Examining Female and Male International Students’ Perceptions of their Body Image
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Introduction
This study focuses on several different cultures of both male and female college aged students who have spent the majority of their lives living in cultures other than the U.S.

It examines how the body image ideals differ from those in the U.S.

Rationale
Existing research generally focuses on the younger generation who grew up in a Westernized culture.

Very little research has been conducted on people who have not grown up in the United States and who got exposed to American body image ideals later in life.

Very little studies have been done with international students who lived in a different culture with different body ideals.

Methods
• Face-to-face interviews.
• 7 Participants: Russian, Congolese, Sri Lankan, Yemenis, Georgian, Australian, and Yugoslavian

Recommendations
• More participants are needed for following studies.
• Have a male and female participate for each culture in order to have both perspectives on body image.
• Have photos as visual aids for the participants to describe certain things and avoid misunderstandings.
• Following research should look specifically at the importance of ‘fashion’ for international students in the U.S.

Research Question/Results
How international students’ body image ideals have changed since living in the U.S

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<td>Faked Body Ideal</td>
<td>“Most of the time they [models] are really all made up, you know, they are perfect” Yemen. “In the US you have these two ideals like this beautiful in shape woman and the guy is ripped. You know, pretty faces, fancy clothes and half naked” Russia</td>
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<td>Fashion is more Important</td>
<td>“When we walk out the door, we walk out the best way we can” Georgia “For university, it’s not like here, you don’t wear like shorts. You never wear shorts in university. You have to be a bit formal” Sri Lanka</td>
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<td>Diet and Exercise</td>
<td>“Nobody diets in Yemen. Everybody is skinny for some reason” Yemen. “I try to eat controlled portions here in the States, this is how I diet or try to diet here in the States, because in my culture, in Yugoslavia you always have to finish your plate” Yugoslavia “I thought about running in the morning but literally they would all start laughing as soon as I said that out loud” Georgia</td>
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<td>Ideal Body</td>
<td>“Women have to be round, or have to have some body shape” Congo. “In the middle between crazy work out and super skinny would be the one I prefer” Yugoslavia</td>
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<td>Talking about Body Image</td>
<td>“My Australian friends don’t really care about this sort of things” Australia “I think the peers I’ve had [U.S] influence the way I am now.” Congo</td>
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International students see the faked body ideal in the U.S and agree this ‘perfection’ is unrealistic to achieve.

The participants dress more ‘casual’ than what they are used to in their home country.

Dieting and exercising is not common in their home countries, yet all participants now practice dieting and certain exercises.

Participants have changed from their home country body ideal to one closer to the American body ideal.

Most of the international students did not talk about ‘body image’ until they arrived to the United States.