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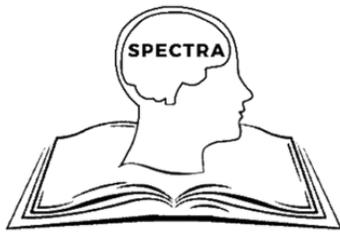
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A Critical Analysis of the Body Positive Movement on Instagram: How Does it Really Impact Body Image?
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A Critical Analysis of the Body Positive Movement on Instagram: How Does it Really Impact Body Image?

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Abstract

Instagram, a photo based social networking site, is one of the most popular forms of social media. The Body Positive Movement campaign surfaced on Instagram in 2012 and aimed to confront the unrealistic expectations and unrepresentative portrayals of women in popular media and advertising. The present study aimed to analyze whether posts that were tagged #bodypositive or #bodypositivity upheld the initial goals of the movement by taking note of the characteristics (including race, sex, gender, and body type) of people that were featured in the top posts of the #bodypositive or #bodypositivity tags. Resultant fieldnotes were coded into the following themes: 1) Hegemonic views of beauty, 2) Homogenous properties of popular posters and posts, 3) Body image centered posting, 4) Crossposting, and 5) Achieving fame and gaining publicity and exposure. It was found that top #bodypositive or #bodypositivity posts often upheld hegemonic beauty standards that are common in popular media. These findings suggest that the Body Positive Movement strayed from its initial goals, thereby failing to provide an outlet for bodies that diverge from the ideals set by popular media. The present study suggests two alternative hashtags-- #effyourbeautystandards and #bodycompassion--that both represent diverse body types and identities while empowering women to be accepting and loving of their bodies. These tags have created a space where the hegemonic views of beauty are questioned and opposed, therefore succeeding in the ways that the Body Positive Movement is failing.

Keywords: Body Positive Movement, Popular media, Hegemonic views of beauty

Social media is becoming an increasingly common source of daily human communication. The Pew Research Center offers social media statistics that highlight Instagram as being one of the most widely used social networking sites, especially amongst 18-24 year olds (2019). Instagram utilizes image-based communication where users upload photos (mainly of themselves), and interact with images by way of commenting and/or liking. Instagram users can follow anyone including their peers, brand accounts, and celebrities. The most followed Instagram accounts include musicians, television stars, clothing brands, and public figures (Instagram, 2020). In order to gain

likes, comments, popularity, and a positive reputation, people often portray idealized versions of themselves on social networking sites (Bryant et al., 2018; Cunningham et al., 2013; Fardouly et al., 2015; Gil-Or et al., 2015). This means that portrayed images are often posed, edited, touched up, and planned in order to present an image of perfection and effortlessness.

Although Instagram's content is user created in the sense that people choose which photos to post, each post is strongly influenced by the norms and standards set by popular culture (Bryant et al., 2018). For example, Instagram culture has placed a great deal of value on appearances, which in turn enforces the

importance of the way one looks ([Barbato & Tiggemann, 2018](#)). In many western cultures, thinness is the idealized female body type. The value placed on thinness is observable in much of popular culture and is perpetuated in media outlets including movies, television, fashion, and social networking sites. A recent study found that along with this thin ideal, female muscularity is also becoming an idealized trend ([Bozsik et al., 2018](#)). This is yet another standard that has been placed upon women: not only do women have to be thin, but also curvy, muscular, and toned ([Alper et al., 2014](#)). Popular media's reinforcement of the thin ideal has many negative consequences for women in particular.

Photo-based social networking sites—like Instagram—lead to body comparisons of peers, celebrities, and lifestyle models ([Brown & Tiggemann, 2016](#)), meaning that people are often making upward comparisons regarding their body. Many studies support that there is a positive correlation between social media use and body concern ([Ahadzadeh et al., 2017](#); [Chock & Kim, 2015](#); [Diedrichs et al., 2015](#); [Tiggemann & Slater, 2013](#)). One study found that Instagram use increased both self-objectification and negative body image ([Fardouly et al., 2018](#)). Not only does Instagram lead women toward viewing themselves as objects, but it also increases their dissatisfaction with their own body - which both impact self worth. Further, viewing celebrity and fitness inspiration (#fitspiration) images were particularly negative for the internalization of body image concerns ([Brown & Tiggemann, 2016](#); [Fardouly et al., 2018](#)). In their 2018 research on body image, Tiggemann et al. found that viewing images that supported the thin ideal led to higher body and facial dissatisfaction compared to the viewing of “average” images. They also found that the more a person is invested in likes, the more they compare themselves, their likes, and their followers to others--which has led to a positive correlation between investment in likes and increased body dissatisfaction ([Tiggemann et al., 2018](#)).

