



# Seafood weekly sales forecasting

Author:

YIFTACH BEINART

# Introduction

Grocery stores are always in a delicate dance with purchasing and sales forecasting. Predict a little over, and grocers are stuck with overstocked, perishable goods. Guess a little under, and popular items quickly sell out, leaving money on the table and customers fuming. The problem becomes more complex as retailers add new locations with unique needs, new products, ever transitioning seasonal tastes, and unpredictable product marketing.

Corporación Favorita, a large Ecuadorian-based grocery retailer operates hundreds of supermarkets, with over 200,000 different products on their shelves. They challenged the Kaggle community to build a model that more accurately forecasts product sales, so they could improve the automation process for execute corporation plans using machine learning.

The purpose of this final project, is to practice and better understand the scientific method and process flow of a data science project. My chosen project is based on the FAVORITA challenge in Kaggle.

The objective is to choose and train a machine learning based model, which will eventually successfully forecast the weekly sales of SEAFOOD items in one type of stores of Corporación Favorita Ecuador.

# Methodology (Project design)

# Data

The data source in Kaggle contains 6 data sets shared by Corporación Favorita. It contains the items and their categories, geographical information about stores and much more.

**Train** (~125,000,000 rows) includes attributes such as store number, item number and the unit sale on a particular date.

**Stores** (54) includes attributes such as city, state, type and cluster of stores (cluster is a grouping of similar stores)

**Items** (4,100) includes attributes such as family and class, as well as if they are perishable or not

**Transactions** (~80,000 rows) includes details of transactions at a store on a particular date

**Oil** (~1,200 rows) includes daily oil prices, as Ecuador is an oil-dependent country and it's economical health is highly vulnerable to shocks in oil prices

**Holidays** (350 rows) includes holidays and events suspected to affect supermarket sales. It includes everything from Christmas to the World Soccer Cup in Brasil, from Black Friday to a 7.8 magnitude earthquake.

Dataset	variables	variable.count
train	id, date, store.nbr, item.nbr, unit.sales, onpromotion	6
oil	date, dcoilwtico	2
holidays	date, type, locale, locale.name, description, transferred	6
items	item.nbr, family, class, perishable	4
stores	store.nbr, city, state, type, cluster	5
transactions	date, store.nbr, transactions	3

# Time frames periods

The raw data reflects the sales from Jan 2013 until Aug 15<sup>th</sup> 2017. Nevertheless, as the chosen objective is to predict the weekly sales over relative long period of time (1 year), the predictive model will not be Time Series based.

This project focus on stores of cluster 14, as seafood sales in those stores is significant compare to others. The stores are located at Ambato & Quito.

As can be seen, seafood sales distribution is pretty stable over the given years.

Year	Seafood #Sales	Seafood Distinct Items Count
2013	56,331	7
2014	66,280	7
2015	76,653	7
2016	70,881	7
2017	41,825	7

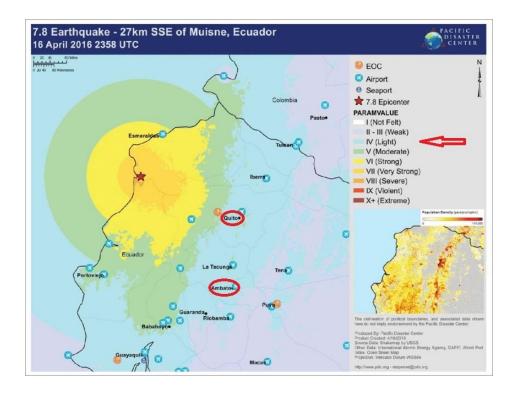
All Seafood product are perishable.



# Additional information

- ✓ Wages in the public sector are paid every two weeks on the 15th and on the last day
  of the month. Supermarket sales could be affected by this.
- ✓ A magnitude 7.8 earthquake struck Ecuador on April 16, 2016. People rallied in relief efforts donating water and other first need products which greatly affected supermarket sales for several weeks after the earthquake.

