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## Research Article

# Analysis Of Educational Messages In The Lion King Movie: Perspectives On Character Education And Environmental Conservation

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### Abstract.

This study aims to analyze the educational messages related to character education and environmental conservation in the film *The Lion King* (1994). Using a qualitative research design and content analysis, the film's narrative structure, dialogue, and visual elements were analyzed to identify key themes and sub-themes related to character education and environmental conservation. The results reveal that *The Lion King* contains important educational messages related to responsibility, leadership, respect for nature, and the interconnectedness of all living things. These findings highlight the potential of films

as a tool for promoting positive values and education. The study's implications for education and media literacy are discussed, emphasizing the importance of incorporating media into educational curricula to enhance students' understanding of important concepts and foster critical thinking and analysis skills. Overall, this study shows that films, such as *The Lion King*, can be a valuable tool for promoting positive values and education, especially for character education and environmental conservation. The findings suggest that educators can use media content analysis as a means to identify and analyze the educational messages embedded in films, and incorporate these messages into educational curricula to enhance students' learning and development.

**Keywords:** The Lion King, Character education, Environmental conservation education

**Abstrak,** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pesan-pesan pendidikan terkait pendidikan karakter dan konservasi lingkungan yang terdapat dalam film *The Lion King* (1994). Dengan menggunakan desain penelitian kualitatif dan analisis konten, struktur naratif, dialog, dan elemen visual film dianalisis untuk mengidentifikasi tema dan sub-tema kunci terkait pendidikan karakter dan konservasi lingkungan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *The Lion King* mengandung pesan-pesan pendidikan penting terkait tanggung jawab, kepemimpinan, menghormati alam, dan keterkaitan semua makhluk hidup. Temuan ini menunjukkan potensi film sebagai alat untuk mempromosikan nilai-nilai positif dalam dunia pendidikan. Implikasi penelitian terhadap pendidikan dan literasi media dibahas, menekankan pentingnya mengintegrasikan media ke dalam kurikulum pendidikan untuk meningkatkan pemahaman konsep penting dan memupuk keterampilan berpikir kritis dan analitis siswa. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa film, seperti *The Lion King*, dapat menjadi alat yang berharga untuk mempromosikan nilai-nilai positif dalam dunia pendidikan, terutama untuk pendidikan karakter dan konservasi lingkungan. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa pendidik dapat menggunakan analisis konten media sebagai sarana untuk mengidentifikasi dan menganalisis pesan-pesan pendidikan yang tertanam dalam film, dan mengintegrasikan pesan-pesan ini ke dalam kurikulum pendidikan untuk meningkatkan pembelajaran dan perkembangan siswa.

**Kata Kunci:** The Lion King, Pendidikan karakter, Pendidikan konservasi lingkungan.

## INTRODUCTION

Character education is becoming increasingly important in today's society as it addresses the need for individuals to possess positive character traits and values (Dewia & Alam, 2020). The focus on character education aims to foster the development of responsible, respectful, and ethical individuals who can contribute to society (Pala, 2011). Schools are one of the primary institutions responsible for instilling these values in young people (Dwi Astuti et al., 2020), and teachers play a significant role in this process (Zurqoni et al., 2018). With the rise of issues such as bullying, violence, and intolerance, there is a growing need to incorporate character education into the curriculum (Covell & Howe, 2001). Therefore, exploring ways to enhance character education in educational settings is crucial for the betterment of society (Prayitno, 2023).

Environmental conservation is becoming increasingly important in today's world as human activities continue to have a negative impact on the environment (Mensah, 2019). Climate change, deforestation, pollution, and loss of biodiversity are just some of the pressing issues that we face (Caro et al., 2022). Environmental conservation education is therefore critical to promote awareness and understanding of these issues

and to encourage individuals to take action to protect the environment (Sukma et al., 2020). This education can be delivered through various means, including formal education in schools and universities, non-formal education programs, and public awareness campaigns (Teane, 2021). It is crucial for individuals to learn about the importance of environmental conservation, the impacts of human activities on the environment, and the actions they can take to protect the environment (Ramadhan et al., 2019). By promoting environmental conservation education, individuals can develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to make informed decisions and take action to protect the environment.

