

Exploring The Psyche Of The Protagonist Through The Health Belief Model In Niven's All The Bright Places (2015)

Muhammad Abdul Ali Khan¹, Saeed Ur Rahman² (corresponding author), Huma Khan³, Dr. Najia Almas⁴, Najeem Khan⁵, Mian Yalmaz Ul Haq⁶

Abstract

This study applies the Health Belief Model (HBM) to analyze Theodore Finch's perceptions and behaviour regarding his mental illness and bipolar disorder in All The Bright Places (2015). The research, conducted qualitatively through analysis of the novel and existing literature, aims to understand Finch's awareness of his condition, the perceived severity, and the overwhelming barriers that prevent him from seeking treatment. Significant barriers such as the stigma of¹ mental illness, fear of labeling, bullying, and a lack of parental support affect Finch's sense of hopelessness. The findings underscore the urgent need for open and objective discussions about mental illness to dismantle stigma and improve intervention strategies, highlighting the fatal consequences of unaddressed mental health issues.

1.0 Introduction

Literature and psychology have a relationship that strengthens with the emergence of young adult literature. The beauty of literature is that it not only discusses morality, society, and religious issues but also delves into the complex and deep ideas of the human psyche. Literature offers a way by providing psychological insights and exploring the human mind's complexities. Furthermore, post-modern literature reflects psychological themes such as human emotions, trauma, and mental and behavioural processes through their narratives, plots, and characters. In literature, the exploration of mental illness among young adults is a growing area of interest, awareness, and concern for contemporary society. According to a study, the prevalence of childhood mental disorders was 12.7% (Krog, H. M. B. 2023). On average, this means that one out of ten or more children suffer from mental disorders. This shows the importance to acknowledge the severity and seriousness of mental illness among children and young adults.

Niven's All The Bright Places (2015) is a young adult novel narrating the story of two 17-year-old suicidal teenagers, Finch and Violet. The novel explores the mental state of the two characters who are struggling to survive because of their traumatic past. Finch and Violet find each other at the top of the high school bell tower. Both characters have plans to commit suicide, but instead of jumping, they start talking. Finch, being manic, tries to understand Violet's reasons for suicide; therefore, Finch starts following her and makes acquaintance with her. Soon their friendship develops into a romantic relationship. They begin to confront past traumas of one another as they embark on the journey of a school project to explore the wonders of the state of Indiana. However, their relationship is ultimately cut short when Finch commits

¹Department of English, Bacha Khan University, Charsadda (Pakistan)

²Lecturer, Department of English, Bacha Khan University, Charsadda (Pakistan)

⁴Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sardar Bahadur Khan Women University Quetta

⁵Assistant Professor of English, Government College of Management Sciences and Commerce, Hangu, KP

⁶National University of Modern Languages

^{2,3,5} PhD Scholars at Qurtuba University of Science and Information Technology, Peshawar (Pakistan)

²Email: sesedu7@gmail.com

suicide by drowning himself. That time, Violet has truly understood the meaning of life and is looking to move forward.

The themes of mental illness and suicidal thoughts appear in the novel. Finch and Violet both struggle with mental illness, but their approach toward illness is different. Violet is suffering from the trauma of her sister's demise and is trying to recover. The people around her, especially her parents and peers are almost supportive. She can freely express her grief with them, and eventually, she finds a way back to her life. However, in the case of Finch, it is quite different. His parents and peers are not very supportive and understanding. Finch cannot express himself to them because of the stigma surrounding mental illness. He feels ashamed of how he feels and fears being labelled. The novel, *All The Bright Places* (2015) suggests how the stigma around mental illness and the difficulty of expressing it can worsen the consequences.

Niven's *All The Bright Places* (2015) reveals that individuals struggling with mental illness can be isolated from their society. People who feel isolated and ashamed due to the stigmatization of mental illness, they see suicide as their only option. Finch is struggling with an undiagnosed and untreated mental illness, which is portrayed in the novel as bipolar disorder. When he was in eighth grade, he started experiencing different moods. He tells about his condition to his best friend, Roamer, but he dubbed Finch as "Theodore Freak." Almost all the students at school labelled him as "weird" and "unpredictable" because Finch would get angry and start fighting. Following such events, Finch got isolated, and his illness has been misunderstood by his peers and teachers.

