

Staging and main character self-efficacy in *Seperti Dendam, Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas*

Afrizal Rinaldo¹, Ranang Agung Sugihartono²

^{1,2}Postgraduate Program, Institut Seni Indonesia Surakarta, Surakarta, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Background: Nowadays, the rise of films that highlight sexual violence in Indonesia pays little attention to the depiction of the main character's self-efficacy as a victim, so they are unable to provide the right course of education for the audience, and reduce the quality of the film. *Seperti Dendam, Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas*, a film by Edwin from Indonesia, raises the issue of sexual violence against children, achieving numerous milestones. This achievement cannot be separated from the way the filmmaker builds the staging to depict the main character's self-efficacy. **Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to determine and understand the function of staging in depicting the self-efficacy of Ajo Kawir in this film. **Methods:** This qualitative research employs David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson, and Jeff Smith's staging theory as a supporting framework and analyzes it through Albert Bandura's social cognitive approach to address the problem formulation. The methods used to collect data in this research include literature reviews and document studies. **Results:** Through the analysis, it is known that the elements of staging in the nine scenes in this film have three functions in describing Ajo Kawir's self-efficacy. These functions serve to form characterisation through the four elements of staging, which show changes in the cognitive process. The next step is to arouse emotions through body gestures and expressions, thereby showing changes in the cognitive process, affection, and motivation. The last step is to move the story through the four elements of staging to describe both vicarious and mastery experiences. **Conclusion:** The changes in self-efficacy of Ajo's in this film illustrate the complexity of the characterizations with the support of the staging that Edwin constructs. **Implications:** This study contributes to the understanding of the function of staging in depicting Ajo Kawir's self-efficacy. The results of the staging analysis serve as a reference for filmmakers to depict the right character's self-efficacy as a means of education.

Keywords: Film; psychology; self-efficacy; social cognitive; staging

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Correspondence: Afrizal Rinaldo, S.Sn., Institut Seni Indonesia Surakarta, Ki Hajar Dewantara St. No.19, Surakarta 57126, Indonesia. Email: afrizalrinaldo1997@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, due to the rapid development of image recording technology, the number of film productions has increased, so that competition in the Indonesian film industry is getting tighter. This encourages filmmakers to increase audience appeal. Films as a form of art can depict real-life phenomena and are easily captured by the audience's imaginations (Atmaja, 2021). One of the many ways filmmakers attract the audience's attention is by depicting problems that occur in people's lives in a film.

The problems that often attract the audience's interest are those with a high level of urgency that threaten the sustainability of social life. This method is not only used to attract the audience's interest, but also serves to add depth to the characterization of the characters, so that a film can resonate with the audience's personal experiences. Through this resonance, the audience can develop an emotional connection with the characters.

One of the problems that is often depicted in a film is sexual violence against children. Based on the data from Table 1, the number of cases of sexual violence against children in Indonesia throughout 2020 reached 6,969

cases and continued to increase to 11,771 cases in 2024 (Kemen PPA, 2025). The increasing number of cases in the last five years has caused concern among the Indonesian people. The increasing number of children who are victims of sexual violence in Indonesia appeals to films that address this issue even more due to public sympathy.

The polemic arose when several films that adapted this issue ignored the ethical and technical aspects of filmmaking and only raised the issue of sexual violence against children as a magnet to attract viewers. One of the films that has recently become controversial is *Vina: Sebelum 7 Hari*. This film, directed by Anggi Umbara, has reached an audience of up to five million viewers in 2024. This film is packaged in the form of a docudrama and tells the true story of a minor who was a victim of bullying, rape, and murder. The director stated that *Vina: Sebelum 7 Hari* aims to serve as an educational medium (Pertiwi, 2024). This statement has received various objections. Several film critics in Indonesia argue that this film violates ethics because it commercialises tragedy and incorporates elements of fantasy horror, thereby reducing the educational value it aims to convey.

Table 1 Number of Cases of Sexual Violence Against Children in Indonesia

No	Year	Number of Cases
1	2020	6,969
2	2021	8,699
3	2022	9,588
4	2023	10,932
5	2024	11,771

Source: Kemen PPA, 2025

Apart from the controversy regarding the ethics, the problem that is ignored by the public in *Vina: Sebelum 7 Hari* is the technical aspect of the film. The mediocre story and technical aspects in this film can have an impact on the increasing number of similar films in the future and allow the Indonesian film industry to be remembered only for selling tragedy (Pratista, 2024). Based on this explanation, as a reference and solution for filmmakers in Indonesia, an understanding is needed regarding the proper steps in depicting the issue of sexual violence against children as a means of creative and quality education. One of the technical aspects that can improve the visual quality in a film is the staging (Louarn et al., 2018).

