

# Representation of Existential Crisis in the Song “33x” By Perunggu (Semiotic Analysis By Roland Barthes)

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**Abstract.** In the context of modern society, developments in life marked by rapid information flows, social pressures, and demands for success often give rise to existential crises, especially among Gen Z. This generation often faces confusion in determining the direction of their lives, given the high social expectations placed upon them. Music serves as a medium capable of reflecting inner turmoil and existential experiences through song lyrics. This study aims to examine the representation of existential crises in the lyrics of the song “33x” by Perunggu using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory. The method used is descriptive qualitative with data collection techniques including observation, interviews, and documentation. The analysis was carried out through the stages of denotation, connotation, and myth interpretation. The findings show that the song “33x” represents the existential crisis experienced by Gen Z, which is reflected through inner anxiety, loss of life orientation, and the process of searching for identity and meaning of existence. Supported by Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism perspective, this song presents a picture of individual freedom as well as personal responsibility in determining the direction of life. In addition, there is a transcendental communication dimension that places the relationship between humans and God as a source of reflection, inner peace, and support in the journey of self discovery amid the pressures of modern life. Thus, the song “33x” does not merely serve as a means of entertainment, but also as a medium for self-reflection and inner communication for Gen Z in understanding and discovering their identity.

**Keywords:** 33x Song, Existential Crisis, Gen Z, Meaning of Life, Self Identity

## 1 Introduction

Social and economic changes in the modern era, triggered by globalization and technological developments, present new challenges for mental health [1]. On the one hand, the acceleration of life, freedom of expression, and ease of access to information provide opportunities, but on the other hand, this also causes social and psychological conflicts. The internet and social media have also changed the patterns of interaction, ways of thinking, and the process of identity formation among the younger generation [2]. This situation has led to an existential crisis, characterized by feelings of emptiness, loss of meaning in life, and doubts about one's own existence, which are experienced by both adolescents and adults and are closely related to mental health [3], especially Gen Z. Gen Z is a group of individuals born between approximately 1995 and 2012 [4]. Music is an effective means of conveying this psychological experience because of its universal emotional power [5], as seen in the song “33x” by Perunggu, which has received a lot of attention from Gen Z.

Perunggu is an indie rock band from Jakarta that was formed in 2019 by Adam Adenan, Ildo Hasman, and Maul Ibrahim. Perunggu has successfully built a strong identity in the Indonesian independent music scene through their 2022 album, *Memorandum*, which has been played more than 80 million times on Spotify, demonstrating high public acceptance, especially among young listeners [6]. One of the songs from the album that is popular among Gen Z is “33x,” released in March 2022 and written by Maul Ibrahim.

Based on [7]'s research, The phenomenon of existential crisis experienced by Gen Z arises from pressure in the academic world, social demands, and unrealistic standards of living that are largely influenced by social media, using a phenomenological approach. As a result, Hindia's songs and other music have an important contribution to supporting mental health and the formation of personal meaning for Gen Z.

Previous research findings have produced mixed results. This study will analyze the existential crisis, using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, which includes denotation, connotation, and myth, as well as Jean-Paul Sartre's theory of existentialism. The song “33x” by Perunggu was chosen for the depth of its lyrics, which are rich in reflective meaning, its symbolic richness that allows for semiotic analysis, and and makes a significant

empirical contribution through a new interpretation on its relevance to the existential crisis experienced by Gen Z such as anxiety and their search for meaning within the constraints of contemporary society as evidenced by the high level of audience engagement on social media for this song. In addition, this study will incorporate the perspective of transcendental communication, a field that has been less explored in other studies, as a manifestation of human spiritual awareness of God Almighty in the midst of existential loneliness. This study offers a novelty by combining different approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the meaning of lyrics compared to previous studies, which focused solely on a phenomenological approach.

