

**A CORPUS STUDY OF ONLINE REVIEWS ON THE
SUICIDE THEMED SERIES *13 REASONS WHY***

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**FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS
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KUALA LUMPUR**

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A CORPUS STUDY OF ONLINE REVIEWS ON THE SUICIDE THEMED

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to explore the reviewers' perspectives on the suicide theme of *13 Reasons Why* by examining the online reviews posted by these reviewers on Internet Movie Database (IMDb), Rotten Tomatoes, and Meta Critics. The corpus analysis tools adopted in the study are concordancing and keyword analysis. Concordancing is used to generate suicide-related concordance lines and to identify the evaluative items in the online reviews, while keyword analysis is used to explore the underlying key themes. Two frameworks applied to analyse these evaluative items and categorise them into positive and negative are evaluation in texts and discursive news values analysis (DNVA). The findings indicate that the suicide theme is perceived in negative light to a more significant extent compared to the positive light. The three main key themes that emerged from the findings and are discussed are *misrepresentation of mental disorder*, *inaccurate portrayal of high school teenagers*, and *misleading message about teen social issues*. The limitation of the study is the data used are limited to three review websites only while there are other websites that could contribute to the richness of the data.

Keywords: concordancing, keyword analysis, suicide, *13 Reasons Why*, online reviews

**KAJIAN KORPUS MENGENAI ULASAN ATAS TALIAN SIRI BERTEMAKAN
BUNUH DIRI *13 REASONS WHY***

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis perspektif pengulas mengenai tema bunuh diri dari siri *13 Reasons Why* dengan meneliti ulasan atas talian yang dipaparkan di *Internet Movie Database (IMDb)*, *Rotten Tomatoes*, dan *Meta Critics*. Instrumen analisis korpus yang digunakan dalam kajian ini adalah *concordancing* dan analisis kata kunci yang digunakan untuk menghasilkan *concordance lines* yang berkait dengan tema bunuh diri serta mengenalpasti kata evaluatif dalam ulasan-ulasan tersebut. Dua rangka kerja yang terlibat untuk menganalisis kata evaluatif dan mengklasifikasikannya sebagai evaluasi positif dan negatif adalah evaluasi teks dan *discursive news values analysis (DNVA)*. Hasil kajian mendapati tema bunuh diri dinilai secara negatif ke tahap yang lebih tinggi berbanding positif. Tiga tema utama yang ditemui dari dapatan kajian dan dibincangkan ialah *kesilapan gambaran penyakit mental*, *gambaran remaja sekolah menengah yang tidak tepat*, dan *mesej yang mengelirukan tentang isu sosial remaja*. Kekangan kajian yang didapati ialah data yang digunakan untuk analisis hanya diambil dari tiga laman web sementara terdapat banyak lagi laman web lain yang boleh menyumbang kepada kekayaan data.

Kata kunci: *concordancing*, analisis kata kunci, bunuh diri, *13 Reasons Why*, ulasan atas talian

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LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

13RW	:	13 Reasons Why
IMDb	:	Internet Movie Database
RT	:	Rotten Tomatoes
MC	:	Meta Critics
DNVA	:	Discursive News Values Analysis

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a detailed description of the background of the study which focuses on adolescent suicide. Adolescent suicide is used as the main subject in the television series *13 Reasons Why*. The analysis of audience perception on the suicide theme brings some insights into the understanding of public opinion on suicide and its reflection on real-life suicide issue. In addition, this chapter also presents the synopsis of *13 Reasons Why* to provide some contexts of the plot which will be used as examples of data in the analysis. The problem statement is discussed next to highlight the literature gap found from the past studies regarding the issue of suicide. The research purpose presented in this chapter is to provide the objective of the present study, while attempting to answer the research questions to achieve the purpose.

Furthermore, the scope of the study provides the names of the three review websites that are used as data source, as well as the duration of the data collection. The significance of the study highlights the implications that the present study will contribute.

1.2 Background of the study

Suicide, specifically adolescent suicide, is a growing issue in Malaysia (Cagande & Foo, 2017). There has been a significant growth in the number of people who call suicide helpline Befrienders KL, from 21,256 in 2015 to 24,821 in 2016 (Pillay, 2017). According to World Health Organization (WHO), there are more suicide attempts for every suicide, and previous suicide attempts elevate the risk of repetitive suicidal behaviours especially among those aged 15 to 29-year-olds (WHO, 2018). This indicates the alarming rise of suicide not only in Malaysia but worldwide which partly constitutes to the scope of the present study, as well as highlighting the importance of the research area of the study.

Past studies on suicide have focused on the roles of online platforms such as blogs, forums, and social media on suicide discussions (e.g. Mars et al., 2015; Biddle et al., 2016; Ueda et al., 2017; Lee & Kwon, 2018), and the media's key responsibility of bringing suicide issues to the outside world (e.g. Cheng et al., 2014; Cheng & Yip, 2012; Niederkröthaler et al., 2014). The scopes of these past studies imply the existence of a gap in suicide studies involving a controversial television series and using the audience perception as data, which the present study has attempted to fill.

Controversies have been surrounding the series *13 Reasons Why (13RW)* since it was first aired on Netflix on March 31, 2017. The series carries a heavy theme told in a fictionalized world of high school teenagers. The main subject matter is suicide.

Throughout the first season, the audience were brought into a complex and an emotional drama involving families, friendships, and relationships. Consisting of 13 episodes, the series depicted social issues among teenagers such as mental health, alcohol and drug addiction, and physical and sexual harassment in extremely graphic ways. To top it all, the suicide scene displayed on the final episode split the audience into two classifications. Some evaluated the suicide theme of *13RW* as negative, while some agreed it was executed with positive intention.

The executive producer, Selena Gomez, claimed first-hand that she intended the show to be honest and able to help people (Adams, 2017). However, the fictional world of the main character who died of suicide, Hannah Baker, was no longer a mere fiction when reports from mainstream news sites about Hannah Baker-like suicides had switched the original intention into a bigger and more controversial real-life issue. Instead of promoting suicide prevention, *13RW* was claimed to be providing a way for suicidal people to commit suicide. For example, in Peru, a 23-year-old man left behind recording tape explaining his suicide before jumping out of a window (Smith, 2017). Families of two teens in California, Bella Herndon and Priscilla Chui, petitioned Netflix to cancel the

show following the suicides of the teens that were claimed were triggered by the suicide of Hannah Baker (Fox News, 2017). Another alleged copycat suicide of a teen Anna Bright was reported to have been staged similarly to *13RW*'s suicide scene (Grigley, 2017), which left Hannah Baker lying in a pool of blood in a bathtub with both of her wrists slit.

These incidents later called the attention of the experts in mental health. One of them was the Executive Director of Suicide Awareness Voices of Education (SAVE), Dr. Dan Reidenberg. He described *13RW* as “doing more harm than good” (Thorbecke, 2017), especially for youngsters who are already struggling with suicidal thoughts (Butler, 2017). Furthermore, MollyKate Cline (2017) wrote that *13RW* failed to verbally mention the issue of depression that was supposedly resulted in Hannah Baker’s suicide. On the other hand, Dr. Janet Taylor, a New York psychiatrist, claimed that *13RW* initially intended to “break the silence” (Thorbecke, 2017).

In spite of the claims by the producers and the reasoned arguments from the experts, it is the audience perceptions that decide whether *13RW* has achieved the mission it attempted to accomplish.

The present study has attempted to address the extent of the positive and negative evaluations of *13RW*'s suicide theme, as well as to offer some insights into the issue of adolescent suicide through the analysis of audience perceptions regarding the suicide theme of *13RW*.

1.3 Synopsis of *13 Reasons Why*

13RW is a television drama series first aired on streaming service Netflix on March 31, 2017. Originally, the series was adapted from a young adult fiction mystery, a novel by Jay Asher with the same title published in 2007 by Penguin Random House. The first season of the series consists of 13 episodes in total, which are the scope of the present study.

13RW tells the story of 17-year-old Hannah Baker who sank into depression after enduring a series of traumatic events during her sophomore year of high school. It is important to note that the word ‘depression’ or any sort of medical term referring to mental health was never mentioned on the series. The audience learned of Hannah’s emotional struggles through her narration.

Set in a small town Crestmont, the series offers 13 episodes, each episode exploring Hannah’s reason to commit suicide which she put on audiotapes for the people she left behind to listen to. On the first episode, the viewers were brought into the lead character’s world, Clay Jensen, who came home from school and found a shoebox left in his doorstep. He picked the box and brought it into the house before discovering a collection of audiotapes inside the box. There were seven tapes, each with two sides except the seventh tape which only had one side. Together they made 13 tapes.

Clay began to listen to one of the tapes (labeled Tape 1, Side A) and upon realising it was Hannah’s voice playing from the tape, he (along with the viewers) was brought into the flashbacks of Hannah’s story before she committed suicide the previous summer.

With Hannah’s voiceover narrating in the background, the story was told in two sets of time chronologically – before and after the suicide. It was explained that all reasons were connected to each other, and like a butterfly effect, one thing affected another. Hannah also instructed the tape receivers to listen to all of them and refuse to do so would end up with Tony Padilla (a friend who was not on the tape and owned the second copy of the tapes) to leak them to the whole school.

Tape 1, Side A (episode one) explained the character Justin Foley’s role in Hannah’s suicide. It was laid out in the flashbacks that Justin tried to score a date with Hannah – a pretty, new girl at school. After she agreed, they went out on a date to a playground one night, where Justin took an inappropriate picture of Hannah. The picture was leaked to the whole school the next day. As a result, Hannah was called with many undignified

labels. The struggle of having to walk the school's hallways with all eyes on her was also explained on the tape, making Clay who listened to it in the present time feel sorry for her. It was also the beginning of Hannah's journey into sadness.

But the story of Clay's role was kept a mystery, and the viewers were forced to guess the mistakes that Clay – the seemingly innocent and quiet boy who barely had friends at school – could have made that put him on the tape alongside the others.

Tape 1, Side B (episode two) put the attention on Jessica Davis, Hannah's first real friend when she entered the school. They were introduced by the then school counselor and clicked right away. But the friendship shattered when a new boy, Alex Standall, came into the picture. On the tape, Hannah explained about her disappointment when Jessica chose a boy over their friendship. The second tape was intertwined with the Tape 2, Side A (episode three) where Hannah explained Alex's part in her story.

Alex was first introduced as a weird, new boy at school, but Hannah and Jessica were willing to be his friends. Then, behind Hannah's back, Alex and Jessica started to date. A while later, the relationship ended, and Alex made a list representing the pretty girls at school. Hannah's name was on the list next to the others, but Jessica's was excluded. Angered and disappointed by the list, Jessica accused Hannah of being the reason she and Alex broke up, and slapped Hannah in the middle of their favourite coffee shop while a lot of people were watching. Hannah was then left alone in the coffee shop, crying. Not only did she lose her best friend, Alex's tape also resulted in Hannah getting harassed by the school's bullies who wanted to know if his list was correctly put. It is important to note that Alex was among a few other characters who felt remorse of their actions towards Hannah at the end of the series, and this led him to attempt a suicide.

Tape 2, Side B (episode four) told the story of Tyler Down, the school's photographer and Hannah's stalker. Tyler was described as a nerd who had a crush on Hannah, and therefore used his photography skills to capture photos of Hannah while she was in her room at home. Knowing that someone was watching her, Hannah was scared and felt as though the only place that used to give her comfort was being taken away by the stalker.

This episode was then continued with Tape 3, Side A (episode five), when Hannah invited Courtney Crimsen, a popular, highly likeable girl at school, for a sleepover in order to catch the stalker in the act. However, the plan went south when Tyler snapped a photo of Courtney kissing Hannah in the room as an act of a joke. When the photo went viral and everyone at school knew, Courtney denied that it was her in the photo to hide the fact that she was homosexual and threw Hannah under the bus. At this point, Hannah's already tainted image was getting worse and the only person who was still willing to be her friend was Clay.

Barely recovered from the event of the controversial photo being circulated around school, Hannah joined the school Valentine's tradition to find the perfect match for a date. She was matched with Marcus Cole, who later became the subject of Tape 3, Side B (episode six). During the date, Marcus showed up late and when he did, he attempted an inappropriate move on Hannah while his other friends were amusedly watching, causing her to scream in a diner and Marcus left in shame.

Tape 4, Side A (episode seven) then told the story of Zach Dempsey who sat with Hannah in the booth when she was crying right after Marcus left. Zach's story started out positive because his kind gesture gave Hannah the impression that he was sincere to be her friend. But it changed shortly after. In Communication class, each student was given a compliment box, and the students could write a letter of compliment to be put inside any box they chose without needing to sign their names. Hannah received a couple of compliments which lifted her already crushing spirit for a short while, until her box began

to be left empty. When she found out that Zach was the one who had been stealing all the letters from her box, it was like her will to get through every difficult day was being cruelly snatched away from her.

In episode eight (Tape 4, Side B) Hannah joined a poetry club. She met Ryan Shaver, the head of school magazine and a member of the same club. With his help, she began to write poetries, pouring her heart out on every piece. Until Ryan leaked one of her most private poems and it became the subject of mockery all around school. She descended deeper into sadness.

The climax began to unravel in episode nine, where Hannah went to a party one summer night. At the beginning of Tape 5, Side A, she explained the event that night could be split into three. The first one was the traumatic event when Hannah saw an estranged friend, Jessica, being sexually assaulted by Bryce Walker who was not named on the tape. With all the bullying and the struggles she went through up until that point, Hannah froze in a closet and simply could not find the will to stop Bryce.

The second event was explained on Tape 5, Side B (episode ten). After helplessly watching the event on the previous episode, a distraught Hannah decided to go home. A friend, Sheri Holland, offered a ride home. When they were at an intersection, Sheri accidentally knocked down a stop sign. Hannah told her to report it so that the authorities could come and at least put up a temporary solution, but Sheri refused. Consequently, that same night, a schoolmate was involved in a car accident at the same intersection and passed away. Hannah was haunted by guilt from that point forward.

Then on Tape 6, Side A (episode eleven) everything came into focus. That same night at the party before Hannah witnessed Jessica's assault, she and Clay went upstairs and into one of the rooms. It was highlighted that the pair was getting closer at this point and they shared mutual feelings towards each other. Clay was also the reason Hannah went to the party although a part of her was already struggling with life and only wanted to isolate

herself. From a casual conversation, Hannah and Clay were getting intimate, until traumatic thoughts filled Hannah's head and she forced Clay to leave the room. Baffled and confused, Clay did as he was told. While Hannah was crying in the room, Jessica, half-conscious and drunk, and her boyfriend Justin came inside. Hannah panicked and the only way out for her was to hide in the closet. That was when Bryce came in and pushed Justin out, and sexually assaulted Jessica while Hannah watched with silent tears. After Bryce left and Jessica was still unconscious, Hannah went downstairs and ran into Sheri.

The mystery of Clay's role was finally unraveled. However, Hannah explained on the tape that Clay actually did not belong there, but she had to tell his story in order for everything to make sense. She also apologized to him on the tape for pushing him away when all he wanted to do was be there for her. Clay (in the present time), realising that he was part of the horrible events that happened that night, was wrecked with guilt. He attempted to jump from a cliff, before being stopped by Tony.

Tape 6, Side B (episode twelve) was when Hannah reached a breaking point. After a fight with her parents over a careless mistake, she left home and wound up at Bryce's house where a party was being held. That night, Hannah was sexually assaulted by Bryce just like Jessica was, and it was the night she decided that her life had no meaning anymore.

But before she went through with her plan to commit suicide, she went to see Mr. Porter, the school counselor on the final episode (Tape 7, Side A). She tried to tell him that she was raped but refused to name the rapist. All Mr. Porter was able to do was suggested that she reported him and fought or lived with it and moved on. Hannah went home, wrapped the two copies of the tapes nicely, one was mailed to Justin as the first receiver and the second one to Tony, before getting into the bathtub and slit her wrists.

The scene where her parents came home and rushed into the bathroom after seeing blood flowing from under the bathroom door was executed in a slow motion, clearly showing Hannah's parents' devastation. At the end of the season, the audiences were left with different impressions and things to say, which led them to share their thoughts and perspectives on the Internet. *13RW* is clearly a work of fiction, but they deeply cared about the ways it affected the viewers, especially the youths, in real life.

1.4 Statement of the problem

As briefly mentioned in the Section 1.2, past studies on suicide have focused on the role of online platforms such as blogs, forums, and social media in suicide discussions. These studies involved real-life incidents experienced by struggling and suicidal people looking for suicide methods and helps in dealing with suicidal ideations. Mars et al. (2015) revealed that suicidal people use Internet to search for information regarding suicide or self-harm, and the act is more prevalent among those with history of suicide attempts and prior suicidal behaviours compared to the first-time attempters. Biddle et al. (2015) found an increasing access to forums and blogs discussing detailed suicide ideations from 2007 to 2014 while the opposite can be seen on the access of help sites. Social media like Twitter plays a role in suicide studies as well, as suicides by prominent figures were copied by fans and followers depending on the media coverage in Japan (Ueda et al., 2017). Lee and Kwon (2018) also highlighted the role of Twitter on suicide, which has become a preferable platform for suicidal people to make a suicide pact.

On the other hand, Cheng and Yip (2012) revealed that Hong Kong media made poor reporting of suicide cases, especially on the risk factors. Cheng et al. (2014) found that rewarding commercial competitiveness is the driving factor of media reporting of suicide, while Niederkrötenhaler et al. (2014) identified the role of media campaigns to reduce the stigma surrounding suicide and mental health, although it was found that the media tends to report more on homicide suicides which increases the stigma on suicide.

Based on the past studies discussed in this section, the study on suicide has largely focused on the role of the internet in addressing real-life suicide issues. Therefore, a literature gap has been identified which is a study on a television series that carries the theme of suicide. Although the content of the series is fiction, its effects on real-life suicidal and non-suicidal people can be seen through the reviews posted by the audience.

The present study has attempted to fill the gap in suicide studies using audience fiction-based opinions and perspectives on suicide theme presented on a controversial television series and the reflections of contributions of the findings to real-life suicide issues.

1.5 Research purpose and questions

The purpose of this study is to examine the online reviews on the television series *13 Reasons Why* posted by the audience of the show on three different review websites on the internet. In order to meet this purpose, these are the research questions that the study has attempted to address:

1. To what extent is the suicide theme perceived as positive or negative?
2. What are the key themes that emerge from the evaluations of the posted online reviews?

These questions are asked for several important reasons. The first question provides the audience perspectives on the suicide theme as depicted on the series. It reveals the different extent to which the suicide is perceived as positive or negative, as well as the driving factors that contribute to the positive and negative evaluations. The second question reveals the notable key themes in the reviews which highlight the underlying specific concerns of the audience towards *13RW*.

1.6 Scope of the study

This study focusses on the first season of *13RW* which consists of 13 episodes. The dataset is in the form of online reviews gathered from review websites which are Internet Movie Database (IMDb), Rotten Tomatoes (RT), and Meta Critics (MC). The duration for the data to be collected is one year, from March 31, 2017 where the show was first aired, until March 31, 2018.

