

"Yes, I'm Nude": Deconstructing Body Image Stereotypes in Nxde by (G)I-DLE

"Yes, I'm Nude": Mendekonstruksi Stereotip Citra Tubuh di Nxde oleh (G)I-DLE

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Abstract

The evolution of the Korean music industry, or K-Pop, has now become a global phenomenon. K-Pop has transcended boundaries, not only as a genre of music but also as a medium capable of conveying messages and critiques on societal issues. (G)I-DLE's 2022 song "Nxde" stands out in this regard, addressing body image and challenging stereotypes related to women's representation. This study investigates how "Nxde" deconstructs body image stereotypes and critiques the objectification of women within K-Pop and broader media cultures. Using Charles Morris's semiotic analysis, this research examines syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic aspects of the song's lyrics and imagery, positioning "nude" as a symbol of self-authenticity that opposes superficial standards often imposed on female idols. Findings indicate that "Nxde" aims to empower women by redefining nudity as an expression of authenticity. As seen in society, the meaning of nudity is often only considered as sexualized and inappropriate norms. While this also raises questions about the potential contradictions between feminist messages that may still conform to patriarchal standards. In conclusion, "Nxde" exemplifies K-Pop's dual role as both a platform for progressive social commentary and a potential reinforcer of traditional beauty norms. The study suggests that songs like "Nxde" can stimulate discourse on body image and foster more nuanced representations of women. However, the findings also underscore the complexities of using provocative imagery to convey messages of empowerment, highlighting the need for further research into media's influence on gender perceptions.

Keywords: K-Pop; stereotype; body image; representation; nudity

Abstrak

Evolusi industri musik Korea, atau K-Pop, kini telah menjadi fenomena global. K-Pop telah melampaui batas, tidak hanya sebagai genre musik tetapi juga sebagai media yang mampu menyampaikan pesan dan kritik terhadap isu-isu sosial. Lagu "Nxde" dari (G)I-DLE yang dirilis pada tahun 2022 menonjol dalam hal ini, dengan mengangkat isu citra tubuh dan menantang stereotip terkait representasi perempuan. Studi ini menyelidiki bagaimana "Nxde" mendekonstruksi stereotip citra tubuh dan mengkritik objektifikasi perempuan dalam budaya K-Pop dan media yang lebih luas. Dengan menggunakan analisis semiotika Charles Morris, penelitian ini meneliti aspek sintaksis, semantik, dan pragmatik dari lirik serta citra dalam lagu tersebut, dengan menjadikan "nude" sebagai simbol keaslian diri yang menentang standar dangkal yang sering diterapkan pada idola perempuan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa "Nxde" bertujuan untuk memberdayakan perempuan dengan mendefinisikan ulang ketelanjangan sebagai ekspresi keaslian diri. Sebagaimana terlihat dalam masyarakat, makna ketelanjangan sering kali hanya dianggap sebagai bentuk yang seksual dan norma yang tidak pantas. Hal ini juga menimbulkan pertanyaan tentang potensi

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kontradiksi antara pesan feminis yang mungkin masih sesuai dengan standar patriarki. Kesimpulannya, “Nxde” menggambarkan peran ganda K-Pop sebagai platform untuk komentar sosial progresif dan sebagai kemungkinan penguat norma kecantikan tradisional. Studi ini menyarankan bahwa lagu-lagu seperti “Nxde” dapat mendorong diskusi tentang citra tubuh dan memupuk representasi perempuan yang lebih beragam. Namun, temuan ini juga menyoroti kompleksitas penggunaan citra provokatif untuk menyampaikan pesan pemberdayaan, sehingga menekankan perlunya penelitian lebih lanjut tentang pengaruh media terhadap persepsi gender.

