

# Feminism in children's animated films: perspectives on characterization by Filipino viewers

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## Abstract

Animation is one of the most significant cinematic genres that date back to the invention of cinema, appealing to both children and adults. Animation is a notable example of how feminist discourse is created through female characters. Much like in other film genres, this phenomenological study explored the experiences, coping strategies, and insights of feminism in children's animated films as perspectives on the characterization by Filipino viewers. This study aims to generate findings that guide the teachers and school heads in designing possible solutions for directing and supervising the learners on their intended experiences and perspectives. Twenty participants from a certain public junior high school, aged between 12 and 13 were selected through a purposive sampling technique and interviewed through in-depth interview. After that, thematic analysis was utilized to collect and validate data after each person was interviewed in-depth. It was found that female animated films bring excitement and fun to the viewers while they are learning. Moreover, it promotes gender equality and value for women. It was recommended to include feminism in children's animated films as part of the lesson, especially in literature, by devising and inventing improved multimedia components or devices useful in language instruction. This could maintain a learning environment that promotes fairness, respect, and care to encourage learning as one of the indicators in classroom observation tools in the Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS) used in DepEd. It would also lessen the burden of economic problems in our country since women's empowerment aids the gender gap, allowing women to take risks in controlling resources.

Keywords: MAED-Teaching English; phenomenological; animated films; characterization; feminism; Philippines

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## 1. Introduction

Life without media is hardly imagined in today's culture. The media, including books, newspapers, radio, television, movies, and the internet, impacts our daily lives. The media has a significant impact on everyday life, and frequently, one needs to be made aware of this critical influencing factor. In the top-grossing domestic movies of 2013, women comprised less than a third of the speaking roles and only 15% of the main characters (Lauzen, 2016). Yet, there is a growing gap between what one might assume to be the current status of women in film and their real status due to the success of several high-profile female-led movies in recent years (Lang, 2017). The truth is that even in today's movies, female protagonists are almost always younger than their male counterparts and are rarely featured in formal leadership roles. They are also twice as likely to be defined exclusively by a life-related position as opposed to a work-related role (Shartey, 2018).

The contemporary craze for solid female leads may contribute to the perception that women are frequently and fairly represented in movies. In his 2002 book, *Media, Gender, and Identity*, David Gauntlett claimed, "the traditional views of a woman as a housewife or low-status worker has been kick-boxed by the sassy, successful 'female strength' figures out of the picture. Nonetheless, research shows that women's value in movies is mostly determined by their identity as mothers, wives, or lovers (Shan, 2018).

Compared to the industrious and adventurous male characters, women are portrayed as overly emotional, dependent on other characters, and restricted to low-status employment (Bussey, 2019). Even movies geared at women frequently fall short of portraying strong, independent women to whom actual viewers can connect. Female audiences have been encouraged to identify either with female figures on screen who were powerless or victims or with active male heroes because commercial films and counter-cinema frequently see the female characters centered in themes of self-sacrifice, defined *Concerning children or men* (Montgomery, 2016).

Despite the increased frequency with which women are portrayed as sassy, accomplished girl-power idols in recent years compared to decades past, gender stereotypes and traditional views of women regarding familial and career roles continue to permeate the media could be due to the influence of post-feminism (Bollinger & O'Neil, 2018). In her essay, "Post-feminism Assumes That The Women's Movement Took Care Of Oppressive Institutions," Orr (1997) highlights the distinctive aspect of the movement now. It is up to individual women to make personal choices that reinforce those fundamental societal changes.

In the face of making these personal choices, women in film are caught between competing demands to be strong and independent while retaining their femininity (Ferris & Young, 2016). The third wave of feminism and post-feminism both identify with characteristics of the second wave, such as critiquing beauty and power structures, while also rejecting agendas of the previous wave by acknowledging and making sense of the potential in those structures (Coleman, 2019). Harris (2007) argued that the third wave's and post-divergent feminism's ideologies, as well as their evolution from the second wave, have influenced how modern feminists are portrayed in a conflicting debate about "power feminists" vs. "victim feminists" (Hannes, 2017). This theory supports research that claims that under a postfeminist third wave, individualism is emphasized, and social change is less of a concern than one's own body's power. According to Wurtzel (1998), being a bimbo these days doesn't mean using your attractiveness or your sexual prowess for the general public's amusement and becoming smarter as a result. It is the turning point for female characters in movies. One school of modern feminism holds that women gain power by controlling the environment of their situations and by owning and appreciating their sexuality. The opposing viewpoint contends that power will not be attained until women are depicted in movies equally in terms of age standards, leadership positions, and by a distinction of extra-familial aspirations, among other inequalities upholding more principles from the first

wave of feminism.

