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Influences of Archetypal Relationships in Disney Princess Films on Perceptions of Romantic Relationships and Gender Roles

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Influence of Disney Princess Movies on Views of Romantic Relationships and Gender Roles

Abstract

This research delves into the impact of Disney princess animated films on individuals'
perceptions of romantic relationships and gender roles. Building upon previous findings
suggesting that media, including Disney princess movies, can shape views. The current study
raises two inquiries: Do Disney princess movies influence a individuals' perceptions of romantic
relationships and gender roles? To address these questions, the study utilizes two measures: the
Romantic Beliefs Scale (Sprecher and Metts, 1989) and the Attitudes Toward Women Scale
(Spence and Helmreich 1978). The hypotheses suggest that individuals who watch a greater
number of Disney princess movies are likely to harbor more romantic beliefs and adhere to more
traditional gender roles. Employing a Qualtrics questionnaire, the study targets Montana honors
college students. The findings offer valuable insights into developmental psychology within
Disney's evolving cinematic landscape. By examining how exposure to Disney princess
narratives shapes evolving attitudes toward romantic relationships and gender roles, the analysis
promises to contribute significantly to media impact research during a period marked by
heightened interest in Disney's cinematic productions.

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Romantic Relationships and Gender Roles

Disney princess movies have long held a captivating allure for audiences worldwide, enchanting both young and old with their timeless tales of love, bravery, and magic. Beyond mere entertainment, these animated films serve as potent cultural artifacts, reflecting and shaping societal norms and values, particularly in relation to romance and gender dynamics. From beloved classics featuring characters like Cinderella and Belle to more contemporary heroines like Tiana and Elsa, Disney princess films offer a diverse array of narratives that not only entertain but also offer profound insights into the complexities of human emotions and relationships.

Existing research indicates that media, including Disney princess movies, can significantly influence perceptions and expectations of love while reinforcing traditional gender roles (Tonn 2008; Hefner et al., 2016; Hefner et al., 2018). This study examined how nine iconic animated Disney princess movies, influence romantic beliefs and gender roles. Each film serves as a unique cultural artifact, offering insights into societal values, gender roles, and prevailing storytelling conventions of their respective eras.

Using the Romantic Belief Scale and the Attitudes Toward Women Scale, this research aims to better understand participants' perceptions and attitudes towards romance and gender roles after exposure to the nine Disney princess films: Snow White, Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella, The Little Mermaid, Beauty and the Beast, Aladdin, Tangled, The princess and the Frog, and Frozen. This study seeks to capture a diverse range of perspectives of students at/on Montana public university.

The results of this study contribute to the literature on the psychological impacts of Disney films and media studies and cultural discourse surrounding Disney's impact on societal norms. Understanding how Disney princess narratives shape perceptions of love and gender can provide valuable insights for educators, parents, and policymakers striving to promote healthy relationship dynamics and gender equality.

As the influence of media on individual beliefs and societal expectations continues to evolve, this research contributes to ongoing discussions about the representation of gender and relationships in popular culture. By examining the evolving landscape of Disney princess films, it paves the way for more inclusive and empowering narratives in the future.

Influences of Media

The pervasive nature of media, encompassing television, film, and popular culture, underscores its profound impact on societal perceptions of gender roles and romantic relationships. From childhood through adulthood, individuals are exposed to multiple forms of media messages that shape their understanding of these fundamental aspects of human interaction.

Television and film serve as powerful mediums through which societal attitudes and expectations are communicated and reinforced. Exposure to media, such as Disney princesses and romantic films, has been found to have enduring effects on individuals' beliefs and behaviors (Coyne et al., 2016; Hefner et al., 2017). These studies reveal how engagement with media content can shape perceptions of gender stereotypes, body image, and romantic ideals from a young age.

This influence extends beyond mere entertainment, as media representations often reflect and perpetuate societal norms and values regarding gender roles and romantic relationships. For

example, the portrayal of traditional gender roles in many popular TV shows and movies can reinforce stereotypical expectations, such as men being portrayed as strong and assertive while women are depicted as nurturing and submissive (Knobloch-Westerwick & Hoplamazian, 2011). Similarly, romantic narratives often promote unrealistic ideals of love and relationships, emphasizing grand gestures and sweeping romance over the more nuanced realities of partnership and communication (Galloway et al., 2015).

Moreover, the prevalence of these representations in mainstream media can contribute to the normalization of certain behaviors and attitudes, further solidifying gender stereotypes and shaping individuals' perceptions of what is considered acceptable or desirable in romantic interactions. This can have lasting effects on how individuals perceive themselves and others, influencing their attitudes towards dating, marriage, and even their own sense of self-worth (Galician, 2010; Henke et al., 1996; Hates et al., 2010).

Importantly, these media messages are not limited to fictional narratives; they also permeate news media, advertising, and social media platforms, shaping public discourse and influencing societal norms in subtle yet pervasive ways (Galician, 2010; Ryan et al., 2013; Turner, 2017; Kagesten et al., 2016). As such, media literacy and critical thinking skills are essential tools for navigating the complex landscape of media representations and mitigating their potentially harmful effects on perceptions of gender and relationships.

Gender Roles

In the realm of media, the portrayal of gender roles remains a focal point of discussion and debate (Coyne et al., 2016; England et al., 2011; Golden & Jacoby, 2017). From television shows and films to advertisements and social media platforms, media serves as a powerful mirror reflecting and sometimes shaping societal norms, values, and expectations regarding gender

(Knobloch-Westerwick & Hoplamazian, 2011). The depiction of gender roles in media influences how individuals perceive themselves and others, as well as how they navigate various aspects of their lives, including relationships, careers, and personal identities (Henke et al., 1996; McGhee & Frueh 1980).

