

Emotional Distress in Song Lyrics of Niki Zefanya's Album *Nicole*

Dwiky Wahyu Saputro¹, Dewi Candraningrum^{2,*}

^{1,2} Faculty of Education English Department, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Surakarta, Indonesia

Abstract

This research examines the forms and expressions of emotional distress expressed in the lyrics of NIKI Zefanya's songs on the album *Nicole* (2022) and explores these expressions as a manifestation of the author's mental state. This study also clarifies the reasons for exploring emotional distress as a central theme in this album through Wellek and Warren's (1949) Literary Psychological Approach. The research method used is descriptive qualitative with a focus on literary psychology. Data was collected from twelve song lyrics from Nicole's album, analyzed using the method of close reading and data recording, according with the Interactive Analysis Approach of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). This study identifies and explains five main forms of emotional distress: Heartbreak, Longing, Emotional Collapse, Loneliness, and Regret. utilizing the psychology of the author approach. The findings show that emotional distress is a prominent theme, manifested through the concepts of Loss, Regret, and Self-Healing. The lyrics reflect high emotional vulnerability and authenticity, which resonate deeply with the author's personal experiences, growth, and self-healing process. This research contributes to Literary Psychology by utilizing song lyrics as a medium to analyze the author's emotional and mental state as reflected in their creative works. Nicole's album explores not only musically, but also as a documentation of the author's self-expression and mental state thru the thematic approach of emotional distress. The results of this research can be applied in the field of Education, specifically to enhance students' emotional and mental capacity in understanding modern literary works such as song lyrics.

Keywords: Emotional Distress, Album, Song, Lyrics, Niki Zefanya, Nicole

Introduction

Music listening has become a daily habit on this day, not just for the young but also for the old. Each song has a different meaning and message, usually connected to human experiences in life. Some songs talk about happiness, family, friendship, everyday life, politics, and even aspirations. However, there are also many songs that tell stories of love filled with happiness and sadness, and it is this last aspect that is the main focus of this study.

In the last recent years, mental health awareness has increased significantly among the younger generation, especially concerning romantic relationships and self-discovery. This can be seen by the rise in emotional stress, anxiety, mild depression, and loss of self-worth due to failure or instability within a romantic relationship. It also points out the fact that romantic relationships are not only a source of happiness, but they can also cause emotional turmoil that directly affects a person's mental well-being. This is also reflected in the popularity of various social media platforms, like TikTok and Instagram, where listeners very often share and reinterpret song lyrics, trying to cope with the end of a relationship, anxiety, or feelings of rejection. Among many singers around the world, Niki Zefanya stands out as a musician whose songs have many emotional and introspective aspects contained within, as described above.

Emotional distress is a psychological condition characterized by the emergence of negative feelings such as sadness, anxiety, loss, and inner pressure that arise from intense emotional experiences, such as failure, rejection, or the loss of a loved one. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), emotional distress occurs when an individual perceives a situation as a threat to their psychological well-being and feels unable to cope with it. Meanwhile, the American Psychological Association (2020) states that emotional distress it as a form of mental suffering that arises from emotional stress that is difficult to cope with, often accompanied by symptoms such as fear, anger, or despair. In the context of art, especially music, emotional distress often becomes a source of inspiration for songwriters to express their inner conflicts and personal experiences through poetic and emotional language. Thus, this concept becomes an important foundation for understanding how song lyrics can function as representations of human emotions as well as a means of self-healing.

Categories of emotional distress are identified in this research and include various forms of emotional distress with interrelated kinds and forms based on emotional responses to mental stress. The first form of emotional distress is heartbreak, which is emotional distress caused by the end of meaningful relationship to one individual. The next form of

* Corresponding author: dc119@ums.ac.id

emotional distress is longing, which is defined as perpetual yearning for either an individual or memory from the past, symbolized by nostalgia and emotional attachment. The third form of emotional distress is emotional collapse, which is an extreme form of mental illness characterized by emotional instability and mental instability, with individuals experiencing mental instability in terms of emotional control. Loneliness is another form of emotional distress, defined as feelings of isolation and emptiness driving from emotional isolation and mental isolation or social isolation. The last form of emotional distress, and also its equivalent, is regret, which is defined by feelings of sorrow, disappointment, and betrayal triggered by premature realization of mistakes and broken mental trusts.

Singer NIKI Zefanya, better known by her stage name NIKI, was born in Jakarta, Indonesia, on January 24, 1999. Since she was a teenager, NIKI has shown interest and talent in music by writing and publishing her works by herself through YouTube. NIKI was also an undergraduate at Lipscomb University, located in Nashville, United States, and she started her career professionally under international record label 88rising in 2017. NIKI received massive recognition as one of the most successful singers and songwriter in Southeast Asia under record label 88rising, and she was able to successfully break into the international market. NIKI started with international release with single See U Never in 2017, then Vintage in 2018, and Lowkey in 2019, and these tracks established NIKI's identity as an international singer with modern R&B sound and rich emotional and story contents. NIKI's new release, however, is album *Nicole*, released in 2022, which carries tracks with contents revolving around nostalgia, sadness, and self-discovery. This album can be claimed as NIKI's personal album, and it was inspired by NIKI's life as a teenage girl, family, and emotional struggles as she is an Asian teenager living in a new environment in a foreign land. Through her works, NIKI not only has vocal and musical talent, but she also has emotional depth with sadness, sorrow, and identity crisis. Thus, these included in album *Nicole* can be interesting and valid material to be analyzed from emotional, linguistic, and psychology viewpoints in research. Music has long been a significant form of emotional expression, and with modern technology and innovations, lyrics of modern song not only act as artworks, but they also reflect the personal life of the singer. One of these works is album *Nicole* by emo Zefanya, NIKI, released in 2022. This album represents NIKI's significant emotional transition and transformation in her career, and this album has significant emotional contents with disappointments and self-discovery.

Nicole is Indonesian singer-songwriter NIKI Zefanya's second studio album, formally released on August 12, 2022, under the record labels 88rising in association with Sony Music Entertainment. In large part, the album was produced by NIKI with Jacob Ray and Ethan Gruska, demonstrating further growth as a songwriter and producer. Musically, *Nicole* is a mix of indie-pop, acoustic folk, and alternative R&B, harnessed to create a cohesive emotional landscape—a reflection of vulnerability and nostalgia. The album's tracklist includes Before, High School in Jakarta, Backburner, Keeping Tabs, The Apartment We Won't Share, Facebook Friends, Anaheim, Milk Teeth, Autumn, Oceans & Engines, Take a Chance with Me, and On the Drive Home. Thematically, *Nicole* represents a reflection of NIKI's personal experience in replaying songs she had written during her teen years in Jakarta and rewriting them with emotional depth and maturity. Through her narrative introspection, *Nicole* captures the emotional landscape of heartbreak, longing, loneliness, and self-discovery—forging this deeply personal yet universally relatable work. This artistic sincerity and emotional resonance make *Nicole* an ideal subject to analyze how emotional sadness is expressed psychologically through song lyrics.

