

## **Ambition of The Main Character To Be Accepted In The Society in The Movie Front of Class**

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**Abstrak** – Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dimana penulis menonton film dan menganalisa film tersebut dengan menggunakan teori ambisi dan Sindrom Tourette. Data dalam penelitian ini berasal dari adegan film dan dialog dalam film “Front of Class”. Hasil analisis menyiratkan bahwa karakter utama didorong oleh keinginan yang kuat untuk menunjukkan bahwa individu dengan sindrom Tourette dapat mencapai kesuksesan di bidang pendidikan. Tekadnya terlihat dari usahanya yang gigih untuk mendaftar ke berbagai sekolah, meskipun menghadapi ketidakpastian dan pandangan sebelah mata dari orang-orang di sekitarnya. Ketangguhan karakter dalam menghadapi tantangan ini menyoroti komitmennya untuk mengejar mimpinya, menunjukkan tidak hanya ambisi pribadinya tetapi juga keinginan untuk menantang persepsi masyarakat dan membuktikan bahwa kondisinya tidak membatasi kemampuannya untuk mengajar.

*Kata Kunci: Movie, Ambition, Tourette Syndrom*

**Abstract** - The research uses a qualitative method in which the writer watches the movie and analyzes the movie using the theory of ambition and Tourette Syndrome. The data in this research comes from the movie scenes and dialogues in the movie “Front of Class”. The analysis results imply that the main character is driven by a strong desire to demonstrate that individuals with Tourette syndrome can succeed in the education field. His determination is evident in his persistent efforts to apply to various schools despite uncertainty and underestimation from those around him. The character's resilience in the face of these challenges highlights his commitment to pursuing his dreams, demonstrating his personal ambition and a desire to challenge societal perceptions and prove that his condition does not limit his ability to teach.

*Key words: Film, Ambisi, Tourette Syndrom*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Literature, in its broadest sense, encompasses the body of written works produced in a particular language, country, or age. It includes various forms of writing, such as fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and drama. Literature serves as a mirror to society, reflecting cultural norms, values, and changes over time. It is both an art form and a medium for expressing human experiences, emotions, and ideas. According to (Abrams, 1999), literature can be seen as a repository of cultural narratives and collective memory, offering entertainment and enlightenment. Through literature, societies can trace their histories, understand their present, and envision their futures. Literature serves multiple functions. It can be didactic, offering moral lessons or philosophical insights; aesthetic, providing beauty and pleasure through its form and style; and cathartic, allowing readers to experience and process complex emotions vicariously. Moreover, Wellek and Waren, in (Burhamzah et al., 2023) explained that a literary work, even though imbued with the author's imagination and is subjective, can still represent social reality in society. The social reality is the author's experience or from the experiences of other people he knows. Literary works take various forms, including poetry, drama, novels, and movies. Each form has unique characteristics, structures, and ways of conveying themes and emotions. A movie typically conveys multiple messages about education, entertainment, and information. It is considered a potent means of communication for reaching a wide audience due to its visual and auditory impact. Through the use of imagery and sound, a movie can effectively convey a significant amount of information in a short timeframe



.Characters play a vital role in movies, shaping the story and fostering emotional engagement with the audience. A character appears in a story, such as in short stories, novels, dramas, or movies (Abrams, 1999). Characters are its most important elements. They advance the plot through their choices, actions, and interactions with other characters and the environment. A well-developed character can raise an audience's interest and empathy, which increases the story's memorability and engagement. (Nurgiyantoro, 2012) The characters have some characteristics, namely, the protagonist and antagonist. A protagonist is a character who has a good personality that always appears in the whole story. The antagonist is a character with a bad personality who usually contradicts the protagonist. This means that the characters in the story have different characteristics. According to (Nurgiyantoro, 2012), there are four kinds of characters based on the differentiation of characterization: Main Character and peripheral Character, Protagonist and antagonist Character, Flat Character and round Character, Static Character and developing Character. Every character and their characterization within a story is distinct from one another. Each character brings a unique perspective, personality, and traits that contribute to the narrative. (Minderop, 2016) reveals that literary psychology research is considered necessary because of the importance of literary psychology to examine aspects of character; the existence of a literary psychology approach provides feedback to researchers on character issues and is very helpful for analyzing literary works that are closely related to psychological problems. The conclusion of Minderop's statement about literary psychology is the importance of literary psychology for studying aspects of character; a literary psychology approach provides researchers with information about character problems and helps analyze literary works related to psychological problems. To truly understand a character, we must consider its physiological, psychological, and sociological dimensions.

