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The Antecedents, Consequences, and Enhancement Strategies of Positive Body Image

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Abstract

Positive body image refers to individuals' cognitive acceptance of their own bodies, appreciation of their uniqueness and functionality, as well as positive processing and protection of body evaluation information, which exerts internal and external beneficial effects on individuals. Grounded in the biopsychosocial model and the operational definition of body image as a theoretical framework, research has revealed that positive body image is influenced by biological factors such as gender, age, and body mass index; psychological factors including personality traits, cognitive styles, and interoception; and sociocultural factors such as significant others, mass media, and values. It demonstrates protective effects on individuals' body cognition, emotional experience, and behavioral regulation, among which body mass index, neuroticism, and perceived pressure from significant others and mass media are particularly salient, with psychological and sociocultural factors exerting greater influence on individuals' positive body image than biological factors. Concurrently, functionality-focused intervention and self-compassion-based intervention have emerged as the two most prevalent enhancement strategies, with the former exhibiting stronger efficacy and the latter possessing greater advantages in application and dissemination. Future research may draw upon intersectionality theory to enrich the theoretical model of positive body image, investigate its developmental characteristics and underlying mechanisms, optimize the content and applicability of enhancement strategies, and consider the preventive and therapeutic role of family factors, thereby advancing the sinicization of positive body image research.

Full Text

The Determinants and Consequences of Positive Body Image and Its Promotion Strategies

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Abstract

Positive body image refers to an individual's cognitive acceptance of their own body, appreciation of its uniqueness and functionality, and active processing and protection of body evaluation information, which exerts both internal and external beneficial effects on the individual. Grounded in the biopsychosocial model and the operational definition of body image, research has identified that positive body image is influenced by biological factors such as gender, age, and body mass index; psychological factors including personality traits, cognitive styles, and interoception; and sociocultural factors like significant others, mass media, and values. These factors demonstrate protective effects on individuals' body cognition, emotional experience, and behavioral regulation, with body mass index, neuroticism, and perceived pressure from significant others and mass media emerging as particularly salient influences. Notably, psychological and sociocultural factors exert greater influence on positive body image than biological factors. Meanwhile, functional-focused intervention and self-compassion-based intervention have become the two most widely employed promotion strategies, with the former demonstrating stronger effectiveness and the latter offering greater advantages in application and dissemination. Future research should enrich theoretical models of positive body image through intersectionality theory, investigate its developmental characteristics and underlying mechanisms, optimize the content and applicability of promotion strategies, consider the preventive role of family factors, and advance the indigenization of positive body image research in China.

Keywords: positive body image, negative body image, promotion strategies

Body image refers to an individual's mental representation of their own body, encompassing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral regulation components (Chen, 2006). It comprises both positive body image—characterized by love, respect, and acceptance of one's body (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015)—and negative body image, which involves disrespect, dissatisfaction, or shame toward one's

body (Gattario & Frisén, 2019). Importantly, these two constructs do not exist in a simple negative linear relationship (Wood-Barcalow et al., 2010). Early research predominantly focused on the prevention and amelioration of negative body image. However, with the rise of positive psychology, researchers have recognized that positive and negative body image are not merely opposite ends of a single continuum.

In recent years, substantial research on positive body image has been conducted by international scholars (Rodgers et al., 2021; Swami et al., 2021; Tylka, 2012), while domestic research remains relatively scarce and lacks systematic review. Studies have demonstrated that positive body image benefits both physical and mental development (Chen et al., 2020), including increased health-promoting behaviors (Avalos et al., 2005) and prosocial behaviors (Tylka, 2012), higher body satisfaction (Webb et al., 2015), and stronger conscientiousness (Allen & Walter, 2016). Evidently, positive body image serves as a protective factor with internal and external benefits, contributing to the healthy development of macro-ecosystems. To guide researchers toward a more positive perspective on body image research and promote public physical and mental health and self-improvement, this study provides an overview of positive body image, systematically reviews its influencing factors, protective effects, and promotion strategies, and outlines future research directions to support the indigenization of positive body image research in China.