During my literature reading, I have read several studies concerning feminism in children's animated films but have never read similar studies about the perspectives on characterization by Filipino viewers regarding feminism in children's animated films. According to Smith and Peiper (2017) research, people who witness skewed representations of men and women while their cognitive development is taking place may arrange their beliefs on gender into schemas influenced by these stereotypes. Viewers' gender prejudices can be encouraged, which can have highly adverse effects.

But psychologically, the movies might deliberately push children to have a minimal view of the world. Thus, this research differed from those previously mentioned since this study emphasized exploring feminism in children's animated films. Previous researchers have yet to achieve such an endeavor. Also, there was yet to be published research with similar topics found in the institution for these types of studies.

Moreover, the findings of this study are essential to educational experts, administrators, parents, teachers, and learners since this will provide awareness to them concerning the realities and perspectives of learners on feminism in children's animated films. In this way, they can make necessary decisions and actions to address problems relating to the experience and perspective. However, there are challenges that the learners encounter in grasping these perspectives, which the researcher has heard and, therefore, need to be investigated and explored for this learning process to be sustained. Hence, in this study, the researcher delves into assessing feminism in children's animated films as perspectives on characterization by Filipino viewers. Thus, I felt the urgency to conduct this study for this study would help teachers, parents, and guardians to understand learners' experiences and perspectives since the study will elicit recommendations and actions to resolve this issue.

### **1.1 Purpose of the Study**

This phenomenological research aimed to analyze the content of feminism in children's animated films as perspectives on characterization by Filipino viewers. Further, this study aimed to generate findings that guide the teachers and school heads in designing possible solutions for guiding and supervising learners on their intended experiences and perspectives. At this stage in the research, the perspectives of Filipino viewers on feminism in children's animated films are defined as the presentation and exploration of how animated films benefit children and viewers and what was its effects on the learning process, be it advantageous or disadvantageous to the learners. Language domains are used to classify animated films' goals as language tools, including the specific language skills emphasized or presented and the medium used in the domain in presenting the lesson to the learners. Thus, this study aimed to assess the current characterization techniques of women in children's animated films and the insights of Filipino viewers on the presence of feminism in children's animated films. However, the advent of continuing the traditional way of teaching gave me the idea

to conceptualize a proposal that attempted to discover the issues with animated films used by parents and teachers as multimedia in teaching children..

## 1.2 Theoretical Lens

The Social Learning Theory (SLT), developed by Albert Bandura in 1977, is used to interpret this study. The most popular theory of learning and development today is SLT.

According to this idea, not all forms of learning can be accounted for by direct reinforcement. Because of this, he included a social component in his theory, contending that people might pick up new knowledge and actions by seeing other people (Muro & Jeffrey, 2008). According to the components of this theory, there are three general concepts for how people might learn from one another. It is believed that the fundamentals of social learning remain constant throughout life. Learning by observation is possible at any age. Learning something new through the modeling process is always feasible as exposure to new, powerful, influential models with access to resources occurs at a certain life stage (Newman & Newman, 2007). SLT posits that people learn from one another via observation, imitation, and modeling.

This is supported by the Theory of Constructivism founded by (Piaget, 1973). This theory is a teaching and learning approach based on student's active participation in problem-solving and critical thinking regarding a learning activity that they find relevant and engaging. Piaget, one of the founders of constructivism, argues in his theory that humans can generate their knowledge and meaning by interacting between their own experiences and ideas. When introduced to new information, they filter the concepts through a mental structure process called a schema that correlates the new information with the person's prior knowledge, viewpoints, or beliefs (Phillips, 2000). According to Piaget's (1973) theory, learning emerges from discovery. Without understanding, a person will mostly rely on repetition. As a result, learners would be less inventive and productive. Piaget was the first who introduce that children are permanently testing their understanding of the world. He believed that children do not own logical thinking as adults do.

Constructivism is based on constructing knowledge by the interconnection between a learner's previous experience and the knowledge they receive from social interaction. Dewey (1997) defines learning as an activity in which ideas and knowledge are advanced through social contact with other learners. So, they will conclude by connecting their previous experiences, which have significance and a sense, with the knowledge they get while investigating. Dewey believes that a child's cognitive development is enhanced through social interaction in a community. He also believed that children are naturally driven to learn and that their education helps facilitate and increase their learning capacity.

