

Struggle, Perseverance, and Parental Love in *The Pursuit of Happyness* (2006): A Dramatic Analysis of Character Development and Conflict

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Abstract

This study analyzes the film *The Pursuit of Happyness* (2006), directed by Gabriele Muccino and based on the autobiographical story of Chris Gardner. The purpose of this study is to examine the character development, narrative conflict, and thematic messages presented in the film. The research applies a qualitative descriptive approach using narrative analysis to interpret the characters, events, dialogues, and visual elements portrayed in the story. The findings show that the film centers on the struggle of Chris Gardner, a single father who faces severe financial hardship while trying to provide a better life for his son. Throughout the narrative, Chris demonstrates perseverance, determination, and strong parental responsibility despite experiencing unemployment, homelessness, and social pressure. The conflict of the story develops through Chris's efforts to balance his responsibilities as a father while pursuing an unpaid internship at a brokerage firm in hopes of achieving financial stability. The study also identifies several important themes, including perseverance, parental love, self-confidence, and the struggle against poverty. These themes are reflected through key scenes and dialogues that emphasize the importance of hard work, optimism, and belief in one's potential. In addition, symbolic elements such as the public restroom, the apartment key, and the basketball represent hardship, opportunity, and personal dreams. The analysis indicates that *The Pursuit of Happyness* not only presents an inspiring story of personal success but also conveys moral values related to resilience, responsibility, and hope in overcoming life's difficulties.

Keywords: Struggle; Perseverance; Character; Dramatic Analysis

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Introduction

Film and drama are important forms of artistic expression that portray human experiences, social realities, and moral values through narrative storytelling. Through characters, conflicts, and dialogue, dramatic works allow audiences to understand different aspects of life such as struggle, ambition, and personal growth. Film, as a visual form of drama, combines storytelling, acting, music, and visual elements to communicate meaningful messages to viewers. Because of these characteristics, films can be analyzed not only as entertainment but also as narrative texts that reflect social conditions and human behavior. Scholars in film studies argue that cinematic narratives often present moral lessons and social commentary through the development of characters and conflicts within the story (Bordwell & Thompson, 2019; Cartmell & Whelehan, 2010). Through narrative analysis, researchers are able to examine how films represent human struggles and social issues while also conveying moral and motivational messages to audiences.

One film that strongly portrays human struggle and perseverance is *The Pursuit of Happyness* (2006), directed by Gabriele Muccino and inspired by the autobiographical story of Chris Gardner. The film tells the story of Chris Gardner, a medical equipment salesman who faces severe financial difficulties while raising his young son, Christopher. After his wife leaves due to economic hardship, Chris must take responsibility as a single parent while struggling to achieve financial stability. Despite losing his home, facing unemployment, and experiencing social pressure, Chris continues to pursue his dream of becoming a stockbroker. The narrative presents an inspiring journey of determination and resilience as Chris works tirelessly to overcome poverty and create a better life for his son. Through

this story, the film portrays how perseverance, motivation, and parental love become important forces that influence the character's actions and decisions.

The story of *The Pursuit of Happyness* reflects several important social themes related to poverty, perseverance, and parental responsibility. Poverty and economic hardship are portrayed through the challenges Chris faces in maintaining his livelihood and providing basic needs for his child. These struggles illustrate how financial instability can influence family relationships and emotional well-being. At the same time, the film highlights the strength of parental love and sacrifice, showing how Chris remains committed to supporting and protecting his son despite the difficult circumstances they encounter. Research in film and social studies suggests that cinematic narratives often reflect social realities and economic struggles experienced by individuals in society (Smith, 2021; Johnson, 2023). Through these representations, films allow audiences to gain deeper understanding of the challenges faced by individuals who experience poverty and social inequality.