Kata kunci: K-Pop; stereotip; citra tubuh; representasi; ketelanjangan

Introduction

The development of the Korean music industry, more commonly known as K-Pop, has experienced significant growth and has now become a global phenomenon. According to data released by Spotify, the number of K-Pop listeners reached 8 billion in 2018. Meanwhile, by 2023, Spotify’s K-pop Hub playlist recorded more than 700 million listeners annually (Yong Jun, 2023). This record illustrates the expanding popularity of K-Pop, reaching nearly every part of the world. As a prominent component of South Korea’s soft power strategy, K-pop not only exports entertainment but also exports values, aesthetics, and ideologies, reshaping how youth worldwide engage with identity, gender, and media (Kuo et al., 2022).

K-Pop music has long played an essential role in conveying social messages and movements, both domestically and globally. For instance, during 2016-2017, when thousands of South Korean citizens protested against President Park Geun-hye, several K-Pop songs such as “Into the New World” (2007) by SNSD, “Bang Bang Bang” (2015) by Big Bang, and “Cheer Up” (2016) by Twice were sung by the demonstrators (Lee, 2017). Notably, “Into the New World” ranked sixth on the list of best K-Pop songs of all time according to the Korean local streaming site, Melon (Melon, 2016).

Beyond the local sphere, the prominent Korean boy group BTS has actively released songs addressing global issues, including anti-violence, youth rights, and diversity. In 2022, BTS was invited to the White House to discuss racial hate crimes targeting the Asian-American community (Bartlett, 2022). These instances reflect that K-Pop serves more than just entertainment; it has also become a crucial platform for diplomacy and advocacy, engaging in significant social issues.

In recent years, the spread of K-Pop has widened, with a variety of social perspectives and issues emerging through the cultural content it produces (Isabel et al., 2022). These issues encompass

topics such as politics, beauty and appearance standards, education, fanatic fan culture, and ideological movements. On October 17, 2022, one of the K-Pop girl groups, (G)I-DLE, released their 5th mini album I Love, featuring the lead single titled "Nxde."

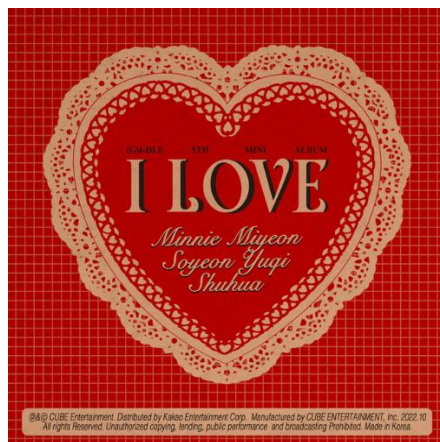


Figure 1. Album Cover I LOVE oleh (G)I-DLE
Source: Official Instagram Account (G)I-DLE

"Nxde" is an alternative pop song with lyrics that center around the notion of encouraging individuals to express their true selves. In an interview, (G)I-DLE's leader and composer, Jeon So-yeon, explained the meaning behind using the word "nude" in her work, emphasizing its reference to authenticity.

"The word 'nude' can be seen as provocative, and people might think, 'Why call it 'nude'? Isn't that too explicit?' But when I think of the word 'nude,' I envision my true self—not a version of me without clothes... Your true self is not when you wear makeup, but when your face is bare. You don't call it a 'bare face.' It's simply a face. I think that's how I see 'nude'—as the genuine form of yourself." (Jeon So-yeon, in an interview with Billboard, (Benjamin, 2022))

The song "Nxde" received diverse responses from the public and music critics, both domestically and internationally. The track achieved significant success on various music platforms, reaching a Perfect All-Kill (where a released song ranks first across all categories on South Korean music charts, not only in daily or real-time charts but also weekly and real-time charts on iChart) with a total of 129 Perfect All-Kills. It also won 11 trophies in weekly music shows in South Korea (Yoon, 2022; Koreaboo, 2022).