2. Connotation and Assessment of Positive Body Image

Initially conceptualized as the right endpoint of a body image continuum opposite to negative body image (Striegel-Moore & Cachelin, 1999), this perspective was challenged by Williams et al. (2004). Their cluster analysis revealed three distinct body image categories: a normative body dissatisfaction group and a negative body image group showed similar levels of body dissatisfaction, but the latter exhibited more severe body image dysfunction, including greater emotional distress and perceived negative impact on quality of life. In contrast, the positive body image group demonstrated relative satisfaction with their appearance, minimal emotional distress from body image concerns, and perceived positive contributions to their quality of life. Furthermore, research indicates that deconstructing negative body image does not automatically construct positive body image (Tylka, 2012); individuals may cease to dislike their bodies without necessarily learning to respect and appreciate them.

Thus, positive body image is not merely the antonym of negative body image but possesses its own distinct characteristics. Avalos et al. (2005) first elaborated on these features, including: (1) positive evaluation of the body regardless of actual appearance; (2) body acceptance including weight, shape, and imperfections; (3) body respect through attending to bodily needs and engaging in healthy behaviors; and (4) body protection by rejecting media-promoted ideal body images. Subsequently, Wood-Barcalow et al. (2010) expanded this framework through expert and student interviews, proposing that positive body image enables indi-

viduals to: (1) appreciate their body' s uniqueness and functionality; (2) accept and even celebrate their body, including aspects that deviate from societal ideals; (3) experience positive feelings of beauty, satisfaction, confidence, and joy; (4) focus on strengths; (5) attend to bodily needs; and (6) process information in body-protective ways (e.g., internalizing positive information while rejecting or reframing negative information).

Building on this work, Tylka (2012) categorized positive body image features into three types: core characteristics (including body appreciation, body acceptance and love, broad conceptualization of beauty, inner positivity, and protective information filtering), features that promote or maintain positive body image (such as media literacy—the ability to resist thin-ideal media and appearance comparisons), and utility features (such as confidence and prosocial behavior). Tylka later supplemented the core characteristics with adaptive appearance investment (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015). Although these attributes lack extensive quantitative validation, researchers agree that positive body image should be conceptualized as a multidimensional construct rather than a unidimensional measure based solely on body satisfaction (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015; Webb et al., 2015). In summary, this study defines positive body image as an individual' s cognitive acceptance of their body, appreciation of its uniqueness and functionality, and active processing and protection of body evaluation information.

Based on these characteristics, Avalos et al. (2005) developed the first quantitative measure of positive body image—the unidimensional Body Appreciation Scale (BAS)—to reflect unconditional body acceptance and respect, using the broad term “body appreciation” to encompass all four attributes of positive body image. This differs from the narrow definition of “body appreciation” in the core characteristics, which specifically refers to gratitude for body features, functions, and health (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015). Despite its strong cross-cultural applicability (Casale et al., 2021; Swami et al., 2021), the BAS cannot comprehensively assess all attributes identified in Tylka and Wood-Barcalow' s (2015) qualitative research, such as broad conceptualization of beauty and inner positivity. Moreover, the unidimensional BAS exhibits structural discrepancies with the multidimensional theoretical construct (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015) and the operational definition of body image (Chen, 2006). Future research should integrate qualitative and quantitative approaches to refine assessment tools and deepen understanding of positive body image' s connotation and structure.

