



Analysis Of Mental Health Communication Messages In The Film “Kukira Kau Rumah”

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Abstract

Background. Film as a mass communication medium plays a strategic role in conveying mental health messages to the public. One Indonesian film that raises this issue is *Kukira Kau Rumah* by Umay Shahab, which represents the experiences of individuals with bipolar disorder and depression through narrative, dialogue, and visual symbols.

Aims. This study aims to analyze how mental health communication messages are constructed and conveyed in the film *Kukira Kau Rumah*, and how these messages are interpreted by the audience.

Methods. This study uses a qualitative approach with content analysis, reinforced by audience reception analysis using Stuart Hall's encoding–decoding theory, Entman's framing theory, and Smith's communication stigma theory as supporting theories. Data were obtained through in-depth observation of the film and semi-structured interviews with three informants aged 20 to 23 who had watched the film.

Result. The results show that the film *Kukira Kau Rumah* effectively conveys mental health communication messages through its depiction of emotional instability, bipolar depression, medical diagnosis, family pressure, and the importance of social support.

Conclusion. The messages conveyed by the film are largely accepted by the audience, thereby building empathy, increasing understanding, and reducing stigma towards people with mental disorders.

Implementation. This film can be viewed as an educational, humanistic, and relevant medium of health communication for the community, especially the younger generation.

Keywords: bipolar, film, mental health communication, kukira kau rumah, audience reception



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INTRODUCTION

Mental health issues are an increasingly pressing topic of discussion in modern society. This is a problem that is familiar to teenagers and young adults. Mental health disorders, including depression and anxiety, have rapidly increased across the world in the last few decades, according to data from the WHO, which estimates that their threat will continue to increase until 2035. However, the public awareness of mental health issues in Indonesia is far from ideal. Stigma and ignorance are hurdles to fighting these conditions. In this case, the mass

media, including cinema, are useful in educating the public about understanding mental health issues.

The film “Kukira Kau Rumah” (2022) is one of the works that successfully depicts the reality of people with bipolar disorder in an emotionally and communicatively engaging way. An eye-opening drug-themed film that sheds light on individual conflict, this movie aligns well with the changing perception in Indonesian culture toward substance abuse. The film conveys important messages about empathy, social support, and awareness of mental health through its narrative, symbols, and dialogue. Ok, but even if the movie is acclaimed and loved by many, it opens such an inquiry where mental health themes are produced for us. Can this film change the way society views this issue? This is where communication analysis becomes important in order to understand the meaning, message, and impact of mental health communication conveyed in this film (Kusuma et al., 2025).

Umay Shahab, director and screenwriter of *Kukira Kau Rumah*, said that his work was out of concern about the lack of representation of mental health issues in Indonesian films (CXO Media). Another problem, he said, is that many people “feel like they're listening but they don't really understand.” “This is a film to raise awareness, not to lecture,” Umay emphasized. Our behavior can have an impact on others who are struggling mentally. (Source: Interview with Umay Shahab by CXO Media, February 6, 2022 / YouTube). Based on this, this study aims to analyze how the film “Kukira Kau Rumah” communicates mental health issues through its narrative and symbolic elements, and to assess the extent to which the message conveyed can contribute to increasing public awareness of the importance of mental health in the surrounding environment.

Although the film *Kukira Kau Rumah* has been widely discussed in the media and in public reviews, most discussion has focused only on the cinematic aspects and storyline, rather than on how the film strategically constructs and communicates mental health messages through the lens of communication science. Yet, so far, there has been little analysis of how this movie represents mental health through a communication lens and the implications for audience reception and perceptions about mental illness. As a matter of fact, it shows that there is a gap for research that provides an analysis of messages of mental-health communication created through narrative dimensions, symbols, and framing of this film in the terminology of communicative and critical perspectives that engage with the material concerned about the dynamics around a psychological disorder, rather than both providing lifestyle guidelines or just entertainment value. (Arrest Bupala Rafiadi¹, Raffi Febriansyah Nugraha², 2025).

This study offers a distinction or difference by examining the film “Kukira Kau Rumah” as a medium of mental health communication, not just as a work of entertainment. The focus of the study is on how this film conveys messages of empathy and public awareness of mental health issues through visual, symbolic, and narrative communication strategies, while also examining the film's potential to change how society views survivors of mental disorders, especially those with bipolar disorder. Thus, this research contributes new insights to the field of communication studies, particularly popular media-based health communication, through an interpretive and critical message analysis approach

Recent studies have increasingly examined the relationship between media, film, and mental health communication, particularly how films represent psychological conditions and influence public perceptions. Film is recognized as a powerful medium of mass communication capable of shaping knowledge, attitudes, and empathy toward mental health issues through narrative, visual symbolism, and emotional storytelling.

