TRACKING BODY DISSATISFACTION AND BODY IDEALS OF ETHNICALLY

DIVERSE COLLEGE WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

Globally, women are exposed to society-created, unachievable body ideals, which change over time and are subject to influence by other, typically Western, societies. Socializing agents such as family members, peers, and media often reinforce these ideals through pressure, which can then lead to body dissatisfaction. Research on body ideals and body dissatisfaction disproportionately focuses on White women within the United States. While this group is important to continue to examine, there is a need to include women from outside of the United States and from Non-Western societies. Thus, this study examined college women's perceptions of body ideals within and outside of the United States, where they learned these ideals, changes in body dissatisfaction over time, and how pressure to be thin from socializing agents was associated with body dissatisfaction in women from both Western and Non-Western societies. College women born and raised within the United States (domestic) and women from outside of the United States but now living in the United States to attend college (international) completed a series of online surveys. First, open-ended questions were used to gather participant perceptions of body ideals. Results indicated that three main body ideals existed within and outside of the United States, with a thin, with accentuated features ideal being the most prominent within the United States, and a thin-ideal being the most common among Non-Western women. Further, nearly all participants stated that the media was responsible for teaching them about body ideals. Second, validated measures were used to collect data about pressure from socializing agents and body dissatisfaction among Western and Non-Western (specifically Asian) women. Body dissatisfaction at baseline and trajectory of body dissatisfaction did not significantly differ between the two groups. However, while greater pressure all socializing agents were associated with higher body dissatisfaction in the predominantly White Western group, for the Asian group,

only pressure from family members was significantly associated with increased body dissatisfaction. The results of this study can be used to inform and create broader, culturally appropriate educational body image programming with the goal of preventing or intervening to reduce body dissatisfaction in college women.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Eating disorders are severe mental health illnesses that are a growing health concern worldwide due to their early age of onset, increasing prevalence of diagnoses, lengthy average duration, and high mortality rate (Blodgett Salafia & Jones, 2018; van Hoeken & Hoek, 2020). Within the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (fifth edition), eating disorders are characterized by "persistent disturbance of eating or eating-related behavior that results in altered consumption of food that significantly impairs physical health psychological functioning" (2013, pg. 329). In general, research findings suggest that eating disorders affect women to a greater degree than they affect men, and the age of onset for most eating disorders are in later adolescence and young adulthood (Galmiche et al., 2019; Udo & Grilo, 2018).

Though eating disorder diagnoses are found worldwide, a meta-analytic review conducted by Galmiche and colleagues (2019) states that there is a significantly greater prevalence of eating disorders in North America than any other continent, followed by Asia and then Europe; more specifically, the United States has higher rates of eating disorders than any other region in the world. When looking at Latin American countries, Kolar and colleagues (2016) found mixed results in regard to eating disorder prevalence among Latin American women; Anorexia Nervosa prevalence was much lower when compared to the United States, but Bulimia Nervosa and Binge Eating prevalence were comparable. Large-scale eating disorder prevalence studies in African countries are limited, yet one meta-analysis found low rates of eating disorders within African samples (van Hoeken et al., 2016); however, the authors made note of the small sample sizes of the studies reviewed. Similarly, there is a lack of prevalence and risk studies for women in Arab nations. One meta-analysis simply stated that women, as compared to men, in the Middle East are most at risk of developing an eating disorder (Melisse

et al., 2020). Though eating disorder prevalence for the United States is highest, likely due to comparatively better mental health diagnosis, there is need to examine risk and development in all areas of the world, as several studies note the increasing prevalence of eating disorder diagnoses in both the United States and other countries (Galmiche et al., 2019; Keski-Rahkonen & Mustelin, 2016; Thomas et al., 2016). Considering the increasing prevalence of eating disorders nearly across the globe, it is imperative that researchers examine factors that influence the development and maintenance of these diseases, particularly in female populations given the intense societal pressures to achieve body ideals.

Subclinical eating disorder symptoms (e.g., problematic behaviors or cognitions that do not meet the minimum threshold for a full clinical diagnosis) include: intense dietary monitoring and restriction, purging, and body dissatisfaction (Hoyt & Ross, 2003). While the development of eating disorders is multi-faceted, involving biological, social, and personal factors, body image disturbances are one of the most prominent risk factors in eating disorder development (Blodgett Salafia et al., 2015; Stice, 2002; Stice et al., 2018), and have been found to be a normal experience for women (Rodin et al., 1984). The current study therefore focuses on college women's body image, specifically perceptions of the overall female body ideal(s) found in different cultures and body dissatisfaction, a negative evaluation of one's physical body (Grogan, 1999), which may form as an outcome of not meeting these ideals.

College Women and Body Image

For women who leave their home and families to attend and live at their university, the ways in which they learn the current body ideals may be different from those who do not attend college. These ways may also differ from adolescents, who live with their families, and women in their middle/late adult years, who potentially have established partners and families and no

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longer spend a great deal of time with peers/friends. Further, for women who attend college and live on campus, there is increased time spent with peers; and, the number of potential targets for comparison, which can impact body image, is greater.

Body image, the way in which an individual views their physical body, is a multifaceted concept involving cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions (Cash, 2005; Thompson et al., 1999). Development of body image begins in childhood, and is influenced by multiple sociocultural factors (Flannery-Schroeder & Chrisler, 1996; Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2006) which continue to be influential to body image throughout an individual's life (Robert-McComb & Massey-Stokes, 2014). Poor body image, also known as body dissatisfaction, is detrimental to physical and mental health (Stice, 2002), and has been shown to begin as early as middle childhood (Maloney et al., 1989), decrease during middle and late adolescence, and increase again at the start of the college transition (Bucchianeri et al., 2013; Linville et al., 2011). Given this increase in body dissatisfaction in college, increasing prevalence of eating disorders in the female population globally, and the impact of sociocultural factors on body image, it is important to examine body ideals and body image in ethnically diverse college women.

Cross Cultural Examinations

To date, the majority of body image and eating disorder literature is focused on White, middle class girls and women in the United States. In more recent years there has been a shift towards focusing on populations outside of this ethnic and socioeconomic group. However, a large portion of such cross-cultural examinations include minority racial groups living within the United States; thus, these individuals are a part of this Western culture of the United States. Few studies have explicitly examined women who were born and raised outside of the United States

(for an exception, see Sanders & Heiss, 1998), and who are now living here in their early adult years.

Further, while there are many differences between Western and Non-Western countries, in a study examining prevalence of eating disorders around the world, Makino et al. (2004) made comparisons between these two groups. Their findings suggest that, while not at the prevalence of Western countries, Non-Western countries are experiencing increasing rates of eating disorders. Given that body dissatisfaction is a well-established risk factor for eating disorders (Stice, 2002), it is also reasonable to hypothesize that researchers should examine body dissatisfaction, and influences on this dissatisfaction, in both Western and Non-Western areas of the world. The present study will therefore consist of young adult, college women who were born and raised in the United States as well as those who were not born and raised within the United States, both from Western and Non-Western societies, but are currently in residence.

Body Ideals

In their review of Western beauty ideals, Calogero et al. (2007) state that, "beauty ideals represent culturally prescribed and endorsed looks that incorporate various features of the human face and body, and thus define the standards for physical attractiveness within a culture." (pg. 4). Thus, societies create ideals that communicate the "acceptable" weight and body shape, as well as what is "acceptable" for more specific features of the body, such as the waist and facial features. Certain attributes tend to be assigned to those who meet these societally prescribed beauty standards. For example, in their seminal article, Dion et al. (1972) examined the "beauty-is-good" stereotype. This stereotype is one in which positive characteristics (e.g., kind, successful, etc.) are automatically attributed to physically attractive individuals. In a meta-analysis on the "what is beautiful is good" effect, researchers found evidence that participants

did indeed attribute better social and intellectual competence to physically attractive individuals (Eagly et al., 1991). Importantly, it has been found that women, in particular, believed that if they were more attractive, their lives and mental health would significantly improve (Engeln-Maddox, 2006; Umberson & Hughes, 1987). Thus, with positive attributes assigned to attractive individuals, as well as beliefs that if they were more attractive their life and mental health would improve, this may create a powerful drive for women to attain and maintain the beauty ideals prescribed by the society in which they live.

Theoretical Grounding

Theories can help explain how individuals learn and accept body ideals. As mentioned above, individuals who are labeled as attractive within a society are stereotyped in a positive way; they are typically seen as successful and happy (Dion et al., 1972). Those who possess qualities that are regarded as desirable are sought out, and those who do not possess qualities regarded as desirable are ignored (Bandura, 1977). In mass media, models are quite often regarded as attractive, thus may be seen as successful and happy, and thus given attention (Tiggemann, 2002). The Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977) is centered around the idea that people imitate behaviors they see performed by authority or, in the case of models, individuals who are regarded as high status within a society, in order to receive desired outcomes (Wiseman et al., 1992). Female models typically embody the beauty ideals within a society, and as individuals are increasingly exposed to these attractive models, their view of what is attractive is learned and shaped. This, coupled with the desirable attributes assigned to those who are regarded as attractive, teaches individuals that they need to adhere to these ideals in order to successfully fit into their society.

Multiple types of media (e.g., social networking sites, magazines, advertisements, etc.) are able to spread body ideals easily and widely, which make them a potent socializing agent. However, media is also consumed by an individual's family members and peers. Within a family system, parents are often regarded as the authority figures. As Social Learning Theory posits, individuals learn by viewing and imitating authority figures (Bandura, 1994). Thus, children may learn what the societal body ideals are, and the importance of body ideals, through communication with and modeling of their parents.

Although peers may not be seen overtly as authority figures the way parents are, peers gain importance as socializing agents as individuals move through adolescence and young adulthood. As peers may share similar views on what is attractive within a society, these views and ideals can be continually discussed and modeled within a peer or friend group. Further, this may drive individuals to compare themselves to others within their group. Social Comparison Theory (Festinger,1954) posits that individuals continually evaluate themselves and, in doing so, engage in comparisons with others. Thus, as Social Learning Theory helps to explain how women may learn about the body ideals within their society, Social Comparison Theory helps to explain how they continue to be reinforced.

Body ideals within a society, often learned through the media, parents, and peers, communicate to women what their bodies must look like in order to be perceived as attractive. While specific body ideals are widespread throughout the society in which they exist (Zones, 2000), there is not one universal body ideal that is adhered to by all women across the globe. Different societies may emphasize different female figures and body features. Additionally, body ideals may change over time.

Body Ideals Within the United States

An area of the world that has received the most attention in terms of body ideals is the United States, and research has heavily focused on White girls and women. Within the United States, there have been significant changes to female body ideals over time. In the late 1800's and early 1900's, for example, the female body ideal was one that was slim, yet voluptuous, and long-legged (Gordon, 1987). Moving into the 1920's, the curves seen previously were flattened, and a straighter, "boy-like" figure was the ideal (Caldwell, 1981). Slenderness was still present in the ideal from the 1940's to the mid-1960's, but greater emphasis was placed on a larger buttocks and bust coupled with a small waist (Calogero et al., 2007); this created the hour-glass figure body ideal. Post 1970's, thinness took over the body ideal, with emphasis placed on women having a small waist, a hallmark feature in most body ideals past and present (Calogero et al., 2007; Cash & Smolak, 2012; Garner et al., 1980; Mazur, 1986). With thinness prominent in body ideals throughout the decades, research has also focused on examining thinness. With multiple instruments to measure dissatisfaction with body weight (Garner et al., 1983; Mutale et al., 2016), and internalization of thinness (Schaefer et al., 2017), the impacts of the thin-ideal on White women in the United States is well-established.

The degree of thinness that is desired is much less than what is easily attained or maintained naturally (Thompson et al., 1999). Within the media, models are often digitally enhanced to remove the appearance of weight from the waist, hips, and thighs (Cash & Smolak, 2012); thus, the images that girls and women are comparing themselves to are not realistic, nor attainable, as these models do not naturally look the way they are presented in media. Indeed, recent literature with samples of White women from the United States have found that women remain preoccupied with thinness and a small waist, while also desiring "perfect," large breasts,

and smaller hips and thighs which creates a curvier figure (Frederick et al., 2017; Frederick et al., 2022; Swami et al., 2020). Research on this "hour glass" ideal is relatively limited in comparison to the thin-ideal, and it was not until recently that an instrument was developed to measure it (Hernadez et al., 2021); therefore, making this ideal of great interest for further research.

The areas of the body that have specific ideals, such as larger breasts, are nearly impossible to naturally attain at such low body weight, which may drive women to surgically modify their bodies (Harrison, 2003; Thompson & Tantleff, 1992). In addition, to attain and maintain the thin-ideal, which is a socially created ideal centered on extreme thinness, caloric restriction and over-exercise may be incorporated (Harrison, 2003). The ways in which girls and women may try to reduce themselves to fit into this ideal can be dangerous to their mental and physical health; for example, they may develop body dissatisfaction, poor self-esteem, and/or eating disorders as a result (Cash & Pruzinsky, 2002; Stice, 2001).

In addition, whereas the desire for an ultra-thin body has existed for many decades, more recently there has been an increase in the number of women who are dissatisfied with their level of muscularity, such that they want to be *more* muscular, or "toned," than they currently are (Benton & Karazsia, 2015; Bozsik et al., 2018; Frederick et al., 2017). This shift may be the result of models and celebrities in the media being shown with more tone (Boepple et al., 2016; Calogero et al., 2007; Frederick et al., 2017). This desire to be more muscular is coupled with the desire to also have very low body fat; thus, there has been the emergence of a body ideal that is thin, yet toned. While multiple ideals may exist within the United States, relatively limited attention has been given to ideals beyond the thin-ideal.

Body Ideals Beyond the United States

Much like the United States, other countries categorized as Western also uphold body ideals that include thinness (Pike et al., 2014; Schaefer et al., 2019; Shager et al., 2019; Swami, 2010). Studies with Canadian women have also found links between negative mental health impacts and ideals that are more muscular (McCreary & Saucier, 2009) or curvy (McComb & Mills, 2022). In their review of body ideals, Calogero et al. (2007) state that due to mass media becoming widespread in the early 1920's, body ideals within many Western cultures became more similar. Slight differences have been found between these Western cultures, however. For example, in their cross-cultural examination, Swami (2010) found that women in the United States preferred a thinner body shape compared to women in Western and Eastern European countries as well as Oceania. Differences have also been found among regions within Europe. Jaeger et al. (2002) found that countries in the southern part of Europe (i.e., Italy, France, Spain) preferred a body that was thinner than the preferred body in northern parts of Europe (i.e., Germany, Sweden, United Kingdom). In addition, in general, women in Europe preferred a thinner body as compared to traditionally Non-Western parts of the world (Jaeger et al., 2002). Western societies share many similarities (Swami et al., 2010), and body ideals may be more quickly shared between the United States and other Western societies, than between Non-Western societies.

In many parts of the Middle East, a curvy, larger body carries positive attributes (Khawaja & Afifi-Soweid, 2004; Melisse et al., 2020), and is typically desired among women. In support of this, in their examination of women in Saudi Arabia, Khalaf et al. (2015) found that a moderate proportion of their college-age sample wanted to be heavier than their current body weight, which was consistent with the local body ideals of a fuller figure and findings from an

additional study conducted with Saudi Arabian women (Qauhiz, 2010). However, in other studies conducted with women from the Middle East, there are reports of a desire for a thinner figure. In their literature review, Melisse et al. (2020) found that women in many parts of the Middle East, including in the United Arabian Emirates and Egypt, desired to be thinner. Melisse et al. (2020) made note that, due to Western influences, media use, and increased affluence, Arab individuals have started to admire a thinner body. Thus, although the ideal body shape historically was curvier, it appears to have now since shifted to be thinner in parts of the Middle East.

Much like the reports of desire for thinness and muscularity in the United States, these ideals are also present in areas of South America (Campos et al., 2019; Campos et al., 2021; Moreno-Domínguez et al., 2019; Swami et al., 2010). In one worldwide comparison of body ideals, women from South America noted the "ideal" female body as very slim, comparable to the ideal for women in the United States (Swami et al., 2010). An awareness of the thin-ideal and feeling pressure to adhere to it were reported in a sample of Argentinean college women (Moreno-Domínguez et al., 2019). In addition, women in Brazil reported engaging in restrictive dieting and over-exercise to attain a slender figure (Alvarenga et al., 2013).

Though past body size ideals for Asian cultures typically favored larger body sizes (Han, 2003; Jung & Forbes, 2007), current trending ideals emphasize extreme thinness (Jung, 2018; Zhang et al., 2018). One study with a large sample of college women in China showed that there was intense focus on the pursuit of an ultra-thin body ideal (Zhang et al., 2018), and another study highlighted a desire to achieve the Western body ideal (Jung, 2018). In addition, reports from Southeastern, Eastern, Southern, and Western Asia indicate that women in these regions value a thin figure comparable to the United States (Swami et al., 2010). However, it does not

appear that women in Asian cultures desire a body that includes a threshold of muscle tone, and instead the main focus is on extreme thinness (Zhang et al., 2018).

In many areas of Africa, the desired female body is one that is heavier and curvy (Holmqvist & Frisen, 2010; Frederick, 2008; Toselli et al., 2016). In contrast, in their cross-cultural examination, Swami et al. (2010) reported that South African women indicated that the ideal female body was slender, almost as slender as what was desired by female participants from the United States. These results from Swami et al. (2010) should be interpreted with the knowledge that their participants were located in South Africa, and women in this country have been shown to have a greater desire for a thin body in comparison to other African countries (Wassenaar et al., 2000). Additionally, Toselli and colleagues (2016) conducted a review of body size preference comparison between African immigrants in Europe and African women who still resided in their country of origin. Results indicated that, in general, women residing in African countries preferred a larger body size than those who had immigrated to Europe (Toselli et al., 2016). The aforementioned study provides some evidence that body ideals may be malleable, and as individuals from Non-Western areas move into Western areas, the messages of thinness may begin to change what they view as ideal.

The Western ideal, or thin-ideal, may be saturating Non-Western cultures (Swami & Tovee, 2005) and, while some inconsistencies can be seen throughout the literature regarding preferred female body type, there is an abundance of evidence showing that, around the world, thinness is being incorporated into female body ideals (Holmqvist & Frisen, 2010; Jung, 2018; Melisse et al., 2020; Swami, 2010). The main danger with body ideals that incorporate extreme thinness is that these ideals are nearly impossible to attain and maintain long-term without the use of restriction of caloric intake and/or over-exercising (Calogero et al., 2007; Harrison, 2003).

An inability to easily attain and maintain these prescribed beauty ideals may, over time, lead women to feel a sense of distress, which can manifest as dissatisfaction with one's body.

Body Dissatisfaction

Body dissatisfaction is a common sub-clinical eating disorder symptom that is broadly defined as negative thoughts, feelings, and evaluations about one's body (Grogan, 1999). In 1984, Rodin and colleagues coined the term "normative discontent" as a way to describe the pervasive dissatisfaction that women tend to experience towards their bodies as "normal." Recent findings suggest there is robust empirical evidence supporting this notion that it is normal for women to feel dissatisfied with their bodies (Tantleff-Dunn et al., 2011). As a well-established risk factor to the development of an eating disorder (Stice, 2002), it is of vital importance to continually examine the development, maintenance, and overall prevalence of body dissatisfaction.

