

**IDENTITY CRISIS OF ADOLESCENCE EXPERIENCED BY HOLDEN  
CAULFIELD IN J.D SALINGER'S *THE CATCHER IN THE RYE* (1951)**

**FINAL PROJECT**



**Presented as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements**

**to obtain the *Sarjana Sastra* Degree**

**in English Literature**

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## **PAGE OF APPROVAL**

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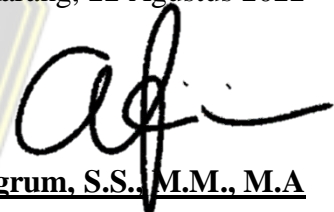
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## VALIDATION

**A Sarjana Sastra Final Project Proposal on**  
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**CAULFIELD IN J.D SALINGER'S *THE CATCHER IN THE RYE* (1951)**

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### STATEMENT OF WORK'S ORIGINALITY

Hereby, I certify that I wrote this thesis on my own, except those words or ideas which were cited in the quotations and the references. I absolutely agree to accept any kind of academic sanction in the form of originality of my paper, if my statement is not valid in the future.



Semarang, August 23rd 2022

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## MOTTO AND DEDICATION

“When you forget that you need Allah (God), He puts you in a situation that causes you to call upon Him. And that’s for your own good.”

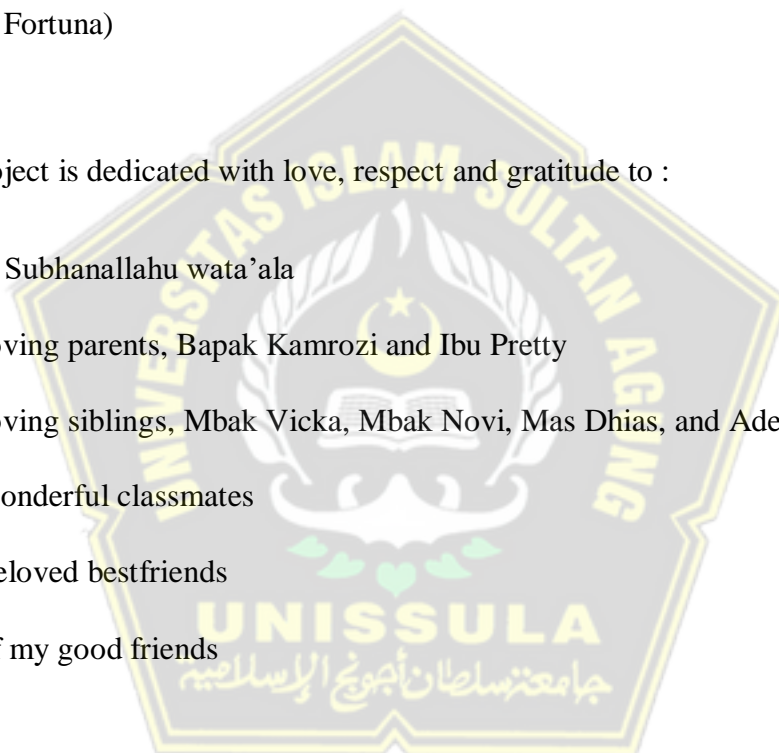
(Omar Suleiman)

“Never wish for death when you’re sad. Allah may grant it when you’re happy.”

(Dinda Dewi Fortuna)

This final project is dedicated with love, respect and gratitude to :

- Allah Subhanallahu wata’ala
- My loving parents, Bapak Kamrozi and Ibu Pretty
- My loving siblings, Mbak Vicka, Mbak Novi, Mas Dhias, and Adek Gun
- My wonderful classmates
- My beloved bestfriends
- All of my good friends



## ABSTRACT

**Fortuna, Dinda. 30801600253. Self-Identity Crisis of Adolescence Experienced By Holden Caulfield in J.D Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951). Advisor: Afina Murtiningrum, S.S., M.A.**

This study analyzes the identity crisis of adolescence experienced by the main character in *The Catcher in the Rye* novel, written by J.D Salinger in 1951, using the theory of psychosocial development by Erik Erikson.

This study uses descriptive qualitative technique of research to analyze data, so that the data collected are from the novel in the form of dialogues, monologues, and prologues. There are some steps to collect the data needed, such as reading and re-reading, noting, identifying, classifying, analyzing and interpreting.

Through this novel, this study finds that Holden Caulfield's identity crisis is in line with the Psychosocial Development theory by Erik Erikson. It can be proven by his confusion of behaving and acting on the problems he faced. After he expelled from school for the third time, instead of tells his parents and thinks about how to solve the problem, he chooses to avoid it by traveling aimlessly. In his journey, he shows the quality of the theory of psychosocial development which refers to a phase of the search for self-identity that makes him tend to do things that are not accordance with the norm such as smoking, going to bars, hiring a prostitute and getting into fights. From there we can see that Holden experienced a self-identity crisis in his adolescence.

**Keywords: Psychosocial, Erik Erikson, Identity Crisis, Adolescence.**



## INTISARI

**Fortuna, Dinda. 30801600253. Krisis Identitas Diri pada Remaja dari Holden Caulfield di Novel *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) oleh J.D Salinger. Pembimbing: Afina Murtiningrum, S.S., M.A.**

Studi ini menganalisis krisis identitas diri pada remaja dari karakter Holden Caulfield di novel *The Catcher in the Rye* yang ditulis oleh J.D Salinger di tahun 1951, menggunakan teori perkembangan Psikososial dari Erik Erikson.

Studi ini menggunakan teknik deskriptif kualitatif untuk menganalisa data, sehingga data-data yang didapatkan dari novel berupa dialog, monolog dan prolog. Adapun beberapa tahap dalam mengumpulkan data yaitu membaca dan membaca ulang, mencatat, mengidentifikasi, mengklasifikasikan, menganalisis dan menginterpretasi.

Melalui novel tersebut, studi ini menemukan bahwa krisis identitas diri pada remaja dari Holden Caulfield sesuai dengan teori perkembangan Psikososial dari Erik Erikson. Hal ini dapat dibuktikan dengan kebingungannya dalam bersikap dan bertindak pada masalah yang dihadapinya. Setelah ia dikeluarkan dari sekolahnya untuk yang ketiga kalinya, alih-alih memberitahu orangtuanya dan memikirkan bagaimana cara untuk menyelesaikan masalah, ia memilih untuk menghindari masalah dengan bepergian tanpa tujuan. Dalam perjalanannya ia menunjukkan kualitas dari teori perkembangan Psikososial yang merujuk pada salah satu fase pencarian identitas diri yang membuat dirinya cenderung melakukan hal-hal yang tidak sesuai norma seperti merokok, pergi ke bar, menyewa seorang prostitusi dan terlibat perkelahian. Dari sana kita dapat mengetahui bahwa Holden mengalami krisis identitas diri pada usia remajanya.