Finch is struggling with undiagnosed, unprocessed, and untreated bipolar disorder. Bipolar disorder is a mental illness in which the psyche of an individual dwells on two extremes, causing alternative moods of depression and mania. According to the American Psychiatric Association (APA), a manic episode is defined as "a distinct period of abnormally and persistently elevated, expansive, or irritable mood and abnormally and persistently increased goal-directed activity or energy, lasting at least 1 week" (Krog, 2023). Symptoms of manic episodes are feeling energetic, excessive talking, crazy thoughts and actions, and sleeplessness or decreased need of sleep. But manic episodes are often a spinoff of major depression, which lasts for at least two weeks while suffering from bipolar disorder. Major depression can be recognizable through symptoms like depressed mood, unpleasantness and lack of interest in daily life activities, loneliness, suicidal thoughts, feeling of worthlessness and guilt, and hypersomnia or insomnia (Krog, 2023). Symptoms portrayed in the novel clearly indicate that Finch is suffering from an undiagnosed bipolar disorder.

1.1 Research Gap

The novel, *All The Bright Places* (2015), by Jennifer Niven, explores the themes of mental illness, trauma, depression, bereavement, love, and loss. The novel has been examined from multiple psychological perspectives. There exists a gap in the literature concerning the behavioral aspects of Theodore Finch's mental illness. The researcher has analyzed Finch's beliefs, attitudes, and thoughts about his mental illness through his behaviors, actions, and conversations.

1.2 Research Question

How do the components of the HBM, including perceived susceptibility, severity, barriers and cues to action, collectively shape the mental health perception and help-seeking behaviors of the Finch, and what implications do these factors have for mental health intervention strategies?

1.3 Research Objective

To examine the components of the HBM, including perceived susceptibility, severity, barriers

and cues to action, collectively shape the mental health perception and help-seeking behaviors of the Finch. Furthermore, to analyze the implications these factors have for mental health intervention strategies.

1.4 Rationale

The rationale for this paper lies in the critical need to understand the interplay between individual perceptions of mental illness and the external factors that influence help-seeking behaviour. By applying the Health Belief Model (HBM) to Theodore Finch's character in *All The Bright Places* (2015), this study seeks to explore how perceived susceptibility, severity, and barriers shape his actions and ultimately lead to his tragic end. Despite growing awareness of mental health issues, stigma, fear of labeling, and inadequate support systems continue to hinder effective intervention. This research aims to contribute to the broader conversation on mental health by illustrating the consequences of untreated mental illness and emphasizing the importance of breaking down these barriers. Through a detailed examination of Finch's experiences, the study offers insights that could inform more compassionate and effective mental health strategies, particularly for those facing similar challenges.

1.5 Significance

This research helps us to understand the actions and behaviour of a Finch who is suffering from mental health issues by using the character of Theodore Finch. Furthermore, it aims to broaden the application of the Health Belief Model (HBM) to the area of mental health and suicide prevention. It focuses on mental health in literature in order to bridge the gap between practical theory and literary analysis. The study also helps to comprehend how to promote awareness concerning mental health issues via literature.

2.0 Literature Review

Anuar et al. (2020) systematic review highlights the need for more investigation on the use and efficacy of HBM in health behavior interventions. Particularly in the context of CKD, the available information is insufficient to make firm conclusions about its benefits. Researchers are urged by this study to plan and carry out excellent studies in order to gain a deeper comprehension of HBM's function in altering health-related behavior.

Raamkumar et al, (2020) used this model to assess COVID-19-related social media information using learning classifiers based on the Health Belief Model. Their study used user-generated content to characterize in order to understand the way public perceives physical distance. They discovered that the HBM framework did a good job of capturing health behaviors and concerns that people voiced online, giving public health authorities' insightful information that they could use to better address community concerns and refine intervention efforts. This method emphasizes how useful HBM is for tracking and directing public health actions during pandemics.

A process orientation and other constructs are added to Burns and Alvin (1992) extended Health Belief Model (HBM) in order to address the difficulties practitioners encounter in encouraging health risk awareness and adherence to preventive healthcare recommendations. The current study explores how HBM is represented through Finch's character in *All the Bright Places*, exploring its applicability in a literary environment as opposed to direct health care practice. Burns focuses on improving the theoretical underpinning of HBM for preventative health care. This distinction draws attention to our special method of using fictional stories to analyze the concepts of HBM.