Several previous studies have examined inspirational films and narratives that portray individuals overcoming adversity. Brown (2021) explains that motivational films often focus on protagonists who achieve success despite facing difficult social or economic circumstances. These narratives usually highlight themes of perseverance, resilience, and determination in overcoming life challenges. Similarly, Rahman (2022) argues that characters in inspirational narratives often represent psychological processes through which individuals develop resilience and self-awareness when confronting difficulties. Other studies have also emphasized the importance of family relationships in inspirational narratives. Garcia (2024) suggests that films portraying parental sacrifice demonstrate how emotional support within families can influence personal motivation and character development. These studies indicate that inspirational films frequently portray human struggles and personal transformation through the experiences of their characters.

Although previous studies have discussed inspirational narratives and character development in film, limited research specifically examines how character development and narrative conflict interact to convey the themes of perseverance and parental love in *The Pursuit of Happyness*. Many previous studies focus mainly on motivational aspects or social issues presented in inspirational films, but fewer analyses explore how narrative elements such as character transformation and conflict progression contribute to the overall meaning of the film. Therefore, further narrative analysis is needed to understand how the film constructs its message through the interaction between characters, conflicts, and thematic elements within the story.

Another important aspect of the film is the theme of perseverance and self-belief. Chris Gardner's journey demonstrates that determination and confidence in one's abilities are essential in overcoming obstacles. Even when faced with repeated failures, Chris continues to pursue opportunities that may lead to success. This message reflects the broader idea that personal success often requires persistence and resilience. According to Bandura (1997), individuals who possess strong self-efficacy tend to maintain motivation and continue striving toward their goals even when they encounter difficulties. In the film, Chris's strong belief in his potential motivates him to continue working toward a better future for himself and his son.

The narrative also highlights the role of motivation and aspiration in achieving personal success. Chris's determination to improve his life is closely connected to his desire to provide a stable and secure environment for his child. His experiences illustrate how motivation can influence a person's actions and decisions when facing challenging situations. Maslow (1954) explains that human behavior is driven by the desire to fulfill different levels of needs, including safety, belonging, and self-actualization. In the context of the film, Chris's pursuit of employment and financial stability reflects the human desire to achieve security and personal fulfillment.

Based on these perspectives, *The Pursuit of Happyness* can be understood as more than a biographical drama film. It is also a narrative that conveys important social and moral messages related to perseverance, parental responsibility, and the pursuit of personal dreams. However, deeper analysis is necessary to understand how these messages are constructed through narrative elements such as character development and conflict progression. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the character development, narrative conflict, and thematic messages presented in *The Pursuit of Happyness* (2006). The study focuses on how Chris Gardner's experiences represent perseverance, parental love, and personal motivation through the development of the narrative. Through this analysis, the research seeks

to demonstrate that the film not only presents an inspiring story of personal success but also communicates important values related to resilience, responsibility, and hope that remain relevant to contemporary social issues.

Literature Review

a. Film as Narrative Representation of Human Experience

Film is widely recognized as a powerful medium for storytelling that reflects human experiences, social conditions, and cultural values. Through visual narratives, films present stories that allow audiences to interpret emotions, struggles, and relationships within society. Film narratives typically combine visual images, dialogue, acting, and sound to communicate meaning and shape viewers' understanding of the story. According to Bordwell and Thompson (2019), films construct narratives through structured sequences of events that guide audiences to understand characters, conflicts, and outcomes.

Narrative theory explains that stories generally follow a structured progression that helps audiences understand how events develop within the narrative. Todorov (1973) proposes that narratives typically move through several stages: equilibrium, disruption, recognition of disruption, attempts to repair the disruption, and the establishment of a new equilibrium. These stages illustrate how narratives develop tension and eventually reach resolution. Recent studies also show that narrative structures in film play an important role in shaping audience engagement and emotional responses to characters and story events (Li, 2024; Zhou & Bamman, 2024). In addition, film analysis focuses on examining how cinematic elements interact to form meaning within the narrative. Scholars argue that analyzing characters, plot structures, and visual storytelling techniques helps reveal the deeper messages conveyed through films (Cartmell & Whelehan, 2010). Through narrative analysis, researchers can understand how films communicate social and moral values through storytelling.

