THE IMPACT OF BTS'S "LOVE MYSELF" SONG AS A SELF-HEALING MEDIUM (A PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF ARMY)

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Abstract

The global phenomenon of the Korean Wave has significantly influenced popular culture, including K-Pop music, which has become part of the lives of many young people. One of the most prominent groups is BTS, which not only provides entertainment through its works but also delivers positive messages related to mental health. The song *Love Myself* is part of BTS's global campaign in collaboration with UNICEF, encouraging listeners to love and accept themselves as the first step toward emotional well-being. This study aims to describe ARMY's experiences in interpreting the song *Love Myself*, analyze its psychological impact, and explain its role in the self-healing process. The study employed a descriptive qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and observations involving five informants who are ARMY aged 18–30 years, living in Indonesia, and who had listened to the song completely. Data analysis used the Miles and Huberman model, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, combined with thematic analysis to identify patterns of meaning. The findings show that *Love Myself* is interpreted by ARMY as an invitation to love themselves, accept their imperfections, and appreciate personal growth. The lyrics provide deep emotional resonance, especially for listeners facing identity crises, social pressure, or emotional wounds. Psychological impacts experienced include increased self-esteem, inner peace, reduced anxiety, and growing motivation to value oneself more. The song also functions as a medium for self-reflection, helping listeners process emotions more healthily and strengthening solidarity within the ARMY community as a supportive environment. The study concludes that *Love Myself* serves as an effective self-healing medium, not merely as entertainment but also as a tool for emotional healing that fosters self-awareness, empathy, and self-acceptance. Music with positive and humanistic messages has great potential to support the mental health of younger generations, especially those actively involved in fandom culture.

Keywords

BTS, Love Myself, Self-Healing, Mental Health, ARMY

Abstrak

Fenomena Korean Wave yang mendunia telah membawa pengaruh besar terhadap budaya populer, termasuk musik K-Pop yang kini menjadi bagian dari kehidupan banyak generasi muda. Salah satu grup yang menonjol adalah BTS, yang melalui karya-karyanya tidak hanya memberikan hiburan tetapi juga menyampaikan pesan-pesan positif terkait kesehatan mental. Lagu Love Myself merupakan bagian dari kampanye global BTS bersama UNICEF yang mengajak pendengar untuk mencintai dan menerima diri apa adanya sebagai langkah awal menuju kesejahteraan emosional. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan pengalaman ARMY dalam memaknai lagu Love Myself, menganalisis dampak psikologisnya, serta menjelaskan perannya dalam proses self-healing. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan fenomenologis. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dan observasi terhadap lima informan yang merupakan ARMY berusia 18–30 tahun, berdomisili di Indonesia, dan telah mendengarkan lagu tersebut secara utuh. Analisis data dilakukan dengan model Miles dan Huberman yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, serta penarikan kesimpulan, disertai analisis tematik untuk mengidentifikasi pola makna. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Love Myself dimaknai oleh ARMY sebagai ajakan untuk mencintai diri sendiri, menerima kekurangan, dan menghargai proses pertumbuhan pribadi. Liriknya memberikan resonansi emosional yang mendalam, terutama bagi pendengar yang sedang menghadapi krisis identitas, tekanan sosial, atau luka batin. Dampak psikologis yang dirasakan meliputi peningkatan rasa percaya diri (self-esteem), ketenangan batin, berkurangnya kecemasan, serta tumbuhnya motivasi untuk lebih menghargai diri. Lagu ini juga berfungsi sebagai media refleksi diri, membantu pendengar memproses emosi secara lebih sehat, dan memperkuat solidaritas dalam komunitas ARMY sebagai lingkungan yang suportif. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini adalah bahwa lagu Love Myself berperan sebagai media self-healing yang efektif, bukan hanya sebagai hiburan, melainkan sebagai sarana penyembuhan emosional yang membangun kesadaran diri, empati, dan penerimaan diri. Musik dengan pesan positif seperti ini memiliki potensi besar untuk mendukung kesehatan mental generasi muda, terutama bagi mereka yang aktif dalam budaya fandom.

