

Analysis of Moral Values of Being in The Pursuit of Happiness Movie

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to analyze the moral values representing the educational values presented in the film "The Pursuit of Happiness." The research design employed qualitative descriptives to examine the movie and its script, focusing on scenes and visuals depicting educational values. By observing the protagonist's utterances and actions, the moral values as explained by Linda and Eyre were analyzed. The results of this research revealed five of the six moral values of being, namely honesty (observed in two scenes), courage (manifested in three scenes), peace (seen in four scenes), independence and potential (highlighted in three scenes), and self-discipline and moderation (illustrated in two scenes). These findings provided a valuable resource for students of English education and suggested "The Pursuit of Happiness" as an interesting option for inclusion in educational curricula. The identified moral values could be integrated into teaching and learning, offering teachers a dynamic tool to foster character development. In conclusion, this research underlined the potential of film as a powerful medium for instilling positive values and character. By embracing the moral values embedded in cinematic narratives, educators could contribute to the holistic development of students, emphasizing the important role of character education in forming responsible and moral individuals.

Keywords: Moral value of being, movie, The Pursuit of Happiness movie

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INTRODUCTION

In the intricate tapestry of human development, the cultivation of moral values serves as the bedrock, moulding individuals into conscientious and ethically grounded contributors to society. Schools play a pivotal role in this transformative process, shaping the way students perceive and navigate the intricacies of right and wrong (Kaur, 2019). Moral education, therefore, becomes a catalyst for fostering a heightened sense of responsibility towards the well-being of others and the broader community. The contemporary landscape, marked by unsettling trends in both educational institutions and society at large, underscores the urgency of refocusing on moral education. This research illuminates the critical importance of instilling moral values as an integral facet of education. Beyond the realm of intellectual growth, the emphasis on moral development contributes

to the cultivation of individuals poised to make positive contributions to the fabric of society, anchoring the transformative potential of education in the nurturing of ethical and responsible citizens.

These values are the foundation upon which ethical principles and behaviour are built. As Lapsley (2007) suggests, one's character is forged through the continuous practice of these moral values. Students, in their journey of self-discovery and personal growth, encounter various dimensions of their existence, including the social, cultural, emotional, physical, and spiritual aspects. By deliberately infusing educational curricula and learning environments with moral values, the educator can seek to instil in students the vital virtues of empathy, integrity, and a profound sense of responsibility. This endeavour aims to shape individuals who not only possess a strong moral compass but actively contribute positively to society by embodying and upholding these moral values in their daily lives.

Movies emerge as a compelling medium for learning moral values, offering a diverse and impactful educational experience. With their inherent ability to captivate audiences and immerse them in extraordinary narratives (Ardayati, 2018), films stand out as an engaging tool for teaching moral values. Integrating thoughtfully selected movies into educational curricula becomes a strategic approach to accommodating varied learning styles, fostering a deeper connection with the subject matter. The unique potency of the film lies in its capacity to seamlessly blend visual and auditory stimuli into a cohesive and powerful whole (Glover, 2009). Beyond mere entertainment, movies serve as windows into cultural diversity, historical contexts, and ethical quandaries, expanding students' horizons and heightening their global awareness. In essence, leveraging the educational value of films not only provides a dynamic and accessible avenue for acquiring academic knowledge but also cultivates well-rounded individuals equipped with a robust moral compass, enhancing the transformative potential of education.

One of the movies that can be as media to teach Moral values is "The Pursuit of Happyness," directed by Gabriele Muccino and released in 2006. Garnering positive reviews and an IMDb rating of 8.0/10, the film tells the real-life story of Chris Gardner, portrayed by Will Smith, a struggling salesman who, against all odds, secures custody of his child while pursuing a transformative career opportunity. The movie has been lauded for its uplifting and emotionally resonant plot, with particular acclaim directed at Will Smith's performance, elevating it beyond ordinary melodrama. Its narrative, rooted in the pursuit of happiness amid adversity, makes it a compelling choice for audiences seeking inspiration. As a cinematic piece, it holds significant potential as a valuable educational resource, especially for students in English education programs aspiring to become teachers. By delving into the film's rich storyline, students can glean not only linguistic nuances but also profound life lessons, making "The Pursuit of Happyness" a captivating and instructive addition to their academic journey.

