

# Parental Views of Disney Princesses in the Context of Value-Based Expectations for Their Pre-School Children

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## ARTICLE INFO

### Keywords:

*gender stereotype,  
gender roles,  
quantitative study,  
representation of women,  
value preferences*

## ABSTRACT

Content analyses of the female image of Disney Princess (DP) tales increasingly report a change in the representation of women. While classic DPs are found to be passive in terms of the plot, they are not “saviour” and their romantic options are limited, newer princesses are more androgynous, more active, more “saviour”-like and freer in their decisions and choices than traditional ones. Media can influence gender stereotypes and gender-related behaviour in childhood, and women who identify themselves as “princesses” in adulthood typically think in gender stereotype patterns, are less motivated in self-actualisation, and are more likely to run away from hard tasks. All this draws attention to the possibility of the early socialization effect of princess tales and raises the importance of examining individual characters. Quantitative study was conducted to examine how parents see their children’s favorite DPs, whether there is a correlation between parents’ value preferences for their kids and the character of favorite DPs perceived by the parents. Our self-developed questionnaire contained items from Schwartz Value Profile and previous studies about DPs. Participant (N=1310) were Hungarian parents of pre-school girls and boys, from various social background and residence. Our study found that parents’ own character preferences, their characterization of their child and the value-based expectations placed on children are related to which Disney character they consider as their children’s favorite. Results can be discussed from different approaches: media effect, gender stereotypes, national characteristics of parenting and values.

## 1. Introduction

The unwavering success of the Walt Disney Company is confirmed by the fact that the release of the first full-length cartoon, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (Cottrell et al., 1973), was followed by the release of many cartoons, and the number of animated films released for children has continued to grow over the last twenty years (Cheung et al., 2021). The animated Disney characters, songs in the tales and the theme of stories are shared cultural values of several generations around the world (Faherty, 2001). The success of serving the market and the company's mission lies in entertaining, informing, and inspiring

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### Cite this article as:

Tóth, B. & Lassú, Z. F. (2023). Parental Views of Disney Princesses in the Context of Value-Based Expectations for Their Pre-School Children. *Sexuality and Gender Studies Journal*, 1(1): 16-30. <https://doi.org/10.33422/sgsj.v1i1.252>

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people around the world through storytelling, and for this it is essential that the films character designs meet the changing interests and value preferences of children and adults (Walt Disney Company, 2020).

The results of content analyses of the female image of Disney Princess tales increasingly report a change in the representation of women (Hine et al., 2018/b). According to previous analyses, the female protagonists of these tales are limited, their lives are confined around the house, they are passive in terms of the plot, they are not “saviour” and their romantic options are limited (Davis, 2006; England et al., 2011; Towbin et al., 2004).

However, researchers also acknowledge that newer princesses are more androgynous, more active, more “saviour”-like and freer in their love choices than traditional ones (Davis, 2006; England et al., 2011). The new Disney Princesses are not perfect, but they are more in line with the image of women in the modern age, as they show a diverse representation of female quality in which world-saving, warrior amazons can proudly assume themselves in addition to women who accept and love as well as live according to traditional values (Hine et al., 2018/a).

According to Albert Bandura's social learning theory, children learn by observing the behavior of the people around them (Bandura, 1969). According to Molen and van der Voort (2000; cited by Towbin et al., 2004), children can learn the most from movies, and the behaviour thus learned can be even stronger than the strength of everyday models (Bandura, 2009). Other researchers have also found that the pedagogical impact of films and children's media understanding increase in proportion to the number of re-views (Crawley et al., 1999), and that imitation can be observed early on, even in infancy (Mumme & Fernald, 2003).

In the current study, it was examined parents' own character preferences, their characterisation of their child and the value-based expectations placed on children are related to which Disney character they see as their children's favourite.

### 1.1. Cultural values in Disney Princess movies

Shalom Schwartz (1992) identified ten core values (self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, security, conformity, tradition, benevolence and universalism) that are found to varying degrees in all cultures (Füstös & Szalma, 2011). In Schwartz's model, these 10 basic values are organized into four higher-order values, along two mutually perpendicular axes (Schwartz, 1992).