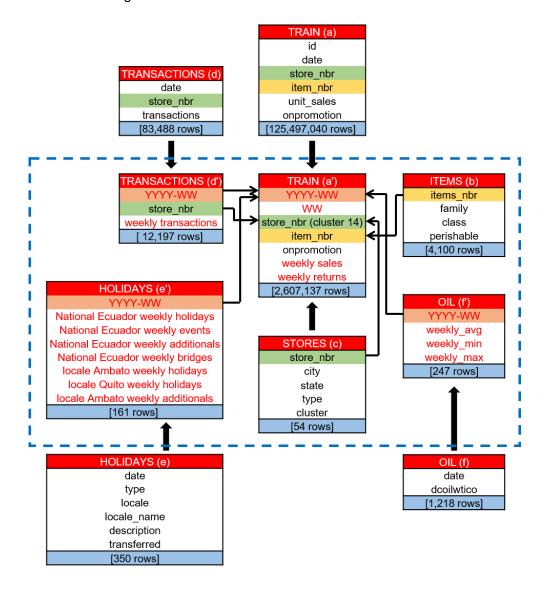
As shown in the map below, the physical effect over those regions was light. Nevertheless, the week of the earthquake and several weeks after will be indicated by an engineered feature. It will be interesting to see whether it had any effect over seafood items at these locations, and if so, will the feature be selected during feature selection voting as feature which effects the prediction.



# **Exploratory Data Analysis**

# Steps:

- 1. Explore each of the tables
- 2. Creating a flat file using SQL
  - ✓ generate new set of tables based on originals add new variables & neglect others
  - ✓ Join tables to a single FF



#### 3. EDA using R

# Data dimension - 22 X 9,951

- ✓ Dealing with NA's and variables type
- ✓ Data summary (attached in the appendix)
- ✓ Check missing (14,223)
- ✓ Imputation for the oil parameters
- ✓ Logarithmic transform label (weekly sales) in order to normalize its distribution (appendix).

```
In [32]: summary(df$weekly_sales) summary(df$log_weekly_sales)

Min. 1st Qu. Median Mean 3rd Qu. Max. 1.00 8.00 18.00 32.09 41.00 267.00

Min. 1st Qu. Median Mean 3rd Qu. Max. 0.6931 2.1972 2.9444 2.9548 3.7377 5.5910
```

✓ Looking at the data using Table1 and Explore data functions in order to see variables distribution, missing and outliers (attached in the appendix)

# EDA Highlights:

- No outliers
- Due to low exposure of 2 variables in higher levels, we chose to joined levels into one: Re categories National Ecuador weekly additionals > 1 as level '2' Re categories National Ecuador weekly events > 2 as level '3'
- Missing in 'Onpromotion' variable 1574 values (15.82%). Since it is a categorical variable we'll add a level: 0=False, 1=True, 2 =Null
- 9% (901 rows) missing values in the oil variables.
   We checked that no variable can explain the presence of missing values on any of the missing variables, thus we can assume that the missing mechanism is at least MAR. Since those missing values stands at 9% of the data, one should impute values. The preferred way to impute the data is with KNN. Nevertheless, we chose to impute the current oil variable with the average oil price of nearest previous weeks.



- Check the label variable vs. the factor variables.
   Different distribution between stores, item nbr, item class, onpromotion, cities, states.
   In the onpromotion variable for the TRUE level, there are outliers of the weekly log sales.
- Find Correlation between numeric variables (spearman) and factor variables (Cramer.V).
   Attached is the correlation matrix for the numeric variables which are significant (P<0.05). It is expected that the correlation between oil parameters will be high and significant (will be handled in the feature selection phase).</p>

The correlation between oil and transactions is weak (0.087)

A data.frame: 10 × 4

row	column	cor	р
<chr></chr>	<chr></chr>	<dbl></dbl>	<dbl></dbl>
weekly_transactions	oil_weekly_avg	0.087	0.000000e+00
weekly_transactions	oil_weekly_max	0.088	0.000000e+00
oil_weekly_avg	oil_weekly_max	0.996	0.000000e+00
weekly_transactions	oil_weekly_min	0.082	4.440892e-15
oil_weekly_avg	oil_weekly_min	0.997	0.000000e+00
oil_weekly_max	oil_weekly_min	0.988	0.000000e+00
weekly_transactions	log_weekly_sales	0.307	0.000000e+00
oil_weekly_avg	log_weekly_sales	0.122	0.000000e+00
oil_weekly_max	log_weekly_sales	0.122	0.000000e+00
oil_weekly_min	log_weekly_sales	0.121	0.000000e+00