b. Character Development in Film Narratives

Character development is a central element in film narratives because characters function as the main agents that drive the story. Characterization refers to the way filmmakers reveal characters' personalities, motivations, and transformations through dialogue, actions, and relationships with other characters. Abrams and Harpham (2012) explain that characters in literary and dramatic works are constructed through their speech, behavior, and interaction with other characters within the narrative. Characters are commonly categorized as static or dynamic. Static characters remain relatively unchanged throughout the story, while dynamic characters experience significant transformation as a result of conflicts and experiences (Stanton, 2007). Dynamic characters are particularly important in dramatic narratives because their development often reflects psychological growth and moral awareness. Recent research in narrative studies suggests that character development is closely connected to identity formation and emotional growth. Rahman (2022) argues that characters in narratives often represent psychological processes through which individuals develop resilience and self-awareness. Similarly, Kim (2023) notes that narrative characters frequently evolve through conflicts and social interactions that influence their attitudes and decision-making processes. Through this development, characters help communicate the thematic messages of the narrative.

c. Conflict as the Driving Force of Narrative

Conflict is a fundamental component of storytelling because it creates tension and motivates characters to act. Stanton (2007) explains that conflict can appear in two primary forms: internal conflict, which occurs within a character's psychological state, and external conflict, which occurs between characters or between characters and their environment. In film narratives, conflict functions as the driving force that moves the story forward. Bordwell and Thompson (2019) emphasize that conflicts provide direction for character actions and contribute to the development of the plot. Without conflict, narratives would lack dramatic tension and audience engagement. Studies in film narrative analysis also indicate that conflicts play a crucial role in shaping audience emotional responses. Smith (2021) states that conflicts allow audiences to connect with characters by presenting challenges that reflect real-life struggles. Lee (2022) also argues that narrative tension created by conflict encourages

viewers to remain engaged with the story because they become invested in the outcome of the characters' struggles.

d. Motivation, Self-Efficacy, and Perseverance

The themes of perseverance and personal success portrayed in many films can be explained through psychological theories of motivation. Motivation refers to the internal drive that encourages individuals to pursue goals and overcome obstacles. One important concept related to motivation is self-efficacy, which refers to a person's belief in their ability to achieve success. Bandura (1997) explains that individuals with strong self-efficacy tend to persist in their efforts even when they encounter difficulties. Maslow's hierarchy of needs also provides a useful framework for understanding motivation in narratives. Maslow (1954) explains that human behavior is driven by the desire to fulfill different levels of needs, including physiological needs, safety, belonging, and self-actualization. In many narratives, characters pursue success as part of their effort to achieve stability and personal fulfillment. Research in motivational psychology indicates that perseverance is closely related to goal commitment and personal resilience. Brown (2021) explains that narratives portraying perseverance often emphasize the importance of determination and optimism in achieving long-term goals. These narratives help audiences understand how individuals respond to difficult circumstances and maintain hope for the future.

e. Social Representation in Film Narratives

Films frequently reflect social realities such as poverty, family struggles, and economic inequality. Through storytelling, filmmakers portray characters who experience challenges that mirror real-life social issues. Studies in cultural and media analysis suggest that cinematic narratives often serve as reflections of social conditions experienced in society (Garcia, 2024). Narratives focusing on family relationships also highlight emotional values such as responsibility, sacrifice, and support. Rahmawati (2021) explains that films portraying family struggles often emphasize the role of emotional resilience and cooperation in overcoming difficulties. Similarly, Sari (2022) notes that narratives emphasizing perseverance and empathy can inspire audiences to develop positive attitudes when facing challenges. In addition, Yusuf (2023) argues that film narratives often function as tools for moral reflection because they encourage audiences to evaluate ethical choices and social responsibilities. Through character experiences and conflicts, films communicate values related to determination, compassion, and perseverance.

