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## POP CULTURE THROUGH LYRICS: HOW SONGS REFLECT SOCIAL TRENDS

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### ABSTRAK

*Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana budaya populer tercermin dalam lagu Anti-Hero oleh Taylor Swift, Happier Than Ever oleh Billie Eilish, dan Traitor oleh Olivia Rodrigo. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi tren sosial yang digambarkan dalam lagu-lagu tersebut serta menganalisis persamaan dan perbedaannya dalam merefleksikan isu-isu sosial. Menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif, penelitian ini menerapkan kerangka teori T.A. Writer, yang mengidentifikasi enam tren sosial utama dalam masyarakat modern: kesadaran kesehatan mental dan pengurangan stigma, redefinisi keluarga dan hubungan, detoks digital dan penggunaan teknologi secara sadar, aktivisme individu dan tanggung jawab sosial, konsumsi berkelanjutan dan etis, serta perubahan budaya kerja ke model jarak jauh dan hibrida. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tidak semua tren sosial yang disebutkan oleh T.A. Writer ditemukan dalam lagu-lagu yang dianalisis. Setiap lagu mencerminkan aspek perubahan sosial yang berbeda, dengan isu kesehatan mental dan redefinisi hubungan menjadi tema yang paling menonjol. Anti-Hero berfokus pada persepsi diri dan pergulatan emosional, Happier Than Ever menggambarkan pertumbuhan pribadi setelah hubungan yang toksik, dan Traitor merefleksikan pengkhianatan serta penderitaan emosional. Analisis ini menyoroti bagaimana musik pop berfungsi sebagai cermin isu-isu kontemporer, terutama dalam ranah kesehatan mental dan hubungan interpersonal. Lagu-lagu ini beresonansi dengan pendengar karena memberikan hubungan emosional dengan perjuangan kehidupan nyata, memperkuat peran musik dalam membentuk dan mencerminkan narasi budaya. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman tentang musik sebagai ekspresi perubahan sosial dan identitas pribadi.*

**Kata kunci:** budaya pop, lirik lagu, tren sosial

### ABSTRACT

This study explores how popular culture is reflected in the songs *Anti-Hero* by Taylor Swift, *Happier Than Ever* by Billie Eilish, and *Traitor* by Olivia Rodrigo. The research aims to identify which social trends are depicted in these songs and analyze their similarities and differences in reflecting societal concerns. Using a descriptive qualitative method, the study applies the framework of T.A. Writer, which identifies six key social trends in modern society: mental health awareness and reducing stigma, redefining family and relationships, digital detox and mindful technology use, individual activism and social responsibility, sustainable and ethical consumerism, and shifting work culture to remote and hybrid models. The findings reveal that not all six social

trends are present in the selected songs. Each song reflects different aspects of societal change, with mental health issues and redefining relationships emerging as the most prominent themes. While *Anti-Hero* focuses on self-perception and emotional struggles, *Happier Than Ever* portrays personal growth after a toxic relationship, and *Traitor* reflects betrayal and emotional turmoil. The analysis highlights how pop music serves as a mirror of contemporary issues, particularly in the realms of mental health and interpersonal relationships. These songs resonate with audiences by providing an emotional connection to real-life struggles, reinforcing the role of music in shaping and reflecting cultural narratives. This research contributes to the understanding of music as an expression of social change and personal identity.

