



Examining Adoptive Strategies for Juveniles in *The Breadwinner*

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Abstract

This paper explores how adaptive methods along with survival strategies operate as operational structures which help families maintain their existence. Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory helps analyze the survival techniques which allowed the protagonist to survive along with her family. According to Social Learning Theory which Deborah Ellis uses in *The Breadwinner* the author emphasizes four modeling techniques beginning with attention followed by retention then reproduction followed by motivation. A single female child named Parvana conceals herself as a male to earn money that sustains her family. The story happens inside Afghanistan during Taliban rule while gender limitations dominate society. The paper illustrates how the protagonist models courageous resistance through their actions to show youth readers important lessons about their capability to act and overcome obstacles. The research explains how the novel presents English-language literature as a tool for discussing universal problems. The complexities of identity development for children exposed to conflict become more apparent through this novel which teaches readers about how children face challenges in dangerous environments to form their identity and defiance and understanding of the world around them. Through the merge of Social Learning Theory with Juvenile Studies the document showcases Parvana's developmental journey by explaining how her progress results from external environmental forces as well as internal drive and acquired behavioral patterns throughout her colonized experience.

Keywords: social learning theory, juvenile literature, gender inequality, resilience

Juvenile studies investigations into their psychological, social and cultural dimensions of childhood and adolescence. It shows how literature combined with language alongside societal elements form identities of young people as they develop. Research into juvenile experiences remains crucial for solving challenges having to do with mental health together with education and social development given the current global changes. Through Social Learning Theory Albert Bandura

determined that people learn by watching others and copying their behavior as well as following their examples. The theory demonstrates how people learn from their minds and social relationships and environmental elements affect their actions. Learning results from internal mental processes according to this approach instead of typical behaviourist methods. Human development alongside education and socialization significantly depend on this theory for their complete understanding.

The Breadwinner by Deborah Ellis provides readers with an effective way to study these concepts. The story presents these events in the oppressive Afghanistan during Taliban rule through the experiences of Parvana as she faces adult responsibilities after her father's imprisonment. Through Parvana's character readers can observe how young people demonstrate perseverance while their multiple role models from the environment interact with the traditional cultural rules that merge to shape their identities. At eleven years old she became required to dress up as a boy to assist her family when her father went to jail. Parvana demonstrates the essential bond between young development and observed life lessons by experiencing interactions with her father as well as her mother, Mrs. Weera and by encountering both reinforcing and disruptive social cultural elements.

Social Learning Theory demonstrates through *The Breadwinner* how young people adapt to difficult circumstances while deriving fortitude from observed resiliency and develop their moral capabilities. Children living under oppression encounter many challenges according to this novel but it reveals that resourceful relationships along with symbolic learning offer powerful ways for kids like Parvana to gain control over themselves and their voices in times of struggle. The protagonist says, "Father's books! At the bottom of the cupboard was a secret compartment her father had built to hide the few books that had not been destroyed in one of the bombings. Some were English books about history and literature. They were kept hidden because the Taliban burned books they didn't like." (Ellis, 24)



In Juvenile studies, the environment serves as a fundamental factor in influencing a child's psychological and emotional growth. These lines illustrate Parvana's experiences within a repressive, fear-driven society, where the annihilation of books represents the obliteration of knowledge and cultural identity. These lines generate a context of deprivation both in material and intellectual forms compelling her to regard books and education as precious. The deeds of Parvana's father to covertly safeguard books cultivate an environment in which she learns to value knowledge and education. The learning experience transforms her identity through its dual purpose of becoming a tool for fighting back and an pathway to self-empowerment. Through her efforts to hide and protect books Parvana learns how to defend important values even during wartime which strengthens both her emotional strength and ethical development. Her father preserving of literature exemplifies Bandura's notion of observational learning, in which children emulate the behaviors and principles exhibited by trusted adults.

Through her nonconformist act of hiding books Parvana learns about maintaining determination even when facing challenges. The hidden books symbolize both intellectual toughness and emotional strength which inspire Parvana to endure Taliban domination. By preserving and maintaining literary works, Parvana and her father participate in a form of cultural defiance, reinforcing the perspective that knowledge and creativity serve as instruments of empowerment, even under oppressive governance. The books reflect a connection to a world beyond the Taliban's reach a world of ideas, history, and imagination. This connection sustains Parvana's spirit and reminds her potential for a more liberated existence.

