



## A PORTRAYAL OF MAIN CHARACTER'S INTERPERSONAL BEHAVIOR IN NINA LACOUR'S *WE ARE OKAY*

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to find out interpersonal behavior portrayed by the main character in *We Are Okay* by Nina LaCour. The analysis of this novel uses the theory of psychoanalysis that focuses on interpersonal behavior by William Schutz. It also explains the impact of interpersonal behavior in Marin and Mabel as the main character. The research of this study used qualitative research methods. The source of data of this study is the novel *We Are Okay*. The data of this study are the character's utterances and author's narration. Analysis of the data used five processes by Yin (2016); Compiling, Disassembling, Reassembling (and Arraying), Interpreting, and Concluding. The results showed the findings of inclusion, control, and affection in Marin and Mabel's friendship. Then, the impact of interpersonal behavior are; Marin included Expressed behavior which became an open and loyal person, while Mabel included Wanted behavior which became a pleasant person and made herself available to others.

**Keywords:** Interpersonal Behavior, Inclusion, Control, Affection.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Humans are social creatures who cannot live alone. Humans always live side by side with each other. This is the basis for creating relationships between individuals, namely friendship. According to Hojjat & Moyer (2017,p.21), Friendships are essential throughout people's lives. It means that friendship is a relationship that cannot be separated in human life. This is because almost everyone from childhood to growing up must have friends. While still a child, a person will get friends from his playgroup who come from his neighborhood. Meanwhile, as a teenager or adult, a person will find friends from his study group (school) and at work. As time goes by, the friends he meets will form friendly relations because they often interact. That is why the presence of a friend in one's life can build interpersonal relationships like behavior between humans.

Behavior in friendship relationships are closely related to emotion because emotion helps the social development of each individual. Emotions affect an individual when they interact with other individuals, how they will behave and respond to it. This is what makes a person's personality formed as a result of the process of social development because when an individual interacts with other individuals, they find each other new things such as a person's personality, knowledge, experiences, and others. This aligns with Aras (2015,p.252), Personality as the total pattern of characteristic ways of behaving and thinking that constitute the individual's unique and distinctive method of adjusting to his environment. So, it is not surprising that each individual has a different personality because they are also different in responding to their responses, such as ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving. People are different not only in terms of their physical traits but

also in mental and behavioral traits. This means that their personality shapes the uniqueness of each person.

Friendship relationships or interpersonal relationships are usually influenced by several things, such as the quality of friendship and gender. According to Ford and Arter (2013,p.133), friendships between men were based on shared activities and were much more emotionally constrained. They tend to keep their distance when chatting or sharing useful information with their friends. In Contrast, Women's friendships with each other rested on shared intimacies and emotional support. They tend to like to discuss personal problems, share feelings, give and receive emotional support in the form of advice. In real life, women tend to be easy to be sympathetic to their friends. One example, if a friend wants to share a story about how she feels (happy or sad), the woman will be more patient to listen to the story at length. It's no wonder that female friends are often referred to as "talking friends", because of the deepening of their feelings, thoughts, and experiences when responding to their friends' stories. This is aligned with Oulton's statements (2007,p.110) that female friendship is implemented at school, and responsiveness is expressed both physically, through tearful embraces. This usually happens between women based on giving and receiving emotional and moral support, sharing stories and experiencing, caring, and nurturing each other. Based on the previous explanation, female friendships are easier to build and more lasting relationships than men. This is because the boundaries of each other's privacy have been removed. They trust and give comfort to each other so that they indirectly think their friends are the right place to share. Aligned with Schutz's idea (1996,p.1), "people need people for three kinds of relations; inclusion, control, and affection."