- 4. Feature Engineering / Impact Coding / Data Extraction / Data Transformation
  - ✓ One-hot encoding was used in order to treat the following variables:

Item nbr

Onpromotion

Store\_nbr

Item class

City

State

YYYYWW

WW

- ✓ For each original categorical variable that we used one-hot-encoding on, we'll reduce one dummy that have the less frequent "1"
- ✓ Add indicator variable EQ\_impact that reflects the earthquake in Ecuador on April -May 2016 (weeks 16-19)
- ✓ Check missing again

#### New data dimension - 82 x 9,951

- 5. Feature selection and voting
  - ✓ Since our label is continuous, Table1 in Python does not run. First, we will have the multivariate analysis, make the voting procedure and then proceed with univariate analysis and correlations to the label variable using R.
  - ✓ Using Lasso, RandomForest, GradientBoost and SVM end by voting for total\_count >1 which reflects 23 selected variables.

#### Correlation > 0.9 between the selected variables:

```
In [14]: numcormatsel %>% filter(cor>0.9)

A data.frame: 6 × 4

row column cor p

<chr> <chr> <chr> <chr> <dbl> <dbl> <dbl> <dbl> <dbl> oil_weekly_avg oil_weekly_min 0.997 0

oil_weekly_avg oil_weekly_min 0.997 0

oil_weekly_max oil_weekly_min 0.991 0

item_nbr_741201 item_class_2854 1.000 0

item_nbr_1247036 item_class_2864 1.000 0

city_Quito state_Pichincha 1.000 0
```

✓ Using Regression to calculate variable importance and removing weekly\_avg & oil\_weekly\_min item\_class\_2854 & 2864 and state\_Pichincha variables.

#### The final data dimension - 18 x 9,951

Note: the 'Data retrieval protocol' is attached in the Appendix.

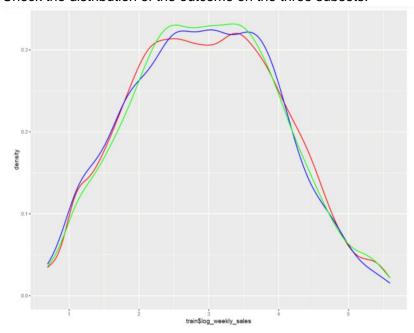
# Models

# Steps:

1. Preparing the data for modeling – use 'Table 1' and divide the data into 3 perfectly balanced datasets:

Test (20%): 18 x 1,991 (green) Dev (16%): 18 x 1,592 (blue) Train (64%): 18 x 6,368 (red)

Check the distribution of the outcome on the three subsets.



<u>Note:</u> Since the label variable (weekly\_log\_sales) is a continuous variable, we will use regression techniques for predicting.

2. Two metrics chosen for comparing the models (since outliers are absent):

$$RMSE = \sqrt{\frac{1}{n} \sum_{j=1}^{n} (y_j - \hat{y}_j)^2}$$

RMSLE = 
$$\sqrt{rac{1}{n}\sum_{i=1}^n(\log(p_i+1)-\log(a_i+1))^2}$$

#### 3. Run 10 different models

Attached are the metric results (Dev vs. Train results) in order by RMSE\_dev. It is noticed that the XGBoost model has an overfitting.

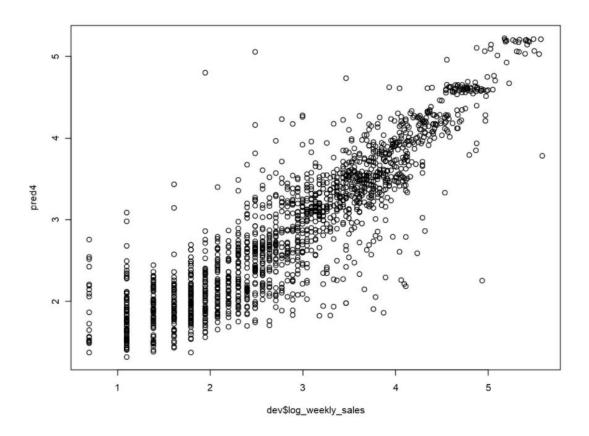
# The selected model is RandomForest (RF-mod4)

A data.frame: 10 × 6	Α	da	ta.i	fran	ne:	1(	0	×	6
----------------------	---	----	------	------	-----	----	---	---	---

