

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter background of the research. It is divided into the following sections: background of the research, limitation of the research, formulation of the research, purpose of the research, and definition of key terms. The background provides an overview of the research, while the other sections explain the scope, research questions, objectives, and contributions of the study.

1.1 Background of the Research

Literary works play an important role in conveying moral values and reflecting social realities. Literature does not only function as a form of artistic expression, but also as a medium that shapes ethical awareness and social understanding. Through stories, characters, and conflicts, authors communicate moral principles that influence human behavior. Novels often present moral dilemmas that require readers to evaluate actions, intentions, and consequences. These dilemmas encourage readers to distinguish between right and wrong based on ethical reasoning. Therefore, literature becomes a meaningful medium for moral and character education. The analysis of moral values in literary works allows readers to gain deeper ethical insight and to reflect on their own moral responsibilities in society.

Moral values are essential in shaping human attitudes and actions within social life. They guide individuals in making decisions, maintaining relationships, and responding to social problems. In literature, moral values are embedded in

characters' choices, dialogues, and interactions. Characters often face situations that test their honesty, courage, empathy, and responsibility. Readers can learn moral lessons by observing how characters deal with injustice, conflict, and moral pressure. These lessons are not presented directly, but are conveyed through narrative development. This narrative method allows readers to interpret moral meanings independently. Consequently, the study of moral values in novels remains an important field of literary research because it connects literary interpretation with ethical reflection.

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee is one of the most influential novels that portray moral issues in a racially divided society. The story is set in the American South during the 1930s, a period characterized by racial segregation, prejudice, and social inequality. These historical and social conditions strongly influence the moral decisions made by the characters. The novel presents moral conflicts related to justice, racism, and human dignity. Through these conflicts, Harper Lee emphasizes the importance of moral courage and integrity. The novel also shows how moral principles are often challenged by social traditions and public opinion.

The character of Atticus Finch represents the strongest moral figure in the novel. His commitment to justice and fairness is clearly shown in his defense of Tom Robinson. Atticus chooses to defend an innocent man despite strong social opposition. He acts based on moral conscience rather than personal safety or reputation. Atticus also teaches his children to respect others and to reject prejudice. His role as a father and lawyer reflects moral consistency in both

private and public life. Through Atticus, the novel presents an example of moral leadership in an unjust society.

Moral development is also represented through Scout Finch as the narrator. Scout begins the story with an innocent and limited understanding of social reality. Through her experiences, she gradually learns about empathy, tolerance, and fairness. Her encounters with injustice help her recognize moral complexity. This development allows readers to observe moral growth in a realistic way. Scout's perspective makes moral lessons easier to understand because they are presented through daily experiences. This narrative technique strengthens emotional involvement and ethical awareness.

Harper Lee strengthens moral messages through literary elements such as symbolism and setting. The mockingbird symbolizes innocence and represents the moral obligation to protect those who do no harm. Tom Robinson and Boo Radley reflect this symbol through their suffering and kindness. The setting of a segregated society highlights moral injustice and ethical conflict. These literary elements deepen the moral meaning of the story. They help readers understand moral issues not only through events, but also through symbolic and contextual representation.

From an educational perspective, the novel has high relevance. Literature can serve as an effective tool for teaching ethics and character education. Students can develop critical thinking by analyzing moral dilemmas and character behavior. Moral discussion encourages students to evaluate social values and personal

responsibility. Literature also helps students understand cultural diversity and historical injustice. Therefore, *To Kill a Mockingbird* is valuable for both literary studies and educational development.

Although many previous studies have discussed themes such as racism, justice, and social inequality in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, studies that focus specifically on moral values remain limited. Most research emphasizes legal and racial perspectives rather than moral representation. A systematic analysis of moral values can provide a new academic contribution. This research aims to identify and explain moral values reflected in the novel. It also seeks to analyze how these values are conveyed through characters, events, and narrative structure. By focusing on moral values, this study offers a different analytical perspective. Ultimately, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of literature as a source of moral education and ethical reflection.

1.2 Identification of the Research

This research is a qualitative literary study that focuses on analyzing moral values in the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. The qualitative approach is chosen because it enables in-depth interpretation of moral meanings presented in literary texts. This study applies a library-based research design, in which the primary source of data is the novel itself. Secondary sources include textbooks, scholarly journal articles, theses, and previous studies related to moral values, literary criticism, and ethical theory. These sources support theoretical interpretation and strengthen the validity of the analysis.

