



Children's Emotional Development in the Fairy Tale *Ṭāhir wa Nādia* Based on Erik Erikson's Theory of Development

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the emotional development of child characters in the fairy tale *Ṭāhir wa Nādia* by Amin Salama based on Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory and to examine its implications for children's character formation. This study is significant because research on children's literature is still predominantly characterized by descriptive approaches to moral values, while analyses of emotional development as a dynamic psychosocial process remain limited. *Ṭāhir wa Nādia* was selected because it narratively portrays children's emotional experiences in extreme situations, such as fear, loss, hunger, and exposure to danger, which are highly relevant for analysis through Erikson's developmental stages within the context of Middle Eastern religious culture. This research employs a qualitative descriptive method using reading and note-taking techniques. Primary data consist of narrative passages, dialogues, and characters' actions, while secondary data are drawn from books and scholarly journals related to developmental psychology, children's literature, and character education. The findings indicate that the emotional journeys of *Ṭāhir* and *Nadia* correspond to the first five stages of Erikson's psychosocial development, namely trust, autonomy, initiative, industry, and early identity formation. Each stage generates adaptive responses that contribute to the emergence of character traits such as courage, independence, perseverance, empathy, cooperation, and moral and spiritual identity. The novelty of this study lies in the integration of emotional development analysis with a contextual reading of Erikson's theory in Middle Eastern children's fairy tales. These findings offer practical implications for parents and educators in utilizing fairy tales as a medium to support children's emotional development and character education.

Keywords: Emotional, Erik Erikson, Character, Development, *Ṭāhir wa Nādia*.

Introduction

In the world of child development, a child's emotional journey is a crucial part of psychosocial development that is influenced by childhood experiences. Children experience various emotional conflicts during their developmental stages, which can have a major impact on the formation of their identity, self-confidence, and future social relationships. One way to accompany a child's emotional journey is through reading books. Books are a widely used medium in learning activities, containing various

materials that can be read and understood. According to Lestari and colleagues (2021), literacy is defined as a comprehensive learning process that aims to identify, understand, communicate, and calculate by utilizing print and written materials in various situations (Kertapada et al., 2025). The right reading books for children can provide positive emotional development (Ulhaq, 2023). Children's reading books can be categorized into several types, such as fairy tales, fables, animal stories, educational stories, science stories, and folk stories. In this case, the type of reading book that is the focus of the research is the fairy tale.

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Fairy tale are imaginative stories usually told from one person to another, containing the inculcation of meaningful values of goodness. Generally, fairy tale tell about the struggle between good and evil, where good always triumphs. Furthermore, fairy tale often discuss community life, history, natural events, and the struggle to achieve change. Fairy tale play an important role in shaping good behavior and instilling positive values from childhood (Edi & Wardarita, 2021).

From the perspective of a child's social and emotional development, conveying teachings about religious and social norms, as well as etiquette in daily life is often not easy if done directly. However, with the storytelling method, this can become simpler. Through a story, we can depict the characters' behaviors, while simultaneously showing the child which behaviors are worth imitating that is, which behaviors are right and which are wrong and which should not be copied (Pujiraharjo & Adiluhung, 2019).

The selection of the fairy tale "*Ṭāhir wa Nādia*" as the research subject is based on the focus on early childhood psychosocial development, which points to the importance of this period in shaping a child's mental and emotional well-being. Children who experience positive psychosocial development are generally able to build healthy social relationships, possess high self-esteem, and demonstrate good capacity in dealing with stress and negative emotions (Kamilla et al., 2022). The fairy tale "*Ṭāhir wa Nādia*" represents the dynamics of children's emotional development through real life experiences of facing fear, hunger, sadness, and hope. This story explicitly displays the process of children overcoming life's challenges while maintaining their self confidence, initiative, and resilience, which aligns with Erik Erikson's psychosocial developmental stages. Furthermore, *Ṭāhir wa Nādia* is rich in character values such as courage, honesty, perseverance, empathy, and cooperation between siblings in facing adversity.

