

Indonesian College Student Defense Mechanism Reflected in Taylor Swift's *Anti-Hero*

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Abstract

The phenomenon of the youth releasing their feelings to receive a sense of comfort by listening to sad songs cannot be separated from the rising mental health issue, which is in accordance with the increasing amount of sad songs produced by the music industry. Taylor Swift's songs are popular among the youth, especially Indonesian college students who are going through profound and complex emotional journeys relating to identity crises, love, and other unpleasant events, because the lyrics, the melody, and the story present the youth's experiences. The popularity of Swift's songs among young people is intriguing to study through a psychological lens. Indonesian college students listen to Taylor Swift's *Anti-Hero* as an unconscious response to avoid a feeling that they are unable to handle because the song is characterized by its haunting melodies and thought-provoking lyrics. This study aims to examine defense mechanisms in Taylor Swift's selected song, *Anti-Hero*, with Indonesian college students. The quantitative-descriptive method is used in this research to assist in describing, showing, or summarizing data constructively, referring to a statistical diagram. This method is used to understand the details of the data by summarizing and finding patterns in certain data samples so that the basic characteristics of the data can be understood and more accurate conclusions can be drawn about the phenomenon being observed. The results obtained are defense mechanisms identified in the response of the targeted respondent, an Indonesian college student, which are repression, denial, displacement, projection, sublimation, and avoidance. As the expression of feeling and emotion, *anti-heroism* is a form of personal defense based on unconscious acts.

Keywords: defense mechanism; mental health; sad song; taylor swift; youth

Introduction

The phenomenon of rising song consumption among today's youth demonstrates that song listening has become an integral component of their habits and lifestyle. Songs are like a part of the youth's inner being, thus breaking the habit is tough, especially since some of the youth regard songs as essential as oxygen or water; in other words, music is something that defines their identity and determines their life journey. Many youths spend almost all of their time listening to songs. It is common to come across situations where the youth are immersed in the accompaniment of their favorite songs while carrying out their daily routines in public, such as public transportation, libraries, cafes, streets, and so on. As a result, songs play a significant role in the emotional, social, and cognitive development of the youth, influencing the fundamental beliefs they hold about themselves and their interactions with others (Kokkidou and Tsakaridou 2009).

Songs, with their highly essential significance among the youth, can be further explained as a medium for communicating numerous things that are difficult to communicate, regulating and altering moods from sad to joy, and linking the youth in interacting with their environment. This is due to the fact that songs are not bound by countries, cultures, or genres (Kokkidou and Tsakaridou 2009). Songs, in their various forms, have varying effects on the lives of the youth. McCarthy et al. evaluated the influence of four different types of songs on a person's mood, emotions, and thinking processes in 1998 and discovered that it was dependent on the atmosphere created by the music. This demonstrates that different music genres have varying effects on a person's mood and feelings (Chaturvedi et al. 2022). Songs with a fast tempo, high pitch, and major key are typically classified as happy songs, while songs with the opposite characteristics are classified as sad songs (Pond and Leavens 2023). According to Barrette, the sad songs that many youth listen to are a reaction to the sadness or negative emotional states that they frequently experience in everyday life as a result of certain environmental factors, and they consist of varying patterns of cognition and bodily experience (Larwood and Dingle 2022). According to Sung Kyung Yoon et al.'s research, the youth who experience sadness, negative emotional states, and mental health difficulties report feeling more happy and less sad when listening to songs of their choice. Aside from that, the most frequently mentioned reason is that sad songs bring comfort. This is due to the fact that sad stimuli in songs represent a desire for calming stimuli, resulting in a radically different interpretation (Yoon et al. 2019).

The majority of sadness and mental health problems occur among the youth in their early adulthood, such as college students who are at risk of feeling stress, anxiety, and depression, all of which generate psychological pressure and negatively affect their academic performance. Academics, feelings of loneliness, job search, lack of spare time, family ties, personal interactions with others, financial constraints, life objectives, societal pressure, and physiology are all sources of college students' sad issues (Ramón-Arbués et al. 2020). Almost every college student, including Indonesian students, is affected by these issues (Kotera et al. 2022). Spotify release 50 popular tracks on Spotify Indonesia, which are dominated by sad songs, demonstrate the phenomena of increased consumption of sad tunes among Indonesian college students (Spotify 2023). They try to release their feelings in order to receive a sense of comfort by listening to popular sad songs.

