

# Youth Impact Communication

## Don't Let My Height Speak For Me: On The (Gendered) Reality Of Heightism

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# Summary

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In the past six months, our team consisting of four members worked hard for this competition. After finishing the whole project, all of us had learned and grown a lot during this process. It was a real sense of accomplishment.

First of all, we learned facts in our life from the research results and the feedback. Two of our group members are tall girls who are experiencing height discrimination. Thus, height discrimination is something that exists among us. It is easier for us to dig into this topic because it is close to us. Due to feudalism in Chinese history, some of the elder people usually have an inflexible image of men and women's height. During the research process, many people on Zhihu and our classmates in our interviews said they got these comments from older people. After posting videos and comics on the internet, we found that many people were facing the same problems and sharing the same feelings with us on height discrimination. Under the comments of our video, people are sharing their feelings and stories. We created a warm and authentic community building and forming via the internet that gathered people with the same issues together and provoked discussion.

On top of that, deadlines are the most efficient ways to motivate people and boost production, backup plans are important when it comes to a crisis. During the first two months, we only did questionnaires and interviews because we didn't have a clear plan. All we did was thinking about our future but didn't take any action at all because we thought we got enough time. However, in the last two months, our efficiency boosted because we set up a strict and clear deadline. Making an actionable and detailed plan before the start of the project will be a lifelong beneficial habit for our team to deal with our work in the future.

Thirdly, the backup plans are important when it comes to crisis and can save a lot of time. It was the main reason why we waited for the opening of the school to start filming. Due to the changes bring to our plan by the outbreak of coronavirus, we refined and narrowed other scripts to make it clearer that we could start our filming right after school opening. The script was amazing and detailed. The story was zigzag and thoughtful. However, the school opening time had delayed for another one month again and we had to give up the film plan and started doing projects separately. Since Ranny and Catherine are adept at art, they drew comics and posters about height discrimination. And Alice wrote and scripted another short video on her own. If we get a backup plan earlier, our video and drawing pieces could have more influence. Time regulation becomes a valuable lesson.

The most important thing is, we learned many new skills during this competition. We learned how to interview people, create a questionnaire, communicate with teammates, and practical skills like scriptwriting and drawing comics. At first, we were confused about how to interview people and make questionnaires. We searched a lot of information online about how to make a reasonable and clear questionnaire and interview. Finally, we designed a questionnaire that would only take thirty seconds to complete, and a friendly interview just like a chat with friends. These basic information helped us to build up our script. Communication is a hard thing especially when we cannot communicate face to face directly. We had complained about other teammates and stewed angrily inside. However, we learned that communication is important when it comes to problems. Most of the problems can be solved with a calm and friendly conversation. These practical skills, drawing comics, are developed because we tried to spread our impact in a new way. Comics drawing needs patience and takes a lot of time. Nevertheless, building up a new skill is a real sense of accomplishment.

# Identify the Topic

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## | Topic Description

Height is one of the most commonly employed descriptors. For many situations, it's the indispensable information about others' appearances. However, compared with other physical characters, it is subject to normative judgements like value and attractiveness. This demarcation appears both in social life and the workplace. Ultimately, we oppose this heightism—the discrimination based on height, primarily against those shorter statures—existing across China and the globe. Such discourse is notable on social media but also in school athletics, where taller students are rewarded with positions and status. However, heightism also intersects with sexism, and our team seeks to discover how heightism affects young women in particular.

## | Why it is important

Heightism permeates every aspect of society and is particularly noticeable during the Spring Festival season, where relatives often assess one another and prospective marital partners by height. These standards are gendered as well, as evidence by online assertions like these: “If you are not above 180 centimeters, then you are not a real man” and “If you are too tall, you are not a real woman.” This applies not only to the lives of minors but also to young adults and older cohorts in the workplace. While height is often the subject of implicit or explicit bias, one of the most effective ways to make it to be rooted out is urging high schools to take the lead.

To this end, our project aims to raise awareness, change perceptions, take actions, give suggestions, and implement solutions to this implicit bias.

## | Project Objective

We are dedicated to changing people's perceptions of tall young women in particular while also boosting the self-esteem of girls who don't conform to

gendered and height-based expectations.

# Identify the Target Audience

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## | Who Are They?