The reason why I chose NIKI Zefanya's album *Nicole* as the subject of my research is because this album has emotional depth rooted in the singer's personal experiences since she was very young. Several songs in this album were written by NIKI when she was about 15–16 years old during her teenage years in Jakarta and finally got professionally re-recorded in 2022. This proves that *Nicole* is not only a work of music but also an emotional archive recording her inner psychological journey and identity development throughout her adolescence until later in adulthood. This is justified in an article on Grammy.com, which mentions that the album *Nicole* "explains itself too much," but that shows how NIKI uses this work to understand and channel emotions that are difficult for many people around her to express. Meanwhile, in her interview with VMagazine, NIKI affirmed that the album was made as an invitation to listeners to feel the nostalgia, sadness, and warmth of her past so that listeners could connect with the same feelings. Thus, *Nicole* was chosen for its uniqueness and emotional honesty to represent experiences of the younger generation in facing love, loss, and the process of self-healing.

The psychological approach to literature, based on the perspective of Wellek and Warren (1949), examines the correlation between a literary work and the psychological condition of its author. This approach believes that literary works are a reflection of the author's personality, inner experiences, and emotional conflicts, which are then expressed through the characters, themes, and symbols in the work. Wellek and Warren classify the study of the psychology of literature into four main perspectives: the psychology of the author, the psychology of the creative process, the psychology of the literary work (structure and content), and the psychology of the reader (emotional responses evoked). This study specifically focuses on the perspective of the Psychology of the Author. This framework is highly relevant because NIKI Zefanya's album "Nicole" is recognized as an autobiographical and emotionally profound collection, allowing for a systematic analysis of how the author's emotional state and personal experiences are projected into her song lyrics. breaktracBy utilizing the author's psychological perspective, this analysis aims to go beyond merely esthetics. The goal is to understand the psychological dynamics within NIKI's mind, such as sadness, loss, and self-acceptance, as reflected in her musical work. Ultimately, this approach treats song lyrics not only as artistic creations but also as a comprehensive record of the writer's mental and emotional expression.

Past research on NIKI Zefanya's album *Nicole* proves the lyrics describe several forms of emotional distress are heartbreak, longing, emotional breakdown, and regret. According to Putri and Netra (2025), emotional breakdowns and heartbreaks are seen as direct responses to the failure of interpersonal relationships through the usage of words that depict the mental state of the individual. In the same way, Yanti and Muslimin (2024) believe emotional pain is strengthened by hyperbolic expressions and therefore fortifies feelings of sadness and despair. Sapari (2024) also notes from her study that the figurative language in the album *Nicole* voices loneliness and longing, especially those lyrics when remembering the past, all lost.

Fitriani (2024) adds that metaphors describe the feeling of emptiness, regret, and betrayal, while Indri (2024) relates slang and informal language to a feeling of isolation and emotional instability. Hasugian et al. (2024) and Aulia et al. (2024) point out that affixation is a way to create a reflective atmosphere and reinforce emotions, while Yap (2024) classifies figurative styles, including similes, personification, and metaphors, into aesthetic implements to describe inner conflict. Pangaribuan and Marpaung (2024) interpret NIKI's language style as a form of self-vulnerability and self-expression, with harsh language describing emotional honesty.

Research by Iqlima and Panggabean (2024) and Puspitarini (2024) also proves that *Nicole*'s album serves as an autobiographical expression of NIKI's inner life since it depicts authentic emotional experiences, not fictional narratives. Through a comparative study, Nugraheny and Yuwita (2023) investigated the lyrics of American rhythm-and-blues singer SZA and established that in her lyrical expression, conceptual metaphors are used as the main tool for expressing trauma, just like the lyrical expressions of NIKI. Meanwhile, Prasetya (2020) applied discourse analysis in the realm of song lyrics to investigate emotional meaning, stressing that linguistic structure, word choice, and context can reveal a psychological dimension. The theoretical framework is also appropriate for *Nicole*, because NIKI's introspective lyric writing transforms personal emotional experiences into universally resonant lyrical narratives.

While previous studies have successfully identified emotional forms and language features in *Nicole* album, they mainly concentrated on stylistic analysis and content description. They often fail to completely connect the emotional expressions directly with the psychological dynamics of the author (Niki Zefanya), beyond general biographical notes. The connection between Niki's documented life experiences and the structured emotional reflection within the lyrical text needs deeper psychological scrutiny under a defined theoretical framework. Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap by systematically analyzing the forms of emotional distress through the perspective of Wellek and Warren's Psychology of the Author. By focusing on the author's psychology, this research moves beyond merely linguistic analysis to explore how NIKI's personal history and emotional development shape the thematic core of *Nicole* album, which provides a deeper, contextually grounded psychological interpretation.

With this in mind, this study attempts to analyze the forms of emotional distress that appear in song lyrics on NIKI Zefanya's album, *Nicole*. Based on the context above, this study tries to explain how psychological conditions related to emotional distress can be a reflection of the songwriter's psychology in accordance with the Wellek & Warren 1949 model of literary psychology analysis, more specifically through the perspective of author psychology. This study also tries to point out why emotional distress became a central theme of the *Nicole* album's overall storytelling and represents how NIKI personally experiences and struggles emotionally as an individual and a young artist.

Research Method

The study employed a descriptive qualitative research approach with a literary psychology framework for analyzing the deep psychological meaning in the lyrics of songs in the album entitled "NIKI Zefanya - Nicole." The object of this study is the expression for emotional suffering, while the subjects for this study are the twelve selected song lyrics for the album, ranging from songs like "Before," "High School in Jakarta," and "Oceans & Engines." The primary data in this research study are the selected song lyrics, which are determined based on coherence on emotional expression, while secondary data in this study are collected in the form of an interview with the artist, "NIKI," garnered from credible sources in the media, acting as a source for this study's data triangulation. The primary data for this study has been collected in an extensive close-reading manner coupled with data recording techniques for identifying selected quotes in the songs' lyrics for the expression of emotional suffering. Data analysis in this study employs an interactive analysis model as conceptualized in Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña in 2014, involved in steps for data collection, data presentation, and conclusion drawing in analyzing data through coding. Conceptually, for the analysis in this study, the model for analysis for literary psychology, as conceptualized by Wellek & Warren in 1949, specifically the 'Author Psychology' outlook, is used for analyzing psychological meaning in songs' lyrics, assuming that songs can psychologically mirror an author's psychological state.

