
THE ADULT RESPONSIBILITIES AS THE TRIGGER FACTOR OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CONFLICTS IN THE MOVIE *13 GOING ON 30* BY GARRY WINICK

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Abstract	Article Information
<p><i>This research discusses how adult responsibilities trigger psychological conflicts in the movie 13 Going on 30 by Garry Winick. There are two objectives for the purpose of this: To identify the forms of adult life responsibilities found in the movie 13 Going on 30 by Garry Winick and to describe adult responsibilities trigger psychological conflict in the movie 13 Going on 30 by Garry Winick. This research uses psychology of literature with coverage Psychosocial Development by Erik Erikson and Field Theory by Kurt Lewin because the theories is relevant to addressing the Adult Responsibilities trigger Psychological Conflict. The researcher used qualitative methods that is explained descriptively based on this research using document analysis as a reference. The finding of this research found 2 form of Adult Responsibilities with 33 data on Intimacy vs. Isolation and 26 data on Generativity vs. Stagnation. Then through the adult responsibilities as the trigger factor of psychological conflict represent the Approach-approach conflict with 21 data, Approach-avoidance conflict with 34 data, and Avoidance-avoidance conflict with 6 data. The findings reveal that the most dominant form of adult responsibility in the movie 13 Going on 30 is embracing emotional vulnerability, which frequently emerges within an approach-avoidance conflict.</i></p> <p>Keywords: <i>Adult Responsibilities, Psychological Conflict, Qualitative method, Intimacy vs. Isolation, Approach- Avoidance Conflict</i></p>	<p><i>Received:</i> 22/09/2025</p> <p><i>Revised:</i> 23/09/2025</p> <p><i>Accepted:</i> 27/09/2025</p>

INTRODUCTION

Early adulthood is critical transition period where individuals start adjusting to new lifestyle and meeting increasing social expectations. In early adulthood, individuals are expected to take on new roles such as being a partner, a parent, and a breadwinner. Additionally,

they need to develop attitudes and values that match their new responsibilities, which can be a source of pressure and psychological conflict if not managed well. According to Hurlock early adulthood is a time when people adjust to new lifestyle and social expectations. In this stage they are expected to take on new roles like being a husband, wife, a parent, and a breadwinner. They also need to develop new desires, attitudes, and values that match their new responsibilities (as cited in Putri, 2018 p.35-36). Adulthood is an important phase of life marked by increased responsibilities and commitments to various roles. During adulthood, people take on more responsibilities. Work often becomes more demanding during this period, and many adults have developed extensive knowledge and skills in specific field. According to Chi et al (2014) during established adulthood, individuals assume roles that come with greater responsibilities. Work demand of ten increase during time, and many people have acquired significant knowledge and skills in a specific field by this stage (as cited in Mehta & Laviere, 2023)

Adult responsibilities is one of the factors in the occurrence of psychological conflict. Conflicts arise from diverse life problems experience by humans. Common issues faced by every individual include anxiety, fear, and love. According to Endraswara conflicts arise from the wide and complex range of life problems people face. "Each person deals with different issues, but there are some common problems many people experience such as love, longing, worry, death, spirituality, fear, and desire (as cited in Melati et al 2019 p.231). Conflicts is often associated with arguments, debates, or wars. Conflict that occurs within individuals is divided into two types, that is internal conflict and psychological conflict. Psychological conflict is when someone faces difficult decisions in life, triggered by personal considerations.

In this study the researcher uses the movie "13 Going on 30" as the object because it deals with themes related to the psychological development of person transtioning from adolescence to adulthood. The movie, 13 Going on 30 highlight the conflicts faced by the main character who suddenly finds herself in an adult situation without going through the natural process of growing up. This provides an opportunity to explore adult responsibilities and how these roles can trigger psychological conflicts. This research entitle is "*Adult Responsibilities as the Trigger Factor of Psychological Conflicts*" "*13 Going on 30*" is very relevant to this topic because it directly shows how an individual, suddenly forced to live an adult life, faces various pressures and psychological conflicts.

In "13 Going on 30" movie, Jenna as the main character has to navigate her new adult life, she discovers the challenges and responsibilities that come with being an adult. She realizes that her actions as a teenager have an effects on her relationships and career.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study employs a psychological approach to literature by using Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory and Kurt Lewin's conflict theory. Erikson's theory helps to analyze the

character's struggle with identity and adult responsibilities, while Lewin's framework clarifies the types of psychological conflicts faced. Both theories are applied to examine how the movie *13 Going on 30* portrays the main character's inner struggles in dealing with adulthood.