**Keywords: pop culture, song lyric, social trends**

## INTRODUCTION

Language is a tool of social communication, in the form of a system of sound and written symbols produced by human. (Chomsky, 2002), state in addition to being a part of the biological endowment of the species, language is a natural object, a part of the human mind that is physically represented in the brain". Language is a communication system that is used to convey an idea, idea or intention as well as information between one another. Language functions as a communication tool to convey an idea, message, feeling clearly and completely. In addition, language also functions as a means of identifying oneself. Language is a communication tool, is arbitrary, conventional and is a sound symbol (Suhandra, 2019). Modern society is undergoing rapid transformation due to emerging social trends driven by technological advancements and shifting cultural perspectives. Language is very important as an effective communication tool to communicate and convey and identify an intention (Hunter, D., Oates, R., Anderson, N., Kok, D., Sapkaroski, D., & Wright, 2023); (Li, M., & Wang, 2023); (Tong, Z., Yu, R., & Xiao, 2023); (Xu, Y., Zhang, L., & Liu, 2024); (Batubara, J., Syarifudin, A., Syathroh, I. L., Herman, H., Yasaviyevna, D. S., & Al-Awawdeh, 2023). The rise of social media has revolutionized communication, allowing individuals to connect globally. However, it has also raised concerns about privacy, misinformation, and mental health issues. Additionally, there has been a growing awareness of diversity and inclusion, leading to significant progress in movements advocating for gender equality and racial justice. Mental health awareness is also gaining momentum, with more people seeking therapy and support. Sustainability efforts are influencing individuals and governments to adopt eco-friendly practices, while automation and the gig economy continue to reshape employment. The COVID-19

pandemic further accelerated changes in remote work, education, and healthcare, exposing social and economic inequalities (Va Sheldon Osunero, 2023). These evolving societal landscapes inevitably shape artistic expressions, particularly in music.

As a crucial component of popular culture, music serves as a mirror to society, reflecting prevailing social norms, challenges, and aspirations. According to (Tim Delaney, 2007), popular culture encompasses the aspects of social life that people actively engage in daily. It includes elements such as fashion, slang, rituals, and food, all of which shape collective identity. Music, as an integral part of popular culture, not only entertains but also communicates the values, struggles, and emotions of the time. Lyrics, in particular, serve as a powerful medium through which artists express their experiences and comment on contemporary issues. From mental health struggles to relationship dynamics, song lyrics capture the essence of societal trends and resonate with listeners who find their realities reflected in the music they consume.

In recent years, numerous songs have emerged as cultural commentaries, addressing themes such as self-perception, emotional turmoil, and personal relationships in the digital age. For instance, contemporary pop songs often highlight the psychological impact of social media, shifting gender roles, and the complexity of human connections. By analyzing song lyrics, we can gain valuable insights into how society perceives and responds to these evolving trends. This study aims to explore how popular music reflects modern societal themes through the lyrics of three significant songs. What pop culture reflects in the songs *Anti-Hero* by Taylor Swift, *Happier than Ever* by Billie Eilish, and *Traitor* by Olivia Rodrigo? And What are the similarities and differences in how these three songs reflect social trends?

### **Definition of Pop Culture**

Popular culture, commonly referred to as "pop culture," is an ever-evolving concept that reflects the collective practices, beliefs, and objects that dominate society at a given time. It serves as a dynamic representation of social trends, media influence, and cultural shifts, shaping and being shaped by the people who engage with it. Scholars have examined pop culture through various perspectives, emphasizing its role in mass consumption, resistance, and social identity formation. Understanding popular culture

requires exploring its definition from different theoretical viewpoints, including sociological, participatory, and theoretical frameworks.

According to ThoughtCo, popular culture refers to the traditions and material culture of a particular society. In the modern Western context, it includes cultural products such as music, art, literature, fashion, dance, film, cyberculture, television, and radio, which are widely consumed by the majority of the population. Pop culture serves as a reflection of contemporary societal values, often evolving with technological advancements and media trends. It is distinguished from "high culture" by its accessibility and widespread appeal, making it a significant force in shaping social norms and collective identities (Crossman Ashley, 2024).

John Fiske provides a participatory perspective on popular culture, arguing that it is not merely about passive consumption but an active process in which individuals interpret, use, and sometimes subvert dominant cultural products to create their own meanings. He emphasizes that popular culture is driven by the audience's engagement rather than being solely imposed by dominant social structures. This view highlights how people appropriate and repurpose cultural commodities to express their identities and resist mainstream ideologies. Fiske's approach positions pop culture as an arena for both pleasure and struggle, where individuals negotiate and redefine cultural meanings (Fiske, 2010).

