Obesity problem has been identified as one of the major health crisis of the modern generation. Recent statistics from the NHS (2018) illustrate that 38% of adults in the US, 32% in Mexico, and 26% in the UK are suffering from obesity. As Dr. Juan Rivera Dommarco (2015), co-author of the BMJ, states ‘The worldwide prevalence of obesity has risen substantially over the past three decades with no country yet achieving a reduction’, the unstoppable surge within obesity rate has evoked contentious debates regarding what is the most efficient method to tackle obesity rate. Although a large proportion of people recognize the considerable benefits brought on by countless attempts, critics argue that voluntary downsizing is neither efficient nor strongly evidenced(Marteau et al., 2015); sugar tax hit poor households hardest(Soares, 2016); promoting healthier lifestyle is misleading and unscientific(Malhotra et al., 2015). However, this essay seeks to argue that reducing portion size and imposing a soda tax could be considered as the most effective method, alongside with promoting a healthy lifestyle.

The reason why reducing portion size could be seen as one of the most efficient procedure is that over-consumption of food and sugary drink is a critical proximal determinate(Marteau et al., 2015). Accordingly, British Medical Journal (2015) identified the importance of developing well-studied policies to decrease the size, which is underscored by convincing evidence that people do tend to consume more calorie from a larger portion of food(Marteau et al., 2015). Despite its recognizable significance towards the problem, some claims that as far as it remains a voluntary agreement in England, the market will self-adjust itself by applying the Gresham’s Law(GAGNON and FREUDENBERG, 2012). Some multinational company such as Mars, Nestle joined the agreement, but a broader change across companies and products is fragmented(Marteau et al., 2015). Correspondingly, only few cinema chains voluntarily moved their largest cup size (ibid). It is undeniable that companies are lack of incentive, which is why the British medical journal (2015) requested firm government intervention towards the portion size. Furthermore, A recent survey (2012) carried out by a New York newspaper reported that 60% resident opposed 16-ounce sugary drinks, which indicate that people’s acceptability over reducing portion should not be worried too much. Moreover, a more recent survey (2015) shows that over 59.9% and 53.5% of people in the UK and US are fond of state intervention. Though it is not a landslide victory, still, the figures implied less resistance from the public.

Imposing sugar tax should be referred to as one of the most succinct, but arguably way to tackle obesity. Mexico's soda tax is a great reference towards the problem. The report carried out by WHO (2015) indicates that pricing policies can influence consumers' purchasing pattern greatly and have an impact on dietary behavior. By data provided by BMJ (2014), the sales of the taxed beverage dropped 6% in that year. On the other hand, non-taxed beverages increased by 4%. This very phenomenon pointed out that taxation could be treated as a powerful weapon against obesity as long as its target precisely like a scalpel.

On the contrary, critics could be easily spotted within this argument. Firstly, Rivera (2016) concludes that the measurement was regressive in the way it hit poor households hardest. As far as Rivera concerned, the impact on poor should be measured in terms of general health improvement, instead of simply focusing on the decrease in sugar-related products' consumption. Likewise, Christopher Snowdon (2016) second Rivera's opinion, ‘any sugar tax is likely to be highly regressive as the poor are spending a much higher portion of their income on sugar-related beverage'. In other the words, the poor are more vulnerable and sensitive towards price shift, which will lead to substitutes’ consumption rise eventually. In addition, there are figures revealing that obesity people are relatively tolerant towards price shift(Snowdon, 2016). Even though this type of argument challenged whether taxation is fundamentally impractical, there are still fixes towards it. In the example of Mexico, the money raised by soda tax was reinvested in obesity prevention and other facilities(Soares, 2016). This move could be concerned as a social wealth redistribution, which applied one of the basic attributes of taxation, reallocate wealth. Furthermore, an economic theory called ‘triple redistribution' indicates that when price shift drastically, the market share of global giants will also shift, which leads to a more competitive market and benefits the consumer eventually.

Secondly, real deduction in obesity has not been observed yet. The result will not show in a short period of time, which dramatically heat up the debate – the feedback system is giving nothing back. A piece of evidence from Colchero (2016) suggest that Mexico people's daily sugary drinks did decline for 36ml per person, which is 16 calories. As a national survey (2014) suggest that 400 000 cases of diabetes could have been averted by the time 2050. Much like what Soares (2016) state at the beginning of the article,' Time will tell whether the tax helps to reduce obesity or not'

Finally, Exercise can be adopted as an effective way to promote weight loss, ergo, prevent obesity subjectively. Exercise, as the only initiative method, have its advantages over other passive ones. The WHO (2014) recommended 2.5 hours moderate-to-vigorous physical exercise per week, which is enough for one to maintain its weight or even lost some of it. Additionally, Harvard School of Public Health (2015) claims that exercise is not simply an individual activity, but a social motivator that would eventually create a ‘built-environment'. This theory considered exercise as a part of a virtuous circle and will promote the atmosphere of a healthy lifestyle(Boston and Ma, 2012). Although some may claims that there are simply not conclusive evidence on relations between exercise hour and obesity(Boston and Ma, 2012) Another argument is concluded by Malhotra (2015), saying that exercise and weight loss shares weak connection, which leads to a weaker effect on obesity, but still, a healthier lifestyle could moderately help to tackle the problem.

In conclusion, reducing portion size, imposing a soda, and promoting healthy lifestyle tax could all be considered as one of the most effective methods, simply because there are many voices on each side during the debate and a single method is not likely to achieve the purpose on its own. From writer's point of view, to directly diminish obesity, government intervention should be considered as a priority. While in the long run, a positive, self-initiative, healthy lifestyle and atmosphere is more important.

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