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Honors Day 2025 Proposal

Title: Dissecting Why Media Is Not the Sole Cause of Body Dissatisfaction Among Female College Students in Collectivistic Cultures vs America.

The specific topic of your research: Body Dissatisfaction Among Female College Students

The central questions or statement of the problem your research addresses:

- What overlooked variables, beyond media influence, lead to body dissatisfaction among female college students in collectivistic cultures compared to those in Western individualistic cultures?

The rationale or the goals for your research:

Existing literature on body dissatisfaction in women is predominantly based on Western individualistic cultures, focusing primarily on white female subjects, yet results are applied to a target population that is not fully represented in the sample. My study is crucial as body image issues affect female college students across diverse races, cultures, and countries. Additionally, it challenges the oversimplified and incomplete cause-and-effect relationship between media and body dissatisfaction by considering overlooked confounding variables, particularly in collectivistic cultures compared to the U.S. My research will explore these unrecognized variables to establish a more nuanced picture of this complex phenomenon that many females struggle with in college.

Your research and/or analytical methods:

I will use a combination of content analysis, literature review, and comparative analysis as my research methods, while also incorporating psychology theories and McLuhan's perspective informed by his famous quote "the medium is the message."

Your main findings, results, or arguments (or expected findings if your research is in progress):

Many scholars have found media to be an amplifier rather than a cause of body dissatisfaction particularly among female college students in collectivistic cultures compared to the U.S. In addition to cultural differences between collectivistic cultures and the American "individualistic" culture, personality (MacNeill, Best, & Davis, 2017, pg.3), family influence(Ordaz, Schaefer, Choquette, Schueler, Wallace, & Thompson, 2018, par 14), attachment types(Bretherton, I,1992, par 13), peer comments, (Gaines, & Burnett, 2014, pg. 351) and the digital divide between America and regions where collectivistic cultures are concentrated (Granguillhome, Lach, Masaki,& Rodríguez-Castelán,2022, par 1-2) are important confounding and lurking variables that contribute to the manifestation of body image issues among female college students in collectivistic cultures.

