

ARTICLE

**SCHOOL PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND BODY IMAGE: A DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS BASED ON THE BRAZILIAN NATIONAL COMMON CURRICULUM BASE**

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**ABSTRACT:** This study aims to analyze interfaces between School Physical Education, body image and National Common Curricular Base, from the critical analysis of this document. This is a qualitative and exploratory research by document analysis, whose semantic categorical content analysis was used for data analysis. Considering the BNCC, the absence of the term “body image” stands out, which represents that the document does not epistemologically delineate the construct. Considering only the specific parts related to the stages of Basic Education and Physical Education, 75 excerpts were found in the document that, although not directly mentioning the term body image, are related to the construct. These were selected, analyzed and grouped into four categories: (i) Presentation, Introduction and Structure of the BNCC; (ii) Early Childhood Education; (iii) Elementary School; (iv) High School. The categories listed allow the understanding of “if” and “how” the document presents possibilities to subsidize the insertion of the theme of body image in Physical Education classes. The main results show that there are different passages in the main sections of interest of BNCC that dialogue with body image in the context of School Physical Education. However, these are presented in a restricted way, so it is possible to say that the BNCC is a limited document in relation to a theme of such complexity in human education as the one analyzed in this study. Therefore, it is of fundamental importance that teachers, especially of Physical Education, are aware of body image, its implications in the school environment and its importance in the student’s development.

**Keywords:** Education, Embodiment, Body Identity, Sociocultural Theory, Schoolchildren.

**EDUCAÇÃO FÍSICA ESCOLAR E IMAGEM CORPORAL: UMA ANÁLISE DOCUMENTAL A PARTIR DA BASE NACIONAL COMUM CURRICULAR**

**RESUMO:** Este estudo objetiva analisar as interfaces entre a Educação Física Escolar, a imagem corporal e a Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC), a partir da análise crítica desse documento. Trata-se de uma pesquisa qualitativa e exploratória por análise documental, cuja análise de conteúdo categorial semântica foi utilizada para a análise de dados. Considerando a BNCC, destaca-se a ausência do termo

“imagem corporal”, o que representa que o documento não demarca epistemologicamente o construto. Considerando somente as partes específicas relacionadas às etapas da Educação Básica e à Educação Física, foram encontrados 75 trechos no documento que, embora não citem diretamente o termo imagem corporal, têm relação com o construto. Esses excertos foram selecionados, analisados e agrupados em quatro categorias: (i) Apresentação, Introdução e Estrutura da BNCC; (ii) Educação Infantil; (iii) Ensino Fundamental; (iv) Ensino Médio. As categorias elencadas permitem a compreensão do “se” e “como” o documento apresenta possibilidades de subsídio para a inserção da temática da imagem corporal nas aulas de Educação Física. Os principais resultados evidenciam que há diferentes trechos nas principais seções de interesse da BNCC que dialogam com a imagem corporal no contexto da Educação Física Escolar; todavia, eles são apresentados de forma tímida e restrita, de modo ser possível afirmar que a BNCC é um documento limitado em relação a uma temática de tamanha complexidade na formação humana quanto a analisada neste estudo. Portanto, é de fundamental importância que professores(as), sobretudo, de Educação Física, estejam atentos à imagem corporal, suas implicações no ambiente escolar e sua importância no desenvolvimento do(a) aluno(a).

**Palavras-chave:** Educação, Corporeidade, Identidade Corporal, Teoria Sociocultural, Escolares.

## **EDUCACIÓN FÍSICA ESCOLAR E IMAGEN CORPORAL: UN ANÁLISIS DOCUMENTAL A PARTIR DE LA BASE NACIONAL COMÚN CURRICULAR**

**RESUMEN:** Este estudio tiene como objetivo analizar interfaces entre la Educación Física Escolar, imagen corporal y Base Nacional Común Curricular (BNCC), a partir del análisis crítico de este documento. Se trata de una investigación cualitativa y exploratoria por análisis documental, cuyo análisis de contenido categorial semántico fue utilizado para el análisis de datos. Considerando la BNCC, se destaca la ausencia del término “imagen corporal”, lo que representa que el documento no demarca epistemológicamente el constructo. Considerando solamente las partes específicas relacionadas a las etapas de la Educación Básica y a la Educación Física, fueron encontrados 75 fragmentos en el documento que, aunque no citen directamente el término imagen corporal, poseen relación con el constructo. Estos fueron seleccionados, analizados y agrupados en cuatro categorías: (i) Presentación, Introducción y Estructura de la BNCC; (ii) Educación Infantil; (iii) Enseñanza Fundamental; (iv) Enseñanza Media. Las categorías enumeradas permiten la comprensión del “si” y “como” el documento presenta posibilidades de subsidio para la inserción de la temática de la imagen corporal en las clases de Educación Física. Los principales resultados evidencian que hay diferentes fragmentos en las principales secciones de interés de la BNCC que dialogan con la imagen corporal en el contexto de la Educación Física Escolar. Sin embargo, estos son presentados de forma tímida y estricta, de modo que sea posible afirmar que la BNCC es un documento limitado en relación a una temática de tamaña complejidad en la formación humana como la analizada en este estudio. Por lo tanto, es de fundamental importancia que profesores(as), sobre todo, de Educación Física, estén atentos a la imagen corporal, sus implicaciones en el ambiente escolar y su importancia en el desarrollo del estudiante.

**Palabras clave:** Educación, Corporeidad, Identidad Corporal, Teoría Sociocultural, Escolares.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The National Common Curricular Base (BNCC, Portuguese: Base Nacional Comum Curricular) is the official document that guides the Basic Education curriculum in the Federative Republic of Brazil (Brasil, 2018). Given its undeniable importance, it must be analyzed through multiple lenses and theoretical frameworks—curricular, pedagogical, educational, and comparative—particularly in

relation to previous legislation and parameterizing documents (Neira, 2018b).

Studies emerging from different fields of knowledge have examined this document and its respective curricular components (Emilio & Abdalla, 2021; Novaes, Triani & Telles, 2020; Silva, 2018). One example is Languages (Rodrigues, 2016; Santos & Fuzii, 2019), which is responsible for providing students with various forms of communication, whether verbal, bodily, visual, auditory, or digital. In this area, one of the components that constitutes it, and will be highlighted in this research, is Physical Education (Neira, 2018b; Paes Neto, Dias & Santo, 2021; Souza *et al.*, 2019).

Physical Education can be understood, according to the BNCC, as a curricular component that thematizes bodily practices in their most varied forms, permeated by a sociocultural construction. When considering the language of the body as the main expressive manifestation of the subject (Le Breton, 2012), this curricular component offers the student the opportunity to express and (re)create meanings and significances through movement. Adjacent to this development, representations of oneself, of the other, and of the world result from the subject's engagement in the world (Merleau-Ponty, 2018). In this process, different fundamental questions, such as one's singularities and identification with them, may emerge in such a way as to result in the formation of a whole, integrated, and positive subject (Tavares, 2003). Thus, this curricular component presents essential particularities for the development of the student's body identity throughout the stages of Basic Education.