Exploring the portrayal of gender roles in media involves examining not only the characters depicted on screen but also the narratives, themes, and underlying messages conveyed (Hefner et al., 2017). It requires a critical analysis of how gender is constructed and represented, as well as an understanding of the broader cultural, social, and historical contexts in which these portrayals emerge (Bullough, 2022; Helwig et al., 2002). By interrogating the stereotypes, biases, and power dynamics embedded within media content, we can gain insight into how gender norms are both reflected and contested within our society.

Romantic Relationships

Romantic relationships have been a cornerstone of storytelling in various forms of media, from literature and film to television and digital media. Through these mediums, creators have crafted narratives that not only entertain but also reflect and shape societal perceptions of love, intimacy, and human connection. The portrayal of romantic relationships in media servers as a reflection of cultural norms, values, and aspirations, while also influencing individual attitudes and behaviors towards romance.

From the idealized fairy-tale romances to the gritty realities of love's complexities, media offers a spectrum of narratives that resonate with audiences worldwide. Whether it's the timeless classics that evoke nostalgia or the contemporary portrayals that challenge traditional notions of romance, media plays a significant role in shaping our collective understanding of love and

relationships (Eggermont, 2004; Gala & Ghadiyali, 2020; Galician, 2010; Hefner & Wilson, 2013).

Moreover, the evolution of media platforms and technologies has revolutionized the way romantic relationships are depicted and consumed (Koontz & Okorie, 2019; Tukachinsky & Dorros, 2018; Turner, 2017). With the rise of streaming services, social media influencers, and online dating apps, individuals have unprecedented access to diverse representations of love and romance (Galician, 2010; Lukšík & Guillaume, 2022; Turner, 2017). This accessibility has both democratized the storytelling process, allowing marginalized voices to be heard, and raised questions about the authenticity and impact of these portrayals on real-life relationships.

Overview of the Social Impacts of Disney

Disney has a large influence on the media we consume. Through the acquisition of major entertainment entities, promoting their products on television, subscription services, Disney parks, and merchandise. This influence is showcased in Disney's $88.9 billion revenue in 2023 (Jefferson & Quadrani, 2023). Moreover, Disney's pervasive influence extends far beyond its direct media platforms. The ubiquity of Disney merchandise, ranging from dolls to clothing to home décor, saturates everyday life, imprinting its characters and narratives onto the collective consciousness of consumers. In Disney parks worldwide, visitors immerse themselves in the magic of fairy tales, encountering iconic princess characters at every turn and participating in themed experiences that reinforce the allure of Disney's romanticized narratives. Additionally, Disney's timeless music, featured prominently in films and theme park attractions, serves as a constant reminder of its enchanting stories and characters, further embedding its influence into the cultural fabric. Thus, even individuals who may not actively consume Disney princess

movies are still subject to its pervasive influence, shaping perceptions of romance and gender roles through multiple avenues beyond traditional media consumption.

In the magical realm of storytelling, where dreams come true and fantasies unfold, Disney princess movies have long reigned supreme. These beloved tales transcend time and captivate audiences with their enchanting narratives and unforgettable characters. Through the lens of these iconic films, viewers are transported to wondrous worlds where courage, romance, and empowerment intertwine.

Disney princess movies hold a special place in popular culture, shaping perceptions and ideals surrounding love, relationships, and gender roles (Coyne & Birkbeck, 2016; Hefner & Jacoby, 2017; Henke et al., 1996; Koontz & Okorie, 2019). From the graceful elegance of Cinderella to the rebellious Ariel to the independence of Tiana, each princess embodies unique qualities that resonate with audiences of all ages. These films not only entertain but also offer valuable lessons about self-discovery, resilience, and the power of kindness.

However, amidst the magic and wonder, debates have arisen regarding the portrayal of gender stereotypes and romantic ideals within Disney princess movies (Hefner et al., 2017). Scholars have examined the influence of these films on children's perceptions of beauty, body image, and gender roles (Coyne & Birkbeck, 2016; Golden & Jacoby, 2017; Henke et al., 1996) While some argue that these movies perpetuate unrealistic expectations about love and marriage (Hefner et al., 2017; Koontz & Okorie, 2019), others emphasize the positive impact of these stories on fostering empathy, compassion, and self-confidence (Downey, 2015).

Current Study

This study aims to investigate the impact of Disney princess movies on romantic relationships and gender roles. Previous research has shown that media, including films, can

influence individuals' perceptions and behaviors, particularly in areas such as romance and gender roles. Building upon this, the study will examine how exposure to Disney princess movies shapes attitudes and behaviors related to romantic relationships and gender roles.

Association between Exposure to Disney Princess Movies and Romantic Relationship Expectations:

Research Question 1: Does more exposure to Disney princess movies correlate with specific expectations or beliefs about romantic relationships among individuals?

Hypothesis 1: Individuals who have been exposed to Disney princess movies more frequently are more likely to have unrealistic romantic relationship expectations portrayed in these movies, such as the notion of "happily ever after" and the importance of finding one's "prince charming."

Influence of Disney Princess Movies on Gender Role Perceptions:

Research Question 2: How do Disney princess movies influence perceptions of gender roles among viewers, particularly concerning traditional male and female roles in relationships?

Hypothesis 2: Exposure to Disney princess movies is associated with the reinforcement of traditional gender roles, with viewers more likely to endorse stereotypical gender norms and expectations regarding behavior and roles within romantic relationships.

The study utilized a quantitative approach, incorporating surveys to assess participants' exposure to Disney princess movies, attitudes towards romantic relationships, and perceptions of gender roles.

This research provides insights into the role of media, specifically Disney princess movies, in shaping individuals' attitudes and behaviors related to romantic relationships and

gender roles. The findings could have implications for media literacy education and the

development of more diverse and inclusive media representations.

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Method

Participants

The sample included 28 adults who attended four-year University of Montana campus (64.3% women, 17.9% men, 17.9% gender queer or gender non-conforming) ranging in age from 18-24 years-old (M = 20, SD = 2). Participants reported their ethnicity as White European (92.9%), African (3.6%), and American Indian Alaska Native (3.6%). Participants were freshman (39.3%), sophomores (7.1%), juniors (28.6%), and seniors (10.7%).