The urgency of this research stems from the increasingly apparent existential crisis of Gen Z, caused by the rapid flow of digital information and social comparison. The song “33x” expresses this condition through symbols and lyrics that describe exhaustion, emptiness, and the search for meaning in life, while also offering hope through spiritual awareness via transcendental communication as a space for reflection and existential recovery. The purpose of this study is to analyze the representation of an existential crisis in the lyrics of the song “33x” by Perunggu using Roland Barthes’s (1975) semiotic approach as a tool to identify denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings [8] in the song lyrics. Furthermore, this meaning is interpreted through the lens of Jean-Paul Sartre’s existentialism to examine the existential crisis, and is linked to the concept of transcendental communication to understand the spiritual dimension that emerges in the song.

## 2 Literature Review

The conceptual and theoretical basis of this study is supported by various literature sources and previous research findings related to the topic discussed. Research from [5] shows that the song “Jiwa Yang Bersedih” by Ghea Indrawari conveys a religious message through lyrics and melodies that describe sadness as a spiritual process towards the meaning of life, hope, and inner peace. Furthermore, research from [9] shows that Billie Eilish's song “What Was I Made for?” depicts an identity crisis and existential anxiety caused by social demands, economic uncertainty, and rapid social changes towards adulthood. The research from [10] emphasizing that music plays an important role as a medium for conveying social reality while providing encouragement and motivation for its listeners.

Music has been present as a medium of communication that is close to humans in the context of culture and social life since early childhood and continues to develop along with life experiences [11]. Not only does music serve as a form of entertainment, it also acts as a medium for expressing feelings, ideas, and personal experiences in an emotional way that can be widely understood. Song lyrics function as a crucial linguistic element in composing and conveying messages through poetic expressions [12]. Song lyrics can also be understood as literary works that represent both the subjectivity of the creator and social reality [11]. Therefore, song lyrics are not only artistic, but also a medium for existential reflection that is rich in meaning [9].

This study uses Roland Barthes' relevant semiotic theory to reveal the meaning contained in song lyrics. Semiotics views text as a collection of signs that represent something outside of itself through social and cultural agreements. According to [8], Roland Barthes' semiotic theory divides the meaning of signs into three layers, namely denotation as literal meaning, connotation as meaning influenced by emotions and culture, and myth as a system of meaning formed by ideology and social constructs. Through this framework, Roland Barthes' semiotics helps researchers understand not only the content of lyrics, but also the process of meaning formation in a social and cultural context.

Communication is a basic human activity in building relationships, exchanging meaning, and understanding [13]. In communication studies, the relationship between humans and God is known as transcendental communication, which in Islam is in line with the concepts of *hablu minallah* and *hablu minannas* as a good relationship between humans and the Creator [14]. Transcendental communication is understood as an effort by humans to draw closer to God in order to obtain inner peace, guidance in life, and meaning for their existence [15]. Awareness of God's presence grows stronger as humans recognize themselves, making transcendental communication an important part of shaping the meaning of life [16].

The interpretation of song lyrics can also be supported by Jean-Paul Sartre's theory of existentialism, which emphasizes awareness of existence, freedom of choice, and human responsibility for one's life. According to [17] The idea of “existence precedes essence” suggests that humans shape their identity through action, thus freedom and responsibility are central to existence. In this context, song lyrics serve as a medium for reflecting on existential crises, such as anxiety, the search for meaning in life, and human relationships with oneself and their social environment.

## 3 Research Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach. According to [18] Qualitative approaches are research methods that collect data in the form of verbal, visual, or pictorial descriptions, rather than in the form of numbers

or statistical data. This approach interprets existential representations through Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, which includes signs in denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings to reveal the messages and ideologies contained therein [8].

This study uses data collection techniques including: 1) Observation, where the researcher observes how the song "33x" by Perunggu is received and responded to by the public, especially Gen Z, who are its main listeners through digital platforms such as YouTube and TikTok. 2) Interviews, the research subjects consisted of five informants who belonged to the Gen Z category, born in 2004 and 2007, aged 21 and 18, because these years represent a transitional phase towards early adulthood, marked by a process of searching for identity, uncertainty about the direction of life, and reflection on the meaning of life. This stage of development is considered most in line with the theme of existential crisis described in the song "33x," so the informants presented experiences and views relevant to the research objectives. In addition, the informants had a close relationship with the music, either as active listeners or fans who understood the messages in the lyrics, and 3) Documentation, the researcher recorded each finding through field notes, audio recordings, and narrative descriptions, and screenshots Screenshots of video content featuring the song "33x" on TikTok and YouTube, along with audience reactions in the form of comments.