Several previous studies related to the film *Kukira Kau Rumah* have contributed to understanding mental health representation in Indonesian cinema. Semiotic studies have explored the psychological dynamics of characters through symbols and dialogue, showing that the film represents bipolar disorder through emotional instability and behavioral patterns. Other research has examined character personality structures using psychoanalytic approaches, focusing on the psychological dimensions of the characters rather than the communication messages conveyed to audiences.

Additional studies have analyzed the film's moral values and social interactions, revealing messages of empathy, family relationships, and social support. However, these studies primarily emphasize moral interpretation and semiotic meaning, without exploring the strategic construction of mental health communication messages in the film.

Moreover, research in media studies highlights that films can serve as health communication media, raising awareness, reducing stigma, and encouraging public discussion of mental disorders. Theoretical perspectives such as Stuart Hall's encoding–decoding theory, framing theory, and stigma communication theory provide important frameworks for understanding how media messages are constructed and interpreted by audiences. Thus, the current body of research shows that while the representation of mental health in film has been widely studied, the integration of message construction, framing strategies, and audience reception analysis remains relatively limited.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A communication message is any form of information, idea, thought, emotion, or symbol that is organized and conveyed by a communicator to a communicant through a communication channel, with the aim of ensuring that the intended meaning is understood and produces a certain effect, such as a change in knowledge, attitude, or action. This message can also be verbal (spoken or written language) or nonverbal (gestures, facial expressions, body language, visual symbols, sounds). In the communication process, messages are the most important element because they are the core of what the sender wants to convey. Well-constructed messages can effectively build understanding, foster emotional closeness, and even influence the recipient's behavior. Therefore, communication messages must have clear meaning, relevance, and be tailored to the characteristics of the recipient in order to achieve the communication objectives optimally (Nurhadi & Kurniawan, 2017).

The context of communication messages in this study is closely related to mental health issues. Mental health is defined as an individual's well-being in which they can realize their potential, manage daily activities, work productively, and contribute positively to their community. Therefore, mental health is the number one health priority, or a state of harmony or unity that enables citizens to understand their own abilities, manage daily stress, work effectively and efficiently, and participate in social and communal activities. Thus, mental health encompasses emotional, mental, and social aspects that influence how people feel, think, and understand others (Yesica Maretha, 2012).

Film is one of the most powerful forms of mass communication. Films using audiovisual devices convey the stories, ideas, messages, and information to viewers through a series of moving images supported by sound, dialogue, music, and pictorial narration. Alongside serving as a medium of entertainment, film is also a medium of education, cultural expression, social reflection, and persuasion that can shape public opinion and behavior. During filmmaking, aspects of the storyline, characters, cinematography, editing, sound, and visuals are all presented, maintaining harmony with one another to deliver an emotional experience and understanding for the audience. Through its visuals and sound, film can also show reality and imagination and move human emotions naturally (Aldo et al., 2023).

One Indonesian film that tackles mental health issues quite directly is *Kukira Kau Rumah*. This psychological drama follows a teenage girl called Niskala, who suffers from bipolar disorder and depression, and lives with a family that neither understands nor cares about her condition. As she meets Pram, a male character who loves music, things start to change in her fight — she feels, for the first time, understood and sympathetic. However, even if the film

engages with an affecting narrative of a person with mental illness, it also delivers a message reinforcing how society can foot-drag on addressing such issues and why compassion from family and friends matters when someone is suffering. It was directed by Umay Shahab and released on February 3, 2022, by MD Pictures and Sinemaku Pictures.

The above-mentioned various interdisciplinary studies speak to the strong use of film as a medium for health communication, especially regarding public education and stigma reduction around brain health. By its ability to tell a compelling story and connect with the audience empathically, film can influence how the public perceives a health issue, as long as its representation is accurate and done sensitively (Hall, n.d.). Since its initial release, many qualitative studies involving the film *Kukira Kau Rumah* have written about bipolar disorder and bipolarity through the character Niskala. These studies generally highlight the depiction of mood swings, impulsivity, and extreme behavior as markers of bipolar disorder, the use of narrative and symbolic elements to build audience empathy, and the role of social environments such as family and partners in framing the experiences of survivors. Research using representational and semiotic analysis proves that this film opens up public discussion on mental health in Indonesia (Kusuma et al., 2025).

However, this literature shows that there are still methodological and thematic gaps. First, studies on health communication framing still rarely discuss visual framing, particularly how camera angles, lighting, visual composition, and audiovisual symbols shape the meaning of mental health. In this case, film is an audiovisual medium, in which many studies show that messages are conveyed through visual elements. Second, the relationality of viral messages is often overlooked in research. (Rodriguez & Dimitrova, 2011). Second, most studies still focus on the representation of messages presented in films, while studies on audience reception are relatively limited. In fact, changes in public perception are greatly influenced by how viewers interpret messages through the encoding and decoding process, not just by the content of the message itself (Hall, n.d.). Third, several studies also highlight the lack of focus in films on the implications of health practices, such as medical information, mental disorder management, and professional referrals, thereby underscoring the need to fully explore the educational potential of films as a health communication medium (WHO, 2024).