1.7 Significance of the study

This study may contribute to the discussion of media-driven public perception of suicide based on a fiction and its reflection on real-life situation. Although *13RW* is a work of fiction, the findings of this study may bring the attention on the insensitive treatments of the series's suicide theme and become a basic guidance for parents, guardians, and teachers should they intend to start a conversation on suicide and mental health with their children.

In addition, this study may also contribute to the growing body of the literature in the same field of corpus-based studies as well as evaluation in online written texts and media discourse.

1.8 Conclusion

Chapter One highlights the background of the present study which focuses on the first season of television series *13 Reasons Why*. The different perceptions among the audience and the reasoned arguments from the experts have prompted the study to explore on the issues of suicide, particularly adolescent suicide which is now a growing social issue among teenagers in Malaysia. The synopsis of the series is provided to shed understanding on the storyline of the lead character Hannah Baker and the incidents that drove her to commit suicide, to which some audiences, or more accurately reviewers, used as examples to elaborate their perception. In addition, past studies have explored the

role of online platforms and media news reporting on suicide discussions. The present study has attempted to fill the literature gap in suicide studies on a controversial television series which carries the theme of suicide. Research purpose and questions and their importance are also presented and will be answered in Chapter Four. Chapter Two will include the reviews of related past studies.

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CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter defines related terms used in the present study, as well as fields of past studies that are relevant to the present study. These are suicide and adolescent suicide, online comments and online reviews, fandom, troll and trolling, and three review websites used as data source which are Internet Movie Database, Rotten Tomatoes, and Meta Critics. Two major frameworks adopted in the present study are also discussed in this chapter. They are corpus linguistics and evaluation.

Two analytical tools from corpus linguistics are adopted in the present study, which are concordancing and keyword analysis. Concordancing analysis generates suicide-related concordance lines from the data corpus which consists of audience reviews from Internet Movie Database, Rotten Tomatoes, and Meta Critics, while keyword analysis uncovers the possible underlying key themes in the reviews.

2.2 Reviews of past studies

2.2.1 Suicide and adolescent suicide

Suicide can be defined as death caused by self-inflicted injuries or any harmful behaviors with the intention to die (Desmet & Hoste, 2013). It is claimed to be “one of the leading causes of death worldwide” (Wasserman & Wasserman, 2009 as cited in Arendt et al., 2018, p. 164). According to World Health Organization (WHO) estimation, by the year 2020 around 1.53 million people will die by suicide (Bertolote & Fleischmann, 2015). In Malaysia, the majority of people committing suicide in 2009 is between the ages of 35 to 44, followed closely by those between the ages of 25 to 34 as recorded by The National Suicide Registry Malaysia (NSRM) (Razuin Rahimi et al., 2015).

Several past researches have been carried out to study the role of Internet on suicide. A cross sectional study of 3946 of the 8525 participants in the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC) by Mars et al. (2015) revealed that Internet use can be both harmful and helpful. The results showed that the majority of the participants used Internet to search for suicide or self-harm related contents, especially those with suicidal intents, thoughts, plans, and history of self-harm. Those who accessed the sites discussing methods of self-harm also reportedly accessed help sites. However, since the data used was cross sectional, the causality of the data could not be determined.

Biddle et al. (2016) found an increase on the access of sites, blogs, and forums that provided information regarding methods of suicide from 2007 to 2014. Twelve search terms taken from Biddle et. al's previous study (2014) were used in four search engines. These terms included "*suicide, suicide methods, suicide sure methods, most effective methods of suicide, methods of suicide, ways to commit suicide, how to commit suicide, how to kill yourself, easy suicide methods, best suicide methods, pain-free suicide, and quick suicide*" (Biddle et al., 2016, p. 372). Three most frequently accessed sites in 2014 were Wikipedia, Lostallhope, and Martin Frost. The study did not extend to the search of help sites, therefore the findings of accessing sites for methods and helps were not balanced. However, these two studies have noted the role of Internet on suicide, and they correlate to the present study as *13RW* is aired on an online streaming platform Netflix and people, including teenagers, can see it easily as long as they have Internet access and a Netflix account.

Since the suicide staged on *13RW* has allegedly been copied by its followers, a study on copycat behaviour was explored further. According to Ueda et al. (2017), an increase in suicide rates in Japan occurred when a prominent celebrity suicide was followed by a large coverage on Twitter. The prominence of the celebrities was measured by the number of articles written about them in national newspaper Yomiuri Shimbun and if they were mentioned on Wikipedia. Between July 2010 and December 2014, 26 prominent figures whose deaths led to a wide social media coverage were identified and these deaths also increased suicide rates among the figures' followers. The study also found that traditional news media was not sufficient to be used in studying the impact of media coverage on actual suicides. Following this, Arendt et al. (2018) studied the role of news media in reporting suicide, focusing on the framing techniques and the use of language on the news reports. The analysis found that reading about suicide-related news frame which uses the language not recommended by experts could encourage the act of suicide among those suffering incurable illness. Based on these two studies, there is a relation between suicide and copycat behaviours. In addition, the two studies also focused on the role of news reports and the language they used, therefore, this is where the role of social media fits into the gap. Lee and Kwon (2018) agreed that social media, specifically Twitter could be an inviting platform for people to join the community that promotes suicide. However, the study was conducted using Korean tweet containing only the term "*suicide pact*", and considering South Korea has a high suicide rate and distinctive cybersuicide pact-related edicts, the generalisability of the entire findings was diminished.

Since the *13RW*'s character Hannah Baker was 17 years-old when she committed suicide, it was fitting to specify the main scope of the present study to youth or adolescent suicide. Youth suicide is a growing social conflict in Malaysia and other developing countries in Southeast Asia (Cagande & Foo, 2017). The use of the data from the 2013 Malaysian adolescent health risk behavior (MyAHRB) study involving youths aged 16-17 found that female youths had higher suicide prevalence compared to male youths. Most of them cited reasons such as "*loneliness, anxiety, no close friends, and lack of supportive peers*" as their suicide ideations (Chan et al., 2016, p. 8). Relating these findings to *13RW*'s plot, loneliness and lack of supportive peers were among possible reasons leading Hannah Baker to her suicide. On the other hand, another study of 232 youths aged between 15 and 25 found that suicide risk was higher among male youths compared to female. While the former's main ideation for suicide was *age*, the latter were more concerned of *depression, loss of motivation, and sense of hopelessness* (Siau et al., 2017). The most common methods used among the youths to commit suicide are hanging and self-poisoning (Bahar, N. et al., 2014). Since *13RW* was adapted from a novel, it is worth noting that Hannah Baker in the book died of overdosing sleeping pills, which can be considered as self-poisoning, while the screen showed Hannah Baker slitting her wrist with a sharp razor blade.

Globally, youth suicide prevention for people between the ages of 0 to 24 in Canada involved emergency programs, depression treatments, and antidepressants to reduce suicide deaths, repetitive attempts and risks (Bennett et al., 2015). The expedited knowledge synthesis-based (EKS) study had huge implications in preventing youth suicide, but the study also had little data to refer concerning the effect of youth suicide prevention programs on death by suicide. Callear et. al (2015) examined the effects of school, community and healthcare-based interventions on youth suicide for people between the ages of 12 to 25, including suicide attempts and behaviour. Among these

three, school-based intervention was found to be the most promising approach to help in preventing suicide in this particular population. Ruch et al., (2018) suggested that incarceration environment may increase the risk of youth suicide and contribute to the factors of suicide among the youths, where many incarcerated youth suicide decedents often die from strangulation, hanging, and suffocation.

In addition, a study was carried out to explore the perspectives of suicide attempt survivors and the benefits of these people getting the disclosure, by conducting group and individual interviews for 40 survivors in the US, between the ages of 20 to 63 (Sheehan et al., 2019). The benefits of suicide disclosure were sorted into twelve themes which included social support, coping strategies and personal recovery, whereas the ten themes of risks of disclosure included stigma, unsupportive reactions, and lack of understanding. These studies on suicide highlighted the important of early suicide detection and laid the groundwork for suicide preventive measures.

2.2.2 Online comments and online reviews

The dataset of the present study was in the form of online reviews and comments posted by the audience of *13RW*. Online reviews are a form of web communication (Park & Nicolau, 2015) or are also known as electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (Kim & Gupta, 2012), which helps people to share their thoughts and responses regarding products, services and brands (Filiberti, 2015). Products can include movies, where people depend on good online reviews to decide whether or not a movie is worth watching. Positive online reviews result in complimentary attitude towards a brand, while negative online reviews lead to negative attitude towards a brand (Ladhari & Michaud, 2015).

Online reviews help people reach for decisions and conclusions (Lu et al., 2018). The additional online ratings contribute to the importance of online reviews since it is now sought by academia and industry (Gao et al., 2017). Zhang et al. (2019) found that high online ratings and successful contents affect consumers' booking experiences positively. In a study to determine whether the connection between reviewers and readers affect booking intention, Chan et al. (2017) claimed that demographic and preference similarities between reviewers and readers motivate consumers' hotel booking. The same case can be seen on the present study, where personal opinions and relatability motivated the reviewers' interpretation of *13RW*'s suicide.

Online comments could also lead to arguments exchange (Silva, 2013: 186 as cited in Torres da Silva, 2015). In 2014, the issue of climate change attracted the public to give opinions on Dutch newspaper websites (De Kraker et al., 2014). It was found that the different world views that were driven by factors such as the level of knowledge, the honest opinions, the shared concerns, and the perception of distrust among the online comments on the websites were highly irregular. Furthermore, the online comments used as data only represented a small part of the entire population, making it insufficient. Saddique et al. (2017) studied the effect of the online Facebook comments on the companies that put their trust on the comments for product advertisements and sales. The results showed that people depend on the comments provided by the third party to agree on buying the products, rather than putting their trust on the companies that produce the products. This pointed out the limitation of the present study, in which the reviewers might have been influenced by others' opinions (third party) on social media before watching *13RW* and writing their own comments on IMDb, Rotten Tomatoes, and Meta Critics. This is discussed further in Chapter Five.

Thakur (2018) claimed that customer engagement is the factor contributing to the online reviews. This is because potential shoppers usually read these online reviews written by previous users of the same products to get an idea of the products before deciding to buy them. Following this, Davis and Agrawal (2018) made another claim that online reviews are influenced by the importance of the products as rated by the consumers and trusting the reviews involves personal involvement amongst the consumers. On top of that, people also rely on online reviews to decide on the best movies to watch (De Jong & Burgers, 2013). On the present study's case, many reviewers decided to watch *13RW* after it became the talk of the town on social media and the controversy outburst on the entire Internet.

2.2.3 Fandom

According to Henrich and Holmes (2013), commenting on the internet allows people to interact with each other, share their insights and beliefs, and debates and negotiates ideas. The comments on *13RW* revolved around the fans' manifestation on the show, which eventually created the voice of a fandom. Fandoms are a group of online communities or people which represents shared interests and passions (DeLuca, 2018). Instead of only sharing interests in movies and music with friends and family (McDonald, 2009 as cited in Johnson & Van Der Heide, 2015), the internet provides a new sharing medium for fandoms (Good, 2013; Liu, 2017 as cited in Johnson & Van Der Heide, 2015). Another form of fandoms is sport fans, which is defined as the public who are also participatory audience (Avalos & Dori-Hacohen, 2018).

2.2.4 Troll and trolling

Another type of communication in an online community is trolling, which is defined as a hostile online behaviour purposely intended to cause harms to other users in online spaces (Coles & West, 2016). These behaviours may interfere with online interactions through annoyance and aggravation (Binns, 2012; Bishop, 2012a as cited in Coles & West, 2016), resulting in negative sentiments to a greater extent compared to positive.

Torres da Silva (2015) did a case study on users' perceptions towards comments sections by analysing comments threads of Portuguese newspaper article. The results showed that the discussion was dominated by negative comments that were sharpened by the relationships among the users. Furthermore, a study on negative hotel reviews in three different languages taken from TripAdvisor.com revealed that there is a general trend towards similarity between languages (Cenni & Goethals, 2017). The same can also be seen on *13RW*'s online reviews where the presence of trolling was apparent based on the hostility shown by some reviewers through the use of profanity. Although some of the reviewers used the asterisk (*) symbol to replace a letter in an offensive word spelling, the hostility can still be sensed.

In addition, trollology may also potentially pose damaging implications in online comments, especially for journalists trying to engage with their audiences (Wolfe, 2019). Although the trolling did not affect the reliability of the data, its presence was acknowledged because it provided a negative sentiment in audience perception regarding *13RW*. On the other hand, Brookes and Baker (2017) analysed the online feedback on National Health Service (NHS). The findings showed that the patients of NHS were more likely to evaluate the provided services as positive rather than negative. The lack of trolling's presence was able to contribute to the improvement of NHS in England.

2.2.5 IMDb, Rotten Tomatoes, and Meta Critics

The dataset of the present study was gathered from three most trusted reviewing websites, which were Internet Movie Database (IMDb), Rotten Tomatoes, and Meta Critics. According to Topal and Ozsoyoglu (2016), moviegoers decide which movie to buy or watch next by reading the reviews and looking at the star ratings on IMDb and Amazon. IMDb is also the most popular online database for movies and personalities with diverse dataset fitting for a sentiment analysis (Lopez, Nguyen, and Sumba, 2019) because it provides insight into people's worldwide thoughts and opinions. Other than IMDb, Rotten Tomatoes and Meta Critics also provide a handful amount of data which could be used for a sentiment analysis. IMDb's Ratings, Rotten Tomatoes's Tomatometer, and Meta Critics's Metascore dispenses the most preferable films by movie enthusiasts. Kuri and Kaufman (2019) used these sites to study the leadership elements portrayed in Hollywood movies which could motivate aspiring future young leaders. Moreover, movie reviews stored in the databases of both IMDb and Rotten Tomatoes helped in an automated sentiment analysis. The emotional stats expressed in the data increased the level of accuracy of the results (Han & Kim, 2017). In short, the dataset gathered from these three websites for the analysis of the present study was reliable and sufficient, as well as able to fill the gap in the study of discourse based on a fiction context.

2.2.6 Corpus linguistics

The present study is a corpus analysis study. A corpus is vital when it comes to studies and issues related to language use (O'Keeffe & McCarthy, 2010). One of the corpus-based methods in the past studies was to examine the variety of language used by the users of Twitch.tv, a website for broadcasting live games attended by people from different language backgrounds. The findings showed that the messages exchanged by the users were influenced by the viewer activeness, repetition of other messages, and the use of emoticons (Olejniczak, 2015). Another corpus-based method was conducted to

study the use of emojis in 2,475 annotated tweets, which found that emojis were either used to repeat or add information, or to replace a word (Donato & Paggio, 2017). In addition to this, a corpus analysis study was carried out to study the memorability of melodies of folk songs. The corpus collected for the analysis consisted of 4,125 digitized transcriptions of Dutch monophonic songs. The analysis of the occurrence of the variation of phrases revealed that short phrases contain highly predictive melodies that usually occurred early in the songs and possessed pitch intervals (Janssen et al., 2017).

2.2.7 Evaluation

The present study also adopted evaluation framework. Evaluation has been applied in the past studies in which things are measured to a certain extent (Brookes & Baker, 2017). Baker and McEnery (2015) analysed audience responses towards a controversial television program Benefits Street. Three discourses were discovered as the main concern of the audience that varied from the wealth and the poor, which later prompted another study on the second season of Benefits Streets by I. Van Der Bom et al. (2017). The findings showed different underlying discourses that influenced the tweets sent by the audience that then resulted in negativity. They also found that using live tweets as data gave them access to a much larger number and the data were not influenced by any other factors as they were given voluntarily. This is also the case with the present study. Although the present study does not use Twitter as data source, the socially-situated and socially constructed meaning making process could still be achieved. In addition, the findings also tied the negative behaviors of the participants to the area of research that uses audience receptions as data, as well as gaining public perspectives on the purpose of a television program.

Tucker (2014) focused on student evaluations to improve teacher performance at Curtin University, Australia. The methods used to identify the offended and unprofessional comments were the same as the ones used in the similar study carried out in 2016 (Oliver et al., 2007 as cited in Tucker, 2014). The comments were recognized as abusive if they were opposite the values of Curtin's Guiding Ethical Principles. Extremera and Rey (2018) conducted a study to test whether positive and negative affect could establish the relationship between core self-evaluations (CSE) and life satisfaction, by involving two groups of Spanish samples. The positive affect and negative affect consisted of ten items each. The findings showed that positive CSE was linked to life satisfaction and the connection between these two was mediated by positive affect.

In a recent paper, Taboada et al. (2017) suggest how previous research has shown that languages tend to contain more positive than negative words, and propose a taxonomy of linguistic resources that are deployed in the expression of negativity. They presented a study investigating the pragmatic expressions of negative evaluation in a corpus of online comments in response to newspaper opinion articles and in another corpus of online reviews of movies, books and consumer products. Through a corpus study of three specific phenomena that play a role in the expression of negativity: adverb-adjective combinations, questions and rhetorical figures, they demonstrated how a sampling of the many lexicogrammar and discourse resources are used to convey a negative evaluation of objects, persons or situations.

2.3 Conclusion

Chapter Two discusses past studies on eight relevant fields. They are suicide and adolescent suicide, online reviews and comments, fandom, trolling, the three review websites, IMDb, Rotten Tomatoes, and Meta Critics, corpus linguistics, and evaluation. Since the main subject of *13RW* is suicide, the topic of suicide is explored further by looking at past studies regarding the suicide issue, particularly adolescent suicide and its growing role in today's Malaysia. The discussion also identifies the gap among the past studies which could be filled with the findings from the present study, particularly the role of review websites in online suicide discussion based on a television series in addition to the social media, blogs, and forums where people engage in a conversation on real-life suicide issue. The reviewers wrote the comments on the series because of their similar interest in the show, which connects their voices in one fandom. Nevertheless, it does not rule out the possibilities that the reviews were written with the intention to troll. The past studies on IMDb, Rotten Tomatoes, and Meta Critics establish the credibility of these three websites and their important roles in the present study. Chapter Three will explore the research methodology adopted in the data analysis which will also include further discussions on corpus linguistics and evaluation.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter contains detail descriptions of the research methodology applied in the data analysis. The theoretical framework and approach are discussed under different subheadings, which are corpus linguistics, evaluation in texts, discursive news value analysis (DNVA), and close reading of suicide-related concordance lines.

For corpus linguistics, two procedures are adopted in the present study. They are concordancing and keyword analysis. Concordancing is applied in the first analysis to generate suicide-related concordance lines from the corpus. Two news values presented in DNVA are adopted in the analysis to identify the evaluative items and expressions, before a sample of 200 suicide-related concordance lines are taken from the concordance analysis for close reading. Keyword analysis is performed in the second part of the present study to generate a list of keywords to discover the underlying key themes in the audience reviews.