**Kata kunci: Psikososial, Erik Erikson, Krisis Identitas, Remaja.**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Highest gratitude to Allah Subhanallahu wata'ala for his grace and kindness, so that this final project can be finished. This study is submitted as the final requirement in accomplishing the degree of Sarjana Sastra in English Literature program of Sultan Agung Islamic University. Hereby, the writer would like to deliver her gratitude to :

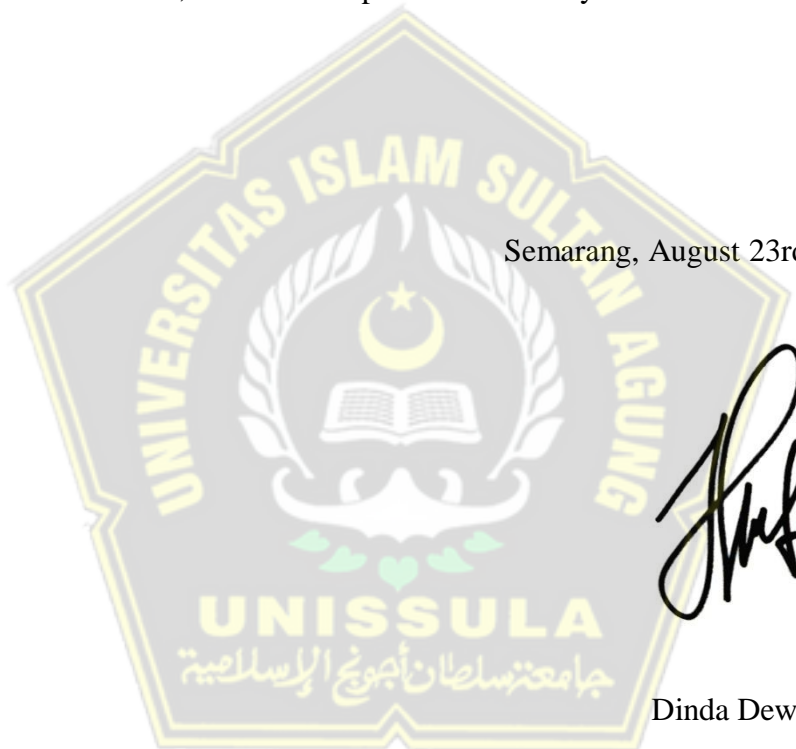
1. My loving parents for their patience in supporting my education.
2. My loving siblings for their for all the help.
3. Mr. Kurniawan Yudhi Nugroho, S.Pd., M.Pd, as the Dean of College of Languages and Communication Science Faculty, and Mrs. \*\*\*\*\*, as the secretary of Languages and Communication Science, Sultan Agung Islamic University.
4. Mrs. Idha Nurhamidah, S.S., M.Hum., as the head of English Literature Department of College of Languages and Communication Science, Sultan Agung Islamic University.
5. Mrs. Afina Murtiningrum, S.S., M.A., as my respectable advisor of this final project who has given guidance and support with love and patience to finish this study.
6. All of my beloved lecturers and staff in College of Languages and Communication Science, Sultan Agung Islamic University.
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8. All of my friend in English Literature 2016.
9. Everyone who has supported me and has become a good friend that I cannot mention one by one.

This final project is still far from being perfect and needs more suggestions and criticism to make it better. However, the writer hopes that this study can be useful for all readers in the future.

Semarang, August 23rd 2022



Dinda Dewi Fortuna

## Table of Contents

<b>TITLE</b> .....	i
<b>APPROVAL</b> .....	ii
<b>VALIDATION</b> .....	iii
<b>STATEMENT OF WORK’S ORIGINALITY</b> .....	iv
<b>MOTTO AND DEDICATION</b> .....	v
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	vi
<b>INTISARI</b> .....	vii
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENT</b> .....	viii
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	x
<b>CHAPTER I</b> .....	1
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	1
A. Background of the study.....	2
A. Limitation of the study .....	4
B. Problem Formulation.....	4
C. Objectives of the Study .....	4
E. Significances of the Study .....	4
F. Organization of the Study.....	4
<b>CHAPTER II</b> .....	5

A. Synopsis.....	5
B. Related Literature.....	7
<b>B.1 Psychology in Literature .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>B.2 Adolescence.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>B.3 Psychosocial Development.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>B.3.1 Basic vs Mistrust .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>B.3.2 Autonomy vs Shame.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>B.3.3 Initiative vs Guilt.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>B.3.4 Industry vs Inferiority.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>B.3.5 Identity vs Role Confusion.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>B.3.6 Intimacy vs Isolation .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>B.3.7 Generativity vs Stagnation.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>B.3.8 Integrity vs Despair.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>B.4 Identity Crisis .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>B.5 Negative Identity.....</b>	<b>14</b>
CHAPTER III.....	16
RESEARCH METHOD.....	16
A. Type of Research.....	16
B. Object of the Study.....	16

C. Data Organizing .....	16
<b>C.1 Data Collecting Method .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>C.1.1 Reading the Novel.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>C.1.2 Identifying Data.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>C.1.3 Classifying Data.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>C.1.4 Reducing Data .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>C.2 Data Types.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>C.2.1 Primary Data.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>C.2.2 Secondary Data.....</b>	<b>18</b>
C. Data Analyzing .....	18
CHAPTER IV.....	19
FINDING AND DISCUSSION.....	19
A. Identity Crisis.....	19
B. Negative Identity.....	29
CHAPTER V .....	37
A. Conclusion .....	37
B. Suggestion.....	37
REFERENCES .....	39

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **A. Background of the study**

Humans are born with different characteristics, especially in aspects of personality. A person's development can occur over time scientifically or unintentionally. Personality development is a process that must be experienced by every individual. Starting from childhood, adolescence, adulthood to old age. In these phases, each individual will experience a different personality development. The most important phase in the process of personality development occurs in adolescence, where adolescence is a crucial period to deal with life crisis which includes an identity crisis. Crisis is used here in a developmental sense to connote not a threat of catastrophe, but a turning point, a crucial period of increased vulnerability and heightened potential, and therefore, the ontogenetic source of generational strength and maladjustment. (Erikson 16)

Identity is important for every individual in determining who he/she is, how and what individual wants to be during his life. In going through the phase of self-identity formation, each adolescence has a different processing time, some are fast and some are slow, some even experience failure or also known as an identity crisis. An adolescence will do a lot of things in the process to find his identity. It is personal coherence or self-sameness through evolving time, social change, and altered role requirements.

Adolescence is a time of intensive formation of value orientations that influence the personality and character formation in general. (Berdibayeva 978)

In the period of psychological development of a child, Erik Erikson in his theory believes that the development of human psychology is heavily influenced by the social environment which called as Psychosocial. Psychosocial issues are common to occur in adolescence as refer to psychological and social problems. At this age, social or personal factors such as interpersonal conflict, dysfunctional families, trauma of the psyche and the motivation to antisocial behavior may cause adolescence develop negative identity, which can manifest themselves in deviant behavior. ((Berdibayeva 978)

Identity crisis in Erik Erikson's theory, it can be found that there are issues related to identity crisis. Such as adolescence, Identity vs Role Confusion, negative identity, and identity moratorium. Together they define Holden's identity crisis. Holden Caulfield in the novel *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) portraying these psychosocial development.

