

Shaping the Female Teen

A qualitative study on the portrayal of female characters in teen dramas

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List of abbreviations

BBC	British Broadcasting Company
MEDIA	Mesures pour Encourager le Développement de L'industrie Audiovisuelle (Measures to support the development of the audiovisual industries)
MCDA	Multimodel Critical Discourse Analysis
NPO	Nederlandse Publieke Omroep
PSB	Public Service Broadcaster

1. INTRODUCTION OF TEEN DRAMAS

Teen drama has been one of the most popular television genres for many years. The genre features adolescents and their everyday lives, representing themes such as school, romance, and friendship (García-Muñoz & Fedele, 2011). In contemporary times, teen dramas are attracting millions of viewers. The genre especially found tremendous success among teenagers and young adults through the exaggerated but relatable storylines (Heintz-Knowles, 2000).

Teenagerhood is a critical phase of one's identity development. Due to the reliability of the storylines, teenagers can feel represented by the characters. Adolescents even form a sense of self through the depicted characters (Sundet, 2020). According to Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, people model the roles and behaviors they see on television (Bandura, 2001). For decades, television shows have provided role models for teens to look up to and serve as an information source on tackling life choices, resulting in television programs shaping teenagers' opinions on friendship, romance, sex, and prevailing ideology. Especially female teens are sensitive to the depiction of the female gender in mass media (Behm-Morawitz & Mastro, 2008). This stresses the importance of knowing the correlation between teens' development and the accurate female representation in the media they consume (Gerding & Signorielli, 2014). Especially as television dramas are known to rely heavily on stereotyping their characters. Male characters are often portrayed as independent, athletic, technical, and assertive, while females as fragile, emotional, romantic, domestic, and needy with less screen time than the other gender. Female characters especially are portrayed as hopeless for love (Gerding & Signorielli, 2014). With this aspect of teen dramas in mind and the potential effect of Bandura's Theory, the potential damage to teens' identity formation is worrisome. This is especially important for the female gender, as they are most prone to adopting the portrayal of the female gender. Therefore, academic research is needed on this topic to gain knowledge on how teen dramas portray their female characters.

The debate surrounding gender representation in mass media has slowly received much attention since the late 2000s. In particular, the treatment of the female gender has been a central topic of discussion. For example, the number of female directors or the amount of screen time for female characters compared to their male counterparts. This discussion on gender equality has resulted in various countries introducing gender-equal quotas into companies (Powers, 2004). In addition, the discussion surrounding the treatment of women in Hollywood has gained tremendous mainstream success through the #Me-Too movement in

2017 (Corfield, 2017). The implementation of gender quotas and public discourse through #MeToo have changed the public debate surrounding gender representation, especially in media. This public debate makes up for an interesting research on whether the representation of women has changed from the 2000s to the present. Therefore, this study aims to gain insight into the potential change in the depiction of females in media.

As previously stated, it is necessary to gain knowledge on how the female gender is portrayed in teen dramas. Especially as female teenagers are most likely to adapt to the displayed narrative. In addition, it is essential to gain insight into whether the public discourse surrounding gender equality has resulted in a shift in gender treatment in mass media. This research combines these two social matters by analyzing how teen dramas have portrayed the female gender in the past decades. Through various decades, teen dramas are analyzed to detect a potential difference due to public discourse. In order to have a guideline, a research question has been formulated. The research question is as follows: "How has the representation of the female gender changed in European teen dramas throughout the decades?".

Previous academic research into similar topics primarily focused on American productions and their impact on American teens. Little to no research has been conducted on European teen dramas. Additionally, nearly all research is conducted through quantitative analysis or qualitative interviews. This thesis attempts to close this gap in the academic literature by looking at the representation of the female gender in teen dramas that aired in The Netherlands. Four of the most frequently watched teen dramas are analyzed, regardless of the origin country. This research attempts to close this academic gap by conducting a qualitative Multimodel Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA). Sixteen episodes from sixteen popular teen dramas from the aforementioned countries will be analyzed using MCDA.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ON TEEN DRAMA'S

This chapter provides a theoretical understanding of the history and atmosphere surrounding female gender portrayal in the media. A framework is established by dividing it into two discourse areas: research and social. Firstly, the research discourse will be further elaborated upon through the use of three sub-sections. The research discourse dives into the theoretical research of teen dramas and the impact of female representation. The section defines the teen drama genre from its beginnings to current trends. Followed by the teen drama genre's appeal, and the relationship between the genre and teen identity is explored. The research discourse concludes by exploring the representation of the female gender in television. The framework concludes by diving into the social discourse surrounding the representation of the female gender. The gender equality movement's history and current state are explored by zooming in on the #MeToo-movement and the implementation of gender quotas.

2.1. The Research Discourse – Research into teen dramas and the impact of female representation

'Teen drama' has been one of the most popular genres on television for years. The name 'teen drama' is an umbrella term as it is difficult to pin down what the genre entails. Dhoest (2015) describes the genre as a soap opera with aspects of science fiction, fantasy, or the adventure genre. A study by Heintz-Knowles (2000) argued that the genre is a sitcom dealing with romance, sexuality, friendship, and family while mostly taking place at school. According to García-Muñoz & Fedele (2011), Hints-Knowles' definition of teen dramas is the 1990s version of the genre. They argue it has shifted more towards the format of dramas that center around the ideal life of teens, showing them in several social and bizarre happenings. For this thesis, the definition by García-Muñoz and Fedele is used.

The genre first originated in the television season of 1965-1966, with the soap opera *Never Too Young* (1965). *Never Too Young* did not characterize itself as a teen drama; however, it was the first television show with teens as its target audience. Shortly after the success, more similar shows began airing, such as *All My Children* (1970) and *Little House on the Prairie* (1974), which caused the first teen icons who regenerate from teen dramas. *Degrassi Junior High* (1987) is credited as the first show which labeled itself a teen drama, followed by *Beverly Hills, 90210* (1990). Both television shows had tremendous success, which resulted in other networks producing series with similar premises, such as *Dawson's Creek* (1998) and *Charmed* (1998) (Heintz-Knowles, 2000). In the 2000s, the genre evolved

to cover more serious topics such as mental health and drugs. Examples are *The O.C.* (2003) and *Skins* (2007) (Turnball, 2008).

American broadcasting networks produce the majority of teen dramas. However, due to globalization, American productions are airing worldwide. Especially in Europe, the genre saw much success, which resulted in European countries creating their interpretation of the genre. However, there are notable differences in the setup of the genre. Turnball (2008) argues how the American versions include the middle-class youth who were significantly embedded in the high school and college culture of post-second world war America. In contrast, Turnball (2008) addresses how European teen television showed the working-class youth, who dealt with serious issues such as mental health and income struggles.

The genre has extensively been researched, mainly focusing on American productions and their handling of themes such as sex, self-image, and development (Van Damme & Bauwel, 2012). Previous research pleads the importance of researching mass media targeted at teenagers, as tweenhood is the most crucial time period to establish a sense of self and develop preferences regarding these themes. This is in line with the Social Cognitive Theory by Bandura, which states that individuals learn social and cultural behaviors by seeing them acted out in mass media (Bandura, 2001). According to Van Evra (2004) and Bandura's Theory, teenagers form themselves according to the characters presented to them in teen dramas. As a result, teens are no longer seeking their parents for advice because television shows have scripts written on every encounter in their lives. Powers' research on gender and sexuality argued the importance of Bandura's model. This research states how (female) teens are vulnerable to media influences as they view fictional characters as role models (Powers, 2004). The genre is often viewed as dumb or with low production value, while it strongly impacts adolescents (Wilks, 2019). Therefore, it is necessary to have a theoretical understanding of teen dramas and their impact on gender representation. This chapter uses five sub-sections to present the teen drama genre and its relationship to female teenager representation.

2.1.1. Identity

Adolescents constantly search for 'who they are' and 'whom they want to be' in life. Tweenhood is the most crucial time period to establish a sense of self and develop your preferences regarding themes such as hobbies, self-image, sex, and overall development (Van Evra, 2004). Teen dramas provide a universal image of youthful identity and symbolic tools to construct an identity yourself (Dhaenens et al., 2016). With these tools, teenagers aim to

construct their own narrative in life, just like the characters they idealize on television (Duits, 2010).

Viewing teen dramas as a key aspect of teenage identity formation aligns with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory. This theory states that individuals learn social and cultural behaviors by seeing them acted out in mass media, such as television (Bandura, 2001). Powers (2004) stresses the importance of Bandura's theory concerning teenagers and their gender and sexuality. Powers' research states how (female) teens are most vulnerable to media influences as they view fictional characters as role models. Van Damme and Bauwel (2012) elaborated on this identity formation by addressing how female adolescents do not simply copy the script they are presented with on television. They address how female teenagers' circumstances, such as parents, school, and friends influence how a teen interprets a teen drama. Nevertheless, they agree with Powers' statement that media provides a mold for teenage identity and construction. For this research, the statement provided by Powers is assumed as well.

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, teens no longer ask their parents for advice. Instead, adolescents are using fictional characters as role models (Powers, 2004). Media, especially American media, are predominant in the lives of teenagers. Every day, television provides teenagers with resources for creating and expressing their identities (Van Damme & Bauwel, 2012). Teens no longer need to feel ashamed of some of the feelings they have or are curious about, as teen dramas feature characters and storylines that reflect a form of their lives on television. The teens are better prepared to tackle difficulties in their own lives as they have seen similar representations in teen drama scenarios (Sundet, 2020). By this means, teen dramas are relatable to teenagers and their identity formation as they cover topics that teenagers engage themselves in daily (Duits, 2010).

Female teenagers are sensitive to the influence of teen dramas in constructing their identity. The various characters presented on screen provide the teenagers with a diverse set of cultural traditions, moral codes, struggles, and ideologies. Through these various characters, teens can identify with the characters or aim to be like them (Van Damme & Bauwel, 2012). By desiring to be like the fictional characters on television, the adolescents are creating their own subculture (Duits, 2010). Both male and female teenagers are doing this; however, according to Duits (2010), especially female teenagers have their own beliefs, values, and activities, which are enabled by the daily mass media they consume. Besides characteristics, the teen dramas also form a standard appearance stereotype that female teenagers desire to maintain. Older actresses portray the majority of female characters with a

primarily slim physique, white ethnicity, and often glamorized look through their clothes and make-up (Van Damme & Bauwel, 2012). Because of this, the subculture has a specific look as well. Female teenagers desire to look like the actresses in teen dramas, especially as adolescents are taken more seriously if they appear like these characters (Osberg, 2004). As a result of teen dramas focusing on the appearance of the female adolescents, the characters get objectified. Teen dramas create expectations for teenage girls, in which they are expected to adhere to (Gluscock, 2011). This expectation feeds into the idea of a sub-culture for female adolescents, which they aim to fit into (Osberg, 2004). As a result, teen dramas affect female teenagers' mental health. Female teenagers feel failed or not worthy when they do not adhere to these often unrealistic standards, negatively affecting their sense of self-worth (Dhaenens et al., 2016). Therefore, it is essential to research what the sub-culture of teen dramas entails and whether this has remained the standard throughout the years.

2.1.2. Appeal

To understand how the genre portrays female characters, it is necessary to understand what the appeal of the genre entails to teenagers. Television is designed to be entertaining to its broad target audience, which includes males and females. Teen drama plotlines feature teenagers and their families together with their various struggles in order to speak to a broad audience, regardless of age (Turnball, 2008). Especially in recent years, teen dramas are reported to have become exceedingly multicultural by including more non-white and middle-class-centric characters (Ross & Stein, 2008). By providing the characters a story arch that dives deeper into their heritage and related struggles, teen dramas are able to attract a broader teenage audience. Teen dramas are a combination of the comedy and melodrama genres, which are the two genres that teens are mainly drawn to. The melodrama aspects attract the female audience, while the sitcom elements draw the male audience. By combining the struggles and genres, teen dramas are able to be attractive for adults and adolescents, regardless of their gender or background (Gamber, 2008). However, what specifically teenage girls attract is a bit more elaborate.

A massive appeal of teen dramas is how they are trendsetters. According to Gillian (2008), viewers of teen shows try to be like the characters in the show. The teens seek out the music and clothes modeled by the characters. Especially female viewers view the characters as fashion icons and try to insert the trendy fashion into their mundane clothing. Female teenagers are more likely to look up to females who adhere to a specific beauty standard, hence the casting of the teen dramas mainly consisting of stereotypical beautiful women

(Powers, 2004). As mentioned before, this helps with creating a sub-culture for female teens to aspire to.

Another reason for the appeal of teen dramas is the level of connectedness the genre entails. Especially in the digital age, engaging with a television show goes beyond viewing. Teenagers are engaging with the television show through social media (Osberg, 2004). Examples of this engagement are viewing and creating content on Instagram and TikTok. Through social media, teenagers are forming a parasocial relationship with the characters or actors, as in recent years, there is much content to find on the characters (Patino et al., 2011). A parasocial relationship refers to a relationship in which the audience considers media personalities their friends or more, despite having limited interactions with them through mass media (Patino et al., 2011). According to Feasey's (2008), female viewers tend to see female characters as their sisters due to their fashion and lifestyle. Besides connecting with the characters in the television shows, teens also feel a sense of belonging by engaging with a community of fans of the same television show online or in real life. Teen shows provide conversation for the teenagers.

Ever since teen dramas started airing, they have been the subject of controversy. There is much public debate that deems the genre as too sexual or argues that the genre encourages 'bad' behavior such as drugs and partying. Teenagers tend to seek these topics in the media, as their parents are most likely to disapprove of this behavior (Bleakley et al., 2008). Teens tend to go to teen dramas for advice on taboo topics and struggles, as television already has a script on how to control these situations (Feasey, 2006). Hence, parents have served as less of an information source for teenagers in recent years. Teen dramas that cover these topics serve as escapism for the viewers. This escapism results from the audience viewing the characters as untouchable and often living a desirable life (Wilks, 2019). Taking the power of television shows on teens into account, it stresses the importance of researching whether the controversial sub-culture remained to be a started in the representation of the female gender.

2.2.3. Gender Representation

As mentioned earlier, the representation of gender in television has widely been studied. A study by Gerding and Signorielli (2014) revealed how male characters outnumber females by a factor of 2 to 1. This study argued how the model of social cognitive theory suggests teens will develop a mindset where men are more important than women. In television, women occupy less significant jobs with less serious conditions than males. This is seen in the number of male writers for teen dramas and their female characters. This is agreed with by

Powers (2004) as her research revealed how male characters tremendously outnumber female characters and are also presented more prominently. Male characters are portrayed as independent, athletic, responsible, and technical. This is agreed with by Van Damme & Bauwel (2012), who revealed how male characters talk twice as much as female characters, and them being the center of the majority of storylines due to their violent and emotionless self. As female adolescents are most vulnerable to media exposure, most research is focused on the representation of the female gender.

As female teens are the most susceptible to the depicted ideologies presented on screens, stressing the importance of an accurate and healthy portrayal of the female gender (Behm-Morawitz & Mastro, 2008). Nonetheless, according to Gerding and Signorielli (2014), females are given little significant characterization and less serious storylines. The serious female storylines are treated more comedically to downplay the event's seriousness (Gerding & Signorielli, 2014). This slightly contradicts Behm-Morawitz and Mastro's (2008) argument, which states that female characters appear more emotional, affectionate, sensitive, and frail, resulting in the characters creating more dramatic storylines. Nonetheless, the female audiences will adopt the antics of the female characters provided in the shows for their difficulties in real life. Females are often portrayed in less prestigious jobs or stay-at-home moms (Powers, 2004). Many female characters are often portrayed as catty, especially towards their female friends. Female characters are often portrayed to hold other females more accountable than males. This showcases how teen dramas portray a form of misogyny. The female characters often fight each other and hold them to a higher standard (Kluch & Schuck, 2020). As female adolescents are sensitive to the depiction of their gender on screen, this supports them to have a misogynistic mindset (Glascok, 2001). Sex is often used in negative themes concerning the female characters. Fear of losing a significant other if one does not have sexual intercourse is an often used trope (Kelly, 2010). Teen dramas portray virginity as a shame when one has turned 16 years old. The focus on sex remains in teen dramas by viewing sexual intercourse as an indicator of a healthy relationship (Dhaenens et al., 2016). Various storylines include the female characters portraying themselves as sexy for the male character through clothing to get their attention (Kelly, 2010). However, when a female is viewed as more sexual than others, she is often disgraced. A character is supposed to have had sexual intercourse, disregarding their feelings (Dhaenens et al., 2016). As a result of sex as a prominent theme in teen dramas, teenagers have become more interested and curious about the topic of sex in comparison to their ancestors, regardless of their ethnicity (Kelly, 2010).