Whenever we have conversations with our peers, "height" is one of the topics we usually talk about when we have the conversation. Some of them might say "Oh I want to grow as tall as you so nobody will laugh at me", or "It is enough, I don't want to grow taller anymore." Both of them are not confident about their height, because we see so many discriminations in the daily life, your families and friends, or the internet, such as "taller people are more beautiful", or "You're as tall as a tree!" Teenagers don't have much judging ability, they don't know whether they need to care about their heights or not. So usually, they will listen to what others said about them, then depends on those comments to judge their height. Due to those reasons, our target audiences are mainly teenagers, especially females who are struggling with their height, influenced by social bias, or otherwise suffering from or participating in heightist constructs. Height discrimination existed in other life without most people noticing. Some words people used, behaviors they did, may have contained potential injustice and bias to other people. Girls are usually more vulnerable and sensitive than boys. They cared about others, especially when they are teenagers. They are more essays to lose confidence or feel shamed because of outlook.

## | Why Are They?

While social biases are difficult to shape, we believe there is a distinct advantage in beginning with young people still developing their sense of self-worth and values. On top of that, boys' height discrimination is usually more obvious than a girl's height discrimination. The society discriminated boys' height more directly like basketball selection. However, to girls' height discrimination, people are more likely to discriminate against them without realization, through words, comments, and recommendations. Teenagers' girls are more likely to care about other's opinions and they might lose their confidence through judgment. We need to lay the problem out, and build their confidence while young people are malleable and opening.

## | **What is your scope?**

For our online research, we narrowed down our scope to girls aged 12 to 25 who are studying in high school or college in China and were willing to share their own experiences with heightism.

## | **How to reach them?**

Our original planned physical route is through interviews with these girls on the street. However, due to the coronavirus outbreak, we have chosen the internet because of social distances. We posted a questionnaire online to get people' s opinions on height, and we updated our projects like video and comics through Weibo and Bilibili.

# Identify the Key Message

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## | The Key Message

Height determines neither individual abilities or worth.

## | The Tactics Behind

Height is just one part of people's appearance. People tend to evaluate and judge others' abilities through height. Those who don't conform to gendered height standards miss out on opportunities and are frequently the butt of strangers' criticism and jokes. Our goal is to appeal both to reason and to empathy to encourage others to let go of biased notions that the tall are strong and the short weak that fall apart under closer scrutiny. We reject the idea that there is a single way to be in one's body or gender, instead of embracing the reality of individual diversity, talents, and tastes.



# Choose the Platform

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## | The Platform Chosen

The main platform that we've been chosen is through the internet. Since in the 21st century, the internet is what people use the most, so we've decided to make our impact on the internet. The platform we have chosen is Weibo. Due to the coronavirus outbreak, we are unable to go outside and interview people on the street. Consequently, we need a platform that allows us to spread our messages and purposes around all over China since Weibo got the most users in China and people are concerned about these social issues. So we created a Weibo account and put some hand-drawn comics about height and videos that share some of our team member's real experience on the account. Our main purpose is to spread our message in a modern, easy-to-accept way.

## | The Alternative Platforms

Other platforms that we've been considering include Bilibili and Wechat. Bilibili a popular video-streaming platform with a wide reach. One of our group members got a Bilibili account and got some fans on there. The video was more likely to get more attention since people viewed her update. Consequently, she updated a video named "what is that feel like to be a girl with 176cm". Currently, we got more views and comments on Bilibili than Weibo. People on Bilibili commented on their experiences and felt that they felt the same way with what we said in the video. WeChat is another popular platform but would limit our impact to family and friends. However, it is more likely to get authentic feedback from people who know you well.

## | The Criteria to Evaluate

Our group decided to use these three methods to spread the ideas of our group. They are updating the video, posting posters, and drew comics for this topic. For Weibo, we expect to get as much as views and likes as possible. Weibo is exposed to a wide range of audiences compared with other platforms. There are

many accounts that specific focusing on a social issue. We can post our project like video, comics, and posters freely on Weibo and get equal attention.

For Bilibili, one of our group members, Yumeng Liu got an account with several fans. By posting videos through that account, we can get attention from fans and others. Thus, it would boost views. On top of that, comments through video are popular in Bilibili. People can post their comments on top of the video or the bottom. This would create an atmosphere that people were communicating with each other. And you can see different opinions, ideas, and arguments during watching the video. This kind of critical and rigorous atmosphere would lead audiences to think deeper and know more about this topic.

For WeChat, the audiences are people who know you well and willing to chat with us more authentically and kindly. They respond to how they feel about a problem in a more intact manner. Family and friends can help you to propagate our project too.