Result and Discussion

This chapter is aimed at presenting the basic findings of the study, which were obtained from the analysis of twelve songs in NIKI Zefanya's album *Nicole*. These analyses were conducted by identifying forms of emotional distress and interpreting their psychological depth through Wellek & Warren's literary psychological approach. The discussion here does not only

present data found but also links theory with biographical context and previous research findings to allow for a fully comprehensive understanding of the construction and interpretation of emotional distress within the lyrics. Discussion in this chapter, therefore, reflects the integration of textual data and theoretical studies complemented by psychological interpretation.

The Forms of Emotional Distress Expressed in The Lyrics of Niki Zefanya “Nicole” Album

Analysis of the lyrics in *Nicole’s* album shows that various forms of emotional distress appear consistently in almost all songs, reflecting the complexity of the emotional struggles experienced by the narrator. Each song presents a different type of distress, ranging from sadness due to separation, longing for the past, to emotional breakdown accompanied by guilt and emptiness. Through in-depth reading, this study has identified several main categories of distress, namely heartbreak, longing, emotional collapse, loneliness, and regret. This subchapter will describe these forms of distress in detail through textual evidence showing how each emotion is expressed in the lyrics in the table below.

Table 1. Forms of Emotional Distress Expressed in The Lyrics of Niki Zefanya “*Nicole*” Album

No	Type of Emotional Distress	Data (Lyric)	Psychological Interpretation
1.	Heartbreak	a. <i>Ocean & Engines</i> (2:16) “I guess this is where we say goodbye”	The lyrics in the song <i>Ocean and Engines</i> show the acceptance stage in the grieving process, where NIKI begins to accept the fact that she must part with the person she loves, even though she is still overwhelmed with deep sadness.
		b. <i>Before</i> (2:51) “Or was I just two-years practice round”	Describing self-devaluation or feelings of worthlessness after NIKI found out that the love she had given her ex-boyfriend for two years was not taken seriously, as if NIKI had only been used as a practice partner.
		c. <i>On the Drive Home</i> (2:31) “And we'll be two pieces of driftwood, floating in a sea of missed calls and excuses”	These lyrics are a metaphor for emotional alienation after a breakup. They describe two pieces of driftwood floating aimlessly, representing two individuals who were once connected but have now lost their way because they have separated.
		d. <i>Ocean & Engines</i> (0:26) “Fingers entwined and so were our minds cryin I don’t want you to go”	These lyrics reflect the conflict between love and loss. The act of holding hands shows that the physical and emotional bond between them is still strong, while the crying in the line “I don’t want you to go” shows NIKI’s refusal to accept the reality of the breakup. Psychologically, this is a form of denial, when someone still refuses to accept the fact that the relationship is over.
		e. <i>The Apartment We Won’t Share</i> (0:45) “The girl I won’t be is the one that’s yours, I hope you shortly find what you long for”	These lyrics express emotional ambivalence. The persona tries to let go by wishing her partner happiness in the future, but implicitly still holds out hope that she will be remembered, because the line “The girl I won’t be is the one that’s yours” can be interpreted to mean that the woman who is now her ex’s partner is the woman that NIKI does not want. Psychologically, this depicts a phase of mixed emotions, when someone is trying to heal themselves but is still emotionally tied to the past.
2.	Longing	a. <i>Facebook Friends</i> (3:04) “Either way, I’ll keep you in this song”	These lyrics express longing converted into an art form, namely a song. By preserving someone in a song, NIKI attempts to immortalize memories that she cannot hold onto in the real world. Psychologically, this is a form of emotional residue, namely the remnants of unresolved emotional attachment, transformed into a healthier coping mechanism through artistic expression in the form of a song.
		b. <i>Ocean & Engines</i> (1:17) “How is it now that somehow you’re a stranger you were mine just yesterday”	These lyrics express an emotional shock that arises after losing a deep connection. Someone who was once close now feels very distant, depicting a loss of relational identity. Psychologically, this is a form of attachment grief, sadness caused by the severing of

		an emotional bond with someone who previously provided a sense of security.
	c. <i>The Apartment We Won't Share</i> (0:41) "The daughter we won't raise still waits for you"	These lyrics express a dream for a future with NIKI's ex-partner that failed to be realized. "The child that will never be raised" becomes a symbol of dead hope. Psychologically, this is called anticipatory grief, which is sadness over a loss that has not yet occurred, but is already recognized as impossible to happen.
	d. <i>Facebook Friends</i> (1:03) "I hope you know, you always cross mine"	Rumination means repeated thoughts about a certain person from the past. NIKI knows that this relationship is over, and at the same time, she reveals that she still thinks about it quite often, unable to control such urges. Psychologically, this could indicate the presence of attachment toward another person that hasn't been completely resolved.
	e. <i>The Apartment We Won't Share</i> (0:13) "The apartment we won't share, I wonder what sad wife lives there"	These lyrics reveal projective longing wherein NIKI is fantasizing about another life that never happened in real life. She creates a made-up situation to appease or control her longing—a coping mechanism against unchangeable reality.
3. Emotional Collapse	a. <i>Keeping Tabs</i> (1:06) "You're the worst thing that I'm still keeping tabs on"	These lyrics depict obsessive behavior propelled by an emotional necessity of being in contact with another person even when it hurts. In these lyrics, NIKI realizes that what she does to stay in touch with her ex-partner is the worst thing to her. Psychologically, this is maladaptive coping, where a person repeats behaviors that prolong their emotional suffering.
	b. <i>Keeping Tabs</i> (1:01) "I wish I never met you"	An angry expression channeled toward what NIKI had to go through in the past. These lyrics again depict a disconnection from emotional feelings by converting love to hatred. This is a kind of psychological defense mechanism, which means avoiding pain by substituting it with anger.
	c. <i>Autumn</i> (3:18) "And I love you but with you It's heartache I breathe"	The lyrics describe emotional ambivalence, NIKI loves the person who is her source of suffering. Psychologically, this condition indicates a dependency conflict when love and suffering exist side by side and create emotional exhaustion for a person.
	d. <i>Ocean & Engines</i> (4:26) "What do you do when your pillar crumbled down, you've lost all solid ground"	Shows emotional instability. The metaphor "pillar crumbled" shows the lack of psychological support that NIKI received in this relationship. Psychologically, a person starts to show signs of emotional disintegration when an individual lacks inner stability because of the loss of an important person.
	e. <i>On the Drive Home</i> (4:15) "In less than eight months you'll wash tear stains off of your shoulder"	Describing traumatic recall, sad memories that replay within her mind. NIKI realizes time will erase the traces of her tears, but right now she's still caught up in this circle of sadness that hits her over and over.
4. Loneliness	a. <i>Anaheim</i> (1:53) "Cause I am lost, but not in you"	These lyrics symbolize existential loneliness wherein NIKI feels lost, not because she lost her partner, but because she has lost her direction and lost herself. That is a phase of emotional detachment from the relational identity.
	b. <i>On the Drive Home</i> (0:10) "Love, keep your eyes on the road"	These lyrics describe the emotional distance that occurs in a relationship. Even though they are in the same physical space, emotionally they are no longer connected. This condition signifies emotional numbness, loneliness in the midst of togetherness.
	c. <i>Ocean & Engines</i> (2:25) "I know I'll be alright,	These lyrics show NIKI's efforts to calm herself amid loneliness. NIKI tries to psychologically strengthen herself to face the emptiness she feels after