This body dissatisfaction may be upheld through negative self-schema. A self-schema is a belief one holds about themselves that serves as a lens for information related to the self. By looking at body image as connected to self-schema, one study found that using social networking sites may lead to women

forming a self-schema of dissatisfaction about their body image ([Ahadzadeh et al., 2016](#)). This self-schema is caused by the hegemonic culture that repeatedly supports the thin ideal. After seeing these images idealized by popular culture, it is common for women to internalize such standards.

The Body Positive Movement surfaced in 2012 to counter the unrealistic beauty expectations and unrepresentative portrayals of women in popular media and advertising ([Sastre, 2014](#)). Because of the high expectations for appearances on Instagram, popular posts were full of idealized beauty and promoted the thin ideal. The body positive hashtag emerged as a space where people could share their unfiltered bodies and receive love and acceptance instead of the scrutiny of mainstream culture. #Effyourbeautystandards (4 million posts), which was started in 2013, and #bodycompassion (1.9 million posts), both stand for similar views but are significantly less popular than #bodypositive and #bodypositivity.

The fitness inspiration posting trend, often seen on Instagram as #fitspiration or #fitspo, are tagged on posts that encourage exercise and dieting or embody the fitness lifestyle. These tags have become widely popular on Instagram, with over 19 million posts.

Since the Body Positivity Movement, the success of the movement is questionable since recent studies suggest body image concerns are still common amongst social media users ([Cohen et al., 2017](#)). These contradictions informed the research questions for the current study: 1) Did the Body Positive Movement create a space where idealized bodies are not at the forefront? 2) Is the movement holding up its initial push for reformation? Findings of past research studies on Instagram and body image informed the hypothesis that the Body Positive Movement was falling short in its efforts to combat the thin ideal and unrealistic beauty standards.

As a long-term social media nonuser, research done on the Body Positivity Movement started from a place of little prior knowledge. As an outsider to social media, there were few preconceived ideas about the movement before research began. This naïveté appears to be a rarity as 37% of all American adults use Instagram. Due to the popularity of the site, it is uncommon to experience--let alone study--its culture from an uninformed perspective. The objective of the current research was to utilize this lack of prior

knowledge to analyze individual posts to obtain a rich understanding about how Instagram has reinforced, challenged, or nuanced body positive culture.

Methods

Fieldwork: The methodological approach of the present study allowed for a common--and popular--scene to be thoughtfully analyzed through the eyes of an outside observer to whom everything is new, thereby causing nothing to be viewed as “normal.” As Tracy explains, “qualitative research is especially well suited for accessing tacit, taken-for-granted, intuitive understandings of culture,” (Tracy, 2020, p. 7). With over 13 million posts, the #bodypositive hashtag is a popular online destination, and many users likely have tacit knowledge of its culture. When things or places become common, they are often overlooked and normalized. A qualitative analysis of body positive hashtags on Instagram facilitated a holistic understanding of a culture that is often unobserved and provided the opportunity to observe participants as they interact in the field.

By taking on the role of a complete witness, all data was collected by way of unobtrusive Instagram observations. Because of this, Instagram users were unaware that their posts were being studied. Each photo studied was posted on a public domain and usernames were not recorded to protect the privacy of the owners of the posts being examined.

The body positivity and body positive hashtags are where most time was spent in the field observing trends and individual top posts. Fieldwork in these two hashtags included analyzing individual posts by taking note of 1) the photo and its characteristics, 2) the other tags on the post, 3) the number of likes the photo received, and 4) the poster’s Instagram page. Noting specifics concerning individual photos yielded data regarding people in the photos (including their race, sex, body type, and gender) and the circumstance of the photo (including where the photo was taken, what else was in the photo, and the purpose/meaning of the photo). Looking into each hashtag that a person included in their caption or in a comment on their photo provided data regarding cross posting activities and led to information about related hashtags while providing more background knowledge on the photo and poster. The number of likes was taken into consideration as to understand the popularity of the poster and how well

received the post was. Examining the account of the poster provided in depth information on their background, the types of posts they generate, their following, their popularity, and their general aesthetic. #Bodypositive and #bodypositivity were further observed for their general climate by looking anywhere from 50-150 posts at a given time in order to find common themes. These processes were repeated until saturation occurred so generalizations regarding the fieldsite as a whole could be made accurately. Although generalizations were made, the majority of research looked into individual posts and pages.

