CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Social capital refers to social networks, trust, and relationships that enable individuals to cooperate and support one another within a society (Putnam, 2000:18). In early 2000s America, the nature of social capital undergoes significant changes. Participation in community organizations declines, leading to a reduced trust in institutions and a weaker engagement in civic activities. However, personal relationships within small communities and peer networks remain vital sources of support, especially for individuals from disadvantagious backgrounds. Nevertheless, access to social capital is not evenly distributed, as socioeconomic status influences one's ability to form beneficial social connections (Putnam, 2005:11). These shifts indicate that while traditional forms of social capital diminish, interpersonal relationships continue to play a crucial role in providing an emotional and economic support.

The concept of social capital is also reflected in a movie entitled *A Cinderella Story* (2004), a modern adaptation of the classic Cinderella tale. The movie follows Sam Montgomery, a hardworking teenager who dreams of attending Princeton University but faces numerous challenges after her father's death. She is mistreated by her stepmother, Fiona, and stepsisters, who constantly undermine her. Despite her struggles, Sam finds support through meaningful social connections, including her best friend Carter and her mentor Rhonda, who provide her with encouragement

and guidance. Additionally, her bond with Austin Ames, a popular yet conflicted student, helps her realize her self-worth and stand up for herself. This narrative illustrates how strong social networks help individuals overcome adversity and achieve personal growth.

This research thesis explores how *A Cinderella Story* (2004) movie portrays social capital as a key factor in Sam Montgomery's journey. The reason for conducting this research is the writer's personal interest in how social relationships shape an individual's opportunities and development. This movie has been one of favorites movies that strongly highlights the role of social capital in shaping the main character's life. The relationships she builds with her friends, coworkers, and mentors significantly impact her journey, making this movie an interesting subject for analysis. Moreover, the writer is exploring how social capital functions in real life, especially in helping individuals navigate challenges and achieve their goals. In relation to this research thesis writing, the writer will analyze causes, types, and impacts of social capital on Sam's journey in *A Cinderella Story* Movie (2004).

1.2 Research Questions

1. What are the causes the formation of social capital in Sam Montgomery's journey in *A Cinderella Story* Movie (2004)?

2. What are the types of social capital that influence Sam's journey in *A Cinderella Story* Movie (2004)?

3. What are the impacts of social capital on Sam's journey in *A Cinderella Story* Movie (2004)?

1.3 Research Aims

1. To analyze the causes of social capital in Sam's Montgomery's journey in *A Cinderella Story* Movie (2004).

1. To analyze the types of social capital that influence Sam's journey in *A Cinderella Story* Movie (2004).

2. To analyze the impacts of social capital on Sam's journey in *A Cinderella Story* Movie (2004).

1.4 Scope of the Study

In this research thesis, the writer examines both the intrinsic and extrinsic elements in *A Cinderella Story* (2004). Intrinsically, the analysis focuses on key aspects of the movie, including its characters, settings, and conflicts, exploring how these elements shape Sam Montgomery's journey and highlight the significance of social relationships in overcoming adversity. Extrinsically, the writer will analyze analyze causes, types, and impacts of social capital as a key factor in the main character's journey by applying Robert Putnam's social capital theory.

1.5 Previous Studies

The first previous study reviews is an undergraduate thesis written by Mauliza Annisa from Universitas Sumatera Utara, entitled *An Analysis of Women Empowerment in the Movie Cinderella* (2021). This thesis examines how the 2021 adaptation of Cinderella portrays the empowerment of its female protagonist. Annisa's research focuses on the movie's representation of gender roles and independence, particularly analyzing how Cinderella breaks free from traditional

expectations and societal constraints. This thesis uses feminist theory to explore the character's journey toward self-reliance and agency.

