

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the foundation for the research by outlining its background and context. It also formulates research questions, establishes the objectives to be achieved, and explains the significance and benefits of the study. Additionally, this chapter defines the scope and limitations of the research, enabling readers to understand the focus and methods used in this study.

1.1 Background Of Study

Social isolation, a modern-day issue, is a major concern in the field of mental health. According to Taylor et al (2023), it is "an objective condition characterized by a need of contact with other individuals and being withdrawn from bunches and social activities." Social isolation can affect many aspects of a person's life, from immune function to hormonal balance, and significantly impacts both mental and physical health (Brandt et al., 2022). Brandt, Liu, Heim, and Heinz (2022) argue that chronic stress caused by social isolation can change how the brain works, which can lead to various mental health problem. Children, socially discriminated individuals, and the elderly are especially vulnerable to the long-term effects of social isolation, which can accelerate the development of mental disorders and reduce quality of life (Brandt et al., 2022). From the study, it can be concluded that isolation and lack of social connection can have a significant negative impact on individual well-being.

Literary works often reflect human experience, and explore themes of social isolation. This statement is supported by Altun (2023), who says" Literature has always been important in forming both personal and cultural identities. Literature reflects the complexity of human identity via the representation of individuals' experiences, cultural origins, and personal development." Social isolation can have a significant impact on characters, both emotionally and mentally. The topic of social isolation has been widely used by writers to reveal the complexities of their characters, reflecting deeper human experiences related to feelings of isolation.

Contemporary Japanese literature offers a unique lens for exploring social isolation, especially in the context of Japan's isolation phenomenon. Haruki Murakami is particularly notable for portraying psychological isolation through introspective and emotionally complex characters. Among his work, *Norwegian Wood* (1987) stands out for its realistic psychological depth, making it well-suited for psychoanalytic analysis. *Norwegian Wood* presents a grounded narrative of Toru Watanabe, a college student grappling with loss, love, and alienation during Japan's era of rapid change. The novel depicted how personal trauma and shifting social dynamics contribute to Toru's sense of social loneliness- feeling emotionally isolated even when surrounded by others. This makes *Norwegian Wood* a powerful text for examining the interplay between internal psychological struggle and external social pressure through Freud's psychoanalytic theory

The topic of social isolation has been discussed by many researchers through different literary works. Shalghin (2025) highlight how different forms of isolation shape identity and emotional states in literary characters. Maryani (2024) examines the mental impact of isolation on female characters in two classic works, while Farahmandian and Shao (2021) analyze the role of psychological needs in the social withdrawal of Leopold Bloom. Ramdhani (2017) links deviant behavior to social conditions in *The Catcher in the Rye*, showing how environment influences mental development. Two other studies focus on *Norwegian Wood*: Prameswari and Marsih (2023) analyze Toru Watanabe's existential crisis, and Kurniawan (2018) explores his emotional distress after personal loss. These studies collectively show that isolation, whether psychological, social, or existential, can deeply affect a character's emotional growth- supporting the relevance of further analysis through Freud's psychoanalytic lens.

This research focuses on analyzing the factors and impact of social isolation on the emotional development of the main character, Toru Watanabe, in the novel *Norwegian Wood*. The novel is set in 1960s Japan, a time of big social and cultural changes. Through Toru's narrative, Murakami shows how personal trauma is connected to what is happening in society, making this novel useful for psychological analysis. This research examines various factors that cause Toru to

withdraw from the social life, such as the traumatic loss of his best friend and his complex relationship with two women, Naoko and Midori, these women represent different aspects of emotional connection and isolation. By analyzing Toru's experiences of isolation, this research aims to better understand how social isolation affects emotional development in a literary work. *Norwegian Wood* is important because it shows that isolation is not just a physical condition, but also a deep psychological condition shaped by life experiences and trauma. The novel detailed view of mental health issues and their effects on relationship makes it a good choice for examining how social isolation manifest and affects emotional development.

In this research, Freud's psychoanalytic theory is used as the main theoretical framework. This theory helps explain how past trauma, hidden desires, and suppressed emotions can affect someone's behavior and emotional life. Toru Watanabe is a good example of how loss and isolation can cause inner conflicts. This research analyzing how Toru tries to balance id, ego, and superego in his efforts to understand himself and connect with others The conflict between his personal desires and expectations of society creates conditions that lead to more isolation and loneliness.

Through this psychological analysis, this research not only reveals Toru's personal experiences but also offers insight into broader how human experiences of loneliness, and isolation. Freud's theory allows the research to explore the psychological side of isolation, showing that loneliness is not just about being alone, but also about inner problems and unhealed emotion wounds. In this way, this research offers a deeper understanding of the psychological effects of social isolation, both in fiction and real life.

1.2 Research Question

1. What factors cause Toru isolate himself from the social world?
2. How do Toru Watanabe's feelings of social isolation affect his emotional development?

1.3 Objective Of the Study

1. To identify and analyze the key factors that drive Toru Watanabe to isolate himself from the social world in *Norwegian Wood*, using Freud's defense mechanism as the analytical framework.
2. To explore the impact of Toru Watanabe's social isolation on his emotional development throughout the novel, based on Freud's personality of structure (id, ego, superego).

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research holds significant theoretical relevance in both literary and psychological fields by providing a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between social isolation and mental health through psychological theories, particularly Freudian psychoanalysis. By analyzing Toru Watanabe's character in *Norwegian Wood*, this research contributes to theoretical framework by revealing key psychological and environmental factors that lead to social isolation. This research enriches the field of literary studies by demonstrating how psychological theories can be effectively applied to analyze literary characters, thus establishing important theoretical connection between fictional narratives and real-life psychological experiences.

Practically, this research offers valuable insights for addressing contemporary mental health challenges in modern society through understanding how loneliness and isolation influence emotional development and mental health. The research findings can be directly applied to real world mental health intervention and support strategies for individuals experiencing similar challenges. Also, the analysis of universal themes of pain, isolation, and self-discovery in the novel can practically help foster greater empathy and understanding among readers regarding mental health struggles, with potential applications in counseling, and therapy.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

This study focuses on the analysis of Toru Watanabe, the main character in Haruki Murakami's *Norwegian Wood*, with the purpose of identifying the factors that cause his social isolation and examining its impact on his emotional

development. This study examines Toru's psychological journey throughout the story, exploring how various experiences and relationships contribute to his sense of isolation from society and his struggle with emotional intimacy.

The scope of this study is limited to Toru Watanabe as the central subject, including his utterances, and the narration in the novel *Norwegian wood* that reveal the cause and consequences of his isolation. The study is confined to literary analysis based on textual interpretation.