

ANALYSIS OF THE CONTENT OF MORAL MESSAGES FOR CHILDREN IN THE FILM JUMBO

Talenta Dida¹, Budhi Waskito², Noning Verawati³

^{1,2,3} Communication Studies Program, Faculty of Social and Political Science,
Bandar Lampung University, Indonesia
Email : talentdidaa@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to analyze the moral messages conveyed to children through the animated film Jumbo, focusing on how moral values are represented through narrative structure, symbols, and visual elements. The research was motivated by the growing role of film as a mass communication medium that not only entertains but also educates and shapes children's character. Although Jumbo presents themes such as friendship, courage, self-acceptance, empathy, and respect for differences, these values are often delivered implicitly, which may cause audiences, particularly children, to overlook or misinterpret the intended moral messages. Therefore, this research aims to identify the moral messages contained in the film and examine their suitability for child audiences. This study employed a qualitative approach using a descriptive content analysis method. Primary data were obtained through repeated observation of the film to identify significant scenes, dialogues, symbols, and visual representations related to moral values. Secondary data were collected from documentation, including film reviews, articles, and related supporting materials. In addition, informants from the Child Protection Division of DP3A Bandar Lampung City were involved to assess the alignment of the film's moral messages with child-friendly content standards. The findings indicate that Jumbo contains strong moral messages related to friendship, anti-bullying, emotional resilience, self-acceptance, and spiritual values, which are conveyed through symbolic visuals and character development. The study concludes that Jumbo is suitable as a child-friendly film and has the potential to function as an effective medium for moral education, while also contributing to communication studies, particularly in the analysis of moral messages in audio-visual media.

Keywords: Children, Content Analysis, Film, Moral Messages, Symbols.

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, films have become more than just entertainment, but also an effective medium for conveying moral messages and life lessons to their audiences. This phenomenon is evident in the increasing number of films addressing humanitarian issues, emotional relationships, and social values relevant to real life. One example is the film Jumbo, which presents a unique story about the emotional relationship between a human and a mechanical elephant, wrapped in meaningful symbols. However, not all viewers are able to grasp the profound message implied behind the visuals and dialogue presented. Differences in cultural background, life experiences, and perspectives create diverse interpretations of the film's meaning. This phenomenon has given rise to the need to explore and analyze more deeply the meaning contained in the film Jumbo, particularly as a moral message and life lesson.

Although Jumbo presents a unique and symbolically rich storyline, not all viewers are able to grasp the meaning hidden behind it. The moral message the director wants to convey is often implied through visual symbols, metaphorical scenes, and character interactions that require in-depth interpretation. Without proper understanding, this message has the potential to be ignored or even misinterpreted by viewers, especially those who only view the film as entertainment. Furthermore, the lack of academic studies that comprehensively examine the content and meaning

of this film means that its contribution as a medium for life lessons has not been fully realized. In fact, the values contained in it, such as empathy, self-acceptance, and respect for differences are very relevant to today's social life. This condition raises a fundamental problem: how to identify and explain the meaning contained in the film *Jumbo* so that it can be understood as a moral message and life lesson, while also revealing the extent of its relevance to the audience in the context of real life.

One of the mass communication media that is currently very popular among many people in the means of disseminating information is film. Film is a medium for disseminating information that contains elements of both verbal and non-verbal nature. This is because films are made for a specific purpose, and are intended for a wide audience. Film (cinema) comes from the word *cinematographie*. Cinema means (moving), *tho* or *phytos* which means (light), and *graphie* or *graph* which means (image, picture, writing). Film is a cultural product and a tool for expressing art. Film is considered a form of mass communication that combines various technologies such as photography and sound recording (Nidiandyah, Sulistiyono, and Purwacandra 2019).

Films act as a medium that can be used to present information about stories, events, drama, comedy and other technical presentations and disseminate them to a wide audience. In films there are also many genres, including action, comedy, romance and horror genres. This is intended so that the audience can choose what they watch according to the genre they want (Wijil 2020).

