

Lilo's Psychosocial Development in Disney's *Lilo & Stitch* (2025): An Eriksonian Perspective

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze Lilo's psychosocial development in the movie *Lilo & Stitch* (2025) based on Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory. Despite numerous studies applying Erikson's theory, little attention has been paid to how family attachment and cultural values interact to facilitate children's psychological recovery in contemporary live-action movies. This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach using content analysis. Data were collected through repeated observation of the movie, identification and coding of relevant scenes and dialogues, and classification based on Erikson's psychosocial development stages. The findings reveal that Lilo represents six of Erikson's eight psychosocial stages, with Identity versus Role Confusion emerging as the most dominant stage, followed by Trust versus Mistrust and Industry versus Inferiority. The analysis further demonstrates that parental loss, social rejection, and emotional relationships with Nani and Stitch significantly influence Lilo's psychosocial development. At the same time, the Hawaiian cultural philosophy of *ohana* serves as a protective framework that supports emotional recovery and identity formation. This study contributes to literary psychology by demonstrating that integrating family attachment and the cultural value of *ohana* enriches Erikson's psychosocial framework for interpreting children's psychological development in contemporary live-action movies.

Keywords: *Psychosocial development, Erik Erikson, Lilo & Stitch, Literary psychology, Live-action movie*

1 Introduction

Children's psychological development is a fundamental aspect of human growth because it influences emotional well-being, social relationships, and identity formation throughout life. Early developmental experiences, particularly those involving family relationships and emotional security, significantly affect children's ability to adapt to social environments and cope with psychological challenges. According to Mokodompit et al. (2025), literature serves as a creative medium through which human experiences, emotions, and social realities are represented in imaginative forms, enabling readers and audiences to understand complex psychological phenomena reflected in fictional narratives. This perspective suggests that literary works function not only as entertainment but also as meaningful representations of psychological and social experiences.

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Supporting this argument, Yusman et al. (2025) state that literature communicates human values and experiences arising from interactions between individuals and their social environment. These characteristics make literary works an appropriate medium for examining psychological development because fictional characters frequently portray emotional conflicts that resemble real-life experiences. Furthermore, Mitchell et al. (2021) explain that children who experience the loss of primary caregivers are more vulnerable to emotional distress, social withdrawal, and identity-related difficulties during critical developmental periods. Similarly, Prakash and Saxena (2024) emphasize that supportive family relationships and consistent emotional guidance are essential for fostering children's psychosocial adjustment and emotional resilience. This argument is further supported by Sochos and Aleem (2022), who found that secure parental attachment plays an essential role in helping bereaved children adjust to emotional loss and maintain psychological well-being. Likewise, emotionally responsive family environments have been shown to strengthen children's socio-emotional competence and facilitate healthy identity development during childhood (Snyder et al., 2025). Therefore, analyzing children's psychological development through literary narratives provides valuable insights into how emotional experiences, family relationships, and social environments contribute to identity formation and psychological growth. Among various literary forms, movies are among the most effective media for representing children's psychological experiences because they integrate visual storytelling, dialogue, and character interactions that vividly portray emotional development.

Movies have increasingly become an important medium for representing psychological experiences because they combine narrative, visual, and auditory elements within realistic social contexts. According to Mukaromah and Rahmawati (2022), movies serve not only as entertainment but also as educational media that convey moral values, emotions, and interpersonal relationships. This view is reinforced by Hu et al. (2022), who explain that children's movies promote emotional awareness, multicultural understanding, and social values through visual storytelling, thereby contributing to children's cognitive and affective development. Furthermore, Tan (2018) argues that cinema enables audiences to perceive, interpret, and emotionally engage with fictional characters, making movies an effective medium for exploring psychological experiences. Together, these perspectives demonstrate that movies provide a rich narrative environment for investigating children's emotional growth and psychosocial development. Expanding on this discussion, Pureka and Khalawi (2024) explain that the language used in movies reflects authentic human communication, allowing dialogue and character interactions to reveal emotional states and behavioral patterns. Similarly, Thomas and Manalil (2025) emphasize that cinema enhances empathy, emotional intelligence, and reflective learning because viewers become emotionally connected with characters' experiences. This perspective is further supported by Wimmer et al. (2021), who explain that engagement with fictional narratives encourages readers and viewers to become psychologically immersed in the story and identify with its characters, thereby facilitating perspective-taking and social cognition. These characteristics make movies particularly relevant for literary psychology research. One contemporary live-action movie that illustrates these issues is *Lilo & Stitch* (2025), which portrays a young girl's struggle with parental loss, social rejection, emotional insecurity, and shifting family dynamics as she gradually rebuilds her sense of belonging with the support of Nani and Stitch. According to Yoan et al. (2025), family

communication and emotional attachment constitute the central themes of the movie, making it an appropriate object for examining children's psychosocial development from the perspective of literary psychology. Because Lilo's emotional conflicts are closely tied to identity formation, family attachment, and social interaction, a comprehensive developmental theory is needed to explain the protagonist's psychological development throughout the narrative.