3. Influencing Factors of Positive Body Image

Although Shi et al. (2020) reviewed factors influencing negative body image, positive and negative body image are distinct constructs, and findings from negative body image research may not generalize to explain the mechanisms underlying positive body image. The biopsychosocial model serves as a valuable theoretical framework for describing and predicting body image influences (Ricciardelli et al., 2003). Research employing this model includes theoretical

studies aimed at multidimensionally describing influencing factors to identify core determinants (e.g., Pu & Jackson, 2016, on anorexia nervosa) and empirical studies constructing structural equation models to compare effect sizes and test model fit (e.g., Welsh, 2009, on postpartum women's body image). Accordingly, this study adopts a theoretical approach using the biopsychosocial model to review factors influencing positive body image, laying groundwork for future empirical research.

3.1.1 Gender

Cross-cultural research consistently shows that men possess more positive body image than women (Ma et al., 2020; Casale et al., 2021; Swami et al., 2021). Swami et al. (2008) suggest this gender difference may stem from men's more flexible ideal appearance standards, societal emphasis on male competence, and greater access to social and personal resources that facilitate positive body image. Additionally, research indicates that negative appearance-related comments from male partners constitute a stressor for women's negative body image development (McLaren et al., 2004), whereas men with positive body image may better appreciate women's bodies and hold more diverse aesthetic standards (Tiggemann, 2015). Cross-sex hormone therapy studies further reveal that body image becomes more positive as individuals' physical sex aligns with their desired gender (Corda et al., 2016). Currently, positive body image research primarily focuses on women; future studies should examine gender differences in positive body image, particularly how men with positive body image may facilitate women's positive body image construction, and explore potential mechanisms involving gender-related biological indicators such as sex hormones.

3.1.2 Age

Positive body image research originated with female university students and later expanded to other age groups. Tiggemann and McCourt (2013) found that women's positive body image positively correlates with age—a finding that seems counterintuitive given that aging entails negative physical changes such as weight gain and skin laxity. However, for older women, positive body image may involve greater emphasis on health and physical function, leading to acceptance of natural aging processes. Additionally, life experiences such as career development and relationship building may help older women define their capabilities based on internal qualities (Tiggemann & Lynch, 2001) and employ cognitive reappraisal strategies to cope with physical imperfections (Webster & Tiggemann, 2003).

Notably, although women's positive body image increases with age, body dissatisfaction remains stable (Tiggemann & McCourt, 2013), confirming that positive and negative body image are not linearly negatively related. Furthermore, the negative correlation between positive body image and body dissatisfaction is weaker among older compared to younger women (Bellard et al., 2021). In summary, while women may experience some degree of body dissatisfaction as

they age, they simultaneously develop compensatory mechanisms to respect and appreciate their bodies.

3.1.3 Body Mass Index

Body mass index (BMI), commonly used to measure obesity, represents an important biological indicator affecting body image (Calzo et al., 2012). Research demonstrates that BMI negatively correlates with positive body image (Satin-sky et al., 2012; Swami et al., 2018). Compared to other biological indicators (e.g., heart rate variability), BMI can be easily calculated from self-reported height and weight, making it a suitable proxy for actual body size in large-scale surveys. BMI shows stronger correlations with positive body image than gender or age, emerging as a more robust predictor (Webb et al., 2015; Swami et al., 2018). Future research should ensure BMI data collection and investigate its relationships with other variables (e.g., self-esteem, executive function) and their combined effects on positive body image.

3.2.1 Personality Factors

Research indicates that the Big Five personality traits predict or protect against body image concerns. Swami and colleagues (2008) found that low neuroticism and high extraversion positively predict positive body image, with neuroticism showing stronger and more stable predictive power (Swami et al., 2013). Subsequently, Allen and Walter (2016) reviewed relationships between Big Five traits and body image, suggesting that positive body image may also relate to conscientiousness. Although highly conscientious individuals tend to endorse social conventions (Roberts et al., 2014), their high self-confidence also promotes rejection of ideal body images (Roberts & Good, 2010). Specifically, highly conscientious individuals exhibit healthier eating habits and better physical health (Hakulinen et al., 2015; Lunn et al., 2014), facilitating the development and maintenance of positive body image. Future research should emphasize the role of neuroticism and deepen longitudinal investigations of personality's influence on positive body image.