The constructivist approach reinforces the individual creation of knowledge and the structuring of new concepts. Constructivism is a learning theory that explains the nature of knowledge and how people learn. It is a branch of epistemology. Only the learners' prior experiences and background information are used to develop a proper understanding. According to this theory, people build their new knowledge or insights by fusing what they already know with the concepts, experiences, and activities that they come into contact with (Ultanir, 2012). Based on the theory of Vygotsky (1978), films enable learners to interact socially, which helps in the cognitive process of language learning. However, numerous factors affect the successful acquisition of a second or foreign language.

The socio-economic model Gardner (1982) developed highlights several interrelated aspects that affect acquiring a second language. Gardner says these include: "the social and cultural milieu (motivation, place, age, attitude, etc.), the environment or context in which learning occurs, depending on the individual learner. If used properly, films can account for the majority of the factors. Children are particularly interested in animated films. The learner's age strongly influences the rate and success of second language acquisition".

Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory also adds this belief that children seek meaning from their world from an early age, a process later referred to as the development of schema (Piaget & Cook, 1952). Piaget believed that children have a strong desire to organize their world to develop cognitively and recognized that children develop differently so that learning can be divided into stages (Piaget & Cook, 1952). Piaget, along with Vygotsky (1978), conveyed the need for early education both in the home and beyond (Piaget & Cook, 1952).

### 1.3. Findings

The study's findings are presented in this chapter. This section analyzed the content of feminism in children's animated films as perspectives on the characterization of selected Filipino viewers from different households in Nabunturan, Davao De Oro, and must be Grade 7 Public Junior high school students aged 12-13. The results are presented in themes and core ideas and the order of the research questions. Further, the presentation of data is supported by transcripts obtained from the in-depth interview. The data are described, analyzed, and explained in this section.

**Table 1.** *Participants' Information*

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Study Group</b>
<b>Grace</b>	12	Grade 7	<b>In-depth Interview</b>
<b>Mara</b>	13	Grade 7	<b>In-depth Interview</b>
<b>Faith</b>	12	Grade 7	<b>In-depth Interview</b>
<b>Carol</b>	13	Grade 7	<b>In-depth Interview</b>
<b>Hope</b>	13	Grade 7	<b>In-depth Interview</b>
<b>Daisy</b>	13	Grade 7	<b>In-depth Interview</b>
<b>Love</b>	12	Grade 7	<b>In-depth Interview</b>
<b>Emma</b>	12	Grade 7	<b>In-depth Interview</b>
<b>Mary</b>	12	Grade 7	<b>In-depth Interview</b>
<b>Olivia</b>	13	Grade 7	<b>In-depth Interview</b>
<b>Emily</b>	12	Grade 7	<b>In-depth Interview</b>
<b>Ella</b>	13	Grade 7	<b>In-depth Interview</b>
<b>Sophia</b>	13	Grade 7	<b>In-depth Interview</b>
<b>Alice</b>	12	Grade 7	<b>In-depth Interview</b>
<b>Lily</b>	12	Grade 7	<b>In-depth Interview</b>
<b>Luke</b>	12	Grade 7	<b>In-depth Interview</b>
<b>Andrew</b>	12	Grade 7	<b>In-depth Interview</b>
<b>Leo</b>	12	Grade 7	<b>In-depth Interview</b>
<b>Oliver</b>	12	Grade 7	<b>In-depth Interview</b>
<b>Jack</b>	13	Grade 7	<b>In-depth Interview</b>

#### **Experiences of Filipino audience in the portrayal of female characters in children's animated films**

Shown in Table 2 are the essential themes and core ideas extracted from the interview on the lived experiences of Filipino audiences in the portrayal of female characters in children's animated films and the thematic analysis shows eight experienced themes, namely: showed excitement, revealed an unconditional love, expressed Help, amazed while learning, entertained, showed independence, portrayed force labor, and learned that woman could perform man's role. The themes are discussed in the preceding pages.