The main character in the catcher in the rye novel, Holden Caulfield, is a teenager who is going through a stressful time in his life. After he is expelled from school for the 4th time, Holden begins to explore the adult world full of confusion and shows his situation of living between no longer being a child but not being able to become an adult.

*The Catcher in the Rye*, by J.D. Salinger in 1951 is one of the most famous fictional novels in American literature. His name exploded on the literary scene after publishing his short story *A Perfect Day for Bananafish* in 1948. 3 years later, he



published the novel *The Catcher in the Rye* and cemented his reputation as one of the greatest writers of the 20th century.

The main character in the novel, Holden Caulfield searches for his identity as a teenager. Later this character seeks his identity and shows other qualities related to psychosocial development theory. The process of the main character to search for his identity motivates this research to be completed. Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development theory considered an appropriate character analysis.

#### A. Limitation of the study

This study only focuses on the main character in the novel, Holden Caulfield, who experienced the loss of his self-identity. This limits the Holden Caulfield identity crisis based on Psychosocial Development theory by Erik Erikson theory in the novel *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) by J.D Salinger.

#### B. Problem Formulation

The purpose of the study is to answer the following problem:

1. How is Holden Caulfield's identity crisis depicted in the novel?
2. How is Holden Caulfield's identity crisis impact his life in the novel?

#### C. Objective of the Study

1. To describe Holden Caulfield's identity crisis depicted in the novel.
2. To analyze the impact of Holden Caulfield's identity crisis.

#### D. Significance of the Study

This result of the study is expected to be able to give the following benefits:

1. This study could ease the students who are doing literary study and encourage them to study more about literature.
2. This study could guide the further researchers related to the discussions of Psychosocial Development.
3. This study could give information about identity crisis as depicted in the character of the novel.

#### E. Organization of the Study

The discussion of the study is systematically divided into parts. Each chapter discusses different subjects. Chapter one provides an introduction that contain : Background of the Study, Limitation of the Study, Problem Formulation, Objective of the Study, Significance of the Study, and outline of the study. Chapter two contain of the synopsis and theory related to literature which is Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Development theory: Adolescence, Ego Development, Identity vs Role Confusion, and Negative identity. Chapter three provides Research Method consist of Types of Research, Data Analyzing and Data Organizing.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **A. Synopsis**

Holden Caulfield is a 16 year old teenager who is going through a difficult time in his life and is experiencing confusion about his identity. He was confused about his status, between not being a child anymore, but also not wanting to become an adult. This was due to the life changes he is experiencing.

Holden's deep sadness over the death of his brother had a profound effect on changing his thoughts and behavior in establishing relationships with family, friends, and people around him. Holden becomes a hateful teenager. Especially to adults. According to him, all adults are fake. He calls them as "Phony". After losing his younger brother, Holden did not receive moral support from his parents and lived separately in the school dormitory.

In addition to his judgemental personality, Holden also cannot concentrate in school lessons because he is too focused on his hatred for people. He hates his roommate, Stradlater, because he is dating his childhood friend. He hates his roommate, Ackley, because he was dirty and annoying. Even Holden hates his headmaster, because he thought he was a hypocrite. He hates almost everyone he met, except children. According to him, the only good human beings are children, because they are a symbol of innocence unlike adults who are full of fakes.

Due to his dislike of school, Holden was expelled from school for the 4th time because he did not pass 4 out of 5 subjects. Instead of going home and telling his parents about his situation, he chose to travel to New York alone to experience the adult world with all the confusion inside him. By his unsociable, naive and judgmental personality, of course Holden is difficult to just have a normal relationship with new people. Holden tries out new rules to convince himself of his identity. Even though Holden has tried adult things, like going to clubs, ordering alcohol, and smoking cigarettes, he is still an innocent teenager who is not as brave as he thinks he is.

No matter how far Holden went, he is still feels depressed. Holden had trouble of sleeping, eating disorders, hallucinating and often contemplating suicide. Whenever he is feeling down, he talks to his dead brother as if they were still together. Sometimes he feels sorry about everything he did not do for his brother. Wherever Holden is, everything he sees depresses him.

The only person he wants to meet while on the run is his younger sister, Phoebe. Even though Phoebe is younger than him, Phoebe is someone who really understands Holden. When Holden secretly meets her at home, Phoebe immediately knew that her brother is in trouble. She is angry with Holden about the fact that he has been expelled from school again. Phoebe says Holden just hates everything. Holden said if he had a choice, he wanted to be a catcher in the rye. He would stand on the edge of a cliff and catch the children from falling.

Until one day, he is planning to go to a place where no one recognized him. He will live apart from his family and will find a job on his own even he plans to pretend to be a deaf mute so as not to have to communicate with other people. He told Phoebe that he would wait for her after school to say good bye. When Holden says his plan, Phoebe insists to going with him wherever Holden goes. They even got into an argument that led to Holden to realize how much his sister loves him. After a fight, Holden buys a carousel ticket for Phoebe. Holden feels happy just to see his sister happy and he wishes he could have been there.

All of Holden's plans about his escape, now vanished because of his sister. No matter how far Holden ran, he is still just a child who still needed the love of others. After 2 days of traveling in New York, Holden finally decides to comes back home. He also agrees to go to a psychiatrist to treat his mental health. At the end of the story, Holden says that when he talks about his life and other people, he sort of miss everybody he tells about. Even his annoying friends that he hates so much.

## **B. Related Literature**

### **B.1. Psychology in Literature**

Novel is a literary work as a result of literature written by author, which have the biggest effect in society and become on of the most popular literary work in the world.

“Literature is a social institution using as its medium language, a social creation ... literature represents life, and life is, in large measure, a social reality, even though the natural world or and the inner or subjective world of the individual

have also been objects of literary imitation. The poet himself is a member of society, possesses of a specific social status ..." (Wellek & Warren 94)

Psychology is a complex form to define, on the other hand it can be described as "the science that systematically studies and attempts to explain observable behavior and its relationship to the unseen mental processes that go on inside the organism and to external events in the environment". (Kagan & Havemann 13)

Human psychology can be analyzed by using psychoanalysis. It is an approach of human subjectivity which offers the concept of mind's thinking, dreaming, wanting, imagining and hiding. Psychoanalysis is developed by Sigmund Freud in last 19th century. Erik Erikson is a major revisionist of Freud's view. Erikson believed that the development task to be accomplished is the present identity from the stages of the personality growth and the phenomena that happen at each stage. Personality, in this context, is the key element in both psychology and literature. As Kagan and Havemann said,

"as the total pattern of characteristic ways of behaving and thinking that constitute the individual's unique and distinctive method of adjusting to his environment". (Kagan & Havemann 422)