The data analysis process was conducted by applying the approach developed by Miles and Huberman, known as the interactive data analysis method [19]. There are three stages: 1) Data Reduction, in this stage, the data obtained from observation and interviews is selected, summarized, and focused on information relevant to the existential crisis in the song "33x"; 2) Data Presentation, in this stage, the reduced data is then organized in the form of narratives and meaning categorization tables, this involves the denotative stage to identify the literal meaning contained within. Following that, the analysis proceeds to the connotative stage to uncover the implied meanings related to emotional and social experiences. In the next stage, the researcher examines the mythical meaning to understand the ideological values and beliefs hidden behind the lyrics. The overall results of the analysis are then interpreted using an existentialist perspective and spiritual dimensions so that the representation of the existential crisis can be understood more deeply. And 3) Drawing Conclusions, the researcher interprets the analysis results to draw conclusions about how the song "33x" represents the existential crisis of Gen Z.

## 4 Results and Discussion

### 4.1 The Meaning of the Lyrics of the Song "33x" By Perunggu in Roland Barthes' Semiotics

This study uses Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis to examine the meaning of the lyrics of the song "33x" Perunggu as a sign consisting of three dimensions, namely denotation, connotation, and myth. The following are the results of the study based on data collected by the researcher from informants who listened to the song "33x.":

Table 1. Stanza 1

Lyric	Denotation	Connotation	Myth
<i>Risalah terikatnya Batin dan raga yang mengunci Di atas Sang Maha Daya Semua kendali terambil alih</i>	This stanza describes the mental and physical state of someone who feels trapped and deprived of freedom, as if the direction of their life is completely controlled by a greater power beyond themselves, namely God.	The connection between the mind and body reflects a situation where an individual loses control over themselves, while the term "The Almighty" implies the existence of a supreme power that can be understood as God, destiny, or the inevitable reality of life.	In essence, humans do not have complete control over their lives. There is a shared view that the journey of life is controlled by a greater power, so that an attitude of surrender is seen as a natural part of human existence.

In the first stanza, the denotative meaning describes the state of individuals who feel a loss of freedom and are constrained by oppressive life experiences. Connotatively, this stanza reflects a state of inner turmoil, such as the demands of life, failure, existential crisis, and confusion in determining the direction of life. The phrase "The Almighty" is interpreted transcendently as God, the supreme power beyond human control. Mythologically, this stanza reflects a cultural view that positions humans as limited beings, so that surrendering to an Almighty power is considered natural, especially when in dire straits. From the perspective of Jean Paul-Sartre's existentialism,

humans can never stop acting because they have consciousness, even though they understand that every effort will not fully satisfy them. Humans must continue to act, and it is this consciousness that is considered a burden because the freedom to choose makes humans continue to move but live in a state of never being satisfied [20]. This attachment can be interpreted as a form of self-denial, namely when individuals refuse to acknowledge their freedom and responsibility for their choices, even though existential freedom is essentially inherent in them. This stanza shows a phase of surrender in which humans realize their limitations and no longer have complete control over their lives.

**Table 2.** Stanza 2

<b>Lyric</b>	<b>Denotation</b>	<b>Connotation</b>	<b>Myth</b>
<i>Jikalau kau keluhkan Dengung sumbang yang mengganggu Buka lagi visimu Kau tahu mana urutan satu</i>	A person who expresses discomfort due to various disturbances is then guided to rearrange their perspective by remembering the things that are the top priorities in life.	The term “dengung sumbang” represents inner turmoil, such as anxiety, pressure from the social environment, and internal conflict, while “membuka pandangan” is interpreted as an invitation to refocus attention on things that have essential meaning in life.	In our busy modern lives, people often lose their way due to various distractions. Although each individual is fundamentally aware of what is most important to them, this awareness is often overlooked.