Robbins in (Ratih, 2016) stated that Motivation is a process that generates intensity, direction, and personal dedication in pursuing a specific goal. Motivation is a complex part of human psychology and behavior that influences how individuals invest their time, how much energy they exert in any given task, how they think and feel about the task, and how long they persist. According to Runyon, in (Separ & Owa, 2023) Four types of motivation exist: fuel, guide, and sustain behavior. There are intrinsic, extrinsic, contributive, and relational motivations. Intrinsic motivation is an individual's desire to engage in an activity driven by internal factors or impulses, without external influence, and fueled by the aspiration to achieve specific goals. This motivation stems from personal learning experiences or the enjoyment of completing the task. Internal elements such as self-esteem, the need for achievement, personal expectations, responsibilities, and job satisfaction play a key role in fostering this type of motivation. Extrinsic motivation is driven by external influences, such as invitations, directives, or pressure from others, prompting a person to act. The desire for external rewards or recognition, such as praise, fuels this motivation. Individuals with positive extrinsic motivation pursue goals to obtain tangible rewards like salary, money, relationships, respect, or fame. In contributive motivation, the motivation to act stems from the belief that others will benefit. Key drivers include altruism, moral principles, or the need to reinforce personal beliefs. On the other hand, actions may also be influenced by negative motives, such as envy or a desire for revenge. Relational motivation is a person's motivation to act depending on how their behavior is expected to affect their relationship with the other party. External norms play a significant role, prompting individuals to meet relational or social expectations.

Ambition is a profound drive that fuels individuals to set and attain goals, often requiring persistent effort and determination (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, n.d.). In addition, Muray, in (Yastanti & Adhi, 2023) Ambition is a strong desire or passion to achieve what we aspire to. It reflects a person's drive to accomplish something significant or pursue meaningful goals. When someone is determined to reach their objectives and fulfill their aspirations, this determination is called ambition. Ambition is a strong motivator that drives people to pursue greatness and achievement. It inspires people to persevere despite difficulties and disappointments and to create and pursue essential goals. Ambitious people are frequently distinguished by their tenacity, fortitude, and readiness to put in the required effort to realize their goals. This motivation can result in notable advancements in one's career, personal development, and societal contributions. To guarantee that pursuing goals remains healthy and sustainable, ambition must be balanced with ethical considerations and a focus on well-being.

"Front Class" is an insightful movie that delves into the intricate social dynamics of a school environment. The narrative centers on a diverse group of students as they face the trials of adolescence, tackling issues like peer pressure, identity, and the quest for academic success. At the heart of the film is a dedicated teacher who seeks to inspire and bring her students together, urging them to celebrate their differences and collaborate toward shared objectives. As the story progresses, audiences observe the students' personal development and the strengthening of meaningful friendships, interspersed with conflicts and misunderstandings. The main character in "Front of Class" is Brad Cohen, an enthusiastic and idealistic teacher committed to fostering her students' development and success. She encounters numerous challenges while attempting to connect with a diverse group of students, each dealing with their unique struggles. Brad suffers from Tourette syndrome. Tourette syndrome is a rare inherited neurological disorder that is characterized by recurrent motor and phonic tics, which are involuntary muscle

