



# Family and Support Factors and Positive Body Image

Victoria Gunnufson  
Dr. Elizabeth Russell

## Introduction

### Background

- Messages from loved ones may foster positive body image
  - Negative correlation between positive body image and restrictive eating messages received from caregivers (Kroon Van Diest & Tylka, 2010)
  - Positive correlation between positive body image and body acceptance from others (Avalos & Tylka, 2006)
- More research needed on positive body image (Avalos & Tylka, 2006; Kroon Van Diest & Tylka, 2010; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015)

### The Current Project

- The present study aims to combine these ideas to determine if caregiver eating messages and perceived body acceptance by others relate to positive body image
- We hypothesized that women who perceive their bodies as being accepted by others would have higher body appreciation
- We hypothesized that restricting and critical eating messages from a caregiver would negatively relate to women's body appreciation

## Methods

### Participants

- 51 female students recruited through psychology research board for extra credit
- Mean age of 19.5 ( $SD = 1.46$ ), 88.5% European American/White

### Measures

#### Caregiver Eating Messages Scale (Kroon Van Diest & Tylka, 2010)

- Pressure to Eat subscale: five items on a scale from 1 to 6, higher numbers indicating more pressure to eat when not hungry
- Restrictive Eating Messages subscale: five items on a scale from 1 to 6, higher numbers indicating more comments on eating too much

#### Body Acceptance by Others Scale (Avalos & Tylka, 2006)

- 10 items on a scale from 1 to 5, higher numbers indicating more acceptance; two each to indicate support from friends, family, dating partners, media, and society

#### Body Appreciation Scale-2 (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015)

- 10 items on a scale from 1 to 5, higher numbers indicating higher appreciation of body

## Results

- Means and standard deviations in Table 1
- Correlations between the variables in Table 2
- Correlations between Body Appreciation and the five Body Acceptance from Others subscales were significant and positive, with the weakest significant correlation being Partners ( $r = -.34, p = .02$ ) and the strongest being Media ( $r = -.59, p < .001$ )
- Restrictive Eating Messages were negatively related to Body Appreciation ( $r = -.45, p = .001$ )
- Pressure to Eat was not significantly related to Body Appreciation ( $r = .06, p = .68$ )

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

	M	SD
Body Acceptance from Friends	4.22	0.69
Body Acceptance from Family	3.85	0.79
Body Acceptance from Partners	4.08	0.91
Body Acceptance from Media	2.59	0.82
Body Acceptance from Society	3.31	0.85
Pressure to Eat	3.27	0.88
Restrictive Eating Messages	2.14	0.95
Body Appreciation	3.57	0.65

Table 2: Correlations

	Body Acceptance from Friends	Body Acceptance from Family	Body Acceptance from Partners	Body Acceptance from Media	Body Acceptance from Society	Pressure to Eat	Restrictive Eating Messages
Body Acceptance from Family	.31	--					
Body Acceptance from Partners	.37	.32	--				
Body Acceptance from Media	.29	.51	.17	--			
Body Acceptance from Society	.34	.47	.27	.59	--		
Pressure to Eat	-.09	.11	-.12	.18	.15	--	
Restrictive Eating Messages	-.33	-.58	-.14	-.33	-.56	.24	--
Body Appreciation	.44	.45	.34	.59	.56	.06	-.45

## Conclusions

### Discussion

- The largest positive correlation was between Body Acceptance from Media and Body Appreciation. This may be because of the major role media plays in our everyday lives.
- The correlation between Body Acceptance from Society and Body Appreciation was the second largest. Messages from society, too, may be especially pervasive in our everyday lives.
- Body Acceptance from Family, Friends, and Dating Partners followed in size, respectively. These may be smaller because family, friends, and dating partners may not be as transparent about the level of acceptance about someone else's body.
- The correlation between Restrictive Eating Messages and Body Appreciation was negative. This may be because receiving restrictive eating messages about food may create insecurities and lower self-confidence about body image.
- There was little correlation between Pressure to Eat and Body Appreciation. This may be because these messages are more related to nutrition choices as opposed to self-image.

### Implications

- These results could be used to help identify sources of body image issues.
- These results could be used in interventions for families with a child who has an eating disorder to change the attitudes and messages given by the caregivers and others.

### Future research

- A limitation of this study was that the sample was limited to college students with little variation in age and ethnicity. A more diverse sample would be helpful.
- Future research could focus on identifying additional factors that may influence positive body image.

## References

- Kroon Van Diest, A. M., & Tylka, T. L. (2010) The Caregiver Eating Messages Scale: Development and psychometric investigation. *Body Image, 7*, 317-326.
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