## **B.2 Adolescence**

Erik Erikson examines adolescence as one of these stages of developments by examining some emotionally distressed adolescents who were having therapeutic treatment. Adolescence is a phase when individuals become confused and not sure about their personal strength and weaknesses. Individuals no longer have well



articulated sense of self. This brief instability and confusion, resulting the uncertainty and conflicting pressure about one's self and role in society. Individuals usually experienced this condition during the adolescence period which called as identity crisis. (Erikson 88)

### **B.3 Psychosocial Development**

Erikson's theory (1950, 1968, 1980) founds the "epigenetics principle". The step-by-step principle is a concept linked to genetic science. Erik H. Erikson describes ego development with internal crises in his book "Childhood and Society". This book is an image of personality development that is shaped by physical, cognitive, impulsive and sexual changes. Throughout the life of the individual and the crises have taken place at these stages. Crisis refers to the time when adolescents engage to choose among meaningful alternatives; commitment refers to the degree of individual exhibits of personal investment. (Marcia 551)

Erikson, psychoanalytic development taking into account the basic concepts of an eight-stage psychosocial development theory formed. The principal points of theories of psychoanalytical development in general are childhood experiences and sexuality. In his studies, Erikson focused gave importance to the terms on interpersonal and cultural influences in child development. (Tatlilioğlu 3)

Erikson defined opposing features of each turn, he has made 8 turns. In each period, through a different kind of conflict, the crises is solved and a basic feature is gained. There are contrasting personalities in each period, but the important is how

positive and how the two contrasting personalities develop correctly. The periods are generally as follows :

### **1. Basic trust vs Mistrust**

The fundamental and basic psychological task for infants is to develop a sense of their environments are responsive, consistent, and reliable. In other words, basic trust of infant built by a responsive caregiver. When infants are in distress, they can expect their caregiver will attend to their needs. (Syed & McLean 3)

Development of a sense of trust will lead to confidence that people around will support their needs. (Branje & Koper 2)

### **2. Autonomy vs Shame**

Following infants developing sense of environment, children in this stage face the question about it is fine for them to be themselves. Due to motor and verbal development, toddlers develop their ability to satisfy their own needs. They become independent and discover that they have many skills and abilities. Children might develop low self-esteem, become ashamed and doubt if caregivers are too restrictive, criticizing, or demanding. (Branje & Koper 2)

### **3. Initiative vs Guilt**

In early childhood, children learn to take a bigger risk without their caregiver and actively taking initiative. They explore their interpersonal skills to initiate activities such as planning activities, making up games and pursuing tasks. Children may develop the sense of guilt if parents and teachers express too much criticism or control toward them. (Branje & Koper 2)

#### **4. Industry vs Inferiority**

During the age, children are capable of learning new skills and knowledge. As they begin to recognizing their interests, they develop a sense of industry, where they are being able to make and do things with feeling confident and competent. If childrens are punished for their efforts or feeling of incapable in their expectation, they might feel inferiority as well as self-low esteem and lack of motivation. (Branje & Koper 2)

#### **5. Identity vs Role Confusion**

Adolescents are becoming more independent and begin to explore the roles that fits in their society. They will experience an identity crisis in which they will reexamine their childhood identifications formed to explore possibilities, and try to find out about who they are and what they want to do in life. Adolescents will struggling with social interactions in order to fit in and discover their own identity. (Branje & Koper 2)

#### **6. Intimacy vs Isolation**

Children who have established a firm of identity, they will be ready and able to make a commitments to others and accept others at any differences. They will begin to seek companionship and love in friendship and romantic relationships. Those who do not develop intimate relationships, they will experience the feelings of isolation, loneliness and fear of being rejected. (Branje & Koper 3)

## **7. Generativity vs Stagnation**

In this developmental task, individuals become concern about establishing and guiding the next generation and contributing to society. They will develop a sense of generativity when individuals provide care for their children, productive at work and involve in some kind of community activities. Unwilling to contribute to society develop a sense of stagnation. (Branje & Koper 3)

## **8. Integrity vs Despair**

In the final developmental task, individuals reflect on their lives. Unproductive older adults feel guilty about their past or feel failed to achieve their goals and experience a sense of despair to find a purpose to life. Individuals who accept their life and feel contented about their contribution to society are able to develop a sense of integrity. (Branje & Koper 3)

Later, this study will more deeply focuses to analyze the main caharacter on the fifth stage. Because, the main character only narates his story in his adolescent period where he shows the quality of the fifth stage of Psychosocial Development.

### **B.4 Identity Crisis**

Erik Erikson's concept of Identity crisis, he concerned that psychosocial theory analyzes and learns on how social conditions such as society, culture and history can influenced individual's identity. He also learn about how development of identity can be influenced by the relationship between individual's identity and social conditions which individuals experienced some issues related to social conditions in their life.

Identity is defined as a set of distinctive characteristic or individual uniqueness by the social environment where the individual lives. (Erikson 109)

Identity is something that can be acquired, developed, and evolved depends on the individual's role in a social circumstance and how they interact with others. In other words, the role that the individual has in society and how society identifies individual, can affect individual to shape their sense of identity. Social environment's condition play on major role in shaping a lasting pattern of 'inner identity'. (Erikson 66)

Examining about identity, Erikson finds that it should be related to identity crisis. Crisis generally defined as a dangerous or unstable situation which affect individual or community. But, Erikson believes that the word 'crisis' is no longer connotes as a catastrophe, which seemed to be an obstacle. He later defines crisis as, "...designating a necessary turning point, a crucial moment, when development must move one way or another, marshaling resources of growth, recovery, and further differentiation." (Erikson 16)

Crisis in human identity occurs more than once in a life time. Erikson uses the word 'crisis' to define the individual's internal conflicts when they experience a struggle time to know who they are and what they want to be in their life. (McLean and Syed, 116) Who am I? What will I do in my life? What is my difference? These questions reflect the identity crisis in adolescent. In order to solve those problems successfully, individuals must have a healthy identity which they are capable to

understand their life's purpose. Therefore, it can be summed up that the identity crisis issues in adolescent are significant to find a sense of self.

