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Representation of Mental Health Issues in the Movie Not Okay

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Abstract: In this study, researchers will discuss the issue of scenes that represent how mental health issues are presented in the film Not Okay. The method in this research is a descriptive study using a qualitative approach. The population of this research is all the characters from the film Not Okay. Danni Sanders, the main character in the film Not Okay, is the subject or sample of the research. Data is collected through cutscene analysis which represents mental health issues through conversations and scenes which will be divided into several categories. Apart from verbal communication, researchers will also analyze non-verbal cues such as facial expressions because they can also be used to convey implied messages. The result of this research is the film "Not Okay" (2022), which succeeded in providing an in-depth and realistic depiction of the complexity of mental health issues. The main characters can encourage viewers to consider the need to recognize and understand mental health issues, as well as how external circumstances and support networks play an important role in the recovery process. As a result, the film is not only entertaining but also makes a significant contribution to increasing awareness and understanding of people facing mental health problems.

Keywords: Mental Health Issues, Non-Verbal Communication, Representation, Verbal Communication

Introduction

Movies are a new medium used not only to display existing entertainment, but also to present storylines, events, music, comedy, and other offerings to people (Riwu & Pujiati, 2018). A movie evolves as more people make movies, especially from the younger generation. This is a sign that hope is emerging among the younger generation in their work (Nasirin & Pithaloka, 2022). The messages conveyed by a movie always impact and change society, not the other way around. The argument that a movie is a representation of culture is used to challenge this perspective. Reality is constantly captured in movies, as well as how society changes and progresses and is shown on screen (Sobur, 2004).

Seeing the many mental health problems that exist in society, several movies such as *I Thought You Were Home*, *Joker*, *All The Bright Places*, *Black Swan* and many others have tried to raise the issue of mental health problems (Ardhini, 2022). This themed movie aims to engage the audience in the community and provide illustrations and lessons about mental health issues that are important to monitor and protect and should not be considered taboo.

Mental health issues are a growing concern in many communities. In Indonesia, as many as one in three adolescents aged 10 to 17 years experienced mental health issues in the past 12 months. This translates to 15.5 million adolescents in the country (Rizaty, 2022). Most of the mental health issues of adolescents or 3.7% are anxiety disorders. This mental health combines social anxiety disorder with generalized anxiety disorder. Major depressive disorder follows it in the rankings with a proportion of 1%. Behavioral disorders mental health issues ranked second with a prevalence of 0.9%. In addition, 0.5% of adolescents suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Rizaty, 2022).

The film to be studied is the film "Not Okay" by Quinn Shepard, this film has the genre of American comedy drama in 2022 with a duration of 108 minutes. The film was released on July 29, 2022 through several digital streaming platforms such as Hulu in the United States, then aired in Indonesia on August 12, 2022. This movie has been rated by 15,371 users on the IMDb page has given an average vote of 6.0/10.

Researchers are interested in taking research on the film *Not Okay* because this film illustrates the mental health issues contained in the film. Mental health is harmony in life that arises from the functioning of the soul, the ability to face challenges or problems, and the ability to experience happiness and positive self-efficacy (Daradjat, 1988). The mental health of each individual will vary and experience dynamics in its development. Basically, humans are faced with situations that must be resolved with various alternative solutions.

In the literature review entitled "Content Analysis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in the Film *27 Steps of May*" conducted by Andrianto & Alif Fianto, which has the results of researchers to the conclusion that by using Coping Stress techniques, the film illustrates the problem of post-traumatic stress. The representation of stressful conditions in this film is described by the main character faced by May, this can be seen through the description of Coping Stress. The representation in this case is also supported by the reality of the code from several scenes supported by the depiction of attitudes, makeup, moods, expressions, and gestures all reveal the truth of the code that appears in a number of scenarios (Andrianto & Alif Fianto, 2021).

In this study, researchers set the boundaries of the problem to be studied by providing a limitation, namely scenes that represent how mental health issues are displayed in the film Not Okay. According to the depiction in the film shown, there are scenes of the struggle of a person who experiences *tantangani* which is then conveyed by the filmmaker by representing real events that are widely experienced in the environment in which we live today. Then the researcher tries to describe how the representation of mental health issues in the film Not Okay by Quinn Shepard.

In this context, the researcher formulated the problem of how is the Representation of Mental Health Issues in the Not Okay Movie?

Methodology

Descriptive study using a qualitative approach is the research methodology used in this research. Qualitative research is interpretive research (using interpretation) that looks into the research problem using various methods. The constructivist paradigm is applied in this research. This constructivist method is based on the fundamental assumption that reality cannot be created either by supernatural or scientific means.

