



The Main Character's Unyielding Attitude and Character Education Values in the Film Zootopia

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the never-give-up attitude of the main character and the educational values presented in the movie Zootopia. The study employs a descriptive qualitative method using content analysis on selected scenes and dialogues. The findings reveal that Judy Hopps, the main character, demonstrates a strong sense of perseverance, optimism, and determination to achieve her dream of becoming a police officer in Zootopia despite facing various obstacles and discrimination. Her persistence and dedication reflect the importance of motivation, courage, and integrity in pursuing personal goals. In addition, the film conveys several educational character values such as hard work, honesty, responsibility, tolerance, and social care. These values align with the objectives of character education that emphasize the development of moral integrity, social awareness, and empathy among learners. In conclusion, Zootopia serves not only as an entertaining animated film but also as an effective medium for character building, offering valuable lessons about perseverance, ethics, and humanity that are essential for both personal and educational development.

Key words : *perseverance, character education, Zootopia, educational values.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis sikap pantang menyerah tokoh utama dan nilai-nilai pendidikan yang disajikan dalam film Zootopia. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan teknik analisis isi terhadap adegan dan dialog yang dipilih. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Judy Hopps, tokoh utama, menunjukkan semangat ketekunan, optimisme, dan tekad kuat untuk mencapai cita-citanya menjadi seorang polisi di Zootopia, meskipun menghadapi berbagai rintangan dan diskriminasi. Ketekunan dan dedikasinya mencerminkan pentingnya motivasi, keberanian, dan integritas dalam mencapai tujuan hidup. Selain itu, film ini juga menyampaikan beberapa nilai pendidikan karakter seperti kerja keras, kejujuran, tanggung jawab, toleransi, dan kepedulian sosial. Nilai-nilai tersebut sejalan dengan tujuan pendidikan karakter yang menekankan pengembangan integritas moral, kesadaran sosial, dan empati pada peserta didik. Kesimpulannya, Zootopia tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai film animasi yang menghibur, tetapi juga sebagai media yang efektif untuk pembentukan karakter, memberikan pelajaran berharga tentang ketekunan, etika, dan kemanusiaan yang penting bagi perkembangan pribadi maupun pendidikan.

Kata kunci : *pantang menyerah, pendidikan karakter, Zootopia, nilai Pendidikan.*



INTRODUCTION

Education is not only about transferring knowledge but also about shaping students' character to face real-life challenges. Character education is considered essential to develop individuals who are intelligent, responsible, and morally upright. According to (Kleinschmidt, 1994) character education aims to help students understand, care about, and act upon core ethical values. Furthermore, (Berkowitz & Bier, 2007) argue that effective character education contributes significantly to students' moral development, academic achievement, and social behavior. According to (Mustari & Rahman, 2011) character values help individuals to act consistently with moral principles in social life. The Ministry of National Education (Kemendiknas, 2011) has emphasized 18 core values of character education, including honesty, responsibility, hard work, tolerance, and social care. These values are closely related to the development of positive social behavior among students (Kamaruddin, 2012). Character education also serves as a foundation for building responsible and ethical citizens in modern society (Ryan et al., 1998).

However, there is a gap between the theoretical goal of character education and the actual implementation in classrooms. In many cases, the teaching of moral and character values still relies on conventional lectures, making it less engaging for students (Afdlila & Faculty, 2015). To address this problem, educators need innovative media that can convey moral messages in an enjoyable and relatable form. Films, as a popular form of audio-visual media, provide an effective alternative. Film allows learners to observe moral dilemmas, character development, and social interactions in meaningful contexts (Champoux, 2007). Through visual narratives, students can better understand abstract moral concepts and relate them to real-life situations (Nucci et al., 2024).

Animated films have become particularly effective tools for character education because they present moral lessons through engaging stories and relatable characters. According to (Wells, 2002), animation possesses a unique ability to simplify complex social issues while maintaining strong emotional and educational impacts. Therefore, animated films can serve as valuable resources for teaching ethical values and social awareness.