Understanding the psychological experiences portrayed in literary narratives requires a theoretical framework that explains how individuals develop emotionally and socially throughout life. Since *Lilo & Stitch* (2025) centers on a child's emotional struggles, family relationships, and identity formation, Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory provides an appropriate perspective for interpreting the protagonist's developmental experiences. According to Erikson (1994), personality develops through eight sequential psychosocial stages, each characterized by a developmental crisis that, when successfully resolved, contributes to healthy personality growth. This perspective emphasizes that psychological development results from continuous interactions between individuals and their social environment rather than biological maturation alone. Supporting this argument, Khairani and Maemonah (2021) explain that psychosocial development is cumulative because unresolved conflicts at one stage may influence subsequent developmental periods. This perspective is further supported by Branje et al. (2021), who explain that identity development is shaped by ongoing interactions within family relationships, friendships, and everyday social experiences, enabling individuals to gradually construct a coherent sense of self over time. Consequently, family relationships, emotional experiences, and social interactions become central determinants of children's psychosocial adjustment and identity formation. Likewise, De Lise et al. (2024) emphasize that adolescents with stronger identity commitments tend to demonstrate better psychosocial adjustment and well-being. In contrast, persistent identity uncertainty is associated with poorer psychological outcomes across different cultural contexts. Erikson's theory has also been widely recognized in literary and cinematic studies. Mahanani and Noviana (2025) explain that Erikson's psychosocial theory effectively reveals identity formation by examining how psychological conflicts develop through characters' experiences and interactions within their social environment. Similarly, Febriani et al. (2026) demonstrate that childhood adversity, family instability, and insufficient parental support significantly influence identity formation and emotional stability portrayed in movies. Together, these findings confirm that Erikson's theory provides a suitable framework for analyzing Lilo's developmental experiences following parental loss and repeated social rejection. To interpret these psychological processes in literary narratives, the present study also adopts a literary-psychological perspective. According to Noermanzah et al. (2016), literary psychology analyses literary works by examining characters' emotions, motivations, behaviors, and internal conflicts, thereby integrating psychological theory with literary interpretation. Therefore, combining Erikson's psychosocial development theory with literary psychology offers a comprehensive framework for analyzing Lilo's psychosocial development throughout *Lilo & Stitch* (2025). Although Erikson's theory has been widely applied in literary and movie studies, previous research demonstrates that several aspects of children's psychosocial development remain insufficiently explored.

Previous studies have demonstrated that Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory

has been widely applied to analyze psychological development in literary works and movies. According to Mahendra and Fattia (2024), psychosocial analysis explains how literary characters respond to developmental conflicts through interactions with their social environment. Similarly, Muharsyah et al. (2025) found that psychosocial conflicts significantly influence identity formation, emotional maturity, and interpersonal relationships, indicating that literary narratives reflect developmental processes comparable to real-life experiences. Supporting these findings, Rahmasari and Nugroho (2025) argue that literary psychology enables researchers to interpret behavioral changes and emotional responses by connecting narrative events with psychological theories, thereby providing deeper insight into character development. Likewise, Isnayani et al. (2024) demonstrate that Erikson's psychosocial theory effectively explains a character's self-development by relating narrative events and psychological conflicts to successive stages of psychosocial growth, highlighting the importance of social relationships and life experiences in shaping character development. Consequently, previous studies confirm that Erikson's psychosocial theory provides a systematic framework for interpreting psychological development and character transformation in literary and cinematic narratives.

Despite these contributions, several limitations remain evident. According to Angelis et al. (2019), studies applying Erikson's psychosocial theory generally emphasize identifying developmental stages or describing individual psychological conflicts rather than examining how psychosocial crises interact throughout an entire narrative. Consequently, psychosocial development is often interpreted as a series of isolated events rather than an interconnected process. Likewise, Cahyani et al. (2025) emphasize the importance of family relationships in promoting children's emotional resilience, yet the interaction between family attachment and broader cultural values remains largely unexplored. Similarly, Branje (2022) argues that identity development should be understood as a continuous process shaped by interactions among personal experiences, family relationships, and broader social contexts rather than as isolated developmental events. These limitations indicate that previous studies have not comprehensively explained how psychosocial development, family attachment, and cultural values collectively shape children's psychological recovery within a single narrative. These unresolved issues reveal an important research gap and highlight the need for a more comprehensive analytical framework integrating psychosocial development, family attachment, and cultural values.