This study focuses on children's emotional development in the fairy tale *Ṭāhir wa Nādia* by employing Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory as the primary theoretical framework. In *The Clinical Erik Erikson: A Psychoanalytic Method of Engagement and Activation*, Stephen Schlein explains that Erikson's psychosocial development theory represents one of the most significant contributions to the field of developmental psychology. The theory posits that human development occurs throughout the lifespan and consists of eight major stages, each characterized by a specific psychosocial crisis (Schlein, 2019: 17-26). Erik Erikson further elaborates on these stages in his work *Identity and the Life Cycle* (1959), in which human development is understood as a

sequence of stages marked by distinct conflicts or crises. The first stage is trust versus mistrust (ages 0–2). The second stage involves autonomy versus shame and doubt (ages 2–3). The third stage concerns initiative versus guilt (ages 3–6). The fourth stage encompasses industry versus inferiority (ages 6–12). The fifth stage is identity versus role confusion (ages 12–20). The sixth stage relates to intimacy versus isolation (ages 20–40). The seventh stage focuses on generativity versus stagnation (ages 40–65). Finally, the eighth stage, or the last stage, involves integrity versus despair (age 65 until the end of life) (Angeline, 2024).

Research on fairy tales and children's literature has been widely conducted, primarily focusing on the psychological aspects of characters, inner conflicts, and character education values. Several studies employing Erik Erikson's developmental psychology theory to analyze the personality dynamics of child and adolescent characters such as those by (Dewi, 2018) and (Mahendra & Fattia, 2024) reveal that fairy tales and children's films are capable of representing psychosocial development stages, including trust, autonomy, initiative, and industry, through the conflicts and experiences of the main characters. Other studies by (Elfa, 2025) and (Wahyuni et al., 2025) highlight identity crises during the stage of identity formation, which are influenced by family pressure, social environments, and emotional support. In addition, inner conflict as a psychological aspect of characters has been examined by (Muarifin et al., 2025) using Lewin's field theory, demonstrating that internal conflicts in fairy tales play a significant role in shaping readers' character and moral values.

On the other hand, a number of studies focus on character education values and the literary values of children's literature in fairy tales and folklore. Research by (Rouli Simanullang et al., 2023), (Bulan & Hasan, 2020) and (Prastiwi & Sudigdo, 2022) find that fairy tales contain character values such as religiosity, independence, responsibility, cooperation, and social awareness, all of which are relevant to the formation of children's personalities. Studies by (Latifah et al., 2021) and (Nafisatul, 2022) emphasize that fairy tales are not merely imaginative narratives but also possess strong educational and psychological functions. Meanwhile, research by (Neina, 2018) and (Paramita Hapsari et al., 2022) underscores the importance of structural suitability, language use, and principles of politeness in fairy tales to ensure alignment with children's psychological development. Building on these studies, the present research positions itself by comprehensively examining the emotional development of the characters *Ṭāhir* and *Nadia* based on Erik Erikson's psychosocial stages and linking this

development to children's character formation within the context of children's literature.

Based on a review of previous studies, research on children's fairy tales can generally be classified into two main tendencies. First, studies that focus on character education values in fairy tales such as religiosity, responsibility, cooperation, and social awareness without systematically connecting them to the psychological developmental processes of child characters. Second, studies employing Erik H. Erikson's psychosocial theory tend to analyze developmental stages descriptively, without further examining how emotional development directly contributes to the formation of children's character as readers.

Moreover, no previous research has specifically examined the emotional development of child characters in the fairy tale *Ṭāhir wa Nādia* by mapping the characters' experiences onto Erikson's psychosocial stages while simultaneously linking them to character formation values. This indicates a research gap in integrating psychosocial analysis and character education within a unified analytical framework.

Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by comprehensively analyzing the emotional development of the characters Ṭāhir and Nādia based on Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory and explaining how such development shapes character values relevant to children. This approach is expected not only to enrich the field of children's literature studies but also to contribute theoretically to developmental psychology and character education through literary media.

This research assumes that the emotional journey of Ṭāhir wa Nādia in this fairy tale reflects Erik Erikson's stages of child psychosocial development, where every challenge they face contributes to the formation of their self-confidence, independence, initiative, and industry. In addition, the emotional experiences within the story are also internalized into character values such as courage, honesty, responsibility, cooperation, empathy, and perseverance. Thus, the experiences in the story can represent the relationship between psychosocial development and character formation in children.

The objective of this study is to examine the emotional development of Ṭāhir wa Nādia through Erik Erikson's psychosocial developmental stages and to understand how their emotional experiences reflect values for child character formation.

Method

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design. Descriptive qualitative research is an approach aimed at obtaining a comprehensive and in-

depth understanding of a phenomenon by collecting data with a high level of quality and accuracy (Rizki, 2022). The object of this study is the fairy tale *Ṭāhir wa Nādia* written by Amin Salama (Salama, 2023). The text is accessible through the Hindawi website <https://www.hindawi.org/> by searching under the *Qiṣaṣ al-Atfāl* (children's stories) section. This fairy tale was selected because it presents dynamics of emotional development that correspond to Erik Erikson's stages of psychosocial development and contains character-building values that can serve as models for children.