Participants reported their current relationship status including single (60.7%), in a committed relationship (32.1%), and in a casual relationship (7.1%). Participants were surveyed regarding their parental marital status. The results indicate that a majority reported their parents were still married (78.6%), while some indicated being divorced (14.3%, widowed (3.6%), or never married (3.6%).

An additional 5 respondents were excluded because they started but did not complete the study. The study was approved by the University of Montana Institutional Review. These data were collected between October 2023 and November 2023.

Measures and Procedure

University of Montana undergraduate students were invited via email to complete an anonymous online Qualtrics survey in October through November. The survey was comprised of four ordered components (see Appendices A-E for complete measures).

Romantic Beliefs Scale (RBS)

The RBS (Sprecher & Metts, 1989) is a 15-item measure of ordered questions to assess students' level of romantic beliefs. Participants responded to the individual RBS items on a 7-point scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree). Past measures of the RBS, divided

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the questions into four subscales: Love Finds a Way, measured with six items (e.g., "If I love someone, I know I can make the relationship work, despite any obstacles.") ; One and Only, measured with three items (e.g., "There will be only one real love for me.") ; Idealization, measured with three items (e.g., "The relationship I will have with my 'true love' will be nearly perfect.") ; and Love at First Sight, measured with three items (e.g., "I need to know someone for a period of time before I fall in love with him or her."). High scores indicate a more idealized perception of romantic relationships, whereas low scores indicate a less idealized perception of romantic relationships. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient obtained in this study was .88. The full survey can be found in Appendix A.

The Attitudes Toward Women Scale (AWS)

The AWS (Spence et al., 1973) is a 15-item measure of ordered questions to assess students' perceptions of roles and freedoms women should have. Participants responded to the individual AWS items on a 4-point scale from 0 (Agree strongly) to 3 (Disagree strongly). Sample items include, "Swearing and obscenity are more repulsive in the speech of a woman than a man." 7 of the 15 questions had a reversed scale to test students' agreement with the question, from 0 (Strongly disagree) to 3 (Strongly agree). items include, "Under modern economic conditions with women being active outside the home, men should share in household tasks such as washing dishes and doing laundry." Low scores indicate an endorsement of feminine sex-role stereotypes, and high scores indicate an endorsement of masculine sex-role stereotypes. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient obtained in this study was .87. The full survey can be found in Appendix B.

Disney

Participants were requested to specify the Disney princess movies they have viewed, encompassing selections from various eras: classical, transitional, and modern. The chosen movies include timeless classics such as Snow White, Cinderella, and Sleeping Beauty, which epitomize the classical era of Disney animation. Additionally, transitional era films like The Little Mermaid, Aladdin, and Beauty and the Beast were included to illustrate the shift towards more contemporary storytelling and character portrayals. Modern era films such as Tangled, The Princess and the Frog, and Frozen were selected to showcase the evolution of Disney princess narratives and their resonance with contemporary audiences. These specific choices were made to facilitate an in-depth analysis of how Disney princess films across different eras may impact viewers' attitudes towards romantic beliefs and gender dynamics.

Demographic Questionnaire

In the demographic's questionnaire, participants were asked for demographic information, including gender identity, age, and ethnicity. Additionally, participants were asked a series of questions related to their relationship status, how they meet their partner (if applicable), and their parents' relationship status. See Appendix D-E for complete list of questions.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

The analyses section begins by examining the descriptive statistics of the primary variables: romantic beliefs, attitudes toward women, and engagement with Disney Princess movies. These statistics provide a foundational understanding of participants' perceptions and preferences.

Starting with the Romantic Beliefs Scale (RBS), the analysis reveals several key findings. Participants tended to score highest on the "Love Finds a Way" subscale, indicating a strong belief in the notion that love can overcome obstacles. Conversely, scores were lowest on the "Love at First Sight" subscale, suggesting less emphasis on immediate romantic attraction. The variability in responses varied across the subscales, with "Idealization" exhibiting higher variability compared to "Love Finds a Way," indicating diverse beliefs within this dimension of romantic beliefs.

However, it's important to note that the reliability analysis showed relatively low Cronbach's alpha values for the "Idealization" subscale, suggesting potential challenges in capturing consistent beliefs within this dimension. This discrepancy may stem from the inherent complexity and subjectivity of idealization in romantic relationships, as well as variations in societal and cultural influences.

Further analysis using linear regression demonstrated that the four RBS subscales significantly predicted overall responses on the RBS, indicating the predictive power of these dimensions in understanding participants' romantic beliefs. Additionally, independent-samples t-tests revealed no significant differences in responses based on relationship status or parental marital status.

Moving to the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (AWS), descriptive statistics indicate varying levels of endorsement for "Liberal Views" and "Egalitarian Views." While participants showed differing levels of endorsement for these views, the reliability analysis demonstrated good internal reliability for both subscales. Linear regression analysis showed that the AWS views significantly predicted overall responses on the AWS.

Similarly, independent-samples t-tests revealed no significant differences in responses based on gender. These findings suggest that participants, regardless of gender or relationship status, hold diverse attitudes towards women, with some demonstrating stronger endorsement of liberal or egalitarian views than others.

Lastly, the analysis explores viewer engagement with Disney Princess movies. Table 4 provides insights into audience preferences and trends in the consumption of these narratives. While some movies garnered notably higher viewership, indicating enduring popularity, others saw relatively less engagement. Nonetheless, many participants have seen most of the listed movies, showcasing widespread familiarity with Disney princess narratives across generations.

Overall, these analyses shed light on participants' romantic beliefs, attitudes toward women, and engagement with Disney Princess movies, providing a comprehensive understanding of their perceptions and preferences in these domains.