## | The Rating Sheet

Weibo and Bilibili are our backup platforms. Weibo, however, remains more popular and its information generally more objective. Nevertheless, Weibo is known for attracting critics, trolling, and similar issues. Also from being a new account on Weibo, your information is hard to get people's attention because there are so many users on Weibo. Bilibili shares this weakness but there are more younger users in Bilibili and allows for more interaction with another target demographic. Compares to Weibo, articles, and videos in Bilibili are easier to get people's attention.

# Set the Agenda

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## | Set the Agenda

Date: 1/18

Group member: Catherine Shi

Posted 10-question questionnaire

Date:1/25

Group members: Alice Liu, Franke Zhang, Catherine Shi, & Ranny Zhang

Brainstorming the script for the short film

Date:2/26

Group members: Alice Liu, Frank Zhang

finished and Presented the script

Date:3/17

Group member: Catherine Shi, Frank Zhang, Alice Liu, Ranny Zhang

Started filming the short movie

Date: 3/26

Group members: Catherine Shi & Alice Liu

Published second questionnaire on our team' s Weibo account and WeChat group

Date:4/1

Group member: Frank Zhang, Alice Liu

Finished edited the film and posted on Bilibili and Weibo

Date: 4/6

Group members: Alice Liu, Franke Zhang, Catherine Shi, & Ranny Zhang

Facilitated conversation with respondents about heightism

Date: 4/8

Group members: Alice Liu

Write the script for the narrative video

Date:4/8

Group member: Catherine Shi

Wrote a report on the questionnaire

Date:4/19

Group member: Alice Liu

Edited video and updated on Weibo and Bilibili

Date:4/19

Group member: Catherine Shi

Finished drawing and updated on Weibo

Date:4.22

Group members: Alice Liu & Franke Zhang & Catherine Shi & Ranny Zhang

Started writing report

Date:3/17

Group member: Catherine Shi, Frank Zhang, Alice Liu, Ranny Zhang

Started filming the short movie

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Date:4.22

Group members: Alice Liu & Franke Zhang & Catherine Shi & Ranny Zhang

Started writing report

# Design the Packages

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 [Why is it like to be a 176cm girl](#)

 [comic: GIANT](#)

 [Weibo account](#)

 [\\_poster](#)

 [\\_poster](#)

 [<Giant>](#)

# Create and Track the Impact

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## | The Execution Plan

We did an interview on January 5th, after school's Christmas break, we interviewed more than 20 classmates in our school to let them give out their opinion about the discrimination of height. Later, at the beginning of winter vacation, around January 18th, we posted a questionnaire on our school WeChat group to spread our impact. Many students answered, then we started to write the script of the video on January 25th.

But after the Chinese New Year, around the end of January, the coronavirus starts to spread all over China and we have to stay at home. We held a two-hour meeting once a week to talk about our progress and what changes should we made. We need to change the plan for the original time for the film. During that time, we stayed at home and refined the script for the short movie. The script was finished on February 27th. And the whole team was waiting for the school opening which was supposed to be March 15th. However, the opening of the school delayed to May 1st. Due to the lack of time, we had to cancel our original plan for the short film and change it. However, we had to send out questionnaires on WeChat and Weibo on March 20th again to get more detailed and accurate results. We decided to distribute our workload and divide our team members into some groups to carry out the project parts separately. Beginning from April 8th, Ranny and Catherine are adept at art and they started creating comics and posters. Alice is a vlogger and planned to cast a short video about this topic on her own. Alice and Catherine posted their project on Weibo and Bilibili on April 19th, and Ranny finished and uploaded comics on April 25th.

## | Impact Statistics

We delivered out about 143 questionnaires and collected them up. According to our data, there was about 63% were the males who did the questionnaire and 37% female did the questionnaire.

The first question we raised in the questionnaire is "compare to your peers, are you tall, normal or short?" about 44% of people said their height is just normal,

about 33% of people said their height is higher than others and about 23% of people said their height is lower than peers.

The second question we asked is “Did you receive any judgments from others?” Around 51% of people chose sometimes, 33% of people chose yes and 16% of people chose no.

The third question we tried to collect the height data of the people who answered this questionnaire. We divided this question into two parts, one for males and one for females. In the males’ part, 37.5% of males are about 170cm~175cm tall, 25% of males are about 180~185cm, 25% of males are about 175~180cm, 18.75% of males are about 185~190cm tall, 6.25% of males are about 160~165cm tall and 6.25% of males are above 190cm. In the females’ part, 33.3% of females are about 165~170cm tall, 19% of females are about 155~160cm tall, 19% of females are about 170~175 cm tall, 15% of females are about 160~165cm tall, and 15% of females are above 175cm.