John Storey, in *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*, explores multiple definitions of popular culture. He presents it as a quantitative phenomenon—widely favored and consumed by the masses—and as a residual category, encompassing all cultural products that do not belong to high culture. He also identifies pop culture as mass-produced for commercial consumption, folk culture rooted in community traditions, and a site of ideological struggle where dominant and subordinate groups negotiate meanings. Additionally, from a postmodernist perspective, Storey discusses how pop culture blurs distinctions between high and low culture, influencing contemporary artistic and commercial practices (John, 2019). These diverse interpretations illustrate the complexity of popular culture, demonstrating its role as a dynamic and contested field within society.

### **Definition of Song Lyrics**

According to (Dallin R, 1994),

“Lyrics are written as a form of interaction between the writer and the listeners. Most of the times, they carry a message (whatever that might be) with the purpose of motivating the listeners, at least, to think about it. Such a purpose and form of interaction are embedded in the cultural context of these people, according to their musical preferences, time, etc.”

As (H.G. Widdowson, 2004). Stated “Song lyrics are texts that use language to express emotions, thoughts and experiences”.

Every song has its message. The appeal and effectiveness of the song to the listener is dependent on the lyrics. The message contained in a song lyric can be delivered depending on how the writer put the words in the lyrics) (Bertoli-Dutra, P and Bissaco, 2006).

### **Social Trends**

Social trends are ongoing changes in societal values, behaviours, and interactions that shape how people live and engage with one another. These trends emerge due to technological advancements, cultural shifts, and global influences, impacting various aspects of daily life, including communication, work, consumer behaviour, and social movements. Understanding social trends is essential for individuals, businesses, and policymakers to adapt to an ever-evolving society and respond effectively to emerging challenges and opportunities.

According to (T A Writer, 2024), A social trend refers to the evolving patterns in society that reflect changes in values, technology, and interactions. Being aware of these trends is essential as they influence daily life, relationships, and society as a whole. It is important to stay aware of social and cultural trends since they indicate shifts in societal values, technological advancements, and modes of interaction. These trends provide insight into how society evolves over time. Below are key trends that have a significant impact on everyday activities, personal relationships, and the broader social structure:

#### **1. The Rise of Digital Detox and Mindful Technology Use**

The growing trend of digital detox reflects society’s response to the overwhelming presence of technology, as excessive screen time and constant online engagement have been linked to increased stress and reduced mental well-being. As a result, there is a rising interest in tech-free spaces,

mindfulness apps, and screen-time limitations to encourage a healthier balance. Recognizing these concerns, many companies and organizations are also implementing digital wellness policies, such as no-email hours, to promote a more mindful and less digitally dependent lifestyle.

## 2. The Rise of Individual Activism and Social Responsibility

The rise of individual activism is increasingly driven by social media, allowing people to amplify their causes and advocate for change. Technology has become a powerful tool for raising awareness on critical issues such as climate change, racial justice, and gender equality. Additionally, there is growing pressure on companies to uphold ethical standards and demonstrate social responsibility. Many impactful movements and initiatives have gained momentum through social media and grassroots efforts, highlighting the power of digital platforms in driving social change.

## 3. Sustainable and Ethical Consumerism

Consumer behaviour is increasingly shifting toward sustainability and eco-friendly choices, with a growing preference for products that minimize environmental impact. The mindset of "buy less, buy better" is becoming more prevalent, encouraging people to prioritize quality over quantity. This shift has also contributed to the rising popularity of second-hand shopping, as more individuals seek to reduce waste and make more conscious purchasing decisions.

## 4. Mental Health-Resources and Reducing Stigma

Discussions about mental health are gaining more attention, fuelled by celebrities, social media, and grassroots advocacy. Mental well-being is now widely recognized as a vital aspect of overall health, leading to greater efforts in schools, workplaces, and communities to provide mental health support. Emerging trends such as self-care practices, therapy through mobile apps, and the acceptance of mental health days are becoming more common, reflecting a broader societal shift toward prioritizing emotional and psychological well-being.