Erik Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development

Referring to adult responsibilities, researchers realize that adult responsibilities is one of the factors in the occurrence of psychological conflict. Conflicts arise from diverse life problems experienced by humans. Common issues faced by every individual include anxiety, fear, and love. According to Endraswara, conflicts arise from the wide and complex range of life problems people face. Each person deals with different issues, but there are some common problems many people experience such as love, longing, worry, death, spirituality, fear, and desire (as cited in Melati et al 2019 p.231). According to Erikson, successfully navigating through each stage leads to well-developed personality and the gaining of fundamental virtues. The virtues are inherent strengths that the ego can utilize to address future challenges (as cited in Hamzah & Wedawati, 2016). Based on Erik Erikson's psychosocial theory, particularly the stages of Intimacy vs. Isolation and Generativity vs. Stagnation, adult responsibilities are categorized into six forms:

1. Intimacy vs. Isolation

In this stage, a person enters early adulthood. Each individual in this phase is ready and tries to integrate their identity with others. In short, they begin to learn how to socialize. Individuals in this stage appear as loving, forming friendships, working, and sharing with others (as cited in Moku & Boangmanalu, 2021). This stage is further divided into three specific forms. The stage of Intimacy vs. Isolation consists of:

- a. Establishing relationship
- b. Embracing emotional vulnerability
- c. Balancing identity and intimacy

2. Generativity vs. Stagnation

In Erikson's terminology, this generation enters the stage of Generativity vs. Stagnation, also known as adulthood. Those in this stage are motivated to help the younger generation develop and live more meaningful lives. Having children does not guarantee a spirit of generativity. For example, parents must do more than just have children; they must also protect and guide them. This means parents often have to sacrifice their own needs (Sarang et al, 2019). This stage of Generativity vs. Stagnation includes

- a. Productivity and social contribution
- b. Guiding the next generation
- c. Fostering social responsibility

Kurt Lewin's Field Theory of Conflict

According to Lewin's work on psychological conflicts is a significant part of his broader Field Theory. He identified different types of conflicts that arise from the interplay of forces within a person's life space. In this context, Kurt Lewin's conflict theory can be used to understand how individuals navigate these complex situations and resolve their internal conflicts. The theory developed by Kurt Lewin, known as "Field Theory", can help researchers study or analyze the psychological conflicts experienced by the main character. In the context of psychological conflicts, Lewin divides conflicts into three main categories based on their motives:

1. Approach- Approach Conflict

This type of conflict occurs when an individual must choose between two desirable outcomes. Both options are appealing, but the person can only select one, leading to a dilemma.

2. Approach- Avoidance Conflict

This conflict arises when a single option has both positive and negative aspects, creating a situation where the individual is simultaneously drawn to and repelled by the same goal.

3. Avoidance- Avoidance Conflict

In this scenario, the individual must choose between equally undesirable options. Both choices are negative and the person would prefer to avoid both, but a decision must be made.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative descriptive method, emphasizing the exploration of participants' perspectives through interactive and flexible approaches. The primary data were collected from selected scenes in *13 Going on 30*, directed by Garry Winick, particularly those that contain relevant dialogue and textual elements. Additional data sources include literature, academic journals, and previous research related to the topic. The data were analyzed using Erik Erikson's psychosocial development theory and Kurt Lewin's field theory to provide a deeper understanding of the character's psychological growth and behavioral transformation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The researcher identified two forms of adult life responsibility and fifty-nine data points from the movie to address the first research question. These data represent various forms of adult life responsibility. To answer the second research question, the researcher applied descriptive analysis based on Kurt Lewin's Field Theory. Furthermore, the researcher presents arguments to support the analysis and interpretation of the findings.

Forms of Adult Life Responsibility

1. Intimacy vs. Isolation

Intimacy vs. Isolation is a stage in Erik Erikson's theory of development that occurs in young adulthood. During this time, individuals seek to form deep, meaningful relationships. Success in this stage leads to strong, loving connections, while failure results in loneliness and feelings of isolation.



Scene 3. Screenplay (00.30.32)

Jenna : I'm going to party with limo
Matt : Great, look like you're back to your old. I probably go
Jenna : You're not going to party?
Matt : No... I gotta work, thanks.