Staging is one of the elements of *mise-en-scène* that can describe changes in the psychological condition of the character in film (Watson et al., 2021). Staging is a technique for placing and arranging actor movements, including appearance, gestures, expressions, and dialogues, directed by the Director to stimulate the actor's emotions in exploring the character (Bordwell et al., 2016). In addition to being used to explore the emotions of the characters in the film, staging is also able to influence the emotional experience of the audience (Widyaevan, 2023). Because psychology is closely related to staging, an understanding of psychology is needed so that a film can depict the life story of a victim of sexual violence in a better way.

Psychology helps study how films can interact

with the human subconscious mind (Riles et al., 2021). Characters in films can display psychological experiences in the form of mental health problems experienced by people in everyday life. Mental health problems can be in the form of inner conflict or social deviation from the character due to past experiences that have an impact on changes in his self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy is defined as a person's belief in their ability to exercise control over their own functions in events in their environment (Bandura, 2009). To examine the depiction of character self-efficacy, Albert Bandura's social cognitive approach is necessary. Social cognitive theory emphasizes that human behavior is the result of dynamic interactions between personal factors, environmental influences, and behavioral patterns (Bandura, 2009). This approach states that environmental conditions greatly influence the process of forming a person's resilience. A person can still think and regulate their own behavior, but interactions between individuals can trigger choices for change (Coëgnarts, 2017). Based on this explanation, understanding a person's self-efficacy process enables them to determine their resilience condition.

The increasing number of cases of sexual violence against children in Indonesia that affects the self-efficacy of victims has made various media, especially in the field of recording media arts, start to raise the issue. These media are in the form of journalistic works, such as documentary films, and fictional films that depict the lives of victims of sexual violence.

Several films in Indonesia, such as *Sajen* (2018), *Like and Share* (2022), and *Vina: Sebelum 7 Hari* (2024), have raised the issue of sexual violence against minors. However, the three films still do not depict the main character's self-efficacy through comprehensive aspects of staging. These three films only depict the sexual violence experienced by the main character in childhood as an introduction to the background, without showing the character's self-efficacy process due to the trauma experienced after the incident. A recent film in Indonesia that represents the lives of victims of sexual violence against children, and depicts its impact on the victim's self-efficacy process until adulthood through staging techniques, is the film *Seperti Dendam, Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas* (2021).

Seperti Dendam, Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas is a film directed by Edwin and adapted from a novel of the same title by Eka Kurniawan in 2021. This film, produced by Palari Films, tells the story of Ajo Kawir, an aggressive young man who enjoys fighting with everyone, but has a secret: he has impotence. The experience of sexual violence caused the condition Ajo Kawir experienced when he was still a child.

Seperti Dendam, Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas has received several awards at national and international film festivals. This film received five awards at the 2022 Indonesian Film Festival, three awards at the Indonesian Movie Actor Awards, five awards at the Maya Awards, one award at the Bandung Film Festival, and an award in the best film category at the Locarno International Film

Festival (Ginangjar, 2022).

The success of the film *Seperti Dendam, Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas* at various film festivals is inseparable from its production team. Producers Meiske Taurisia and Muhammad Zaidy had been planning the film since 2016, and it successfully won the "Most Promising Project" award at the Asian Project Market Busan International Film Festival, along with funding in the same year (Nathania, 2023). The collaboration between the highly accomplished Indonesian director Edwin and Japanese cinematographer Akiko Ashizawa is also considered capable of presenting a unique depiction of the impact of sexual violence through cinematographic aspects. Edwin's ability to construct surreal yet symbolically imbued scenes makes him a perfect fit for adapting Eka Kurniawan's novel into film.

Based on the background of the problem, the formulation of the problem in this study is: "How is the function of staging in describing the self-efficacy of the character Ajo Kawir in the film *Seperti Dendam, Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas*?" In line with the formulation of the problem, this study aims to determine and understand the function of staging in describing the self-efficacy of the main character in the film *Seperti Dendam, Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas*.

Based on these objectives, the results of this study will provide both theoretical and practical benefits. The expected theoretical benefits are that the study's results can provide insight into the function of staging in depicting the self-efficacy of the main character in a fictional film. The expected

practical benefits are that the study's results can serve as a reference for filmmakers to accurately describe changes in self-efficacy through staging, thereby facilitating education. For the general public, this research is expected to increase awareness of the importance of combating sexual violence, especially against children, and understanding the impact it has on victims' self-efficacy.