Film has been an integral part of popular culture for many years and has been used as an educational tool in various contexts (Checa-Romero, 2016). Movies can be a great way to explore different cultures, historical events, and social issues (Marcus et al., 2018). They can also be used to teach language skills, critical thinking, and media literacy. However, it is important to remember that films are a form of media and may have biases or inaccuracies that should be critically examined. Therefore, it is essential to approach films with a critical eye and to use them as a starting point for discussion and further learning.

One such film is *The Lion King*, an animated feature film produced by Walt Disney Pictures (Allers & Minkoff, 1994). The film tells the story of Simba, a young lion cub who learns important lessons about life and leadership as he journeys towards adulthood. *The Lion King* had a remake in 2019 using Computer-Generated Imagery (CGI) technology and was directed by Jon Favreau. The film became one of the highest-grossing films of all time, earning over 1.6 billion US dollars worldwide, and was ranked 7th among the highest-grossing films of 2019. Its achievement even surpassed that of 'The Avengers' at that time.

*The Lion King* has been widely recognized for its entertainment value and artistic merit (Osatinski, 2019). However, beyond its entertainment value, the film also contains valuable educational messages that can be analyzed from various perspectives. The educational messages in *The Lion King* can be seen through the themes of leadership, responsibility, friendship, environmental conservation, and character education.

The film's portrayal of Simba's journey towards becoming a responsible leader can serve as a model for teaching leadership and responsibility in educational settings. By analyzing Simba's transformation from an impulsive and carefree cub to a mature and responsible leader, educators can provide students with valuable lessons on leadership and responsibility. Simba's struggles and challenges can serve as a starting point for discussions on the importance of perseverance and determination in achieving success.

Moreover, *The Lion King*'s portrayal of the Circle of Life and the importance of environmental conservation can serve as a starting point for discussing environmental issues and promoting ecological awareness. The film's representation of the African savannah ecosystem, the delicate balance of the food chain, and the consequences of human intervention can provide valuable lessons on the importance of environmental conservation.

Furthermore, the film's messages on character education and the importance of

friendship can be valuable tools in promoting positive character development among children and young adults. The film's portrayal of friendship between Simba, Timon, and Pumbaa can serve as a model for positive peer relationships. The film's representation of Scar, the villainous character, can provide an opportunity for discussions on the importance of empathy, compassion, and ethical behavior.

Despite the potential educational value of *The Lion King*, there is a lack of research on its use in educational settings. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the educational messages in *The Lion King* from the perspectives of character education and environmental conservation, and to explore the potential of the film as an educational tool in promoting positive character development and environmental awareness. By conducting this study, it is hoped that educators and researchers can gain insights on the ways in which *The Lion King* can be used to promote education and positive values.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative research design that focuses on content analysis. Content analysis is a research method that involves the systematic examination of media messages to identify patterns, themes, and other characteristics (Riffe et al., 2019). In this study, content analysis is used to identify the educational messages in *The Lion King* related to character education and environmental conservation.

The sample for this study consisted of the full-length feature film of *The Lion King*. The film is analyzed based on its narrative structure, dialogue, and visual elements that convey educational messages related to character education and environmental conservation. The data collected from the content analysis was coded and categorized into themes and sub-themes.

The data analysis process involved several steps. First, the data is transcribed from the film into a digital format. Second, the data is coded and categorized into themes and sub-themes based on the coding sheet. Third, the data is analyzed to identify patterns and relationships among the themes and sub-themes. Finally, the results of the analysis are interpreted and presented in the form of a narrative description.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Synopsis of The Lion King Movie**

*The Lion King* is an animated musical film that tells the story of Simba, a young lion cub who is destined to become the next king of the Pride Lands. Simba is the son of Mufasa, the current king, and Sarabi, the queen. The film begins with a grand ceremony in which all the animals of the Pride Lands come together to witness the birth of Simba.

Mufasa takes Simba on a tour of the Pride Lands and teaches him about the "circle of life" - the idea that all living things are interconnected and have a role to play in the natural order of things. Mufasa also warns Simba about the dangers of the elephant graveyard, a place where the hyenas, the sworn enemies of the lions, are known to lurk.