spasms and vocalizations, respectively. The prevalence of Tourette syndrome is three times higher in males than in females. The etiology of Tourette syndrome remains unknown; however, evidence suggests that there may be an abnormality of one or more chemical neurotransmitters in the brain. The syndrome often manifests between the ages of two and fifteen and persists into adulthood. In nearly 80% of cases, motor tics occur before phonic tics. Motor or phonic tics, but not both, may be present in individuals with milder forms of the condition. This research aims to examine the challenges and aspirations of Brad within the educational landscape, particularly in light of her limitations as someone living with Tourette's syndrome.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher employed a qualitative descriptive method to carry out this study. Based on Zohrabi in (Mohajan, 2018) qualitative research is a type of social inquiry that focuses on how people interpret and make sense of their experiences to gain insight into individuals' social realities. The writer chose a qualitative method to explore Brad Cohen's ambition and character as presented in the movie "Front of the Class" and his journey toward societal acceptance. Aminuddin in (Wulandari, 2021) It was stated that qualitative methods always have descriptive quality. This means the data analyzed are descriptive phenomena, not nominal forms or coefficients of the relationship among variables. Qualitative methods were chosen to provide an in-depth and highly nuanced understanding of the experiences and challenges faced by individuals with Tourette Syndrome and the strategies they employ to overcome social barriers.

In this research, data collection is conducted using a documentation method, which relies on transcripts and various sources. Documentation serves as the primary technique for gathering data in this study. The movie "Front of Class" served as this research's primary data source. This movie was released in 2008, directed by Peter Warner. Data collection methods to find data relevant to research include reading the script, watching this movie many times, and identifying the words or dialogues related to the character so that researchers can better understand the object under study. The researcher also analyzed the movie scene and script using the Runyon and Muray theory.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this research indicate that Brad, the main character in the film, demonstrates strong ambition and motivation to achieve his goal of becoming a teacher despite the challenges posed by his Tourette syndrome. Based on the theory by Runyon about types of motivation. Runyon categorizes four types of motivation: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, contributive motivation, and relational motivation. In "Front of Class" movie, the writer found two types of motivation. Brad has internal motivation and external motivation. Brad's internal motivation arises from within, as he genuinely enjoys being a teacher. He finds fulfillment and happiness in teaching. Brad's external motivation comes from his mother, who initially supported and believed in him. Moreover, his mother consistently provides positive encouragement, reinforcing his determination to pursue teaching despite facing repeated rejections. Brad has an ambition to be a teacher. According to Muray, ambition is a strong desire or passion to achieve what we aspire to. It reflects a person's drive to accomplish something significant or pursue meaningful goals. In this movie, Brad has a strong ambition to become a teacher despite living with Tourette syndrome. His drive comes from a deep desire to impact children's lives positively and show that people with disabilities can succeed in professions often considered challenging for them. Brad's ambition also stems from his struggles as a student. He endured misunderstanding, bullying, and frustration because of his uncontrollable tics caused by Tourette's. He aims to be the kind of teacher he longed for as a child—someone understanding, supportive, and inspiring. This goal fuels his determination, helping him persevere through multiple rejections and setbacks.

## DISCUSSION

Here is an explanation of Brad's ambition to become a teacher as depicted in the film Front of the Class. Brad's ambition was visible during his interview for a teaching position. Several times, Brad had to experience rejection because of a misunderstanding about Tourette's syndrome. Every time he was interviewed, Brad always made strange sounds, which were caused by the Tourette's syndrome he suffered from. However, the interviewer considered this bad and thought Brad was not severe enough to undergo the interview. The interviewer views Brad, who has Tourette syndrome, as a handicapped individual, leading to the belief that handicapped people cannot effectively teach or manage students. This misconception underscores the stigma surrounding disabilities

and the assumption that those with conditions like Tourette's are not capable of fulfilling roles that require teaching and guiding students.

Interviewer : "Ahh, you got something stuck in your throat? Would you like a drink?"  
Brad : "I have Tourette Syndrome. I'd like to tell you about it. It's a neurological...Tourette's?"  
Interviewer : "Isn't that where you yell out obscenities?"  
Brad : "That's coprolalia, It's, ahh, it's a rare symptom that a small percentage of people with Tourette's have. I don't have that."  
Interviewer : "OK, listen. **They did not tell me that you were going to be handicapped. How do you expect to handle a bunch of wild students with a handicap like that?**"

Brad responded to the interviewer's doubts by asserting his capability to teach and sharing his resume.