According to Kluch & Schuck (2020), television productions are adapting to recent developments surrounding support for equal gender representation. The number of women on television worldwide has rapidly increased in the last few years. As a result, more female characters are in teen dramas with more feminist tropes (Kluch & Schuck, 2020). However, research indicates how a majority of media industries are practicing purplewashing. Purplewashing refers to people, companies, and other organizations aiming to appeal to gender equality. Companies are using feminist values at the convenience of enhancing their goodwill without actually supporting gender equality (Martinez-Fierro & Garza-Veloz, 2022). Media companies frequently use purplewashing to hide their misogyny, objectification, sexualization, and violence towards the female gender (Casás, 2018). Purplewashing is a method to instrumentalize feminism to justify discrimination toward the female gender. Martinez-Fierro & Garza-Veloz (2022) elaborate on this view by mentioning how media uses purplewashing as a marketing technique without changing much of their antics. As teen dramas have a strong impact on their female audience, it is necessary to research whether teen dramas participate in purplewashing without changing much of their negative stereotypical characterization.

2.3. The Societal Discourse – From gender quota's to #MeToo

Understanding the social construction of the environment of teen dramas and the representation of the female gender is essential. As mentioned in the previous section, females are outnumbered by males in television. Television productions often feature predominantly male writers, directors, producers, and actors (Gerding & Signorielli, 2014). Women occupy fewer television industry positions (Sink & Mastro, 2017). This is reflected in the storylines depicted in the teen dramas. Research by Sink and Mastro (2017) revealed that males more often downplay female storylines or create unrealistic ones. Therefore, much of the teen dramas are more male gaze focused, reflecting the production room.

This gender equality resulted in a public debate over the treatment of women on television. In the past decades, much public debate has arisen, demanding equal job opportunities and treatment for women (Powers, 2004). This debate has resulted in various countries introducing gender equality quotas and, eventually, the #MeToo-movement (Corfield, 2017). It is necessary to understand the public discourse surrounding gender equality to comprehend how the female gender is portrayed in teen dramas.

2.3.1. Gender Quota

The debate regarding gender equality and representation has gotten much attention in the past decades. Gender quotas are a tool used by governments and countries to increase the representation of females in companies, often by setting rules on a minimum percentage of females in a company (International IDEA, 2021). As mentioned before, women are underrepresented in parties and companies globally. Therefore, various countries have started to debate whether or not to implement a quota. However, the debate surrounding gender quotas emerged in the 1970s. Feminists criticize the male-dominated parliaments and their limited opportunities (Dahlerup & Freidenvall, 2005). Franceschet et al. (2012) stated four reasons for parliaments to adopt gender quotas: equal representation, marketing the party as more female friendly, responding to the diversification of the society, and transnational norm diffusion. Globally, there are four different gender quotas: aspirant quotas, legislative quotas, reserved seats, and voluntary quotas (Ahrens et al., 2020; Franceschet et al., 2012). The first implementation of gender quotas emerged in the 1990s, with over 100 countries implementing them in contemporary times.

This research is focused on teen dramas broadcasted in The Netherlands. The Netherlands has been attempting to introduce a legislative gender quota since 2010; however, much public opposition is stalling the installation (Plantenga & Remery, 2015). In 2020, the E.U. implemented a gender quota that media institutions must meet to obtain financial funding. The Netherlands officially introduced its voluntary gender quota in 2020, making them one of the last in Europe (BBC, n.d.). However, The Netherlands did not meet the requirement of a minimum of 30% female company employees, which lasted for several years without repercussions. However, in January 2022, The Netherlands introduced an ingrowth quota. This ingrowth quota entails that companies' boards are more strictly monitored on their gender figures and transparency. As of now, The board of a company must consist of 1/3rd woman.

Besides the Dutch gender quotas, the teen dramas also have to do with the gender quotas of other countries. The E.U. also introduced a voluntary quota and advised its countries to implement it. Norway was the first European country to introduce a gender quota on company boards, followed by Spain, France, and Iceland. They implemented legislative quotas, with a minimum of 40% of female employees (International IDEA, 2021). The U.K. had proposed a gender quota in 2011 to ensure that women would receive the same treatment as their male counterparts in the workplace. The quota was finally introduced in 2015, making them one of the first countries. The quota stated that at least 40% of the employees must be

female. The quota, however, has never been legalized and remains on a voluntary status (Ahrens et al., 2020). Nevertheless, the BBC introduced a gender quota in 2020, whereby the split must be 50/50 among their productions, including cast and crew (BBC, n.d.).

As of 2020, the E.U. implemented funding guidelines through its Media and Creative Europe department (MEDIA). The MEDIA has provided several frameworks for media companies to adhere to in order for them to have a balance in gender equality. Companies adhering to these guidelines can get a bigger funding budget. Besides the frameworks, MEDIA provides training for companies to get an insight into gender equality. Overall, media companies in Europe have seen an increase in female employees over the past five years. As media companies worldwide are implementing and adhering to gender quotas, possibly more women are included in producing television. It is, therefore, necessary to see whether the possible inclusion of more women will change the characterization of female characters.

2.3.2. #MeToo Movement

In addition to the political discussion about women's inequality in media, the MeToo movement has also contributed to the public discourse. Founded by Tarana Burke in 2006, the MeToo movement aims to empower women who have experienced sexual abuse, assault, or rape, especially in the workplace. The social movement aims to empower those through empathy and solidarity (Burke, 2022). In 2017, the Me Too movement found much public recognition, with the hashtag #metoo going viral on social media. This directly resulted from the exposure and sexual allegations against Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein (Kluch & Schuck, 2020). Women began to spread the hashtag together by sharing their stories and experiences of sexual conduct behind the scenes of Hollywood (Burke, 2022). Over six months, millions of people began to express their experiences globally, especially those in the media sector (Kluch & Schuck, 2020). As a result of the movement, several people have been exposed for their sexual misconduct. Publicly and not publicly. Examples are Bill Cosby and R. Kelly, who are convicted of sexual abuse.

Additionally, the MeToo movement did not solely appear in Hollywood. Through social media, the movement achieved global recognition. Consequently, various countries had their own form of the movement. Several countries had their version of the hashtag. For France, it became #BalanceTonPorc (DenounceYourPig), and Italy had #QuellaVoilaChe (TheTimeThat). This global attention resulted in significantly more exposure to sexual abuse. In Belgium, numerous women shared their experiences with TV producers Bart de Pauw,

which resulted in de Pauw being fired and prosecuted. In The Netherlands, many underage females came forward about sexual power abuse by producers at The Voice of Holland, who were also fired. As of today, the MeToo movement continues to help and build a community while aiming to expand its focus to women who are queer, disabled, and women of color (Burke, 2022).

According to Corfield (2017), the MeToo movement resulted in more public discourse about the portrayal and representation of women on television. Audiences became more aware of the female disadvantage in media as well as how women are depicted differently than males. As a result of the public discourse and gender quotas, production companies became more aware of their female representation. This has resulted in a more balanced treatment of females in the industry. Corfield (2017) states how television productions have begun to hire more women behind the scenes, eventually leading to an improved representation of females on screen. This contradicts Wilks (2019), who states that in recent years, the industry has presented itself in a feminist manner while remaining male-dominated, still employing few women in prominent positions. This is reflected back into the storylines, as there is an increase in female storylines. However, more and partly of the storylines are romantic without autonomy for the female character (Kelly, 2010). This is in line with the previously mentioned concept of Purplewashing. Wilks (2019) claims that sexual abuse remains a dominant culture in the media industry. Females are still abused or sexualized by higher-ups. Kelly (2010) further elaborates that women are treated to lose their jobs if they do not concede to sexual activities. The sexual depiction of the female gender remains common. Worldwide, specific females under 25 experience these issues majority (Gerding & Signorielli, 2014). As teen dramas mainly consist of a cast under 25, it is necessary to research whether the depiction of females has changed due to the public discourse. Based on the social discourse research, it is revealed how the implementation of gender quotas correlates positively with the public discourse surrounding the MeToo movement. Therefore, a theory can be formed that the correlation is reflected in teen dramas, eventually leading to female characters being depicted equally to their male counterparts. If so, female characters are depicted differently before 2010 compared to later seasons, as the EU started to advise gender quotas in 2010, and the MeToo movement started solely to attract attention. This research provides an insight into research this topic.

3. RESEARCHING WOMEN IN TEEN DRAMA'S

The portrayal of female characters in teen dramas is studied by conducting a qualitative research design via the Multimodel Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA). This section defines the choice of research design together with the legitimization of the method. Furthermore, the corresponding steps of the research procedure are elaborated on. The section concludes with the correlative ethical considerations for this research design.

3.1. Research Design

In order to research the portrayal of females in teen dramas throughout the years, a qualitative study has been executed. A qualitative method has been chosen as this form of research enables one to focus on exploring and formulating a hypothesis by analyzing and interpreting the given subject (Çoşkun, 2015). The qualitative analysis is conducted using the Multimodel Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) method to answer the research question. MCDA has been chosen as the method of conduct as it provides a systematic approach to study not only linguistic texts but visual texts as well. It aims to understand the social structures of problems communicated through language and images (Çoşkun, 2015). As a result, there is a comprehended understanding of the portrayal of female characters in teen drama as script and cinematography are analyzed. Discourse analysis helps researchers uncover the motivation behind a text by allowing them to view a problem from a higher stance. It helps to study the underlying meaning of a spoken or written text as it considers the social and historical contexts. The analysis highlights what is being voiced and what is being silenced. Therefore, it is necessary to have in-depth knowledge of the broader environment of the teen dramas (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Herewith, there is a better understanding of the portrayal of female characters in teen dramas, as the research and social discourse are taken into account when analyzing the teen dramas.

MCDA is executed by conducting a fundamental lexical analysis of the episode, followed by an analysis of visual semiotic choices. By this means, an episode's script and cinematography are included. The lexical analysis looks at the meaning of the words used by the characters concerning their representation of gender. The visual semiotic analysis reveals what the characters' actions are trying to communicate (Çoşkun, 2015). As MCDA covers the metaphorical expressions, latent and manifest content will be included in this analysis (Powers, 2004).

3.2 Sample

In order to have a comprehensive idea of how female characters are represented in teen dramas, the television shows have been chosen based on a sample criteria list. This sample criteria list included:

- Has to be aired before and after 2011
- Has to be a long running television show, at least five seasons
- Frequently watched in The Netherlands
- Has to have teen drama as a sub-genre within teen show genre.

This list is constructed based on the focus of this research. As previously mentioned in the theoretical framework, after 2010 much public discourse arose after the #MeToo movement and the introduction of gender quotas in various countries. Based on this information, it is interesting to analyze whether these public discourses will translate into the depiction of female characters in teen drama shows. Four time periods have been selected to comprehensively analyze whether there are changes in the depiction of female characters throughout the years. These four time periods consist of:

1. The first season
2. The last season aired in 2010
3. The first season aired in 2011
4. The last season

The first season is analyzed to have a detailed image of how the female characters are portrayed at the beginning of the teen shows. Ultimately, a comparison can be made with the later seasons to understand whether and how the depictions have changed. The seasons aired in 2010 and 2011 are chosen to be analyzed to determine if there is a potential direct reflection of the introduction of gender quota laws and the debate surrounding gender equality. The last season of the teen shows are analyzed as this represents the most contemporary season of the teen shows. By analyzing the most recent season, a comparison is drawn up with the first season to see the potential differences in the depiction of the female characters.

Long-running television shows is a criteria for this analysis. By analyzing solely long-running teen shows, a more thorough analysis is executed on whether the portrayal of female characters has changed throughout the decades. As long-running television shows more often consist of the same characters or premise, a more precise distinction can be noted on whether they have changed their depiction. For this research, long-running television shows refer to television shows with at least five seasons. A minimum of five seasons have been chosen as often five seasons are over a time period of five years. In this manner, at least half a decade is represented in teen shows.

Frequently watched teen shows in The Netherlands are analyzed for this research. Frequently watched television shows are chosen as criteria as this research focuses on the teen television shows which were aired in The Netherlands. The Netherlands has been chosen as the focus for this research, as it is one of the last countries to implement a gender quota in business in media. In order to narrow the shows down to popular television shows, websites such as Kijkonderzoek and IMDB were consulted.

Lastly, the teen television shows must be within the teen drama sub-genre. Teen dramas have been chosen as the primary focus of this study as the characters must deal with the dramatized consequences of their friendships, romances, and issues in their day-to-day lives. Much of the storylines are often ongoing story arcs, spanning several episodes. It is more striking to see whether the women are portrayed differently in the dramatic storylines than in teen comedies, where storylines are often not deep or span over several episodes. To conduct an in-depth analysis of the depiction of women in the teen drama, 60 episodes from four television series will be analyzed. It is chosen to analyze 12 episodes of 1 hour per television show, in order to conduct a comprehensive study on a television show. According to previous conducted research, three episodes are plenty to have a representative result for representation (Manganello et al., 2008). Hence, per time frame, three episodes have been analyzed. As there are four timeframes, this adds up to 12 episodes per show. A total of four television shows will be analyzed to have plenty of data to depict how female characters are portrayed in teen dramas comprehensively. By analyzing four teen dramas, generalization, in conclusion, will be less likely as different television shows are used. The teen dramas are chosen as a result of random sampling. Random sampling refers to the sampling technique where each possible sample has an equal chance of being chosen for the research. Random sampling has been chosen to have an unbiased representation of teen dramas, which ultimately also helps minimize the chance of generalization. This way, the study has a higher chance of validity (Emerson, 2015).

3.3. Operationalization

The units of analysis for the study need to be specified. As mentioned above, teen dramas will be analyzed to comprehend the portrayal of the female gender in television. The teen dramas are selected through the random sampling method. By consulting the aforementioned websites, four television shows have been selected. These shows are *90210*, *Skins*, *Spangas*, and *Degrassi*. Additional information on these teen dramas is located in Table 1. The episodes of *Spangas* are half as long as the other three television shows. Therefore, the double number of episodes will be analyzed to maintain the validity of the study. A clear overview of the analyzing method can be found in Table 2. From season 10 to 14, *Degrassi: The Next Generation* renamed itself simply *Degrassi*. From 14 on, it rebranded itself to *Degrassi: Next Class*, followed by five additional seasons. For this research, the show is referred to as *Degrassi*. Since season 14, *Spangas* has renamed itself *Spangas: De Campus*; however, for this research, it will be referred to as *Spangas*.

Table 1 Overview of television shows to be analyzed.

TV-Show	Running time	Network	Seasons	Created by	Synopsis
<i>Spangas</i>	2007 - 2022	KRO-NCRV (PSB)	15 seasons (episodes)	Anya Koek (Female)	We follow the lives of a group of students at their high school, Spangalis College, as they experience relatable, exciting adventures. They all have their own personal stories of love, friendship, family, loneliness, sorrow and discovery.
<i>Degrassi</i>	2001 - 2017	TeenNick and MTV (commercial)	18 seasons (425 episodes)	Yan Moore (Male), Linda Schuyler (Female)	The lives of the kids at Degrassi Community School dealing with the serious and sometimes taboo issues that plague teenagers.
<i>Skins</i>	2007 - 2013	E4	7 (61 episodes)	Bryan Elsey (Male), Jamie Brittain (Male)	The story of a group of British teens who are trying to grow up and find love and happiness despite

					questionable parenting and teachers who more want to be friends (and lovers) rather than authority figures.
90210	2008 - 2013	The CW	5 (114 episodes)	Darren Star (Male), Rob Thomas (Male), Gabe Sachs (Male), Jeff Judah (Male)	A Kansas family relocates to Beverly Hills, where their two children adapt to the infamous social drama of West Beverly Hills High.

Table 2 *Analyzed seasons and episodes*

	Teen dramas			
	90210	<i>Skins</i>	<i>Degrassi</i>	<i>Spangas</i>
First season	3 episodes Season 1 aired 2008 - 2009	3 episodes Season 1 aired 2007	3 episodes Season 1 aired 2001 - 2002	6 episodes Season 1 aired 2007
The last season aired in 2010	3 episodes Season 2 aired 2009 - 2010	3 episodes Season 4 aired 2010	3 episodes Season 9 aired 2009 - 2010	6 episodes Season 3 aired 2009 - 2010
The first season aired in 2011	3 episodes Season 3 aired 2011 – 2012	3 episodes Season 5 aired 2011	3 episodes Season 10 aired 2011 - 2012	6 episodes Season 4 aired 2011 - 2012
Most recent season	3 episodes Season 5 aired 2012 - 2013	3 episodes Season 7 aired 2013	3 episodes Season 18 aired 2017	6 episodes Season 15 aired 2021 - 2022

To get a sense of the television shows, the researcher needs to familiarize themselves with the synopsis and the main and supporting characters. To follow Robinson et al.'s (2008) method of conduct, the main characters are defined as those listed on the show's website. Supporting characters are defined as recurring characters in the television series that appear at least in two episodes of a season. The database IMDB is used to decide the main and

supporting characters and acquire additional information. IMDB is chosen as the main source as the subjects provide much of the data on the website. This study does not include characters that do not meet these requirements or did not appear in the episode.