Body Dissatisfaction Within the United States

Normative discontent with the body is especially true for women living within the United States. This discontent may start early, as studies examining the trajectory of body dissatisfaction have found that during the initiation of adolescence, body dissatisfaction increases, but has been shown to decrease during middle and late adolescence, only to increase again at the start of the college transition (Bucchianeri et al., 2013; Linville et al., 2011). Furthermore, prevalence of body dissatisfaction for adult women living in the United States is high, and has remained stable over the years (Cash & Henry, 1995; Fiske et al., 2014; Grabe & Hyde, 2006). In their meta-analytic review of body dissatisfaction prevalence among women in the United States, whose samples included young adult women, Fiske et al. (2014) reported prevalence of body dissatisfaction as high as 72%. Specifically, among college students, Wardle et al. (2006) found

that 45% of women in their study perceived themselves as overweight, and 59% reported that they were currently trying to lose weight. In addition, Wang et al. (2019) conducted a 15-year longitudinal study of body dissatisfaction from adolescence to adulthood, finding evidence of stability of dissatisfaction over time. As previously mentioned, the body ideal for women living in the United States has been one that emphasizes thinness that is extremely difficult to attain and maintain (Thompson et al., 1999). The inability to fit within this standard of beauty, which is the reality for a majority of women, may lead to dissatisfaction with one's body (Stice, 2002; Tantleff-Dunn et al., 1999). While there has been a focus on body dissatisfaction among women in the United States, less attention has been given to body dissatisfaction in women in many parts of the globe.

Body Dissatisfaction Beyond the United States

Though studies have shown that United States women have higher body dissatisfaction than European women and women living in Australia or Canada, studies with European, Australian, and Canadian samples show that body dissatisfaction is still highly prevalent (Gupta et al., 2001; Holmquist & Frisen, 2010; Rodgers et al., 2020; Swami et al., 2010). For example, a national cross-sectional study with over 8,000 women in Australia found that just over 80% of women reported dissatisfaction with their weight (Lauche et al., 2016), and, in a large-scale study, close to 45% of young adult Canadian women reported dissatisfaction with their body (Carter et al., 2017). Researchers typically refer to these aforementioned global areas as Western cultures, which emphasize individualistic values (Laungani, 2006), and are also cultures that tend to highly value and emphasize thinness (Grogan, 1999). Given that these areas of the world are more likely to uphold a Western lifestyle and value thinness, it is understandable why there may be similar levels of body dissatisfaction compared to women living in the United States.

Research focused on body dissatisfaction experienced by women living in Asian societies has shown mixed results. Previous findings suggested that women living in Asia had lower levels of body dissatisfaction when compared to women living in the United States (Swami et al., 2010). However, other studies suggest that women living in Asia may actually have higher levels of body dissatisfaction than their United States counterparts (Jung & Forbes, 2007; Kowner, 2002; Pike and Dunne, 2015; Rodgers et al., 2020; Shih & Kubo, 2005). For example, women in Japan showed high body dissatisfaction and investment in a body ideal that is very thin (Holmquist & Frisen, 2010; Rodgers et al., 2020; Shih & Kubo, 2005). Though these results are mixed, body dissatisfaction in many parts of Asia has risen considerably over time (Pike & Dunne, 2015). Researchers attribute these changes to Western influence that is being integrated into society (Kowner, 2002). While those in Asian societies may not fully adopt a Western lifestyle (e.g., values, beliefs, etc.), Western influence in terms of body ideals are still able to infiltrate, through means of media, and impact the way women view their own bodies.

While research with United States, European, and Asian samples are more commonly found in literature, research focused on South American countries, and consequently, the women in these countries is relatively slim. The research that has been conducted with young adult women in South America has found high body dissatisfaction trends, consistent with the aforementioned Western global areas (Campos et al., 2021; Silva et al., 2011; Swami et al., 2010). Specific studies on Brazilian women note interesting findings such that women in Brazil feel a strong pull, or obsession, towards achieving the "perfect" body and maintain the perception that they will also gain the positive attributes that society has tied to the "perfect" body (Etcoff et al., 2004; Goldenberg, 2010). Body dissatisfaction prevalence and development

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in South American women is a particularly important area of focus for researchers, as there is limited literature.

Within the middle east, the ideal body shape historically was curvier but has now since shifted to be thinner (Melisse et al., 2020). As this shift becomes more widespread, research shows that body dissatisfaction has as well (Al-Sendi et al., 2004; Madanat et al., 2011; Melisse et al., 2020; Schulte & Thomas, 2013; Thomas et al., 2010). A review of the literature focused on women in the Middle East revealed that these women were more at risk of developing eating disorders that involve a restrictive component, such as Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia Nervosa, than eating disorders that involve loss of control of eating, like Binge Eating Disorder (Melisse et al., 2020). Similarly, a high desire, or drive, to be thin has been found in multiple studies with Arab college women (Melisse et al., 2020; Schulte & Thomas, 2013); these women may be more exposed to Western ideals due to their affluence.

To date, literature on body dissatisfaction in Africa is the least common. A few studies that examine body dissatisfaction among African women found that body dissatisfaction was not common in African individuals, and certainly not to the degree that exists in Western cultures (Frederick et al., 2008; Jaeger et al., 2002). However, Wassenaar and colleagues (2000) examined body dissatisfaction and drive for thinness among White and Black college women in South Africa, finding that while body dissatisfaction was higher in the White group, drive for thinness was higher for the Black group. However, it is important to interpret findings in light of the unique context of South Africa as well as societal impact factors such as urbanization, affluence, and resource security.

Overall, it has been found that body dissatisfaction is more common in areas of the world that are more affluent, regardless of whether that area of the world is individualistic or

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collectivist (Swami, 2015). Researchers note that with affluence typically comes an infiltration of more Western influence through mass media, which could lead to greater exposure to thin Western body ideals (Holmquist & Frisen, 2010; Swami, 2015). In addition, researchers note that in areas of greater affluence there are greater resources, so food is easier to attain, and finances allow for expenditures on dieting products, surgeries, and gym memberships (Holmquist & Frisen, 2010). Thus, the aforementioned findings and arguments made by scholars may serve as an explanation as to why the prevalence of body dissatisfaction in rural communities around the world and areas of the world that are still developing is low in comparison to urban and developed countries (Holmquist & Frisen, 2010; Swami, 2015).

Research on body dissatisfaction among women around the world suggests that the prevalence of body dissatisfaction has been rising over time. As such, the state of normative discontent has expanded beyond the United States into other areas of the world. Body dissatisfaction results when an individual negatively evaluates their appearance (Grogan, 1999), and their negative evaluation may be in response to viewing specified beauty ideals that they do not fit. In addition, socializing agents within the immediate environment are important sources of information about body ideals and consequently may impact how individuals feel about their bodies.

Sociocultural Influences on Body Dissatisfaction Development

While society is largely responsible for creating and upholding specific body ideals, the development and maintenance of body dissatisfaction can be attributed to socializing agents within an individual's life. These socializing agents communicate and reinforce the importance of body ideals. Beginning in early childhood and continuing throughout an individual's life, parents, siblings, peers, and the media are some of the most prominent agents in socialization,

regardless of which culture you reside in (Arnett, 1995; Arnett, 2014). However, the potency of each socializing agent may differ by time period within the lifespan and by which culture you reside. For example, in the United States, parental influence is typically strongest in childhood, and decreases during adolescence and young adulthood, when peer and media influence take over (Aquilino, 2006). In other areas of the world, parental influence may last much longer (Trommsdorff, 2006). For example, in Asian cultures, children are expected to respect and revere their parents throughout their lives (Wang & Lui, 2010). The changes in the importance of socializing agents in different developmental periods, and different cultures, may mean that the potency of their influence on body dissatisfaction differs as well.

As previously mentioned, body dissatisfaction has been found to increase during the start of the college years (Bucchianeri et al., 2013; Linville et al., 2011). The explanation for this rise during the start of the college years may be due to a variety of factors. Some of these prominent factors are pressures introduced by socializing agents directly in an individual's primary environments and social circles, such as the potential for a larger peer group and more time spent with peers; both of which provide the opportunity for more comparisons and body-centered conversation. In their longitudinal study, Stice and Whienton (2002) found that perceived pressure to be thin from socializing agents was one of the most potent predictors of body dissatisfaction. Thus, this study will focus on appearance-related pressures from family members, peers, and the media.

Theoretical Grounding

The tripartite influence model (Thompson et al., 1999) posits that socializing agents, such as family, peers, and media, have a strong influence on women's body image and eating behaviors. Specifically, this model proposes that appearance-related pressures from family,

peers, and media concerning prescribed body ideals lead to enhanced thin-internalization and appearance comparisons among women, in turn leading to body dissatisfaction when they do not meet the prescribed body ideals, and potentially a later eating disorder (Thompson et al., 1999). The tripartite influence model is supported in research with both United States (van Den Berg et al., 2002; Johnson et al., 2015) and international (e.g., non-United States) (de Carvalho et al., 2017; Rodgers et al., 2011; Shagar et al., 2019; Shahyad et al., 2018; Yamamiya et al., 2008; You & Shin, 2020) samples of young adult women. Due to its focus on family, peers, and media, and its ability to fit culturally diverse samples, this theoretical model will frame the present study.

The majority of studies utilizing the tripartite influence model use an aggregated "family" variable that consists of mothers, fathers, and siblings. Very few studies (e.g., Bliss, 2005; Coomber & King, 2008; Schaefer & Blodgett Salafia, 2014) have examined mothers, fathers, and siblings separately within the tripartite influence model framework. The current study disaggregates the "family" factor into three separate factors that potentially exert appearance-focused pressure: mothers, fathers, and siblings. By doing this, we can examine and compare the influence that each of the three familial factors has on body dissatisfaction separately. This provides a unique influence profile for all three factors. As each separate family member communicates, indirectly or directly, the importance of attaining and maintaining specific body ideals, the pressure to meet these standards may push women to feel dissatisfied with their appearance.

A second socializing agent named in the tripartite influence model is peers. Peers can serve a variety of functions, including models of body ideals or points of appearance-related comparison, and young adults spend a significant amount of time with their peers at work,

school, or socializing. The tripartite influence model hypothesizes that peer influence on body dissatisfaction is mediated by social comparison; women engage in social comparisons with peers, and this comparison and subsequent negative evaluation of their body lead to feeling dissatisfied with their body (Thompson et al., 1999; van de Berg & Thompson, 2002). In addition, peers may engage in verbal commentary centered around the body, and that in turn may lead to a more intense focus on one's body, leading to negative evaluations and body dissatisfaction.

Lastly, the tripartite influence model names media as an especially potent socializing agent in the context of body image disturbance. Media is an information hub where the larger society's appearance ideals can be quickly and widely distributed. Messages related to the importance of meeting these ideals are also communicated by the media; in turn, these messages may be internalized, and lead to heightened body dissatisfaction (Rodgers et al., 2015; Thompson et al., 1999). Highly visual media may also provide a space where both celebrity models and peers' bodies are on display. As individuals view highly visual content of both model and peer bodies, they may engage in social comparisons, and if they evaluate their appearance as less attractive than the target of their comparison, body dissatisfaction could develop (Rodgers et al., 2015).

For young adult women in college, family, peers, and media may play particularly important roles in body image development as individuals are engaging in the exploration of their identity and where they fit into the world, and these socialization channels communicate the larger cultural ideals in the context of physical attractiveness. However, the role of each socializing agent may change as individuals move from adolescence to young adulthood, thereby

affecting the strength of their influence. In addition, an individual's culture may influence the potency of each socializing agent.

Family Influence. The family functions as not only a system in which the family members influence one another, but also as a place where messages about larger societal values, behaviors, and attitudes are transmitted and reinforced (Kreppner & Lerner, 1989; Minuchin, 1974). This includes values, behaviors, and attitudes about appearance and body weight and size. A family whose culture heavily emphasizes the importance of appearance and attractiveness typically has girls who show more pronounced difficulties with their appearance (Kluck, 2010). Each member of the family can influence the other, and research shows that mothers, fathers, and siblings all exert direct and/or indirect appearance-based pressures through methods such as commentary and criticism about self and others' weight and size, and modeling behaviors consistent with dissatisfaction with one's body (Hardit & Hannum, 2012; Minuchin, 1974; Ricciardelli & McCabe, 2001).

Though stated earlier that the parental influence tends to decrease across adolescence and young adulthood in the US, there is evidence that parental factors still exert potent appearance-related pressure in young adulthood (Aquilino & Supple, 2001). In their sample of young adult women in the United States, Wansink et al. (2017) found that weight-based comments made by parents in childhood still impacted women's satisfaction with weight in adulthood. Previous studies have also shown that negative appearance-based talk is prevalent amongst all family members, and is associated with body dissatisfaction in adolescents (Berge et al., 2016; Keery et al., 2005; McCormack et al., 2011). Developmentally, the parental influence decreases as individuals move beyond adolescence; however, the majority of young adults in college do not consider themselves as having full adult status, and one study found that parents of college-going

children also do not consider them adults (Nelson et al., 2007), which creates a sense of dependence on parents. Due to being in a period of exploration and instability, young adults in college may heavily rely on their parents for guidance, information, and support (Arnett, 2000). With this idea of both independence from and continued dependence on parents while in college, parental influence may be an important influence on college women's body dissatisfaction.

Research has shown that familial pressure influences body dissatisfaction in adolescence (Eisenberg et al., 2012; Holsen et al., 2012), yet little is known about familial pressure on body dissatisfaction in young adulthood. In addition, most research focuses on the mother-daughter relationship, and less on the father-daughter and sibling-sibling relationships. Though the content of the parental pressure within families may differ depending on the culture in which that family resides, how parents influence body image development (e.g., modeling and appearance-based messages) may be the same regardless of culture (Cash & Smolak, 2012). The following sections will focus on each familial relationship and its influence on body image disturbance.

Maternal Influence. For most individuals, the mother is perceived as the primary caregiver. Mothers, in comparison to fathers, typically spend more time with the children, and women in many parts of the world are socialized into a caregiver role (Chng & Fassnacht, 2016; Cotter et al., 2009). Furthermore, some researchers posit that the mother's impact is strongest on daughters (see Boyd, 1989). The mother may not only serve as the primary caregiver but also as a primary influence on body image disturbance for their daughter(s) (Wertheim et al., 1999). The strong influence of the mother on daughter's body dissatisfaction development may be because the daughter trusts and looks to the mother, as the primary caregiver, for support and guidance (Rastog & Wampler, 1999). Thus, if the mother is critical of her daughter's body, those messages may be particularly detrimental to a girl's perception of her body.

In body image and eating disorder literature, the mother-daughter relationship is well-studied during childhood and adolescence, but less is known about the maternal impact on body image during young adulthood. In an effort to examine what types of maternal messages and behaviors regarding appearance young adult women were exposed to, Segar (2012) conducted a focus group study of college women in the United States. They found that maternal exercise, dieting behaviors, and modeling, all indirect sources of pressure, were especially integral in the formation of how women felt and viewed their bodies (Segar, 2012). Concerning direct pressure, Schwartz and colleagues (1999) found that maternal appearance-related comments predicted poor body image outcomes among college-age women in the United States. In support of findings from Schawrtz et al. (1999), Kluck (2010) similarly found that appearance-related and body size comments from mothers were associated with eating disorder symptomology among their college-age daughters in the United States.

The mother-daughter relationship and its association with body dissatisfaction has been examined not just in the United States, but also across other parts of the world. For example, in a study of Italian young adults, mothers who vocalized dissatisfaction with their own, or others', bodies had daughters who reported dissatisfaction with their bodies (Biolcati et al., 2020). In addition, in a sample of Australian young adult women, mothers' verbal encouragement to diet was associated with higher levels of body dissatisfaction (Rodgers & Chabrol, 2009). Further, Chng and Fassnacht (2016) found, in their sample of young Asian women, that negative comments from mothers were related to negative feelings about body shape and general body dissatisfaction, and positive comments from mothers functioned as a potential protective factor. Thus, mothers can both negatively and positively impact their daughters' body image development and maintenance.

Regardless of culture, it is clear that mothers are largely present in their children's lives as the primary caregiver, and research has shown mothers to be influential in the development of body image, both positively and negatively. However, more research is necessary to examine their influence on body dissatisfaction during young adulthood. In addition, cross-cultural examination of the maternal influence on body image of daughters who have come to the United States is lacking. Young adult women who move to the United States for higher education present an especially unique sample, as it is unlikely that they are moving to the United States with their parents, and they are not able to engage in any in-person familial contact. Because of limited mother-daughter contact, there may be less opportunity for mothers to exert high levels of direct pressure in terms of appearance-based commentary.

Paternal Influence. Research regarding paternal influence on body image disturbance in young adulthood is limited. Researchers have theorized that fathers may serve as an important model to women in young adulthood as daughters may model their partner choice after their father; thus, paternal criticism of a girl's body may impact body satisfaction as he serves as the model for what a potential future partner may define as attractive (Biolcati et al., 2020; Costin, 1997; Krenke et al., 2015). In addition, fathers are important in the development of their daughter's feelings of empowerment and psychological well-being, which can be protective against body image disturbance (Steinhilber et al., 2020). Thus, the influence of the father has the potential to both negatively and positively impact body image in their young adult daughters.

During their investigation of the content of father appearance-related commentary, one research study with a sample of women living in the United States found that paternal negative weight-based talk tended to center around the theme of their child needing to lose weight (Berge et al., 2016). This is in line with Costin (1997) who states that a father can directly influence his

daughter's body image through criticism of her body, but also indirectly in his vocalized perceptions of, and behavior towards, other women's bodies. Furthermore, Kluck (2010) found that father encouragement to diet and criticism of body shape significantly predicted college-age daughters' body dissatisfaction.

Cross-cultural examinations with young adult women and fathers are nearly nonexistent. One study with Italian young adult women found that paternal criticism was predictive of daughters' body satisfaction, such that higher criticism from fathers led to daughters' lowered satisfaction with their body (Biolcati et al., 2020). Interestingly, in their sample of Asian women, Chng and Fassnacht (2016) found that negative comments from fathers were related to daughters' negative feelings about body shape and general body dissatisfaction, and positive comments from fathers functioned as a potential protective factor for daughters. Thus, like mothers, fathers may have a strong influence that can function both as a risk factor or a protective factor in body image development.

In general, research examining the role of paternal influence on body image is more limited than mothers influence, especially during the young adult developmental time period. Nevertheless, it has been suggested that their role might be less pronounced than that of mothers in determining body image (Rodgers et al., 2020). One explanation may be fathers spend less time alone with their child, especially in a caretaking role. A study comparing United States and Kenyan fathers found that both groups spent little time alone with their child (e.g., mothers were typically present), and even less time in the role of primary caretaker (Harkness & Super, 1992). In addition, in their review of father involvement in China, Liu (2019) notes that it is still common for the father's primary role to be outside the home, ensuring the family is financially secure. With less time spent directly with their children as compared to mothers, fathers'

influence may be less potent. However, paternal influence should continue to be examined as fathers have the potential to contribute both positively and negatively to body image development. In addition, there is relatively little literature focusing on the father's influence on body image in young adulthood.