Alternative fieldsites on Instagram included the fitspiration and fitspo hashtags along with #effyourbeautystandards and #bodycompassion. Each alternative tag was researched in order to gain a deeper understanding of the scope of body-related hashtags. These tags were analyzed similarly to the #bodypositivity and #bodypositive fieldsites in order to foster a complete understanding. During research, deep analysis of individual photos were more commonly made on the #effyourbeautystandards and #bodycompassion tags compared to the #fitspiration and #fitspo hashtags due to their more complex nature.

Data Analyzing Procedures: Data was analyzed by way of constant comparative analysis. Codes were continually updated and revised in order to explain each new piece of emergent data in the most meaningful way (Tracy, 2020).

Initial fieldnotes collected from Instagram hashtags (#bodypositive, #bodypositivity, #fitspiration, #fitspo, #effyourbeautystandards, and #bodycompassion) were transcribed and condensed for preciseness. Fieldnotes were then reviewed and reorganized in order to detect words that were repeated throughout, which were then highlighted to produce first level codes. 30 pages of fieldnotes yielded 50 first level codes. Each set of hashtags (bodypositive/bodypositivity, fitspo/fitspiration, and bodycompassion/effyourbeautystandards) were separately coded in order to find recurring themes so that comparisons between hashtags could be made. As the focus of the current study is on #bodypositivity and #bodypositive, the majority of data was retrieved from these hashtags.

Prominent reoccurring first level codes for #bodypositivity and #bodypositive included: popularity, thinness, idealization, predominance, and

body-centered. Emergent first level codes from #bodypositivity and #bodypositive were then analyzed for common subjects and were categorized by theme, which generated five second level codes. These themes included: 1) Hegemonic views of beauty, 2) Homogenous properties of popular posters and posts, 3) Body image centered posting, 4) Crossposting, and 5) Achieving fame and gaining publicity and exposure.

First level codes from #fitspiration and #fitspo included: thinness, muscular, toned, lifestyle, promotion, objectification, and idealized. These codes were then categorized by theme and produced the second level codes: 1) Promoting weight loss and thinness, 2) Homogony of posters and posts, and 3) Promotion of lifestyle.

First level codes from #bodycompassion and #effyourbeautystandards were: self-love, positivity, diversity, self-esteem, accepting, honest, personality, proud, and bold. These codes produced the second level themes: 1) Person-centered sharing, 2) Realistic and honest content, and 3) Combatting unrealistic ideals.

Results

After spending over twenty hours researching the hashtags body positive or body positivity, common posting themes emerged. As predicted, findings suggest that the mission of the Body Positive Movement on Instagram has been obstructed.

Hegemonic Views of Beauty: Hegemonic beauty ideals are highly featured on #bodypositive and #bodypositivity. Whether a post supported the dominant beauty archetype depended on the sex, gender identity, body size, ability, race, and age of the person in the photo. Women were overwhelmingly featured on #bodypositive and #bodypositivity, accounting for nearly 90% of all observed posts. Further, the culturally dominant gender identity (cisgender) was most often represented on the top posts of these hashtags. Self-reported transgender males or females made up of less than twenty posts.

The most common body type pictured on the top posts of #bodypositivity and #bodypositive hashtag was thin. Women between the (estimated) sizes of 0-4 showed up on the hashtags more frequently than plus sized women or women of any other body size. On any given day, it was found that half of posts were photos of women between these (small) sizes. Further, many

of these posts were of women with little to no body fat. Muscular and toned frames were especially popular compared to the ectomorph body type (naturally lean with little to no fat or muscle). When large or plus sized (size 12-24) women were featured in top posts, they often met other United States beauty standards. These women rarely had excessive body fat and were often toned, but had a larger and curvier body type. Idealized beauty standards such as whiteness, tanned skin, and blonde hair were all common on body positive hashtags. Nearly 70% of observed popular posts from #bodypositive and #bodypositivity were of white women. Almost all observed photos were of women who appeared to be between the ages of 18 and 35. Only seven of the hundreds of photos observed were of elderly women. Further, data concludes that able-bodied posters were by far the majority, as less than thirty posters that had a disability, were physically marked, or were visibly ill could be identified.