**Table 2**

## Experiences of Filipino audiences in the portrayal of female characters in children's animated films

Essential Themes	Core Ideas
<b>Showed Excitement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excited because the movie stars a woman.</li> <li>• For me, the experiences of the Filipino audience will excite them in the movie.</li> </ul>
<b>Revealed An Unconditional Love</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are affectionate towards their children.</li> <li>• She is supportive and loves her mother.</li> <li>• I like Rapunzel because even though the witch is locking her up, she still loves her daily and will not resist.</li> <li>• Their love is unconditional.</li> <li>• What is important in the overall contribution of the film is the importance of giving love to the family, accepting women in society in equal responsibility and so on.</li> </ul>
<b>Expressed Help</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They learned to be helpful and above all to be good children.</li> <li>• For me the typical roles of female characters in children's animated films are supportive and sacrificial.</li> </ul>
<b>Amazed While Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They will be amazed and learn a lesson from the film.</li> <li>• It gives a lesson to the viewers.</li> <li>• It brings enjoyment because it's nice. Because usually female characters in the movie are like Mulan, she is a fighter.</li> <li>• I am attracted to their women's look. It is enjoyable to watch a story like Frozen, but since it is about powers, sometimes you will be shocked if some powers come out.</li> <li>• I was amazed at the movie because it brought out some other scenes that I can relate.</li> </ul>
<b>Entertained</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I only saw that there is a comedy. There is also a damn girl.</li> <li>• It's so fun to watch him that you can't switch to another channel because it's so funny.</li> <li>• The women who are part of the animation have a great contribution because they are the ones who bring happiness to the children.</li> </ul>

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<b>Showed Independency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm proud of what's being aired because it's all done by men. They expect that only men can do that, but women can do it more.</li> <li>• It's nice, Ma'am, because other female characters don't rely on someone else's.</li> <li>• They will not give up right away.</li> </ul>
<b>Portrayed Force Labor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their parents have debt, and they are the payment.</li> <li>• They don't have a mother. They have a stepmother, they are being beaten, and they are helper.</li> </ul>
<b>Learned That Woman Can Perform Man's Role</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To let the viewer's know that women can do what men can do. Women are more powerful than men.</li> <li>• I can also see that women also have power. If men can do it, so can women. Women are more relatable compared to men.</li> </ul>

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### **Strategies of Filipino viewers in coping with the challenges in the portrayal of female characters in children's animated films**

The second research question of this study focuses on the thematic exploration of how Filipino viewers cope with the challenges in the portrayal of female characters in children's animated films; thematic analysis shows five themes, namely: using the life experiences in continuing life, showed independence as women, showed bravery in handling life difficulty, embraced humility in life, and conveyed perseverance in surviving life are discussed in the preceding pages.

### **Table 3**

Strategies shared by Filipino Viewers in coping with the challenges in the portrayal of Female Characters in Children's animated films.

<b>Essential Themes</b>	<b>Core Ideas</b>
<b>Used The Life Experiences In Continuing Life</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They handle it based on their experience so that they can be strong no matter what problems they have in their lives.</li> <li>• They can be strong and independent. They have other motivations based on past experiences, loved ones, their dreams.</li> </ul>
<b>Showed Independence As Women</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They handle it by standing on their own feet, but their coping mechanism is to face challenges and fight them with their blessings that come in their worst moments.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>She stood up on her own and did not lose hope. She trusts and tries hard to achieve her dream in life.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She stood up on her own and did not lose hope. She trusts and tries hard to achieve her dream in life.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Showed Bravery In Handling Life Difficulty</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The female characters in the movie handle the force labor because they are brave, then no matter how they are tortured, they continue to fight. The more they are hurt, the stronger they become.</li> <li>• They have the ability to fight. Sometimes the female is weak physically and mentally, but the more they are attacked, the more they fight. That is the ability of the female.</li> <li>• Through their fighting spirit and abilities mam that even though they no longer have parents, they still have faith in themselves that they can handle their problems.</li> <li>• They can handle it because of their fighting spirit.</li> <li>• They are very brave and they will do what is right just like Rapunzel and her evil stepmother.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Embraced Humility In Life</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being humble and patient because most of them don't have a choice, they just suffer and hope for a better future.</li> <li>• They are kind all day long and patient even though they have already won. They will show respect all day.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Conveyed Perseverance In Surviving Life</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't give up on your dreams.</li> <li>• They didn't give up because they did their best despite the difficulty.</li> <li>• They handle their emotions without giving in to life's challenges.</li> <li>• They stand by themselves to survive today despite what they are doing is hard.</li> </ul>

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#### **Insights of the participants shared on the exploration of feminism in children's animated films**

The last problem of this study focuses on the assessment of the insights on the exploration of feminism in children's animated films, and the thematic analysis shows the following themes: sharing in strengthening the woman's character, understanding one another, showing Fairness of treatment in the society, depict connectedness between fictitious life to real life, and trust one's ability.

