



Jurnal Review Pendidikan dan Pengajaran
<http://journal.universitaspahlawan.ac.id/index.php/jrpp>
 Volume 7 Nomor 3, 2024
 P-2655-710X e-ISSN 2655-6022

Submitted : 29/06/2024
 Reviewed : 04/07/2024
 Accepted : 15/07/2024
 Published : 20/07/2024

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THE INSECURITY PROBLEMS REFLECTED IN SARA KAYS' THREE SONGS

Abstract

Insecurity is a common feeling of uncertainty experienced by many people worldwide. It is described as something usual but it is hard to be ignored. It is temporary, not permanent. It can disappear but in a short period because many things that may trigger it to arise back and stay for a while. Neighborhood, appearance, and love relationships are three causes of insecurity. In this study, the objective is to find out the insecurity problems that are reflected in three songs written and sung by Sara Kays, such as Chosen Last, Picture of You, and Bored. The theory of insecurity by Abraham Maslow is applied in this study. The writer uses a descriptive qualitative method to examine each of the discussed insecurity problems. Data from this study are collected by listening to the songs, reading the whole lyrics, and identifying a few lyrics related to the topic's issue. The study's results are provided in some song verses as proofs and in the form of narration paragraphs as the writer's discussion. There are three insecurity types found per three songs. Chosen Last ties to social insecurity. Picture of You associates with body image relationship. Bored attaches to relationship insecurity.

Keywords: Insecurity, Lyrics Analysis, Sara Kays' Songs

Abstrak

Ketidakamanan adalah perasaan ketidakpastian yang umum dialami oleh banyak orang di seluruh dunia. Hal ini digambarkan sebagai sesuatu yang biasa namun sulit untuk diabaikan. Itu bersifat sementara, tidak permanen. Bisa saja hilang namun dalam jangka waktu yang singkat karena banyak hal yang mungkin menjadi pemicunya untuk muncul kembali dan menetap untuk sementara waktu. Lingkungan, penampilan, dan hubungan cinta adalah tiga penyebab rasa tidak aman. Dalam penelitian ini tujuannya adalah untuk mengetahui permasalahan ketidakamanan yang tercermin dalam tiga lagu yang ditulis dan dinyanyikan oleh Sara Kays, seperti Chosen Last, Picture of You, dan Bored. Teori ketidakamanan Abraham Maslow diterapkan dalam penelitian ini. Penulis menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif untuk mengkaji setiap permasalahan ketidakamanan yang dibahas. Data dari penelitian ini dikumpulkan dengan mendengarkan lagu, membaca keseluruhan lirik, dan mengidentifikasi beberapa lirik yang berkaitan dengan topik permasalahan. Hasil penelitian dituangkan dalam beberapa bait lagu sebagai bukti dan dalam bentuk paragraf narasi sebagai pembahasan penulis. Ada tiga jenis ketidakamanan yang ditemukan per tiga lagu. Terpilih Hubungan terakhir dengan ketidakamanan sosial. Gambaran Anda diasosiasikan dengan hubungan citra tubuh. Kebosanan melekat pada ketidakamanan hubungan.

Kata Kunci: Ketidakamanan, Analisis Lirik, Lagu Sara Kays

INTRODUCTION

Literature is a written work. It has been a part of human history and is an important piece of human writing. Anybody may create literature. According to Pickering and Hoepfer, literature is a particular activity formed inside a human's external desire to comprehend, express, and most importantly share the experience. In life, it exists as a result of human ideas, thoughts, and feelings. Literature is a fiction-style imaginative writing (Terry Eagleton, 1996).

A literary work is a branch of literature in narrative, descriptive, or explanatory form. According to The Copyright Act, literary work is conveyed in words regardless of the nature of the physical objects in which it is implemented. It connects to reality as a representation of

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anybody's perspective and can describe the events in a specific time. One of the literary works that is popular these days is song.

The song is a beautiful art in audio form. It influences the listeners' emotions. It can make them feel calm, happy, sad, touched, amazingly alive, etc. A song is a place to process emotions and ideas, some songs have long and open spaces like rooms (Samitha Sinha, 2019). There are numerous songs worldwide. In this study, the writer selects three songs from Sara Kays.

Sara Kays is a Nashville-based young pop singer/songwriter. She was born on February 18, 1999. She grew up in Carmel, Indiana. Ed Sheeran, Jake Bugg, and Shawn Mendes are her inspirations in writing her music. It is known that she has signed with Atlantic Records. Kays is already a sensation on social media. Her music gains people's attention on the internet since most of her songs are relatable to people's issues about family, mental health, and self-esteem nowadays thus she has a lot of their support. So far, Kays has released three mini-albums. Her first album is "A House Too Big" which was released in 2018. "Camera Shy" as her second album which was released in 2020. And her third album is "Struck by Lightning" which was released in 2021.