In the ever-evolving landscape of popular song, female pop stars have consistently shaped the industry with their distinctive voices, magnetic stage presence, and an innate talent for crafting timeless hits that resonate across generations. Among the pantheon of celebrated figures, Taylor Swift emerges as a luminary, not only for her chart-topping hits but also for her adept navigation and reinvention of her musical identity. This exploration focuses on Swift's album *Midnight*, a sonic journey that encapsulates her evolution as an artist and storyteller.

Released at the crossroads of pop and indie folk, *Midnight* stands as a testament to Taylor Swift's versatility and prowess as a songwriter. She often changes personas to the public to deliver different types of music in every era which attracts fans to support the upcoming stage of her life (Zhang 2022). The album, characterized by its introspective lyrics and ethereal melodies, captures the essence of nocturnal emotions and introspection. The atmospheric production of *Midnight* creates a cohesive and immersive listening experience, showcasing Swift's willingness to experiment with her sound while staying true to her storytelling roots.

Amidst the tapestry of *Midnight*, one standout track that demands close examination is the enigmatic *Anti-Hero*. This song, characterized by its haunting melodies and thought-provoking lyrics, offers a departure from the conventional love-centric themes often associated with Swift's work. Transitivity analysis is a method employed to deconstruct how a singer interprets and expresses their worldview through song lyrics (Rangkuti and Hafifah 2022; Rumapea, Rangkuti, and Pasaribu 2022; Sulistyawati, Krisifu, and Sumarlam 2022). *Anti-Hero* delves into the complexities of identity, painting a vivid picture of a protagonist who defies societal expectations. The song's sonic landscape, marked by brooding instrumentals and Swift's emotive vocals, adds depth to its exploration of the *anti-hero* archetype, inviting listeners to reflect on the blurred lines between heroism and rebellion.

The popularity of Swift's songs among young people is intriguing to study through a psychology lens. In connection, both song and young listeners prompt an action-reaction pattern. As was previously said, the *transmission of affect* is a specific mental mechanism. Under some conditions, this process allows the feelings of fear, wrath, or love to be transmitted from one person or object to another (Reed 1923). The psychological aspect of the listeners who make her songs a pleasure or an escape from problems also identified as *principle pleasure* by Freud. He explains how the Id, which demands instant satisfaction for all needs, wants, and urges is what propels people (Street 2021). He also mentions the sublimated joy that art brings.

Freud's psychological theory is a foundational theory for understanding humans and their behavior. The two most important concepts in Freud's psychoanalytic theory are the conscious and unconscious mind. Humans pay special attention to the unconscious motivations and emotions as they will be examined later, that is, how the unconscious influences the current state of humans (Pollingug and Williams 1995). The body and mind function via a complex system similar to a machine (Reed 1923). Human psychology possesses its own learning curve. Adolescence and youth are, of course, this developmental era. This implies that psychobiological variables, which provide the bodily foundation for an organism's cohesive sense of vital selfhood, play a role in the identity crisis (T. M. I. T. Press and Academy 1970). In this case, young people who are on the threshold of identity crisis and emotional instability.

The existence of the unconscious is explained as a repository of unpleasant feelings and experiences (wounds, guilt, desires, and unresolved conflicts) that we tend to ignore because doing so makes us feel overwhelmed, in contrast to the conscious, who are aware of the situation and confront it head-on, the unconscious is unknown to humans. It also clarifies how these sentiments of anxiety make us subconsciously reluctant to acknowledge and investigate our harmful behavior. It is the protection mechanism that the so-called Tripartite psyche (Id, Ego, Super-ego), which emerges from the unconscious, generates (Tyson 2015).

The defense mechanism is a physical procedure to prevent painful admission or recognition. First, *repression* happens when the ego uses repression as an unconscious technique to keep frustrating or hazardous ideas from becoming aware. The brief restoration to a previous psychological state that is eased rather than imagined. Repressed people keep their undesirable emotions hidden from awareness, or to put it another way, they forget. The second defense is *denial* which shows an unwillingness to comply with outside events that occurred. When something becomes too much for an individual to undergo, they simply decide not to recognize it. Almost similar to denial, *avoidance* is done by avoiding persons or circumstances that might trigger unconscious fears and cause us to become uncomfortable.