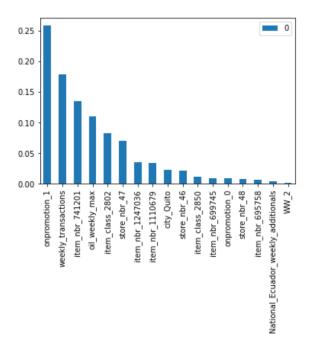
Name	Model	RMSE_Dev	RMSLE_Dev	RMSE_Train	RMSLE_Train
<chr></chr>	<chr></chr>	<dbl></dbl>	<dbl></dbl>	<dbl></dbl>	<dbl></dbl>
RandomForest (RF)	mod4	0.4957582	0.1490027	0.42626830	0.12802322
SVM	mod7	0.4977178	0.1493421	0.49341688	0.14622767
RandomForest (ranger)	mod5	0.5101627	0.1543961	0.46813395	0.14065353
GBM	mod10	0.5170288	0.1552648	0.52488079	0.15607587
XGBoost	mod8	0.5418664	0.1617597	0.08013069	0.02776829
Base Linear regression	mod1	0.5886486	0.1744881	0.60941196	0.17927886
GBM	mod9	0.6030014	0.1786473	0.62218536	0.18232785
Decision Trees-tree	mod2	0.6308729	0.1840876	0.63070361	0.18295666
Decision Trees-rpart	mod3	0.6308729	0.1840876	0.63070361	0.18295666
kNN	mod6	0.6843906	0.2046648	NA	NA

# RandomForest (RF-mod4) received % Var explained of 77.29%

# The plot graph of the predictive results vs log\_weekly\_sales is



# 4. Check variable importance



- 5. RandomForest Hyper parameter and fine tuning
  - ✓ All 3 partitioned data sets generated in R, where saved and imported to Python for the final phase of hyper parameter and fine tuning:
  - ✓ Re-generate base RF model in Python (since it was initially generated in R)
  - ✓ Perform random search
  - ✓ Perform nonrandom search (Fine tuning)
  - ✓ Set a grid space to search for the best hyper parameters (attached in appendix).

The best parameters out of that grid are:

The model was improved by 4.04% (RMSE ~ 0.510) in reference with the base model

The following is comparison table between the base model and the best parameters from the grid model:

Model	Date Set	RMSE	RMSLE
Base	Test	0.531	0.0237
Model	Train	0.197	0.0037
Grid	Test	0.510	0.0221
Model	Train	0.422	0.0164

Perform fine tune over the grid model by narrow the vector of each parameter around the best parameter from the previous step. The best parameters result after fine tuning are

#### Final model

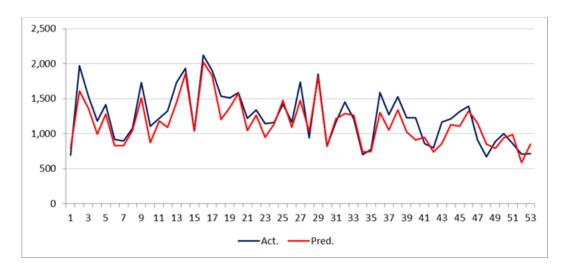
Check fine-tuned model results shows an improvement additional 0.04%

# Weekly Sales Prediction

Eventually we compare the predictive weekly sales values (after re-transform by exponential) vs. the given original weekly sales column in the test dataset (was performed using EXCEL)

+										
Week#	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Test actual	690	1,970	1,533	1,181	1,417	916	897	1,075	1,730	1,105
Test predict	789	1,607	1,364	994	1,282	825	828	1,044	1,514	869
Week#	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Test actual	1,220	1,325	1,733	1,935	1,038	2,121	1,906	1,537	1,509	1,586
Test predict	1,182	1,088	1,442	1,855	1,037	2,021	1,827	1,206	1,380	1,581
Week#	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Test actual	1,222	1,341	1,147	1,161	1,424	1,163	1,736	944	1,850	820
Test predict	1,046	1,265	951	1,135	1,472	1,089	1,477	1,032	1,803	819
Week#	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
Test actual	1,165	1,451	1,213	701	778	1,591	1,274	1,526	1,227	1,228
Test predict	1,208	1,289	1,264	741	748	1,304	1,051	1,340	1,024	910
Week#	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
Test actual	860	798	1,164	1,211	1,318	1,391	909	667	885	1,000
Test predict	945	739	861	1,129	1,107	1,321	1,153	853	793	942
Week#	51	52	53	Total						
Test actual	860	707	713	65,869						
Test predict	988	585	851	60,967						

Weekly sales prediction in cluster 14 stores vs. actual weekly sales (test dataset):



The trend over the year is predicted pretty well. The average variance is around 7%

# **Results and Conclusions**

The origin Favorita data contains ~ 125M rows.