In the second stanza, the denotative meaning shows a message in the form of advice addressed to individuals who feel disturbed by things that disturb their peace of mind. The expression “Dengung Sumbang” is used as a metaphor to represent these disturbances, which come in the form of thoughts that constantly arise. At the connotative level, the phrase “Dengung Sumbang” describes the inner turmoil of the modern era, such as the pressure to achieve success, the burden of social demands, anxiety about the future, and the constant struggle of life. The lyrics “Buka lagi visimu” (Open your eyes again) signify an invitation to broaden one's perspective, namely the capacity to weigh and understand life from a clearer and more objective point of view. The ability to reflect on life more clearly. Furthermore, the lyrics “You know which one comes first” imply that humans are essentially equipped with an intuitive inner awareness of values and priorities in life, but often ignore it. At the mythical level, this stanza contains the cultural belief that behind all the noise of life, humans have a basic guideline embedded within themselves. Therefore, the trapped condition experienced by a person is not caused by a lack of direction, but by indecision in determining their own life choices. According to Arayhan, this part of the lyrics means that every human being has their own purpose in life and knows which steps they must take [21].

**Table 3.** Stanza 3

<b>Lyric</b>	<b>Denotation</b>	<b>Connotation</b>	<b>Myth</b>
<i>Melamban bukanlah hal yang tabu Kadang itu yang kau butuh Bersandar, hibahkan bebanmu</i>	Slowing down, taking a break, and seeking support is not wrong, but rather a natural necessity.	This stanza expresses rejection of the demand to always appear strong and productive, where leaning on God is interpreted as the courage to acknowledge one's limitations and give oneself the opportunity to recover.	In social life, resilience is often considered a key value, but there is also a cultural perspective that recognizes that rest is an important part of the process of becoming a balanced and whole person.

This stanza explains how the process of slowing down occurs in life. Slowing down is not considered a failure, but rather a human necessity. In the third stanza, the denotative meaning emphasizes that slowing down,

taking a break, and seeking support cannot be seen as a form of defeat, but rather as a human need. At the connotative level, the term “slowing down” is interpreted as a form of self-restraint in the face of social pressures that demand a fast pace and continuous productivity, while the lyrics “Lean on us and give up your burden” contain an invitation to curb the ego and make peace with one's circumstances. On a mythical level, this stanza forms the understanding that limitations and the need for rest are not something to be ashamed of, but rather part of the human essence of living. In line with Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism, as beings that exist, humans have the freedom to make choices and build themselves, which can shape their existence through the decisions they make, leading them to become the person they want to be [22]. Therefore, this stanza represents a moment of self-reflection when individuals begin to realize their freedom and responsibility more clearly. In addition, the stanza describes how people sometimes feel rushed in their lives, such as solving every problem by making hasty decisions without careful consideration, or worrying about their future [21].

**Table 4.** Stanza 4

<b>Lyric</b>	<b>Denotation</b>	<b>Connotation</b>	<b>Myth</b>
<i>Kelak kau 'kan mengingat Yang membawamu ke sini Kami pernah di situ, di posisiimu Helakan kesahmu</i>	Someone will look back on their life journey, with “us” as those who have been in the same position and invite them to express their complaints.	This stanza conveys empathy and emotional reinforcement, that suffering has meaning and is not an experience that is endured alone.	Suffering as a universal phase of life, where sharing sadness and recognizing shared experiences can bring peace and strength.

In the fourth stanza, the denotative meaning leads to an invitation to look back on past experiences as memories and as a space for self-reflection. The use of the word “we” forms a shared identity that affirms a sense of togetherness with those who have been in similar circumstances. At the connotative level, the lyrics “Someday you will remember” interpret time as an element that provides emotional distance and a new perspective on suffering, so that the burden that currently feels heavy will later be understood as part of the process of self-formation. The phrase “We have been there in your position” explains that suffering is a universal experience that can be experienced by anyone, while the phrase “Let your feelings out” hints at the importance of venting emotions as a way to release pent-up inner burdens. On a mythical level, this stanza reflects the belief that every human being will go through a phase of adversity that is not experienced alone, while also carrying the hope that every difficult period can eventually be overcome. This stanza conveys a message of empathy and solidarity. In addition, encourages listeners to express their concerns as part of the healing process.