Body identity is the elementary basis for the formation of body image (Tavares, 2003), understood in this study as the mental representation of one's own body (Schilder, 1981). Body image can be classified into two dimensions: perceptual and attitudinal. The first refers to the accuracy of body size, shape, and weight, while the second refers to emotions, beliefs, thoughts, and behaviors related to the body (Cash & Pruzinsky, 2002; Ferreira, Castro & Morgado, 2014). The development of body image throughout life is dynamic, capable of being modified by bodily experiences and existing sociocultural influences (Tavares, 2003; Tavares, 2007; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015).

The sociocultural theory of body image originally postulated the existence of three main factors that influence the way the subject perceives themselves: parents, peers, and media. However, more recently, a fourth factor has been included, which relates to other people who are also significant in sociocultural influences, that is, people who, depending on the context, can influence the way the individual represents themselves—for example: teachers in the school environment (Schaefer *et al.*, 2017).

The presented factors can influence body image mainly through two mechanisms: internalization of the beauty ideal and social comparison. In this regard, social contexts such as the school are central spaces of action, in which teachers must be attentive to issues related to the body, with the objective of fostering a school culture that facilitates the development of a positive body image (Garbett *et al.*, 2021; Paxton & Damiano, 2017; Yager *et al.*, 2013), this being comprehended one's attitudes of love, respect, care, and protection towards their own body and physical appearance (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015).

The emphasis placed on the school environment is particularly important since different problems associated with negative body image have been observed in children (Smolak, 2012; Yager *et al.*, 2013). Paxton and Damiano (2017) indicate that children as young as 3 years old may already show weight bias, associating positive characteristics with figures presented to them with smaller body dimensions and negative characteristics with larger figures. Among boys aged 5 to 8, the findings of Drummond (2012) point out that they associate speed, strength, and muscularity with leaner bodies, and similar results are presented in Ricciardelli's (2012) study. Between ages 8 and 10, both boys and girls

already compare their bodies and appearance with those of their peers (Tatangelo & Ricciardelli, 2017). There are also reports that 47% to 50% of children aged 6 to 11 present body dissatisfaction (Smolak, 2012). Altogether, these findings indicate that childhood is a critical period for the development of negative characteristics of body image, making it essential to address this topic pedagogically at school.

In adolescents, the findings are no different, since this population is also considered at risk for the development of negative body image (Miranda *et al.*, 2014). There are reports that around 70% of girls and 45% of boys would like to change their body weight and shape (Smolak, 2012). Furthermore, adolescence is a sensitive and important period for the development of body image, in which body dissatisfaction commonly increases throughout this stage and only stabilizes in adulthood (Wang *et al.*, 2019). In the study by Bornioli *et al.* (2019), in a population-based sample, a causal relationship was found between body dissatisfaction and health-harming behaviors (smoking, alcohol consumption, eating disorders, among others). The high prevalence of body dissatisfaction in adolescents is a reality in different population groups. In the study by Martins and Petroski (2015), one in four girls showed a high prevalence of body dissatisfaction.

In addition to all the problems exposed, changes in body image can impact school performance, as advocated by Li, Rukavina & Wright (2012) and Mellin *et al.* (2002). In this sense, the school environment should focus special attention on issues involving body image, especially in the space of School Physical Education, which has the body and movement as its main foci of action. An important step toward this goal is the support of official national base documents, such as the BNCC, in the presentation and thematization of body image as a learning objective in Basic Education. Especially in the area of School Physical Education—which may constitute an opportune space for the development of healthy and positive relationships with one's own body—content related to body image is essential to support the pedagogical practice of the Physical Education teacher with a focus on the positive development of students' body image (Almeida *et al.*, 2023). This is especially relevant since recent theories in School Physical Education, such as critical and post-critical theories (Bossle, Prodóximo & Maldonado, 2023; Neira, 2018a), point to an epistemological framework leaned towards the concepts of embodiment, body consciousness, and bodily practices, distancing themselves from the analysis of body image. This constitutes an important gap in knowledge of this theme within the pedagogical field of Physical Education.

It is also worth noting that the way the BNCC is organized and characterized has already been widely discussed in the literature (Neira, 2018b), so describing it would not bring new information. However, exploring this document from the perspective of a construct that, to the best of our knowledge, has not yet been explored is significantly important. This article seeks to encourage educators from various disciplines, particularly those in School Physical Education, to consider not only the interface between body image and school-based Physical Education, but also the extent to which the BNCC is responsive to and supportive of this timely and highly relevant topic. Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the intersections between School Physical Education, body image, and the BNCC through a critical analysis of the document.

## METHODS

This study is a qualitative and exploratory investigation conducted through document analysis. The process, the comprehension, and the meaning are the focus of qualitative studies (Mattar &

Ramos, 2021). Document analyses are valuable in the field of Education, particularly in studies aiming to understand new aspects of a theme or problem (Lüdke & André, 2022).

Document analysis is also recommended when certain documents have not yet been analytically examined or interpreted based on a specific object of study, whether written or not (Marconi & Lakatos, 2017).

A central aspect of this stage is the understanding that the target document of this research carries an important ideological charge for comprehending its constitution. Based on this assumption, it is essential to consider that the BNCC conveys a discourse, and that both the context and the intentionality echoed in its writing will be subjects of analysis (Salge, Oliveira, & Silva, 2021).

## Procedures

The document analysis was based on the conception of Lüdke and André (2022, p. 45), in which the aim is "to identify factual information in documents based on questions or hypotheses of interest." Once this methodological procedure was adopted, the following stages were carried out: characterization of the type of document; data analysis itself; form of data recording; creation of categories; and system enhancement.

Firstly, the document analysis focused on the BNCC, which is characterized as an official, public, and technical document aimed at guiding schools in Brazil in the development of their Political-Pedagogical Projects, the construction of subject area curricula, and the implementation of pedagogical practices for curricular components (Brasil, 2018; Lüdke & André, 2022).

For the data study, content analysis—both categorical and semantic—was employed (Bardin, 2016). This methodological approach consists of a set of techniques for analyzing communications (Bardin, 2016), through which the researcher goes through three stages: pre-analysis, material exploration, and treatment of results, inference, and interpretation. Specifically, in semantic categorical analysis, the researcher directs their attention to the intended meaning of the content present in the objects of investigation. In order to substantiate the data generated and minimize possible biases, this analysis was guided by important criteria such as: mutual exclusion, homogeneity, relevance, objectivity, and productivity (Bardin, 2016).

The recording method of this document analysis considered specific sections of the document that were coherent with the object of study. Sections corresponding to the general aspects that support and guide the document—such as its preface, introduction, the pedagogical foundations of the BNCC (pages 5 to 14), and the stage of Early Childhood Education (pages 35 to 56)—were analyzed, along with the general sections of Elementary Education and the Area of Languages (pages 57 to 66), specific sections on Physical Education (pages 213 to 239), and Secondary Education (pages 461 to 497). All of these sections were evaluated from the perspective of Physical Education and body image.

The characterization of this document, as well as the selection of the analyzed sections, resulted from an extensive and exhaustive reading of the BNCC, with the aim of identifying potential content related to the theme of this research (Lüdke & André, 2022). Since the focus is on the intersections between body image, Physical Education, and the BNCC, issues related to other areas of knowledge were not considered relevant, as they were developed based on different theoretical frameworks, authors, objectives, and specific fields of action.

