

**THE NEED FOR HARD-WORKING TO ACHIEVE A SUCCESSFUL  
LIFE IN GABRIELE MUCCINO'S *THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS* (2006)  
MOVIE: A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH**



**RESEARCH PAPER**

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by

**NOVA AULIA WIJAYANTI**  
A 320 050 238

**SCHOOL OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION FACULTY  
MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF SURAKARTA  
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A. Background of the Study

*The Pursuit of Happyness* movie is based on Chris Gardner's true story and written by Steven Conrad. Chris Gardner published his autobiography on May 23, 2006, before becoming an associate producer of the major motion picture. *The Pursuit of Happyness*, directed by Gabriel Muccino and released by Columbia Pictures on December 15, 2006. The duration of this movie takes about 117 minutes.

*The Pursuit of Happyness* movie begins in 1981 in San Francisco, California. Chris Gardner and his wife Linda live in a small apartment with their son, Christopher. Chris Gardner is a bright and talented, but marginally employed salesman. The smart salesman Chris Gardner invests the family savings in osteo national bone density scanners. In fact, the sale of bone-density scanner's not good and it make the financially breaks the family. That moments bringing troubles to his relationship with his wife Linda and makes she leaves him and moves to New York where she has received a job in a pizza parior. She wishes to take their so Christopher with her, but Chris Gardner refused because they both to take care of him.

The conflict that involved in this story, when Chris Gardner has everything going against him. His wife left him and he's raising 5 years old son alone, without any real income. Sleeping in the bathroom, homeless, shelters, and

shabby hotels when he's got the money to afford a room, Chris Gardner never gives up. Without money and wife, but totally committed to his son Christopher, Chris sees the chance to fight for a stock broker internship position at Dean Witter, offering a more promising career at the end of a six month unpaid training period in hopes of landing. There are nineteen other candidates for the one position. The one pain position is available at the end of the training program. He hard working to achieve a successful life and he is unpaid to something more substantial, even as his life continues to offer him see back. On the idea he can land a job and provide his son with a better life.

The public responses consist of two aspects; they are positive responses and negative responses. The first is positive responses. First from *Godsmack04* from United States, he loves very much *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie. *Godsmack* opinion, *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie is one of the best films of this year. For a year that was fueled by controversy and crap, it was nice to finally see a film that had a true heart to it. Everybody needs to see especially the people in this world that take everything for granted, he advised people to watch this movie.

Second is *jellienellie818* from United States, she said she has been a fan of Will Smith for years and she have to say this may be his best film yet. *The Pursuit of Happyness* is just a wonderful (based on a true) story, full of adventure, hope, and pain. The chemistry between Will Smith and Jaden Smith is almost unbearable. With great acting, great directing, great writing make this movie more interesting.

Third is *LISA ANN SANDERS*. She said that many times "inspired by" films feel like hard sells or bids for Oscar glory. *The Pursuit of Happyness* is none of that. *The Pursuit of Happyness* is meaningful and uplifting make the viewer becomes fully invested in the struggles of Chris Gardner and his son. Will and Jaden Smith are perfect couple father and son. The real-life father and son dynamic enriched the film.

Secondly are negative responses. First, Jerry the Cow "The movie got boring in parts, and the ending tried to wrap everything up too quickly". Second Thomas, "the movie makes me sleep in my desk".

*The Pursuit of Happyness* movie is a box office movie because the film debuted at the first at the North America box office, earning \$27 million during its opening weekend. It was Will Smith's sixth consecutive at the first opening. The film grossed \$162 million in the US and Canada and a further \$141 million in other markets, for a total worldwide box office of \$304 million. As of November 2007, US Region One DVD sales accounted for an additional \$90 million in revenue, slightly less than half of which was earned in its first week of release.

Some awards and nominee that have got by *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie. First, Academy awards popularly known as the Oscars, are presented annually by the American academy of motion picture arts and sciences to recognize excellence of professionals in the film industry, including directors, actors, and writers. The formal ceremony at which the awards are presented is one of the most prominent award ceremonies in the world. Will Smith is nominee for best actor from *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie.

Second, The Golden Globe awards are presented annually by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA) to recognize outstanding achievements in entertainment industry, both domestic and foreign, and to focus wide public attention upon the best in motion pictures and television. The formal ceremony and dinner at which the awards are presented is a major part of the film industry's awards season, which culminates each year with the academy awards. Here, in *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie some nominee awards were getting. They are, first, Will Smith for best actor-motion picture drama (nominee), second, world and music by Seal for best original song "A father's way"(nominee).

Third, The Black Reel awards began in 2000 and were designed to annually recognize and celebrate the achievements of Black people in feature, independent and television films. Awards range from the art of character portrayals to the artistry displayed behind the camera. The *Pursuit of Happyness* movie gets some nominee. They are first, The Pursuit of Happiness movie for best movie (nominee). Second Will Smith for best actor in motion picture (nominee). Third Jaden Smith for best breakthrough performance (nominee).