iChart™ 2022.10.25 8:30 (KST)		
(여자)아이들		
Nxde		
iChart™	Weekly (Total Score)	#1 ↑2
iChart™	Realtime (Total Score)	#1 -
Melon	Daily	#1 -
	TOP100	#1 -
Genie	TOP 100 (Daily)	#1 -
	TOP 100 (Realtime)	#1 ↑9
Youtube	Top songs	#1 -
FLO	24Hours	#1 -
VIBE	Today Top 100	#1 -
Bugs	Song Chart Daily	#1 -
	Song Chart Realtime	#1 -
(↑) Bonus points for TOP5 sites		
(↑) TND means Out of 100		

Figure 2. Perfect All Kill achieved by (G)I-DLE through “Nxde”

Source: Yoon (2022)

On the positive side, while "Nxde" received acclaim, it also faced criticism, particularly concerning its use of provocative imagery, such as lingerie-inspired costumes, which some felt contrasted with the song's message of self-empowerment. Critics questioned whether the revealing clothing genuinely contributed to female liberation or instead reinforced societal pressures around appearance (Yang, 2022). Skeptics argued that while the song encourages listeners to reject objectification, its visuals still lean on a concept of sexuality often critiqued within the K-pop industry.

From the beginning, K-pop has been known not only for its music but also for its intense visualizations, including costumes and choreography that are often considered provocative, and for lyrics with significant thematic intentions (Jie, 2023). This is particularly true concerning female idols. Women in media, especially within the K-pop context, are frequently scrutinized for their complex representation between empowerment and objectification. Female objectification in K-pop remains a central discussion in feminist studies, as the industry often exhibits a strong pattern of exploiting women's bodies for popularity. Prior research has shown that despite the industry's growing global fan base, there exists a darker side tied to female objectification.

Lin & Rudolf (2017) revealed that widespread K-pop consumption could reinforce imbalanced gender attitudes, especially in countries with high gender inequality. They found that the greater the influence of K-pop, the more traditional gender stereotypes are accepted, particularly regarding the portrayal of women as sexual objects in music videos and stage performances. Jonas (2022) observed that while the K-pop industry has opened career doors for women, it also perpetuates patriarchal systems. Female idols are often positioned as visual commodities to satisfy the “male gaze,” with their appearances strictly regulated by narrow beauty standards, subjecting them to constant pressure to remain physically attractive.

Meanwhile, Li (2024), who examined a song by the same group studied here—namely, (G)I-DLE's "Tomboy"—highlighted how the use of the “girl crush” concept appears to empower women but remains bound by patriarchal aesthetics. Female idols are still frequently depicted with hypersexualized imagery, creating a paradox between the feminist messages intended and visuals that conform to traditional norms. However, existing literature has not sufficiently addressed the internal contradiction within self-proclaimed feminist K-pop songs that promote empowerment through lyrics, yet rely on sexualized imagery in their visual narratives. The case of “Nxde” thus presents a compelling opportunity to investigate how authenticity, gender politics, and visual culture interact in the K-pop industry.

In contrast to previous studies, this research will deeply analyze how "Nxde" attempts to dismantle gender stereotypes by emphasizing self-acceptance and authenticity, as seen in lyrics that discuss "nude" as a representation of one's true self, free of makeup or artificiality. This study aims to fill that gap by analyzing how “Nxde” simultaneously reinforces and challenges gender norms, with particular attention to the lyrical construction of selfhood and the visual strategies used to convey empowerment. The significance of this study lies in its effort to understand whether an artwork like "Nxde" can genuinely serve as a tool to shift social perceptions of self-image or whether it remains caught in the contradiction between empowerment messages and visual exploitation. The results may provide broader insights into how the representation of women in media, particularly K-pop, can influence global perceptions of authenticity and gender equality.

Research Methods

This research adopts a qualitative-explorative approach, aiming to explore and understand the construction and meaning of a social phenomenon (Kriyantono, 2006). The study will employ Charles Morris's semiotic analysis method, focusing on the interpretative framework of signs. In his semiotic theory, Morris divides the study of signs into three branches: syntactics, which focuses on the relationships between signs within a sign system; semantics, which studies the relationship between signs and the objects they refer to (meaning); and pragmatics, which examines how signs are used by people within specific social contexts ((Morris & Ders., 1971), (Pelc, 2000), (Niu, 2020)).

