
Revealing Posttraumatic Growth, Identity and Global Influence in Demi Lovato: *Dancing with the Devil* Documentary

Clara Andita Dwi Putri Wijaya¹, Achmad Munjid¹
¹Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
✉: claraanditadwiputriwijaya@mail.ac.id

ABSTRACT

As a singer and an actress, Demi Lovato has fame which can influence her fans globally. Further, with the mental health, addiction, and trauma issues, she gains positive changes in her life that affect and encourage her fans as well. The object of this study is *Demi Lovato: Dancing with the Devil* documentary series. This study reveals Lovato's posttraumatic growth that influences her identity and global influence. The narratives, captured clips, posts, and previous research are used as the data in this study. This study uses the theory of posttraumatic growth and new media for data interpretation. The findings show that Lovato's posttraumatic growth consists of five domains: personal strength, relations to others, new possibilities, appreciation of life, and spiritual and existential changes. Moreover, her posttraumatic growth also leads her to discover her identity as a non-binary person and bring positive impacts to her fans around the world and the non-binary community. Therefore, as a new media form, the *Dancing with the Devil* documentary series successfully delivers Lovato's stories and struggles to people worldwide, especially her fans.

Keywords: *Demi Lovato; documentary series; global influence; identity; trauma*

Article information
(Filled by Editorial
Management)
Received: 04 Feb, 2024
Revised: 06 Oct, 2024
Accepted: 09 Oct, 2024

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.22146/rubikon.v11i2.93886>
Available at <https://jurnal.ugm.ac.id/rubikon/article/view/93886>
This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License

INTRODUCTION

Demetria Devonne, who is well known as Demi Lovato, is an actress and an American singer. She first gained her popularity through her appearance in a TV show for kids called *Barney and Friends*. Lovato further got fame when she played the role of Torres in Disney's *Camp Rock* in 2008. She then worked for Disney for a couple of years of her teenage years. As she worked for Disney, she was chosen to be the advocate for mental health as she was known for being completely sober for six years from when she was 18 up to 23 years old. Since then, she has raised awareness about mental health through some events and her social media platforms so that she can spread positivity and understanding to people, especially her fans globally.

However, as time passes by, Lovato finds herself struggling with the fame she has, her mental health, her trauma, and her addiction. In 2021, Lovato released her seventh album called *Dancing with the Devil... the Art of Starting Over*. During the same period, Lovato also announced her four-part documentary, entitled *Demi Lovato: Dancing with the Devil*. It has four parts or

episodes filmed by Michael D. Ratner, reflects Demi, who fearlessly opens up about the worst periods in her life, including an overdose in 2018 (Dodds, 2023).

Demi Lovato: Dancing with the Devil documentary series serves some important and crucial moments in her life, especially with her struggles. It includes her childhood trauma, her teenage dark years, and her mental health issues. The documentary series consists of four parts: Part One: Losing Control; Part Two: 5 Minutes from Death; Part Three: Reclaiming Power; Part Four: Rebirthing. This four-part documentary series is very significant in showing Lovato's posttraumatic growth, her identity, and the global influence she has. Further, the documentary series also includes some of the important people in Lovato's life who also give witnesses of things which happened to her.

Moreover, the four-part documentary series is relevant because nowadays, some public figures have addiction issues. Those include Robert Downey Jr., Ben Affleck, Bradley Cooper, Drew Barrymore, Elton John, Jamie Lee Curtis, Keith Urban, Daniel Radcliffe, Amber Valletta, Eric Clapton, and

Matthew Perry (Langmaid, 2022). The psychological explanation underlying drug addiction is based on a variety of environmental and societal factors. These pressures might vary from unstable relationships in family life to external demands such as making big singles. Besides creative improvement, some artists utilize drugs to cope with the strain of performing. This form of relaxation, while helpful, is the most likely to lead to addiction (Luck, 2021). Therefore, Lovato's documentary series has gained much attention from her fans worldwide.

In relation to global influence, by addressing her mental health issue, her trauma, and her past life in her documentary series, Lovato could connect and let the audience, especially her fans, relate to and reflect on them in their lives. Further, the documentary series itself was publicly posted on *YouTube*, where everyone can access it freely. Therefore, by raising her life issues, she wants to share her perspective on those problems she deals with, encourage her audience and fans who are experiencing the same issues, and empower them to seek self-love. Thus, with the diverse background of her fans, she could help them by showing

her positive changes after she lived in trauma and along with the issues she has.