Fourth, The NAACP Image award is an award presented annually by American National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to honor outstanding people of color in film, television, music, and literature. *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie get some winner and nominee. They are first, *The Pursuit of Happyness* for outstanding motion picture (winner). Second, Jaden Smith for outstanding supporting actor in a motion picture (nominee). Third Thandie Newton for outstanding supporting actress in motion picture (nominee).

Fifth, The Screen Actors Guild awards are an annual award given by the Screen Actors Guild (SAG) to recognize outstanding performance by members. SAG award have been one of the major awards events in Hollywood. Will Smith in *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie for outstanding performance by a male actor in leading role-motion picture (nominee).

Seventh, the MTV movie awards is a film awards show presented annually on MTV (Music Television). It also contains movie parodies that used official movie parodies that used official movie footage with hosts and other celebrities and music performances. The nominee is decided by a special panel at tenth planet productions, the MTV movie awards. Winners are decided by the general public. Presently voting is done through MTV's official website through a special movie award link. Jaden Smith in *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie is a winner for best male performance.

Eight, the Broadcast Film Critics Association awards (BFCA) is the largest film critic's organization in the U.S and Canada, representing 199 television, and radio and online critics. Every year the association, founded in 1995 by Joey Berlin and Rod Lurie, presents its critics choice awards to honor the finest achievements in filmmaking. *The Pursuit of Happyne*s movie gets two nominee awards. They are, first, Will Smith for best actor (nominee), and Second, Jaden Smith for best young Actor (nominee).

Ninth, the BET awards were established in 2001 by the Black Entertainment Television network to celebrate African-Americans and often minorities in music, acting, sports, and other fields of entertainment over the past

year. The awards are presented annually and Will Smith in *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie for best actor (nominee).

Tenth, The Phoenix Film Critics Society (PFCS) is an organization of film reviewers from Phoenix based publications. Jaden Smith in *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie for best performance by youth in leading or supporting role-male (winner).

Eleventh, The Annual Chicago Film Critics Association awards, located in Chicago, USA. The media type is film and the event type is critics' event. Will Smith in *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie for best actor (nominee).

Twelfth, David di Donatello, named after Donnatello's David, is a movie awards assigned each year for cinematic performances and production by Ente David di Donatello, part of Academy del Cinema Italiano. It is the Italian equivalent to the academy award. Gabrielle Muccino director in *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie for the best language movie nominee.

The last, Capri Awards. Capri, Hollywood-kimbo International Film Festival (2005) Capri, Hollywood. The type of Capri awards are film and music. The initiator is Istituto Capri Del Mondo. The Capri, Hollywood symposium and film festival is an event involving individual's who have continuously made a strong contribution to the promotion of film as an international form of art, expanding beyond the borders of their own countries. *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie is a winner for movie of the year.

The writer interested to do this research caused some aspect like context, character, plot, casting, and theme. Firstly, the context is the contents of the movie

or the story tell about. This movie is tell about fatherhood and based a true story; *The Pursuit of Happyness* is drama which has great actors that make the movie easy to understanding. Out side of the father and the son roles that form the essence of the story, the rest of the actors, however, are given limited screen time. There is obviously good chemistry between the two Smiths, it seems they did not need to act to perform although delving deeper into their characters could have improved the movie and turned it from good to great. Director Gabriele Muccino captures and highlights in a dramatic context the nuances of the father and son relationship. The movie's main achievement is bringing the real life story of Chris Gardner to the theaters and voicing its message to the whole world. The whole family will find an up lifting story in the movie though it would be especially good for fathers and sons to see the film together and the movie can give positive and optimistic by the consumer.

Secondly, the character. The character of Chris Gardner as a major character is a man that has high responsibility to his family. He is hard worker, smart, initiative, self – confident, loving and caring, and persevering. He has good relationship with other people, he bright and talented in his job as a salesman. Chris Gardner is a struggling salesman; he tries to support his family, but is not having much success. Chris Gardner is a hard worker and always positive thinking about his life and he has a motivation that with hard working can achieve a successful in his life.

Thirdly, plot. Plot is the interesting conflicts that happened in *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie. The interesting conflicts are at the time Chris Gardner's wife

leaves him, he loses his house, his bank account, and credit cards. Forced to live out in the streets with his son, Chris is now desperate to find a steady job, he takes on a job as a stockbroker, but before he can receive pay, he needs to go through 6 months of training, and to sell his device, in the other word he is unpaid in the beginning work in the firm.

Fourthly, the casting. Douglas and Harnden (1996: 107) describes that “Casting characters requires knowing the qualities at the centers of the characters that are the most important, the ones that motivate them through the story, and then finding people who can understand and convey those qualities”. Will Smith is appropriate actors to act as Chris Gardner as the major character from this movie. The casting of the actors is Will Smith. Will Smith has given their earnest performances, deeply penetrated in the characters and that appeals the most. Willard Christopher “Will” Smith, Jr (born September 25 1968) is an American actor, film producer and rapper. He has enjoyed success in music, television and film. Newsweek (American weekly news magazine published in New York City) has called him the most powerful actor on the planet. Smith has been nominated for four Golden Globe awards, two academy awards, and has won Multiple Grammy awards. His most notable sequel; *Bad Boys I and II*; *Independent day*; *I, Robot*; *Ali*; *Men in Black*; *I Am a Legend*; *Hancock* and *Seven pounds*. Smith married actress Jada Pinkett in 1997. Together they have had two children: Jaden Christopher Syre (born, 1998), his co-star in *The Pursuit of Happyness*, and Willow Camille Reign (born 2000), who appeared as his daughter in “*I Am Legend*”.