Sibling Influence. The sibling relationship is unique, enduring, and influential. The nature of the sibling relationship is one that encompasses familial components, as most siblings share at least some portion of their genes and/or a home environment; in addition, it also encompasses peer/friend components, as siblings are usually somewhat close in age and serve as models, confidantes, and sources of support (Lamb, 2014). The sibling relationship is largely studied in childhood and adolescence, while there is little research focused on the sibling relationship during young adulthood. However, the sibling relationship during young adulthood tends to be one that is more positive and emotionally close than during adolescence, even as the physical distance between siblings increases (Scharf et al., 2005). Therefore, while siblings may not remain close in physical proximity during young adulthood due to moving out of the home for work, school, or family, emotional closeness is enduring within the sibling relationship.

Much like research on the paternal influence on body image disturbance, research on the sibling influence is also notably slim. Research that has examined the sibling influence in the context of body image disturbance among women in the United States has found that when sibling influence is integrated into models with parental influence on body dissatisfaction, parental influence is a stronger predictor of body image disturbance (Cash & Smolak, 2012). However, prior research has suggested that siblings are important socializing agents and do have an influence on body image concerns. For instance, Berge et al. (2016) found that negative appearance-based talk done by siblings in the United States focused on physical appearance. In

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addition, researchers have found that sisters serve as influential models of weight concerns (Bliss, 2000; Coomber & King, 2008) and are perceived to communicate appearance-related pressures to be thin at the same level as parents (Bliss, 2000). Older brothers, compared to other sibling constellation combinations, have been found to engage in the highest volume of negative appearance-based talk (Berge et al., 2016).

Cross-cultural studies including siblings report similar findings in terms of sibling influence on body dissatisfaction when compared to studies in the United States. For example, one study with Italian female participants found that, regardless of gender, negative appearance-based comments by siblings was directly associated with body dissatisfaction; the more negative comments women received, the higher their body dissatisfaction (Nerini, et al., 2016). Further, Mellor et al. (2009) found that Indian and Malaysian women reported higher levels of perceived pressure to lose weight from older siblings as compared to Chinese women. Siblings were identified as a main source of messages emphasizing the importance of thinness by Fijian women (McCabe et al., 2011). It appears that siblings are important and prominent sources of pressure for women in many cultures.

Though siblings have often been neglected in body image literature, some researchers have found support for their influence on body image disturbances. Indeed, the sibling relationship itself is unique, as it is both a familial relationship and a peer relationship; thus, it may exert an influence that is more complex than either a parent or a peer influence alone. In addition, as individuals move into young adulthood, the sibling relationship is marked by closeness, regardless of physical distance. It is possible that this closeness may lead to greater admiration of a sibling, and thus increase the potency of the sibling influence, particularly for body dissatisfaction.

Peer Influence. The susceptibility to peer pressure and peer influence is highest during adolescence and decreases for most individuals when they mature into adulthood (Gardner & Steinberg, 2005; Steinberg & Monahan, 2007). While young adults may not be as susceptible to peer pressure and influence, that does not mean that peers are no longer an important social relationship. Peers contribute to the development and maintenance of well-being during young adulthood (van Wel et al., 2002), and members of peer groups that are considered friends are a source of information and support (Buote et al., 2007). Furthermore, researchers note that intimacy within friendships in young adulthood is more important than it was within friendships in adolescence (Radmacher & Azmitia, 2006). While individuals are moving through the young adulthood developmental period, the influence of peers and friends remains relevant in the United States. However, cross-culturally, due to traditional values of familial importance, peer influence in other parts of the world may not be as potent moving through young adulthood (Baptist et al., 2012). Indeed, differences in friendships between cultures that are more individualist versus more collectivist have been found. For example, Takahashi and colleagues (2002) found that Japanese adults indicated they relied more on their parents than friends for emotional and instrumental support, and United States adults reported their friends as important figures in their life more often than Japanese adults. Furthermore, differences in harmony within relationships between individualist and collectivist cultures were found, with Japanese adults indicating lower levels of conflict within their friendships (Takahashi et al., 2002). An emphasis on harmony within relationships in collectivist cultures may work to discourage pressure between peers and friends whereas an emphasis on uniqueness in individualist cultures may work to enhance pressure or competition between friends and peers (Wang & Liu, 2010).

Research has examined connections between appearance-related pressures from peers and body dissatisfaction among women in the United States (e.g., Hazzard et al., 2019; Johnson et al., 2015; Krones et al., 2005; Sheldon, 2010). Krones et al. (2005) found that peer pressure and criticism were directly related to body dissatisfaction, rather than mediated by other factors. In addition, Sheldon (2013) demonstrated how peer pressure to be thin was stronger for college-aged women than men. Furthermore, peer influence, rather than parental influence, was the most important predictor of body dissatisfaction in their young adult sample (Sheldon, 2013). One novel finding by Lin et al. (2015) was that women perceived that their female friends found a thinner body most attractive; thus, this may create another form of peer pressure, as women may desire to fit a thin body to be viewed as attractive by their friend group. These findings support the potency of peer pressure on body dissatisfaction.

Studies have shown the power of peer pressure to be thin on body dissatisfaction in many cross-cultural examinations, including those with Japanese, French, Australian, Malaysian, and Israeli women (e.g., Lev-Ari et al., 2014; Girard et al., 2018; Ramme et al., 2016; Rodgers et al., 2011; Shager et al., 2019). One study with a sample of Israeli women found that the influence of the best female friend was greater than that of the sister (Lev-Ari et al., 2014). In their sample of Pakistani college men and women, Khan et al. (2011) found that peer pressure to fit body ideals was stronger for women than men. A qualitative study of Chinese college students revealed that peer pressure was almost unavoidable in their college dormitories, and these pressures led to eating and body image issues (Zhang, 2012). Peer pressure and its association with body image disturbance can be found not only in the United States but globally. In collectivist cultures, friend groups serve as one type of "in-group"(i.e. a group made up of individuals who are attached and loyal to one another) (Hofstede & Bond, 1984; Hui & Tradias, 1986), and these

groups provide a sense of connection and attachment (Chen & West, 2008). As such, these groups may provide a space where young adult women can discuss their bodies.

As peers across cultures communicate prescribed body ideals and the importance of thinness via appearance-related comments, pressure, and/or teasing, this may prompt dissatisfaction with one's body. During young adulthood, messages from peers may be particularly powerful as there is a shift from the high importance of familial relationships in childhood to a greater importance of peers starting in adolescence and into young adulthood. Furthermore, the importance of peers may continue until romantic relationships take over.

Peer groups in young adulthood are more likely to include same-sex and opposite-sex friends, as the importance of finding and having a romantic relationship increases (Barry & Masten, 2010; Conger et al., 2000). Research has found that emphasis is placed on physical attractiveness as an important factor in attracting a romantic partner (Dion et al., 1972). Furthermore, in the context of attracting a partner, women in particular tend to place more emphasis on maintaining an "attractive" appearance than men (Fernanda Laus et al., 2018). Thus, the pressure to appear "attractive" to potential partners in their peer group may also introduce another indirect type of pressure that young adult women face.

With the development of the internet, and in particular social networking sites, peer and media influences greatly intersect. Social networking sites allow users to upload their content and images that their "followers" or "friends" can view and interact with. While magazines and television advertisements utilize models and actors that are unknown personally to many individuals, social networking sites mostly contain peers and friends whom individuals interact with more frequently. Indeed, appearance comparison to peers and friends on networking sites may be a more salient influence on body dissatisfaction than the comparisons made to models, as

peers and friends represent more realistic models (Hogue & Mills, 2019). Thus, as peers and friends post images of their bodies and other features, this may exert indirect pressure through comparison.

Media Influence. Young adult consumption of media is high in the United States and many developed and developing parts of the world (Auxier & Anderson, 2021; Ortiz-Ospina, 2019; Singh et al., 2012; Subramani, 2015). Media functions as a means for young adults to maintain connections with their friends and as a way to explore and express their own identity (Arnett, 2012; Brown, 2006; Coyne et al., 2013). Social networking sites, also known as social media, such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, are sites where many young adults tend to spend a significant amount of their media time (Brenner & Smith, 2013; Jacobsen & Forste, 2011; Swanson & Walker, 2015). While social media may be a great way for young adults to stay connected to friends and information (Singh et al., 2012), its usage may be cause for concern in the context of body image concerns, as media is a main channel to promote societally constructed, unachievable body ideals.

Many young college women live in a place in which media is widely available, distributed, and important (Neilson, 2012). Social media has been found to exert appearance-related pressure, and therefore be an important predictor of body dissatisfaction (de Valle et al., 2021). Though research on social networking sites is still relatively new, studies have shown the impact that these sites have on body image disturbance in samples of women living in the United States. For instance, experimental studies utilizing appearance-focused social networking sites have found that exposure to fit and/or thin images led to higher levels of body dissatisfaction among young adult women (Mabe et al., 2014; Tiggemann & Barbato, 2018; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015). It is worth noting that even though the time that participants were exposed to

such images was relatively brief, they still experienced elevated body dissatisfaction after viewing them.

One meta-analysis conducted by Holland and Tiggemann (2016) indicated that women, both from the United States and outside of the United States, who spend more time on social networking sites also had higher levels of body image disturbance. Thus, research with both United States and non-United States samples suggests that it may not be just the amount of time that individuals spend on social media that is important, but also the type of media individuals are engaging with and the importance of, and investment in, these images that promote body ideals (de Vaate et al., 2018; Holland & Tiggemann, 2016). Newer types of media (e.g., social networking sites) whose content is heavily image-focused (e.g., Instagram and Snapchat) may be particularly detrimental, as these platforms, in addition to being a salient channel for body ideal promotion and appearance comparisons, also allow their users to utilize appearance altering filters or editing tools before being posted.

Other forms of media, such as those considered traditional mass media (e.g., magazines, advertisements, etc.), differ from social networking sites as they do not allow for the alteration of the individual consuming it, meaning that women can alter the images they post online by themselves whereas images found in traditional media are edited by professionals working for that company. However, similar to social networking sites, the images and content within female-centered traditional media heavily promote specific thin body ideals and appearance/weight-altering techniques (Bazzini et al., 2015). One experimental study found that female college students in the United States reported higher body dissatisfaction when briefly exposed to fitness and health magazines (Cameron, & Ferraro, 2004).

Media is a pervasive influence in the development of eating disorders and subclinical eating disorder symptoms. One landmark study conducted by Becker (2004) examined how the introduction of television impacted subclinical eating disorder symptoms in Fijian adolescents. They found that exposure to television displaying Western media, which was a novel experience for the participants, significantly increased participation in subclinical eating disorder behaviors (Becker, 2004). This direct link between Western media and its impact on eating disorder development in countries outside of the United States supports the argument that Western media infiltrating other regions of the world is, at least, partly to blame as to why there is an increase in eating disorder diagnoses in other parts of the world.

Mass media can be easily distributed and consumed globally. It has been found that the ideal body preferences of women in different parts of the world, who had access to different types of media, were associated with exposure to Western media, but not their own, local media (Swami et al., 2010). Furthermore, women who were exposed to Western media tended to prefer thinner body types (Swami et al., 2010). This suggests that Western media is particularly important to women's perceptions of beauty, and the inclusion of thinness in body ideals. As individuals, particularly women, from outside of the United States move and integrate into the United States society, they may consume more Western media, which includes messages about thinness and Western beauty ideals. Thus, the present study will examine the role of media among young adult women who have moved to the United States.

Internet and social networking site usage has been increasing across most developing countries and remaining high and stable across developed countries (Poushter et al., 2018). However, in some areas of the world, such as India and sub-Saharan Africa, with South Africa reporting the highest usage, internet usage is still low (Poushter et al., 2018). In addition, more

affluent countries tend to have higher interest usage than poor countries (Poushter et al., 2018). Low access to the internet and media may, at least partially, inhibit individuals' exposure to Western thin body ideals, thus restricting pressure from the media to conform to or pursue thinness (see Becker, 2004).

Individuals may view body ideals being modeled and emphasized in media; in turn, socializing agents such as mothers, fathers, siblings, and peers may reinforce and communicate the need to fit these ideals. It is also possible that college women are continuing to develop their identities and body image, and family members and peers remain a more important source of support and feedback. It remains essential, however, to examine the contribution of all of these socializing agents (i.e., family members, peers, media) to the development of young adult women's body dissatisfaction within different cultures, as the potency of one socializing agent in one culture may be different in another. For example, in cultures that emphasize the authority and status of parents, a stronger parental influence on body dissatisfaction may exist.

Present Study

Body ideals and body dissatisfaction have been extensively studied among women, particularly White women, who grew up in the United States. These individuals have been subjected to the potent and widespread thin body ideal within this country, which, in turn, has an impact on the development of body dissatisfaction. While less is known about body ideals and body dissatisfaction development in women who were born and raised outside of the United States, evidence suggests that a thin body ideal may be infiltrating other areas around the world. However, while thinness has moved from the United States to other Western and Non-Western societies, the prominent ideal within the United States may be shifting.

The goal of the first study was to gather information on the current female body ideal(s) described by both women who grew up in the United States (domestic) and women who grew up outside of the United States, both from Western and Non-Western societies, but currently reside in the United States (international), and to examine differences and similarities in domestic and international women's body ideals. In addition, we also focused on similarities and differences in ideals for specific female body parts, and where these ideals are learned. The research questions for Study 1 were:

1) What body ideals exist within the United States, according to domestic and international college women?

2) What body ideals exist in other countries, according to international, both Western and Non-Western, participants who have come from those countries?

3) What areas of the body receive the greatest amount of focus/have the most specific ideals, according to domestic and international college women?

4) Where do domestic and international college women learn what the current body ideals are?

The goal of the second study was to examine body dissatisfaction between two groups. The first group, the Western group, consisted of college female domestic and international, specifically from Canada, participants. The second group, the Asian group, consisted of international college female participants from Asian societies. This study sought to determine differences in baseline body dissatisfaction and the trajectory of body dissatisfaction over time for both groups. In addition, for both groups, we examined associations between five socializing agents and body dissatisfaction. Specific research questions for Study 2 were:

1) Are body dissatisfaction scores significantly different between Western and Asian participants at Time 1?

2) Is the trajectory of body dissatisfaction significantly different between Western and Asian participants?

3) Pressure from which socializing agents (mother, father, sibling, peers, or media) is associated with body dissatisfaction in the Western group and the Asian group?

METHOD

Procedure

This study was approved by the university's Institutional Review Board. Students from a Midwestern university were recruited through flyers posted on campus and a series of emails distributed on the university research listserv. Interested individuals were screened to confirm they met inclusion criteria (participants had to be 18, female, enrolled at the university, and speak English) and determine whether they were originally from the United States (domestic) or originally from a country outside of the United States (international). Once confirmed that all inclusion criteria were met, participants were given a Qualtrics link to the first survey, which included their first place of consent and examined body satisfaction and sociocultural influences. After completion of the first survey, participants emailed the researcher to state they were finished and the researcher confirmed that the first survey was recorded. Participants were then sent a Qualtrics link to the second survey, which collected self-reported demographic information as well as body ideals, conversations revolving around body appearance with peers, and social media. Once confirmed that the second survey had been recorded, the researcher then provided participants with instructions for collecting compensation.

This study included three waves of data collection (fall 2019, spring 2019, and fall 2020); thus, participants potentially completed six surveys (three body satisfaction surveys and three body ideals surveys). Each participant created their 4-digit participant ID, which they entered at the beginning of each survey; this allowed researchers to track and connect each participant's data over time. Informed consent was collected electronically before each survey throughout the three waves of data collection. Compensation was as follows: $5 for completion of the first survey in each wave of collection and $10 for completion of the second survey in each wave of

collection. Participants were able to earn up to $45 total for the completion of all surveys throughout the study. In addition, to help keep attrition rates low and encourage full participation, participants who completed the first and second waves in their entirety were entered into a gift card drawing. A second gift card drawing was then held for participants who completed all waves of data collection. The gift card drawing after both the second and third waves consisted of two $50 and four $25 Amazon gift cards. Participant names were entered into an Excel spreadsheet, and a random number generator was used to choose winners.

Participants

Participants were domestic (i.e., born and raised in the United States) or international (i.e., born and raised outside of the United States) young adult females. This was a non-clinical, convenience sample. All participants were undergraduate or graduate students at a Midwestern university.

For Study 1, the study participants were 84 female participants (52 domestic, 32 international) who completed the first wave of data collection. The overall mean age was 21.37 (*SD*=3.78). For domestic participants, the mean age was 19.56 (*SD* = 1.69), and most participants were White (86.5%), heterosexual (86.5%), middle class (86.5%), and raised in a two biological parent household (mother and father) (82.7%). For international participants, the mean age was 24.31 (*SD* = 4.37), and most participants were heterosexual (84.4%), middle class (78.1%), raised in a two biological parent household (mother and father) (90.6%), and had lived in the United States for more than four years (36.7%). Most participants were Asian (56.3%); other world regions represented included the Middle East (e.g., Saudi Arabia, Egypt, etc.) (6.3%), Europe (e.g., United Kingdom, Spain, etc.), and Oceania (e.g., Australia) (31.3%). See Tables

A1 and A2 for a complete breakdown of demographic categories, including specific countries where participants stated they were born and raised.

For Study 2, the researchers created a Western and an Asian group. To form a Western group, international participants from Canada (7) were grouped with the participants from the United States (40). The Western group had 47 total participants with a mean age of 19.91 (*SD* =1.75). The majority of the participants in this sub-sample were White (83%), heterosexual (87.2%), middle class (87.2%), and raised in a two-biological parent household (85.1%). See Table A3 for all participant demographic information.

The Asian participant group included participants from China (2), South Korea (1), Thailand (1), India (5), and Nepal (2). The Non-Western group had 11 total participants with a mean age of 28.36 (*SD* = 3.70). All participants in this sub-sample were Asian (100%), and a majority of the participants were heterosexual (90.9%), middle class (63.6%), were raised in a two-biological parent household (90.9%), and had lived in the United States for more than four years (63.6%). See Table A3 for all participant demographic information.

Measures

Measures were included to assess body ideals, body dissatisfaction, and sociocultural pressure related to maintaining/achieving thinness. In addition, self-reported demographic information was collected from participants. For the first study, we used a body ideals questionnaire designed by the researchers specifically for this study; for the second study, we used validated measures of body dissatisfaction and sociocultural pressures.

Body Ideals

The researchers created open-ended questions to collect information on participants' perceptions of current female body ideals. The open-ended questions included: "*What areas of*

the body and/or body parts do you and your peers from the U.S. and your home culture

discuss?"; "*What are/is the ideal body shape and size for women in your home culture?*"; and

"*What is the "ideal" body shape and size for women in the U.S.?*," Lastly, one additional

question was asked to all participants: "*How are body ideals communicated to you?*" Participants

were given an expansive list of answers to choose from and were directed to choose all that

applied.