Until this article was written, no identical research has been found, but there are several previous studies discussing similar formal objects with different material objects. The majority of previous research on self-efficacy has tended to be quantitative. These studies generally examined children's self-efficacy through formal learning media to understand changes in their behavior patterns (Capa-Aydin et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2025; Qin et al., 2025; Rahayuningtyas et al., 2020). These previous studies serve as a reference for implementing the social cognitive theory in this study.

Previous research, particularly in Indonesia, has examined the condition of a character's self-efficacy in fictional works, such as films, but remains quite minimal. Previous research on the self-efficacy of main characters in films has proven that cinematic aspects such as mise-en-scène and editing can support the depiction of the characters' self-efficacy and how they increase their resilience to face problems (Monica et al., 2023; Rinaldo, 2022; Rinaldo & Sugihartono, 2025). Previous research in the field of film still describes cinematic aspects that support the depiction of character self-efficacy. Although previous research has explored

the depiction of a character's self-efficacy in film, none have examined the function of staging as a means to build a change in behavioural pattern more deeply.

Although previous studies have examined the relationship between cinematic aspects and character self-efficacy in films, no study has yet explored the role of staging in shaping character self-efficacy in greater depth. Unlike previous studies, this study examines the role of staging in depicting the self-efficacy of a sexual violence survivor in a film. Research on the function of staging is important to be carried out as a reference and guideline for novice filmmakers in depicting the behavioral patterns of sexual violence survivors in films more creatively and accurately. Knowledge of how staging builds a depiction of self-efficacy is also necessary to understand the character's resilience, so that it can motivate the audience to face problems in life and recover from their trauma.

Based on the reviews of previous studies, the resistant topic of discussion in a film remains minimal in India. Furthermore, research has been conducted on the lack of self-efficacy in relation to the same film. Furthermore, the prevalence of films that fail to effectively portray character self-efficacy through staging elements makes this research a worthwhile exploration.

Using the staging theory of David Bordwell, Kristin Thompson, and Jeff Smith, along with Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory, this research provides an analysis of how the director constructs scenes that depict changes in the self-efficacy of the character Ajo Kawir, a victim of

sexual violence, as he confronts challenges in his life. The study emphasizes how Edwin, as the director, employs one of the key elements of mise-en-scène, namely staging, to craft scenes that evoke emotional responses from the audience through an accurate and nuanced portrayal of the self-efficacy of a sexual violence survivor.

RESEARCH METHOD

The type of research used in this study is descriptive qualitative research, which focuses on studying a document in the form of a film, *Seperti Dendam, Rindu Harus Bayar Tuntas* (2021) by Edwin from Indonesia, as the object of research. The purpose of the study is to interpret the function of staging in scenes that describe the main character's self-efficacy. Qualitative research can provide in-depth insight into the character development, narrative, and cinematic aspects (Verma et al., 2025). In order to answer the problem formulation, the approach in this study is the social cognitive approach proposed by Albert Bandura, and supported by the staging theory of David Bordwell, Christine Thompson, and Jeff Smith.

Staging is a director's step to construct and direct the movements of actors who play characters in a film (Bature-Uzor, 2018). An actor's performance consists of visual elements (appearance, gestures, facial expressions) and sound (dialogue) (Bordwell et al., 2016). Based on this explanation, the success of an actor's performance in a film is often related to his ability to manipulate his appearance, gestures, facial expressions, and dialogue according to the needs of the story.

In addition to the theory of staging, to understand the function of staging in depicting the self-efficacy of the character Ajo Kawir in this film, the theory of self-efficacy in the social cognitive approach by Albert Bandura is used as a scalpel in analyzing the scenes. Self-efficacy is a measure of a person's ability to carry out a role in a community (Waddington, 2023). Meanwhile, according to Bandura (2009), self-efficacy is an expectation of belief (hope) about the extent to which a person can carry out a behavior in a particular situation, which is influenced by four factors, namely: mastery of experience, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physical and emotional conditions. Self-efficacy influences self-motivation to achieve success in life through cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection processes (Aini & Widyafendhi, 2019).

Qualitative research provides flexibility for the variabilities that arise when data collection is carried out (Kharismawati & Wahidati, 2023). The data collection methods used in this study are literature study and document study.

Literature review is a data collection technique that involves collecting data on literature related to the problem being studied (Panjaitan & Hasanah, 2022). A literature review was conducted in this research to search for and collect data related to the object of this film, in the form of books and journals. Meanwhile, document study is the activity of collecting, observing, and recording data or information that is relevant to the research context (Rosmawati et al., 2024). Documents can be in the form of writing, pictures, or someone's work.