As previously mentioned, the writer uses three songs by Sara Kays for this study. They are Chosen Last, Picture of You, and Bored. The underlying topic shared by all three of them is insecurity. The reason why the writer chose these songs is because of the personal meaning that indicates the insecurity problems that are owned by most people nowadays.

Chosen Last is about a person being an outcast who does not have someone on their side then always feels alone and excluded since childhood. The writers for this song are Sara Kays herself and Steven Martinez. He is known as the producer of this song. Chosen Last was released on August 3, 2020. It is a part of Kays' second mini-album, Camera Shy as the sixth track.

Picture of You is about a person's self-hate, guilt, and regret of beautiful moments that are broken by their past. This song is produced by King Henry and Steven Martinez. They also wrote this song with Sara Kays. Picture of You was released on March 19, 2021. It is a part of Kays' third mini-album, Struck By Lightning as the seventh track also known as the last.

Bored is about a person who is afraid that someone they love does not interest them anymore and will leave them. Sara Kays was not the only writer for this song. Hayley Gene Penner and this song's producer, Grant Averill, greatly helped her. Bored was released on March 31, 2023. It is her sixth single after the release of her third mini-album and is her first single in 2023.

This study aims to examine the insecurity problems that are reflected in Sara Kays' songs. The writer will identify the types of insecurity and analyze the depiction of the insecurity problems in songs that Sara Kays wrote. The results of this study are anticipated to be a learning and discussion process for readers about the insecurity problems. The writer's hope is this study can be beneficial for the writer and the readers. For this study, the writer uses the insecurity theory of Abraham Maslow in a psychological approach.

The writer will provide three previous studies. The first belongs to Biplob Dey, Umme Rashid, A. Sultana, and A. Hossain with the title "Feeling of Insecurity and Level of Tolerance among University Students". The similarity is in the usage of Abraham Maslow's insecurity theory. However, the previous study focused on the Chittagong University students' insecurity and tolerance level.

The second belongs to Shruti Raina and Dr. Kiran Bhan with the title "A Study of Security-Insecurity Feelings among Adolescents in Relation to Sex, Family System and Ordinal Position". The similarity is in the usage of Abraham Maslow's insecurity theory. However, the previous study focused on the effect of adolescents' security-insecurity feelings about the ordinal position, family system, and sex.

The third as the last previous study belongs to Anjana Bhattacharjee and Somali Bhattacharjee with the title "Security-Insecurity Feeling and Depression among Adolescents of Working and Non-Working Women". The similarity is in the usage of Abraham Maslow's insecurity theory. However, the previous study focused on the condition of adolescents working and non-working women regarding security-insecurity feelings and depression.

Insecurity is a part of human life. It cannot be separated from the psychological condition. It is a common feeling that many individuals experience throughout their life. Thus, it appears to be common. According to Abraham Maslow, insecurity is an emotional state of being unsettled

by feelings of stress, pressure, and conflict together with accompanying symptoms of tension like anxiety.

Moreover, Abraham Maslow continued that insecure people view the public as a harmful place and are convinced that most people are self-centered. They are alone, rejected, nervous, unfriendly, discouraged, and unsatisfied most of the time. They exhibit conflict and tension, are inwardly focused, are troubled by guilt feelings, and are generally agitated and egoistic.

In another definition, insecurity is characterized by inadequacy in many aspects of one's life, a lack of self-assurance, trouble dealing with uncertainty, desertion, failure, or adversity. People may be insecure about their issues, such as goals, capabilities, or relationships (American Psychological Association's Dictionary of Psychology, 2023).

Insecurity does not come up easily. There are many reasons why a person can get the insecurity. According to Reck, Nonnenmacher, and Zietlow, bad childhood experiences usually sow the seeds of insecurity. One of them is receiving unpleasant treatment from other people around. They may appear innocuous and will imprint someone's personality. They also begin to be incorporated into their belief systems. And this will lead to insecurity in the future.

One person's insecurity is different from another's. Even though it looks similar, it seems very distinct, depending on the various factors and effects. Furthermore, insecurity frequently spills over from one aspect of life to another. As long as the writer researches, there are some of the most common insecurity types, such as social insecurity, body image insecurity, and relationship insecurity.

Social insecurity is a common one. It is defined as a lack of confidence, primarily caused by anxiety about what might happen in the future. People with insecurity type cannot act well and thrive in social situations. They may be concerned about appearing odd, uttering something detrimental or unsuitable, not being intelligent enough to add anything to the conversation, and failing to get the jokes.

Body image insecurity is the most frequently experienced by people worldwide. This insecurity type makes it complicated to understand their physical appearance precisely. They may drain an inordinate amount of time and effort being concerned about how they look. They may be self-conscious about only one part or the entire body. They believe many people judge their whole appearance without a doubt.

