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## HEDONISM PRACTICES AS REFLECTED THROUGH THE MAIN CHARACTER IN THE WOLF OF WALL STREET MOVIE

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### ABSTRACT

The objective of this research was to find out the hedonism practices through the main character dialogues in *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie based on Weijers's theory of hedonism and happiness which consist of six types of hedonism, they were folk hedonism, value, and prudential hedonism, motivational hedonism, normative hedonism, hedonistic egoism, and hedonistic utilitarianism. This research used a descriptive qualitative method to analyze the data. The data were taken from the main character dialogues in *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie. The result of the research showed that there were five types of hedonism practices found in the main character dialogues of *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie, they were folk hedonism, value and prudential hedonism, motivational hedonism, hedonistic egoism, and hedonistic utilitarianism.

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### INTRODUCTION

A movie can be entertainment for a human being, but it also can use to get useful information about other cultures and historical information that contained in it. A movie also can be a medium to illustrate social issues by the director or the scriptwriter that related to the issues in the present time or from a different time. One social issue that remains main exist in society is hedonism. The activities of the hedonistic lifestyle aimed to seek the pleasures of life, and the point of doing such activities is to become the center of attention in her surrounding (Armstrong, 2003).

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Pleasures have become a benchmark for a hedonist, the more pleasures someone gets means that the happier that he or she achieved in their life. The person that adopts a lifestyle is eager to do things that can keep themselves happy to feel alive, therefore, they do not hesitate to justify any means to reach their happiness. There are two aspects underlying this research, the first is to explore hedonism in general and specific, and the second is the impact of hedonism itself on hedonists.

According to Weijers (2012: 15), the term hedonism comes from the Greek word *hēdonismos* which means for pleasure. This term refers to how we should behave, how to avoid the bad to get the good thing, and what motivate us. Despite the meaning of hedonism being for pleasure, the theory also identifies pleasure and pain as the only important elements of whatever phenomena they are designed to describe. Hedonism is defined as the way of seeking pleasure, but also negatively as the avoidance of displeasure (Onfray, 2015). Some relate this behavior as natural and also healthy, but others define hedonism as overindulgence and moral decay. On one hand, hedonism is associated with good taste and the art of living well, on the other hand with addiction, superficiality, irresponsible behavior, and short-sighted egoism.

Brax (2009: 17) describes pleasure in hedonism as a kind of experience that is regularly distinguished by how they feel. The very least pleasure that can be experienced by a hedonist might be the content of the object, or the general term of it is called mental states. In general, mental states can not only be distinguished by how they feel but by their content or by their function, so if the distinctive feeling view fails, there are other options.

Hedonism also can be viewed as a way of life that is characterized by openness to pleasurable experiences (Veenhoven, 2003). Hedonism is also a kind of value in the morals that appear reciated for enjoyment. Moreover, Simon Blackburn and Gregory Pence in Weijers (2012) stated that hedonism is a specifically normative theory that claims that pursuing our pleasure should be the goal of all our actions without mentioning any other types of hedonism. From the explanation above, it can be concluded that the main goal of hedonism is pleasure, and hedonists race to pursue pleasure no matter what it takes.

Weijers (2012) proposed six types of hedonism, namely (1) folk hedonism, (2) value and prudential hedonism, (3) motivational hedonism, (4) normative hedonism, (5) hedonistic egoism, and (6) hedonistic utilitarianism.

- 1) Folk hedonism. This type argues that people have to reach their happiness by thinking about what would happen in the future or to other people.

- 2) Value and Prudential hedonism. This type of hedonism explains that all pleasure is valuable and should be pursued even if it did not lead to any benefit.
- 3) Motivational hedonism. This type of hedonism means behavior that is done continuously and created by the desire to get happiness and avoid pain.
- 4) Normative hedonism. This type of hedonism explains how pleasure should be pursued and pain should be avoided.
- 5) Hedonistic egoism. This type of hedonism explains that a person is willing to do everything to get their happiness even if they have to sacrifice others people's happiness.
- 6) Hedonistic utilitarianism. This type of hedonism explains how a person getting their happiness not only for himself or herself but also for everyone.

The hedonism practices cannot be separated from the life around us, from buying things impulsively to fulfill their desire and reach their happiness or sacrificing someone's happiness for their own sake. Related to the explanation above, this research tries to find out the hedonism practices through the main character dialogues, Jordan Belfort, based on Weijers (2012) theory of hedonism and happiness.

## **METHOD**

This research uses the qualitative method. The qualitative method is used as a broad explanation for behavior and attitudes (Creswell 2014: 96). This research focused to analyzed the dialogues of the main character, Jordan Belfort and finding out the types of hedonism in *The Wolf of Wolf Street* movie. In relevant to the explanation, the descriptive qualitative method is the most suitable for this, because the objective of this research is to deliver and describe the types of hedonism which use in *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie.