Costa et al. (2020) created a questionnaire based on the Health Belief Model that uses quantitative metrics to validate common perceptions on the dangers of contracting COVID-19 infection. This method was helpful for public health education and communication processes because it made it possible to quickly, directly, and quantitatively identify each person's belief profile for every questionnaire dimension. Costa focuses on measuring belief

profiles about the hazards of contracting COVID-19, it study explores how HBM is portrayed through Finch's character in *All the Bright Places* highlighting its use in a literary analysis setting.

Jones et al. (2014) carried out a systematic review to assess the efficacy of interventions based on the Health Belief Model (HBM) in enhancing adherence to behaviors that promote health. Out of the eighteen studies that met the eligibility criteria, three-quarters (79%) demonstrated moderate to substantial impacts. Even still, the HBM's applicability as a foundation for adherence-boosting therapies was called into question because so few studies employed it in its entirety. The current study examines HBM's portrayal through Finch's character in *All the Bright Places*, stressing a literary analysis method rather than actual health interventions, in contrast to Jones's focus on analyzing HBM interventions' efficacy in healthcare.

Henshaw & Freedman-Doan (2009) employed The Health Belief Model (HBM) to elucidate the elements that promote or impede the use of mental health services. According to the Health Belief Model (HBM), people are more likely to participate in health-related behaviors if they think there are minimal obstacles to action, the intervention is successful, and the problem has major repercussions. Creating and assessing initiatives to raise mental health awareness and utilization is made easier with the help of this model.

McWhirter & Goetz (2016) investigated how the Health Belief Model (HBM) was used in American magazine articles concerning the risks of tanning and skin cancer. They looked for HBM constructions in 574 articles and 905 photos from men's and women's magazines published between 2000 and 2012. Information on severity (60.3%) and vulnerability (48.1%) was commonly provided in texts, along with references to the advantages (36.4%) and obstacles (41.5%) of preventive. But there were rarely any indications to take action. The current study examines HBM representation through Finch's persona in *All the Bright Places*, putting emphasis on literary analysis than media application, in contrast to McWhirter and Hoffman- Goetz's concentration on media content.

Castonguay et al. (2016) used the Health Belief Model (HBM) framework and theme coding to study the narratives of depression patients who sought therapy. The results showed that each HBM element was impacted by ambiguity about the ailment and the course of treatment, with dread of the unknown course of treatment acting as a major deterrent to seeking assistance. By offering direction, interpersonal cues to behavior decreased uncertainty.

Johnson et al. (2008) conducted a systematic review using the Health Belief Model (HBM) to examine cervical cancer screening among immigrants and ethnic minorities in the United States. Their study emphasizes the importance of understanding sociocultural factors that influence health-related beliefs and healthcare utilization. It advocates for the development of culturally relevant screening strategies and programs to address disparities in cervical cancer burden among underserved populations.

Diefenbach & Leventhal (1996) discuss popular approaches in health behavior studies, such as the medical model, Health Belief Model (HBM), and theory of reasoned action. They highlight the model's importance for minority health research and demonstrate how applicable it is to a range of ailments. Dewi et al. (2022) study Finch's personality and his internal and external conflicts through Freud's psychoanalytic theory and Kenney's conflict theory. Finch's external conflicts are caused by his abusive father, peers, and society that control him and force him to think negatively. Finch's personality is studied through three human structures: Id, ego, and superego. The study shows that Finch's ID, aggressive behaviors, and ego overcome his superego. Finch's mind is controlled by his unconscious thoughts to act in a realistic way, which serves as a barrier to his treatment.

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Krog et al. (2023) comparatively analyze three young adult protagonists with mental illness. The study compares their perceptions about mental illness and the treatment they are getting from their families, peers, and therapists. It highlights that language stigmatization plays a key role in the recovery or treatment of the protagonists. In the case of Finch, he could not discuss his mental illness freely with others, and stigma about mental illness acts as a barrier to his treatment.