If denial is coping with something dangerous with distraction, avoidance is ignoring that problem. The following defense, *projection*, is blaming others for having our worries, anxieties, or sinful cravings while remaining silent about our own. *Displacement*, which also involves other people or things, is the act of displacing our impulsive problems onto a different, less dangerous object than the one that initially triggered our wrath. The other defense called sublimation is one of the projected defense mechanisms converts id-evoked socially unacceptable ideas or feelings—such sexual violence, guilt, or suicide—into activities that are accepted in society, like sports, the arts, or music. In order to communicate in a way that is acceptable in society and to create a very expressive and emotional home, the individual in question uses the Sublimation subtraction mechanism. The last, *regression*, a complex defense, is a return to a past psychological state that is momentary, lived, not just imagined. Regression can be a return to a pleasant or unpleasant moment (Pollingug and Williams 1995; Tyson 2015; Ramalakshmi and Sophia 2022).

This research aims to investigate a current phenomenon, namely the defense mechanisms of Indonesian university students reflected in the use of the *Anti-Hero* song by pop singer Taylor Swift. Due to the song's immense popularity among Indonesian students as well as the general concerns about the issues and mental stress that arise from both academic and extracurricular activities, we feel compelled to investigate ego defense mechanisms. It is crucial to understand how Indonesian students' id, superego, and ego respond to challenging circumstances. Readers will have a deeper understanding of the mental state between the younger generation of Indonesian college students and the popular song *Anti-Hero*. This research has a strong connection with psychological issues that will be studied in depth using Freud's defence mechanism theory.

Method

The quantitative-descriptive method is used in this research to assist in describing, showing, or summarizing data constructively, referring to a statistical diagram. This method is used to understand the details of the data by summarizing and finding patterns from certain data samples so that the basic characteristics of the data and make more accurate conclusions about the phenomenon being observed. Standardized questions and predefined response possibilities in surveys are highlighted in this type of study. Compared to exploratory research designs, quantitative research methodologies are more closely associated with descriptive and causal research designs.

This research needs the correct informants who have been netted by numerous criteria to be able to fill out the form in order to manage the data and analyze it afterward. As a result, respondents who are familiar with the song *Anti-Hero* can be a source of research that will be examined for their psychological state based on the suitability of Taylor Swift's song *Anti-Hero*. When doing quantitative research, a researcher has to be knowledgeable with statistical data analysis techniques, questionnaire design, scale measurement, construct formulation, and sampling (Ag, Author, and Lang 2007).

This research collect data using a questionnaire made by Google Form. The questionnaire consists of 2 types of questions. The first type of question is a five-point scale designed to assess respondents' knowledge of Taylor Swift, ranging from unfamiliar = 1 to

familiar = 5. The second type of question consisted of the respondent's opinion regarding Taylor Swift's song, the suitability of the song to the respondent's situation, the respondent's feelings after listening to the song, and which part of the lyrics was related to the situation the respondent. The analysis data in this article used Freud's Analytical Approach. In other words, this model looks at the respondent's unconscious when handling particular circumstances and coming to judgments that would affect how the Anti-Hero song is used as a defensive mechanism.

Finding

In this article, 36 respondents were filtered based on criteria with randomized cluster sampling have filled out the questionnaire. Each answer has been examined and grouped according to Freud's defense mechanism behavior. There are six defense mechanisms identified in the response of the targeted respondent, an Indonesian college student, which are repression, denial, displacement, projection, sublimation, and avoidance.