Perseverance is one of the essential character traits that supports individual success and personal growth. (Lickona, 2012) emphasizes that perseverance enables individuals to overcome challenges, remain committed to their goals, and develop resilience in difficult situations. As a result, the representation of perseverance in educational media deserves further examination to understand its potential contribution to character formation.

One such film is *Zootopia* (2016), produced by Walt Disney Animation Studios. The film tells the story of Judy Hopps, a young rabbit who dreams of becoming a police officer despite being underestimated because of her species and size. Judy's persistence, optimism, and courage illustrate the never-give-up attitude, which reflects several key character education values such as hard work, honesty, responsibility, and tolerance.

Several previous studies have examined films as media for moral learning. (Afdlila & Faculty, 2015) found that films can function as effective moral education tools that encourage emotional engagement and reflection. Meanwhile, (Mustari, 2011) explained that internalizing character values requires practical and contextual learning approaches. However, few studies have explored *Zootopia* specifically in relation to perseverance and the integration of character education values.

Therefore, this research seeks to fill that gap by analyzing the never-give-up attitude of the main character in Zootopia and identifying the educational character values represented in the film. The novelty of this study lies in its attempt to connect moral values portrayed in a popular animated film with formal character education principles, thus bridging the gap between entertainment media and educational objectives.

METHOD

This research applied a qualitative descriptive method with a content analysis approach to analyze Zootopia. The object of the study was the animated film Zootopia. The method was chosen because the data analyzed were in the form of words, dialogues, scenes, and visual representations rather than numerical data. The focus of the study was to identify moral values and to analyze the characterization of the main character, Judy Hopps, as reflected in selected scenes and dialogues.

This study used descriptive qualitative research. Operationally, this means the researcher systematically observed, selected, interpreted, and described narrative and visual elements found in the film. The analysis emphasized meaning, context, and interpretation rather than measurement or statistical testing.

The approach employed was content analysis. In this research, content analysis was implemented by identifying specific scenes, dialogues, and visual elements that contained moral values and reflected the character traits of Judy Hopps. Each selected unit was categorized, interpreted, and analyzed based on its contextual meaning within the storyline. The use of content analysis allowed the researcher to produce valid and replicable interpretations by maintaining consistency in categorization and analysis procedures.

The population of this study was the entire storyline of Zootopia. The sample consisted of selected scenes and dialogue transcripts that contained moral values and represented the characterization of Judy Hopps.

The sampling technique used was purposive sampling. Operationally, the researcher selected scenes based on the following criteria:

1. Scenes that explicitly or implicitly presented moral values.
2. Scenes that demonstrated the main character's attitudes, decisions, conflicts, and development.
3. Dialogues that revealed character traits through interaction with other characters.

This technique was chosen because the study did not aim to generalize findings but to explore and interpret specific meaningful units relevant to the research objectives.

The research was conducted through library and document research. The primary setting of analysis was the film itself and its official English transcript. The researcher repeatedly watched the film and examined the script to ensure accurate interpretation of dialogue and visual context.

In this qualitative study, the researcher acted as the primary instrument. The researcher personally observed, selected, categorized, and interpreted the data. To support the analysis, the researcher used:

- The film Zootopia (English version)
- The official script/transcript
- Data classification tables to organize identified moral values and character traits

The researcher's role as the main instrument ensured direct engagement with the data and contextual interpretation of each scene.

Data were collected through:

1. Observation

The researcher watched the film repeatedly to understand the storyline, identify important scenes, and capture moral messages and character expressions.

2. Document Analysis

The researcher analyzed the film transcript to examine dialogues containing moral values and characterization. Relevant scenes were transcribed and documented as primary data.

3. Library Research

Secondary data were obtained from books, journals, and online sources related to moral values, characterization, and qualitative research to support theoretical analysis.

Primary data consisted of scenes and dialogues from the film. Secondary data consisted of supporting theories and references relevant to the study.

Data analysis was conducted continuously during and after data collection using the following steps:

1. Data Reduction

The researcher selected and focused on relevant scenes and dialogues that aligned with the research objectives. Irrelevant data were excluded.