Regarding the method of data recording, the excerpts resulting from the analysis were compiled to synthesize the emerging data (Lüdke & André, 2022). Initially, 89 excerpts were selected, but

14 of them did not correspond directly to the objectives of this research and were therefore excluded. These excerpts addressed issues related to the possibilities for teachers to approach topics based on the specific school context in which they work.

After exhaustive readings of the specific sections of the BNCC listed in this study, 75 excerpts were selected, of which nine are from the presentation, introduction, and structure of the BNCC; 14 are from Early Childhood Education; 36 from Elementary Education; and 16 from Secondary Education. The selection of excerpts for analysis was based on the chosen sections, aiming to identify interfaces between body image and Physical Education, how these occur, and from which perspective.

In document analyses, arbitrary choices are appropriate, as the objective is to speculate about the ideologies, intentions, and values of the authors of the document (Lüdke & André, 2022). The analysis resulting from such choices must be examined and considered as a new perspective that adds to other analyses of the document (Lüdke & André, 2022).

The creation of categories is the outcome of repeated and systematized readings of the document, which allow for their formulation based on recurring themes or their relevance (Lüdke & André, 2022). It is common for the initial formulation of categories to be grounded in the theoretical frameworks supporting the research, and, throughout the process, to be modified based on new insights derived from the observed reality (Lüdke & André, 2022).

Following the creation of categories, the next stage consisted of system enrichment, in which the researchers dedicated themselves to deepening, expanding, and linking the analysis (Lüdke & André, 2022). Deepening consists of a renewed attempt to analyze the document and uncover new perspectives, increasing understanding and enhancing the analytical scope. Expansion of the field of knowledge involves identifying emerging aspects that require further development. Lastly, linking is the procedure of seeking associations among elements within the material, with the goal of organizing and assigning them to the appropriate categories (Lüdke & André, 2022).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before presenting the categories, one of the results that deserves to be highlighted is the absence of the term body image throughout the entire BNCC. This omission allows for at least two reflections. First, the lack of an explicit mention of body image in the document may be a consequence of its absence in studies related to the field of School Physical Education—possibly characteristic of a still incipient body of work in this area. Second, as a consequence of the current educational scenario. The lack of explicit engagement, thematic inclusion, and deepening of this construction may render its importance invisible, hinder its integration into teaching practice, and, consequently, present itself as a gap in the formation of students in Basic Education.

In line with the perspective of Silva (2022), curricular documents are identity-shaping tools, and the absence of a construct that encompasses perceptions and attitudes toward one's own body, its relationship with the world, and the sociocultural relationships that surround it invites reflection on whether this document aims to shape alienated subjects and identities in the process of developing mental representations of the self.

In light of it, plus the absence of epistemological delineation and deeper exploration of the construct, this research used excerpts from the BNCC that may establish interfaces with content

proposed by body image theory—a procedure similar to that carried out in another documentary analysis study also focused on the BNCC (Mello *et al.*, 2016).

From the analysis of the selected excerpts, four categories emerged: (i) Presentation, Introduction, and Structure of the BNCC – this category groups excerpts from the point of view of body image theory and approach; (ii) Early Childhood Education – includes specific excerpts from the initial stage of Basic Education that mention the importance of self-knowledge for the development of students' identity; (iii) Elementary Education – reveals concerns regarding changes occurring during this phase, concerns about violence against the body, and problematizations of body ideals; (iv) Secondary Education – addresses the development of body image, the fight against body stereotypes, and the application of this knowledge in social life. In short, all categories were grouped based on the proximity of their content to the body image literature.

The categories correspond to sections of the document in such a way that it becomes possible to understand whether and how body image is present in each of them. This organization will allow the reader to grasp where and how each aspect aligns with the dimensions of body image and at which stage of Basic Education. In this sense, the following sections will present tables illustrating some of the statements that most explicitly correspond to the body image literature, with proper references to classical authors in the field who contributed to the development of body image theorization.

Although it is not the primary objective of this research, we believe it is important to make brief considerations about the BNCC and thus establish our perspective on the document. The BNCC has a history that is far from unproblematic and is, in fact, controversial. In its formulation process, the significant anachronistic changes between the second and third versions of the document reveal the influence of international institutions, private-sector groups, and educational movements (Emilio & Abdalla, 2021). Therefore, we understand that this traditional curriculum, from the viewpoint of School Physical Education, carries more negative than positive aspects—already noticeable in the early years of Basic Education—since it does not explicitly include the Physical Education teacher in Early Childhood Education.

The failure to acknowledge the importance of the Physical Education teacher in Early Childhood Education—despite the centrality of bodily experiences and play—perpetuates the alienation of part of the school context from the teacher's practice (Mello *et al.*, 2016). The organization into skills and competencies draws from twentieth-century curricular theories and caters to prescriptive educational interests (Silva, 2018), thereby restricting the teacher's freedom to act—particularly due to large-scale assessments—and limiting students' reflection, focusing instead on shaping bodies for labor (Emilio & Abdalla, 2021; Silva, 2018; Huguenin, Almeida, & Morgado, 2024). The delimitation of bodily practices is a conceptual and epistemological misstep, since the direction, signs, and meanings attributed to bodily practices are the responsibility and authorship of each student (Neira, 2018b).

Although the discourses presented in the BNCC may suggest a prospective desire to improve national education, studies show that the document itself is inconsistent with the very theory that guides its organizational and structural logic (Neira, 2018b; Novaes, Triani, & Telles, 2020; Santos & Fuzii, 2019; Souza *et al.*, 2019).

On the other hand, asserting that the BNCC consists solely of negative aspects may not truly represent a critical and scientific perception of the document. One positive point is the very definition of Physical Education, which places this curricular component within the Area of Languages, under the domain of culture. Other positive aspects—derived from reflective interpretation—lie within the field

of possibilities. For example, the document may contribute to the development of various bodily practices in institutions and contexts where they did not previously occur, and may encourage the creation of curricula and pedagogical planning by teachers (Souza *et al.*, 2019).

Given these preliminary considerations, we emphasize that although the BNCC presents significant weaknesses, it is, from a legal standpoint, a normative document that aims to guide national education, influence initial teacher education, and inform large-scale assessments. For this reason, this analysis was deemed relevant, and despite the results found, the discussions developed here do not seek to endorse or validate the document in question. Rather, they aim to highlight possible interfaces with a theme that remains marginalized in the school environment, as illustrated in Box 1.