Brad : "I can teach! Look at my resume. Look at it! Ok? I was very successful as a student teacher my Tourette's never posed a problem! I can teach!"

Despite Brad's reassurances, the interviewer remained unconvinced, believing that Brad's disability prevented him from being capable of teaching and managing students effectively. Despite facing rejection, Brad did not give up. He continued to apply for teaching positions at several nearby schools where he had not previously sought employment. He promised himself that he would keep trying until he achieved his goal of becoming a teacher.



Figure 1. Brad makes mark on the map

(Scene: 39.27 – 39.40)

Brad : "So, I decided it wasn't Tourette's, I just hadn't found the right school yet. I keep barking, and I wasn't quitting until I found that principal. **I made a map of every school where I hadn't interviewed.** I made a map of every school where I hadn't interviewed. If the Principal wasn't in, I'd give my resume to a secretary or a janitor, and ask them to drop it off when the principal returned. **I wasn't going to stop until I had one.**"

This scene beautifully illustrates Brad Cohen's resilience and determination in pursuing his dream of becoming a teacher. Brad's decision to reframe his perspective from seeing Tourette as a barrier to viewing it as a challenge to find the right school demonstrates his proactive approach and positive mindset. Brad mapping every school where he hasn't yet interviewed shows his methodical approach and unwavering commitment to achieving his goal. This scene not only highlights Brad's ambition but also underscores his belief that there is a place where his talents and passion for teaching will be recognized and valued despite the initial rejections and challenges he has faced.

Brad's achievement in securing his dream job as a teacher in *Front of the Class* represents the culmination of his perseverance, resilience, and unwavering commitment throughout the film. After facing rejection from 25 schools, he is accepted as a teacher. This moment signifies more than a career milestone; it represents a triumph over societal prejudices and misconceptions about Tourette syndrome. The principal's welcoming words, acknowledging Brad's qualifications and eagerness to lead the class, symbolize a recognition of his talent and dedication. This underscores the importance of inclusive hiring practices and the need to look beyond disabilities to appreciate each individual's abilities and potential.



**Figure 2. Brad is accepted to be a teacher**

(Scene 53.18 – 53.30)

Principal : “Hilarie said that if we’re gonna talk the talk. We need to walk the walk. **She’s waiting to show you your class room. Welcome.**”

After successfully being accepted as a teacher, Brad taught second grade, and Brad taught with a very fun technique so that his students would be very close and liked him. He begins to connect with his students. At this moment, Brad’s enthusiasm and passion for teaching are palpable as he walks into the classroom. He uses his unique experiences with Tourette syndrome to relate to his students, fostering an atmosphere of understanding and acceptance. Brad's approach includes openly discussing his condition, which helps demystify it for his students and encourages them to embrace differences. The scene highlights his dedication to positively impacting their lives, as he aims to be the supportive and inspiring teacher he always wanted. This moment marks the beginning of his teaching career and symbolizes his triumph over adversity and his commitment to creating an inclusive learning environment.

One day, several school observers visited the school where Brad taught to evaluate the teaching methods employed by the staff. They observed Brad as he engaged his students using an interactive approach that fostered participation and enthusiasm. Impressed by his teaching style and connection with the students, the supervisors selected Brad as the representative for Sallie Mae's First Year Teacher of the Year event.



**Figure 3. Brad is chosen as representative for the Sallie Mae's First Year Teacher of the Year event**

(Scene 1.30.30 – 1.31.06)

Hilarie : “Some of you may have notice an observer hanging around school the last few weeks. Well he was here to assess one of our teachers. Mr. Cohen. And I’m here to announce that our very own **Brad Cohen has been chosen from amongst all the new educators in the state of Georgia to be Sallie Mae’s First Year Teacher of the Year.**”

This shows Brad's ambition to become a good and skilled professional. He successfully realized his goals through perseverance, resilience, and a positive mindset, always striving to do his best and refusing to give up.