Based on the above, the writer intends to do research on a novel entitled *We Are Okay* by Nina LaCour which portrays friendship in women, named Marin & Mabel. It is the basis for the writer to learn about the literature through the text aspect, especially related to the psychological approach dealing with traits of the main characters in building a literary work. There are many branches of psychoanalytic theory, one of which is the theory of needs, called interpersonal behavior or FIRO ((Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientations). According to Schutz (1966,p.1), the concept of interpersonal behavior refers to the fact that humans in their lives need other humans. This theory explains how a person enters a group because of three interpersonal needs (inclusion, control, affection). So, psychology in literature is a part of the theory of literary studies.

Previously, there was a study on this novel, entitled "Lesbianism Portrayed in Nina Lacour's *We Are Okay*" written by Muktar Hasan Hasibuan. The difference between this study and previous research is that this research uses FIRO theory by Schutz as research theory and focuses on exposing the main character's interpersonal behavior in the novel. While previous study uses a feminist theory, focused on exposing lesbianism and how is implied in society.

Based on the description above, this research was aimed to gain an understanding of interpersonal behavior on the main characters and the impact of interpersonal behavior on the main characters (Marin & Mabel) in the novel *We Are Okay* using a psychological approach based on Schutz's theory. Schutz developed the theory of FIRO in the 1958 book *The Interpersonal Underworld*. According to the theory, three dimensions of interpersonal relations were deemed to be necessary and sufficient to explain most human interactions: inclusion, control, and affection. Besides that, Schutz added interpersonal needs with expressed&wanted needs to identify behavior of the main characters based on the interaction (the impact).

- a. **Inclusion** is defined behaviorally as the need to establish and maintain a satisfactory relationship with people to interaction and association. There are three types of inclusion;
- Undersocial type: characteristically, tends to be introverted and withdrawn.
  - Oversocial type : characteristically seeks people incessantly and wants them to seek him out.
  - Social type: characteristically, feels comfortable with people and comfortable being alone.
- b. **Control** is defined behaviorally as the need to establish and maintain a satisfactory relationship with people to control and power.
- Abdicrat type: characteristically tend toward submission and abdication of power and responsibility.
  - Autocrat type: characteristically, tend to dominate.
  - Democrat type: characteristically, feels comfortable giving or not, taking or not taking orders, as is appropriate to the situation.
- c. **Affection** is defined behaviorally as the need to establish and maintain a satisfactory relationship with others to love and affection.
- Underpersonal type: characteristically seeks a satisfactory affectional relation, most comfortable when others do the same to him
  - Overpersonal type: characteristically want others to treat him in a very close
  - Personal type: characteristically he is lovable person who is lovable even to people who know him well
- d. **Expressed&Wanted needs**
- The Expressed dimension of a need describes the extent to which a person initiates the behaviors associated with the need: the degree to which he or she behaves in that way toward others.
  - Wanted dimension of a need describes the extent to which a person refers to receiving those behaviors from others: the degree to which one wants others to behave that way toward oneself.

Dimension/ Need	Inclusion	Control	Affection
<b>Expressed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Inviting others to join in your activities</li> <li>-Involving others in projects and meetings</li> <li>-Incorporating everyone's ideas and suggestions</li> <li>-Taking a personal interest in others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Assuming positions of authority</li> <li>-Managing the conversation</li> <li>-Attempting to influence others' opinion</li> <li>-Establishing policies and procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Reassuring and supporting others</li> <li>-Showing concern about others' personal lives</li> <li>-Sharing your personal opinions and feeling with others</li> <li>-Being trustworthy and loyal</li> </ul>
<b>Wanted</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Getting involved in high-profile activities and projects</li> <li>-Doing things to get noticed</li> <li>-Going along with the majority opinion</li> <li>-Wearing distinctive clothing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Deferring to wishes, needs, and request of others</li> <li>-Asking for help on a job</li> <li>-Raising issues for others to consider or decide</li> <li>-Involving others in decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Being flexible and accommodating</li> <li>-Listening carefully to others</li> <li>-Trying to please others</li> <li>-Making yourself available to others</li> </ul>

## 2. METHOD

In this research, the writer used a qualitative analysis. The purpose of qualitative research is to describe and interpret issues or phenomena systematically from the point of view of the individual or population being studied and to generate new concepts and theories (Mohajan, 2018,p.2).