The population of this study is all characters from the movie Not Okay. Danni Sanders, the main character in the movie Not Okay, became the subject or sample of the study. Primary and secondary data were used in the data collection technique method of this research. Primary data used in this research was collected through observation and documentation by examining the cut scenes related to everything that can be seen on camera, including character appearance, narration, sound, location, and camera angle, as well as dialog spoken by the character.

Researchers conducted research using the significance of signs of mental health issues represented in the film Not Okay by using the semiotic analysis theory technique according to Roland Barthes. In this study researchers used data validity triangulation of data sources, carried out using a method of comparing or double-checking the level of validity of data to be collected from several different sources.

Result and Discussion

1. Representation of Mental Health Issues

The denotation in the scene at 11:26, where Danni looks remorseful for her actions on social media, and she says "Why Danni, why?" reflects the internal conflict and feelings of regret that individuals may feel when caught up in the pressure to maintain a perfect image on social media.

Connotatively, in the scene above the phrase depicts the questions that often arise in the minds of individuals when contemplating their actions that may not be in line with their personal values or integrity. Through the character of Danni, the movie highlights the importance of having solid self-esteem, realistic self-perception, and the ability to cope with social pressure in maintaining mental health. The character of Danni depicts people who struggle to deal with situations because they do not have a strong and healthy ego to rely on. In addition, people who struggle with their own egos have

difficulty making decisions because they are not sure what to do, what they want and who they are (Sarni et al., 2021).

The myth of this scene and its relation to mental health is that it presents the negative impact that pressure to maintain a perfect image on social media can have, including feelings of regret, self-questioning, and feelings of dissatisfaction with oneself that can affect one's overall mental well-being.

Then the scene that represents the next mental health issue is in the scene at minute 13:11 Danni is silent in her house while looking for ideas on how to make herself look like she is really in Paris. the scene shows Danni eating while talking to her mother on a phone call. And Danni's facial expression shows enthusiasm when talking to her mother and stating that she was invited by a writer's workshop in Paris.

The connotation of the scene above illustrates that in mental health issues, eating is often someone's outlet when someone is experiencing stress. This is also called a coping mechanism. Coping mechanism is a behavioral and mental reaction to stress that is influenced by the resources available to the individual or the surrounding environment. The goal is to reduce and handle the growing conflict, which can cause misery and interfere with daily life (Pertiwi & Ulandari, 2023). One of the coping mechanisms is by eating. So that when this method is often done, a new mental health problem arises, namely emotional eating, which is a condition where a person eats in large and uncontrolled quantities for general stress management, which refers to eating behavior that is motivated by emotions, not actual hunger (Pertiwi & Ulandari, 2023).

This scene reinforces the myth that social media is a place where only the best and most attractive version of one's life is displayed. Danni tries to fulfill this expectation by creating illusions that make her life seem more attractive than it actually is.

2. Character Mental Health Condition

At 1:17:15 in the scene, it shows a mental health condition, one of which is depression. Denotationally, Danni is seen lying on the sofa, staring at the ceiling with a blank expression. The room looks disheveled and the light is dim, making the room look dark and adding to the impression of a gloomy atmosphere.

Connotatively, the scene shows thoughts of loneliness and despair. Danni's blank stare represents the emotional and mental emptiness she is experiencing. The cluttered room and dim lighting symbolize inner turmoil and lack of hope or ambition. Empty and hollow feelings are often associated with a lack of emotional connection and uncertainty about one's identity. People who experience this often believe that they have no real existence or are incapable of experiencing normal emotions (Miller et al., 2021).

This scene seen as a myth about the sadness and helplessness of Danni's condition reflects an example often associated with today's youth, who feel lonely and lost in life despite today's technological advances. This myth emphasizes the psychological problems that many people face in modern society, which are often disguised behind a seemingly perfect existence.

The next scene that belongs to the mental health issue of depression is in the scene at minute 1:23:40, in the scene denotation shows Danni is shown sitting on the floor of a

messy bathroom while holding a laptop on her lap. With a blank look from her facial expression reflecting deep sadness.

Connotatively, the scene shows Danni's solitude and emotional emptiness in the messy bathroom. Although the bathroom is often seen as a place of privacy, in this situation, the visible clutter reflects the internal chaos and feelings of confusion she is experiencing and suggests a feeling of helplessness and loss of interest in activities she would normally enjoy. This reflects the feeling of being trapped or hopeless that she may face in the face of the challenges or problems she is facing. The feeling of emptiness can be summarized as a sensation of lack of direction or significance in life, as well as a feeling of isolation from individual identity and social relationships (Miller et al., 2020).