Lovato's life stories have a significant impact on cultural and societal implications. Through her actions, she has been a role model for her fans. She has been breaking down the social norms about mental health and encouraging her fans to always ask for help whenever they need it. Further, Lovato also gave an example that people deserve to be heard. It was shown by her advocate events where she opened up and told her own experiences to her fans. As she positively shares her issues, she could inspire people worldwide to always gain power from the struggle they have and try to put much love into themselves rather than thinking about what people might say about such issues.

Moreover, for young people whose emotions are not stable yet, Lovato's documentary series can be a sort of media for young people who suffer from existential crises to find a safe place within themselves. It includes how they identify themselves, discover what they like and do not like, find ways to solve problems, and find comfort. In relation to her addiction, Lovato also gives an understanding of how strong the influence of drugs is, and she also shows her empathy and

support to those who experience the same things. Therefore, from her recovery journey until her current career, she shows how many positive changes she has.

METHODOLOGY

In analyzing this case, the writer decides to use the theory of posttraumatic growth by Tedeschi and Calhoun. The posttraumatic growth theory applied in this study involves the use of some principal psychological perspectives to explain or support several arguments, particularly those that are related to psychology. Posttraumatic growth itself refers to the positive changes which people have after experiencing traumatic events in their lives. What makes it interesting is that people tend to focus on the negative sides of having traumatic experiences. However, it can also bring some positive aftermath impact. Even though the process requires much time, posttraumatic growth highlights five domains. Those are personal strength, relating to others, new possibilities, appreciation of life, and spiritual and existence changes (Tedeschi et al., 2018).

Personal strength is where people who have had traumatic experiences are finally able to gain the power to come back and

use their past experiences as fuel to be a better version of themselves. Relating to others, the second domain is where people try to build up their trust and have relationships with others. Nevertheless, it does not mean that they leave the relationship they had. On the contrary, they improve their past relationships with others.

In the third domain, new possibilities, people who had trauma can see how brave and bold they are, and now they can decide what they want, what their interests are, and what career they want to pursue. Appreciation of life, the fourth domain, is where people show their gratitude for the chances they get now. Despite the traumatic events they experienced, they are learning to be more grateful for life and every little thing they have in the present. The last domain, spirituality and existence, does not always have to do with spiritual beliefs. In this domain, people who have traumatic experiences can relate it to their journey and the existential changes they have (Tedeschi et al., 2018, pp. 26-28).

With the offered five domains, the theory of posttraumatic growth is used to help the writer reveal Demi Lovato's posttraumatic growth,

identity, and global influence. Furthermore, in this research, the primary data is taken from the four-part documentary series itself, *Demi Lovato: Dancing with the Devil*, in the form of statements and scenes. It was produced by Marc Ambrose and was directed by Michael D. Ratner. It consists of four episodes with different duration for each episode. The first part is 22 minutes 35 seconds long. The second part is 21 minutes and 55 seconds long. The third part is 21 minutes 58 seconds. The last part is 28 minutes 50 seconds.

As the object is a documentary series, it is included as one of the new media products. The theory of new media is taken from Ocak (2012). New documentary types arose on the Internet as new media as well as digital technology evolved. These contemporary forms are classified as online documentary (web-doc), interactive documentary (i-doc), database filmmaking, and non-linear documentary. New media, with its unique characteristics, allows documentary producers to think, envision, build, and create documentary projects in new ways and motivates them to create documentaries in new ways (Ocak, 2012). This theory is used to discover new media's

influence in spreading the information and create a connection between public figures, in this case, Demi Lovato, and the audience.

The writer first watched the four-part documentary series several times. Second, the writer captures the important evidence which shows Lovato's posttraumatic growth, which later relates to how she identifies herself and the global influence she makes. Third, the writer selects the captured scenes and writes down the narratives. The writer also uses some posts that are taken from X with the hashtag #HowDemiHasHelpedMe to find the global influence she made. In addition, the secondary data is taken from the previous related articles and journals. After that, the writer analyzes the collected data and puts it into the discussion.

DISCUSSION

As a famous singer, Lovato has done things that might influence her fans. It includes her songs, her acts, and her appearances. In her four-part documentary series, she breaks down all her career experiences until the time she overdosed in 2018. Lovato has been known since she first appeared in the *Barney and Friends* TV show. Since then, she has been

gaining more popularity, especially since she decided to pursue a singing career. There is no doubt that popular public figures undergo some issues in their lives. In the case of Lovato, she exemplifies celebrities' contradictory cultural status: they exemplify prosperity, glamour, and beauty, yet society develops a fetishistic fixation with their collapse (Franssen, 2020).