Kata Kunci
BTS, Love Myself, Self-Healing, Kesehatan Mental, ARMY

INTRODUCTION

The global music industry is developing very rapidly, and this phenomenon certainly affects the development of music in Indonesia. Music has now become an art form that continues to grow rapidly and offers various benefits. In the context of ethnomusicology, music functions in many aspects, especially in understanding human behavior. At least ten functions of music have been identified, including emotional expression, aesthetic satisfaction, entertainment, communication, symbolic representation, stimulation of physical responses, reinforcement of social institutions and religious ceremonies, preservation and stability of culture, strengthening social norms, and reinforcing community integrity.

Music can also be considered a form of communication because it contains meanings related to emotions and situations that can be conveyed implicitly. Through this, music becomes a reflection of realities occurring in society, while song lyrics serve as a medium for writers to deliver various messages based on certain concepts.

Music may also become a source of inspiration for listeners because melodies can encourage people to act, behave differently, and even change their lifestyles. One of the most crucial elements of a song is its lyrics, through which songwriters express themselves and communicate messages. Lyrics consist of words and sentences capable of building atmosphere and creating imaginative imagery for listeners, leading to various interpretations.

For many people, including the researcher, music has the ability to provide calmness and comfort. Although music is not a conventional language such as Indonesian, English, Japanese, or Mandarin, its universal nature allows people to immerse themselves in melodies and absorb every nuance conveyed by artists through lyrics and music videos, even when they do not understand the language used. Therefore, music can be considered an effective medium for delivering messages.

Many music listeners are able to feel the emotions experienced by musicians when creating lyrics, and they may respond emotionally after listening to those songs. Some listeners cry, laugh, scream, or become inspired to create their own works. Song lyrics therefore become a medium through which musicians communicate messages and emotions.

Self-healing has become increasingly popular because it is considered capable of helping individuals manage emotions and anger. According to Kompas.com (2020), self-healing is a recovery process usually arising from mental disorders, trauma, and emotional wounds from the past, whether caused by oneself or others. The purpose is to understand oneself more deeply, accept imperfections, and develop positive thinking patterns from past experiences.

The self-healing process can be carried out independently, for example by listening to music. Calming melodies may improve mood and reduce physical and mental exhaustion.

The popularity of South Korean popular culture, commonly known as the Korean Wave or Hallyu Wave, began around 1997 in China. This phenomenon later spread across East and Southeast Asia, including Indonesia. Korean dramas and K-Pop music gained massive popularity because of their engaging storytelling, appealing visuals, and enjoyable music.

Love for K-Pop music became inseparable from the Korean Wave phenomenon. K-Pop is often associated with boy groups and girl groups whose songs and music videos attract global audiences.

Becoming a K-Pop idol is not easy. According to IDN Times (2019), idols undergo intense training, strict beauty standards, exhausting schedules, limitations in their private lives, and immense social pressure. Many idols also struggle with mental health challenges due to professional demands.

Fans who share common interests often form communities known as fandoms. In the K-Pop context, fandoms function as communities where fans interact, support artists, and share cultural activities.

BTS is recognized as one of the most influential boy bands in the world. According to Kompas.com (2021), BTS had approximately 90 million ARMY members worldwide.

Indonesia is considered one of the countries with the largest BTS fan bases in Southeast Asia.

HYBE, formerly known as BigHit Entertainment, has the mission “Music & Artist for Healing.” BTS consistently delivers messages of self-love, emotional healing, and mental health awareness through their music.

BTS also collaborated with UNICEF in the *Love Myself* campaign aimed at ending violence against children worldwide. During a speech at the United Nations General Assembly in 2018, Kim Nam-joon emphasized the importance of self-love, stating that “true love begins with loving myself.”