**Table 5.** Stanza 5

<b>Lyric</b>	<b>Denotation</b>	<b>Connotation</b>	<b>Myth</b>
<i>Tak perlu kau berhenti kurasi Ini hanya sementara Bukan ujung dari rencana</i>	“Kurasi” (Curation) means the process of carefully selecting and arranging something to produce an arrangement that has value and meaning. An invitation to keep going because difficult conditions are only temporary and not the end of everything.	When an individual's life is going through a difficult phase, they do not stop gaining experience and continue to hold onto hope as their main strength to face despair.	There is a common belief that every suffering has its own end and will eventually be replaced by better circumstances.

This stanza emphasizes that life's journey does not need to stop even when facing difficult times. In the fifth stanza, the denotative meaning refers to an invitation for someone to continue the process of life that they are currently undergoing without stopping halfway. The term “curation” is understood literally as the process of

managing and filtering. The lyrics “You don't need to stop curating” emphasize the importance of continuing to organize and select life experiences even in difficult situations. The phrase “This is only temporary” indicates that the condition is not permanent, while the lyrics “Not the end of the plan” emphasize the continuity of life's journey. At a connotative level, “curation” symbolizes human efforts to organize life by filtering the values, experiences, and principles that one wishes to maintain. The lyrics “This is only temporary” serve as a calming reinforcement, while “Not the end of the plan” suggests that each phase of life is only part of a series of ongoing processes. On a mythical level, this stanza reflects the belief that humans have the resilience to face and overcome difficult times. This is linked to Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism, which states that humans need to be fully aware of their freedom in order to be able to construct and interpret the meaning of their own existence [20]. Required to always move forward and give meaning to every stage of life that he goes through. This stanza represents the search for meaning in life understood as an active process, in which individuals are required to keep moving forward and give meaning to every stage of life that they go through. When in a difficult situation or faced with challenges that hinder the achievement of a goal, this stanza serves as a reminder that these conditions are only temporary [21].

**Table 6.** Stanza 6

<b>Lyric</b>	<b>Denotation</b>	<b>Connotation</b>	<b>Myth</b>
<i>Jalanmu 'kan sepanjang niatmu Simpan tegar dalam hati 29 kau terus mencari</i>	The direction of a person's life is shaped by their intentions and inner strength, even though the process of self-discovery is still ongoing.	The number “29” can be understood as a marker of a phase of life or a symbol of an unfinished search for identity, where life is interpreted as a journey of intention and inner/mental resilience.	In the context of modern culture, a certain age is often seen as a crucial moment to assess one's achievements in life, so individuals feel compelled to have accomplished something.

In the sixth stanza, the denotative meaning emphasizes that the direction of a person's life is largely determined by their intentions, which form the basis of their actions. This stanza contains an exhortation to maintain inner strength, even though at the age of 29, individuals are still in the phase of searching for their identity and purpose in life, which they have not yet fully discovered. At the connotative level, this stanza emphasizes that the essence of intention lies in sincerity of heart, which enables a person to persevere in the process, even though the final outcome is uncertain. Inner fortitude is a hidden strength that provides essential support when individuals face various trials in life. The number 29 serves as a symbol of the final phase of one's twenties, a time when social pressure to appear established is strongest, but which coincides with an ongoing process of searching for identity and direction in life. In mythical terms, this stanza reflects the cultural belief that the demand to achieve success at a certain age often overshadows human life. The main message conveyed emphasizes that self-worth is not measured by age or achievement alone, but by steadfastness of attitude and sincerity of intention that is maintained throughout one's life journey. This stanza emphasizes that a person's path in life is influenced by their intentions and determination. Every journey requires intention, and it is very important to always remember that intention. Because this can determine our destination as a result of the journey we have taken in life [23].

**Table 7.** Stanza 7

<b>Lyric</b>	<b>Denotation</b>	<b>Connotation</b>	<b>Myth</b>
<i>Sebutlah nama-Nya Tetap di jalan-Nya Kelak kau mengingat Kau akan teringat</i>	This stanza contains an exhortation to always remember God and walk according to His guidance.	The phrase “Call upon His name” is interpreted as a symbol of surrender and an effort to achieve spiritual peace.	Spiritual values are placed as the main foundation in finding meaning in life while alleviating anxiety about one's existence.