Further, Lovato once became an advocate of mental health for youth. With that being said, society thinks that her mental health issue is the one that keeps her from becoming this successful. However, Lovato has rebranded herself as the personification of confidence, self-improvement, and recovery by integrating her crises, diagnosis, and therapy into her public image (Franssen, 2020). Therefore, in this discussion, the writer provides some parts. The first one is all about the four-part documentary series, *Demi Lovato: Dancing with the Devil as a new medium*. Second, it elaborates on Demi Lovato's posttraumatic growth. The third one discusses Lovato's identity. Lastly, it describes the global influence she has.

Demi Lovato: Dancing with the Devil as a New Media

As technology develops rapidly, many forms of media offer people both education and entertainment. New media enables new types of representation and documentary film creation. New media documentaries also change the cultural experience of watching a film. Instead of just watching a new media documentary, the audience interacts with it by observing, navigating, and searching inside the film's surface or space (Ocak, 2012).

The documentary talks about Lovato's trauma and mental health issues. The documentary series lets the audience, mainly her fans, reflect and relate the mentioned stories to theirs. It is triggering for some people who have the same traumatic experiences and who have mental health issues. Since it is produced in a new documentary form, the audience has the time to continue watching or rest first. Therefore, this new form of media is an effective and innovative way to deliver messages to the audience.

Lovato has gained many fans since her first appearance in her singing career. The ages of her fans are also varied. It consists of those who are still

teenagers until those who are already adults. Through new media and a documentary series, Lovato has successfully delivered her stories and values to her fans. Further, an increasing number of people are viewing and following new sorts of documentaries on the Internet (Ocak, 2012). Therefore, a new media in the form of a documentary series is used well in this case.

This documentary series embraces Lovato, her family, her friends, and her team through a near-fatal 2018 overdose that sent the singer and actress to a point of breakdown of her addiction as well as mental health that she had never experienced before. Lovato opens up about failing years of sobriety, taking more extreme drugs, and experiencing horrible sexual assaults that altered her attachment to drugs (Spanos, 2021).

In the first part, "losing control", Lovato opens about overdose moments back in 2018 at the age of 25 years old. She was found unconscious in her house after consuming fentanyl. However, before explaining what happened on her overdose night, she also opens up about some issues she has. Firstly, she had childhood trauma when she witnessed her mother being abused by her father. Her father was abusive and

alcoholic. In the first episode, Lovato shows that she feels guilty for her father's death. She never wanted her father to pass away alone. However, the fact is that he was found for about one and a half weeks after his death.

Further, it was during Father's Day. Therefore, Lovato felt bad because when people celebrate Father's Day, her father rotted alone. Secondly, she had an eating disorder where she would rather eat nothing, and she felt that there was something wrong with her body. When she was little, Lovato was put into a beauty pageant where they were expected to be pretty and have great body looks. Lovato also speaks up about her eating disorder and how her surroundings are very careful with the food they eat whenever she is around. Thirdly, she had an addiction to crack and heroin. After celebrating six years of sobriety on March 16, 2018, two weeks later, she broke her sobriety by consuming drugs.

The second part, "5 minutes from death", talks more about the overdosed night and what happened that night. July 23, 2018, was the night she decided to go back to drugs and alcohol. She celebrated one of her best friend's birthdays and continued the party at her

place. In the documentary series, she admitted that she lied to her friends when she said she wanted to go to bed. At that time, she called her dealer, and that was when everything started. In the morning, she was found unconscious, and that is when her assistant and security asked for help. Because of her overdose night, she suffered some damage, including three strokes, a heart attack, and brain damage; she cannot drive, she has blind spots in her vision, she has pneumonia, and she has multiple organ failures. Lovato was found naked in her bed after she overdosed. That was the moment when everyone in her place thought that she was raped. After being able to communicate, in her documentary series, Lovato also states that she knew her drug dealer raped her. Thus, this made every situation she had even worse.

In the third part, "reclaiming power", Lovato shows her love and support for people affected by her night. As she celebrated her best friend's birthday before the accident, many of her fans blamed her best friends. Her fans thought that they were the reasons that made Lovato break her sobriety. She was the one who decided to be in touch with drugs again.

Therefore, she asked her family, best friends, and people involved to be interviewed. She wanted them to give their point of view and to clear their names. It can be seen that Lovato cares about her loved ones.

Furthermore, in this part, Lovato also breaks down the moment when she experienced sexual assault. She was raped during her Disney TV Journey. Since then, she started to cut herself, stop eating, and throw up as her coping mechanism. However, with the past traumatic experiences she had, and after 18 months of her hiatus, she decided to come back to the music world.