The last aspect is the theme. Theme is the creativity begins. The theme of this movie is need for hard working to achieve a successful in life. Hard working is which one of way that done by people to reach success and happiness in their life, so, hard working is a key to happiness. *The Pursuit of Happyyness* movie explain that the hard working that done by Chris Gardner as a major character in this movie, is used to show the struggle for successful, happiness, and ambition of Chris Gardner. Chris Gardner has a motivation and faithful by hard working he can achieve successful in his life. The hard working that has been done by Chris Gardner was showed from beginning until the end of the movie. It's very interesting story that can motivated the viewer to do something to achieve everything in life.

Based on some consideration above, the writer is interested in observing her work. It is appropriate of note to analyze the work by using a Sociological approach in order to know Chris Gardner world view. Then, the writer proposes to conduct a research entitled "The Need for Hard-Working to Achieve a Successful Life in Gabriele Muccino *The Pusuit of Happyyness* (2006) Movie: A Sociological Approach".

## **B. Literature Review**

As long as the researcher knows, there are no other researchers that have conducted to study the movie *The Pursuit of Happyyness* in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta. In the other university the researcher found two research papers that used *The Pursuit of Happyyness* movie as the object of research.

First, “Chris Gardner’s Motivation in Striving for his happiness as Seen in *The Pursuit of Happiness Film*” by Rani Herarsih. She describe the personality of Chris Gardner, explain Chris Gardner motivation, and to find out Chris Gardner’s obstructions in pursuing his happiness. Different with the writer, Rani analyzes the motivation by Chris Gardner. The research paper of the writer explains the need for hard working to achieve a successful life with sociological approach.

Second, “Politeness Aspects in Translation English Screenplay Movie into Indonesian On *"The Pursuit of Happiness"* and *"The Holiday"* (A Case Study of Pragmatic Translation) by Mushallin. He researches the study of pragmatic translation of politeness aspects from English screenplay movie into Indonesian. The movies entitled *The Pursuit of Happiness* and *The Holiday* selected as data. Different with the writer, Mushallin analyzes the linguistics aspect from the movie and the writer analysis with literature aspect from the movie.

### **C. Problem Statement**

The problem in this study is how hard-working to achieve a successful life is reflected in *The Pursuit of Happiness* movie.

### **D. Limitation of the Study**

In this research, the writer needs to limit the study. The writer focuses on the analysis of Chris Gardner’s hard-working as a major character in *The Pursuit of Happiness* movie based on sociological approach.

### **E. Objective of the Study**

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To analyze the movie based on structural approach
2. To analyze the movie based on sociological approach.

### **F. Benefit of the Study**

#### 1. Theoretical benefit

- a. To give additional information and contribute to the larger of knowledge particularly studies in *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie.
- b. To give contribution to other research especially in this study.

#### 2. Practical benefit

To give deeper understanding for the writer self about the movie based on a sociological approach.

### **G. Research Method**

To analyze the data, the writer uses the qualitative method in this study:

#### 1. Object of the study

The object of this study is *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie.

#### 2. Type of data and the data source

In this study, the writer uses two:

a. Primary data sources

Primary data sources are the main data consisting dialogue, action, and descriptive about the hard-working of *The Pursuit of Happyness* movie.

b. Secondary data sources

Secondary data sources are some material related to data requires, major character life from the movie, the data taken from official website and other sources which are related to the primary data such as biography of the author, some books of sociological and other data related to this research.

3. Technique of data collection

The methods used for collecting data are library research and documentation. The technique of collecting data are, first, watching and learning the movie repeatedly. Second, reading the script to get more understanding and the last, reading some related references to observe the theory, data, and information.

4. Technique of data analysis

In analyzing the data the writer employs descriptive analysis on the movie than structural analysis of the work and finally the sociological of literary work.

## **H. Research Paper Organization**

In order to make the research paper is easier to follow, the research paper is organized into six chapter, as follows Chapter I is introduction, covering the background of the study, the problem of the study, limitation of the study, the benefit of the study, research method, review of literature study, and thesis organization. Chapter II covers sociological approach containing notion of sociology, the aspect of sociological approach, structural element of the movie, and theoretical application. Chapter III includes the social background with the all aspect reality of the American society at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Chapter IV includes the structural analysis of the film describing characters and characterizations, setting, point of view, plot, and theme of the film and brief discussion. Chapter V presents the sociological analysis deal with the problems of the film. Chapter VI closing consists of conclusion, implication and suggestion.