	Someday I'll be fine"	separating from her partner. This is a form of self-reassurance that arises in the healing process.
	d. <i>Facebook Friends</i> (1:12) "I've been doing fine, but I've done better"	These lyrics describe feelings of social isolation, where NIKI appears fine on the outside, but internally she feels a loss of emotional connection with someone. This condition corresponds to the concept of social comparison loneliness.
	e. <i>Backburner</i> (2:17) "But I know in a week or so, You'll fade away again"	Showing anticipatory loneliness, a feeling of loneliness that arises because someone has prepared themselves to be abandoned. Because NIKI already feels that she is only the second choice and she realizes that she could be deserted at any time.
5. Regret	a. <i>Backburner</i> (2:36) "Cause maybe you'll finally choose me after you've had more time"	These lyrics express regret and false hope. NIKI tries to calm herself by thinking that there is still a chance for her love even though she is the second choice. This is a form of wishful denial, where NIKI cling to hope in order to avoid feelings of loss.
	b. <i>Milkteeth</i> (1:13) "This love's but a newborn, so why does it bite?"	Describing emotional awareness of immature love. NIKI questions why something new is painful for her, revealing the conflict between expectations and emotional reality.
	c. <i>Keeping Tabs</i> (2:04) "I'm so glad our paths didn't cross"	On the surface, it appears to be acceptance, but psychologically this is a form of defensive regret, where NIKI covers up her regret with irony to protect herself from excessive pain.
	d. <i>Take A Chance With Me</i> (1:38) "Oh, why can't we for once Say what we want, say what we feel?"	These lyrics express communicative regret between two individuals who do not want to be honest about their feelings, the realization that the opportunity to be honest about their feelings has passed and cannot be repeated. Psychologically, this is a form of interpersonal regret.
	e. <i>Take A Chance With Me</i> (3:22) "In the end we only regret the chances we didn't take"	It depicts NIKI's reflections on the past and her realization that the chances she ignored at the time often become the greatest source of regret in her life. This is a common form of retrospective regret that often arises after loss.

One of the most prominent forms of emotional distress in *Nicole's* album is heartbreak, or deep sadness caused by the loss of a meaningful relationship. In the song *Ocean & Engines*, NIKI describes the phases of denial and acceptance in the grieving process. "Fingers entwined and so were our minds cryin I don't want you to go" is indicative of NIKI's inner struggle to deny the fact that she and her partner needed to separate, while "I guess this is where we say goodbye" holds a deeper sense of emotional acceptance. In the song *Before*, "Or was I just two-years practice round" reveals feelings of worthlessness after noticing that love given to another person was not genuinely valued. In contrast, the metaphor "two pieces of driftwood floating in a sea of missed calls and excuses" from *On the Drive Home* describes emotional alienation after the relationship was over.

Longing is another powerful form of emotional distress in this album. In the song *Facebook Friends*, NIKI channels her longing for someone from her past through art: "Either way, I'll keep you in this song," referring to putting in effort to eternalize someone in a piece of music. The lyrics "How is it now that somehow you're a stranger you were mine just yesterday" (*Ocean & Engines*) show the loss of relational identity after separating from someone who was once very close. This form of longing transforms into one of anticipatory grief in the song *The Apartment We Won't Share*, as in the line "The daughter we won't raise still waits for you," symbolizing hopes that died or failed before they could be realized.

The aspect of emotional collapse in *Nicole's* album depicts moments of breakdown due to the intensity of unresolved feelings from her past. The song *Keeping Tabs* shows obsessive behavior as a form of maladaptive coping, wherein a person keeps himself attached to things that pain him, through the line "You're the worst thing that I'm still keeping tabs on". The lyrics "I wish I never met you" show anger as a shield to mask sadness. 'Autumn' displays inner exhaustion with loving someone who has become a pain to her through emotional ambivalence: "And I love you but with you it's heartache I breathe." Meanwhile, in *Ocean & Engines*, the phrase "What do you do when your pillar crumbled down?" symbolizes the loss of emotional support.

The aspect of loneliness emerges as a more reflective form of emotional distress. In the song *Anaheim*, the lyrics "Cause I am lost, but not in you" depict existential loneliness, whereby NIKI loses her way not because she has lost someone else, but because she has lost her real self. The lyrics "Love, keep your eyes on the road" show the emotional distance in the relationship, which has grown so empty and meaningless. Meanwhile, "I know I'll be alright, someday I'll be fine" depicts NIKI's attempt to calm herself amidst the loneliness after ending her relationship with her loved one. The social

dimension, added through "I've been doing fine, but I've done better," describes the state of alienation one wears behind an appearance of being fine.

The last form of emotional distress is regret, which describes the process of self-reflection after losing a relationship with a loved one. In the song Backburner, the lyrics "Cause maybe you'll finally choose me after you've had more time" indicates false hope and denial of reality. The song Milkteeth shows awareness of immature love through the line "This love's but a newborn, so why does it bite?", showing the conflict between hope and emotional reality. The song Take a Chance With Me carries the phrase "In the end we only regret the chances we didn't take", a throwback to opportunities that could have been, but are no longer there.