*Figure 1. The Schwartz value circumplex*  
*Source: (Schwartz, 1992)*

These two axes (Self-transcendence - Self-enhancement and Conversation – Openness to change) can be seen as dimensions of transformation/change in DP movies. While classic DP characters (Snow White, Cinderella) are more traditional, conform, security seeker who serve only others' needs, some of the modern DPs (Elsa, Merida) are more independent, fight against the traditions and have their own way. Values that DP characters follow can be detected in the movies.

Studying appearance of universal and social values in animation movies, Ameer and Zuberi (2020) found that characters of Frozen (Buck & Lee, 2013) present Hedonism, Power and Benevolence. Regarding Benevolence, Leeuw and Laan's (2018) results show that children who watch animation characters' pro-social behaviours (e.g. helping others and, as a result, losing a race instead of winning it, as it happened in the „Cars“) are more likely to help a friend, than those who don't watch this part of the movie. In addition to this, Cheung and colleagues (2021) highlighted that presenting diverse characters in DP movies can improve acceptance and respect of cultural and social diversity in audience. Parents who discuss animation movies with children can help them to be more sensitive to social injustice.

On the other hand, results of other studies e.g. Indhumathi's (2019) showed that children (girls) who preferred Disney movies were more traditional in their sex roles perceptions, and their more stereotypical sex role perceptions were associated with lower self-esteem and more traditional career aspirations. However, in this study, researchers did not differentiate traditional or modern Disney movies, they included all of them „from “Snow white and Cinderella” from 1950 to” Finding Dory” in 2016“ (Indhumathi, 2019, p.186). Therefore we can assume, that it matters which one is the particular Disney movie that children prefer.

## **1.2. Values in child raising**

Research finds that traditional, security-oriented attitude towards values is a fundamental feature of the Hungarian people over time, which can probably be dominant in the process of parenting (Kapitány & Kapitány, 2012; Pál, 2016).

Parental value studies have found that some of the demographic characteristics of parents are the most determinant of which values parents consider important for parenting. According to Xiao and Andes (1999), those with lower socioeconomic status and less education preferred conformity, while those with higher status and higher education preferred self-direction as the value to be developed in their child. Based on the results of Csurgó and Kristóf (2012), most Hungarian parents, regardless of their family form, consider honesty, responsibility, independence and respect for others to be values that they would like to see in their children. Obedience and frugality are more important for the less educated, and selflessness is more important for the elderly and families with more children. According to Eccles et al. (1990), parents' performance expectations of their child are also influenced by the gender of the children and the gender stereotypes of the parents. As we did not find any Hungarian study on how parents see their children in preschool and how they would like to see their children later, parental perceptions and expectations about the child were examined along self-developed scales using Schwartz's value profile (Schwartz, 1992, Nguyen et al., 2000) – in the context of DP characteristics.

## **2. Study**

The aim of the research is to learn about the popularity of Disney Princess tales and to investigate related factors among preschool boys and girls based on the views and expectations of parents.

## **2.1. Questions of the present study:**

- are there and if so, what are the children's favourite Disney Princess tales according to the parents?
- is there any difference between princess tales favoured by boys and girls in preschool?
- is there a relationship between parents' value-based expectations of their children and the characteristics of a Disney princess thought to be a child's favourite?

## **2.2. Methods and sampling**

To examine these questions, a questionnaire was compiled that was shared on paper and online with parents of preschool children. The content elements of our own questionnaire are based on previous international literature on Disney Princesses (Cordwell, 2016; Hayes, 2008; Hine et al., 2018/a) and values (Schwartz, 1992). Investigating the value-preferences, we modified Schwartz's Value Profiles (Schwartz, 1992; Nguyen et al., 2000) and ask the respondents to use a six-point scale to determine how much they would prefer that his/her child should be like someone e.g., „who believes that people should do what they're told. He/she thinks people should follow rules at all times, even when no-one is watching” (Conformity). According to Csepeli and Prazsák (2010), Schwartz's value test is both suitable for assessing the values preferred by the individual and society.