Body Dissatisfaction

Body dissatisfaction was assessed using the 9-item Body Dissatisfaction subscale of the

Eating Disorders Inventory (EDI; Garner et al., 1983). All items were rated on a 6-point scale

ranging from 0 (*never*) to 5 (*always*), with five items reverse scored. Higher scores indicated

greater body dissatisfaction. Sample items included: *"I think that my stomach is too big"* and *"I*

think that my thighs are too large." One sample item that was reverse scored was: "*I feel*

satisfied with the shape of my body." A past study with a White, college female sample reported

a Cronbach Alpha of .91 (Gordon et al., 2010). For our sample, the average Cronbach Alpha

across all waves of body dissatisfaction data for domestic participants was .79 and for

international participants was .89.

Pressure to be Thin

Appearance-related pressure was assessed using the family, peers, and media subscales of

the Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire-4 (SATAQ-4; Schaefer et al.,

2015). For this study, the authors added items specific to mothers and fathers as well as for

siblings, and did not keep the questions that asked about family broadly. Participants were

directed to skip subscales in which they did not have/have contact with that individual(s)/factor.

All subscales had 4 items, and all items were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*Definitely*

Disagree) to 5 (*Definitely Agree*), coded such that higher scores indicated higher levels of perceived pressure from each of the previously identified sociocultural factors. Sample items from each subscale included: "*I feel pressure from my mother to look thinner,*" "*My father encourages me to decrease my level of body fat,*" "*My siblings encourage me to decrease my level of body fat,*" "*I get pressure from my peers to decrease my level of body fat,*" "*I feel pressure from the media to improve my appearance.*" A past study with a White, college female sample reported a Cronbach Alpha of .87 (Schaefer et al., 2019). Separate Cronbach Alphas were calculated for domestic and international participants for each sociocultural sub-scale. For domestic participants at the first wave, the Cronbach Alpha's ranged from .89 to .95. For international participants at the first wave, the Cronbach Alpha's ranged from .88 to .97.

Analysis

Study 1

This study examined domestic and international participants' descriptions and perceptions of the current female body ideal(s). Participants who completed the body ideals measure in the first wave of data collection were included in this analysis. The following research questions were analyzed using thematic analysis: What body ideals exist within the United States, according to domestic and international college women? What body ideals exist in other countries, according to international, both Western and Non-Western, participants who have come from those countries? What areas of the body receive the greatest amount of focus/have the most specific ideals, according to domestic and international college women?

Thematic analysis allows researchers to organize qualitative data and identify themes and commonalities (Clarke & Braun, 2014). The process of thematic analysis in this study followed the six steps outlined in Clarke and Braun (2014): 1. Organize the written information provided

by participants into one document and read through this data; 2. Generate initial codes to capture diversity and patterns within the data; 3. Search for themes by reviewing the codes and finding similarities; 4. Review the potential themes to ensure accuracy; 5. Define and name themes that make the distinctions between the themes clear; 6. Produce the report of the data analysis.

Study 2

This study examined the differences of baseline body dissatisfaction and trajectory of body dissatisfaction of participants over the course of a year, as well as examined associations between five socializing agents (mothers, fathers, siblings, peers, and media) and body dissatisfaction at the first time point. Because a goal of Study 2 was to assess change in body dissatisfaction over time, only the participants who completed all three waves were included in the analyses. From wave 1 to wave 3 there was a 34% attrition rate for international participants, and a 9% attrition rate for the domestic participants. At the start of data collection for wave 2 (spring, 2019), the COVID-19 pandemic had shut down the university at which data was being collected. The researchers believe that the pandemic was instrumental in the high attrition rate for the international participants. In general, there was no detectable pattern for those who dropped out of the study after the first data collection point. Participants who did not complete all three waves varied in their country of origin, and the two groups did not significantly differ in age at time point 1 ($t = .71$, $p = .10$) or their body dissatisfaction scores at time 1 ($t = -2.62$, $p = .22$) or time 2 ($t = -1.52$, $p = .95$). For comparisons of baseline body dissatisfaction only the first wave of data was used. In addition, to examine the roles of various socializing agents on body dissatisfaction, only the first wave of data for each socializing agent and body dissatisfaction was used.

The participants in this study were split into two groups: women born and raised in traditionally Western societies (e.g., the United States and Canada) and those born and raised in Asian societies (e.g., China, South Korea, and India). Past research has examined eating disorder prevalence differences between women in Western and Non-Western societies (Makino et al., 2004), and their findings suggest that, while not at a prevalence rate in Western countries, Non-Western countries, including Asian countries, are experiencing increasing rates of eating disorders. Given that body dissatisfaction is a well-established risk factor for eating disorders (Stice, 2002), it is also reasonable to argue that researchers should examine body dissatisfaction, and the influences on this dissatisfaction, in both Western and Non-Western areas of the world. In addition, cultural differences, such as the independent focus in Western culture and the interdependent focus in Asian cultures, may impact how pressure from socializing agents is associated with body image disturbance, even in light of the globalization of Western media. For this reasoning, the researchers split the participants into a Western and an Asian group for Study 2.

For Study 2, the first research question was: Are body dissatisfaction scores significantly different between Western and Asian participants at baseline? This question was analyzed by using an independent samples T-test. The second research question was: Is the trajectory of body dissatisfaction significantly different between Western and Asian participants? This question was analyzed using Multi-level Modeling. The third question was: Which socializing agents (mother, father, sibling, peers, or media) are associated with body dissatisfaction for Western participants, and which socializing agents are associated with body dissatisfaction for Asian participants? This question used the data from timepoint 1 and was analyzed using regression analysis.

HOW DIFFERENT ARE BODY IDEALS: A QUALITATIVE EXAMINATION OF BODY IDEALS AMONG INTERNATIONAL AND U.S COLLEGE WOMEN

Abstract

Societies create body ideals that set unrealistic standards that women strive to achieve. While thinness has been a continual hallmark of ideals within the United States, and idealization of thinness has spread globally, current body ideals may differ depending on the world area. Perceptions of current body ideals outside and within the United States were collected from a sample of 84 international (mean age 24.31; $SD = 4.37$) and domestic (mean age 19.56; $SD = 1.69$) college women. Within and outside of the United States, women identified three major body ideals, with an emphasis on having a thin waist. The thin-ideal was most common among women from Non-Western countries, and a "thin with accentuated features" ideal was most common within the United States. Nearly all participants reported that they learned about body ideals from the media. These results suggest a need for further exploration of the various body ideals within and outside the United States.

Introduction

Body ideals represent "culturally prescribed and endorsed looks that incorporate various features of the human face and body, and thus define the standards for physical attractiveness within a culture" (Calogero et al., 2007, pg. 4). These ideals can change, reflecting the standards set within a particular time frame in a society (see Calogero et al., 2007). In addition, while each independent society is able to create an ideal for the women within it, ideals may be influenced by other societies around the world (Becker, 2004; Jung, 2018). Typically, these ideals originate in the United States and spread to other Western societies and then to Non-Western areas of the world (Becker, 2004; Calogero et al., 2007; Jung, 2018). For instance, a historically upheld ideal

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in the United States, the thin-ideal, which emphasizes extreme thinness and has been shown to negatively impact women, has spread to other societies, influencing the promotion and idealization of thinness there (Becker, 2004; Calogero et al., 2007; Jung, 2018).

As body ideals change over time, it is important to maintain a current understanding of body ideals around the world that women are exposed to, and how certain areas of the world, like the United States, are influencing these ideals. In the present study, we used a qualitative focus to collect detailed descriptions of current body ideals among women from within (i.e., domestic) and outside (i.e., international) of the United States who are currently attending college in the United States. The international college women were from both Western and Non-Western societies. This allowed us to determine what ideals exist presently in Western and Non-Western areas of the world, and how the United States may be affecting ideals in other regions of the world.

Body Ideals Within the United States

Historically, the body ideal within the United States has included thinness, and an emphasis on a small waist (Calogero et al., 2007; Cash & Smolak, 2012). The degree of thinness that is desired and idealized is much less than what is easily attained or maintained naturally (Frederick et al., 2017; Thompson et al., 1999). Recent literature with samples of White women from the United States have found that women remain preoccupied with thinness and a small waist, while also desiring "perfect," large breasts, and smaller hips and thighs which create a curvier figure (Frederick et al., 2017; Frederick et al., 2022; Swami et al., 2020).

Whereas the desire for an ultra-thin body has existed for many decades, more recently there has been an increase in the number of women who are dissatisfied with their level of muscularity, such that they want to be more muscular, or "toned," than they currently are

(Benton & Karazsia, 2015; Bozsik et al., 2018; Frederick et al., 2017). This shift may originate from models and celebrities in the media being shown with more muscle tone (Boepple et al., 2016; Calogero et al., 2007; Frederick et al., 2017). The desire to be more muscular is coupled with the desire to also have very low body fat; thus, there has been an emergence of a body ideal that is thin, yet toned. Although the female muscular ideal has received some attention in recent literature, the primary focus of research has been on the presence and influence of the thin-ideal in the United States.

Body Ideals Outside of the United States

Much like the United States, other countries categorized as Western also uphold body ideals that include thinness (Pike et al., 2014; Schaefer et al., 2019; Shager et al., 2019; Swami, 2010). In their review of body ideals, Calogero et al. (2007) state that due to mass media becoming widespread in the early 1920's, body ideals within many Western cultures became more similar. Slight differences have been found between these Western cultures, however. For example, in their cross-cultural examination, Swami (2010) found that women in the United States preferred a thinner body shape when compared to women in Western and Eastern European countries as well as Oceania. Differences have also been found between regions within Europe. Specifically, Jaeger et al. (2002) found that countries in the southern part of Europe (i.e., Italy, France, Spain) preferred a body that was thinner than the preferred body in northern parts of Europe (i.e., Germany, Sweden, United Kingdom). Body ideals may differ not only within world regions as demonstrated by research in European countries but also between world regions. For example, it was found that, in general, women in Europe preferred a thinner body as compared to women from traditionally Non-Western parts of the world (Jaeger et al., 2002).

In many parts of the Middle East, a Non-Western region of the world, a curvy, larger body carries positive attributes (Khawaja & Afifi-Soweid, 2004; Melisse et al., 2020), and is typically desired among women. In their examination of women in Saudi Arabia, Khalaf et al. (2015) found that a moderate proportion of their college-age sample wanted to be heavier than their current body weight, which was consistent with the local body ideals of a fuller figure and findings from an additional study conducted with Saudi Arabian women (Qauhiz, 2010). However, in other studies conducted with women from the Middle East, there are reports of a desire for a thinner figure. In their literature review, Melisse et al. (2020) found that women in many parts of the Middle East, including in the United Arabian Emirates and Egypt, desired to be thinner. Thus, although the ideal body shape historically was curvier, it appears to have now shifted to include thinness in parts of the Middle East.

Though past body size ideals for Asian cultures typically favored larger body sizes (Han, 2003; Jung & Forbes, 2007), current ideals emphasize extreme thinness (Jung, 2018; Zhang et al., 2018). One study with a large sample of college women in China showed that there was an intense focus on the pursuit of an ultra-thin body ideal (Zhang et al., 2018), and another study highlighted a desire to achieve the thin, Western body ideal (Jung, 2018). In addition, reports from Southeastern, Eastern, Southern, and Western Asia indicate that women in these regions value a thin figure comparable to the United States (Swami et al., 2010). However, it does not appear that women in Asian cultures desire a body that includes muscle tone (Zhang et al., 2018).

As each society creates its unique body ideals which spread throughout that society (Jones, 2000), there is not one universal body ideal that is adhered to by all women across the globe; different societies may emphasize different female figures and body features. Although

many Western societies have typically favored a thin-ideal, this may not be entirely the case in some Non-Western areas of the world. However, because body ideals are constantly changing and are subject to influence from outside societies (Jung, 2018), Non-Western areas may be shifting to ideals that are similar to those present in Western areas.

Theoretical Grounding

Body ideals within a society, often learned through the media, parents, and peers, communicate to women what their bodies must look like in order to be perceived as attractive. Multiple theories can help explain how individuals learn and accept these body ideals. According to the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), people imitate behaviors they see performed by authority or, in the case of models, individuals who are regarded as high status within a society, in order to receive desired outcomes (Wiseman et al., 1992). Models are regarded as attractive and perceived to be successful and happy; thus, women may strive to emulate the successes they see in the media (Tiggemann, 2002). Within a family system, parents are often regarded as the authority figures. Thus, children may learn what the societal body ideals are, and the importance of body ideals, through communication with and modeling of their parents.

Although peers may not be seen overtly as authority figures the way parents are, peers gain importance as socializing agents as individuals move through adolescence and young adulthood. As peers may share similar views on what is attractive within a society, these views and ideals can be continually discussed and modeled within a peer or friend group. Further, this may drive individuals to compare themselves to others within their group. Social Comparison Theory (Festinger, 1954) posits that individuals continually evaluate themselves and, in doing so, engage in comparisons with others. Thus, as Social Learning Theory helps to explain how

women may learn about the body ideals within their society, Social Comparison Theory helps to explain how they continue to be reinforced.

College Women

For both domestic and international women who leave their homes and families to attend and live at college, the ways in which they learn the current body ideals may be different from those who do not attend college. These ways may also differ from adolescents, who live with their families, and women in their middle/late adult years, who potentially have established partners and families and no longer spend a great deal of time with peers/friends. College women are subject to intense pressure through a variety of social channels (e.g., peers, media, family) to learn and conform to ideals.

For women who attend college and live on campus, there is increased time spent with peers, and the number of potential targets for comparison is greater. In addition, conversations around body shape and size in college peer groups is common; while some of these conversations involve supportive messages (e.g., "you're not fat, you're beautiful"), many conversations revolve around expressing dissatisfaction with one's body (e.g., "I feel fat and ugly") (Salk & Engeln-Maddox, 2011). Participating in any sort of conversation around body weight/shape brings attention and awareness to how an individual feels about their body and how their body does not fit with discussed ideals. As peer conversations bring attention to, and further spread, body ideals within a society, these conversations often lead to body comparisons (Tsang, 2017), which communicates to the individual how close or far their body is from being considered attractive.

Media usage by young adults is high (Auxier & Anderson, 2021; Ortiz-Ospina, 2019), and many social networking sites that are most popular for women under 30 (i.e., Instagram, Tik

Tok, Snapchat) are highly visual and feature not only pictures of celebrities and models, but also peers. Through the image-altering tools available to those who post on social networking sites, unrealistic ideals are not only regularly posted, but these pictures posted are made to look perfect to gain attention (Dumas et al., 2017). Social media is also a popular way for colleges, and clubs, sports teams, and other organizations related to the college, to advertise and provide updates (Motta & Barbosa, 2018); even if an individual may not wish to utilize social media for posting and interacting with peer/society content, sometimes it is necessary to receive information related to their activities. Thus, maintaining this presence on social media, in general, may provide them with opportunities to view advertisements with models or images of photoshopped peers, which depict society's body ideals.

While parents (Chng & Fassnacht, 2016; Kluck, 2010; Segar, 2012) and siblings (Bliss, 2000; Nerini, et al., 2016) have been shown to communicate ideals through conversation and modeling, many college women, including women who are international students from countries around the world attending college in the United States, live away from their families. Although the connection between family members can be maintained via voice and video calls and occasional trips home, given their greater and easy accessibility, college women may rely on peers and media to provide information about what is attractive and what is not.

Globalization and Harm of Body Ideals

Setting a standard of beauty can be harmful to women regardless of where they live. Although there may be some inconsistencies regarding the preferred female body type, thinness tends to be a prominent feature worldwide (Holmqvist & Frisen, 2010; Melisse et al., 2020; Swami, 2010), perhaps due to the saturation of Non-Western cultures with media images of the Western, thin-ideal (Swami & Tovee, 2005). The main danger with body ideals that incorporate

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extreme thinness is the near impossibility to attain and maintain them long-term without the use of severe restriction of caloric intake and/or over-exercising (Calogero et al., 2007). Furthermore, because the combination of larger breasts and low body fat is nearly impossible to naturally attain (Coltman et al., 2017), women who prescribe to a curvier ideal may be driven to surgically modify their bodies to achieve this look (Sarwer, 2019). Lastly, a thin, yet toned ideal is even more difficult to attain and maintain than the thin-ideal, as the restricted caloric intake that is needed to maintain low body fat inhibits the ability to become toned (Thompson & Stice, 2001).

An inability to achieve prescribed beauty ideals easily over time may also lead women to feel a sense of distress, which can manifest as dissatisfaction with one's body. While examinations of ideals for women beyond the thin ideal in the United States have recently begun, more qualitative studies are needed to provide a detailed, in-depth understanding of overall shape and body part ideals found within the United States. In addition, qualitative examination of ideals outside of the United States, both in Western and Non-Western societies, provides information regarding not only current ideals within different societies, but also if the ideal(s) found within the United States have spread outward, shifting the standards of beauty to impossible ideals, thereby having the potential to negatively impact women globally.

Current Study

The current study explored domestic (i.e., women who were born and raised within the United States) and international (i.e., women who were born and raised outside of the United States) college women's perceptions of current body ideals within and outside of the United States. Specifically, the research questions for this study were:

1) What body ideals exist within the United States, according to domestic and international college women?

2) What body ideals exist in other countries, both Western and Non-Western, according to international participants who have come from those countries?

3) What areas of the body receive the greatest amount of focus/have the most specific ideals, according to domestic and international college women?

4) Where do domestic and international college women learn current body ideals?

Method

Procedure

This study was approved by the university's Institutional Review Board. The data used in this study were collected as a part of a larger study. The larger study included three waves of data collection (fall 2019, spring 2019, and fall 2020); data collected from participants during the first wave, fall 2019, were used in this study.

Undergraduate and graduate students from a Midwestern university were recruited through flyers posted on campus and a series of emails distributed on the university research listserv. Interested individuals were screened to confirm they met inclusion criteria (participants had to be 18, female, enrolled at the university, and speak English) and determine whether they were originally from the United States (domestic) or originally from a country outside of the United States (international). Once confirmed that all criteria were met, participants were asked to complete surveys via a secure Qualtrics link which included documentation of consent. Participants were compensated for each wave of the study.

Participants

Participants were domestic (i.e., born and raised in the United States) or international (i.e., born and raised outside of the United States) college women. This was a non-clinical,

convenience sample. All participants were undergraduate or graduate students at a Midwestern university.