3.2.2 Cognitive Style

Individuals' cognitive styles determine how they allocate cognitive resources and select strategies when processing appearance-related information (Gestsdottir & Lerner, 2008). Wood-Barcalow et al. (2010) proposed a "protective filtering" mechanism as a potential pathway to promote and maintain positive body image. Through this mechanism, the brain processes appearance-related information in a self-protective manner, filtering out harmful negative information. Notably, in Wood-Barcalow et al.'s (2010) qualitative study, 80% of individuals with positive body image reported experiencing negative body image during adolescence but overcame it through cognitive transformation. Specific transformation strategies included analyzing, resisting, and challenging internalization of media ideal body images, ultimately accepting a more inclusive and diverse definition of beauty

—findings consistent with Tiggemann (2015). Temporally, negative body image typically precedes positive body image; research shows girls develop motivations for thinness around age six (Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2006). This suggests that building positive body image may represent a conscious choice during cognitive development, requiring initial active transformation of cognitive style to resist existing negative body image, followed by engagement of the protective filtering mechanism. Future research should clarify the cognitive processing transition mechanisms from negative to positive body image.

3.2.3 Interoception

Interoception refers to awareness of one's internal bodily states, comprising three components: interoceptive accuracy, interoceptive sensibility, and interoceptive awareness (Garfinkel et al., 2015). Interoceptive accuracy is commonly measured by heartbeat perception ability, interoceptive sensibility reflects subjective experience of internal processes and is typically assessed through self-report measures like the Body Awareness Questionnaire, while interoceptive awareness represents metacognitive awareness of interoceptive accuracy (Zhang & Chen, 2021). Research demonstrates associations between interoception and body image (Badoud & Tsakiris, 2017). Specifically, interoceptive accuracy negatively correlates with body dissatisfaction (Emanuelson et al., 2015); individuals with higher interoceptive accuracy maintain more stable body self-representations, exhibit better emotional stability (Zhang & Chen, 2021), and demonstrate higher positive body image (Duschek et al., 2015). Future research could employ heartbeat perception training to enhance awareness of internal bodily cues and examine the synergistic effects of interoception's three components on positive body image.

3.3.1 Significant Others

Significant others, particularly parents, play a crucial guiding role in constructing individuals' body image (Li & Liu, 2018), with cross-cultural consistency in findings (Andrew et al., 2014; Wood-Barcalow et al., 2010). Specifically, perceived body acceptance from others—feeling that significant others (parents, partners, friends) accept one's body and value one's abilities and traits—is essential for building positive body image. When individuals directly (e.g., receiving positive appearance-related feedback) or indirectly (e.g., having internal qualities like personality, competence, and creativity emphasized) perceive body acceptance from others, their need to meet others' appearance expectations diminishes, allowing them to allocate more cognitive resources to attending to internal bodily sensations and functions (Avalos & Tylka, 2006). Moreover, a bidirectional mechanism exists between individuals and significant others: positive body image serves as an important basis for peer selection (Tylka, 2012), as individuals with positive body image tend to choose peers with similar body image. This may occur because individuals within the same social network exhibit homogeneity in body image and eating behaviors (Paxton et al., 1999), creating

a “positive body image-peer selection-positive body image” cyclical network. Additionally, research shows that sociocultural factors (perceived pressure from significant others and media) influence children’s body change strategy choices (e.g., dieting or exercise) more strongly than biological factors like BMI (Ricciardelli et al., 2003). Future research should examine how perceived pressure from significant others and media affects children’s positive body image and body change strategies to safeguard children’s physical and mental health.