In the seventh stanza, the denotative meaning directly contains an invitation to mention God, to remain on His path, and ultimately to look back on the journey of life that has been traveled. At the connotative level, the phrase “His Name” symbolizes a spiritual effort to build closeness with God amid inner turmoil and a search for the meaning of one's existence. Meanwhile, the expression “Stay on His path” can be understood as an attitude of surrender and obedience, which places religious values as the main guidelines in living life. The phrase “You will remember” suggests that the meaning of life experiences can often only be understood and reflected upon in the

future. On a mythical level, this stanza reflects the view that spirituality is often positioned as the foundation for achieving inner peace and finding purpose in life. Various cultural traditions and belief systems teach that closeness to God can help individuals make sense of suffering and reorganize a life journey that originally felt chaotic and directionless. In the context of transcendental communication, this stanza can be understood as a form of communication between humans and God as a transcendent being. The invitation in the lyrics “call upon His name, stay on His path” indicates a verbal action that leads to the mention and appreciation of God. From the perspective of Islamic communication, prayer is understood as a medium given by Allah SWT so that humans can connect with Him and become an important element in the life of a Muslim because every form of worship basically leads to prayer as a form of communication with God [16]. In addition, divine messages are not always understood instantly, but are interpreted through life experiences, until individuals realize that prayer, surrender, and spiritual closeness that are built slowly shape the direction of their lives. This stanza emphasizes the spiritual aspect. The mention of “His name” and “His way” refers to God as the source of peace and guidance in life. This stanza explains the call to return to God or spiritual values as a guide when facing confusion and difficulty in understanding oneself. In difficult times, we should always remember God in every step we take [26].

**Table 8.** Stanza 8

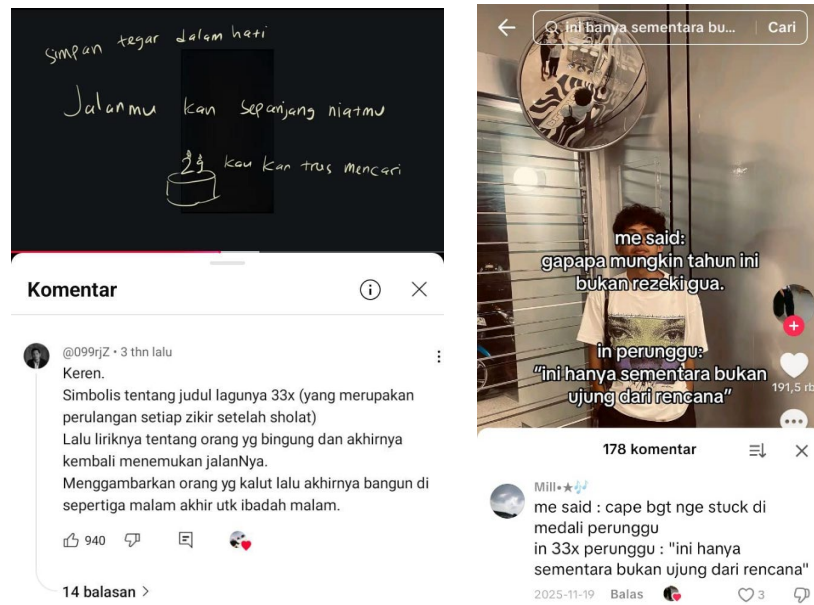
Lyric	Denotation	Connotation	Myth
<i>Sebutkanlah nama-Nya Resapilah jalan-Nya Kelak kau mengingat Kau akan teringat</i>	Repeating spiritual exhortations to reinforce the message contained therein.	This repetition emphasizes that closeness to God is a process that must be internalized, not merely spoken.	The belief that repeating prayers and faith will bring inner peace to humans.