Data collection is discussed next to include the size of the corpus, the reliability of the data source, and the duration of the data collection. Next, data analysis procedure explains the steps taken to conduct the present study.

3.2 Background of the methodology

3.2.1 Corpus Linguistics

The present study is a corpus-based study which explored the evaluation of texts in the media discourse. A corpus may be defined as “a collection of texts, written or spoken, which is stored on a computer” (O’Keeffe, McCarthy & Carter, 2007, p. 1). A corpus is also a tool used to collect written or spoken texts stored in an electronic form for quantitative and qualitative purposes (O’keeffe, McCarthy & Carter, 2007). Baker (2004)

points out that corpus linguistics offers a range of procedures, two of which were applied in this study. The first was concordance analysis and the second was keyword analysis.

Concordancing is a widely used tool in corpus study, used to “find occurrences of a particular word or phrases” (O’Keeffe, McCarthy & Carter, 2007, p. 8), also presented as concordance lines. Concordance lines generated for a concordance analysis enables researchers to “examine different patterns of the same word or cluster” (Baker et al., 2008, p. 279). Furthermore, concordance lines point to the wider contexts and functions of the text (Flowerdew, 1998).

The concordance analysis in the present study was conducted using the software AntConc 3.5.2 (Windows) 2018. AntConc is a software that is available for free download. By using the search word *suicide* and other words or phrases which indicate the meaning of suicide, a set of concordance lines were able to be studied to reveal the audience perception on the suicide theme and answered the first research question.

The second corpus linguistic technique adopted in the present study was keyword analysis. Keyword analysis or “the creation of keyword lists” (Baker, 2004, p. 346) in the earliest days was used to identify the words that materialized “societal or cultural concerns” (e.g. Firth, 1957; Williams, 1983 as cited in Baker, 2004). However, as the practice of corpus linguistics expanded through the years, the definition of keyword analysis was also enhanced. Scott (1999) branches out to a more statistical definition by suggesting that any word could be key if it occurs frequently when compared to a reference corpus. Other researchers also opt out for different approaches of keyword analysis. It is mainly used to comprehend the details of specific genres (e.g. Tribble, 2000 as cited in Baker, 2004), to identify the elements of discourse within language, and to redirect researchers to underlying and undiscovered concepts that could highlight the existence of an ideology within the discourse (Baker, 2004).

In addition, Poole (2014) defines keyword analysis as a result of the comparative analysis between the text being investigated and a larger set of texts from the same genre which acts as a reference corpus. The result of a keyword analysis typically points out to keyness which is defined as “a quality words may have in a given text or set of texts, suggesting that they are important, they reflect what the text is really about, avoiding trivia and insignificant detail” (Scott & Tribble, 2007, pp. 55–56 as cited in Poole, 2014). These important words may help in discovering the underlying key themes in a discourse, which are the key patterns and trends that could be interpreted and made sense of from online opinion data, as well as the key areas of concern (Brookes & McEnery, 2017).

The second research question as noted in Chapter One aimed to uncover the concealed key themes within the online reviews posted by the reviewers. First, the keywords analysis was performed using the KeyWords function of the Compleat Lexical Tutor, an online tool that provides many features convenient for corpus data analysis which is accessible at <http://lxtutor.ca>. Three reference corpora are readily available on the websites. Two of them were chosen as the reference corpora for the study, which were BNC UK Spoken 10 Million and Brown US Written 1 Million. The results of the keyword analysis were able to prompt the discovery of the underlying key themes.

3.2.2 Evaluation in texts

Evaluation is one of the frameworks that was applied to a large part of the present study. According to Hunston (2011, p. 11), evaluation is defined as “set of meanings which might be expressed in a given text using a wide variety of language resources”. It is also a complex linguistic phenomenon, as it involves different extents to which things are measurable (Brookes & Baker, 2017). Both positive and negative evaluations are achievable through this phenomenon. For example, Van Der Bom et al. (2017) find that evaluation analysis can help in discovering the negative discourse in a dataset involving

audiences' response to a television program, which enables the socially-situated and socially constructed meaning making process. Furthermore, Brookes and Baker (2017) note that evaluation analysis of patients' negative feedback contributes to the improvement of a health facility.

The present study drew the insight from Bednarek (2016) on the ways the evaluative items and expressions were identified through certain categories, including “comparators (comparative adjectives/ adverbs, adverbs of degree, comparator adverbs and expressions of negativity), markers of subjectivity (modals) and markers of value (evaluative lexis, adjectives, adverbs, nouns, verbs, and indicators of the existence of goal achievement)”. Of all comparators, only markers of value were required to analyse the data in the present study.

3.2.3 Discursive News Value Analysis

The corpus techniques and evaluation approach were integrated with Discursive News Values Analysis (DNVA) (Caple & Bednarek, 2013). Previously, DNVA has made contributions in journalism and communication (Potts et al., 2015). DNVA sorts out the newsworthiness of online articles (e.g., Caple & Bednarek, 2013; Caple & Bednarek, 2014; Potts et al., 2015), or in the present study's case online reviews.

Bednarek and Caple (2014) highlight the importance of DNVA in discourse-based studies, which is to introduce a new framework to critical linguists to analyse news values and expand it further. Although it is mainly aimed on investigating why a story is worth to be published (Caple & Bednarek, 2015), the news values presented in the framework, especially Negativity and Positivity, may help in analysing the audience evaluation on the suicide theme of *13RW* whether it is negative or positive and revealing why their voices are worth to be heard.

The present study adopted this approach together with the interrelation of corpus linguistics techniques to examine the newsworthiness of online reviews of *13RW*, focusing on the suicide theme. As stated by Henrich and Holmes (2013) responding to online news allows people to communicate with each other as they agree or disagree with the contents of the shared articles. The same was seen in the reviews of *13RW* where audiences were expressing their thoughts to be shared with the other viewers. To fit the purpose of the study, DNVA was broken down into several news values. Table 3.2 below shows the news value and the definition according to Potts et al. (2015) and Bednarek (2016).

Table 3.1 News values and definition

News value	Definition
Consonance	Events discursively constructed as stereotypical
Eliteness	Events constructed by fame or high status
Impact	Events constructed as having effects or consequences
Negativity	Events constructed as negative
Novelty/ Unexpectedness	Events constructed as news or unexpected
Personalisation	Events constructed as a personal or 'human' face
Proximity	Events constructed as geographically or culturally near
Superlativeness	Events constructed with high intensity
Timeliness	Events constructed as timely to the publication and date

While Positivity is not listed as one of the news values because it is infrequently acknowledged by scholars (see Caple and Bednarek, 2013) Bednarek (2016) included it as one of the news values with the definition of the events constructed with positive valence, making it one of the news values that is relevant the findings of the present study. Hence, Negativity and Positivity news values were adopted in the present study to identify the negative and positive reviews in the corpus (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2 News values adopted in the analysis

News value	Definition
Negativity	Events constructed with negative valence
Positivity	Events constructed with positive valence

3.3 Data collection

The research data was in the form of online reviews or comments posted by the audience of *13RW*. The reviews were gathered from three different websites, which were Internet Movie Database (IMDb), Rotten Tomatoes and Meta Critics. These websites were chosen because first, it has been reported that they are trusted for movie and show reviews because of their popularity (Olteanu, 2017). Second, IMDb, Rotten Tomatoes and Meta Critics are listed as the top 10 film review websites by Raindance (Taylor, 2013).

The duration for data collected was one year, from March 31, 2017 where the series was first aired, until March 31, 2018 to ensure that it was not mixed with the reviews for the second season of the series that was released in May 2018. Since there were reviewers who came back to their previous reviews and added the comments for the second season, all reviews were read carefully to ensure that the analysis only focused on the reviews of the first season. In addition, the reading also enabled the identification of words or phrases used in the data that could indicate the meaning of suicide, which are *kill yourself*, *death*, *way out*, *self-harm*, *ended her life*, *slit wrist*, *offed herself*, *taken her life*, and *took her life* (see Table 3.4).

Table 3.3 below presents the total number of tokens retrieved from each website.

Table 3.3 Total number of tokens retrieved from each website

IMDb	Rotten Tomatoes	Meta Critics
168,179	28,929	11,509
Total no. of tokens		208,617
Total no. of tokens after the dates were removed		204,102

All the collected reviews were then combined into a corpus named *13RW* Review Corpus which consisted of 204,102 tokens. The dates were removed from the corpus so that they would not be generated as outputs during keywords analysis since most of the dates were repetitive.

All the data were taken from public domains, and the usernames of the reviewers did not influence the analysis of the data.

3.4 Data analysis procedure

First, the concordance lines were generated by using AntConc. The *13RW* Review Corpus was imported into the software with *suicide** as the search term. The search window size was increased from 50 to 80 to capture longer co-texts of the concordance lines. Out of 1052 concordance hits, only 432 were sorted as the suicide evaluation. Other words or phrases that indicate the meaning of suicide were also used as the search terms as presented on Table 3.4 below. The wildcard * was used to give various meanings to the words and phrases so that they would not be used repetitively. For example, the search term *kill** could mean *kill*, *kills*, or *killed*.

Table 3.4 Suicide-related search terms

Suicide-related terms	Search terms
Suicide	<i>suicide*</i>
kill/ kills/ killed yourself/ herself/ himself/ oneself	<i>kill* *self</i>
Death	<i>Death</i>
way out	<i>way out</i>
self-harm	<i>self harm</i>
end/ ends/ ended her life	<i>end* her life</i>
slit/ slits	<i>slit*</i>
off/ offs/ offed yourself/ herself/ himself/ oneself	<i>off* *self</i>
take/ takes/ taken her life	<i>take* her life</i>
took her life	<i>took her life</i>
Total no. of concordance lines	501

As noted in Section 3.3, the words or phrases that indicate the meaning of suicide in Table 3.4 were identified through a close reading of sample online reviews from the three websites. This procedure might have missed certain words that indicate suicide, but great care had been taken to ensure that the list was identified to the best ability of the researcher.

The total of 200 concordance lines were then studied for the identification of relevant evaluative items and expressions used to express the reviewers' perception of the suicide theme on *13RW*. As noted earlier, the analysis applied marker of values comparator, where each evaluative item and expression were classified into "adjectives, adverbs, nouns, verbs, and indicators of the existence of goal achievement" as outlined by the evaluation approach by Bednarek (2016).

Although the suicide concordance lines were already generated, they did not necessarily contain appropriate evaluative items and expressions. Therefore, a close reading of the data was required to identify them and ensure that all of them were in line with the suicide evaluation. The 501 concordance lines produced by AntConc then led to the file view where all the data gathered were available presented for analysis. However, the analysis was performed on a smaller set of data which consists of 200 concordance lines.

Close reading is a functional linguistics tool for Critical Discourse Analysis (Martin, 2005). However, the present study treated close reading as an analytical means “to uncover layers of meaning that lead to deep comprehension” (Boyles & Scherer, 2012). Schur (1998) finds that close reading could lead to “fresh dimensions of meaning and inspiration” of texts.

The present study adopted this technique on 200 concordance lines samples taken from the result of the concordance analysis to identify the appropriate evaluative items and expressions in line with the suicide evaluation due to its less time-consuming trait. The purpose of this analysis was also to understand the use of the items and expressions for the categorisation of negative and positive evaluation.

The evaluative items and expressions were identified according to their lexical categories. For example, as will be shown later in Table 4.3, the word *justify* from the data was sorted into the verb category because of its lexical properties, the word *glorification* was categorised into noun category, the word *dreadful* was classified as an adjective, and the word *graphically* was recognised as an adverb. The full findings are presented and discussed in Chapter Four.

Next, DNVA (Caple & Bednarek, 2013) was adopted to identify the negative and positive reviews. It was initially expected that the data would be identified both as negative and positive, however each with different weight and extent.

The negative evaluative items and expressions were classified according to four events presented in the Negativity news value. They were items related to damaging and destroying, violence and anger, crime or criminal activities, and death. According to Bednarek (2016), these items were briefly described as containing “negative evaluative language”, “negative lexis”, and “references to negative happenings” such as violating societally acceptable behaviour.

On the other hand, the positive evaluative items were classified according to three events presented in the Positivity news value (Bednarek, 2016). The items were associated with either benefits, helping, or good evaluation.

All of these contribute to the categorisation of Negativity and Positivity news values. For example, as will be presented later in Table 4.3, the word *dreadful* was sorted into damaging and destroying category and was evaluated as negative because it represented an audience perception on the suicide theme. In addition, *dreadful* is also a negative evaluative language. An example for Positivity news value as will be presented later in Table 4.4, is the adjective *sympathetic*, which was evaluated as positive because it relates to benefits category.

The concordance analysis of suicide was then followed by the keyword analysis to discover the underlying key themes within the online reviews. The KeyWord function on Compleat Lexical Tutor was chosen to generate the keywords by using two reference corpora, which were BNC UK Spoken 10 Million and Brown US Written 1 Million. The outputs from both reference corpora were compared to generate the top 50 most shared keywords. These keywords were then analysed further to identify the main key themes of the online reviews, which are *misrepresentation of mental disorder*, *inaccurate portrayal of high school teenagers*, and *misleading message about teen social issues*.

Procedures, discussion, and examples of data which led to these themes will be presented in Chapter Four.

3.5 Conclusion

Chapter Three discusses the methodological approaches adopted in the data analysis. Two corpus techniques, concordancing and keyword analysis, were applied to answer the first and the second research question respectively. Concordance analysis was used to generate suicide-related concordance lines. The search term used was the word *suicide* itself alongside other words or phrases that indicate the meaning of suicide which will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

The evaluative items and expressions in the suicide-related concordance lines were identified by following Bednarek (2016), followed by a close reading on the 200 selected concordance lines sample to identify the relevant evaluative items and expressions of suicide evaluation. The identified items and expressions were then categorised as positive and negative by adopting Discursive News Values Analysis (DNVA) (Caple & Bednarek, 2013). The keyword analysis carried out next was able to generate 50 top keywords, which were analysed further to identify the main key themes of the online reviews. The key themes identified through the analysis of the keywords were *misrepresentation of*

mental disorder, inaccurate portrayal of high school teenagers, and misleading message about teen social issues.

Chapter Four presents the findings of all analyses. All examples of the data are unedited and as they appeared on the websites.

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CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the concordancing and the keyword analysis. As noted in Chapter Three, two corpus techniques adopted from corpus linguistics were adopted in the analysis of the first and the second research questions, which were concordancing and keyword analysis respectively. In addition to concordancing, DNVA and a close reading of 200 review samples taken from the corpus were also applied to get the results. For the second research question, the keyword analysis was performed to generate a set of keywords from the reviews to discover the underlying key themes.

The two research questions are answered and discussed in detailed.

4.2 Findings and analysis of the first research question

The first research question as presented in Chapter One is: *To what extent is suicide theme perceived as positive or negative?*

To answer this question, a concordance analysis was carried out. As noted in Chapter Three, first, suicide-related concordance lines were generated by using AntCont software. The search terms used were the word suicide itself and the other words or phrases that indicate the meaning of suicide.

Table 4.1 presents the frequency of the suicide-related terms.

Table 4.1 Frequency of suicide-related terms

Suicide term	Search term	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Suicide	<i>suicide*</i>	432	86.2
kill/ kills/ killed yourself/ herself/ himself/ oneself	<i>kill* *self</i>	25	5.0
Death	<i>Death</i>	24	4.8
way out	<i>way out</i>	7	1.4
self-harm	<i>self harm</i>	5	1.0
end/ ends/ ended her life	<i>end* her life</i>	3	0.6
slit/ slits	<i>slit*</i>	2	0.4
off/ offs/ offed yourself/ herself/ himself/ oneself	<i>off* *self</i>	1	0.2
take/ takes/ taken her life	<i>take* her life</i>	1	0.2
took her life	<i>took her life</i>	1	0.2
Total frequency of <i>suicide</i>		501	100

Table 4.1 above presents the suicide-related terms, and the frequency of the occurrence of each term in the corpus. Three of the search terms, which are *off* *self*, *take* her life*, and *took her life* occurred at least once, with *suicide** as the most frequently occurred search term in the corpus. This shows that the other words and phrases that indicate the meaning of suicide also contribute to the analysis of the study.

To uncover whether the suicide theme was positively or negatively evaluated, the first 200 concordance lines from the total 501 lines were studied for the identification of relevant evaluative items and expressions. As noted in Chapter Three, the evaluative items and expressions were identified by classifying them into five different categories under marker of values comparator, which were “adjectives, adverbs, nouns, verbs, and indicators of the existence of goal achievement” (Bednarek, 2016).

Based on a close reading of the 200 concordance lines, those suicide-related terms that were used to describe, discuss, and evaluate Hannah’s suicide were singled out from those terms that refer to suicide irrelevant to Hannah’s case, such as discussion of suicide in general, the reviewers’ personal experience with suicide or their close encounter with any other suicide attempts. It should be pointed out that ideally all 501 lines were to be studied. Focusing on these 200 lines was for practical reasons; it is admittedly one of the limitations of this study.

Table 4.2 presents the findings.

Table 4.2 Analysis of evaluative items and expressions

Markers of value	Evaluated as	No. of evaluative items		Examples
		Frequency	Percentage (%)	
Adjectives	Positive	21	9.4	1) <i>...powerful...</i> (IMDb) 2) <i>...authentic...</i> (IMDb) 3) <i>...mature...</i> (RT)
	Negative	85	38.0	1) <i>...nauseating...</i> (MC) 2) <i>...offensive...</i> (RT) 3) <i>...insulting...</i> (IMDb)
Adverbs	Positive	0	0	
	Negative	3	1.3	1) <i>...explicitly...</i> (IMDb) 2) <i>...falsely...</i> (IMDb) 3) <i>...offensively...</i> (IMDb)
Noun	Positive	14	6.3	1) <i>...a conversation that needs to be had.</i> (IMDb) 2) <i>...portrayal...</i> (IMDb) 3) <i>...a new outlook...</i> (RT)
	Negative	34	15.2	1) <i>...shame...</i> (IMDb) 2) <i>...glamorization...</i> (RT) 3) <i>...misrepresentation...</i> (IMDb)

Table 4.2 continued

Markers of value	Evaluated as	No. of evaluative items		Examples
		Frequency	Percentage (%)	
Verbs	Positive	5	2.2	1) ...does not in any way glorify suicide... (IMDb) 2) ...it's not promoting suicide... (IMDb) 3) ...I don't see how this show glamorizes suicide or even has caused idealization of suicidal thoughts to increase as articles report. (IMDb)
	Negative	14	6.3	1) ...glorify suicide... (IMDb) 2) ...glamorizes suicide... (RT) 3) ...making fun of it (suicide)... (IMDb)
Indicators of the existence of goal achievement	Positive	16	7.1	1) ...raises awareness about this TOPICS LIKE SUICIDE... (RT) 2) ...help better understand teen suicide. (IMDb) 3) ...actually does a very good job of showing the extremely negative impact that a persons' suicide has on the people around them. (IMDb)
	Negative	32	14.3	1) ...exploiting these terrible realities for drama and entertainment... (IMDb) 2) The writer of this story clearly thinks that all suicide victims are just attention seeking juvenile brats... (IMDb) 3) ...gives a reason for someone ending their lives... (IMDb)

The evaluative items and expressions were classified into different categories according to their lexical properties. Table 4.2 shows that adjectives were by far the most frequently occurred category, followed by nouns, adverbs, verbs, and indicators of the existence of goal achievement.