3.3.2 Mass Media

Mass media serves as a primary vehicle for disseminating sociocultural standards and expectations regarding ideal body images (Levine & Murnen, 2009). Previous research has predominantly focused on mass media’s negative effects on body image (Ren et al., 2018), demonstrating that exposure to unrealistic ideal body types promotes upward social comparisons and negative body image. Recently, researchers have recognized the harmfulness of ideal body images and advocated for mass media to showcase “body-positive” content featuring diverse body types to promote broad definitions of beauty and acceptance of appearance diversity (Cohen et al., 2019; Rodgers et al., 2020), thereby helping individuals confront their actual body size (Lazuka et al., 2020). However, some argue that even diverse aesthetic standards continue to emphasize appearance importance (Cohen et al., 2019), suggesting that media should instead promote “body-neutral” content (e.g., images emphasizing body functionality) to shift attention from appearance to bodily diversity and functionality (Rodgers et al., 2020), thereby fostering positive body cognition.

Historically, mass media research focused on traditional outlets such as magazines, television, and music videos (López-Guimerà et al., 2010). With internet development and global app usage, research has shifted toward social media. Today, social media has become an important tool for social interaction (Shi et al., 2020) and a major platform for disseminating ideal body images. Unlike traditional media, social media provides users with self-presentation platforms (e.g., uploading selfies), increasing attention to body image evaluation (Gu et al., 2021). Research shows that both positive and negative feedback may increase self-objectification risk—the tendency to view one’s body from an observer’s perspective, recognize imperfections, and develop negative body image (Niu et al., 2020). However, other studies find that positive feedback, especially when contradicting traditional ideal body types, protects and promotes positive body image (Rodgers et al., 2021). Future research should compare relationships between social media types, feedback valence, and positive body image, exploring underlying psychological mechanisms.

3.3.3 Values

Swami and Abbasnejad (2010) found that traditional gender attitudes, particularly those related to appearance and gender roles (e.g., chastity and passive female gender roles), correlate with lower positive body image. Feminist per-

spectives suggest that feminism equips individuals with abilities to critique traditional gender roles and resist external cultural pressures (Kinsaul et al., 2014), helping women break free from cultural stereotypes (e.g., thinness, delicacy) and redefine their own values. However, some studies have not found feminism's promoting effect on positive body image (Cash et al., 1997; Tiggemann & Stevens, 1999), possibly because feminism internalization is a process, and only high-level feminists possess the capacity to resist cultural pressure (Tiggemann, 2015). Meanwhile, developing feminist identity promotes self-worth and autonomy during the internalization process (Anastasopoulos & Desmarais, 2015). Therefore, future research should examine the development mechanisms of high-level feminism through feminist identity to identify pathways for promoting positive body image.

4. Protective Effects of Positive Body Image

Compared to the detrimental effects of negative body image, positive body image provides internal and external benefits. Research shows that positive body image enhances well-being, alleviates negative emotions such as depression and anxiety, maintains stable BMI, and promotes healthy lifestyle habits (Andrew et al., 2014). Based on the operational definition of body image (Chen, 2006), this study elaborates on positive body image's effects on women from three dimensions: body cognition, emotional experience, and behavioral regulation.

4.1 Body Cognition

Individuals with positive body image internalize positive information through the protective filtering mechanism, such as rejecting or reframing negative information (Tylka, 2012; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015), enabling them to accept body parts inconsistent with ideal body types and appreciate their body's uniqueness. Research suggests that subjective body cognition appears more important than objective indicators (Gillen, 2015); compared to objective biological indices like BMI, positive body image more strongly benefits physical and mental health. This may occur because body image influences metacognition (Powell et al., 2015). Among obese women, those with positive body image demonstrate more efficient metacognitive activity and greater perseverance in sustained weight loss behaviors than those with negative body image (Nejati et al., 2017). In essence, individuals with positive body image possess higher self-esteem, derive self-worth from broader sources, transform positive body perceptions into overall self-cognition, and emphasize body functionality over aesthetic features (Andrew et al., 2014).