The present study contributes to literary psychology by extending the application of Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory beyond the identification of psychosocial stages. Unlike previous studies that mainly classify developmental stages or describe individual psychological conflicts, this research interprets psychosocial development as a continuous process shaped by the interaction among parental loss, family attachment, and cultural values throughout the narrative. The novelty of this study lies in integrating Erikson's psychosocial development theory with the Hawaiian cultural philosophy of *ohana* to explain how supportive family relationships facilitate children's psychological recovery and identity formation in a contemporary live-action movie. Furthermore, the study systematically maps the frequency of psychosocial stages while interpreting their narrative significance within the protagonist's developmental journey. Consequently, this research enriches literary psychology and broadens the application of Erikson's theory by demonstrating that cultural values function as an essential component of children's

psychosocial development and emotional resilience. Based on the identified research gap and the proposed contribution, the following research objectives are formulated.

This study aims to analyze the psychosocial development of the main character in *Lilo & Stitch* (2025) by applying Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory within the perspective of literary psychology. Specifically, the study seeks to identify the psychosocial stages reflected in Lilo's character, examine the continuity of psychosocial development throughout the narrative, and interpret how parental loss, family attachment, and the Hawaiian cultural philosophy of *ohana* interact to influence the protagonist's psychological development and emotional recovery. Through this approach, the study is expected to contribute to literary psychology by providing a more comprehensive interpretation of children's psychosocial development in contemporary live-action movies while offering valuable insights for future research in literary criticism, child psychology, and character education.

2 Methods

This study employed a descriptive qualitative research design to analyze the psychological development of the main character in *Lilo & Stitch* (2025) based on Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables researchers to explore psychological phenomena, behaviors, and meanings represented in literary works through interpretative analysis rather than statistical measurement. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research aims to understand social or human phenomena by interpreting experiences within their natural context. This approach is particularly appropriate for literary psychology because it focuses on understanding characters' emotions, behaviors, and developmental experiences represented in narratives. Furthermore, according to Creswell (2014), qualitative researchers act as the primary research instrument, functioning as planners, data collectors, analysts, and reporters of the research findings. Accordingly, the researcher was directly involved in selecting, coding, interpreting, and reporting the research data.

The primary data source was the live-action movie *Lilo & Stitch* (2025), while secondary data were obtained from books, journal articles, and previous studies related to literary psychology, Erikson's psychosocial development theory, and qualitative research methodology. According to Pureka and Khalawi (2024), language is represented in various media, including movies, making movies an appropriate object for literary and linguistic research. This perspective supports the use of movies as valid research data because dialogues, visual expressions, and character interactions reflect meaningful psychological experiences. The unit of analysis consisted of scenes, dialogues, visual expressions, and character interactions involving the main character that reflected psychosocial development throughout the movie.

The data consisted of 45 scenes selected through purposive sampling because they contained psychological phenomena relevant to the study's objectives. According to Sugiyono (2013), purposive sampling is a sampling technique in which data are selected based on specific research considerations. Accordingly, only scenes containing verbal dialogues, visual interactions, emotional responses, behavioral changes, and psychosocial conflicts experienced by the main character were included in the analysis. Scenes unrelated to Erikson's psychosocial indicators or repetitive narrative events were excluded. After the selection process, each scene was as-

signed a specific code according to its chronological sequence in the movie. The selected data were then organized through a systematic coding process. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), qualitative coding consists of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding to identify concepts, establish relationships among categories, and integrate the findings into a coherent interpretation. Open coding began with identifying and labeling scenes, dialogues, and character interactions that represented psychosocial experiences. Axial coding was subsequently applied to group similar codes into categories corresponding to Erikson's psychosocial stages of development. Finally, selective coding was employed to identify the dominant psychosocial themes and interpret how parental loss, family attachment, and the Hawaiian cultural philosophy of *ohana* influenced Lilo's psychological development throughout the narrative. After coding, the organized data were presented through tables and figures during the data display stage to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusion drawing and verification were carried out by interpreting the analyzed data to answer the research questions while ensuring consistency between the findings and the theoretical framework.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, the researcher repeatedly reviewed the selected scenes, dialogues, and visual expressions to maintain consistency throughout the analysis. The coding procedure and selection criteria were applied consistently to enhance dependability, while every interpretation was supported by evidence obtained directly from the movie to ensure confirmability. The collected data were analyzed using the qualitative data analysis procedures proposed by Sugiyono (2013), consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction involved selecting information relevant to the research objectives, followed by presenting the findings through descriptive explanations and analytical tables. Finally, conclusions were drawn by interpreting the relationship between the research findings and Erikson's psychosocial development theory while continuously verifying the consistency between the analyzed data and the theoretical framework. Through these procedures, the findings provide a comprehensive explanation of the psychological development of the main character in *Lilo & Stitch* (2025).