**Figure 3. Brad got an award**

(Scene 1.32.48 – 1.34.22)

Brad : “That's right. **Coping with my Tourette's has taught me the most valuable lesson that**

**anyone could ever learn: And that is to never let anything stop you from chasing your dream from working or playing or falling in love.”**

Brad receiving the award in this scene from "Front of the Class" is a touching and symbolic moment. Not only does this scene showcase his personal triumph over the challenges of Tourette Syndrome, but it also highlights the overwhelming support he has received from his family, school community, students, and friends. Brad's acceptance speech exudes humility and gratitude as he acknowledges the many people who have helped him along the way. What stood out was Brad's decision to thank his Tourette's sufferer, referring to her as his "Best Friend" and most excellent teacher. This perspective is very moving. Instead of seeing his condition as a burden, Brad sees it as a source of strength and an invaluable lesson; by embracing the lessons that Tourette has taught him—such as perseverance, resilience, and never giving up on his dreams—Brad shares a powerful message about turning adversity into opportunity. Interactions with his students, who repeat the lessons he has learned, highlight his profound impact as a teacher. His experiences have shaped his own life and inspired his students, teaching them about determination and confidence. Brad receiving this award is more than just a celebration of his achievements. It is a broader affirmation of the potential that lies within every individual, regardless of their challenges.

Brad's ambitions are attainable due to his strong motivation, which comes both from within himself (internal motivation) and from the support of those around him (external motivation). Brad has always been highly motivated to become a teacher. Since he was young, he felt that teaching was his true calling, even believing he was born for it. This is demonstrated in the dialogue at 4:26 in the scene where Brad is interviewed for a teaching position at the school.

Interviewer : What made you decide to go into teaching?  
Brad : **It's all I've ever wanted to do. I feel like I was born to teach.**

When Brad was diagnosed with Tourette syndrome, he stayed optimistic, believing he could overcome it and still achieve his dream of becoming a teacher, as shown in the scene in the minute 19:51.

Brad's Mom : Yeah, but they're still looking for a cure, right? I mean, they will find one, won't they? They they... have to find...  
Brad : **It's OK, Mom. We'll get through this, all right. I can still chase my dreams**

Additionally, Brad is driven by a desire to prove to his father that he can be successful. His father has always doubted his potential due to his Tourette syndrome, and Brad wants to show him that he can achieve his goals despite the challenges.

Brad : SEE? There's a reason, Dad. **But he never believed in me. That I would succeed. That I could teach.**

Scene 35:18 also shows Brad's motivation. In this scene, Brad is resolute in his commitment to pursuing his dream of becoming a teacher. He is determined to demonstrate his abilities and prove that he can achieve this goal despite his challenges.

Brad : Now some day, some way, I knew, Tourette's or no Tourette's, **I was going to be a teacher. I had no choice but to prove that Tourette's would never get the best of me. If I quit, I would be agreeing with everyone who ever told me I was barking up the wrong tree.**

The external motivation comes from Brad's mother, who always gives him support and advice. In Front of the Class, Brad's mother is a powerful advocate who supports him as he navigates life with Tourette syndrome. A memorable scene shows her standing up for him when school officials and teachers misunderstand his condition. Her steadfast support helps Brad gain confidence and resilience, shaping his determination to fulfill his dream of becoming a teacher despite his challenges. This relationship emphasizes the film's themes of acceptance, perseverance, and the vital role of a supportive family in overcoming societal and personal obstacles.

Brad's mother motivates him to live confidently despite his Tourette syndrome. Once she learns that his condition is incurable, she helps him build resilience and adapt to life without feeling inferior. She encourages him to embrace his uniqueness, empowering him to navigate his days as confidently as possible. Brad's mother introduced him to others with Tourette syndrome so he could learn from their experiences. This exposure helped Brad see firsthand how others managed similar challenges, empowering him with practical strategies and the confidence to live authentically.

Brad :It's a church, Mom!

Brad's Mom : Honey, you're not going to have to get a Bible lesson. This is just a support group.  
Brad : Do I have to?  
Brad's Mom : **You need to connect with other people who have Tourette's. Find out how they live with it.** OK?