#### **Table 4**

## Insights Shared by Filipino Viewers on the exploration of feminism in children's animated films

Essential Themes	Core Ideas
<b>Share In Strengthening The Woman's Character</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They share how to strengthen a woman.</li> <li>• We can learn and understand that women have also rights.</li> <li>• Women are strongly independent and can do men's jobs even though they are women.</li> <li>• Women today are not the same back then. Women were competitive now before they were banned and looked down upon in society.</li> <li>• It helps to show the importance of women being independent and sometimes in life, not entertaining others who look down brought by men.</li> </ul>
<b>Understand One Another</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mutual understanding in each other.</li> <li>• A viewer's understanding of how to be a good person to each other.</li> <li>• Respect women.</li> <li>• The understanding of the Filipino audience is the great role and role of the female characters in the film.</li> </ul>
<b>Show Fairness Of Treatment In The Society</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equal view of the participants in the film.</li> <li>• I was happy and nervous but I also enjoyed it at least a little. I am aware of what is fair and unfair to women.</li> <li>• The rights of women and men are equal, and society's treatment is balanced.</li> </ul>
<b>Depict Connectedness Between Fictitious Life To Real Life</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The movie has helped connect people worldwide in a way that scripted and live-action films sometimes can't.</li> <li>• Other feminist movies can also help children because that's where they can learn to be a Princesses and they also feel like they are one of the Princesses in the movie.</li> </ul>
<b>Trust One's Ability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We can do everything as long as we believe in ourselves.</li> <li>• You should not think that you can't do it. Let's just admit to ourselves that we can do it.</li> <li>• It even boosted the confidence of women to fully contribute and uphold women's involvement.</li> </ul>

## **DISCUSSION, IMPLICATION FOR EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE, IMPLICATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH, CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The discussion gained from the study's findings is presented in this chapter. This document also includes the implications of my research in other sectors of effort, such as teaching techniques and recommendations for future research. The phenomenological study aims to address the content of feminism in children's animated films as perspectives on the characterization of selected Filipino viewers from different households in Nabunturan, Davao De Oro, and must be Grade 7 Junior high school students aged 12-13. A portion of this section and the literature listed are deemed relevant to the study's topic.

Experiences of Filipino Audience in the Portrayal of Female Characters in Children's Animated Films. Filipino audiences have many experiences with the portrayal of female characters in children's animated films. However, during the conduct of the study, there were eight themes emerged from the data collected from the research participants: (1) showed excitement; (2) revealed an unconditional love; (3) expressed Help; (4) amazed while learning; (5) entertained; (6) showed independence; (7) portrayed force labor; and (8) learned that woman can perform man's role.

The first theme is Showed Excitement. This subject discusses that the majority of the participants still believe that watching films should excite them because, primarily, the very reason why they are watching is to be entertained, and getting entertained is the consequence of feeling excited. It also shows that many of them are still looking forward to whenever new movies are being released in the market.

Children's animated television and film characters act as role models and reinforce various traits, appearances, behaviors, and social positions frequently based on archaic notions of masculinity and gender. Children's media significantly influences how they view men and women. The depictions of gendered behavior in popular culture shape what we know and understand about ourselves and others. Also, according to Lammen (2017), children's animated films have important educational value messages for children of all ages by establishing certain societal standards and values in young people and disseminating a variety of cultural themes.

Stereotypical representations of men and women focus on roles, behavior, and physical characteristics. According to Calvert (2019), while male and female television characters have historically been stereotyped in their duties and personality traits, recent years have seen a shift in how women are portrayed. Most female actors and actresses in television and film are limited to a few roles. According to Durkin & Nugent (2018), women have historically been associated with the private sector, which encompasses family and household, and have been primarily depicted in the domestic realm on television.

The second theme is Revealed An Unconditional Love which means that the majority of the participants believe that women are good to be perceived in media as representatives of unconditional love, which is basically brought out by the long perception that women are made for motherhood and carrying love within them is a branding identity.

This is supported by Chen's (2018) research, which found that the current study sought to determine if female advantage in emotional information processing occurs in a naturalistic social-emotional setting, and if so, what temporal dynamics are at work. People are generally assessed by how they speak. However, it is uncertain if this advantage extends to real-world interpersonal interactions, as prior research required participants to discern emotions from static pictures without a naturalistic social-emotional context. This is significant because emotional information is always decoded within a certain context according to Mayo Clinic (2022).