#### 5. Shifting Work Culture-Remote and Hybrid Models of Working

The pandemic significantly accelerated the adoption of remote work, leading many organizations to embrace flexible working arrangements. While remote and hybrid work models offer benefits such as improved work-life balance and increased productivity, they also present challenges, particularly in maintaining social connections. In response, trends like shared workspaces, digital collaboration tools, and "work from anywhere" policies have emerged, reshaping the modern work environment to support flexibility and connectivity.

#### 6. Redefining Family and Relationships

Social trends are reshaping traditional family structures and relationship dynamics, reflecting evolving societal values. The rise of single-parent households, the choice to remain child-free, and the emergence of non-traditional family units are becoming more common. Additionally, there is growing acceptance of diverse relationships, including LGBTQ+ partnerships and non-monogamous arrangements such as open or polyamorous relationships. These changes highlight a broader cultural shift toward inclusivity and personal choice, emphasizing the importance of individuality in defining family and relationships.

(Va Sheldon Osunero, 2023) highlights similar trends, focusing on the impact of social media, diversity and inclusion, mental health awareness, sustainability, and changes in work structures. Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have revolutionized communication while raising concerns about misinformation and mental health. Increased awareness of diversity and inclusion has led to legal advancements in LGBTQ+ rights and movements such as #MeToo and Black Lives Matter, which have influenced policies and public attitudes toward gender and racial equality. Mental health awareness continues to grow, with a rising acceptance of therapy and psychotropic treatments. Furthermore, sustainability efforts have encouraged individuals and corporations to adopt eco-friendly habits, and the gig economy has transformed work structures by introducing new employment opportunities. The COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated changes in work, education, and healthcare while exposing social inequalities.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

This research employs a descriptive qualitative method, which aims to understand phenomena by providing in-depth descriptions and analysis. Further this study also employed descriptive method. According to (Moleong, 2017) qualitative research is intended to explore and interpret the experiences of research subjects, focusing on how they perceive and engage with specific phenomena. Qualitative approach is used in this study. (Fraenkel, J.R. and Wallen, 1990) state that “qualitative approach is employed when a researcher wants to acquire a holistic depiction of what actually happens in particularly circumstances or situation. Further this study also employed descriptive method. According to (Arikunto, 1996), it has no intention to prove any hypothesis, but to examine and describe the representation of social events that are found in the data sources. Descriptive quantification is also employed in this study. In this study, the phenomenon being investigated is the social trends reflected in the song Anti-Hero by Taylor Swift, Happier Than Ever by Billie Eilish and Traitor by Olivia Rodrigo.

### **Research Object and Subject**

The object of this research is the songs Anti-Hero by Taylor Swift, Happier Than Ever by Billie Eilish and Traitor by Olivia Rodrigo. These songs are analyzed in relation to six major social trends:

1. Mental Health Awareness & Reducing Stigma
2. Redefining Family & Relationships
3. The Rise of Digital Detox & Mindful Technology Use
4. The Rise of Individual Activism & Social Responsibility
5. Sustainable & Ethical Consumerism
6. Shifting Work Culture – Remote & Hybrid Models

The subject of this research is how pop songs reflect social trends in modern society. This article explores how these songs lyrically and thematically reflect (or do not reflect) those evolving societal trends.

### **Data Sources**

The study utilizes both primary and secondary data:

1. **Primary Data:** The primary data source is the lyrics of the songs *Anti-Hero* by Taylor Swift, *Happier Than Ever* by Billie Eilish and *Traitor* by Olivia Rodrigo.
2. **Secondary Data:** The secondary data consist of journal articles, theses, books, and credible websites related to pop culture and social trends. These sources provide a theoretical framework and support the interpretation of the song lyrics.