### Presentation, Introduction, and Structure of the BNCC

**Box 1. Comparison between the BNCC excerpt (presentation, introduction, and structure) and the body image literature**

Location	Excerpt from the BNCC establishing a possible connection with the theme of body image	Scholarly literature on body image
<b>General Competencies of Basic Education (No. 5) (p. 9)</b>	<p>“Understand, use, and create <b>digital information and communication technologies</b> in a critical, meaningful, reflective, and ethical manner across various social practices (including school settings) to communicate, access and disseminate information, and produce knowledge...” (Brasil, 2018, p. 9, emphasis and translation by the authors).</p>	<p>“Media literacy interventions, which aim to enhance participants’ ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create media” (Mclean, Paxton, &amp; Wertheim, 2016, p.).</p>
<b>General Competencies of Basic Education (No. 8) (p. 10)</b>	<p>“<b>To know oneself, appreciate oneself, and take care</b> of one’s physical and emotional health, understanding oneself within human diversity and recognizing one’s own emotions and those of others, with self-criticism and the capacity to manage them” (Brasil, 2018, p. 10, emphasis and translation by the authors).</p>	<p>“Loving the body for what it can do and its connection to others (e.g., genetic heritage) and accepting one’s unique physical features is representative of positive body image” (Tylka &amp; Wood-Barcalow, 2015, p. 122).</p>

**Source:** Author’s own elaboration (2023). Note: BNCC = National Common Curricular Base; p. = page.

In the presentation, introduction, and structure of the BNCC, two general competencies of Basic Education are identified that engage with the theme of body image. First, competency number five relates to anticipated outcomes of pedagogical practice in media literacy. Subsequently, competency number eight encompasses body image theory and positive body image.

Media literacy, whether traditional media or social media, is a potential pedagogical practice within body image education that aims the promotion of a reflective use and production of media. This approach can serve as a protective measure against negative body image, as a tool for raising awareness about who the creator/emitter of the content is, the target audience, and the intended objective. Additionally, it addresses values, perspectives, and behaviors generated or impacted by certain attitudes. Finally, it encourages reflection on the extent to which the disseminated information is credible (Paxton, Mclean, & Rodgers, 2022). The BNCC reveals a certain concern with the use of digital technologies in general, as can be seen in the excerpt cited above. These and other references presented in this article may foster the development of children and adolescents who are attentive to the consumption and critical use of media in general.

Although indirect, superficial, and mild, two body image theories are present in general competency number eight. The theories of body image and positive body image are addressed insofar as this competency refers to the act of knowing oneself, appreciating oneself, and taking care of oneself. Merleau-Ponty (2018) postulates that the body enables the centrality of human existence. Through perceptual experiences, the body animates the latent horizon and expresses itself through body image. According to Tavares (2003, p. 83), an important aspect to consider regarding body image is the individual's connection with the body.

For the body to appear as an image in our mind, it is necessary that it exists for ourselves as a concrete, meaningful object that impacts us and stands out among the many other objects that present themselves to the individual, producing images.

For this to occur, bodily experiences allow the subject to engage meaningfully with the environment, in order to (re)signify the self (Gattario *et al.*, 2020; Merleau-Ponty, 2018). Thus, the individual comes to know oneself and the world as they live within it, developing a well-established body image. This "perceptual experience of the body's engagement with the world" (Merleau-Ponty, 2018), also referred to as corporeity, can occur positively in Physical Education classes, provided that the bodily experiences offered are planned and sensitive to this objective, thereby fostering aspects of positive body image.

Regarding positive body image, it refers to body appreciation, the most researched theme within the field of positive body image. This theory is especially important because it has been identified as a suppressor of body dissatisfaction and a predictor of positive body image (Linardon *et al.*, 2021). Defined as behaviors of valuing and respecting one's own body and rejecting appearance ideals (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015), constructs associated with positive body image encourage the individual to understand their abilities and flaws and to love themselves (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015).

Thus, it is possible to identify a subtle alignment between two general competencies of Education and body image theories. Both media literacy and body appreciation are important constructs for the school environment. Once present in the general competencies of Education, it is expected that throughout the BNCC both will be reinforced in the guidelines and objectives of each educational stage, beginning with Early Childhood Education, as presented in Box 2.

## Early Childhood Education

**Box 2. Comparison between the BNCC excerpt on Early Childhood Education and the body image literature**

Location	Excerpt from the BNCC establishing a possible connection with the theme of body image	Scholarly literature on body image
<b>Early Childhood Education in the context of Basic Education (p. 37)</b>	<p>"Six learning and development rights ensure, in Early Childhood Education, the conditions for children to learn in situations in which ... they can <b>build meaning about themselves</b>, others, and the social and natural world" (Brasil, 2018, p. 37, emphasis and translation by the authors).</p>	<p>"Body image reflects the history of a life, the journey of a body, whose perceptions integrate its unity and mark its existence in the world at every moment" (Tavares, 2003, p. 20, translation by the authors).</p> <p>Mental image is the subjective experience of how the world, at a given moment, presents itself to us." (Tavares, 2003, p. 25, translation by the authors).</p>

<b>Learning and Development Rights in Early Childhood Education (p. 38)</b>	<p>“To know oneself and construct one’s personal, social, and cultural identity, building a <b>positive image of oneself</b> and of one’s groups of belonging through diverse experiences ...” (Brasil, 2018, p. 38, emphasis and translation by the authors).</p>	<p>“As the image of our own body, it represents an essentially personal experience, which each individual lives constantly, using it to give meaning to their actions, perceptions, and the flow of their impulses.” (Tavares, 2003, p. 100, translation by the authors).</p> <p>“Loving the body for what it can do and its connection to others (e.g., genetic heritage) and accepting one’s unique physical features is representative of positive body image” (Tylka &amp; Wood-Barcalow, 2015, p. 122).</p>
<b>Learning and Development Rights in Early Childhood Education (p. 39)</b>	<p>“This intentionality consists of the educator’s <b>organization and proposition</b>, of experiences that allow children <b>to know themselves and others...</b>” (Brasil, 2018, p. 39, emphasis and translation by the authors).</p>	<p>“Bodily change resulting from perceptions and movements made available through significant professional intervention opens new pathways in people’s existence, expanding their possibilities for new perceptions and movements, new alternatives to choose from in each life circumstance. This implies, first and foremost, activating a process of body image development” (Tavares, 2003, p. 119, translation by the authors).</p> <p>“The tripartite influence model proposes that individuals experience pressure from socializing agents (e.g., media, family, peers)” (Frederick <i>et al.</i>, 2022a, p. 141).</p>
<b>Fields of Experiences</b>  <b>“The self, the other, and us”</b>  (p. 40)	<p>“As they live their first social experiences (within the family, the school institution, and the community), <b>they build perceptions and questions about themselves and others</b>, differentiating themselves while simultaneously identifying as individual and social beings [...]. In these experiences, they can broaden the way they <b>perceive themselves and others, value their identity</b>, respect others, and recognize the differences that constitute us as human beings” (Brasil, 2018, p. 40, emphasis and translation by the authors).</p>	<p>“Recognizing the other is a subsequent stage to the ability to recognize oneself” (Tavares, 2003, p. 122, translation by the authors).</p> <p>“When we are born, there is already an outline of our image in the external world constructed by our parents and family under a strong cultural influence ... our bodily identity develops based on the experience of sensations that emerge in our real body within the context of an imaginary body” (Tavares, 2003, p. 81, translation by the authors).</p> <p>“The development of the mental image thus occurs through the integration of various perceptual elements relevant to the object” (Tavares, 2003, p. 80, translation by the authors).</p> <p>“The subject build their bodily identity based on the experience of their sensations” (Tavares, 2003, p. 81, translation by the authors).</p>
<b>Fields of Experiences</b>  <b>“The self, the other, and us”</b>  (p. 45)	<p>“(EI03EO05) <b>Demonstrate appreciation for the characteristics of one’s own body</b> and respect the characteristics of others (children and adults) with whom one interacts” (Brasil, 2018, p. 45, emphasis and translation by the authors).</p>	<p>“Body appreciation is not solely appreciating one’s appearance or the extent that one’s body aligns with cultural appearance ideals. Rather, it involves praising the body for what it is able to do, what it represents, and its unique features.” (Tylka &amp; Wood-Barcalow, 2015, p. 122).</p>

**Source:** Author’s own elaboration (2023). Note: BNCC = National Common Curricular Base; p. = page.

Within the set of excerpts selected for analysis, Early Childhood Education is exclusively related to the importance of bodily experiences in child development. Excerpts emerged corresponding to the process of body image development, positive body image, personal identity development, the role of the teacher, and the singularization of the bodily self.