Document study in this research was conducted by watching the film *Seperti Dendam, Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas* on the Netflix film streaming service, which was then analyzed using screenshot techniques and recorded scenes.

In order to obtain research results, data analysis in qualitative research is carried out in six stages (Creswell, 2010). The stages consist of data processing, data reading, data coding, data description, data presentation, and data interpretation. The analysis technique is employed in this study to address the problem formulation and draw conclusions. Through these stages, it is known that nine scenes describe the self-efficacy of the character Ajo Kawir. Furthermore, the following are the results of the study and their discussion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Film as an educational medium can depict cultural phenomena and social issues through visual storytelling (Restianty et al., 2024). Filmmakers can depict real-life problems in a film through the selection of themes, stories, and characters (Wardaniningsih & Kasih, 2022). *Seperti Dendam, Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas* raises a social problem that is currently increasing in Indonesia, namely, sexual violence against children. Several characters, including Ajo Kawir, Iteung, and Rona Merah, experience sexual violence in this film. However, this study focused on analyzing the character of Ajo Kawir as the main character in the film *Seperti Dendam, Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas*.

Based on the identification, nine scenes have been identified as containing elements of staging

that serve to form characterisation, arouse emotions, and advance the story. However, the self-efficacy of Ajo Kawir's character is described at different levels, necessitating categorisation. The following is a further discussion of each category.

The way a character moves, expresses himself, and communicates can show his nature and behavior (Bordwell et al., 2016). Knowledge about the nature and behavior of a character is called characterization (Bucciferro, 2021). One of the functions of staging is to form characterization that can be observed through appearance, gestures, expressions, and dialogue.

The characters in the film can show their life experiences if the filmmaker can correctly characterize the film character (Sugihartono & Wanggay, 2023). Furthermore, the following is a more in-depth discussion of the scenes that form characterization in describing the self-efficacy of the character Ajo Kawir in the film *Seperti Dendam, Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas*.

The first scene with higher function to form characterization can be seen at figure 1 (1) (timecode: 00.04.28 – 00.05.30). The scene began with Ajo Kawir fighting a drunken man who had insulted his manhood. Although Ajo ended up getting beaten, the encounter highlighted his aggressive nature and his tendency to resolve conflicts through violence. This moment not only revealed Ajo's character as someone quick to fight but also reflected a broader social belief: that a man's worth was tied to his sexual performance. In a society where impotence was seen as a weakness, Ajo compensated for his inability to get an erection by asserting his



(1) timecode: 00.04.28 – 00.05.30



(2) timecode 00.34.50 – 00.38.16



(3) timecode 01.16.08 – 01.20.41

Source: *Seperti Dendam, Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas*, 2021

Figure 1 the scenes that have a higher function in forming Ajo Kawir's characterization

masculinity through physical aggression.

Ajo's violent behaviour was the result of the sexual violence he experienced as a child in the past. Children who experienced sexual violence could be negatively impacted on their self-esteem and functionality in other aspects of life (Okunlola et al., 2021).

This scene depicts Ajo's cognitive distortion and low self-esteem. This can be seen through three elements of the staging, namely appearance, gesture, and expression. Ajo's messy appearance indicates his aggressive nature and dislikes being controlled by others. The change in Ajo's body gestures from being relaxed to being more defensive to throwing punches after hearing the provocation of the man who made fun of his genitals shows aggression, low self-confidence, and emotional instability. Ajo's smiling facial expression when being ganged up on by the masses indicates a deviation. Based on the

analysis of the two elements of the staging in this scene, it can be seen that Ajo's self-efficacy is low.

The next scene, which plays a significant role in characterisation, can be observed in Figure 1 (2) (Timecode: 00:34:50 – 00:38:16). This scene further illustrates the influence of the affection Iteung gave to Ajo Kawir. Ajo and Iteung danced together, accompanied by a song titled *Sekuntum Mawar Merah*. The song *Sekuntum Mawar Merah* expresses love from a man to a woman through a red rose. The song can describe the happy atmosphere felt by Ajo and Iteung. The dance gestures and smiles on both of them depict the happiness they feel.

The conflict in the film began to emerge when Budi Baik, Iteung's ex-lover and childhood friend, showed up at their wedding party. Still harboring feelings for Iteung, Budi attempted to intimidate Ajo through his body language and subtle provocations,

eventually trying to challenge him. This can be seen through their dialogue.

Based on the description, the affection Iteung gave to Ajo helped him become a better person. This was evident when Ajo responded to Budi's intimidation with a calm smile. His body language and gestures in that scene reflected a significant change in his character—he was no longer easily provoked and had learned to control his emotions more effectively. Based on the description, it is evident that the elements of the scene, including gestures and expressions, support a more accurate depiction of Ajo's cognitive process, indicating an increase in his self-efficacy.