4.2 Emotional Experience

Positive body image directly promotes positive emotional experiences. Research demonstrates that positive body image negatively correlates with depression and distress while positively correlating with happiness (Andrew et al., 2014)

and significantly predicts well-being (Swami et al., 2018). Additionally, positive body image indirectly facilitates positive emotional experiences through mediating effects of emotion regulation strategies. Emotion regulation involves monitoring, evaluating, and adjusting emotion intensity, duration, and expression during emotional arousal (Gross & Thompson, 2007). As a sub-concept, cognitive emotion regulation refers to conscious cognitive approaches for processing emotionally arousing information (McComb & Mills, 2021), comprising four maladaptive strategies (rumination, catastrophizing, self-blame, blaming others) and five adaptive strategies (acceptance, positive refocusing, planning, perspective-taking, positive reappraisal). Research shows that positive body image promotes selection of adaptive cognitive emotion regulation strategies (Nejati et al., 2017). Future research could explore relationships between positive body image and both antecedent-focused and response-focused strategies based on the process model of emotion regulation (Gross & John, 2003).

4.3 Behavioral Regulation

Positive body image predicts the occurrence of health behaviors. Research indicates that positive body image helps individuals recognize internal needs and engage in self-care behaviors such as meditation, moderate exercise, and rest (Tylka, 2012). Additionally, positive body image positively predicts intuitive eating levels (Chen et al., 2020). Intuitive eating refers to eating based on internal physiological cues—eating when hungry and stopping when full—without external or emotional influences (Tribole & Resch, 1995). This may occur because individuals with positive body image possess high interoceptive accuracy and greater sensitivity to internal physiological cues (Duschek et al., 2015). Moreover, positive body image negatively predicts smoking, alcohol consumption, and substance abuse (Andrew et al., 2014). Thus, positive body image facilitates healthy eating habits and prevents addictive behaviors, with interoception representing a potentially valuable factor for future investigation.

5. Promotion of Positive Body Image

With the development of positive psychology, researchers have shifted focus from alleviating negative body image to promoting positive body image. This study elaborates on the two most commonly used strategies—functional-focused intervention and self-compassion-based intervention—and clarifies their discriminant relationship.

5.1 Functional-Focused Intervention

Physical appearance, including weight and size, easily triggers upward social comparisons when contrasted with societal ideals, typically increasing focus on appearance flaws and undermining body satisfaction (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). In contrast, body functionality refers to the body's efficacy and the satisfaction derived from it (Alleva et al., 2014). Research shows that focusing

on body functionality generates positive emotional experiences and promotes cognitive restructuring of body image (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015), likely because functional focus facilitates behaviors such as exercise, social interaction, and metabolism (Alleva et al., 2015), fostering body acceptance, respect, and appreciation through psychophysiological interactions.

Based on this rationale, Alleva et al. (2015) developed the Functional-Focused Intervention (FFI) to enhance positive body image. This program employs on-line writing tasks three times weekly for at least 15 minutes per session, directing attention toward body functionality. The intervention involves: first, providing participants with a brief introduction to body functions with examples; then conducting three structured writing tasks focusing on sensory and physical abilities, health and creative activities, and self-care and interpersonal communication. Participants describe each function's importance, such as the body's role in information transmission (i.e., body language) during communication. Studies have confirmed FFI's applicability and effectiveness among rheumatoid arthritis patients (Alleva et al., 2018) and non-clinical samples (Ziemer et al., 2019), showing significant improvements in positive body image, including body appreciation, body respect, and satisfaction with body functionality.