The source data of the research is from *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie, and the data comes from the main character's dialogues from the beginning of the movie until the end.

The data is collected by the researcher through several steps, first is by watching the movie repeatedly. Second, download the English subtitle to help the analysis process. Third, choose and write down the main character's dialogues. Then fourth, identify the types of hedonism based on the main character's dialogues. Fifth, classify the data from the dialogues which contain the types of hedonism.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From the six types of hedonism, the researcher found five types of hedonism in the main character dialogues, Jordan Belfort, from *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie based on Weijers's (2012) theory. The researcher found 47 data that contain the types of hedonism namely, folk hedonism, value, and prudential hedonism, motivational hedonism, hedonistic egoism, and hedonistic utilitarianism.

### Folk Hedonism

**Table 1. Data 3**

No.	Time	Source	Data Interpretation
3.	0:02:48	I drink like a fish. I fuck hookers maybe five, six times a week.	Drink alcohol and change sex partners without thinking about the effect of it in the future.

In the scene of the movie, Jordan is explaining his habit of using drugs, gambling, and drinking. While explaining that, he also uses drugs and has intercourse with someone. Based on the dialogue above, it can be concluded that the dialogue contains folk hedonism and it implies that Jordan only focuses on his happiness even though his bad habit, gambling, drinking, using drugs, and having intercourse with different sex partners every single time can cause him bad result both health and financial. It fits folk hedonism because Jordan is only thinking about his happiness without thinking about what might happen in the future.

**Table 2. Data 4**

No.	Time	Source	Data Interpretation
4.	0:03:25	Relax! Just relax!	Jordan risked his life by flying a helicopter while drunk.

One night, Jordan went home with his pilot using a helicopter. The one who is flying the helicopter is not the pilot but Jordan himself. He was drunk while flying the helicopter, which is very dangerous and risk not only his life but also the pilot's life. Jordan laughs and says "Relax! Just relax!" to his pilot, and he hit the ground very hard after saying that. Luckily both of them are saved. Based on the explanation above, Jordan does not care about the pilot's life, Jordan only focuses on his happiness and it can be seen that he is laughing in the scene. In conclusion, this dialogue contains folk hedonism.

## Value and Prudential Hedonism

**Table 3. Data 7**

No.	Time	Source	Data Interpretation
7.	0:04:54	Money doesn't just buy you a better life, better food, better cars, better pussy.	Money is an example of instrumental good and Jordan describes things that money can buy.

At the beginning of the movie, Jordan tells about how success in life brings a lot of joy and happiness to him. An example of his happiness is money, and Jordan explains how money can make you live a better life, better food, better cars, and of course girls that hang around you. Moreover, from the money that you have, you can give it to the church for charity, or even to a political party. Money is an example of the value and prudential hedonism where money can please us or help us to avoid pain. From that explanation, it can be concluded that this dialogue contains a value and prudential hedonism.

**Table 4. Data 96**

No.	Time	Source	Data Interpretation
7.	0:46:22	Expensive champagne and We had to buy champagne.	Expensive champagne is an example of what money can buy.

Jordan's father, Max, come to his office when he found out the company expenses reach 430,000 dollars in just a month. Max was so furious when he found that Jordan spend his money on unnecessary things such as expensive champagne and side dishes that cost the company 26,000 dollars. Moreover, Max found that some of that money is used for prostitution. It can be concluded that those expenses do not lead to any benefit for Jordan and his colleague, but it is still good to experience. Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that this dialogue contains the type of hedonism which is value and prudential hedonism.

## Motivational Hedonism

**Table 5. Data 6**

No.	Time	Source	Data Interpretation
6.	0:03:55	Daily, I consume enough drugs.	Jordan consumes drugs daily to stimulate him to work better.

Waking up in the morning after flying his helicopter by himself last night, Jordan explains how he “conquer” the world of investing through his daily habit. Jordan consumes drugs in a large dosage which will harm his health and his body, and he repeats this habit every single day that later on become a behavior for him that actually should be avoided. Jordan does this thing continuously daily, which means that it is Jordan’s behavior to avoid pain and get his happiness, therefore this dialogue is considered motivational hedonism.

**Table 6. Data 104**

No.	Time	Source	Data Interpretation
104.	0:50:4 9	We liked to get as fucked up as possible during our business powwows.	Getting as high as they can during a business meeting to achieve the best business idea.

Straton Oakmont is having a close party only for the employee of the company. Jordan, Donnie, and other founding fathers of the company are looking for a company that is going for their Initial Public Offering or IPO with Straton Oakmont. While they keep thinking about which is the right company, they like to do it while they are high, by keep drinking alcohol and consuming ludes just like a choco-chip, keep swallowing it on and on. Jordan and other founding fathers like to get as high as they can during their business trips or meeting to get the best idea, and this means that this dialogue contains motivational hedonism because Jordan keeps doing it as a behavior to reach his happiness by getting the best idea.