This scene reinforces the myth that silence is often considered private and invisible to the public. By sitting in the bathroom, Danni appears to be seeking a safe place to reflect and process her own thoughts. In addition, this scene also reflects that individuals who experience difficulties tend to feel isolated and lonely.

3. External Influences on Mental Health

The main character in the movie faces various social pressures, which directly impact her mental health. Her desire to be accepted and recognized online drives her to commit unethical and harmful acts. In addition, the expectations and judgments of those around her further exacerbate her feelings of anxiety and worthlessness.

In the scene at 53:34, Danni attends a social party that is crowded with influencers. Danni tries to smile and talk to the people around her, she is also seen trying to engage in conversation with signs of discomfort and her facial expressions look forced and stiff, with her smile not entirely genuine.

The connotation of the scene shows that in a stressful social situation, Danni feels deep discomfort. Despite trying to present a cheerful image, her expression and demeanor hinted that she was actually feeling depressed and uncomfortable. Danni's efforts to constantly show happiness and engagement reflect the intense pressure to meet social standards that demand one to always look positive and confident in social situations. This reflects complex and profound emotional and mental states, and can depict traumatic situations, and can trigger anxiety (Joelnetan et al., 2022).

The myth in this scene reinforces the perception that happiness in social life is often measured by one's ability to interact and appear cheerful in social life. This understanding ignores the fact that many people feel uncomfortable in such situations. It can also create an assumption that pain or discomfort should be hidden in public, which can increase isolation for individuals experiencing mental health issues.

At 1:28:36, Danni is crying because she reads negative comments about herself on social media through her laptop. Danni sits on a chair in her room which looks messy with items scattered on the floor with dim room lighting.

Connotatively, this scene not only describes what Danni does when reading negative comments about herself but also describes Danni's emotional reaction. The negative comments she received could be an indication of cyberbullying and its impact on mental health. Cyberbullying is another term for bullying that occurs online and is done with the aim of making fun of, insulting, scolding, or even threatening the victim

or other social media users. The victim experiences terror as a result of the cyberbullying act committed by the perpetrator against him/her. As a result, this has a negative impact on the victim's psychological condition and can increase the risk of suicide by causing feelings of fear, anxiety, and mental distress (Dwipayana et al., 2020).

The myth in the scene states that social validation through social media is beneficial to one's self-esteem. When Danni receives negative comments, it highlights the myth that society judges people based on their online appearance, as well as the harmful impact cyberbullying can have on mental health.

At 1:29:04 denotationally, Danni is seen in the aisle of a shop carrying some goods and then getting physically assaulted and threatened by an aggressive man. Danni's expression shows a face of fear and discomfort that causes anxiety, then Danni leaves with heavy breathing after getting harsh words from the man.

Connotatively, the man's posture when approaching Danni in an aggressive or dominating manner indicates an act of assault or threat. Danni's body position leaning towards the shelf, accompanied by emotions and body language that show discomfort, reinforces the notion that she feels afraid, depressed and anxious. Acts of violence can cause physical and psychological disturbances that can have an impact on a person's mental health. Uncontrolled emotional and mental growth can change a person's behavior (Malfasari et al., 2023).

The presence of violence in public places such as shops demonstrates the mythical concept that violence can occur in unexpected places and in ordinary situations. It conveys the message that instability and the threat of violence are part of many people's lives. This can have a negative impact on a person's mental and emotional well-being (Malfasari et al., 2023).

4. Support and Recovery System

The scene at 20:45 shows Danni sitting in the middle of the sofa with a blanket covering her body showing a flat and sad facial expression. With her parents sitting next to her with a posture that shows emotional involvement and attention and her parents asking about Danni's physical and mental condition.

The connotation of the scene is depicted through the important role of the family, which has an important position in facilitating recovery through the process of help or assistance. In addition, families can do the following things to reduce risk and strengthen family resilience. These include identifying what family members need, listening to their concerns, providing comfort, protecting them from the worst possibilities, and managing expectations and hopes (Ulfah, 2021).

Then the myth in the scene reflects on the importance of family support in overcoming mental health problems. This underscores the concept that family is a safe haven and a valuable source of emotional support during difficult times and has an important role in shaping the mental health of each member (Ulfah, 2021).

Denotationally, the scene at 30:17 depicts Danni attending a social support group that forms a circle in a communal space to talk about her trauma. The group members are diverse, representing various backgrounds, age differences and having similar

circumstances. They sit on chairs placed in a circle in the middle of a basketball court at a community center.