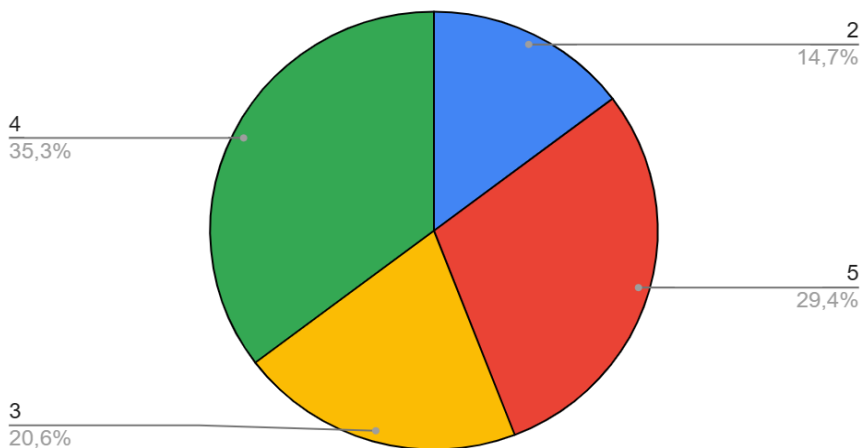
Table 1. Questions

Why does the song relate to your situation?	How does the song affect your emotions?	Which lyrics are related to your feelings?
<i>Question 3</i>	<i>Question 4</i>	<i>Question 5</i>

To identify the relation between college students' defense mechanisms to *Anti-Hero* song, five questions were mentioned. The first two questions, "How often do you listen to this song?" and "How much relatable is this song to your life?" are used to build enthusiasm in the correspondence to answer more questions and for the researcher, to filter the appropriate correspondence. The other question purposes to answer the research question.

Diagram 1. Question 1

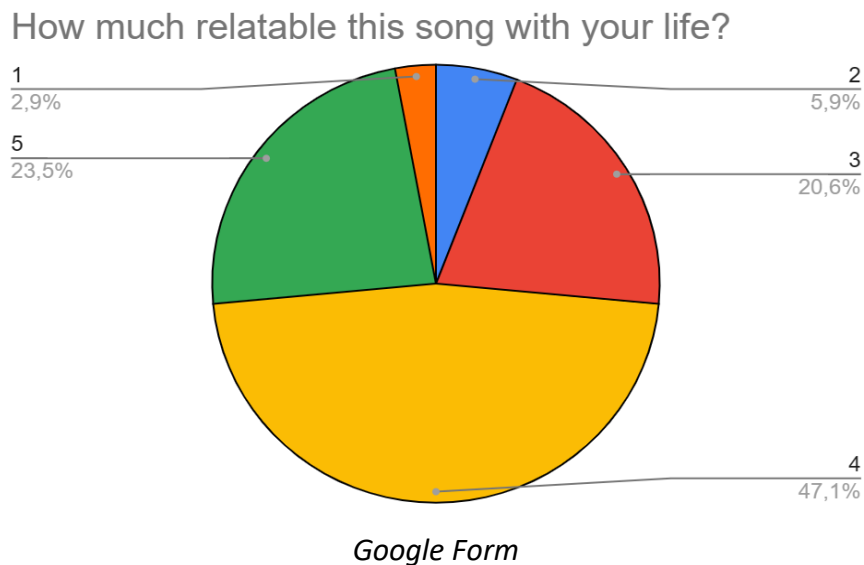
How often do you listen this song (Anti-Hero)?



Google Form

The diagram indicates that the majority of respondents frequently listen to Taylor Swift's song *Anti-Hero*. It indicates they feel secure and familiar when listening to this song. According to the data, 35,3% of the 36 respondents said they listened to this music frequently. In the meantime, 29,4% of people listen to this music nonstop. This song explores Taylor Swift's feelings of inadequacy and her intense terror at discovering that she has been an anti-hero in her own life. These emotions can be found in the lyrics of the song which convey the feeling of alienation from others as she is not as conventional as most of society. It encourages listeners to go deep into Taylor Swift's song *Anti-Hero*.

Diagram 2. Question 2



Based on the data, 47,1% of the respondents feel related to the song and 23,5% of them feel very related. It means that most of the respondents somehow feel the same way as Taylor Swift tends to write the song, they have experience related to the lyrics, about how she feels the complexity of her identity, painting a vivid picture of a protagonist who defies social expectations. Everyone has their worries and insecurities which we don't want other people to find out and use against themselves, so it relates to how we picture ourselves in our minds that we are the main character yet still undoubtedly fragile.

Repression

Based on the survey, there was one respondent who showed repression in the manifestation of her defense mechanism. Music expresses human feelings, dreams, and aspirations in a unique artistic language and actively influences a person's emotions (Ermat and Ugli 2021). Songs themselves don't directly cause repression, but they can function as triggers for emotions or memories that were previously suppressed in the unconscious mind. Certain songs may have associations with specific events or periods in an individual's life, as exemplified by Taylor Swift' *Anti-Hero*. If a particular song is played during a traumatic or emotionally charged experience, hearing that song again might serve as a trigger, uncover repressed memories and bring them to the surface of consciousness (Otgaar et al. 2019).