Meanwhile, Mufasa's brother Scar is plotting to overthrow him and become the

new king. Scar is bitter and jealous of his brother's power and is willing to do whatever it takes to achieve his goal. Scar befriends the hyenas and makes a deal with them: if they help him kill Mufasa and Simba, he will allow them to enter the Pride Lands and hunt freely.

One day, Simba and his best friend Nala sneak away from their babysitter Zazu and decide to explore the elephant graveyard. They are ambushed by the hyenas, but Mufasa arrives just in time to rescue them. Scar, however, has other plans. He lures Mufasa into a trap and causes him to fall to his death. Scar then convinces Simba that he is responsible for his father's death and encourages him to run away and never return.

Years later, Simba has grown into a carefree adult and has made new friends, the meerkat Timon and the warthog Pumbaa. They live a carefree life under the motto "Hakuna Matata" (which means "no worries"). However, Simba's past comes back to haunt him when he meets his childhood friend Nala, who tells him that Scar has turned the Pride Lands into a wasteland and that the animals are suffering. She urges Simba to return and take his place as king.

Simba is initially hesitant, but he is visited by the wise baboon Rafiki, who reminds him of his true identity and purpose. Simba decides to return to the Pride Lands and confront Scar, but he is still haunted by his guilt over his father's death. With the help of his friends, Simba faces Scar and his army of hyenas in a final battle. Simba ultimately emerges victorious and takes his rightful place as king of the Pride Lands, restoring balance to the "circle of life" and bringing hope and prosperity to all the animals.

Overall, The Lion King is a timeless tale that teaches important lessons about responsibility, leadership, and the importance of community. Its iconic soundtrack, memorable characters, and stunning animation have made it a beloved classic for generations of fans.

### **Character Education in The Lion King Movie**

The results of this study indicate that The Lion King effectively conveys messages of character education through its characters, storyline, and visuals. The following are the key findings related to character education in the film:

#### **1. Bravery**

One of the main messages conveyed in The Lion King is bravery. Simba, the protagonist, exemplifies this value by facing his fears and challenges, and fighting for what is right. He learns to be a good and wise leader by understanding the values of justice and wisdom. For example, Simba faces his fear of the hyenas and takes on the responsibility of leading his pride. He also confronts his past mistakes and takes action to correct them. The message of bravery is an important one for viewers, especially children, who may face challenges and adversity in their own lives. By watching Simba's journey, they can learn the importance of courage and perseverance in the face of difficulty.

#### **2. Responsibility**

Simba also embodies the message of responsibility. He learns that he must take responsibility for his own actions and the fate of his kingdom. He realizes that a true

leader takes responsibility for the well-being of his subjects. This message is an important one for children, who are learning to navigate the world and make their own choices. By watching Simba's journey, they can learn the importance of taking responsibility for their actions and making choices that benefit themselves and those around them.

3. Friendship

The characters of Timon and Pumbaa show the importance of friendship and treating others well. They welcome Simba into their world, showing him warmth and hospitality, and teaching him that family does not always mean blood. This message is an important one for children, who are learning how to interact with their peers and build relationships. By watching the interactions between Simba, Timon, and Pumbaa, they can learn the importance of treating others with kindness and respect, and how true friends can support and help one another.

4. Honesty

The character of Zazu, the palace's guardian, is always honest and loyal in his duties, even when it is difficult. He shows that honesty is an important virtue for a responsible leader. This message is an important one for children, who are learning to navigate the world and make their own choices. By watching Zazu's interactions with Simba, they can learn the importance of being honest and truthful in their own lives.

5. Hard work

Rafiki, the wise old baboon, teaches Simba the importance of hard work and perseverance in achieving his goals. He shows that with dedication and effort, anything is possible. This message is an important one for children, who are learning to set goals and work towards them. By watching Rafiki's interactions with Simba, they can learn the importance of working hard and not giving up when faced with obstacles.

Overall, the character education messages conveyed in *The Lion King* include bravery, responsibility, friendship, honesty, and hard work. These messages provide strong added value to the film and can help viewers, especially children, to understand and apply positive values in their lives. The film is an effective tool for teaching important character education values and can be used in educational settings to promote moral and ethical development.