5.2 Self-Compassion-Based Intervention

Self-compassion refers to the ability to treat oneself with kindness and understanding when facing inadequacies, failures, or suffering (Neff, 2003). Research demonstrates that self-compassion significantly negatively correlates with body dissatisfaction and body shame (Ferreira et al., 2013) and positively correlates with body appreciation and body esteem (Burychka et al., 2021). Self-compassion-based intervention (SCBI) represents one of the most frequently used strategies for promoting positive body image (Guest et al., 2019). Neff and Germer (2013) originally developed an 8-week Mindful Self-Compassion program. Albertson et al. (2014) shortened this to 3 weeks, finding that the intervention group showed significantly increased self-compassion and body appreciation alongside decreased body dissatisfaction, body shame, and appearance-based self-worth, though severe sample attrition (48%) limited conclusion validity. In response, Toole and Craighead (2016) further reduced the intervention to one week with daily 20-minute sessions comprising three tasks: body scan exercises (days 1-3), deep breathing exercises (days 4-5), and body-focused loving-kindness meditation (days 6-7). This revised protocol demonstrated equivalent efficacy while addressing sample attrition issues.

5.3 Comparison of FFI and SCBI

Both FFI and SCBI constitute online intervention training, also known as portable therapy (Germer & Neff, 2013), offering cross-regional and cross-temporal portability and strong ecological validity. However, compared to traditional face-to-face interventions, online interventions require higher participant compliance and more active feedback.

Key differences between FFI and SCBI include: first, in nature and format, FFI employs autonomous online group counseling, whereas some SCBI require combined offline and online delivery (e.g., Toole & Craighead, 2016' s laboratory plus online approach). Second, theoretically, FFI is grounded in body image theory, emphasizing recognition of body functionality' s importance and individual differences, while SCBI centers on self-compassion, using body scanning and awareness to respond to imperfections with compassion—FFI emphasizing cognition and SCBI foregrounding emotional experience. Third, FFI demonstrates stronger effectiveness, while SCBI offers greater advantages in application and promotion (Guest et al., 2019).

However, similar to measurement tools, current promotion strategies only target partial features of positive body image, presenting certain limitations. Future research should base interventions on the complete features and influencing factors of positive body image (e.g., interoception), evaluate strategy applicability and effectiveness, and enhance intervention timeliness and portability through mobile applications and wearable devices to normalize and personalize positive body image promotion.

6. Issues and Future Directions

Positive body image represents an important protective factor for mental health, and guiding individuals toward positive body image deserves public attention (Bucchianeri & Neumark-Sztainer, 2014). Positive body image is not the opposite of negative body image but a multifaceted construct that includes but is not limited to body appreciation. Existing research predominantly focuses on women, neglecting gender differences in positive body image and men' s influence on women' s positive body image construction. Meanwhile, positive body image is developmentally dynamic (Milton et al., 2021); current cross-sectional designs cannot adequately explain transformation mechanisms from negative to positive body image, nor do they address the content completeness and population applicability of promotion strategies, particularly the influence of significant others (especially parents) on positive body image development. Furthermore, given cultural differences in positive body image (Todd & Swami, 2020), developing indigenous Chinese measurement tools is essential. Building on existing findings, future research should address the following areas.

First, future studies should enrich theoretical models of positive body image through intersectionality theory (Else-Quest & Hyde, 2016) and deepen understanding of its antecedents and consequences by constructing biopsychosocial models. Currently, research primarily focuses on young White women, neglecting other genders, races, social classes, sexual orientations, and variable interactions. Research shows that heterosexual, homosexual, and bisexual groups differ in body satisfaction, with bisexual individuals experiencing greater appearance pressure (Hazzard et al., 2022). Future research should incorporate multi-level comparisons of sexual orientation and examine how stigmatization affects positive body image in sexual minority groups across cultural contexts. Multiple

regression analyses reveal intersectional effects of gender, race, and cultural background (Brady et al., 2017) and gender, nationality, and sexual orientation (Almeida et al., 2022) on body image. Future research should investigate whether socioeconomic status, BMI, and interoception produce differential positive body image levels among individuals sharing the same gender, race, and sexual orientation. Moreover, biological, psychological, and social factors interactively and differentially influence body image. For instance, psychological and sociocultural factors (e.g., negative emotional experiences, perceived thin-ideal pressure) affect postpartum women's body image more than biological factors like weight change (Welsh, 2009), informing both understanding of outcome variables (e.g., how thin-ideal pressure influences eating behavior changes) and scientific development of postpartum care protocols. Therefore, future research should expand demographic variables while attending to sample diversity, identity intersectionality, and comparative and interactive effects of influencing factors.