Relationship insecurity is convenient to scan. It is related to people who are in any relationship. It may show up whenever one's security in one's closest relationships is undermined by previous interactions or personal vulnerability. When they have this insecurity type, they are unwilling to be exposed and unable to believe in others. They may struggle to trust someone's actions and words in the relationship.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For this study, a descriptive qualitative method is applied. According to Creswell, it is a way of examining and recognizing the meaning that people make of a personal or societal circumstance. The process of this study involves identifying the problem as well as gathering, organizing, and evaluating data. The main goal of this analysis is to describe the data and findings.

The data of this study are the songs. The writer picks three songs that relate to the problem. They are Chosen Last, Picture of You, and Bored by Sara Kays. The writer spends a few hours in a different period listening to them. During the research, the writer used a music platform on two devices, to listen to them with the earphones.

To collect the data, the writer took notes and observed those three songs. The details of the following procedures are listening to those songs insistently, reading the whole lyrics, identifying a few marked verses that are tied to the problem to comprehend the meaning, and analyzing them with the insecurity types based on Abraham Maslow's theory.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this part, the writer conveys the findings and discussions about the topic that the writer has researched for this study. The result is divided into the related insecurity types that have been mentioned. Each song is paired with a single insecurity problem. A few chosen verses will be

the evidence for this discussion followed by the writer's explanation according to Abraham Maslow's insecurity theory.

'Chosen Last' hooks up with social insecurity. From the title, it can be deduced that the singer gets ignored and nobody cares about her. It goes along with Abraham Maslow's theory that an insecure person feels alone and rejected. The first verse of the song has proved it.

[Verse 1]

Inside jokes that I never know, but I
Still laugh until I cry
Group photos but I'm standing off to the side
I'm just camera shy

Based on the lyrics, Kays pretends to laugh in responding to the jokes. She forces herself to keep laughing even crying. She tries hard to act like that. The jokes are private, which means only she and her friends know them but the reality says that she never knows them. In the third and fourth lines, Kays is shy of the camera. She does not want to be the highlight in group photos, she lacks self-confidence. It is her alibi to stand off to the side.

This type of insecurity makes the owner feel uncomfortable. They're anxious about what might happen in the future. It can happen because they have bad childhood experiences as a reason why they get social insecurity. The proof is the song's chorus.

[Chorus]

I've been chosen last since the kindergarten
Walk in the grass and it's disregarded
Fast walk to the lunch table
And pack up before I'm ready to go
I don't speak my mind, I just sit and listen
I'm there on time 'cause they won't know I'm missing
Sometimes, I would rather stay home
Than show up to be ignored and alone

According to the lyrics, Kays has received unpleasant treatment. She has been chosen last since she was in kindergarten. She goes to the lunch table on time but nobody realizes her existence. Eventually, she worries about what comes next until sometimes she wonders if staying home is a better choice than facing her predicted future; being ignored and alone. Kays is disturbed by the sensations of anxiousness as Abraham Maslow defined the insecurity.

The social situation is one of the obstacles for a person with this insecurity. They cannot act and thrive well. They will find it difficult to adapt to many places, especially the new and crowded ones. The pre-chorus of the song is the evidence.

[Pre-Chorus]

Always at the birthday parties
But never close to anybody

Based on the lyrics, Kays finds herself at a boisterous place, in this song she is always at the birthday parties of her friends. However, she never gets close to one of them. She cannot be as energetic and cheerful as anyone should be at a birthday party. It is concluded that she must be concerned about appearing odd, uttering something detrimental or unsuitable, and not being intelligent enough to add anything to the conversation.

'Picture of You' links with body image insecurity. From the title, it can be seen that this song relates to the singer's body appearance. A person with this insecurity is anxious about how they look in front of others. The proof is in the second verse of the song.

[Verse 2]

Future holidays, the beach next summer break
I don't need proof that I was there
My big brother's wedding
Hope I'm not regretting the dress
That I decide to wear

According to the lyrics, Kays does not need a few pictures of herself for the sake of not spending much time and effort on how she looks during the summer break. She tries to save herself from the people's judgment about her appearance. In the next event, Kays is afraid of her looks at her big brother's wedding, but she finally wears the dress she decides on and hopes

everything is fine. She has no other option than attiring properly since it is an important family event.

Body image insecurity owners are self-conscious of their whole appearance excessively. They are too complicated to see a little good thing in their physical looks since they do not give themselves a chance to realize it first. The pre-chorus of the song has proved it.

[Pre-Chorus]

I know there were more good times than bad
But they keep on getting ruined by these photographs

Based on the lyrics, Kays' body image insecurity has a bad impact on her. She thinks her photographs are not good enough. Thus, her good times have already ruined easily even being worse than her bad times as her conclusion. She is self-conscious of her entire looks excessively. Kays is usually discouraged and unsatisfied with herself following Abraham Maslow's theory about an insecure person's feelings.