The Encoding-Decoding theory proposed by Stuart Hall in 1973 serves as the main theoretical basis for this study. According to this theory, media producers “encode” meaning into texts/media, and audiences “decode” (or interpret) those texts according to their specific social and cultural background and personal experience. Audiences can also accept messages as encoded (dominant/preferred reading), negotiate some while rejecting others (negotiated

reading), or, at worst, reject the core message and create alternative interpretations (oppositional reading) (Hall, n.d.). Decoding is an important part of the communication process because, without the audience decoding (text consumption), the media cannot dominate its audience. The position of decoding in this study is important to determine how the same text is read and understood by its audience, thereby placing the audience in a certain decoding position and determining their level of acceptance of the text consumed (Dewi, n.d.).

This study has two supporting theories. The first is Framing Theory, proposed by Robert M. Entman (1993), which explains how the media packages or frames an issue so that the audience understands and responds to it in a certain way. In films, framing can emerge through the story's perspective, visuals, dialogue, and symbols, guiding the audience to understand specific mental health issues, such as serious problems, stigma, or the healing process. There are several dimensions to the framing theory, namely frame building, which is how filmmakers construct a frame of meaning through the story's perspective, narrative, and visuals to emphasize a particular message. Frame setting determines how the frame is directed at the audience to evoke an emotional response or a certain perspective on the issue. Framing influence refers to the impact of the frame on the audience's perception of the issue, such as the formation of empathy, awareness, or even criticism of it (Gilang & Parahita, 2010).

The final supporting theory is Communication Stigma Theory, which was first introduced by Mathew W. Smith in 2007. This theory described the mechanism of stigma, whereby messages shape, spread, and sustain stigmatization towards a person or group; it was particularly relevant to media and public communication. This theory may also be applied to identify relevant stigmatization of the terms with potential mental health concepts, and to determine which communication strategies need to be employed to effectively share this information in an educational manner. Dimensions of stigma: Labeling, which is reported, classified as a defect; Mark, the negative label; Responsibility, someone to blame for causing or highlighting (the causes); and Peril that furthers portrayal as risks for individuals and groups.

Based on several previous studies, relevant research gaps have been identified, as found in the study by (DA, Sani, M Suheni, S Aisyah, 2022). Using psychological communication semiotics analysis in the film *Kukira Kau Rumah*. The results of this study indicate that the film conveys the characters' psychological dynamics through symbols and dialogue. However, this study discusses only the psychological aspects emphasized, without examining in depth the meaning of mental health communication messages. Research on personality (Kurnia & Resti, 2021) The main character in the same film was analyzed through Freudian literary

psychology. This study focuses on the psychoanalytic approach to analyzing the characters' personality structures and does not cover the construction of messages delivered to the public.

Research from (Berliana & Abidin, 2023) also used semiotic analysis to examine the film *Kukira Kau Rumah*'s moral message. They found that the film conveyed messages of empathy and family values. However, this study only discussed moral aspects in general and did not specifically highlight mental health messages or aspects of public communication. At the same time, (Yasmin et al., 2024) examining the representation of librarians and bipolar patients interacting using Roland Barthes' semiotics. Although this study provides a fairly good view of social interaction, it is considered to focus too much on the communication channel, without considering the message frame and its effect on the audience. A classic study by (Mccombs, n.d.) The agenda-setting theory holds that the media can influence the attention paid to certain issues. While this theory has brought existential rights into the study of information communication, the author does not identify the film *Kukira Kau Rumah* as a sample and the subject in relation to health issues.

A study by (Wibowo, 2024) When he began examining the audience reception analysis regarding the issue of bipolar disorder in the film *Kukira Kau Rumah*. The results showed that viewers had diverse understandings of the issue of bipolar disorder. However, this study focused only on the reception aspect, without exploring the film's construction from a communicative perspective. I can conclude that the contribution of this study is to directly explore how the film *Kukira Kau Rumah* constructs, frames, and delivers mental health communication messages to the public. This approach has never been used before, so this study has made a contribution to the study of mass communication and the representation of mental health issues in the media.

Based on the literature review and previous studies, several research gaps can be identified:

1. Limited focus on the health communication perspective. Most previous studies examine the film from psychological, literary, or semiotic perspectives, rather than analyzing how mental health messages are communicated strategically through film narratives and visuals.
2. Lack of analysis of the communication message construction. Existing research tends to focus on representation or symbolism, but rarely analyzes how filmmakers encode mental health messages through narrative structures, dialogue, and visual framing.
3. Limited integration of audience reception analysis. Although some studies analyze audience responses, they often focus only on reception without examining the relationship between message construction and audience interpretation.

