

Final Blog portfolio

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1- Introduction

The body practice I chose for this project is to adhere to daily exercise to lose weight. When I was in primary school, I was really a fat girl and consistently laughed at by my classmates. I have started to feel ashamed of my fat body since then. Therefore, this time, I decided to make some changes to my body. In the current situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, outdoor sports are arguably under a risk of infection. Thus, I chose to do indoor exercises everyday before I take the shower and go to bed.

2- Experiences

The initial plan for my daily exercise includes three sets of two minutes rope skipping, three sets of one-minute sit-ups, and one set of 10-minute relaxing exercises. The beginning is always troublesome. At the first several days, it almost took me one hour to finish these tiring exercises, since I need to rest for a long time before I can do another set. Also, I did little at the last set of those time-limited exercises. After finishing those daily exercises, I was tired to death and almost fall into sleep immediately after I went to bed. Fortunately, everything went better as I gradually got used. In the third week, I became able to do around fifty sit-ups in the first set, which I could only do around forty before. Even in the last set, I could do around thirty sit-ups, which I could only do around twenty before. The number of

rope skipping done per set did not change much but I felt less tiring after each set.

At last, I got used to those daily exercise and nearly formed the habit of that. I adhere to do so every day and, though it is still tiring, I consider it as part of my daily life instead of something special.

The effect of those exercises can be reflected directly through changes in my weight.

In Lecture 2, we learned that body changes can be tracked quantitatively (Song 2021: Lecture 1, September 8). Also, in Natasha Schüll's article, she mentioned Eric Boyd's idea that, by tracking your body data, you can know exactly how your body has changed (Natasha Schüll 2016: 197). Therefore, I made a line chart of the my weight data (attached below). This line chart shows a overall trend of losing weight.

The effect of those exercises can also be reflected indirectly through daily experiences. In Lecture 2, we learned that body changes can also be recorded experientially (Song 2021: Lecture 1, September 8). Among my personal experiences, the most impressive one is others' reaction. My friends always feel surprised about my being slimmer and praise me. Once, when I went to the lecture hall, my classmates saw me and said words like "you are much slimmer than before!", "I nearly cannot believe it is you!", "how beautiful you are!". All these experiences make me realize my changes and make me feel happy.

Another impressive experience is that I have become more confident and willing to

show my body. Clothing is one manifestation. Before, I always chose conservative clothes to fully cover my body, which I was ashamed of to some extent. But currently, encouraged by others' prasing, I am more confident of my body and therefore willing to try some fashionable clothes, which uncover a few body parts like shoulders or belly.

3- Reflections

Knowledge learned in this course gives me a chance to critically reflect on my thoughts expressed above.

The first reflection is why my being fat was always laughed at by others. After learning Lecture 1, I realize social "values" include the fundamental beliefs about what is beautiful, and being slim is one of it in the current society (Song 2021: Lecture 1, September 1). Therefore, I was laughed at because my being fat is opposite to what is valued. In addition, perhaps my being laughed at is also a reflection of the operation of cultural hegemony. Cultural hegemony means "the ability of the dominant group to create consent or agreement within a population without the use or threat of force" (Song 2021: Lecture 2, September 8). In the current society, an agreement that being slim is beautiful has already been created under the cultural hegemony. If someone is being fat, he would be laughed at by others and therefore gradually form the idea that it was wrong to be fat and accept the dominant opinion. Arguably my personal experience is also the operation of

such cultural hegemony.

The second reflection is why I feel happy after becoming slimmer. As argued above, being slim is one of the social values in the current society. And I think I feel happy not for the simple fact of being slim or losing weight, but for being consistent with social values. In Marx's words, this is currently a very competitive society and appearance has become one of the event to compete. If you can look better, the feeling is that you should do so, or you would be reflected badly by your group (Marx 2015: 5). So I think I want to be consistent with those social values to be "good", or at least not so "bad" in the society. When I was fat, others' words always remind me of my being "bad", which make me feel ashamed. And when I become slim, others' praising reminds me of my being "good", which makes me feel safe and confidence. In addition, I think this is also the expected result of the operation of cultural hegemony as argued above.

The last reflection is whether my being fat is bad by itself. As argued above, being slim is valued due to the social consent in the current society created and operated by culture hegemony. And this preference is made by human instead of comes from the nature of being slim or fat. In other societies, such as the Tang Dynasty, the social consent created by cultural hegemony may be the contrary, which means being fat is considered beautiful. Therefore, we should realize that being slim or fat is not good or bad by itself, but is only under preference of one over another by

certain coscial backgrounds. In addition, despite the existence of cultural hegemony, people also have their agency. Agency means the potential to contest cultural values (Song 2021: Lecture 2, September 8). Even though the current society considers being slim beautiful, I can still hold my contrary view. Also, social values are not unchallengeable, especially when a group of people hold the same opposite view and apply their agency. For example, in OH’s article, certain kinds of social values are currently challenged by the new trend of k-pop dances (OH 2015: 60).

Multimedia Elements Attached

1- line chart of my weight changes



2- video of my doing sports

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Q54xo0FAJHuApTHaqI5abYIsugBA7LQg/view?usp=sharing>

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