This study utilizes two sources of data: primary data and secondary data. The primary data consist of excerpts from the fairy tale *Ṭāhir wa Nādia*, including narrative passages, dialogues, and characters' actions related to emotional development and character formation. The secondary data comprise supporting scholarly sources, such as journals, books, and academic articles relevant to developmental psychology, children's literature, and character education.

The data collection technique used in this study is the reading-and-note-taking method. The researcher carefully reads the text of *Ṭāhir wa Nādia* and records segments of the narrative, dialogues, and characters' thoughts or actions that correspond to Erik Erikson's stages of psychosocial development. Data analysis follows the model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which includes data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Faizah et al., 2025).

To ensure the credibility of the findings, this study applies data validation through triangulation. Triangulation is a method used to test data validity by utilizing elements outside the primary data as points of comparison or verification. This technique includes several types, namely source triangulation, methodological triangulation, time triangulation, and theoretical triangulation (Emiliza, 2019). In this study, source triangulation and theoretical triangulation are emphasized. Source triangulation is conducted by re-examining and cross-checking the primary data source, namely the fairy tale *Ṭāhir wa Nādia*, while theoretical triangulation involves analyzing the compatibility between the applied theoretical framework and the research data.

Result and Discussion

The Results and Discussion of this research focus on two main aspects, namely: (1) the forms of the characters Ṭāhir and Nādia's emotional development based on Erik Erikson's psychosocial development, covering the stages of Trust versus Mistrust, Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt, Initiative versus Guilt,

Industry versus Inferiority, and Identity versus Role Confusion; and (2) the child character formation that emerges through the emotional development of the two characters in the story Ṭāhir wa Nādia.

In this research, the researcher directly quotes data in the form of narration, dialogue, and characters' actions from the story Ṭāhir wa Nādia by Amin Salama (Hindawi digital version). All of this data contains a complete description of the emotional responses, behaviors, and psychological development of the characters Ṭāhir wa Nādia, which are then mapped onto Erikson's psychosocial developmental stages, while simultaneously demonstrating character values that can be emulated by children, such as trust, courage, independence, perseverance, responsibility, as well as moral and spiritual identity.

A. Forms of Ṭāhir wa Nādia's Emotional Development

1. Stage of Trust versus Mistrust

In (Trust and Mistrust in International Relations, 2006) it is explained that this stage marks the beginning of the individual's personality formation process. The feeling of trust begins to develop along with the creation of physical comfort and a minimum level of fear and anxiety about the future. The trust formed since infancy will give rise to hope that persists throughout life, which is the conviction that the world is a safe and worthy place to live (Mokalu & Boangmanalu, 2021).

"لا تبكي يا ناديتي العزيزة! لا تخافي ولا تحزني؛ فلي طريقي الخاصة التي ستساعدك في الخلاص من كيد زوجة أبنينا الشريرة"
(Data 1): "Don't cry, my dear Nadia! Don't be afraid and don't be sad; I have my own way that will help you escape the treachery of our wicked stepmother."

"لا تقلقي يا اختاه. نامي آمنة مطمئنة؛ فسوف لا يكون إلا ما ترغبين وتحبين".

(Data 2): "Don't worry, my sweet sister. Sleep safely and soundly; everything will turn out just as you wish and desire."

The dialogue of Ṭāhir in Data 1 and Data 2 shows how he acts as an older brother figure who provides trust to his younger sister, Nadia. This situation is aligned with Erikson's idea that trust is formed when a child experiences warmth, attention, and protection. This trust then becomes the basis for Nadia to see the world as a place that still holds hope and goodness, even though external conflicts continue to threaten.

More than a momentary emotional response, the trust developed within this sibling

relationship functions as an ego foundation that enables Nadia to face subsequent crises with greater emotional stability. This trust is also mediated by strong religious beliefs, so that her sense of security is derived not only from her older brother as a protective figure, but also from faith in God. This indicates that the stage of trust in this narrative develops through both interpersonal and spiritual dimensions.