The data of this study are the main character's utterances and the author's narration. The data are collected from the novel *We Are Okay* written by Nina LaCour which contains interpersonal behavior by William C. Schutz because the main character faced an event interaction of human behavior in certain situations which is related to interpersonal behavior in friendship. This research used five-phased in analyzing the data, they are: Compiling, Disassembling, Reassembling, Interpreting, Concluding (Yin,2016,p.185).

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Directive acts are generally used to direct or influence the interlocutor to take action. To put it another way, directive acts are realized on purpose to get some effects through the action of the interlocutor. It also points out that if an utterance is a directive act, it must have an intended action. The reason is that action is the thing that encourages the speaker to perform the directive acts. A speaker cannot exclude directive acts in utterance that is functioned to make an interlocutor does as expected. The impossibility of excluding directive acts is a result of the contributive role of directive acts. Furthermore, as a classification of illocutionary acts, directive acts are correlated to intention. The intention of a speaker determines which type and form of the directive act.

This research applied Interpersonal needs (*Inclusion, Control, and Affection*) and Expressed&Wanted needs by Schutz (1966). The interpersonal behavior in the novel between Marin and Mabel is aligned with William Schutz's idea that "people need people for three kinds of relations; inclusion, control, and affection," (Schutz, 1966,p.1). Marin and Mabel's interaction formed based on their need for each other, such as the need to feel together, the need to maintain relationships, and the need for comfort and support. These needs are what underlies the formation of Inclusion, Control, and affection in the relationship between Marin and Mabel.

#### 1. Inclusion

The story of the novel *We Are Okay* by Nina Lacour begins with Marin as the narrator and the main character who has a best friend, named Mabel. While still in California, Mabel is one of Marin's closest friends, they even looked like sisters. Mabel's parents know her so well because Marin came to Mabel's house frequently. So, when Marin moved to study in New York, Mabel missed her so much because Marin didn't answer Mabel's text, they haven't spoken at all. This is what makes Mabel decide to come to see Marin during the holidays. Mabel's arrival shows a social type of inclusion where Mabel is capable of a strong commitment to resolving her relationship with Marin without anxiety, even though Marin ignores her text. This inclusion can be seen in the quotation below:

*"Marin," she says. "I should just tell you now that I'm here with a motive, not for vacation."*

*My heart sinks, but I try not to let it show. I look at her and wait.*

*“Come home with me,” she says. “My parents want you to come.”*

*“Go for what? Christmas?”*

*“Yeah, Christmas. But then to say. I mean, you’d come back here, of course, but you could go back to my house for breaks. It could be your house, too.”*

(LaCour, 2017,p.31)

From the quotation above, it shows that Mabel means that she wants to take Marin back to California with her. This shows Mabel’s inclusion, she wants Marin to include in her activities to celebrate Christmas together. Mabel reassures Marin by saying that her parents also want Marin back. This meant that Mabel's parents wanted Marin to be part of their family. It is because Christmas is usually celebrated with family, and Mabel's parents know that Marin has not had a family since Marin's grandfather died. So this inclusion represents a sense of belonging in a group/family, actually when Mabel said *“I mean, you’d come back here, of course, but you could go back to my house for breaks. It could be your house, too.”*

Mabel tries to convince Marin back with her to California to celebrate Christmas. This represents inclusion between Marin and Mabel. It can be seen as follow:

*“We’ll be able to see each other on all our breaks, and you’ll have a place you can always go home to. My parents want to help you with things when you need it. Like money or just advice or whatever. We can be like sisters,” she says. And then she freezes. (LaCour, 2017,p.52)*

From the quotation above, Mabel wants Marin not only as her friend but also as her sister. She convinced Marin not to worry about anything, because her parents would help Marin, both materially and non-materially. Mabel did this to build a sense of belonging between them. This includes inclusion, where Mabel wants Marin to be her family, part of her life. Then, from the sentence *“We’ll be able to see each other on all our breaks, and you’ll have a place you can always go home to.”* It can be concluded that Mabel needs to interact with Marin frequently.