The setting of the research is non-experimental and does not involve human participants. The analysis is centered exclusively on written texts rather than real-life observation, interviews, or surveys. The focus is placed on narrative events, character behavior, dialogues, and descriptive passages that reflect moral values. This text-based setting ensures consistency and objectivity in the research process.

The research activities are conducted in academic environments, such as a university library and a personal research workspace. These locations support systematic reading, documentation, and interpretation of the data. Data collection is carried out through intensive reading, highlighting, and note-taking. Relevant quotations are carefully selected and recorded as data.

The research is conducted over a specific period during the academic year. It follows structured stages consisting of data identification, data classification, data interpretation, and conclusion drawing. These stages ensure that the research process is organized, transparent, and academically accountable. Through this setting, the study aims to produce a systematic and reliable analysis of moral values in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and to strengthen literature as a source of moral education.

1.3 Limitation of the Research

This research is limited to the analysis of moral values presented in the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. The study focuses exclusively on intrinsic literary elements, particularly characters, narrative events, and dialogues,

while extrinsic aspects such as the author's biography, historical background, and readers' responses are not examined. The analysis is confined to the identification and interpretation of moral values, including justice, empathy, courage, integrity, and tolerance, as reflected in the narrative structure of the novel.

This research does not involve comparative analysis with other literary works, adaptations, or related texts. The study applies qualitative textual analysis; therefore, the findings are interpretative in nature and depend on textual evidence and theoretical perspective. Consequently, the results may not represent all possible interpretations of the novel. However, these limitations are necessary to maintain analytical focus, methodological consistency, and academic clarity within the scope of the research.

1.4 Formulation of the Research

1. What moral values are reflected in the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee?
2. How are moral values portrayed through the characters, events, and dialogues in the novel?

1.5 The objectives of this research are:

1. To identify the types of moral values reflected in Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*
2. To analyze the representation of moral values through characters, events and dialogues in the novel.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

1. Moral Values is principles that guide ethical behavior and decision-making, encompassing justice, empathy, courage, integrity, and respect for inherent human worth (Dhaliani Sastra Wijaya, n.d.).
2. Representation is the depiction of ideas, traits, or themes through literary devices such as character, plot, dialogue, and symbolism.
3. Racial Injustice is systemic or individual discrimination based on race, as exemplified by the persecution of Tom Robinson and analyzed in scholarly discourse (Markey, 1989).
4. Empathy is the capacity to understand and share the perspectives and experiences of others, a central moral lesson emphasized by Atticus Finch (Clavero, 2025).
5. Moral Leadership is the practice of guiding individuals or communities through consistent adherence to ethical principles, even in the face of social opposition (Chen et al., 2019).
6. Symbolism is the use of concrete objects to represent abstract concepts most notably the mockingbird as a symbol of innocence and moral purity.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter examines the theoretical foundations and existing scholarship relevant to the study of moral value representation in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Concepts are derived from applicable academic resources, organized into three main sections: Review of related theories, Literary Theory on Representation and a clarified conceptual framework

2.1 Review of Related Theories

2.2 Moral Development Theory by Lawrence Kohlberg

Kohlberg (1981) explains that human moral development progresses through three main stages: preconventional, conventional, and postconventional. In the novel, characters like Scout Finch demonstrate this progression from obeying rules out of fear of punishment (e.g., being scolded by Calpurnia) to understanding broader principles of justice (when she grasps why her father defends Tom Robinson). This theory is relevant for outlining how moral values are understood and practiced by characters in different situations.

In the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, characters like Scout Finch demonstrate this progression through their evolving understanding of right and wrong. Early in the narrative, Scout's moral decisions are rooted in the preconventional stage for example, she avoids misbehaving primarily out of fear of being scolded by Calpurnia or disciplined by her father. She also adheres to rules simply because they are established by authority figures, such as her initial

acceptance of school regulations despite finding them confusing or unfair. This aligns with Kohlberg's description of how young children prioritize personal consequences when making moral judgments.