The unit of analysis in this research is the song lyrics of "Nxde" as a representation of the authenticity intended by the songwriter. The lyrics in this study will use the English translation accessed via [genius.com](https://www.genius.com) and the official music video of "Nxde" available on (G)I-DLE's official account.

Given that this research is textual and interpretative in nature, one way to enhance clarity and systematic analysis is by utilizing analytical tables. In the context of semiotic analysis, tables can serve as heuristic tools to map the relationship between signs, meanings, and their social usage. Using tables in qualitative research is not about quantifying meaning, but enhancing the readability and accessibility of interpretive findings (Ridder et al., 2014). It helps to bridge the richness of textual analysis with the clarity of structured presentation, especially when working with dense cultural texts such as song lyrics. Furthermore, tables can assist in maintaining transparency in the interpretive process, showing how each analytical dimension connects with the data (Ritchie et al., 2014).

This study incorporates a table format to guide the analysis will follow three stages based on Morris's theory: first, the syntactic analysis will examine how the lyrics are structured and interconnected to create a flowing narrative of self-authenticity. Second, the semantic analysis will explore the relationship between the chosen words and the concept of "nude" as a metaphor for honesty or self-expression. Third, the pragmatic analysis will investigate how the lyrics interact with and are interpreted by the audience in a social context. This approach aligns with

best practices in qualitative research, which encourage methodological flexibility and clarity, particularly in presenting multi-layered textual interpretation.

Results and Discussion

Deconstructing “nudity”; Exploring the Body in the Lyrics of Nxde

In this section, the researcher will elaborate on the main findings obtained from analyzing the lyrics of the song "Nxde" using Charles Morris's semiotics approach. Each result will be discussed to understand how the lyrics explore the concept of self and how this meaning is constructed and perceived by the audience. The researcher will also examine whether the messages within the lyrics successfully challenge stereotypes about identity or, conversely, reinforce traditional views that have long existed within the K-pop industry.

The song "Nxde" begins with an *intro* section

Table 1. Lyrics in the *Intro* section

No	Element	Findings
1	Syntactics	<i>Why you think that 'bout nude?</i> <i>'Cause your view's so rude</i> <i>Think outside the box</i> <i>Then you'll like it</i> (Emphasize and encourage open-mindedness)
2	Semantics	Questioning social and conventional perceptions of the body.
3	Pragmatics	Challenging stereotypical views on nudity and body aesthetics, particularly society's tendency to categorize bodies and appearances based on narrow norms.

Source: Genius English Translations – (G)I-DLE - Nxde

The *Intro* section opens with provocative lyrics that question the meaning of "nude" or nudity. These lyrics attempt to challenge current societal norms, which tend to stereotype the body and nudity based on limited external judgments and morality. Women, in particular, are still subject to double standards and social punishment when engaging in actions that appear sexual (Emmerink et al., 2016). Society's views often remain superficial, and a taboo still exists regarding a broader understanding of this concept.

Broadly speaking, in K-pop culture, body image and appearance remain a primary focus. This highlights how the idealized beauty standards promoted through K-pop media can encourage individuals, especially teenagers, to emulate the appearance of their favorite idols (Buhphang,

2024). Therefore, this section of the lyrics explores the idea that bodies and identities can be viewed more openly and inclusively. The lyrics suggest that the body is not merely an object to be judged by standardized norms but also a medium for individuals to express their authentic selves.

Following this, in *Verse 1*, the lyrics begin to reject stereotypes surrounding individual freedom.