### **Data Collection Techniques**

This study collects data through song selection, lyric analysis, documentation, and library research. The steps are as follows:

1. **Selecting the Singer and Songs**
  - Three well-known pop singers—Taylor Swift, Billie Eilish, and Olivia Rodrigo—were chosen because their music often reflects social issues.
  - The songs “Anti-Hero,” “Happier Than Ever,” and “Traitor” were selected based on their themes related to mental health, relationships, and modern social trends.
2. **Analyzing the Lyrics**
  - The lyrics of each song were carefully examined to identify themes and messages.
  - Lines related to personal struggles, relationships, and societal issues were highlighted and categorized.
3. **Documentation**
  - Lyrics were collected from official sources such as artist websites and music streaming platforms.
  - Public and critical responses (reviews, interviews, and social media discussions) were also considered.
4. **Library Research**
  - Books, journal articles, and online publications on social trends in music and lyrical analysis were reviewed.

- This provided a deeper understanding of how modern songs reflect society.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

The analysis is based on T.A. Writer's theory of six social trends, which include:

1. Mental Health Awareness & Reducing Stigma
2. Redefining Family & Relationships
3. The Rise of Digital Detox & Mindful Technology Use
4. The Rise of Individual Activism & Social Responsibility
5. Sustainable & Ethical Consumerism
6. Shifting Work Culture – Remote & Hybrid Models

The data analysis follows these steps:

1. Identifying Themes in the Lyrics
  - The lyrics were broken down to find words, phrases, and ideas that reflect the six social trends.
  - For example, if a song talks about anxiety or self-doubt, it was linked to mental health awareness.
2. Categorizing the Songs Based on Social Trends
  - Each song was analyzed to see which trends it reflects.
  - A comparison was made to understand how different artists approach the same or different trends.
3. Contextual Analysis
  - The artists' background, interviews, and public statements were reviewed to understand their intent.
  - Audience reactions (reviews, comments, and articles) were examined to see how listeners interpret the songs.
4. Drawing Conclusions
  - The findings were summarized to show how pop music reflects modern social issues.
  - The study highlights the role of music in shaping public conversations about mental health, relationships, activism, and work culture.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### Social Trends in Anti-Hero Song by Taylor Swift

SOCIAL TRENDS	LYRIC	MEANING
Mental Health and Reducing Stigma	<i>"I have this thing where I get older            but just never wiser"</i>	This line can be seen as reflecting struggles with self-perception, growth, and anxiety—common themes in discussions about mental health. It suggests feelings of stagnation and frustration, which are often associated with imposter syndrome, self-doubt, and personal struggles with mental health.
	<i>"Midnights become my afternoons"</i>	This could symbolize insomnia or anxiety-related sleep issues, which are common symptoms of mental health struggles such as depression and stress. It also normalizes talking about irregular sleep patterns, which is a step toward reducing stigma around mental health challenges.
	<i>"It's me, hi, I'm the problem, it's me."</i>	This line expresses self-blame and internalized guilt, feelings that are common in people dealing with low self-esteem, depression, or anxiety. The repetition of this phrase mirrors the way negative self-talk can dominate one's thoughts. By putting these emotions into lyrics, the song contributes to the broader social trend of openly discussing mental

		health and reducing stigma around self-doubt and vulnerability.
Redefining Family and Relationships	<i>"I wake up screaming from dreaming, one day I'll watch as you're leaving 'cause you got tired of my scheming."</i>	This reflects relationship insecurities and the fear of abandonment, which are common themes in modern relationships, especially for individuals dealing with attachment issues or past trauma. As relationships evolve and become more open about personal struggles, acknowledging fears of being left behind is a key part of modern conversations around emotional vulnerability in relationships.
	<i>"I have this dream my daughter-in-law kills me for the money."</i>	This line is a satirical take on family dynamics and inheritance disputes, but it also touches on the complexities of modern family relationships. It acknowledges generational tensions and shifting family structures, which align with the social trend of redefining family—where traditional family roles are increasingly questioned, and relationships are more complex than in past generations.
The Rise of Digital Detox & Mindful Technology Use	<i>"Did you hear my covert narcissism I disguise as altruism?"</i>	This line reflects self-awareness in the digital age, where people curate their online presence to appear a certain way. The song critiques how social media can encourage performative behavior—where individuals present an idealized version of themselves while struggling with insecurities in private. This aligns

