



# Chris Gardner's Struggle Reflected on *The Pursuit of Happyness* Movie: An Individual Psychological Approach

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## Abstract

Every person's life is riddled with difficulties. It might get complicated at times, forming the personality of human life. There was a movie that portrays how struggle life is, entitled *The Pursuit of Happyness*. This research's purpose was to find out the numerous obstacles faced by Chris Gardner in this movie. The writer used a psychological technique to assess Chris Gardner's struggle for a better life. The research was conducted using a descriptive qualitative method. The result showed that the movie focused on Chris, who had a hard time making ends meet. This movie conveyed the message of self-reliance, optimism, and self-confidence.

**Keywords:** Chris Gardner; movie; struggle

## Introduction

Every person's life is riddled with difficulties. It might get complicated at times, forming the personality of human life. People's personalities and lifestyles change as they search for meaning in life (Purwaningrum, 2006). People will strive to improve in order to achieve their life's objectives. Since literature is the exposition of human mental life, it can be said that literary works have a relationship to psychology. Both psychology and literature study human beings' lives with its problems in their life (Aras, 2014).

There is a movie that portrays how struggle life is, entitled *The Pursuit of Happyness*. It is an American biographical movie inspired by true stories. Released in 2006, this movie is directed by Gabriele Muccino. This movie starred Will Smith as Chris Gardner, a salesman with no home. For a single father like him, fighting for his son (Jaden Smith) is a priority. He had to overcome numerous obstacles in order to live a better life. After being evicted from their residence, he and his son are left homeless. Chris ultimately secures a position as an intern at a famous brokerage business, but the employment is unpaid. Chris refuses to give up hope as he works to provide a better life for himself and his son, despite the fact that they must live in shelters and face numerous challenges.

After watching *The Pursuit of Happyness*, the writer is interested in conducting research on it, focusing on Chris Gardner's struggle for a better life. It is common to see people struggling to make a living. The writer hopes that this research will provide readers with useful information and lessons.

Some researchers have previously undertaken research on this movie. Firstly, Sapalakkai (2018) conducted research entitled *Cooperative Principle Used by Chris Gardner in "The Pursuit of Happyness" Movie*. Chris Gardner's maxims are used and flouted in the study. He also wanted to know what implications can be drawn from violating the maxims in the movie's business conversation. He came to the conclusion that flouting the maxims was part of Chris' effort in his life that contributed to his success, which is demonstrated by Chris' utterances in the five selected scenes.

Another research was conducted by Apriyansyah (2013). His research entitled *A Study of Adler's Personality Theory in Chris Gardner's Character in The Pursuit of Happyness Movie*. He described some of the factors that influenced Chris Gardner's personality using a qualitative approach. He applied Adler's personality theory to his situation.

Third, Avivah & Thamrin (2021) on their research found 24 data of formal style and 39 data of casual style in the conversation between the speakers. The social factors that were most dominant in affecting the use of formal and casual style were the participant and setting factors.

Some previous research, as mentioned by the writer, has focused on the movie *The Pursuit of Happyness* from various angles and views. Meanwhile, comparing with the previous research, the writer will focus on a psychological technique to assess Chris Gardner's struggle for a better life in this research. Moreover, this research attempt to find out numerous obstacles faced by Chris

Gardner and what messages are found in this movie.


**Method**

The research was conducted using a descriptive qualitative method. Nassaji (2015) stated that a descriptive study's purpose was to characterize a phenomenon and its characteristics. This type of method was more interested in what happened than how or why it happened. The primary data source was taken from the scene actions and dialogue in the movie *The Pursuit of Happyness*, especially from the lead actor, Chris Gardner. While the secondary data source was taken from related theory from journals, books, articles, and other publications.

In order to collect data, the writers went through several stages to collect the data, including watched and understood the movie from beginning to end, read some journals to find out the theory and data, determined the main character's struggle in life, and selected a scene or action that depicts the main character's struggle in life to get his happiness in the movie.

**Results**

*Table 1. Sign of Chris' Struggle*

SIGN	INTERPRETATION
 <p><i>Figure 1. Chris as a medical device salesman</i></p>	<p>To make money, he must work hard to sell the device</p>



*Figure 2. Door-to-door sales*

He also met with potential targets one-on-one everyday



*Figure 3. Chris's car*

The police towed his car because it had not paid for parking



*Figure 4. Chris applying for internship*

He met with the company's HR director, but he is ignored



*Figure 5. Taxi fare*

Chris cannot pay his taxi fare, he did this because he has to approach the company's HR director



*Figure 6. Losing the medical device*

He ran away from the taxi driver, but his medical device got stuck so he must leave it



*Figure 7. Divorce*

Her wife, Linda, left him and moved to another city



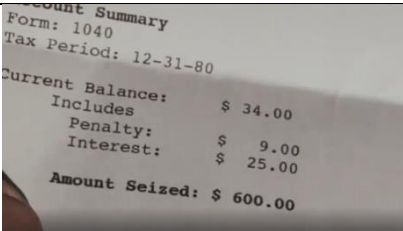


*Figure 8. Kicked by the apartment*

The apartment owner went to him and told Chris that he must pay the fee or leave the apartment



*Figure 9. Going to the jail*

The police put Chris in jail because he didn't pay the taxi fare

 <p><i>Figure 10. Tax in America</i></p>	<p>The government took all Chris's money because he didn't pay it for several months</p>
 <p><i>Figure 11. Kicked by the motel</i></p>	<p>His belongings are taken from the motel because he didn't pay the fee</p>
 <p><i>Figure 12. Sleep at station's toilet</i></p>	<p>He and his child (Christopher) must sleep in the toilet because he has no place to sleep</p>

### Discussion

The movie focused on Chris, who had a hard time making ends meet. He constantly felt that he would succeed in life, but at the same time, he had a hard time living comfortably. Chris Gardner also took risks. He took an entry-level opportunity at a brokerage firm, and he was always on the lookout for savings. He was determined to complete his internship program, and every day, he would work towards his goal.

## Conclusion

*The Pursuit of Happyness* retells Chris Gardner's struggle to make a living. His efforts are reflected in this movie. This movie conveys the message of self-reliance, optimism, and self-confidence.

Following the completion of this research, the next researcher is expected to be able to add or complete the necessary material additions that will make this research more perfect.

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