Table 2. Lyrics in the *Verse 1* section

No	Element	Findings
1	Syntactics	<p><i>Hello, my name is Yeppi Yeppi</i> <i>The way I talk is kinda dumb</i> <i>But I've got a sexy, sexy figure</i> <i>Well, for a tiara with a diamond</i> <i>Did you think I'd just laugh as if, laugh as if?</i> <i>Twisted Lorelei that don't need no man</i> <i>A bookworm obsessed with philosophy, a self-made woman</i> <i>Very flabbergasted by this sassy story</i> <i>The audience booed and shouted</i> <i>"You tricked me you're a liar"</i> (Sarcastic language to challenge social expectations)</p>
2	Semantics	Women are portrayed as complex, independent individuals who do not require recognition or approval from men for validation.
3	Pragmatics	This represents a resistance to gender stereotypes and societal expectations about how women should behave or appear within societal norms and rules.

Source: Genius English Translations – (G)I-DLE - Nxde

The word "*yeppi-yeppi*" in the opening section is derived from the Korean word 예뻐 (yeppeo), meaning "pretty." However, this word can also be understood as an adjective used to describe someone's attractive or charming appearance. Semantically, "*yeppi*" can be interpreted more broadly as a form of sarcasm about how women are expected to conform to norms and meet societal standards of beauty (Lal et al., 2022). The double standards constructed around women create a situation where they are caught between the demands to adhere to social standards and their desire to express themselves freely.

In the line, "*The way I talk is kinda dumb, But I've got a sexy, sexy figure,*" there is an exploration of how physical beauty is often juxtaposed with intellect (Faheim et.al., 2020). This resistance to gender stereotypes and societal norms reflects the momentum of modern feminism, which aims to reduce the objectification of women as merely physical beings. Specifically, in the lyrics "*Twisted Lorelei that don't need no man*" and "*A bookworm obsessed with philosophy, a*

self-made woman," there is a reference to the German myth of the Lorelei as a seductress (Talitha & Liyanti, 2019). This part implicitly reinforces that women do not need validation from anyone to define themselves. Kim (2021) interprets this as an act of resistance against rigid gender norms, illustrating how media and digital culture serve as a medium for contemporary feminism to challenge standardized gender roles imposed by society.

The song "Nxde" then transitions to the *Pre-chorus 1* section.

Table 3. Lyrics in the *Pre-chorus 1* section

No	Element	Findings
1	Syntactics	<i>Ah, an undressed movie star</i> <i>Ah, a night of broken starlight</i> <i>Even if I look tacky or fall apart</i> <i>Even if I'm not loved anymore</i> (Celebrity portrayal of societal pressure)
2	Semantics	The duality between beauty associated with celebrity status and the vulnerability that arises when expectations are unmet.
3	Pragmatics	Unrealistic expectations are often placed on public figures, especially women, emphasizing that a person's self-worth should not be measured solely by appearance or social perception.

Source: Genius English Translations – (G)I-DLE - Nxde

In popular culture, physical beauty for celebrities remains an idealized form valued by society. A slim body, fair skin, and flawless appearance are still deeply ingrained beauty standards, especially within the context of South Korean cultural development. Grabe et al., (2008) highlight how the ideal image of celebrities constructed through mass media ultimately reinforces and creates high beauty standards.

The lyrics in *Pre-chorus 1* portray the allure of celebrity as no longer bound by traditional beauty standards. The word "*undressed*" emphasizes the notion of a celebrity or idol in a perpetually imperfect state. Women are often compelled to appear flawless, both physically and emotionally, under the scrutiny of fans, media, and the public at large.

Furthermore, the lyrics in this section challenge the fragile nature of beauty standards, where one may lose societal approval based solely on appearance. The phrase "*not loved anymore*" suggests that changes in appearance or public perception can lead to a withdrawal of societal approval. This reflects how media and society influence perceptions of objectified beauty standards (Tiggemann & Slater, 2013).

The song then transitions into the *chorus* and *post-chorus* sections.