## 2. Control

Marin and Mabel give control to each other. This is evident when Marin returns to a memory of her and Mabel will go to the party. It can be seen as follow:

*“What are you doing?” Mabel said. “You don’t have to change.”*

*“It’ll look better like this anyway,” I said.*

*I pulled the jeans up and tucked in the fraying seam of what used to be a dress. I looked in the mirror and it was true—it looked better.*

(LaCour, 2017,p.59)

From the quotation above, Marin keeps changing her clothes, even though Mabel forbids her to change and Mabel's parents do not ask her to change. It indicates that Marin belongs to the democrat type of control. It is because Marin feels capable of making

decisions as is appropriate to her situation for herself. From the sentence "*It'll look better like this anyway," I said.*" It means that Marin changed her clothes to bond with Mabel. She showed that she was fit with her new look in front of Mabel.

Marin's control is continued in the next quotation, Marin reminds Mabel to sleep and keeps their phones. Marin noticed Mabel and saw that there was something in Mabel's mind.

*"Maybe we should turn our phones off," I say. "In case we need them later."*

*Mabel nods. She looks at her phone, and I wonder if she's thinking about calling Jacob before she turns it off. The light of the screen casts across her face, but I can't read her expression. Then she holds down a button and her face goes dark again. (LaCour, 2017,p.71)*

In the above quotation, it can be seen that Marin belongs to a democrat type of control also. Marin asked Mabel to turn off the phones, but Mabel's reaction was normal, not bothered. Likewise, with Marin's reaction, she asked without coercion. Marin just kept quiet watching Mabel and trying to understand what Mabel was worried about. Previously, Mabel tells Marin that she has a boyfriend named Jacob. So, Marin knows that Mabel didn't turn off her phone directly because she is still waiting for a call from her boyfriend. Besides that, Marin doesn't mind if Mabel does it. So that the control between Marin and Mabel has the same position, not dominating either one. The control between them is also seen in the following quotation:

*"I don't need to be with somebody in order for it to be okay that you have a boyfriend. It's okay already."*

*"Marin. I'm just asking you to think about it. I'm not saying you have to make some huge decision or fall in love or do anything that complicates your life."*

*"I'm fine as I am." (LaCour, 2017,p.152)*

Based on the above, Marin controlled herself not to obey Mabel's request. Marin feels fine without a boyfriend, she feels enough to have a few friends that she thinks suit her needs, such as her friendship with Hannah, her roommate. That's why the control between Marin and Mabel is included in the Democrat type because sometimes Marin can accept or reject Mabel's request. Marin feels that she can take responsibility for her own decision not to have a boyfriend.

### 3. Affection

In the novel *We Are Okay*, Marin and Mabel are best friends. They have a sense of affection that they show to each other. Besides that, they feel like they belong to each other. So, if one of them got something wrong, they will notice her partner, like this quotation:

*I should still have a half-hour at least—and I can't help but torture myself by scrolling up to see all of the texts Mabel sent before this one. Asking if I'm okay. Saying she's thinking of me. Wondering where the fuck am I, whether I'm angry, if we can talk, if she can visit, if I miss her. (LaCour, 2017,p.14)*

From the quotation above, we can see that Mabel cares for Marin. Even though Marin ignores all of her messages, she still tries to reach Marin. She tries to know about Marin's condition. This represents Mabel's affection and includes personal type. It means that Mabel needs to be liked, but if she isn't liked, she can accept. It proves when Marin gets a text message from Mabel, then she said: "*Whether I'm angry, if we can talk, if she can visit, if I miss her.*"