The lyrics and themes of a song can resonate with a person's personal experiences and emotions. Lyricists can create a song that resonates with their listeners and speaks to

their experiences and concerns (Demissie 2023). If a song delves into subjects or emotions that an individual has pushed aside, hearing it may bring those neglected feelings to the surface. The brain often creates unconscious associations between music and emotions. Even without conscious awareness of this connection, specific melodies, rhythms, or tones can stir up emotions and thoughts that were previously repressed. Sometimes, listening to music can provide a cathartic experience, allowing individuals to release pent-up emotions and find relief from these conditions (JOHN and UKANA 2023). This release might include the surfacing of repressed feelings and memories.

The impact of music on emotions varies from person to person. While one song may evoke a particular emotional response in one individual, it may not have the same effect on another.

Denial

Denial, part of the defense mechanism is the same as repression, but they operate in slightly different ways. Repression involves the unconscious blocking of distressing material, while denial involves a conscious or unconscious refusal to accept the reality of a situation. It has become a catch-all term to refer to a range of psychological strategies for handling information-truth or emotions-too difficult to admit into consciousness (Moon and Treviño-Rangel 2020). There are two respondents in the survey who showed denial in the manifestation of their defense mechanism. Songs often have a strong emotional impact and can elicit powerful emotions. When a song deeply connects with a listener, it may bring to the surface emotions or memories that the individual has consciously or unconsciously avoided. For some individuals, music serves as a means of creating a specific mood or atmosphere for escape. A song can serve as a trigger by drawing attention to aspects of life, relationships, or emotions that the person has actively been evading.

The lyrics of a song have the potential to impact an individual's defense mechanisms, potentially leading to denial through diverse psychological processes. Sad lyrics may make it possible to empathize with the singer or the character conveyed in the lyrics, human emotions are driven predominantly or solely by cognitive/logical assessments (Huron and Vuoskoski 2020). To steer clear of these emotions, an individual might resort to denial, minimizing the importance of the emotions evoked by the song. Denial frequently entails selective attention or perception, wherein people concentrate on specific aspects of reality while disregarding others. When a song addresses sensitive subjects, individuals may choose to perceive or interpret the lyrics selectively, aligning them with their established beliefs or sidestepping discomforting truths.

People's reactions vary depending on their distinct life experiences, psychological composition, and present mental state. Individuals may choose different defense mechanisms in response, or conversely, they might view the song as an opportunity for introspection and personal development.

Projection

Personalised anger and blame reactions are caused by personal selfishness or uncontrollable bigotry. The emotions that accompany such situations are very likely to be resentment and anger-both of which are the result of the impulse to blame and personal attack, the object of attack (C. Press 2016). In Freud's dictionary, the act of blaming another object while protecting oneself who is trapped in a bad condition is called projection. Projection is the act

of harboring self-loathing and taking it out on others. Based on the data collected, there is one respondent who relates to the song *Anti-Hero* which shows *projection*.

Respondent 14 believes that the *Anti-Hero* song perfectly captures her circumstances—she feels pressured and does not accept her troubled state. Respondent 14 asserts that Taylor's songwriting is honest and direct, citing her storytelling skills as a means of expressing her emotions in lines like "I wake up dreaming from dreaming one day I watch you leave and life will lose all its meaning." The responses to the questions indicate how dependent she is on other people. He/she is projecting what he/she does, or who he/she is, onto other people. He/she is gauging how happy he/she is in other people's life standards.

Through Taylor Swift's song, he/she feels represented and his/her defense feels normalized because of the lyrics that fit his/her situation. The respondent projects his/her own problems and pressures onto others, making them appear to be experiencing it as well.

Displacement

Displacement is defined as the redirection of an impulse to a powerless substitute target. Displacement is the expression of feelings to a substitute target because the primary target is unwilling to express them. People's feelings towards the substitute target are based on their negative self-concepts about the real target and themselves. That is, people think poorly of someone and themselves. Displacement means changing the impulse's aim. Freud saw displacement as a form of dream manipulation, involving a change of focus from essential elements to insignificant ones, or a simple illusion as a substitute for something (Utomo et al. 2013). Four of the 36 respondents displayed characteristics of the defense mechanism known as displacement. Respondents change the main target into a substitute target because the main target does not want to be revealed.