METHOD

In this research, a qualitative descriptive methodology was employed to thoroughly examine and analyze the moral values depicted in the movie "The Pursuit of

Happyness." Following the principles outlined by Creswell (2014), qualitative research places significant emphasis on gathering information from objects or individuals, focusing on subjective interpretation and in-depth data analysis. The primary method chosen for this research is documentary research, as recommended by Bowen (2009). Systematic document analysis is applied, utilizing movie scripts as rich textual sources and recognizing the importance of online documents.

To ensure a structured and consistent approach to data collection, an observation table is employed as a tool. The subsequent qualitative data analysis, following the approach suggested Miles and Huberman (1994), involves the processes of reduction, display, and drawing conclusions. A specifications table is utilized to enhance clarity in presenting the findings. This integrated methodology is designed to offer a concise yet comprehensive exploration of the ethical dimensions portrayed in the movie "The Pursuit of Happyness".

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The movie "The Pursuit of Happiness" contains five moral values. These moral values can be found in 22 utterances spread throughout 14 scenes in the movie. There are two scenes of honesty, three scenes of courage, four scenes of peaceability, three situations of self-reliance and potential, and two scenes of self-discipline and moderation.

a. Honesty

There found two scene that shows honesty in the movie.

Scene 1 (43:16-43:59)

Context: Chris Gardner arrives at the office for his interview, presenting a somewhat unkempt look, with noticeable traces of white paint still visible on his face and attire.

Chris: **I was arrested for failure to pay parking tickets. I ran here from the police station.**

Mr Frakesh: What were you doing before you were arrested?

Chris: **I was painting my apartment.**

Mr Frakesh: Is it dry now?

Chris: Uh. I hope so

Chris Gardner displayed high transparency during a job interview with Mr. Farkesh. He openly admitted to recent arrest for unpaid parking tickets, explaining his dishevelled appearance. When asked about paint marks on his clothes, Chris truthfully stated he was painting his apartment, highlighting his commitment to honesty and integrity.

Scene 2 (07:41-07:57)

Context: The scene takes place in the morning, when Chris and his family are having breakfast together. After the meal, while Linda (Chris's wife) is cleaning up and washing the dishes, she brings up the topic of paying the bills.

Linda: Did you pay the taxes?

Chris: No, I'm gonna have to file an extension.

Linda: You already filed an extension.

Chris: Yeah, well, I gotta file another one.

Linda: That's... It's \$650.

Chris: I'll have it in the next month.

Linda: That means interest, right? And a penalty?

In a scene from "The Pursuit of Happyness," Chris Gardner demonstrates transparency and trustworthiness by openly admitting to his wife, Linda, that he hasn't paid their taxes and needs an extension. His commitment to honesty, despite potential discomfort, reflects his dedication to maintaining integrity in their relationship and dealing truthfully with financial challenges.

The first discovery centred on honesty, emphasizing the commitment to truth in words and deeds, even when challenging. According to Linda and Eyre (1993), honesty, a form of integrity, involves acting on one's principles despite discomfort, revealing and shaping one's character.

b. Courage

There found three scene that shows courage.

Scene 1 (13:37-14:07)

Context: In the bustling streets of San Francisco, Chris navigated through packed sidewalks and towering buildings to apply for a stockbroker position. Before entering the building, Chris entrusted his medical equipment to a beggar, but in the middle of the interview, it was seen that the beggar had taken the medical equipment away. In the end, Chris had to go after the beggar and promised Tim Brophy that he would return the form to apply for the job.

Tim Brophy: Let me see if I can find you an application for our internship. I'm afraid that's all we can do for you. See, this is a satellite office. Jay Twistle in the main office, he oversees Witter Resources. I mean, you know, I'm just this office. As you can see, we got a hell of a lot of applications here. Normally I have a resume sheet, but I can't seem to find it anywhere. We...

Chris: Um, Thank you very much. I need to go. I'll bring this back. Thank you.