4. Insufficient discussion of visual framing in health communication. Film as an audiovisual medium conveys meaning through cinematography, lighting, visual composition, and symbolic imagery, yet these elements are rarely analyzed within the context of mental health communication.
5. Limited exploration of stigma communication in film narratives. Few studies analyze how films address mental health stigma and its reduction through communication strategies.

These gaps indicate the need for a study that integrates message construction, framing analysis, stigma communication, and audience reception within the context of mental health communication in film.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative content analysis approach because the focus is to understand the meaning of mental health communication messages constructed through narratives, dialogues, and visual symbols in the film *Kukira Kau Rumah*. A qualitative approach was chosen because this study does not aim to measure anything statistically, but rather to interpret the film's messages in depth and context. In addition to the content analysis contained in this study, this study is also reinforced by an audience reception approach (Stuart Hall's encoding–decoding) to see how viewers interpret the mental health messages conveyed by the film, whether they are in accordance with the messages encoded by the filmmakers (dominant reading), partially accepted and negotiated (negotiated reading), or rejected and interpreted differently (oppositional reading).

This study examines the 2022 film *Kukira Kau Rumah* by Umay Shahab. The procedure used was thesis writing with a focus on scenes, dialogue, character expressions, and visual elements through films that depict mental health issues, particularly bipolar disorder. The primary data sources were obtained through direct observation of the film, which was watched repeatedly and in depth. In addition, primary data was obtained through semi-structured interviews with several informants aged 20, 21, and 23 who had watched this film, with the aim of understanding how they interpreted the film's message. Meanwhile, the secondary data sources for this study included scientific journals, theoretical books, news articles, and interviews with the film's director and cast, which can be accessed on digital media platforms such as Kompas, CXO Media, and YouTube.

Data collection techniques were carried out in three stages: documentary observation of films and semi-structured interviews to elicit audience interpretations, and documentation in the form of dialogue quotations, screenshots of key scenes, and supporting references from

academic literature. The collected data was then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman data analysis model, which consists of data reduction (selecting and filtering relevant parts of the film), data presentation (organizing findings in the form of narratives or category tables such as empathy, stigma, social support, and bipolar representation), and drawing conclusions based on an in-depth interpretation of the mental health messages constructed by the film. Comparing data from films, scientific literature, and interviews with viewers, along with repeated observations, allowed for the development of interpretations that were mutually consistent and semantically accurate

The study compared findings from three types of information sources to maintain the quality and credibility of the data from audience interviews, film observations, and the reception of the results. This comparison of sources was conducted to produce stronger interpretations that are not dependent on a single type of data. Meanwhile, system researchers collected data using several techniques simultaneously, such as analysis and semi-structured interviews, to improve understanding of the mental health messages contained in the film in that state. These steps ensured that the meaning of scenes, dialogues, and visual symbols could be interpreted more objectively and consistently.

Good psychometrics is reflected in the validation of two out of five informants who gave statements that fully agreed with all five preset dimensions, while the other two informants either disagreed or gave neutral ratings. In addition, the review process assessed data validity through a member check. The member check was carried out by providing the interview informants with a summary of the researcher's interpretation of the results. The informants were expected to reassess the summary provided and indicate whether the recorded interpretation of the landslide film matched their own thoughts. The polling process was repeated, with the researcher watching the film several times, reviewing the interview notes, and examining the patterns of meaning that emerged to provide a stable interpretation. This allows the research to properly present the construction of mental health messages in films while mapping the wider variations in audience interpretations.

DISCUSSION

This section of results and discussion formulates the research problem, which focuses on how mental health messages are represented in the film *Kukira Kau Rumah*. The findings of this study not only describe the form and content of the messages conveyed in the film but also examine their meaning in the context of health communication. The findings of this study not only represent the form and content of the film, but also how these messages acquire

meanings in the process of communicating about health. Meanwhile, the discussion focuses on the extent to which the mental health communication messages conveyed in the film *Kukira Kau Rumah* can affect the audience to be aware, empathetic, and more understanding of the importance of maintaining mental health. The researcher narrowed the focus to five scenes on mental health and the background of interviews with the following three informants: three people aged 20, 21, and 23 who had watched the film *Kukira Kau Rumah*. They stated that this film is not just an entertaining drama, but has strong educational value for the community. As follows:



Figure 1: Niskala Gets Emotional in Class (04:18)

In this scene, Niskala is in his classroom, arguing with his friend. The argument stemmed from a difference of opinion, which provoked Niskala to overreact emotionally. I see Niskala as overly sensitive, speaking loudly, and contorted in anger. His emotions suddenly explode, creating an unsuitable atmosphere in the classroom and drawing the teacher's and his friends' attention. In reality, I see this in Niskala's overly emotional facial expressions, flailing body movements, and raised voice when arguing. Even though the classroom is a formal social space where students wear school uniforms, it still allows for the expression of Niskala's emotional uncertainty. The intensity of his words and his spontaneous responses reveal his emotional instability. I would like to describe this as the beginning of the mood disorder experienced by Niskala as a person with bipolar disorder, where the inability to control emotions is filled with conflict. Behavior that is easily triggered by emotions, excessive reactions, and the inability to calm down show symptoms of emotional instability that are part of the bipolar condition experienced by the character Niskala.