		with the growing trend of digital detoxing and mindful technology use, as people recognize the mental health impact of constant online engagement and seek authenticity over digital perfection.
The Rise of Individual Activism & Social Responsibility	<i>"It's me, hi, I'm the problem, it's me."</i>	While this lyric primarily reflects self-doubt and personal struggle, it also resonates with the trend of individual accountability, a key aspect of social responsibility and activism. In modern activism, people are increasingly recognizing their role in societal issues, whether related to privilege, power dynamics, or ethical consumption. The acknowledgment of personal flaws can parallel the broader societal trend of individuals striving to be more conscious of their actions.
Sustainable & Ethical Consumerism	Not Directly Reflected in the Lyrics	The song does not explicitly discuss sustainability or ethical consumerism. However, its themes of self-awareness and emotional honesty do align with the growing trend of conscious consumerism, where people are more mindful about their choices, whether in relationships, lifestyle, or material consumption.
Shifting Work Culture- Remote and Hybrid Models of Working	Not Directly Reflected in the Lyrics	The song does not directly mention work culture, remote work, or hybrid models. However, themes of isolation and self-

		perception in the song could resonate with those experiencing the emotional toll of remote work, such as loneliness and self-doubt in a less socially connected work environment.
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**6. Social Trends in Happier than Ever Song by Billie Eilish**

SOCIAL TRENDS	LYRIC	MEANING
Mental Health & Reducing Stigma	<i>"When I'm away from you, I'm happier than ever."</i>	This line suggests an emotionally draining relationship and reflects themes of toxic relationships, anxiety, and emotional well-being. The phrase implies that the speaker feels relief when distancing themselves from someone harmful, which aligns with the growing awareness of mental health and the importance of setting boundaries for emotional self-care.
	<i>"I don't relate to you, I don't relate to you, no / 'Cause I'd never treat me this sh—ty."</i>	This highlights self-worth and the recognition of toxic behavior, a concept often discussed in modern mental health conversations. It aligns with the social trend of reducing stigma around emotional abuse and advocating for self-respect. In recent years, people have been more vocal about recognizing unhealthy relationships and prioritizing their mental well-

	<p><i>"You ruined everything good / Always said you were misunderstood."</i></p>	<p>being.          This reflects gaslighting and manipulation, which are common psychological experiences discussed in mental health awareness movements. Many people have started to recognize emotional manipulation in relationships and have become more empowered to call it out.</p>
<p>Redefining Family &amp; Relationships</p>	<p><i>"And I don't talk about you on the internet / Never told anyone anything bad."</i></p>	<p>This suggests a shift in how relationships are navigated in the digital age. With the rise of social media and online discourse, people are becoming more aware of how they present their personal relationships publicly. The reluctance to speak negatively about a person online reflects the social pressure to maintain appearances despite personal struggles.</p>
	<p><i>"You call me again, drunk in your Benz / Driving home under the influence."</i></p>	<p>This references reckless behavior and emotional dependence, themes often found in relationships that involve codependency, substance abuse, or emotional manipulation. As modern relationships become more complex, people are becoming more aware of these issues and are actively seeking to break free from unhealthy</p>

		relationship patterns.
The Rise of Digital Detox & Mindful Technology Use	<i>"You call me again, drunk in your Benz / Drivin' home under the influence."</i>	This suggests constant digital connection, where toxic relationships are maintained through calls and messages, even when they are emotionally draining. It aligns with the trend of digital detoxing and setting emotional boundaries, as more people recognize the mental health impact of unhealthy digital interactions and opt to limit their exposure to stress-inducing communication.
The Rise of Individual Activism & Social Responsibility	Not Directly Reflected in the Lyrics	The song does not discuss activism or social responsibility. However, its overall message of empowerment and self-liberation aligns with broader themes of self-advocacy—encouraging individuals to speak up for themselves and remove toxic influences, which is a key component of modern personal and social activism.
Sustainable & Ethical Consumerism	Not Directly Reflected in the Lyrics	The song does not address consumer habits or sustainability. However, its underlying theme of breaking free from toxic cycles could metaphorically connect to the trend of conscious decision-making, including in relationships, lifestyle, and

		consumption.
Shifting Work Culture- Remote and Hybrid Models of Working	Not Directly Reflected in the Lyrics	The song does not discuss work culture or remote work. However, themes of emotional exhaustion and feeling unappreciated could resonate with those experiencing burnout, a growing concern in remote and hybrid work models.