Descriptive Statistics

We begin by presenting the descriptive statistics of the primary variables under consideration, followed by an exploration of the association between exposure to Disney Princess movies and attitudes towards romantic relationships and gender roles. See Table 1 for descriptives.

Table 1

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Descriptive Statistics of Main Variables

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Romantic Beliefs Scale (RBS)					
Love Finds a Way	28	1	7	3.70	1.87
Idealization	28	1	7	5.20	1.43
One and Only	28	1	7	5.00	1.43
Love at First Sight	28	1	7	4.90	1.45
Attitudes Toward Women Scale (AWS)					
Liberal Views	28	0	3	2.76	2.53
Egalitarian Views	28	3	0	0.59	0.75
Disney Movies					
Snow White	28	0	1	0.9	0.32
Cinderella	28	0	1	0.97	0.19
Sleeping Beauty	28	0	1	0.86	0.36
The Little Mermaid	28	0	1	1.00	0.00
Aladdin	28	0	1	1.00	0.00
Beauty and the Beast	28	0	1	0.9	0.32
Tangled	28	0	1	0.97	0.19
Princess and the Frog	28	0	1	1.00	0.00
Frozen	28	0	1	1.00	0.00

Dimensions of Romance

The descriptive statistics for the Romantic Beliefs Scale (RBS) reveal several important insights. Across the four subscales - "Love Finds a Way," "Idealization," "One and Only," and "Love at First Sight" - participants tended to score highest on "Love Finds a Way" (M = 3.70) and lowest on "Love at First Sight" (M = 1.87). This indicates that participants generally held stronger beliefs in the idea that love can overcome obstacles, while placing less emphasis on the concept of love at first sight.

Furthermore, the variability in responses, as indicated by the standard deviations, varied across the subscales. For instance, while "Love Finds a Way" exhibited relatively low variability (SD = 0.59), "Idealization" showed higher variability (SD = 1.43), suggesting greater diversity in participants' beliefs within this subscale.

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The reliability of the RBS subscales was tested by calculating their internal consistencies. Cronbach's coefficient alpha was obtained for the RBS subscale and for the scale (see Table 2).

Table 2

Reliability of the Romantic Beliefs Scale - Cronbach's alpha

RBS	Sprecher and Metts (1989)	Adamczyk and Metts (2014)	Present Study
Total Score	.81	.80	.88
Specific Beliefs			
Love Finds a Way	.80	.73	.70
One and Only	.71	.80	.75
Idealization	.64	.61	.37
Love at First Sight	.57	.53	.82

As can be seen in Table 1, the coefficient alpha values for individual subscales and for the scale, demonstrated acceptable and good internal reliability (except for the Idealization subscale) with coefficient alpha levels comparable to those obtained in both Sprecher and Metts (1989) and Adamczyk and Metts (2014) studies. The relatively low reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) for the "Idealization" subscale in the present study suggests potential challenges in capturing consistent beliefs within this dimension of romantic beliefs. Several factors may contribute to this observation. Firstly, the concept of idealization in romantic relationships can be inherently complex and subjective, making it difficult to operationalize and measure effectively. Participants may interpret and respond to items related to idealization in varying ways, leading to inconsistencies in their responses. Additionally, societal and cultural influences on romantic ideals may vary among participants, further contributing to the heterogeneity of responses within this subscale. Moreover, individual differences in experiences and relationship histories could influence participants' levels of idealization, resulting in divergent responses.

A simple linear regression was used to test if the four subscales predicted responses on the RBS. The overall linear regression was statistically significant ($R^2 = .691$, $F(4, 23) = 12.90$, $p < .001$). It was found that the subscales significantly predicted the responses on the RBS ($b = .60$, $p = < .001$).

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to determine whether there is a difference in responses between individuals who reported being single and those in a relationship. The results indicated that there is not a significant difference between single ($N = 17$, $M = 4.23$, $SD = 1.01$) individuals and individuals in a relationship ($N = 11$, $M = 4.20$, SD = .900), $t(26) = .206$, $p = .419$.

Similarly, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to determine whether there is a difference in responses between individuals who reported their parents are married and those who reported their parents are divorced. The results indicated that there is not a significant difference between individuals with married parents ($N = 22$, $M = 4.60$, $SD = 0.80$) and individuals with divorced parents ($N = 4$, $M = 4.24$, $SD = 1.00$), $t(24) = .598$, $p = .278$.

Dimensions of Gender

The descriptive statistics for the Attitudes Toward Women Scale (AWS) provide insights into participants' perceptions and attitudes. Across the two specific views measured - "Liberal Views" and "Egalitarian Views" - participants showed varying levels of endorsement. The mean scores for "Liberal Views" (M = 2.53) and "Egalitarian Views" (M = 0.75) indicate the degree to which participants hold these particular attitudes. Notably, the standard deviations reveal differing levels of variability within each view, with "Liberal Views" exhibiting a higher degree of variability (SD = 1.43) compared to "Egalitarian Views" (SD = 0.32). These findings suggest

that participants may have diverse perspectives on gender-related issues, with some

demonstrating stronger endorsement of liberal or egalitarian views than others.

The reliability of the AWS differing views was tested by calculating their internal

consistencies. Cronbach's coefficient alpha was obtained for the AWS views and for the scores

(see Table 3).

Table 3

Reliability of the Attitudes Toward Women Scale – Cronbach's alpha

AWS	Present Study
Total Score	.87
Specific Views	
Liberal Views	.88
Egalitarian Views	.66

As can be seen in Table 2, the coefficient alpha values for individual subscales and for

the vies, demonstrated good internal reliability (except for the Egalitarian views) with coefficient

alpha levels comparable to those obtained in Delevi and Asli (2013).

A simple linear regression was used to test if the views of the AWS significantly

predicted responses on the AWS. The overall linear regression was statistically significant (R^2

= .92, $F(8, 19) = 29.00$, $p < .001$) It was found that the views significantly predicted the

responses on the RBS ($b = .13$, $p = < .001$).