Jenna's excitement about the party and Matt's disinterest suggest that they are experiencing different forms of isolation. Jenna might be surrounded by people and social events, but she lacks the intimacy and understanding that comes from meaningful relationships. Meanwhile, Matt's focus on work might protect him from superficial social interactions, but it also isolates him from potential personal connections, including with Jenna. This dialogue is more about balancing identity and intimacy, Jenna's excitement for the limo party reflects her current self image and priorities while Matt's focus on work reflects his own identity and values (responsibility). The moment shows a misalignment between their individual identities, which affects how close they can be.

2. Generativity vs. Stagnation

Generativity vs. Stagnation is the seventh stage in Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, occurring during middle adulthood. This stage focuses on the individual's need to contribute to the world through productive work, raising children, mentoring others, and participating in community or societal development.



Scene 39. Screenplay (00.59.30)

Jenna: Matt, these photos...they're beautiful
Jenna: You need to share these. With the world
Matt: They're just for me
Jenna: No, they're for all of us. You have a gift

Uplifting others and encouraging them to reach their potential is a classic example of *generativity*. In Erikson's theory includes promoting productivity and sharing talents in ways that benefit society not just for personal gain. Jenna sees that Matt photography is valuable to others, not just himself. This scene is a clear example of productivity and social contribution within the generativity stage. Jenna has evolved from someone focused on status and self image into a person who recognize the potential in others and wants them to thrive not for fame, but to serve and inspire others. By telling Matt "You have gift" and "You need to share this with the world" she acts as a catalyst for someone else's generativity, showing that true maturity involves not just creating, but helping others to create meaningfully as well.

Adult Responsibility that Trigger Psychological Conflicts

1. Intimacy vs. Isolation
 - a. Intimacy vs. Isolation trigger Approach- Approach Conflict

In Intimacy vs. Isolation stage, individuals seek to form close and meaningful relationships with others. Success in achieving emotional intimacy with other will lead the individual to stable and satisfying relationships, while failure to do so may lead to isolation and feelings of loneliness. Meanwhile Approach-Approach Conflict in Kurt Lewin's theory is a conflict that occurs when a person is faced with two equally attractive or positive choices. In this part, the researcher found and analyzed some excerpt about the form of Intimacy vs. Confusion trigger Approach-Approach Conflict.



(00.37.55)

Jenna : Hi Mom... can I just....hang out with you tonight?
Mom : Of course honey. Are you okay?
Jenna : I just missed you...

Jenna's sudden desire to spend time with her mom shows her need for emotional closeness, safety, and authentic connection — all of which are core elements of intimacy in Erikson's theory. It contrasts sharply with her previously independent or superficial adult life, where emotional isolation dominated. In this situation involves two positives choices that Jenna is being pulled between, re connecting with her mother seeking comfort and closeness and living the exciting adult life she once wished for. Although she chooses to be with her mom in this scene, the underlying conflict is between two desirable but mutually exclusive goals: meaningful relationships vs. glamorous independence. That tension marks this as an approach-approach conflict. Jenna is torn between maintaining her new adult life and returning to emotionally fulfilling, familiar bonds like the one with her mom — both are attractive in different ways.

b. Intimacy vs. Isolation trigger Approach- Avoidance Conflict

In the context of Erikson's *Intimacy vs. Isolation* stage, an *approach-avoidance conflict* often arises when individuals encounter the potential for deep relationships. This type of conflict occurs when one is simultaneously drawn to and repelled by the idea of intimacy. On one hand, the prospect of a close relationship offers the emotional fulfillment and connection that are highly appealing; on the other hand, the fear of vulnerability, rejection, or loss of independence can create significant hesitation.



(00.25.19)

Jenna : Hi, this is Jenna and I'm looking for Matt
Matt : You're not Chinese?
Jenna : Matt?
Matt : yeah..
Jenna : You're tall, you're different. You don't know me?
Jenna is trying to reconnect with Matt (approach), but she is taken back by.