Individuals who fails into a situation called identity confusion, which failing to cope with the difficulties that the crisis has brought. The individual has not been able to identify himself in psychosocial terms and lack of ability in making decision which lead them to have negative identity. (Tatlilioğlu 12)

### **B.5 Negative Identity**

Negative identity is one of the results when adolescents experience the loss sense of identity. In the process of solving the identity crisis, adolescent unify various social roles, which they commit into an overall sense of identity. Each of these roles has a multiple types, such as positive, negative, or neutral. Adolescents can develop their identity through free experimentation with these multiple roles. Erikson defined a negative identity as deviate of an identity based on identifications roles which happens at critical stages of development and had been presented by individuals as most undesirable or dangerous and yet also as most real. (S. Hihara et al. 26)

During the critical stage of development, young people try to explore a variety of elements of the self such as self identification, self image, social roles and values in order to find sense of identity. Adolescents who are distressed by guilt connected with the earlier conflict, suffering from a severe identity crisis. When adolescent cannot resolve their sense of guilt through any normal experimentation, they desperately attempt to take action by choosing negative roles and rejecting positive



ones. Thus forming a negative sense of self rather than a positive sense of self.  
(Erikson 31)

Erikson and other theorist believed that in general negative view towards the self (negative identity) promotes radically views toward society. They proposed three psychosocial beliefs which will especially related with negative identity: dichotomous beliefs, cynicism, and social distrust. First, dichotomous beliefs is designation for adolescent who has a high sense of negativity towards their identity, this happens because their inability to integrate conflicting views of their world, such as “good or bad” and “friend or enemy”. Second, cynicism means that they tend to believe others as enemies. Third, social distrusts mean that individuals believe other people are not trustworthy or not generally fair. These problematic psychosocial beliefs have been found to avoid adolescent from engaging activities in society and instead encourage them to engage in dangerous problem behaviors. ((S. Hihara et al. 26)

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHOD

Research method is one of the method strategy uses to collect and analyze data responding to problem formulation. This chapter consist of types of research, data organizing and data analyzing.

#### A. Type of Research

This research is qualitative research where the data are reported in a form of sentences or descriptive ways. It is presented descriptively because the data analysis in this research is in forms of words, sentences, phrases, utterances and dialogue, not in a number form.

#### B. Object of the Study

The object of this research is a novel written by J.D Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951)

#### C. Data Organizing

##### C.1. Data Collecting Method

There are some steps to collecting method, those are:

##### C.1.1. Reading The Novel

To fully understand this novel, reading is important. Reading the novel *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) by J.D Salinger throughly for several times will help to

understand the detail of the story and understand it better. Also include reading with the particular attention to the words inside the novel.

### **C.1.2. Identifying The Data**

Identifying data is done after reading the novel several times. Identifying the data is to analyze the important parts of the novel, which of the data that can be used to be analyzed and not. The data can be identified by marking, underlining, bookmarking, labeling and numbering. Data found in a form of description, prologue, monologue and dialogue. It also includes the indirect meaning of the text that is found in several paragraph.

### **C.1.3. Classifying Data**

The third method of collecting data is classifying data. Classifying data is to list the identified data then put it on a table. This table consist of columns of numbers, data from the novel, comments and reference. The classified data is called appendix.

### **C.1.4. Reducing Data**

The final method is reducing data. Reducing means remove some parts of the data found into smaller number. The results of this step can reduce deficient data and storage efficiency.

## **C.2. DATA TYPES**

This study uses two types of data, those are:

### **C.2.1. Primary Data**

The primary data are taken from the novel *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) by J.D Salinger.

### **C.2.2. Secondary Data**

The secondary data are taken from journals, books, sites, and articles that supporting this research.

## **D. Data Analyzing**

The last step of this research is analyzing data. Analyzing data is a technique which consist of 2 steps, analyzing and reporting the data. This technique is stated in statements, description and quotation or through explanation. The study tries to take interpretation taken from the novel and uses the Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development and continue to report the results by describing and explaining together with data found. The complete analysis is reported in Chapter IV as the results.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

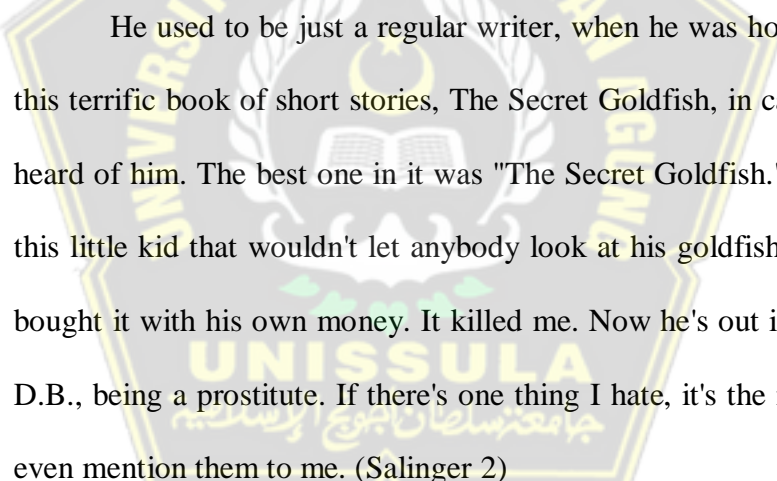
As what is mentioned in Chapter one, the aims of this research are to describe the identity crisis of the main character and to analyze the impact of the main character's identity crisis in J.D Salinger's novel, *The Catcher in the Rye*. In this chapter, there is a further analysis on finding based on Erikson's psychosocial development. The first sub chapter focuses on the identity crisis experienced by Holden. The second sub chapter focuses on how Holden's identity crisis impact his life.

#### A. Identity Crisis

Identity crisis happens as a part of human development. Development from time to time creates a sense of "crisis" in every individual, so does Holden Caulfield. The main character of *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) novel has an identity crisis in his adolescent. As a teenager who is going through a stressful time in his attempts to deal with his physical and social changes, leads him to live in a state of in betweenness, not being a child any more and yet become an adult. He trapped in his childhood memories and resist the world of adulthood which he considers as a "phony". Holden narrates his story during his stresfull time, after being expelled from school for fourth time. Holden is in situation where he becomes afraid of going home and tell his parent about his problem and decides to go to New York. During his hard time, he potray uncertainty of what he is and what he

wants to be. A feeling of uncertainty about his self and his role in society that he faces in adolescent period arises his identity crisis.

According to Erikson, "The lost of sense of identity is often expressed in a scornful and snobbish hostility toward the roles offered as proper and desirable in one's family or immediate community." (Erikson 172-173) Individuals feel this feeling of identity crisis in their adolescent expressed by some kind of rejection to other roles. Holden starts his story with describing his parents who are quite touchy about everything and his brother who is now working as a writer in Hollywood. Holden's identity crisis can be seen in the quotation below :



He used to be just a regular writer, when he was home. He wrote this terrific book of short stories, *The Secret Goldfish*, in case you never heard of him. The best one in it was "The Secret Goldfish." It was about this little kid that wouldn't let anybody look at his goldfish because he'd bought it with his own money. It killed me. Now he's out in Hollywood, D.B., being a prostitute. If there's one thing I hate, it's the movies. Don't even mention them to me. (Salinger 2)

This monologue shows that Holden rejects the role of adult by calling his brother as a prostitute because he decides to work in Hollywood and is no longer the author of the children's books he used to admire. A feeling of disappointment that his brother is leaving from his childhood memories. This shows the quality of his identity crisis where he step away from the roles offered, in this case is being an adult.