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**9. Social Trends in Traitor Song by Olivia Rodrigo**

SOCIAL TRENDS	LYRIC	MEANING
Mental Health & Reducing Stigma	<i>"It took you two weeks to go off and date her / Guess you didn't cheat, but you're still a traitor."</i>	This lyric expresses emotional betrayal and heartbreak, which can have a significant impact on mental health. Feelings of betrayal, sadness, and emotional distress are often linked to anxiety and depression, themes that have become more openly discussed in modern conversations about mental well-being. The song resonates with people who have experienced emotional pain, helping to reduce stigma around discussing heartbreak and emotional trauma.
	<i>"Loved you at your worst, but that didn't matter."</i>	This reflects themes of one-sided emotional labor in relationships, which can contribute to feelings of low self-worth and emotional exhaustion. Modern mental health discussions emphasize setting boundaries and recognizing

unhealthy relationship patterns, which aligns with the growing societal trend of prioritizing emotional self-care and mental well-being.

<p>Redefining Family &amp; Relationships</p>	<p><i>"You talked to her when we were together / Loved you at your worst, but that didn't matter."</i></p> <p><i>"You betrayed me / And I know that you'll never feel sorry / For the way I hurt."</i></p>	<p>This highlights trust issues and emotional infidelity, which are increasingly discussed in modern relationship dynamics. As social trends evolve, people are redefining what commitment and loyalty mean in relationships. Emotional cheating, once overlooked, is now recognized as a form of betrayal that can damage trust and emotional security. (likes, follows, DMs).</p> <p>This reinforces the theme of emotional accountability in relationships. Modern discussions around relationship ethics and emotional responsibility emphasize that actions, even if not explicitly labeled as cheating, can still cause deep emotional wounds. The song reflects a shift toward acknowledging emotional damage and holding partners accountable for their behavior.</p>
<p>The Rise of Digital Detox &amp; Mindful Technology Use</p>	<p><i>"You betrayed me / And I know that you'll never feel sorry / For the way I hurt."</i></p> <p><i>"It took you two weeks to go off and date her / Guess you didn't cheat, but you're still a traitor."</i></p>	<p>The song reflects the emotional impact of digital interactions, particularly how social media and instant communication can intensify heartbreak. In today's world, people can see who their exes are interacting with online, leading to constant emotional</p>

		triggers. This aligns with the digital detox movement, where people consciously step back from social media to protect their mental well-being and avoid toxic online comparisons.
The Rise of Individual Activism & Social Responsibility	Not Directly Reflected in the Lyrics	The song does not discuss activism or social responsibility. However, it promotes emotional empowerment and self-awareness, encouraging listeners to recognize their emotions and advocate for their own well-being—a key part of today’s focus on personal growth and emotional intelligence.
Sustainable and Ethical Consumerism		The song does not mention consumer habits, sustainability, or ethical concerns.
Shifting Work Culture- Remote & Hybrid Models of Working		The song does not discuss work-life balance, hybrid models, or work culture.

### Similarities and Differences in How *Anti-Hero*, *Happier Than Ever*, and *Traitor* Reflect Social Trends

#### Similarities

1. Mental Health Awareness & Reducing Stigma (*Strong in all three songs*)

- All three songs explore emotional struggles and mental health themes, emphasizing self-doubt, anxiety, and emotional trauma.
- "Anti-Hero" discusses self-loathing, imposter syndrome, and intrusive thoughts (“*It’s me, hi, I’m the problem, it’s me*”).

