

**CHILDREN PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT ON
FAMILY DISRUPTION AS PORTRAYED IN RUKHSANA
KHAN'S *A NEW LIFE* (2009)**

A GRADUATING PAPER

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Gaining
the Bachelor Degree in English Department



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MOTTO

“Sometimes it is okay to giving up.”

- Hendery of WayV

“It wasn't easy, but it wasn't bad.”

“It just so happens because we're facing today for the first time.”

- SEVENTEEN, *Cheers To Youth*



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DEDICATION

I dedicate this final paper to:

Me, myself, and I, who never giving up even it is fine to gives up
sometimes.

My parents, Bapak Muchodjin and Ibu Eva, who never stop in
supporting me and giving me their allowance to explore
something new in this world.

My little sisters, Zahra and Zahwa who always look up to me and
giving me strength to never giving up and finish my paper.

All my peers who go through the same difficulties.

And my lecturers from the English Literature Study Program of
Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga in Yogyakarta.

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LIFE (2009)**

kami menyatakan bahwa skripsi tersebut sudah dapat diajukan pada sidang munaqosyah untuk memenuhi salah satu syarat memperoleh gelar Sarjana Sastra Inggris.

Atas perhatiannya, kami mengucapkan terima kasih.

Wassalamu 'alaikum Wr. Wb

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A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

I certify that this graduate paper is definitely my own work. I am completely responsible for the content of this graduating paper. Other researcher's opinion or finding included in this research is quoted or cited in accordance with ethical standards.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

MOTTO	ii
DEDICATION	iii
APPROVAL (NOTA DINAS).....	iv
VALIDATION	v
FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
ABSTRACT	xii
ABSTRAK	xiii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 BACKGROUND OF STUDY	1
1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION.....	6
1.3 OBJECTIVE & SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY	7
1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW.....	8
1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	10
1.5.1 Individual Psychology Theory	10
1.6 RESEARCH METHOD	17
1.6.1 Type of Research.....	17

1.6.2 Data Source	18
1.6.3 Data Collection Technique.....	18
1.6.4 Data Analysis Technique	19
1.7 PAPER ORGANIZATIONS	20
CHAPTER II INTRINSIC ELEMENTS	21
2.1 Theme.....	21
2.2 Plot	22
2.2.1 Events	23
2.2.2 Conflicts	27
2.2.3 Climax	29
2.3 Character and Characterization.....	34
2.3.1 Main Characters	35
2.3.2 Additional Characters.....	38
2.4 Setting	48
2.4.1 Setting of Place.....	48
2.4.2 Setting of Time.....	51
2.4.3 Setting of Social Circumstances.....	52
2.5 Point of View	53
CHAPTER III FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS	55

3.1 Feelings of Inferiority	55
3.2 Striving for Superiority	60
3.3 Social Interest.....	64
3.4 Lifestyle.....	69
CHAPTER IV CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION.....	72
4.1 Conclusion	72
4.2 Suggestion	74
REFERENCES.....	75
CURRICULUM VITAE.....	78



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**Children Personality Development on Family Disruption as
Portrayed in Rukhsana Khan's *A New Life* (2009)**

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ABSTRACT

This research examines factors influencing children's personality development in *A New Life*, a novel by Rukhsana Khan published by Groundwood Books in 2009. The story explores children's experiences adapting to a new environment and how these challenges affect their personal growth within the family. The study applies Alfred Adler's personality theory, which includes key ideas such as feelings of inferiority, striving for superiority, social interest, and lifestyle. Using a qualitative descriptive method, this study analyzes the characters Hamza and Khadija by interpreting the factors shaping their personalities. The results of this research show that Hamza and Khadija's feelings of inferiority stem from difficulties in language and adjusting to a new culture, such as Hamza feeling undervalued by his classmates. Hamza's efforts to prove his abilities demonstrate his striving for superiority, although these actions sometimes have negative consequences. Social interest is reflected in moments of empathy, like when Khadija recognizes the difficulties her friend is facing. Hamza and Khadija's lifestyle is also shown through the moment when they are new in Canada, which has a different culture and environment from Pakistan. The study also emphasizes the role of parents in giving emotional support and encouraging a positive mindset, showing that a combination of internal and external factors shapes a child's personality.