Usually, in a friendly relationship, someone will give something to show their affection. In addition, the person who is given the gift will feel happy. This usually aims to make their partners feel happy and stay. They will try to share the fun with each other, as Marin does the following:

*I want to buy gifts for people. Something for Mabel. Something to send back for Ana and Javier. Something to leave on Hannah's bed for when she returns from break or to take with me to Manhattan if I really go to see her.*

(LaCour, 2017,p..49)

Based on the quotation above, it proves how much Marin loved each person around her by wanting to give a gift to the people who were close to her. Marin wants to give a gift to Mabel because this is her chance for the first time she meets Mabel again after being separated for so long. She also gives a gift to Mabel's parents. Marin and Mabel's parents know each other well because Marin often spends time in Mabel's house in the past, automatically they often interact. Besides that, not only has she had a good friendship with Mabel, but Marin also has a good relationship with her roommate, Hannah. Hannah is the only one who became a friend in her new life. So, all of it can be concluded that Marin's affection was represented by giving gifts.

From description above at **point 1(inclusion), poin 2 (control), and point 3 (affection)** we can concluded that the level of fulfillment of these needs will form various types of three areas of interpersonal behavior, such as Marin and Mabel who have the same type of interpersonal behavior. Marin is not an ambitious person, she interacts based on the response of her partner. While Mabel is a peaceful person, she can adapt to a relationship without anxiety. This is what makes their relationship included in the Social type of inclusion because both of them can be a low or high participant in their relationship. Then for the control, they are Democrat type because neither Marin nor Mabel are stubborn people. They tolerate each other and care about the decisions chosen by others. And for the affection, they are included in the Personal type, because they are not easy to establish good and close relationships with everyone. They are only able to have a good and close relationship with certain people. Marin is a lovable person, but since she lost her family, she changes her attitude to being an introvert. Marin didn't talk with anyone in her new place, and even though she moved to New York it is possible to meet a lot of new people.

#### 4. Expressed needs

Previously, we can see interpersonal interaction (Inclusion, control, and affection) between Marin and Mabel. This interpersonal interaction gave them impact on each other

by identifying Expressed&Wanted behavior. Marin knows that Mabel is a kind and caring person to people around her. So, to get rid of the awkwardness and make Mabel comfortable, Marin tries to talk to Mabel like everything is going to be fine. Later on, she shares her story about her experience where she lives now. It can be seen as follow:

*Thankfully, I manage to tell her about my history Professor, who swears during lessons, rides a motorcycle, and seems much more like someone you'd meet at a bar than in a Lecture hall. This topic doesn't make me a gifted conversationalist, but at least it makes me adequate.*

*"At first I kept thinking all my professors were celibate," I say. She laughs. I made her laugh. (LaCour, 2017,p.16)*

Based on the quotation above, Marin and Mabel are doing some conversations. Then, from the sentence *"She laughs. I made her laugh."* This shows Expressed behavior's Marin dealing with control where she tries to control and make the situation more comfortable. It shows that Marin is quite happy because she can make Mabel laugh with her funny story. It is because at the first time Mabel comes, Marin feels fear and worries if she can't make Mabel comfortable. Now, Marin doesn't expect to make things better, there is no clumsy. It shows that Marin's expression feels free. These few attempts by Marin show that she really wants Mabel to enjoy being with her:

*"There's a rec room on the fourth floor," I say when we're finished. "We could watch a movie if you want."*

*"I'm actually pretty tired," she says. "I think I might just get ready for bed."*

*"Oh, sure." I glance at the clock. (LaCour, 2017,p.39)*

The quotation above shows Expressed behavior of Marin dealing with inclusion, in which Marin makes an effort to be with her partner by trying to offer to watch a movie together, even though there is a rejection. It is seen when Mabel said, *"I think I might just get ready for bed."* Even though Mabel refuses to watch a movie together, she doesn't force Mabel. Marin also doesn't mind it. She knows that her partner was overwhelmed after a long flight to come. So, she confirmed Mabel's permission. This shows that Marin understands Mabel's condition.