2. Stage of Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt

In this stage, the child is faced with a conflict between their desire to act autonomously and the feelings of doubt or shame that can hinder them (Mahendra & Fattia, 2024). The child begins to learn to control their body, choose what they want to do, and explore. This stage is crucial for building self-confidence and the ability to be independent. Appropriate support and boundaries will foster autonomy, while shaming or overly controlling parenting can lead to shame and doubt about one's own abilities. Erikson mentions that too much shame can cause a child to grow up wanting to "hide from the world" or feel perpetually negatively observed.

"فتسأل طاهر على أطراف أصابعه ليحضر بعض العصي"
(Data 3): "Then Ṭāhir tiptoed slowly, intending to go out to find some sticks or stones as markers."

"وعندئذ صعد طاهر فوق ظهرها وطلب من شقيقته أن تركب هي أيضاً، ولكن نادية قالت له: "هذا حمل ثقيل على هذه البطة اللطيفة، ولا يجب أن نرهقها جزاء معروفها. فإذهب أنت أولاً وبعدئذ تعود البطة فتساعدني على العبور"

(Data 4): "Ṭāhir immediately climbed onto the duck's back and invited his sister to climb on too. But Nadia said: "This will be a heavy burden for this kind hearted duck. We should not burden it as a reward for its kindness. You go first, then the duck will return and help me cross."

Data 3 shows Ṭāhir's action in making his own decision in an emergency situation. He attempts to overcome the problem with his own initiative, without waiting for orders or help from others. This behavior demonstrates the emergence of a sense of autonomy, which is the courage to try, self-regulate, and act independently.

Furthermore, Data 4 shows that Nadia's decision not to ride the duck simultaneously is evidence of emotional and moral maturity. She considers the duck's burden and their safety, thus choosing a more responsible autonomous

solution. This action shows that she is not overcome by fear or doubt but is capable of making an autonomous decision with moral consideration.

In both Data 3 and 4, the descriptions indicate that they are not trapped by the shame or inability that Erikson worried about, but instead succeed in building self-confidence and independence in taking action.

This success indicates that the autonomy developed by Ṭāhir and Nadia is not an egoistic form of independence, but rather an autonomy accompanied by moral consideration and concern for other beings. Accordingly, this stage does not merely foster a sense of competence, but also cultivates self-regulation, which serves as an essential foundation for the development of initiative in the subsequent stage.

3. Stage of Initiative versus Guilt

In this stage, the child begins to learn how to formulate plans and carry out activities that they desire. When their determination fails, it can foster a fear of starting something or making decisions due to the worry of making a mistake. This condition can lower self-confidence and make them reluctant to pursue adult aspirations. However, if the child successfully navigates this stage, they will develop the ego quality that provides direction and purpose in their life (Rizki, 2022).

"انحنى طاهر وأخذ يجمع أكبر كمية من الحصى الصغير ويضعه في جيوب مدرسته "

(Data 5): *Ṭāhir bent down and began to collect as many small pebbles as possible, putting them into the pockets of his coat.*

"وضعت نادية الخبز في جيب رداها لأن جيوب طاهر كانت مملوءة بالأحجار الصغيرة البيضاء ثم سار الجميع نحو الغابة، وظلوا يمشون في طرقاتها، وطاهر يتوقف من حين إلى آخر، وينظر خلفه نحو كوخهم ويسقط من يده حصة "

(Data 6): *Nadia put her bread into the pocket of her gown because Ṭāhir's pockets were full of small white pebbles. Then they all walked towards the forest. They continued walking along the paths within it, while Ṭāhir stopped from time to time, looked back towards their hut, and dropped a pebble from his hand.*

أجاب طاهر: "إنني أنظر إلى قطتي الصغيرة البيضاء، الواقعة فوق سطح منزلنا. إنها تشيخني ببصرها وتقول لي: وداعاً "

(Data 7): *Ṭāhir replied, "I am looking at my small white cat. It is standing on the roof of our house, waving goodbye to me with its gaze."*

ثم أخذت تُغني بصوت رخيم: "أيتها البطة الجميلة أيتها البطة السمينة وأحلى بطة في المدينة يا أطيب ما رأت عيني نحفظه لك طويلاً؟ هل تفعلين فينا جميلاً واعبري بنا ذا النهر فاحملينا فوق الظهر أيتها البطة الجميلة أيتها البطة السمينة!"

(Data 8): *Then Nadia began to sing in a soft and melodious voice: "O beautiful duck, O fat and happy duck, The most beautiful duck in the city, And the sweetest sight to our eyes, would you kindly do us a favor, Carry us over this river? We will not forget your service... O beautiful duck, O fat and happy duck!"*

In Data 5 and 6, Ṭāhir's action is clearly an initiative, where he collects pebbles and deliberately drops them along the way as markers for the path home. He designs a strategy independently, not just following adult instructions. This effort illustrates the ability to plan actions, which is an important indicator of the Initiative stage.