3.4. Data-collection

After the units of analysis had been particularized, a set of pre-established categories were created (Çoşkun, 2015). By reviewing the key findings from the theoretical framework, the pre-established categories can be conceptualized using a coding frame. This coding frame was tested through an unstructured viewing of a random episode. It was decided to follow the coding frame loosely while analyzing the episodes to avoid missing anything other than the theoretical frameworks suggested.

According to MCDA, three layers should be analyzed for each episode. Firstly, the semantic layer was analyzed by looking at the meaning of words. Secondly, the syntactic layer has been analyzed by understanding what is said underneath the text. Lastly, the performative layer has been analyzed by looking at the visual aspects (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Open coding was used as it aims to describe and classify the texts which were analyzed. The open coding process was executed by making notes and codes of each layer. The identical method of conduct was used for the 60 analyzed episodes.

3.5. Data-analysis

After the open coding process, the codes have been reviewed, and the data has been gathered into similar groupings. During the reviewing process of the open coding, the aforementioned coding frame was consulted loosely. Axial coding has been conducted to reveal the connection between the various codes. Axial coding is chosen as this technique supports creating linkages between the analyzed data. The data was analyzed by axial coding with the help of the coding frame. After the axial coding process, the connections were reviewed again. By reviewing the codes and groups, a correlation was found between the representation of gender in teen dramas and the appointed time frames. After reviewing the codes, the results were written up to answer the research question. The results were connected with the aforementioned theoretical framework to reveal additional components of the analyzed data.

The coding procedure was reliable as one coder assembled the data. This is a benefit as the single researcher reported all the practices. As a result, the same standards are held in interpreting the data.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

The representation of the female gender can be a sensitive subject. It is ethically essential that this research provides an independent review of the episodes without a bias (Pietilä et al., 2020). Due to the social value that the research possesses, it is of ethical importance that an independent review is conducted. This has been maintained by transparency about the process and handling of all the data. It is of ethical importance that with each episode, the same actions are conducted from the same thinking point of view. Consequently, it is a benefit of this research that one researcher will carry out it (Pietilä et al., 2020). This increased the chance of all the data being processed in like manner.

4. RESULTS

In order to present the findings of the analysis in an orderly overview and eventually answer the research question, this section will discuss the main themes that resulted from analyzing the television episodes. The four main themes are: Behind the Scenes, Importance of Appearance, Stereotypical Behavior, and The Power of Autonomy. These themes have been chosen to be analyzed based on their notable frequent pattern of appearing in the analyzed episodes. Each theme will be elaborated on with the use of sub-themes to showcase the interrelationships between them through the different time periods. In order to get an understanding of the portrayal of women in teen dramas, the themes will be detailed with the use of quotes and snippets of the fieldnotes made by the researcher during the analysis. Furthermore, the findings of this study will be linked back to the previously assembled literature framework in the discussion. By connecting the theoretical and empirical findings, connections can be established to further analyze prior arguments stated in the academic literature.

4.1. Behind the scenes

Before discussing the main themes that emerged from the coding process, the creators of television shows need to be discussed. As Wilks (2019) mentioned, the television industry is predominantly male-dominated. Wilks (2019) noted how the male dominance in the production houses is reflected in the television series. For the teen drama genre, this is not necessarily reflected in the number of female characters, as they generally have a majority of female characters. However, it is reflected in the storylines and character-building of the female characters, which will further be elaborated on in the following passage. From 2011 on out, various countries began to implement gender quotas. As the number of females in the production area affects the characters, it is essential to dissect whether there has been a change in the number of women in the writing room and female directors for the teen dramas.

Table 3 showcases the number of female writers in the analyzed episodes.

Unfortunately, no information can be found on the seasons from 2010 and 2011 for *Spangas*. By putting the four analyzed teen dramas side by side, it can be stated that there has been a rather turbulent difference in the number of female writers. From the first season on, there has been a decline in the number of female writers. However, there has been an increase seen in the last seasons. *Spangas* is the only show that had its first season solely written by a woman and its last season written exclusively by males. *Skins* and *Degrassi* both display

improvements in the number of female writers. As *Skins* is a British series, the amount of female writers is presumably a consequence of the introduction of gender quotas in the United Kingdom in 2011. *90210* showcases no changes in the number of female writers. Two out of three episodes are co-written by a female. Even though there is a slight positive difference in the number of females, it must be noted that the writing room remains predominantly male as women are mainly co-writing episodes.

To summarize, it can be concluded that the implementation of gender quotas and the public uproar had a presumable effect on the number of female writers for teen dramas. There is a positive development in the number of female writings for teen drama episodes. Therefore, the findings indicate how the amount of women as writers of episodes correlates lightly positively with the changes in public discourse on female equality. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the majority of the female-written episodes are co-written with males.

Table 3 *The number of female writers in the analyzed episodes.*

	Teen Dramas				Total
	<i>90210</i>	<i>Skins</i>	<i>Degrassi</i>	<i>Spangas</i>	
First season	2/3 all co-written with males (aired 2008 – 2009)	0/3 (aired 2007 – 2008)	2/3 all co-written with males (aired 2001 – 2002)	6/6 all co-written with males (aired 2007 – 2008)	10/15 (67%)
The last season aired in 2010	2/3 (aired 2009 – 2010)	0/3 (aired 2009 – 2010)	2/3 all co-written with males (aired 2009 – 2010)	- (aired 2009 – 2010)	4/9 (44%)
The first season aired in 2011	2/3 (aired 2010 – 2011)	1/3 (aired 2010 – 2011)	0/3 (aired 2010 – 2011)	- (aired 2010 – 2011)	3/9 (33%)
	2/3 all co-	2/3	3/3 all co-written	0/6	7/15

Last season	written with males (aired 2012 – 2013)	(aired 2012 – 2013)	with males (aired 2014 – 2015)	(aired 2021 – 2022)	(46%)
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Table 4 showcases the number of females who directed the analyzed episodes. Unfortunately, no information can be found on the season from 2010 for *Spangas*. By putting the four analyzed teen dramas side by side, it can be stated that there is a rather turbulent difference in the number of female directors. The number of female directors increased rapidly. Remarkably, the seasons from 2011 are more and partly directed by females. However, the amount dropped severely for the later season. The increase of female directors in 2011 could presumably reflect society's call for more females in the television industry and the beginning of the introduction of gender quotas. *90210* is the solely show that displays an overall increase of female directors. The first season was directed by one female director and the latter by two females. Both *Degrassi* and *Spangas* showcase that no female directors were incorporated in their last season, while various females solely directed their 2011 season. In summary, findings indicate how the amount of women as writers of episodes correlates positively with the changes in public discourse on female equality. However, this is seemingly not the case for the number of female directors.

Table 4 *The number of female directors in the analyzed episodes.*

	Teen Dramas				Total
	<i>90210</i>	<i>Skins</i>	<i>Degrassi</i>	<i>Spangas</i>	
First season	1/3 (aired 2008 – 2009)	0/3 (aired 2007 – 2008)	1/3 (aired 2001 – 2002)	0/6 (aired 2007 – 2008)	2/15 (13,33%)
The last season aired in 2010	1/3 (aired 2009 – 2010)	2/3 (aired 2009 – 2010)	1/3 (aired 2009 – 2010)	- (aired 2009 – 2010)	3/9 (33%)

The first season aired in 2011	2/3 (aired 2010 – 2011)	3/3 (aired 2010 – 2011)	3/3 (aired 2010 – 2011)	6/6 (aired 2010 – 2011)	14/15 (93%)
Last season	2/3 (aired 2012 – 2013)	1/3 (aired 2012 – 2013)	0/3 (aired 2014 – 2015)	0/6 (aired 2021 – 2022)	3/15 (20%)

To conclude, the data reveals a slight increase in the number of female writers for teen dramas. This is in line with the previous statements made by Corfield (2017), who argued that more females are involved in the production of teen dramas. However, according to the data, it remains turbulent. The number of female directors increased rapidly until 2011. According to Corfield (2017), this results from the increasing public discourse surrounding female treatment in Hollywood. However, after 2011 the number dropped severely, which reveals that this research data is more in line with the statements made by Wilks (2019). The television industry remains male-dominated while trying to present itself in a more feminist manner. This is in line with the concept of purple washing, as the production is not gender representative.

4.2. Importance of Appearance

The most common theme was the theme of appearance. Female characters in teen dramas are repeatedly depicted as regularly being preoccupied with their looks. In addition, the female characters are frequently judged on how they look. This is displayed in how much they adhere to feminine appearance standards or what they wear. The pressure on the appearance of female characters also appears in the insecurity and the sexualization. This theme reveals how teen dramas emphasize the importance of appearance for female characters. This topic is explored through the sub-themes of The ideal female look, Adhering to a standard, and Suggestive Objectification.

4.2.1. The ideal female look

The data reveals that teen dramas present appearance as a central role in the lives of female adolescents. The genre displays a specific image of the ideal beauty standard for teenage girls. The teen dramas execute this by its casting and the specific attire the characters model. There is, however, a slight difference in the appearance of the various character stereotypes. Nevertheless, these stereotypes still adhere to a general beauty ideal. By analyzing the earlier seasons, three separate female character appearances emerged. Table 5 showcases what the appearance stereotypes of these three female characters entail.

Table 5 *Appearance stereotypes*

‘Nice Girl’	‘Cool Girl’	‘Popular Girl’
Brown hair	Mostly Brown hair	Blond
Small length	Middle length	Tall
Caucasian ethnicity	Caucasian ethnicity	Caucasian ethnicity
Thin	Thin	Thin (skinniest)
No Trendy clothing	Have their own alternative trendy style. Often quirky.	Most trendy clothing
Often fully covered	Have their own alternative trendy style. Often quirky.	Scantily dressed
Often underdressed (expect at a gala event. They often look the ‘prettiest’)	Have their own alternative trendy style. Often quirky.	Over-dressed
Dressed in neutral colors	Mostly dressed in darker colors	Mostly dressed in pink

Doe-eyed	Does not have specific facial features	Often has fox-like features
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Each analyzed television show has followed these stereotypes and their characteristics, showing that the teen dramas portray a specific beauty ideal. This has changed little in the teen dramas in the later seasons. Table 6 illustrates, per time period, how the three main female characters fit into the given beauty standard. A different teen drama demonstrates a time period to showcase a complete image of the stereotype.

Table 6 *Appearance stereotypes in the analyzed teen dramas*

	‘Nice Girl’	‘Cool Girl’	‘Popular Girl’
First season (illustrated by <i>90210</i>)			
2010 season (illustrated by <i>Degrassi</i>)			









			
2011 season (illustrated by <i>Skins</i>)			
Last season (illustrated by <i>Spangas</i>)			

Table 6 demonstrates that all four television shows loosely follow the blueprint for the stereotypes. In the character and storyline theme, the corresponding character characteristics these stereotypes entail. By portraying the most popular character as the thinnest and thus the prettiest, teen dramas normalize an image in which teens must be skinny to become popular. Even the 'nice girl', who is often unpopular, is portrayed as a thin girl with big doe-like eyes. With this, teen dramas establish a distinct look for girls, regardless of the social status they

associate with. The table showcases little difference in diverse casting regarding ethnicity, as seen in the casting for the two later seasons. However, it is remarkable to state that series only adhere to the same ideal. Likewise, two television shows had actors in their late teens cast as adolescents. One television show had actors in their early twenties, and one show had cast actors in their mid-20s. This difference in age versus the accurate ages of the characters did not change over the seasons.

Previous research revealed how teen dramas create a sub-culture for their audience with their own set of characteristics and appearance. This research data reveal the blueprint to which the teen dramas adhere. The actresses have a slim physique, Caucasian, and often glamorized look through their clothes and make-up (Van Damme & Bauwel, 2012). According to Gillian (2008), the look is part of the appeal for teenagers. However, unrealistic beauty standards negatively affect the sense of self-worth of the female audience (Dhaenens et al., 2016). The data of this research is overall in line with previously conducted research.

To summarize, the data reveals how teen dramas follow a specific blueprint for their characters' appearance, reflected in their casting. By adhering to the beauty ideals, teen dramas fortify the normalized beauty standards for female adolescent viewers. This depiction of beauty has not changed throughout the years in teen dramas.

4.2.2. Adhering to a standard

The data reveals how teen dramas picture appearance as one of the most important aspects of a woman. Much attention is given to the female characters their appearance by themselves or their loved ones. The genre portrays how caring about appearance is coupled with a sense of self-worth. The pressure on the appearance to be taken seriously is showcased in the first seasons of the teen dramas. This pressure primarily occurs when a girl desires to look good for a guy, a date, a party, or another type of event. In short, the characters want to look nice to others to be noticed as better individuals. For instance, this occurs with the character of Ashley in the first season of *Degrassi*. Ashley is running for school president and wants to look suitable for the election. To illustrate, the fieldnotes from the episode:

Girl angrily knocking on the bathroom door

“Toby come out, I’m in a hurry! I need to shower. I have the election today remember”

“You have no humor, only you care about your looks” (said her brother)

“Stop, I really want to win this so let me in”

(*Degrassi*, season 1, episode 3)

The emphasis on looking good for an event is subsequently illustrated by the character Jal in the first season of *Skins*. She has a music performance, and her teacher asks her to look feminine for the concert. She is struggling with what this entails. She has a conversation about this with her friend Michelle:

“why do girls have to wear dresses for a competition? I just play an instrument”

“because we have to fucking look good for society. You need to learn some tips though on how to look good. You always wear the same stuff. Looking good is literally the only thing I’m good at. Let me learn you some tricks”

Girl helps her friend with picking out outfits for her performance.

Girl looks insecure about her looks.

(*Skins*, season 1, episode 3)

The cases of Ashley and Jal display how much emphasis is placed on the female appearance to be taken seriously by society. Jal's example showcases how much emphasis others place on her looks around her, while Ashley's instance illustrates how much importance she sets on her appearance. However, by analyzing Ashley's semantic layer, her motivation stems from previous outside influences as well. An image depicts that a woman must adhere to a particular beauty ideal to be taken seriously by society.

Another example of a female adhering to a standard is in the 2011 season of *Skins*. Frankie does not have the stereotypical ideal female body. Frankie's appearance tends more toward a heterogeneous body. As Frankie's body does not necessarily have stereotypical female features, she was bullied at school. For example, an instance in which Frankie was bullied for her body:

Girl got bullied at her previous school because she did not look like a girl.

Bullies made a website to document their bully antics

Picture of Frankie in her underwear, with presumably a milkshake thrown onto her

The text “Frankie got no fanny” written all over it.

(*Skins*, season 5, episode 1)

The example of Frankie is linked to the aforementioned sub-theme of the Ideal Beauty Image. Frankie's appearance does not adhere to the ideal female teen's appearance; therefore, she is held accountable and bullied. The examples of Frankie, Jal, and Ashley are prominent examples in the earlier seasons. The emphasis on appearance remains a normalized pressure for female characters in recent seasons. This is evidenced by the case of Yael in the most recent season of *Degrassi*. Her boyfriend, Hunter, removed her armpit hair from pictures. Yael confronts him on the matter:

“You had armpit hair so I changed it for you”

“I don’t look like myself now in the picture”

“No, you look great now”

“Why is my armpit hair a problem?”

“Well, are you not embarrassed?”

“No, I am not embarrassed of my armpit hair. I don’t want to shave it”

“Well, you are a girl. Girls are supposed to shave everything right?”

“I don’t shave my legs either. You think because I am a girl I should shave everything?”

“yeah, you should not like it. I want you to shave it. It’s disgusting”

“Are people are talking about it? Maybe you are right.”

(*Degrassi*, season 4, episode 3)

Yael's example shows how society is expected to look like a specific beauty image for women. In this case, teenage girls are expected to shave their body hair as it is considered disgusting. Teen dramas normalize adhering to these beauty standards, with Yael ending the conversation with her boyfriend when she realizes others gossip about her. The semantic layer of her realization can be concluded that Yael is embarrassed to learn her appearance is being discussed.

To conclude, teen dramas impose a particular beauty ideal on young girls and are held accountable if they do not meet this standard. This has not changed over the years, as the data reveals that teen dramas are forming standard appearance stereotypes that females need to maintain to be taken seriously. This is in line with the previously mentioned research conducted by Dhaenens et al. (2016) and Osberg (2004).

4.2.3. Suggestive Objectification

As stated in the previous sub-theme, much emphasis is placed on the female characters' appearance. The results indicate that much of this emphasis is shown in a suggestive manner. From the results, it is clear that the teen dramas portray adolescent teens' appearance as an object that can be sexualized. The analyzed shows present this suggestive objectification through the camera work, the characters' clothing, and the way they are discussed.