As part of the questionnaire, we sought to understand the socio-demographic characteristics of families, the personality traits of children, the value-based expectations placed on them and the relationship between children and Disney Princesses based on parents' responses. The compiled questionnaire was pre-tested on a small sample and finalised after the necessary correction. A total of 1,310 completed questionnaires, including 959 online and 351 paper-based questionnaires, were used for the analyses.

Parents participating in the study were reached by convenience sampling from kindergartens in a small rural town (N=351) and through social media (N=959); the research is not representative. Completion of the questionnaire was voluntary and anonymous, no sensitive data were collected or stored. The research was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Eötvös Loránd University Faculty of Education and Psychology under number 2019/201-2.

## **3. Results**

### **3.1. Socio-demographic data**

Based on the responses of parents who completed the questionnaire, 1,242 women, 66 men and 2 other non-binary people participated in our sample. Such a high gender shift (94.8% of respondents are female) supports the well-known practice that family-to-kindergarten contact and other activities related to the upbringing of pre-school children are primarily the responsibility of mothers in Hungary (Bornemissza, 2010). In our sample, the youngest parent raising a pre-school child is 20 years old and the oldest is 56 years old, with an average age of 35.8 years. By type of settlement, 50.6% of the respondents live in cities, 21.3% in villages, 16.2% in the capital and 11.9% in cities with county status. The families in the sample are typically urban dwellers, which is important for the sociocultural factors of childraising.

Table 1.

*Participating parents' socio-demographic characteristics*

Participants' age	Range: 20-56 St.d: 5.6 Mean: 35.8
Participants' gender	Female: 1242 (94.8%) Male: 66 (5%) Non binary: 2 (0.2%)
Participants' residence	Capital: 212 (16.2%) City with county status: 155 (11.9%) City: 661 (50.6%) Village: 279 (21.3%)
Participants' education level	less than eighth grade: 11 (0.8%) completed primary school: 52 (4.0%) secondary vocational education without a high school diploma: 134 (10.2%) completed secondary school: 427 (32.7%) completed high school or university: 682 (52.2%)

Respondent parents typically have a tertiary education (52.2%); in our sample, parents possessing tertiary education are overrepresented compared to national data (which is 18.2% in the 2011 national representative survey in the age group over twenty - KSH, 2013). This factor is a common bias in scientific research using online questionnaire methods. 32.7% of parents had a high school diploma, 10.3% received secondary vocational education without a high school diploma, 4.0% had completed primary school and 0.8% had less than eighth grade education (see Table 1). Therefore, despite the large sample size, our results can only be cautiously generalised and to a limited extent within the group of parents possessing a lower level of education. Pre-school children (N=1,310) for whom parents completed the questionnaire were typically five (25.4%), six (25%), or four (21.7%) years old (see Table 2).

Table 2.

*Age and gender distribution of children in the sample*

	3 years old	4 years old	5 years old	6 years old	7 years old	8 years old	Total
Boys	57	142	154	158	91	13	615
Girls	70	141	179	170	118	15	693
Other non-binary	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Total	128	284	333	328	209	28	1.310

### 3.2. Disney Princess' preference and parents' value-based expectations

**Familiarity and popularity of DP films and characters.** According to the majority of parents, their child has already seen a Disney Princess (DP) tale (80.5%). Although both preschool boys and girls are highly familiar with DP tales, slightly more girls (89%) than boys (70.9%) are familiar with these tales, at least according to their parents, the gender difference is statistically significant ( $p=.000$ , Cramer's  $V=.232$ ). Children know an average of five DP tales. Based on parents' responses, there is a statistically significant association between children's gender and the number of DP tales they have seen ( $p=.000$ , Cramer's  $V=.289$ ). According to their parents, 80.1% of the boys and 91.6% of girls had already seen one of the DP tales, and boys saw in average four, girls in average six DP movies.

Based on parental responses, the most well-known DP movies among children include Frozen (77.6% mentioned), Tangled (62%), and The Little Mermaid (49%). These tales are also the best-known DP films among girls (Frozen was mentioned by 86.7%, Tangled by 71.9%, The Little Mermaid by 61.7%). Boys had seen Frozen (66.8%) and Tangled (50.2%) at a similarly high rate, but their third most popular DP movie was Aladdin (47.3%), in which the main character is male.