Chiraz (2020) examines young adult literature and the stigma surrounding mental illness. The researcher focuses on the de-stigmatization of mental illness; however, it sometimes leads to the danger of romanticizing death and suicide. The researcher studies Jennifer Niven's Finch from psychological and sociological perspectives to examine the destructive nature of mental illness stigma and romanticizing death. These are very critical issues, and it is important to discuss them freely and openly to de-stigmatize mental illness.

Abdin and Bakar (2020) conducted research on young adult literature to portray teenagers suffering from mental illness. The study applied Beck's cognitive theory of depression to Violet Markey and Theodore Finch, the two main characters of the novel, *All The Bright Places* (2015). The researchers highlight that teenagers' depression and suicide are major issues, which are portrayed by Jennifer Niven with much seriousness and realism.

Mahdani (2023) identifies the major conflicts between Finch and Violet in Niven's *All The Bright Places* (2015). The main characters of the novel are struggling with both internal and external conflicts. Their inner conflicts result from the uneasiness and thinking of suicides on their side, due to which they attack others. But the external conflicts are much worse than a nightmare. They are caused by society's opposing views and its hostility towards mentally ill people. As they want to avoid external conflicts, they seek peace and harmony.

3.0 Research Methodology

This research follows a qualitative methodology, emphasizing a thorough literature review to understand existing analysis of mental issues and behavior in *All The Bright Places* (2015). A qualitative approach is well-suited for this research as it allows for a detailed analysis of Finch's beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour regarding his mental health. Textual analysis, incorporating critical techniques such as close reading, will be employed to examine key passages. This research utilizes the Health Belief Model to qualitatively analyze Finch's behavior concerning his mental health issues. Ethical considerations, including proper attribution, will be rigorously observed. The study aims to synthesize qualitative data to derive nuanced conclusions, thereby making a qualitative contribution to the literature and the discourse on psychoanalytic theory.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

This research is grounded in the Health Belief Model (HBM), which serves as the theoretical framework for analyzing Finch's character in *All The Bright Places* (2015). The HBM suggests that health-related behaviors are influenced by several factors: perceived susceptibility, perceived severity, perceived benefits, perceived barriers, cues to action, and self-efficacy. By applying these components, the study will explore how Finch's beliefs and actions regarding his mental health are depicted, offering insights into the psychological dimensions of his character within the narrative.

The Health Belief Model (HBM) is a theoretical framework that studies individual behaviour from a psychological perspective. The model explains and predicts health-related behaviour to understand individuals' attitudes and beliefs towards their health behaviour. The six key components of the model, perceived susceptibility; perceived severity; perceived benefits; perceived barriers; cue to action; and self-efficacy, influence human behaviour. The HBM can

be used for health promotion, health education and awareness, and disease recovery and prevention. In the 1950s, behavioral scientists and US public health researchers began developing socio-psychological models intended to improve the efficiency of health education programs. The common demographic factors that are associated with preventive health behaviors are age, gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic. However, these aspects cannot be altered through awareness and health education. Thus, the scientists wanted to develop a model in order to modify individual characteristics and predict preventive health behavior. As a result, the Health Belief Model (HBM) emerged in the 1950s. At that time, many diagnostic processes and tools were undermined due to lack of awareness (Green et al, 2020). Hence, the HBM was first used to promote awareness about the symptoms of preventable diseases. They wanted people to understand the symptoms and that health related risks can be cured if diagnosed at early stages.

The HBM consists of four aspects for individual assessment: perceived susceptibility, perceived severity, perceived benefits, and perceived barriers. Perceived susceptibility is the individual's perception of the risk of getting an illness or disease. At this stage, an individual observes his behaviour and begins to contemplate his actions and thoughts to recognize the concern symptoms. After recognizing the symptoms, an individual has to know the seriousness of the illness and how much his life is in danger. It is termed "perceived severity". The next stage is "perceived benefits" in which an individual focuses on the efficiency of change in behaviour and the effectiveness of taking the recommended treatment to reduce the threat, but the individual does not take the treatment in every case. Sometimes perceived barriers overcome the benefits of taking recommended health action. In this case, an individual's beliefs and attitudes towards health care are not positive. The perceived benefits are much lower than the barriers. Later on, two more constituents were added to the model. Health promotion and awareness messages are important for an individual if one desires to acquire the recommended action and is ready to alter one's behaviour. This awareness can be spread through mass media, peer education, and other interventions, which can be termed as cues to action. Cue to action is the stimulus required to motivate the decision making process to admit being diagnosed. The last aspect of the model is self-efficacy. It is the person's confidence in his ability to successfully change his behavior and take the recommended action.