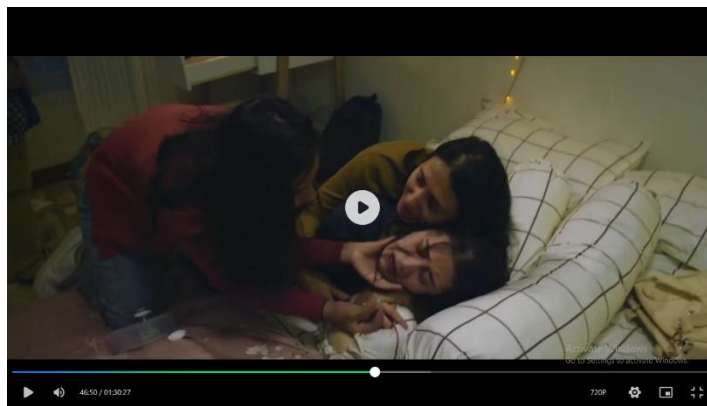


Figure 2: The Recurrence of Niskala's Bipolar Disorder (46:50)

In this scene, Niskala seems to have “fallen ill” after playing with Pram again. In this scene, Niskala is depicted as weak, lying down, with a gloomy face, teary eyes, and a weak body. This apparent weakness also shows a drastic shift in emotion from being very happy and excited when with Pram to being gloomy and depressed when alone in a private room. On a realistic level, Niskala's bipolar condition is evident in her weak physical expression, vacant stare, and low emotional response. Niskala seems to have difficulty controlling her feelings and is unable to feel happiness when she is with her family. The actions of her loved ones who try to calm her down become the most unstable level of her expressiveness. The white clothes worn by Niskala and the dim lighting give a clear impression that this is a scene of emotional distress and unhappiness. This scene is an expression of a severe phase of bipolar depression, characterized by a decrease in energy, deep sadness, and an inability to maintain positive feelings even though they had previously experienced them. This scene confirms that momentary happiness is not always able to prevent the recurrence of the bipolar disorder experienced by Niskala.

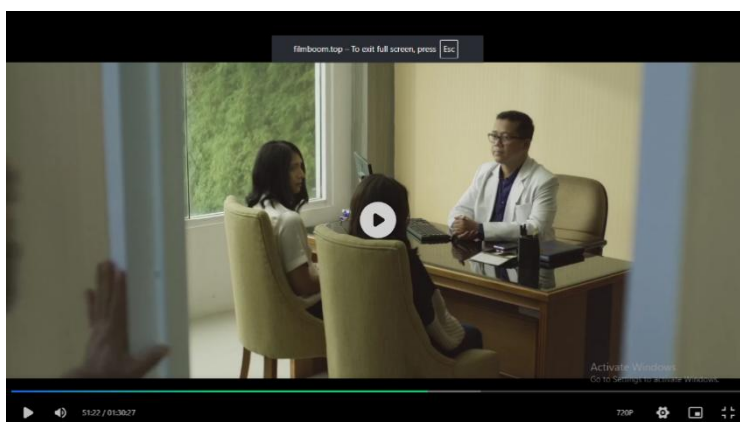


Figure 3: The beginning of Niska's bipolar diagnosis (51:22)

This scene depicts Niskala and her mother consulting with a psychiatrist in his office. The scene shows a formal and calm atmosphere, where the psychiatrist explains Niskala's psychological condition after a series of observations and conversations. Niskala looks down, avoiding eye contact, with a passive expression that shows confusion and fear about the situation in the room. From a realistic perspective, the diagnosis of bipolar disorder is represented through the body language and expressions of the characters. Niskala sits without making eye contact, with a passive expression, fear, and confusion. Niskala's mother listens intently to the psychiatrist's explanation, her face sad and shocked. The psychiatrist in a white coat, seen from the psychiatrist's desk, explains what is happening to Niskala in the clinical room. This scene in particular can best be understood as a skirmish between two narrative factions struggling to dominate Niskala's story; namely, her behavior and coping skill adaptations aren't just antics, they're symptoms of a mentally ill brain diagnosed as bipolar disorder.