Being judged by others is one of the biggest fears for the body image insecurity owner. It is their belief. They can overthink people's unpleasant words and regret their appearance since they do not want to be caught in any photos. The evidence is the chorus of the song.

[Chorus]

So I know you wanna keep
This memory, can you keep it in the back of your head?
'Cause when I see it in a week
I'll wish I was dead
I'll wish I took the picture of you instead

According to the lyrics, Kays asks her friends to keep the memory in the unseen location. She hopes it gets hidden forever since she does not want to be criticized for her appearance. The longer she sees the memory in a week, the jumbler her thoughts and feelings. Kays rues the memory was taken. She wishes she was dead, so she does not need to worry about it excessively. She wishes she only took her friend's picture, not with herself together.

'Bored' connects with the relationship insecurity. From the title, it can be concluded that this is an ending thought of the singer's lover about her. It triggers an unpleasant treatment and then generates an undesirable trauma for her. The chorus of the song has proved it.

[Chorus]

I remember just last year
Spilled my hopes and fears
Then he slammed that door
Didn't keep my thoughts inside
And it left me crying on the bathroom floor
I don't think I'm interesting enough
To keep this up, to keep your love
If I end my word count here
And I don't say more
Then you can't get bored

Based on the lyrics, Kays' relationship insecurity shows up since it was undermined by previous interactions with her love interest. Her past relationship gives her trauma. She was left after telling her hopes and fears. She could only cry on the bathroom floor. Her love was finally discontinued. However, it may make her believe that most people are self-centered as Abraham Maslow's thoughts about an insecure person.

This type of insecurity causes someone to have a fear of others getting bored of them. They will try hard to make their interlocutor or love interest comfortable in their conversation. It is proved by the pre-chorus of the song.

[Pre-Chorus]

You should talk forever
'Cause the less I say, the better

According to the lyrics, Kays finally finds someone to talk to. She lets them keep talking about anything since she only wants to be a listener, no matter how long her interlocutor talks. She is okay to say things less. It is her better decision instead of getting the hurtful treatment for

the second time. Kays is unwilling to be exposed. It is participated in Abraham Maslow's theory that an insecure person is inwardly focused.

Trust always belongs to a person with this insecurity type. It is hard to convince themselves to think positively about people out there. They may struggle enough to trust anything someone will say or do in the relationship. The bridge of the song is the evidence.

[Bridge]

I just wanna make myself believe (you won't get bored, you won't get bored)

But it would be a waste of energy (to tell you more, if you get bored)

So, keep the conversation off of me (you won't get bored, you won't get bored)

If I end my word count here

And I don't say more

Then you can't get bored

Based on the lyrics, Kays confirms her mindset that the person she talks to will not get bored of her. It is seen in her words as adlibs in parenthesis. She wants herself to believe what she hopes for her interlocutor. It will waste her energy to keep the conversation if the person she talks to starts getting bored, it is just tiring. Kays gives up on making a new relationship. She finally does not continue her words.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

From the analysis, insecurity is a common problem in human life and cannot be separated. It belongs to the human mind and mentality. There are three types of insecurity that the writer has researched for this study, they are social insecurity, body image insecurity, and relationship insecurity. These are associated with three songs by Sara Kays such as Chosen Last, Picture of You, and Bored as the writer's object study.

This study is based on Abraham Maslow's insecurity theory. There are some points used for the research. An insecure person is disregarded and lonely, and dislikes the nervous feeling since it is annoying. They are often discouraged by things they cannot have. They are discontent about themselves. An insecure person thinks negatively of others and considers them egoistic. They cannot trust them easily. And they turn inward at the end.

'Chosen Last' tells about the singer's social insecurity. According to the lyrics of verse one, Kays gives her fake reaction to the strange inside jokes, has a little self-confidence, and is camera-shy. Meanwhile, in the chorus' lyrics, she has anxiety because of people's discomfort actions. It makes her overthink about tomorrow's events in her life. The lyrics in the pre-chorus reveal that it is hard to find someone to be close to in a loud place since she worries about anything in her herself.

'Picture of You' mentions about the singer's body image insecurity. Based on the lyrics in verse two, Kays is reluctant to share her holiday photos. At her big brother's wedding, she is anxious about her looks with the dress of her choice. Then, in the pre-chorus, her good times are contaminated by her photographs, she believes it. The chorus' lyrics express that she is chagrined the memory she did not need was made as the result was bad.

'Bored' claims about the singer's relationship insecurity. According to the lyrics of the chorus, Kays has a love experience in the past. But it was deeply distressing and disturbing for her. Furthermore, in the pre-chorus lyrics, she is willing to be the passive speaker for a better conversation. It does not matter to her. The bridge as the last part of the song for this study, shows her trust in others is a little and tries to keep her energy from the boring dialogue.

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