Holden should come back home in Wednesday before the christmas vacation started. But he decides to get out of Pencey early after he has been kicked out. Before he go, Holden visits his history teacher, Mr. Spencer, in order to say goodbye. Holden feels that he should say goodbye to him, because he is the only teacher who he respects most. In their conversation, Holden shows the quality of his identity crisis in the quotation below :

"Life is a game, boy. Life is a game that one plays according to the rules."  
"Yes, sir. I know it is. I know it." Game, my ass. Some game. If you get on the side where all the hot-shots are, then it's a game, all right--I'll admit that. But if you get on the other side, where there aren't any hot-shots, then what's a game about it? Nothing. No game. (Salinger 9)

The quotation above shows that Holden's identity crisis, where he has low self-confidence and looks down on himself. According to him, the phrase "life is a game" is only appropriate for people who are talented and successful in their fields. Whereas he thinks that he is on the other side, where he is not a talented person and not part of what he calls as "hot-shots". Individuals without a clear sense of identity would become depressed and lack of self-confidence, trapped in the 'diffusion' status or might embrace 'negative identity' becoming a 'delinquent', a 'rebellion', or a 'loser'. (Shaffer 191)

This quotation below also shows Holden's identity crisis :

You should see her. You never saw a little kid so pretty and smart in your whole life. She's really smart. I mean she's had all A's ever since she started school. As a matter of fact, I'm the only dumb one in the family. My brother D.B.'s a writer and all, and my brother Allie, the one that died, that I told you about, was a wizard. I'm the only really dumb one. (Salinger 72)

In this quotation, Holden also shows that he had a low level of self-confidence when he said that he was the only stupid person in the house compared to his brother and sisters. He has no confidence in his abilities and what talents he has. The ignorance in him shows the quality of the identity crisis he is facing. Individuals without a clear sense of identity would become depressed and lack of self-confidence, trapped in the 'diffusion' status or might embrace 'negative identity' becoming a 'delinquent', a 'rebellion', or a 'loser'. (Shaffer 191) This quotation below also shows Holden's identity crisis :

... I act quite young for my age sometimes. I was sixteen then, and I'm seventeen now, and sometimes I act like I'm about thirteen.

... And yet I still act sometimes like I was only about twelve.

... Sometimes I act a lot older than I am – I really do – but people never notice it. (Salinger 9-10)

The quotation above shows Holden's identity crisis. His behavior which he often acts like people in different age shows that he is not certain about his self. That feeling may occur because he is not sure about what he actually is, a child or an adult. So subconsciously he is confused to determine how he should behave in his daily life. According to Erikson,

identity crisis is a sense of confusion due to war within themselves that experiences by severely conflicted young people. (Erikson 17)

In Holden and Mr Spencer's conversation, Mr Spencer asked what was the problem with the schools he had previously attended. Considering he's been kicked out of 3 schools and Pencey being the fourth. But Holden wouldn't tell him. According to Erikson, identity crisis is a sense of confusion due to war within themselves that experiences by severely conflicted young people. (Erikson 17) This quotation below also shows Holden's identity crisis :

"Do you feel absolutely no concern for your future, boy?"

"Oh, I feel some concern for my future, all right. Sure. Sure, I do." I

thought about it for a minute. "But not too much, I guess. Not too much, I guess." (Salinger 15)

In this quotation, Holden expressed skepticism toward questions about his future, which he said he wasn't too worried about. From the word 'I guess' at the end of the sentence, indicating that he's not really has no concern about his future, but he's just avoiding it. Individuals with a sense of confusion have doubts about what they are and what they want to be in their life. According to Erikson, identity crisis is a sense of confusion due to war within themselves that experiences by severely conflicted young people. (Erikson 17)

After he left Mr. Spencer home, on his way to the dorms, Holden tells that he lives in the wing room named after his senior. He was a success man after graduating from

Pencey, and contributed a large sum of money to the school. Once, he gave a speech at church, which Holden demonstrates the qualities of his identity crisis as follows:

He told us we should always pray to God--talk to Him and all--wherever we were. He told us we ought to think of Jesus as our buddy and all. He said he talked to Jesus all the time. Even when he was driving his car. That killed me. I just see the big phony bastard shifting into first gear and asking Jesus to send him a few more stiffs. The only good part of his speech was right in the middle of it. He was telling us all about what a swell guy he was, what a hot-shot and all, then all of a sudden this guy sitting in the row in front of me, Edgar Marsalla, laid this terrific fart. It was a very crude thing to do, in chapel and all, but it was also quite amusing. (Salinger 19)

In the quotation above, Holden shows that he views adulthood as phony, fake and hypocritical. He characterizes 'phonies' as people who are fake and dishonest about who they are, and they just play apart to fit into a society. Adulthood represent everything he fears of fights against. According to Erikson, "The loss of sense of identity is often expressed in a scornful and snobbish hostility toward the roles offered as proper and desirable in one's family or immediate community. (Erikson 172-173)

Identity confusion may result in behavior, such as running away, dropping out from school, quitting jobs, and staying out all night. (Van Doeselaar et al., 8) Holden shows this quality of identity confusion when he is faced with a problem. After getting into a fight with his roommate, Holden feels depressed and decides to go to New York.

All of a sudden, I decided what I'd really do, I'd get the hell out of Pencey right that same night and all. I mean not wait till Wednesday or anything. I just didn't want to hang around any more. It made me too sad and lonesome. So what I decided to do, I decided I'd take a room in a hotel in New York--some very inexpensive hotel and all--and just take it easy till Wednesday. Then, on Wednesday, I'd go home all rested up and feeling swell. I figured my parents probably wouldn't get old Thurmer's letter saying I'd been given the ax till maybe Tuesday or Wednesday. I didn't want to go home or anything till they got it and thoroughly digested it and all. I didn't want to be around when they first got it. My mother gets very hysterical. She's not too bad after she gets something thoroughly digested, though. Besides, I sort of needed a little vacation. My nerves were shot. They really were. (Salinger 54)

The quotation above shows that when faced with a problem, Holden chooses to run away rather than face it. Holden's inability to resolve issues with his roommates, his family, and even with himself indicates that Holden is feeling depressed due to a war with himself. The confusion over what he wants causes feelings of wanting to run away as he doesn't want to face his parents when they find out Holden is expelled from school again.