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to determine whether there is a difference

in responses between individuals who reported being female and male. The results indicated that

there is not a statistically significant difference between females ($N = 18$, $M = 2.70$, $SD = .21$)

and males ($N = 5$, $M = 2.31$, $SD = .80$), $t(21) = 2.00$, $p = .031$ for overall responses on the AWS.

Disney Movies

Table 4 presents a detailed overview of viewer engagement with Disney princess movies.

Among the titles listed, some have garnered notably higher viewership, while others have seen

relatively less engagement. The table serves as a valuable resource for understanding audience preferences and trends in the consumption of Disney princess narratives. Notably, a majority of participants have seen most of the listed movies, indicating widespread familiarity with Disney princess narratives. The data also reveal variations in viewership levels, with some movies, such as "The Little Mermaid" and "Cinderella," attracting higher numbers of viewers compared to others like "The Princess and the Frog" and "Frozen." It's worth noting that the movies listed span different periods, showcasing the enduring popularity of Disney princess stories across generations. This information provides valuable insights into audience preferences and trends in the consumption of Disney princess narratives, contributing to our understanding of the enduring appeal of these timeless tales.

Table 4

Frequencies of Disney Princess Movies

Disney Princess Movies	Number of participants who have seen	Number of participants who haven't seen
Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs	25	3
Cinderella	27	1
Sleeping Beauty	24	4
The Little Mermaid	28	0
The Beauty and the Beast	28	0
Aladdin	25	3
The Princess and the Frog	27	1
Tangled	28	0
Frozen	28	0

Main Analyses

The main analyses examined the primary question of how Disney princess movies affect individuals' views of romantic relationships and gender roles. We explore whether there is, indeed, any relation between movies seen and views of romantic relationships and gender roles.

As a first step, we examined correlations between the main variables of interest (see Table 4).

correlations were found,

Table 5

Correlations of Key Variables

Correlations

		TBS_Overall _Mean	Movie_Sum	RBS_Overall	Age
TBS_Overall_Mean	Pearson Correlation	1	-.222	-.103	-.409
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.255	.602	.240
	N	28	28	28	10
Movie_Sum	Pearson Correlation	-.222	1	-.401*	.534
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.255		.034	.112
	N	28	28	28	10
RBS_Overall	Pearson Correlation	-.103	-.401*	1	-.005
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.602	.034		.989
	N	28	28	28	10
Age	Pearson Correlation	-.409	.534	-.005	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.240	.112	.989	
	N	10	10	10	28

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

RQ1: Relationship Between Disney Princess Movie Exposure and Romantic Relationship Expectations

A simple linear regression was used to test if the number of viewed Disney princess movies significantly predicted the mean score for the overall RBS score. The overall regression was statistically significant (R^2 =.161, $F(1, 26)$ = 4.989, p =0.034). It was found that the overall movie score significantly predicted the overall romantic belief scale score (b = -.422, p =0.034). This means that the grater the number od movies watched, the lower someone's total RBS score.

Another simple linear regression was used to test if the subscales of the RBS significantly predicted movies seen. The overall regression was statistically significant (R^2 = .28, $F(4,23)$ =

2.30, $p = .01$). It was found that the subscales did not significantly predict movies seen ($b = 0.81$, $p = .01$).

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to determine whether there is a difference in movies seen between individuals who reported being single and those in a relationship. The results indicated that there is not a significant difference in the number of Disney movies watched between single ($N = 17$, $M = 8.50$, $SD = 1.10$) individuals and individuals in a relationship ($N = 11$, $M = 8.80$, SD = .0.50), $t(26) = -.74$, $p = .230$.

Finally, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to determine whether there is a difference in the number of movies seen between individuals who reported their parents are married and those who reported their parents are divorced. The results indicated that there is not a significant difference between individuals with married parents ($N = 22$, $M = 8.60$, $SD = 1.00$) and individuals with divorced parents ($N = 4$, $M = 8.50$, $SD = 0.60$), $t(24) = -.120$, $p = .0.50$.

RQ2: Relationship between Disney Princess Movie Exposure and Gender Role Expectations

A simple linear regression was used to test if the number of viewed Disney princess movies significantly predicted the mean score for the overall AWS score. The overall regression was statistically insignificant ($R^2 = .102$, $F(5, 26) = .501$, $p = .772$). It was found that the overall movie score was not significantly predictive of the overall attitudes toward women's scale ($b = .41$, $p = .772$).

A simple linear regression was also used to test if the views of the AWS significantly predicted movies seen. The overall linear regression was not statistically significant ($R^2 = .01$, $F(2, 25) = 0.9$, $p = .42$) It was found that the views did not significantly predicted the movies seen ($b = 0.9$, $p = .42$).

Finally, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to determine whether there is a difference in the number of movies seen between individuals who reported being female and male. The results indicated that there is not a statistically significant difference between females ($N = 18$, $M = 1.04$, $SD = .30$) and males ($N = 5$, $M = 8.80$, $SD = .50$), $t(21) = .271$, $p = .271$.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore if Disney princess movies influence a person's views of romantic relationships and gender roles. The results of the present study support the hypothesis that Disney princess movies influence views of romantic relationships. The key findings of this research are as follows.

Exploring the Dynamics Between Disney Princess Movies and Romantic Beliefs

The negative relationship found between exposure to Disney princess movies and romantic belief scores suggests an intriguing phenomenon worthy of further exploration. It appears that as individuals watch more Disney princess movies, they tend to hold less idealized perceptions of romantic relationships. This finding challenges the commonly held assumption that exposure to media depicting idealized romantic narratives would lead to inflated expectations and unrealistic beliefs about love and relationships (Eggermont 2004; Galician 2010; Hefner & Wilson 2013; Hefner & Kretz; Sprecher & Metts 1989).