Tim Brophy: okay

Chris Gardner demonstrated moral courage by embracing transparency in his application process and engaging with the Brophy Team with a bold and proactive demeanour. The defining moment came when he observed his medical equipment

being taken by a beggar. Chris prioritized integrity over career prospects, calmly expressing gratitude and committing to return the items. This showcased his rare blend of authenticity, courage, and moral strength, leaving a lasting impression on the audience.

Scene 2 (24:21-25:16)

Context: knowing that Mr Twistle was rushing to reach Noe Valley, Chris seized the opportunity and confidently expressed his desire to travel to the same destination, seeing it as a chance to engage in conversation with him.

Mr. Twistle: Yeah. Listen. What can I do for you?

Chris: I submitted an application for the intern program. I hoped I could sit down with you for a moment.

Mr. Twistle: Actually, I'm on my way to Noe Valley, Chris.

Chris: Can we share a ride maybe?

Mr. Twistle: All right get in.

this scene underscored Chris's exceptional courage, unwavering determination, authenticity, and boldness in navigating challenges while actively pursuing valuable opportunities and meaningful interactions.

Scene 3 (44:08-44:17)

Context: Despite his messy appearance, with patches of white paint on his face, Chris Gardner sits confidently wearing a white shirt and jacket during the interview.

Mr. Frohm: He (Jay) said you're smart.

Chris: Well, I like to think so.

Mr. Frohm: And you want to learn this business?

Chris: Yes, sir, I wanna learn this business

Mr. Frohm: Have you already started learning on your own?

Chris: Absolutely

Chris's firm "Yes, sir, I wanna learn this business" and confident "Absolutely" to Mr Frohm reveal his commitment to tackling challenges in the business world. These responses underscore authenticity, integrity, and bold, positive engagement—essential qualities for effective leadership. Chris exhibits moral courage and readiness for leadership responsibilities.

The second aspect explored the moral value of courage, defined by Jablin (2006) as the capacity to confront challenges and embrace uncertainty despite fear. In education, this moral value, according to Sadooghiasl (2018), manifested through ethical care, inner serenity cultivation, and fostering principled decision-making and virtuous conduct.

c. Peaceability

There found four scenes presented in the movie.

Scene 1 (51:54-52:22)

Context: In a poignant moment, Chris Gardner exemplifies peaceability by maintaining composure despite emotional turmoil caused by his ex-wife's plans. Accepting a job offer from Mr. Twistle amid personal challenges, he demonstrates a resolute commitment to inner calm in the face of adversity.

Receptionist Dean Witter 16: Your name?

Chris: Yeah, my name is Chris Gardner. The message is:
Thank you very much for inviting me into the program. I really appreciate it, and I'd be very pleased to accept your invitation.

Receptionist Dean Witter 16: Is it all?

Chris: Yes that's. Thank's it.

Receptionist Dean Witter 16: okay

Chris exhibits commendable peaceability and emotional maturity in accepting an unpaid internship at Dean Witter for two months. His accommodating nature is evident in gracefully acknowledging the terms and understanding the distinction from a paid position. His gratitude message to Mr. Twistle reflects empathy and emotional understanding, showcasing professionalism and enthusiasm for the opportunity. Chris's overall character highlights his capacity to approach challenges with serenity and adaptability.

Scene 2 (01:02:27-01:02:35)

Context: This scene is set in an office, with many employees on the phone, you can see Chris busy on his phone, at the same time Mr. Farkesh asks Chris to buy him coffee. With complete calm, Chris immediately went to buy coffee.

Mr. Frakesh: Chris

Chris: **Yes sir**

Mr. Frakesh: Would you get me some coffee, please?

Chris: (Without any reason, Chris go to the café to buy a coffee for Mr. Frakesh as office manager)

Mr. Frakesh: Who wants to get me a doughnut? Chris?

Chris: **Yes, sir.**

In his internship, Chris displayed peaceability by maintaining calm and composure amidst unexpected tasks. His accommodating nature was evident as he willingly

took on additional responsibilities, showcasing adaptability and contributing to a harmonious workplace atmosphere.