The sample was 84 female participants (52 domestic, 32 international) who completed the first wave of data collection. The overall mean age was 21.37 (*SD*=3.78). For domestic participants, the mean age was 19.56 (*SD* = 1.69), and most participants were White (86.5%), heterosexual (86.5%), middle class (86.5%), and raised in a two biological parent household (mother and father) (82.7%). For international participants, the mean age was 24.31 (*SD* = 4.37), and most participants were heterosexual (84.4%), middle class (78.1%), raised in a two biological parent household (mother and father) (90.6%), and had lived in the United States for more than four years (36.7%). Most international participants were Asian and not of American descent (56.3%); other world regions represented included the Middle East (e.g., Saudi Arabia, Egypt, etc.), Europe (e.g., United Kingdom, Spain, etc.), and Oceania (e.g., Australia). See Tables 1 and 2 for a complete breakdown of demographic categories, including specific countries where participants stated they were born and raised.

Measures

Body Ideals

The researchers created open-ended questions to collect information on participants' perceptions of current female body ideals. The open-ended questions included: "*What are/is the ideal body shape and size for women in your home culture?*"; "*What is the "ideal" body shape and size for women in the U.S.?*,"; and "*What areas of the body and/or body parts do you and your peers from the U.S. and your home culture discuss*?" Lastly, one additional question was asked to all participants: "*How are body ideals communicated to you?*" For this final question,

participants were given an expansive list of answers to choose from and were directed to choose all that applied.

Results

Given the qualitative nature of this study, the researchers utilized a thematic analysis approach to identify body ideals both within and outside the United States. Thematic analysis outlines an approach for researchers to organize participant responses in a meaningful way, which then drives the identification of themes and commonalities within the data (Braun & Clark, 2014). The identification of themes was not theory driven, and instead a bottom-up technique was used. The responses from international participants were separated from the larger dataset to identify body ideals outside of the United States. Responses from all participants were used to identify body ideals within the United States, which body areas are of particular focus, and where body ideals are learned. Results of thematic analysis indicated that body ideals both within and outside the United States were the same; however, the frequency at which the descriptions of each body ideal appeared differed between groups.

Body Ideals

International participants described the body ideal within their country of origin (see TABLE A2 for a list of participants' countries of origin). Of the 32 total international participants, 21 (66%) responded. Of these 21 responses, 16 (76%) fit into specific themes, while 5 (24%) did not. These body ideal descriptions differed by area of the world.

To identify body ideals within the United States, both domestic and international participants' descriptions of the current body ideal were analyzed. A total of 66 (44 domestic and 22 international), or 78%, participants responded to this question. Of these 66 descriptions, 59 (89%) fit into any of the body ideal themes. For both groups, three body ideals were identified:

1) thin; 2) thin, yet toned/athletic; and 3) thin waist with accentuated features. While the ideals that emerged were the same for both groups, there were differences in the frequency at which these ideals were described.

Theme One: Thin

The researchers identified keywords when examining the data for body ideals. The specific terms used to describe the thin-ideal body type were: skinny, thin, lean, and slim. To be placed in the thin-ideal theme, the participant had to describe a body type that used these keywords; these keywords were not coupled with terms that overlapped with other body ideals descriptions such as, curvy, toned, athletic, etc.

International Participant Descriptions. Compared to the other ideals described by international participants for their country of origin, the thin body ideal was described most frequently. Of the 21 total responses, 9 of these fell into the thin theme (43%). An interesting finding was that all of the participants who described this thin body ideal were from world regions considered Non-Western (e.g., China, India, South Korea). Participant responses in the thin theme followed these descriptions:

"Thin and tall" (participant 15, India);

"Petite/slim, without a protruded belly" (participant 14, India)

"slim and fair, long hair" (participant 9, Nepal)

"Skinny, tall" (participant 2, Thailand)

Domestic and International Participant Descriptions of this Ideal in the United States. The majority of international participants described a thin-ideal as the current ideal in their country of origin. However, when asked to describe the current body ideal in the United States, only 2 (9%) international participants described the current ideal as fitting the thin-ideal:

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"Thin" (Participant 26, Canada)

"lean" (participant 19, China)

While very few international participants stated that the ideal within the United States was thin, a moderate proportion of domestic participants stated that it was. Of the 44 domestic participants, 10 (23%) stated that the current ideal in the United States was thin:

"Long legs, small waist, long arms, very slender kind of like Barbie" (participant 48, United States)

"Tall and skinny. Possibly a size 2 in jeans" (participant 57, United States)

"skinny, pretty, tall, slim" (participant 64, United States)

The most common body ideal described by international students for their country of origin was one that is thin; however, this was not the case for the ideal within the United States. In addition, an interesting finding was that height (i.e., tall) appeared often in domestic participants' descriptions of the thin-ideal within the United States.

Theme Two: Thin, yet Toned/Athletic

Responses that aligned with this theme included keywords such as tone, athletic, fit, and muscular, in conjunction with keywords that referred to thinness. In addition, the responses could not include any mention of curves, or body regions that were emphasized for being anything other than toned or muscular; for example, a participant response could include "toned buttocks", but not include "large, round buttocks." The latter would refer more to a curvy physique than a toned/athletic one.

International Participant Descriptions. This body type had the fewest international participant responses; only 3 participants of the 21 (14%) described this as being the ideal within their country of origin. All participants that described this thin, yet toned/athletic body type were

originally from Canada, and there were no participants from world regions considered Non-Western that mentioned muscle tone or athletic shape in their descriptions of their home country ideals. Sample statements include:

"Muscular/toned legs and stomach, some definition in the arms, flat stomachs" (participant 25, Canada).

"skinny and fit" (participant 22, Canada)

"[...}Ideal I would still say is lean, fit, glowing skin, healthy hair. Ideal shape would be athletic or slightly hourglass, probably a size 2-4. [...]" (participant 24, Canada).

Domestic and International Participant Descriptions of this Ideal in the United States. Descriptions combining both thinness and muscle tone for the United States ideal were the least commonly reported from domestic participants (4; 9%), but second most common from international (7; 32%) participants. While some international participants confidently stated that the ideal within the United States was thin, yet toned/athletic, a few mentioned that they had merely "heard" that this was the ideal and were not sure if this was the ideal or not:

"Athletic is what most girls I have been in touch with, aim for" (participant 14, India)

"I am not sure exactly, but I have heard about it. Probably more towards the athletic side." (participant 15, India)

"The ideal body here seems to be fit, athletic and strong" (participant 17, Egypt)

"skinny, fit" (participant 22, Canada)

In addition to the importance of muscle tone, some domestic participants commented on the importance of muscles not being *too* prominent:

"Thin, Tan, Toned, and Clear skin" (participant 54, United States)

"Thin, tall, long legs, tan, size 00-2, lean muscles, but not too muscular looking"

(participant 73, United States)

The thin, yet toned/athletic ideal was the least frequently described ideal, both for

international participants' country of origin and for the current ideal within the United States.

While many international participants were not confident that a thin, muscular ideal was the

standard of beauty in the United States, multiple domestic participants stated the importance of

toned muscles, but that these muscles should not be too large or apparent.

Theme Three: Thin, with Accentuated Features

This ideal was identified if descriptions combined keywords related to thinness with

keywords that referred to a body with accentuated features, most often larger breasts and

buttocks. Other descriptions of this ideal combined a thinness with curves. However, responses

in this theme were absent of any description of muscle tone or an athletic look.

International Participant Descriptions. This body ideal was described only slightly

more often than the thin, yet toned/athletic ideal among women for their country of origin. Of the

21 total participants, 4 (19%) described this ideal. Descriptions of this ideal were from

participants in various world regions, but tended to be from those who lived in Western societies.

Within this body type description, there was a focus on the waist being small:

"Slim waist, flat stomach, thicker thighs and average height i.e. 5'3-5'5." (participant 17,

Egypt)

"Very thin but with large chest area and buttocks" (participant 26, Canada)

Also, participants made note of the thin waist in combination with larger features. The

term "assets" refers to breasts and buttocks:

"White, skinny, small hips but with some curves. Symmetric face." (participant 4, Spain)

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"thin waists and big shapely assets" (participant 23, Canada)

Domestic and International Participant Descriptions of this Ideal in the United States. Descriptions of thinness with the inclusion of curves were the most common for both domestic (25; 57%) and international (11; 50%) participants when asked about the body ideal within the United States. In addition to the inclusion of large breasts and buttocks, another common feature described by both international and domestic participants was a small/thin waist.

> "I think US style would be glass watch body shape with wide hips and tiny waist line"(participant 10, Kazakhstan)
>
> "hourglass measurements" (participant 30, Bangladesh)
>
> "Curvy, larger hips and smaller waist" (Participant 2, Thailand)
>
> "Big butt, big boob, skinny waist. Hour glass figure" (participant 37, United States)
>
> "Ideal body shape in the US is to have an hourglass figure with excessively large bottoms and breasts. The ideal size is between a 4 and a 6" (participant 72, United States)

International and domestic participants most commonly described the thin with accentuated features body ideal as the ideal standard for women within the United States while it was the second most common ideal described by international college women for their country of origin. The descriptions of this ideal outside of the United States were more common from women who were born and raised in other Western societies. However, regardless of the society participants grew up in, there was focus on the waist, specifically that it should be small.

Specific Body Part Focus and Ideals

All participants were asked to list the areas of the body that they discussed with their peers. Of the 84 total participants, 34 domestic and 15 international participants answered this

question. The percentages calculated utilized only the participants that responded. These responses were examined to address whether areas of the body discussed with peers differed between international and domestic participants.

The most frequently discussed body areas for both domestic and international participants were: waist (94% domestic, 73% international), buttocks (85% domestic, 60% international), and chest/bust (79% domestic, 47% international). See TABLE A4 for the full breakdown of body areas and their frequencies. The body areas that were most frequently discussed were also the areas of the body that were most commonly commented on in the participants' descriptions of the ideal body:

"toned thighs and butt, flat stomach, large breasts" (participant 46, United States)

"the ideal body shape is short, small waist with curves, big butt and boobs, and a thigh gap" (participant 52, United States)

"Small waist, large hips, thighs and breasts" (participant 1, United Kingdom)

"curves, thin waist, shapely chest, long legs, hairless" (participant 23, Canada)

"White, skinny, small hips but with some curves. Symmetric face" (participant 4, Spain)

Where Ideals Are Learned and Communicated

To explore where these body ideals were learned and communicated, participants were asked to indicate how body ideals are communicated to them. One domestic participant did not answer this question, thus was not included in the overall percentage calculations. Percentage calculations were done with the participants who did answer the question. Overall, the majority of both domestic and international participants stated that social media was responsible for communicating ideals (98%). In addition, other types of media, such as actresses (80%), ads on T.V. (60%), and magazines (51%) followed as influential for both domestic and international

participants. Family members and peers were reported less commonly than media for both groups, with the least common communicator of ideals for both groups being fathers (11%).

When comparing domestic participants' responses to those from international participants, there are noticeable differences. International participants reported a greater frequency of ideals being learned and communicated by peers (37.5% vs 23.5%), fathers (15.6% vs 7.8%), and siblings (25% vs 5.8%). In contrast, frequencies for social media (100% for both), ads on T.V. (62.7% vs 59.4%), and actresses on T.V. (84.3% vs 78.1%) were the most similar between the two groups. See Table A5 for the complete breakdown of where ideals were learned and communicated as reported by domestic and international participants.

Discussion

The current study explored perceptions of current body ideals within and outside of the United States among domestic and international college women. Overall, results indicated that, both within and outside of the United States, there were three main body ideals: thin; thin, yet toned/athletic; and thin with accentuated features. There was a consistent emphasis on having a thin, small waist in all of these ideals. Nearly all participants stated that media, both digital and traditional, were responsible for teaching them about body ideals.

Body Ideal Within the United States

Historically, the body ideal within the United States has focused on extreme thinness (Calogero et al., 2007); however, the ideal for the United States most commonly described by college women in this study was one with a small/thin waist with large breasts and buttocks. Compared to the thin-ideal, research on this curvier ideal and the impacts it has on women is limited (Hernanedez et al., 2021). However, recent literature does note that a large proportion of women are dissatisfied with specific areas of the body, such as the breasts (Frederick et al., 2017;

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Frederick et al., 2022; Swami et al., 2020). This literature parallels results from the present study showing that women may be striving to achieve more than just low body weight, which adds a greater level of unattainability than thinness by itself. Perhaps scholars should shift attention from a body ideal that focuses solely on thinness to a body ideal that includes larger features, such as the bust and buttocks (Hunter et al., 2021; McComb & Mills, 2022).

Notably, the ability for international college women in this study to provide descriptions of the current ideal within the United States that were similar to descriptions given by domestic participants suggests that there is awareness of these ideals among those who are from a different culture. Awareness of these ideals may lead to internalization and the pursuit of these ideals, as has been seen in past research with ethnic minority samples in the United States (Evans & McConnell, 2003). In addition, the Western body ideal may be seen as a symbol of success and power, (Becker, 2004). This may encourage international college women to pursue the body ideal predominant within the United States, even if the ideal is different from their country of origin.

Body Ideals Outside of the United States

Multiple countries were represented by the international participants in this study. International participants from Western countries (e.g., Canada, Spain, etc.) described body ideals that included muscle tone and accentuated features, such as breasts and buttocks, and did not describe a solely thin ideal. This was consistent with results for women's perceptions of the ideal within the United States, or one that had additional standards to meet beyond thinness. Past research has noted the similarities in body ideals in Western countries (Calogero et al., 2007; Swami et al., 2010). Further, research with Canadian samples of women has shown how a thin, muscular ideal with specific curves (i.e., breasts and buttocks) can negatively impact women's

mental health (McComb & Mills, 2022; McCreary & Saucier, 2009). Still, research on ideals beyond the thin-ideal is limited in many Western areas of the world.

A noticeable difference within the international sub-sample was that descriptions of sole thinness as the ideal were from college women from Non-Western, primarily Asian countries (e.g., India, Nepal, etc.). Though past body ideals for Asian cultures typically favored larger body sizes (Han, 2003; Jung & Forbes, 2007), Asian women now strive to achieve an ultra-thin body type (Wong et al., 2017; Jung, 2018). In their study, Jung (2018) found a strong desire among Chinese women to achieve the "Western" body ideal.

Researchers have noted the rise in the idealization of thinness around the world (Swami et al., 2010). The results from this study, and other research, suggest that the Western ideal may no longer be one that is solely thin (Frederick et al., 2017; McComb & Mills, 2022). This is important given that the thin-ideal found within the United States has influenced other societies to shift and idealize thinness as well (Calogero et al., 2007; Jung, 2018). Thus, other ideals found within the United States, and now other Western societies, may eventually influence Non-Western societies.

Attention to Specific Body Areas

While societies tend to have ideals that outline specific body shape and weight requirements (e.g., thinness), there also tends to be an emphasis placed on what is ideal for specific body regions (Swami et al., 2010; Swami et al., 2020). Both international and domestic women in this study noted that the waist was commonly discussed with peers, and many participant descriptions for ideals within and outside of the United States included "thin/small/toned waist." This finding was not surprising given that a small waist has been an important feature throughout the decades (Calogero et al., 2007), and results from this study,

along with other research, indicate that it continues to be a standard to meet for women globally (Frederick et al., 2017; Shih & Kubo, 2002).

While the waist appeared to be important and highly discussed by both international and domestic women, discussion of the buttocks and bust were also frequently discussed. This is in line with our finding that a body ideal with accentuated features (i.e., larger breasts and buttocks) was most common within the United States and was present in Western countries outside of the United States. Past research has noted that larger breasts may not be as emphasized in some Non-Western societies (Ching & Xu, 2019), but Swami et al. (2020) found that the majority of women in their study desired larger breasts than they currently had, regardless of country of origin.

The Harm of General Body and Specific Body Part Ideals

Each of the ideals, thin, thin, yet toned/athletic, and thin with accentuated features, that emerged in this study are difficult to achieve. In addition, internalization of the thin-ideal and the thin with accentuated features ideal have been associated with body dissatisfaction in college women (Hernandez et al., 2021; McComb & Mills, 2022). While drive muscularity is typically examined with male or female athlete populations, research with non-athlete women has shown that internalization of a more toned/athletic ideal is associated with compulsive exercise (Homan, 2010), which is rigid, time-consuming, and can interfere with the individual's social life and mental health (Dittmer et al., 2018). Further, those in pursuit of an ideal that is thin yet toned may use supplements such as protein, growth hormones, steroids, etc. to assist in achieving the level of muscle tone necessary without adding extra calories (Field et al., 2005). Adding muscle tone and accentuated features to the thin-ideal makes achieving such ideals even more challenging. There are prevention programs in place to help combat the negative impacts of

pursuing "appearance ideals", such as the Body Project (Stice & Presnell, 2007); however, as ideals increase in difficulty to achieve and maintain, there will be more ways for women to become dissatisfied with the way their body looks, which may push prevention programs to adjust what "appearance ideals" include.

The combination of larger breasts with a small waist and low body fat is physically contradictive (Coltman et al., 2017), and the addition of large buttocks creates an even more impossible standard. To achieve such a curvy ideal, women may seek out other options, beyond restrictive dieting and over-exercising, such as expensive and dangerous surgery (Sarwer, 2019). A large proportion (90%) of White women in one study desired plastic surgery to address areas of their body that they were dissatisfied with; these areas included their waist, breasts, and buttocks (Wagner, 2008). According to the Plastic Surgeon's Report (2020), in the United States, the majority of individuals undergoing plastic surgery were White women. In the top five most commonly performed invasive surgeries were breast augmentation and liposuction; in the top ten most common surgeries were surgeries related to the enhancement of the buttocks (i.e., augmentation, lift, and implants). Specifically, among women between the ages of 19 and 34, the two most common invasive surgeries were breast augmentation and liposuction (Plastic Surgeon's Report, 2020). These statistics on the popularity of surgeries to increase breast and buttocks size and reduce body fat suggest high levels of dissatisfaction with body fat and the size of these body features.

Where Body Ideals Are Learned

Lastly, this study examined where college women learned about body ideals. The majority of women in this study stated that they learned body ideals through some sort of media, both digital (e.g., social media, T.V. shows/ads) and traditional (e.g., magazine ads), which

parallels findings from Jung (2018). The most common media that participants learned from was social media. Participants provided examples of models and celebrities from the media that they felt embodied the thin and thin with accentuated features ideals. Women with these body ideals are praised on various media platforms, such as Instagram, where they receive many "likes," which could also be viewed as reinforcement and support (Tiggemann et al., 2018). This finding is in line with Social Learning Theory, which states that individuals learn through watching others, and by seeing these individuals be rewarded for their behavior (Bandura, 1977).

Women who attend college have the potential for more time spent with peers and more peer interactions, which allows for more opportunities for comparisons to their peers and appearance-related discussions (Tsang, 2017). Over half of the participants in this study indicated that they discussed specific body areas with their friends, and peers were the second most frequent communicator of body ideals. As viewed through the Social Comparison Theory framework, according to Festinger (1954), individuals continually evaluate themselves and, in doing so, engage in comparisons with others. Conversation with peers may lead to a focus on body parts, and this focus leads to comparisons within the group to see how the individual "measures up" in comparison to the others.