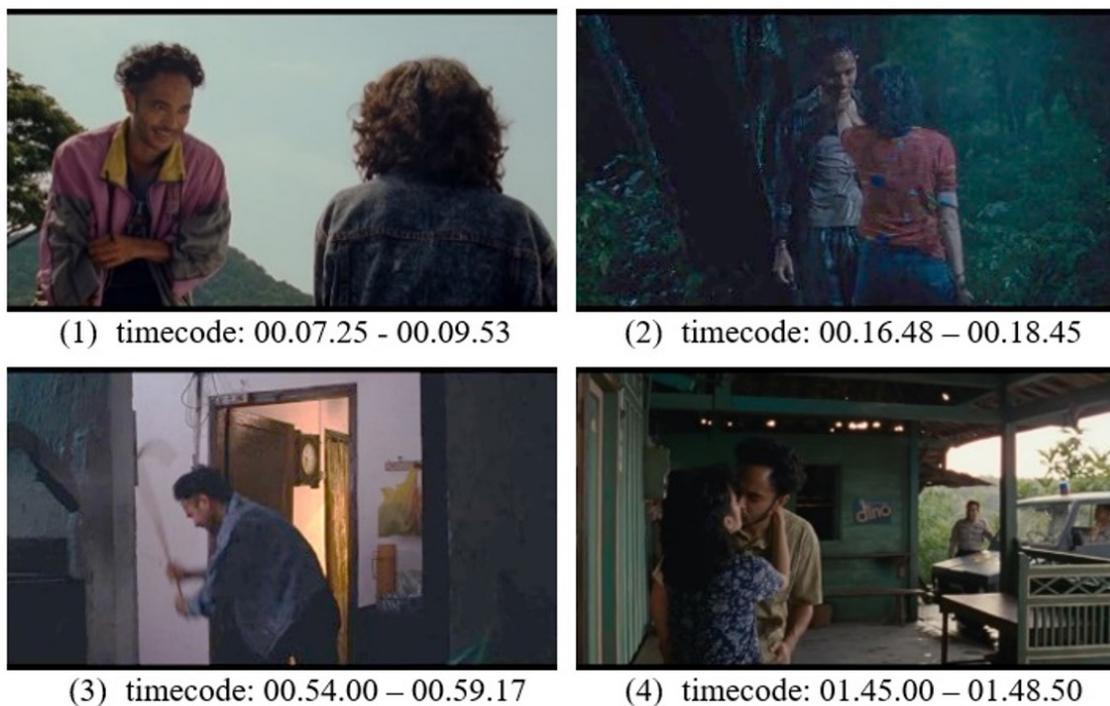
The last scene with higher function to form characterisation is displayed in the scene where Ajo becomes a truck driver in Figure 1 (3) (timecode: 01.16.08 – 01.20.41). Ajo's characteristics after being released from prison experienced significant changes. Ajo Kawir's cognitive abilities improved, indicating an increase in his self-efficacy. This can be seen through Ajo's appearance, which is cleaner, able to communicate normally, and able to smile again. The changes occurred because Ajo was no longer angry at his wife's actions and made peace with his impotence, although he still felt ashamed to meet Iteung again because he was a murderer. This shame was evident in the writing on the back of another truck, which read "going home ashamed, not going home longing," a phrase he stared at while driving the truck. The change in Ajo's character in this scene shows the mastery of experience.

Furthermore, Ajo's cognitive process is depicted through his dialogue in this scene. Ajo was

seen patiently facing the provocation in the form of curses thrown by Iwan, responding only with a smile before walking away to avoid confrontation. He even broke up a fight between his friend and Iwan at the food stall. This showed that Ajo no longer resorted to violence and had grown into a better person.

Based on this description, it can be seen that Edwin, as the director, constructs staging to display Ajo's self-efficacy, which has been increased so that he can recover from the mental disorder he experienced. Although he appears to have recovered psychologically, his physical condition has not fully recovered. Ajo still has a condition of impotence, which causes his genitals to be unable to get an erection. The staging elements, including gestures and expressions, in this scene support the depiction of Ajo's cognitive condition, which has improved. That depiction displays mastery of Ajo's experience, indicating his increasing self-efficacy.

Gesture and expression elements in the staging of films can arouse emotions (Bordwell et al., 2016). In addition to gestures and expressions, intense dialogue between two characters in a dramatic situation is also able to arouse the characters' emotions (Thomsen & Heiselberg, 2020). Based on this explanation, one of the functions of the staging is to arouse the character's emotions. Understanding the character's emotions is an important aspect of further understanding the character's self-efficacy. The following are the results of the analysis of the function of the staging to arouse emotions in scenes that depict Ajo Kawir's self-efficacy.