Table 4. Lyrics in the *Chorus - Post-chorus* sections

No	Element	Findings
1	Syntactics	<p>Yes, I'm a nude Nude Yes, I'm a nude Nude (I don't give a love) Baby, how do I look? (Yeah) How do I look? (Yeah) Put on my beautiful self, da-da-da-da-da Baby, how do I look? (Yeah) How do I look? (Yeah) Put on my beautiful self, da-da-da-da-da (Questioning public views and strengthening self-affirmation)</p>
2	Semantics	Self-image independent of others' opinions
3	Pragmatics	Reinforcing the importance of self-acceptance and the dependency on external validation

Source: Genius English Translations – (G)I-DLE - Nxde

“Yes, I'm a nude” serves as a powerful statement that emphasizes an individual's confidence in themselves. It highlights how one does not need to hide or construct their identity to satisfy societal expectations. Deci & Ryan (2000) explain that personality and self-identity can be self-determined. In a similar vein, Hooks (1989) argues that reclaiming one's body and voice is fundamental to dismantling gender hierarchies. She writes, “*We learn to look to those empowered by the very systems of domination that wound and hurt us for some understanding of who we are that will be liberating, and we never find that.*” This underscores the necessity of self-definition as a form of resistance against oppressive systems. In this context, the statement “Yes, I'm a nude” goes beyond a simple expression of self-assurance, it becomes a radical declaration against the silencing and regulation of female identity, affirming a woman's right to self-representation on her own terms.

Then the song enters *Verse 2* section.

Table 5. Lyrics in the *Verse 2* section

No	Element	Findings
1	Syntactics	<p>Ouch! Excuse me, to all of you who are sitting here If you were expecting some rated R show Oh, I'm sorry, but that's not what we're showing For a refund, go that way Whatever people say is not my interest You're welcome to throw your dumb popcorn</p>

No	Element	Findings
		<i>Rating is just the inverse of bliss</i> <i>But my climax, those prejudice make me sick</i> (Audience expectations of women and entertainment)
2	Semantics	Critique of societal expectations regarding women in the entertainment industry, which only view them as sexual objects.
3	Pragmatics	Rejecting a limited view and defining their own happiness and success.

Source: Genius English Translations – (G)I-DLE - Nxde

Verse 2 of “Nxde” increasingly critiques societal expectations that tend to objectify and stereotype women, particularly within the entertainment industry. Even today, women's objectification in the entertainment world is still seen as equating to sexual objectification. A study by Apuke (2019) explains that in the music industry, women are often presented as visual objects to fulfill sexual demands and appeal to audiences. This creates pressure on women to meet beauty standards that often lead to exploitative circumstances.

This section of *Verse 2* illustrates resistance to social norms that require women to fulfill specific roles in society, especially in the entertainment world. The lyrics, “*If you were expecting some rated R show, Oh, I'm sorry, but that's not what we're showing,*” can be interpreted as a reminder for women that they have the right to determine their own narratives and the direction of their lives, independent of the standards imposed by society, which do not necessarily lead to true happiness.

Women are often caught in a dilemma of dual roles, where what they wish to portray as appealing can be judged or criticized by the public as indecent (Delgado et al., 2022). This section of *Verse 2* reinforces the message of *Verse 1* that women should not be viewed solely as visual objects, but rather as individuals with the freedom to express themselves and the right to define their own identities.

Coming to *pre-chorus 2*, the lyrics in this section have few similarities to *pre-chorus 1* section.

Table 6. Lyrics in the *Pre-chorus 2* section

No	Element	Findings
1	Syntactics	<i>Ah, an undressed movie star</i> <i>Ah, no more shameless night</i> <i>Even if I look tacky or perhaps to you</i> <i>Even if I'm not loved anymore</i> (Rejection of societal expectations)
2	Semantics	Freedom and release from superficial social judgment.
3	Pragmatics	Love or validation from society is not the only measure of value or self-worth.

Source: Genius English Translations – (G)I-DLE - Nxde

Women are often portrayed in decorative and domestic roles, frequently treated as "ornaments" devoid of individual value (Guizzo et al., 2017). This objectification manifests as part of a media culture that positions women in subordinate roles, where their bodies become visual objects intended to attract attention rather than showcase their intellectual capacities or skills.