According to Erikson, "Such complaints as 'I don't know', 'I give up', 'I quit', are by no means mere habitual statements reflecting a mild depression; they are often expressions of the kind of despair." (Erikson 169) Individuals who have not a strong

feeling of themselves tends to feel depressed. It is shown by Holden in the quotation below :

When I was all set to go, when I had my bags and all, I stood for a while next to the stairs and took a last look down the goddam corridor. I was sort of crying. I don't know why. I put my red hunting hat on, and turned the peak around to the back, the way I liked it, and then I yelled at the top of my goddam voice, "Sleep tight, ya morons!" I'll bet I woke up every bastard on the whole floor. Then I got the hell out. Some stupid guy had thrown peanut shells all over the stairs, and I damn near broke my crazy neck. (Salinger 55)

This monologue shows that Holden is a depressed teenager who is unsure of what he is doing. It's normal when we cry when we are sad or laugh when we are happy. But Holden lives in disbelief about himself by saying 'I don't know' about what he is feeling and what he is doing. Another problem as a result of his identity crisis shown in the quotation below :

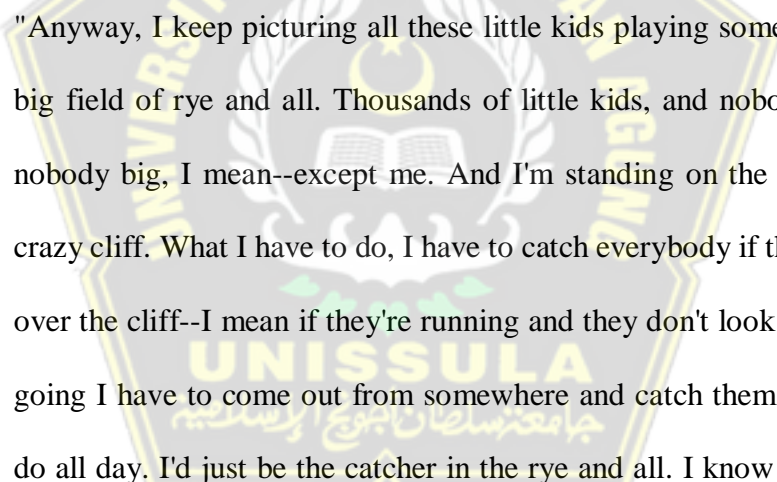
"Oh, how nice!" the lady said. But not corny. She was just nice and all. "I must tell Ernest we met," she said. "May I ask your name, dear?" "Rudolf Schmidt," I told her. I didn't feel like giving her my whole life history. Rudolf Schmidt was the name of the janitor of our dorm. (Salinger 59)

In this quotation, Holden tries to shies away from interpersonal intimacy by lying to his mother's classmate that he meets once about his name. He gives her a fake name because



he do not want to expose himself. He do not want others to know her or engage in adult intimacy. Intolerance and irrational fear may likewise be seen as a result of such lack of confidence and self-assurance. (Watt 290)

In his escape, Holden ventured to meet his younger sister at home. The only kind of human that escapes negative comments from him. According to him, children are more trustworthy than adults, so Holden feels more comfortable talking to his sister. In the conversation, Phoebe knows that Holden was expelled again from school, she is very upset and questions about what exactly Holden wants to do in his life. Holden's answer shows the quality of the identity crisis.



"Anyway, I keep picturing all these little kids playing some game in this big field of rye and all. Thousands of little kids, and nobody's around--nobody big, I mean--except me. And I'm standing on the edge of some crazy cliff. What I have to do, I have to catch everybody if they start to go over the cliff--I mean if they're running and they don't look where they're going I have to come out from somewhere and catch them. That's all I'd do all day. I'd just be the catcher in the rye and all. I know it's crazy, but that's the only thing I'd really like to be. I know it's crazy." (Salinger 186)

In this quotation, Holden shows that he is afraid to enter the adult world and still wants to be a kid. He fears of responsibilities of become a grown up man and instead he portrays the catcher in the rye as a helper which he wants to save children from losing their innocence and entering adulthood. Holden trapped between the two phases of his life,



adolescence and adulthood. Based on Erikson, identity crisis is a sense of confusion due to war within themselves that experiences by severely conflicted young people. (Erikson 17)

Adolescent in their attempt to solve their identity crisis, according to Erikson, a need to find an adult leader figure outside of the family who can guides the adolescent safely. (Erikson 87) However, during the process of finding a trustworthy figure, the adolescent hesitates to have complete “trusting commitment, and will paradoxically, express his need for faith in loud and cynical mistrust.” (Erikson 129) This quotation below shows Holden has cynical mistrust :

I woke up all of a sudden. I don't know what time it was or anything, but I woke up. I felt something on my head, some guy's hand. Boy, it really scared hell out of me. What it was, it was Mr. Antolini's hand. What he was doing was, he was sitting on the floor right next to the couch, in the dark and all, and he was sort of petting me or patting me on the goddam head. Boy, I'll bet I jumped about a thousand feet. (Salinger 206)

This monologue shows that Holden unable to have complete trusting commitment when Mr. Antolini shows a kind of sympathy, but Holden thinks that it might be a sign of sexual intention. His doubts about adults are a form of her rejection of the adult world because he has decided that adults are 'phonies'.

At the end of the story, again, Holden reiterates about his identity crisis. When he finally decides to come back home and gets a therapy for his depression. Identity crisis is

a sense of confusion due to war within themselves that experiences by severely conflicted young people. (Erikson 17) It shown by the quotation below :

A lot of people, especially this one psychoanalyst guy they have here, keeps asking me if I'm going apply myself when I go back to school next September. It's such a stupid question, in my opinion. I mean how do you know what you're going to do till you do it? The answer is, you don't. I think I am, but how do I know? I swear it's a stupid question. (Salinger 230)

This quotation above shows that, after exploring the adult world, Holden still does not have strong sense of self in the end. He is unable to make a commitment to his future. This is a form of Holden's failure to solve his identity crisis which is reflected in the qualities that have been shown.

### **B. Negative Identity**

Every individual's psychosocial identity, contains a hierarchy of positive and negative elements. Throughout the childhood, individuals grow with the representation of evil and ideal prototypes. Negative identity is a formed of identity by identifying with opposed roles that expected by society. Erikson asserted that identities consist of both positive and negative sides, with negative identities not simply lacking positive ones. A negative identity represents a problematic side of the sense of identity consisting the negative aspects of the self. (Erikson 26)

One of Holden's problem is communication. Being a sensitive adolescent, he has a communication problem, not only with the adult people, but also with others of his age. His communication problem reflected his low social skills and his feeling of alienation. Negative identity in adolescent, formed if there are problems in learning, problem in communication with parents, peers, teachers and others in the formation of self-concept. (Steva Berdibayeva et al., 978)

This quotation below shows us his communication problem with others :

I felt like giving somebody a buzz.

...My brother D.B. was in Hollywood. My kid sister Phoebe goes to bed around nine o'clock--so I couldn't call her up. She wouldn't've cared if I'd woke her up, but the trouble was, she wouldn't've been the one that answered the phone. My parents would be the ones. So that was out. Then I thought of giving Jane Gallagher's mother a buzz, and find out when Jane's vacation started, but I didn't feel like it. Besides, it was pretty late to call up. Then I thought of calling this girl I used to go around with quite frequently, Sally Hayes, because I knew her Christmas vacation had started already--she'd written me this long, phony letter, inviting me over to help her trim the Christmas tree Christmas Eve and all--but I was afraid her mother'd answer the phone.