In Data 7, Ṭāhir's dialogue mentioning the "small cat on the roof" demonstrates the cognitive and emotional aspects that support the emergence of initiative. In the story, Ṭāhir is not actually looking at his cat. He stops and looks back so that no one sees him taking the pebbles out of his coat pocket and dropping them on the path this is a form of initiative to plan and execute an activity according to his wishes and aspirations.

Then in Data 8, Nadia demonstrates initiative through the creative act of singing to ask for the duck's help. The song she creates is not just an emotional expression but an interpersonal strategy using gentle persuasion and praise to seek assistance.

From all the data, there is no sign of guilt that hinders them. On the contrary, they show the courage to explore, take steps, and are not afraid to try something new. This means they successfully passed this stage with a healthy ego development in the form of the ability to have a purpose.

The initiative demonstrated by Ṭāhir and Nadia is not impulsive in nature, but rather emerges from their prior experiences of crisis, particularly feelings of insecurity and the threat of loss. Therefore, their actions can be understood as a form of *sense of purpose*, namely the capacity to direct behavior toward long-term goals, as proposed by Erikson. This initiative functions as an adaptive mechanism that enables them to maintain self-control in extreme situations.

4. Stage of Industry versus Inferiority

According to Erik Erikson, children in the Industry versus Inferiority developmental stage begin to build skills and competencies in various areas, both in school learning and in social relationships (Elkarimah & Madzkur, 2025). In this stage, children begin to understand the importance of effort and realize that they have a role in their social environment (Rangkuti et al., 2025).

"ولكنَّ طاهرًا كان يُخرج لها في كل مرة قطعةً من العظم"
(Data 9): "But Tāhir would stick out a small piece of bone that he kept every time."

أدرجت الفتاة ما يدور برأس المرأة الشمطاء، فقالت لها: "لا أدري كيف أفعل هذا يا أمه! .. كيف يمكنني أن أدخل إلى الفرن وأختبر حرارته"

(Data 10): *However, Nadia, who was intelligent and sharp in her intuition, realized the wicked woman's evil intention. So she said softly, "I... I don't know how to do that, Mother. How can I possibly enter the oven to check its temperature?"*

فأجابت نادية: "كما أنني لا أرى فيه أي زورق! ولكن ها هي ذي بطة كبيرة تقبل نحونا، فلو سألتها لمساعدتنا على عبور هذا النهر"
(Data 11): *Nadia replied, "I don't see any boat either. But... look! A big duck is approaching us. If we ask it nicely, maybe it will be willing to help us cross."*

"تعب الطفلان من طول الطريق وهما جائعان، فرقدا بجانب النار ثم استيقظا في منتصف الليل، فاقسمت نادية لقمتهما مع طاهر"
(Data 12): *The two children were exhausted after walking a long distance while hungry. They lay down near the fire and fell asleep. When they woke up in the middle of the night, Nadia shared her small piece of bread with Tāhir.*

فقال طاهر: "هيا بنا يا نادية ندخل هذا المنزل ونأكل من الخبز والكعك حتى نشبع .. سأبدأ أنا بقطعة من السقف، أما أنت فتستطيعين أن تأكلي قطعة من النافذة. لا بد أن طعمها سيكون لذيذاً"

(Data 13): *Tāhir said, "Come on, Nadia, let's enter this house and eat the bread and cakes until we are full. I will start with a piece from the roof, and you can take a piece from the window. It must taste very delicious."*

In Data 9, the description shows that Tāhir attempts to trick the Witch who intends to harm him. Every time the Witch asks him to show his finger, he shows the small piece of bone as if he hasn't grown well, leading the

Witch to wait longer until he is fat enough to eat.

Data 10 and 11 demonstrate Nadia's cleverness in understanding the Witch's malicious intent, refusing to enter the oven, and offering a solution by asking for the duck's help. Her intelligence shows that she is quite creative in facing problems.

Data 12 and 13 show Tāhir and Nadia's actions in empathy and cooperation. Nadia sharing her last food with Tāhir illustrates that she already understands the value of contribution to others, consistent with the characteristics of a child entering the industry stage. Then Tāhir invites Nadia to cooperate to immediately eat the bread until they are full as a form of survival.