Keywords: *Personality, Children, Development, Alfred Adler, Parents*

**Perkembangan Kepribadian Anak dalam Disrupsi Keluarga
dalam *A New Life* (2009) Karya Rukhsana Khan**

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini berfokus pada faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi perkembangan kepribadian anak-anak dalam novel *A New Life* karya Rukhsana Khan yang diterbitkan oleh Groundwood Books pada tahun 2009. Cerita ini menggambarkan pengalaman anak-anak yang harus beradaptasi dengan lingkungan baru dan bagaimana tantangan tersebut memengaruhi pertumbuhan pribadi mereka dalam keluarga. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori kepribadian Alfred Adler, yang mencakup gagasan utama seperti perasaan inferioritas, dorongan untuk menjadi unggul, minat sosial, dan gaya hidup. Dengan metode deskriptif kualitatif, penelitian ini menganalisis karakter Hamza dan Khadija melalui interpretasi faktor-faktor yang membentuk kepribadian mereka. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perasaan inferioritas Hamza dan Khadija berasal dari kesulitan bahasa dan adaptasi budaya baru, seperti perasaan Hamza yang dianggap kurang dihargai oleh teman-teman sekelasnya. Upaya Hamza untuk membuktikan kemampuannya mencerminkan dorongannya untuk menjadi unggul, meskipun tindakan ini kadang-kadang berdampak negatif. Minat sosial terlihat dalam momen-momen empati, seperti ketika Khadija menyadari kesulitan yang dihadapi oleh temannya. Gaya hidup Hamza dan Khadija juga ditunjukkan melalui momen saat mereka masih baru di Kanada yang memiliki kultur dan lingkungan yang berbeda dari Pakistan. Penelitian ini juga menekankan peran orang tua dalam memberikan dukungan emosional dan mendorong pola pikir positif, menunjukkan bahwa kepribadian anak terbentuk melalui kombinasi faktor internal dan eksternal.

Kata Kunci: *Kepribadian, Anak-anak, Perkembangan, Alfred Adler, Orang Tua*

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Family is a closely-knit, enduring household unit formed through blood ties, matrimonial bonds, or legal adoption, often cohabiting and jointly undertaking socio-economic duties. As the most elementary level in the social entity, the family is pivotal in a child's initial social experience, providing the primary setting where a child acquires fundamental life views (Sujan, 2022). This smallest social cluster is a vital component in all societies, typically comprising a father, a mother, and their children, and frequently includes near or distant relatives.

Families can be classified in several distinctive ways, for example, by marriage sort (monogamous, polygamous), by area (patrilocal, matrilocal, and avunculocal), by specialist (patriarchy, matriarchy), and by kinfolk composition (nuclear, joint) (Sharma, 2013). However, Branard (2023) states that families are generally classified into two main categories based on their structure and size: the nuclear family and the extended (joint) family, each with

distinct features. A nuclear family is a compact unit made up of parents and their biological or adopted children. In contrast, joint families encompass multiple generations dwelling together, sharing common living spaces, a single kitchen, and collective financial responsibilities.

In addition to the two categories of families distinguished by their structure and size, there is another classification known as family dynamics. These dynamics encompass the range of constructive and detrimental interactions that are passed along through successive generations (RHB, 2021). Family dynamics can change from healthy to unhealthy. It can also shift from unhealthy to healthy and vice versa (Applebury, 2023). A healthy family or family harmony is a state of trust and mutual support where disagreements and conflicts are resolved amicably and without self-centeredness. It impacts how adolescents develop their mental health, build their self-esteem, behave in social situations, and deal with social stigma (Windarwati et al., 2020). The positive and negative changes in the family structure, such as

divorce, legal separation, parental death, out-of-home placement, and deployment, are typically used to measure family disruptions.

An unhealthy family dynamics or family disruption such as divorce, abused and out of home placement in early childhood commonly increases the long-term risk for major depression (Gilman et al., 2003). Family disruptions experienced during childhood primarily affect the children until they grow up. Children suffer the most from family disruption because children in common have no choice when their parents bring them to move from place to place; the parents would say that anything they do is the best choice for the children.

It can be seen in *A New Life*, when Abugee, the father of the family, tells Hamza that they are moving to another country to find a new home and catch every opportunity, and it is all for him to be thankful for that. Hamza wanted to refuse, but he felt he had no choice because his father's decision was final and agreed upon by everyone. After all, Hamza was just a child, and his parents,

especially his father, were responsible for him. Therefore, he had to move away and leave his hometown.