Sanchez (2022) investigated that even among adolescents and newborns, females are seen to be superior in emotional competence, such as recognizing other people's emotions encoded in facial clues.

The third theme is Expressed Help, which refers to Filipino viewers still believing that men and women need to be expressed help. This shows that many see women as nurturers of children and, at the same time, supportive and sacrificial, especially to their family members or relatives.

This is in reaction to Women's Media Center (2022) research on the Mainstream media now represent women as figures to get Help with like those male superheroes. In a cultural world that is full of broken anti-heroes, full of conceited Tony Starks, and full of Supermen who do not feel at peace with their extraordinary nature, both Wonder Woman and Captain Marvel teach us a lot about moral values and justice; they change our ideas about ideal women and established gender roles.

The fourth theme is Amazed While Learning. Being amazed while at the same time still learning the narrative arcs, themes, and lessons that the film wants to express or communicate still matters among Filipino viewers, which debunks the circulating information that many Filipinos need to be more educated and under-informed.

This is countered by Fang's (2018) study, which concluded according to a recent study that emphasizes the significance of on-screen representation, girls may be more inclined to see themselves in leadership roles and develop greater confidence when they see themselves mirrored in superhero movies and television series.

The fifth theme is Entertained. The core idea is that with the given nexus of movies and films in the Philippines, many Filipino viewers are still getting entertained despite such materials' lack of substance, depth, and originality.

People spend a lot of time and money watching TV and movies, reading books, and participating in other forms of entertainment, according to Rentfrow (2012). Nevertheless, psychology focuses little on identifying individual differences in these entertainment preferences. Much of the psychological study on entertainment is based on the basic "media effects" paradigm, which holds that specific media directly influence people's attitudes, feelings, and actions as stated by Pressman (2019).

The Sixth theme is Showing Independency. Women should not only represent in media as partners for males but as individuals capable of working and thriving alone.

Over the last few decades, Sadza's (2017) research has demonstrated unequivocally that women are underrepresented in the media, and, when they are, they are frequently cast in stereotyped positions. Christianini (2016) stated that because women's societal responsibilities have increased dramatically due to the continuous liberation movement, these consistent findings are sometimes seen as exceptional. On the other hand, recent advancements in the television environment may bring new insights into the issue. There are signs that some gender-targeted genres (for example, soap operas and the adolescent scene) may include an equal representation of men and women and less stereotyping in their gender portrayals, according to Hevey (2021).

The Seventh theme Portrayed forced labor, is that women are also represented in media as subjects for forced labor which needs to be looked at closer because films sometimes depict reality.

According to the International Labour Organization (2018), the public awareness of all forms of forced labor and the promotion of fair recruiting may be greatly aided by the media, which plays an important part in this process. The International Federation of Journalists (2018) agrees that the public's opinions of forced labor and labor migration may be significantly impacted by important influences such as the media. The coverage of a story in the media can bring an issue to the attention of more people, leading to increased public mobilization and support for policy reforms, as stated by Lebaron (2018).

The Eight theme Learned that Women Can Perform Man's Roles. This is good news because it means that most participants believe that whatever men can do can also be a thing or feasible with women.

United Nations (2019) explained that previous study on gender stereotyping in media had concentrated chiefly on two levels of stereotyping. The first stage of gender stereotyping is the actual existence of men and women in television shows (whether they appear or not), which is referred to as recognition. The second level, referred to as respect, focuses on the nature of that depiction or portrayal (how they seem). Research into narrowcasting has yet to determine if the representation of men and women on gender-targeted channels

differs from the broader recognized trends of underrepresentation of women (i.e., recognition) and stereotypical depiction of both men and women (i.e., respect), according to McKinsey (2020).

Strategies of Filipino Viewers in Coping with the Challenges in the Portrayal of Female Characters in Children's Animated Films. Experiences accompany the challenges of portraying female characters in children's animated films. Among those experiences, there is one problem that caught my attention, and that is forced labor. Upon the conduct of the study based on the data collected from the participants of the study, five themes emerged as a coping mechanism for the Filipino viewers: (1) used life experiences in continuing life; (2) showed independence as women; (3) showed bravery in handling life difficulty; (4) embraced humility in life; and (5) conveyed perseverance in surviving life.