Body-Centered: Posts on #bodypositivity and #bodypositive are most commonly of people, and the focus of these images is mainly on the body of the person posing for the photo. Only 10% of photos on these hashtags were faces, foods, objects, or quotes. Although some posts are focused on outfits and looking good in clothes, many photos are of the body in underwear, lingerie, or bikinis, some even without faces. Nearly 30% of photos were of thin women in sexualizing positions such as bending over and taking a photo of their backside or posing erotically in underwear. When photos were not sexual--but instead more confident or joyful--most plus sized or larger women were the focal point. Another relevant pattern in data supported that when plus sized women did post sexualized photos, they often had more than 1,000 followers.

Fame and Popularity: Top posts of #bodypositivity and #bodypositive were comprised of both average posters and lifestyle posters. The latter category included popular bloggers, models, content creators, influencers, and brand ambassadors. While some accounts that used either of the tags embodied the meaning of the movement in their posts, such as a poster who aimed to increase women's confidence or was a female empowerment blogger, others in no way demonstrated the views of the tags, often tagging many women oriented hashtags without supporting the hashtag's values in the post.

Cross-Posting: As mentioned previously, posts that were tagged #bodypositive or #bodypositivity often used other tags as well. One of the most common hashtags that was used alongside body positive hashtags was #fitspiration. Cross-posted (#bodypositive and #fitspiration) images were often from fitness lifestyle blogs or models and encouraged working toward a fit lifestyle.

Fitness Inspiration Hashtags: Research on #fitspiration and #fitspo revealed posting themes of the two tags. Images that were tagged with these hashtags were most often of muscular and toned individuals—both male and female, but more commonly female. Similar to the posts on #bodypositive and #bodypositivity, fitness inspiration posts upheld people with privilege in our society as top posts displayed mainly able bodied, young, white individuals. Further, most posts were body focused. Some photos were only of one's body with their face cut out or just of a person's backside, while the majority were selfies of their face and body. Total lifestyle promotion was common on these tags as posters often broadcasted all aspects of their life including the foods they eat, their workout regimens, and their body and weight. Many posters tagged #fitspiration or #fitspo in each of their posts as every image on their page is related to a fitness lifestyle. Promotional posts for workout clothes, nutrition brands, and fitness gear were common on the tags as they are both popular communities for fitness bloggers and individuals alike.

Body Compassion and Eff Your Beauty Standards Hashtags: #Bodycompassion and #Effyourbeautystandards are two lesser-known (6,000 posts combined) hashtags that relate to the initial goals of the Body Positivity Movement. During research on these hashtags, common themes emerged. First, photos on #effyourbeautystandards and #bodycompassion are person focused instead of body centered. Common posts include: photos of just a person's face, empowering quotes, body image art, and food. The majority of posts are entire body images that focus on bold, fun outfits that the posters feel empowered and happy wearing. Compared to #bodypositive and #fitspiration tags, photos of people are much less objectifying and instead convey confidence. Posts on these two hashtags often convey realistic bodies and are representative of a diverse community. Women openly expose their stretch marks, cellulite, and fat in

photos. Posts are reflective of many races, genders, cultures, body types, and sexual orientations. Although white women are still the majority, others are represented at higher volumes than any other researched hashtag. These hashtags are very cohesive and stay true to their meaning, as all posts truly seem to work toward empowerment. Although promotions are still present in the top posts of #effyourbeautystandards and #bodycompassion, they are mainly related to the content of the hashtags (plus size clothing brands) and therefore still support the goals of the hashtag.

Discussion

Findings regarding the prominence of hegemonic views of beauty in the top #bodypositivity and #bodypositive hashtags support that the Body Positive Movement is lacking inclusivity. First, only one prominent gender appeared on body positive hashtags. Female bodies were most prevalent in the #bodypositive and #bodypositivity hashtags. As unrealistic beauty standards and expectations are especially enforced for women, it was not a surprise that females would be the majority within these hashtags. Men were rarely featured in both top and recent posts of the hashtags despite the prominent body ideals that are present for males as well as women. Similarly, transgender males or females were not represented on these hashtags despite possibly facing difficulties with their body image for not aligning with the idealized norms. Second, thinness was a common theme of the top posts of #bodypositive and #bodypositivity. Despite the Body Positive Movement's goals of being a place where hegemonic beauty standards were ignored, many posts supported the thin ideal. This suggests that the Body Positive Movement is straying from its initial goals and no longer offers a safe space where users can move away from standards of thinness. Third, many top posts of the body positivity movement hashtags were representative of the privileged people in our society. As mentioned, top posters were overwhelmingly white, young, and cisgendered—all people who are institutionally privileged in the United States. One reason that many ages are not represented on #bodypositive and #bodypositivity could be due to older people being present on Instagram as a whole (Pew Research, 2019). Another reason could be that in