A New Life novel describes how Hamza and Khadija moved to Canada because their father, Abugee, says he wants to explore opportunities in the new country. As the children of the family, Hamza and Khadija have no choice but to follow. Before they move, Khadija watches a TV show showing what a North American house looks like and imagines that their new house will be similar to what she has seen in TV shows before. However, reality hits her because the house turns out to be a small flat, far from what she had expected. Abugee explains that he cannot afford for a proper house at the moment, but he promises later that once he gets a stable job and enough money, he will buy a house for the family. Both Hamza and Khadija enrolled in the same school and attended Mrs. Baker's English class since the beginning. At their new school, they encounter many children who look different from one another, and many of them are also immigrants. There are the white one, the tanned one and the black one. At first, Hamza struggles to make friends with anyone because he feels others look

at him ridiculously. They even exclude Hamza from games, as the other children refuse to let him play with the softball. However, this isolation only lasts for the first few weeks. Over time, Hamza and Khadija managed to befriend their classmates and participate in their activities. After several years, they officially become Canadian citizens, gain acceptance in their community, and eventually move into a much better house than the small flat they first lived in.

This study focuses on the children's responses to family disruption, which is particularly interesting to the researcher because the novel provides a detailed look at how Hamza and Khadija encountered challenges such as adapting to a new school, improving their English language skills, making new friends and adjust to a new place with different cultures. In some cases, readers often overlook the children's character position. The focus on the children's character highlights the emotional and psychological challenges they face, such as feelings of inferiority, striving for superiority, and the development of social interest and their lifestyle. The attention is often focused on the parents' characters

because the parents have to take responsibility for their family, and this novel reveals that the children also endure complex difficulties. At such a young age, they must comprehend family issues and confronted with a sudden shift in their life without any preparations. For a young kid, facing a family disruption and any situations they had never imagined before is hard enough to do. The things that are not understandable and could ruin their imagination about their life happened to them.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the explanation above, this research has several following problem formulations:

1. How do feelings of inferiority and the drive for superiority, as described by Alfred Adler, influence the character development of Hamza and Khadija in *A New Life*?
2. In what ways do social interest and lifestyle, shaped by family dynamics and external influences, contribute to the adaptation and personality growth of Hamza and Khadija in their new environment?

1.3 Objective and Significance of Study

This research explores how Hamza and Khadija's personalities in *A New Life* are influenced by factors such as feelings of inferiority, the drive for superiority, social interest, and lifestyle, based on Alfred Adler's individual psychology theory. The study focuses on how these elements shape the children's character development and help them adapt to new and challenging environments.

The significance of this study is rooted in its focus on children as central characters whose struggles are often not given enough attention. By examining their personality growth and the factors that influence it, this research provides a deeper understanding of children's emotional and psychological challenges in disrupted family situations. Additionally, this study emphasizes the role of family dynamics and external influences in shaping a child's ability to adapt and grow. This perspective helps readers better understand the complexity of personality

development, especially in children and addresses a gap in research that often centers on adult experiences.

1.4 Literature Reviews

In this study, the researcher has not found any literary studies that use *A New Life* (2009) as a research object. Despite that, the researcher has found several relevant studies that have similarities in discussing an issue using Alfred Adler's personality theory. Relevant research that has been done previously includes the following:

First, research conducted by Lestari (2012) examines the struggle for the love of Bella Swan in *The Twilight Saga: New Moon* movie, directed by Chris Weitz. This research describes the battle for the love of Bella Swan in the New Moon movie based on the six basic concepts of individual psychology. They are fictional finalism, striving for superiority, feelings of inferiority and compensation, social interest, style of life, and the creative self. The six elements are interrelated and have essential roles. The

result of this research is that Bella is striving to reach her goals and will do anything to be with Edward.

Second, research conducted by Derin and Yıldız (2018) examines an Adlerian approach towards *The Kid* movie, which was directed by Jon Turteltaub and written by Audrey Wells. This research focuses on Russ' life and problems, and the sources of his problems are examined as concrete examples of many Adlerian approach concepts.

Third, Amelia and Diyah's (2021) research examines Anna's feelings of inferiority as the main character of *Miracles from Heaven*. This research results that the reasons behind Anna's feelings of inferiority are her physical weakness, anxiety, and pessimism, which appear because Anna has a physical disorder in the digestive organ that is not normal like the others.

Fourth, Agnes' (2022) research examines the superiority complex of *Crazy Rich Asian* main character, Eleanor. As a result, Eleanor does not have a good relationship with Nick and Rachel, her friends, and she portrays her superiority complex.

Fifth, Nisa's study (2015) examines the personality development of Poppy Moore in the *Wild Child* movie. This study uses Elizabeth Hurlock's theory to analyze the main character's personality development and the factors that influence Poppy's personality development.

