

An Analysis of Character Roles in Fostering Social Awareness in the Korean Drama Daily Dose of Sunshine

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Abstract

This article aims to examine the role of characters in fostering social awareness in the Korean drama Daily Dose of Sunshine. The characters' roles align with the framework of social awareness proposed by Greenspan and Driscoll, particularly in the areas of (1) social understanding and (2) social communication. These aspects are most prominently demonstrated through characters who exhibit the ability to perceive and process emotional and contextual social cues effectively. They employ communication strategies that enhance mutual understanding and minimize conflict, reflecting competence in interpersonal communication. The narrative progression highlights the root causes of psychological distress, particularly the burden of societal, familial, and academic expectations, which lead to stress and a diminished sense of self-worth when individuals fail to meet externally imposed standards. The analysis also reveals that the characters embody dimensions of social awareness through (3) sensitivity to others' suffering and (4) active engagement in addressing mental health issues concerns that remain stigmatized in society. This is especially pertinent in the Korean cultural context, where collectivist norms often compel individuals to conceal mental health struggles to maintain social image. The storytelling, conveyed through characters' perspectives and emotional expressions, enables audiences to comprehend the psychological pressures experienced by the characters, which may result in mental health challenges.

Ultimately, the characters serve as a reflective medium, portraying the internal vulnerabilities often hidden from the public sphere. Their portrayals evoke empathy and self-reflection among viewers, leading to greater awareness of mental health issues within social and cultural dimensions. The series contributes to constructing a more resilient social structure and fosters a safe space for open discourse on mental health as a normal aspect of human life.

Keywords

Social awareness, Characters, Korean drama.