The second previous study that the writer reviews is an undergraduate thesis written by Muhammad Nif'an Fatahillah from Universitas Brawijaya (2019), entitled *Representation of Social Issues in Siti and Turah Movie: A Study of Pierre Bourdieu's Social Practice and Symbolic Violence*. This thesis analyzes the portrayal of social issues in the Indonesian movie *Siti and Turah*, using Pierre Bourdieu's theory of social practice and symbolic violence. It highlights the struggles of lower-class individuals, exploring themes of poverty, oppression, and social hierarchy. This thesis emphasizes how social structures perpetuate inequality and limit upward mobility.

The third previous study that the writer reviews is an undergraduate thesis written by Okania Mentari from Universitas Batanghari (2019), entitled *Personality Traits: Analysis of Main Character in Cinderella Movie 2015 by Disney*. This thesis analyzes the personality traits of the main character in Cinderella (2015) by using the Big Five Personality Traits theory. Mentari's thesis focuses on how Cinderella's characteristics—such as agreeableness, openness, and conscientiousness—affect her behavior and interactions with other characters.

The differences between this research thesis and the three previous studies are that this research thesis specifically focuses on how *A Cinderella Story* (2004) illustrates the role of social capital in shaping the protagonist's opportunities and success through the framework of social capital. This research thesis will provide a

new perspective on how relationships and support systems influence an individual's ability to achieve their goals.

1.6 Research Method

1.6.1 Method of Data Collection

In writing this research thesis, the writer uses library research to gather the data. Library research involves various sources that contain information related to the subject of a study (George, 2018:6). This method incorporates both primary and secondary data. Primary data as original research or firsthand accounts of events and experiences. It refers to information obtained directly from sources such as surveys, interviews, experiments, or observations, which has not been previously published or analyzed by others (George, 2018:73). In this research thesis, primary data is gathered through a close analysis of *A Cinderella Story* (2004), focusing on the dialogues and scenes from the movie.

In addition, secondary data refers to information that has been collected, analyzed, and interpreted by others (George, 2018:73). Secondary data typically consists of sources such as books, journal articles, research papers, and other academic documents that provide a second-hand analysis of primary data. In this research thesis, the secondary data is gathered from books, journal articles, and research papers that provides analyses and perspectives relevant to the themes and issues examined in *A Cinderella Story* (2004). Overall, the combination of primary and secondary data allows the writer to conduct a thorough analysis of *A Cinderella Story* (2004) by providing diverse perspectives and critical insights into the role of social capital in shaping the protagonist's journey.

1.6.2 Research Approach

Referring to the background of the study that reveals social capital's role, the writer applies a sociological approach in analyzing the movie. A sociological approach is a method of analysis that emphasizes social relationships, societal structures, and the influence of social environments on individuals and groups (Timasheff, 1995:154). According to Putnam, a sociological approach focuses on the role of social networks, trust, and civic engagement in shaping both individual opportunities and collective well-being (Putnam, 2000:22). In this research thesis, the writer applies Robert Putnam's theory of social capital to analyze the causes, types, and impacts of social capital on the main character's journey in the movie.

1.7 Organization of the Writing

The writer divides this research into several chapters:

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the writer discusses the background of the study, research questions, scope of the study, aims of the study, previous studies, research methods, and organization of the writing.

CHAPTER II: INTRINSIC THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, the writer will elaborate the intrinsic elements of the movie, including narrative aspects (character and characterization, setting, and conflict) and cinematic aspects (camera angles and camera shots).

CHAPTER III: EXTRINSIC THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, the writer will elaborate the extrinsic aspects of the study, focusing on the concept of social capital, its historical context in early 2000s America, and its application in teen movies. It also explains Robert Putnam's social capital theory and how it relates to the protagonist's journey.

CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the writer analyzes both the intrinsic and extrinsic elements including an in-depth analysis of *A Cinderella Story* (2004), focusing on how social capital influences Sam Montgomery's journey. It also examines the causes, types, and impacts of social capital that shape the main character's ability to overcome challenges and achieve her goals.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

This chapter contains the final results of the discussion of this research.

REFERENCES