Different from previous research, this research aims to identify and analyze the children's personalities that appear in *A New Life* novel because the children's personality development in *A New Life* novel has never been analyzed in any study before.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

1.5.1 Individual Psychology Theory

This research uses Alfred Adler's theory of personality to study the children's character, Hamza and Khadija. Adler explained (in Jaenudin, 2015) that human behavior itself serves as an illustrative example of what people do and the purpose of their actions. From this study, the researcher finds what affects children's personality

development the most, such as family disruption and moving far away from home to a new place, which is quite different from where they came from.

The Adlerian approach is an all-encompassing psychological framework that highlights the importance of conquering feelings of inferiority and securing a sense of community to achieve happiness and success (Cherry, 2023). Adler strongly emphasized the role of social environments in shaping individuals, proposing that the drive for significance and belonging is a crucial motivator for people.

Adler acknowledged the emergence of habitual behaviors in the early years, referring to these as lifestyles. He was critical of the notion of fixed personality types, arguing that such categorizations could overshadow the distinctiveness of each person (Hoffman, 2023). Adler asserted that everyone possesses inherent potential despite any physical limitations (Feist & Feist, 1998). He viewed

the child's personality as a cohesive whole (Adler, 1930). Children's lives must be understood by those who seek to understand them. To truly comprehend children, one must consider their history, current circumstances, and future aspirations, all of which the child interprets and uses to forge their unique patterns and ways of life, including their past, present, and future, which the child interprets and shapes patterns and lifestyles.

a. Inferiority Feeling

Inferiority feelings are characterized by constant self-comparison and an effort to overcome imagined or real feelings of inferiority (Cimsir, 2019). All individuals, whether adults or children, have feelings of inferiority. According to Adler, the search for and struggle for supremacy is at the core of personality. People feel inferior when they feel helpless or experience events that make them incapable of doing anything (Jaenudin, 2015).

People with the feelings of inferiority will be encouraged to reach a higher level of development. If they have reached a certain level, they will feel a sense of lack to reach the next level and will go for higher goals without feeling inferior rather than striving for perfection (Jaenudin, 2015). This feelings of inferiority is the driving force and the starting point where every child's efforts come (Adler, 1927).

Physical imperfections are the first factor that strengthens the feelings of inferiority until it crystallizes into an inferiority complex. While this may be actual organ weakness, it is simply a minor physical abnormality of no medical significance but socially embarrassing, such as abnormal obesity, albinism, nevus, bow legs, and many more in some cases. Other factors that reinforce the feeling of inferiority are related to an individual's social, religious, and economic circumstances.

b. Striving for Superiority

Individuals overcome inferiority complexes by compensating for their weaknesses and inadequacies (Anthony, 1979). Some people seek superiority while ignoring others. Their goals are personal in nature, and their efforts are primarily motivated by the development of exaggerated inferiority complexes and inferiority complexes. Striving for success is an innate characteristic of every human being.

Jaenudin (2015) also explains that the drive for superiority is universal and timeless. There is no separation between drive and need; there is only one drive, which is the drive to be superior as an attempt to get rid of feelings of inferiority. The superiority in question is to be better than oneself, and it is the main driving force in human life that reveals the causes of individual action, the drive to achieve superiority or perfection.

c. Social Interest

Social interest is the perception of belonging to a social group with the rest of humanity and, inadvertently, membership in that group (Feist & Feist, 2008).

According to Adler (in Jaenudin, 2015), social interest enables a person to strive for superiority in a healthy way and not stray down the wrong path. Social interest is a part of human nature that appears in different magnitudes in each individual. Ultimately, social interest consist of people striving to achieve their perfection in society.

Adler describes three social ties between individuals and the environment. The first is occupational issues. Due to the division of labor in society, each individual's career orientation influences other individuals. The second bond belongs to the human race and is the connection with others of the same kind, the presence of other humans, and thus the need for individuals to adapt, cooperate, and share activities. Her third bond with a

person is that the person is of one gender and not the other. Reciprocity between the two sexes is clearly a prerequisite for the survival of humanity.

The three social ties are intertwined in everyday life, and often, problems arising from one social relationship affect problems arising from another social relationship. The three social connections are the most prominent examples of social situations in which individuals modify, adjust, and communicate their responses to others.

d. Lifestyle

Lifestyle refers to the general lifestyle of an individual or group, including attitudes, behaviors, values, habits, choices, and consumption patterns. Lifestyle includes habits, attitudes, tastes, moral standards, and economic levels. Lifestyle reflects a consistent set of behaviors that define an individual. Adler uses multiple terms such as self-image, ego, personality, unity of

personality, creative activity, the method of facing problems, opinions about oneself and life issues, and outlook on life as a whole. (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1965). From the description above, lifestyle is someone's way of living, what things they usually do, where they live and spend their money on, and more.

