence of PBI messages in one season of six youth-oriented television series (Riverdale, 13 Reasons Why, Elite, Atypical, Sex Education, and Big Mouth). In total, 3,151 scenes and 126 characters were coded. **Time frame of analysis:** 2021

**INFORMATION ABOUT THE VARIABLES**

**Variables:**

Variables coded at a scene level:

*Body self-care* was defined from a self-love perspective (verbal and visual cues), meaning that it is not motivated to meet narrowly defined appearance ideals. Presence was coded if the scenes show practices which preserve or improve one’s health (e.g., taking a relaxing bath) or if characters talked about these practices.

*Body appreciation* includes verbal and visual expressions of an individual’s acceptance of their own (changing) body and others’ bodies without references to narrowly defined appearance ideals in scenes. The following themes are part of body appreciation and body appreciation was thus present if one (or more) of these themes were depicted/discussed: 1) respecting one’s body, 2) accepting one’s body, 3) feelings satisfied about one’s body, 4) loving one’s unique appearance, 5) body pride, 6) complimenting others/receiving non-sexualizing and non-objectifying compliments.

*Resilience* against body image-threatening messages includes verbal and visual manifestations of resilience against body image-threatening messages. In scenes resilience against (a) negative appearance remarks, (b) body ideals, and (c) pubertal changes were coded separately. Specifically, the following reactions reflect resilience: rationalization, ignoring, and revolt.

Variables coded at a character level:

Character level data were coded separately per character and thus does not rely on aggregated data from the scene level data.

*Body self-care* was defined from a self-love perspective and means that the character practices self-care without being motivated to meet narrowly defined appearance ideals. Presence in the character was coded if the character engaged in any self-care practices throughout the season.

*Body appreciation* was coded as part of a character when the character appeared to be appreciative of their own body.

*Resilience against body image-threatening messages* was generally coded in characters if the character showed resilience in (one of) the three BI-threatening situations: (a) negative appearance remarks, (b) body ideals, and (c) pubertal changes.

**Level of analysis:** Television scenes and characters

**Values:**

0 = no occurrence in scenes/absent in characters/not resilient in characters, 1 = occurrence in scenes/present in characters/resilient in characters

**Reliability:** Four master’s students who received training and the first author of this study conducted content analysis by dividing the sample among themselves. Their training aimed to enhance the clarity of the coding instrument and the codebook, thereby reducing subjectivity. This training comprised both group and individual coding sessions. Before coding the entire sample, each coder coded one episode of each series to assess inter-coder reliability. Inter-coder reliability was evaluated using Krippendorff’s alpha (α), a measure that considers chance while assessing inter-rater reliability for categorical variables (Landis & Koch, 1977). Alpha values of .67 and .80 indicate substantial reliability, while values exceeding .80 indicate almost perfect reliability (Krippendorff, 1980). Krippendorff’s α ranged from .70 to .90 for all categorical variables at both character and scene levels, indicating high reliability for all coded variables.

**Codebook:** can be found via OSF [https://osf.io/kbej6/?view_only=4661f7a877e-94271be064256a9172047](https://osf.io/kbej6/?view_only=4661f7a877e-94271be064256a9172047)

**REFERENCES**