Family members are also able to contribute to the learning of body ideals (Bliss, 2000; Chng & Fassnacht, 2016; Kluck, 2010; Nerini, et al., 2016; Segar, 2012). A greater proportion of international participants indicated that fathers and siblings were responsible for communicating ideals, but in general, college women in this study indicated that family members were not the most common communicators of body ideals. By the time women transition to college, the media and peers may overtake family members as the primary source of information regarding standards of attractiveness. This may be in part due to a developmental shift, as typically the

parental influence tends to decrease past childhood (Aquilino, 2006), as well as a physical move away from family members to attend college. And while sibling relationships tend to remain emotionally close in young adulthood (Scharf et al., 2005), college women's environments may be saturated with media and peers, thus decreasing the sibling influence in relation to these other socializing agents.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study had several limitations that should be taken into consideration. First, participants' responses were collected via an online survey, with open-ended questions to allow all thoughts to be shared, which may have contributed to missing data. However, because these responses were not collected in-person, there was no way for the researchers to ask for clarification of responses, or to probe participants further. Second, only certain world areas were represented in this study, and it would be ideal to have participants from African, Latin/South American, and Middle Eastern countries. Third, knowing how long women have lived in the United States and measuring acculturation would help to better understand how ideals may have changed since moving to the United States. It would be beneficial to focus attention on new college international students in the United States to track how their perceptions of body ideals may change over time the longer they reside in the states.

In considering these limitations, future studies should hold in-person or virtual focus groups to allow for probing and clarification of participant statements. In addition, in-person focus groups would allow for greater reflection by participants, as they listen to the perspectives of others in the group. Relatedly, future research should hold separate focus groups for each world area, as this would increase the number of participants within the sample and may strengthen the potential for generalizability of the findings.

To best inform content for prevention and intervention programs there are also several recommendations. Researchers should explore why participants feel that these body ideals are upheld and important in their societies, and what these ideals represent/symbolize for women. Further, exploring how individuals try to fit these new and existing ideals is important to determine the emergence of new or worsening problematic behaviors.

Strengths and Implications

Utilizing perceptions from international and domestic college women, this qualitative study provides detailed descriptions of multiple current body ideals within and outside of the United States. College women are subject to pressures to conform to body ideals from a number of socializing agents including media, peers, and family members, and thus are likely to be highly aware of what is deemed as "attractive" within society. Findings from this study suggest that researchers should not only examine the impact of the thin-ideal on women's body image but also should give greater attention to ideals that include muscularity and accentuated features.

There were multiple strengths of this study. The most important strength was the inclusion of international women attending college in the United States. To the researchers' knowledge, no other studies have gathered perceptions from international college women about body ideals in their country of origin and the United States. By including this population, this study addresses a gap in the knowledge within the body image field. Second, this study had a good sample size for both the domestic and international groups. While the researchers are careful to not overgeneralize findings, this sample size allowed for the examination of ideals in multiple world regions. Third, by allowing women to describe current ideals, researchers can create terminology that is relevant and appropriate across cultures. More specifically, this will enable researchers to create and modify tools that measure the internalization of these ideals.

Further, knowing current body ideals in and outside of the United States can allow for relevant and culturally-adaptive educational and intervention programming for college women.

The findings in this study show the push for women to achieve a thin body, but also suggests that dissatisfaction with one's body may not be solely about body weight. Body ideals, as shown in this study, incorporate levels of muscle tone, larger-sized breasts and buttocks, etc., and it is important that researchers continue to examine the impact of all body ideals. Regardless of which body ideal an individual prescribes to, there are risks to physical health, such as extreme dieting, as well as mental health, such as body dissatisfaction, involved. Body ideals present a standard for women to compare their bodies to and, given the near impossibility of women to naturally fit these prescribed ideals, the negative evaluations of one's body in comparison to the ideals present the opportunity for the development and maintenance of body dissatisfaction.

Effective body image programming, such as the Body Project (Stice & Presnell, 2007), exists to combat the idealization of the thin-ideal. As researchers examine body ideals, beyond sole thinness, and ideals of body parts, this can assist in prevention and intervention programming aimed at reducing body image dissatisfaction. It is important for professionals to understand which ideal(s) are present within their societies to best serve the women living there. With this better understanding, there is the opportunity to provide education to women about resisting the desire to conform to body ideals, the way that the Body Project does, which may prevent body dissatisfaction. Further, by preventing body dissatisfaction, there is strong evidence of the prevention of a later eating disorder (Stice & Shaw, 2002), and perhaps the transmission of body image disturbance from one generation to another.

Conclusion

Within and outside of the United States, there are several body ideals, often perpetrated by the media, that women may prescribe to and strive to achieve, and these ideals appear to be shifting towards greater unattainability. In this study, the majority of international, Non-Western women described the thin-ideal, which has spread from Western societies, as the body ideal for their country of origin. However, the most commonly described ideal for the United States was one that is thin with accentuated features, which includes thinness as well as larger breasts and buttocks. An additional body ideal in the United States, as well as other Western areas, was the thin yet toned/athletic ideal, which also adds a level of difficulty to achieve. Due to the vast reach of media globally, Non-Western areas that have not yet adopted these ideals may someday. These findings suggest an urgency to research more than just the thin-ideal as well as to develop educational and intervention programming on different body ideals, their prevalence, potential negative consequences, and global spread.

WESTERN VS. NON-WESTERN COLLEGE WOMAN'S BODY DISSATISFACTION TRAJECTORIES OVER TIME AND ASSOCIATIONS TO SOCIALIZING AGENTS

Abstract

Body dissatisfaction, the negative evaluation of one's body, can be influenced by appearance-related pressures from socializing agents such as family, peers, and media. Little research in this area has focused on women from other countries attending college in the United States. This study aimed to examine body dissatisfaction trajectories among Western and Asian college women, and associations between body dissatisfaction and pressure from mothers, fathers, siblings, peers, and media. Participants were 47 mostly White, college women from Western countries, mean age 19.91 (SD =1.75), and 11 international college women from Asian countries, mean age 28.36 (SD = 3.70). Results indicated no differences between the groups on body dissatisfaction Time 1 scores and trajectories. While pressure from all socializing agents was associated with body dissatisfaction for the Western group, only pressure from family members was associated with body dissatisfaction for the Asian group. These results suggest that further research on how pressure from socializing agents differs for college women from varying cultures is necessary.

Introduction

Body dissatisfaction is a common sub-clinical eating disorder symptom that is broadly defined as negative thoughts, feelings, and evaluations about one's body (Grogan, 1999). Studies with female samples from the United States have found that body dissatisfaction increases from early adolescence to late adolescence, and then further increases at the beginning of young adulthood (Bucchianeri et al., 2013). In addition, Wang et al. (2019) conducted a 15-year longitudinal study of body dissatisfaction from adolescence to adulthood with a community

sample of women living in the United States, finding evidence of the stability of dissatisfaction over time, such that those with high dissatisfaction in adolescence continued to have high dissatisfaction into adulthood. Specifically, among college students, Wardle et al. (2006) found that 45% of women in their study perceived themselves as overweight, and 59% reported that they were currently trying to lose weight.

Body Dissatisfaction in Western Countries

Though studies have shown that United States women have higher body dissatisfaction than women in other Western countries (i.e., Western Europe, Australia, Canada, etc.), body dissatisfaction is still highly prevalent in women across Western countries (Gupta et al., 2001; Holmquist & Frisen, 2010; Rodgers et al., 2020; Swami et al., 2010). For example, a study with over 8,000 women in Australia found that just over 80% of women reported dissatisfaction with their weight (Lauche et al., 2016); additionally, close to 45% of young adult Canadian women reported body dissatisfaction (Carter et al., 2017). Within Western cultures, individualistic values are emphasized (Laungani, 2006), and Western cultures also tend to highly value and emphasize thinness (Grogan, 1999). Given that women in Western Europe, Australia, and Canada are more likely to uphold a Western lifestyle and value thinness, it is understandable why they may have similar levels of body dissatisfaction to women living in the United States.

Body Dissatisfaction in Asian Countries

The research focused on body dissatisfaction experienced by women living in Asian societies has demonstrated mixed results. Some studies (e.g., Swami et al., 2010) suggest that women living in Asia have slightly lower levels of body dissatisfaction when compared to women living in the United States. However, other studies suggest that women living in Asia may actually have higher levels of body dissatisfaction than their United States counterparts

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(e.g., Jung & Forbes, 2007; Kowner, 2002; Pike and Dunne, 2015; Rodgers et al., 2020; Shih & Kubo, 2005). Compared to women in the United States, women in Japan showed high body dissatisfaction and investment in a body ideal that was very thin (Holmquist & Frisen, 2010; Rodgers et al., 2020; Shih & Kubo, 2005). Though results are mixed, rates of body dissatisfaction in many parts of Asia have indeed risen considerably over time (Pike & Dunne, 2015). Researchers attribute these changes to Western influence that has been integrated into society (Jung, 2018). While those in Asian societies may not fully adopt a Western lifestyle (e.g., values, beliefs, etc.), Western influence in terms of body ideals are still able to infiltrate, likely through the media, and have the potential to impact the way women view their bodies.

Body image disturbance is a risk factor for eating disorders in women in both Western and Non-Western societies (Stice, 2002; Jung, 2018). In one study examining the prevalence of eating disorders around the world, Makino et al. (2004) made comparisons between women in Western societies and those in Non-Western, including Asian, societies. Their findings suggest that, while not at the prevalence rate of Western countries, Non-Western countries are experiencing increasing rates of eating disorders. Given that body dissatisfaction is a well-established risk factor for eating disorders (Stice, 2002), it is reasonable to suggest that researchers should examine body dissatisfaction, and the influences on this dissatisfaction, in both Western and Non-Western areas of the world.

Sociocultural influences may be playing an integral part in the increase of body dissatisfaction and eating disorders around the world (Makino et al., 2004; Sherwood & Neumark-Sztainer, 2001). Societies create body ideals that incorporate thinness, muscularity, and specifications for the appearance of body parts, thus creating complex and unachievable standards of beauty. Socializing agents, such as media, family, and peers, within an individual's

immediate environment, are important sources of information about body ideals, as well as potent communicators of the importance of achieving these ideals (Thompson et al., 1999). Consequently, socializing agents may directly or indirectly impact body dissatisfaction development and maintenance.

Theoretical Grounding

A framework for understanding socializing agents' role in the development of body dissatisfaction is the tripartite influence model (Thompson et al., 1999), which posits that socializing agents, such as family, peers, and media, have a strong influence on women's body image and eating behaviors. Specifically, this model proposes that appearance-related pressures from family, peers, and media in relation to prescribed body ideals lead to enhanced thin-internalization and appearance comparisons among women, in turn leading to body dissatisfaction when they do not meet the prescribed body ideals, and potentially a later eating disorder (Thompson et al., 1999). The tripartite influence model is supported in research with young adult women in the United States and other Western cultures (van Den Berg et al., 2002; Johnson et al., 2015; Rodgers et al., 2011; Shagar et al., 2019) as well as Asian women (Yamamiya et al., 2008; You & Shin, 2020). Due to its focus on family, peers, and media, and its ability to fit culturally diverse samples, this theoretical model framed the present study. While the original model does not include a separate examination of siblings, given previous work examining the importance of siblings' influence on body image disturbance (Schaefer & Blodgett Salafia, 2014), the current study disaggregates the "family" factor into three separate factors that potentially exert appearance-focused pressure: mothers, fathers, and siblings.

Sociocultural Influences on Body Dissatisfaction Development

Beginning in early childhood and continuing throughout an individual's life, parents, siblings, peers, and the media are some of the most prominent agents in socialization, regardless of which culture one resides in (Arnett, 1995; Arnett, 2014). However, the influence of each socializing agent may differ by time period within the lifespan and by which culture one resides. For example, in the United States, the parental influence is typically strongest in childhood and decreases during adolescence and emerging adulthood, when peer and media influence take over (Aquilino, 2006). In other areas of the world, parental influence may last much longer. For example, in Asian cultures, children are expected to respect and revere their parents throughout their lives (Wang & Lui, 2010). In addition, there are important general socialization differences between Western and Non-Western cultures, such as the independent/individual-centered focus in Western culture and the interdependent/group focus in Asian cultures, to consider. Due to changes in the importance of socializing agents in different developmental periods as well as different socialization practices in Western and Asian cultures, the influence of varying socializing agents on young women's body dissatisfaction may differ as well.

Family Influence

The family functions as not only a system in which the family members influence one another, but also as a place where messages about larger societal values, behaviors, and attitudes are transmitted and reinforced (Kreppner & Lerner, 1989; Minuchin, 1974). This includes values, behaviors, and attitudes about appearance, body weight, and size. Research shows that mothers, fathers, and siblings all exert direct and/or indirect appearance-based pressures (Hardit & Hannum, 2012; Ricciardelli & McCabe, 2001). Though the specific content of the appearance-based pressure (e.g., body parts, size, etc.) within families may differ depending on culture, the

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effect of such pressure on young women's body dissatisfaction may be the same regardless of culture (Cash & Smolak, 2012).

      Maternal Influence. Given their central position within the family system and impact on child outcomes, mothers' influence on body image disturbance is well-established. Examinations of maternal appearance-related pressures on body dissatisfaction have shown that maternal appearance-related comments predicted poor body image outcomes among college-age women in the United States (Schwartz et al., 1999). Similarly, Kluck (2010) found that appearance-related and body size comments from mothers were associated with eating disorder symptomology among their college-age daughters in the United States. Chng and Fassnacht (2016) found, in their sample of young Asian women, which included women of Chinese and Indian descent, that negative comments from mothers were related to negative feelings about body shape and general body dissatisfaction, and positive comments from mothers functioned as a potential protective factor. Their ability to significantly impact body image disturbance, both positively and negatively, makes mothers an influential socializing agent.

      Paternal Influence. While fathers are also a central part of the family system, less research focuses on their influence on young women's body image disturbance. One study with a sample of women living in the United States found that paternal negative weight-based talk tended to center around the theme of their daughter needing to lose weight (Berge et al., 2016). Furthermore, Kluck (2010) found that father encouragement to diet and criticism of body shape significantly predicted college-age women's body dissatisfaction. Cross-cultural examinations outside of the United States with young adult women and fathers are nearly nonexistent. In one exception, in their sample of Asian women, Chng and Fassnacht (2016) found that negative comments from fathers were related to daughters' negative feelings about body shape and

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general body dissatisfaction, and positive comments from fathers functioned as a potential protective factor for daughters. Thus, like mothers, fathers may have a strong influence that can function both as a risk factor or a protective factor in body image development.

Sibling Influence. Though the physical distance between siblings tends to increase during young adulthood, research shows that the sibling relationship is still generally influential and important (Lamb, 2014; Scharf et al., 2005), including in the context of body image. Researchers have found that sisters serve as models of weight concerns (Bliss, 2000; Coomber & King, 2008) and are perceived to communicate appearance-related pressures to be thin at the same level as parents (Bliss, 2000). Cross-cultural studies including siblings report similar findings in terms of sibling influence on body dissatisfaction when compared to studies in the United States. For example, siblings were identified as a main source of messages emphasizing the importance of thinness by Fijian women (McCabe et al., 2011). In a study conducted by Mellor et al. (2009), Indian and Malaysian women reported higher levels of perceived pressure to lose weight from older siblings when compared to Chinese women. Thus, it appears that siblings are important and prominent sources of pressure for women in many cultures.

Peer Influence

For those who attend college, regardless of Western or Non-Western background, time spent with peers increases, which increases the potential for peer influence on body dissatisfaction. Peer influence, rather than parental influence, was the most important predictor of body dissatisfaction among young adults in the United States (Sheldon, 2013). In a study by Lin et al. (2015), women in the United States perceived that their female friends found a thinner body most attractive; this may create a form of pressure, as women may desire to fit a thin body in order to be viewed as attractive by their friend group. Additionally, a qualitative study of

Chinese college students revealed that peer pressure was almost unavoidable in their college dormitories, and these pressures led to eating and body image issues (Zhang, 2012). Similar to findings from Sheldon (2013), college women in China reported that appearance advice and comments from peers were more important than advice from parents and that peer appearance-based feedback impacted both behaviors and feelings towards their bodies (Zhang et al., 2018). Therefore, peers are an important socializing agent in relation to college women's body image, both within Western and Asian samples.

Media Influence

Media is widely available, distributed, and important to young adult women attending college in the United States (Neilson, 2012). Media comes in a variety of forms such as digital (e.g., social networking sites, T.V. ads, etc.) and non-digital (e.g., magazine ads), and research has shown the negative impact of all types of media. Social media in particular has been found to exert appearance-related pressure, and therefore be a strong predictor of body dissatisfaction (de Valle et al., 2021). Though research on social networking sites is still relatively new, experimental studies utilizing appearance-focused social networking sites have found that exposure to fit and/or thin images led to higher levels of body dissatisfaction among young adult women in the United States (Mabe et al., 2014; Tiggemann & Barbato, 2018; Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2015). A meta-analysis conducted by Holland and Tiggemann (2016) indicated that women, both from the United States and outside of the United States, who spend more time on social networking sites also had higher levels of body image disturbance. Regarding non-digital media, an experimental study found that female college students in the United States reported higher body dissatisfaction when briefly exposed to fitness and health magazines (Cameron, & Ferraro, 2004). Both digital and non-digital media heavily exert pressure by promoting body

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ideals and appearance/weight-altering techniques (Bazzini et al., 2015), and mass media is able to be easily distributed and consumed globally. The global consumption and negative influence of Western media on Asian women's body image has been demonstrated. In their study, Jackson et al. (2016) found that the consumption of Western media negatively impacted the body image of young adult Chinese women. In summary, the media, especially Western media, has demonstrated a significant effect on college women's body image, both within Western and Asian samples.

International College Women in the United States

Cross-cultural examinations of body image disturbance among college students within the United States commonly have samples that consist of minority groups within the United States (i.e., African American, Asian American, Hispanic American) (Citations). Additionally, cross-national comparisons of body image disturbances tend to be made between women who attend college in their countries of origin: for example, comparing college students who live in and attend United States universities to Chinese college students who live and attend universities within China. There are few examinations of body image disturbance of those college students from other countries who currently attend a university within the United States (for an exception, see Sanders & Heiss, 1998); thus, there is relatively little research on this population which limits scholars knowledge on how moving into the United States impacts young adult womens' body image. While minority groups born in the United States may be a part of the same cultural background as those who do not live within the United States, individuals who were born and raised outside of the United States and now live there solely to attend college may differ from minority groups; Those who immigrate for education only do not move with their friends and family, and though they bring with them their cultural values and norms, they are not fully

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immersed in their country's culture. By moving from being immersed in their native culture, which includes being immersed in their culture's body ideals, to now being in a host culture, immersed in a new culture with new body ideals, there may be a change in their levels of body dissatisfaction and perceived pressures from socializing agents to adhere to body ideals.

Body ideals provide guidance for how people need to look to be regarded as attractive in a particular culture (Calagero et al., 2007). As college women from other cultures move to the United States to attend college, they may experience pressures for thinness, or other types of ideals, which may then lead to increased body dissatisfaction over time. It is important to examine body image experiences and disturbances of international college students who were born and raised in Non-Western cultures and now attend a Western university given the limited attention this population has been given in body image research. Furthermore, as a well-established risk factor for the development of an eating disorder (Stice, 2002), it is important to study body dissatisfaction in understudied populations, as well as to examine the influence of socializing agents in the development and maintenance of body dissatisfaction, as these may differ based on the culture an individual was born and raised in.