Scene 3 (01:05:31-01:05:49)

Context: In the midst of his rush to meet a client, Chris Gardner embodied the moral value of peaceability. Despite his time constraints, he maintained a calm and helpful demeanour when Mr Frakesh urgently sought assistance with parking. Chris's willingness to support others, even in a time-sensitive situation, contributed to a harmonious and cooperative atmosphere.

Chris: Hey Mr. Frakesh

Mr. Frakesh: Hay man, do you have five minutes?

Chris: Actually, I got a green light from Walter Ribbon.

Mr. Frakesh: Because I have no minutes. I'm supposed to present commodities to Bromer. Could you move my car? That'd really help me out. It's on Samson, half block, silver Caprice. Just move it to the other side. They're street sweeping. There's spaces. Hang on to these. I have backups in my desk. And you have to jimmy that.

Chris: **Uh, Jimmy what?!**

In a brief encounter with Mr. Frakesh, Chris Gardner demonstrated peaceability by maintaining a calm and respectful demeanor. Despite time constraints, Chris's willingness to assist with an urgent request, coupled with his polite and respectful response, contributed to a harmonious and positive workplace atmosphere.

Scene 4 (01:02:47-01:02:50)

Context: In the scene, Mr. Frohm gets out of a taxi and is seen approaching Chris to borrow money because he forgot to bring his wallet.

Mr. Frohm: Chris, you got five bucks? I left my wallet upstairs.

Chris: Let me run up and grab that for you, Mr. Frohm.

Mr. Frohm: No, I gotta be in CAL Bank at 4, and I'm late.

Chris: Um...

Mr. Frohm: I'll pay you back, honest. Five, five is good? Five is lovely. Thank you.

In a brief yet impactful moment, Chris exemplified peaceability by empathetically offering financial assistance to Mr. Frohm, despite his own financial constraints. His calm and accommodating response demonstrated a commitment to fostering positive relationships and contributing to a harmonious atmosphere.

The third moral value, peaceability, involves maintaining a serene mind and managing emotions, as defined by Linda and Eyre (1993). This entails a

predisposition to yield rather than engage in disputes, fostering careful consideration of potential consequences before action. In education, peaceability contributes to character development, promoting composure in decision-making.

d. Self-reliance and Potential

There found three scenes presented in the movie.

Scene 1 (25:16-27:50)

Context: Mr. Twistle grinned as Chris Gardner lost in concentration, manipulated the Rubik's Cube in the back of the taxi. The cab driver intrigued, stole glances at the rear-view mirror. Chris skillfully solved two sides of the puzzle, capturing the attention of both Mr. Twistle and the cab driver, who watched in growing fascination.

Mr. Twistle: I'm sorry. I'm sorry. This thing's impossible.

Chris: **I can do it.**

Mr. Twistle: No one can.

Chris: **I can.**

Mr. Twistle: No one can. It's bullshit.

Chris: **Give it to me. (good-natured) You really messed it up.**

Mr. Twistle: (light hearted) Sorry.

In a testament to the moral values of self-reliance and potential, Chris earnestly implored Mr Twistle to trust him with the cube. With determination, he showcased his commitment to personal excellence by skillfully restoring the cube, highlighting his individuality and the proactive use of his untapped potential for positive outcomes. This moment exemplified Chris's reliance on his own abilities and his dedication to realizing and developing his inherent strengths.

Scene 2 (01:35:14-01:35:30)

Context: In this scene, Chris Gardner engages in a conversation with a client, discussing the client's financial plans and goals. Chris is seated on a chair, wearing professional attire—a suit and tie—reflecting his serious and business-like demeanour.

Chris: Your wife, Martha, works at PacBell also, correct?

Client: Yes, she does

Chris: And you guys are both looking to retire at the same time?

Client: We'd like to retire and maintain our lifestyle without paying a lot of taxes.

Chris: So basically, you want nobody's hands in your pockets but your own? Are you familiar with tax-free municipal?

