

An Analysis of Katie's Low Self-Esteem and Feeling of Prestige in Sophie Kinsella's My Not So Perfect Life

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the human needs in the novel. The novel tells the story of the main character who experiences feelings of low self-esteem and prestige in his life in the big city. This research aims to find out what and how the main character's needs are. This study uses a qualitative method with data obtained from sentences or dialog contained in the novel. The object of this research is the novel *My Not So Perfect Life* and is supported by secondary data such as theory books, and articles related to the topic of the problem. These problems can be formulated using Abraham Maslow's Theory of Human Needs, namely The Esteem Needs which helps the main character in meeting his needs. The results of this study can be concluded that in this novel the main character is in accordance with Abraham Maslow's theory of needs.

Keywords: feelings of inferiority, prestige, human needs, power, independence, appreciation, praise, big city

INTRODUCTION

Living in a big city is everyone's dream. Many people want to live in big cities because they feel that life there will be easier. People who live in big cities are more satisfied than people who live in the suburban (Righi et al., 2022). One of the conveniences of living in a big city is the presence of public facilities that are usually not available in the suburbs such as public transportation and supermarkets. However, there are also people who do not want to live in big cities because of some of the problems there. One of the problems is feelings of low self-esteem and prestige. These feelings can appear in a person because big cities are surrounded by smart, hard-working, and rich people. Living in a big city can also be damaging to some of its

residents due to various physical and social changes (Christiani et al., 2015).

Low self-esteem is a feeling related to personality. Feelings of self-esteem are assessments of one's value, worthiness, and competence in various fields (Chellappoo, 2021). This feeling can be negative and makes you feel that you have no abilities or talents compared to others. Feelings of low self-esteem often appear when a person has a goal but fails to achieve that goal. In the city, a person usually experiences this kind of feeling when job competition is high and social standards are high.

High job competition can make a person experience feelings of inferiority. Living in the city is identical to high competition, especially in the field of work. Finding a job in the city is very difficult due to limited job opportunities. However, job seekers are more likely to choose to move to cities because of better environments during the job-seeking process (Shen & Zhang, 2022). People think that working in the city is fun. The high and modern lifestyle makes this social standard common. Living in the city is often associated with success or high achievement. Social standards are also the reason someone experiences feelings of low self-esteem.

Prestige is a feeling to increase social status in other people's opinions. Social status affects the way people make up their beliefs about their abilities and these beliefs are important for achievement (González-Jiménez, 2022). People who have this kind of feeling do not want to be seen as low or incapable. They usually do various things to elevate their status, feel satisfied and recognized by others. Feelings of prestige also often occur in big cities, for those who want to live in big cities must experience this kind of feeling. They want a perfect appearance, a luxurious lifestyle, and a good job in the city. People who experience this kind of feeling can be caused by expectations that they make themselves, then if these expectations have not been achieved, they will feel prestigious.

People usually experience feelings of prestige due to standards and social expectations in society. Social expectations are made up of objective rules about how people should behave towards each other (Clay et al., 2016). Big cities are often recognized for their lifestyle and perfect looks. The lifestyle in big cities can lead to feelings of prestige, such as work and social activities. Social activities must be attended by people who are influential in the work environment. Therefore, someone who is prone to feelings of prestige will as much as possible fulfill their desire to look the most attractive so that they feel the best. If they cannot fulfill that desire, they will experience feelings of prestige because they feel they are not equal to others.

Feelings of insecurity and prestige can occur due to several factors such as job competition and social pressure, big cities certainly have competition in terms of employment. This kind of work environment will trigger feelings of inferiority because they feel unable to complete it because the social standards set are very high. Similarly, with feelings of prestige, one must prove that they do not want to be left behind in something if they do not want to feel prestigious in the work environment. These social pressures include, for example, the pressure to have a successful job or a high-ranking job. The feeling of prestige in a job can be categorized as sociological, formed from subjective assessments in which there are elements of respect, elements of self-esteem, and elements of appreciation (Majchrowska et al., 2021). This can also lead to feelings of inferiority because they feel unable to meet these demands. Feelings of prestige can also arise because of social pressure, high expectations that are indirectly expected can make someone do anything to cover their feelings of prestige.