...Then I thought of calling up this guy that went to the Whooton School when I was there, Carl Luce, but I didn't like him much. So I ended up not calling anybody. (Salinger 64)

This quotation shows Holden's inability to communicate with others, not just with adults but also with his peers. His communication problem indicates his insecurity which is reflected in his low social skills and his avoiding of intimacy. At one time he wants to talk to someone, but on the other hand he is afraid by things that actually only existed in his own mind. Just to talk to other people, was a problem for him and he didn't call anyone in the end.

Adolescent with negative identity may engage in various extreme problem behaviors such as delinquency behavior, self-injury and suicide. (Sugimura et al., 3) Negative identity is formed in adolescence, when there are behavioral problem through the experimentation of different role in order to solve their identity crisis. This quotation below shows the negative identity of the main character :

The more I thought about my gloves and my yellowness, the more depressed I got, and I decided, while I was walking and all, to stop off and have a drink somewhere. I'd only had three drinks at Ernie's, and I didn't even finish the last one. One thing I have, it's a terrific capacity. I can drink all night and not even show it, if I'm in the mood. Once, at the Whooton School, this other boy, Raymond Goldfarb, and I bought a pint of Scotch and drank it in the chapel one Saturday night, where nobody'd see us. He

got stinking, but I hardly didn't even show it. I just got very cool and nonchalant. I puked before I went to bed, but I didn't really have to--I forced myself. (Salinger 98)

This monologue shows that Holden has a tendency to carry out deviant or illegal behaviors since school. He drinks Scotch with his friends even though he is still underage. Deviant behavior performed by individuals when conducting experiments while exploring different roles is a form of negative identity that they experience.

Boy, I sat at that goddam bar till around one o'clock or so, getting drunk as a bastard. I could hardly see straight. The one thing I did, though, I was careful as hell not to get boisterous or anything. I didn't want anybody to notice me or anything or ask how old I was. But, boy, I could hardly see straight. When I was really drunk, I started that stupid business with the bullet in my guts again. I was the only guy at the bar with a bullet in their guts. (Salinger 161)

This quotation above shows another time when Holden is drunk again in a bar. Holden would often lie about his age to others in order to be considered an adult, and he do the same to the bartender at the bars he visited to order alcohol. Holden's deviant behavior is very dangerous, considering that he is still a minor but has often drunk alcohol without the knowledge of his parents and teachers. Adolescent with negative identity may engage in various extreme peroblem behaviors such as delinquency behavior, self-injury and suicide. (Sugimura et al., 3)

Negative identity expressed as an angry and snobish rejection of adolescent roles expected by family, community or society. (Erikson 172) They tend to do maladaptive behavior and may engage with alcohol, drug, free sex and suicidal thought. This quotation below show Holden's negative identity :

....

The first thing when I got in the elevator, the elevator guy said to me, "Innarested in having a good time, fella? Or is it too late for you?"

"How do you mean?" I said. I didn't know what he was driving at or anything.

"Innarested in a little tail t'night?"

Me?" I said. Which was a very dumb answer, but it's quite embarrassing when somebody comes right up and asks you a question like that.

"How old are you, chief?" the elevator guy said.

"Why?" I said. "Twenty-two."

"Uh huh. Well, how 'bout it? Y'innarested? Five bucks a throw. Fifteen bucks the whole night." He looked at his wrist watch. "Till noon. Five bucks a throw, fifteen bucks till noon."

"Okay," I said. It was against my principles and all, but I was feeling so depressed I didn't even think. That's the whole trouble. When you're feeling very depressed, you can't even think.

"Okay what? A throw, or till noon? I gotta know."

"Just a throw."

"Okay, what room ya in?"

I looked at the red thing with my number on it, on my key. "Twelve twenty-two," I said. I was already sort of sorry I'd let the thing start rolling, but it was too late now.

"Okay. I'll send a girl up in about fifteen minutes." He opened the doors and I got out.

"Hey, is she good-looking?" I asked him. "I don't want any old bag."

"No old bag. Don't worry about it, chief."

"Who do I pay?"

"Her," he said. "Let's go, chief." He shut the doors, practically right in my face. (Salinger 99)

This quotation above shows that one day on his run, Holden stays at a motel, where he meets an elevator boy who offers him a prostitute. Holden once again lies about his age. Holden is very depressed and couldn't think that's why he accepts the offer. This shows that Holden unknowingly puts away the positives and always ends up doing bad or dangerous things.



Anyway, when I was in bed, I couldn't pray worth a damn. Every time I got started, I kept picturing old Sunny calling me a crumb-bum. Finally, I sat up in bed and smoked another cigarette. It tasted lousy. I must've smoked around two packs since I left Pencey. (Salinger 109)

In this quotation, after a prostitute he rents is gone, he spends his time in the room smoking, he is even smoked 2 packs since he left the school. Another bad behavior that he does like there is nothing positive he can do. Negative identity expressed as an angry and snobish rejection of adolescent roles expected by family, community or society. (Erikson 172)

Based on Sugimura, Adolescent with negative identity may engage in various extreme problem behaviors such as delinquency behavior, self-injury and suicide. (3)  
Holden negative identity shows in this quotation below :

I stayed in the bathroom for about an hour, taking a bath and all. Then I got back in bed. It took me quite a while to get to sleep--I wasn't even tired--but finally I did. What I really felt like, though, was committing suicide. I felt like jumping out the window. I probably would've done it, too, if I'd been sure somebody'd cover me up as soon as I landed. I didn't want a bunch of stupid rubbernecks looking at me when I was all gory. (Salinger 113)

This monologue shows Holden suicidal thought. Feeling his life is very depressing, about the death of his brother, him leaving after being expelled from school, feeling unhappy

with the adult world, makes him have thoughts of suicide by jumping out of the window. A person with a negative identity tend to thinks of dangerous things to do such as self-injury even suicide.



## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

This chapter talks about the conclusion and the suggestion from the final project. The main concern of this final project is to describe Holden's identity crisis and how his identity crisis impact his life. Moreover, the suggestion in this chapter offers a different approach of analysis to the other researchers who want to use this novel as their project.

#### **A. Conclusion**

Human development from time to time creates a sense of "crisis". It is normal that adolescence experience identity crisis in their life. Adolescence is one crucial stage where they suffer from identity confusion.

Identity crisis in Holden appear when he start to questioning about what he actually is and what he wants to be in his life. He begins to explore what is called adult's world to tries a different role with his confusion self. The unable to finish his crisis, Holden experience negative identity which influence his thoughts and behaviors. He attempts to reach out to people who might help him in his struggle to solve his identity crisis.

Through this novel, the reader lives the experience of Erik Erikson's identity crisis. Erikson's negative identity is illustrated in Holden's maladaptive behaviors such as smoking, going to bar, drinking alcohol and pays for prostitute.

#### **B. Suggestion**

The Catcher in the Rye is an amazing novel written by J.D Salinger in 1951, that tells us about the perspective of a person that experiencing from identity crisis in his adolescent. Although this novel is already being analyzed using Psychosocial Development theory, there is an opportunity to use this novel using another theories. We can also take a different approach to analyze this novel.



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