In the adjective category, three examples of positive items given are the words *powerful*, *authentic*, and *mature* as can be seen in the examples below:

- 1) Prepare for graphical content towards the final episode, it's very tragic and **powerful**. (IMDb)
- 2) The fact that these problems are treated in an **authentic** way make the serie even more realy to us. (IMDb)
- 3) The subject matter of this is so heartbroken that it never felt sappy or corny as it's done in a realistic and **mature** way that knows what it's talking about... (RT)

The six evaluative items were not used to describe suicide specifically. Example (1) refers the suicide theme as *the final episode*, example (2) refers it as one of *these problems*, and example (3) uses the phrases *the subject matter*. Another three examples of negative items are *nauseating*, *offensive*, and *insulting* as shown in the examples below:

- 1) And that scene where Hannah slits her wrists is just **nauseating**, I don't know what the writers were hoping to accomplish by showing us that. (MC)
- 2) But romanticizes a serious issue for the pure goal of profit, borderline **offensive**. (RT)
- 3) As someone who has felt this way and has known others who were legitimately bullied, I found this **insulting**. (IMDb)

Example (1) describes the suicide theme as *that scene where Hannah slits her wrists*, example (2) regards it a *serious issue*, and example (3) simply uses the word *this*. All these evaluative items were discovered through the close reading techniques.

As discussed in Chapter Three, these items along with others from all categories were examined as positive and negative by adopting Negativity and Positivity news value from DNVA (Caple & Bednarek, 2013). The meanings of the items were measured according to the events with which they were associated. Table 4.3 and Table 4.4 present the analysis of the negative and positive evaluative items respectively.

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Table 4.3 Analysis of negative evaluative items and expressions

Negativity	Examples of data				
Terms relating to:	Adjectives	Adverbs	Nouns	Verbs	Indicators of the existence of goal achievement
Damaging and destroying	1) ... <i>dreadful</i> ... (IMDb) 2) ... <i>appalling</i> ... (MC) 3) ... <i>toxic</i> ... (IMDb)	1) ... <i>explicitly about suicide</i> ... (IMDb) 2) ... <i>falsely</i> ... (IMDb) 3) ... <i>offensively</i> ... (IMDb)	1) ... <i>glorification</i> ... (IMDb) 2) ... <i>punishment</i> ... (IMDb) 3) ... <i>big issue in the American society</i> ... (IMDb)	1) ... <i>making fun of it (suicide)</i> ... (IMDb)	1) ... <i>an absolutely disgusting attempt to "raise" awareness for suicide and depression.</i> (RT) 2) ... <i>exploiting these terrible realities for drama and entertainment</i> ... (IMDb) 3) ... <i>in no way whatsoever does this tv show portray an accurate depiction of the aftermath a suicide can bring to parents, friends, and even bullies.</i> (RT)
Violence and anger	1) ... <i>reckless</i> ... (IMDb) 2) ... <i>brutal</i> ... (MC) 3) ... <i>dark</i> ... (IMDb)		1) ... <i>trigger</i> ... (IMDb) 2) ... <i>revenge</i> ... (IMDb) 3) ... <i>a blame game</i> . (IMDb)		
Crime/ criminal activities					1) <i>Suicide and Rape are very real and serious, in real life, but they are not represented as such in the series.</i> (IMDb)

Table 4.3 continued

Negativity	Examples of data				
	Adjectives	Adverbs	Nouns	Verbs	Indicators of the existence of goal achievement
Death			1) ... <i>the most glorifying suicide thing.</i> (IMDb)	1) ... <i>justifies...</i> (IMDb)	1) ... <i>makes it (suicide) seem as something cool and aesthetic.</i> (MC)
			2) ... <i>the epitome of romantic suicide.</i> (IMDb)	2) ... <i>glorifies...</i> (IMDb)	2) ... <i>depicts suicide and sets suicide as the final trump card.</i> (IMDb)
			3) ... <i>not the reality of suicide.</i> (IMDb)	3) ... <i>exploit...</i> (IMDb)	3) ... <i>you too can use suicide hurt the people you don't like.</i> (IMDb)

Table 4.3 shows the negative evaluative items that were identified according to four events with which they are associated, which are damaging and destroying, violence and anger, crime or criminal activities, and death.

Focusing on the damaging and destroying category, the three examples for adjective are *dreadful*, *appalling*, and *toxic*. Examples as written by the reviewers are shown below:

- 1) Of course there needs to be attention in high schools for suicide and bullying. But no, there is no need to make it this **dreadful**. [...] Anyway, I watched the entire show, but I kinda felt like a waste of time. Over-hyped, underdelivered and too much teenage 90210 Beverly Hills. (IMDb)
- 2) The whole premise of show is ridiculous. The fact that she blamed others for her own suicide and is **appalling**. However, what's more disturbing is how blind so many people are to this and actively support and recommend this show. (MC)
- 3) This show completely exploits and romanticizes suicide in the worst way possible and they made it inaccessible for people who are going through those same things with triggering and graphic scenes that they were advised to leave. [...] The popularity this is gaining is extremely unhealthy because it's spreading so many **toxic** messages about suicide and mental illness. [...]. (IMDb)

In example (1), the word *dreadful* was used by one reviewer to describe the dreadful presentation of suicide and bullying on the series, which he did not find worthwhile spending long hours watching it. Although his review started out positive, he continued by pointing out that while suicide and bullying were two serious topics, they did not have to be portrayed in such unpleasant way. According to Cambridge Online Dictionary, *dreadful* is defined as “causing fear, shock, or suffering”. The word is clearly associated with damaging and destroying, therefore, it was classified as negative.

The second example for adjective is *appalling*, which can be defined as “shocking” or “very bad”. It poses the similar meaning as *dreadful*, according to example (2), the reviewer linked his *appalling* point to the subplot of Hannah putting the blame on the people she left behind for her suicide through the thirteen tapes. Blaming people for suicide that then led them down a traumatic phase of life, two of them attempted suicide and the others carried the guilt probably for the rest of their lives, is an act of damaging and destroying, and therefore, *appalling* was classified as negative.

Another example for adjective is the word *toxic*, which is defined as “poisonous”. In other words, toxic contents may be harmful to the audiences, as pointed out in example (3). In the review, the word *toxic* was directed at the messages *13RW* has spread about suicide and mental health. The reviewer also provided examples to explain his stance, such as the exploitation and the romanticisation of suicide that could possibly lead to a real suicide, which rendered the word *toxic* negative.

For adverb category, the three examples as presented in Table 4.3 are *explicitly about suicide*, *falsely*, and *offensively*. While *falsely* and *offensively* are adverbs, *explicitly about suicide* was also categorised as adverb because of the word *explicitly*, which is an adverb. However, since *falsely* and *offensively* were found in one review, only two examples of data taken from the corpus are discussed below:

- 1) AS someone with severe depression this show is very triggering not only because of the way it is **explicitly about suicide** but the glorifying of it. This leads people like me to start thinking about how easy it would be to leave as we could just leave something like a pile of tapes to blame other people when it's really our decision. (IMDb)
- 2) With that being said, the other thing I wanted to point out is that the issues being talked about in this show are handled **so falsely and offensively**, it's basically insulting those with mental illnesses. (IMDb)

In example (1), the reviewer mentioned about how the explicit execution of the suicide scene could become a trigger to the people struggling with suicidal thoughts and give them ideas on how to commit suicide while placing blame on others. Furthermore, the explicit suicide scene could be difficult and uncomfortable for struggling people, leading to negative emotions such as fear, shock, and anxiety. Therefore, the phrase *explicitly about suicide* was classified as negative.

Meanwhile in example (2), the reviewer made a reference to “the issues being talked about” on the show, which one of them is suicide, is actually insulting to the people who are actually struggling with mental illnesses. The way the suicide storyline was made to be a final way out could send false message to these people. Therefore, both *falsely* and *offensively* were classified as negative.

For the noun category, the three examples highlighted in Table 4.3 are *glorification*, *punishment*, and the phrase *a big issue in the American society*. While *glorification* and *punishment* are nouns, the phrase *a big issue in the American society* is also considered as noun because of the words *issue* and *the American society*. Examples of data are shown below:

- 1) Finally I would not recommend this show to people, not as much as its **glorification** and extremely poor attempt to portray all of these major issues, it's because it's dangerous pending on your own state of mind.. especially someone that is at all not in the right place at the moment... (IMDb)
- 2) This isn't sympathetic to the suicide victim, but a **punishment** for anyone for who ever has been a survivor of a child, spouse, sibling, friend of a suicide. (IMDb)
- 3) But NO is just a boring teenage series that touches a **big issue in the American society** - teenage suicide and bullying. Which in the US obviously is a big issue. Which is why I think 13 Reasons Why has 9.1 on IMDb. (IMDb)

The word *glorification* is one of the notable examples used by the reviewers. Other than “the act of praising and honouring God or a person”, glorification can also mean “the act of describing something in a way that makes it seem better or more important than it really is”. In example (1), the reviewer stressed that the glorification of suicide on *13RW* was not meant for mentally struggling people because it could lead them to see suicide as a good way to end a problem. It is damaging and destroying, therefore, *glorification* was also classified as negative.

Another noun example is the word *punishment*, as seen in example (2). *Punishment* is “an act of punishing someone”. By portraying Hannah’s suicide the way that it was, it was a punishment for the people who have been through it or are actually going through it. In addition, it also presents having a close friend or family member commit suicide as a punishment because they failed to notice the signs of suicidal person. The word was then also classified as negative.

The phrase *a big issue in the American society* was categorised as a negative noun because it indicates the presence of trolling based on the hostility and the sarcasm, that *13RW* gained a high rating on IMDb simply because it is a big issue only in the American society, as shown in example (3).

There was only one example for verb, which was *making fun of it* (suicide). This phrase was classified as verb because of the word *making*. The reviewer wrote:

The way they talk about suicide is insulting and it kind of seems like the show is **making fun of it** when it is never a joke. [...] That could possibly make more teens commit suicide, making the situation even worse than it already was. (IMDb)

As someone who has gone through worse struggles than Hannah had, he found the suicide theme to be insulting and treated as a joke. Therefore, the verb was classified as negative.

Furthermore, for the indicators of the existence of goal achievement category, there are also three examples which are the phrases *an absolutely disgusting attempt to "raise" awareness for suicide and depression, exploiting these terrible realities for drama and entertainment, and in no way whatsoever does this tv show portray an accurate depiction of the aftermath a suicide can bring to parents, friends, and even bullies*. Examples can be seen below:

- 1) This show glamorizes suicide and is **an absolutely disgusting attempt to "raise" awareness for suicide and depression**. It is doing more harm than good and needs to be pulled/removed from Netflix. (RT)
- 2) The fact that this show is getting a second season leads me to believe that the focus was never about sending out suicide prevention messages, or anti-rape messages, but about **exploiting these terrible realities for drama and entertainment**, and that is honestly disgusting and inexcusable. [...] there's no mention of justice where Hannah's and Jessica's abusers are concerned since not a single adult knows about what happened, and the guilt is eating everyone up inside to the point that they are considering suicide (which is what the show is purportedly trying to be against). (IMDb)
- 3) Personally, through high school I experienced 3 peers committed suicide and **in no way whatsoever does this tv show portray an accurate depiction of the aftermath a suicide can bring to parents, friends, and even bullies**. [...] If you like drama then this show is an excellent choice, but it certainly doesn't shine light on a real depiction of what a teenager with depression goes through. (RT)

In example (1), one reviewer saw the show as *an absolutely disgusting attempt to "raise" awareness for suicide and depression*. Supporting his argument was the hope that *13RW* would be removed from Netflix so that no one else could see it. This shows intense negative feelings of anger and hatred. Therefore, the use of the phrase was classified as negative.

Another reviewer thought of *13RW* as *exploiting these terrible realities for drama and entertainment* as shown in example (2). According to him, the fact that *13RW* was getting a second season defeated the original purpose to send suicide prevention messages, as initially claimed by the producers of the series. Because if it was sending suicide prevention messages, the story should have ended with season one only.

The last example for damaging and destroying is as shown in example (3). Similar to the perspectives from other reviewers, this one also highlighted the false representation of suicidal person and the act of suicide itself. Therefore, it was classified as negative.

The second event is violent and anger. Three examples for adjective category are *reckless*, *brutal*, and *dark*. Examples are as below:

- 1) [...] the way it executed its approach to depict sensitive and possibly triggering events is dangerous and **reckless**. [...] but for all those out there who are survivors of rape, depression, suicide, sexual assault, and others depicted in the show it can be very triggering. (IMDb)
- 2) Showing these people it intends to help a girl who is turned away at every door she turns to could, in turn, be incredibly harmful to those who have picked up the show as it is an issue that affects them. I do believe the **brutal** imagery used for the suicide is incredibly necessary and the way the shows deals with rape is very important, but the mess of messages has lost these details and instead, every teen on twitter is speaking about the dreamy lead character. (MC)
- 3) An overly pop version of a **dark** and serious topic. (IMDb)

The word *reckless* can be defined as “doing something dangerous and not worrying about the risks and the possible results”. As one reviewer wrote in example (1), the suicide theme was described as reckless because it could possibly cause the already struggling people to copy the act in real life. The scene of Hannah slitting her wrists in the bathtub could make someone else slit her wrist, causing an alarming violence and danger. Therefore, the word *reckless* was classified as negative.

The second adjective example for violence and anger is *brutal*, as shown in example (2) which is defined as “cruel” or “violent”. Several reviewers thought that the brutal way of portraying the suicide was necessary in order for it to reach people right to the core, but this reviewer saw it in a different way. The real messages the series was trying to convey somehow got lost in the brutality of the suicide scene. Therefore, *brutal* was classified as negative.

The next example is the word *dark*, which in this context could mean “sad” or “without hope”. As pointed in example (3), although this review did not elaborate further on the use of the word *dark*, the way the topic (suicide) was executed (*overly pop version*) was enough to classify it as negative.

Next, the noun *trigger* was classified as negative because according to some reviewers, watching the graphic suicide-related scenes could be a trigger for sensitive audiences. *Trigger* in this context can mean “a situation that causes something to start”. One of them wrote:

Some scenes are hard to watch, and people who are sensitive to the subject matter (rape & suicide) should probably not watch the series. Can definitely be a **trigger**. (RT)

The other two examples for noun category are *revenge* and *blame*, which were also used frequently in the data.

Next, the evaluative items associated with crime or criminal activities were identified. One example is the impact the show left on one reviewer who wrote *suicide and rape are very real and serious in real life, but they are not represented as such in the series* as an indicator of the existence of goal achievement. This paints a negative view on rape specifically, because *13RW* did not include the punishment for the rapist in the final episode. It could mislead teenagers to think that rape is not a crime and those who do it can easily get away without serious consequences. Therefore, it was classified as negative.

On top of that, evaluative items and expressions associated (verb) with death are the phrases *promotes suicide*, *glorifies suicide*, and *exploits suicide*. All these put suicide in the wrong light, as highlighted here:

- 1) Talking about suicide in a way that honors it is horrible. Blaming people for suicide is also terrible. [...] This should not be available to people of all ages who could be struggling and wondering if they should take their life. This TV show **promotes suicide**. BAD. (IMDb)
- 2) I also have to grudgingly agree that this show seems to **glorify suicide**, especially from a teenagers perspective, as Hannah not only becomes super popular post-suicide, but totally gets back at everybody who wronged her with her tapes.
[...] this plot was a deep held revenge fantasy. (IMDb)
- 3) Let's **exploit suicide** for entertainment!
[...] If life gets tough, just kill yourself? Suicide makes for an interesting/memorable death? Suicide is a good method to get lasting revenge, especially on your loving parents? [...] Suicide is good entertainment? (IMDb)

The glorification of suicide on the series may give ideas to young audiences to also resort to suicide when they get hurt and use the suicide to seek revenge on the people who hurt them.

The suicide story also made a reviewer write *makes it (suicide) seem as something cool and aesthetic* as an indicator of the existence of goal achievement. This ideology clearly did not sit well many other reviewers, and therefore it was classified as negative. Another two examples are *depicts suicide and sets suicide as the final trump card* and *you too can use suicide hurt the people you don't like*. Both paint suicide in the wrong light Three examples are as below:

- 1) All this tv show does is romanticize suicide and **makes it seem as something cool and aesthetic**. (MC)
- 2) Sociologically/psychologically the show is pretty inappropriate because it **depicts suicide and sets suicide as the final trump card**. There is a scene where Clay hallucinates Hannah lying dead in a pool of blood, wearing a beautiful white gown. That scene is almost the epitome of romantic suicide. (IMDb)
- 3) The way I see it, this show glorifies suicide and that it is other people's fault that people commit suicide and that **you too can use suicide hurt the people you don't like and suicide is cool and trendy**. [...]. (IMDb)

After all negative evaluative items and expressions were identified, the positive evaluative items and expressions were examined next using the same methodology. The events with which the items and expressions were associated are benefits, helping, and evaluation that represents the good. Table 4.4 presents the analysis.

Table 4.4 Analysis of positive evaluative items and expressions

Positivity	Examples of data				
Terms relating to:	Adjectives	Adverbs	Nouns	Verbs	Indicators of the existence of goal achievement
Benefits	1) ... <i>sympathetic</i> ... (RT)		1) ... <i>dexterity</i> ... (IMDb)	1) ... <i>does not IN ANY WAY glorify suicide</i> ... (IMDb)	1) ... <i>shows us it's (suicide's) importance</i> . (IMDb)
	2) ... <i>human</i> ... (IMDb)		2) ... <i>wake-up call</i> ... (IMDb)	2) ... <i>does not encourage it</i> ... (IMDb)	2) ... <i>shows us the many possibilities and thought process of a person who is going through it</i> . (RT)
	3) ... <i>honest</i> . (IMDb)		3) ... <i>reality check</i> ... (IMDb)	3) ... <i>it's not promoting suicide</i> . (IMDb)	3) ... <i>shows the warning signs that you can look for in someone who is contemplating harming themselves</i> . (RT)
Helping			1) ... <i>a conversation that needs to be had</i> . (IMDb)		1) ... <i>starts a conversation</i> ... (IMDb)
			2) ... <i>warning</i> ... (IMDb)		2) ... <i>help better understand teen suicide</i> ... (IMDb)
			3) ... <i>suicide prevention!!!</i> (IMDb)		

Table 4.4 continued

Positivity	Examples of data				
	Adjectives	Adverbs	Nouns	Verbs	Indicators of the existence of goal achievement
Terms relating to: Evaluation: Good					1) <i>...its good that it brings attention to the issues like of suicide... (IMDb)</i> 2) <i>...actually does a very good job of showing the extremely negative impact that a persons' suicide has on the people around them... (IMDb)</i>

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First, the positive evaluative items and expressions were identified according to terms relating to benefits. Three examples of adjective are *sympathetic*, *human*, and *honest*.