our culture, becoming old is seen as unfavorable leading to the stigmatization of wrinkles and other signs of aging. Youthfulness, on the other hand, has been a long-standing ideal and many posts on the hashtags upheld this beauty standard by overwhelmingly featuring youthful women. Another form of privilege that was supported by observing #bodypositive and #bodypositivity images was implied wealth. Symbols of wealth—including name brand clothing, lavish products, large houses, and extravagant activities—appeared in many posts.

Findings suggest that most top posts of body positive hashtags are body-centered. Being so body-oriented still stresses the significance of one's body image instead of moving away from the importance of appearances. This focus that Instagram places on appearances is one cause of women's negative body image ([Ahadzadeh et al., 2017](#); [Chock & Kim, 2015](#); [Diedrichs et al., 2015](#); [Tiggemann & Slater, 2013](#)), so it is interesting that the majority of posts on this counter culture are body-centric.

Body sexualization was a prevalent theme that arose from body positive hashtags. Past research found that people post sexualized photos on Instagram to gain followers and likes, and to bring attention to themselves ([Horan & Ramsey, 2018](#)). The positive correlation between Instagram use and self-objectification implies that the inherent culture of Instagram may facilitate self-objectification ([Fardouly et al., 2018](#)). While sexualization wouldn't be surprising to encounter on top posts of Instagram as a whole, sexualization showing up on body positive hashtags implies that the general theme has shifted from acceptance of all bodies to the emphasis of beauty and sexiness.

Findings also suggest that cross-posting may be one reason that the Body Positive Movement no longer supports the meaning behind its creation. It seems that the reason for using so many different hashtags when the tags are unrelated to the true message of the photo is to gain followers and exposure. As women are the main users of the hashtags, their target audience can be reached easily. This leads to hashtags moving away from their true message as posters are using them on their posts that don't align with the hashtag's identity. For example, a size 00 fashion model or fitness blogger likely fits into idealized norms of beauty, and therefore is not challenging beauty standards; posts such as these

instead *perpetuate* beauty standards in a community whose goal was to act as an antithesis to the norm. One makeup and women's lifestyle brand took one photo shoot of 5 plus sized models in bikinis and posted the photos from the same shoot over a long period of time, while all other photos were of thin white women or product images. It seems that some brands are using the #bodypositive and #bodypositivity hashtags to simply gain followers and to appear inclusive without putting the work in. Typical users (who are not famous or striving for fame) are often using movement as intended, but famous users or those working toward fame use the hashtags mainly to gain more views. This leads to top posts being oversaturated with idealized women, causing them to be no different from popular posts on Instagram as a whole.

Negative body image is further perpetuated on #fitspiration and #fitspo hashtags. It was a trend for people to look sad or disappointed in their before photos and empowered in their after photos, which supports the idea that being thin makes people happy. In this way, many posts that tagged #fitspiration or #fitspo glamorized weight loss. As findings suggest that both thin and muscular body types were highly featured on #bodypositive, #bodypositivity, #fitspiration, and #fitspo, top posts suggest that our culture is moving toward the idealization of thinness and muscularity: thereby holding women's bodies to even higher standards.

The fitness inspiration hashtags are used to encourage people to be thin, muscular, and to take part in the fitness lifestyle, but many body types and people are left out. Although muscularity was most often promoted, weight loss was also endorsed in many ways. "Inspirational" quotes such as, "Be stronger than your excuse," "Torn between wanting a snack and looking like a snack," "My hobbies include eating then complaining I'm getting fat," "You won't get the ass you want by sitting on it," and, "Do it for looking in the mirror and feeling good about what you see," (#Fitspiration) encouraged people to work out and to stop putting off their fitness goals. Each of these quotes has a common theme that people need to worry about their weight. Some of these quotes even suggest that one cannot be beautiful if they are overweight. Before and after images show the impact of exercise and dieting on one's body and self-esteem. While individual posts that tag #fitspiration may truly be

inspirational posts about their own success, many top posts are simply images of thin, muscular, women in workout gear. At which point one may wonder, is this inspiring me to be fit or inspiring me to be dissatisfied with my own body?