f. Previous Studies on Inspirational Film Narratives

Several studies have examined inspirational films that portray individuals overcoming adversity. Brown (2021) explains that motivational films often focus on protagonists who achieve success despite difficult circumstances. These narratives highlight values such as perseverance, optimism, and resilience. Other research also emphasizes the importance of family relationships in inspirational narratives. Garcia (2024) argues that films portraying parental sacrifice often demonstrate how emotional support within families can influence personal development and motivation. In addition, psychological analyses of inspirational narratives highlight the role of self-efficacy and personal determination. Patel (2023) suggests that characters who believe in their abilities are more likely to pursue opportunities and overcome obstacles. Johnson (2023) further explains that inspirational narratives often illustrate how persistence and determination can lead to personal achievement. Based on these theoretical perspectives and previous studies, film narratives can be analyzed through several important elements, including character development, conflict, motivation, and social representation. These theoretical frameworks provide the foundation for analyzing *The Pursuit of Happyness* as a dramatic narrative that portrays perseverance, parental love, and the pursuit of a better life.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design to analyze the character development, narrative conflict, and thematic elements presented in the film *The Pursuit of Happyness* (2006). Qualitative research is suitable for film and literary studies because it focuses on interpreting meanings, ideas, and social messages conveyed through narratives rather than measuring numerical

data. According to Creswell (2020), qualitative research aims to explore and understand social or cultural phenomena by examining texts, experiences, and visual representations. In the context of film analysis, qualitative methods allow researchers to interpret narrative elements such as characters, dialogues, conflicts, and symbolic meanings in depth.

This research applies a narrative analysis approach to examine how the story in *The Pursuit of Happyness* develops through character interactions, conflicts, and thematic messages. Narrative analysis focuses on understanding how stories are structured and how meaning is constructed through events and character actions. Bordwell and Thompson (2019) explain that narrative analysis in film studies examines how story elements such as plot, characters, and cinematic techniques interact to create meaning and emotional engagement for audiences. Through this approach, the study analyzes how the narrative structure of the film portrays Chris Gardner's struggle, perseverance, and personal development.

The primary data source of this study is the film *The Pursuit of Happyness* (2006), which tells the autobiographical story of Chris Gardner and his journey from poverty to professional success. The unit of analysis in this research consists of selected narrative elements from the film, including key scenes, dialogues, character interactions, and narrative events that illustrate character development, conflict progression, and thematic representation. Particular attention is given to scenes that depict Chris Gardner's economic struggles, his relationship with his son, and moments that demonstrate perseverance and motivation. These narrative elements are considered important because they represent the central themes of the film.

The data collection technique used in this study is document analysis. Document analysis involves examining written or visual materials in order to identify relevant information related to the research objectives. According to Bowen (2021), document analysis is a systematic method used to review and interpret documents or media sources to gain deeper understanding of a phenomenon. In this study, the researcher watches the film several times to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the narrative. During the viewing process, the researcher identifies and records important scenes, dialogues, and character actions that are relevant to the research focus. These selected scenes are then categorized based on analytical aspects such as character development, conflict development, and thematic representation.

The data analysis procedure is conducted through several stages. First, the researcher performs repeated viewing of the film to understand the overall storyline and narrative structure. Second, key scenes and dialogues that represent important narrative elements are identified and selected as analytical data. Third, the selected data are organized and classified into several categories, including characterization, conflict progression, and thematic messages. Fourth, the researcher interprets the data by examining how these narrative elements interact to convey themes of perseverance, parental love, and personal motivation. The interpretation process is supported by relevant theoretical perspectives from narrative theory, film studies, and motivational psychology. According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2020), qualitative data analysis involves processes such as data reduction, data display, and interpretation in order to generate meaningful conclusions.

To ensure the credibility and reliability of the analysis, this study applies theoretical triangulation by comparing the interpretation of the film with different theoretical perspectives and previous studies related to narrative analysis and inspirational film narratives. Denzin and Lincoln (2021) state that triangulation helps strengthen the trustworthiness of qualitative research by integrating multiple sources of knowledge and interpretation. Through these procedures, the study aims to produce a systematic and comprehensive analysis of the narrative elements and thematic messages presented in *The Pursuit of Happyness*. The qualitative descriptive approach allows the researcher to interpret the film in depth and reveal the social, psychological, and moral values conveyed through the experiences of the main character.