In this research, the researchers analyze Finch's character in the novel, *All The Bright Places* (2015), through the Health Belief Model (HBM). All the six components of the model are explained through Finch's character. His perception is analyzed through HBM to determine how he perceives his mental illness, how he thinks of its seriousness and what are the benefits of taking health care, and what are the barriers that are stopping him from taking a recommended action. Finch' cues to action and self-efficacy is also analyzed which strengthen the researchers' claim and reasoning.

4.0 Analysis and Discussion

4.1 Perceived Susceptibility

Finch is aware of his condition, bipolar disorder. An individual, suffering from bipolar disorder, acts on two extremes; depression and mania. Finch refers to these extremes as moods in the novel, *All The Bright Places* (2015). These moods: depression and mania are being symbolized by the words 'asleep' and 'awake'. There is no middle in between, as Finch says, "The Asleeps and Awakes, no in-betweens" (Niven, P, 52). Finch is afraid of being labeled, but he himself calls it "bipolar disorder, my mind says, labeling itself" (Niven, P, 177). This shows that Finch is susceptible to his mental illness, and he knows that it is a threat in the long term that had to be dealt with.

Finch frequently reflects on his dark moods that show his understanding of his mental illness. When he gets depressed, he goes quiet and lonely. As he said after getting into one of his

depressive moods,

“I’ve done what I could to be pleasant and quiet, making myself as small and unseen as possible... when I’m asleep” (Niven, P, 31).

And when he gets into these depressed moods, he feels afraid. There is no way to escape this catastrophic fate, which eventually leads him to commit suicide. As he says, “I’m most afraid of the long Drop. I’m most afraid of Asleep and impending, weightless doom” (Niven, P, 141).

Finch changes the scenery around him in order to get comfort. He goes alone and runs for miles and miles in winter, while, in summer, he takes long baths to block everything that might disturb him. Finch even changed the red color of his room to blue because it was too depressive, which means that he is avoiding anything that makes him feel nervous and anxious when he is in these dark moods. The blue color gives him peace and serenity as he is floating in water because he is afraid of being depressed. As he mentioned it;

“Kind of black, sinking moods. I imagine it’s what being in the eye of a tornado would be like, all calm and blinding at the same time. I hate them” (Niven, P, 187).

Finch is aware of his condition’s cyclic nature. At the start of the novel, he is coming out of depression and "being awake again" (Niven, P, 10). Being manic, he does crazy things and is full of confidence and energy. He goes to school, hooks up with girls, falls in love, and explores new places. He also broke into fights and attempted suicide. This is the cyclical nature of his mental illness, bipolar disorder, of he himself is aware but cannot help it; “I get into these moods sometimes, and I can’t shake the” (Niven, P, 187). He understands his condition very well and knows what is coming ahead.

4.2 Perceived Severity

Bipolar disorder has a significant impact on Finch’s life. He acts more strange than usual due to his mental illness. He gets into fights; he is moody and unpredictable. That is why people hate him for being weird, and he gets into fights with them when they call him a freak. As he understands the nature of his mental illness, so does its severity. One of the reasons he acts strange and weird is that he wants to take control of his mind and consciousness that have been occupied by mental illnesses like past trauma and bipolar disorder. That is why Finch always contemplates suicide and death, which is another reason for him controlling his mind.

He studies different ways of dying and then practices them to feel. At the start of the novel, Finch finds himself on the top of a high school bell tower just to contemplate suicide and to feel the death before dying so that he will not be afraid in time. He is standing on a ledge at the tower and enjoying the view. Later on, in the novel, Finch swallowed a half bottle of pills and then ran into an emergency for help. Just because he wants to feel the way Cesare Pavese, an Italian poet, felt when he swallowed pills and took his life. When Finch gets into one of his moods, he takes long baths and deep breaths to block everything and every sound, which shows the severity of his condition. Violet describes his severity and insanity as;

“He plays guitar in five or six different bands, and last year he cut a record. But he’s kind of ... extreme. Like he came to school one day painted head-to-toe red, and it wasn’t even Spirit Week. He told some people he was protesting racism and others he was protesting the consumption of meat. Junior year he wore a cape

every day for an entire month, cracked a chalkboard in half with a desk, and stole all the dissecting frogs from the science wing and gave them a funeral before burying them in the baseball field” (Niven, P, 22).