The fourth question we asked was “If there are people who judge your right, what is your reaction?” 79% of people said they don’t really care about it, 12% of people will be sad or depressed and 9% of people will be furious about it.

The fifth question we asked was “What is your reaction when you see a peer who is very tall” 51% of people will just say nothing, 30% of people might feel surprised and 19% of people will say:” You should go play basketball” . Another question on this part is “What is your reaction when you see a peer who is very short” 81% of people will just say nothing, the other 19% of people will say: “You should receive some treatments to grow taller.”

The last question we asked is “If you’ re the captain of the basketball team and there is a short guy who wants to join your club, what will you do?” 93% of people will let him join the club to see his skill, 5% of people will directly say: “No because you’ re too short” , and the other 2% of people will still reject him but in a gentle way.

For the video that we posted on Weibo and Bilibili , we got 4500 views for the video, 28 bullet screen, 105 comments, 151 likes, 18 collects, 81 coins, 16 transmits.

For the poster that we posted on Weibo, we got 175 views, 10 likes, and one comment.

## | **Collect Feedback**

We posted the video on to Bilibili and received a lot of comments. The most popular one was “nobody can limit that women had to be short and slender.” This powerful comment is similar to our main idea that height can’t speak for me. We did a successful job in conveying our idea.



On top of the comments that we received said they felt the exact the same way. For example, "I am a 176cm girl..... this video is extremely authentic!!!! exactly the same!!!!" . Some boys claimed that they agreed with the video too. "As a boy with 189cm height, I ' m almost weeping." From that, we reached out more than our main target audience—tall girl, but also the boys who are experiencing bias. Some people also told their friends' stories under Weibo, "one of my best friends, who is a boy with 170cm, was told that 'you are too short' frequently when it comes to looking for a mate. He was joked by people. I hope that he won' t saw this comment otherwise he would blame on me."

Surprisingly, this video led to a discussion in the comments. "Think, isn' t it embarrassing to have a girlfriend that is much taller than you?" People thought differently that "there will be somebody loved them. Love can' t be limit by height. Height discrimination occurred because these people cannot accept them."

# Review and Reflections

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## | Overall Self Check

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## | What Are Successful

We think the part that we have done great and successfully are the parts of interviewing and our efforts to spread out our video and our ideas. We didn't stop creating impact through this coronavirus break. In the beginning, we planned a lot in our short movie about height discrimination. The script was meticulous and thoughtful. However, due to the outbreak, we used our backup plan, or plan B in this situation, which is designing comics and posters, also spread videos on the internet. The video, comic, and posters lead to great influence and get much feedback. The Internet is a strong and influential tool to create impact. It was hard to communicate through the internet with team members since you need to schedule a meeting to fit everyone's busy life. However, we tried our best to set up a zoom meeting. Overall, no matter what we been through, we meet our objective.

## | What to Improve

I think what to improve is our way of spreading through in the first place when this project just started. What we did is just like forcing the people around us to participate. Also, another point that we really need to improve is the meeting process at the start of the project. We spent too much time on discussing and defining our topic and the topic targeted group

Also, another thing we can improve is during the interview, we didn't use the correct way of asking people for participating. Imagine if you are walking on a street, and somebody just suddenly comes out to you and asks you some questions and does not explain why are they asking, you are more likely to go away and keep alert with these guys. Thus, next time when we have the chance to interview, we should explain our purpose then let the person answer, or maybe we can give them

some example answers, that way they won't feel puzzled and talk nothing, then find an excuse to leave.

## | Summarize Learnings

After several months of working, our team worked very hard and received a lot of valuable experience and knowledge during this competition process.

First, we studied and learned how to create an impact, how to spread our ideas out. It doesn't as easy as we thought. In the very first place, we thought it would be easy to let people around us know and let them spread it out for us, but it actually turns out that the reality isn't like this easy. Some people reject and refuse to answer, or refuse to pay attention to us, or they just simply don't want to talk about this topic. However, we didn't give up throughout all these difficulties, there are still people who want to talk about this topic, so we set up a Weibo account, also spreading our message through WeChat, and upload videos to bilibili at the same time. To let people know that we are doing this topic, we are trying to get attention from them. After alternating all these platforms, we learned a lot about how to create an impact on social media.

