



DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL STUDIES

FINAL EXAMINATION

Student ID (in Figures) :

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Student ID (in Words) : _____

Course Code & Name : **MPU3232 Academic Writing Skills**
Semester & Year : January – April 2020
Lecturer/Examiner : Shazan Khan Omar
Duration : 2 hours

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

1. **This question paper consists of 2 parts:**
PART A (55 marks) : READING COMPREHENSION & SUMMARY
There are **TWO (2)** questions. Answer both questions in the space provided.
PART B (45 marks) : ESSAY WRITING
There is **ONE (1)** question. Write your essay in the space provided.
2. **Candidates are not allowed to bring any unauthorized materials except writing equipment into the Examination Hall. Electronic dictionaries are strictly prohibited.**
3. **This question paper must be submitted along with all used and/or unused rough papers and/or graph paper (if any). Candidates are NOT allowed to take any examination materials out of the examination hall.**
4. **Only ballpoint pens are allowed to be used in answering the questions, with the exception of multiple choice questions, where 2B pencils are to be used.**

WARNING: The University Examination Board (UEB) of BERJAYA University College regards cheating as a most serious offence and will not hesitate to mete out the appropriate punitive actions according to the severity of the offence committed, and in accordance with the clauses stipulated in the Students’ Handbook, up to and including expulsion from BERJAYA University College.

Total Number of pages = 7 (Including the cover page)

PART A : READING COMPREHENSION & SUMMARY (55 MARKS)

INSTRUCTION(S) : There are **TWO (2)** questions. Answer both questions in the space provided.

READING PASSAGE

Before answering the two questions, read the article below.

Should We Worry about ‘13 Reasons Why’?

Adapted from: Campo, JV, Bridge, JA 2018, ‘Exploring the Impact of 13 Reasons Why: looking for light amidst the heat’, *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, vol. 57, no 8, pp. 547-549.

This article is to explore the impact of the Netflix series *13 Reasons Why* (13RW) on adolescent viewers. The series is an adaptation of a 2007 novel by Jay Asher, and tells the story of an adolescent girl who dies by suicide following a series of traumas and disappointments that she catalogues before her death on 13 audiotapes. The tapes are left behind with the expectation that each of the individuals presumably responsible for her suicide will listen and better understand their individual and collective failures.

Most importantly, the popular series has been widely viewed and is largely acclaimed within the entertainment community, but several prominent mental health professionals and organisations are anxious and have sharply criticised Netflix for its release. Expressing grave concerns that the show may unintentionally promote rather than discourage youth suicide. The literature suggests that youth and individuals with pre-existing mental illness are particularly vulnerable to suicide contagion, which appears to be fostered by stories that promote simplistic explanations for suicidal behaviour, sensationalise the topic, present suicide as a means of accomplishing meaningful ends such as community change or revenge, glorify or focus on the positive characteristics of the victim and offer descriptions of “how to” die by suicide.

The overall scenes in *13 Reasons Why* series are nearly 13 hours long and can be viewed in unsupervised settings by any group of viewers which can result in adolescent viewers to imitate many destructive actions (e.g. rape) performed by the actors. For example, Bryce Walker is a rapist, a bully, and the perpetrator of the baseball team’s clubhouse. For much of *13 Reasons Why* he gets away with this toxic behaviour. *13 Reasons Why* also explicitly depicts school bullying which becomes one of the show's most controversial issues that can lead a victim to harm themselves. For example, the series has clearly showed the way the bullies intimidate those whom they perceive as vulnerable to the extent that the victims take their own lives.

This series may also encourage young viewers to practice gender discrimination where all female characters have to face some forms of slut shaming. The main reason most boys practice this unhealthy behaviour and attitude because girls in the series are blamed for not conforming to their sexual standards. As a consequence, female characters will be humiliated and intimidated based on rumours concerning their sexual promiscuity.

Some people claim that instead of worrying about the social issues portrayed in the series, attention should be paid to lessons which viewers can learn from the scenes. *13 Reasons Why* encourages healthy conversations with youths about mental health while mitigating risk of suicidal behaviours. Recent report suggests that a group of high school students started a program called *13 Reasons Why Not*, designed to increase authentic conversation about strategies for adolescents to get support from peers and adults. The increase rate of the internet searches regarding suicide after the series was aired could be seen as positive because it reflects greater awareness regarding suicide and the importance of suicide prevention. Also, *13 Reasons Why* can promote awareness so that teenage viewers can avoid impulsivity, bullying, hopelessness, and other consequences of childhood traumas which may exist independent of psychiatric illness. Vulnerable teenagers will learn that they can gain social support from responsible and caring adults in their lives in order to disengage themselves from social issues manifested in the series such as drug abuse, bully, gender discrimination etc. In this sense, disengaging teenagers from involving in social problems can be achieved if adults are willing not only to listen to teenagers but also understand the root of the conditions.

Although a plethora of benefits associated with exposure of adolescents to *13 Reasons Why* are highlighted such as it encourages teenagers to initiate meaningful conversations about their problems, the potential risks of viewing the series without the observation of adults are worrisome. Similarly, Ayers et al. (2017) reported that cumulative Internet searches for terms related to how to take our own lives have increased following the show's release. To illustrate, it is troubling that searches for phrases like "how to commit suicide," "commit suicide," and "how to kill yourself" were noted to increase in the wake of the show's release. Likewise, the rate of suicide, drug abuse, bully, gender discrimination and other social issues can also escalate if teens consider them as forms of escapism especially after watching the series regardless of continuous social support they receive from adults. For example, they may learn to videotape their experience to express their emotional overwhelm before committing suicide. As media outlets continue to evolve, adolescent exposure to controversial content will likely continue to grow. Research is needed to understand strategies to use these opportunities to promote the health of young people while minimising risks of unintended harm.

QUESTIONS

1. Reading comprehension (30 marks): Reconstruct the argument presented in the article above by identifying the following elements:

I. the main claim (3 marks)

II. the reasons in support of the main claim (8 marks)

III. the opposing claim (3 marks)

IV. the reasons in support of the opposing claim (8 marks)