**Hedonistic Egoism**

**Table 7. Data 43**

No.	Time	Source	Data Interpretation
43.	0:19:47	By the way, John, our analysts indicate it could go a heck of a lot higher than that. Your profit on a mere \$6,000 investment would be upwards of \$60,000!	Jordan tries to convince his customer to buy pink sheet stock despite the real fact that is not what Jordan says.

Jordan had his first job since he lost his job because of Black Monday. This job is the same as his last job, as a stockbroker, but the difference between his new job and his previous job is that now Jordan had to sell pink sheets, cheap stock, a stock that normally people avoid because of the price will be stuck. What makes Jordan interested in selling this stock is because the pink sheet gives 50 percent commission, which is bigger compared to his previous job, only 1 percent commission. So Jordan call his client right away and offer him a company called Aerodyne. Jordan persuades and convinces the buyer that the price of this stock will keep getting higher and higher, which only a lies. Jordan focuses on how to get the 50 percent commission no matter how, even if he had to lie to his customer, he does not care about it. Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that this dialogue contains hedonistic egoism.

**Table 8. Data 45**

No.	Time	Source	Data Interpretation
45.	0:21:31	I was selling garbage to garbage men and making cash hand over fist.	Jordan succeeds to convince his customer to buy the stock and get the commission, while Jordan does not care whether he will get a profit or not.

Jordan made his first sale as a broker in his new firm. He made 2 grand by just persuading and convincing his customer to buy stock of a company, which is there is no clear background information about the company. Jordan’s main goal is how to get his customers money and not care about the rest that will happen to his customer. From Jordan’s dialogue it can be concluded that this dialogue contains hedonistic egoism because Jordan sacrifice his customer money to buy pink sheet stock and from the commission money, he pursues his dream by saying that he knew how to spend the money better than his customer.

**Hedonistic Utilitarianism**

**Table 9. Data 72**

No.	Time	Source	Data Interpretation
72.	0:30:17	In no time, I'll make them rich.	Jordan wants his colleague to be like him, successful with a lot of money.

To build a company, Jordan can not do this alone. Because of that, Jordan calls his old friends to join them. Jordan clearly understands that all of his old friends have no economic study background or experience, especially in the stock market, but Jordan has the power and will to make his friends understand it, and become wealthy people from it. From here Jordan understands that he can not build a company by himself so he needs help from his old friends, and not only that, Jordan wants his friends to understand and become wealthy people from it, he not only thinks about himself but also about his friends. From the explanation above, it can be concluded that this dialogue contains hedonistic utilitarianism.

**Table 10. Data 86**

No.	Time	Source	Data Interpretation
86.	0:37:49	Send in the stripes!	Share the joy of great sales by sending stripes to all his employees.

After making a great sale in the current month, Jordan announce their sale report that month to all his employees. The profit that the company got is all from the pink sheet stock which is 28,7 million dollars. To celebrate it, Jordan offers one of his employees, Danielle, to shave her hair for 10,000 dollars and that money will be used by Danielle for her breast surgery. In addition to that, Jordan also sends the stripes to the office to make his employee happy and enjoy the achievement they have done. From here, Jordan wants to share his happiness after achieving a great sale to all his employees. Based on the explanation above, this dialogue is considered a hedonistic utilitarianism.

The data of the explanation above is taken from the main character’s dialogues. A dialogue can be concluded into each type based on the dialogue itself and the correlation between the dialogue and the scene of the movie when the dialogue occurs, and the researcher matches the dialogue to the types of hedonism. From the total of 47 data, hedonistic egoism becomes the most common type found in the dialogues with a total of 17 data. The main reason for it is that Jordan wants to pursue the maximum happiness of his life even if it has to sacrifice someone else happy and it is correlated with the definition of hedonistic egoism by Weijers (2012).

The desire to pursue happiness and to get satisfaction from it leads to bad impacts in the long term of Jordan’s life. Using drugs lead Jordan into an addict, swallow the pills until he loses his motor skills and consciousness, and it can cause damage to his health organs. The other bad impact of hedonism is reflected by Jordan how seeking pleasure can lead to a greedy person and will ruin the life of their own. Hedonism might bring pleasures in the short term, but when it

comes to the long term but will slowly but surely take all the good things that Jordan has, from his marriage to his career.

## CONCLUSIONS

From the analysis of hedonism practices found in Jordan Belfort's dialogues as the main character in *The Wolf of Wall Street* movie, the research found that 47 data contain types of hedonism. 13 data employ folk hedonism, 2 data employ value and prudential hedonism, 4 data employ motivational hedonism, 17 data employ hedonistic egoism, and 11 data employ hedonistic utilitarianism. Hedonistic egoism is considered the most common type found in the main character dialogues because Jordan wants to pursue the maximum happiness even if it has to sacrifice someone else happiness.

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