As the story unfolds, Scout begins to transition into the conventional stage, showing concern for social expectations and the perspectives of others. Her growing awareness of community attitudes toward the Finch family during Tom Robinson's trial reflects this shift she becomes conscious of how her actions reflect on her family's reputation and struggles to balance her own instincts with societal norms. This is particularly evident in her interactions with classmates who criticize Atticus for defending a Black man; while she initially responds with anger and physical confrontation, she gradually learns to consider how her behavior affects others and what it communicates about her family's values.

The most significant development occurs as Scout moves toward postconventional reasoning, particularly when she grasps why her father defends Tom Robinson despite widespread opposition in Maycomb. She comes to understand that Atticus's actions are guided by principles of justice and equality that extend beyond community approval or legal technicalities. When she stands on the Radley porch at the novel's conclusion and imagines the events of the story from Boo Radley's perspective, she demonstrates the ability to apply abstract moral reasoning to understand complex human experiences an indicator of postconventional thought.

This theory is relevant for outlining how moral values are understood and practiced by characters in different situations, providing a structured framework

for analyzing their growth and decision-making processes. Contemporary scholarship has further validated its application to literary analysis; for instance, (Nugraha et al., 2020) notes that Kohlberg's model remains a valuable tool for examining how fictional narratives depict moral development, even as modern researchers have expanded on his work to incorporate cultural and contextual factors. While some critics argue that the theory may overlook gender differences or cultural variations in moral reasoning points raised by scholars such as (Bekpenbetova et al., 2024) and it offers a useful foundation for tracing the evolution of moral understanding in Lee's characters.

By applying Kohlberg's framework to *To Kill a Mockingbird*, researchers can systematically examine how exposure to injustice, empathy-building experiences, and guidance from moral mentors like Atticus shape the characters' (Asha et al., 2025) ethical development. This analysis not only illuminates the novel's portrayal of moral growth but also connects its themes to broader discussions about how individuals and societies develop a sense of justice and responsibility a relevance that persists in contemporary conversations about ethics and social change.

2.3 Literary Theory on Representation

According to (Juraj, 2026), representation in literature refers to how authors convey meaning through narrative elements. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, moral values are represented through symbolism (e.g., the mockingbird as a symbol of innocence and vulnerability), character dialogue (such as Atticus's advice to "walk in someone else's shoes to understand them"), and story structure

that follows the moral growth of the main characters. This theory provides the basis for analyzing how moral values are communicated both explicitly and implicitly in the narrative.

In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, moral values are prominently represented through symbolism, which serves as a powerful vehicle for conveying abstract ethical concepts. The mockingbird stands as the novel's central symbol introduced early as a creature that "don't do one thing but make music for us to enjoy" and is therefore a sin to kill. This symbol represents innocence, vulnerability, and moral purity, linking characters like Tom Robinson and Boo Radley to a broader commentary on the destruction of goodness by prejudice and injustice. Contemporary scholar (Of & Education, 2017) notes that Lee's use of this symbol constructs a moral framework where harming the defenseless is framed as a fundamental violation of ethical principles, reinforcing the novel's call for empathy and protection of marginalized individuals.

Character dialogue functions as another critical tool for representing moral values, with explicit statements often serving to articulate core ethical principles while implicit exchanges reveal how these values are negotiated in practice. Atticus's iconic advice to "walk in someone else's shoes to understand them" directly communicates the value of empathy, framing it as a foundational moral practice. Similarly, his statement that "the one place where a man ought to get a square deal is in a courtroom" explicitly advocates for justice and equality under the law. However, dialogue also reveals tensions between stated values and societal realities such as when Scout's teacher condemns Hitler's prejudice while

expressing racist views about Black people in Maycomb, highlighting how moral values can be selectively applied or misunderstood. As (Page & Bell, 2024) argues, these contrasting exchanges construct a nuanced representation of morality as a principle that requires active reflection rather than passive adherence to social norms.

The novel's story structure further shapes the representation of moral values by following the moral growth of its main characters, creating a narrative arc that mirrors the development of ethical understanding. The plot progresses from Scout and Jem's childhood innocence where morality is seen as simple and absolute to their confrontation with the complexity of injustice, as they witness Tom Robinson's wrongful conviction and grapple with the realization that their (Page & Bell, 2024)community is divided by prejudice. This structural choice constructs morality as a concept that deepens and evolves through experience, aligning with Hall's constructionist approach by positioning moral development as intertwined with social and cultural learning. (Hasibuan, 2025)emphasizes that this narrative structure also encourages readers to undergo a parallel process of reflection, prompting us to reevaluate our own assumptions about justice and equality as we follow the characters' journey.