The results indicate that a majority of subjective objectification in the performative layer stems from the teen shows cinematography. This entails the camera filming the female characters by emphasizing their bodies. To illustrate, field notes from the first seasons:

Camera lingers on girl in underwear, not on fully clothed friends

Camera zooms into a picture of a girl with her breasts. Twice.

Camera only shows a naked female in the room. Not showing the others in the room she's talking to

Camera zooms in and starts playing slowed footage of a girl in lingerie walking

Results state that this method of sexually emphasizing the female body remained frequent in the 2010 and 2011 seasons. On the contrary, results reveal that this method of filming did not appear in teen dramas' last seasons. There was no evidence that cinematography amplified the suggestive emphasis on the female body. It can be concluded that the female body formerly was filmed suggestively; however, in contemporary teen dramas, they are presented in an adequate state.

In addition, the appearance of the characters are emphasized through their clothing. The results demonstrate that the teen dramas often present the female characters in scanty clothing to make them appear sexy and confident. This frequently occurred in the first and 2010 seasons:

Girl scantily dressed for her first date (very cropped top and shorts)

Friends compliment mom on wearing a good outfit (she's the one most scantily dressed)

Girl in her underwear while opening the door

girl looks skimpy dressed for her boyfriend

Majority of the girls at the audition are in few clothes

Scantily dressed is used as an indicator that you are young and wild

Results state that sexually emphasizing the female body through clothing was frequent in the first two analyzed seasons. On the contrary, results reveal that this method of dressing the female characters did not appear in the 2011 and the final seasons of the teen dramas. There was no evidence that the way the females dressed amplified the suggestive emphasis on their appearance. It can be concluded that the female body previously was sexualized through the use of clothing; however, in contemporary teen dramas, they are presented in adequate clothing.

The results indicate how the female body was often discussed or addressed in a suggestive manner, emphasizing the female body's appearance. Research shows how this mainly appeared when other male characters discussed the females. This frequently appeared in the first and 2010 seasons of the teen dramas. An example is given in the first season of *Skins*, in which Jal and her male friends see her in a dress for the first time:

Girl is dressed in a revealing outfit.

“Jal, is that you in there? You look cleaned up tonight.”

All five boys keep staring at girl her breasts

“Stop looking at them”

“But they are a bit out there right? Your boobs look so good”

“Aren’t you gay?”

“Yeah im gay but your boobs are so good”

“I am going to dream about these tonight”

“Shouldn’t you respect a womans body, muslim boy?”

“Oh I’m respecting your body so well”

“What’s keeping your boobs up? They are so pointy, I need to touch them. I am going to die if I don’t touch them”

“Ew. Chris, what the fuck”

“Good job cleaning up Jal, where did you hide those two bad boys”

(*Skins*, season 1, episode 3)

This fragment illustrates the suggestive emphasis which is put on the body of Jal. Her male friends sexualize her body and make several suggestive comments, while Jal offers little resistance to these comments. As the results showcase, it can be stated that teen dramas normalized this behavior in their earlier seasons.

The results show that this suggestive emphasis is still present in the most recent seasons of the teen dramas. As seen in the last season of *Degrassi*, in which three male characters talk about what female appearance they believe is appealing:

“I just really do not like body hair on girls. Is that bad?”

“You can’t help what you like man. You like what you like”

“Yeah, I like muscular girls”

“exactly man. It’s just nature. I like girls who are a little bit too big you know. Body positivity and such. Everything is bigger on them, if you know what I mean”

“Is that why you always drool over our chemistry teacher”

“Like I said, you like what you like”

“Yeah. I just like girl with no body hair. True, I can’t help it. I am going to tell Yael she needs to shave so I can like her again”

(*Degrassi*, season 15, episode 3)

This example from the most recent season of *Degrassi* demonstrates the way females are discussed on how their bodies should appear to be found attractive by males. The results showcase that there is still a suggestive emphasis on the female body in contemporary teen dramas. It can be concluded that teen dramas did not change in the way they placed a suggestive emphasis on appearance in addressing the female body in a sexualized manner.

The results indicate that then dramas use female body has been objectively used against the female characters. In the 2010 season of *90210*, Naomi spreads nude pictures of Annie for revenge, knowing that the pictures were taken without consent. To further illustrate this happening:

Girl manipulates guy in giving her nude pictures of other girl

These nude pictures have been taken without the consent of the girl

Spreading nudes is revenge for girl presumably hooking up with girl’s boyfriend

Everybody rapidly sends the naked picture around

All classmates show the naked picture to each other

Girl gets laughed and pointed at for her naked picture

(*90210*, season 2, episode 2)

A similar case transpired in the 2011 season of *Degrassi*. Alli sends nude pictures of herself to her boyfriend to gain his attention. However, he decided to send the picture to his friends after a falling out as revenge. The nude pictures quickly started to spread around the school. Instead of her boyfriend, Alli got into much trouble for her nude picture spreading around the school. For example, quotes from when Alli was talking to the female principal about the pictures:

Girl is send to the female principal for her nude picture spreading around the school
Boyfriend who spread the picture is not seeing and repercussions.

“I can send you to the police because you are distributing child pornography” “it’s very tough but please Alli, respect your body. You are the only one who can”

“I will not report you to the police but let this be a lesson”

“thanks. You really are a nice principal”

“Just remember Alli, a naked pictures can cost you a job. Respect your body”

(*Degrassi*, season 9, episode 3)

This instance exhibits how the female body is not only portrayed as a weapon but also treated as an object needing protection. Alli's boyfriend leaks her nude photos, but according to the principal, Alli should respect her body. The teen dramas display that the female body is something other individuals can utilize against females. The genre portrays an image in which a woman is responsible for her own body and must take responsibility for whatever transpires. Similar happenings did still occur in the recent seasons of the teen dramas. Therefore, It can be concluded that the female body is sexually objectified against themselves in contemporary times.

To summarize, the teen dramas have emphasized female characters' appearance by objectifying them in their earlier seasons. This was performed through the cinematography, clothing, and how they are treated and discussed. This is in accordance with previous research by Glascok (2011), who argued that teen dramas suggestively objectify female characters in teen dramas to adhere to an ideal appearance, especially for the males surrounding them. However, the results showcase how the female characters are presented adequately in the contemporary seasons with their cinematography and styling. Therefore, the performative level has changed its apparent suggestive objectification, resulting in the teen dramas appearing less objectified on the surface level. However, by looking at the semantic and syntactic layer, it appears that the teen dramas still suggestively objectify their female characters and hold them accountable. The data is in accord with Dhaenens et al. (2016) who

stated that female characters are still portrayed objectively and are frequently disgraced. Likewise, this depiction of objectification can be related to the concept of purplewashing, as the depiction has only changed on the surface. It can be concluded that teen dramas still objectify the appearance of their female characters.

4.3. Stereotypical behavior

The previous theme discussed that teen dramas rely on appearance to present their characters. Additionally, results indicate that teen dramas rely on stereotypical behavior to give body to their female characters and storylines. This was present in the manner the teen dramas portray their female characters in terms of acting and reacting to their social environment. This topic of female depiction is explored through four sub-themes representing the most common female tropes in teen dramas. These four areas are: Characters, Shrewish, Differences between genders, and Downplaying Storylines.

4.3.1. Characters

As previously mentioned, teen dramas adhere to a presupposed beauty ideal. However, the results also exhibit that teen dramas follow a handbook for the type of characters they have. For example, the results reveal how a majority of the characters can be placed into one of the three stereotypes; the nice girl, the cool girl, and the mean girl. Each stereotype has its associated characteristics, illustrated in Table 7. Each female main character is loosely based on one of the three stereotypes mentioned. However, the results revealed how specific traits occurred in the prevalence of the female characters. The most common traits are nurturing, nosy, insecure, hopeless romantic, and enthusiastic. These five characteristics can be stereotyped as typical female characteristics, as all teen dramas include them in their female characters. This typecasting of the female characters did not differ throughout the seasons. The teen dramas remained to portray the characters and their characteristics through the same stereotypical formula as in the earlier seasons.

The data of this research is in line with multiple previous researchers, such as Behm-Morawitz and Mastro (2008), who state that female characters appear more emotional, affectionate, sensitive, and romantic. Teen dramas adhere to their stereotypical roots by creating blueprint characteristics for their female characters, which the female audience aims to be like (Duits, 2010; Van Damme & Bauwel, 2012). Therefore, it can be concluded that teen dramas stereotypically portray their female characters.

Table 7 *Character stereotypes in the analyzed teen dramas*

‘Nice girl’	‘Cool Girl’	‘Mean girl’
Naïve	Quirky personality	Mean
Innocent	Often a secondary character to the nice and mean girl	Rich
Can do no wrong	Laid back	Jealous
No boyfriend and often a virgin	Rotates between having a boyfriend and one-night stands	Boyfriend: most popular boy at school
Often has one girl best friend and one male best friend	Friends with both the nice girl and the popular girl. Mostly the popular girl.	Often surrounded by two friends who follow her
Loving family home	Often traumatic past (is not shared with her friends)	Neglected by parents
Unpopular	Seen as one of the guys	Most popular girl at school
Often new at school	People see her as someone to have fun with	Arrogant
Bullied by popular girl	Does not stick up against bullying	Bullies the nice girl

Interests: creative hobbies such as music or photography	Interests: partying	Interests: clothing, appearance, fashion
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4.3.2. Shrewish

The majority of the female characters in the analyzed television portray shrewish behavior in their storylines. The shrewish behavior occurred with the main female characters and secondary characters. Especially themes such as manipulation, blackmailing, betraying, and sabotaging others are frequent. In the earlier seasons, the shrewish antics were usually related to getting something done for them, often school-related. This can be seen in the first season of *Spangas*:

Girl blackmails boy into help her with school assignment

Girl blackmail boy to carry all her stuff

Girl blackmail boys to do their job

Blackmail: knowing boys cheated on the test

(*Spangas*, season 1, episode 4)

However, the schemes often involved more toxic issues and stunts in the later seasons. Female characters frequently devise schemes to either get back with their boyfriend or to get back at another female for wrongdoing. To illustrate, a scene from the last season of *90210*:

Female Manager blackmails guy into living with her and marrying her

Manager says she'll ruin his career if her does have a relationship with her

Manager is happy her scheme is working out

(*90210*, season 5, episode 1)

A recurring theme in teen dramas is female characters being upset with other female characters rather than being infuriated at male characters who often initiate or perform wrongdoing. This will be further elaborated on in the misogyny section. Female characters often choose to get back at their female friend by ruining relationships or opportunities for them. An example can be seen in the last season of *Spangas*:

Girl mad at her female friend for dancing with her boyfriend at a party
Boyfriend and female friend have apologized multiple times and explained their selves
Girl does not believe them and believes female friend wants her boyfriend”
“Girl tries to seduce the boyfriend of her female friend to make her friend jealous
Girl cries at seeing her female friend flirt with her boyfriend”
“Why are you doing this to me? I did nothing wrong?
Nothing wrong? Besides being a slut you must be dumb as well. You first tried to go
after my boyfriend. Now you know how it feels to get your heart broken! Haha!”
(*Spangas*, season 15, episode 5)

These kinds of evil-tempered demeanors became more regular as the teen dramas progressed. Antics like these occurred in every analyzed episode from the 2011 and the last seasons. This depiction is in accordance with previous research. As Powers (2004) mentioned, female characters are often portrayed as catty, especially towards other females. Previous research indicated that female characters hold other female characters more accountable than males, making the female characters portray signs of misogyny (Kluch & Schuck, 2020). Therefore, it can be concluded that teen dramas increasingly depicted female characters as shrewish and manipulating individuals, particularly to other females, throughout the decades.

4.4.3. Differences between genders

This research reveals that teen dramas depict the male and female gender being different from each other in terms of characteristics. The genre portrays both genders as having different mindsets and needs. The results indicate that the contrast primarily transpires when the genders engage in storylines related to love. The teen dramas portray the female gender with a different form of love language than their male counterparts. The distinction occurs in the first season of *Spangas*, in which Stan asks his male friend Nassim for advice on how to seduce Avalanche:

“Help me, i need to learn the method of the women. They think different than us”
“Why, you fancying someone?”
“Avalanche. She’s the best, but I just cant seem to get how to talk to a girl”
“You have to treat her like an equal. You know, like one of the boys. Girls love to think that they can chill with you like you are a friend of her.”
“So I can just talk about cars and stuff?”

“Yeah, girls love that stuff! They are different than us, they just want a best friend”
(*Spangas*, season 1, episode 3)

The semantic layer showcases how teen dramas view the mindset of the male and the female gender differently. The boys discuss how a girl wishes to be seduced differently than boys. Furthermore, the data reveals that this contrast depiction remains a recurring theme throughout the years. In the 2011 season of *Skins*, Rich does not know how to seduce a girl, so he enlists the help of his friend Alo:

“I can hit up a girl right. I can do that”
“I am pretty sure you have never even talked to a girl before.”
“They cannot be much different than us right?”
“You definitely need to learn the method of the woman. They think different than us you know. Like they like girly stuff and girly things. They are more emotional as well. Are you emotional? Right, so I’ve thought. They just think different than us, man”
“okay but how do I learn this”
“to think like a girl we need to have a girl to help us”
“okay yeah but not a girl who is a girl you know, we need a boy girl”
“yeah a boy girl who thinks like us. Otherwise we can’t understand a thing she’s saying”
(*Skins*, season 5, episode 1)

Likewise, this example showcases how teen dramas portray a females desires differently than males. Alo states that women have different interests and are more emotional than men. With these statements, teen dramas suggest that these qualities must be mastered to ask a woman out. Alo and Rich want to ask a girl for help. However, they need a girl who shares their interests, as they will not understand her otherwise. The semantic layer reveals how they contradict themselves, indicating that there are women with male needs and interests. Moreover, the results reveal that the distinction in needs is still present in the later seasons of the teen dramas. This is evidenced in the scene where Job-Jan talks to the male school therapist about how to have a successful relationship with a woman:

“You know, what Maxima and mine’s secret is to having no fights?”
“tell me”

“The female brain works differently than a male brain. You have to pretend like you are working for her. As if you are pushing the extra mile. You do this with small gestures, big result. Put their shoes away, hang their coat. Women will think they can control you because you do these tasks for them. But actually you control them. Because now they think they need to repay you. So they will do grand gestures for you and will listen to everything you say. Believe me, it works. I would write this down if I were you, a golden tip”
(*Spangas*, season 15, episode 1)

The statements given by Job-Jan, display what this sub-theme entails. Women think differently, and they can be manipulated to think they get their desired love. All mentioned examples show how one should pretend to be different in order to seduce a woman as one thinks differently. This is in line with the previous research, as this reveals how teen dramas remain to rely on stereotyping their characters. The data reveals how females are portrayed as more sensitive, romantic, and needy for romanticness, which is in line with the statements made by Gerding and Signorielli (2014). To conclude, the data reveals that teen dramas depict an image in which males and females have different perspectives and desires in love. This depiction has not changed throughout the years and remains a common theme in teen dramas.

4.3.4. Downplaying Storylines

As previously noted, teen dramas have a predominantly female cast. This is reflected in the abundance of female storylines. Remarkably, the data reveals how all teen dramas in the earlier seasons extensively incorporated traumatic experiences in the storylines. These traumatic experiences varied from mental illness, kidnapping, rape, and addiction. For instance, in the first episode of *Degrassi*, Emma gets into an online relationship with a boy who then continues to be a 35-year-old man and kidnaps her. To further illustrate the severeness of this example:

Girl got trapped by a man of 35, while he pretended to be 16
Girl is only 13 years old
Guy locks girl up in his hotel room
“If I told you my real age you wouldn’t talk to me anymore”
“I want go home, leave me alone”

“But we have hours to spend together and I have been dreaming about this over and over again”

“I just want to feel so close to you right now”

Man initiates to have sexual intercourse with the minor girl

Man forces himself onto the minor girl

The girl stiffened because, probably, fear

Girl gets saved by her mom and the police before it got get any worse.