Overall, the five forms of emotional distress in Nicole's album form a complete emotional narrative from loss and regret to acceptance. Each form of distress serves as an interrelated psychological stage, reflecting NIKI's emotional journey as an individual and artist. Referring to the theory of the Psychology of the Author (Wellek & Warren, 1949), emotional expression in this work is not just an esthetic product, but a direct reflection of the author's mental state, using music as a means of self-healing (self-healing thru creation).

How Emotional Distress is Portrayed in Niki Zefanya Album 'Nicole' Based on Psychological Analysis Model by Wellek & Warren (1949)

This analysis will apply the method proposed by Wellek and Warren with an added focus on the application of psychology to better understand the impact and creation of emotional distress not only by language, linguistic, and stylistic choice, but by the degree of psychology conveyed by those songs. The application of this argument will specifically concentrate on dimensions one and two, with NIKI's emotional experiences and psychology, as well as personal conflicts and emotions, conveyed and shown in her personal expressions and communications found in those lyrics, and by extension, with *Nicole's* world translated into a mirror of psychology by those texts, conveyed by such mechanics as metaphors, hyperbole, style, symbols, and narratives.

Table 2. Emotional Distress Portrayed in Niki Zefanya Album 'Nicole' Based on Psychological Analysis Model

No	Aspects of Psychology	Data (Lyric)	Description
1.	Emotional Experience	a. <i>Ocean & Engines</i> (2:16) "I guess this is where we say goodbye"	These lyrics depict the emotional experience of separation. Separation is expressed, which shows NIKI's awareness of the end of an important relationship to her, a real process of loss. Psychologically, this depicts the initial stage in acceptance of grief, where a person tries to normalize the pain by articulating it with words.
		b. <i>Keeping Tabs</i> (1:06) "You're the worst thing that I'm still keeping tabs on"	NIKI's emotional experience is reflected in the obsessive attachment for her ex-partner in these song lyrics. She realizes that one who hurt her still has an influence on her mind. This describes emotional distress caused by an unresolved attachment, where feelings of anger and love are mixed together, or in other words, feelings of love and hate at the same time.
		c. <i>Take A Chance With Me</i> (1:48) "Oh, why can't you for once, disregard the world, and run to what you know is real?"	The lyrics reveal how emotionally frustrated NIKI has become in yearning for a relationship that never lived but still left deep scars. The emotional acknowledgment needed and expressed here on NIKI's part comes for someone who has chosen to walk away. This reveals psychologically a need that remains unfulfilled: emotional acceptance and its validation.
		d. <i>On The Drive Home</i> (0:10) "Love, keep your eyes on the road, cause when I stare, all I see's two foggy windows to a lost soul"	These lyrics describe NIKI's deep emotional experience of alienation in her relationship. "Two foggy windows" symbolize the emotional distance and confusion of identity experienced by two people who have both lost their way. Psychologically, this speaks to an awareness of emotional emptiness within a relationship that may still appear to be well but is actually near collapse.
2.	Self-Reflection	a. <i>Facebook Friends</i> (1:12)	These lyrics reflect the honest self-reflection of NIKI: even though NIKI seems okay, there still is

		"I've been doing fine, but I've done better" b. <i>Take A Chance With Me</i> (3:22) "In the end we only regret the chances we didn't take" c. <i>Keeping Tabs</i> (2:02) "I'm so glad our paths didn't cross, I'm so glad, I'll say it 'til I believe it" d. <i>Ocean & Engines</i> (5:13) "This is the last falsetto, I'll ever sing to you my great lost love"	a sense of loss that has not healed from her ended relationship. This means understanding that emotional wounds have not totally healed. NIKI admits to her condition without hiding her fragile side. These lyrics reflect on past decisions and NIKI's regret over missed opportunities. In the context of the author's psychology, NIKI expresses her awareness that regret often arises not because of failure, but because of her unwillingness to take emotional risks, which ended up causing her to regret it. This expression presents in itself a reflective process through which NIKI attempts to convince herself that the loss is indeed the best thing that could happen to her. Psychologically, this describes a mechanism of self-reassurance-that is, trying to accept reality through affirmative repetition. These lyrics are a powerful reflection of NIKI's decision to close the door on her past. NIKI shows emotional release by mentioning "last falsetto," which is symbolic of the end of her expression of love for her ex-lover. This is an example of the emotional closure she has gotten through music.
3.	Inner Conflict	a. <i>Ocean & Engines</i> (1:56) "But I'm letting go, I'm givin' up the ghost" b. <i>The Apartment We Won't Share</i> (1:54) "Now someone else's word to keep, I'm sure she's beautiful and sweet" c. <i>Autumn</i> (3:18) "And I love you but with you It's heartache I breathe" d. <i>Anaheim</i> (0:52) "But all I do is live to hurt you soundless, say you see I'm lying, babe, and let this go"	The above lyrics define NIKI's turmoil between letting go and holding on to a strong attachment. The word "givin' up the ghost" symbolizes NIKI's efforts to release, to give in to these memories that haunt her. This, in psychology, marks an emotional transition state with struggles embedded in it. Here, there is a contradiction between jealousy, sadness, and acceptance. NIKI attempts to soothe herself by thinking of an ideal substitute partner for her ex-lover, indicating rationalization. The contradiction between ego and empathy arises here. These lyrics convey emotional ambivalence, which is an imbalance between love and pain that NIKI experiences as she is involved in a relationship. Her love overwhelms her, and at the same time, she recognizes that she suffers in this relationship. The lines "it's heartache I breathe" can be seen to mean that with each and every breath, NIKI suffers from heartache. This represents emotional dependence. NIKI's emotional struggles with guilt and freedom are evident in these lyrics. NIKI wishes to be forgiven so that she can be free from emotional pain since she does not desire to continue causing pain to her lover. This portrays NIKI's mental turmoil caused by guilt, which she is not openly expressing.
4.	Healing and Acceptance	a. <i>Ocean & Engines</i> (2:25) "I know I'll be alright, Someday I'll be fine" b. <i>The Apartment We Won't Share</i> (0:10) "Not what I wanted, but what we need"	These lyrics address the acceptance stage that NIKI goes through in the emotional healing process after she decided to break up with her lover. She believes that time will heal her wounds, indicating psychological maturity in managing distress. These lyrics signify acceptance of a tough decision. NIKI realizes separating from her lover may not be what she personally wants, but it is the best thing for them both. This reflects emotional rationality in accepting reality.