The first theme Used Life Experiences In Continuing Life. Participants responded that some of the female characters in animated films used their life experiences in continuing life amidst their trials. Female characters surpassed problems by handling them based on their experiences, making them strong. Based on Bell (2018), animated films from the 1990s highlight the masculine form of authority because there are no mother characters, but there are powerful father parts. Females have no choice but to continue their life and be strong.

The second theme is Showed Independence As Women. Females in animated films handle their problems by standing on their own feet and did not lose hope. Participants said that females in animated films trust and tries hard in their life to achieve their dreams. One of the most well-liked themes among many researchers has been the subject of gender in animated movies. In the past 35 years, a large number of further publications addressing the stereotypical portrayals of women in Disney films have been released. Stone (2017) and Brush (2017) criticized films for the portrayal of female sexuality and passivity. According to Sells (2018), the ideological patriarchy permeating animated movies was the subject of prior research. Perhaps the only "strong female" in the movie is Ursula, who serves as Ariel's sole female role model. Ursula stands for feminism, gender fluidity, and the empowerment of young Ariel. Ariel has the power to be anything she wants, but she opts for the position of a young bride and social convention (Landis, 2019). In addition, a study by Trites (2019) also studied *The Little Mermaid* and discovered that it is sexist throughout, that women are dependent on men, and that a character's consciousness is heavily influenced by their outward appearance.

The third theme is Showed Bravery In Handling Life Difficulties. This is the most responsive theme among other themes. This depicts that most of the participants viewed females in animated films showed bravery in handling life difficulties. They have the ability to fight for what they think is right. Through their fighting spirit, they survived the problems and challenges in life. It shows that the interviewed participants believed that women deserve every chance to be heard, especially when their feminine roles are executed in media. Women should be depicted as self-empowering also, not in a way that they should be portrayed as superheroes always but as objects of bravery and confidence. In contrast with the study of Jhally (2016), "women are constantly shown "drifting away" mentally while under the physical protection of a male as if his strength and alertness were enough. "Kilbourne (2019) stated that the media repeatedly teaches young girls that for women to be accepted by men in this culture, they must be physically attractive.

The fourth theme is Embraced Humility In Life. This simply means that some participants saw female characters as humble and patient to face certain trials in life, such as forced labor. According to Baker and Raney's (2017) analysis of physical characteristics, psychological traits, and communicative behaviors, male characters dominated female characters in cartoon programming. Men tended to play the lead roles, and men were more likely than women to exhibit anger and have better emotional control.

The fifth theme is Conveyed Perseverance In Surviving Life. This means that every trial and forced labor that the female characters encountered in the movie conveyed perseverance in surviving life. They are not weak; they did their best and did not give up. In contrast, Hofstede (2017) noted that women are typically viewed as docile, maternal, reliant, and excessively emotional. According to Thompson (2016), emotional

displays like happiness and grief are stereotypically linked to girls and women. Moreover, Kelly (2019) outlined how American society has traditionally portrayed women as weak, emotional, and passive.

Insights on the Exploration of Feminism in Children's Animated Films. Based on the data collected from the study participants, four themes emerged: (1) Share in strengthening the woman's character; (2) Understand one another; (3) Show Fairness of treatment in the society; (4) Depict connectedness between fictitious life to real life, and (5) Trust one's ability.

One of the realizations of the researcher is that Share in Strengthening The Woman's Character. The core idea is that feminism should be a shared belief for many Filipinos, not just a shared responsibility for the media and policymakers. This is good because, for them, feminism should be promoted and advocated.

According to Yang (2020), the media clearly distinguishes between men's and women's societal roles. Unfortunately, the media lags far behind society in this regard.

It frequently depicts women as subordinate, confined, and dependent on other parties. Our media fails to support and educate women in their quest for rights and perpetuates society's skewed and flawed attitudes toward them. Worse, this publicity not only does not alleviate their condition but actively worsens it, adding to their misery, according to Thangham (2022). It sometimes assures that the women in issue are perpetually victimized. Their privacy is violated, their rights are violated, and their private lives are made public. Mackey (2020) stated that exposés about women are also more prevalent than equivalent information about males.

The second theme is Understand One Another. The core ideas of that film become good when it helps them to understand the people around them and that it helps them become better people. With that, values such as courage, understanding, and well thinking should be promoted by films.