Second, research should investigate developmental characteristics and clarify occurrence mechanisms of positive body image. Most existing studies employ cross-sectional designs that cannot reveal causal mechanisms. However, positive body image construction is a dynamic, lifelong developmental process (Milton et al., 2021). Research shows girls develop dieting awareness by ages 5-8 (Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2006) and body dissatisfaction by ages 8-11 (Field et al., 2001). Negative body image peaks in early adolescence, stabilizes through adulthood (Nelson et al., 2018), and transitions to positive body image between ages 18-21 (Gattario & Frisén, 2019). Might this transition relate to executive function development? As cognitive flexibility, working memory, and inhibitory control develop, individuals may develop multifaceted body appearance evaluations and inhibit attentional and memory biases toward negative body information. Future research should employ longitudinal designs combined with recall methods, such as having participants recall and narrate body image transformation experiences (Gattario & Frisén, 2019), to further explore age-related characteristics and relationships with executive function, clarifying positive body image development mechanisms.

Third, optimize promotion strategy content and applicability while considering family's preventive role. Current strategies lack consideration of positive body image's complete features, applicability, and family factors. First, existing strategies focus on body appreciation as the core intervention target; both FFI and SCBI aim to enhance cognitive and emotional understanding of body functionality's importance, neglecting other features. For instance, could dot-probe and visual search tasks be used to establish attentional bias toward positive body features, thereby increasing body esteem? Could cognitive and affective empathy training enhance prosocial behavior, which in turn reinforces positive body image? Additionally, current programs lack applicability for men, women over 45, and children under 11 (Guest et al., 2019; Guest et al., 2022). For children under 11, FFI writing tasks may be too difficult, while SCBI mindfulness interventions require attentional qualities that may exceed children's

capacities for conscious, non-judgmental present-moment focus. Furthermore, research should examine strategy applicability and effectiveness for clinical versus non-clinical populations: Are FFI and SCBI suitable for body dysmorphic disorder patients? What is their effectiveness? Could they be combined with cognitive-behavioral therapy to enhance treatment outcomes? Second, microsystem considerations are lacking. Research shows that parenting styles influence children's positive body image development and healthy eating habit acquisition (Carbonneau et al., 2021). Moreover, most parents fail to intervene when aware of body size's impact on children's body image, sometimes even providing negative feedback (Liechty et al., 2016). Thus, parental involvement and positive feedback during childhood are more important than later interventions. Future research should develop comprehensive, applicable, and timely promotion strategies based on complete positive body image features while considering family factors and demographic differences.

Fourth, consider East-West cultural differences to advance Chinese indigenous research on positive body image. Current research predominantly applies Western measurement tools and conclusions without considering cultural differences. Studies reveal substantial cultural differences in positive body image between East and West (Todd & Swami, 2020). Specifically, while Western culture focuses on weight and shape, Chinese culture also emphasizes facial appearance and height (Chen et al., 2006). Additionally, Western culture emphasizes female muscularity (Bozsik et al., 2018), whereas Chinese women pursue slenderness (Stojcic et al., 2020). Furthermore, Jackson et al. (2020) found that Asian media exhibits stronger appearance preferences than Western media. Although the BAS shows good cross-cultural applicability, it cannot capture complete positive body image features or cultural differences. Future research should revise the BAS for Chinese contexts (e.g., adding facial appearance and height evaluation items) or develop new measures to improve explanatory power. Simultaneously, media should be guided to convey positive aesthetic standards that promote broad definitions of beauty. Therefore, future research should construct Chinese indigenous positive body image structures and assessment tools grounded in Chinese cultural contexts, guide the public toward healthy body image, and advance Chinese indigenous research on positive body image.

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