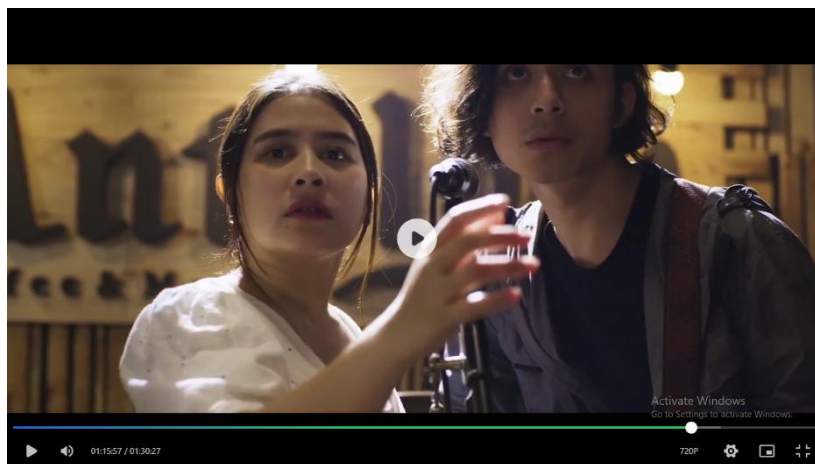


Figure 4: Niskala Experiences Tantrums due to Emotional Pressure (1:15:47)

In the following scene, I captured Niskala singing with Pram in front of the audience. Bahaya was somewhat distracted, and his face radiated joy and authority, feeling no barriers in expressing his emotions. Psychology states that the difference between sensistis and the psychological self is between sensistis and the self. He felt free, accepted, and self-actualized. However, the atmosphere changes drastically when Niskala's father suddenly arrives and verbally expresses his anger in front of many people. In fact, Niskala's father conveyed his anger through his intonation. Whether this represents stage one or not from Niskala's point of view, such an emotional leap, seeing her psychological instability and susceptibility to pressure

from her immediate environment, certain people in the family, she found herself under pressure. Overall, this scene illustrates the inner turmoil and emotional strain that Niskala goes through as a person with bipolar disorder. The tantrum that suddenly comes out is not a mere mischievousness or excessive emotion, but the psychological response to rejection for being her, control, and family environments which were never intended to understand her emotional state. This scene shows how angry and repressive communication within the family can deteriorate Niskala's mental condition, leading to another emotional conflict that torments her.



Figure 5: Niskala's Decision (1:19:41)

This scene depicts the psychological state of Niskala and Pram, who are at their lowest point of despair. Both are shown to have the intention of ending their lives together as a way of escaping emotional pressure, family conflict, and a feeling of not being understood by those around them. Niskala's facial expression is filled with fear, sadness, and emotional exhaustion, while Pram's is one of resignation and despair. This scene reaches the peak of the internal conflict between the two characters, especially at Niskala's level. At the level of actuality, this despair manifests through emotional dialogue, teary eyes, and limp, helpless body language. Niskala's attitude reveals a very unstable mood where despair suppresses her survival instinct. However, the situation changes when Dinda, Niskala's best friend, arrives and tries to prevent her from taking action. Dinda is portrayed as a figure who provides empathy, concern, and persuasive communication in an effort to dissuade Niskala from making a fatal decision. Overall, this scene represents the serious impact of mental health disorders, particularly on Niskala, who is in a state of deep depression as part of bipolar disorder. Moreover, Dinda's presence can also be seen as a much greater function of hope and social support, deeply involved and serving primarily to protect Niskala from her actions. Given this background, this

scene cannot be forgiven and makes it even more brutal, that sympathy, caring conversations, and a few truly loved ones play a role in helping the individual escape from such a radical decision on that extraordinary night.

DISCUSSION

Kukira Kau Rumah is an Indonesian psychological drama film released on February 3, 2022, directed by Umay Shahab and produced by MD Pictures and Sinemaku Pictures. The film tells the story of mental health disorders, namely bipolar disorder and depression, as represented by the main character, Niskala, a teenager with bipolar disorder who lives without understanding her own family's struggles. The story shifts to a turning point when Niskala meets Pram, a musician with his own traumas, as their involvement leads to the next part about empathy, communication, and social support in mental health. The film is a visual novel that inspires public dialogue about how mental illness is represented in the media and shows how film narratives can be a useful health resource. (Source: Interview with Umay Shahab by CXO Media, February 6, 2022 / YouTube).