Following the data analysis, the coding results and scene classifications were validated using a validation sheet, which was reviewed by an expert validator in English literature. The validation examined the conformity of the identified scenes, dialogues, and narrative elements with the characteristics of Erik Erikson's eight psychosocial development stages. In addition, the validator evaluated the accuracy of the researcher's interpretation of the main character's psychological conflicts and the relevance of the movie context to the corresponding theoretical indicators. Based on the validation results, the researcher revised and refined the coding as necessary before determining the final data for the analysis. This validation process ensured that the selected data were theoretically appropriate, representative, and consistently classified according to Erikson's psychosocial development theory.

Table 1: Distribution of Erikson's Psychosocial Development Stages

No.	Erikson Stage	Data Amount	Percentage
1	Trust vs Mistrust	9	20%
2	Autonomy vs Shame and Doubt	3	6,7%
3	Initiative vs Guilt	7	15,5%
4	Industry vs Inferiority	9	20%
5	Identity vs Role Confusion	12	26,7%
6	Intimacy vs Isolation	5	11,1%
7	Generativity vs Stagnation	0	0%
8	Integrity vs Despair	0	0%
	Total	45	100%

3 Findings and Discussion

3.1 Findings

The findings of this study are presented based on the psychosocial development stages experienced by the main character, Lilo, throughout *Lilo & Stitch* (2025). The analysis identified forty-five representative scenes, which were classified according to Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory. The overall distribution of these stages is presented in Table 1.

While Table 1 provides the numerical distribution of each psychosocial stage, Figure 1 offers a visual representation that facilitates comparison of the frequency of each developmental stage throughout the movie.

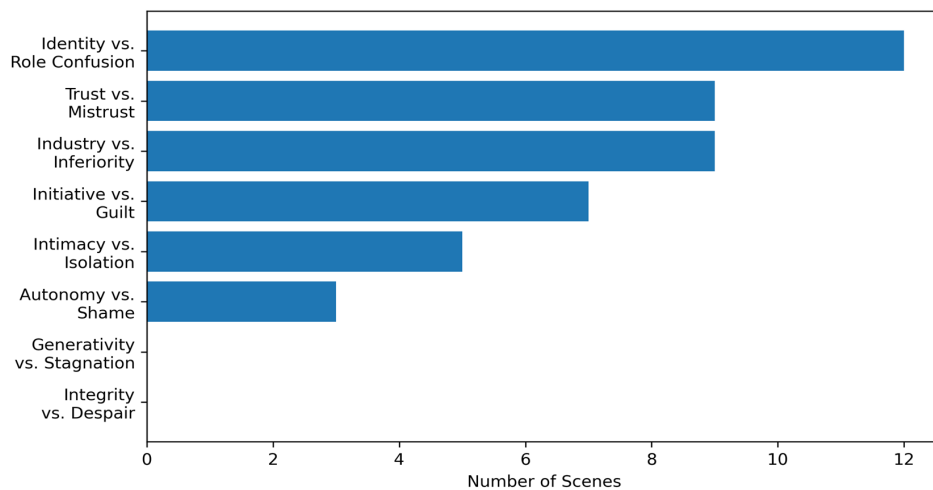


Figure 1: Distribution of Erikson's Psychological Development Stages

Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of psychosocial development stages reflected by Lilo throughout *Lilo & Stitch* (2025). The findings indicate that Identity versus Role Confusion is the most dominant stage, appearing in twelve scenes (26.7%). This is followed by Trust versus Mistrust and Industry versus Inferiority, each identified in nine scenes (20%). Initiative versus Guilt appears in seven scenes (15.5%), Intimacy versus Isolation in five scenes (11.1%), and Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt in three scenes (6.7%). No evidence was found for Gener-

Table 2: Representative Evidence

Stage	Timeline	Representative Dialogue	Key Finding
Identity vs. Role Confusion	00:09:17	“That’s not a friendship bracelet. Ew, garbage girl.”	Social rejection contributes to identity uncertainty.
Trust vs. Mistrust	00:47:57	“Ohana means family...”	Trust develops through family attachment.
Industry vs. Inferiority	00:48:59	“Lesson number one...”	Competence develops through learning.
Initiative vs. Guilt	01:16:44	“Stitch broke the family...”	Responsibility emerges after mistakes.
Intimacy vs. Isolation	00:50:27	“Did you have a family?...”	Attachment reduces emotional isolation.
Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt	00:29:17	“Can I go into the animal shelter?”	Independence remains guided by adults.

ativity versus Stagnation or Integrity versus Despair because these stages are associated with adulthood and late adulthood. Overall, the distribution demonstrates that Lilo’s psychological development is primarily characterized by identity formation, emotional security, and social adaptation.