Film has several functions and roles in society, such as transmitting norms, morals, and culture, as well as serving as a means of socialization. Film is not only used as a medium to depict events or occurrences, but also as a constructor of reality. Essentially and substantially, film has power that impacts the communication process in society.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. *Persuasive Communication*

Mass communication is a medium that has a significant impact on society in obtaining and disseminating information. Mass communication is often described as a hypodermic needle, or the bullet theory, which is often coined by communication experts. This means that when someone injects a drug into another person, the drug goes directly into the recipient's psyche (Nasution 2018).

The definition of mass communication according to Joseph A. is: ("First, mass communication is communication addressed to masses, to an extremely large science, Second, mass communication is communication mediated by audio and/or visual transmitters"). First, mass communication is communication addressed to masses, to an extremely large science, Second, mass communication is communication mediated by audio and/or visual transmitters".

B. *Moral Message*

According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), a message has several meanings, such as an order, advice, or request that must be conveyed to another person. More specifically, a message is a product provided by a communicator and then delivered to the recipient, either directly or through a medium. Essentially, a message is information that is conveyed, either verbally or through another communication medium. Therefore, for a message to be conveyed and received by the recipient, the delivery or distribution of information requires other media to support its dissemination (Djawad 2016).

Morals can also be interpreted as morality. The benchmark for moral behavior is in accordance with values, ethics, and morality that must be in accordance with the values of truth. Preventing moral decline is very necessary to instill internalization in the form of civic education, Pancasila education, and character education (Etika 2015). Morals come from the Latin word "mores" which comes from the word "mos" which means morality, character, or

behavior, as well as life values (Nasih et al. 2020). According to Novi Mulyani, morals can be interpreted as differentiating between good behavior and bad behavior, behavior is an action based on differences and getting rewards when someone does an action that is considered good and will feel guilty when someone violates a rule or a certain guideline (Rafiony et al. 2023).

The following is an explanation of the moral messages between humans and other humans in a social environment:

a. *Friendship*

Friendship is a form of human-to-human relationship that involves feelings, trust, acceptance, mutual assistance, understanding, and spontaneity (Fauziah 2014). Friendship is a relationship between two or more individuals who understand, respect, and support each other. It is an emotional bond based on trust, loyalty, and mutual care. Friendships can exist at various levels, from casual acquaintances to very close bonds.

b. *Caring*

This is a feeling directed at one person for another that motivates and energizes them to take action, and influences life constructively and positively by increasing closeness between people. Therefore, caring can also be interpreted as a manifestation of empathy and attention. Caring is an attitude or feeling of concern and attention to the circumstances, feelings, or needs of others. It involves empathy, or the ability to feel and understand the feelings of others, as well as a willingness to provide support or assistance when needed. Caring also includes an appreciation for the diversity and uniqueness of each individual.

c. *The value of compassion*

The value of compassion is the appreciation, care, and positive feelings extended to others. It involves feelings of warmth, concern, and concern for the happiness and well-being of others. This value encompasses kindness, empathy, and a willingness to help and support others in a variety of situations. Compassion can be applied in a variety of contexts, including family, friendship, romantic relationships, and everyday interactions with others. It involves a sense of responsibility to understand and respond to others' feelings, and to be considerate of their needs and desires.

C. *Film*

In general, a film is a series of moving images with sound, also known as audiovisuals, and with a storyline. Film is one of the second modern communication tools to emerge in the world. Film serves as a new means of communication, disseminating data in the form of information and entertainment, which has long been a common practice. It also presents various stories, events, music, and other forms of entertainment for general distribution to the wider public (Forcha and Ngange 2022).

D. *Content Analysis*

Content analysis is a technique used to analyze and understand text. Content analysis can also be defined as an investigative technique that attempts to describe text objectively, systematically, and quantitatively. According to H.D. Laswell, this type of analysis is called quantitative semantics. Researchers can learn a great deal about society by analyzing newspapers, magazines, television programs, or music. Researchers who use content analysis do not study individuals, but rather the communication created by those individuals. This technique is primarily used in the fields of journalism, social psychology, and political science. Content analysis is also used to measure cultural change and study various aspects of culture. Sociologists also use it as an indirect way to determine how social groups are perceived. For example, they might examine how African Americans are portrayed in television shows or how women are depicted in advertisements (Dawud 2019).