### 3. Wanted needs

Mabel's wanted behavior is increasingly visible, she convinces Marin not to worry about anything, especially her flight. It is proved by the following quotation:

*"I guess that's a lot to ask you all at once. Maybe we should just start with Christmas. Fly back with me, spend a couple days, see how you feel. My parents will pay for your flight". (LaCour, 2017,p.32)*

Based on the quotation above, Mabel asks her parents to pay for Marin's flight so that Marin can go with her. Besides that, we can see Mabel's concern about the Marin condition. She felt that Marin was not okay. Indirectly, this is the other motive Mabel came. Mabel thinks that there is something wrong. She wonders about what happens and makes the personality of her partner change, it shows from the utterance *"I guess that's a*



*lot to ask you all at once.*" So Mabel decides to visit and invite her back to California. Even though Mabel just wants to spend a couple days with Marin, it is clear that Mabel wants her partner to feel better. It indicates Mabel's Wanted behavior dealing with affection in which Mabel makes a personal interest in Marin by offering flights paid for by Mabel's parents. Now, Mabel and Marin are in one room. Mabel tries to break the silence by getting Marin to speak. It is indicated Wanted behavior Mabel and can be seen as follow:

*I slept with my head under blankets and each time I stepped outside in the daylight I thought I'd go blind.*

*"Marin," Mabel says. "I came all the way here so that when I talked, you'd be forced to talk back."* (LaCour, 2017,p.35)

From the utterance "*Marin,*" Mabel says. "*I came all the way here so that when I talked, you'd be forced to talk back.*" We can see what Mabel feels, such as a statement of hope and disappointment. Mabel hopes when she comes, she and her partner can like before, have fun with everything they can do and talk about. But in reality, Mabel feels disappointed because when she comes, Marin doesn't respond much to Mabel's questions, Marin is more silent. Mabel wants her partner to know that she cares about her partner, even though she doesn't come easily.

Based on **point 4 (expressed) and point 5 (wanted)**, we can see some different impacts on each other influenced by family background. We know that Marin doesn't have a family, she just have Gramps before. It means Marin needs a female friend to share her stories, feelings, problems, etc. Marin makes an effort to interest Mabel with her. Because of it, Marin included Expressed needs. Then the impacts on Marin are: she is being open, reassuring others, and being loyal. While Mabel is included in Wanted needs because she has parents, she needs a friendship which is made from the same hobby or though young as her age. Then, the impacts on Mabel are: she is trying to please others and making herself available to others.

Thus, it can be concluded that every relationship can't be separated from interpersonal needs, namely Inclusion, control, and affection. Likewise, Marin and Mabel's relationship cannot be separated from inclusion, control, and affection because they feel they need each other, then try to reach a satisfactory relationship. This is aligned with Schutz's statement in the book Hammer & Schnell which says that "all groups must deal with the issues of Inclusion, Control, and Affection, in that order," (2000,p.6)

## CONCLUSION

The Interpersonal behavior of Marin and Mabel's friendship is portrayed by interaction based on their sense of need, including inclusion, control, and affection. For Inclusion, Marin and Mabel's relationship is included in the Social type of inclusion because both of them can be low or high participants in their friendship. This is proven by how Marin interacts based on the response of her partner, while Mabel can adapt to a relationship without anxiety. For Control, they included a Democrat type of control because neither Marin nor Mabel is a stubborn person. Then for Affection, they are included in the Personal type of affection because they are only able to have a good and close relationship with certain people.

Second, Interpersonal behavior also has an impact on each other in Marin and Mabel's relationship. This impact can be seen from how their behavior interacts to reach satisfactory relationships, whether they tend to receive or give to their partners, called Expressed&Wanted behavior. In their friendship, Marin is included in Expressed behavior, while Mabel is included in Wanted behavior. Because of this, Marin became an open and loyal person. Then Mabel became a pleasant person and made herself available to others.

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