



**THE INFLUENCE OF BULLYING TO SOCIAL IDENTITY OF MAIN
CHARACTER IN THE MOVIE *THE DUFF* (2015)**

A THESIS JOURNAL

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**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
DIPONEGORO UNIVERSITY
SEMARANG
2016**

THE INFLUENCE OF BULLYING TO SOCIAL IDENTITY OF MAIN CHARACTER IN THE MOVIE *THE DUFF* (2015)

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Setiap orang memiliki identitas yang berbeda dilihat dari perannya masing-masing dalam hubungan sosial. Konsep diri dari seseorang, meliputi identitas individu dan identitas sosial, dapat ditetapkan dari berbagai faktor. Film *The DUFF* menunjukkan pengaruh dari *bullying* (penindasan) terhadap identitas sosial karakter utama dalam film, seorang siswi sekolah menengah atas bernama Bianca Piper. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mendeskripsikan identitas sosial, untuk menunjukkan pengaruh dari *bullying* terhadap identitas sosial, dan untuk menganalisis perubahan perilaku dari karakter utama dalam film. Penulis menggunakan pendekatan psikologi sosial termasuk teori identitas sosial. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah bahwa terjadi perubahan perilaku dari karakter utama setelah ditindas oleh siswa-siswa lain di sekolahnya. *Bullying* mempengaruhi identitas sosial Bianca sehingga dia kehilangan kepercayaan dirinya dan mengasingkan diri dari berbagai kegiatan sosial. Bianca telah melewati tahap-tahap mendapatkan identitas sosial namun perilakunya tidak berubah secara ekstrem. Dia berada dalam situasi sulit tetapi akhirnya dia dapat membela dirinya sendiri dari penindasan yang berbahaya oleh orang lain. Film *The DUFF* menggambarkan bahwa *bullying* masih ada bahkan sampai sekarang. *Bullying* dapat membuat perilaku seseorang berubah dan dapat mempengaruhi identitas sosial dari orang yang ditindas. Cerita dalam film mungkin tidak menggambarkan kehidupan setiap remaja dan siswa di Amerika, akan tetapi ini menunjukkan kepada kita bahwa orang-orang yang sadar akan penindasan seharusnya membantu menghentikannya untuk mencegah terjadinya sesuatu yang lebih buruk. Selanjutnya, orang yang ditindas juga harus mengumpulkan keberanian untuk membela dirinya dari perbuatan yang tidak adil oleh orang lain.

Kata kunci: identitas sosial, *bullying*, perubahan perilaku, remaja

1. Introduction

People nowadays have many concerns since everything can appeal into public. Furthermore, a person will likely befriend with people who have common similarity with him or her. "Different social contexts may trigger an individual to think, feel, and act on basis of his personal, family or national "level of self". ... (Turner et al, quoted by University of Twente)." The different "level of self" can lead someone to think

which group he or she should join. A person's social identity is different as they belong to different group. People who think that they have "better" level of social identity may also bully other individual or group. Bullying is everywhere in this era. According to Dan Olweus, "a person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself (1993)." Bullying can happen in school or among peer groups. Nowadays a bullied person cannot escape from bullying even if they are at home. Social media play great role as a media of bullying. This situation is called as cyber bullying. Hinduja and Patchin (2014) define cyber bullying as aggressive and frequent attack by using electronic devices in example computers, cell phones, and etc. Cyber bullying also happen in circumstances of American teenagers.

The writer chooses to analyze movie *The DUFF* (2015) because its story suits for this research. The development of technology and the use of internet nowadays made everyone susceptible of cyber bullying. It also affects the life of American teenagers. The influence of bullying to American teenagers is reflected by the main character in the movie. The behavior of the main character named Bianca changes during the movie because of internal and external factors. Thus the writer decides to describe movie *The DUFF* (2015) to represent the influence of bullying to social identity of the main character in the movie.

2. Social Identity Theory

The writer uses Social Identity Theory from Henri Tajfel and John Turner (1979). This theory is related with the existence of a person in-group or out-group in society. "Social identity is that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from

his membership of a social group (or groups), together with the value and emotional significance attached to this (Tajfel, 1978).” There are three steps of finding a person’s social identity; they are social categorization, social identification, and social comparison. Social categorization is the first step when a person is defined where groups he or she could possibly belongs to. Myers (2013) argues that in this step, we categorize people, and also ourselves into some groups. Every group will do internalization for the new members of the group. The next step is social identification. “We can conceptualize a group, in this sense, as a collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves, (Tajfel & Turner, 1979)” The third step is called social comparison. In this step, how a person think about another person is influenced by the perception of their in-group. Myers states that in-group and out-group will look contrast to each other. However people usually show their favoritism to their own group. Since people have pride within their in-group, they want to look better than other groups. Myers (2013:328) states that in-group bias indicates a positive self-concept.

3. Bullying

Kowalski et.al state that bullying is a situation when a person uses their power to show off the gap of social power or status to other. Nowadays people do not only use physical strength to bully others, but also use the power of internet and social media. Bullying others using internet and electronic devices is called as cyber bullying. Furthermore in this thesis, the types that are discussed related to the movie are denigration and harassment. Kowalski et.al state that denigration is spreading

derogatory and false information online. The bully spread the information by posting it on web page or sending it as message to others. It can be digitally edited photos or a song which made to mock someone. The bully fakes the information of someone and it causes harm for the bullied person (2008:48). The next one is harassment. Harassment is repeatedly sending cruel, vicious, and/or threatening messages (Feinberg & Robey, 2010). The bullies find it easier to attack someone online because they do not have to mock them face to face. It can be done whether the bullies are far or close with the bullied person in physically distance. Furthermore the bullies do not know how much they hurt the bullied person because they cannot see his or her response at a glance (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014:2-3).