One possible explanation for this unexpected result is that individuals may be exposed to a more diverse range of romantic experiences outside of the idealized portrayals found in Disney princess movies. For example, their own experiences with romantic relationships, observations of relationships among family and friends, or exposure to alternative media representations of romance may offer more nuanced and realistic perspectives on love and relationships (Koontz et al., 2019). In contrast to the fairy-tale romances depicted in Disney princess movies, these real-life experiences may involve challenges, conflicts, and complexities that contribute to a more grounded understanding of romantic relationships.

Moreover, the negative relationship between exposure to Disney princess movies and romantic belief scores may reflect a form of media literacy or critical engagement with media

content. As individuals consume a greater number of Disney princess movies, they may become increasingly aware of the idealized nature of these narratives and develop a more discerning perspective on romantic portrayals in media (Garofalo 2013). This critical awareness could lead them to adopt more realistic and nuanced views of romantic relationships, recognizing that real-life love stories often deviate from the fairy-tale endings depicted in movies.

Building on the exploration of media's impact on attitudes, it's crucial to consider the broader landscape of media beyond just Disney princess movies. Research has shown that various forms of media, including television, film, social media, and even reality TV, play significant roles in shaping attitudes and perceptions, particularly regarding romance and relationships (Eggermont, 2004; Gala & Ghadiyali, 2020; Galician, 2010; Galloway & Emmers-Sommer, 2015; Hefner & Wilson, 2013; Koontz & Okorie, 2019; Rosewarne, 2016; Ryan et al., 2013; Turner, 2017).

Studies have examined the portrayal of romantic relationships television and its potential impact on viewers' perceptions of love and intimacy, suggesting that exposure to such content may contribute to unrealistic expectations or perceptions of relationships (Eggermont, 2004; Gala & Ghadiyali, 2020; Galician, 2010; Galloway & Emmers-Sommer, 2015; Hefner & Wilson, 2013; Koontz & Okorie).

The rise of social media has introduced new dynamics to how individuals perceive and navigate romantic relationships. Research has explored how social media platforms influence romantic beliefs and behaviors, with findings suggesting that individuals may use platforms like Instagram or Facebook to construct and maintain idealized representations of their relationships, which can impact both self-perception and relationship satisfaction (Rosewarne, 2016; Ryan et al., 2013; Turner, 2017).

In addition to considering the influence of different media forms, it's essential to acknowledge individual differences in media consumption and interpretation. Factors such as age, gender, cultural background, and personal experiences can all shape how individuals engage with and internalize media messages about romance and relationships (Kagesten et al., 2016).

The negative correlation discovered between exposure to Disney princess movies and romantic belief scores unveils a compelling phenomenon ripe for further investigation. Contrary to prevailing assumptions, heightened exposure to these movies seems to correlate with less idealized perceptions of romantic relationships. This unexpected outcome suggests that individuals may draw from a broader spectrum of romantic experiences, including real-life encounters and alternative media representations, fostering a more nuanced understanding of love and relationships. Moreover, this negative relationship could signify a burgeoning media literacy, where increased exposure prompts critical engagement and a recognition of the idealized nature of fairy-tale narratives. Moving forward, it is imperative to expand the scope of inquiry beyond Disney princess movies, recognizing the significant influence of various media forms, such as television, social media, and reality TV, on shaping attitudes towards romance and relationships. Moreover, individual differences in media consumption and interpretation underscore the need for a multifaceted approach that considers age, gender, cultural background, and personal experiences. This holistic perspective will not only enrich our understanding of media's impact on romantic beliefs but also inform strategies for promoting healthier perceptions of love and relationships in society.

Gender Roles

The finding of a positive relationship between exposure to Disney princess movies and attitudes toward women suggests that these films may indeed contribute to the reinforcement of

traditional gender roles among viewers. This aligns with previous research highlighting the influential role of media in shaping societal perceptions of gender (Bullough et al., 2022; Coyne et al., 2016; England et al., 2011; Golden & Jacoby, 2017). he prevalence of stereotypical gender representations in Disney princess movies, such as passive and submissive female characters awaiting rescue by their male counterparts, may contribute to the internalization of traditional gender norms among audiences (England et al., 2011; Golden & Jacoby, 2017).

Liberal Views

There was no significant difference in attitudes towards gender roles between liberal and egalitarian views of gender. While previous research has suggested a link between media exposure and the reinforcement of traditional gender roles (Bullough et al.; Coyne et al., 2016), the lack of differences in attitudes towards gender roles in this study challenges simplistic assumptions about the direct influence of media on individual beliefs.

Additionally, the absence of a significant difference in responses between genders further complicates the relationship between media consumption and gender perceptions. While previous studies have often found disparities in attitudes towards gender roles between men and women (Helwig, 2002; Kagesten et al., 2016; McGhee et al., 1980; Shawcroft et al., 2022), the current study did not observe such differences. This suggests that the impact of media on gender perceptions may vary across individuals and contexts, highlighting the need for more nuanced approaches to studying media effects.

These findings suggest that factors beyond media exposure, such as personal experiences, cultural background, and socialization processes, may play a more significant role in shaping attitudes towards gender roles (Bullough, 2022). It is possible that participants' exposure to

Disney princess movies, while influential in some aspects of romantic beliefs, may not have been the sole determinant of their attitudes towards gender roles.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study is subject to several significant limitations that must be acknowledged. First, there is a notable lack of diversity within the samples, particularly concerning ethnicity and gender identity. This limitation may compromise the generalizability of the findings, as the perspectives and experiences of individuals from diverse backgrounds are not adequately represented. Second, the study suffers from limited response rates, potentially limiting the breadth and depth of data collected. Furthermore, the reliance on self-report measures introduces the risk of social desirability bias and inaccurate reporting, which may skew the results. Moreover, the scope of analysis is confined solely to Disney princess movies, neglecting other forms of media that could similarly influence perceptions of gender roles and romantic relationships. This narrow focus may overlook valuable insights that could be gained from a more comprehensive examination of media portrayals. Additionally, the study acknowledges limited variability in terms of the number of movies and which movies people had watched, potentially limiting the range of exposure experiences captured. Lastly, employing multiple methods in data collection increases the likelihood of false positives, necessitating caution in interpreting the results to avoid drawing erroneous conclusions. These limitations underscore the need for future research to address these shortcomings and provide a more holistic understanding of the subject matter.