"Most people in Afghanistan could not read or write. Parvana was one of the lucky ones. Both of her parents had been to university, and they believed in education for everyone, even girls." (Ellis,7) Parvana's parents serve as educated role models, demonstrating Albert Bandura's concept of observational learning, wherein children assimilate values and behaviors through modelling. Their commitment to education, even in the midst of the Taliban's oppressive regime, significantly shapes Parvana's perspective on learning and resilience. Research on juvenile development highlights the vital importance of supportive environments in forming identity; despite systemic oppression, the values instilled by her parents nurture her intellectual and moral growth. The Taliban's prohibition of

education, particularly for girls, starkly contrasts with this, amplifying the importance of her parents' resistance and its impacts on Parvana. The conclusion of the novel, characterized by both uncertainty and hope, highlights how the values of education and resistance continue to shape Parvana, illustrating the enduring effect of her upbringing in the face of oppressive rule. Moreover, Parvana says, "Parvana leapt to her feet. 'Stop! Stop it! We'll go now! We'll go!' She grabbed the arm of one of her mother's attackers. He shook her off as if she were a fly. " (Ellis,32) "The worst part of her dream was seeing Mother beaten. It was as if Parvana was watching it happen from far, far away, and couldn't get to her to help her up." (Ellis,35)

When Parvana springs to her feet and attempts to disrupt her mother's assault, she is reflecting the innate human inclination to safeguard those dear to her. Her effort to seize the assailant's arm indicates that, despite the brutality, she is beginning to address injustice in a straightforward, though somewhat inexperienced, way. This can be interpreted as a learned behavior or response shaped by the adversity and oppression she has observed in her surroundings. The aggressive surroundings to which Parvana is subjected fundamentally influence her cognitive growth and emotional well-being. The initial occurrence underscores her instinctual effort to intervene, while the subsequent quotation explores her internal suffering, characterized by her separation from her mother and her sense of helplessness. This reflects the ways in which children in conflict areas or repressive environments formulate survival strategies, which may include a sense of internalized helplessness or constant vigilance.

The poetic lines show an unequal reality because of institutional violence that oppresses women within Parvana's society. Women like her mother face the role of being subjected to domination and aggressive treatment in this society. A discriminatory social practice shapes Parvana's development when she understands the brutal reality she must face because of her gender-based suppression. The stressful events that affect Parvana in *The Breadwinner* closely match Bandura's social learning theory foundation of attention retention, reproduction and motivation. When her mother becomes a victim of attack Parvana witnesses the entire scene which reveals to her the extreme violence and discrimination that exists in her neighborhood. The traumatic incident embeds itself into her mind because she experiences it in her dreams each night which demonstrates her ability to remember depression and terror. Despite lacking



sufficient physical abilities to stop them she tries to stop the attackers to demonstrate her intent to become a protective figure. This ordeal, together with her affection for her family, inspires her to seek alternative methods of resisting oppression, thereby fostering her resilience and ingenuity. These incidents highlight systemic injustices such as gender-based violence, the dehumanization of women and children, and the pervasive normalization of trauma in conflict environments.

"They were going to turn her into a boy." As a boy, you'll be able to move in and out of the market, buy what we need, and no one will stop you," Mother said. "It's a perfect solution," Mrs Weera said. "You'll be our cousin from Jalalabad," Nooria said, "come to stay with us while our father is away." (Ellis,46)

The novel *The Breadwinner* provides a comprehensive depiction of the status of women under the Taliban regime. Parvana's family faces food shortages due to her father's imprisonment. Nooria informs the young Parvana that she is the sole member capable of purchasing additional food for the family and all the members of the family haven't had food for days. As there is no option for her with a lot of distress she accepted, they plan to maintain it as a secret to safeguard their lives from the Taliban. During her visit to the market, Parvana is confronted by a Taliban soldier for not wearing a burqa. This illustrates the prohibitions against women and girls leaving their homes without a male escort and the mandatory use of the burqa. Additionally, the Taliban's systematic destruction of schools, colleges, and universities significantly contributed to the decline of the education system in Afghanistan. As a result, the Afghan population experienced heightened illiteracy during Taliban rule, as severe educational restrictions led to the closure of schools and forty six universities, depriving countless children and young adults of educational opportunities and impairing their literacy skills.

The character of Parvana changes into an impersonation of a male figure in *The Breadwinner* to reveal the flexible character of identity and survival capabilities in restricted environments thus contributing crucial insights to Juvenile studies. Her acceptance of this male identity reveals both the resilience and practical nature that young people need when facing systematic gender discrimination as they cope with hiding their genuine self. The situation reveals survival under such conditions demands adapting to social rankings because Parvana learns men's rights grant freedom and protection which

define her sense of independence and identity. For children who must hide their true identity the development of psychological problems often persists because they struggle with their self-concept while also internalizing their subordination. Through wearing the male identity Parvana both gains strength and shores up the burdens of performing persona traits she does not truly feel.

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