Finch is well aware of his severe condition, and he knows that one day he will take his life because of his extreme severity. He is trying to get control over his life, but all his efforts are in vain, which he describes as;

“I want to stay alive... I’m fighting to be here in this shitty, messed-up world. Standing on the ledge of the bell tower isn’t about dying. It’s about having control. It’s about never going to sleep again” (Niven, P, 17).

He is fighting to take control of his life, but that is not possible in his case. That is why he started romanticizing death. Finch is reading about suicide, and its different methods, and he is also studying those writers who have ended their lives by suicide. He is inspired by an Italian poet, Cesare Pavese, who was urging for the greatest manifesto, love, and to die valiantly. Finch is also reading Virginia Woolf’s works, taking inspiration from her works and life. Eventually, he drowns himself just like her, as he has been swallowed by a black hole and none of it matters.

4.3 Perceived Benefits

Finch perceives limited benefits to getting treatment or medical care. Finch wants to live for Violet, and therefore he sees the benefits of taking treatment to be around her as a normal guy.

He wants to continue and live a happy life for his family and loved ones. A change in his behavior can be seen after falling in love with Violet Markey. When Finch got into a fight with Roamer, Violet told him to stop it, and so Finch did it. The next time when Roamer was beating him, he just took it while laughing; “Finch didn’t even try to defend himself” (Niven, P, 135), because Violet had already stopped him from fighting. Finch began to take the therapy session a bit more serious. After taking pills, he also joined ‘Life is Life’, a support group for teens who are thinking, have attempted, or have survived, suicide. Finch also likes to explore new places with Violet. Finch wants to live a perfect life, and he feels grateful to Violet for making his life perfect. But these benefits of taking care are not enough to help him fight the battle against his inner demons. The obstacles are far more severe, bigger, and dangerous than perceived benefits, which lead him to drown himself.

4.4 Perceived Barriers

Theodore Finch is aware of his illness and sees the benefits of taking treatment. However, the barriers he perceived about his severe condition were far more overwhelming than his perceived benefits of taking a recommended action. Suffering from mental illness is in itself a big deal, but what makes it worse than other physical diseases is the stigmatization and labeling of it. Theodore Finch experienced different levels of stigmatization of mental illness at different levels. In school, he is misunderstood by his peers, who refer to him as a ‘freak’. At his home, there is not such a thing as mental illness. Finch’s father called him dramatic, and his mother, who is not even at home mostly, would never take such things for granted until and unless it is a physical disease. As Finch says;

“...in this house there’s no such thing as being sick unless you can measure it with a thermometer under the tongue” (Niven, P, 117).

In the case of Violet, when she was suffering from past trauma, her parents helped her and talked to her. But this does not happen to Finch. Even Violet’s parents got to know about Finch’s sufferings and lies, they stopped her from seeing him. “The boy is troubled, Violet. The boy is unpredictable...” (Niven, P, 151). Finch himself does not want to talk about his mental condition. He refers to it as unpleasant, and people should not talk about it.

Finch cannot express himself to other people due to his fear of being labeled. People like to throw labels on you for being crazy, maniacal, etc. He needs people to understand him and

have sympathy with him. But it is a lot easier to be sympathetic toward physical disease because it can be easily recognized. Finch also does not want to be recognized as a patient. He is turning blind eyes towards his mental illness as he says; "The thing I know about bipolar disorder is that it's a label. One you give crazy people" (Niven, P, 172). His ignorance towards his mental illness can also be seen when he joined the support group.

"I want to get away from the stigma they all clearly feel just because they have an illness of the mind as opposed to, say, an illness of the lungs or blood. I want to get away from all the labels. "I'm OCD," "I'm depressed," "I'm a cutter," ... I'm the only one who is just Theodore Finch" (Niven, P, 181).

For Theodore Finch, life is all about secrecy. If you reveal your condition, you are going to be labeled. And that is why; he broke into a fight with Violet when she suggested he take help, which eventually led him to commit suicide by drowning himself.