Normalizing and justifying language and phrases are still common in news articles regarding violence against women. Despite numerous warnings, complaints, and disputes, the same sexist worldview appears in every news piece, according to Kidwai (2016). Aaldering (2020) explained that his viewpoint typically conjures up mitigating causes for men's aggression and seeks to blame women, frequently by considering them flawed or deficient. Godoy (2022) agrees that the media has the propensity to regard and show women as consumers rather than creators. Women are mainly absent from "authoritative" sectors such as politics and economics. They are limited to morning shows and "light" issues in day-to-day operations.

The third theme is that Show Fairness of treatment in society. Today's media, from conventional legacy media to internet media, continues to significantly impact our thoughts and notions about the role of girls and women in society, according to Lebaron (2018). Unfortunately, we have observed that the media tends to propagate gender inequity. According to Taboada (2021), children are impacted by gendered stereotypes that the media presents to them from an early age. Hing (2015) explained that one in every five specialists interviewed by the media is a woman. In advertising and the film industry, women are commonly presented in stereotyped and hypersexualized ways, which has long-term societal effects. In addition, men hold 73% of managerial positions, while women hold 27%.

The fourth theme is Depicting the connectedness between fictitious life to real life. People compose screenplays from their imaginations in the early phases of film production based on one of three things: a prior event in their own lives, an incident pertaining to one's current circumstances, or a projected occurrence or notion in society's future, according to Sanchez (2022). Missaliodo (2020) explained that a certain genre may embellish or exaggerate this, but practically every film, whether a true story or a novel adaption, has a background of truth. The entire concept of a film is to take a written tale and bring it to life on the big screen. Even the distance between the observer and the screen creates a fictitious illusion, yet an emotional connection may encourage realism, according to Women's Media Center (2022).

The fifth theme is Trust One's Ability. The film is a popular type of entertainment that allows audiences to engage emotionally with people and learn about their social lives. However, inspiring female peers on the big screen was extremely scarce in the past, according to Rentfrow (2012). Many crucial professions in

filmmaking, such as directors and cinematographers, were almost totally dominated by men for many decades, and women lacked the capacity to make demands in the film business, as stated by Fang (2018).

As a result, women have consistently been underrepresented in film. Even when they are present, women are frequently presented in conventionally feminine (i.e., stereotypical) positions, such as nonprofessionals, housewives, wives or parents, and sexual gatekeepers, according to Adamo (2022). For young females, the lack of a role model on the big screen is damaging, as stated by Lebaron (2018). They are discouraged from following their dreams and actively engaging in social events. As a result, Bohnet (2019) Stated that female underrepresentation is an urgent issue that must be addressed.

#### **Implication for Educational Practice**

The study is pertinent to the that watching films should excite them because primarily the very reason why they are watching is to be entertained and getting entertained is the consequence of feeling excited. It also shows that many of them are still looking forward to whenever new movies are being released in the market. Feminism should be a shared belief for many Filipinos and not just a shared responsibility for the media and policymakers. This is good because, for them, feminism should be promoted and advocated.

When it comes to female characters, whatever is being fed to them by the media should just be accepted, which means that many of them can be easily manipulated and that the ideology of feminism is dying in the hands of the media as perceived and represented by these findings.

Furthermore, it inferred that feminism is viewed as a means of assisting viewers in enjoying and entertaining themselves with the films. They are happy and learning with it.

#### **Implication for Further Research**

The result of this study has given us knowledge on how feminism in children's animated films influences the minds of the younger generation since they are now in the digital era. For further research, it would be relevant to include feminism in children's animated films as part of the lesson, especially in literature, through devising and inventing improved multimedia components or devices that will be useful in language instruction. This could maintain a learning environment that promotes Fairness, respect, and care to encourage learning as one of the indicators in classroom observation tools in Results-Based Performance Management System (RPMS) used in DepEd. It would also lessen the burden of economic problems in our country since women's empowerment aids the gender gap that allows women to take risks in controlling resources.

#### **Concluding Remarks**

As a result, the mind is still developing and unable to distinguish between positive and opposing viewpoints. Young minds are like molten iron and can be molded in any way to be whatever they are exposed to. It has been observed that children who watch pro-social and non-violent films are more sociable. A Chinese proverb states: "A child's life is like a piece of paper on which everyone who passes by leaves an impression." Films have recently drawn children much more, and they now use them as a simple form of entertainment. Children typically begin watching animated movies very young and develop into delighted viewers over time. Children develop the ability to imitate actions and situations that they frequently encounter. This makes it quite evident that animated films' colorful characters have the power to instantly change a person's cognitive state into a favorable one.

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