(*Degrassi*, season 1, episode 2)

This predatory storyline would possibly have been a traumatic and negatively life-changing experience. However, it is never discussed again. Emma goes to school the next day, and everyone acts as if it has never happened. Another example is Cassie in *Skins*, who has anorexia and was just released after being admitted to a hospital. Her mental illness of anorexia is de-emphasized and downplayed by numerous characters. To illustrate, several quotes said by characters in the first season:

“Cassie is good in bed if she’s not hungry, everybody says it”

“Cassie is stupid, she only drinks coffee so she won’t eat”

“Cassie is such a crazy bitch, she never eats”

“Did you see? She looks like a stick, is she on a hunger strike or something? ”

“Why don’t you just eat for once? Jesus Christ, it is not that hard”

(*Skins*, season 1, episode 2)

Cassie's mental illness of anorexia is joked about by almost every character in her environment. This showcases how easily traumatic experiences for female characters are incorporated into the storylines without any further repercussions. Downplaying traumatic experiences to sensationalize storylines occurred in multiple teen dramas during their first season. Every time it occurred, it was only an arc for one episode. The traumatic storylines occurred in later seasons as well. However, they were incorporated into longer story arcs. Nevertheless, they did occur for longer than two or three episodes. The female characters are expected to digest the trauma in an episode and behave 'normally' afterwards. This is especially seen in the 2010 and 2011 seasons. Female characters were often typed as drama queens or not believed when speaking out about their traumatic experiences. For instance, This appears with Fiona in the 2011 season of *Degrassi*. Fiona is physically and mentally

abused by her boyfriend but is not taken seriously when asking her brother for help. To give an example of this:

“Bobby hurts me, he threw me off the stairs”

“Fiona, you promised no drama this year. God, I thought we were done with the theatrics”

“How many schools do you have to ruin for us and our reputation? Why do you always need to cry and lie for attention”

“It’s true, I’m not lying. I have bruises”

“You promised no drama”

(*Degrassi*, season 10, episode 2)

The example case of Fiona showcases how women are frequently not taken serious and expected to behave according to 'normal' societal standards. This especially occurs with women who have had other dramatic storylines, as they were often not believed when another traumatic occurrence transpired. This can be seen with the character of Naomi in the 2011 season of *90210*. Naomi was raped by her teacher. She was ashamed of the happening and was afraid to report the event to the police. Her attention-seeking past made her story unbelievable when she finally sought help from her female best friend. To illustrate, quotes from the scene:

“You should not hang out with him, he’s bad news”

“Why? And what’s wrong with you? You have been so absent lately”

“He raped me, that’s why I’m so messed up”

“He raped you?”

“Yeah, I did not want to tell you about the rape because I was just so embarrassed”

“You have done some low stuff in the past Naomi. But this. Lying about rape? I can’t believe you are saying this. This is just psycho.”

(*90210*, season 3, episode 2)

The cases of Emma, Naomi, and Fiona demonstrate that women are expected to quickly process trauma and behave as if it is a frivolity. It also depicts an image that women should be ashamed when a terrible event occurs, as it is something outside societal norms.

In the last seasons of the teen dramas, the storylines surrounding sensationalized trauma are remarkably handled again as in the earlier seasons. The teen dramas all use traumatic experiences for only one episode or ignore the issue. For example, in the last season of *90210*, Annie drunkenly kills a person by car. In the following episode, she struggles with being morally conflicted on the matter. Annie does not know whether she should confess her crime but is taunted by nightmares. However, she chooses not to confess her crime, and in the following episode, it is not mentioned anymore. This can be linked back to the kidnapping storyline of Emma in the first season of *Degrassi*. Both life-changing experiences are handled as if it was a minor inconvenience.

To summarize, teen dramas use traumatic experiences to sensationalize their storylines. By treating trauma as a storyline, the traumatic experiences are downplayed, and women in society are also expected to do this. This is in accordance with previous research, in which it was stated that female character storylines are often portrayed more comedically to downplay an event's seriousness (Gerding & Signorielli, 2014). Therefore, it can be stated that teen dramas have not changed their depiction of downplaying female trauma.

4.4. The power of autonomy

The results indicate that female characters in teen dramas frequently use the concept of female autonomy. This primarily occurred in the handling of storylines by the female characters. The extent to which they were in charge of their faith and happiness. However, the results reveal how much females need the male gender to have power over their autonomy. The power over autonomy transpired in four areas; love, sex, and independence.

4.4.1. Autonomy of love

As mentioned earlier in the characters sub-theme, love is a common topic in teen dramas. The episodes regularly cover the latest crushes, relationships, and breakup developments. The results exhibit that much pressure is put on getting a boyfriend from the first seasons of the teen dramas. The female characters often linked their happiness with having a boyfriend. This is evidenced by the first season of *Degrassi*, in which Ashley and Terri are discussing the coming school year:

“This is going to be the best year ever! First thing we need to do is get you a boyfriend, Terri.”

“I am not sure if it will happen this year. I mean, I really want to”
“Trust me! We need to get you a boyfriend. I’m so sure this will cheer you up”
“yeah you are right, Ash. We need to fix a hunk for me in my life”
(*Degrassi*, season 1, episode 3)

This example shows that an adolescent girl will have a successful school year after getting a boyfriend. Teen dramas portray an image in which the teens must have a relationship to be happy. This emphasis on having a boyfriend is also featured in the 2010 season of *Spangas*. In this scene, Avalanche is discussing her crush on Stan with her female friend Lara:

“Tell me, why do I like him?”
“because he’s cute?”
“he’s the worst kid at school but still I think about him every day and every minute”
“oh, someone has got a little crush”
“a little crush? I love him! He makes me so happy every time I think of him”
“I think we need to put operation get-avalanche-a-boyfriend into action”
“It’s urgent, my mental health is on the line”
(*Spangas*, season 3, episode 2)

Similarly, *Spangas* showcases that Avalanche desires Stan to be her boyfriend in order to be happy. She refers to her mental health deteriorating if Stan is not going to be her boyfriend. Likewise, teen dramas exhibit female characters with an intense craving for male love. This portrayal of the women and their relationship with love continues in the subsequent seasons of the teen dramas. For instance, the desire for love in order to be happy is portrayed in the final season of *Spangas*. Gioia is upset about how nobody is dating her. She is discussing this matter with the school therapist:

“What’s wrong with me? Do I look weird?”
Girl spinning around, showing herself to the school therapist
“I see two legs, arms, ears, your body looks physique looks healthy”
“No but, would you date me?”
“No”
“You see, nobody wants to date me, everybody wants to date Noor and nobody wants me. I suck”

“I would not date Noor either, you are all kids. I’m an adult remember”

“yeah but you would date adult Noor, or other adults. Not me. Everything is wrong with me. Nobody would want me and I will never be happy”

Girl looking angry

“Nothing is wrong with you”

“Everything is wrong with me. It will not end up happy. Nobody wants me”

Girl looking sad

(*Spangas*, season 15, episode 5)

Gioia believes something is wrong with her, hence her not having a date. The therapist does not thoroughly contradict the statements given by Gioia. Herewith, the semantic layer showcases how the therapist amplifies the argument of female adolescents being abnormal when they do not have a boyfriend. This depiction of the absence of a partner creates an image in which teenage girls need to have a relationship to be happy.

To summarize the results, it can be concluded that teen dramas portray female characters without autonomy over their love life. The teen dramas' female characters argue that their happiness depends on having a boyfriend. When the female adolescents do not have a boyfriend, they are miserable and abnormal. Teen dramas argue that the male gender is needed to make the female gender happy; therefore, the female characters do not have complete autonomy over their love life and happiness. This depiction of autonomy in love has not changed through the seasons; it remains a common philosophy in the contemporary seasons. This is in line with statements made by previous researchers. Kelly (2010) stated how in contemporary teen dramas, female characters have an increase in the number of romantic storylines. However, they are still not in charge of their romantic happiness as they depend on men. This is in line with the concept of purplewashing, as female characters have more romantic storylines. Nevertheless, they remain not have autonomy over their love life.

4.4.2. Autonomy of sex

According to the data, teen dramas use the concept of sex as a social weapon. Having sexual intercourse was a frequent storyline in three of the four analyzed shows. Intercourse was often presented as a benchmark to pass in order to fit in at high school. The virgin characters were constantly treated more as outsiders or were pitied. This treatment of virgin characters occurred with both male and female characters. Male characters were often bullied, while female characters felt more ashamed for their chastity. Storywise, female characters were

constantly included as sexual objects for male characters to lose their virginity to. For instance, this occurs in the first episode of the first season of *Skins*. Tony asks his girlfriend Michelle if she wants to have sexual intercourse with their virgin friend Sit:

“You’d help out with Sid today?”

“What?”

“With Sid. You know, the virgin thing”

“You aren’t serious?”

“He’s got to pop his cherry and I have nominated you to, you know, help out”

“God Tony. Do I have to?”

“It’s not much to do. He’s almost seventeen. He’s got to get laid before his birthday, otherwise he cannot be my friend obviously”

“Well, alright. If it’s so serious, I’ll help”

(*Skins*, season 1, episode 1)

This example presents the social pressure on adolescents to have sex. The instance portrays how easily women are expected to have sex. In this example, Tony keeps pressuring Michelle to have intercourse, and he readily assumes she will agree. Michelle eventually complies with Tony's request. A standardized picture is depicted of women who are expected to be utilized for men to lose their virginity. Additionally, teen dramas illustrate a standardized notion of females settling with this expectation.

In the later seasons, virginity is depicted explicitly as an embarrassment. The virgin characters are portrayed as ashamed of their lack of sexual intercourse. To illustrate, in the 2011 season of *90210*, Ivy lied to her boyfriend Dixon about her virginity. He confronts her with this lie:

Boy disappointed to hear his girlfriend is still a virgin and wants to confronts his girlfriend about her virginity

“Are you a virgin? Are you?”

“Where is that coming from?”

“Just answer the question. Did you lose your virginity when you were 14 at summer camp?”

Boy raising his voice and becoming more mad at girlfriend

Girlfriend becoming more uncomfortable

“Well, no. How did you know?”

“Wow, you lied to me. Oscar told me. Nice that you can tell him about your virginity but not your boyfriend”

“I didn’t. He guessed it, something about my aura”

“Why would you lie about something big like that?”

“I don’t know why I lied. You know, being a virgin is not cool. I made a mistake, please don’t be mad at me”

“It’s not about me being mad. It’s about you being a virgin”

Boy storms off.

(*90210*, season 3, episode 3)

This example illustrates teen dramas' social pressures on having sexual intercourse. Dixon is infuriated when he learns about his girlfriend's virginity. When Ivy explains her embarrassment about her virginity, Dixon remains angry. This example showcases how teen dramas amplify embarrassment about virginity and judgment on lack of sexual intercourse. The topic of social pressure on sexual intercourse was a common subject in three of the four shows analyzed up to the final season.

In the final season of the analyzed teen dramas, sexual intercourse was presented as another form of social pressure. Intercourse is presented as an indicator of a healthy relationship. When a female character did not want to have sex, the reason was often not further explored, and the central theme remained to have intercourse. To present an example, in the final season of *Degrassi*, Yael is insecure about her body. Therefore, she has had no desire to make out with her boyfriend, Hunter. Hunter confronts Yael with this:

“What’s going on with you? you have been acting different”

“Yeah, I don’t know”

“Ever since you got that new bra. You never want to make out with me anymore”

“I’ve been wearing a binder. I’m not comfortable with my new body. With my growing boobs. ”

“So you don’t want to break up with me? ”

“Girl kisses boy. ”

“I don’t know I haven’t been feeling the best these days. I am not comfortable with myself. ”

“So you still want to make out with me? ”

“I’d rather continue to talk with you after school. I’m glad we are talking now. ”

“I know something else we can do”

Boy hinting at making out again.

Girl laughing and kisses boyfriend.

(*Degrassi*, season 15, episode 3)

This scene showcases how Yael is not feeling comfortable with her body, which is changing due to puberty. However, her boyfriend insists on making out again, ignoring his girlfriend's struggles. This is noticed by analyzing the syntactic layer of this scene. By ending the scene with kissing Hunter, Yael created a normalized image of physical contact being more important than one's struggles. This normalized image is portrayed in the final season of *Skins* as well. In this scene, sexual intercourse is presented as a medicine against sadness and stress. The character of Effy is stressed; however her boyfriend insists on sex being the answer to feeling better:

Boy and girl in bed together, girl looking quite uneasy

“How are you so cool about this?”

“What about it? Nothing we can do right. Just come to me”

“I mean, the police is going to find out maybe?”

“Come on, stop stressing. Cuddle with me”

Girl looking even more stressed

“Sex will make us both happy, come on.”

Girl and boy kiss.

(*Skins*, season 7, episode 2)

This example, again, indicates that the feelings of a female character should be ignored as the male character desires sexual intercourse. As Effy complies with kissing her boyfriend, it showcases how her feelings do not matter in the scene. Teen dramas depict an image in which feelings should be suppressed, as sexual intercourse will make one feel better.

In addition to the social pressure presented by the teen dramas, the genre depicts sexual intercourse as a weapon to achieve a goal. Similar to the previous sub-theme where the female body was objectified, sexual intercourse is presented as a form of currency. This depiction of sexual intercourse emerged in the first seasons of the teen dramas. In the first season of *Skins*,

Jal's father is a famous music producer who abuses his power in the industry with women. To illustrate a scene where this transpires:

Girl her father is surrounded by women (he's important music executive)
it seems that this is normal as the daughter is not surprised
Girl does not take her father and all the women seriously as she mocks them.
"He's always using all those girls, he knows they just want a record deal and he just wants to fuck them all"
(*Skins*, season 1, episode 3)

Followed by another scene:

Girl sees her father in a music studio with a female
She is showing him her music, hoping to get her signed
Father tries to get woman drunk by keep pouring her alcohol
He himself is not drinking
Father says something to female which looks like indicating to having sex
Drunk woman has sex with music producer.
Girl walks away and shakes her head at her father.
(*Skins*, season 1, episode 3)

The women in the first example aim to grab the male producer's attention to enter the music industry. The second example highlights how the male producer abuses his power to get the woman drunk and have sex with her in the studio. It is unclear whether the woman wanted to have sex with the record producer to get a record deal or if she was sexually assaulted. Nevertheless, it remains an example of power and sexual abuse. In both examples, Jal sees the instances happen, setting an example for her where sex can be used as a currency and as a way to abuse power. As she does not react to the instances, the semantic layer reveals how she has normalized these practices. A similar example of abuse occurs in the second season of *Skins*. Effy and her male boss have a sexual relationship. She enjoys the relationship as she loves him and enjoys being his favorite employee. Her boss presumably enjoys the relationship as he gets to manipulate Effy to undertake illegal activities for him. Another woman confronts Effy on this matter:

“You have obtained illegal information and illegally traded money, this is a full-on felony”

“Oh stop. It’s not my fault he does not like you anymore:”

“Effy I’m serious. He’s fucking you and himself over”

“I don’t expect you to understand our love”

“Effy, if you weren’t sleeping with him, you would even have this fucking job. We’re both pathetic for sleeping with him”

“Well maybe if you took his dick out of your mouth, you would be better at the fucking job and still had it”

“Give him up Effy. It won’t end well”

“Fuck you, you pathetic bitch”

Effy storms off.

(Skins, season 7, episode 2)

This example showcases how abuse of power and sex remain normalized in the most recent seasons of teen dramas. In the instances of Effy and Jal, the female characters are presented as naive individuals who do not realize they are abused. Sexual intercourse is showcased in an unhealthy manner. However, this is de-emphasized by the gullible form in which the female characters are presented.

In summary, it can be concluded that teen dramas exemplify an unhealthy notion of sexual intercourse. Teen dramas present sexual intercourse as a weapon of social pressure. A character should have lost her virginity in high school; otherwise, it is an embarrassing matter. This is in accordance with various previous research. Teen dramas depict sex in an oftentimes harmful manner. It frequently involves fear of losing social status or a significant other, resulting in characters feeling pressured to have sex (Kelly, 2010). Particularly in recent seasons, teen dramas depict intercourse as an indicator of a healthy relationship. This is in line with research by (Dhaenens et al., 2016) , who echoed that regardless of whether the character is comfortable with having intercourse, it will make them feel better. Additionally, sexual intercourse can be a form of currency or achieve a goal. Furthermore, teen dramas often depict female characters as naive, as male characters can abuse sexual intercourse to gain power.

4.4.3. Autonomy of independence

The previously mentioned sub-themes explore autonomy through love and sex. Additionally, the results reveal how autonomy is a frequent indicator of the overall independence of the female characters. Independence here refers to the female characters standing up for themselves and how they handle a difficult situation. Therefore, this fairly broad sub-theme will be further elaborated through various instances in the teen dramas.