First, Respondent number eleven indicated that someone had to face their problem. The respondent's statement in the lyrics "it's me, hi, I'm the problem, it's me" makes the respondent admit that the main problem in the respondent's life starts with the respondent itself. According to the respondent, a person must admit his good and bad sides and must learn to live with himself. From this opinion, it can be concluded that even though the problem is within us, we must admit that we have good and bad sides and learn to live with ourselves. This respondent implemented a displacement defense mechanism. This respondent projects the problems by changing them into problems faced by other people.

Second, respondent number eighteen indicated that he felt better and enjoyed more after hearing the song *Anti-Hero*. The lyrics "it's me, hi" illustrate that the respondent wants to tell about the stress of the situation in writing the respondent's thesis. The song *Anti-Hero* itself made the respondent feel calmer in working on the respondent's thesis. This respondent implemented a displacement defense mechanism, by projecting the problems that the respondent was facing because of his thesis. This respondent did not explain clearly, but from the answer to the fourth question regarding whether this song is appropriate to the situation, it can be concluded that this respondent is projecting the problems that exist by changing them to the thesis he/she is working on.

Third, respondent number twenty can demonstrate that this song is very relevant to real life. According to respondents, Taylor Swift's songs can cause feelings such as sadness and depression all at once. The respondent stated in the lyrics "I end up in crisis (tale as old as time)" indicating that the respondent was in a crisis or depressed situation. In the lyrics, the respondent also stated that he/she was depressed due to someone's pressure and that

he/she was depressed because he/she was working on his/her thesis during the final semester. The pressure can cause the respondent to feel depressed and afraid of other people's opinions because the respondent feels that being hated by someone. This respondent implemented a displacement defense mechanism by projecting the problems faced by the thesis that the respondent was working on.

And last respondent, respondent number thirty-two believes that the song *Anti-Hero* could influence both thoughts and actions. The lyrics mentioned by the respondent, "I'm the problem, it's me. Everybody agrees everybody agrees" shows that the respondent knows that the problem is with the respondent himself/herself and everyone agrees. According to the respondent's response to the fourth question regarding whether this song is appropriate for the situation in which the respondent is the subject of people's talk, the respondent cannot be trusted, is not respected by others, and is always viewed negatively. This opinion shows that this respondent uses a displacement defense mechanism by projecting the problems that the respondent has onto other people. The respondent is aware that the source of the problem is within the respondent itself, but the respondent reveals that the source of the problem is outside of himself.

Displacement refers to the redirection of emotional impulses from the original target to a substitute target, which occurs frequently when the primary target is unwilling to confront or express those emotions. This mechanism, which involves changing the direction of impulses, is frequently based on negative self-concepts. The responses from four respondents demonstrated displacement defense mechanism characteristics in their responses to the song *Anti-Hero*.

Sublimation

According to Freud's defense mechanism theory, sublimation is a type of ego defense mechanism that aims to prevent and/or alleviate distress by transforming and adapting Id impulses that generate anxiety into forms of conduct that are pleasant, acceptable, and even admired by society. This defense mechanism is defined as someone wanting to change unpleasant or unacceptable thoughts, feelings, or behavior, such as sexual aggression, guilt, or suicide, into something positive and acceptable to society, such as exercising, cleaning, painting, or gardening. Sublimation occurs when the Id, the primordial or instinctive unconscious, has a strong desire to express its impulses but is resisted by the conflicting Superego, which is the voice of conscience or the source of self-criticism that results from reflecting society's moral values. The conflict between the Id and the Superego creates anxiety, and one of the Ego's coping mechanisms is to deploy the sublimation defense mechanism (Ramalakshmi and Sophia 2022).