Source: *Seperti Dendam, Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas*, 2021

Figure 2 the scenes that have higher function in arousing emotions

Figure 2 (1) (timecode: 00.07.25 - 00.09.53) displays one of the scenes with a higher function to arouse emotion. This was the scene where Ajo Kawir first met Iteung, which took place in Palebe's coal mine. Their meeting was unlike that of ordinary couples in typical romance films—they began their relationship with a fight, as Ajo intended to attack Palebe, Iteung's employer. The interaction between the two revealed new emotions beginning to arise in Ajo.

Hatred or dislike toward another person can turn into love (Usman et al., 2022). Even though they were fighting in this scene, Ajo and Iteung often smiled at each other as they exchanged punches. The smile plays an important role in romantic, personal, and professional relationships (Dobrevva et al., 2022). The facial expressions between the two revealed the emergence of interest, which gradually grew into affection and eventually

blossomed into love. Ajo, who had been known for being merciless in combat, chose not to injure Iteung severely. Instead, he showed admiration and interest in her, smiling sincerely after defeating her—something he had never done with anyone else he had fought.

Based on that description, Ajo's smiling expression shows that Iteung's character provides affection that can have an impact on changes in his self-efficacy. This change can be assessed in a more positive direction because the presence of Iteung can persuade Ajo to become a better person. This was evident when Ajo decided to spare Palebe's life, not out of mercy, but because he had developed an interest in Iteung.

Through the analysis of this scene, it becomes clear that the seeds of affection from Iteung had already been planted in Ajo. This affection develops into a feeling of love between the two of them.

Furthermore, the role of Iteung in Ajo Kawir's self-efficacy will be discussed through the analysis of the next scene, where he confronts Iteung after avoiding her.

The next scene that has a higher function in arousing emotions is when Ajo confesses his love to Iteung in figure 2 (2) (timecode: 00.16.48 – 00.18.45). This scene shows the beginning of the relationship between Ajo and Iteung, which initially was just mutual interest, developing into mutual love. It started when Ajo refused to meet Iteung again after several dates because he was embarrassed by his impotence. Iteung, who was angry at Ajo for avoiding her, started chasing and beating Ajo. Ajo finally revealed that he loved Iteung, and the reason he avoided her was because of his impotence. After hearing this confession, Iteung accepted Ajo for who he was.

A person who experiences trauma sometimes covers up their sadness and fear by becoming more aggressive and defensive (Syawalya & Kusuma, 2023). Ajo's aggressive and violent behavior was, in fact, a way of masking his biological shortcomings as a man. This is shown through Ajo's crouching body gesture and sad expression, shown through crying when cornered by Iteung.

Ajo's dialogue in this scene reveals that he lacks courage, which subtly indicates his shame about his impotence. Furthermore, the persuasion carried out by Iteung's character enhances the character's self-efficacy. This persuasion is not only shown through their dialogue, but also through gestures in the form of Iteung's touch, which is continued with Ajo accepting Iteung's hug and kiss. Based on

this explanation, Iteung's persuasion in this scene becomes an affection that Ajo needs to strengthen his self-efficacy. This was evident through Ajo's gestures and expressions after Iteung accepted his condition. Ajo no longer cried and willingly accepted her embrace.

The next scene with higher function in arousing emotions can be seen in Figure 2 (3) (timecode: 00.54.00 – 00.59.17). This scene depicts how Ajo goes berserk after being betrayed by Iteung. This scene begins with Iteung, who, thinking Ajo had become a thug again, decided to help him overcome his trauma. To achieve that, Iteung searched for the perpetrators of Rona Merah's rape and the cause of her husband's impotence. In order to find the two perpetrators, Iteung met Budi Baik to find information about their whereabouts. Due to the desire to immediately kill the two perpetrators in order to cure her husband's impotence and added to Budi's temptation, Iteung finally had sex with him and betrayed her marriage vow.

Sometime after the incident, Iteung became pregnant. Iteung, who was ashamed of what she had done, tried to come clean to Ajo. Instead of forgiving him, Ajo was furious after hearing that Iteung had had an affair and decided to go back to being a gangster. Ajo, who remembered the job offer to kill a thug named Macan, decided to kill her. The decision was based on the anger he felt after hearing about Iteung's affair.