Three examples are shown below:

- 1) The cast is relatively unknown, [...] and they were also great in it as the victims that caused Hannah's suicide are somewhat **sympathetic**, but they know what they've done and have to live with it... (RT)
- 2) "13 Reasons Why" is a story that deals with the issue of youth suicide in a very **human** and sensitive way. We live in a society in which physical illnesses are diagnosed and treated very easily, there are treatments and remedy for almost everything, but when the problem is emotional, as in the case of Hannah, who went through so many traumatic situations, she was isolated from the others, [...] it gives us the feeling that Hanna's story is not fictional... (IMDb)
- 3) I think this is something all HS teachers and students should watch. [...] I cannot praise this show enough for being **honest** and bringing a taboo topic into mainstream media, especially media being directed at teenagers. (IMDb)

As highlighted in example (1), the other characters or “reasons” for Hannah’s suicide were seen as the victims because they managed to invite the sympathy from the audience for their redemption after listening to Hannah’s tapes. This indicates that Hannah’s suicide had a positive effect on the people she put on the tapes and that something good came out of the act, that it changed people for the better.

For example (2), unlike the negative evaluation of suicide that mostly thought of Hannah’s suicide as a misrepresentation, this reviewer could relate to Hannah’s sufferings and feel her emotions throughout the series. Therefore, *human* was classified as positive.

The last example for adjective is the word *honest*. In example (3) context, honest means “truthful”. All three adjective examples indicate the present of hopefulness that the issues of suicide will no longer remain in the shadow and that the stigma surrounding suicide will be eradicated.

Three examples for noun are *dexterity*, *wake-up call*, and *reality check*. Three examples are as below:

- 1) I guess what I wanted to say is that I would like to thank the film producers for bringing this subject up with such **dexterity** so other kids hopefully will find ways to seek help. (IMDb)
- 2) This series serves not only as entertainment, but also as a **wake-up call** about depression and suicide. (RT)
- 3) It is a real **reality check** for everyone - whether you experience this yourself/ did experience this yourself, or you do not or even know somebody - because people need to realise yes this can happen in person, this can happen to anybody and anyone, anywhere in the world... (IMDb)

The word *dexterity* in example (1) was used to describe the well-executed suicide theme and the rich backstory behind it. It also shows that the suicide scene was well-researched before it was executed and put on the screen. This brings satisfaction to the audience, which a positive emotion, therefore it was categorised as positive.

The use of the phrase *wake-up call* in example (2) agreed with the previous arguments that *13RW*'s purpose is to bring awareness on suicide and depression, which have been stigmatised for many years, especially among teenagers. Therefore, it is classified as positive.

The phrase *reality check* in example (3) brought a new point to the argument. *13RW* was told in Hannah's point of view. Hannah, the teenage girl who could not see past anyone's mistakes and treatments towards her, had the right to express her emotions and her downward spiral into sadness. That is the point of the series, that a suicidal person who has been pushed over the edge tend to make bad decisions, and that this could happen to anyone. When it does happen, at the very least *13RW* may be the guidelines of how to deal with a person struggling with suicidal thoughts. *Reality check* is then classified as positive.

Moreover, contrary to the negative evaluation, some reviewers disagreed that the show glorifies suicide. One of them wrote:

The lack of "sugar coating" and the absolute refusal to skip the "hard" or "taboo" topics in this series is beyond respectable. [...] And no, this show **does not IN ANY WAY glorify suicide, or encourage the act.** (IMDb)

While many reviewers thought that the hard-hitting truths presented on the series were done in the name of glorifying suicide, there were still reviewers who perceived it as a positive way to shine a light on the issue. It had to be executed in the harsh ways in order to bring out the reality of it and its importance. Examples of the reviews are as follows:

- 1) I believe it's a subject that should be explored more and 13 Reasons Why really **shows us it's importance.** [...] it could help to make you feel less alone and if you are know a friend who is struggling, the show comes packed with a great message on how to help someone; to just listening and be there for them. (IMDb)
- 2) **The story delves into something deeper.** Something we don't normally think about or even want to talk about. Suicide is not something to be taken lightly and **this show shows us the many possibilities and thought process of a person who is going through it.** (RT)
- 3) ... this series brings up the consequences of suicide and the reasons so many young people commit suicide. **This is important because it brings awareness to the issue and shows the warning signs that you can look for in someone who is contemplating harming themselves.** (RT)

The second category is terms relating to helping. Three examples for noun are *a conversation that needs to be had, warning, and suicide prevention.* The examples are as follows:

- 1) What is important is that this show is starting **a conversation that needs to be had**. Which is actually the purpose of most of these 'social awareness' pieces. [...] this is art mimicking reality. (IMDb)
- 2) They don't glorify suicide in this TV show - they show us the catastrophe that stays with people you leave on earth, it shows that although your pain may end, your act of suicide leaves even deeper scars on all the people who loved you (even though you may not feel like you are loved).
[...] I don't see it as a suggestion for suicides but as a **warning**. It carries some important messages... (IMDb)
- 3) Why this show discussed so much? Because finally we are talking about real issue and so many students can RELATE. This is **suicide prevention!!!** (IMDb)

Suicide used to be seen as a taboo and easily be swept under the rug when it happens. However, according to this reviewer in example (1) *13RW* has opened a path for it to be talked about and discussed without the stigma behind it. The series has brought awareness on the issue of suicide and realisation among the society, and therefore, this was classified as positive.

Another two positive nouns are *warning* (example (2)) and *suicide prevention* (example (3)). While the former means *13RW* could give warning signs to look for in a suicidal person to prevent him or her from actually committing suicide, the latter promotes *13RW* as a suicide prevention method. Therefore, both were classified as positive.

There are only two examples for indicator of the existence of goal achievement available from the corpus, which are *start a conversation* and *help better understand teen suicide*, which were written as follows:

- 1) This was created to **start a conversation** teenagers want to be heard and valued. [...] This is trying to show how one thing can or a series of events can affect someone. (IMDb)
- 2) This is a show I believe you should watch just because it is so well done, but also to **help better understand teen suicide**, and how as people, we can all be better to each other by showing how not to treat one another. (IMDB)

The reviewer in example (1) related the scenes of *13RW* to real-life situations, that how suicide victims are often blamed for their actions while the people who drove them towards suicide, such as rapists, easily get away with their crimes. Although this may indicate the present of anger, it also points out the feeling of understanding, especially in the case of Hannah. Therefore, the phrase *start a conversation* was classified as positive.

In example (2), the reviewer pointed out that *13RW* gave insights into the issue of teen suicide as well as encouraging people to treat each other better. Although this may be a small act of kindness, but it could go a long way in preventing someone from attempting suicide.

The last event associated with positive evaluative items is good evaluation. An example is as follows:

As for romanticising teen suicide, I would argue that the show **actually does a very good job of showing the extremely negative impact that a persons' suicide has on the people around them.** (IMDb)

Although the example also contains a negative lexis which is *disparaging*, but the highlight is that *13RW* brought attention to the issues of suicide. Therefore, they are evaluated as positive.

The comparison between Table 4.3 and Table 4.4 shows that the negative evaluative items outweigh the positive evaluative items. The negative evaluative items are more variant and creative compared to the positive ones. In addition, the one word which has the biggest weight among the audiences is *glorify*. Using such word to describe a topic addressed in a fictional world indicates that the audiences truly believe that *13RW* glorifies suicide and it is justified in the examples below:

- 1) I think this show is incredibly problematic for a number of reasons. It shows incredibly graphic scenes involving rape and suicide, **glorifies suicide**, validates the main character's suicide, never once mentions mental illness or the resources available for those who need [...] It validated strong negative thoughts I was already having and basically gave me a step by step guide on how to kill myself. (RT)
- 2) As a person who has been through a close family member's suicide you do actually blame yourself a lot for a long time, and for the dead person to actually blame these people on tape is just a truly awful thing to do. [...] I'm very sad how this show sort of **glorifies suicide** as something weirdly beautiful and doesn't actually deal with real mental illnesses and problems. (IMDb)
- 3) I watched this show even though i have struggled with the thought of suicide ever since I was 9 years old. Now i am 28. I was hoping this show would send a message out in a good way but honestly...all it did was glorify suicide. [...] **glorifies suicide**/makes it romantic in a way. They brought in a VERY serious topic and they turned it into a blame game. (IMDb)

To answer the first research question, the suicide theme portrayed on *13RW* is perceived in a negative light to a greater extent. Several reasons can be associated with the negativity.

4.2.1 Discussion of the first research question

Based on the two analyses, it is apparent that the suicide theme is perceived as negative to a greater extent compared to the positive. However, both sides have argumentative interpretations of *13RW* which are discussed in this section.

In the negative evaluation, most of the reviewers saw a glorification in Hannah's suicide. Instead of using the platform to spread awareness and eradicate the stigma behind it, the series was perceived to present suicide as a solution to an unsolvable life problem.

Hannah became more popular after her death. Her locker was decorated with goodbye cards, photos, and flowers. The school also put up a banner encouraging students to seek help if they ever struggled with life so that they would not end up like Hannah. Since the story of *13RW* was told in two sets of time, most of the tape receivers changed for the better at the end because of Hannah's suicide. According to some reviewers, their "redemption" was a depiction of glorification of Hannah's suicide, that they became a better person because Hannah committed suicide. She was bullied when she was alive, but immediately turned into a "saint" after she died, as pointed out by this reviewer:

The show very much disgusted me with **its blatant and unforgiving glorification of Hannah's suicide**. [...] While it is true if you drive someone to suicide you will be traumatized but **the immediate depiction of her as a saint after the suicide** versus the way she was treated beforehand (Shown in flashbacks) reminds me very much of my own beliefs that led me to try and commit suicide. The belief that everyone will regret what they did after you're dead and that people will care more after you're dead. (IMDb)

Another reviewer pointed out that Hannah's suicide was portrayed as some sort of noble sacrifice to pave a better path for the people who hurt her in the past, as stated below:

Vapid and insulting glorification of weakness disguised as some sort of **noble sacrifice** in her suicide. (IMDb)

Suicide is a critical issue, but the way it was presented on *13RW* gave the impression that it was an easy decision for Hannah who barely faced difficulties in her life. Although the series stated all reasons for Hannah's suicide in a complete narration laid out in 13 episodes, some reviewers thought that they were "trivial" and "not worth dying for". For examples, losing a best friend over a boy, being named one of the hottest girls in school, having letters from a compliment box stolen, and having a poem leaked for the whole school to read were all described as "not enough reasons" for someone to commit suicide. Many of the reviewers shared their own personal experiences of dealing with bullying and depression and found that Hannah's struggles could not compare to them, hence, the glorification. The use of words such as *validates*, *promotes*, *romanticizes*, *glamorizes*, *justifies*, and *encourages* further support the claim that the suicide theme on the series was treated in a way that gives people the wrong ideas about it and they reflect the idea of suicide glorification. Examples of data can be seen as follow:

- 1) I personally have depression, take things for it, been through shrinks blah, blah, and **I am offended at all the trivial issues they make look like they ACTUALLY matter in life.** (IMDb)
- 2) Now i know, that cyber-bullying is a real problem, teenage suicide is also NO laughing matter but this is really not the way to portray it. **It boils a complicated psychological issue down to something trivial like simple narcissism and "all about me" culture.**
- 3) **The majority of the reasons are mundane bits of irrelevant high school drama.** Only when we get to the part where she witnesses rape and then gets raped do things start to make sense. So why did she drag her best friend Clay into it? [...] Clearly, Hannah was very unstable to begin with. (IMDb)

To emphasize more on the negative evaluation, some reviewers thought that *13RW* made a joke out of the topic of suicide, at the same time punishing the real suicide survivors with its "insulting" treatment of suicide.

This show completely gives an OK to teenagers committing suicide everyday in America. [...] There are so many people all over the world combating depression, and so many have a million worse reasons to commit suicide, but they chose not to everyday. Showcasing some American kid, combating life in high school, does not truly portray the seriousness of the issue of suicide and depression. **This show makes a joke out of the topic**, and it is repulsive. (IMDb)

Another notable point in the negative evaluation is the exploitation of suicide for profit and entertainment. One clear example is the fact that *13RW* series was adapted from a novel with some changes made for cinematography effects. In the book, Hannah died of overdosing sleeping pills. But in the series, the suicide scene showed Hannah getting into a bathtub filled with water while holding a sharp razor blade. As the scene went on, the camera angle focused exactly on the razor blade penetrating through her veins in her wrists, blood dripping into the water inside the bathtub turning it all red, while she was slowly taking her last breath. The scene was described as “extremely graphic”, and according to the reviewers, it was inappropriate to be shown on screen for impressionable young adults to see, especially those struggling with suicidal thoughts and ideations, and history or tendencies of self-harm. The scene planted fantasies inside the minds of these particular audiences, leading them to copy the act in real life, as pointed by a reviewer who had a daughter rushed to a hospital after attempting the same act a few nights after she watched the series.

- 1) Not a fan of the suicide scene ,felt like it was **too graphic** and they could've used more symbolism instead. (IMDb)
- 2) There's a scene in the finale that was **one of the most disturbing scenes** that I have seen in any TV show, ever. (IMDb)
- 3) The series **shows the death in rather intense detail and does not censor it**. I am not one to be made queasy by blood and gore (I sat through the deaths of Walking Dead's season 7 premiere without a problem), but this scene made me sick to my stomach. (RT)

This is also an example of *13RW* being a “trigger” to suicidal people. Watching Hannah killing herself in painful way was claimed to be giving a permission for others to kill themselves with the certainty that the people who hurt them would feel sorry after they are gone. Many reviewers were concerned with the series’ failure to tie Hannah’s suicide with a mental health problem. The way her character was built up throughout the show did not represent a person dealing with a depression, a mental health problem commonly associated with suicidal manners (Hawton et al., 2013; Lepine and Briley, 2011 as cited in Cummins et al., 2015). This is also a false representation of a real-life suicide and Hannah’s character is a false portrayal of a suicidal person. The pain that drive suicidal people towards suicide has to be unbearable, and these people do not have time to perfectly hatching a plan to record 13 tapes for the people they left behind to listen. Suicidal people simply stop caring about their lives and the people they might be leaving, and jump straight to suicide, unlike Hannah. A reviewer also highlighted that Alex portrayed a better representation of a suicidal person, but his story was only told to justify Hannah’s suicide. One example is as follow:

I have studied Psychology in University I also did Psychiatry and this show is **a major misrepresentation about real life suicide victims.** Numerous research has shown that 90% of suicide cases are either due to mental illness (Major depression/Bipolar/Schizophrenia etc..) or substance abuse (Alcoholism, Narcotics etc..). The issue with this show and Hannah Baker's character... [...] Real life suicide victims tend to blame themselves for everything that goes wrong in and around them. [...] It's very clear to me that this piece of garbage is written by someone who has ZERO understanding of depression, mental illness and suicide in general. The psychology behind mental illness and suicide is extremely complex and a lot of factors are into play, that portraying Hannah as killing herself due to bullying alone is just overly simplistic and silly. (IMDb)

Others pointed out that if the series was really intended for suicide prevention, Hannah should have been given options of seeking help, not being turned down at every door she tried to reach. The most notable example of this is shown on the final episode where Hannah went to see Mr. Porter, the school counselor. Some reviewers disagreed with the way he handled Hannah's struggles, while some blamed Hannah for hoping for Mr. Porter to understand her when she herself refused to come clean about her situation.

- 1) In my opinion, I think **Hannah would have killed herself whether or not Mr. Porter did a better job of helping her.** Let's face it - she killed herself that same night.
[...] She even says on the last tape that she is giving life "one more shot but if you are listening to this, then he has failed me". As if it was a test for Mr. Porter and he failed it so now he has to suffer for the rest of his life. (IMDb)
- 2) Not to mention that **when she goes to speak to Mr. Porter she is extremely defensive and cryptic, expecting him to read her mind and know her whole story just by barely saying anything.** And then she gets upset that Mr. Porter doesn't go running after her begging her to tell him everything when she made it quite clear that she doesn't want to say anything. (IMDb)
- 3) Similar thing happened with Mr. Porter, she told him that she got pretty much raped, but when he proposed to call the police and her parents, she said no. Then he asked her for the name of the guy who raped her, and she didn't want to say. Then when he tells her that there's only one more option left - to move on, she gets angry with him. **Then when she left, she BLAMED Mr. Porter for not going after her, just like she blamed Clay for leaving.** (IMDb)

This is also an example of a self-victimisation, another reasoned argument from the negative evaluation's perspectives. Many reviewers raised the issue of Hannah putting herself in a bad circle surrounded by bullies and peer pressures, while pushing away the only person who was sincere to be her friend which was Clay. She refused to confide in him and her loving parents, sending her deeper into the downward spiral that led to her suicide.

Apart from this, at the end of the series, half of the tape receivers felt remorse for all the miseries they caused Hannah. The most obvious effect was Clay, who went through a major character development as the tapes he listened to came to an end. From a quiet boy at school, he turned into an angsty rebellious teenager whose mission was to punish those who hurt Hannah, including himself. Clay hallucinated on a daily basis and spoke to Hannah as if she was there with him, had multiple outbursts in front of teachers and other students, was suspended from school after being caught in a possession of drug that Justin planted in his bag as a warning for him not to spill their secrets to other people, risked his life to face Bryce and was beaten up badly, and attempted a suicide himself after realising he contributed to Hannah's suicide.

Other characters also went through a hard phase after listening to Hannah's tapes. Alex stole a gun from his police father and shot himself in the head, Jessica went through a trauma after finding out that she was sexually assaulted while Justin knew but kept it a secret, Justin ended up on the street after his guilt-stricken behaviours forced his stepfather to abuse him physically, and Zach realised he had to spend the rest of his life feeling guilty for stealing a couple of letters from Hannah's compliment box. All of these subplots reflect a victory of a revenge-seeking journey. Hannah had subjected them to a lifetime of guilt through her suicide tapes, and many reviewers strongly disagreed with this idea, therefore adding weight to the negative evaluation of the suicide theme of *13RW*.

In addition, *13RW* also set suicide as a final way out. Many reviewers wrote that Hannah's suicide was portrayed as a way to end the struggles of life. It sent the wrong messages to the viewers, that if they face difficulties in life, all they have to do is commit suicide.

