

A Spark of Enhanced Self-Esteem: Unveiling the Hidden Message Behind "Bejeweled" by Taylor Swift

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Abstract:

This research aims to reveal how self-esteem can be interpreted in the song Bejeweled by Taylor Swift using Coopersmith's (1967) theory of self-esteem. The analysis was conducted by employing a qualitative descriptive method and was collected by close reading and analyzing the content of the collected data. This study highlights the issue of how a person can realize their self-esteem after a long journey and struggle to free themselves from dark times. After analyzing the data, the researcher found that self-esteem is something that can be rebuilt, even after a painful experience. Individuals are considered to have high self-esteem when they can recognize their value. This recognition empowers them to take control of themselves, shaping their own happiness without relying on other's expectations. This study provides significance to readers, inspiring anyone who wants to learn about self-esteem, especially in building self-confidence and achieving their full potential.

Keywords: self-esteem; self-control; Taylor Swift

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap bagaimana harga diri dapat diinterpretasikan dalam lagu Bejeweled oleh Taylor Swift dengan menggunakan teori harga diri dari Coopersmith (1967). Analisis dilakukan dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dan dikumpulkan dengan membaca secara cermat kemudian menganalisis isi dari data yang terkumpul. Penelitian ini menyoroti masalah bagaimana seseorang dapat menyadari harga dirinya setelah melalui perjalanan panjang dan perjuangan dalam membebaskan diri dari masa-masa kelam. Setelah melakukan analisis, peneliti menemukan bahwa harga diri merupakan sesuatu yang dapat dibangun kembali, bahkan setelah mengalami pengalaman yang menyakitkan. Individu dianggap memiliki harga diri yang tinggi ketika mereka dapat mengenali nilai mereka. Pengakuan ini memberdayakan mereka untuk mengambil kendali atas diri mereka sendiri, membentuk kebahagiaan mereka sendiri tanpa bergantung pada harapan orang lain. Penelitian ini memberikan signifikansi bagi pembaca, untuk bisa menginspirasi siapa saja yang ingin belajar mengenai harga diri, terutama dalam membangun kepercayaan diri dan menggali potensi penuh dalam diri.

Kata kunci: harga diri; pengendalian diri; Taylor Swift

INTRODUCTION

Human beings are born with an intrinsic quality that serves to imbue them with a sense of self-worth and value in their lives; this is known as self-esteem. According to Floricica et al. (2021) self-esteem is categorized as a form of generalized self-assessment, which influences an individual's cognitive processes, emotional states, and behavior. One of the most significant aspects of a human being is emotion. Without emotion, a human being is just a shell with no direction and purpose. Furthermore, Gross & Thompson (2007), asserts that emotional regulation is a form of an individual's capacity to express emotions by controlling their feelings and actions in response to a given situation or surrounding environment. He also added that it must be understood as comprising the heterogeneous set of processes through which emotional states are regulated. The ability to control emotions will develop as human experience grows.

Following emotional states, self-esteem is the spearhead for humans in controlling their emotions. Floricica et al., (2021) stated that Individuals with high levels of self-esteem tend to possess a more comprehensive understanding of themselves and their personal preferences. They are often able to articulate a detailed list of their likes and dislikes, exhibiting heightened confidence in their capabilities. This aligns with Coopersmith (1967) which suggests that with self-esteem, one can have a review to express attitudes and show how individuals believe they are valued, capable, successful, and worthy. These self-worth feelings can be developed through self-esteem. A person's level of self-worth and self-confidence can be seen in how they accept their condition. Maintain a positive sense of self-worth, and possess a conviction in the intrinsic value and purpose of their existence to enhance self-esteem.

Linked with these personal values, self-esteem can also increase when someone feels in love. Love is a universal human experience Treger et al. (2014). In both everyday discourse and scientific argument, there is no singular, unified perspective on what concept of love. People describe love and change in relationships in different ways. These views are shaped by beliefs, culture, and personal experience (Czernecka, 2021). When in love, a man will devote all his abilities and strengths to attract the attention of their partner. The emotional state of being loved is a fundamental need for human beings (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). One can be categorized as having a high level of self-esteem when they have high confidence in themselves. Falling in love is a complex experience that involves

controlling our emotions, thoughts, and behavior toward another person. In addition, falling in love makes us aware of how valuable our self-value is. According to research conducted by Murray (2006), positive assessments are more reflected in people who have high self-esteem in romantic relationships compared to people who have low self-esteem. When we have high self-value, we tend to have more stable self-worth and this makes our self-esteem more visible without relying on external validation to make ourselves feel better.