5. Memory and Nostalgia	c. <i>Before</i> (1:12) "You were all I'd ever known, And now I'm supposed to love you from a distance"	These lyrics describe a healing process full of emotional contradictions between continuing to love and needing to let go. The line "You were all I'd ever known" describes a very deep emotional attachment where that person, or NIKI's ex-lover, has become the center of NIKI's identity and emotional comfort. The next stanza shows a realization that this love must now be kept at arm's length as a form of protection. Psychologically, this describes the process whereby an individual learns to love without attachment; the process of redefining love after loss.
	d. <i>Milkteeth</i> (1:31) "I know soon enough we'll come apart at the seams"	These lyrics describe the acceptance of love's impermanence. NIKI understands that new or young relationships usually possess a fragile or uncertain nature. This is emotional awareness that grows with the process of maturing.
	a. <i>Highschool In Jakarta</i> (0:04) "It's 2013 and the end of my life, Freshman's year's about to plummet just a little harder"	The above lines symbolize NIKI's nostalgia towards her teenage years, as she was living and studying in Jakarta at that time. She remembers when she was into teenage love and faced disappointment, which serves as emotional material forming inside of her today. This can be classified under emotional recall, as she remembers something and develops feelings of nostalgia and sadness.
	b. <i>Before</i> (0:03) "It was Halloweekend I just flew across the globe, twenty two hours just to see you"	The lyrics form an expression of NIKI's yearning in the past and the sincerity she felt. NIKI's 22-hour travel symbolizes young love's sacrifice. The psychology involved here forms the idealization of NIKI's earlier emotions.
	c. <i>Facebook Friends</i> (2:49) "But I miss hearing you laugh, So, maybe once more, we'll cross paths"	From these lyrics, one can infer NIKI's nostalgia towards her past relationship, which ended well, and demonstrates appreciation and nostalgia towards her ex rather than resentment. This symbolizes maturity in emotions, acquired after experiencing pain.
	d. <i>Autumn</i> (1:32) "And here you are right next to me, Ironically, I've never felt more alone"	This is evident in the lyrics, which describe the nostalgia of this paradoxical NIKI, whose ex-lover's presence cannot bring closeness anymore. The emotional distance created by the end of love symbolizes loneliness in togetherness.

The first type of emotional distress evident in this album is an emotional response based on the experience of loss and emotional attachment towards an individual who has failed. This is particularly evident in the song *Oceans & Engines*, "I guess this is where we say goodbye," where NIKI shows recognition of the end of an emotionally significant relationship with her loved one. This can be perceived by analyzing the lyrics of *Keeping Tabs*, "You're the worst thing that I'm still keeping tabs on," which demonstrate NIKI's fixation with an individual from her past and, therefore, emotional attachment.

The entire act of self-reflection is at the center of NIKI's mental evolution within this album. Through *Facebook Friends* "I've been doing fine, but I've done better," NIKI shows self-realization regarding the emotional scars she has and is still recovering from, with all appearances of strength and composure. This particular statement represents emotional authenticity, with NIKI upliftingly conceding personal weakness. Within *Take a Chance With Me* "In the end we only regret the chances we didn't take," self-reflection revolves around regret over previous choices, and this indicates NIKI's understanding of emotional fear and its consequences, with "Take a Chance" symbolically representing NIKI's realization that what keeps people back, particularly when it comes to emotional matters, is not fear of failure, but fear of what may be lost by attempting something. Through *Keeping Tabs* "I'm so glad our paths didn't cross, I'll say it 'til I believe it," self-presentations include NIKI attempting to support and reassure her own self that parting with love has ended up favoring NIKI positively, with this emotional support-working as part of NIKI's self-empowerment. Finally, through *Oceans & Engines* "This is the last falsetto I'll ever sing to you," NIKI symbolically indicates the end of all emotional connections with loved ones, and uses such emotional melodies as instruments intended to provide NIKI with mental and emotional fulfillment, and possibly, closure.

The first type, and perhaps the most intricate one, is the internal conflict, which can be seen in NIKI's album *Nicole*, and is characterized by a struggle between love, pain, and letting go. The choice between ego and heart can be seen in *The Apartment We Won't Share*, where she tries to accept that she has lost that she loves to another individual. The love turned into pain, and pain into love is evident in *Autumn*, "And I love you but with you, it's heartache I breathe," and reaches its climax, and at the same time, finds its beauty, as love, which was once bliss, has turned into pain and, at the same time, is what keeps love alive. The guilt and need to forgive and be forgiven, and sometimes self-liberation, can be seen in *Anaheim*, which can be referred to as self-liberation through guilt and need to be forgiven. The stages of healing and acceptances bring NIKI from distress to happiness and peaceful living. "I know I'll be alright, someday I'll be fine," NIKI shows hope and determination to heal and be stronger over time, evident in *Oceans & Engines'* song. This indicates the need to recognize and accept that emotional pain can be healed with time. "Not what I wanted, but what we need," NIKI demonstrates emotional aspects of sanity, as she recognizes that parting was not what she wanted, but what she and that special one needed. This shows NIKI at stages of healing and sanity, evident in *The Apartment We Won't Share*. The lyrics, "You were all I'd ever known, and now I'm supposed to love you from a distance," reveal NIKI has matured and has learned to love without any attachment, evident in *Before's* song. The next one, "I know soon enough we'll come apart at seams," NIKI recognizes young love and its naivety and accepts its fate, evident in *Milkteeth*. The four tracks demonstrate an honest process of emotional healing, with music as the platform to come to terms with one's past and find new meaning in lost moments.

The last aspect of emotional pain, conveyed in *Nicole*, is nostalgia towards the past. The last song in NIKI's emotional cycle, which exhibits nostalgia towards one's earlier years, is "High school in Jakarta, 'It's 2013 and the end of my life.'", and "Before 'Twenty two hours just to see you'" represents nostalgia with reminiscence of young love and sacrifices, in which "Facebook Friends 'I miss hearing you laugh, maybe once more we'll cross paths'" shows nostalgia with "no hate, and no pain," symbolically representing emotional maturity after experiencing emotional pain. "Autumn" represents emotional maturity with an understanding of circumstances, closing NIKI's cycle of emotional nostalgia with "bitter comprehension, although you may be with me, the warmth is lost." From the psychology of the author, "the nostalgia in *Nicole's* album is more than romance, it's NIKI's understanding of her own emotional evolution and growth, crafted by remembering and processing her experiences.