Result

This section presents the findings of the analysis of the film *The Pursuit of Happyness* (2006). The results are organized into three main analytical categories: character development, conflict progression, and thematic representation. These categories help explain how the narrative structure of

the film conveys the themes of perseverance, parental love, and personal motivation through the experiences of the main character.

Character Development

The analysis shows that character development plays a central role in shaping the narrative of the film. The protagonist, Chris Gardner, is portrayed as a determined individual who faces severe financial hardship while attempting to build a better life for himself and his son. At the beginning of the film, Chris is depicted as a struggling medical equipment salesman who has difficulty selling portable bone-density scanners. His financial instability gradually affects his family life, eventually leading to the separation from his wife, Linda. This situation marks the beginning of Chris's transformation into a single father who must take full responsibility for raising his young son.

Throughout the narrative, Chris demonstrates perseverance and determination despite facing numerous obstacles. One important scene that illustrates this development occurs when Chris attends an interview at a brokerage firm after being arrested for unpaid parking tickets. Despite wearing casual clothes because he had just been released from jail, Chris confidently explains his situation to the interviewers and expresses his strong desire to succeed. In this scene, Chris says, *"I'm the type of person that if you ask me a question and I don't know the answer, I'm gonna tell you that I don't know. But I bet you what: I know how to find the answer, and I will find the answer."* This dialogue reflects Chris's confidence, honesty, and determination, which become important aspects of his character development.

Another significant aspect of character development is the relationship between Chris and his son, Christopher Gardner Jr. Christopher is portrayed as an intelligent and patient child who supports his father despite their difficult circumstances. Several scenes highlight the emotional bond between them, particularly when they are forced to sleep in a public restroom after being evicted from their apartment. In this scene, Chris tries to comfort his son by pretending that they are hiding from dinosaurs in a game. This moment illustrates Chris's effort to protect his son emotionally while facing extreme hardship. The interaction between father and son demonstrates how parental responsibility and love influence Chris's determination to continue struggling for a better future.

Conflict Progression

The narrative conflict in the film develops through Chris Gardner's struggle to overcome economic hardship while pursuing professional success. The central conflict revolves around his efforts to secure a stable career and provide a better life for his son despite experiencing poverty, unemployment, and homelessness. At the beginning of the story, the conflict emerges from Chris's inability to sell his medical equipment and maintain financial stability. His economic difficulties worsen when he loses his savings and fails to pay rent, which leads to his eviction from the apartment he shares with his son. One of the most emotional moments in the film occurs when Chris and his son are forced to spend the night in a public restroom in a subway station because they have nowhere else to stay. In this scene, Chris quietly struggles to hold the door closed while people attempt to enter the restroom, illustrating the severity of their situation and the emotional burden he carries as a father.

The conflict intensifies when Chris begins his unpaid internship at a brokerage firm. The internship is highly competitive because only one trainee will eventually receive a permanent position. During this period, Chris must balance his responsibilities as a father with the intense demands of the internship program. For example, Chris is shown working tirelessly to contact potential clients while simultaneously trying to secure childcare and shelter for his son. These challenges create narrative tension and highlight the difficulties he faces while pursuing his professional goals.

The climax of the narrative occurs when Chris successfully completes the internship and is offered a permanent position at the brokerage firm. This moment represents the turning point in the story because it marks the end of Chris's struggle for financial stability. In the final scene, Chris walks through a busy street with tears in his eyes after learning that he has been hired. This moment symbolizes the fulfillment of his efforts and demonstrates that perseverance and determination can lead to success despite overwhelming challenges.

Thematic Representation

The analysis also reveals several important themes that shape the overall message of the film, including perseverance, parental love, and self-confidence. These themes are conveyed through

character actions, narrative conflicts, and key dialogues throughout the story. One of the most prominent themes is perseverance. Chris Gardner repeatedly faces failure and hardship, yet he continues to pursue opportunities that may improve his life. His persistence is demonstrated through scenes in which he studies financial materials late at night, makes numerous phone calls to potential clients, and continues working even when he has no stable home. His determination reflects the message that success often requires continuous effort and resilience.