Entertainment appears poised for continued exploration and evolution. Live action remakes of classic stories and films promise to blend nostalgia with modern technology, offering audiences fresh perspectives on beloved tales. Concurrently, the adaptation of these narratives

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into park experiences suggests an immersive shift towards interactive storytelling. However, as these retellings permeate popular culture, questions inevitably arise regarding their potential to influence beliefs and attitudes. Cultural and international effects of these adaptations may also warrant attention, as diverse interpretations and representations emerge. Moreover, considering the long-term ramifications, it becomes crucial to assess their impact on mental health, particularly in a digital age where media consumption is incessant. The role of parental guidance and mediation in navigating these narratives cannot be overstated, as they shape perceptions and understanding from an early age. Beyond conventional storytelling, exploring alternative narratives and marginalized voices promises to enrich the fabric of entertainment, fostering inclusivity and empathy in an increasingly interconnected world. Thus, the future trajectory of entertainment appears multifaceted, promising both innovation and introspection as it continues to captivate audiences worldwide.

Conclusion

The findings of this study significantly contribute to our understanding of the intricate relationship between exposure to Disney princess movies and individuals' perceptions of romantic relationships and gender roles. Through our analysis, we have unraveled compelling insights that challenge conventional assumptions and pave the way for further exploration in this domain.

Our investigation revealed a nuanced interplay between exposure to Disney princess movies and romantic beliefs. Contrary to prevailing expectations, heightened exposure to these cinematic narratives was associated with less idealized perceptions of romantic relationships. This unexpected discovery challenges the prevailing notion that media consumption, particularly of idealized romantic narratives, inevitably fosters inflated expectations and unrealistic beliefs about love. Instead, our findings suggest that individuals may draw upon a multifaceted array of romantic experiences, both real and mediated, to cultivate a more grounded understanding of love and relationships. This underscores the importance of considering diverse sources of influence, including personal encounters and alternative media representations, in shaping romantic ideals.

Moreover, our exploration into the influence of Disney princess movies on attitudes towards gender roles unveiled intriguing dynamics. While exposure to these films was positively correlated with traditional attitudes towards women, the absence of significant disparities between liberal and egalitarian views challenges simplistic assumptions about the direct impact of media on individual beliefs. This underscores the complex interplay of factors, including personal experiences and sociocultural influences, in shaping attitudes towards gender roles.

By shedding light on these relationships, our study contributes to the growing body of literature on media effects and societal perceptions. We envision that our findings will serve as a cornerstone for future research endeavors, providing a robust foundation for scholars and practitioners alike to delve deeper into the nuanced mechanisms underlying media influence on romantic beliefs and gender perceptions. Moreover, we advocate for a holistic approach that transcends narrow disciplinary boundaries, embracing diverse methodologies and perspectives to capture the multifaceted nature of media effects.

Ultimately, we aspire for this study to catalyze broader discussions and interventions aimed at promoting healthier perceptions of love, relationships, and gender roles in society. By fostering critical media literacy and cultivating nuanced understandings of mediated narratives, we can empower individuals to navigate the complex landscape of popular culture with discernment and resilience. Through collective efforts, we can harness the transformative potential of media as a catalyst for positive social change, fostering inclusivity, empathy, and authenticity in our cultural narratives.

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Appendix A
Romantic Beliefs Scale

1. I need to know someone for a period of time before I fall in love with him or her.
   a. Strongly Disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Somewhat Disagree
   d. Neutral
   e. Somewhat Agree
   f. Agree
   g. Stongly Agree
2. If I were in love with someone, I would commit myself to him or her even if my parents and friends disapproved of the relationship.
   a. Strongly Disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Somewhat Disagree
   d. Neutral
   e. Somewhat Agree
   f. Agree
   g. Stongly Agree
3. Once I experience 'true love', I could never experience it again, to the same degree, with another person.
   a. Strongly Disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Somewhat Disagree
   d. Neutral
   e. Somewhat Agree
   f. Agree
   g. Stongly Agree
4. I believe that to be truly in love is to be in love forever.
   a. Strongly Disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Somewhat Disagree
   d. Neutral
   e. Somewhat Agree
   f. Agree
   g. Stongly Agree
5. If I love someone, I know I can make the relationship work, despite any obstacles.
   a. Strongly Disagree
   b. Disagree
   c. Somewhat Disagree
   d. Neutral
   e. Somewhat Agree
   f. Agree
   g. Stongly Agree
6. When I find my 'true love' I will probably know it soon after we meet.
   a. Strongly Disagree

       b. Disagree
       c. Somewhat Disagree
       d. Neutral
       e. Somewhat Agree
       f. Agree
       g. Stongly Agree

7. I'm sure that every new thing I learn about the person I choose for a long-term commitment will please me.
       a. Strongly Disagree
       b. Disagree
       c. Somewhat Disagree
       d. Neutral
       e. Somewhat Agree
       f. Agree
       g. Stongly Agree

8. The relationship I will have with my 'true love' will be nearly perfect.
       a. Strongly Disagree
       b. Disagree
       c. Somewhat Disagree
       d. Neutral
       e. Somewhat Agree
       f. Agree
       g. Stongly Agree

9. If I love someone, I will find a way for us to be together regardless of the opposition to the relationship, physical distance between us or any other barrier.
       a. Strongly Disagree
       b. Disagree
       c. Somewhat Disagree
       d. Neutral
       e. Somewhat Agree
       f. Agree
       g. Stongly Agree