However, looking at the suicide theme from the positive evaluation's perspectives, many of the reviewers had more understanding of and relatability to Hannah's character. They kept in mind that all the characters were teenagers, and according to their opinions, teenagers do not have the same capacity of thinking the way adults do. Therefore, most of the reviewers perceived Hannah's actions as a normal teenager's act, especially one who is going through hardships. Depressed people, not to mention teenagers, tend to make bad decisions, and therefore Hannah's actions of recording the tapes and putting the blames on the other characters were acceptable. Her actions did not make sense because they were not supposed to make sense, and that was the message of the *13RW*.

While it's true that Hannah appears self-absorbed, **it is important to remember that she is a teenager and the teenage mind is not fully developed.** Teens have not developed the ability to fully empathize with others and often appear to be self-centered. To portray Hannah otherwise might have made her a more sympathetic character, but would be less realistic.

[...] There was no glorification of the act. In fact, there were many examples of the survivor's pain, it felt more like a deterrent. Also, the examples of how the smallest acts can link together to bring so much pain to one person were poignant and felt real. (RT)

Furthermore, some of the positive reviewers pointed out that *13RW* was not intended for the young audiences but for parents, guardians, and teachers. The series let the adults in on their children's world at school to which they are oblivious, and it taught them to better understand their children's life. Hannah's story can be a guideline they could follow to look for a sign for a mental struggle and suicidal behaviours. This is what they called as "suicide prevention".

If you've ever experienced what it's like to know someone close to you that has committed suicide, this is the TV series you've been waiting for. It's brutally honest, and it doesn't feel at all melodramatic. [...] I hope this series instigates a wide-spread dialogue about suicide and suicide prevention. (MC)

Despite the many faults of the series, another positive evaluation pointed out *I3RW* did raise an awareness among the society that adolescent suicide is a real issue today and open a path towards better conversation and treatment. Although the perception of the whole message may be different for different people, one similar result is that it made people talk about suicide.

The next section presents the analysis of the second research questions with supporting arguments from past studies on suicide.

4.3 Findings and analysis of the second research question

The second research question as mentioned in Chapter One is: *What are the key themes that emerge from the analysis of the posted online reviews?*

A keyword analysis was conducted to identify the key themes. The keywords analysis enabled an understanding of underlying specific concerns (Brookes & Baker, 2017). The KeyWords function of the Compleat Lexical Tutor was used for this analysis with two readily accessible reference corpora, BNC UK Spoken 1 Million and Brown US 10 Million. Table 4.5 presents the outputs.

Table 4.5 Outputs of keyword analysis

	Brown Written Million	US 1	BNC Spoken Million	UK 10
No.	Relative Frequency	Keyword	Relative Frequency	Keyword
1	1070.00	<i>Depress</i>	3050.00	<i>spoiler</i>
2	550.00	<i>Especial</i>	1250.00	<i>cinematographer</i>
3	515.00	<i>Situate</i>	1000.00	<i>angst</i>
4	465.00	<i>Realise</i>	1000.00	<i>storyline</i>
5	453.75	<i>Teenage</i>	950.00	<i>jock</i>
6	438.75	<i>Bully</i>	925.00	<i>classmate</i>
7	358.00	<i>Rape</i>	825.00	<i>protagonist</i>
8	350.94	<i>Suicide</i>	800.00	<i>storyteller</i>
9	325.00	<i>Binge</i>	748.61	<i>suicide</i>
10	305.00	<i>Spoiler</i>	700.00	<i>program</i>
11	285.00	<i>Narrate</i>	625.00	<i>suspense</i>
12	260.00	<i>disappoint</i>	587.50	<i>flashback</i>
T	248.18	<i>Episode</i>	550.00	<i>cheesy</i>
14	235.00	<i>flashback</i>	500.00	<i>motivate</i>
15	200.00	<i>Teen</i>	475.00	<i>heartbreak</i>
16	191.67	<i>Amaze</i>	450.00	<i>mindset</i>
17	190.00	<i>Cassette</i>	450.00	<i>nerd</i>
18	190.00	<i>heartbreak</i>	433.30	<i>episode</i>
19	165.00	<i>Annoy</i>	420.00	<i>depict</i>
20	160.00	<i>Empathy</i>	400.00	<i>traumatise</i>
21	155.00	<i>soundtrack</i>	400.00	<i>stellar</i>
22	140.00	<i>Depict</i>	400.00	<i>weight</i>
23	125.00	<i>cinematographer</i>	375.00	<i>melodramatic</i>
24	121.67	<i>Portray</i>	350.00	<i>screenplay</i>
25	115.00	<i>Rumour</i>	350.00	<i>insufferable</i>
26	115.00	<i>Irritate</i>	350.00	<i>bath tub</i>
27	110.00	<i>Harass</i>	350.00	<i>melodrama</i>
28	110.00	<i>Stalk</i>	337.50	<i>awesome</i>
29	110.00	<i>devastate</i>	305.89	<i>clay</i>
30	110.00	<i>Revolve</i>	258.33	<i>soundtrack</i>
31	100.00	<i>Storyline</i>	250.00	<i>snowflake</i>
32	100.00	<i>Disgust</i>	250.00	<i>goof</i>
33	95.00	<i>Edit</i>	250.00	<i>geek</i>
34	95.00	<i>Jock</i>	250.00	<i>egregious</i>
35	95.00	<i>Trauma</i>	233.33	<i>contrive</i>
36	91.25	<i>Parent</i>	218.16	<i>teen</i>
37	90.00	<i>Flaw</i>	200.00	<i>premeditate</i>
38	85.00	<i>Cringe</i>	200.00	<i>makeup</i>
39	82.50	<i>protagonist</i>	200.00	<i>douche</i>
40	80.00	<i>traumatic</i>	200.00	<i>hello</i>
41	79.86	<i>Tape</i>	200.00	<i>fairytale</i>
42	75.00	<i>Slut</i>	200.00	<i>culpable</i>
43	75.00	<i>Colour</i>	200.00	<i>cryptic</i>
44	75.00	<i>Addict</i>	200.00	<i>hallucinate</i>
45	75.00	<i>sympathise</i>	200.00	<i>unflinching</i>
46	70.00	<i>Hype</i>	191.18	<i>binge</i>
47	70.00	<i>Contrive</i>	180.00	<i>flaw</i>

Table 4.5 continued

	Brown Written Million	US 1	BNC Spoken Million	UK 10
No.	Relative Frequency	Keyword	Relative Frequency	Keyword
48	70.00	<i>Scenario</i>	172.05	<i>bully</i>
49	67.50	<i>Favour</i>	166.67	<i>finale</i>
50	66.67	<i>Connect</i>	162.22	<i>portray</i>
51	65.83	<i>Bake</i>	160.00	<i>empathy</i>
52	63.33	<i>Behaviour</i>	153.81	<i>teenage</i>
53	61.67	<i>Classmate</i>	150.00	<i>jarring</i>
54	61.11	<i>Watch</i>	150.00	<i>gripe</i>
55	60.00	<i>Hallucinate</i>	150.00	<i>dang</i>
56	60.00	<i>Criticize</i>	150.00	<i>drivel</i>
57	60.00	<i>Repetitive</i>	150.00	<i>vapid</i>
58	55.62	<i>Commit</i>	150.00	<i>nitpick</i>
59	55.00	<i>Overwhelm</i>	150.00	<i>coaster</i>
60	55.00	<i>Cheesy</i>	150.00	<i>scumbag</i>
61	55.00	<i>Captivate</i>	150.00	<i>downplay</i>
62	55.00	<i>Centre</i>	150.00	<i>epilogue</i>
63	51.25	<i>Impress</i>	150.00	<i>trope</i>
64	50.00	<i>Humiliate</i>	150.00	<i>trash</i>
65	50.00	<i>Clothe</i>	150.00	<i>meander</i>
66	50.00	<i>Angst</i>	150.00	<i>explicate</i>
67	50.00	<i>Boring</i>	150.00	<i>engross</i>
68	50.00	<i>Unravel</i>	140.00	<i>poignant</i>
69	50.00	<i>Intrigue</i>	125.00	<i>synopsis</i>
70	50.00	<i>Motivate</i>	120.00	<i>aftermath</i>
71			112.50	<i>lawsuit</i>
72			112.50	<i>kudos</i>
73			110.00	<i>captivate</i>
74			109.62	<i>narrate</i>
75			108.51	<i>series</i>
76			100.00	<i>closet</i>
77			100.00	<i>mistreat</i>
78			100.00	<i>gratuitous</i>
79			92.86	<i>revenge</i>
80			90.86	<i>rape</i>
81			83.33	<i>condescend</i>
82			75.00	<i>fictitious</i>
83			75.00	<i>heartache</i>
84			75.00	<i>lame</i>
85			72.73	<i>movie</i>
86			70.00	<i>avenge</i>
87			66.67	<i>borderline</i>
88			64.29	<i>narcissistic</i>
89			64.29	<i>vindictive</i>
90			63.64	<i>hype</i>
91			63.64	<i>garbage</i>
92			62.50	<i>repercussion</i>
93			62.50	<i>corny</i>
94			62.50	<i>genre</i>

Table 4.5 continued

	Brown Written Million	US 1	BNC Spoken Million	UK 10
No.	Relative Frequency	Keyword	Relative Frequency	Keyword
95			61.11	<i>mediocre</i>
96			54.28	<i>character</i>
97			53.57	<i>slut</i>
98			51.19	<i>romantic</i>
99			50.00	<i>belittle</i>
100			50.00	<i>coward</i>
101			50.00	<i>thrall</i>
102			50.00	<i>hotline</i>
103			50.00	<i>stalk</i>
104			50.00	<i>befriend</i>
105			50.00	<i>narcissism</i>
106			50.00	<i>introspect</i>
107			50.00	<i>facade</i>
108			50.00	<i>authentic</i>
109			50.00	<i>shun</i>
110			50.00	<i>compel</i>
111			50.00	<i>preposterous</i>

The two outputs were then merged into one to generate the top 50 shared keywords and they are presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Top 50 shared keywords

No	Keyword	No	Keyword
1	<i>Spoiler</i>	26	<i>Traumatize</i>
2	<i>Cinematographer</i>	27	<i>Stellar</i>
3	<i>Depress</i>	28	<i>Weight</i>
4	<i>Angst</i>	29	<i>Melodramatic</i>
5	<i>Storyline</i>	30	<i>Rape</i>
6	<i>Jock</i>	31	<i>Screenplay</i>
7	<i>Classmate</i>	32	<i>Insufferable</i>
8	<i>Protagonist</i>	33	<i>Bathtub</i>
9	<i>Storyteller</i>	34	<i>Melodrama</i>
10	<i>Suicide</i>	35	<i>Awesome</i>
11	<i>Program</i>	36	<i>Binge</i>
12	<i>Suspense</i>	37	<i>Clay</i>
T	<i>Flashback</i>	38	<i>Narrate</i>
14	<i>Especial</i>	39	<i>Disappoint</i>
15	<i>Cheesy</i>	40	<i>Soundtrack</i>
16	<i>Situate</i>	41	<i>Snowflake</i>
17	<i>Motivate</i>	42	<i>goof</i>
18	<i>Heartbreak</i>	43	<i>Geek</i>
19	<i>Realise</i>	44	<i>Egregious</i>
20	<i>Teenage</i>	45	<i>Contrive</i>
21	<i>Mindset</i>	46	<i>Teen</i>
22	<i>Nerd</i>	47	<i>Premeditate</i>
23	<i>Bully</i>	48	<i>Makeup</i>
24	<i>Episode</i>	49	<i>Douche</i>
25	<i>Depict</i>	50	<i>Hello</i>

The top 50 shared keywords were then studied to discover the main themes of the online reviews. To do this, a concordance analysis based on the AntConc was first conducted using each of the keywords as the search term. The concordance lines of each keyword were closely examined to identify possible themes emerging from the online reviews. A theme was established in this study when the concordance analysis of several keywords pointed to a shared, common idea. For example, the theme on *misrepresentation of mental disorder* was identified through a close analysis of the concordance lines based on the following six keywords: *depress*, *angst*, *classmate*, *protagonist*, *mindset*, and *clay*.

Through this process, a total of three key themes were identified in this study. They are (1) *misrepresentation of mental disorder*, (2) *inaccurate portrayal of high school teenagers*, and (3) *misleading message about teen social issues*.

The next section explores the discovery of each key theme, including the procedure, examples, and discussion.

4.3.1 Misrepresentation of mental disorder

The first key theme that will be discussed in this section is *misrepresentation of mental disorder*. As noted previously in Section 4.3, the keywords *depress*, *angst*, *classmate*, *protagonist*, *mindset*, and *clay* were used as the search terms to generate concordance lines. The keyword *depress* occurred 216 times, *angst* 23 times, *mindset* nine times, *classmate* 12 times, *protagonist* 28 times, and *clay* 568 times.

The first example of this theme can be seen from concordance line 122 taken from the 216 *depress* concordance lines as follows:

The show also sends a very false message to viewers- saying that if you're struggling, no one can help you and you have two options, suicide or self harm. Both of these are very wrong, and also not linked to each other. Statistically, most cutters do not have suicidal thoughts. **Depression is not mentioned once in the show**, which is the preceding cause of suicide. So, what are they supposed to be talking about? - **Therapists are pretty much never mentioned either**- a key factor to getting help for mental illness. (IMDb)

According to this reviewer, depression is one of the driving factors towards suicide. However, the word 'depression' itself was never mentioned on the show. The struggle of having depression might have only been shown through the acting of the main actress, but unfortunately, the representation could be sending wrong messages about depression and suicide to the audience.

On the show, the main character Hannah struggled alone in the events leading up to her suicide. None of her family and friends noticed her struggles and she was never once offered help. In addition, Hannah herself never sought help, except for the last episode when she went to see the school counselor but was turned down. Therefore, this could be damaging to the teenagers who are struggling with mental disorder, especially depression as well as suicidal thoughts. They may be led to think that no one will be willing to offer them help should the need arise, and that the only way to let go of the pain they are experiencing is suicide.

Another example of *misrepresentation of mental disorder* can be seen from concordance line 107:

Clay gets handed pills by his mum and we found out he used to take them. I assume they were **anti-depressants**? However **this is skimmed over and never returned to** because the only person with mental health issues is Hannah obviously and we can't let anyone else be more troubled than her. This could have been a great character development point but was sadly wasted. (IMDb)

One of the points made by some reviewers is Clay showed signs of depression, although this was also never mentioned on the show. In addition, there was one scene where Clay's mother handed him pills for him to take to which he refused. This reviewer assumed that the pills were anti-depressants. A person with a healthy mental state would not be required to consume anti-depressants, which indicates that Clay also struggled with a kind of mental disorder. However, Clay's exact mental state was never explored on the

show because the entire plot only focused on Hannah, whose representation of a depressed person was deemed a failure.

This can be further justified through concordance line 112:

I know from my own past that when someone close to you commits suicide, you blame yourself. You contemplate it yourself, even. But every therapist you go to will say IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT! And the fact that Alex tries killing himself because Hannah literally blamed him for it (among others who did not deserve it) proves that blame gets you NOWHERE. **It starts with mental health and coping abilities, which this show says nothing about.** I think that Alex, Jessica and Justin had the clearest suffering of all, not Hannah. I could see signs of depression in all of them, but not Hannah. (IMDb)

Another character mentioned on Hannah's tapes, Alex, attempted suicide towards the end of the show due to the guilt he had been carrying because of Hannah's suicide. On the other hand, Jessica was sexually assaulted when she was unconscious at a party and was traumatised by it, while Justin had been abused by his drug addict step-father since he was a child. However, their mental conditions were overshadowed by Hannah's, who according to this reviewer, was not depressed at all and yet was the one committing suicide.

This can also be supported by concordance line 13:

And here lies my overwhelming issue with the series, namely, Hannah's character. Hannah is an extremely unlikable narcissistic little madam who ostensibly has everything going for her. **I fail to see any evidence of depression** and her whole attitude demands for the world to revolve around her. Not just content with taking her own life, she was determined to ruin the lives of others as well. (IMDb)

Hannah Baker's character was supposed to portray the journey of a depressed person's descend into suicide. But instead, according to this reviewer, she came across as a narcissist whose mission was to ruin the lives of others who had hurt her in the past by committing suicide. This is another example of *misrepresentation of mental disorder*, because a person who suffers depression is more likely to blame herself for all the things that have gone wrong in her life rather than placing the blame on other people.

Concordance line 72 also mentioned about this issue, as presented below:

I have studied Psychology in University I also did Psychiatry and this show is a **major misrepresentation about real life suicide victims**. Numerous research has shown that 90% of suicide cases are either due to mental illness (Major depression/Bipolar/Schizophrenia etc..) or substance abuse (Alcoholism, Narcotics etc..). The issue with this show and Hannah Baker's character, is that **she didn't seem to fit the demographics of a suicidal person** whatsoever. [...] Hannah didn't blame herself at all, she never once thought that anything was her actual fault (unlike real life suicide victims). (IMDb)

This reviewer claimed to be a graduate of Psychology and Psychiatry, and according to the statistics he provided, a person with depression tends to blame herself a lot, which is something Hannah never did on the show.

Furthermore, many of the reviewers advised people struggling with depression to not watch *13RW* as it could bring them more harm than good. One of the examples can be seen through concordance line 156 below:

As a mental health therapist, I have had several newly suicidal young people come to me citing this show as influential in their suicidality. If you are feeling vulnerable and like life is too painful to endure, the revenge this show promises is not realistic. [...] If you decide to watch this show, and you are feeling depressed or vulnerable, please do it with someone you can talk to about it who isn't also vulnerable and can help or help you get the help you need from a qualified professional. Otherwise, avoid this Netflix program. It doesn't have your better interests in mind. (RT)

People with depression are not advised to watch *13RW* because it could influence the vulnerable mind that suicide is the only way out of every problem that life presents.

The second keyword that contributed to the identification of *misrepresentation of mental disorder* theme is *angst*. As noted earlier in this section, the keyword *angst* occurred 23 times. One example that supported the presence of this theme in the reviews can be seen from concordance line 3 as follows:

With Hanna I found her character tone narcissistic, over-blown, bitchy, needy and whiny. Sure I know many teens have a very tough time with teen angst and fitting in. Even more are subjected to daily bullying or pressure to fit in. **But this character truly had nothing in my mind, that would lead someone to suicide.**

In fact in found she was one of the main bullies. Consider why she seemed to blame everyone else for mistreating her or others, yet she herself instigated much of the same on her friends. (IMDb)

This reviewer perceived Hannah as a bully instead of a victim, and she was the one inflicted pain on others rather than being on the receiving end. Her life story was not that of a suicidal or a depressed person, but that of a bully who committed suicide over teen angst. Another example presented below is taken from concordance line 6:

13 Reasons Why is a 13 hour long teen-angst drama that features a "relatable" teen, Hannah Baker, as a girl who commits suicide purely because of other people, according to this movie. **It doesn't portray a real sense of depression at all, just terrible things teenagers can do.** (RT)

According to this reviewer's point of view, Hannah committed suicide not because of depression, but because of her angst. The real sense of mental struggle was not shown on the show. Instead, it was filled with teenagers' misbehaviours that led someone to commit suicide. Another example that suggested the *misrepresentation of mental disorder* theme as interpreted by the reviewers is taken from concordance line 23:

It's hard to believe that someone, **seemingly quite mentally sane** would commit suicide over teenage angst. We have **no evidence whatsoever that Hannah was chronically depressed or mentally disturbed or suicidal, at all** (unlike Alex, who was portrayed as a depressed kid). So... the series is not about suicide, because **the main character is not suicidal.** (IMDb)

Similar like other examples, this reviewer viewed Hannah's character as not suicidal, which should have been the driving factor of her suicide in the first place. Hannah was neither seen seeking professional help nor offered help by the people close to her. Rather, Hannah committed suicide over angst ignited by the way she was treated by her friends. This was perceived as false as it could send wrong messages to other teenagers who are struggling worse than Hannah was.