Another important theme is parental love and sacrifice. The relationship between Chris and his son plays a central role in shaping the narrative. Chris consistently prioritizes his son's well-being despite his own struggles. For instance, when Christopher becomes upset about their difficult situation, Chris encourages him to remain hopeful and protect his dreams. In one memorable scene, Chris tells his son, "Don't ever let somebody tell you you can't do something. Not even me. You got a dream, you gotta protect it." This dialogue emphasizes the importance of confidence and perseverance while also illustrating the emotional support that Chris provides to his child.

The film also highlights the theme of self-confidence and personal motivation. Chris's belief in his ability to succeed motivates him to continue striving for opportunities despite repeated setbacks. His determination to participate in the brokerage internship and his willingness to work harder than others demonstrate how self-confidence influences personal achievement. These thematic elements reinforce the film's broader message that perseverance, love, and belief in oneself can help individuals overcome even the most difficult life circumstances. The findings indicate that *The Pursuit of Happyness* presents a narrative in which character development, conflict progression, and thematic representation are closely interconnected. Through the experiences of Chris Gardner and his son, the film conveys powerful messages about resilience, determination, and the importance of family support in overcoming adversity.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that *The Pursuit of Happyness* presents a narrative that strongly emphasizes perseverance, parental responsibility, and personal motivation through the experiences of its main character, Chris Gardner. The analysis of character development, conflict progression, and thematic representation reveals that the film portrays the process of personal transformation through adversity. Chris Gardner's journey from financial instability to professional success illustrates how narrative cinema often uses character struggles to convey messages about resilience and determination. This finding is consistent with previous research on inspirational films, which suggests that protagonists in motivational narratives typically undergo significant personal transformation as a result of the challenges they encounter (Brown, 2021). Similarly, Rahman (2022) argues that characters in inspirational narratives often represent psychological resilience and identity development when facing social or economic difficulties.

The development of Chris Gardner as a dynamic character reflects the theoretical perspective of characterization in narrative studies. At the beginning of the film, Chris is portrayed as a struggling salesman who lacks financial stability and faces uncertainty about his future. However, through the progression of the narrative, his experiences gradually strengthen his determination, confidence, and sense of responsibility. This transformation supports Abrams and Harpham's (2012) explanation that dynamic characters develop through conflicts and experiences that shape their psychological and emotional growth. The findings of this study also align with Kim's (2023) research, which explains that characters in narrative cinema often evolve through interactions with social environments and personal challenges. In the context of *The Pursuit of Happyness*, Chris Gardner's character development illustrates how perseverance and self-belief can influence personal transformation.

The relationship between Chris Gardner and his son also plays a significant role in shaping the narrative meaning of the film. The strong emotional bond between father and son highlights the theme of parental love and sacrifice, which becomes one of the central messages of the story. Several scenes in the film illustrate how Chris prioritizes his son's well-being despite the hardships they experience together. This finding is consistent with Garcia's (2024) study, which explains that family relationships in cinematic narratives often represent emotional support systems that influence characters' motivations and decisions. Similarly, Rahmawati (2021) argues that films portraying family struggles often emphasize the importance of emotional resilience and cooperation within families when facing difficult

circumstances. In this film, Christopher Gardner Jr. functions not only as a supporting character but also as a source of motivation that strengthens Chris's determination to achieve success.

Another important aspect revealed in the findings is the role of conflict as the driving force of the narrative. The central conflict of the film revolves around Chris Gardner's struggle to overcome poverty while pursuing a stable career as a stockbroker. This conflict develops through a series of obstacles such as unemployment, homelessness, and financial instability. These challenges create narrative tension that motivates the protagonist to continue striving for success. This result supports the argument proposed by Bordwell and Thompson (2019), who explain that conflict functions as a key element in cinematic storytelling because it drives the progression of events and encourages character involvement in the narrative. Research conducted by Smith (2021) also indicates that conflicts in film narratives often mirror real-life struggles, allowing audiences to emotionally connect with the characters' experiences.