Content analysis is a scientific study of communication content. Technically, content analysis involves the following activities: (1) grouping symbols/symbols used in communication, (2) using benchmarks as a basis for grouping, and (3) using an analytical technique to make predictions. Content analysis is essentially a systematic technique for analyzing content and processing messages. Content analysis can also be viewed as a tool for observing and analyzing the overt communication actions of selected communicators.

Content analysis has a long history. Neuendorff explains that content analysis has been used since 4,000 years ago, during ancient Rome. Aristotle's concept of rhetoric is one use of content analysis, where messages are shaped and adapted to the conditions of the audience. Meanwhile, Krippendorff notes that the use of content analysis can be traced back to 18th-century Sweden, regarding an incident involving a popular book containing 90 hymns entitled "Song of Zion," which escaped state censorship and controversy (Hansen 2005).

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researcher used a qualitative method with a descriptive approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the research phenomenon. This research was conducted at the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service, specifically at Jalan Dokter Susilo No. 02, Floor 09, Bandar Lampung. This study was conducted over three months, from November 2025 to January 2026.

A. Informants

Informants were selected using a purposive sampling method: child violence prevention and handling section (key informant), child rights fulfillment section (key informant), and one supporting informant in the field of child rights fulfillment and protection.

B. Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The validity of the data was ensured through source and method triangulation.

C. Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994): data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Identification and Construction of Symbolic Meaning in Moral Messages

The film *Jumbo* does not convey a moral message explicitly or in a patronizing manner, but rather through the use of visual and narrative symbols that are thoroughly integrated into the storyline, characters, and conflicts that develop throughout the film. The moral message is conveyed implicitly through a series of events and visual representations that allow the audience to grasp the meaning gradually. This approach makes the film *Jumbo* not only function as entertainment, but also as an educational medium that can convey moral values effectively without verbal coercion.

The symbols used in the film "*Jumbo*" serve as a means of representing deeper meanings than mere visual representation. Through these symbols, viewers, especially children, are encouraged to understand moral values through emotional experiences, empathy for the characters, and appreciation of the situations depicted. This symbolic approach makes the moral message feel more subtle, natural, and non-patronizing, making it easier for audiences to accept and internalize it, depending on their level of psychological and emotional development.

Symbols serve not only as supporting elements of the story but also as a medium for conveying the ideas, values, and messages the filmmaker wishes to convey to the audience. Therefore, symbols play a crucial role in constructing meaning and interpreting the moral message in an audiovisual work.

In the film "Jumbo," these symbols appear in various forms, such as the main and supporting characters, certain objects with emotional value, relationships between characters, and important events that occur repeatedly and consistently throughout the story. Each symbol does not stand alone but is interconnected and reinforces the moral message it intends to convey. Through the use of these symbols, the film "Jumbo" gradually builds meaning around the values of self-acceptance, courage in facing differences, empathy for others, the importance of friendship, and hope as a moral strength in facing life's challenges.

In the film, researchers identified five main symbolic elements that have significant meaning in conveying the moral message: the storybook inherited from Don's parents, the figure of Meri, who serves as a magical element, the friendship between Don, Nurman, and Mae, Don's artistic performance, and Don's posture, which is the main character's most prominent physical characteristic. These five elements not only serve as visual complements to the story but also serve as a means to indirectly convey values, emotions, and moral messages to the audience. The presence of these symbols reinforces the film's message without having to be conveyed through explicit dialogue, inviting the audience to understand the meaning through visual and emotional experiences.

B. Moral Messages Contained in The Visuals of The Film Jumbo

The Jumbo film conveys its moral message not only through dialogue and storyline, but also through the power of its carefully designed and structured visuals. As an animated film aimed at children, visuals are a key element in conveying moral values because children tend to grasp messages more easily through what they see than what they hear. Visuals displayed repeatedly and consistently can build children's emotional understanding of the situations experienced by the characters, so that the moral message can be accepted naturally without appearing patronizing. Therefore, visual analysis in the Jumbo film is important to understand how the moral message is embedded in a subtle, emotional, and easily understood by a child audience, especially in the context of character development and social attitudes.