In the fourth part, "rebirthing", Lovato shows how she gains power and strength after her dark moments. She started to do many positive activities that could help her grow and be a better version of herself. At the end of the four-part documentary series, she states that she does not need to hide every feeling she has. Moreover, she also encourages her fans to do positive things in their lives.

Demi Lovato's Posttraumatic Growth

Lovato had traumatic experiences when she was little and a teenager. First, she

experienced an abusive relationship with her parents. Second, she experienced sexual assault during her career in the entertainment world. Therefore, those traumatic experiences indeed had some impacts on her life. However, those are not always in negative ways. Lovato also takes those traumatic experiences as her fuel to do some positive things. In this case, Lovato's posttraumatic experiences are seen through the five domains. Those are explained as the following.

Personal Strength

The first domain that shows Lovato's posttraumatic growth is her strength. After living through the traumatic experiences for years, she got the courage to gain all the strength to get up and do better things. In the first part, Lovato breaks down some of her traumas, including the one she got because of her violent father and her experience joining a beauty pageant when she was little. However, during her documentary series, she shows how she gains back her strength.

It's interesting that it took me a quarantine to work of this trauma stuff. I have never really taken the time to, uh, dig deep and do the work on.

(losing control, 00:05:07)

From the narrative above, Lovato states that her COVID-19 quarantine became one of her moments to work on her trauma. She did some positive things, such as meditating and relaxing. Rather than thinking about the negative thoughts of having trauma, Lovato encourages herself to take the positive sides of it. Living in isolation for months has given some people, primarily the privileged enough, an extraordinary chance to look back on their present circumstances and reset them (Samuel, 2020). She takes advantage of her quarantine time to bring back her confidence and calmness. Further, with the clear elaboration of how she undergoes trauma and mental health in her documentary series, Lovato also states her belief that with all the traumatic pasts she has, she could gain power back.

... but at the end of the day, I'm responsible for my life choices and hold only myself accountable. And the last two years have been about me doing the work to identify and confront those traumas so I can be my best self and truly be happy.

(5 minutes from death,
00:19:58)

That's the best part about of my life today is that I'm in control of it. What I eat is my decision. What I don't

eat is my decision. What I do is my decision. And I'm really, really, really grateful of the team that I have today.

(rebirthing, 00:14:29)

This whole thing is a learning process for me, too, of no longer having any fear and just going forward with what I want to do."

(Part four: rebirthing, 00:26:46)

In the last part of the documentary series, Lovato highlights that those things become her fuel to let go of her hard feelings of traumatic experiences. She gained the power to do things she likes, make decisions, and go forward while living her own life. In the third and fourth parts, Lovato emphasizes her ways of reclaiming her power and starting over her life. Further, through her cheerful words, Lovato can see her traumatic experiences very positively. In addition, individual strengths can work as a shield towards perceived stress and as protective factors for mental health. These strengths support mental health by improving psychological well-being and lowering psychological symptoms (Duan, 2016).

The proof of Lovato's strength is also clearly seen when she first appeared at the 62nd GRAMMY Awards. She

sang her comeback song entitled "Anyone" that she wrote and recorded shortly before her overdose night. She claims that she was in denial of needing help. However, Lovato realized she should have asked for help after the incident. It took Demi Lovato nearly a year and a half to feel comfortable performing in public following her overdose (Lafuente, 2020). In the GRAMMY stage, Lovato gained her power and showed the world that it is all right to embrace all past experiences and fold those into power.

In the following picture, Lovato first sang her song as her comeback. At first, it was hard for her as she needed to stop before finishing her first verse. However, she got much support from the audience. Therefore, she was able to start over her song and sang it powerfully and beautifully. In her documentary series, Lovato also states that her song, Anyone, dramatically influences her. She highlights that every lyric she wrote in that song is what she feels.



Image 1. Lovato's first comeback after her 18 months of hiatus

Relations to Others

The concept of posttraumatic growth by Tedeschi and Calhoun highlights that the positive process of trauma aftermath is not a quick one, but it takes time. For trauma survivors, it might be quite challenging to be open and build trust with other people. However, it does not rule out the possibility of gaining power and change quickly. Intimate relationships are essential for a healthy human life. By investigating them rather than dismissing them, the self-awareness and compassion required for connections and relationships can be strengthened (Brickel, 2017).

In Lovato's case, after living through her traumatic experiences, including her overdose incident, she has been trying to fix her relationship with her surroundings. Those include her relationship with her parents, sisters, friends, and team.