All these actions demonstrate that neither of them is in a position of inferiority; rather, they possess control, effort, competence, perseverance, and creativity.

This condition indicates that repeated experiences of confronting challenges actually strengthen the child characters' sense of competence. Successfully solving problems both independently and collaboratively helps them develop the belief that effort and skills are valuable in sustaining life. Thus, the stage of industry develops as the result of an accumulation of emotional experiences across earlier developmental stages.

5. Stage of Identity versus Role Confusion

According to Erikson in Sobh (2020), adolescents have the important task of overcoming the identity crisis and role confusion they experience. In this stage, they strive to form a distinctive personal identity, build connections with the social environment to gain recognition, and create meaningful relationships with others (Rusuli, 2022).

ارتعدت نادية من شدة الخوف، وقالت: "إلهي! كيف يمكننا الخروج من الغابة في ذلك الظلام الحالك؟"

(Data 14): *Nadia trembled with extreme fear and said, "My God! How can we get out of this forest in such darkness?"*

طاهرًا طمأنها بقوله: "لم هذه الدموع الغالية يا عزيزتي؟ تقي بالله العلي القدير فلا بد من أنه سيرعانا ويساعدنا؛ فنحن لم نخطئ في حق أحد، ولم نقترف إثماً ضد هذه اللعينة، بل هي المذنبة في حقنا .. وإن مع العسر يسراً، إن مع العسر يسراً"

(Data 15): *But Tāhir calmed her by saying, "Why these precious tears, my dear sister? Trust in Allah, the most high and the most powerful. He will surely look after us and help us, for we have not*

wronged anyone, nor have we committed any sin against that wicked woman; rather, she is the one who is guilty towards us. Indeed, with hardship comes ease, indeed, with hardship comes ease."

أقشعر بدنُ الفتاة عند سماع ذلك القرار، وأخذت تبكي وتتضرع إلى الله قائلة: "أي رب: ومنك الرحمة، ومن خلقك الظلم. كم كنت أفضل أن تفترسنا الحيوانات الكاسرة في الغابة إذ كنت، على الأقل، أموت معه! رباه! تحنن علينا، وساعدنا فانت معين من لا معين له، وناصر الضعفاء والمظلومين، وملجأ اليتامى والبانسين"

(Data 16): *Hearing that, Nadia looked up to the sky while crying in her heart, "O God... from You comes mercy, and from Your creatures comes injustice. I would have preferred for the wild animals in the forest to devour us, for at least I would die with my brother! O Allah, have mercy on us... help us, for You are the Helper of those who have no helper, the Defender of the weak and the oppressed, and the refuge of the orphans and the miserable."*

"وفي أسرع من لمح البصر، استجمعت نادية كل قواها، ودفعت العجوز إلى داخل الفرن وأغلقت عليها الباب"

(Data 17): *In a flash, faster than a blink of an eye, Nadia gathered all her strength, pushed the old woman into the oven, and immediately closed the oven door tightly, locking it, and letting the old witch meet her end inside.*

ملأ ظاهر جيوبه ذهبًا وجواهر من كل صنف، قائلاً: "هذه أفضل من الحصى؛ فسبحان مغير الأحوال"

(Data 18): *Ṭāhir immediately filled his pockets with gold and various jewels, saying, "These are much better than pebbles. Glory be to Allah who changes circumstances."*

In Data 14 and 16, Nadia's fear is accompanied by her faith in God and the belief that help will come. She understands injustice, expresses prayer, and shows compassion, thus forming a strong moral identity. This indicates that Nadia's identity develops not because of adult instruction, but through direct life experiences. In Data 15 and 18, Ṭāhir's identity is shown to be morally mature. He comforts his sister with religious principles of patience and God's help. He is also very religious in understanding the change of fate as part of Divine wisdom "Glory be to Allah who changes circumstances" showing his spiritual identity and the meaning of life he believes in.

Data 17 shows Nadia's courage, as she is able to make a decisive decision to fight evil. This demonstrates the consistency of her self-identity formed by previous struggle experiences.

Thus, their identity is formed through a blend of spiritual values, extreme life experiences, and a supportive sibling relationship.

The identities formed by Ṭāhir and Nadia are not solely personal in nature but are also collective and religious, in accordance with the cultural context of the story. This indicates that identity formation in this tale does not fully follow the individualistic pattern commonly assumed in Western theory, but is strongly influenced by values of faith and social responsibility. Therefore, the identity stage in this narrative requires a contextualized reading of Erikson's theory.