The visuals in Jumbo don't just serve as visual enhancements, but also serve as a means of nonverbal communication that plays a significant role in constructing meaning and moral values. Every character's facial expression, body movement, and interaction is designed to convey specific emotions that the audience can directly feel. Through these visual elements, Jumbo consistently instills moral values such as self-acceptance, friendship, empathy, courage, and anti-bullying, conveyed in a concrete and relevant way to children's everyday lives.

Based on the above explanation, it can be understood that the visuals in the film Jumbo have a strategic role in conveying moral messages to child audiences. Therefore, the following discussion will focus on the visuals displayed in the film Jumbo, especially in certain scenes that emphasize facial expressions, body language, and interactions between characters. These visuals are analyzed descriptively by paying attention to the context of the scene and the time span of their appearance in the film, in order to reveal the moral messages contained therein. Through the analysis of these visuals, it is hoped that it will be clearly seen how the film Jumbo utilizes the power of images as an effective educational medium in instilling moral values in children.

C. Conformity of Moral Messages with Child-Friendly Content Standards according to the Bandar Lampung City Child Protection Service

This research also involved an audit of the film's suitability as a program aimed at children through the perspective of the authorized agency, namely the Bandar Lampung City Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Agency. The involvement of this agency is crucial because DP3A has a mandate to ensure that content consumed by children does not contain elements that could potentially harm their psychological, emotional, or social development. Through observation and in-depth interviews with informants competent in child protection, this research sought to assess the extent to which the moral message in the film *Jumbo* meets applicable child-friendly content standards.

Based on the interview results, the researcher posed questions regarding the criteria that must be met for a film to be categorized as suitable for children, particularly from the perspective of child protection agencies. These questions aimed to explore the normative standards used by the DP3A in assessing children's film content. The researcher posed the following question: *What criteria must be met for a children's film to be deemed suitable for children?*

In response to this question, Mrs. Tri, the informant, expressed her views as follows:

Essentially, films aimed at children must meet strict child protection standards, as children are at a stage of psychological development that is highly vulnerable to the visual and narrative influences they consume. Therefore, the first thing to ensure is that the film does not contain pornography, explicit violence, hate speech, or other content that could potentially negatively impact children's thinking and behavior. Content depicting deviant behavior or social conflict must be presented carefully, with an emphasis on educational value and moral learning, rather than exploiting the conflict itself. If the film addresses sensitive issues such as bullying, discrimination, or family conflict, it is important to highlight how such behavior is unacceptable and how its impact can harm the victim emotionally and socially. Children's films should be a learning medium that demonstrates the consequences of wrong actions, so that children understand that every behavior has an impact on themselves and others."

Interviews were also conducted to gain a deeper understanding of how film is perceived as a means of moral education for children, and its impact on behavior and values instilled from an early age. Film is viewed as a powerful mass communication medium that conveys moral messages through visuals, narratives, and characters that children can emulate. Therefore, the results of these interviews are crucial in analyzing the role of film in shaping children's moral character.

The researcher then posed the following question to Ms. Tri, an informant:

To what extent does film play a role in shaping moral character in children, according to your experience?"

The informant provided an answer based on her observations and professional experience in the field, as explained by Mrs. Tri:

We, the Child Protection Agency, aren't directly involved in films, but from what I've observed so far, children's films are already quite restricted in terms of content. This means there's a clear distinction between what's appropriate and what's not. Morally, children's films typically have their positive and negative impacts considered, both on behavior and character development. Films aimed at children typically present examples of behavior that can be emulated, so children can learn moral values from what they watch."