I'm going to take this time to spend with my family, and get to know my boyfriend and cuddle with my dogs more.
(rebirthing, 00:03:40)

From the narrative above, Lovato claims she also tries to have stronger and bolder relationships with her family and loved ones. Lovato emphasizes that she spends more

time with them and learns from each other. Further, in the following narrative, she explains that her choice does not only affect her but also the people around her. In her documentary series, Lovato states that her best friends were affected by her overdose night. As she is a famous singer with many fans, her best friends were blamed. The fans thought that they were the reasons why she came back to drugs and alcohol.

I get why after the OD I was so focused on myself, but unfortunately to took me too long to realize how my choices affected the people I really care about who had stuck by me.

(reclaiming power,
00:03:54)

However, Lovato tried to fix her relationship with her friends and people who were affected by her overdose night. In the fourth part of her documentary series, she insisted and gave her friends a chance to explain their points of view about her overdose night. The fact is that her best friends did not have anything to do with her actions that night. She let them give their explanation and clear their names in public. That is because their friends also got some hateful comments and death threats from her fans. Therefore, Lovato involves her

best friends, family and staff in her documentary series. Here, it shows that she is in charge of fixing her relationships with her surroundings.

New Possibility

After living through traumatic experiences, the bravest decision is to open oneself and believe in the new possibilities that may appear in life. People may be ready to open themselves up to the prospect of a future that is not too controlled by, or caught in, the (unaware) trauma by listening to the past thoughts that remain in the present (Marder, 2006). In this case, Lovato's traumatic experiences let her positively create new possibilities.

I want to allow myself the ability to live my life in the most authentic form possible, which I just haven't done because of my past and some things that I've needed to work on.

(Part four: rebirthing,
00:08:54)

Lovato allows herself to find new possibilities in her life that she has not discovered yet. Furthermore, one year after the documentary was released, Lovato also posted a post stating that whenever she wakes up, she is given another opportunity to be

who she wants and aspires to be. She has spent most of her life developing in front of the fans. They have seen it all, both good and bad. This shows that trauma gives her positive thoughts about having new possibilities in living life.

Moreover, the following picture shows a picture that Lovato posted on her social media platform (NBC News [@NBCNews], 2018). She posted her thoughts into notes. She shows how grateful she was. In addition, Lovato also states that she will keep fighting. This shows that she has a positive new possibility in her life, especially after her overdose at night.

I have always been transparent about my journey with addiction. What I've learned is that this illness is not something that disappears or fades with time. It is something I must continue to overcome and have not done yet.

I want to thank God for keeping me alive and well. To my fans, I am forever grateful for all of your love and support throughout this past week and beyond. Your positive thoughts and prayers have helped me navigate through this difficult time.

I want to thank my family, my team, and the staff at Cedars-Sinai who have been by my side this entire time. Without them I wouldn't be here writing this letter to all of you.

I now need time to heal and focus on my sobriety and road to recovery. The love you have all shown me will never be forgotten and I look forward to the day where I can say I came out on the other side.

I will keep fighting ❤️

Demi

Image 2. Lovato's post on August 6, 2018

[Instagram.com/ddlovato/](https://www.instagram.com/ddlovato/)

Appreciation of Life

For trauma survivors, in taking the positive effects of it, commonly, they tend to

appreciate everything they have in life. As stated by Tedeschi and Calhoun, those who have been living in traumatic experiences tend to see their present lives as second chances. Therefore, they always try to do better at every chance they have. It works the same for Lovato, especially after her overdose night. She is grateful for everything she has at the moment.

It's like a nice reminder that it wasn't my time, you know? That there was more life to be lived.

(5 minutes from death,
00:20:27)

Lovato highlights that her past experiences, including her traumatic ones, have reminded her of the present. She also emphasizes that when things do not work as she expected, the right time has not yet come. Therefore, seeing things from a positive side is needed in overcoming trauma. The research found that increased appreciation for life was the most generally endorsed element of PTG during six months post-discharge, and it was related to higher degrees of perceptual loss and symptoms of depression at that time (Silva et al., 2011).

I don't think that I would've been able to appreciate the big things that are going to come in

the future has I not been able to appreciate the little things now.

(rebirthing: 00:02:54)

In other times of my life, I've always tried to find the good in things, and that's what I did with this. It was like, how can I use this experience to work on myself?

(rebirthing, 00:03:11)

I've had a lot of lives, like, my cat - you know? I'm on my ninth life, and I don't know how many opportunities I have left. It's interesting. Life ebbs and flows.

(rebirthing, 00:27:35)

It can be seen that through her four-part documentary series, Lovato shows how she appreciates her life. She also states that everything she lives in is the one that she should be grateful for. This feeling makes her realize that she has to do what she focuses on in the present and appreciate life even more.