According to the parents interviewed, the three favourite Disney Princesses of Hungarian children were Elsa (64%) and Anna (20.8%) from the movie Frozen, and Rapunzel (13%) from the movie Tangled (see Table 3).

Table 3.

*Frequency of parents mentioning Disney Princesses as a favourite of their child (N=694)*

Disney Princesses	How many boys favour it? (N=73)	How many girls favour it? (N=465)	How many children favour it in total? (N=593)
Snow White	3 (4.1%)	13 (2.8%)	16 (3%)
Cinderella	0	25 (5.4%)	25 (4.6%)
Sleeping Beauty	0	12 (2.6%)	12 (2.2%)
Ariel	6 (8.2%)	20 (4.3%)	26 (4.8%)
Belle	4 (5.5%)	18 (3.9%)	22 (4.1%)
Jasmine	1 (1.4%)	5 (1.1%)	6 (1.1%)
Pocahontas	2 (2.7%)	3 (0.6%)	5 (0.9%)
Mulan	2 (2.7%)	5 (1.1%)	7 (1.3%)
Tiana	0	0	0
Rapunzel	8 (11%)	62 (13.3%)	70 (13%)
Merida	1 (1.4%)	12 (2.6%)	13 (2.4%)
Anna	13 (17.8%)	98 (21.1%)	112 (20.8%)
Elsa	35 (47.9%)	310 (66.7%)	345 (64%)
Vaiana (Moana)	13 (17.8%)	22 (4.7%)	35 (6.5%)
Grand total	88	605	694

A significant association was found between the gender of the children and the favorite DP for Cinderella ( $p=.042$ , Cramer's  $V=.087$ ), Elsa ( $p=.002$ , Cramer's  $V=.134$ ) and Vaiana (Moana) ( $p=.000$ , Cramer's  $V=.182$ ). Girls typically prefer Cinderella (5.4%) and Elsa (66.7%), compared to boys (0% and 47.9%, respectively). Princess Vaiana (Moana) was named by parents as more of the boys' favourite (boys 17.8%, girls 4.7%).

Most of the parents (56.5%) who think their child has a favourite princess, themselves have a favourite Disney Princess ( $p=.000$ , Cramer's  $V=.180$ ), and we have found a link between the parent's favourite Disney Princess and the children's favourite Disney Princess character in most DP tales (see Table 4). Exceptions to this are Snow White, Belle, Tiana and Elsa.

Table 4.

*Frequency of parents favorite Disney Princesses and parents mentioning Disney Princesses as a favorite of their child (N=275)*

Disney Princesses	How many children preferred?	How many parents preferred?	How many parents stated that both of them preferred this DP?	Result of association test
Cinderella	14 (5.1%)	30 (10.9%)	4 (1.5%)	Cramer's V=.131 p=.030,
Sleeping Beauty	9 (3.3%)	8 (2.9%)	2 (0.7%)	Cramer's V=.211 p=.000,
Ariel	17(6.2%)	21 (7.6%)	4 (23.5%)	Cramer's V=.154 p=.011,
Jasmine	4 (1.5%)	15 (5.5%)	3 (1.1%)	Cramer's V=.372 p=.000,
Pocahontas	3 (1.1%)	9 (3.3%)	3 (1.1%)	Cramer's V=.571 p=.000,
Mulan	5 (1.8%)	25 (9.1%)	2 (0.7%)	Cramer's V=.146 p=.015,
Rapunzel	40 (14.5%)	34 (12.4%)	14 (5.1%)	Cramer's V=.284 p=.000,
Merida	10 (3.6%)	30 (10.9%)	5 (1.8%)	Cramer's V=.244 p=.000,
Anna	56 (20.4%)	34 (12.4%)	16 (5.8%)	Cramer's V=.249 p=.000,
Vaiana (Moana)	25 (9.1%)	50 (18.2%)	13 (4.7%)	Cramer's V=.277 p=.000,