From the overall results of analysis, it can be established that emotional distress in *Nicole's* album not only lies in its portrayal of NIKI's loss, but also in its portrayal of NIKI Zefanya's psychology and overall psychology of its author. Applying the psychology of the author method by Wellek and Warren in 1949, it can be established that emotional distress, self-actualization, and love and sorrow in *Nicole's* album are embedded in an overarching theme of love, sorrow, and healing through personal experiences, emotions, and psychology of its author. Thus, *Nicole* can not only be termed as an album, but also an emotional song that reveals its overall psychology and transformation and evolution of its author. Based on the analysis of twelve songs from *Nicole's* album, emotional distress is shown through a blend of personal narrative and the author's psychological reflections. Based on the theory of the Psychology of the Author (Wellek & Warren, 1949), it was found that emotional expression in lyrics is not just a reflection of temporary feelings, but rather a representation of NIKI's inner condition and real-life experiences as a songwriter. Lyrics like "You were all I'd ever known, and now I'm supposed to love you from a distance" (*Before*) and "Cause maybe you'll finally choose me after you've had more time" (*Backburner*) illustrate the dynamics between emotional attachment and the effort to let go. Additionally, in a psychological context, this album shows self-defense mechanisms such as denial, rumination, and acceptance, which are reflected in the honest yet private choice of diction and style of expression. Each form of distress becomes a reflection of the emotional phases the author is going through from despair and sadness to self-acceptance. In this way, the portrayal of emotional distress in *Nicole* can be understood as a form of self-projection, where NIKI uses the creative process to transform emotional trauma into therapeutic artistic expression. This aligns with Wellek and Warren's view that literary works serve as a means of expressing the author's emotions, a place where a disturbed mind finds balance through creation.

Emotional Distress Became Central Theme in The Lyrics of Niki Zefanya "Nicole" Album

Emotional turmoil appears as one of the predominant themes in *Nicole's* album, as it is influenced by various personal and psychological aspects revolving around NIKI's emotional experiences as a songwriter. This particular album can be regarded as NIKI's autobiographical concept, as she has been reproducing all her teenage years' experiences, such as unrequited love, moving places, and trying to find identity and discover herself. All these personal aspects created significant emotional pain for NIKI, and she channeled all those emotions into uncompromising and true song narratives in this album. Hence, pain appears as one of the paramount themes not only due to personal need, but also, in this case, pain acted as a therapeutic methodological approach by NIKI to understand and release all those difficult emotional experiences she encountered. This subchapter will thoroughly expound all those personal and psychological aspects revolving around pain as one of the overall album themes.

From vmagazine.com, NIKI has explained what the *Nicole* album represents by calling it "A love letter to my younger self," making it clear that this album emerged from NIKI's need to understand those wounds from their teenage years and heal through art. The lyrics "You are everything I've ever known, and now I must love you from afar" in "Before" and "And I love you, but being with you is the sadness I breathe" in "Autumn" describe NIKI's moments of healing and turmoil.

Based on the psychological theory of authors Wellek & Warren (1949), the sadness that emerges in this album is not merely an artistic expression of NIKI, but a form of psychological documentation of NIKI's struggle in facing loss and redefining the meaning of love and her identity. On grammy.com, NIKI tells her listeners that she is actually someone who likes to experience everything, and that is what she discovered about herself after many years. Because she has many friends who are confused about such things, connecting with her emotions makes her feel alive, and the best way to express all of that is through writing music.

On hypebae.com, it is explained that *Nicole's* album consists of 12 folk-pop songs that can be considered personal confessions. Each song on this album has a vulnerable feel and tells a personal story. Although NIKI does not have a favorite song on this album, mainly because she wrote and produced it herself, there are two songs in particular that she likes. "I am very proud of the writing process for 'The Apartment We Won't Share,' and I also often unconsciously play 'Backburner' while showering, so there's that," she said. *Nicole's* album features a strong narrative aspect between songs, forming a consistent emotional pattern of loss, regret, and healing. This is supported by thematic analysis, and this order of tracks, "Before," "Backburner," and "Oceans & Engines," establishes a cohesive emotional thread, beginning with nostalgia and making up for mistakes, then moving towards the ultimate recognition of a relationship, and ending with self-acceptance. The emotional themes are also cohesive in tracks such as "Facebook Friends" and "The Apartment We Won't Share," which chronicle NIKI's era of sadness with emotional truth, thereby proving that sadness is the connecting thread that weaves the entire body of work into one cohesive whole. Therefore, according to the author's psychological approach, the sadness in this album represents a recurring pattern of emotional experience—a journey from pain to a deeper understanding of oneself.

Besides being personal, the sadness in *Nicole's* album is also a communal expression for the younger generation or Gen Z who live in the digital age and are prone to emotional identity crises. Songs like "Facebook Friends" and "On the Drive Home" describe how love and loss occur in a broader social context; Niki tries to look "fine" in public while hiding deep sadness inside. The viral phenomenon of NIKI's songs on social media like TikTok and Instagram enhances the function of this album as an emotional mirror to Gen Z, who usually use music as a means of confirming their emotions. Based on Erikson's psychosocial theory (1950), sadness here functions as a means of generational identity expression—a process of understanding oneself through shared emotional experiences. Therefore, *Nicole's* album is not only a personal work of art but also an emotional cultural representative for the younger generation, who use music as a means of healing and self-reflection.

Overall, the analysis of *Nicole's* album demonstrates that emotional distress is a central theme not because of aesthetic or narrative needs, but because emotional distress is an authentic representation of NIKI Zefanya's psychological path and emotional development as a person and an artist. By applying the psychology of the author approach, Wellek & Warren (1949) explain distress as a two-way functioning expressive mechanism.

Conclusion

This research seeks to identify and interpret various aspects of emotional distress present in NIKI Zefanya's song lyrics found in NIKI's album *Nicole*, and to make sense of its expression and intentions behind its prominence as the theme of NIKI's album *Nicole*. Employing a literary psychology methodological approach grounded in Wellek and Warren's psychology of the author theory in 1949, NIKI's creations can be seen not only as works of art but also works of psychology, reflective and representative of NIKI's own personal experiences as is evident with NIKI Zefanya, songwriter and composer of *Nicole*.

From the first research question, it was determined that there are five categories of emotional distress that can be found in *Nicole's* album, and they are heartbreak, longings, emotional collapse, loneliness, and regret. The five categories can be found in different song lyrics such as *Oceans and Engines*, *Backburner*, *Before*, and *Autumn*, which deal with pain and sorrow resulting from disconnection with a loved one, living in the past, and sadness over mistakes made in love. The pattern obtained reveals that emotional distress in this artwork has various stages, including pain and then moving towards healing and acceptance.