Chris's client interactions showcase his potential as a financial advisor, embodying moral values like self-reliance. His unique skills shine as he conducts insightful interviews, demonstrating individuality and discernment. Chris's proactive approach to understanding clients' goals reflects his commitment to personal excellence and responsibility. His astute recognition of his potential and dedication to developing his gifts highlight his commitment to serving clients with tailored solutions aligned with their needs.

Scene 3 (01:47:48-01:48:16)

Context: Before his exam, Chris adeptly handles his emotions, responding confidently when asked about nervousness. Mr. Jay Twistle offers encouragement, and Chris acknowledges it positively, setting a supportive tone for the situation.

Mr. Jay Twistle: I'm doing fine. Rumour has it you signed 31 accounts for us from Pacific Bell.
Chris: Yeah, yeah. Met some guys at a ball game, got some cards. I've been working.
Mr. Jay Twistle: I guess. So, one more day. Getting nervous?
Chris: No, I'm okay
Mr. Jay Twistle: Yeah? Listen, whatever happens you've done a fantastic job, Chris.
Chris: I mean that
Mr. Jay Twistle: Take care of yourself.

In the final interaction, Chris's self-reliance shines as he confidently manages his emotions, taking responsibility for his state of mind during a high-pressure situation. Mr. Twistle's encouraging words provide a positive backdrop, and Chris's response underscores his proactive mindset, affirming his potential and showcasing moral values of self-reliance in the face of an upcoming exam.

The fourth finding focuses on self-reliance and potential, defined as the capability to autonomously execute tasks and make decisions without external reliance. This quality, highlighted by Linda and Eyre (1993), fosters individual autonomy, resourcefulness, personal empowerment, and resilience. It emphasizes the conscious pursuit of one's potential, rejecting mediocrity for enhanced self-assuredness in navigating life.

e. Self-discipline and Moderation

There found two moral values contained in the movie.

Scene 1 (03:36-03:46)

Context: Under the morning sun in San Francisco, Chris Gardner, in work attire, strides down busy streets. Carrying a worn-out backpack and holding his son

Christopher's hand, they discuss birthday gifts on their way to the daycare, where the bright and curious boy clutches a small toy.

Christopher: I think, I should make a list.

Chris: For your birthday gifts?

Christopher: Yeah.

Chris: Well, you know, you're just going to get a couple things.

Christopher: Just to look at and research. So, I can choose better.

Chris: okey, well that's smart, yeah make a list

In the dialogue, Chris guides Christopher toward self-discipline and moderation. By advising him to limit gifts, Chris fosters moderation, encouraging thoughtful choices over excess. Suggesting a list promotes a balanced approach, instilling values that contribute to Christopher's personal growth and a disciplined mindset in navigating life's situations.

Scene 2 (01:35:30-01:36:02)

Context: in this scene, Chris Gardner is seen in a rush to catch a bus with his young son, Christopher, by his side. The urgency in his voice and actions indicates that time is of the essence, and he is determined to reach their destination before it's too late.

Chris: Come on. Come on. Hold that bus! Hold the bus!

Christopher: My Captain America! Dad! Dad! Dad!

Chris: Stop it! Shut up! Shut up!

In this dialogue, Chris showcases self-discipline and moderation. His focus on catching the bus and assertive response to Christopher's distraction highlight his responsibility and commitment to achieving their goal. Chris's determination and measured approach underscore his commitment to personal excellence, contributing to a purposeful and successful outcome.

The fifth moral value, self-discipline, involves controlling urges and actions for goal attainment, while moderation is about embracing balance. In education, as noted by Gorbunovs (2016), these values positively impact students, enhancing the quality of learning and influencing goal achievement.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, "The Pursuit of Happiness" reveals morally significant scenes reflecting values such as honesty, courage, peaceability, independence, potential, and self-discipline. Utilizing Linda and Eyre's (1993) theory, Students of English Education who want to be a teacher can leverage these scenes to impart valuable lessons in character

development in the future. By incorporating these moral values into education, students can prioritize truthfulness, face challenges with determination, foster empathy, embrace their unique abilities, and develop crucial skills like self-discipline. This film provides a compelling medium to reinforce educational value principles, empowering students for purposeful lives enriched with integrity, empathy, and resilience.

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