In the eighth stanza, although repeating the message from the previous section, there is a deeper meaning. At the denotative level, this stanza teaches listeners to always remember God, reflect on His provisions, and live their lives according to His guidance, so that their life journey is understood as a series of meaningful experiences. Connotatively, the use of the word “resapilah” (absorb) emphasizes that the relationship with God is not limited to mentioning His name, but requires deep contemplation and is reflected in one's daily attitudes and behavior. At the mythical level, this stanza reflects the belief that spiritual awareness plays an important role in bringing inner peace amid the complexities of life. From a transcendental communication perspective, this stanza describes the condition of an inner dialogue between humans and God, in which prayers and reflections are answered with peace, guidance, and meaning in life. This section summarizes the song with the introspection that ultimately individuals will return to reflecting on and contemplating the meaning of life through interaction with the Creator.



**Figure 1.** Podcast Interview with Perunggu  
 Source: Youtube Channel Authenticity ID

This research is also supported by Perunggu's statement in an interview on the podcast “Perunggu: Keluarga, Kerjaan, Baru nge-band! – Podcast Naik Clas,” which was uploaded to the Authenticity ID YouTube channel on August 9, 2024. This song was written during a time of distance from the Almighty, amidst periods of hardship. In essence, the song depicts the phase of self-discovery and the search for life's purpose, constantly reminding oneself of God's presence in every step we take as we navigate life.



**Figure 2.** Youtube and TikTok Comments

Source: Perunggu's Youtube Channel and Tiktok @sukadipanggilacil\_

Responses in the comments section on Perunggu's YouTube account and one of TikTok's videos using the song "33x" show that the song is understood as a reflection of feelings of fatigue, confusion, and entrapment in a certain phase of life. The lyrics are directly linked to personal experiences, such as the pressures of life and uncertainty about the future. This shows that the song "33x" is not only enjoyed as a piece of music, but also interpreted as a form of emotional affirmation and a space for collective reflection, where individuals share, validate their feelings, and find strength in the face of existential crises.

This song also discusses the existence of humans in social life, also known as the phenomenon of existential crisis. An existential crisis is a state in which a person begins to question the meaning of life, loses direction, and feels alienated in the midst of a complex and uncertain reality. Often, individuals feel that things are beyond our control in this modern era. These thoughts haunt the younger generation today, especially Gen Z, who feel that they are still searching for their place in life.

The song "33x" is very relevant to the current situation of Gen Z, considering the many social demands that often arise, individuals feel stuck and lost. According to Dhillia, Gen Z today lives under a lot of pressure, such as standards of success, family demands, and constant comparisons [24]. Also, as Nakita said, Gen Z often feels confused and pressured by the demands of success, and loses direction. One tries to understand that determining the direction of life does not have to be rushed, but what makes it difficult is the fear of the outcome, which is always uncertain [25].

The melody in the song "33x" gives a lively feel, as if it touches the soul and invites us to improve our lives. As Wahyu said, this song conveys a sense of confusion, as if it evokes an inner feeling when someone pauses for a moment and asks themselves, "Where am I going next?" This song is like entering a phase of life when someone feels like they have to make a big decision, but they are not sure which direction is the right one. Additionally, Wahyu reveals that the song is like a symbol that humans have the freedom and full right to determine the direction of their own lives, even though the process is not always easy and is full of doubts [23]. According to Defie, this song describes how if we have our own choices, we can determine our own path in life without having to be controlled or dictated by others [26].

In addition to touching on the emotional side, this song also highlights the spiritual side. There is a part where we as humans must always remember and return to His path, which is God. When we are going through difficult phases, despair, and anxiety in life, of course, in every process to achieve a goal, we must remember that it is God Almighty who has brought us to this point and always mention His name. As Arayhan said, this song invites us to surrender ourselves to God so that we can find peace and emotional support, reminding us that other people have also been in difficult situations, not just us. We must accept with grace what is beyond our control, and when faced with problems, we must view them from a different perspective and resolve them without haste, aware that these issues are temporary and not the end of the plan [21]. Therefore, it proves that songs alone can encourage someone to return to the Creator when they are feeling anxious and searching for their identity.