Based on the parameters of the emotional path of the social space before the first scene when Niskala argues in class, researchers can conclude that the initial actions of pathological communicative behavior used by the character are the beginning of emotional disturbance. Excessive emotional reactions, high tone of voice, and tense facial expressions are all evidence of poor emotional regulation. In this case, from the perspective of health communication theory, it is not only conflict with friends and even teachers, but also the first signs that the character's behavior will become more severe and underlying mental health disorders will begin to appear. Through framing theory, the filmmaker deliberately frames the classroom, which should be a safe and rational space, as a space that actually triggers psychological pressure for Niskala. This visual and narrative framing also directs the audience to understand that mental disorders can arise not only in formal social spaces but also in such settings and are understandable. Therefore, the film serves to raise public awareness that individuals with bipolar disorder are not subjects who can be assumed to manage their emotions under pressure. (Rodriguez & Dimitrova, 2011)

Analyzed using Stuart Hall's encoding–decoding theory (Hall, n.d.), The message encoded by this scene is that Niskala's emotional reactions are not mere mischief or aggressive behavior, but rather expressions of an unstable mental condition. The interview results show that the audience perceives this message as the preferred reading, in which they understand Niskala's anger as a symptom of mental disorder, not as a personal fault. This demonstrates the

film's effectiveness in communicating mental health messages in a communicative and empathetic manner.

In the second scene, given the Emotional Shift and Bipolar Depression Phase parameters, researchers noticed that Niskala's adaptation changes dramatically following Happiness with Pram. In the depression stage, unhealthy adaptation manifested itself in a weakened physical appearance (dope sick), a blank stare, and a dimly lit room. This scene speaks in the context of health communication to explain how bipolar disorder occurs from the extreme of current happiness that cannot prevent the recurrence of depression (WHO, 2022). The film uses visual framing to encode an atmosphere of emotional despair through dim lighting, a slow tempo, and minimal dialogue. The embodiment of emotions through body language functions as a visual frame, providing psychological clues that make the audience feel the despair experienced by Niskala. Emotional exhaustion is conveyed through body tone and facial expressions, and the filmmaker agrees that people with bipolar disorder cannot consciously control depression and mania. Research informants interpreted this scene as a realistic depiction of depression, indicating that the film's message was predominantly accepted. This reinforces the film's function as a medium for mental health education, capable of fostering emotional understanding rather than merely reinforcing knowledge (Saleh et al., 2016). Mental health has become an important aspect of modern society, but it is often overlooked by older generations. This contrasts with Generation Z, who prioritize mental health as a primary concern. Poor family communication and lack of support from surrounding individuals cause psychological illness in many young people. Parents have a critical role and responsibility in maintaining their child's mental health. Although each child wishes to be raised in an atmosphere of harmony, the actual reality may be a sharp contrast. Some parents think their children can be fully independent just because they become adults. However, even as adults, young people still need parental figures as role models and guides (Assegap et al., 2025).

Medical diagnosis parameters are realized as Mental Health Understanding, a scene in which three characters who have seen a psychiatrist discuss it and their reactions. It serves as a cardinal view throughout the film's narrative, implying aspects of explicit medical legitimacy regarding Niskala's condition. The scene explicitly proclaims that bipolar disorder is a real health problem that must be addressed with professional treatment. In Health Communication Theory, the formal delivery of medical information serves to improve health literacy and reduce stigma against mental disorders (Handayani et al., 2021). In terms of framing, the presence of psychiatrists, clinical spaces, and medical attributes establishes an authoritative frame, which confirms that Niskala's behavioral changes are not the result of parenting failures

or personal attitudes, but rather a psychological condition that can be explained scientifically. This framing is important because it shifts the audience's understanding of the issue from one that is mainly moral to one that is mainly medical. Through the prism of encoding-decoding, this scene encodes the message that seeking answers from a doctor is a legitimate and necessary step. According to the interview results, the audience accepts this as education that opens up new insights into the importance of diagnosis and medical assistance. Once again, the film promotes health communication by helping to understand issues from the perspective of the person.

Family Pressure and the Impact of Intrapersonal Communication can be seen in the fourth scene. The contrast between Niskala's happiness while singing and her father's anger when she is in the heart room is very strong. This scene shows how repressive family communication and self-control can worsen the condition of individuals with bipolar disorder. In health communication theory, social support, especially from family, is placed in an important position as a factor in stabilizing mental health status (WHO, 2022). Through the narrative, the father figure in the frame represents an uncomfortable authority figure with regard to his child's condition. The father's verbal anger and dominant gestures become symbols of rejection and a lack of empathy. Niskala experiences emotional outbursts in the form of tantrums, showing his psychological vulnerability to excessive external situational pressure (Kustiawan et al., 2022). From an encoding-decoding perspective, the message encoded here is that conflict within the family and unhealthy communication can trigger a relapse of this disorder. Informants interpreted this scene as a social critique of family communication patterns that neglect mental health. This interpretation shows that viewers not only receive the film's message, but also reflect on it in the context of broader social life.