Jenna is trying to reconnect with Matt (approach), but she is taken back by how much he has changed and how different he is from the person she remembers (avoidance). The conflict is between her desire to reconnect and her discomfort with the changes that time has brought. Jenna's reaction highlights the tension between her idealized memory of Matt and the reality of his present self. This ambivalence—wanting intimacy but feeling uncertain due to the unpredictability of change—illustrates the *Intimacy vs. Isolation* stage. Her initial enthusiasm is countered by hesitation, symbolizing the risk of becoming emotionally isolated if she is unable to accept the changes in Matt. This conflict not only underscores her emotional vulnerability but also raises questions about whether she can overcome her discomfort to truly reconnect, making it a significant moment in her journey toward authentic intimacy.

c. Intimacy vs. Isolation trigger Avoidance- Avoidance Conflict

In the context of Intimacy vs. Isolation, Avoidance-Avoidance conflict can arise when a person is faced with two equally undesirable choices, relating to relationship or isolation. Both choices can lead to unhappiness, and choosing one means avoiding the negative consequences of the other, but still causing suffering.



(00.36.00)

Jenna : (Jenna sits alone in her luxurious but seemingly empty apartment, staring at her childhood photo album).

In this scene, Jenna is alone in her apartment, staring at her childhood photo album. The conflict she face is; on one hand she has material success, status, and independence (her adult life) on the other hand she long for authecticity, love, and the simpler happiness of her past (represented by the photo album). Both options feel difficult and costly which is the hallmark of avoidance- avoidance. She doesn't yet see an easy, positive path. That's why the moment feels haeavy, vulnerable,and conflicted.

2. Generativity vs. Stagnation

a. Generativity vs. Stagnation trigger Approach- Approach Conflict

This is a psychological situation where someone in the Generativity vs. Stagnation stage must choose between two positive ways to contribute both choices promote growth, productivity, or helping others but the person can only choose one. Generativity vs. Stagnation triggered Approach-Approach Conflict happens when a person wants to fulfill their social responsibility or productivity goals but is torn between two equally meaningful and positive path to do so.



Screenplay (01.37.34)

Becky: Everyone at school thinks I'm weird

Jenna: You are way cool. You just don't know it yet

Jenna: You're smart, and funny, and original. And someday you're gonna find people who appreciate that

Jenna is affirming Becky's uniqueness and encouraging her to embrace it, reflecting guiding the next generation by boosting a younger person's self-worth. Both options could have no major negative impact on Jenna personally, but one is clearly more rewarding for her values. For example Jenna can stay quite and avoid involvement, letting Becky handle her insecurity alone and Jenna can take the opportunity to encourage and mentor Becky, which she chooses.

b. Generativity vs. Stagnation trigger Approach- Approach Conflict

Refers to a psychological conflict, as described by Kurt Lewin, that occurs when a single goal or situation contains both attractive (approach) and unattractive (avoidance) aspects. In other words, it is something a person both desires and fears at the same time.



Screenplay (00.57.50)

Jenna: I missed you. You were always there for me... and I blew it

Jenna: I didn't even realize what I lost

Matt: It's been a long time, Jenna. But yeah... I missed you too

Jenna seeks reconnection, showing a desire for meaningful relationships and emotional restoration. Reconnecting with Matt could bring joy (approach), but also guilt and rejection due to past mistakes (avoidance).

c. Generativity vs. Stagnation trigger Avoidance- Avoidance Conflict

Occurs when an individual must choose between two equally undesirable options. For example, in *13 Going on 30*, Jenna faces the dilemma of either keeping her career through dishonesty or losing it entirely—both outcomes bring negative consequences.



Screenplay (00.47.30)

Dad: Sweetheart, you seem...different today

Jenna: I feel like I've missed everything. Like I don't know who I am anymore

Mom: That's okay. We all lose our way sometimes

Jenna experiences stagnation (regret, confusion), triggering the desire to become a better person. Jenna feels trapping between two bad states, living a false life or starting over without clarity about how feels like a loss in both ways.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the characters and psychological conflicts in the movie *13 Going on 30*, it can be concluded that adult responsibilities are the main trigger for the psychological conflicts experienced by the protagonist, Jenna Rink. Through Erik Erikson's psychosocial stages of *intimacy vs. isolation* and *generativity vs. stagnation*, Jenna's struggles are portrayed as revolving around her difficulties in forming meaningful relationships and balancing personal fulfillment with social contribution. Combined with Kurt Lewin's theory of behavioral change within the context of social pressures and environmental demands, the premature burden of adult responsibilities leads Jenna to experience emotional vulnerability and identity dissonance. This process illustrates how unpreparedness in managing adult demands creates profound internal conflicts, which significantly influence her relationships, sense of purpose, and life decisions.

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