The third keyword that supported this theme is *classmate*, which occurred 12 times. One example is taken from concordance line 9:

That is **not a suicide note**. That is typical attention seeking behavior. When you are sure you are going to kill yourself, the last thing you would care about is what some random classmate thinks about you or anything else. Real suicide notes are short, to the point, and sometimes even humorous. Apologize to the people you love, some practical instructions about what to do after you die, and possibly a few witty sentences to get off your chest. That's that. (IMDb)

Hannah's tapes were supposed to be her suicide note, but unfortunately the act of recording them was perceived as an attention-seeking behaviour. On top of that, Hannah was also perceived as an attention seeker instead of a depressed person. This also added weight to the *misrepresentation of mental disorder* theme.

The fourth keyword that supported this theme is *protagonist*. One example can be seen from concordance line 10:

As most of the reviewers shared, the main problem and deficiency of the production is the protagonist. **Hannah Baker is not in any way the spot on example of a tormented, depressed and wounded American teenage girl.** Actually, she is quite the opposite and perfectly fits the claim 'Suicide is for the weak'. Here are some plain examples: 1. She actually has a pretty decent and quite happy life if I have to be honest, something that can not be said for others (Justin/Tyler for ex.) Her family is loving and supportive, struggling to maintain social status and providing their daughter what she needs despite difficulties (buying a new expensive car for her prom, refusing to benefit from her salary and savings etc.). (IMDb)

According to this reviewer, Hannah did not fit the demographic of a depressed girl. Despite her family's business facing financial trouble, she still had a loving home and present parents who were willing to give their best for her. Compared to other characters, Hannah definitely had a better life. But in the end, she was the one who commits suicide while the others continued with their lives. Thus, this added to the weight of *misrepresentation of mental disorder* in the online reviews as interpreted by the audience.

This theme was further justified with the fifth keyword, which is *mindset* that occurred nine times. One example can be seen from concordance line 4 as follows:

As a person who has attempted suicide before, I felt that, "13 Reasons Why", started out on good footing but got lost rather quickly. I think that the producers needed to do far more research on teen suicide and the causes of it. **"13 Reasons Why" didn't really offer much in the way of true information about the mindset of a suicidal person.** (IMDb)

The person who wrote this review claimed to be a suicide attempter. Speaking from own experience, she thought that *13RW* did not present the true reality of a suicidal person. More research needed to be done in order to capture the essence of suicide and the causes of it. Another example as presented below is taken from concordance line 8:

Suicide is overall a very internal feeling. **No way that a girl who is depressed** and has been bullied to the point where she has no sense of self-value left would even have the mindset to record 13 tapes blaming everyone who ever wronged her, which is a very external act. (IMDb)

According to this reviewer, the act of recording thirteen tapes explaining the reasons one would commit suicide does not resemble the true nature of a suicidal person. A suicidal person is perceived as not having self-value and care about the world. Therefore, recording a set of tapes equipped with instruction and poetic narration should not have been the act of the main character.

The last keyword that contributed to the *misrepresentation of mental disorder* theme is *clay*. Clay is the name of the lead male protagonist. One example that is relevant to this theme is taken from concordance line 255 out of 568:

Lastly, as a social worker who deals with people suffering from serious mental illness, **the character of Hannah does not exist in reality**. She is physically attractive, intelligent and lives in a highly supportive and healthy home, yet she confides nothing whatsoever to her parents, even when another student is stalking her and taking photos of her through the bedroom window. **Clay is similarly unrealistic for the same reasons** and with all of the students who are aware of the situation, the idea that none of them would tell any adult is very unlikely. (RT)

This reviewer claimed to be a social worker experienced in dealing with people suffering from mental illness. Hannah was good looking, had great parents, and lived in a supportive home. However, when she had troubles, confiding in her parents was not seen as a good option. The same was also said about Clay. Both of these did not define the true reality of a mentally troubled person who had been driven to the point of suicide. The second example of the keyword *clay* that supported the *misrepresentation of mental disorder* theme can be seen from concordance line 498:

However Hannah's character is painfully irritating. [...] The poor kid Clay tortures himself over Hannah's tapes and about how he supposedly "killed Hannah Baker" when he literally had done nothing wrong... [...] I felt much more sympathetic towards about every other character on the show than Hannah. So many other characters are going through so many of their own problems in life and I assumed there would eventually turn out to be some overlying moral of don't make assumptions about others' lives, but the only focus is on Hannah's "problems" which can be summed up by that she expects everyone to be mind readers and follow her capricious wants... (IMDb)

This reviewer, including several others, mentioned about the other characters who had worse lives compared to Hannah's and some of them also showed signs of depression. However, their struggles were not highlighted because the entire focus of the show is only on Hannah, who was often perceived as narcissistic instead of depressed.

Based on the examples discussed in this section, it was concluded that *misrepresentation of mental disorder* is one of the important key themes of the show interpreted by the reviewers who discussed it in the online reviews. The second key theme that will be discussed in the next section is *inaccurate portrayal of high school teenagers*.

4.3.2 Inaccurate portrayal of high school teenagers

The keywords that contributed to the interpretation of *inaccurate portrayal of high school teenagers* theme were *jock*, *protagonist*, *teenage*, *melodramatic*, *clay*, and *teen*.

The first keyword is *jock*, which occurred eight times. One example that supported the *inaccurate portrayal of high school teenagers* theme is taken from concordance line 2 as presented below:

She went on a date with a jock cretin, who creepily took an upskirt photo of her while she was fully dressed (including underwear). Said cretin's moronic friends grab his phone and send the pic to everyone in the school. All the kids then immediately and inexplicably extrapolate from this pic that the girl had sex with the jock. Why? How does someone get from point A to B here? If the showrunners (or novel author - I don't know, I haven't read the book) bothered to research the subject of the show, they'd know that high school social media is riddled with far more risqué pictures than this. It's a big part of the problem in today's schools. Putting aside the completely illogical assumption of sex from the photo, no kids today are jumping to such conclusions from pics like this, let alone alienating the picture's subjects because of it. If so, everyone in high school would be walking the hallways alone with their heads hung in shame. (MC)

This reviewer provided example of an event in 13RW to prove his point. Hannah's suicide story started with a rumour because of a photo circulated around the school, which was deemed "illogical". According to this reviewer, the use of social media in today's high schools goes beyond a controversial photo. These days, high school students share everything on social media. The reality is, one photo of a girl's skirt would not have such big impact, and it certainly would not drive the girl to suicide. Therefore, this review supported the *inaccurate portrayal of high school teenagers* theme. Another example of this theme can be seen from concordance line 3:

Just another show that **inaccurately depicts how high-schoolers behave and communicate to each other**. It isn't that hard to get this right. Just interview actual school teachers, staff and students and they will tell you how these kids ACTUALLY TALK.
[...] By the way, the whole premise of a jock is vastly cliché, because nobody is casually going around wearing Letterman jackets in California.
[...] Maybe I find enjoyment in identifying **inaccurate portrayals of high-schoolers**. Or laughing at some of the ridiculous dialogue choices.
(MC)

This reviewer clearly stated in his review that 13RW presented "inaccurate portrayals of high-schoolers". The way they spoke, behaved, and dressed all contributed to his point. In addition, he also suggested the writers to interview real high school students and observe the actuality of today's high school scenery. This shows how inaccurate the show is in portraying the characters. The third example of *jock* that supported this theme is taken from concordance line 4:

These high school student stereotypes are painfully **outdated**. It's hard to take this 'glimpse into the lives of teens' seriously when you have almost the exact same jock/school board prep/greaser/etc set up as the 2006 Rockstar game 'Bully' and countless number of media before and after it. It's been a few years since I was in school, I'll admit, but man the continuity of this world seems to shift rapidly. Sometimes Liberty is a 'small town school' and sometimes it has a professional grade darkroom. Maybe it's just me but **this damn High School looks more like a bloody college or a high-end, largely populated school.** (IMDb)

“Liberty” is the name of the high school on the show, and instead of being painted as a real high school, it was perceived as a “college” or a “high-end, largely populated school” by this reviewer. The portrayals of the characters looked as if like the storyline was set in 2006 rather in today’s world. Therefore, this also contributed to the interpretation of the *inaccurate portrayals of high school teenagers* theme.

The second keyword that supported this theme is *protagonist*, which occurred 28 times. One example is taken from concordance line 2 as follows:

Where it lacks is some of the writing and the source material. Several lines will easily make you cringe due to **their utterly out-of-touch nature with the way teens actually talk to one another**. There's also a lack of depth given to the characters, particularly the protagonist and antagonist. The protagonist is only ever a kind person trying to make friends and trust others, resulting in her getting stabbed in the back. The antagonist is purely someone in which we never really learn anything about other than he's evil and a douche. (RT)

This review is another example which supported the claim that the teen characters on 13RW do not communicate the way real teenagers do. This is because the writing lacks depth, and this shows that the writers should have done more research on the true reality of teenagers in high school.

The third keyword that contributed to the *inaccurate portrayal of high school teenagers* theme is *teenage*, which occurred 111 times. One of the examples can be seen on concordance line 6:

The students in this show are **not normal teenagers!** Most teenage athletes are not flagrant rapists, and most high school students would not go to great lengths to cover up a rape or suicide. (IMDb)

The rapist character on the show was one of the school athletes. According to this reviewer, most school athletes are not rapists, and it is unlikely that they will go to such great lengths to cover up a crime. This indicates that the teenagers on the show were not the accurate portrayal of real life high school teenagers. This was also further supported by a second example of the keyword *teenage* as presented below, taken from concordance line 12:

Its hard to grasp the concept of the main character being bullied when she is constantly invited to parties and people cheer for her when she enters the room.

I find it hard to believe that 12 kids heard a suicide tape and didn't bother to report it to their families or speak about it to their friends. [...] **No one in the program behaves like a real person.** Apparently teenage boys who attract a hot girl are more interested in a kiss in the park and lying about sex than they are in giving the relationship a week and actually getting some. (RT)

As noted earlier, Hannah was good looking. She was adored at the beginning of the show, therefore, her being suicidal was difficult to relate to. Other than that, 12 teenagers who listened to the tapes kept quiet throughout the show even when they knew a crime (the rape) had been committed. According to this reviewer, this was also difficult to believe. Hence, the portrayals of these high school teenagers were deemed inaccurate.

The third example of this keyword can be seen from concordance line 92:

This show is plagued by teenage slang and witticisms invented by the writers, who **clearly have no idea how real teenagers speak**, in an attempt to be hip. Slang like "cappuccino fingers." As in "Eww, don't touch me with your cappuccino fingers!" What the hell are cappuccino fingers? The fingers the perpetrator got from holding a mug of cappuccino by its handle? It's complete nonsense that I'd normally ignore, except that the whole series is loaded with this type of senseless dialogue. (MC)

This reviewer highlighted the dialogues used by the teenagers on the show. Most of the dialogues were written by writers who could not relate to the teenage world as they clearly did not resemble the way real teenagers speak. Therefore, this added more weight to the *inaccurate portrayal of high school teenagers* theme.

The next keyword that supported this theme is *melodramatic* which occurred 15 times.

One example is taken from the first concordance line as presented below:

One more thing, the way they told the story was **unrealistic for sophomores and juniors in high school**. Now I come from a very very small Christian town, so to be honest there wasn't a whole lot of crazy parties with alcohol and drugs and things like that(at least I never went to them) but even so I felt like a lot of the situations were melodramatic and unreal. (IMDb)

One of the many issues presented on 13RW is substance abuse among teenagers. According to this reviewer, real high school parties do not include that much use of alcohol and drugs, especially among those in sophomore and junior years. Therefore, the interpretation of the *inaccurate portrayal of high school teenagers* theme was further justified. The second example of *melodramatic* can be seen from concordance line 8:

The writing is unbearably mopey and melodramatic. It feels like an emo's wet dream. I think Clay is a well written character and acts like a true teen but **everyone else is a poor depiction of high school**. They all either drink, have sex, or act incredibly malicious. (IMDb)

The only character perceived as a true teen by this reviewer was Clay, while the rest had no resemblance of real high school teenagers. This is most probably because they only cared about drinking alcohol, being sexually active, and treating each other badly rather than actually being in school.

In addition to this, the keyword *clay* also contributed to the identification of the *inaccurate portrayal of high school students* theme. As noted earlier, Clay is the name of lead male protagonist. It occurred 568 times and the three relevant concordance lines will be discussed next.

The first example can be seen from concordance line 175:

Clay had his moments, but was ultimately an unlikeable protagonist. Several of the people in the tapes did not deserve to be included (Portraying a depressed character as a manipulator and a liar is just a bad idea. And, so is outing a victim in such a public way to guilt-trip someone.). And as a general statement to all Netflix (& CW) shows: **teenagers don't talk or look like that**; like, has anyone who worked on this show ever interacted with a teenager? (RT)

Other than highlighting that Clay and several other characters did not deserve to be on the tapes, this reviewer also included a reminder to Netflix and another network channel known for its teenage dramas, CW, that teenagers do not communicate the way they are often portrayed on screen. This was certainly also implied for the characters on 13RW. The second example of *clay* as presented below is taken from concordance line 263:

Perhaps the actors would have been better performers with a more believable script and character development. I mean really, Tony? **No teen in this country behaves, speaks, or makes expressions like Tony. Even Clay is too good to be true.** But the bad boys are also too bad to be true. (IMDb)

While another reviewer agreed that Clay was a true portrayal of a teenager, this reviewer on the other hand claimed the opposite. Other than Clay, Tony, who was often seen wearing leather jacket and driving around the small town watching over Clay, was also perceived as a poor portrayal of a high school teenager. This could be because Tony resembles an adult rather than a teenager. The last example of this keyword is taken from concordance line 314:

This show feels like it was either written/directed by **adults who don't remember anything about high school and are completely out of touch with today's youth**, or by bratty high school students who are overdramatizing their social lives to unwitting adults. Either way, it's plot is full of gaping holes. [...] **The characters are constantly doing things real people never actually do** (which can sometimes make for an exceptional story, but not when the show clearly strives to be realistic). (IMDb)

For a show that strived to be realistic, according to this reviewer, 13RW definitely failed in its effort to shed light on the reality of teenagers' lives in high school. The characters did not behave like normal teenagers do, and the high school scenery was far too different compared to a real high school.

Apart from this, the keyword *teen* also supported the presence of *the inaccurate portrayal of high school teenagers* theme in the online reviews. It occurred 144 times. Three of relevant lines will be discussed next.

The first one is taken from concordance line 1:

In the show there is talk that Hannah was bullied and I am guessing there are many of the above demographic who say she was. **If what she went through is deemed bullying then my goodness has society regressed since I was a teen a couple decades ago** as other than the very first thing she mentions, nothing she dealt with was bullying and even that first thing she could have corrected. Also, if this show is representative of today's youth and how they view life then we're all pretty much doomed. (IMDb)

This reviewer refused to acknowledge that what Hannah went through is bullying. This is because bullying in real life, according to her, is far worse, although she admitted that years have passed since she was a teenager. This was further justified by the second example as presented below, taken from concordance line 76:

A terrible production with awful acting and dialogue. The cast all **look 5 or more years older than their characters are supposed to be**. It was like watching an 80's teen movie with all the stereotypical characters in there. (IMDb)

One of the reasons of the inaccurate portrayal of high school teenagers may be the real age of the actors. Some actors looked a lot older than they were supposed to be, and this could be the reason they seemed unfit to be high school teenagers. The last example can be seen from concordance line 123:

After a couple episodes, it became comical to me that the kids in the movie cussed at their teachers and they acted like it was just normal teen talk. My kids go to public school and that would NEVER be acceptable to their teachers. They would at the very least be sent to the office and then suspended if they kept it up. Just saying, **most public schools are not like that.** (MC)

This reviewer used a comparison between the public school her children go to and the school presented on 13RW. According to her, real school teachers would not tolerate rude students. Unlike those on the show, rude students would at least be punished for their behaviours. Therefore, this also added support to the interpretation of *inaccurate portrayal of high school teenagers* theme in the online reviews.

Based on the examples provided in this section, it was concluded that *the inaccurate portrayal of high school teenagers* is one of the main key themes as interpreted by the reviewers in the online reviews. The next section will discuss the third key theme, which is *misleading message about teen social issues*.

4.3.3 Misleading message about teen social issues

The third key theme of the online review is *misleading message about teen social issues*. The keywords that contributed to the identification of this themes are *storyline, program, cheesy, bully, weight, rape, and melodrama*.