Beyond the narrative structure, the film also reflects broader social issues related to poverty and economic hardship. The struggles experienced by Chris Gardner illustrate the challenges faced by individuals living in unstable economic conditions. Scenes depicting homelessness, financial pressure, and employment difficulties highlight the social realities of poverty and economic inequality. These findings support Liu's (2025) argument that contemporary film narratives often function as representations of social conditions experienced in society. By portraying Chris Gardner's experiences, the film provides audiences with insight into the difficulties associated with economic instability and the impact it can have on family life.

The theme of perseverance identified in this study also relates to psychological theories of motivation and resilience. Chris Gardner repeatedly encounters failure and hardship, yet he continues to pursue opportunities that may improve his situation. This persistence reflects the concept of self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's belief in their ability to achieve goals despite obstacles (Bandura, 1997). Individuals with strong self-efficacy tend to remain motivated and maintain effort even when faced with difficult circumstances. In the film, Chris's confidence in his abilities encourages him to continue striving for success even when he experiences homelessness and financial hardship. Research on inspirational narratives also suggests that stories portraying perseverance can motivate audiences by demonstrating how determination and resilience contribute to personal achievement (Tal-Or, 2025).

In addition to perseverance, the film also highlights the importance of family resilience. The relationship between Chris and his son illustrates how emotional support within families can strengthen individuals when facing adversity. Even during moments of extreme difficulty, Chris continues to encourage his son to remain hopeful and protect his dreams. This interaction reflects the concept of family resilience, which refers to the ability of families to maintain emotional stability and support despite challenging circumstances. Sari (2022) explains that narratives emphasizing empathy and family support often promote moral reflection and encourage audiences to value cooperation and responsibility within family relationships.

Furthermore, the film communicates moral lessons related to hope and optimism. Chris Gardner consistently encourages his son to believe in his dreams and remain confident about the future. These messages illustrate how motivational narratives often promote positive attitudes toward perseverance and self-improvement. Studies on inspirational cinema indicate that films portraying personal struggles and eventual success can encourage viewers to reflect on their own aspirations and develop stronger motivation to overcome challenges (Khalish, 2025; Stolk, 2025). Through its narrative, *The Pursuit of Happyness* demonstrates that determination, self-belief, and family support can help individuals overcome social and economic barriers.

Overall, the discussion of these findings confirms that *The Pursuit of Happyness* functions not only as an inspirational biographical film but also as a narrative that reflects broader social and psychological themes. The film illustrates how character development, narrative conflict, and thematic representation interact to convey messages about perseverance, parental love, and social resilience. By connecting the findings of this study with previous research on narrative cinema and inspirational films, it becomes clear that the story of Chris Gardner represents a powerful example of how film narratives can portray human resilience and the pursuit of a better life.

Conclusion

This study analyzed *The Pursuit of Happyness* (2006) by focusing on character development, narrative conflict, and thematic messages within the film. The findings indicate that the narrative structure of the film is strongly shaped by the transformation of the main character, Chris Gardner, whose journey from economic hardship to professional success reflects themes of perseverance, parental responsibility, and personal motivation. The progression of conflict throughout the story functions as the central mechanism that drives the narrative and reveals the protagonist's resilience when facing social and economic challenges. The analysis also demonstrates that the themes of perseverance, parental love, and self-confidence are conveyed through the interaction between characters, narrative events, and key dialogues in the film. These themes illustrate how determination and family support can influence individuals when confronting adversity. By portraying the struggles experienced by Chris Gardner and his son, the film presents a narrative that reflects broader social issues such as poverty, motivation, and family resilience.

The main contribution of this study lies in its narrative analysis of how character development and conflict progression work together to construct the inspirational message of the film. The findings show that *The Pursuit of Happyness* functions not only as a biographical drama but also as a narrative that communicates important moral values related to perseverance, responsibility, and hope. In addition, the results of this study suggest that the film has potential implications for educational contexts, particularly in character education and motivational learning. The story of Chris Gardner can be used as a learning resource to encourage students to develop perseverance, self-confidence, and resilience when facing challenges in their personal and academic lives. Therefore, inspirational films such as *The Pursuit of Happyness* can serve as meaningful media for teaching moral values and promoting positive attitudes toward perseverance and personal growth.

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