### **Environmental Conservation in The Lion King Movie**

*The Lion King* also delivers an important message about environmental conservation. The film portrays the African savanna as a delicate ecosystem that must be protected in order to maintain the balance of nature. Throughout the movie, various environmental issues are highlighted, including deforestation, poaching, and overgrazing. These issues are depicted through the destruction of the Pride Lands and the diminishing of the animal population.

The following are the key findings from the content analysis related to environmental conservation in *The Lion King*:

1. Importance of biodiversity

*The Lion King* highlights the importance of biodiversity in maintaining a

healthy ecosystem. The film showcases the various animals living in the Pride Lands, each with its own unique role to play in the ecosystem. Simba, as the future king, is responsible for maintaining the balance of nature and ensuring that all animals are protected.

2. Consequences of environmental destruction

The film also shows the consequences of environmental destruction. Scar's decision to overhunt and overgraze the Pride Lands leads to a shortage of food for the animals, which in turn leads to the death of many animals. The barren and lifeless Pride Lands under Scar's reign is a clear depiction of the consequences of unchecked environmental destruction.

3. Responsibility for environmental protection

The Lion King emphasizes the importance of taking responsibility for protecting the environment. Simba learns that being a responsible leader means protecting not only his own interests but also the interests of all the animals in the Pride Lands. He takes on the responsibility of restoring the balance of nature by defeating Scar and restoring the Pride Lands.

4. The circle of life

One of the most famous songs from The Lion King, "Circle of Life," highlights the interconnectedness of all living things. The song emphasizes that everything in nature is connected and that every living thing has a role to play in the ecosystem. This message reinforces the importance of biodiversity and the need to protect all living things in order to maintain a healthy ecosystem.

Overall, The Lion King delivers a strong message about the importance of environmental conservation. The film highlights the importance of biodiversity, the consequences of environmental destruction, the responsibility for environmental protection, and the interconnectedness of all living things. These messages can be used to teach children about the importance of protecting the environment and the need to take action to address environmental issues.

### **Implications for Education**

The analysis of The Lion King has revealed several implications for education related to character education and environmental conservation. The following are the implications for education that can be drawn from the study:

1. Use of media for character education: The findings suggest that The Lion King can be used as a media resource for teaching character education to children. The film effectively portrays the importance of traits such as courage, responsibility, and empathy through the characters of Simba, Mufasa, and Nala. Teachers can use the film as a starting point to initiate discussions about character education in the classroom.
2. Role of media in environmental conservation education: The film also provides important environmental conservation messages through the portrayal of the Circle of Life and the impact of human actions on the environment. Teachers and educators can use the film to teach children about the importance of conservation and the consequences of not preserving the environment.
3. Integration of character education and environmental conservation education:

The Lion King also shows how character education and environmental conservation education can be integrated into a single narrative. The film highlights how the characters' actions affect the environment and the importance of taking responsibility for one's actions. Teachers and educators can use the film to teach children about the interconnectedness of character and environmental education.

4. Use of culturally relevant media: The Lion King is a culturally relevant media resource that can be used to engage children from diverse backgrounds. The film reflects African culture, values, and traditions, which can be used to teach children about cultural diversity and respect for different cultures.

In summary, The Lion King is a valuable media resource that can be used to teach character education and environmental conservation education in formal and informal educational settings. The film's themes and messages can be used to initiate discussions, promote critical thinking, and engage children in meaningful learning experiences.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, The Lion King is a film that contains valuable educational messages related to character education and environmental conservation. Through content analysis, this study has identified several key themes and sub-themes related to these messages, including the importance of responsibility, leadership, and respect for nature. The analysis of these themes and sub-themes provides important insights into the educational value of the film, particularly in terms of its potential to promote positive character traits and environmental stewardship.

The findings of this study have important implications for education. By using films such as The Lion King as a teaching tool, educators can enhance their students' understanding of important character education and environmental conservation concepts. The use of media such as films can also be a valuable tool for engaging students and fostering critical thinking and analysis skills.

Overall, this study highlights the importance of media literacy and the potential for films to be powerful tools for promoting education and positive values. Further research in this area is needed to explore the potential of other media and to develop effective strategies for incorporating media into educational curricula.

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