Through this scene, it can be seen that there is a change in Ajo Kawir's cognitive process. Iteung's betrayal served as a negative motivation that drove Ajo to return to his old life as a thug. Based on this

description, it can be seen that Ajo's self-efficacy is once again disturbed, resulting in a significant change in characteristics.

This change is depicted through Ajo's body gestures, beating Macan to death indiscriminately with a sadistic smile on his face, and saying the word "whore" which was actually intended for Iteung. Even though Iteung was not at Macan's house, Ajo still shouted at her, which indicated that he had begun to experience signs of a mental disorder. This indicates that Ajo is starting to experience mental disorders. Based on this description, it is evident that the elements of the scene, including gestures and expressions, depict Ajo's disturbed cognitive condition.

The last scene that has a higher function in arousing emotions can be seen in Figure 2 (4) (timecode: 01.45.00 – 01.48.50). After becoming a better person and recovering from his impotence, Ajo decided to reunite with Iteung. Edwin captured Ajo's life journey through the phrase "*Seperti Dendam, Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas*" (timecode: 01:45:00), which means "*like vengeance, longing must be paid in full*". The writing can be interpreted as the life of Ajo and Iteung, who are bound by

revenge, causing the two to be separated. This scene provides a conclusion to Ajo's journey in healing his trauma. The reunion of the husband and wife in this scene showed that their love was strong enough to overcome their past trauma.

This last scene shows that Ajo's affection for Iteung can motivate him to go home and start a new life. Their affection was depicted through the dialogue in which they apologized to each other and expressed their love. In addition to the spoken words, Ajo's intimate gesture of kissing Iteung illustrated the deep love and longing he had carried during their years apart.

Character movement can move the story (Bordwell et al., 2016). The actions taken by a character in a scene have an impact on the movement of the film narrative (McCormack et al., 2021). Based on this explanation, staging functions move the story. The following are the results of the analysis of the function of staging to move the story in scenes that describe Ajo Kawir's self-efficacy.

The initial tragedy of Ajo Kawir experiencing impotence is in the flashback scene when Ajo was still in elementary school. This scene can be observed in figure 3 (1) (timecode: 00.48.27 –



(1) timecode: 00.48.27 – 00.52.10



(2) timecode: 01.38.00 – 01.41.10

Source: *Seperti Dendam, Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas*, 2021

Figure 3 the scenes that have a higher function in moving the story

00.52.10). At that time, Ajo and his friend were spying on two law enforcement officers who were raping a woman named Rona Merah. At that time, Ajo had a bad feeling after seeing a solar eclipse. A solar eclipse is considered a sign of bad events that require vigilance (Octaviana, 2023).

In this scene, Ajo experienced a traumatic vicarious event that affected both his physical and mental condition into adulthood. Ajo, who was caught red-handed by the authorities, was taken into the house, although not explicitly shown. However, signs such as screams and pleas shouted by Ajo at the shot of the solar eclipse indicate that he experienced sexual violence.

More concrete evidence that Ajo had experienced sexual violence appeared in the scene where Iteung met the perpetrator of Rona Merah's rape and murder (timecode: 01.31.35 - 01.33.15). In this scene, Iteung described Ajo's traumatic experience and the perpetrator's actions, including stripping him naked and forcing him to join in raping Rona Merah. Trauma is a disturbing experience that makes a person have significant fear, confusion, disassociation, helplessness, and any other distorted feelings (Mazzoni et al., 2025). The effect of the trauma can be intense enough to make a person have long-lasting deviant behaviour and functioning.

The trauma experienced by Ajo in this scene caused him to experience impotence. Impotence, or better known as erectile dysfunction, is a sexual disorder in men that makes it difficult to achieve and maintain an erection that is hard enough to have satisfying sexual intercourse (Dierickx et al.,

2021). Various factors cause impotence; in addition to biological diseases, psychological factors such as stress, anxiety, and depression can cause this condition (Bryan-Thomas et al., 2018) "erectile dysfunction" and "male impotence." The results showed that many variables such as psychological disorders resulting from traumatic experiences (e.g. PTSD or depression). Ajo experienced this condition after he was forced to have sex with Rona Merah. The impact of this incident not only affected Ajo's physical condition but also his mental condition, which affected his self-efficacy.

Through this scene, the audience can understand the reason why Ajo's cognitive process has been distorted since the beginning of the film. Ajo's forced sexual encounter with Rona Merah had led to a deep sense of low self-efficacy, which caused him to grow into a man who expressed his inner turmoil through violence and impotence. Ajo's guilt for having sex with Rona Merah disrupts his cognitive process so that he experiences impotence. This impotent condition then had an impact on his self-confidence, so that to cover up this deficiency, Ajo became an aggressive thug who liked to fight.