Despair, Social Support, and Hope Researchers see that the fifth scene is the emotional climax of the film, depicting suicide as a sign of extreme despair. This scene represents the most serious consequences of mental disorders when not properly addressed. The issue of suicide must be presented sensitively in health communications, and this film frames it not as a solution but as a sign that social support has failed (Alawiyah & Alwi, 2022). Dinda's presence as a friend who remembers her as her sister is a symbol of social support, that the presence of other people in our lives is indeed very necessary so that everyone needs people who try and are willing to listen to every complaint they make. The people referred to here are those who are truly close to us and whom we know well; this support is social support. Through this framing, the film emphasizes that the love of others who truly care is always an external saving factor in human life when in very bad conditions. In the encoding-decoding perspective,

the encoded message is that hope can still be found when humans have friends. Research informants interpreted this scene as a strong moral and health message that empathy and interpersonal communication can prevent tragedy. However, the film also shows that it is not only about hopelessness and loss of the will to live, but also about the success of communication and the potential for human support.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrative communication approach to analyzing the film *Kukira Kau Rumah*.

First, the study positions the film not merely as entertainment or psychological representation but as a strategic medium of mental health communication. It analyzes how the film constructs messages about bipolar disorder through narrative structures, dialogue, and visual symbolism.

Second, the research integrates three theoretical perspectives simultaneously—encoding–decoding theory, framing theory, and communication stigma theory—to examine both message construction and audience interpretation.

Third, the study combines qualitative content analysis of film scenes with audience-reception analysis, allowing researchers to understand not only the messages encoded by filmmakers but also how viewers interpret and respond to them.

Fourth, the study contributes to media-based health communication research, particularly in the Indonesian context, by demonstrating how popular films can function as educational tools that foster empathy, increase mental health awareness, and reduce stigma toward individuals with mental disorders.

Therefore, this research provides new insights into the role of film as a communication platform for mental health awareness and social change, bridging the gap between media studies, communication science, and public health discourse.

CONCLUSION

The film *Kukira kau Rumah* conveys messages about mental health through powerful narratives, dialogue, and visual symbols depicting emotional states and aspects. Bipolar disorder is portrayed as a complex psychological disorder, but also as a health issue that requires understanding, empathy, and support from relatives. Through five main scenes analyzed, the film shows how emotional instability, depressive phases, family pressure, and a lack of healthy communication can worsen an individual's mental condition. Interviews with informants show that the messages encoded in the film are predominantly accepted, with the audience understanding that the main character's behavior is not a form of delinquency, but rather a manifestation of mental health disorders. This study confirms that films as a popular medium have strategic potential in communicating mental health messages, especially among the younger generation. Based on these findings, this study has comprehensively answered all the research questions posed, while also confirming that films as a popular medium have strategic potential in communicating mental health messages in a communicative, humanistic, and educational manner, especially among the younger generation. The conclusion must be related to the title and answer the formulation or purpose of the study. Do not make statements that are not adequately supported by your findings. Write down improvements made to industrial engineering or science in general. Do not make further discussions, repeat abstracts, or just list the results of the study. Don't use bullet points, use paragraph sentences instead.

IMPLICATION

The findings of this study provide several implications for the academic world, society, the nation and state, as well as the international community. In the academic field, this research contributes to the development of communication studies, particularly in the area of health communication and media studies. The analysis demonstrates that films can function not only as entertainment but also as a strategic medium for communicating mental health issues through narrative, visual framing, and symbolic representation. Therefore, this study enriches the theoretical discussion on media framing, audience reception, and communication stigma, while also encouraging future researchers to further explore the role of popular media in shaping public understanding of psychological and social issues.

For society, the results of this research highlight the importance of increasing public awareness and empathy toward individuals experiencing mental health disorders. The film *Kukira Kau Rumah* illustrates that mental health problems such as bipolar disorder are real conditions that require understanding, support, and appropriate treatment. Through the

representation of emotional struggles, family conflict, and the importance of social support, this study implies that open communication, empathy, and supportive environments are crucial in helping individuals maintain their psychological well-being. Thus, the research encourages communities to reduce stigma and create a more inclusive and supportive social environment for people with mental health conditions.

For the nation and the state, the findings imply that creative media such as films can be utilized as effective tools for public education and mental health campaigns. The representation of mental health issues in popular media has the potential to support government programs aimed at improving mental health literacy among citizens, especially among young people. By collaborating with filmmakers, educators, and health professionals, the government can promote mental health awareness through culturally relevant media content that resonates with the younger generation.

At the international level, this study shows that Indonesian films have the potential to contribute to global discussions on mental health communication and media representation. By portraying psychological issues through culturally contextual narratives, Indonesian cinema can become part of the broader global effort to reduce stigma and promote mental health awareness. Therefore, this research highlights the importance of cross-cultural communication in understanding mental health issues and encourages international collaboration across media, communication, and public health.

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