There was 1 of the 36 respondents who showed signs of the ego sublimation defense mechanism. The respondent demonstrated there were several lyrics that made he/she sink into feelings of worry and guilt because the lyrics described what he/she felt. The respondent stated that the lyrics "I stare directly at the sun but never in the mirror" describe a situation where he/she always feels worried and guilty about anything that has or will go wrong. Furthermore, the lyrics "I'm the problem, it's me" made the respondent sink deeper into his/her problems, to the point where he/she considered performing unpleasant actions that were not accepted in society. However, he/she used an ego sublimation defense mechanism by diverting his/her thoughts from wanting to do unpleasant things by choosing to be more careful about everything he/she did so that nothing wrong would happen. The respondent

realized that there were still many people, especially his/her lover and friends, who always supported him/her, which made him/her choose to do positive things.

The flow that occurs in the respondent's Id, Superego, and Ego to construct the ego sublimation defense mechanism may be viewed through this. The respondent's Id or instinct is the thought of doing unpleasant things as a result of his/her feelings of worry and guilt which then come into conflict with the respondent's Superego who realizes that there are still many people who support him/her so his/her Ego decides to do positive things by being more careful about various things which he/she did.

Avoidance

People often possess an amazing ability to adjust to high levels of environmental stress. Most survivors of potentially traumatic incidents go through short bouts of imbalance but do not endure protracted suffering (Ursano 2012). Avoidance refers to avoiding situations and making the decision not to address issues, thereby leaving them unresolved. The respondents labeled Taylor Swift's songs, especially *Anti-Hero*, as therapy because they reflect their situation and the lyrics can describe their situation and feelings. In the lyrics, Taylor, the writer, as two out of the thirty-five responders, their preferred defense is to avoid conflict. Reasonable causes for this include an inferiority complex and an incapacity to solve issues.

Implicitly, the lyric line "I stare directly at the sun but never in the mirror" strongly illustrates what avoidance means as if the creator is afraid to look at what is in the mirror so he/ she decides to avoid it. Likewise, the lyrics "All of the people I've ghosted stand there in the room" show the behavior of ending contact with people, choosing to avoid them, and leaving them without any explanation. This is what happened with the two responders who stated that the songs accurately captured their experiences of encountering difficulties. Fear of making mistakes and insecurity make a person very careful in their actions. But what they do is avoid people with unresolved problems. The second respondent attributed the reason that he avoided problems to his depressive state. Emotional distress made her indifferent to the situation and chose to avoid the unpleasant situation. The way she defended herself was initially by degrading herself by calling herself the problematic one. Then the person chooses to avoid many people and distance themselves and not accept external influences because they have low self-esteem.

Other/No Signs of Defense Mechanism

Only 11 of the 36 respondents showed signs of ego defense mechanisms. The remaining 25 respondents were then sorted into two groups: those who felt related to the song but did not show any signs of ego defense mechanisms, and those who did not relate to the song *Anti-Hero* or merely listened to it because they enjoyed it.

There were 21 respondents who felt related to the song but did not show any signs of defense mechanisms. The circumstances that make them relate to the song *Anti-Hero* are dominated by insecurity, guilt, and the pressure of college tasks. The lack of indicators of ego defense mechanisms displayed by respondents in our analysis was owing to a lack of significant data that they gave for us to examine and classify the data into Freud's types of defense mechanisms.

Meanwhile, four respondents admitted that their situation was not related to the song *Anti-Hero*. Because of the song's popularity, two respondents solely listened to *Anti-Hero* as fans of the song. Another respondent stated that he/she loved how Taylor Swift played this

song and believed it was enjoyable to listen to. Then one respondent stated that he/she listened to this song since it matched his/her taste of genre.

Conclusion

Through Taylor Swift's *Anti-Hero*, the study data discussed in the findings shows the defense mechanism of Indonesian college students. The aspects of defense mechanisms in Taylor Swift's *Anti-Hero* reflected Indonesian college students are repression, denial, projection, displacement, sublimation, and avoidance. The majority of students recognized their high frequency of listening to the song and how much it influenced their lives as teenagers.

Taylor Swift interprets and expresses their worldview through song lyrics about the complexities of identity, painting a vivid picture of protagonists who defy societal expectations and respondents admitting that the lyrics of the song encourage them to go deep into Taylor Swift's song *Anti-Hero*. This is based on their previous experiences and occurs in a society of teenagers who highly value music, according to their answers.

In a time when listening to music is virtually unrestricted, a group of youth is using music effectively to improve their mood, communicate who they are, sustain connections, and get through tough times as represented by Indonesian college students.

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