Through play and experimentation, culture emerges as one of the aspects to be promoted in the “Learning and Development Rights in Early Childhood Education” and in the “Fields of

Experience,” both closely linked to Physical Education and body image. This assertion can be seen in the following excerpt:

To know oneself and construct one’s personal, social, and **cultural identity**, building a **positive image of oneself** and one’s groups of belonging through diverse experiences of care, interactions, play, and languages experienced in the school institution and its family and community context (Brasil, 2018, p. 38, emphasis in original).

According to Mello *et al.* (2016), the BNCC, by emphasizing the body and bodily experiences through play and games, positions the Physical Education teacher as a central figure, facilitating, mediating, and promoting specific knowledge in these areas. Another excerpt that highlights this statement can be seen in:

Body, gestures, and movements – With the body (through the senses, gestures, impulsive or intentional movements, coordinated or spontaneous), children, from an early age, explore the world, space, and objects around them, establish relationships, express themselves, play, and **produce knowledge about themselves**, others, and the social and cultural universe, progressively becoming **aware of this corporeity**. (Brasil, 2018, p. 40, emphasis in original).

It is important to highlight that, in the excerpt above, the BNCC falls short by reinforcing a technicist perspective that conceptualizes learning and development as linear and progressive processes. However, as noted in the first observation, the construction of self-knowledge is part of a lifelong process that unfolds in a dynamic and often inconsistent manner (Tavares, 2003; Tavares, 2007).

“The construction of meanings about the self” (Brasil, 2018, p. 37, translation by the authors) happens through significant bodily experiences that allow the creation of references about one’s own body through bodily sensations (Tavares, 2003, translation by the authors). Specifically, in Early Childhood Education, bodily experiences are of central importance for development (Cash & Smolak, 2011). Children between 4 and 6 years already demonstrate comparisons between themselves and others (Smolak, 2012).

In the second excerpt, more than simply “knowing oneself,” the document points to the construction of personal identity. The construction of human identity (or bodily identity) is closely linked to the development of body image (Tavares, 2003). Since body image is an imagetic representation of the subject, it is rich in values, concepts, characteristics, histories, and experiences inherent to one’s identity, and therefore related to the subjective expression of the self. When proposing to seek the interface also with Physical Education, it is appropriate to highlight that it is through movement that our deepest subjectivities can be expressed and allow the subject’s connection with their own representation, that is, their bodily identity (Tavares, 2003).

The process of constructing a “positive self-image” (Brasil, 2018, p. 38, translation by the authors) aligns with the previous paragraph, insofar as bodily experiences occur in ways that provide sensations connected to the individual’s identity (Tavares, 2003). In this sense, the role of the teacher, particularly the Physical Education teacher, even though this is not yet a widespread reality in Early Childhood Education—is essential for creating environments conducive to positive bodily experiences (Neves, Hirata, & Tavares, 2015).

In this developmental process from early childhood, body image can be positive and/or negative (Siegel, Winter, & Cook, 2021). The literature shows that children as young as 3 years old may already exhibit weight stigma attitudes (Damiano *et al.*, 2020; Harriger *et al.*, 2019) and compare their bodies with those of their peers (Smolak, 2012). By age 5, they demonstrate internalized thin-ideal preferences (Tatangelo *et al.*, 2016). Furthermore, parents, peers, media, and other significant individuals

are important factors influencing how the child perceives themselves (Schaefer *et al.*, 2017). Despite this, both parents and teachers show resistance and difficulties in addressing the topic (Russel-Mayhew *et al.*, 2015; Siegel, Winter, & Cook, 2021).

Therefore, on page 40 of the BNCC, when describing the field of experience “The self, the other, and us,” the document presents the process of bodily identity development in a limited manner. This field of experience establishes a series of Cartesian causal relationships in the text without critical discussion of how, for example, children’s experiences may fail to generate self-identification and, consequently, distorted self-representations and/or perceptions that do not provoke positive/healthy modes of behavior, feeling, and thinking toward themselves. The limited way in which the document addresses this theme may have consequences for teaching practice and, thus, for the formation of children at this stage of Basic Education.

In this sense, to increase the possibilities for social context to facilitate the development of positive body image, several aspects must be considered. These aspects encompass teacher training and practice, school culture focused on body image, training and support of caregivers, media literacy, among others (Huguennin *et al.*, 2024). According to Siegel, Winter, and Cook (2021), processes are necessary to remove appearance-focused cultures and weight stigmas and to encourage skills and appreciation of abilities.

Unlike the previous category, in Early Childhood Education, learning and development objectives were presented. In the field of experience “The self, the other, and us,” three objectives showed synergy with body image, all reinforcing aspects already mentioned: recognizing one’s own body, perceiving the different possibilities of existence, and valuing one’s own body characteristics. In Elementary School, however, some particularities need to be considered, as shown in Box 3.

## Elementary School

**Box 3. Comparison of the excerpt from the BNCC for Elementary School – body image literature**

Location	Excerpt from the BNCC establishing a possible connection with the theme of body image	Scholarly literature on body image
Elementary School in the Context of Basic Education (p. 58)	“In this period of life, children are experiencing <b>significant changes in their developmental process that impact their relationships with themselves</b> , with others, and with the world” (Brasil, 2018, p. 58, emphasis in original, translation by the authors).	“It is during childhood that concerns about weight, beliefs related to the body, and behaviors aimed at improving physical appearance may begin. Therefore, from a very early age, the individual, in the pursuit of an ideal body, may have their body image affected” (Neves <i>et al.</i> , 2017, p. 332, translation by the authors).
Elementary School in the Context of Basic Education (p. 61)	“... it is necessary to consider the need to <b>denaturalize any form of violence in contemporary societies, including the symbolic violence of social groups that impose norms, values, and knowledge</b> considered universal and that do not establish dialogue among the different cultures present in the community and school” (Brasil, 2018, p. 61, emphasis and translation by the authors).	“Increased in body dissatisfaction, disordered eating... have been attributed, in part, to ‘Westernization’ and exposure to media depictions of thin attractiveness ideals imported from the United States, European Union, and other Western countries” (Jackson, Cai, & Chen, 2020, p. 214). “The present outline of the construct of body shaming can help to sensitize practitioners in bullying and cyberbullying prevention for this phenomenon. It can provide them with a clear definition and classification as a starting point to assess the frequency of body shaming in their area of work and develop specific interventions for this precursor of cyberbullying. On the one hand, they can assess the real impact of body shaming on