For the second research question, the analysis results show that emotional distress in this album is expressed through a psychological approach that originates from the inner condition of the songwriter, NIKI Zefanya. Based on Wellek & Warren's theory (1949), the lyrics in *Nicole's* album reveal the psychology of the author, where NIKI's youthful experiences are the main source of her emotional inspiration. Lyrics such as "You were all I'd ever known, and now I'm supposed to love you from a distance" (*Before*) and "And I love you but with you is heartache I breathe" (*Autumn*) show a process of reflection and catharsis regarding failed relationships. Psychologically, distress here has served as a means of self-healing and a form of emotional reintegration between NIKI and her past.

Meanwhile, the third research question confirms that distress is the main theme in this album because it comes from three layers of analysis: biographical and psychological, thematic coherence, and generational expression. From a biographical perspective, this album is an emotional documentation of NIKI's teenage years in Jakarta, which were filled with experiences of loss and first love. Thematically, each track is part of an overarching story, and there is an entire emotional arc that progresses from pain to acceptance. From a generational standpoint, the pain in *Nicole* album could also

be seen as part of an emotional turmoil faced by young individuals in today's world of technology, making this not only personal to NIKI, but something that can be widely identified with by all of NIKI's listeners and fans.

This research has revealed that a musical composition may be a mirror of psychology, reflecting not only the emotional psychology of its composer, but also serve as a platform of reflection for its listeners. *Nicole* album symbolizes art with integrity and therapeutic value, and emotional expression can be one such platform towards happiness and growth. This research will open up new avenues of understanding psychology and its relationship with literary and musical compositions among listeners of music.

From an academic standpoint, it is also intended that the findings and results of this research can be applied in English and literature subjects, especially in terms of analyzing modern literary works that portray the psychology and emotions of their writers. Through studies such as this, students are expected to learn not only through cognitive learning, but also through affective and humanistic learning, such as understanding emotions, empathy, and self-expression through modern literary texts such as song lyrics.

Acknowledgement

The author would like to sincerely thank the English Education Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Muhammadiyah University Surakarta for the academic guidance and support provided during the research and writing of this article. The author also gives appreciation to family, colleagues, and friends who have always gave encouragement and moral support during the preparation of this work. Thank you also to my girlfriend who has provided support and helped in many ways while I was working on this research. She also always accompanied me during difficult moments throughout the research process. Finally, the author thanks the listeners of NIKI Zefanya's music, whose emotional experiences also inspired the creation of this research.

References

- Abrams, M. H. (1953). *The mirror and the lamp: Romantic theory and the critical tradition*. Oxford University Press.
- Billboard. (2022, August 12). 88rising's NIKI talks new album *Nicole* and revisiting her teenage self. Retrieved from <https://www.billboard.com/music/features/88rising-niki-new-album-nicole-2022-interview-1235122439/>
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Erikson, E. H. (1950). *Childhood and society*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- Fitriani, D. (2024). Metaphorical expression of emotional distress in modern pop lyrics. *Journal of Language and Emotion Studies*, 3(1), 45–59.
- Freud, S. (1923). The ego and the id. In *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (Vol. 19, pp. 12–66). Hogarth Press.
- Grammy. (2022, August 18). NIKI reflects on her high school years in Jakarta through her new album *Nicole*. Retrieved from <https://www.grammy.com/news/niki-nicole-new-allbum-2022-before-high-school-in-jakarta-oceans-engines-interview-88rising-youtube>
- Hasugian, M., Siregar, N., & Pohan, F. (2024). Morphological elements as emotional emphasis in contemporary song lyrics. *Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, 6(2), 71–83.
- Hypebae. (2022, August 15). NIKI on 88rising, sophomore album *Nicole*, and revisiting her teenage memories. Retrieved from <https://hypebae.com/2022/8/niki-88rising-sophomore-album-nicole-music-feature-exclusive-interview>
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphors we live by*. University of Chicago Press.
- Magazine. (2022, August 10). Interview: NIKI invites fans to relive her teenage nostalgia through *Nicole*. Retrieved from <https://vmagazine.com/article/interview-with-niki/>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Music Daily. (2022, August 25). Album review: NIKI's *Nicole* explores heartbreak and healing. Retrieved from <https://musicdaily.com/niki-nicole-album-review/>
- Pangaribuan, R., & Marpaung, M. (2024). Vulnerability and honesty in modern songwriting: A psychological interpretation. *Indonesian Journal of Literary Psychology*, 2(1), 25–40.

- Prasetya, A. (2020). A discourse analysis of song lyrics in Avril Lavigne's album Let Go. *Humaniora: Journal of Language and Literature*, 8(2), 150–162.
- Putri, A. P., & Netra, I. G. S. (2025). Expressing failure of love with reference to song lyrics by NIKI Zefanya's "Nicole" album. *Kulturistik: Jurnal Bahasa dan Budaya*, 9(1), 23–34. Retrieved from <https://ejournal.warmadewa.ac.id/index.php/kulturistik/article/download/11257/6345>
- Sapari, M. (2024). Figurative language as emotional representation in pop music. *Linguistics and Art Journal*, 2(3), 75–88.
- Sapari, R. (2024). Figurative language as a medium of self-expression in NIKI's album "Nicole" (2022). Undergraduate Thesis, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. Retrieved from <https://digilib.uinsgd.ac.id/96923/4/CHAPTER%20I.pdf>
- The Line of Best Fit. (2022, August 20). How Nicole Zefanya became NIKI. Retrieved from <https://www.thelineofbestfit.com/features/interviews/how-nicole-zefanya-became-niki>
- Wellek, R., & Warren, A. (1949). *Theory of literature*. Harcourt, Brace & Company.
- Yanti, L., & Muslimin, H. (2024). Hyperbole and emotional intensity in contemporary music. *Journal of Language, Art, and Expression*, 3(2), 55–66.
- Yanti, N., & Muslimin, M. (2024). Hyperbolic expression in the album "Nicole" by NIKI. *Journal of English Teaching, Literature, and Applied Linguistics (JETLAL)*, 6(2), 45–55. Retrieved from <https://journal.umg.ac.id/index.php/jetlal/article/download/6279/4401>
- Yuliana, D. P. (2022). Exploring personal emotion through lyrical language: A study of Halsey's "Manic" album. Undergraduate Thesis, Universitas Negeri Malang.
- Yuniar, A. (2024). Emotional depth and narrative vulnerability in contemporary pop music. *Journal of Aesthetic Studies*, 4(1), 33–47.