Regarding the sense of being loved and how it affects our self-esteem, love is like a beautiful flower, it can bloom beautifully, but it can also wither and die, leaving behind painful thorns; this is what people call heartbreak. Have you ever imagined how much heartbreak can change a person's life? Heartbreak is a strong and painful emotional experience. When someone we love leaves or a relationship we have built falls apart, we will naturally feel sad, disappointed, and lost. This emotional pain often impacts the way we view ourselves. Even in research conducted by Ayu et al. (2023) reveals that a person who fails in a romantic relationship, especially in cases involving physical violence, causes a person to feel more insecure about themselves and often compare themselves with others who have a higher value than them. This is because this situation not only involves emotional sense but also leaves a trauma in one's mind.

Therefore, with self-esteem awareness, individuals can escape the shackles of heartbreak. Statement accompanied by Jaffar R et al. (2021) enrolls the value of self-love and self-satisfaction on an individual's well-being cannot be measured. To comprehend the concept of self-esteem, it is essential to consider an individual's perception of their worth, appreciation, and affection. Thus, Sandha et al. (2012) revealed that self-esteem can improve social interactions and value themselves more. people who value themselves tend to be more confident than individuals who do not understand their values. Moreover, individuals with high self-esteem are more likely to be receptive to the values of others, resulting in reduced frustration (Coopersmith, 1967).

The phenomenon of how a person can feel fluctuations in self-esteem but can regain their confidence is related to Taylor Swift's song 'Bejeweled'. In this song, it significantly explains how a person can feel fluctuations in their self-esteem. Through the lyrics, we can see how a person experiences a decline in self-confidence, strength, and self-esteem, but manages to rise and reinvent herself. Taylor suggests that this song was made after she was

able to feel a spark of increased self-esteem after her heartbreak. This song is a reflection of Taylor who managed to appreciate herself and managed to break free from the shackles of an unhealthy relationship.

This study reveals the question of how may self-esteem be interpreted in Taylor Swift's "Bejeweled" song. By using the qualitative method, this study underlines the issue of self-esteem in a person after a long struggle to release her downfall in a song. In this case, the concentration of this research is focused on the hidden meaning portrayed in the lyrics of Taylor Swift's song "Bejeweled". In addition, this study is important to be able to contribute to science, especially anyone who wants to learn about literature and self-esteem. Furthermore, this study is relevant in society when they should break free from societal expectations and inspire them to embrace their individuality.

Three studies have been conducted on 'Bejeweled' as the object of the study. Previously, the study on figurative language in the research conducted by Santika & Syafryadin (2023) on the *Midnight's Album* by Taylor Swift. This study revealed that *Midnight's* album contains eight types of figurative language with the most frequently used figurative language being metaphor. Santika argues that Taylor uses a lot of metaphors to give an aesthetic impression to each stanza of her lyrics. In contrast, a similar study conducted by Pratiwi (2023) which also discusses figurative language in Taylor Swift's music videos, found that hyperbole is the most common figurative language because it is most suitable for expressing affective meaning. Nevertheless, both studies agree that in Taylor Swift' music, figurative language plays an important role in conveying emotional dimension and artistic expression. Furthermore, Anhar (2024) analyzed the *Hyperreality of Women in "Bejeweled" Music Video* and found that despite the evidence that women are competitive and materialistic, they are still capable of asserting their resistance and expressing their femininity. Their struggles depicted in the "Bejeweled" music video are an illusion.

In comparison to the three previous studies, this research presents the novelty in addressing the identified research gap. The song lyrics of *Bejeweled* are relatively unexplored to analyze, particularly with regard to the concept of self-esteem. Moreover, the application of self-esteem has not been explicitly studied in this aspect because it tends to focus on language style and how women only wish for a reality that is ultimately

illusory. By taking those points, the researcher focuses on the ideas of psychology with a particular focus on the multidisciplinary aspects of literary analysis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Coopersmith (1967) defines self-esteem as the self-evaluative process, which an individual engages in on a continual basis, and encompasses an attitude of approval or disapproval. Higgins et al. (1987) argue that the standards of the self-evaluative process depend on the individuals. It can be influenced by social evaluation, which consists of multiple stages of information and judgment processing. Higgins added by citing from (Kahneman & Tversky, 1982; Markus & Nurius, 1986) stated that self-evaluation can include comparisons with constructed or imaginary standards, such as mental reflections or 'possible' selves, which can include dreams, fantasies, and logical possibilities. Additionally, this process indicates the extent to which an individual believes themselves to be capable, significant, successful, and worthy. Align with this, Coopersmith believes that a person can be considered self-accepting when they accept themselves as they are, regardless of their strengths and weaknesses. In contrast, people usually reject themselves when they do not feel good enough or worthy of themselves and thirst for external validation. Low self-esteem even makes one feel like they have no control over themselves, lose direction, and cannot make choices. On the contrary, someone with high self-esteem will set goals they want to achieve, just like people save money to buy or get something.