Present Study

This study examined body dissatisfaction among college women who were born and raised within the United States and Canada (i.e., Western group), and college women who were born and raised in Asian countries who currently attend college in the United States (i.e., Asian group). The countries included in the two groups in this study are consistent with the countries that Makino et al. (2004) had in their groups. The aims of the present study were to determine differences in baseline body dissatisfaction and the trajectory of body dissatisfaction over time

for both groups as well as to examine associations between five socializing agents and body dissatisfaction. Specific research questions were:

1) Are body dissatisfaction scores significantly different between Western and Asian participants at Time 1?

2) Is the trajectory of body dissatisfaction significantly different between Western and Asian participants?

3) Pressure from which socializing agent(s) (mothers, fathers, siblings, peers, or media) is associated with body dissatisfaction for Western participants, and pressure from which socializing agent(s) is associated with body dissatisfaction for Asian participants?

Method

Procedure

This study was approved by the university's Institutional Review Board. Students from a Midwestern university were recruited through flyers posted on campus and a series of emails distributed on the university research listserv. Interested individuals were screened to confirm they met inclusion criteria (e.g., participants had to be 18, female, enrolled at the university, and speak English) and determine whether they were originally from the United States or originally from a country outside of the United States. Once confirmed that all inclusion criteria were met, participants were given a secure online link to a first survey, which examined body dissatisfaction and sociocultural influences. After completion of the first survey, participants were then sent a secure online link to the second survey, which included questions regarding body ideals and a demographic survey. Informed consent was given by participants before each survey.

This study included three waves of data collection (fall 2019, spring 2019, and fall 2020); thus, participants potentially completed six surveys (three body satisfaction surveys and three surveys that included measures for demographic information). Compensation was given for each survey completed. In addition, to help keep attrition rates low and encourage full participation, participants who completed the first and second waves of data collection were entered into a gift card drawing. A second gift card drawing was then held for participants who completed all three waves of data collection.

Participants

This was a non-clinical, convenience sample. All participants were undergraduate or graduate students at a Midwestern university. To form a Western group, international participants from Canada (7), were grouped with the participants from the United States (40). The Western group had 47 total participants with a mean age of 19.91 ($SD =1.75$). The majority of the participants in this sub-sample were White (83%), heterosexual (87.2%), middle class (87.2%), and raised in a two-biological parent household (85.1%). See Table A3 for all participant demographic information.

The Asian group included international participants from China (2), South Korea (1), Thailand (1), India (5), and Nepal (2). The Asian group had 11 total participants with a mean age of 28.36 ($SD = 3.70$). All participants in this sub-sample were Asian (100%), and a majority of the participants were heterosexual (90.9%), middle class (63.6%), raised in a two-biological parent household (90.9%), and had lived in the United States for more than four years (63.6%). See Table A1 for all participant demographic information.

Measures

Body Dissatisfaction

Body dissatisfaction was assessed at three separate time points using the 9-item Body Dissatisfaction subscale of the Eating Disorders Inventory (EDI; Garner et al., 1983). All items were rated on a 6-point scale ranging from 0 (*never*) to 5 (*always*), with five items reverse scored. Higher scores indicated greater body dissatisfaction. Sample items included: *"I think that my stomach is too big"* and *"I think that my thighs are too large.*" One sample item that was reverse scored was: "*I feel satisfied with the shape of my body.*" A past study with a White, college female sample reported a Cronbach's Alpha of .91 (Gordon et al., 2010). For our sample, the average Cronbach's Alpha across all waves of body dissatisfaction data for Western participants was .79 and for Non-Western participants was .89.

Pressure to be Thin

Appearance-related pressure was assessed using the family, peers, and media subscales of the Sociocultural Attitudes Towards Appearance Questionnaire-4 (SATAQ-4; Schaefer et al., 2015). For this study, the authors added items specific to mothers and fathers as well as for siblings. Participants were directed to skip subscales in which they did not have contact with that individual(s). All subscales had 4 items, and all items were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*Definitely Disagree)* to 5 (*Definitely Agree*), coded such that higher scores indicated higher levels of perceived pressure. Sample items from each subscale included: "*I feel pressure from my mother to look thinner*," "*My father encourages me to decrease my level of body fat,*" "*My siblings encourage me to decrease my level of body fat,*" "*I get pressure from my peers to decrease my level of body fat,*" "*I feel pressure from the media to improve my appearance.*" A past study with a White, female college sample reported a Cronbach's Alpha of .87 (Schaefer et

al., 2019). In the present study, for Western participants at the first wave of data collection, the Cronbach's Alphas ranged from .89 to .95. For Non-Western participants at the first wave, the Cronbach's Alphas ranged from .88 to .97.

Analysis

This study examined the differences of baseline body dissatisfaction and trajectory of body dissatisfaction of Western and Asian college women over the course of a year, as well as associations between pressure from five socializing agents (mothers, fathers, siblings, peers, and media) and body dissatisfaction. For comparisons of baseline body dissatisfaction, only the first wave of data was used. To examine the roles of various socializing agents on body dissatisfaction, only the first wave of data for each agent and body dissatisfaction was used. An independent samples t-test was used to examine body dissatisfaction differences between the two groups at Time 1. Multi-level modeling was used to examine body dissatisfaction trajectories over time, controlling for participant age at Time 1 and BMI. Lastly, regression analysis was used to examine the association between each socializing agent's pressure and body dissatisfaction. Participants who did not complete all three waves varied in their country of origin, and the two groups (i.e., those who completed all waves vs. those who did not) did not significantly differ in age at Time 1 ($t = .71$, $p = .10$) or their body dissatisfaction scores at Time 1 ($t = -2.62$, $p = .22$) or Time 2 ($t = -1.52$, $p = .95$). Missing data was dealt with by mean imputation.

Results

Baseline Differences in Body Dissatisfaction

An independent T-test was used to compare mean body dissatisfaction scores on Time 1 for the Western and Asian groups. At Time 1, there was no significant difference between

Western participants *(M = 20.69, SD = 7.40)* and Asian participants *(M = 19.85, SD = 12.07)* in body dissatisfaction (*t* = 1.29, *p* =.18).

Trajectory of Body Dissatisfaction

A multilevel model was built to compare body dissatisfaction trajectories between participants in the Western group and those in the Asian group. Using a mixed linear model, an empty model was created with body dissatisfaction as the outcome variable and time added as the predictor. This model indicated that, overall, there was not a significant change in body dissatisfaction over time for either group (*p* > .05). The AIC for the empty model was 1143.38. Next, using a mixed linear model, a new model was created with body dissatisfaction as the outcome variable and BMI, age, time , and group as predictor variables. The AIC for this model was 1049.28, which indicates that this model was a better fit than the empty model. In this model, the group*time interaction term was not significant *t*(54.73)= -.006, *p* = .98. This indicates that the trajectories of body dissatisfaction were not significantly different between the two groups.

Pressure from Socializing Agents

Linear regressions were conducted separately by group for body dissatisfaction and all pressure from each socializing agent. For the Western group, body dissatisfaction was significantly associated with pressure from each of the socializing agents. As pressure from mothers (R^2 = .20, F(1, 44) = 11.27, *p* = .02), fathers (R^2 = .14, F(1, 45) = 7.20, *p* = .01), siblings (R^2 = .12, F(1, 45) = 6.36, *p* = .02), peers (R^2 = .10, F(1, 45) = 4.86, *p* = .03), and media (R^2 = .22, F(1, 45) = 12.34, *p* = .001) increased, body dissatisfaction increased. See Table A6. For the Asian group, pressure from all family socializing agents, but not peers or media, was significantly associated with body dissatisfaction. As pressure to be thin from mothers (R^2 = .91,

$F(1, 9) = 87.39$, $p < .001$), fathers ($R^2 = .64$, $F(1, 9) = 16.05$, $p = .003$), and siblings ($R^2 = .66$, $F(1, 9) = 17.20$, $p = .002$) increased, body dissatisfaction increased. See Table A7.

Discussion

The present study sought to compare Western and Asian participants' baseline and trajectories of body dissatisfaction and associations between socializing agents' pressure on body dissatisfaction. The Western group included individuals from the United States and Canada, and the Asian group included individuals from China, India, South Korea, Thailand, and Nepal. These country groupings follow previous research (Makino et al., 2004), in which researchers examined eating disorder prevalence differences in Western and Non-Western countries, which included Asian countries (i.e., China). While results indicated that body dissatisfaction at baseline and trajectories of body dissatisfaction did not differ between the two groups, there were notable differences between the two groups regarding the associations between pressure from mothers, fathers, siblings, peers, and the media and body dissatisfaction.

Baseline and Trajectory of Body Dissatisfaction

The Western and Asian groups did not differ in their baseline body dissatisfaction. The finding that body dissatisfaction levels were similar between these two groups parallels findings from Swami et al. (2010) who found that women in East Asian countries (i.e., China and South Korea) had comparable levels of body dissatisfaction to women from Western Europe (i.e., United Kingdom, Portugal, etc.), albeit slightly lower body dissatisfaction than women from North America (i.e., the United States and Canada). In addition, similar levels of body dissatisfaction have been found in a sample of non-international, White and international, Asian college women attending a university in the United States (Sanders & Heiss, 1998).

Western media, containing images of thin models and messages communicating the "need" to be thin, has spread globally (Jung, 2018). Research has found that body ideals in Western countries, and now many Asian countries, include extreme thinness (Swami et al., 2010). It is possible that women from Western and Asian countries have similar rates of body dissatisfaction because of their similar levels of exposure to thin content in the media. Regardless of Western or Non-Western world region, messages of thinness can shape women's perceptions of beauty, and if self-evaluations do not meet ideals, then body dissatisfaction may occur.

In addition to similar baseline body dissatisfaction scores, body dissatisfaction scores did not significantly change over the study period, and the trajectories of body dissatisfaction were not significantly different between the Western and Asian groups. While previously noted that women in the United States and many Asian countries report high levels of body dissatisfaction, trajectories of body dissatisfaction through young adulthood have been found to be relatively stable (Wang et al., 2019). While the authors are unaware of any studies that focus on body dissatisfaction trajectories for Asian women living in their respective countries, a study conducted with a community sample of 4,746 young adult women living in the United States, 19.2% of which were Asian American women and 48.5% of which were White women of European descent, found similar trajectories of body dissatisfaction for these groups of women from adolescence through young adulthood (Bucchianeri et al., 2013).

Body image begins to develop early in an individual's life. Body dissatisfaction has been found to increase at the start of adolescence and again at the beginning of college, after which it remains relatively stable even through middle adulthood (Linville et al., 2011; Webster & Tiggeman, 2003). By the time women enter young adulthood, body dissatisfaction may be less likely to significantly fluctuate due to the remaining importance of the body for a women's self-

image and self-esteem (Wang et al., 2019; Webster & Tiggeman, 2003) as well as women's established identity by this time. Further, this study was conducted over one year, and this may not be enough time for a significant change in body dissatisfaction to occur.

Pressure from Socializing Agents and Body Dissatisfaction

Examinations of appearance-related pressure from socializing agents (mothers, fathers, siblings, peers, and the media) and body dissatisfaction revealed differences between the two groups. The Tripartite Influence Model (Thompson et al., 1999) provides a framework for understanding body dissatisfaction development and the role that socializing agents play; as socializing agents exert pressure to be thin, the individual internalizes the thin-ideal and strives to achieve this ideal which later may lead to body dissatisfaction. For the Western group, pressure from each socializing agent was related to higher body dissatisfaction. This finding is in line with past research which found that family pressures (Burke et al., 2021; Hazzard et al., 2019; Johnson et al., 2015), peer pressures (Hazzard et al., 2019; Johnson et al., 2015), and media pressure (Hazzad et al., 2019; Johnson et al., 2015) were directly related to increased body dissatisfaction among White, young adult women. When considered independently, each agent exerted their unique pressure which predicted body dissatisfaction; however, rarely, an individual would only feel pressure from one socializing agent at a time. Learning to resist and redirect pressure from socializing agents to conform to "appearance ideals" is central to the Body Project (Stice & Presnell, 2007), which is a successful eating disorder prevention program that is primarily conducted with Western White women. Thus, results from this study are in line with the program's goal to reduce the impact that socializing agents have on body image disturbance.

For the Asian group, only pressure from mothers, fathers, and siblings was associated with body dissatisfaction. These findings contrast past research with Asian college women; for

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example, Javier and Belgrave (2015) found that pressure from both peers and media predicted body dissatisfaction but pressure from family did not, and Shin et al. (2017) found significant, positive correlations between parents', peers', and media influence and body dissatisfaction. It is important to note that previous research on pressure from socializing agents has examined women as they live in their country of origin. It could be that international college women from Asia residing in the United States are not surrounded by peers whom they deem themselves "close" to, and thus may not be put in situations where pressures arise. Family may be an important support system for women from Asian societies who have moved to the United States to pursue higher education. In addition, there may be an intense focus on schooling, which would leave little time for peer interactions. Further, Han (2020) found that the Asian value of honoring family through achievement was associated with disordered eating behaviors in their sample of international Asian college women. Additionally, in many Asian societies, it is expected that women respect their parents (Wang & Lui, 2010), and a way to show respect may be by meeting social standards of attractiveness. Lastly, siblings have also been found to exert strong pressure to achieve thinness in Asian women samples (Mellor et al., 2009). This past research provides evidence for the emphasis that Asian women place on school and family and how this focus may impact relationships with their body.

Strengths and Implications

The data for this study were collected via an online platform, which allowed the researchers to reach the participants more easily, especially considering that the COVID-19 pandemic began and persisted throughout the second and third wave of this study. International, Non-Western women attending college in the United States are an understudied population in body image research; this study included women from Asia and established similarities and

differences in body dissatisfaction rates and effects from socializing agents compared to women from Western societies. In addition, this study examined pressures from family members separately and did not combine family members into one aggregated "family" pressure. By including this step, the researchers were able to determine which family socializing agent(s) were independently associated with body dissatisfaction.

Women all over the world are subject to pressures to conform to beauty ideals from agents within their social environments. The Body Project is an effective, well-known body dissatisfaction prevention program focused on reducing sociocultural pressures and body ideal internalization. Although it was originally designed and tested with adolescent girls and women in the United States, the Body Project has been successfully adapted to Orthodox Jewish adolescents (Casasnovas et al., 2021) and college women in Saudi Arabia (Alshebali et al., 2021). Given the similar levels of body dissatisfaction in our Western and Asian groups, the results from this study suggest that Asian college women would benefit from a culturally adapted prevention program, as has been done for other cultural groups. Importantly, this program should aim to directly address how to resist body-related pressure from mothers. Related, Chng and Fassnachet (2016) found that positive comments from mothers can function as a potential protective factor; so, while prevention can happen at the individual level, mother-daughter programming or therapy sessions may help to reduce the negative pressure and increase positive comments from mother to daughter.

Limitations and Future Directions

The most significant limitation of the present study was the small sample size of the Asian group of women ($n = 11$). This study also included both undergraduates and graduate students. Larger samples sizes could allow for the ability to control for type of higher education

the participants are pursuing (i.e., undergraduate vs. graduate). Another limitation is that the majority of the Asian participants had lived in the United States for more than four years, which may mean that these participants have had greater opportunities for immersion in Western media and other Western influences in comparison to those who have been in the United States for less time. Additionally, it is unknown how socioeconomic status may play a role in body dissatisfaction and the influence of family, peers, and the media. Swami et al. (2015) found that affluence is associated with body image disturbance, such that women from affluent areas outside of the United States report greater investment in thinness and higher levels of body dissatisfaction. Lastly, it is unknown how the COVID-19 pandemic may have impacted the participants' body image during the duration of this study.

When considering the findings, strengths, and limitations of this study, future work investigating body image among international college women should examine the role of acculturation, as individuals who assume more of the host (i.e., Western) culture may have different body image experiences than those who reject the majority culture. In addition, to assess long-term changes in body dissatisfaction and pressure from socializing agents, future work should collect data over a longer period of time, ideally from the beginning of college attendance until middle adulthood, or during the transition to college. Lastly, while five different socializing agents were examined in this study, future work would benefit to include romantic partners as a socializing agent of interest. Given the importance of romantic relationships in young adulthood, partners may exert pressure that differs from family, peers, and/or media.

Conclusion

Body dissatisfaction is a normative experience for women around the world (Rodin et al., 1984; Swami et al., 2010), and pressure from socializing agents to achieve body ideals may be a

critical disruption to a healthy body image. While women living in Western societies receive a great deal of attention in studies, more research is warranted on women who travel to the United States in pursuit of higher education. Results of this study indicate differences in socializing agents' pressure in relation to body dissatisfaction, and show the need for close examination of how different socializing pressures impact women from different cultural backgrounds while attending college in the United States.

Discussion

The goals of this research were to explore young adult, domestic and international college women's perceptions of body ideals and to examine similarities and differences in body dissatisfaction and pressure from socializing agents. Two studies were conducted to address these goals. The first study examined similarities and differences in body ideals within the United States and outside of the United States as described by college women who were born and raised within the United States (domestic) and college women who were born and raised outside of the United States but currently attending a Midwestern university within the United States (international). The second study examined body dissatisfaction trajectories and how pressures from mothers, fathers, siblings, peers, and the media were associated with body dissatisfaction among college-aged women from Western (e.g., United States and Canada) and Asian (e.g., South Korea, China, India, etc.) societies.

Body Ideals

In this study, international participants were asked to describe the body ideal in their country of origin, and both international and domestic participants were asked to describe the body ideal in the United States. Collectively, there were three main body ideals described by both international, for their country of origin, and all participants, for the ideals within the United

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States: thin: thin, yet toned/athletic, and thin with accentuated features. While the same three body ideals were described by both international and domestic participants, differences emerged.

Ideals Within the United States. Women most commonly described an ideal within the United States that has a small/thin waist with large breasts and buttocks. This contrasts with the past ideal, which has focused on extreme thinness (Calogero et al., 2007). Research on this thin with accentuated features ideal and the impacts it has on women is limited (Hernanedez et al., 2021), but the growing available research does note that a large proportion of women are dissatisfied with specific areas of the body, such as the breasts (Frederick et al., 2017; Frederick et al., 2022; Swami et al., 2020). This literature parallels results from the present study, suggesting that women may be striving to achieve more than just low body weight, which adds a greater level of unattainability than thinness by itself.

Body Ideals Outside of the United States. While there was a consensus from both domestic and international women on what the current body ideal is within the United States, there was more variation in ideals when international women were asked about their country of origin. Women from Western countries (e.g., Canada, Spain, etc.) described ideals that were either thin, yet toned/athletic or thin with accentuated features, similar to the current ideal within the United States, which is not surprising given past research noting the similarities in body ideals in Western countries (Calogero et al., 2007; Swami et al., 2010). In contrast, women from Non-Western Asian countries (e.g., China, India, Nepal, etc.) commonly described a solely thin ideal, and their descriptions lacked any mention of muscle tone or larger breasts and/or buttocks.