People in big cities have experienced cases like this, which is why many literary writers have created literary works that mention feelings of prestige and inferiority. Sophie Kinsella is the one who often creates stories set in big cities. One of her novels, "My Not so Perfect Life" is a story about the life of a girl named Katie Brenner who dreams of living in a big city. Then Katie decides to find a job in London, she wants a perfect life. However, she has difficulties in achieving this desire.

In this novel, researchers used theories related to the problems of living in a big city such as the feelings of inferiority experienced by the main character while working and the feelings of prestige that surround her social environment. Researchers use the theory of A Human of Motivation by Abraham Maslow because the main character, Katie, experiences several feelings that cause her to experience difficulties living in a big city. The difficulties experienced by the main character are found in The Esteem Needs theory, which is the need for self-esteem, feelings of inferiority, and feelings of prestige. People need self-esteem, which means to give respect and to be respected by others (Ronie & Hellystia, 2019).

The aim of this research is to analyze the story of the novel "My Not so Perfect Life" using Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. There are 5 basic levels of needs, which are (1) The first level is Physiological Needs: These needs include physical needs that if they are not fulfilled, other needs will be ignored. These needs are also the most basic or simple needs that must be fulfilled as much as possible to continue other needs. (2) The second level is Safety Needs: Safety

needs referred to in this theory is a sense of security (safety), protection from fear, and strength in protecting. (3) The third level is Love Needs: Someone who really wants this need usually wants to get recognition and appreciation from others in order to fulfill personal satisfaction needs. (4) The next need is Esteem Needs: Someone who really wants this need usually wants to get recognition and appreciation from others in order to fulfill personal satisfaction needs. (5) The last need is Self-actualization Needs: This need will be fulfilled if the previous needs have been fulfilled properly. (Maslow, 1943).

METHOD

A qualitative research method is an iterative procedure in which a better understanding of the scientific community is achieved by making significant new distinctions that result from getting closer under study (Aspers & Corte, 2019). Usually, this qualitative research aims to compare this research with previous research.

Qualitative data contains a set of independent texts for questionnaires and recorded interviews that have been conducted. The information that has been collected is the result of the method that is being conducted. Qualitative data is carried out by using participant observation, direct interviews, document analysis, and groups with the aim of obtaining and analyzing the data that has been collected (Ismail, 2021). This data is usually described descriptively and not in numerical form.

The object of this research is a novel entitled "My Not so Perfect Life" by Sophie Kinsella. The novel discusses feelings of inferiority and feelings of prestige in everyday life. All words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs related to feelings of inferiority and prestige are the research data. The data sources are divided into two, which is primary data and secondary data. The primary data is the novel "My Not so Perfect Life" which consists of 23 chapters and was published in 2017 by Sophie Kinsella with a total of 431 pages. The secondary data used in this research is a theoretical book entitled "Motivation and Personality" by Abraham Maslow which consists of 16 chapters and was published in 1954.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are the problems experienced by the main character to live in a big city like London, Katie Brenner's efforts to fulfill her dreams, and her efforts to fulfill the social expectations. In the issue of social expectations, Katie experiences feelings such as low self-esteem and

prestige after successfully getting a job in London. These feelings arise because of the work environment, the high expectation of her parents, and the people around her. This kind of feeling is found in Abraham Maslow's theory, The Esteem Needs.

The Esteem Needs

All people in our society have a need or desire to have a stable, strongly grounded, and usually high regard for themselves, for self-respect, or self-esteem, and for respect for others. These needs can therefore be classified into two groups. First, the desire to be strong, to achieve, for sufficiency, for power, for confidence in facing the world, and for independence or freedom. Second, people have a need or desire for respect or appreciation from others, status, fame and glory, dominance, recognition, attention, importance, dignity, or esteem.

In The Esteem Needs there are several issues such as The need of Power, Independence, Recognition, and Appreciation.

1. The Need of Power

A person needs the desire for power because power can influence the quality of others' behavior as well as the control of resources, allowing those with power to gain the necessary potential (Kocur & Mandal, 2018). For example, when a person has the power of status, they can control his surroundings because they have the potential to fulfill the requirements.

But I'm determined to be Cat. I will be Cat. It's my all-new London name. I've had three jobs in my life (OK, two were internships), and at each new step I've reinvented myself a bit more. Changing from Katie to Cat is just the latest stage. (Kinsella, 2017:14).