		mental health and the concordance with known effects of other forms of bullying, such as symptoms of anxiety, depression" (Schüter, Kraag, & Schmidt, 2021).
Elementary School in the Context of Basic Education (p. 58)	“... the <b>affirmation of their identity</b> in relation to the collective to which they belong results in more active ways of relating to that collective and to the norms governing relationships among people inside and outside of school, <b>through the recognition of their potentialities and through acceptance and valuing of differences</b> ” (Brasil, 2018, p. 58, emphasis and translation by the authors).	“Body appreciation is not merely about valuing appearance or the extent to which the body aligns with cultural appearance ideals. Instead, it involves praising the body for what it is capable of doing, what it represents, and its resources” (Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015, p. 122).
<b>The Language Area</b>		
Specific Language Competencies for Elementary School (p. 65)	“To understand languages as human, historical, social, and cultural constructs of a dynamic nature, recognizing and valuing them as forms of meaning-making of reality and as <b>expressions of subjectivities and social and cultural identities</b> .” (Brasil, 2018, p. 65, emphasis and translation by the authors).	“Theories of embodiment also guide us. Embodiment is a construct anchored in philosophy and critical theory. In his writings, Merleau-Ponty conceived of embodiment as the 'perceptual experience of engagement of the body in the world,' whereby 'perceptual experience' referring to a particular location of the body in the world. .... These authors highlighted that this construct reflects attunement to inner states, captures a broad range of experiences, and addresses the reciprocal relationships between body and culture.” (Gattario <i>et al.</i> , 2020, pp. 1–2) “The body and mind are inseparable, and the body comprises a center of subjectivity, interpreting and experiencing the world meaningfully, always in relation to the particular location of the body in the world.” (Piran, Teal, & Counsell, 2020, p. 118)
Specific Language Competencies for Elementary School (p. 65)	“To understand and use <b>digital information</b> and communication technologies in a <b>critical</b> , meaningful, <b>reflective</b> , and ethical manner across various social practices (including those in schools), in order to communicate through different languages and media, produce knowledge, solve problems, and develop individual and collective projects.” (Brasil, 2018, p. 65, emphasis and translation by the authors)	“Media literacy, which promotes independent critical thinking and helps media recipients become active, conscientious consumers, rather than remaining passive and subservient to the images and values that dominate the media” (Coughlin; Kalodner, 2006, p. 36).
<b>Physical Education</b>		
Physical Education (p. 218)	“Body awareness gymnastics encompass practices that involve gentle and slow movements, as well as the use of postures or awareness of breathing exercises, aimed at achieving <b>better perception of one's own body</b> . Some of these practices that make up this group originate from ancient bodily practices of Eastern cultures.” (Brasil, 2018, p. 218, emphasis and translation by the authors)	“Hatha yoga... promotes a unified view of mind and body as well as steady control of the mind.” (Cox <i>et al.</i> , 2017, p. 2). “yoga practice associates with higher levels of mindfulness, self-compassion, body awareness, and body responsiveness” (Cox <i>et al.</i> , 2017, p. 2). “... the movement of the body, either with or against the force of gravity or centrifugal impulses, can have a tremendous influence on body image ... Thus, movement influences body image and leads us from a change in body image to a change in psychic attitude.” (Schilder, 1999, p. 229, translation by the authors)

<b>Specific Physical Education Competencies for Elementary School (number 4) (p. 223)</b>	<p>“To identify the multiplicity of <b>standards</b> related to performance, health, beauty, and body aesthetics, critically analyzing the models disseminated by the media and discussing consumerist and prejudiced attitudes.”</p> <p>(Brasil, 2018, p. 223, emphasis and translation by the authors)</p>	<p>“Critical processing in this manner is proposed to render media content less influential as awareness and attention to the constructed nature of media content interrupts the tendency to both internalize media appearance ideals and compare oneself with content that has been recognized as unrealistic, deliberately constructed to deliver an intended outcome – typically for the benefit of the creator and produced by parties with ulterior motives such as profit and influence” (Paxton; McLean; Rodgers, 2022, p. 159).</p>
<b>Physical Education – 6th and 7th Grades (Continued) (p. 235)</b>	<p>“(EF67EF17) <b>To question prejudices and stereotypes</b> related to the world of combat sports and other bodily practices, <b>proposing alternatives</b> to overcome them based on solidarity, justice, equity, and respect.”</p> <p>(Brasil, 2018, p. 235, emphasis and translation by the authors)</p>	<p>“Instead of providing information that may make obese students appear non-normal (i.e. medical condition), an alternative strategy may be providing positive information to increase the receptivity by advocating diversity and emphasizing the positive aspects of a diverse population” (Rukavina; Li, 2008, p. 71).</p>
<b>Physical Education – 8th and 9th Grades (p. 237)</b>	<p>“(EF89EF09) To question the <b>excessive practice</b> of physical exercises and the use of medications aimed at enhancing performance or accelerating <b>body transformations</b>.”</p> <p>(Brasil, 2018, p. 237, emphasis and translation by the authors)</p>	<p>“A person with muscle dysmorphia has a significant and unwavering preoccupation that they are not muscular and/or lean enough, lifts weights multiple times per week, meticulously tracks their food intake to meet calorie and protein targets, frequently checks their appearance in mirrors, and experiences functional impairment resulting from their obsessive muscle-building behaviors” (Martenstyn; Maguire; Griffiths, 2023, p. 79).</p>

**Source:** Authors (2023). Note: BNCC = National Common Curricular Base; p. = page

At this stage of Basic Education, children and adolescents between the ages of 6 and 14 are included, that is, individuals at different stages of development. Regarding children, studies have shown that this population may exhibit body dissatisfaction and other aspects of negative body image (Nichols *et al.*, 2018; Swami; Punshon; Paul, 2022). The adolescent population is considered at risk in terms of body image due to new social insertions and the sense of needing to belong to a group, significant hormonal changes, and bodily changes (Miranda *et al.*, 2014).

In this context, significant changes may occur in the body image of these adolescents. This is especially true for girls, since the changes resulting from this phase of biological maturation may distance them from the socially imposed beauty ideal and generate aspects of negative body image (Miranda *et al.*, 2014). Considering that this is a Western society—where weight stigma and internalized ideals of bodily size are present—such bodily changes may give rise to various forms of violence focused on the body (Li; Rukavina; Wright, 2012; Schlueter; Kraag; Schmidt, 2021). Currently, different forms of violence aimed at the body are known, such as body shaming, cyberbullying, trolling, and teasing, each with its own characteristics and means of operation (Schlueter; Kraag; Schmidt, 2021). In the study by Li, Rukavina, and Wright (2012), several coping mechanisms were identified that adolescents use in response to weight-related teasing, including avoidance, confrontation, self-protection, weight loss, compensation, and stress reduction, among others.