To provide a more comprehensive understanding of the quantitative distribution presented above, representative evidence from each psychosocial stage was selected for further qualitative analysis. The evidence consists of scenes, dialogues, and character interactions that best illustrate the psychosocial conflicts experienced by Lilo. These representative data are summarized in Table 2.

As shown in Table 2, the following representative evidence illustrates how each psychosocial stage is reflected through Lilo’s experiences, behaviors, and interactions. The selected scenes provide qualitative support for the quantitative findings presented previously.

3.1.1 Identity vs. Role Confusion

The analysis identified twelve scenes representing Identity vs. Role Confusion, making it the dominant psychosocial stage. Across these scenes, Lilo experiences repeated social rejection, emotional insecurity, and uncertainty regarding her place within her family and community. The representative dialogue illustrates the emotional impact of peer rejection, while subsequent scenes demonstrate her gradual search for belonging through her relationship with Stitch and Nani. These findings indicate that identity formation is portrayed as a continuous developmental process throughout the narrative rather than a single isolated event.

3.1.2 Trust vs. Mistrust

Nine scenes represented Trust vs. Mistrust. The findings reveal that Lilo initially experiences emotional insecurity following the loss of her parents. Nevertheless, repeated interactions with Nani and Stitch gradually strengthen her sense of trust. The representative dialogue concerning

Ohana symbolizes emotional security, acceptance, and unconditional family support.

3.1.3 Industry vs. Inferiority

Nine scenes represented Industry vs. Inferiority. Lilo repeatedly attempts to demonstrate competence despite criticism and rejection from peers. The selected evidence shows that learning, responsibility, and perseverance contribute to the development of confidence, although feelings of inferiority remain visible in several situations.

3.1.4 Initiative vs. Guilt

Seven scenes were classified as Initiative vs. Guilt. Lilo frequently initiates actions independently and later reflects upon their consequences. The representative dialogue demonstrates increasing responsibility after realizing that her decisions affect other family members.

3.1.5 Intimacy vs. Isolation

Five scenes symbolically represent Intimacy vs. Isolation. Rather than depicting romantic intimacy, the movie emphasizes emotional attachment through family relationships and friendship. Lilo gradually moves from emotional isolation toward acceptance and belonging.

3.1.6 Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt

Three scenes illustrate Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt. Although less frequent, these scenes show Lilo's desire to make independent decisions while still depending on adult guidance. This stage reflects the balance between personal independence and external supervision.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Lilo's psychosocial development is characterized by six psychosocial stages, with Identity versus Role Confusion emerging as the most dominant, followed by Trust versus Mistrust and Industry versus Inferiority. This pattern suggests that the psychological consequences of parental loss, emotional isolation, and repeated social rejection significantly shape Lilo's emotional and psychosocial development throughout the narrative. Furthermore, the concept of ohana functions as a protective factor that gradually strengthens her sense of belonging, emotional security, and interpersonal relationships, ultimately contributing to her positive psychosocial development. Despite these findings, one theoretical consideration should be clarified regarding the application of Erikson's psychosocial stages. Erikson (1994) associated the Identity versus Role Confusion stage primarily with adolescence, whereas children of Lilo's chronological age are generally expected to experience the Industry versus Inferiority stage. However, the present study does not interpret this finding as a contradiction to Erikson's developmental framework. Rather, it adopts a literary-psychological perspective in which fictional characters are analyzed according to the psychological conflicts represented within the narrative rather than solely according to their chronological age. Throughout the movie, Lilo experiences parental loss, emotional isolation, persistent social rejection, and uncertainty regarding her role within her family and social environment. These recurring experiences consistently reveal identity-related concerns that become central to her psychological portrayal. Therefore,

the prominence of the Identity versus Role Confusion stage should be understood as a narrative representation of Lilo's psychological condition within the story rather than as a literal departure from Erikson's sequential model of psychosocial development. This interpretation enables the findings to remain theoretically consistent while reflecting the complexity of psychological conflict represented in the movie.

3.2 Discussion

The findings indicate that Identity versus Role Confusion emerged as the dominant psychosocial stage experienced by Lilo, suggesting that identity formation constitutes the central developmental challenge portrayed in *Lilo & Stitch* (2025). Rather than merely reflecting a sequence of psychosocial stages, the distribution of findings demonstrates that the movie emphasizes the process through which a child attempts to construct a stable sense of self while coping with profound emotional adversity. According to Erikson (1994), identity develops through continuous interaction between individual experiences and the surrounding social environment. This theoretical perspective helps explain why Lilo's repeated experiences of parental loss, social rejection, and emotional instability become significant obstacles to the formation of a coherent self-concept. The predominance of Identity versus Role Confusion therefore reflects not only the developmental characteristics of childhood but also the cumulative psychological impact of traumatic experiences that disrupt emotional security and social belonging. Similar observations have been reported by Mahendra and Fattia (2024), who argue that psychosocial conflicts depicted in literary works often emerge from interactions between personal experiences and social environments rather than from isolated psychological events. Consequently, the findings suggest that Lilo's identity development is portrayed as a gradual, dynamic process shaped by emotional relationships, environmental responses, and family experiences throughout the narrative.