The sentence mentioned that Katie tried to change her name to make her look stronger, at least by changing her name she felt she had the potential to influence other people's behavior towards her. Katie felt that her name sounded dumb, so she changed her name from Katie to Cat. This implies that one has a need for power. She thinks that changing her name will make her braver and stronger.

I'm not going to lose it. Not over a man. It's fine, I tell myself sternly. Everyone has the odd embarrassing moment in their life and I just need to get this in perspective. What I'll do is: I'll go up to the top and then back down again, and that will give me some breathing space. (Kinsella, 2017:153).

Katie tried to calm herself down from the embarrassing things, with the sentences that everyone must have experienced the same thing, she turned

it into strength. the words were spoken to herself so that she did not feel weak. Remembering the reasons why she lives in the big city, and why she chooses to stay.

She's right. What's the point of being the only member of the family with experience in marketing and not speaking out? If I don't at least try to talk Dad round, then I'm being feeble. (Kinsella, 2017:133).

Katie believed that she was the only one in her family with experience working in branding job, and if she didn't do the branding, then no one else could. She is so confident in her abilities that she feels more powerful than the rest of her family. So she decided to do it, not only because she had the experience, but also to help her father and stepmother's Glamping business in the countryside.

2. Independence

Someone who wants independence usually feels comfortable with themselves, they don't have to depend on others, and makes sure they are safe (Moza et al., 2021).

"You don't have to choose: London or Somerset," says Alex at length. "You can be both surely."

"My dad makes me feel I have to choose." ... "He makes it this either-or situation..." (Kinsella, 2017:323).

It is reported that Katie felt that she was not free to make choices. Even though Katie actually doesn't want her father's help. This shows that Katie's father often gives Katie choices, so Katie feels uncomfortable. In this situation, a person needs independence to do something without the help of others so that they feels comfortable with theirself.

... "And you're really happy in the Big Smoke, Katie, My love?" I am happy. But that doesn't mean it's not hard. Dad doesn't know about London... He doesn't understand why I moved here and he never will.

... I had a choice: follow my heart or not break his. (Kinsella,2017:17-18).

The sentence shows that Katie felt she had to move to London to follow her heart. Even though her father didn't understand that she was struggling there, she moved without his help. She just wanted to do what she wanted. This shows that she is able to do things independently and without the help of others.

I check my reflection in the mirror and run a last-minute dollop of serum through my curls. I'm doing London differently this time. More confidently. I'm not trying to be a girl with straight, tortured, unfamiliar hair. I'm being me. (Kinsella, 2017:416).

Katie didn't want to change herself anymore, she was going to stay true to herself and become more confident in her life in London. She felt it was not good to live a life that was not her. She had forgotten the idea of being someone else. At this point, Katie realized she was someone who was quite capable of living life without having to pretend.

So, the department is up and running again-
... Anyway, who cares? I have a job. A fab job. There's no point feeling hurt by Demeter. Or Alex. I have more important things to do. (Kinsella, 2017:396).

The main character convinces herself not to care about her old office because she already has a new job. This is influenced by the fact that Katie is no longer unemployed and has a fab job. It's possible that Katie would be sad if she didn't have a job yet.

3. Recognition

A person who is recognized tends to have higher self-esteem, more confidence and more willing to face new challenges (Ashish et al., 2023).

"We know!" says Bidy. "We're so proud of you, love, with your job and your amazing life. Aren't we, Mick?" ... "Or in your spare time...or weekends? You're so bright and clever, Katie..." (Kinsella, 2017: 129).

From the sentence explains that Katie's stepmother named Bidy is very proud of Katie, proud of what Katie is doing in London, namely working, and has a perfect life. She praised Katie's life, even though Bidy didn't know the truth that Katie lived a life in the city full of feelings of inferiority and prestige, she praised Katie sincerely for making her proud.

"Oh, Katie." Bidy seems to dissolve. "Would you? We rely on you so much, you know. When you're around, everything seems to fall into place. We'll pay your ticket, of course. And I know you're busy with your wonderful job in London, and we're ever so proud of you, ...
... "... You've got your career, your life, your flat— ..." (Kinsella, 2017: 170-171).