Due to cross posting between #fitspiration, #fitspo, #bodypositive, #bodypositivity, the top body positive posts reflect goals from the fitspiration movement: they encourage women to diet and exercise (change their appearance) instead of accepting their body for what it is. As mentioned previously, research shows that #fitspiration images in particular lead to negative body image (Fardouly et al., 2018). The Body Positive Movement, whose goal was to improve women's body image, now reflects the images that lead to negative body image due to cross-posting behavior.

While it appears that #bodypositivity and #bodypositive have been oversaturated with idealistic views, #bodycompassion and #effyourbeautystandards have yet to be taken over by the hegemonic culture and provide a strong counter to the thin ideal and body centered focus that Instagram encourages. For these reasons, #bodycompassion and #effyourbeautystandards successfully embody the powerful goals of the Body Positivity Movement, while making improvements such as the addition of empowerment and representation. Body compassion inspires the love and acceptance of one's body and appreciates differences. Tylka et al. (2015) define body compassion as showing "kindness and nonjudgmental understanding" for one's own body. In their research, they found that having body compassion decreases the internalization of thinness related pressures and improves one's body image. Body compassion is represented in both #effyourbeautystandards and #bodycompassion as the tags both empower and support women to treat themselves with respect, love, and acceptance. The embodiment of these values suggests that viewing these images may aid in counteracting the destructive hegemonic views of beauty (Tylka et al., 2015).

#Effyourbeautystandards encourages people to question beauty ideals and to empower people to love themselves. Further, there were many mentions of mental health and body image, which contributes to an open discussion of an otherwise taboo subject. These hashtags are attempting to normalize public displays of realistic emotions and bodies, therefore moving away

from the idealization and extreme self-presentation that occurs on Instagram.

Although the Body Positive Movement started off as a community to combat idealized beauty standards such as the thin ideal, research suggests that in gaining popularity, it has moved away from its true intentions and goals. Influencers, brands, bloggers, and celebrities using the hashtag to gain more following and cross-tagging from fitspiration has turned #bodypositive and #bodypositivity into pages where the thin ideal is upheld. Although some posts are still true to the initial goals of the movement, the majority of posts are not. Representation of different cultures, races, gender identities, sexual orientations, and abilities are lacking, as many types of people are left out of the tags. Further, popular posts on these hashtags place focus on women's bodies instead of focusing on other qualities.

Future research could be improved by increasing participation in the field, therefore interacting with posters and followers of the researched hashtags. Interviewing participants who use Instagram would also provide further and deeper understanding of the Body Positivity Movement, as the movement's impact on individuals could be discussed. Participants could also be asked to analyze the top posts of body positive hashtags, which could provide information on how Instagram users make sense of the movement.

The present research discusses which online communities promote healthy views of one's body and which do not. By providing a rich description of the inequities and successes of different body related movements on Instagram, this research contributes to the creation of a more constructive body image culture.

Conclusion

The Body Positive Movement (#bodypositive and #bodypositivity) went from being a somewhat obscure hashtag in 2012 to becoming a popularized concept with over thirteen million posts in 2020. The Body Positive Movement's goals have been hindered by the large number of posts that uphold the thin ideal, therefore not challenging unrealistic mainstream norms and standards of beauty. The hashtags of the Body Positive Movement lack diversity, as the majority of top posts represent able-bodied, young, and white women. Furthermore, these hashtags have been taken over by the mainstream culture, which has moved the

tags away from their initial intentions and goals.

#Bodycompassion and #effyourbeautystandards are both body-image related tags that work toward empowering women to be accepting and loving of their bodies. These tags have created a space where the hegemonic views of beauty are questioned and opposed; therefore, succeeding in the ways that the Body Positive Movement failed.

Instagram enforces self-presentation and idealistic beauty through its image-based platform (Barbato & Tiggemann, 2018). Since the culture of Instagram has proven to be unhealthy for one's body image and mental health, it is important to find a space where one feels accepted and appreciated (Ahadzadeh et al., 2017; Chock & Kim, 2015; Diedrichs et al., 2015; Tiggemann & Slater, 2013).

Both #bodycompassion and #effyourbeautystandards are spaces where destructive values, thinness related pressures, and damaging expectations are boldly disregarded and where empowerment and body confidence thrive. These tags are safe spaces where those who diverge from the ideal are free to be themselves without filtering out "flaws." If more Instagram users begin following and standing for the values that are upheld on these tags, Instagram may become a healthier and more inclusive environment.

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