**Parents' value-based expectations towards their children.** The items in Schwartz's value profile (Schwartz, 1992; Nguyen et al., 2000) were modified according to our goals and used to examine value-based expectations about children. In the original questionnaire the respondent is asked to compare themselves with short descriptions of different people and answer how similar they think they are to the portrait provided ranging from "very much like me" to "not like me at all", in a six-point scale. In our study we modified these items to reveal parents' value preferences asking them "*How much do you want your child would be a person who e.g. thinks it is important that every person in the world be treated equally. He/She believes everyone should have equal opportunities in life*" (example of Benevolence). According to Schwartz (1992) the ten universal values are organised into four super values or dimensions (Altruism, Openness, Self-Enhancement and Conservation). Value dimensions were tested using Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation and Kaiser Normalization. The analysis revealed five factors based on parental responses and explain 54% of the variance (see Table 5.). The five value dimensions explored cover the four dimensions described by Schwartz (Altruism, Openness, Self-Enhancement and Conservation), however, the original Conservation dimension was split up into two parts, separating tradition-respecting, honest and obedient traits. The prominence of the latter among the values is justified by the parent-child relationship, in which the obedience of the child is traditionally important in Hungary (Varga & Gordon Györi, 2014).

Regarding the relationship between the gender of the children and the value-based traits expected of them, in line with social stereotypes, it was hypothesized that parents expect more openness and self-enhancement from boys and higher altruism and conservation from girls. However, the results revealed by the Mann-Whitney test did not confirm this. According to the parents, boys and girls differ only in the dimension of obedience, with boys showing a surprisingly higher factor average than girls ( $p=.001$ ,  $U=139683.000$ ,  $Z=-3.383$ ).

Parents' value-based expectation factors for their daughters show a correlation with the girls' favourite Disney Princesses in three cases. Parents who said that their daughter's favourite was Sleeping Beauty considered the values of the "tradition-respecting & honest" factor to be more important and expected from their children than the parents who thought that their daughter's favourite was not Sleeping Beauty ( $p=.009$ ,  $U=1154.000$ ,  $Z=-2.606$ ).

Similarly, parents who said that their daughter's favourite was Snow White considered "obedience" as a value expected of children to be more important than parents who said that

their daughter's favourite is not Snow White ( $p=.005$ ,  $U=1221.000$ ,  $Z=-2.806$ ). Finally, parents who said that their daughter's favourite was Bell (the protagonist of Beauty and the Beast) considered the values of the "brave, feisty & innovator" factor to be less important than the parents who thought that their daughter's favourite was not Bell ( $p=.012$ ,  $U=1639.000$ ,  $Z=-2.501$ ). Parents' value-based expectations of their sons showed no association with the boys' favourite Disney Princesses.

Table 5.

*Results of factor analysis of value-based expectations for children based on parental responses*

Rotated Component Matrix					
	Component				
	Accepting, caring	Dominant, successful	Tradition-respecting, honest	Obedient	Brave, feisty, innovator
It is important to me that my child comes up with new things to get creative. He or she should love to do things in his or her own individual way.	.306	.143	.026	-.053	.569
It is important to me that my child be rich. I want him or her to have a lot of money and expensive things.	-.154	.651	-.001	.132	.186
I want my child to consider it important that all people be treated equally. I want him or her to think that all people should have equal opportunities in life.	.704	.010	.017	.119	.102
It is important to me that my child show his or her abilities. I want people to value my child for what he or she does.	.239	.665	.047	.102	.143
It is important to me that my child lives in safe conditions. He or she should avoid anything that endangers his or her safety.	.379	.468	.165	.208	-.147
My child should love surprises and always love to do new things. I find it important for him or her to do different things in his or her life.	.250	.274	.033	.190	.653
It is important to me that my child listens to those who are different from him or her. Even if he or she doesn't agree with them, he or she should want to understand them.	.716	-.014	.040	.100	.171
It is important to me that my child be modest and restrained. He or she should try to live in a way that does not attract the attention of others.	.211	.107	.056	.679	.037
It is important to me that my child is having a good time. He or she should love to be pampered.	.423	.528	.120	-.100	.099
It is important to me that my child decides for himself or herself what he or she does. He or she should love to be free and not depend on others.	.511	.394	.141	-.233	.214
It is very important to me that my child helps the people around him or her. He or she should care about the well-being of others.	.684	.105	.220	.062	.090
It is important to me that my child be very successful. I hope people recognise my child's accomplishments.	.098	.638	.183	.255	.237



