Introduction

- This study focuses on how African American female college students communicate about body image and self-esteem.
- It examines the perceived differences between self-esteem vs body image, culture’s role in body image, and the differences in females’ perceptions of male vs female body image communication.

Rationale

- Existing research generally focuses on other ethnicities.
- Existing research generally does not differentiate between body image and self-esteem.

Methods

- 7 participants who met the following criteria were chosen:
  - Female
  - African American
  - Currently attending a university
- Private face-to-face interviews were conducted, 30 minutes to 60 minutes in duration.
- The interviews consisted of a set of 13 questions with room for personal explanations and expansions.

Results

- 6 out of the 7 participants say that they are more likely to speak to family about body image than peers.
- 100% of participants say an outside force makes them feel better about their appearances, but the answers vary (spirituality, nice clothes, compliments, etc.).
- While all participants say that their weight is the attribute they dislike the most about their bodies, 3 out of the 7 believe that what others probably view as their worst attribute is not weight related.
- 2 questions were “What is your favorite physical feature about yourself?” and “What do you believe is others’ favorite physical feature about you?” 5 out of the 7 participants had the same answer for both questions.

Recommendations

- A larger number of participants are necessary to study these topics further.
- Topics should be narrower in scope.
- Male and female participants could generate more variety in the conclusions.