2. Data Display

The selected data were organized into tables and narrative descriptions to clarify relationships between moral values and character traits.

3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification

The researcher interpreted the categorized data to identify patterns, relationships, and meanings. The findings were re-checked to ensure consistency between selected data and interpretations.

Operationally, the analysis followed these procedures:

1. Observing the plot structure of the film.
2. Identifying moral values presented in the scenes.
3. Identifying the character traits of Judy Hopps.
4. Analyzing the relationship between moral values and the main character's development.
5. Interpreting each unit of analysis within its narrative context.

Through these systematic procedures, the method ensured that the analysis was grounded in the film's textual and visual data, aligned with qualitative research principles, and focused on meaningful interpretation rather than theoretical description.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the analysis of moral and character education values in Zootopia, focusing on selected scenes and dialogues that reflect character-building messages. The analysis is based on purposively selected units of dialogue and visual scenes that represent moral values embodied by the main character, Judy Hopps.

The findings show that Zootopia contains strong character education values manifested through actions, conflicts, and interpersonal interactions. The values identified include respect, responsibility, fairness, tolerance, wisdom, mutual help, altruism, cooperation, courage, and self-confidence.

1. Respect

In the scene (00:32:09–00:32:33), Mrs. Otterton comes to the police department asking for help to find her missing husband. Although Chief Bogo initially refuses due to workload, Judy voluntarily offers to take the case.

Judy's response reflects respect toward Mrs. Otterton's feelings and suffering. Respect here is not only politeness but empathy and recognition of another person's dignity. Judy acknowledges Mrs. Otterton's pain and treats her concern seriously.

This scene demonstrates that respect involves active concern and willingness to respond to others' difficulties. Judy's action shows moral sensitivity and compassion, aligning with the concept that respect includes protecting and valuing others.

2. Responsibility

In the robbery scene (00:28:26–00:28:35), when Mr. Pig's shop is robbed, Judy immediately responds: "Don't worry sir! I've got this."

Although she was previously assigned as a parking officer, Judy takes responsibility beyond her assigned duty. Her quick reaction to chase the criminal shows professional commitment. Responsibility here is reflected in her readiness to act and her seriousness in fulfilling her role as a police officer.

This illustrates that responsibility is not merely holding a position but demonstrating accountability through action, even under pressure.

3. Fairness

In the confrontation scene (01:32:00–01:32:15), Judy and Nick expose Bellwether as the mastermind behind the predator crisis. Instead of blaming predators as a group, Judy focuses on factual evidence.

This reflects fairness because Judy does not generalize or discriminate. She seeks truth objectively and ensures that justice is based on evidence.

The discussion reveals that fairness in the film is portrayed as rejecting stereotypes and ensuring equal treatment regardless of species background.

4. Tolerance

In the scene (00:13:47–00:14:10), Benjamin Clawhauser calls Judy “cute.” Judy responds calmly, explaining that the term may feel inappropriate when said by other species. Benjamin apologizes for stereotyping her.

Judy’s reaction reflects tolerance. She does not respond with anger but provides clarification. This shows openness toward differences and willingness to educate rather than condemn.

The film emphasizes tolerance as mutual understanding and respect across differences in race, species, and background.

5. Wisdom

In the scene (01:15:59–01:16:23), when Bellwether and Chief Bogo offer Judy recognition as a public hero, Judy humbly says, “I’m not a hero... I think I broke it.”

Her response reflects wisdom. Instead of accepting praise blindly, she reflects critically on her actions and their consequences. Wisdom here is shown through self-awareness, humility, and moral reflection.

Chief Bogo’s statement reinforces that being a good officer requires maturity and balanced judgment.

6. Mutual Help (Saling Membantu)

In the childhood scene (00:05:28–00:05:47), Judy helps her friends retrieve their tickets from Gideon Grey.

This early scene establishes Judy’s character as someone who naturally helps others. Helping is portrayed not as an obligation but as part of her identity.

The film conveys that mutual help strengthens social bonds and reflects positive social character.