Secondly, we realized how many people have the same feeling or a painful past about this height discrimination, because due to the issue of China's history event, some of the elder people usually have an inflexible image about men and women's height. While we are doing research about this topic, there's a lot of people and posts about this height discrimination from elder people. The post about this on Zhihu and some of them even have several thousand views and agree. Thus, we noticed that this isn't a small thing, this topic is happening all around China, maybe what we are doing right now cannot change too much about the current situation, but during the process of working on this topic, we learned and realized this thing, so we can not let our next generation to suffer from height discrimination.

Last but not least, we discovered some high-efficiency method of working. The most efficient of all time is the deadline. The deadline is the only one that can push a person to the highest efficiency of working. Thus, while we are creating our first draft, we set up an agenda for the first two months and with a clear deadline on it, so it can make us together faster and make sure the quality at the same time. We learned that sometimes, you really need to push you to your limit. Otherwise, you won't know what effort you can really make

# Team Credits

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## Frank Zhang

Yixin Zhang is the supporter and helper in the height-discrimination project. During the discussion of the topic, he gave out some opinions about the topic's choice and provide some of the plans that the team might choose. He also helped Yumeng Liu on the script of the video, discussing how the video is going to be and gave out some opinions with the team. Then his job is to fill out the "The Platform Chosen", "The Alternative Platforms" and "The Criteria to Evaluate" in the part of "Choose the platform" and participated in the writing of "Review and Reflections" section. This is not easy work, although the team has already provided the material to use, the work of concordance the materials altogether and write about it is still challenging. However, he overcomes most of it and acted as a supporter of the whole team

## Alice Liu

During the hight-discrimination project, Yumeng Liu was the person in charge of the whole project. In the team, she assigned work to people and tried to keep them on track by scheduling meetings and setting up deadlines. This job was really annoying because being the boss always made your friends feeling uncomfortable. It was hard to find a balance. However, she had relieved this pressure and tension by helping others with their tasks. Mainly, Yumeng Liu was responsible for the video that we sent out on Bilibili and Weibo. Primarily, before the outbreak of coronavirus, she wrote a bunch of script and drew storyboard for our original planning short movie. However, the coronavirus outbreak took longer than we thought. Consequently, she was forced to give up her original script which she spent a week on. Instead of refining and planning on the short movie, she decided to film a video by herself, because she got a Bilibili Vlogger account as a habit. She planned, prepared, filmed, and edited the video within ten days and then updated on Bilibili. The video was quite successful. We received a lot of comments and likes from strangers. They commented that they felt the same way because they were experiencing discrimination too. Yumeng Liu was responsible for replying to these comments to make other girls and boys who are experiencing discrimination that they weren't alone. Moreover, she managed our Weibo account. On top of that, since she got the main idea for the film, she was responsible for identifying the key message parts.

## Ranny Zhang

Ran Zhang is responsible for the comic and the part of the set package of the report. Ranny brought the idea of height discrimination out because she was

experiencing it. On top of that, She had put a lot of effort into the thoughtful designing of the story and elaborate drawing of the comic. The story is about a group of fairies realized that the giant girl they discovered is composed by others' harsh opinions and judgments. These fairies wear glasses which was literally means the colored glasses. They were scared of the giant, thought that the giant would destroy the world. However, when one of the fairies took the glasses off, the giant was just a girl with higher height and was bundled by tags of other people. Ranny was a very creative and meticulous person.

Catherine Shi

Mengling Shi is in charge of making the questionnaire and drawing the poster of the Weibo. When she is making the questionnaire, she considered a lot of situations such as "If the takers of the questionnaire see this question, will they be mad?" or 'Is this question violated to the takers?"Because we need to get the perspectives from people that have different heights, so we made some questions like "What is your height?" and "Is your height higher than your peers, lower than your peers, or just at a normal level?. Due to her ability to art, she drew a poster that we also used as our profile photo of Weibo.

# Judge Comments

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" One thing that really stuck out about this project is how well you continued to narrow your focus throughout the piece. You started with stereotyping, then narrowed it down to heightism, then narrowed it down to how it affects women. That really helps you more accurately develop research methods and tailor your message. This level of thoughtfulness is repeated with your action plan, which details a very clear and methodical approach to completing your project. Your video is well shot and definitely appeals to your target audience, with very high production value. The humor and lightheartedness is disarming, even if the message is still pretty serious. Your comics and posters also are incredibly professional and well-designed, clearly aimed to encourage sharing on social media to maximize impact. While it's great that you kept such a tight focus and narrow execution, do give some thought in your reflection not only to how you would do this project differently, but how you would scale this project to a larger audience. How can you share research findings, or more importantly, solutions to an audience in a way that will effect societal change? "