4. Intrinsic Aspects

GIRL: (*prologue*) I thought we were living in a brave new world, a place without labels. But every so often, there's that one moment in high school that changes your perspective of everything.
(The DUFF, 00:00:52 – 00:00:58)

The theme of this movie is about school life. The beginning of the movie shows the first day of senior year of Malloy High School student. The prologue is stated by the girl named Bianca. The prologue implies that she hopes that her senior year will be a good year. However it is different because it is a turning point when she changes her perspectives about everything. Friendship and love in high school are also included in the story.

In the movie, Bianca experiences both of internal conflict and external conflict. The internal conflict is when she fights against herself. Besides internal conflict, Bianca also experiences external conflicts. She struggles against another person and society. Even before the bullying video is spread on internet, Bianca already has problem with

Jess and Casey. She cannot believe the sincerity of Jess and Casey because of their appearance. Moreover, Wesley says that some people are friends with the DUFF to look better. In 00:22:16, the scene shows that the conflict rises when Bianca quarrels with her best friends. After the “DUFF Love” video is spread, she suffers from all the consequences since she is the person recorded in the video. This shows Bianca has problem with society, which is not other than her school friends.

5. Extrinsic aspects

5.1. Social Identity of Main Character “Bianca”

At first Bianca has personal identity as herself, Bianca Piper. Her social identity is a part of gang with Jess Harris and Casey Cordero. She refers her gang as her in-group and she likes it. However Bianca changes her thought later. Since Jess and Casey are popular in school, people only acknowledge their gang members as Jess and Casey. After the incident when Wesley tells Bianca that she is the DUFF in her group, she starts to doubt about her role in her group. She finds out that she feels dissatisfied with her in-group. Losing her social identity, Bianca thinks that she is a school DUFF.

In Social Identity Theory, most people show favoritism toward their in-group. The study done by Tajfel and Turner in 1986 shows that when people are put together in a group, they will tend to favor their in-group rather than other groups. At first she is just angry when she was told that she is the DUFF. Then she believes it later, gets angry at her best friends and excludes herself from social activities. Her insecurities make her feels angry and sad. After that she tries to be confident again by herself. Similar like the theory, Bianca tries to get individual achievement. Bianca’s behavior changes are average because she becomes different from her true self. However it is not a major

behavior changes because she is not doing something extreme or dangerous to herself or other people involved in her problems.

Finally she gets back her social identity. As an individual she is known as a DUFF but she embraces it as a part of herself. In social categorization, she finds that she is comfortable to be friend with Jess and Casey. Then Bianca also has through social identification. The three of them can adjust to each others' personality. They realize that nobody is perfect so insecurity does not matter to define them. The final step is social comparison. Bianca likes her in-group and she does not compare herself to others. She knows that the most important thing to define her identity is self-respect and self-love.

5.2. Bullying in Malloy High School

Besides her insecurities, Bianca is also oppressed by bullying. In the beginning, the bully is Madison with the help of Caitlyn. However after the "DUFF Love" video is spread, everyone in school also mocks her. Their action can be categorized as denigration. The bully intentionally uploads an inappropriate video to harass other person. When the bully uploads the video, it rapidly goes viral. Even though other students do not personally upload the video, they still can be categorized as bully. The type of bullying they have done is harassment. They share the video and send comment to the site. They also send harassing comments in students chat group.

Bullying is external cause of Bianca's behavior changes. She is a carefree and easygoing person. This incident makes her worry about herself. She excludes herself from social activities in school because people treat her badly. It is easy for Madison to destroy Bianca only by uploading the video online. She does not think that it is really bad because she does not see immediate response of the bullied person. Madison even

threatens Bianca that she will upload another video which can destroy Bianca. It shows that Madison not only does cyber bullying, but she also attacks Bianca in real life. In this movie, Jess and Casey can only help Bianca indirectly by shutting down the website. The role of school is important when bullying happen at school. The teachers have authority to handle the problems. When Bianca realizes that nobody has power to label her, it is the time that Bianca cannot be bullied anymore. Finally Bianca realizes that the way she accepts herself can defend her from bullying. In the end she becomes an easygoing person like usual and becomes braver and wiser than before.

6. Conclusion

Every person has personal identity and social identity. People get social identity from their relationship in social circumstances. However external incidents can affect a person's social identity. Her behavior constantly changes as she becomes distant from her in-group. Bianca's behavior changes can be categorized as average changes. She thinks and acts not like herself, but fortunately she does not do extreme or dangerous things as she is depressed because of the bullying. After resolving her problems, Bianca gets back to her in-group with Jess and Casey. This event is compatible with Social Identity Theory which states that a person gain self-esteem from individual and group achievement. This movie shows that bullying still exists in this era. Bianca's story may not represent the life of American high school students, but it shows us that bullying in school is not impossible to happen even if in a top school in America. Whenever bullying happens, people around who are aware that it is bullying should help the bullied person to prevent something worse happen. Moreover, the bullied person should believe and defend themselves from any injustice.

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