The keyword *storyline* occurred 19 times. The first example of the *misleading message about teen social issues* theme can be seen from concordance line 2 as follows:

While adding things to a story is okay when transferring mediums, what is not acceptable is when **the message is altered**. The core of the story is centered around a student's suffering, and how unable adults are to intervene when bullying and abuse can be so complicated. With the lawsuit storyline and Clay's vengeance, the focus shifts to revenge, which is not Hannah's main goal. (IMDb)

13RW highlighted many teen social issues other than suicide. For example, bullying, rape, and drug abuse. Unfortunately, when several other subplots were added to the show to make it more entertaining, the real intention to raise awareness about these teen social issues were overlooked. Many of the reviewers perceived Hannah's motivation to commit suicide was revenge, and this unfortunately had buried the real message about teen suicide which has become a rising issue worldwide. The second example of this theme is taken from concordance line 7:

First of all, from reading a synopsis of the storyline I was instantly compelled to watch the show. come on, a dead girl left "13 reasons why she killed herself" thought provoking. But, I was watching in agony for most of the episodes, because Hannah Baker placed herself in avoidable situations and then blame the world for her idiotic decisions. Big example!!! She knew that Bryce raped Jessica and went over to this dude's house and got in his hot tub, what she thought would happen? like a fellow reviewer that just can't be real, it's impractical, and for someone who seemed experienced she behaved quite naive. She yearned for popularity and acceptance, she just wasn't humble. Rape and bullying are nooo joke, but Hannah Baker supposed mysterious reasons for killing herself were not enigmatic but frankly "selfish!!!" I just felt it for her parents. (IMDb)

In today's reality, many sexual assault victims are fighting for justice. In 2017, over 1,582 rape cases were reported in Malaysia (Women's Aid Organisation, 2020), and 1,163 of these cases were underage victims. This indicates the seriousness of rape cases especially among teenagers. However, the way the rape storyline was written for 13RW paints a bad picture for the victim. After witnessing a rape committed by Bryce, Hannah willingly got into the hot tub at his house the next few days. According to this reviewer, this defeats the whole purpose of the show to spread awareness about rape because it shows the victim's fault instead of the rapist himself. In other words, this facilitates "rape

myths” further. As defined by Lonsway and Fitzgerald (1994, p. 134), “rape myths” are as “attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely and persistently held, and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women”. Therefore, this supported the interpretation of misleading message of teen social issues in the online reviews. The last example of the keyword *storyline* can be seen from concordance line 17:

The rape storyline was another plot point that I see others dismissing and almost as if it was the vicrims' fault rather than Bryce's. Yes, Hannah should've reported Jess' rape- I'm not excusing that- but her decision to go to Bryce's party was not premeditated and she had no way of knowing her fate would be the same. She fought off as much as she could but she had already "clocked out" on life a long time ago. She just couldn't do it anymore and the build up of guilt, shame and loneliness was enough for her to contemplate and execute her suicide sadly. (IMDb)

As noted previously, the rape storyline on *I3RW* was perceived as enabling rape victim blaming culture. This reviewer acknowledged this perception, however she also justified Hannah’s action of getting into the hot tub with Bryce as not premeditated. While others perceived it as Hannah’s fault, this reviewer interpreted it as the rapist’s fault. This indicates that there were two perceived messages, which consequently adding support to the presence of *misleading message about teen social issues* theme in the online reviews.

The next keyword that contributed to the identification of this theme is *program* which occurred nine times. One relevant example can be seen from concordance line 3:

I've read some of the reviews on this site pertaining to the show and I am not pleased with this with the thing that some of you have taken away from this program. [...] It's a show about how your actions no matter how small or innocent that they might be can have a drastic impact on somebody's life. It's about how you never really know what's going on somebody else's life or what or what they have to deal with you don't know how they feel about what you say or things that you do. (IMDb)

In spite of the critics 13RW has received because of its message about suicide, this reviewer perceived it as something entirely different. According to him, *13RW* went beyond a teen suicide issue. It gave glimpse about people's struggles that are not visible to others, and it also taught people about how small things could impact someone else's life. Another example is seen from concordance line 7:

Everyone may have different opinions on the manner in which it was done but there can be no doubting that this is a program that needed to be made. Young people, parents, teachers and school management need to watch this, the debate needs to be opened and the message needs to get out. Teenage problems need to be voiced in a safe environment and suicide is not the solution to any of these problems. (IMDb)

Although *13RW* has sparked many debates about teen issues since it was first aired, one is simply unable to deny that it did start a conversation about these issues. This reviewer agreed that the show has led to many arguments because of its misleading messages, but most importantly, it shed lights on the issues that have since long been socially considered as taboo. Also agreeing to this reviewer's opinion is concordance line 8:

Despite so much push back from many who would like to brush the issues 13 Reasons Why brings up under the rug, it's an important and well-written program that pushes the boundaries of what can be discussed in modern entertainment. (IMDb)

The third keyword that contributed to *misleading message about teen social issues* theme is *cheesy*, which occurred 10 times. One example that is relevant to this theme is taken from concordance line 3 as presented below:

But further than that, the show deals with some incredibly deep, serious, and important themes, ranging from suicide and sexual assault to just basic bullying.
[...] Watch it and you will come out for the better. I honestly think they should start showing this show to students in high school, because I really think it could make a difference for a lot of kids. [...] It makes you take a long, hard look at yourself in an effort to make you a better person. Now of course 13 Reasons has its issues. Some parts are cheesy and other parts are overly dramatic, but other than that it feels real. (RT)

Some reviewers may have perceived most of the scenes on the show as “cheesy” to the point that it felt unreal and out of touch with today’s reality. On the other hand, this reviewer perceived it as an attempt to bring out the truth about teen issues in a more entertaining way. Another example can be seen from concordance line 5:

This is NOT another cheap and cheesy high school tale. 13 reasons why is about social connections and interactions of young adults in high school and shows a depressing truth which is all too real for all too many. Many know the term 'Butterfly effect' where a flap of a butterfly's wings could cause a storm on the other side of the world. The show depicts how these flaps, in a behavioral sense, can cause emotional chaos and disturbance not on the other side of the world but right around the corner. (IMDb)

As discussed earlier, there were reviewers who interpreted the message *13RW* attempted to highlight as doing more harm than good. However, according to this reviewer, it was executed in the “harmful” manner in order to bring out the depressing truth behind the story of a teen girl’s suicide. This added more weights to the presence of *misleading message about teen social issues* theme in the online reviews.

The next keyword that largely contributed to this theme is *bully*. This keyword occurred 34 times. Three examples supporting the identification of this theme will be discussed next.

The first one is taken from concordance line 5 as follows:

Silver lining is, bully and sexual abusive are indeed serious matter and should not be taken lightly, but I am afraid the plot that done in this entire show will drive you more into setting new paradigm that your life is in the hands of everyone, if one person imperfect then they are responsible about your death profoundly. (IMDb)

Bullying and sexual assault are two serious issues, as supported by this reviewer, and yet 13RW managed to downplay their importance. Instead of giving out solutions and opening up healthy discussion about these issues, the message it conveyed put the spotlight on entirely different matter. The second example of this keyword can be seen from concordance line 10:

Bullying that leads to suicide tends to be a systematic breaking down of a person over a prolonged period of time. That is really hard for young people to deal with because it isolates them and leads to feelings of hopelessness. This version of the issue seems to me to be the upper class, first world, white girl problems like only having one pair of Lulu lemon yoga pants.

So, I thought that the intention was good but ultimately it lacks anything resembling reality and feels very self righteous and sanctimonious. [...] Probably not the best example for teaching kids about how NOT to be a bully. (IMDb)

As repeatedly suggested previously, Hannah's character did not fit the demographic of a depressed person, nor did it resemble the real mindset of a bullying victim. Therefore, this defeats the purpose of the show to spread awareness about how bullying affects teenagers. Apart from this, the third example can be seen from concordance line 14:

By keeping certain subjects away from the innocent children, they end up committing those things with an innocent smile on their faces.

In the end, this is a collection of mistakes that adults and teenagers alike are making. By being a passive witness to all of these, we might finally realise that we have to do whatever necessary to disrupt this vicious cycle (the bully tortures the victim only for the victim to become a bully in its turn - this might be a rough picture, but it happens in softer cases as well). (IMDb)

Many others perceived Hannah as unfit to be a bullying victim because she is the real bully, this reviewer on the other hand, while agreeing with the point Hannah is the bully, also justified this by saying that Hannah is bullied into becoming a bully herself. This indicates the presence of mixed messages.

Furthermore, the keyword *weight* also added supports to the misleading message about teen social issues theme. It occurred six times. One example of the theme can be seen from first concordance line 6 as presented below:

They also tried to cram too many "teen issues" in the story, but they felt inadequate to the focus of the story. It also resorts to very cheap methods to keep the tension high.

The biggest issue I feel is the reveal near the end. It is completely unnecessary and because of it the first eleven or so episodes lose their meaning and weight.

The legal aspects of the whole ordeal that happened at that high school was very interesting, and wanted to see how would it turn out, but in the end it's nearly completely forgotten or simplified. (IMDb)

According to this reviewer, the first eleven episodes of the show overshadow the true message behind the suicide story. By the end of the show, it has lost the meaning, therefore this indicates that the show sends misleading message about teen social issues it attempts to discuss in the first place. In addition, the season ends abruptly, with the lawsuit storyline being left hanging.

Other than *bully*, another keyword that largely contributed to the same theme is *rape*. It occurred 189 times. The first example can be seen from concordance line 1 as follows:

If you are looking for a show with a clear message don't watch this show. People may find their own messages, but the shows messages were muddled at best.

[...] What was unforgivable was the mixed messages on when is a rape a rape and whether to get involved. (IMDb)

This example added weight to the discussion of rape in the online reviews. The way the rape storyline was handled on the show gave misleading messages about rape myth, victim blaming, and consent. This may be dangerous to other teen girls who have experienced the same tragedy because it could make them question about whether or not a rape is a rape and whether it is right to get help. The second example can be seen from concordance line 3:

The series depicts violence, bullying, rape but it cannot make a stand against these things, because the victim is always partially responsible. Hannah is supposed to be "pure" a model, to contrast with all the terrible things happening around her, but, in the end, she's just part of the problem and we have no clear stand against rape, against bullying, against not speaking up.

[...] I do not think it's essential for anyone to watch it, because you may get the wrong lesson out of it and that's pretty bad when you talk about rape and suicide. (IMDb)

This reviewer agreed with the previous examples discussed in this section. Hannah experienced a sexual assault, but unfortunately it left the audience with more questions about whether or not it was a rape. This clearly shows that *13RW* is not the right medium to be spreading awareness about the seriousness of rape. The last example of *rape* can be seen from concordance line 14:

But more importantly, it has come to alert us. It has come to tell us that actions and words we consider unimportant and trivial could seriously harm other people, who have a different worldview than we do. It also sheds lights on rarely-touched topics, like teenage rape and female objectification, with bravery and clarity. But scratch beneath the immensely attractive surface and you will find that the majority of the show's messages are in fact toxic. (IMDb)

Some of the reviewers may have perceived the message of *13RW* as a reminder to not hurt other people, and that how such trivial issues could inflict more pain than people can imagine. However according to this reviewer, underneath all the issues discussed on the show, it has toxic messages that could be harmful.

The keyword *melodrama* also contributed to the identification of this theme. Occuring seven times, one example can be seen from concordance line 2 as follows:

There are so many nuances that this show could have touched upon, but it instead focuses on melodrama and ultimately it's main goal - pure revenge porn.

[...] Attempting to cater this show to others who may be seeking help - especially teenagers - is completely irresponsible, and I'm glad I'm not the only one intelligent enough to comprehend this. (IMDb)

According to this reviewer, *13RW* had potentials to open up healthy discussions about the teen issues it attempted to bring forward. However, it missed its chances by focusing more on making it entertaining rather than sticking to its initial purpose, which was to shed lights on teen issues that have been silenced for generations.

Therefore, based on the examples provided in this section, it was concluded that *misleading message about teen social issues* is one of the main key themes.

The findings presented in this chapter highlight the extent the negative reviews of *13RW*, subsequently pointing out the key themes that had become the major concerns of the audience. As claimed by De Jong and Burgers (2013), the reviewers (consumer critics) mainly used the first-person perspective to give their own personal view regarding the suicide theme. Some reviewers are suicide survivors themselves, some have experiences in dealing with suicide of the loved ones. This implied the real-world data, which allowed the meaning-making process that eventually brought insight into social-cultural norms (Van Der Boom et al., 2017) especially surrounding the issue of youth suicide.

The next part discusses the findings of the second research question.

4.3.4 Discussion of the second research question

Three important key themes were identified through the discussion of the second research question, which were *misrepresentation of mental disorder*, *inaccurate portrayal of high school teenagers*, and *misleading message about teen social issues*. The reviewers came from different backgrounds and identities, and while these did not affect the reliability of the data, some of them introduced themselves as mental disorder survivors and therapists, which contributed to the first key theme.

Some reviewers pointed out that mental disorder is a preceding cause of suicide, especially depression, which is also an essential element missing from the plot of *13RW*. Although Hannah's story was supposed to portray a journey of a girl struggling with depression and suicidal ideation, some of the reviewers perceived it as a misrepresentation of the two issues.

As highlighted in the examples, this is because *13RW* sent the wrong messages about depression, that when a person is struggling, seeking help is not an option. Another reason is the word 'depression' itself was never mentioned on the show, and the other characters who showed signs of depression were never given enough attention. In addition, some reviewers perceived Hannah as narcissistic instead of depressed, whose intention was to ruin the lives of others by committing suicide and leaving tapes behind. People who struggle with depression are advised not to watch the show, as doing so could influence them into committing suicide instead of preventing it. Hannah's story did not truly represent the story of depression and suicide, but instead it treated these serious issues as something trivial that simply anyone can experience.

The second key theme is *inaccurate portrayal of high school teenagers*. The examples discussed in the previous section highlight several reasons for the interpretation of this theme in the online reviews. The first reason is the way the teenage characters on *13RW* communicated with each other and with the teachers, behaved, and dressed did not resemble real life teenagers. In addition, instead of presenting the high school scenery that today's youth could relate to, it ended up being portrayed as if the story was set in many years ago.

Another reason contributing to this theme is the ages of the real actors are far older than their characters are supposed to be on the show. Therefore, the representation of each character was deemed inaccurate. Furthermore, real teenagers are unlikely to let a crime go unreported, which is what happened on *13RW*. This paints teenagers in a bad light.

The third key theme is *misleading message about teen social issues*. As noted previously, *13RW* attempted to discuss many teen issues other than suicide, such as rape, bullying, and drug abuse. However, the show wasted its opportunities by focusing more on being an entertaining show to gain profits instead of sticking to its initial purpose to spread awareness about these issues. The way these issues were handled on the show also defeats the whole purpose to prevent them from happening in real life because it sent misleading messages to teenagers who are facing the same struggles in their lives.

The next section presents the conclusion of Chapter Four.

4.4 Conclusion

Chapter Four presents the data analysis and the findings. The discussion on the first research question revealed that the reviews contained both positive and negative evaluations, with the latter outweighing the former to a greater extent. There are several notable reasons for the reviewers who evaluated the suicide theme as negative. First, Hannah Baker's suicide story was executed with the element of glorification. Second, the suicide theme was treated as a joke out of a serious topic. Third, the suicide issue was explored in *13RW* as an exploitation for profit and entertainment. Fourth, the suicide scene was a trigger for suicidal people. Fifth, Hannah Baker's character portrayal was perceived as a false representation of a suicidal person, and the last one is the element of self-victimisation.

A keyword analysis was conducted to answer the second research questions. All keywords were analysed further to identify main key themes of the online reviews. These themes are *misrepresentation of mental disorder, suicide as an act of revenge, inaccurate portrayal of high school teenagers, and misleading message about teen social issues.*

Chapter Five will present conclusion of the study.

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CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to make a summary of the findings gained from the analyses performed in the previous chapter. It also includes the limitations of the study, suggestions for the future studies, and the final conclusion.

5.2 Summary of the study

The purpose of the present study was to examine the online reviews on the television series *13 Reasons Why* posted by the audience of the show on IMDb, Rotten Tomatoes, and Meta Critics. The purpose has been achieved and both of the research questions presented in Chapter One have been answered.

The findings of the study revealed that the suicide theme on *13RW* was perceived as negative to a greater extent. In spite of the claims from the producers that *13RW* was initially intended for good value and helping struggling people, the perspectives from the majority of reviewers clearly differed. The way the suicide scene was executed left negative impressions on the reviewers.

According to the findings, the suicide theme of *13RW* was greatly glorified. Hannah's death cleared her of her tainted image at school and she was suddenly seen as a "saint". The tapes she left behind were the second chances for the people who hurt her in the past and because of those tapes, they became better people.

The exploitation of suicide for entertainment also contributed to the negative evaluation. The graphic suicide scene was intentionally made for cinematography effect and "shock value". In addition, the suicide scene was also a trigger to people with suicidal thoughts and ideations and history or tendencies of self-harm.

The portrayal of suicide as a final way out also did not sit well with the majority of the audiences. Hannah's revenge-seeking journey which left negative impacts on her friends' life added to the weight of the negative evaluation. Apart from this, the false representation of a suicidal person and self-victimisation also contributed to the greater extent of negative suicide evaluation.

However, the negative impression does not necessarily mean *13RW* has failed to deliver its messages. Some positive reviewers disagreed with the idea of suicide glorification but saw it as a real-life depiction instead. Hannah's downward spiral can be a guideline for adults to notice signs of suicidal behaviours among teenagers, consequently open a healthy discussion about mental health. This could then lead to an effective suicide prevention.

Above it all, through all the faults and flaws of the series, in all honesty, it has truly put attention on suicide and made people talk about an issue that used to be treated like a taboo.

The keyword analysis that followed after the concordance analysis revealed the top 50 shared keywords that were studied further to discover the key themes. The first theme is *misrepresentation of mental disorder*. Based on the examples discussed in Section 4.3.1, several reasons attributed to the identification of this theme. First, the word 'depression' or any other medical terms for mental health was never mentioned on the show. Second, the portrayal of Hannah Baker's character did not fit the demographic of a depressed or a suicide person, instead she was portrayed as a narcissistic who used revenge as the motivation for her suicide.

The second theme is *inaccurate portrayal of high school teenagers*. Based on the examples discussed in Section 4.3.2, the teenage characters on *13RW* did not resemble real life teenagers. The way the characters communicated with each other, dressed, and behaved were different compared to the way real teenagers do, therefore adding more weights to the interpretation of this theme.

The third theme is *misleading message about teen social issues*. *13RW* attempted to bring many teen issues forward, such as rape, bullying, and drug abuse. However, the attempt was deemed a failure when the focus of the story shifted to ‘revenge suicide’ because of Hannah’s suicide storyline. Apart from this, the show also paints all these issues a bad picture, resulting in misleading messages to the teenagers who might also be experiencing the same struggles in their daily lives.

5.3 Limitations of the study

As noted in Section 4.2, one of the limitations of the study is the close reading on 200 samples of suicide concordance lines in the identification of evaluative items and expressions.

In addition, the data used in the analysis are limited to three review websites only, which are IMDb, Rotten Tomatoes, and Meta Critics. There are other websites that could have contributed to a richer data for the analysis. The data also comprises of only public opinions with no influence of facts.

5.4 Suggestions for future studies

Other than the issue of suicide, *13RW* also explores the issues of bullying, drug addiction, mental health, and sexuality. These issues can be studied further in the future using the same datasets or with an added data from different review websites. Moreover, the keyword analysis revealed a set of keywords that could lead to more possible key themes which could also become an issue worth studying in the future. In addition, the present study only focused on the first season of *13RW*. Future studies could be based on the second season of the series.

5.5 Conclusion

From the beginning of *13RW*'s screening on Netflix, many people, medical experts and mainstream news sites alike have had different opinions and arguments on the suicide theme presented on the series. The present study has attempted to explore the issue from the audience perspective. The findings revealed that the suicide theme was perceived as negative to a greater extent by the audience. Many of the reviewers were concerned with *13RW*'s treatment of suicide issue on the show, mainly because the suicide issue, particularly adolescent suicide issue is becoming a growing alarm in society. Therefore, the present study has shed some insights and understanding into the importance of portraying the accurate adaptation of a serious real-life issue for an entertainment. In addition, the present study has revealed a crucial element in adolescent suicide, which is parenting. Furthermore, the present study has also contributed to the growing body of the suicide studies through the adoption of corpus linguistic techniques.

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