Spiritual and Existential Changes

The last domain of posttraumatic growth is how individuals relate to their spiritual journey. Tedeschi and Calhoun (2018) state that it only sometimes works for those who are believers but also for the non-ones. It can be in

terms of their existence as well.

I think that God has a twisted sense of humor sometimes.

(5 minutes from death,
00:13:41)

I knew that what I had been looking for I hadn't found yet. But what I had been looking for was not in the form of a drug. It was the spiritual growth that I've had over the past - I even want to say, like, seven months. That spiritual growth is what I was looking for.

(5 minutes from death,
00:14:44)

It can be seen from the narratives above that Lovato also lets her spiritual growth take part in her recovery and posttraumatic journey. Further, she also shows that she needs guidance spiritually to overcome her trauma. Spirituality adds value to a happy life while influencing how these demands are fulfilled (Van Dierendonck, 2012). Moreover, Lovato's spirituality is shown in the following narratives.

All it did was bring me back to my knees of begging to God for help.

(reclaiming power,
00:10:12)

And I'm really, really, really grateful.

(rebirthing, 00:14:44)

I am very, very aware of how blessed, lucky I am.

(rebirthing, 00:15:02)

Thus, Lovato indeed takes her spirituality in charge of her overcoming processes. Besides gaining her power back from the traumatic experiences, she also tries to relate her struggle and the blessing she gets from the spiritual and existential point of view.

Demi Lovato's Identity

Along the way, Lovato overcomes her trauma and mental health; she also explores and discovers her identity. In her documentary series, she also states that she discovered her new identity. She is no longer on track with where society told her to be. In finding her identity, Lovato also shares her journey in being honest with herself and accepting her as she is.

There's so much more of me that I have yet to explore. And one of the good things about this experience is that I've used this time to look within. And also I feel like I'm actually too queer to marry a man in my life right now. I'm not willing to put a label on it right this second. I think I will get there, but there's a lot of things I have to do for myself first.

(rebirthing, 00:08:24)

Life is fluid and I'm fluid,
and that's all I know.
(rebirthing, 00:27:44)

In the fourth part, Lovato stated that her life is as fluid as hers. Further, she also announced that on her social media platforms. She proudly said that she is a non-binary person and encouraged people, especially her fans, to be honest with themselves and accept themselves well. People have a gender that is neither male nor female, and they may simultaneously identify as male and female or question the concept of not having two genders. 'Genderqueer' or 'non-binary' are umbrella names for such genders (Richards et al., 2016). In this case, Lovato stated at the time that she was "officially changing" her pronouns into they/them as it felt "most authentic and true" (Carras, 2023).

Hence, the trauma experiences she had helped her to find herself. Lovato stated that she is more comfortable with the identity she has right now. Further, she is open to expressing herself in many forms, such as how she dresses up and her appearance.

Global Influence

As a singer and actress who has gained popularity since she was little, Lovato indeed has many fans worldwide. Further,

Demi Lovato has also been open about her experiences with drug addiction and mental health. Therefore, she has been very influential for her fans. Since she creates many popular songs among the fans, those become the reasons why they put so much compassion on her. Moreover, it is also shown that some fans show gratitude to Lovato.

a. To her fans in general

Since she announced her four-part documentary series, Lovato has been gaining a lot of support and gratitude from her fans. There are many of her fans who make Lovato their role model in life. They show how influential Lovato's documentary is for them. Since the documentary series became one of many media Lovato uses to interact and connect with her fans, many fans got helped. With the same mental health and trauma issues, the fans are encouraged in a very positive way. Thus, many fans made posts in X after watching *Demi Lovato: Dancing with the Devil*.

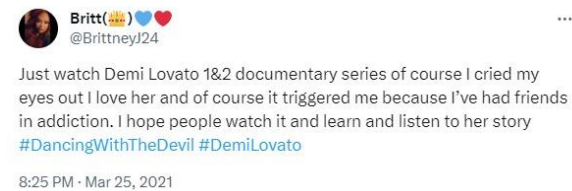


Image 3. Posts of her fans after watching Lovato's documentary series
Twitter.com

In the pictures above, it can be seen that Lovato has been influencing her international fans. She inspires and raises her fans' awareness about self-love. Furthermore, Lovato's stories have shown her bravery and honesty about her mental health and addiction issues, along with her traumatic experiences. Therefore, many fans can relate her stories to their own.