The predominance of Identity versus Role Confusion can be understood through the significant influence of parental loss, which serves as the primary source of Lilo's psychological conflict throughout the movie. The loss of both parents not only deprives Lilo of emotional security but also disrupts the developmental environment that is essential for establishing a stable sense of identity. According to Mitchell et al. (2021), children who experience parental loss are at greater risk of developing emotional distress, social withdrawal, and difficulties in forming a coherent self-concept because the absence of primary caregivers weakens emotional stability during critical developmental periods. This perspective explains why Lilo frequently demonstrates feelings of loneliness, rejection, and uncertainty regarding her place within her family and social environment. Furthermore, Prakash and Saxena (2024) argue that childhood psychological development is strongly influenced by supportive interpersonal relationships, particularly those provided by parents and other significant caregivers. Without consistent emotional support, children may experience prolonged psychosocial conflicts that interfere with healthy identity formation. The findings of this study support these arguments by demonstrating that Lilo's identity crisis is not portrayed as an isolated psychological condition but rather as the cumulative consequence of bereavement, disrupted family structure, and repeated experiences of social rejection. Consequently, the movie presents identity formation as a gradual developmental process in which emotional adversity continuously shapes the protagonist's understanding of herself

and her relationship with others.

Beyond the influence of parental loss, the findings demonstrate that family attachment plays a fundamental role in facilitating Lilo's psychological recovery throughout the narrative. Although Lilo experiences persistent emotional distress following the death of her parents, her relationships with Nani and Stitch gradually provide the emotional security necessary for rebuilding trust, strengthening her sense of belonging, and supporting the development of a more stable identity. According to Erikson (1994), successful psychosocial development depends not only on individual resilience but also on supportive social relationships that enable individuals to resolve developmental crises. The findings of this study extend this perspective by showing that emotional recovery is closely connected to the Hawaiian cultural philosophy of *ohana*, which emphasizes unconditional acceptance, mutual responsibility, and enduring family bonds. Rather than portraying family solely as a biological relationship, the movie represents *ohana* as an inclusive support system in which emotional commitment and shared responsibility become essential components of psychological healing. This interpretation is reflected in the gradual transformation of the relationship among Lilo, Nani, and Stitch, in which emotional acceptance replaces the loneliness, rejection, and insecurity experienced earlier in the narrative. These findings are consistent with Cahyani et al. (2025), who argue that interpersonal relationships and family support significantly influence children's emotional resilience and psychosocial adjustment. However, the present study further demonstrates that cultural values embedded within family relationships also contribute to psychosocial recovery, suggesting that the concept of *ohana* enriches Erikson's psychosocial framework by providing a cultural dimension through which identity formation and emotional recovery can be more comprehensively understood. Consequently, the findings indicate that Lilo's psychological development is shaped not only by the resolution of psychosocial conflicts but also by a supportive cultural environment that continually reinforces acceptance, a sense of belonging, and emotional security.

Although Identity versus Role Confusion emerged as the dominant psychosocial stage, the presence of the other five stages demonstrates that Lilo's psychological development is multidimensional rather than confined to a single developmental conflict. Trust versus Mistrust and Industry versus Inferiority, which together accounted for 40% of the findings, indicate that emotional security and perceived competence remain fundamental aspects of Lilo's development. The recurring representation of Trust versus Mistrust suggests that the protagonist continually navigates feelings of safety and acceptance after the loss of her parents. At the same time, Industry versus Inferiority reflects her persistent efforts to demonstrate competence despite peer rejection and social exclusion. According to Khairani and Maemonah (2021), successful psychosocial development is achieved through the progressive resolution of interconnected developmental crises rather than through isolated stages. This perspective explains why several psychosocial stages appear simultaneously throughout the narrative.

Similarly, the presence of Initiative versus Guilt, Autonomy versus Shame and Doubt, and Intimacy versus Isolation illustrates complementary dimensions of Lilo's psychological growth. Her attempts to make independent decisions, assume responsibility for her actions, and establish meaningful emotional relationships indicate that psychosocial development occurs through continuous interaction between personal experiences and social relationships. Rahmasari and

Nugroho (2025) emphasize that literary characters often experience multiple psychological conflicts simultaneously because narrative development mirrors the complexity of real human experiences. The findings of the present study support this perspective by demonstrating that Lilo's emotional development cannot be interpreted through a single psychosocial stage. Instead, the interaction among several developmental conflicts collectively contributes to her psychological maturation throughout the narrative. Consequently, the movie portrays psychosocial development as a dynamic, interconnected process in which each developmental stage reinforces the others, shaping the protagonist's emotional resilience and personal growth.