Rotated Component Matrix					
	Component				
	Accepting, caring	Dominant, successful	Tradition- respecting, honest	Obedient	Brave, feisty, innovator
It is important to me that it is important for my child that the government provides security against all kinds of threats. He or she should want the state to be strong so that it can protect its citizens.	-.096	.301	.292	.401	.252
My child should look for adventures and love to take risks. He or she should live an exciting life.	.015	.113	.209	.073	.804
It is important to me that my child always behaves properly. He or she should want to avoid doing something that's wrong in the eyes of another person.	.048	.218	.346	.644	.021
It is important to me that my child be respected by others. I want people to do what he or she says.	-.124	.564	.378	.258	.088
It is important to me that my child be honest with his or her friends. He or she should want to dedicate his or her life to people close to him or her.	.164	.204	.674	.113	.007
My child should have a strong belief that people need to protect their environment. It should be important for him or her to take care of his or her environment.	.510	.039	.587	.002	.055
I want traditions to be important to my child. He or she should try to follow the customs left behind by religious or family traditions.	-.025	.041	.723	.250	.094
I want my child to take every opportunity to have fun. It should be important for him or her to do things that will make him or her happy.	.284	.146	.550	-.138	.260
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.					
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.					

a. Rotation converged in 8 iterations.

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1. The popularity of Disney Princess movies

Throughout the interpretation of our results, it is important to keep in mind that we have tried to learn about children's film experiences and tale preferences through parental responses, therefore our results may reflect parents' film experiences and preferences, not their children's.

According to the results of the questionnaire survey, most children, regardless of gender, but typically more girls, see more and more DP tales as they grow up. According to the parents, most children last saw the current DP tale together with the parent, so it is likely that the responding parents have accurate information about the children's opinions related to DPs. During the study, most children last saw the movie *Frozen* or *Frozen II*, the latest DP film to be screened during the research. Consistent with the results of Gomez (2014), it was also found that *Frozen* is the most popular tale, regardless of the gender of the children, and this tale is also the most common DP movie that had been viewed several times. The results show

that, unlike among girls, Aladdin is the third most popular tale among boys. This movie can be so successful among boys because it focuses more on the lived reality and struggles of the male hero (Aladdin) than on the personal story of the protagonist princess (Jasmine). Demonstrating the path of a male hero thus provides a better connection for boys than for girls (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). The result does not show that this decision reflects the boys' own decision or the parent's conscious choice of tale, assuming that the parent perceives that Aladdin is more relevant to the boys than the other DP tales, and therefore shows this movie to them.

Most of the children have seen the tale of Frozen and Tangled more than once. Interestingly, Tangled is not a fresh DP tale, yet it is at the forefront of the stories last seen and viewed several times, regardless of the gender of the children. It may be interesting to examine the themes and possibilities of identification that this tale conveys, which enables it to be so popular among both boys and girls. Even in the light of the tales seen several times, gender differences were observed only in the third most watched DP movie, which is Cinderella for girls and Vaiana (Moana) for boys. These results can be easily connected to gender stereotypes as Cinderella is a classic DP heroine with submissive feminine characteristic while Vaiana (Moana) is a brave, independent, third generation princess with more masculine traits (Cordwell, 2016), that's why more preferred by boys. It is also possible that Cinderella is one of the participating parents' (that is mothers') most known DP movies and these parents can easily transfer their preferences to their daughters.

Consistent with the results of previous research, our results show that the popularity and impact of DP tales, regardless of the gender of the children, albeit more so among girls, is indisputably present even in pre-school. It is therefore worth examining the relationship between DP and children not only among school-aged children, but also much earlier, even in pre-school (Coyne et al., 2016; Golden & Jacoby, 2018). Based upon the results, it is understandable that DP research typically focuses on the female image of tales and the relationship between DP and girls, yet examining the relationship between boys and DP tales is not a negligible question either as gender difference can be found in the DP media consumption of boys and girls.