B. Character Formation of Ṭāhir wa Nādia from Emotional Development

Based on the five stages of emotional development according to Erikson that the two characters went through, it appears that their experiences in facing each developmental crisis formed a number of key character traits that consistently emerged throughout the narrative. Their success in navigating each stage appropriately and in line with their developmental needs resulted in the formation of a more mature personality.

1. Trust

The character trait that emerges in the Trust versus Mistrust stage experienced by the characters Ṭāhir and Nadia is trust. In Ṭāhir's dialogue with Nadia, it is evident that Ṭāhir provides calmness, hope, and comfort to his sister Nadia, thus establishing trust in others. When a child experiences rejection by a parent or caregiver, it can form a negative perception of the environment. Consequently, the child will find it difficult to trust anything and views the world around them as a dangerous place. In this stage, the crucial element to be developed in a child's personality is "hope" the conviction that even amid difficult situations, there is still the possibility of goodness and safety in the future (Krismawati, 2014). Ṭāhir's effort to reassure and calm Nadia reflects the successful navigation of Erikson's first stage, resulting in the formation of the conviction that the world is not entirely dangerous.

2. Independence (Autonomy)

The character trait that emerges in the Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt stage

in the characters Ṭāhir and Nadia is independence (autonomy). Independence in a child is not always determined by age. It can be recognized when a child begins to show their own will or initiative. In other words, chronological age does not automatically influence the level of independence. There are children who have entered adolescence or even adulthood but are still dependent on others. Conversely, there are also very young children who are already capable of showing independent behavior (Ramadhania et al., 2022).

Ṭāhir's dialogue describes that Ṭāhir shows the ability to make his own decisions in an emergency, such as when he tiptoed out to look for sticks or stones as road markers. This action demonstrates the courage to act without waiting for help from others, which is the main characteristic of the development of autonomy in children. Meanwhile, Nadia's dialogue shows that Nadia's decision not to ride the duck simultaneously indicates maturity in thinking and the ability to make a responsible decision. She did not hesitate to reject Ṭāhir's invitation for the sake of another creature's well-being, and this illustrates that she is not controlled by fear, shame, or doubt.

Even though they were in difficult and constrained circumstances, both Ṭāhir and Nadia were still able to demonstrate self-control and the ability to act according to their own judgment. This signifies that both successfully developed a healthy sense of autonomy, which is the conviction that they are capable of doing things without always depending on others. Thus, the second stage in Erikson's theory can be said to have been navigated well, because both did not get trapped in shame or doubt, but instead grew up as individuals who have confidence in their own abilities.

3. Initiative and Creativity

The character trait that emerges in the Initiative versus Guilt stage experienced by the characters Ṭāhir and Nadia is initiative or the ability to start a creative action. In this stage, both demonstrate the ability to plan, make decisions, and carry out actions based on their own ideas. Ṭāhir shows

initiative through his strategy of collecting and dropping pebbles as markers for the way home, a plan that arose from spontaneous yet purposeful thinking. His action reflects the courage to try new ways and the conviction that he is capable of controlling the situation.

Similarly, Nadia displays a form of initiative through her creativity in singing to ask for the duck's help. This choice demonstrates that she is able to use a polite, gentle, and persuasive manner in facing a problem, while simultaneously expressing original thought. Both Ṭāhir and Nadia show no signs of inhibiting guilt; instead, they demonstrate emotional maturity and the courage to explore. Their various actions illustrate the successful navigation of this stage, marked by the emergence of the ability to design a purpose and the self-confidence to carry it out.

4. Perseverance (Industry)

The character trait that emerges in the Industry versus Inferiority stage in the characters Ṭāhir and Nadia is perseverance or the ability to develop skills and actively work to solve problems. In this stage, the child begins to understand the importance of effort, hard work, and self-contribution in facing challenges. According to Yanto & Baskoro (2021, p. 37), perseverance describes a person's effort carried out with diligence, persistence, and without easily giving up when facing obstacles that attempt to weaken their spirit (Manurung, 2022). This is clearly visible in the actions of Ṭāhir and Nadia as they strive to survive amidst the witch's threat.

Ṭāhir's action of using a small piece of bone in place of his finger demonstrates cleverness and the ability to solve problems, an important characteristic of the industry stage. Similarly, Nadia shows the ability for critical and strategic thinking when she realizes the witch's evil intention and refuses to enter the oven. She is even capable of offering alternative solutions, such as utilizing the duck's help to cross the river.