While *Pre-chorus 1* emphasizes the objectification and image of a celebrity in the public eye, *Pre-chorus 2* shifts the focus to rejecting the exploitation of women, which often pressures them to appear beautiful and appealing according to societal expectations. Particularly in the lyrics "*no more shameless night Even if I look tacky or perhaps to you,*" there is a critique that social validation should not be the primary source of an individual's value against societal expectations that frequently sexualize women. *Pre-chorus 2* further emphasizes the effort to liberate oneself from social pressures to always look perfect and align with public expectations.

Following *Pre-chorus 2*, the song transitions into a chorus that is consistent with the previous chorus. The researcher will then continue to analyze the *bridge* and *outro* as the concluding sections of the song.

Table 7. Lyrics in the *Bridge-Outro* sections

No	Element	Findings
1	Syntactics	<i>Mm, ah</i> <i>Mm, ah</i> <i>Mm, ah</i> <i>Yes, I'm a nude</i> <i>Yes, I'm a nude</i> <i>Now I draw a luxury nude</i>

No	Element	Findings
		<p><i>Why you think that 'bout nude</i> <i>'Cause your view's so rude</i> <i>Think outside the box</i> <i>Speak out</i> <i>My beautiful self, my beautiful self</i> <i>I'm born nude</i> <i>And you're the pervert</i> <i>Rude</i> <i>Nude</i> (Repetition of the word “nude” to emphasize the meaning of openness and counter negative interpretations)</p>
2	Semantics	Nudity is defined as self-honesty and freedom that is not bound by social norms.
3	Pragmatics	A rallying point for more open-mindedness and against conventional views, especially to challenge the assumption that one's body should be judged from a sexual or moral perspective.

Source: Genius English Translations – (G)I-DLE - Nxde

The *Bridge-Outro* serves as the conclusion of the song “Nxde.” The repetition of the word “nude” can be interpreted as a symbol of openness and self-expression, devoid of filters or pretenses.

This act of redefining nudity aligns with feminist discourses that challenge the historical control over women’s bodies and identities. As Butler (2011) explains, gender is a performative construct, continually reiterated through social norms and disciplinary power. Thus, the act of singing “*I’m born nude*” becomes a form of performative resistance, dismantling the binaries of pure/impure and reclaiming the body from external judgment.

Moreover, Gill (2008) introduces the concept of “*postfeminist sensibility*”, where women's participation in hyper-visibility, including nudity, can paradoxically signify both empowerment and complicity within patriarchal ideals. The line “*Now I draw a luxury nude*” can be understood as a negotiation between subversion and survival in a media landscape that frequently commodifies female expression. It also suggests that nudity is something natural and beautiful, in contrast to the negative interpretations often associated with sensuality or indecency (Crane, 2000).

The ending of the song, therefore, delivers not only a musical resolution but also a feminist critique of how society reduces women's bodies to objects of moral scrutiny and spectacle. This critique resonates with Bordo (2023) argument that female bodies have historically been the sites where cultural anxieties are inscribed and contested. Judgments about nudity, particularly when performed by women, reflect deeper ideological structures that police female agency and embodiment. “Nxde” thus articulates a sharp rebuke of the objectification of women’s bodies and the persistent moral judgments imposed upon them, which stem from entrenched societal biases and prejudices.

“Nxde”: Reading Body Image Beyond Female Stereotypes

This cultural reading of nudity also reflects a broader discourse on gender and sexuality. In patriarchal societies, the female body is historically positioned as a visual commodity, where women are defined through their capacity to be seen rather than heard. According to Bartky (2015) the regulation of women's bodies through practices of beautification, discipline, and surveillance serves to reproduce gender hierarchies. On the other hand, in modern society “nudity” is still associated with vulgarity or sexual allure, a view arising from rigid social constructs. This becomes a limiting factor, deeply ingrained within cultural norms and mindsets, where discussions of body and sexuality are often deemed taboo (Grinde, 2021). Such tendencies yield negative feedback, especially when these views become a legacy passed down continuously.