Image 4. Lovato talks about mental health in her concert
Demi Lovato: Dancing with the Devil

Lovato encourages her fans to be open and honest about mental health issues. As it is a significant thing to be taken care of, she shows her fans that it is okay to ask for help. Therefore, it is evident that she also dramatically impacts her fans, especially when she does positive things. One of them is raising awareness of mental health issues.



Image 5. Lovato's fan shows her gratitude for her existence
Demi Lovato: Dancing with the Devil

In the documentary, *Demi Lovato: Dancing with the Devil*, there are some clips of her unreleased 2018 documentary series. In those clips, some fans show and state that the songs she wrote have impacted their lives so much. Some say they can relate to what Lovato put in her lyrics. They find comfort through the words Lovato puts in her songs. Besides the fact that her songs are relatable to most of her fans, Lovato's songs are also influential in bringing positive changes. For example, some songs whose lyrics encourage people to keep fighting the different battles in their lives.

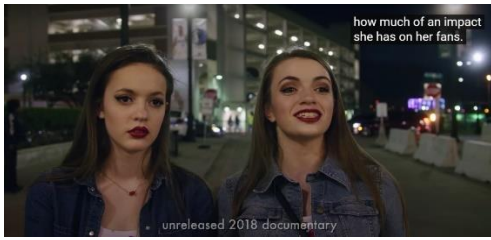


Image 6. Lovato's fans show how impactful she is to her fans
Demi Lovato: Dancing with the Devil

On the night she overdosed, Lovato got much support from her fanbase. Further, there was also a hashtag that showed their support. It was through #HowDemiHasHelpedMe. The trending of this hashtag shows how good her relationship with her fans is. She got non-stop support from her fans all around the globe. Further, many fans give proof of how Lovato has helped them. Those are seen from the posts they posted with the hashtag #HowDemiHasHelpedMe.

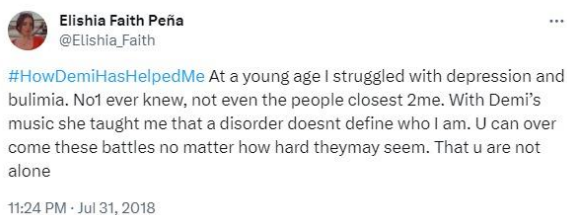


Image 7. A post of Lovato's fan
Twitter.com

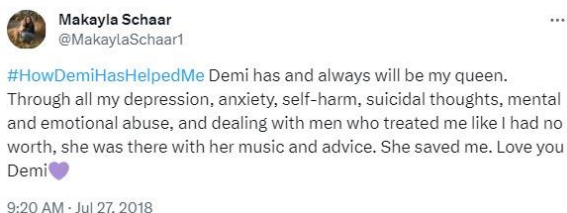


Image 8. A post of Lovato's fan
Twitter.com

It can be seen that Lovato has positively impacted her

fans. It is through the songs that she wrote and sang. Even though Lovato herself struggles with mental health and trauma issues, it does not stop her from having a positive influence on her fans. Because her songs are being listened to by people and her fans worldwide, the messages she wants to say through her songs are well delivered, and thus, she has helped many of her fans.

b. To the non-binary community

In the documentary, Lovato states that her identity is neither male nor female. She is a non-binary person. With that being said, Lovato indirectly shows her bravery in being honest to herself. Thus, some impacts influence the non-binary community. On her social media, X, Lovato posted a video where she came out as a non-binary person along with the caption.



Image 9. Lovato's post on X
Twitter.com

Even though Lovato has mentioned her identity in her documentary series, she still emphasizes that through her post on X. In her post, she also attaches a video where she speaks up about the comfortable thing and situation she feels as a non-binary person. Yet, she also mentions that she is not an expert on that. Therefore, she also lets some of her relatives who have more knowledge about non-binary identity to also share their thoughts. In that video, Lovato encourages her fans to love themselves as they are, no matter what their gender and identity are.

CONCLUSION

With the trauma and mental health issues that Lovato has been through, her life story can influence many people. The traumatic experiences have brought some positive changes

in her life. Those are seen as posttraumatic growth (PTG). In Lovato's case, her PTG domains consist of five. Those are personal strength, relationships with others, new possibilities, appreciation of life, and spiritual and existential changes. Furthermore, those five domains were found in her documentary. Moreover, through her changes of posttraumatic growth, Lovato was able to find her own identity as a non-binary person. She was able to be honest with herself and discover more things to reveal her identity. Lovato also has much influence, especially on her fans. With her popularity and fame, she could bring positive influence and encourage her fans to be able to love themselves, be aware of their mental health, and explore themselves freely. Lovato also has had some influences on the non-binary community since she announced her identity in her comeback. Therefore, through her documentary, she could embrace all her life issues, and struggles, and spread good motivations.