An individual's effort to achieve or expected perfection requires a particular way of doing things, which Adler (in Jaenudin, 2015) mentions this as a lifestyle. An individual's lifestyle is a combination of two elements: inner motivations that determine the direction of their behavior and motivations from the environment that reinforce or hinder the direction of their intrinsic motivations.

1.6 Research Method

1.6.1 Type of Research

This type of research is qualitative because the researcher studies the data in the form of text, sentences, or

words. The researcher uses a descriptive method in this research, which aims to describe the problem and then analyze and interpret the existing data. The data used in this research are words, sentences, and discourses that show the personality of children in the *A New Life* novel.

1.6.2 Data Source

The primary data source in this research is *A New Life* novel, including the novel elements such as events, stories, and dialogues. The secondary sources include information from articles, books, websites, and journals that are relevant to the topic.

1.6.3 Data Collection Technique

In this research, the researcher collects data through a documentation process. The researcher observes the novel by reading it repeatedly to take notes on several records in the form of events, time, and dialogues in the novel. In the data collection process, the researcher also uses some relevant references to the topic to be used in the research. For example, the researcher refers to Alfred

Adler's Individual Psychology as a theoretical foundation to analyze the characters' personality development. Additionally, scholarly articles and books discussing the psychological effects of family disruption on children are used to support the analysis and provide a broader understanding of the topic.

1.6.4 Data Analysis Technique

Based on the data collection process above, the researcher continues to analyze the data using descriptive analysis. The things done in collecting data first describe the inferiority, superiority, social interest, and lifestyle of Hamza and Khadija in *A New Life* novel by Rukhsana Khan. Second, the researcher analyzes the feelings of inferiority, superiority, social interest, and lifestyle of Hamza and Khadija in *A New Life*, a novel by Rukhsana Khan. Third, the researcher interprets the inferiority, superiority, social interest, and lifestyle of Hamza and Khadija in Rukhsana Khan's *A New Life*. Fourth, the researcher summarizes the inferiority, superiority, social

interest, and lifestyle of Hamza and Khadija in *A New Life*, a novel by Rukhsana Khan. Fifth, the researcher writes a research report related to the inferiority, superiority, social interest, and lifestyle of Hamza and Khadija in the novel.

1.7 Paper Organization

This research is divided into four chapters. The first chapter is an introduction that includes a background of the study, research question, objective and significance of the study, literature review, theoretical framework, methods, and paper organization. The second chapter explains the intrinsic elements of the novel, the third chapter discusses the research findings and the fourth chapter presents a conclusion and suggestion.

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CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter explains the conclusion that the researcher reaches after studying *A New Life* novel by Rukhsana Khan. The conclusion presented in this chapter respond to the research question in the first chapter. In addition, the researcher offer recommendations for future studies that uses *A New Life* novel as their primary data source

4.1 Conclusion

The development of Hamza and Khadija's characters cannot be separated from the role of their parents, who contribute to the formation of their personalities. In this case, in addition to the involvement of Hamza and Khadija's parents, environmental conditions also play an important role in their character development.

Basically, every human being who has feelings of inferiority must also have feelings of superiority that are naturally present to compensate for the feelings of inferiority. The inferiority feelings of Hamza and Khadija have led them to learn more about themselves to overcome their inferiority feelings. It goes the same with the superiority feelings. In addition to compensating for the inferiority feelings, superiority is there to help them improve themselves and prove that they can actually overcome their inferiority.

Hamza and Khadija's character development is also supported by their interest in the social conditions around them. The social conditions they face and the curiosity about what happened with their surroundings and the lifestyle of Hamza and Khadija also affect their character development. Another factor that affected Hamza and Khadija's character development was their parents' role, who gave them a positive outlook on the social situation around them. In addition, Hamza and Khadija's parents also taught them to have an empathetic attitude towards those around them.

4.2 Suggestion

This study has a few shortcomings, and it is because there has not been much research done on *A New Life* novel yet. It's still a relatively new area of study, and there's much room for further research. Future researchers may adopt any approach to research this novel, and they may find it beneficial to adopt any flexible approach to their studies. This could include the use of Alfred Adler's theory in exploring a range of theoretical frameworks, as applied by the researchers in this study, or the application of other theories that may prove suitable for understanding the nuances of *A New Life* novel.

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