Although Erikson's psychosocial development theory effectively explains Lilo's psychological conflicts resulting from parental loss, emotional insecurity, and social rejection, the findings suggest that the theory alone does not fully capture the cultural context portrayed in *Lilo & Stitch* (2025). Erikson emphasizes the interaction between individual development and the social environment; however, this study indicates that the Hawaiian cultural philosophy of *ohana* plays a more substantial role by promoting unconditional family attachment, collective responsibility, and emotional support. This finding extends previous studies by Mahendra and Fattia (2024) and Rahmasari and Nugroho (2025), which primarily focused on identifying psychosocial stages without examining how cultural values influence psychosocial recovery. Therefore, rather than challenging Erikson's theory, the present study suggests that *ohana* complements the psychosocial framework by explaining how culturally embedded family values facilitate children's identity formation and emotional resilience. Consequently, integrating Erikson's theory with the concept of *ohana* offers a broader perspective on children's psychosocial development in contemporary literary narratives.

Figure 2 summarizes the conceptual relationship identified throughout the findings and illustrates the process of Lilo's psychosocial development in *Lilo & Stitch* (2025). The model demonstrates that the loss of parents serves as the initial factor triggering emotional insecurity, which subsequently develops into an identity crisis during childhood. These findings indicate that unresolved emotional loss becomes the foundation for subsequent psychosocial conflicts experienced by the main character. However, the narrative also reveals that psychological recovery does not occur solely through individual adaptation. Instead, recovery is facilitated through the development of supportive relationships with Nani and Stitch, who gradually provide emotional acceptance, protection, and a renewed sense of belonging. Within this process, the Hawaiian cultural philosophy of *ohana* functions as the central mechanism that transforms emotional vulnerability into psychological resilience. Consequently, the conceptual model suggests that psychosocial recovery is achieved through the interaction between developmental experiences, interpersonal relationships, and cultural values rather than through the resolution of individual psychological conflicts alone. This model therefore extends the application of Erikson's psychosocial theory by demonstrating that cultural and familial contexts play a significant role in supporting children's identity development and emotional recovery.

3.3 Implications

The findings of this study provide several important implications for literary psychology research and educational practice. Theoretically, this study extends the application of Erik Erikson's