The results illustrate how female characters often depend on male characters to help them in difficult situations. Frequently, the male gender figures as a superhero in the lives of the female adolescents. This is especially seen when analyzing teen dramas' thematic and semantic layers. To illustrate, this transpires in the 2010 season of *Degrassi*. Fiona is harassed by catcalling at school, and she has a conversation with her brother on the matter:

“public school boys are so shameless”

“Yeah well I can’t always be your body guard. I have a life too”

“I have tried forget it and I know judo but nothing seems to offend them off ”

“That happens when you are single right”

“So tell the guys that you are taken”

Girl gets catcalled again by a boy catcalling her

After this conversation, Fiona decided she needed a fake boyfriend to protect herself from catcallers. Subsequently, Fiona started to spread the rumor that she was dating the ‘bad boy’ at school, Riley. To illustrate, one of the conversations Fiona had with a catcaller:

“Want someone to treat you right baby girl. I’m here angel”

“I am flattered, but this angel is taken”

“Yeah I am also taken. Taken by your beautiful face”

“No, I am taken. I am dating Riley”

Girl looking very confident saying her lie

Boy looking very stressed

“Oh sorry. Don’t tell him what I said, please! It won’t happen again”

Boy flees

(Degrassi, season 9, episode 2)

The example of Fiona showcases how a male is needed to help a woman in difficult situations. In the contemporary seasons, this is portrayed slightly different. The female characters present themselves more independently and strongly towards their social environment. This is seen in the last season of *Spangas*. JJ offers to help Maxima Carry her bags:

“Hey let me carry your bag for you”

“I can do that myself”

“Yeah yeah, you are a strong independent woman, but even they need help carrying their bags”

(*Spangas*, season 15, episode 1)

After this conversation, JJ and Maxima introduce themselves to a new student:

“Hi, I am JJ and this is MY girlfriend Maxima”

Boy puts emphasis on the MY

Girl looking very annoyed at her boyfriend

“Just now I was a strong independent woman and now I get introduced as YOUR girlfriend”

“Yeah but you are my girlfriend right”

“That’s true sweetie, but I am so much more than that. I am perfectly capable of introducing myself. ”

“Ah alright, then we’ll do it again. Hi I’m JJ”

“And my name is maxima. And JJ and I have an equal relationship in which we listen to each other very well”

(*Spangas*, season 15, episode 1)

This example showcases how Maxima is vocal about being an independent woman who can care for herself. She addresses JJ on how he introduced her as just his girlfriend. Herewith, the semantic layer showcases how female characters have become more vocal about their independence and have become less reliant on males. However, when reviewing the syntactic layer, the social and theoretical history is considered for the analysis process. The syntactic layer shows that Maxima is most likely vocal about her independence, so the viewer can

create an image in which *Spangas* treats female characters as equal and strong. Therefore, the depiction has become double-imposed.

To summarize, teen dramas have portrayed female characters as relatively helpless under challenging situations. They were dependent on the help of male characters. In contemporary times, teen dramas are introducing more feminist characteristics into their female characters. This is in line with Kluch and Schuck (2020), who argue how teen dramas have changed their female characters according to public discourse surrounding the depiction of females. However, considering the previously mentioned sub-themes surrounding autonomy, this feminist depiction seems hypocritical. Teen dramas have changed little regarding female autonomy, which makes female characteristics look like a form of purplewashing. This is in line with previous research on the matter, as female characters are still depicted as less important and reliant on the males in their lives. Teen dramas aim to change their image of female treatment by implementing feminist characteristics, creating goodwill among their audience (Martinez-Fierro & Garza-Veloz, 2022).

5. CONCLUSION

This study explored the portrayal of the female gender in teen drama television shows by answering the central question: How has the representation of the female gender changed in teen dramas throughout the decades?. In this final chapter, an answer to this research question is formulated by summarizing the analyzed results. Additionally, the practical and theoretical potential limitations of the findings are discussed, followed by recommendations for future research on the topic of the portrayal of the female gender in teen drama television shows.

5.1. Surface level change versus actual change

To answer the research question: 'How has the representation of the female gender changed in European teen dramas throughout the decades?' findings showcased that the portrayal of the female gender has changed on a rather hypocritical level. On a surface level viewing of the television shows, the portrayal of the female characters has changed to a different narrative. The female characters in the first seasons are portrayed as stereotypical females with associated goals and actions. The female characters are portrayed as either excessively friendly and sensitive or incredibly mean and popular. Their primary interests lie in shopping, boys, and gossiping. The female characters are often suggestively objectified through the cinematography and their clothing. In contemporary seasons, female characters have gotten more storylines. The female characters have become more vocal about their independence and are dressed more appropriately.

However, when analyzing further themes of the teen dramas, results showcase how little the teen dramas have changed. The teen dramas still use the exact blueprint for the appearance of their female cast and the characterization. Herewith, a standard for female adolescents is created. As a result, a sub-culture and unrealistic expectations for female teenagers are created (Osberg, 2004).

The majority of the storylines for women concern their hardships with the male gender. The storylines range from falling in love with a boy to devising schemes to get their ex-boyfriend back. In addition, the female storylines more and partly revolved around submitting to the desires of boys. The female characters put their needs aside or changed their personality for the male gender, especially regarding sexual intercourse. Besides the abundance of male-related storylines, many storylines dealt with hatred between girls. Most of these quarrels arose from tension surrounding a boy or backstabbing to achieve a goal. This is in line with previously conducted research, such as Powers (2004), who mentioned how

female characters seem to hold other women more accountable than men. This reveals how teen dramas encourage misogynistic thoughts in their audiences (Glascok, 2011).

Another critical issue was how traumatic experiences were portrayed and handled. These experiences included rape, death, or mental-health related topics. These experiences were barely mentioned again after one or two episodes. The few times that a female character was still dealing with an issue after an episode, she was admonished by male and female characters on how she acted dramatically or did not believe her. This creates a notion of devaluing and deemphasizing these experiences for females. On the contrary, these intense experiences are often life-changing, often in a negative manner. This is in accordance with several previously conducted research, such as Gerding and Signorielli (2014), who mentioned how female character story often portrayed more comedically to downplay an event's seriousness.

By comparing the portrayal of female characters on the surface layer and the silent thematic layer, it can be concluded that there is a rather hypocritical difference in the depiction of the female gender. This contrast can be linked to the concept of purplewashing. Purplewashing refers to people, companies, and other organizations aiming to appeal to gender equality. Teen dramas use purplewashing to instrumentalize feminism to hide their misogyny, objectification, and sexualization of the female gender (Casás, 2018). This is in line with research conducted by Martinez-Fierro and Garza-Veloz (2022). They argued how media companies are using feminist values at the convenience of enhancing their goodwill without actually supporting gender equality.

To conclude, this study indicates that the portrayal of female characters in teen dramas has hypocritically changed throughout the decades. Female characters are depicted more as feminist and independent on a surface level. However, looking deeper into the characters and their storylines, teen dramas have changed little since the public discourse surrounding female representation. Overall, the results of this research were similar to previously conducted academic research into the topic. The results of this thesis indicate how much work teen dramas still need to do in order to accurately depict the (female) teenagers they influence.

5.2. Limitations and Future Research

To conclude, this research's limitations should be noted, and recommendation areas for future research. All limitations have been tried to be limited by the use of following the research design steps and being transparent during the research.

For this research, four television shows have been analyzed to explore the depiction of females in teen dramas. In order to get a more nuanced result, the sample could be improved by expanding the sample size by adding more television shows. This way, the sample would include more television shows which might result in a less generalized outcome. Likewise, this applies to comparing different countries and their portrayal of women in teen drama. As read in the gender quota section, each country has its own set of regulations for the equality of gender and its particular morals on the depiction of gender. Therefore, it can be an appealing future area to study to see the different potential perspectives of countries. By broadening the sample, the exploration of the female gender does not stay limited to a specific audience.

However, further limitations should be noted. For this research, only a single researcher conducted the analysis. The researcher may perceive specific actions differently than a second researcher would. Another limitation is the potential bias. The researcher identifies as a female, which might result in a quicker judgment in misrepresentation. However, in the methodology section of this research, it is noted what has been done to counter this.

A final limitation that should be noted is the denomination of the female gender. Considering the time and space, a more old-fashioned view of the female gender has been chosen for this research. Characters who, at surface level, appeared or acted with generally feminine features were considered to be female. As a result, stereotyping might have been utilized, not knowing whether or not a female character identified with the female gender. Except for a brief storyline with the character Frankie in *Degrassi*, the subject of gender identification was not further examined in the teen dramas. It may be a limitation that the researcher characterized characters as female while they may identify themselves as a different gender or vice versa. A recommendation for future research would be to explore the female gender further on a more detailed level.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A. Websites consulted for the most popular teen dramas in The Netherlands

1. <https://kijkonderzoek.nl/component/kijkcijfers/file,n1-0-1-p>
2. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_teen_dramas#Netherlands
3. https://www.imdb.com/search/title/?title_type=tv_series&countries=nl

Appendix B. Table overview of details per show per season

90210

First Season

Synopsis	Main characters	Supporting characters
With the arrival of the next generation, it gets even hotter at West Beverly High. Be there from the very beginning, as Annie and Dixon move into the seductive world of friendship, rivalry, sex and scandal in America's most infamous zip code. Meet budding stars in the unforgettable episodes of Season 1, including a disastrous high school musical, a Valentine's Day disaster and the hottest love triangle in television history. With relationships going on and off, betrayal and police looking for drugs, 90210 is the place to be for the ultimate naughty entertainment!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Harry Wilson ▪ Annie Wilson ▪ Dixon Wilson ▪ Naomi Clark ▪ Ethan Ward ▪ Ryan Matthews ▪ Debbie Wilson ▪ Erin Silver ▪ Tabitha Wilson ▪ Navid Shirazi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adrianna Tate Duncan ▪ Kelly Taylor ▪ Tracy Clark ▪ Charles Clark ▪ George Evans

The last season aired in 2010

Synopsis	Main characters	Supporting characters
West Beverly High is back with a season of drama, drugs, betrayal and lies. 90210, the most infamous zip code in America, is getting hotter. Witness the sex, the scandals and the sibling rivalry. As relationships are tested and pregnancies are pretended, rumors - not to mention 'sext messages' - are flying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Harry Wilson ▪ Annie Wilson ▪ Dixon Wilson ▪ Naomi Clark ▪ Erin Silver ▪ Tabitha Wilson ▪ Liam Court ▪ Adriana Tate-Duncan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teddy Montgomery ▪ Mark Driscoll

around you. Enjoy all the thrills in 22 unforgettable episodes of the funniest bad entertainment television has to offer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Debbie Wilson 	
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The first season aired in 2011

Synopsis	Main characters	Supporting characters
High school has never been so sexy... Season three of 90210 literally kicks off when an earthquake hits Beverly Hills... and that's just the beginning of all the trouble! West Beverly's students are gearing up for the next stage in their lives, and all 22 episodes are once again filled with drama, sex, secrets and betrayal. In their final year of school, the group has to deal with prom, final exams, mental illness, drug addiction and blackmail. Welcome to the most exciting postcode area in the world!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annie Wilson Dixon Wilson Naomi Clark Ryan Matthews Debbie Wilson Erin Silver Ivy Sullivan Navid Shirazi Teddy Montgomery Adrianna Tate-Duncan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laurel Cooper Oscar Miles Cannon Javier Luna

The most recent season

Synopsis	Main characters	Supporting characters
BID FAREWELL TO YOUR FAVORITE ZIP CODE Say goodbye to 90210, the zip code with more money, drama, and passion than any other! This enticing fifth and final season brings shocking new challenges to the wealthy and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annie Wilson Dixon Wilson Naomi Clark Erin Silver Navid Shirazi Liam Court Adriana Tate-Duncan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Max Miller Teddy Montgomery Taylor Williams Alec Martin Vanessa Shaw

beautiful Angelinos we've followed since high school. Featuring iconic guest stars and the historic 100th episode, this 5-disc set is the final chapter in a legacy famous for it's friendships, fashions, and sinful fun.		
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Skins

The first season

Synopsis	Main characters	Supporting characters
This series sees the introduction of a new cast; it follows the lives of the first generation of sixth form students Tony Stonem, Michelle Richardson, Sid Jenkins, Cassie Ainsworth, Chris Miles, Jal Fazer, Maxxie Oliver and Anwar Kharral.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tony Stonem ▪ Chris Miles ▪ Sid Jenkins ▪ Cassie Ainsworth ▪ Michelle Richardson ▪ Jal Fazer ▪ Anwar Karrel ▪ Maxxie Oliver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effy Stonem ▪ Abigail Stock ▪ Angie ▪ Anthea ▪ Mad Twatter

The last season aired in 2010

Synopsis	Main characters	Supporting characters
Like the previous series, this series follows the lives of the second generation, which consists of Effy Stonem, Pandora Moon, Thomas Tomone, James Cook, Freddie McClair, JJ Jones, Naomi Campbell, and twin sisters Emily and Katie Fitch.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ JJ Jones ▪ Freddie McClair ▪ Effy Stonem ▪ Thomas Tomone ▪ James Cook ▪ Naomi Campbell ▪ Katie Finch ▪ Pandora Moon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sophia ▪ Alan ▪ Andrea ▪ Doug ▪ DC Sweeney

The first season aired in 2011

Synopsis	Main characters	Supporting characters
This series sees the introduction of a new cast; it follows the lives of the third generation of sixth form students of Franky Fitzgerald, Rich Hardbeck, Grace Blood, Mini McGuinness, Liv Malone, Alo Creevey, and brothers Nick and Matty Levan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Franky Fitzgerald ▪ Rich Hardbeck ▪ Mini McGuinness ▪ Liv Malone ▪ Alo Creevey ▪ Nick Levan ▪ Grace Blood ▪ Matty Levan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ David Blood

The most recent season

Synopsis	Main characters	Supporting characters
Effy has cast her party-hard lifestyle and issues aside, and has become more mature and ambitious. Naomi has lost much of her ambition as a principled young woman and is now a layabout and stoner. Emily has become more confident. Cassie has overcome her mental issues, but has become solitary, serious, principled and tired, and Cook has become much more subdued, serious and calculated, as a result of having spent years on the run.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effy Stonem ▪ Naomi Campbell ▪ Cassie Ainsworth ▪ Yaniv ▪ Jakob 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jane ▪ Emily Fitch ▪ Dominic ▪ Victoria ▪ Mark ▪ Amanda ▪ Ida ▪ Jeffrey Flavors

Degrassi

The first season

Synopsis	Main characters	Supporting characters
It introduces a group of seventh and eighth grade schoolchildren and follows their lives as they deal with the typical issues and challenges of teenage life, such as online predators, sibling relationships, peer pressure, sex, rumors, stress, self-image and drugs. This season depicts the 2001-2002 school year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Emma Nelson ▪ James ‘Jimmy’ Brooks ▪ Terri McGreggor ▪ Ashley Kerwin ▪ Liberty Van Zandt ▪ Manuela ‘Manny’ Santos ▪ Tobias ‘Toby’ Isaacs ▪ Gavin “Spinner” Mason ▪ James Tiberius ‘J.T.’ Yorke ▪ Paige Michalchuck ▪ Sean Cameron 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Archie ‘Snake’ Simpson ▪ Mr. Daniel Raditch ▪ Christine ‘Spike’ Nelson ▪ Jeff Isaacs

The last season aired in 2010

Synopsis	Main characters	Supporting characters
This season again depicts the lives of a group of high school freshmen, juniors and seniors, along with some college age students as they deal with some of the challenges and issues that young adults face such as drug abuse, sexting, homosexuality, sexually transmitted diseases, sex, relationships, and illegal situations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Peter Stone ▪ Fiona Coyne ▪ Declan Coyne ▪ Chantay Black ▪ Anya MacPherson ▪ Leia Chang ▪ Holly J. Sinclair ▪ Connor Deslauriers ▪ K.C. Guthrie ▪ Jenna Middleton ▪ Alli Bhandari ▪ Clare Edwards ▪ Dave Turner ▪ Danny Van Zandr ▪ Sav Bhandari ▪ Gavin “Spinner” Mason ▪ Johnny DiMarco 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mia Jones ▪ Mr. Bince ▪ Mrs. Laura Coyne ▪ Victoria ▪ Mr. Lavigne ▪ Daphne Hatzilakos ▪ Ms. Laura Kwan ▪ Archie ‘Snake’ Simpson

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Blue Chessex ▪ Riley Stavros 	
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The first season aired in 2011

Synopsis	Main characters	Supporting characters
<p>This season depicts the lives of a group of high school sophomores, juniors, seniors, and graduates as they deal with some of the challenges and issues that teenagers face such as domestic violence, dysfunctional families, self image, bullying, sexual harassment, gender identity/transsexualism, teenage pregnancy, online predators, homophobia, school violence, divorce, religion, kidney failure, self-harm, alcoholism, sexual identity, financial difficulties, running away and relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Peter Stone ▪ Sav Bhandari ▪ Clare Edwards ▪ Fiona Coyne ▪ Declan Coyne ▪ Holly J. Sinclair ▪ Wesley Betenkamp ▪ Ms. Winnie Oh ▪ Connor DeLaurier ▪ Anya MacPherson ▪ Jenna Middleton ▪ Dave Turner ▪ K.C. Guthrie ▪ Drew Torres ▪ Alli Bhandari ▪ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mrs. Bhandari ▪ Bobby Beckonridge ▪ Mary-Kate Sinclair ▪ Mrs. Laura Coyne ▪ Archie “Snake” Simpson

