Obesity body image (sociology) part ii

Obesity/body image (Sociology) Part II

Running Head: OBESITY BODY IMAGE Obesity Body Image Full School This paper discusses Obesity as a social issue that could be explained in three sociological ways. Three perspectives including conflict, functionalist, and symbolic interactionist perspective have their different but connected explanations for the prevalence of obesity. This explanations show how obesity should be dealt in communities to promote its elimination and encourage desired societal change. The Symbolic Interactionist perspective best illuminates and explains the issue of Obesity as how it was interpreted by the individuals having the disorder themselves and especially for the normal-weight individuals. Proper education is recommended to inform the public including the societal systems of government, schools, and family about the nature and causes of obesity and also to discourage the public from discriminating against obese patients who may suffer low self-esteem.

Obesity / Body Image

Introduction

Have you ever met an obese person in your community? Are they being treated fairly and receive equal privileges compared with normal weights? Often times, being obese have a negative stigma among normal individuals and why is that so? In this paper, Obesity with be analyzed in three sociological perspectives (conflict, functionalism, symbolic interactionism) to be able to understand why obese individuals are often discriminated by other normal-weight individuals and why do these obese persons have low self-esteem in accepting their body image.

Obesity is a psychological disorder manifesting in a behavior of excessive

eating. The disorder is classified by an overt, extreme over-weight of a person having a weight exceeding 100 pounds. Obesity, as a psychological eating disorder could be best understood using the three sociological perspectives of conflict, functionalism, and symbolic interactionism. The rate of obese patients is continuously growing and studies show that 30 % of the citizens in U. S. are reported to be apparently suffering in obesity; (Bernstein et. al., 1991).

Upon applying the conflict perspective, obesity could be described as a scenario which produces a clash or divergence among ingroups and outgroups of obese-inflicted patients in the United States and in any other societies nowadays. For instance, due to the increasing rate of obese patients in the United States, there is an apparent conflict existing in the provision of Medicare or welfare support by the government among citizens inflicted with obesity as a medical problem as it affects the economy and the business of employers. Moreover, this health-threatening disorder poses the possibility of increasing likelihood of death rates and other severe health problems like hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular ailment, cancer, stroke, etc (Blixen et. al., 2006). In so doing, there exists a stigma among obese persons where they are less appealing to employers not only because of their appearance but also because of the expensive coverage that has to be paid by employers in case they get hired. And so, obese individuals have lesser opportunity to get hired compared with normal-weight individuals. Functionalist perspective on the other hand, views obesity as a conflict present which influences all the parts of the society which are interconnected. Thus, any existing conflict affecting the institutions requires to be studied, to be examined, and to be solved with the use of scientific

method and societal principles. And of course, with the participation of each interconnected institutions like the family, school, government, citizens, religion, etc., the society shall achieve the societal change desired and eliminate the prevalence of the epidemic obesity (Blixen et. al., 2006). Symbolic Interactionist perspective views obesity as a stigma in a society where being " obese" as a symbol of severe stoutness is mostly interpreted by discriminating individuals as a label for people who caused their obesity. What others don't understand is that obesity could be genetically-predetermined. Symbolic Interactionism best explains attitude of individuals towards obese persons since their interpretation for the meaning of obese affects how they react towards obese persons. This calls for a provision of education among citizens for promoting desired societal change: in preventing the disease to proliferate and in encouraging obese and normal individuals to accept their own stigma and their neighbors as well and fight discrimination as it may impact in every individual's psychological well-being (Boggess, 2007).

Conclusion

Obesity is a psychological disorder manifesting in a behavior of excessive eating. Conflict perspective views Obesity as a challenge for citizens to stop its prevalence as it affects the society. Functionalism, offers scientific method to examine the nature of the disease for information, prevention, and cure. Symbolic Interactionism, best explains the attitude of individuals towards obese patients since their behavior is influenced by how they interpret symbols (severe overweight) in their present, social world.

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