RESEARCH METHODS

The data were analyzed using a qualitative method. Data from the lyrics of the song 'Bejeweled' were examined using Coopersmith's (1967) self-esteem theory. In this paper, the technique of closed reading is used for the collection of data, with the content of analysis employed for the subsequent analysis of gathered data. The data collection is conducted through a reading of Coopersmith's theory and the lyrics of the "Bejeweled" song. The data analysis is conducted through an examination of the lyrics of a given song, with a focus on understanding their meanings and associations. This involves the establishment of connections between the lyrics and Coopersmith's theory, the identification of key points from the analysis results, the compilation of the analysis results, and the documentation of the references utilized. In this specific instance, the data is drawn from the lyrics of Taylor Swift's song, while the analytical tool employed is

Coopersmith's theory. The application of Coopersmith's theory in this context offers a perspective on the personality aspects of the song lyrics under examination.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Bejeweled is a song from the album *Midnights* by Taylor Swift which was released in 2024. This song tells the story of a person's self-confidence after successfully breaking away from a toxic relationship. In this song, Taylor is described as a woman who realizes how valuable she is so she decides to leave her unhealthy relationship. Through the song, Taylor invites listeners to be able to find their own value and not let themselves live only to fulfill other people's expectations.

Here's the following is the full lyrics of the song:

[Verse 1]

*Baby love, I think I've been a little too kind
Didn't notice you walkin' all over my peace of mind
In the shoes I gave you as a present
Puttin' someone first only works when you're in their top five
And by the way, I'm goin' out tonight*

[Chorus]

*Best believe I'm still bejeweled
When I walk in the room
I can still make the whole place shimmer
And when I meet the band
They ask, "Do you have a man?"
I could still say, "I don't remember"
Familiarity breeds contempt
Don't put me in the basement
When I want the penthouse of your heart
Diamonds in my eyes
I polish up real, I polish up real nice*

[Post-Chorus]

Nice

[Verse 2]

*Baby boy, I think I've been too good of a girl (Too good of a girl)
Did all the extra credit, then got graded on a curve
I think it's time to teach some lessons
I made you my world (Huh), have you heard? (Huh)
I can reclaim the land*

And I miss you (Miss you), but I miss sparklin' (Nice)

[Chorus]

*Best believe I'm still bejeweled
When I walk in the room
I can still make the whole place shimmer
And when I meet the band
They ask, "Do you have a man?"
I could still say, "I don't remember"
Familiarity breeds contempt
Don't put me in the basement
When I want the penthouse of your heart
Diamonds in my eyes
I polish up real, I polish up real nice*

[Post-Chorus]

Nice

[Bridge]

*Sapphire tears on my face
Sadness became my whole sky
But some guy said my aura's moonstone
Just 'cause he was high
And we're dancin' all night
And you can try to change my mind
But you might have to wait in line
What's a girl gonna do?
A diamond's gotta shine*

[Chorus]

*Best believe I'm still bejeweled
When I walk in the room
I can still make the whole place shimmer (Shimmer)
And when I meet the band
They ask, "Do you have a man?"
I could still say, "I don't remember"
Familiarity breeds contempt
Don't put me in the basement
When I want the penthouse of your heart
Diamonds in my eyes
I polish up real (Nice), I polish up real nice*

[Outro]

*And we're dancin' all night
And you can try to change my mind
But you might have to wait in line
What's a girl gonna do? What's a girl gonna do?
I polish up nice
Best believe I'm still bejeweled
When I walk in the room
I can still make the whole place shimmer*

From the first chorus of this song lyrics give a depiction of how precious the singer is and is a sparkling, dazzling, and mesmerizing figure. The singer is portrayed as someone who remains confident and still exudes her value despite having faced a difficult relationship. The singer is in an unequal relationship, and the lyrics show that she does not get an equal return for what she has fought for her lover.

Through this song, the lyrics seem to encourage listeners to keep believing in the abilities and value that exists in every human being and encourage not to be afraid when proving to the world how radiant we are if we keep trying to get our meaning. The lyrics of Bejeweled explore the complexity of past romantic relationships. The nature of love that becomes a journey that is sometimes complicated and leads to separation. Despite that, the lyrics also promotes the idea of accepting and embracing fate. Where we can find the spark of our identity after letting go of an unhealthy relationship.