#### **4.2. Favourite Disney Princess characters**

In each case, the children's character preference identified by the parents showed a relationship to which DP tale the children last saw. In most of the cases, the favorite DP was also associated with which tales the children had seen several times. While the results are not suitable for determining the direction of relationships, they do show that the models chosen by children from animated films are related to a fresh film experience and to multiple views, two important elements of modelled learning (Bandura 1969, 1986).

A relationship was also found between the DPs thought to be the children's favorite and the DP preference of the parent. Except for four princesses, it was found that a parent's favorite character is related to whom they think their child's favorite is. Consistent with the research results of Antalóczy and colleagues (2012), our results probably reflect that parents who grow up watching and liking certain DP movies are also happy to share their favorites with their children. At the same time, the parents themselves can be open to watch the new tales with their children, and this will make them new favorites as well. Thus, the parent-child interaction is not one-way: in the process of socialization, children, and the media content they consume affect their parents as much as parents influence their children (Nelissen, 2018).

#### **4.3. The relationship between value-based expectations of children and favorite Disney Princesses**

Parents' value-based expectations of their child showed association with their child's favorite fairy-tale heroines. Here, too, we do not want to discuss every context in detail, focusing only on those that allow for exciting interpretations in relation to gender roles.

In the case of the girls three correlations were revealed between the parents' value-based expectations of their daughters and their favorite DP character, in two of which the preference for the classic female protagonists (Sleeping Beauty and Snow White) is accompanied by a preference for traditional female values (tradition-respecting, honest and obedient), which are also reflected in the story of the tales. Interestingly, however, Belle, the princess of "Beauty and the Beast", represents a value (such as love of books) that was novelty and despised in its day, but today is a traditional expectation of a girl. Belle displays the traditional "good girl" character of today, learns well, reads books, respects her father, and keeps her promise. Her courage and commitment can be seen in the fact that she refused to marry a man who focused on appearances and objectified her. This act of rejection was a rebellion in the days when this movie was released, but not in the eyes of today's parents and children. Based on the result, we believe that little girls who prefer Belle can follow a very traditional set of values, which explains the negative association between the parental value preferences of the "brave-feisty-innovator" factor towards these girls.

It is important to emphasize, however, that the revealed associations are not cause and effect, the direction of causality cannot be explained by our results. From the research results of the interactions of personality and environment, we know that during reactive interactions, the same environment (e.g. a DP tale or protagonist) is subjectively interpreted by all individuals. In the process of evocative interaction, children's personalities are shaped by the value-based expectations placed on them, which are also influenced by the child's own personality. Based on our results, we can't know whether a parent describes their little girl as more gentle because of his/her parental expectations, and based on these expectations this girl is not encouraged to watch a DP tale with a strong and determined character, or whether the parent perceives the child's gentleness and withdrawal, and adjusts media content and expectations accordingly. As children grow, they strive to move beyond the environment offered by their parents over time, and they also choose favorite characters who go beyond their parents and even themselves, heroines who are slightly better than them, or slightly different from them, but are somewhat attractive in some way during modelled learning (Moffitt, 1993).

#### **5. Conclusions**

DP animated films can be an important part of the lives of pre-school children. According to the participating parents' responses, the children know and even watch their favorite DP fairy tales several times, choosing their favorites that suit their characters and/or gender. However, parents and children interact in this process, on the one hand by passing on favorites, and on the other hand, through parental expectations. Boys and girls are somewhat different in that, they find different characters attractive, and this difference is also related to the values expected from them by their parents. The direction of the interaction cannot be determined, yet the results call attention to the need to make a conscious choice of media content. Despite the fact that, from a certain age, the children themselves choose the socializing agents that affect them, in pre-school age a parent can still consciously shape a child's worldview, even through the tales they watch together. There is no question that the humble Snow Whites who run the household are as valuable and necessary in everyday life as the brave and determined Mulans who fight for their beloved ones. The question is how we can give our children a

choice and help them not live their lives as the Sleeping Beauty, but to be able to fight for themselves, for the community and for a livable future, as Vaiana does.

A major limitation of our research is that we studied the relationship between preschool children's DP tales and their favorite DP characters based on their parents' responses. Therefore, the results can be biased by the parents' perspective. It would be worth asking the children themselves about their DP preferences.

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