While researchers have noted the rise in the idealization of thinness around the world (Swami et al., 2010), the results from this study, combined with other research, suggest that the Western ideal may no longer be solely thin (Frederick et al., 2017; McComb & Mills, 2022).

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This is important given that the thin-ideal found within the United States has influenced other societies to shift and idealize thinness as well (Calogero et al., 2007; Jung, 2018). Thus, other ideals found within the United States, and now other Western societies, may eventually influence Non-Western societies. Indeed, the ability for international college women to describe emerging ideals shows awareness, and awareness of these ideals may lead to internalization and the pursuit of these ideals, as has been demonstrated with ethnic minorities in the United States and women outside of the United States (Evans & McConnell, 2003; Stojcic et al., 2020).

Attention to Specific Body Areas

Both international and domestic women in this study noted that the waist was commonly discussed with peers, and many participant descriptions for ideals within and outside of the United States included "thin/small/toned waist." Further, in line with the finding that an ideal with accentuated features, such as larger breasts and buttocks, was most common within the United States and was present in Western countries outside of the United States, both international and domestic women noted that the bust and buttocks were also frequently discussed.

A small/thin waist was present in each of the ideals in this study: thin, thin yet toned/athletic, and thin with accentuated features. Further, the thin with accentuated features ideal, prominent in the United States, includes the importance of the buttocks and breasts. The combination of larger breasts with a small waist and low body fat is physically contradictive (Coltman et al., 2017), and the addition of large buttocks creates an even more impossible standard. By creating new ideals increasing in difficulty to achieve and maintain, there will be more ways for women to become dissatisfied with the way their body looks.

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Where Body Ideals Are Learned

Body ideals are created by society and transmitted through socializing agents, such as media, family, and peers, that are present in the majority of societies around the world. Past research has found that media is the main communicator of body ideals (e.g., Jung, 2018), and the results of this study fall in line with these past findings. The majority of women in this study stated that they learned body ideals through some sort of media, both digital (e.g., social media, T.V. shows/ads) and traditional (e.g., magazine ads). The most common media that women learned from was social media. Social Learning Theory states that individuals learn through watching others and by seeing these individuals be rewarded for their behavior (Bandura, 1977). Social media provides platforms for models, celebrities, and peers that embody body ideals to be praised through comments and "likes," which could be viewed as reinforcement and support (Tiggemann et al., 2018). In addition, if viewed through the Social Comparison Theory framework (Festinger, 1954), which states that individuals continually evaluate themselves and, in doing so, engage in comparisons with others, those praised for their appearance on social media create an opportunity for women to make upward comparisons (Schmuck et al., 2019).

Peers were the second most frequent communicator of body ideals, and appearance-related conversation with peers may lead to a focus on body parts; such a focus can lead to comparisons within the group to see how the individual "measures up" in comparison to the others (Tsang, 2017). Lastly, family members are also able to contribute to the learning of body ideals (Bliss, 2000; Chng & Fassnacht, 2016; Kluck, 2010; Nerini, et al., 2016; Segar, 2012). However, there is a developmental shift away from parents as a main influence past childhood (Aquilino, 2006), and while siblings may remain emotionally close in young adulthood (Scharf et al., 2005), college women's environments may be saturated with media and peers, increasing

their influence. While a greater proportion of international participants indicated that fathers and siblings were responsible for communicating ideals, in general, college women in this study indicated that family members were not the most common communicators of body ideals.

Body Dissatisfaction and Pressure

Multiple socializing agents, including the media, peers, and family members, are involved with modeling, communicating, and reinforcing body ideals within any one society (Thompson et al., 1999). This creates pressure for women to conform to these ideals, which may result in body dissatisfaction. However, the influence of this pressure on body dissatisfaction may differ depending on which socializing agent is engaging in pressuring, and from which society a woman is from. Thus, this study sought to compare body dissatisfaction and the associations between socializing agents' pressure and body dissatisfaction between a group of Western college women and Asian college women.

There were no differences between the two group's body dissatisfaction levels at baseline and trajectories of body dissatisfaction. Previous studies have shown similar levels of body dissatisfaction among Asian, European, Canadian, and United States women (Swami et al., 2010 Holmquist et al., 2019). Further, in the current sample, the majority of the women had been living in the United States for over four years, which may account for similar baseline levels and trajectories of body dissatisfaction. While we are unaware of any studies that focus on body dissatisfaction trajectories for Asian women living in their respective countries, one study found similar trajectories of body dissatisfaction from adolescence through young adulthood for both White and Asian women living in the United States (Bucchianeri et al., 2013).

Pressure from Socializing Agents and Body Dissatisfaction

Particularly interesting findings emerged regarding connections between appearance-related pressure from mothers, fathers, siblings, peers, and the media and body dissatisfaction. The Tripartite Influence Model (Thompson et al., 1999) lays the foundation for explaining how socializing agents impact body image. The framework outlines the influence of pressure on body dissatisfaction through multiple mechanisms (i.e., appearance comparison and thin-internalization), but pressure to be thin from media (Hazzad et al., 2019; Johnson et al., 2015), family (Burke et al., 2021; Hazzard et al., 2019; Johnson et al., 2015), and peers (Hazzard et al., 2019; Johnson et al., 2015) can also directly affect women's body dissatisfaction. In support of these direct associations, for the Western group in this study, positive associations were found between all socializing agents' pressure and body dissatisfaction.

In contrast, for the Asian group, only pressure from mothers, fathers, and siblings was positively associated with body dissatisfaction, which does not align with past findings (Javier & Belgrave, 2015; Shin et al., 2017). In Asian societies, children are expected to respect and care for their parents (Wang & Lui, 2010), which may contribute to their strong influence. Notably, the pressure to meet their mother's expectations of their physical appearance may result in perfectionism (Frederick et al., 2016), which may further manifest as body dissatisfaction (Boone et al., 2014). Siblings have also been found to exert strong pressure to achieve thinness in Asian women samples (Mellor et al., 2009). For Asian women who move to the United States to pursue higher education, while their family members may no longer live in close physical proximity, their influence can still be transmitted and impact their body image.

Integrating Knowledge on Body Ideals and Body Dissatisfaction

Body ideals represent what each society deems as desirable and set a standard that women then compare themselves to. For the majority of women, to achieve these unrealistic ideals naturally is nearly impossible, and attempts to meet such beauty standards have shown to be detrimental to both physical and mental health (Stice, 2002). It is beneficial to study both body ideals and body dissatisfaction together: if women are aware of ideals and further educated on the impossibility of naturally achieving these ideals, it may help to buffer the pressures felt from socializing agents to fit these ideals, thus reducing dissatisfaction with their bodies. As socializing agents communicate and reinforce ideals to women, this leads to awareness and internalization of ideals, which may ultimately lead to body dissatisfaction as women strive to meet the ideals communicated to them.

The first study, on body ideals, shows that the current ideals, both outside and within the United States, include thinness to some extent, but also muscle tone and accentuated features. Expanding these unattainable ideals further creates more ways and reasons for women to become dissatisfied with their bodies. This information can help to educate professionals and programing in order to fully address and combat the messages from society to women about the way(s) their body "should" look. In addition, researchers can examine the impacts of unique body ideals, not just the thin-ideal. The majority of research focuses on a solely thin-ideal, and less research is available that examines the impacts of a muscular or curvy ideal on women's physical and mental health. The thin-ideal became globally widespread, and if there are newer ideals in the United States, it is plausible to hypothesize that these ideals will also spread as the thin-ideal did. In order to spread, ideals need channels in which they are dispersed, communicated, and reinforced. In the first study, participants indicated that all socializing agents, such as family

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members, peers, and media were responsible for communicating ideals; thus, all should be examined as they are all influential in a young woman's development of body image.

Because thinness was found to be integrated into whichever body ideal participants described, the second study focused on pressure to be thin from socializing agents and body dissatisfaction. Differences existed between Western and Asian women for which socializing agents were associated with body dissatisfaction. While all socializing agents were associated with body dissatisfaction for the Western group, pressure from mother, fathers, and siblings were found to be particularly important for women in the Asian group. This was an interesting finding, as results from the first study, along with past research noting the influential role of media on body image (Thompson et al., 2016), suggest media may be an impactful communicator of body ideals. However, previous literature has indicated that negative comments from mothers and fathers in Asian societies towards their daughters' bodies was associated with heightened body dissatisfaction (Chng & Fassnacht, 2016), the pressure to achieve thinness that siblings may exert (Mellor et al., 2006).

Strengths and Implications

The most important strength of this study was the inclusion of international college women from both Western and Non-Western cultures. This population is under-researched in the body image field and needs greater attention, especially since differences were seen in the current study in body ideal descriptions and associations between socializing agents' pressure and body dissatisfaction. Further, by having participants that were born and raised outside of the United States and now living in the United States in their young adult years, the researchers were able to examine perceptions of female body ideals both within their country of origin as well as in the United States.

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Another important strength of this study was the examination of pressure from mothers, fathers, and siblings, separately. Assessing each family member separately allows for greater precision in identifying targets for prevention and intervention programs. Indeed, siblings were indicated as an important communicator of body ideals by participants. The inclusion of siblings is noteworthy, given that they are an understudied group within body image literature.

The emergence of multiple different body ideals within and outside of the United States indicates the need to have valid, reliable, and culturally adapted measurements to assess internalization and pressure to achieve these different body ideals. The results from this study may assist in creating new instruments, or adjusting existing ones. Specifically, measurements may benefit by including terms that were found in participants' descriptions, to be more widely understood and more easily translated into various languages.

The finding of different ideals in the present study, combined with the knowledge that body ideals are ever-changing, suggests that broad, culturally adaptive programming to help women reject any sort of body ideal may be more beneficial than creating programming targeting only one body ideal within one society. Based on the results of this study, this programming should also include elements that address pressure from all socializing agents, with an emphasis on mothers given the finding that mothers emerged as a potent socializing agent for Asian women.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study had several methodological limitations. The most significant limitation was the small sample size of the Asian group ($n = 11$). While we had an acceptable sample size for our overall international group, having more participants in each world area present in this study would add stronger support to these findings. Larger samples sizes could also allow for the

ability to control for type of higher education the participants are pursuing (i.e. undergraduate vs. graduate). Additionally, our results may not be widely generalizable, especially to other world areas outside of the United States, as there were few participants to represent each area present in this study. To expand the limited research on women outside of the United States and other Western areas of the world, strong recruitment efforts should be made to include women from African, Latin/South American, and Middle Eastern countries. Further, to strengthen the generalizability of results, future researchers should separate participants by specific Asian regions. A second methodological limitation was that participants' responses were collected via an online survey, with open-ended questions to allow all thoughts to be shared. Because these responses were not collected in person, there was no way for the researchers to ask for clarification of responses, or to probe participants further. Future studies should consider holding in-person focus groups to allow for probing and clarification, and consider separate focus groups for each world area. In-person focus groups would also allow for greater reflection by participants, as they listen to the perspectives of others in the group, and separate groups would strengthen the researchers' ability to generalize findings.

This study would benefit from including additional variables. For example, we did not ask participants about the SES of the family that they grew up in, which would be useful when examining groups from within and outside of the United States. Swami et al. (2015) found that affluence is associated with body image disturbance, such that women from affluent areas outside of the United States report greater investment in thinness and higher levels of body dissatisfaction. Future work should consider measuring acculturation, as individuals who assume more of the majority (i.e., Western) culture may internalize ideals more/differently than those who reject the majority, Western, culture. Additionally, incorporating measurements to account

for pressure from multiple socializing agents to be muscular and/or achieve accentuated features would be beneficial to objectively examine from which socializing agent(s) women feel pressure to fit which ideal. Lastly, while five different socializing agents were examined in this study, future work would benefit to include romantic partners as a socializing agent of interest. Given the importance of romantic relationships in young adulthood, partners may exert pressure that differs from family members, peers, and the media. To assess long-term changes in body image disturbance and pressure from socializing agents, future work should collect data over a longer period of time, ideally from the beginning of attendance at university until middle adulthood.

Conclusion

This research demonstrates important similarities and differences in body ideals within and outside of the United States, as well as in body dissatisfaction and strength of pressure from socializing agents on body dissatisfaction between Western and Asian college women. This research adds to the literature by including women who were born and raised outside of the United States and now attending college in the United States. This study indicates multiple body ideals present both within and outside of the United States, with the prominent ideal within the United States including more than just thinness. Additional findings from the present study showed similar rates and trajectories of body dissatisfaction between Western college women and Asian women attending college within the United States. However, while pressure to be thin from all socializing agents was independently associated with body dissatisfaction for the Western group, only pressure from family members predicted of body dissatisfaction for Asian women. Overall, greater awareness and understanding of the increasingly difficult body ideal standards that women in Western and Non-Western societies are pressured to conform to, and where these pressures are coming from, provide the opportunity to prevent and intervene to

reduce the negative impact that different socializing agents can have on the development of body

dissatisfaction.

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Table A1

Participant Demographics

Domestic Participants	Frequency	Percentage
Ethnicity		
African American	1	1.9
African, not U.S born	1	1.9
Asian American	1	1.9
Bi/Multiracial	3	5.7
Caucasian	45	86.5
Latina/Hispanic	1	1.9
Socioeconomic Status		
Low SES/poor	5	9.6
Middle SES/middle class	45	86.5
High SES/wealthy	2	3.8
Childhood Household Type		
Grandparents	1	1.9
Same-sex parents	1	1.9
Single-mother family	4	7.7
Step family/blended family	3	5.8
Two biological parent household	43	82.7
Sexual Orientation		
Bisexual	6	11.5
Lesbian	1	1.9
Heterosexual	45	86.5
International Participants	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Ethnicity		
African, not U.S. born	2	6.3
Asian, not U.S born	18	56.3
Caucasian	10	31.3
Middle Eastern	2	6.3
Socioeconomic Status		
Low SES/poor	7	21.9
Middle SES/middle class	25	78.1
High SES/wealthy	0	0
Childhood Household Type		
Grandparents	1	3.1
Single-father family	1	3.1
Single-mother family	1	3.1
Two biological parent household	29	90.6
Sexual Orientation		
Bisexual	1	3.1
Lesbian	2	6.3
Heterosexual	27	84.4
Prefer not to answer	1	3.1
Prefer to self-identify	1	3.1

Table A2

International Participants' Country of Origin and Length of Time in the United States

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage
Country		
Australia	1	3.1
Bangladesh	1	3.1
Canada	8	25
China	3	9.4
Denmark	1	3.1
Egypt	1	3.1
India	6	18.8
Kazakhstan	1	3.1
Nepal	2	6.3
Saudi Arabia	1	3.1
South Korea	1	3.1
Spain	1	3.1
Sri Lanka	1	3.1
Thailand	1	3.1
United Kingdom	1	3.1
Missing	2	6.3
Length of time lived in United States		
Less than one year	6	27.2
One year	2	9.0
Two years	3	13.6
Three years	7	31.8
Four years	3	13.6
More than four years	10	36.7
Missing	1	4.5

Table A3

Participant Demographics

Western Participants	Frequency	Percentage
Ethnicity		
African American	1	2.1
African, not U.S born	3	6.4
Asian, not U.S born	1	2.1
Bi/Multiracial	2	4.3
Caucasian	39	83.0
Latina/Latino/Hispanic	1	2.1
Socioeconomic Status		
Low SES/poor	5	10.6
Middle SES/middle class	41	87.2
High SES/wealthy	1	2.1
Childhood Household Type		
Adoptive Family	1	2.1
Grandparents	1	2.1
Single-mother family	4	8.5
Step family/blended family	1	2.1
Two biological parent household (mother and father)	40	85.1
Sexual Orientation		
Bisexual	5	10.6
Heterosexual	41	87.2
Prefer to self-identify	1	2.1
Asian Participants	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Ethnicity		
Asian, not U.S. born	11	100.0
Socioeconomic Status		
Low SES/poor	4	36.4
Middle SES/middle class	7	63.6
Childhood Household Type		
Grandparents	1	9.1
Two biological parent household (mother and father)	10	90.1
Sexual Orientation		
Gay/Lesbian	1	9.1
Heterosexual	10	90.1
Length in United States		
Less than one year	0	0
One year	1	.09
Two years	1	.09
Three years	1	.09
Four years	1	.09
More than four years	7	63.6

Table A4

Breakdown of Body Areas Focused on During Conversation with Peers

Body Area	Domestic (n=34)	International (n=15)
Waist	**32** (94.1%)	**11** (73.3%)
Buttocks	**29** (85.3%)	**9** (60%)
Chest/Bust	**27** (79.4%)	**7** (46.7%)
Legs	**13** (38.2%)	**4** (26.7%)
Face	**8** (23.5%)	**3** (20%)
Hips	**9** (26.5%)	**3** (20%)
Arms	**5** (14.7%)	**1** (6.7%)
Thighs	**13** (38%)	**2** (13.3%)
Back	**1** (3%)	**0** (0%)
Shoulders	**2** (6%)	**1** (6.7%)

Note. 18 domestic and 17 international participants did not answer this question. These percentages were calculated using only the participants who answered this question.

Table A5

Where Body Ideals Were Learned

Type	Overall (N = 84)	Domestic (n = 51)	International (n = 32)
Social Media	**83** (98.8%)	**51** (100%)	**32** (100%)
Actresses on T.V.	**69** (80.2%)	**43** (84.7%)	**25** (78.1%)
Ads on T.V.	**52** (60.5%)	**32** (62.7%)	**19** (59.4%)
Ads in Magazines	**44** (51.2%)	**29** (56.8%)	**14** (43.8%)
Peers	**24** (27.9%)	**12** (23.5%)	**12** (37.5%)
Mothers	**17** (19.8%)	**11** (21.6%)	**5** (15.6%)
Fathers	**10** (11.6%)	**4** (7.8%)	**5** (15.6%)
Siblings	**11** (12.8%)	**3** (5.8%)	**8** (25%)

Note. One domestic participant did not complete this question. The percentages are based on participants who completed this question.

Table A6

Regression Analysis for Western Group

Predictor	B	SE	β	*t*	*p*
Maternal Pressure	.79	.24	.45	3.36	.02*
Paternal Pressure	.66	.25	.37	2.68	.01*
Sibling Pressure	.68	.27	.35	2.52	.02*
Peer Pressure	.52	.23	.31	2.20	.03*
Media Pressure	.78	.22	.46	3.51	.001*

Note. * denotes significance at the .05 alpha level.

Table A7

Regression Analysis for Asian Group

Predictor	B	SE	β	*t*	*p*
Maternal Pressure	2.50	.27	.95	9.34	<.001*
Paternal Pressure	1.70	.43	.80	4.00	.003*
Sibling Pressure	1.92	.46	.81	4.15	.002*
Peer Pressure	1.35	.91	.44	1.48	.17
Media Pressure	1.39	.67	.57	2.08	.07

Note. * denotes significance at the .05 alpha level.