7. Altruism / Prioritizing Others

In the scene (00:32:53–00:33:15), Judy insists on taking Mrs. Otterton’s case even though it risks her career. Chief Bogo threatens her with dismissal if she fails within 48 hours.

Despite the risk, Judy accepts the challenge. This demonstrates altruism—prioritizing others’ welfare over personal safety.

Her action reflects moral courage and selflessness, emphasizing that true service often involves sacrifice.

8. Cooperation

In the limousine investigation scene (00:46:10–00:46:33), Judy and Nick work together to investigate clues about Mr. Otterton.

Initially, Nick is reluctant, but eventually they collaborate effectively. Their teamwork enables them to uncover important evidence.

Cooperation is portrayed as essential to problem-solving. The film highlights that diversity in perspective strengthens collective efforts.

9. Courage

In the confrontation with Gideon (00:47:17–00:47:47), Judy defends her friends despite being physically smaller and facing intimidation.

Her courage is shown in standing up against bullying and prejudice. She confronts fear without aggression, demonstrating moral bravery.

Courage here is not physical strength but determination and confidence in defending what is right.

10. Self-Confidence

In the early scenes (00:02:15–00:02:37; 00:03:27–00:03:45), Judy declares her dream to become a police officer, despite ridicule from Gideon and doubt from her parents.

Her statement, “I guess I’ll have to be the first one,” represents strong self-belief. Judy refuses to internalize negative stereotypes about bunnies.

Self-confidence in Zootopia is portrayed as resilience against social limitations and stereotypes. It becomes the foundation for her perseverance and ultimate success.

The analysis demonstrates that Zootopia integrates character education values into its narrative structure through dialogue, conflict, and character development. Judy Hopps functions as a moral agent whose actions embody core educational values.

The moral messages are not delivered through direct instruction but through situational conflict, social prejudice, and problem-solving. This makes the values more contextual and relatable.

The film reflects contemporary social issues such as discrimination, stereotyping, equality, and diversity. By portraying these issues through animal characters, the film simplifies complex social realities while maintaining strong moral implications.

Therefore, Zootopia can be considered an effective medium for character education because it presents moral values in practical, narrative-based situations that encourage reflection, empathy, and critical thinking.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research questions, findings, and discussion of Zootopia, directed by Byron P. Howard and Rich Moore, several conclusions can be drawn.

First, the characterization of the main character, Judy Hopps, strongly reflects a persistent and never-give-up attitude. This trait appears 12 times throughout selected scenes in the film. From childhood until she becomes a police officer, Judy consistently

demonstrates perseverance despite facing stereotypes, discrimination, doubt, and professional challenges. The frequency of this trait indicates that perseverance is a core element of her characterization. It reflects real-life values where individuals must face obstacles with determination and optimism. Therefore, the film encourages viewers to internalize the spirit of persistence as an essential life value.

Second, the analysis identifies ten moral values expressed in the film: respect, responsibility, fairness, tolerance, wisdom, mutual help, altruism, cooperation, courage, and honesty. These values are conveyed through dialogue, conflict, and character interaction rather than through direct moral instruction. The narrative structure integrates moral lessons naturally within the storyline, making them relatable and applicable to everyday life.

Among those values, the most dominant moral value found in the film is mutual help. This value appears repeatedly in various contexts—during Judy’s childhood, in her professional duties, and in her partnership with Nick. The dominance of mutual help demonstrates that social harmony, empathy, and solidarity are central themes of the film. The message suggests that social problems such as prejudice and discrimination can be overcome through cooperation and mutual support.

Furthermore, film as a medium plays an important role in delivering moral messages to society. As an audiovisual medium, film can influence audiences positively or negatively depending on how viewers interpret the content. Through visualization and storytelling, moral values are presented in concrete situations, allowing audiences to reflect on real-life applications.

In essence, *Zootopia* is not merely an entertaining animated film. It serves as a medium of character education by embedding meaningful moral messages within its narrative. The film reminds viewers that behind entertainment, there are values that shape attitudes, perspectives, and behavior. Therefore, watching films critically can become a way to rediscover and strengthen character values in everyday life.

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