In the subsequent quotes, it is evident that both do not only focus on self-safety but also on cooperation and empathy. Nadia

sharing her last piece of bread with Ṭāhir reflects an awareness of her social role, while Ṭāhir's invitation to eat the gingerbread house is a form of coordination and joint effort to survive. All these actions illustrate that they are able to face environmental demands in a positive, effortful way, and without feeling inferiority.

Thus, both Ṭāhir and Nadia successfully demonstrate the industry character, which is the ability to work hard, solve problems, and show a tangible contribution to themselves and others. This indicates that they have adaptively passed this stage according to Erikson's theory.

5. Moral and Spiritual Identity

The character trait that emerges in the Identity versus Role Confusion stage experienced by Ṭāhir and Nadia is moral and spiritual identity. According to Mulyasa (2013), religious identity plays a major role in forming spiritual intelligence in children. This spiritual intelligence includes the child's ability to recognize and believe in the existence of God, cultivate gratitude and compassion, and build good relationships with the surrounding environment. When a child has a solid and positive religious identity, it strengthens their spiritual development so that they can live a life with greater harmony and balance (Hafid, 2023). In this stage, both demonstrate that they have a strong understanding of the values of right and wrong, courage, and religious conviction that guide their actions.

In several dialogues (Salama, 2023:6, 12), Nadia appears overwhelmed by fear, but she consistently returns to the value of faith and the hope of God's protection. Her sincere prayer, her awareness of injustice, and her compassion towards herself and her brother reflect a moral identity that has developed independently through her life experiences, not merely through adult teachings.

Meanwhile, (Salama, 2023:9, 13) Ṭāhir demonstrates a mature spiritual identity through the way he comforts Nadia using divine principles. His conviction that hardship will be followed by ease, and his understanding that changes in fate are part

of God's will, illustrate that he has found a life value that serves as the foundation of his self-identity.

Furthermore, in (Salama, 2023:12), Nadia's decision to fight the witch shows the maturity of her moral identity, as her action is not merely impulsive but is based on the values of right and wrong that she believes in. Her action is no longer just a spontaneous reaction from a small child, but a reflection of the self-identity that has been formed through the bitter experiences they underwent.

Overall, both Ṭāhir and Nadia show that they have successfully navigated this stage with a solid self-identity, characterized by moral values, courage, spiritual conviction, and the ability to determine meaningful actions according to their own principles.

These findings indicate that character formation in the tale *Ṭāhir wa Nādia* is a direct implication of the characters' success in navigating emotional developmental crises. However, since Erikson's theory was developed within a Western cultural context, its application to this Middle Eastern fairy tale requires caution so as not to overlook the dominant role of religious values and family collectivism in shaping the characters' emotional experiences.

As proposed by Erikson, ego development consistently interacts with the social and cultural environment (Schlein, 2019). Therefore, the application of the epigenetic principle in the context of this Middle Eastern fairy tale must be interpreted contextually, as religious values and family collectivism play a central role in shaping children's psychosocial experiences (Fitrikasari et al., 2022).

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the fairy tale *Ṭāhir wa Nādia* by Amin Salama using Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory, it can be concluded that the emotional development of the characters Ṭāhir and Nadia represents five early stages of psychosocial development: trust versus mistrust, autonomy versus shame and doubt, initiative versus guilt, industry versus inferiority, and identity versus role confusion. Each of these developmental stages is consistently depicted through the characters' dialogues, actions, and

emotional experiences as they confront crises and life challenges.

At the stage of trust, the protective relationship between Tāhir and Nadia fosters a sense of security, hope, and the belief that the world is not entirely dangerous. The stage of autonomy is demonstrated through their ability to make independent decisions accompanied by moral consideration. Furthermore, the stage of initiative is reflected in their strategies, creativity, and courage in planning actions to ensure their survival. The stage of industry develops through perseverance, cooperation, and ingenuity in problem-solving, while the stage of identity is manifested in the formation of a strong moral and spiritual identity grounded in religious values, courage, and social responsibility.

The findings of this study indicate that the characters' emotional development has direct implications for children's character formation, including trust, independence, initiative, perseverance, empathy, courage, as well as moral and spiritual identity. Thus, the fairy tale *Tāhir wa Nādia* functions not only as a work of children's literature but also as a representative medium illustrating the interrelationship between psychosocial development and character education. These findings further emphasize that the application of Erikson's theory within the context of a Middle Eastern fairy tale must be interpreted contextually, as religious values and family collectivism play a dominant role in shaping the characters' emotional experiences.

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