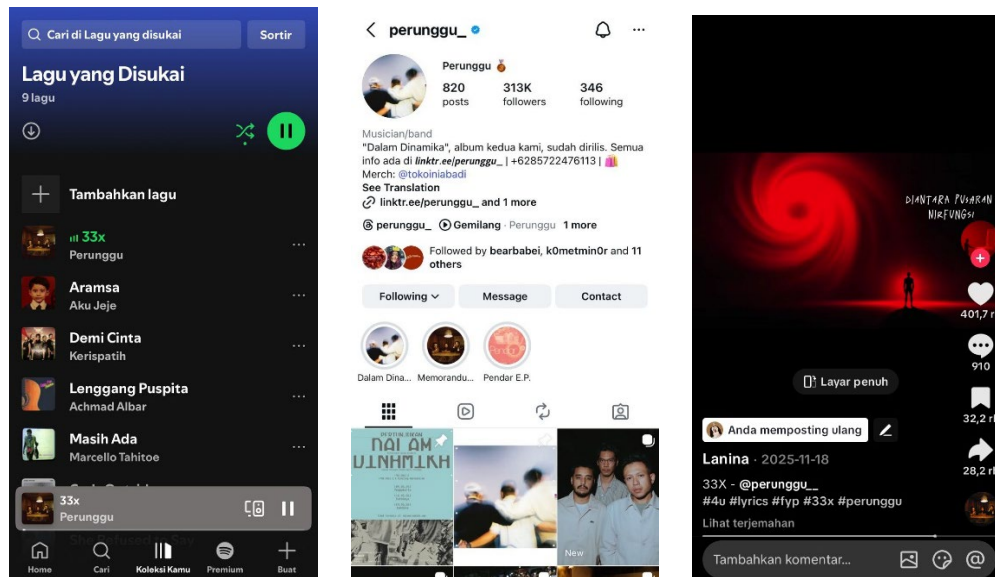


Figure 3. Informants' Involvement in the Song "33x" by Perunggu

Based on information gathered from informants, their involvement with Perunggu's song "33x" was not limited to listening, but was also reflected in various forms of interaction in the digital space. Informants followed Perunggu's official social media accounts, reposted content related to the song "33x," and saved the song to their favorite playlists on streaming platforms. This pattern of engagement shows that the song "33x" has a strong appeal and relevance to the personal experiences of the informants. Furthermore, the activities of following and reposting song content can be interpreted as a form of identity expression as well as the informants' emotional attachment to the messages presented in the songs.

#### 4.2 The Meaning of Existential Crisis in the Song "33x" by Perunggu

The song "33x" by the band Perunggu represents the anxieties that arise in the journey of life. Through introspective lyrics rich in metaphor, this song not only highlights feelings of exhaustion and uncertainty, but also describes the inner process of searching for meaning and maintaining one's identity. On the other hand, the song presents a sense of divinity, which is found in the lyrics in the form of an invitation to always remember God in the midst of life's downturns or anxieties that befall oneself.

This song also discusses the existence of humans in social life, which is referred to as the phenomenon of existential crisis. Existential crisis refers to a condition where a person questions the meaning of life, experiences confusion about direction, and feels alienated in the midst of a complex and uncertain reality. In the context of modern life, individuals often face various situations that are beyond our control in this modern era. These thoughts are widely felt by the younger generation, especially Gen Z, who are still in the process of searching for their existence and identity in life. Through Jean-Paul Sartre's theory of Existentialism, humans have the freedom and responsibility for their own life choices [17]. Therefore, an existential crisis is not something to be avoided, but rather something to be faced with the courage to determine the direction of one's life and commit to that choice, so that Gen Z can live according to their true selves without being pressured by social demands.

### 5 Conclusion

The song "33x" by Perunggu reflects the existential crisis experienced by Gen Z through symbols and lyrics that express inner turmoil, confusion about the direction of life, and efforts to find one's identity and meaning of existence. Through Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis, which covers the levels of denotation, connotation, and myth, the existential crisis is understood as a natural and human part of the process of life. Jean-Paul Sartre's theory of existentialism supports this conclusion by emphasizing that individuals have both freedom and responsibility in shaping the meaning of their lives, even when under social pressure and the uncertainty of the times.

This study also reveals the existence of a transcendental dimension of communication in the song "33x," which is reflected in the call to always remember and surrender to God as the source of inner peace and guidance in life. These findings show that music not only serves as entertainment, but also as a medium for existential and spiritual reflection that is relevant to Gen Z in facing an identity crisis in the modern era.

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