Here Katie's stepmother understands that Katie is busy and has an amazing job in London. Katie's father and stepmother were proud to see their daughter get what she wanted in the big city - the job, the lifestyle, the perfect life. But on the other hand, Katie's parents wanted her in their home, in their rural home. Helping them run their glamping business.

Alex picks up the Ansters Farm brochure, which Bidy has helpfully left on the tray. He studies it for a minute, then raises his head. "You know something? I saw

this earlier, and I thought: This looks like a piece of Demeter's work. You've learned from her, clearly. Congratulations." (Kinsella, 2017:289).

It was mentioned here that Alex saw the brochure of the Ansters' farm and it was just like what Demeter did. Katie managed to learn a lot from Demeter. With the word congratulations spoken by Alex, proving that Alex recognizes her ability to work. Katie learned from her previous job, by seeing the ability of her former boss, Demeter, made her learn many things and know various insights in work, especially in terms of branding.

"That Demeter likes your stuff, doesn't she?" he greets me. "We knew you were talented!" ... "Demeter. She's an expert on brochures, apparently. I told her, 'Katie did that.' You should have seen her face." "Oh, Katie!" says Bidy in delight. "That's wonderful! Did you tell her about your job in London, love?" she adds innocently. (Kinsella, 2017: 253).

Katie's father was so proud of his daughter, he even proudly showed it to Demeter - Katie's former boss who was an expert in brochures and told how Demeter's expression when she saw Katie's brochure. Katie's parents knew that Katie was very talented. Katie's father also told it to Bidy. Bidy eagerly listened to the story.

4. Appreciation

The need to get appreciation from people in the surrounding or work environment. Someone who needs appreciation will usually be more confident to get fulfillment and feel they have power. The fulfillment of the need for appreciation or self-esteem causes self-confidence, usefulness, and necessary in the world (Maslow, 1943).

I don't have a top-ten job... But I live in a top-ten city. Living in London is something that people all over the world would love to do, and now I'm here. And that's why I don't care if my commute is the journey from hell and my bedroom is about three feet square. I'm here. (Kinsella, 2017:15)

No one appreciated Katie's efforts to live in London, so she tried to convince herself by saying positive words to appreciate herself. Katie lives life in the big city, finds a job there, does the things she wants, and sticks to her guns. Although in London Katie experienced some things that made her feel inferior and prestigious. She decided to stay there.

Alex suddenly announced, only a little drunkenly, "I do admire you, Katie Brenner. I do so admire you." "Admire me?" I felt my jaw sag. No one had ever admired me before. "What on earth—" "You're tough. And you're..." He seemed to search for the word. "You're straight. You fought for Demeter because you thought it was right. You didn't have to fight for her; in fact, you had every reason not to—but you did." (Kinsella, 2017: 420).

This shows that Alex-boss Demeter really admires Katie, very, very much. What Katie has done so far really amazes him. According to Alex, Katie is a tough woman, she's straight. Straight in the sense that Katie actually didn't need to help Demeter at all when her former boss got into trouble. Katie had many reasons not to help Demeter. However, Katie still helped her former boss solve her work problems. That's why Alex really admires Katie's nature and kindness.

“I couldn't do a better job myself. Katie, I think you have a rare talent. I only wish our juniors were this talented.”
... “Thank you, ... That's very... Thank you. I just have to.”
... Finally, finally, I've got what I always wanted. She praised it. She wants to give me a chance. (Kinsella, 2017: 251-252).

The sentence explains that Demeter just realized that Katie has a rare talent, a talent that she did not expect, a talent that makes Katie happy that in the end she got attention, got praise, got recognition from Demeter. The boss also gave Katie the opportunity to work again at Cooper Clemmow. Katie who got the opportunity was very happy, she would not waste it.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis that uses the concept of Abraham H. Maslow's Human of Motivation theory. It can be concluded that people tend to prefer to live in big cities in order to get better facilities that make it easier for them to live. Those born in the suburbs usually start moving to the city to get to work. From the analysis, researchers proved that the behavior of these people is influenced by the feelings contained in Abraham H. Maslow's Human Theory of Motivation, which are The Need of Power, Independence, Recognition, Appreciation. The researcher found evidence of one to two quotes on each element or element in Abraham H. Maslow's Human of Motivation theory concept.

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