The connotations of the scene show Danni's presence at the social support group as a signal that she is seeking acceptance and help from a community of people in similar circumstances. It also shows Danni's attempt to not feel alone in her struggle with mental health difficulties. Individuals who receive emotional support from others around them to express and discuss their feelings and traumatic experiences can heal faster than those who do not (Rahmanishati & Dewi, 2021).

The myth portrayed is that community can be a valuable source of help for those facing mental health. This highlights the value of solidarity and describes group therapy in community centers. A person feels more cared for because they can get advice for themselves from people who attend the support group (Rahmanishati & Dewi, 2021).

The denotation of the scene at 1:30:16 depicts Danni seen in the kitchen of her house, warmly embraced by her father. Danni's emotional expression shows sadness, fear and despair. Danni cries and is hugged by her father who radiates love and support.

Connotatively, Danni's sad facial expression and weak posture show vulnerability and emotional openness. This underscores the need to have a support system that can provide a sense of security and comfort when in a vulnerable situation. In providing support, parents need to respond to their children by building relationships, improving communication, listening, and paying attention to communication and some strategies to avoid children becoming lonely and not leaving them alone until the right time (Adisa et al., 2024).

The myth in this scene reinforces that family is the safest place to seek emotional support and security. This myth highlights the importance of family relationships in providing invaluable assistance to individuals struggling with mental health issues. And parents can be the best support system for their children.

In the scene at 1:30:56, Danni is seen attending a support group meeting room called "Online Shaming Support Group" after she was mistreated and shamed online because her lies were exposed. In the warmly lit room, many people are seated in a circle, including Danni who is wearing long pants and a green sweater. A support group was in progress, and everyone was sitting and listening. Danni's facial expressions and body language are uncomfortable and disjointed, and her face shows discomfort.

Connotatively, the scene represents the room with soft lighting and basic decorations providing a sense of warmth, comfort, and security, which is important for the atmosphere of the support group. The simply dressed Danni represents the sentiment of solitude and vulnerability. The circle of support symbolizes equality, mutual support, and the ability to speak and be heard, which contrasts with the emotions Danni is feeling. Danni's facial expressions and posture show regret, embarrassment, and awkwardness, indicating the emotional distress she experienced in the situation. Social support is defined as the receipt of tangible benefits from others in the form of assistance or support that can be used according to individual needs (Puspita & Kustanti, 2019).

The scene's myth of social support depicts support groups as places where people experiencing emotional or social difficulties can seek help and healing. This expresses the view that society has a support network capable of assisting individuals in recovering

from mistakes. Social support can also be obtained from family, friends and the surrounding environment (Puspita & Kustanti, 2019) Danni who chose a support group from the forum apart from her family support to try to recover.

Discussion

The movie "Not Okay" (2022) explores various mental health issues through the emotional expressions of the main characters and the narrative. Depression, anxiety, and trauma are the topics of mental health issues raised in this movie, and all of them are depicted realistically and deeply. This representation is very important in an effort to raise public awareness about mental health issues and create a space for discussion about issues that are sometimes considered taboo.

This is reflected in the concept of mental health which includes a person's psychological state, both healthy and unhealthy. A person's psychological balance is strongly influenced by the influence of internal and external circumstances (Maulana & Yulianti, 2023). The main character in the movie "Not Okay", Danni Sanders, is represented as a figure who has mental health problems such as depression and anxiety disorders. Mental health issues are displayed quite realistically, including emotional expressions, behavior, and character speech. Danni's depression is manifested by social isolation, loss of interest in daily activities, and expressions of poor self-esteem and pessimism. Meanwhile, her anxiety is portrayed as an overreaction to stressful situations, panic, and fear of constant threats.

The film also emphasizes the impact of the outside world on the main character's mental health. Danni's mental health deteriorates due to factors such as social media pressure, society's excessive expectations, and lack of support from her friends. Through these depictions, the film emphasizes the importance of understanding how the environment affects one's mental health and encourages a supportive atmosphere. Although the main character faces great obstacles during her recovery, "Not Okay" emphasizes the value of support systems and recovery efforts. Danni eventually gets support from friends and family, and she seeks help from mental health specialists. Throughout this process, the movie conveys messages about the value of self-awareness, social support, and self-recovery in regaining mental health. Mental health service providers use empathy to promote human growth by reinterpreting traumatic experiences (Nelma, 2022).

Conclusion

The film also emphasizes the impact of the outside world on the main character's mental health. Danni's mental health deteriorates due to factors such as social media pressure, society's excessive expectations, and lack of support from her friends. Through these depictions, the film emphasizes the importance of understanding how the environment affects one's mental health and encourages a supportive atmosphere. Although the main character faces great obstacles during her recovery, "Not Okay" emphasizes the value of support systems and recovery efforts. Danni eventually gets

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