The most recent season

Synopsis	Main characters	Supporting characters
<p>This season follows a group of high school juniors and seniors from Degross Community School, a fictional school in Toronto, Ontario, and depicts some of the typical issues and challenges common to a teenager's life. This season picks up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lola Pacini ▪ Goldi Nahir ▪ Esme Song ▪ Shaylyn “Shay” Powers ▪ Grace Cardinal ▪ Zigmund “Zig” Novak ▪ Johan Haak 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Darryl Armstrong ▪ Diana Hollingsworth ▪ Ms. Grell ▪ Mrs. Powers ▪ Abra

during the second semester of the current school year. It will tell the stories of high school drama with groundbreaking stories including mental health, major depressive disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, cystic fibrosis, gender identity, sexual identity, acceptance, faith, terrorism, disabilities, sex, hate crimes and more.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hunter Hollingsworth ▪ Miles Hollingsworth ▪ Fransesca “Frankie” Hollingsworth ▪ Deon “Tiny” Bell ▪ Rasha Zuabi 	
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Spangas

The first season

Synopsis	Main characters	Supporting characters
Everyone would like to be at Spangalis College. Of course you get regular subjects like mathematics and geography there. But there is so much more: parties that you have to organize, sports days that you have to participate in (or not), fashion shows for which you have to make clothes and recruit models, new teachers that you have to 'initiate'... And forget the charities not! sigh. In fact, you don't have time for homework at all.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irmak Sertkaya • Luxor de Haan • Lana van Hamel • Nassim Gharbi • Fay Picaroon • Barry Hartveld • Avalance Blokland • Jolé van Haagendoorn • Tobias van Hamel ▪ Flip van Hamel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ronnie Hartveld • Aldert Kalkhoven • Marieke • Rozalie Mokketier • Frank van Hamel ▪ Punky

The last season aired in 2010

Synopsis	Main characters	Supporting characters
It will be an exciting school year, because Spangalis College is going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irmak Sertkaya • Luxor de Haan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aldert Kalkhoven • Wiesje Ijzinga

to merge with Gradanius due to budget cuts in education. The 'Gradans' seem to be taking over. And Frank van Hamel gets overwrought by it. In the end, all students together provide a nice surprise for Van Hamel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lana van Hamel • Nassim Gharbi • Fay Picaroon • Avalance Blokland • Jolé van Haagendoorn • Flip van Hamel • Tobias van Hamel • Marjana El Asmi • Samson Meijaards ▪ Annabella vermeulen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Madge Johnson • Koen van Wageningen • Jochem Damstra • Rozalie Mokketier • Frank van Hamel • Tessel Albedo ▪ Stan van Houten
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The first season aired in 2011

Synopsis	Main characters	Supporting characters
Every student of Spangalis College has his own story, stories that mainly take place in and around the school and the schoolyard, but sometimes also at home. They come into contact with love, friendship, homosexuality, death, loneliness, grief, school, teacher/teachers, parents, divorce, belonging, bullying, discrimination, and dreams for the future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irmak Sertkaya • Luxor de Haan • Lana van Hamel • Katou Salhi • Avalance Blokland • Eman Loukili • Flip van Hamel • Tobias van Hamel • Marjana El Asmi • Rudolf Noltenius • Annabella Vermeulen • Stan van Houten • Abel Brandt ▪ Charley Bogaarts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Madge Johnson • Meneer van Dam • Frank van Hamel • Oscar de Wit • Shanti Blokland • Jochem Damstra ▪ Sefa Sertkaya

The most recent season

Synopsis	Main characters	Supporting characters
In <i>SpangaS: the campus</i> we follow ten students at the best school in the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JJ Smit • Noah 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ryan • Biko

<p>Netherlands. Not only do they receive lessons in subjects such as Dutch, mathematics and geography, they also learn to become independent. They cook their own food (or eat something at Biko's), exercise and sleep there during the week.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ryan • Daan • Sami • Lesley Huf • Gioia Kramer ▪ Noor Benschop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maxima Paraat ▪ Olivier Locadia
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Appendix C. Table overview of details per show per episode

90210

The first season

Episode	Name	Air date	Directed by	Written by	Synopsis
1.1.	We're Not in Kansas Anymore	September 2, 2008	Mark Piznarski (Male)	Rob Thomas & Gabe Sachs & Jeff Judah (Male)	The wilsons arrive in Beverly Hills moving from Kansas. Harry Wilson who is father to Annie and Dixon takes on a principle job at west Beverly high school much to Annie and dixon's dismay. They both start their first week at their new high school feeling very awkward that their father (the principle) is watching their every move. Annie who is sweet and friendly and has a passion for theatre finds it very hard to understand all the new cliques and the same with Dixon who's a star athlete also adopted by the wilsons from an earlier age. They meet lots of new different people and one in particular Naomi Clark who is a spoilt rich girl thinks money can buy everything and happiness.
1.2.	The Jet Set	September 2, 2008	Wendely Stanzler (Female)	Gabe Sachs (Male), Jeff Judah (Male), Darlene Hunt (Female)	Naomi finds herself in trouble when she fails an assignment, and Ryan and Kelly bring the issue to Harry's attention, while Harry struggles with a disturbing revelation about the result of a secret tryst with Naomi's mother, Tracy, from many years ago.

					<p>Meanwhile, Dixon learns more about Navid when they team up to try to pull a school prank against Palisades High. Annie meets a potential love interest in the form of drama student Ty Collins, who turns out to be the wealthiest student at West Beverly, and who spirits her away for San Francisco for the evening. Silver posts the story about Ethan's infidelity with Naomi on her Internet blog, while Adrianna continues her self-destructive slide into drugs and debauchery. Also, Ryan tries to ask Kelly out on a date, but she has to find a babysitter first for her four-year-old son, and former West Beverly alumni Brenda Walsh, now a successful Broadway and London theater director, arrives back in town to help put on a new school play.</p>
1.3.	Lucky Strike	September 8, 2008	Mark Piznarski (Male)	Jill Gordon (Female)	<p>Dixon and Annie find their Friday night plans disrupted after Debbie and Harry plan a family bowling night without consulting them. So, Annie plans to sneak out of the place to meet with Ty to attend a rock concert, while Dixon plans with Navid and Ethan to sneak him out so they can watch a movie at Navid's house. Meanwhile, Naomi has an unpleasant evening with her</p>

					<p>estranged and selfish businessman father, Charles, who puts her off for work. Also, Dixon invites Silver over to the Lucky Strike Bowling Alley, and he later finds Silver asleep in his car. Silver then confides in Dixon about her troubled home life and how her drunkard mother, Jackie, verbally and physically abuses her. The news gets back to Kelly who confronts Jackie about it, while at the same time, Kelly continues to be sought after by Ryan who tries asking her out on a date.</p>
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Last season aired in 2010

Episode	Name	Air date	Directed by	Written by	Synopsis
2.1.	To New Beginnings!	September 8, 2009	Stuart Gillard (Male)	Rebecca Sinclair (Female)	<p>During the summer, most of the students at West Beverly were forced to attend summer school after Annie anonymously called the police to report Naomi's post-prom party. During the last weekend of Labor Day, Naomi, Silver and Adrianna hang out at the Beverly Hills Beach club. There, Adrianna runs into an old boyfriend named Teddy Montgomery, a tennis player and new student, while Naomi finds him irresistible. Navid also plans on spending his first romantic night with Adrianna, but jealousy gets in the way. Meanwhile,</p>

					Annie has spent the summer isolating herself out of guilt for the hit-and-run accident that she committed, fearing that someone will discover her terrible secret.
2.2.	To Sext or Not to Sext	September 15, 2009	Tom Warmby (Male)	Jennie Synder Urman (Female)	The twisted Naomi continues her personal quest to destroy Annie's personal and professional life by spreading a false rumor about the existence of a nude photo of Annie, which causes a further divide between Annie and Dixon, as well as Annie's parents who continue to worry about her continuing slide down a dark path. Meanwhile, Liam decides to defy his stern and semi-abusive stepfather and try out with Dixon and Teddy for a spot on the school's surfing team. Elsewhere, Ryan worries about his romance with the manipulative Jen who begins to show off her true colors to him.
2.3.	Sit Down, You're Rocking the Boat	September 22, 2009	Janice Cooke (Female)	Mark Discoll (Male)	Annie is humiliated that the entire school received her sext message and is on a mission to reveal Naomi as the sender of the revealing photo. Harry and Debbie attempt to discuss Annie's situation but the conversation only causes more tension, leading Harry to open up to Kelly about his family problems. Dixon meets his dream girl, Sasha and sparks immediately begin

					to fly, though he fails to reveal his true age. Silver continues to get over Dixon while Adrianna and Navid deal with Teddys presence in their life. Liam, fed up with the lies between Naomi and Annie, retreats to his garage to work on a mysterious project. The gang joins Teddy on his fathers yacht for an afternoon of ocean-filled drama.
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The first season aired in 2011

Episode	Name	Air date	Directed by	Written by	Synopsis
3.1	Senior Year, Baby	September 13, 2010	Stuart Gilland (Male)	Jennie Snyder Urman (Female)	Beverly Hills is rocked by an earthquake. Naomi has spent the summer dealing with the aftermath of her rape by Mr. Cannon, Annie and Dixon are dealing with the absence of their father while Debbie tries to hold the family together. Teddy and Silver find themselves happier than ever until he suffers an injury that could end his tennis career. Navid welcomes Adrianna back from her summer tour with Javier, but their arrival brings an unexpected death. Ivy and Dixon return from their summer vacation in Australia, while Annie and Liam discover their friendship may be best if it ends.
3.2	Age of Inheritance	September 20, 2010	Liz Friedlander	Padma L. Atluri	Naomi finds out she can now access the money in her trust fund, so she decides

			(Female)	(Female)	to throw a giant birthday party where The Honey Brothers perform a few songs. Dixon, Navid and Liam decide to take Oscar out for a night on the town, but their party ends when Ivy finds a Facebook photo of Dixon doing a body shot off a girl. Annie has an instant connection with Charlie, a guy she meets at a coffee shop, but seems more interested in exploring her relationship opportunities with Liam. Jen is forced to go on bed rest until she delivers the baby and has no choice but to allow Ryan into her life. Silver confronts Teddy about his drinking problem.
3.3	2021 Vision	September 27, 2010	Millicent Shelton (Female)	Tod Himmel (Male)	Naomi has constant flashbacks to her rape and begins taking sleeping pills in order to sleep through the night. Mr. Cannon invites Silver over to his apartment to watch his new documentary and secretly slips something in her drink. Meanwhile, Teddy wakes up from a night of drinking and realizes he hooked up with someone. Dixon learns that, despite what he assumed, Ivy is a virgin. Annie confronts her boss, Katherine about her awkward behavior and is shocked when she makes her an offer she may not be able to refuse. Adrianna sings a new stolen song at a memorial service but she soon regrets her decision to do so

					when the video goes viral on the web.
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The most recent season

Episode	Name	Air date	Directed by	Written by	Synopsis
5.1	Till Death Do us Part	October 8, 2012	Stuart Gillard (Male)	Patti Carr (Female), Brian Dawson (Male), Allen Clary (Male)	Naomi and runaway groom Max plan to elope to Las Vegas which goes terribly wrong when their car breaks down in the middle of the desert and they eventually both land in jail when they hitchhike a ride with a fugitive and armed robber. Meanwhile, Liam is forced to put his bar, The Offshore, up for sale in order to pay off the scheming and greedy Vanessa in order to buy out her \$200,000 interest in Liam's movie contract. Navid later approaches Liam about becoming his business partner. Teddy is overwhelmed by Silver's request to father her baby. In Las Vegas, Adrianna continues her country music tour with Austin where she hooks up with a handsome stranger named Taylor, unaware that Dixon has got into a life-threatening car accident and is in a coma back in Los Angeles. Also, Debbie visits from Paris to see Annie after she tells her about Dixon's condition.
5.2	The Sea Change	October 15, 2012	Bethany Rooney (Female)	Lara Olson (Female), Brian Dawson	Naomi decides to throw a wedding reception when Max's investors continue to pull out of his and Alec's business. After some interesting words

				(Male), Allen Clary (Male)	from Riley in physical therapy, Dixon lashes out at Annie for being too over protective of him while worrying that Adrianna sees him differently now that he is in a wheelchair. After being dissed by Liam and Navid, Silver develops feelings for a supportive Teddy, while awaiting for his answer on whether or not he will have her baby. Adrianna tries to avoid Taylor, who is now Liam and Navid's business partner, but is even more conflicted about her feelings for him when he kisses her. Also, Vanessa blackmails Liam into being with her after she gets her hands on a video of Liam walking away from the fire burning down the Offshore and tells people that they are engaged.
5.3	It's All Fun and Games	October 22, 2012	Cherie Nowlan (Female)	Brian Dawson (Male), Allen Clary (Male)	Silver is coerced into spending the entire day with Adrianna, doing risk-taking challenges, a carefree adult in their 20s would do after she keeps putting off her insemination appointment. She later has a naked photo shoot, thanks to a suggestion from Naomi. While Max is away on business, Naomi does everything she can to have Alec like her and later, when they soon begin to bond, he kisses her, putting her in a tough position of whether or not to tell Max. Meanwhile, Annie has a reluctant Dixon meet with a

					therapy group at CU, when he loses hope at ever walking again and meets Megan, the daughter of the dead truck driver that caused Dixon's car accident. When a police detective begin questioning Liam about Vanessa's whereabouts, he contemplates telling the truth about the accident and facing serious jail time until he learns that the police have discovered Vanessa's criminal history and believe that she has simply run off again, leaving Liam relieved.
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Skins

The first season

Episode	Name	Air date	Directed by	Written by	Synopsis
1.1	Tony	January 25, 2007	Paul Gay (Male)	Bryan Elsey (Male), Peter Bakare (Male)	Tony is a smart-ass, super-confident 17-year-old, with the good-looking girl on his arm and ability to charm most other females he encounters. He launches a scheme to help his friend Sid lose his virginity before his birthday, whilst making a little profit on the side. However his plan quickly unravels, leaving the friends with a dilemma which requires an urgent solution.

1.2	Cassie	February 1, 2007	Paul Gay (Male)	Bryan Elsey (Male), Peter Bakare (Male)	If the world wasn't strange enough, this episode perceives the world through the eyes of Cassie. A world in which you receive messages through your food. A world in which the guy you are interested in only has eyes for your best friend, who only has eyes for his best friend. And a world in which the only person you can talk to is your taxi driver. Welcome to the calm in storm of the surreal.
1.3	Jal	February 8, 2007	Adam Smith (Male)	Bryan Elsey (Male), Peter Bakare (Male)	Time to get to know the girl behind the clarinet. Whereas the rest of her family make their mark by spitting out rhymes to booming base beats, Jal seeks solace from the chaos all around her in the classical tunes flowing over her single reed. Although seemingly trying to keep a controllable distance from the adolescent conundrum that the 21st century teenagers have created around her, it is not long before she is sucked into the whirlwind of her surroundings. But can the resulting destruction create something better?

The last season aired in 2010

Episode	Name	Air date	Directed by	Written by	Synopsis
4.1	Thomas	January 28, 2010	Neil Biswas (Male)	Jamie Brittain (Male), Bryan Elsley (Male), Chris Hill (Male)	Focuses around Thomas and his coming to terms with life and love in England.
4.2	Emily	February 4, 2010	Philippa Langdale (Female)	Ed Hime (Male)	Emily confronts Naomi over her supplying Sophia with drugs. Emily has learned that Sophia was gay and her locker is a shrine to Naomi, though Naomi denies any sexual relationship between her and Sophia. Emily and Naomi then move in together but, at a party where Cook assaults one of the guests for no apparent reason, Emily gets Sophia's brother to open a box which contains Sophia's hand-drawn account of her affair with Naomi, who rejected her for Emily, hence her subsequent, drastic actions.
4.3	Cook	February 11, 2010	Philippa Langdale (Female)	Ed Hime (Male), Bryan Elsley (Male), Chris Hill (Male)	Cook is remanded in custody following the GBH charge but he is later released, with an electronic tag, to live with his alcoholic mother Ruth and adoring younger brother Paddy. He is also expelled from college for the assault. Appalled to learn that Ruth had sex with Freddie, he steals her car along with Paddy and trashes it. However, he becomes alarmed to think that Paddy may turn out like him, admits to selling the drugs to Sophia

					and,taking the rap for Naomi,he gets sent down.
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The first season aired in 2011

Episode	Name	Air date	Directed by	Written by	Synopsis
5.1	Franky	January 27, 2011	Amanda Boyle (Female)	Sean Buckley (Male)	Loner Franky starts at Roundview and accidentally challenges Mini's position as Queen Bee. Mini plays the long game and Franky finds herself befriended by the girls. When she won't conform to what Mini expects of her she is spat out. Franky meets Matty, who understands and empowers her. Franky stands up to Mini, which inspires Grace to join her. A new gang is formed - Franky, Alo, Rich and Grace. Franky has finally found friends, but in doing so has started a war with Mini.
5.2	Rich	February 3, 2011	Philippa Langdale (Female)	Jamie Brittain (Male)	Rich uses his taste in extreme music to keep the world, especially girls, at bay. When Alo finds Rich's perfect woman, Rich is forced to into pairing up with Grace to learn how to chat up girls. But first she must learn the ways of metal to impersonate a practise metal chick. Rich continually pushes Grace away, refusing to believe a mainstream girl could understand him. He loses his hearing and learns about compromise. Rich allows Grace into

					his world, but has his heart broken when she puts Mini and Liv first.
5.3	Mini	February 10, 2011	Philippa Langdale (Female)	Georgie Lester (Female)	Mini is under threat. When Grace brings Franky into the Charity Fashion Show, Mini sacks them both, and re-imagines the show in her own image to cement her power. Despite appearances, her relationship is also rocky - Nick can't wait forever for sex. As Mini struggles to maintain control, Liv acts out in the worst way possible - giving Nick what Mini failed to. Mini discovers but pretends it hasn't happened. Mini loses her virginity at the wrong time, with the wrong person and for all the wrong reasons.