Additional narrative elements, including setting and point of view, contribute to the representation of moral values by situating ethical dilemmas within specific contexts. The fictional town of Maycomb, Alabama portrayed as a place where "everybody's business is everybody else's" and traditions run deep represents a social order where moral values are shaped by community norms,

some of which conflict with universal ethical principles. Told from Scout's first-person perspective, the narrative filters moral questions through a child's evolving understanding, allowing Lee to represent both the clarity of fundamental ethical truths and the confusion that arises when these truths clash with societal expectations. (HAMIMED, 2025)notes that this narrative choice constructs morality as accessible to all individuals, regardless of age, while also acknowledging the challenges of applying moral principles in complex social environments.

2.4 Virtue Ethics by Aristotle

As outlined by Hursthouse (1999), Aristotle's virtue ethics emphasizes that moral value lies in character and good habits, rather than just rules or outcomes. Atticus Finch serves as a prime example, embodying virtues like courage (defending Tom Robinson despite public condemnation), empathy (understanding Mayella Ewell's position), and integrity (staying true to his principles). Evaluation of this theory shows it is well-suited for examining how moral values are manifested through characters' behavior and personality.

In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Atticus Finch serves as a prime embodiment of Aristotelian virtues, demonstrating how these traits guide consistent moral action even in the face of adversity. His courage is not the physical bravery of a warrior but the moral courage to defend Tom Robinson despite public condemnation, social isolation, and threats to his family's safety. This aligns with Aristotle's definition of courage as the mean between recklessness and cowardice Atticus acts neither impulsively nor out of fear, but from a reasoned commitment to justice.

His empathy, shown in his ability to understand Mayella Ewell's position as a victim of poverty and abuse even as he exposes the falsehood of her accusation, reflects the virtue of compassion as a component of practical wisdom. As notes, Atticus's character exemplifies how virtues work in concert: his sense of justice is informed by empathy, while his integrity ensures he acts on his convictions regardless of personal cost.

Other characters in the novel further illustrate how virtue ethics operates through the development or absence of moral traits. Scout Finch demonstrates the potential for virtue cultivation as she learns to balance her natural impulsiveness with growing wisdom and compassion. Her journey from solving conflicts with her fists to using words and understanding mirrors Aristotle's argument that virtues are acquired through practice and guidance from moral exemplars like Atticus. Conversely, characters such as Bob Ewell embody the consequences of lacking virtuous character his cowardice, dishonesty, and cruelty lead to harm for others and ultimately his own downfall. This contrast constructs a moral framework where character is seen as the foundation of ethical behavior, with virtues and vices shaping both individual actions and community well-being.

Aristotle's concept of *phronesis* practical wisdom that enables individuals to apply general moral principles to specific situations is central to understanding how virtue is enacted in the novel. Atticus demonstrates practical wisdom when he chooses to defend Tom Robinson not just because it is legally required, but because he recognizes that failing to do so would compromise his character and teach his children that justice is conditional. He also exercises wisdom in how he

handles conflicts with community members, avoiding direct confrontation while firmly maintaining his principles. Contemporary scholar (Eslit et al., 2023) argues that Lee's portrayal of practical wisdom in Atticus resonates with modern discussions of ethical leadership, highlighting how effective moral action requires both commitment to principles and sensitivity to context.

While virtue ethics provides a powerful lens for analyzing the novel's moral dimensions, it is important to acknowledge critical perspectives that expand on Aristotle's original framework. (Bekpenbetova et al., 2024) and other feminist scholars have noted that traditional virtue ethics has often emphasized traits associated with male leadership like courage and justice while underemphasizing qualities such as care and nurturance that are central to ethical behavior in many contexts. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, characters like Calpurnia and Miss Maudie Atkinson embody these care-oriented virtues, demonstrating how moral character can be expressed through acts of service, protection, and community building. As (HAMIMED, 2025) observe, integrating these perspectives enriches the analysis of virtue in the novel, revealing how multiple forms of ethical excellence contribute to a just society.