The next scene that has a higher function in moving the story can be observed in Figure 3 (2) (timecode: 01.38.00 – 01.41.10). This scene showed Ajo Kawir's increase in self-efficacy, as he rejected Jelita's advances and affirmed that he still had a wife. Based on the dialogue between the two, it was evident that Ajo still loved Iteung. This was not only reflected in his words but also in his gloomy facial expression, his refusal to look at Jelita, and his body language as he tried to distance

himself, clearly showing his discomfort being close to a woman who was not his wife.

Furthermore, in this scene, Jelita's character, who was portrayed as the incarnation of Rona Merah's ghost, played a role in helping to cure Ajo's impotence. Her action, specifically the hand gesture touching Ajo's genitals, could be interpreted as a symbolic act of freeing him from the guilt he carried for having had sex with Rona Merah in the past. Jelita's presence as the ghostly embodiment of Rona Merah also suggested that Ajo's condition was rooted in psychological trauma, stemming from cognitive distress and guilt over Rona Merah's death. Once he was released from this burden of guilt, Ajo's genitals were able to function normally again.

Based on the discussion above, it is evident that Edwin, as the director, constructs the staging in this film for three functions in describing Ajo Kawir's self-efficacy. The first function is to form character through staging elements in three scenes that show changes in Ajo Kawir's cognitive process, and the affection given by supporting characters is known to affect the condition of his self-efficacy. The second function is to arouse emotions in four scenes that demonstrate how the motivation and affection provided by supporting characters influence the cognitive process of Ajo Kawir's character. The third function involves moving the story through staging elements in two scenes, illustrating how vicarious experience affects Ajo Kawir's life path and how he overcomes his trauma through mastery experience.

While films are primarily designed as an

entertainment medium, they can also provide insight into mental health issues by facilitating reflection, processing emotions, and igniting personal change in a person (Capitani et al., 2025). The power of films lies in how filmmakers depict real-life problems that viewers can identify and help them reflect on their experiences (Khalish & Hanami, 2025). Therefore, by understanding the staging and characterisation of this film, it can serve as a reference for novice filmmakers to depict the self-efficacy process of a sexual abuse victim as a character.

CONCLUSION

Seperti Dendam, Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas is a film that depicts a social problem that is currently increasing in Indonesia, namely sexual violence against children, with a myriad of achievements. This achievement cannot be separated from the way Edwin, as a filmmaker, builds the staging to depict the main character's self-efficacy.

Based on the research results, nine scenes in the film *Seperti Dendam, Rindu Harus Dibayar Tuntas* were identified as depicting the main character's self-efficacy. This depiction is supported by elements of staging, including appearance, gestures, expressions, and dialogue.

Edwin constructs the staging in this film with three functions. The first is to form characterization through the four elements of staging that show changes in the cognitive process of the character Ajo Kawir. The next step is to arouse emotions through body

gestures and expressions, thereby showing changes in the cognitive process, affection, and motivation. The last is to move the story through the four elements of staging to describe the effect of vicarious experience and mastery of the experience of the character Ajo Kawir.

The changes in Ajo's self-efficacy in this film illustrate the complexity of the characterizations, supported by the staging that Edwin constructs. This film shows that characters are influenced and shaped by their experiences, which can change their cognitive abilities. The change displayed by staging in this film shows the development of the main character's self-efficacy.

Based on the conclusions described, several suggestions for subsequent similar research can be identified. The next research with the same object is expected to delve deeper into the psychological condition of the main character of this film, utilizing elements of *mise-en-scène* beyond staging. This is because this film has other elements of *mise-en-scène* that support the depiction of the character's psychological condition. The subsequent research with the same object is also expected to examine the psychological condition of the character with a different approach, because there are other interesting aspects to study, one of which is trauma coping, which is needed to understand how someone can deal with the trauma they experience. Based on this explanation, it is believed that there are still other psychological aspects that can be studied in this film.

This study recommends a more precise and creative method for developing staging to portray the self-efficacy of sexual violence survivors for aspiring filmmakers. Knowledge and understanding of staging are needed as a reference amidst the proliferation of films that address the issue of sexual violence without considering the psychology that enhances emotional resonance between a film and its audience. The changes and developments in the self-efficacy of the main character, supported by staging in this film, can be a learning tool for novice filmmakers to be able to depict the life story of a victim of sexual violence in a better way.

This research also recommends that society increase its sensitivity to the issue of sexual violence, particularly against children. By raising this awareness, society is expected to actively participate in combating sexual violence against children, which poses a serious threat to the future of the nation's younger generation.

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