The most recent season

Episode	Name	Air date	Directed by	Written by	Synopsis
7.1	Fire: Part 1	July 1, 2013	Charles Martin (Male)	Jess Brittain (Female)	Sharing a flat with would-be stand up comic Naomi Effy is now the office junior at the hedge fund department of Hewitt Maurice asset management fund. To avoid a friend getting into trouble Effy stands in for her boss Victoria and takes it upon herself to deal with valued client Max Stibbard, who is impressed. As a result Jake, the head of the firm gives Effy the chance to be a dealer and, helped by the lovelorn Dominic

					<p>from the research department,pulls off an impressively lucrative deal. Effy is now mixing with high-flying financiers and Naomi is appalled at her friend's shallow behaviour,especially as Naomi admits to having cancer. Effy however is on a roll and embarks upon an affair with Jake. At the same time it is noticed that market returns are not matching the firm's returns.</p>
7.2	Fire: Part 2	July 8, 2013	Charles Martin (Male)	Jess Brittain (Female)	<p>Naomi tries to recover from cancer without Emily knowing. Effy is sleeping with her boss and tries to get Dom's help to pull Jake's company out of a slump.</p>
7.3	Pure: Part 1	July 15, 2013	Philippa Langdale (Female)	Bryan Elsey (Male)	<p>Cassie is working in a seedy diner in London and regularly phoning her father Marcus, who is going senile. She lives in a noisy house where she keeps herself to herself but befriends another tenant, Maddie, a would-be actress who seems to have a lot of gentleman callers. She has meaningless sex with co-worker Yaniv but is shocked to discover that somebody has been secretly filming her and posting the photos online under the name Oblivion. Hearing that Marcus has had an accident Cassie decides to quit her job but before she can do so another work colleague Jakob admits to taking the</p>

					photos, admitting that he idolizes her with a pure, asexual love. She responds by hitting him.
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Degrassi

The first season

Episode	Name	Air date	Directed by	Written by	Synopsis
1.1	Mother and Child Reunion.	October 14, 2001	Bruce McDonald (Male)	Lunda Schuyler (Female), Yan Moore (Male), Aaron Martin (Male)	Spike, Caitlin, Joey, Lucy, and Snake have a high school reunion at Degrassi Community School. Joey's wife has died and he is unsure if he wants to go to the reunion, especially after meeting Caitlin's fiancé. Meanwhile, as Emma (Spike's daughter) is preparing to enter grade 7, she meets a boy online named Jordan. While the high school reunion is underway at Degrassi, Emma meets her online friend, Jordan, in person, and no one's evening goes as planned.
1.2	Family Politics	November 4, 2001	Anthony Browne (Male)	Lunda Schuyler (Female), Yan Moore (Male), Aaron Martin (Male)	Toby and Ashley have just become step-siblings and their families moved in together, but they do not get along. Ashley is running for school president, and Toby convinces his best friend, J.T., to run against her. Emma and Manny are

					having problems of their own. Being in grade 7 is tough, especially when Spinner is on a power trip.
1.3	Eye of the Beholder	November 11, 2001	Eleanore Lindo (Female)	Lunda Schuyler (Female), Yan Moore (Male), Aaron Martin (Male)	Terri is not looking forward to the school dance. She's too fat for any boy to like her, except for Spinner, that is. Too bad Paige likes Spinner too. She convinces Terri to go to the dance, but not before getting her drunk, so she'll look like a fool in front of Spinner. There's also a new student in Mr. Simpson's class: Sean Cameron, who has fallen behind a year. Emma is intrigued, despite Sean's "bad boy" image. Meanwhile, J.T. and Toby decide to skip the dance to surf pornography on the Internet.

The last season aired in 2010

Episode	Name	Air date	Directed by	Written by	Synopsis
9.1	Just Can't Get Enough	October 4, 2009	Philip Earnshaw (Male)	Kit Hood (Male), Sara Snow (Female), Kate Melville (Female)	When Mia is offered a MAJOR modeling contract in Paris, Peter decides he'll go with her. But he soon realizes he doesn't fit into her sophisticated world. Peter's addiction to meth worsens despite his promise to Mia that he would quit. Holly J stresses out about organizing the Winter Beach Bash.
9.2	Shoot to Thrill	October 11, 2009	Philippa Langdale	Kit Hood (Male), Matt Huether	Alli feels like her relationship with Johnny is getting boring so she

			(Female)	(Male)	spices things up by texting him racy naked pictures of herself. But when Alli angers Johnny by revealing one of his deepest secrets, Johnny takes vicious revenge by sending the pictures to the entire school. Fiona and Riley warm up to the idea of being a couple but will Riley's past cool their chemistry?
9.3	Close to Me	October 11, 2009	Graeme Campbell (Male)	Kit Hood (Male), Duana Taha (Female)	Jane and Spinner have been through so much together. They're best friends. Jane's just come out of a difficult year at home, so hanging out with Spinner is safe and... easy. That's not a bad thing, right?

The first season aired in 2011

Episode	Name	Air date	Directed by	Written by	Synopsis
10.1	“What a Girl Wants” Part 1	July 19, 2010	Eleanore Lindo (Female)	Michael Grassi (Male)	Another year kicks off at Degrassi. The claws come out when Sav decides to run against Holly J for Student Body President. Holly J is determined to win, no matter how ruthless she has to be. Meanwhile, Fiona's new boyfriend might not be as nice as he seems.
10.2	“What a Girl Wants” Part Two	July 20, 2010	Eleanore Lindo (Female)	Michael Grassi (Male)	Fiona's new outlook on life opens her eyes to her boyfriend's anger issues. Will she be able to help him or will she end up in danger? Holly J convinces Anya to pull a nasty trick on Sav to get him to drop out of the election. Dave makes a play for

					Alli.
10.3	“Breakaway” Part one	July 21, 2010	Eleanore Lindo (Female)	Matt Huether (Male)	Fiona runs away to Deglassi when life gets too stressful in New York. The entire school falls for Anya's lie, which jeopardizes Sav's chances in the election. Jenna misunderstands the surgery Clare plans to get and rumors spread like wildfire.

The most recent season

Episode	Name	Air date	Directed by	Written by	Synopsis
15.1	#BackToReality	June 30, 2017	Stefan Brogren (Male)	Alejandro Alcoba (Male), Celeste Bronfman (Female), Jennifer Kassabian (Female), Ian MacIntyre (Male)	Grace and Jonah keep their relationship on the DL and Tristan starts back slowly in school. Esme is willing to do whatever it takes to keep her man.
15.2	#GetMoney	June 30, 2017	Stefan Brogren (Male)	Courtney Jane Walker (Female), Celeste Bronfman (Female), Jennifer Kassabian	Frankie is uploading some questionable posts on her socials so Esme encourages her to recreate her online persona. Shay is determined to up her game to get scouted.

				(Female), Ian McIntyre (Male)	
15.3	#ILookLikeA	June 30, 2017	Samir Rehem (Male)	Iam MacIntrye (Male), Celeste Bronfman (Female), Jennifer Kassabian (Female),	Goldi has been flirting with Winston and doesn't even know it. Miles questions a post-grad opportunity that seems too good to be true.

Spangas

The first season

Episode	Name	Air date	Directed by	Written by	Synopsis
1.1	Eerste Schooldag EN: First day of school	September 3, 2007	Dennis Bots (Male)	Anya Koek (Female), Hetty Kleinloog (Female), Jetske Vulsma (Female)	Today is the first day of school after the summer holidays. Everyone is back. Or are we missing someone? Why doesn't Barry go to school anymore? And it is Jochem Damstra, the new teacher, his first day at Spangalis College.
1.2	Ingebroken! EN: Broke into!	September 4, 2007	Dennis Bots (Male)	Anya Koek (Female), Hetty Kleinloog (Female)	On this second day of school, janitor Aldert Patron Kalkhoven discovers that there has been a break-in! Dutch teacher, Rozalie Mokketier, also discovers a little later that the structures of the superstructure are smeared with tire tracks. Is this related? Vice Principal

					Frank van Hamel is missing his new teacher. Where is Jochem Damstra?!?
1.3	Schuldig? EN: Guilty?	September 5, 2007	Dennis Bots (Male)	Anya Koek (Female), Hetty Kleinloog (Female)	Everyone suspects each other of smearing the drafts, perhaps Barry is most suspicious because of the mud tires of his moped! But Barry isn't in school anymore, so how can he?
1.4	Verstoten EN: Outcast	September 6, 2007	Dennis Bots (Male)	Anya Koek (Female), Hetty Kleinloog (Female)	The incidents at school are piling up. Vice Principal Frank van Hamel suspects Barry. Everything indicates that Barry is involved in the incidents, according to Mr. Van Hamel. The twins are having a hard time because they have gone too far according to their classmates.
1.5	Terug naar School EN: Back to school	September 7, 2007	Dennis Bots (Male)	Anya Koek (Female), Hetty Kleinloog (Female)	Barry has to go back to school. He is, after all, compulsory. But Barry mainly goes back to find the culprit. The new teacher Jochem Damstra is back at school. The twins are squeezing it And school pictures are being taken today.
1.6	Ramadan	September 8, 2007	Dennis Bots (Male)	Anya Koek (Female), Hetty Kleinloog (Female)	Irmak's father's shop is very busy because of Ramadan. Irma helps her father. The hospitable family invites friend Fay for the Ramadan meal. Feeling guilty, Barry's classmates search for proof of his innocence!

The last season aired in 2010

3.1	Start van het nieuwe schooljaar EN: Start of	September 14, 2009	Jop de Vries (Male)	Bryan Elsey (Male)	It will be an exciting school year, because Spangalis College is going to merge with Gradanius due to budget cuts in education. The 'Gradans' seem to be taking over. And Frank van Hamel gets overwrought by it. In
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	the new school year				the end, all students together provide a nice surprise for Van Hamel.
3.2	Twijfel in de liefde EN: Doubting love	September 15, 2009	Jop de Vries (Male)	Bryan Elsey (Male)	It will be an exciting school year, because Spangalis College is going to merge with Gradanius due to budget cuts in education. The 'Gradans' seem to be taking over. And Frank van Hamel gets overwrought by it. In the end, all students together provide a nice surprise for Van Hamel.
3.3	Bio-industrie EN: Bio industry	September 16, 2009	Jop de Vries (Male)	Bryan Elsey (Male)	It will be an exciting school year, because Spangalis College is going to merge with Gradanius due to budget cuts in education. The 'Gradans' seem to be taking over. And Frank van Hamel gets overwrought by it. In the end, all students together provide a nice surprise for Van Hamel.
3.4	Verliefdheid EN: falling in love	September 17, 2009	Jop de Vries (Male)	Jamie Brittain (Male)	It will be an exciting school year, because Spangalis College is going to merge with Gradanius due to budget cuts in education. The 'Gradans' seem to be taking over. And Frank van Hamel gets overwrought by it. In the end, all students together provide a nice surprise for Van Hamel.
3.5	Vleeskippen EN: Meat chicken	September 18, 2009	Jop de Vries (Male)	Ed Hime (Male)	It will be an exciting school year, because Spangalis College is going to merge with Gradanius due to budget cuts in education. The 'Gradans' seem to be taking over. And Frank van Hamel gets overwrought by it. In the end, all students together provide a nice surprise for Van Hamel.
3.6	Motorraces	September 21, 2009	Jop de Vries (Male)	Ed Hime (Male)	It will be an exciting school year, because Spangalis College is going to merge with Gradanius due to budget cuts in education.

					The 'Gradans' seem to be taking over. And Frank van Hamel gets overwrought by it. In the end, all students together provide a nice surprise for Van Hamel.
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The first season aired in 2011

Episode	Name	Air date	Directed by	Written by	Synopsis
4.1	De eerste schooldag EN: The first schoolday	September 13, 2010	Diede van 't Veld (Female)		We follow the lives of a group of students at their high school, Spangalis College, as they experience relatable, exciting adventures. They all have their own personal stories of love, friendship, family, loneliness, sorrow and discovery.
4.2	Spieren trainen op het schoolstrandje EN: Training muscles on the school beach	September 13, 2010	Diede van 't Veld (Female)		We follow the lives of a group of students at their high school, Spangalis College, as they experience relatable, exciting adventures. They all have their own personal stories of love, friendship, family, loneliness, sorrow and discovery.
4.3	Lana fantaseert over New York EN: Lana fantasizes about New York	September 14, 2010	Diede van 't Veld (Female)		We follow the lives of a group of students at their high school, Spangalis College, as they experience relatable, exciting adventures. They all have their own personal stories of love, friendship, family, loneliness, sorrow and discovery.
4.4	Emam wil vrienden worden met Luxor en Rudolf	September 15, 2010	Diede van 't Veld (Female)		We follow the lives of a group of students at their high school, Spangalis College, as they experience relatable, exciting adventures. They all have their

	EN: Emam wants to be friends with Luxor and Rudolf				own personal stories of love, friendship, family, loneliness, sorrow and discovery.
4.5	De bovenbouwer Vertegenwoordiger Wordt bekend gemaakt... EN: The senior president will be announced....	September 16, 2010	Diede van 't Veld (Female)		We follow the lives of a group of students at their high school, Spangalis College, as they experience relatable, exciting adventures. They all have their own personal stories of love, friendship, family, loneliness, sorrow and discovery.
4.6	Shanti heeft liefdesverdriet EN: Shanti has love sickness	September 20, 2010	Diede van 't Veld (Female)		We follow the lives of a group of students at their high school, Spangalis College, as they experience relatable, exciting adventures. They all have their own personal stories of love, friendship, family, loneliness, sorrow and discovery.

The most recent season

Episode	Name	Air date	Directed by	Written by	Synopsis
15.1	New year, new me	October 4, 2021	David Cocheret (Male)	Gerben Hetebrij (Male)	Maxima and JJ have a resolution for this new school year: don't argue. Olivier is reminded of the threat from two old friends. Noah is super happy to be in JJ's group.
15.2	Ze is weer Single! EN: She is single again!	October 5, 2021	David Cocheret (Male)	Gerben Hetebrij (Male)	Olivier tries to keep a threatening phone call a secret from Lesley. Maxima is not happy when she has to give up her bedroom to the boys, but is pleasantly

					surprised with the arrival of a new student.
15.3	Nasi Bossa	October 6, 2021	David Cocheret (Male)	Gerben Hetebrij (Male)	Lesley and Olivier are surprised by a new student. Noah is impressed by Daan. Former student Jackie has a surprise for De Campus, but is it also a nice surprise?
15.4	43 Dagen EN: 43 days	October 7, 2021	David Cocheret (Male)	Gerben Hetebrij (Male)	JJ and Daan get along very well during the first school party. Ryan drives everyone crazy with his cooking and pranking. Noah is terrified in the greenhouse.
15.5	Plantenkas romance EN: Greenhouse romance	October 11, 2021	David Cocheret (Male)	Gerben Hetebrij (Male)	Maxima is furious with JJ and Daan after their dance action. Noah comforts Zane and thinks he has a chance with her. Lesley sees Olivier withholding something and searches his belongings. Will Lesley find out?
15.6	Zwarte band EN: Black belt	October 12, 2021	David Cocheret (Male)	Gerben Hetebrij (Male)	Olivier gets a week to find 5000 euros. Noah goes off during boxing class. Gioia becomes insecure when she learns that Noor has another date. Gioia also wants a date.

Appendix D. Coding frame

Main Theme	Main code	Sub theme	
Sub culture	Character	Morals	
		Traditional gender roles	
		Stereotypical characteristics	

		(sensitive, fragile, emotional ect.)	
		Other	
	Appearance	Clothing	
		Looks	
		Other	
	Other		
Relationship	Family	Parents	
		Other family	
	Friends	Female	
		Male	
		Other friend dynamics	
	Love		
	Other		
Storylines	What kind of		
	How is it portrayed		
	How is it dealt with		
	Other		
Objectification	Appearance	Focused on looks	
		Appearance most important	
		Wanting to look good for others	
		Others	
	Sexualized		