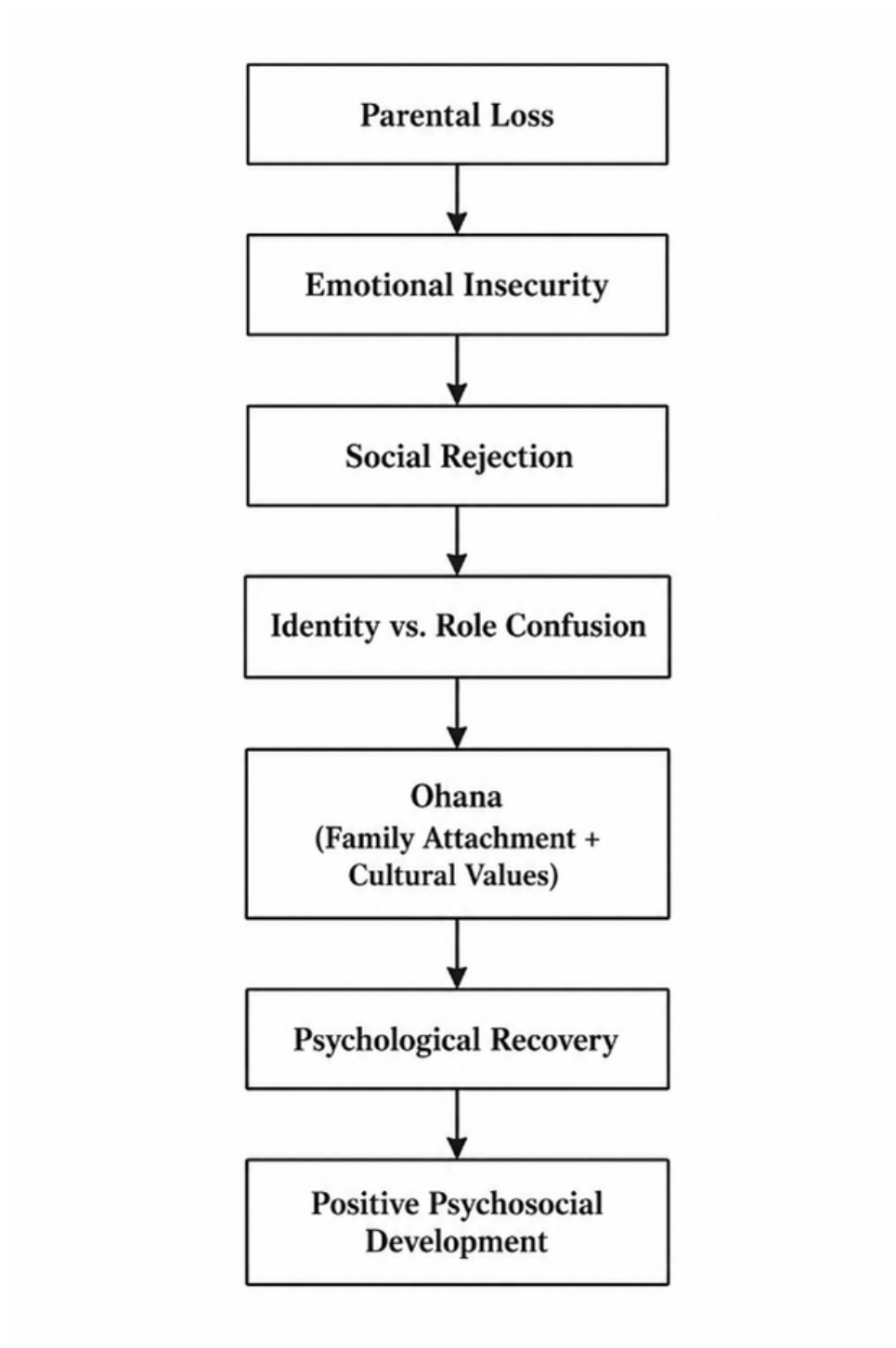


Figure 2: Conceptual Model of Lilo's Psychosocial Development.

psychosocial development theory by demonstrating that children's psychological development in literary narratives is influenced not only by individual psychosocial conflicts but also by cultural values and family relationships that facilitate emotional recovery. Integrating the Hawaiian philosophy of *ohana* into the interpretation of psychosocial development offers a broader perspective on how cultural contexts contribute to identity formation and psychological resilience. Practically, the findings highlight the importance of emotional support, family attachment, and stable interpersonal relationships in helping children cope with parental loss and other emotionally challenging experiences. The psychological development portrayed in *Lilo & Stitch* (2025) may therefore provide useful insights for parents, caregivers, psychologists, and counselors in understanding the emotional needs of children experiencing similar circumstances. Pedagogically, the movie may serve as an effective instructional resource in literature, literary psychology, and character education because it presents realistic representations of children's emotional development, empathy, resilience, and family values. Furthermore, integrating contemporary movies into English-language and literature classrooms may encourage students to develop critical thinking skills while enhancing their understanding of psychological theories through authentic narrative contexts. Consequently, the findings contribute not only to the development of literary psychology but also to broader educational practices that promote emotional awareness, character development, and culturally responsive learning.

4 Conclusions and Limitations

This study investigated the psychosocial development of the main character in *Lilo & Stitch* (2025) through the perspective of Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory. The findings revealed that six of Erikson's eight psychosocial stages were reflected in Lilo's psychological development, with Identity versus Role Confusion emerging as the most dominant stage. The analysis further demonstrated that parental loss, emotional insecurity, and social rejection significantly influenced Lilo's psychosocial conflicts throughout the narrative. Moreover, the findings indicate that the Hawaiian cultural philosophy of *ohana* plays a crucial role in facilitating psychological recovery by strengthening family attachment, emotional support, and the protagonist's sense of belonging. These findings suggest that children's psychosocial development in literary narratives is shaped not only by developmental crises but also by the interaction between family relationships and culturally embedded values.

The present study contributes to the field of literary psychology by extending the application of Erikson's psychosocial development theory through the integration of the Hawaiian cultural philosophy of *ohana*. Unlike previous studies that primarily identified psychosocial stages, this study demonstrates that cultural values function as an important mechanism supporting children's emotional resilience, identity formation, and psychosocial recovery. Accordingly, the findings provide a broader perspective on children's psychological development in contemporary literary narratives while enriching the application of psychosocial development theory in culturally diverse contexts.

Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. The analysis is limited to a single contemporary live-action movie, *Lilo & Stitch* (2025), and employs only Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory as the primary analytical framework. Consequently, the find-

ings may not fully represent psychosocial development portrayed in other literary works, movie genres, cultural settings, or supporting characters. Future research is therefore encouraged to investigate different literary works or movies, integrate additional psychological perspectives such as attachment theory, resilience theory, or trauma theory, and examine multiple characters to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of children's psychological development across diverse cultural contexts. Such studies may also further explore the relationship between family attachment, cultural values, and psychosocial development, thereby enriching future research in literary psychology.

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