The relevance of Aristotelian virtue ethics to *To Kill a Mockingbird* extends beyond literary analysis to contemporary ethical debates. (Asha et al., 2025) argues that the novel's focus on character development and practical wisdom offers valuable insights for addressing modern challenges such as systemic inequality, prejudice, and social division. By framing morality as a matter of cultivating virtuous traits rather than just following rules, the text

encourages individuals to take responsibility for their own ethical growth and to act as moral agents in their communities. This aligns with current scholarship in moral philosophy that emphasizes the importance of character education and practical reasoning in building more equitable societies.

In conclusion, Aristotle's virtue ethics provides a comprehensive framework for examining how moral values are represented through character, behavior, and practical action in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The novel illustrates how virtues are cultivated, how they guide ethical decision-making, and how they contribute to both individual flourishing and collective well-being. By analyzing the text through this theoretical lens, researchers can deepen their understanding of Lee's portrayal of morality and its enduring significance for contemporary discussions of ethics and social justice.

2.5 Review of the Related Findings

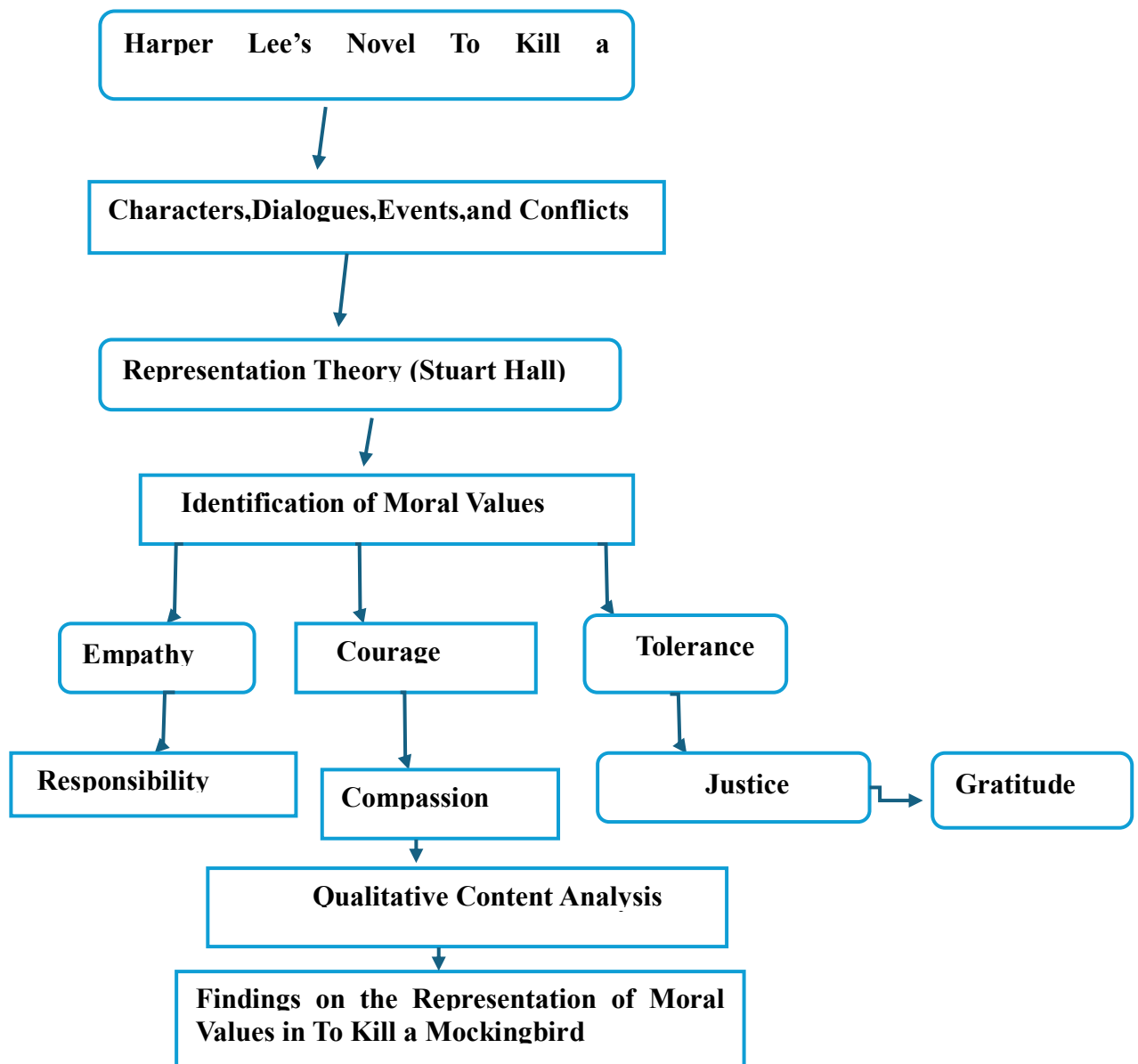
Previous research on *To Kill a Mockingbird* has identified various aspects of moral value representation in the novel:

- a. Racial Justice: (Bouacida & Chellouk, 2024) states that the novel critiques the unfair legal system faced by Black Americans in 1930s United States, using Tom Robinson's case as a clear example of social injustice.
- b. Moral Growth: (Nugraha et al., 2020) finds that the development of Scout and Jem from ignorance to understanding of injustice illustrates how moral values can be learned through life experience.
- c. Empathy and Social Responsibility: (Bekpenbetova et al., 2024) explains that Atticus's advice on empathy is central to understanding the novel's moral

values, as it teaches the importance of viewing the world from others' perspectives.

- d. These findings indicate that moral value representation in the novel has been widely studied, yet there remains scope to analyze how combining narrative elements and moral theories can provide a more comprehensive understanding.

2.6 Conceptual Framework



This conceptual framework indicates that the subject of this study is Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The research data consist of dialogue, character actions, events, and conflicts that convey moral values. These data were analyzed using Stuart Hall's theory of representation to explain how moral values are constructed and represented in the novel. Next, the data were classified into seven categories of moral values: empathy, courage, tolerance, responsibility, compassion, justice, and gratitude. The results of the analysis provide an overview of the forms of moral value representation conveyed by Harper Lee through her literary work.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter delineates the comprehensive methodological framework for investigating moral value representation in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, structured around six core components. Each section is grounded in peer-reviewed international scholarship published between 2020 and 2025, ensuring alignment with contemporary standards for rigorous literary research.

3.1 Research Design

The study employs a qualitative research design with a thematic content analysis approach, which is recognized as optimal for exploring how moral constructs are encoded within narrative texts (Braun & Clarke 2021). As outlined by Braun & Clarke. (2021), this methodology enables systematic identification and interpretation of patterns across character interactions, symbolic devices, and plot structures. The design integrates principles of ethical literary criticism (Braun & Clarke 2021) to examine how the novel mediates moral principles, alongside corpus stylistics techniques (Caballero Nieto & San Segundo Ruano, 2020) to enhance objectivity in tracking recurring moral motifs. This dual approach balances interpretive depth with empirical rigor, consistent with recommendations for contemporary literary inquiry.

3.2 Object of the Research

The object of this research is the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* written by Harper Lee. The novel was first published in 1960 and is considered one of the most influential literary works in American literature. This research focuses on the representation of moral values presented through the characters, dialogues, actions, and social conflicts in the novel.

The research analyzes several moral values reflected in the story, such as honesty, courage, justice, empathy, tolerance, responsibility, and humanity. These moral values are represented through the main characters, especially Atticus Finch, Scout Finch, Jem Finch, and Tom Robinson.

The data of this research consist of words, phrases, sentences, dialogues, and narrations related to moral values found in the novel. The researcher uses the novel as the primary source of data to identify and analyze the moral values represented in the story.

3.3 Technique of Data Analysis

Data analysis combined thematic content analysis with corpus-based linguistic techniques, as recommended by Caballero Nieto & San Segundo Ruano (2020). The process proceeded in three phases:

(1) Open Coding descriptive codes were assigned to each passage based on moral values and narrative elements, with constant comparison of segments to refine coding categories (Bekpenbetova et al., 2024);

(2) Axial Coding coded data were grouped into thematic categories including “Moral Socialization Through Narrative,” “Virtue in the Face of Adversity,” and “Systemic Injustice and Moral Responsibility,” each linked to relevant theoretical frameworks;

(3) Selective Coding overarching themes were synthesized to elucidate the interconnectedness of moral values throughout the novel. Supplementary corpus analysis was conducted to examine lexical frequency and distribution of moral terms, providing empirical support for interpretive findings (Tully, 2023). All analytical decisions were documented in an audit trail to ensure transparency and methodological rigor.