Discussion

Grief, Sorrow, Long Journey

Struggles is an intrinsic aspect of life. When confronted with adversity, our self-esteem is challenged, and if we persevere, our self-esteem is enhanced. When undertaking a significant journey, individuals may encounter challenges. They can learn from the experience or choose to ignore it. Self-discovery helps people recognize their strengths and weaknesses, leading to a stronger sense of self-worth. How we face challenges, as shown in Taylor's lyrics, reflects our ability to cope with adversity.

*[Verse 1]
Baby love, I think I've been a little too kind
Didn't notice you walkin' all over my peace of mind
In the shoes I gave you as a present*

These lines show that in her past relationship, Taylor realized that she was not getting positive reciprocity with her partner. "A little too kind" implies that the treatment and understanding she has given has become her limit point. Taylor feels that she has

made all her sacrifices to make her partner happy, but she is not appreciated, and he only takes advantage of her kindness. She has even let her partner “walkin’ all over my peace of mind” which makes Taylor persist in her decision to ignore her feelings and let her partner dominated in their relationship. The metaphor “In the shoes I gave you as a present” symbolizes all the sacrifices Taylor has made for her partner but only gives a sense of disappointment when others exploit her kindness.

[Bridge]
*Sapphire tears on my face
Sadness became my whole sky
But some guy said my aura’s moonstone
Just ‘cause he was high*

The lyrics interpret the emotional states of sadness and disappointment caused by an unsuccessful romantic relationship. The *sapphire* metaphor, representing tranquility, sincerity, and profoundness, is employed to interpret sadness and tears yet conveys an elegant sense of sorrow. Despite experiencing sadness and disappointment in her relationship, Taylor maintains a sense of self-worth. The tears that fall, like a stone of sapphire, indicate that the sadness experienced by Taylor is of such value that it cannot be allowed to remain unacknowledged. Furthermore, her sadness is metaphorically likened to the vast expanse of the sky, wrapping her feelings and outlook on life. However, when others offer their opinions, evaluating her as a calm individual comparable to a *moonstone*, she does not concern herself with such comments. Taylor does not rely on external validation to ascertain her self-worth; rather, she believes her value derives from within. This aligns with the concept of self-esteem, which posits that an individual can accept themselves unconditionally without seeking external validation.

[Chorus]
*Familiarity breeds contempt
Don’t put me in the basement
When I want the penthouse of your heart*

When a pairs is in a relationship, they get used to each other's behavior, but sometimes when they get too comfortable with someone, they can start to look down on that person. This context is what Taylor is experiencing. The metaphor of “basement” represents the feeling of being ignored and undervalued and the lowest place in her partner's heart. On the contrary, Taylor wants to be in the “penthouse” which is identical

to the most luxurious place at the top of the building which implies something valuable. Through these lyrics, Taylor realizes that she deserves a more valuable place in her relationship. She demands to be prioritized and highly valued instead of being taken for granted.

[Verse 2]
*Baby boy, I think I've been too good of a girl (Too good of a girl)
Did all the extra credit, then got graded on a curve*

This lyric interprets how Taylor finally realizes her worth after the long journey she has struggled to survive with her relationship. The phrase “*too good of a girl*” finally gives Taylor the realization where she sacrificed herself too much for other people who didn't appreciate her. Through the metaphor of “*extra credit*”, it describes all the extra attention she gave but was “*graded on curve*” or not appreciated properly. This becomes a limitation for Taylor to realize her self-worth that must be prioritized. Because if she continues this relationship, she still get to be underestimated, even losing her own identity.

Empowering, Confident, and Resilient

The first verse of the song describes a relationship that the singer defines as one in which there is a misalignment between two people. Where in a relationship requires that two people who have different backgrounds must understand each other's conditions, and not burden one party.

[Verse 2]
*I think it's time to teach some lessons
I made you my world (Huh), have you heard? (Huh)
I can reclaim the land
And I miss you (Miss you), but I miss sparklin' (Nice)*

The lyrics represent someone's confidence in transforming their emotional state and adopting a resolute stance to reclaim control of their life. Taylor feels that she has sacrificed too much and given in, so it is time to change the dynamics of her relationship in unfair treatment. The sarcastic tone in the question “*Have you heard?*” is a form of Taylor's sarcasm towards her partner because he doesn't really appreciate her after her long struggle. However, the metaphor of “*reclaim the land*” emphasizes that Taylor has the power to improve her quality of life even without him. Despite her longing for her ex-partner, Taylor prioritizes her intrinsic value and happiness. She aspires to reclaim the self-esteem she once possessed, which was closely intertwined with a sense of radiance and self-worth.