In the case of “Nxde,” the subversive act of declaring “Yes, I’m a nude” may appear to challenge these structures. However, it also highlights the ambivalence in negotiating empowerment within a commercialized cultural industry. Butler (2011) offers insight here: *gender is not a stable identity but rather constituted through repeated social performances*. When (G)I-DLE sings about being “nude,” they are not only stripping away clothing but also metaphorically rejecting the layers of normative femininity imposed upon them. Yet, this performative rejection still occurs within a mediated space, raising questions about the authenticity of such acts

As Crane (2000) elucidates, nudity is no longer merely regarded as a physical appearance but also as a form of self-representation free from social constructs. He states,

“...while in the past, nudity in women was a form of disempowerment and subordination, today nudity can be interpreted as a means of women's empowerment... bodies are not meant solely for sexual availability” (Crane, 2000, in Fashion and its social agendas: Class, gender, and identity in clothing, p. 233).

The K-pop music industry, as a study of contemporary popular culture, remains closely linked to the practice of objectifying women, evident in the portrayal of female idols as symbols of sexual allure. Female idols are often controlled to adhere to strict beauty standards, including undergoing plastic surgery, following stringent diets, and curating appearances to satisfy public perceptions that view women as visual objects (Jonas, 2022). This situation results in significant social pressure, where women's bodies are reduced to marketing tools rather than as expressions of self (Venters & Rothenberg, 2023).

Sexuality in “Nxde” is therefore negotiated between rebellion and conformity. On one hand, it challenges dominant ideologies that equate nudity with shame, particularly in cultures where women’s sexuality is policed. On the other hand, the commodification of sexuality within K-pop, driven by market demands and fan expectations, limits the extent to which such performances can be truly liberatory. As Venters & Rothenberg (2023) note, female idols in K-pop often lack creative control over their images, operating within management systems that prioritize visual branding over artistic freedom.

“Nxde” critiques how women's objectification persists today. The findings from this study encourage listeners and society to view the body as a form of self-expression and an integral part of human identity, rather than merely as a sexual object. In line with Davis (2018), “...sexualized media exposure and narrow beauty standards can constrain women’s freedom to express their true identities and reinforce detrimental social constructs.” Also, as Vera & Foucault (1979) reminds us, power and resistance are intertwined; acts of defiance often emerge within, rather than outside, the systems they seek to disrupt. Thus, it is essential to promote broader discussions regarding the constructions of women in media and how these can contribute to the formation of more authentic and diverse identities, free from stereotypes and objectification.

Conclusion

This study highlights two core findings from the analysis of meanings and symbols within the lyrics of “Nxde.” First, “Nxde” emphasizes how women's bodies in media, particularly in the entertainment industry (K-pop), are often reduced to mere visual and sexual objects. This underscores the powerful social constructs influencing perceptions of the body, especially within industries prioritizing human body imagery like K-pop. Second, the song illustrates a significant shift in perspective regarding the meaning of nudity. The body is no longer seen merely as a symbol of sexuality or subordination but as a means of empowerment that reflects freedom and complete self-control. The concept of “Nxde” conveys that bodies, whether male or female, belong to the individual and are not solely for public consumption. This represents a rejection of traditional stereotypes that confine women to visual and sexual functions.

The implications of this study suggest that works like "Nxde" can provide new understanding to the public regarding the importance of authentic representation of the body, free from objectification. Additionally, this song can prompt the media industry to represent women and the human body in more positive and multifaceted ways, reflecting diverse identities rather than merely visual objects. A limitation of this study is the scarcity of literature addressing body representation in the K-pop context, particularly from a deconstructionist perspective. Future research could integrate insights from various disciplines, such as psychology and gender studies, to gain deeper understanding of the impact of this representation on audiences and the development of women's identities in the global media industry.

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