- "Happier Than Ever" reflects emotional abuse, manipulation, and self-empowerment ("*You made me hate this city*").
  - "Traitor" deals with heartbreak and emotional betrayal, aligning with conversations around relationship trauma ("*Loved you at your worst, but that didn't matter*").
2. Redefining Family & Relationships (*Strong in all three songs*)
- All songs challenge traditional relationship norms.
  - "Anti-Hero" examines self-sabotage in relationships ("*I have this thing where I get older, but just never wiser*").
  - "Happier Than Ever" critiques toxic relationships and emotional detachment ("*I'd never treat me this shitty*").
  - "Traitor" challenges the idea that cheating only applies to physical infidelity ("*Guess you didn't cheat, but you're still a traitor*").
3. The Rise of Digital Detox & Mindful Technology Use (*Present in "Anti-Hero" & "Happier Than Ever", but not in "Traitor"*)
- "Anti-Hero" hints at social media anxiety and public scrutiny ("*Did you hear my covert narcissism I disguise as altruism*").
  - "Happier Than Ever" expresses the toxic impact of online communication and digital dependence ("*I don't relate to you, 'cause I'd never treat me this shitty*").
  - "Traitor" does not explicitly discuss digital detox but reflects how social media intensifies heartbreak (though not stated directly in lyrics).

### **Differences**

4. The Rise of Individual Activism & Social Responsibility (*Only strong in "Anti-Hero"*)
- "Anti-Hero" subtly explores self-awareness and personal responsibility ("*Did you hear my covert narcissism I disguise as altruism*"), encouraging self-reflection and accountability.
  - "Happier Than Ever" and "Traitor" focus on personal relationships and emotions, rather than activism or social responsibility.

5. Sustainable & Ethical Consumerism (*Not present in any of the songs*)

- None of the songs discuss ethical consumption, sustainability, or environmental awareness.

6. Shifting Work Culture – Remote & Hybrid Models (*Not present in any of the songs*)

- None of the songs address changing work dynamics, work-from-home culture, or job flexibility.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

### Conclusion

This study examines how contemporary pop songs reflect six major social trends in modern society. Through the lyrical analysis of "Anti-Hero" by Taylor Swift, "Happier Than Ever" by Billie Eilish, and "Traitor" by Olivia Rodrigo, the research finds that these songs address significant issues such as mental health awareness, shifting family and relationship dynamics, and individual activism.

- Mental Health Awareness & Reducing Stigma is prominently featured in all three songs, as they express personal struggles, self-doubt, and emotional pain.
- Redefining Family & Relationships is reflected in their portrayal of breakups, toxic relationships, and the impact of personal connections.
- The Rise of Individual Activism & Social Responsibility is seen in the themes of self-empowerment and breaking free from unhealthy situations.

However, the study found limited or no direct references to digital detox, mindful technology use, sustainable consumerism, or shifting work culture in these songs. This suggests that while personal and emotional themes are widely explored in pop music, broader socio-economic trends may not be as directly addressed.

Overall, this research highlights the role of pop music as a mirror of societal concerns, particularly in the areas of mental health and relationships. These songs resonate with audiences because they provide an emotional connection to real-life struggles.

### **Suggestion**

1. Further Research on Other Social Trends in Pop Music
  - Future studies could explore different artists or songs that focus more on technology, sustainability, and changing work cultures.
  - Genres beyond pop, such as indie or alternative music, might address these trends more explicitly.
2. Expanding the Scope of Study
  - Including more songs from diverse backgrounds and languages could offer a global perspective on how music reflects social change.
  - Examining audience responses (through surveys or interviews) could provide deeper insights into how listeners interpret these themes.
3. Interdisciplinary Approach
  - Combining music analysis with psychology, sociology, and media studies could create a more comprehensive understanding of how music influences and reflects societal shifts.

By continuing to study the relationship between music and society, researchers can further understand how artists contribute to public discussions on important social issues.

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