In the area of Languages, there is a passage that indirectly establishes an interface between body image, the BNCC, and Physical Education. On page 65, in the specific competencies for the area of Languages, it is made explicit how Languages are understood. As an “expression of subjectivities and social and cultural identities” (Brasil, 2018, p. 65), bodily practices are rich forms of communication, full

of meaning about the sender, the world, and the sender-world relationship (Le Breton, 2012; Merleau-Ponty, 2018). Moreover, as the subject develops their body image (and consequently their identity), they transform their worldview, and in this relation, each mutually modifies the other.

Once again, the strategy, understanding, and use of digital technologies emerged as a point of emphasis in the BNCC. According to Paxton, McLean, and Rodgers (2022), it is already well established that both traditional and social media hold significant influencing power. In the study by Burnette, Kwitowski, and Mazzeo (2017), adolescents demonstrated that having critical awareness regarding images disseminated on social media (modified and artificial images) served as a protective factor against body dissatisfaction. A similar study conducted with adolescents aged 12 to 14 also mitigated the impacts associated with negative body image by raising awareness about the intentions behind the information conveyed through media (Mahon & Hevey, 2021).

Specifically in the area of Physical Education, important excerpts emerged for the discussion of new issues. Within this curricular component, it was possible to perceive the suggestion of body awareness gymnastics as a pedagogical approach to the image of one's own body. Also identified, in the specific competencies of this component, was a subtle dialogue with the sociocultural theory of body image. Likewise, the use of martial arts stood out as a means to address possible existing body stereotypes in this and other modalities. Finally, within this category, the problematization of one of the possible consequences of negative body image emerged, namely body dysmorphic disorder.

One of the body awareness gymnastics practices well established in the literature as a pedagogical practice with body image outcomes is Yoga. This practice consists of postural activities that combine physical postures with breathing and meditation, thus focusing on promoting a unified view of the self (Cox *et al.*, 2017; Halliwell *et al.*, 2016). This view tends to be positive, since mindfulness and self-compassion are stimulated throughout the activity (Cox *et al.*, 2017). In Cox *et al.*'s (2017) study, 20 adolescent students reported significant improvements in body image, developed a less objectified view of the body, and showed better indices of body appreciation.

The sociocultural theory of body image is dedicated to understanding human behavior based on cultural influences (Cash; Pruzinsky, 2002), which establish important values in understanding how a person perceives others, oneself, and the living context. These values are internalized, disseminated, and perpetuated mainly through three agents: parents, peers, and media. Thompson *et al.*'s (1999) tripartite theory is widely accepted in the literature, and it is well known that the school environment can potentiate the establishment of beauty ideals. Western societies, generally speaking, have beauty ideals characterized by thin bodies for women and muscular bodies for men (Dondzilo *et al.*, 2019; Roberts *et al.*, 2022; Siegel; Winter; Cook, 2021). These standards are frequently considered unattainable, and in attempting to conform to such impositions, children and adolescents may become frustrated and develop aspects of negative body image. Therefore, it is essential that students be capable of "identifying the multiplicity of patterns of performance, health, beauty, and bodily aesthetics, critically analyzing the models disseminated in the media, and discussing consumerist and prejudiced postures" (Brasil, 2018, p. 223). Recognizing that different forms of existence exist in society while simultaneously critically analyzing the role of the media in attempting to impose a standard body associated with beauty is fundamental for students' own understanding of themselves.

Following this discussion, the sociocultural theory of body image describes aspects of negative body image. Through four social agents (important in influencing the individual's body image), there are two mechanisms that lead to body dissatisfaction: one is social comparison and the other is the

internalization of the beauty ideal. Once dissatisfied with themselves, children and adolescents are more likely to adopt unhealthy body modification strategies. One of these strategies can culminate in body dysmorphic disorder, which consists of excessive physical exercise, unhealthy eating, and even the use of medications and anabolic steroids for bodily modifications. The problematization of this disorder is presented in the BNCC in the 9th grade of Elementary School as a competency: "Problematize the excessive practice of physical exercise and the use of medications for enhancing performance or potentiating bodily transformations" (Brasil, 2018, p. 237, emphasis ours).

It is necessary to consider that the BNCC's recognition of these practices enables Physical Education teachers to include body image in their planning. Body image is well established in the literature as a construct necessary for public health throughout life (Bornioli *et al.*, 2019; Guest *et al.*, 2022; Lewis-Smith *et al.*, 2023). However, this construct should not be mentioned solely because it involves processes of health and illness; the heuristic perception of body image allows for understanding the process of human recognition integrally, of constructing identity, promoting well-being and unity (Guest *et al.*, 2022).

In this sense, the theme of body image, timidly and possibly covertly, emerges in the specific Physical Education section, which represents yet another fragility of a document that is not attentive to this matter. In its timid presence, body image in the BNCC seems to aim at students' identification and discussion of beauty standards rather than the promotion of positive body image among students. Aligning with this perspective, Box 4 shows that the final stage of Basic Education presents similarities with Elementary School.

## High School

**Box 4. Comparison of the BNCC excerpt from High School – literature on body image**

Location	Excerpt from the BNCC establishing a possible connection with the theme of body image	Scholarly literature on body image
<b>The purposes of High School in contemporary times</b> (p. 466)	<p>"To know oneself and better manage one's body, feelings, emotions, and interpersonal relationships, asserting self-respect and respect for others."</p> <p>(Brasil, 2018, p. 466, emphasis and translation by the authors)</p>	<p>"Body image is a complex construct that includes how a person feels, thinks, and relates to the appearance, functionality, and performance of the body" (Frederick <i>et al.</i>, 2022, p. 110).</p>
<b>The purposes of High School in contemporary times</b> (p. 466)	<p>"Combat stereotypes, discrimination of any kind, and violations of the rights of individuals or social groups, promoting coexistence with diversity" (Brazil, 2018, p. 467, emphasis and translation by the authors).</p>	<p>"A maladjustment in the way the subject sees themselves does not allow them to place themselves in the world in a healthy way. The attempt to value a body image based on media stereotypes disrupts the adolescent's construction process, which relies on more or less stable parental experiences and figures to counteract and define their own identities" (Frois; Moreira; Stengel, 2011, p. 76, translation by the authors).</p>
<b>The Area of Languages and its Technologies</b> (p. 484)	<p>"Students should be challenged to reflect on these practices, deepening their <b>knowledge about the potentials and limits of the body</b>.... This set of experiences, beyond developing <b>self-knowledge and self-care with the body</b> and health, socialization, and entertainment, fosters dialogue with other</p>	<p>"Physical exercise guided toward this purpose can provide the individual with experiences that promote the development of the subject's identity, as it is a resource for the awareness of one's own feelings, potentialities, and bodily limits" (Neves; Hirata; Tavares, 2015, p. 102, translation by the authors).</p>