Many listeners have reported positive emotional effects after listening to BTS songs. For example, a woman interviewed by Kompas.com explained that BTS songs helped her overcome depression by providing emotional comfort and hope.

The lyrics of *Answer: Love Myself* contain motivational messages directed toward individuals experiencing loss of motivation, depression, and mental health struggles. The song emphasizes the importance of self-love as the key to emotional well-being.

Based on this background, the researcher became interested in conducting a study entitled *“The Impact of BTS’s ‘Love Myself’ Song as a Self-Healing Medium (A Psychological Analysis of ARMY).”*

METHOD

The research was conducted online. The study took place approximately two months after the research permit was issued by Universitas Muhammadiyah Tapanuli Selatan.

This study used a qualitative approach. According to Kirk and Miller, qualitative research originally emerged as an alternative to quantitative observation. Descriptive qualitative methods allow researchers to participate intensively in the field, carefully observe events, conduct reflective analyses, and produce detailed reports.

The type of research used was phenomenological research, which investigates experiences lived by individuals or groups.

Data collection methods included interviews, informants and respondents, and documentation. Interviews were conducted through in-depth interview techniques to obtain comprehensive information about subjective meanings, thoughts, feelings, attitudes, behaviors, perceptions, beliefs, and motivations.

The participants in this study were BTS fans (ARMY) who experienced positive impacts from BTS albums as part of their self-healing process. The researcher used purposive sampling to select informants based on criteria relevant to the study objectives.

Five informants participated in this study. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with each participant to understand their experiences using BTS music as a medium for self-healing.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Informant 1

Based on interviews with the first informant, Dwifitri Ayta began knowing BTS in 2018 and became interested after listening to the songs *Save Me* and *Spring Day*. She felt emotionally supported by *Spring Day* because the song reminded her of the Sewol ferry tragedy. While listening to *Love Myself*, she felt inspired and grateful because of the song's messages about self-love. According to her, the song encourages people to love themselves before loving others. She also stated that the song motivated her during difficult times and became a healing song for people experiencing burnout.

Informant 2

Cindy became familiar with BTS in 2019 and officially became ARMY in 2021. She explained that *Love Myself* influenced her positively by encouraging self-love, self-acceptance, and appreciation for personal growth. The song helped her during times of self-doubt, social pressure, and feelings of inadequacy. According to Cindy, the song reminded her to stop blaming herself and appreciate her worth.

Informant 3

Lingling became familiar with BTS in 2016 and officially joined ARMY in 2017 after hearing the song *MIC Drop*. She explained that *Love Myself* motivated her whenever she lacked confidence. According to Lingling, the song teaches listeners to prioritize and love themselves before loving others.

Informant 4

Joshua became an ARMY in 2017 after learning about the Sewol ferry tragedy that inspired the BTS song *Spring Day*. He explained that BTS songs focusing on self-love and self-acceptance emotionally supported him, especially during difficult moments. He stated that *Love Myself* made him realize the importance of prioritizing himself and valuing self-love.

Informant 5

Iswatun Hasanah became an ARMY two years ago. She explained that *Love Myself* made her realize the importance of loving herself. The song also helped her feel calmer whenever she experienced problems and became a healing song during difficult periods in life.

CONCLUSION

The song *Love Myself* is interpreted by many ARMY members as an invitation to love themselves, accept imperfections, and recognize personal value. The lyrics and messages delivered by BTS provide strong emotional resonance, especially for listeners experiencing identity crises, social pressure, or psychological problems.

Psychologically, the song contributes positively by increasing self-confidence, creating inner peace, and reducing feelings of anxiety and stress. Many ARMY members feel that the song motivates them to face difficult situations and gives them hope.

Furthermore, *Love Myself* functions as an effective self-healing medium. Through emotional identification with the lyrics and music, listeners feel heard, understood, and more capable of reflecting on their emotions. The song therefore becomes not merely entertainment, but also a meaningful emotional healing medium for many listeners.

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