[Verse 1]

Puttin' someone first only works when you're in their top five

The lyrics above show the explicit meaning of where a relationship will succeed if someone puts you first in their life. This indicates that a healthy and lasting relationship requires two-way communication. A relationship will not last long if only one person prioritises the relationship while we do not receive the same treatment.

In a broader context, this lyric emphasises the importance of equality and awareness in a relationship to respect each other, and both parties must feel prioritised and consider their togetherness as the most important thing for the relationship to grow and develop. In this lyric, the singer realises that she is very valuable to herself and prioritises her qualities over being with someone who makes her not develop.

[Chorus]

*Diamonds in my eyes
I polish up real, I polish up real nice*

The concept of self-esteem can be defined as an individual's perception of their own worth and value. In this particular lyric, it can be interpreted that Taylor views herself as a person of high self-confidence. The song "*Diamonds*" symbolizes strength, beauty, and value. With these feelings, Taylor feels confident to develop her potential and gain more attention. By "*polishing up*" her abilities, she can enhance her personal charm and achieve the best version of herself.

[Chorus]

*Best believe I'm still bejeweled
When I walk in the room
I can still make the whole place shimmer*

The lyrics emphasise that the singer does not want to define herself by past miseries. Through the lyrics '*Bejeweled*' which means adorned with diamonds or precious jewels that sparkle. From here, the singer emphasises that she is someone who is valuable, can radiate her charm and self-esteem, defining herself as someone special. This line not only states her presence, but also emphasises her self-worth and inextinguishable spark despite others perspectives.

Through these lyrics, Taylor wants to show the world that even though she has had a difficult time, with her value and strength in showing her worth and value, she believes she can prove that she has the right to shine and attract attention like a diamond. The

metaphor of a diamond is used to define someone who is sparkling and valuable enough to be happy.

Breaking Other's Expectation and Self-esteem Manifestation

Self-esteem is a form of judgement we make about ourselves by how valuable and competent we are. However, the expectations of others can be very significant in shaping our self-esteem. Just like our relationships with family, friends, and society will greatly influence the formation of our expectations of ourselves.

[Chorus]
And when I meet the band
They ask, "Do you have a man?"
I could still say, "I don't remember"

The lines above indicate that other people's expectations are no longer important and can manifest her self-esteem when she finds her self-worth. These lines explain that feeling confident and sure of one's worth makes one not rely on others, especially a man to feel complete and happy. The question *'Do you have a man?'* is a common question that women often receive when they feel confident about themselves. It is as if a relationship is the most important thing, and it must be glorified. Thus, the lyrics show the manifestation of a woman who is highly confident of achieving what she dreams of without being influenced by other people's opinions by breaking the stereotype that a woman cannot live independently without depending on others by giving an affirmative answer that she feels no need to explain or justify her status to others.

Through her casual yet sarcastic answer, Taylor wants to show everyone that she is the one who has control over herself, freedom is hers. She does not want to be overwhelmed by society's stereotype that success and happiness are often associated with romantic partners or relationships. Furthermore, Taylor wants to defy gender norms where a woman is often emphasised that their nature is only to get married and have children. Through these lyrics, Taylor defines herself as an independent and self-reliant person who does not need external validation.

[Bridge]
And you can try to change my mind
But you might have to wait in line

This line indicates that Taylor exhibits a considerable degree of self-assurance, resilience, and rationality. Taylor refuses to accept other's opinion that are not her priority.

She is more concerned with her own interests and qualities and asserts that she is not easily influenced by the other's opinions. Taylor asserts that she accepts criticism and opinions about herself, but other people's perceptions are not something that can influence her way of thinking. She is firm in her beliefs and opinions.

CONCLUSION

The lyrics of this song reflect how Taylor was able to free herself from an unhealthy relationship and use her power to choose her life path and then gain her confidence freely. As stated by Coopersmith, self-esteem is successfully obtained when a person feels that they are very valuable regardless of external validation. This idea is also seen in the lyrics that show how Taylor focuses on the value that exists in her rather than having to fulfil society's stereotype that a woman is identical to the role of someone who takes care of the household and must have a relationship partner. Through her lyrics, Taylor wants to show the world that an independent woman can be herself without depending on men and society's expectations of her life. Because of Taylor's resilience and strength while going through her dark period, she managed to show her self-worth and celebrate her independence without thirsting for other people's validation.

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