	areas of knowledge..." (Brazil, 2018, p. 484, emphasis and translation by the authors).	
<b>Specific Competencies of Languages and their Technologies for High School (p. 490)</b>	"Understand the processes of production and negotiation of meanings in bodily practices, recognizing and experiencing them as <b>forms of expression of values and identities</b> , from a democratic perspective and with respect for diversity" (Brazil, 2018, p. 490, emphasis and translation by the authors).	"Bodily manifestations, whether one's own or those of others, are not considered defects or qualities, but characteristics of people that have roots and consequences and will never be completely explained" (Tavares, 2003, p. 124, translation by the authors).
<b>Specific Competency (number 5) (p. 495)</b>	"Young people should demonstrate a deep and systematic understanding of the presence of bodily practices in their lives and in society, including the social, cultural, ideological, economic, and political factors involved in the practices and the discourses that circulate about them ... as <b>privileged forms of constructing one's own identity</b> , self-knowledge, and the propagation of democratic values. In this regard, it is important that <b>students reflect on their preferences, values, prejudices, and stereotypes regarding different bodily practices</b> " (Brazil, 2018, p. 495, emphasis and translation by the authors).	"Artistic activities, individual and group bodily experiences, sports, gymnastics, and systematic physical activity practices ... have relevance and the potential to stimulate the process of body image development. This process is inherent to the entire existential journey of the human being" (Tavares, 2003, p. 120, translation by the authors).
<b>Skill of Specific Competency 5 (p. 495)</b>	"(EM13LGG502) <b>Critically analyze prejudices, stereotypes, and power relations present in bodily practices</b> , adopting a stance against any manifestation of injustice and disrespect for human rights and democratic values" (Brazil, 2018, p. 495, emphasis and translation by the authors).	"Physical education and health professionals have the responsibility to eliminate obesity biases from environments where individuals move to learn about their bodies...Instructors need to establish norms of equality, benevolence and acceptance of peers so that overweight students have the chance to be connected to the curriculum. This involves inclusion of affective objectives that focus on elements of personal and social responsibility. The focus should be shifted from blaming students for being overweight to a focus on a healthy lifestyle at all shapes and sizes" (Rukavina; Li, 2008, p. 73).
<b>Skill of Specific Competency 5 (p. 495)</b>	"(EM13LGG503) Experience bodily practices and give them meaning in their life project, as a form of self-knowledge, <b>self-care with the body and health</b> , socialization, and entertainment" (Brazil, 2018, p. 495, emphasis and translation by the authors).	"The premise that supports the role of bodily experience in the development of body image is that the notion of existence is constituted through the manipulation of the body for the care of feeding and hygiene, for comfort and caresses, and the resonance of internal states" (Neves; Hirata; Tavares, 2015, p. 98, translation by the authors).

**Source:** Authors (2023). Note: BNCC = National Common Curricular Base; p. = page

The final category corresponds to the last curricular stage of the BNCC, which is High School. Among the highlighted excerpts, emphasis was placed on those containing content similar to the previously mentioned ones. The BNCC brings forth the need for students at this stage to know themselves, combat stereotypes, recognize their bodily potentialities and limits, use bodily practices as a means of expressing values and identities, and be critically aware of the existing prejudices, stereotypes, and power relations that are perpetuated through symbolic or structural violence.

Still during adolescence, one of the purposes of High School is to lead the student to "know themselves and better deal with their body, feelings, emotions, and interpersonal relationships, asserting

self-respect and respecting others" (Brasil, 2018, p. 466). In the ongoing trajectory of construction and deconstruction of body image, the process of self-knowledge may occur insofar as the adolescent is developing positive relationships with themselves, with the world, and with others. Schilder (1981) postulates that although body image is singular and individual, it is immersed in a context of interrelations of body images (those of others) within an environment in which perceptions are particular.

Combating bodily stereotypes and discriminations aligns with the considerations made in Elementary Education. In High School, these factors are perceived as means of power relations, in which students should: "Critically analyze prejudices, stereotypes, and power relations present in bodily practices, adopting a stance against any manifestation of injustice and disrespect to human rights and democratic values" (Brasil, 2018, p. 495, emphasis in the original).

From the perspective of the post-critical view of the Physical Education curriculum, there are power relations in bodily practices in multiple ways. The perpetuation of stereotypes and prejudices, both regarding bodily practices and bodies themselves, leads to exclusion, segregation, and marginalization of other modes of existence (Neira, 2018b).

In summary, the final stage of Basic Education presents, to a certain extent, important contradictions to be considered. Although one of the stated purposes of this stage emphasizes the importance of better understanding oneself, High School reduces the Physical Education curricular component to just one more skill within the Languages and Their Technologies area. Still within this perspective, combating stereotypes and asymmetrical power relations in bodily practices and adopting self-care attitudes and the expression of values and identity presupposes a prominence of Physical Education that transcends a mere skill. Moreover, this knowledge is inherent to students' body image, especially in educational contexts where these aspects are addressed through the body and movement.

This study presents at least three limitations worth mentioning. Given the length of the document, our analysis may not have covered it entirely, meaning that sensitive aspects related to the target theme of this study may not have been considered. Therefore, new research aiming to documentarily analyze the intersections between body image, Physical Education, and the BNCC is necessary.

Similarly, the absence of studies in the literature that address body image in School Physical Education is noted as a limitation. This claim is substantiated by the fact that few studies—such as experience reports, pedagogical actions, and reviews—were found to establish a discussion with the findings of this research.

Another limitation concerns the methodological procedures adopted in this study. The fact that the content analysis was conducted solely by the first author may represent a weakness of the study. Therefore, it is suggested that future research considers performing the procedural aspects under double-blind conditions in order to ensure the accuracy of the results.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study aimed to analyze the interfaces between School Physical Education, body image, and the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) through a critical analysis of this document. The main findings revealed that throughout the BNCC, there are several excerpts that dialogue with the theory of body image. However, these passages are presented in a timid and restricted manner, making it possible to affirm that the BNCC is a limited document with regard to a theme as complex as the one investigated

in this study. An important finding was the absence of the term body image throughout the entire document, which may consequently lead to the non-identification of the veiled mentions of body image in the BNCC, as well as the lack of a conceptual delimitation of the construct.

Considering curricular documents as tools that shape subjects and identities, the limitations of the BNCC reveal epistemological and pedagogical gaps in the formation of future generations. Aside from media literacy, a possible consequence of not explicitly mentioning, addressing, or deepening the concept of body image and its related constructs is the formation of children and adolescents who are inattentive to—and therefore alienated from—the sociocultural relations involved in the hierarchical structuring of bodies and the processes of self-representation. Understanding body image in the school context has increasingly been presented as a robust heuristic perspective which, beyond outcomes related to health, aims at the full (de)construction and development of teachers and students.

Although the authors have made an effort to enable a deeper understanding of the issue addressed, it is not possible to exhaust all topics of interest in this manuscript. Therefore, future documentary analyses focused on body image are necessary, whether in Physical Education or in the curricular sphere as a whole. Moreover, other perspectives on the theme, as well as the establishment of dialogues with other authors, are important for new findings, especially to identify diverse pedagogical practices in the BNCC beyond media literacy. It is necessary for researchers, teachers, and administrators to be attentive to the multiple forms of existence of themselves and their students, so that identities in the process of construction and deconstruction may value, recognize, embrace, and love themselves at every stage of life, each carrying its own singularities.

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Author 1 – Writing of the manuscript, data collection, data analysis.

Author 2 – Writing of the manuscript and data collection.

Author 3 – Research coordinator and supervisor, manuscript writing and final writing review.

**DATA AVAILABILITY DECLARATION**

The data underlying this research are contained within the manuscript.

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT**

The authors declare no conflict of interest related to this article.