Finch does not trust the medical system and the therapists. His perception is that therapists only label give drugs. Finch considers medicines as drugs that addict the users. Mr. Embryo asked Finch to bring him a drug test result, but the situation with Finch was different. Finch is not giving him true details of his condition.

"I've learned the hard way that the best thing to do is say nothing about what you're really thinking. If you say nothing, they'll assume you're thinking nothing, only what you let them see" (Niven, P, 92).

Parental care is the first and preferred way of treating a mentally ill child. In Finch's case, it is the worst that could be expected. Finch's interaction with his father can be seen as a bitter relationship between father and son. Finch is avoiding eating meat at dinner to irritate his father by saying "I don't eat red meat... 80's Finch who's the vegetarian" (Niven, P, 49). The relationship between father and son is a worse one, and that is because of Mr. Finch, who used Finch's head as a "punching bag".

"... he catches me by the arm and wham, slams me into the wall. I hear the crack as my skull makes contact, and for a minute the room spins" (Niven, P, 102).

One of the barriers is that he cannot communicate with his parents. The second one is that their treatment of him is the cause of his depressive moods. After such treatment, Finch is compelled to find peace and serenity in water because when he is drowned in water, he feels he is detached from everything, which gives him comfort for a moment, but at the end, it leads him to his impending, weightless doom.

4.5 Cues to Action

Finch has a dull life. However, his love, Violet Markey, and exploring new places are the two things that make him live life to its fullest. The first interaction between Finch and Violet takes place on the roof of the bell tower when Finch saves her life. Finch immediately tries to understand her and what is going inside her head, as she is suicidal. There is a kind of mutual understanding between the two from the very beginning, as Finch says; "she's the first person I've met who seems to speak my language" (Niven, P, 53). Finch knows that she needs him to help her. After knowing every detail about Violet's life, he promised himself to live for her. "This time will be different. This time, I will stay awake" (Niven, P, 45).

Exploring new places makes Finch believe that there is still to be cheered in this rubbish world. He likes to drive fast with his "Little Bastard" and move from one place to another. When the geography teacher, Mr. Black asks for an assignment about the wonders of

Indiana, Finch suggests that they should also explore these places. All these wonderings require energy, which Finch possesses because he is a crazy person.

4.6 Self-Efficacy

Finch's self-efficacy varies throughout the novel, *All The Bright Places* (2015). His confidence in managing his conditions or moods is usually low. However, he feels empowered when he is around Violet and exploring new places. He believes that with the right person besides you, you can climb a mountain.

“I learned that not everyone is disappointing, including me, and that a 1,257-foot bump in the ground can feel higher than a bell tower if you're standing next to the right person” (Niven, P, 69).

When he is around Violet and exploring new places, he feels confident. But perceived barriers are stronger for him than perceived a benefit, which is why he lacks confidence in taking recommended action and scheduling meetings with Mr. Embry. He does not disclose his secrets or feelings to Mr. Embry because of the stigma. Finch also does not believe in labeling himself. He wants people to acknowledge him for who he is. And that is why he lacks confidence in taking medication because it will detach him from his personality and character. As a whole, Finch does not feel confident in taking treatment, and that is why he does not see the benefits of taking treatment.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendation

By applying the Health Belief Model (HBM) to Theodore Finch, the protagonist of Jennifer Niven's novel *All The Bright Places* (2015), this analysis concludes that Finch perceives his mental illness, particularly bipolar disorder, as a critical issue requiring resolution. He is aware of the severity of his condition and expresses a desire to lead a normal life, particularly after entering a romantic relationship with Violet Markey. However, Finch's perceived barriers, to seek treatment including the stigmatization of mental illness, fear of being labeled, lack of parental support, , bullying at school, and the romanticizing death ultimately outweigh the perceived benefits of pursuing professional help. These overwhelming barriers prevent Finch from access of necessary care, leading to a sense of hopelessness and isolation. Consequently, his reluctance to openly address mental health struggles, compounded by societal stigma, contributes to his tragic decision to commit suicide by drowning. This case highlights the critical need for society to take mental illness seriously and foster open, stigma-free discussions to prevent such tragic outcomes.

The researchers suggest applying the Health Belief Model (HBM) to Violet Markey, one of the narrators and protagonists in Jennifer Niven's *All The Bright Places* (2015).

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