Another way Brad's mother supports him is by calling him after each interview. She consistently encourages him, providing reassurance and motivation throughout his journey.

Brad : Well, it was the worst interview I've ever had. All he could see when he looked at me was my Tourette's. That's all any of them see.  
Brad's Mom : **Well, honey, if they can't see what a great teacher you'd be that is their failure, not yours.**

Brad also received encouragement from his middle school principal. Brad's middle school principal significantly contributed to his sense of acceptance despite his Tourette syndrome. The principal established an atmosphere of understanding and respect by informing his classmates about his condition. This initiative helped Brad feel included and secure, enhancing his confidence and creating new opportunities to thrive among his peers. Ultimately, this supportive environment allowed Brad to feel like he truly belonged. This moment opened new possibilities for Brad.

Principal : **What can we do and I mean everyone in this school. What can we do to help you, Brad?**  
Brad : **I just want to be treated like everybody else.**  
Principal : Good job. Go sit down.  
Brad : A few words a little education and it was like opening a door to a brand-new world.

Brad Cohen's life illustrates persistence in an environment of huge challenges. From his early struggles with Tourette Syndrome, which led to isolation and misunderstanding, to the challenges he experienced as an aspiring teacher, Brad's unwavering persistence teaches us the priceless lesson of resilience. His refusal to give up on failures demonstrates the importance of perseverance in accomplishing one's goals. Brad's story revolves around the relationships that help him overcome his obstacles. His mother, Ellen, emerges as a beacon of unconditional love, displaying remarkable sensitivity and unflinching faith in Brad's ability despite cultural stereotypes. The film explores the transformational power of empathy and acceptance through Brad's encounters with his family, friends, and colleagues. It encourages us to look past superficial differences and appreciate individuals.

In the film, Brad vigorously fights Tourette Syndrome's prejudices. He speaks for himself, erases myths through education, and defends his right to be judged on merit rather than imagined restrictions. Brad's bravery motivates people to question their biases and push for inclusivity, resulting in a more just and understanding society. Brad's integrity shines through in his unwavering dedication to his desire to become a teacher. Despite being discouraged and rejected, he remains committed to his beliefs, confronting each issue with honesty and resilience. His drive to thrive on his terms, motivated by dedication and ethical clarity, displays character strength that crosses all boundaries. Brad humbly recognizes the support that encouraged him forward in times of achievement. His passionate appreciation for his family, mentors, and pupils emphasizes the significance of acknowledging and respecting those who encourage us on our paths. Brad's award speech, describing Tourette Syndrome as his "constant companion" and most outstanding teacher, exemplifies the transforming power of seeing adversities as chances for personal growth and learning.

## CONCLUSION

The film *Front of the Class* illustrates that Brad Cohen's ambition is driven by a profound personal motivation to transcend the constraints imposed by his Tourette Syndrome and societal prejudices. His journey demonstrates the efficacy of resilience and determination in attaining success, even in persistent rejection and doubt. By persistently pursuing his aspiration of becoming a teacher, Cohen not only substantiates his capabilities but also exemplifies how individuals with disabilities can flourish in domains traditionally perceived as challenging for them. The first result concludes that Brad Cohen's story shows incredible resilience and determination in pursuing his dream of becoming a teacher despite the challenges of Tourette Syndrome. His refusal to let setbacks define him and his unwavering commitment to prove himself underscore the importance of perseverance in achieving goals. Brad Cohen's journey vividly illustrates how his pursuit of social acceptance shapes his personal growth and identity. His experiences impart crucial lessons on embracing oneself, navigating adversity with strength, and demonstrating the enduring impact of persistence. The second result concludes that Brad's ambition to be accepted

as a competent teacher, despite society's prejudice about his condition, highlights the intersection of ambition and societal acceptance. His advocacy for himself and his efforts to educate others about Tourette Syndrome reflect the broader theme of overcoming social barriers through education and understanding. The movie promotes moral messages about empathy and inclusion through Brad's interactions with his family, colleagues, and students. The movie challenges viewers to look beyond superficial differences and appreciate everyone for their unique strengths and contributions.

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