The researchers then directed their questions to a more specific issue, namely the representation of bullying and physical abuse in the film *"Jumbo"*. Bullying is a serious issue in the world of children, as it directly impacts their psychological, social, and emotional well-being. Films that address this issue serve not only as entertainment but also as educational and reflective media for children to understand the impact of bullying and how to respond positively. Therefore,

an assessment from a child protection perspective is crucial to determine whether the representation is appropriate and safe for children's development.

The researchers then posed the following questions to Mrs. Neti:

In the film Jumbo Don, there's a large orphan who is underestimated, but finds courage. And how do you assess this representation of bullying or physical abuse from a child protection perspective?"

Mrs. Neti then linked this form of bullying to the representation shown in the film "Jumbo," as she explained:

The film itself highlights that they tease Don because of his size. But he manages to handle it, remains kind, thinks positively, and gets back up. So it fits the theme of bullying."

Based on this statement, the film Jumbo is considered capable of representing the issue of bullying realistically yet safely for children, because it not only shows the physical forms of harassment experienced by the main character, but also shows how the character responds to bullying in a positive way. This is important because children not only learn to recognize forms of bullying but also learn how to deal with these situations with a healthy and constructive attitude.

The researcher then directed the interview to the expected positive impacts on children's behavior after watching the story of friendship between Don and his friends. Films that promote the value of friendship serve not only as entertainment but also as a means of social and emotional learning that is important for children's development. Healthy friendships can foster empathy, tolerance, and the ability to accept differences in their social environment. Therefore, understanding the expected positive impacts of this film is crucial to assessing the extent to which it contributes to the development of children's character.

The researcher then posed the following question to Mrs. Juwita:

What positive impacts do you expect to see on children's behavior after watching the story of friendship between Don and his friends?"

In response to this question, the informant stated that the main values they hoped to foster were mutual respect and affection among friends. Mrs. Juwita expressed this as follows:

The positive impact is that we must respect each other, love each other, and that our friends' shortcomings should not be used as an insult, but rather as an advantage."

This statement demonstrates that the film "Jumbo" contains a strong moral message about accepting differences. Children are encouraged to understand that each individual has unique qualities that should not be ridiculed but rather appreciated as part of human diversity. This message is particularly relevant in the context of children's social lives, where differences in physical appearance, character, and background often trigger conflict or bullying.

V. CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that the film Jumbo uses various symbols to convey moral messages indirectly. These symbols are manifested through objects, characters, and story elements that have a deeper meaning than just their visual function. Some important symbols in the film Jumbo include the storybook, the jasmine necklace, and the character Don, whose physical condition is different from other children. These symbols play a role in representing moral values such as courage, self-acceptance, emotional bonds, and the struggle to face differences. The use of symbols in the film Jumbo is done subtly and consistently, so as to enrich the meaning of the story without confusing the child audience. Thus, the symbols in the film Jumbo function as a supporting tool in conveying a moral message that is profound and reflective.

Based on the visual analysis conducted, the film Jumbo contains a moral message conveyed through visual elements such as the characters' facial expressions, body language, image composition, camera angles, lighting, and color. These visuals directly depict the emotional state of the main characters, especially Don, in facing feelings of inferiority, social pressure, bullying, and the process of growing courage and self-confidence. The moral messages contained in the

visuals of the film Jumbo include the values of empathy, friendship, anti-bullying, courage, and self-actualization. Through concrete and easy-to-understand visuals, this film shows that feelings of sadness, fear, and lack of confidence are human, and can be overcome through social support and self-acceptance. Thus, the visuals in the film Jumbo play an important role as a nonverbal communication medium in conveying moral messages to children.

The suitability of the moral message of the film Jumbo with the standards of the target audience segment of children can be said to be highly relevant and in accordance with the principles of child protection. This film does not show excessive violence, does not contain inappropriate language, and conveys the moral message in an educational and safe way for children. Based on the results of interviews with the Department of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, this film is considered suitable for use as a learning medium and character education both in schools and families. Group viewing activities facilitated by schools and parental guidance in the family environment can strengthen children's understanding of the moral values conveyed by the film. Thus, the film Jumbo has a positive contribution as a visual communication medium that is not only entertaining, but also functions as a means of developing children's moral character on an ongoing basis.

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