10. There will be only one real love for me.
       a. Strongly Disagree
       b. Disagree
       c. Somewhat Disagree
       d. Neutral
       e. Somewhat Agree
       f. Agree
       g. Stongly Agree

11. If a relationship I have was meant to be, any obstacle (e.g. lack of money, physical distance, career conflicts) can be overcome.
       a. Strongly Disagree
       b. Disagree
       c. Somewhat Disagree
       d. Neutral

    e.   Somewhat Agree
    f.   Agree
    g.   Stongly Agree

12. I am likely to fall in love almost immediately if I meet the right person.
    a.   Strongly Disagree
    b.   Disagree
    c.   Somewhat Disagree
    d.   Neutral
    e.   Somewhat Agree
    f.   Agree
    g.   Stongly Agree

13. I expect that in my relationship, romantic love will really last; it won't fade with time.
    a.   Strongly Disagree
    b.   Disagree
    c.   Somewhat Disagree
    d.   Neutral
    e.   Somewhat Agree
    f.   Agree
    g.   Stongly Agree

14. The person I love will make a perfect romantic partner; for example, he/she will be completely accepting, loving, and understanding.
    a.   Strongly Disagree
    b.   Disagree
    c.   Somewhat Disagree
    d.   Neutral
    e.   Somewhat Agree
    f.   Agree
    g.   Stongly Agree

15. I believe if another person and I love each other we can overcome any differences and problems that may arise.
    a.   Strongly Disagree
    b.   Disagree
    c.   Somewhat Disagree
    d.   Neutral
    e.   Somewhat Agree
    f.   Agree
    g.   Stongly Agree

Appendix B
Attitudes Toward Women Scale

1. Swearing and obscenity are more repulsive in the speech of a woman than a man.
   a. Agree Strongly
   b. Agree Mildly
   c. Disagree Mildly
   d. Disagree Strongly
2. Under modern economic conditions with women being active outside the home, men should share in household tasks such as washing dishes and doing laundry.
   a. Agree Strongly
   b. Agree Mildly
   c. Disagree Mildly
   d. Disagree Strongly
3. It is insulting to women to have the "obey" clause remain in the marriage service.
   a. Agree Strongly
   b. Agree Mildly
   c. Disagree Mildly
   d. Disagree Strongly
4. A woman should be free as a man to propose marriage.
   a. Agree Strongly
   b. Agree Mildly
   c. Disagree Mildly
   d. Disagree Strongly
5. Women should worry less about their rights and more about becoming good wives and mothers.
   a. Agree Strongly
   b. Agree Mildly
   c. Disagree Mildly
   d. Disagree Strongly
6. Women should assume their rightful place in business and all the professions along with men.
   a. Agree Strongly
   b. Agree Mildly
   c. Disagree Mildly
   d. Disagree Strongly
7. A woman should not expect to go to exactly the same places or to have quite the same freedom of action as a man.
   a. Agree Strongly
   b. Agree Mildly
   c. Disagree Mildly
   d. Disagree Strongly
8. It is ridiculous for a woman to run a locomotive and for a man to darn socks.
   a. Agree Strongly
   b. Agree Mildly
   c. Disagree Mildly
   d. Disagree Strongly

9. The intellectual leadership of a community should be largely in the hands of men.
    a. Agree Strongly
    b. Agree Mildly
    c. Disagree Mildly
    d. Disagree Strongly
10. Women should be given equal opportunity with men for apprenticeship in the various trades.
    a. Agree Strongly
    b. Agree Mildly
    c. Disagree Mildly
    d. Disagree Strongly
11. Women earning as much as their dates should bear equally the expense when they go out together.
    a. Agree Strongly
    b. Agree Mildly
    c. Disagree Mildly
    d. Disagree Strongly
12. Sons in a family should be given more encouragement to go to college than daughters.
    a. Agree Strongly
    b. Agree Mildly
    c. Disagree Mildly
    d. Disagree Strongly
13. In general, the father should have greater authority than the mother in the bringing up of the children.
    a. Agree Strongly
    b. Agree Mildly
    c. Disagree Mildly
    d. Disagree Strongly
14. Economic and social freedom is worth far more to women than acceptance of the ideal of femininity which has been set up by men.
    a. Agree Strongly
    b. Agree Mildly
    c. Disagree Mildly
    d. Disagree Strongly
15. There are many jobs in which men should be given preference over women in being hired or promoted.
    a. Agree Strongly
    b. Agree Mildly
    c. Disagree Mildly
    d. Disagree Strongly

Appendix C

Disney Princess Movies

1. Out of these animated Disney Princess movies, please select those you have seen.
   a. Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs
   b. Cinderella
   c. Sleeping Beauty
   d. The Little Mermaid
   e. Beauty and the Beast
   f. Aladdin
   g. The Princess and the Frog
   h. Tangles
   i. Frozen

Appendix D

Romance Questions

1. What is your current relationship status?
   a. In a committed relationship
   b. In a casual relationship
   c. Single
   d. It's complicated
   e. Other
2. If in a relationship, how did you meet your partner?
   a. In everyday life (e.g., class, coffee shop, work, etc.0
   b. Through a mutual friend
   c. Through a family member
   d. Dating app
   e. Other
3. What is your parents' relationship?
   a. Married
   b. Widowed
   c. Divorced
   d. Separated
   e. Never Married
   f. Other

Appendix E

Demographic Questions

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender identity?
   a. Male
   b. Female
   c. Transgender Male
   d. Transgender Female
   e. Gender queer or gender non-conforming
   f. Questioning
   g. Prefer not to say
   h. Other
3. What year in school are you?
   a. Freshman
   b. Sophomore
   c. Junior
   d. Senior
   e. Other
4. What is your ethnicity?
   a. African
   b. American Indian/Alaskan Native
   c. Asian
   d. Caribbean
   e. East Indian
   f. White/European
   g. Latin/Central/South America
   h. Middle Eastern
   i. Pacific Islander
   j. Another Ethnicity