COMPETING INTEREST STATEMENT

Herewith the author declares that this article is totally free from any conflict of interest regarding the assessment, review and

revision, and publication process in general.

REFERENCES

- Brickel, R. E. (2017, September 15). How to Build Trust in a Healing Relationship as a Trauma Survivor. *Brickel and Associates LLC*. <https://brickelandassociates.com/healing-relationship-trust-after-trauma/>
- Carras, C. (2023, June 14). *Demi Lovato opens up about using she/her pronouns again: "I just got tired."* Los Angeles Times. <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/music/story/2023-06-14/demi-lovato-interview-pronouns-gendered-bathrooms>
- Dodds, E. (2023, August 18). *Everything you need to know about Demi Lovato.* Hits Radio. <https://planetradio.co.uk/hits-radio/entertainment/music/everything-need-know-demi-lovato/>
- Duan, W. (2016). The benefits of personal strengths in mental health of stressed students: A longitudinal investigation. *Quality of Life Research*, 25(11), 2879-2888. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s1136-016-1320-8>
- Franssen, G. (2020). The celebritization of self-care: The celebrity health narrative of Demi Lovato and the sickscape of mental illness. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 23(1), 89-111. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549419861636>
- Lafuente, C. (2020, January 28). *The Truth Behind Demi Lovato's "Anyone."* The List. <https://www.thelist.com/185499/the-truth-behind-demi-lovatos-anyone/>
- Langmaid, S. (2022, December 16). *Celebrities Who Are Open About Addiction.* WebMD. <https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/addiction/ss/slideshow-celebs-addiction-recovery>
- Luck, H. (2021, April 26). The Relationship between addiction and the music Industry. *The Chant*. <https://nchschant.com/19522/investigative/the-relationship-between-addiction-and-the-music-industry/>
- Marder, E. (2006). *Trauma and Literacy Studies: Some "Enabling Questions"*
- Mikha (Director). (2021, March 24). *Demi Lovato: Dancing With the Devil | Live Premiere.*

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1qLf ecCuw4>
- Ocak, E. (2012). *New Forms of Documentary Filmmaking within New Media*. In *Avanca | Cinema 2012 International Conference*, 1169-1175. Avanca: Edições Cine-Clube de Avanca.
- Ratner, M. (Director). (2021a, March 24). *5 minutes from death: Dancing with the Devil*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SRz-ePm4te8>
- Ratner, M. (Director). (2021b, March 24). *losing control: Dancing with the Devil*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uZmXF50Yx7I>
- Ratner, M. (Director). (2021c, March 31). *reclaiming power: Dancing with the Devil*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6FW-glAaTKU>
- Ratner, M. (Director). (2021d, April 7). *rebirthing: Dancing with the Devil*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lvxtpm4OGJ4>
- Richards, C., Bouman, W. P., Seal, L., Barker, M. J., Nieder, T. O., & T'Sjoen, G. (2016). Non-binary or genderqueer genders. *International Review of Psychiatry*, 28(1), 95-102. <https://doi.org/10.3109/09540261.2015.1106446>
- Samuel, S. (2020, June 9). *Quarantine has changed us—* *And it's not all bad*. Vox. <https://www.vox.com/future-perfect/2020/6/9/21279258/coronavirus-pandemic-new-quarantine-habits>
- Silva, J., Ownsworth, T., Shields, C., & Fleming, J. (2011). Enhanced Appreciation of Life Following Acquired Brain Injury: Posttraumatic Growth at 6 Months Postdischarge. *Brain Impairment*, 12(2), 93-104. <https://doi.org/10.1375/bri.12.2.93>
- Spanos, B. (2021, April 6). "Demi Lovato: Dancing With the Devil": Everything We Learned. <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-news/demi-lovato-dancing-with-the-devil-everything-we-learned-1142242/>
- Tedeschi, R. G., Shakespeare-Finch, J., Taku, K., & Calhoun, L. (2018). *Posttraumatic growth: Theory, research and applications*. Routledge.
- Van Dierendonck, D. (2012). Spirituality as an Essential Determinant for the Good Life, its Importance Relative to Self-Determinant Psychological Needs. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 13(4), 685-700. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-011-9286-2>

Wijaya, C. A. D. P. (2024).
*Behind the Tortured: Lily
Bloom's Posttraumatic
Growth Seen in Hoover' It
Ends with Us and It Starts
with Us.* Yogyakarta:
Universitas Gadjah Mada.