In the current project, we decided to focus on the seafood family of products, in four stores out of 54 (from same type/cluster) and predict its weekly sales over one year.

The initial Seafood cluster 14 dataset contains ~ 10K rows with 21 independent variables.

The label (weekly unit sales) distribution over the years shown stable.

No outliers were found, and the missing data was handled by imputation or adding category level to replace NA values.

In model selection phase we divided the data into 3 balanced datasets:

Train (64% of the data), Dev (16%) and Test (20%);

Executed 10 different models

The best model picked by its lowest RMSE score was RandomForest.

Except for the XGBoost model, no overfitting was found.

We set a grid for random search with RandomForest hyper parameters, and execute it over the Train and Test partition to improve the base model.

We performed several fine tuning cycles according to random grid base parameters results, over Train and Test partitions.

Eventually, we set the best fine-tuned model as the final model which represent the best metric, lowest RMSE ~ 0.510 which represent an improvement of 4.07% vs. the base model.

Finally, we performed a prediction of weekly sales based on the Test dataset. As mentioned above the sales trend over the year was captured well.

# **Appendix**

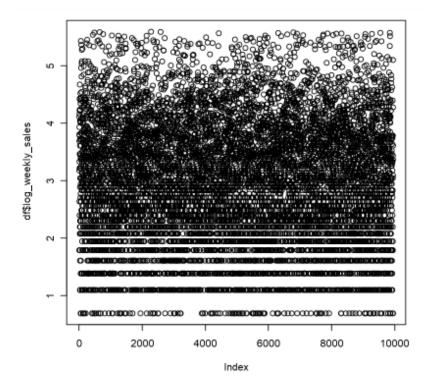
### Data retrieval protocol:

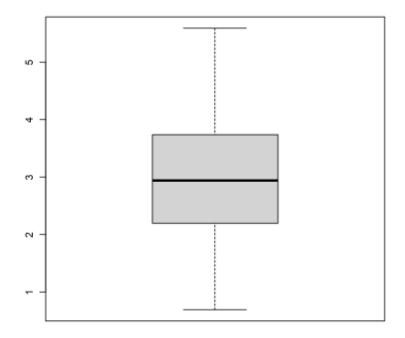


## Summary (data frame):

```
In [20]: summary(dfseafood14ff)
              WWYYYY
                              WW
                                       store_nbr
                                                   item_nbr
                                                                item_class
          201446 : 56
                              : 230
                                       46:2582 252698 :1237
                                                               2802:3026
          201710 : 56
                               : 223
                                       47:2636
                                                 589403 :1310
                                                                2806:1237
                        31
                                                 695758 :1495
          201414 : 55
                               : 222
                                       48:2557
                        32
                                                                2850:2834
          201441 : 55 28
                               : 220 50:2176 699745 :1531
                                                               2854:1570
          201444 :
                   55
                        27
                               : 213
                                                 741201 :1570
                                                                2864:1284
          201452 : 55
                                : 213
                                                 1110679:1524
                        30
          (Other):9619
                        (Other):8630
                                                 1247036:1284
          preishable_item weekly_sales
                                        weekly_transactions onpromotion
                         Min. : 1.00 Min. : 1.0
1st Qu.: 8.00 1st Qu.:267.0
          1:9951
                                                           False:4531
                                                              True :3846
                                          Median :491.0
                         Median : 18.00
                                                             NA's :1574
                         Mean : 32.09
3rd Qu.: 41.00
                                          Mean :490.4
                                          3rd Qu.:722.0
                         Max. :267.00 Max. :942.0
             city
                              state
                                         National_Ecuador_weekly_holidays
          Ambato:2176 Pichincha:7775
                                         0:8569
          Quito :7775 Tungurahua:2176
                                        1: 994
                                         2: 388
          National_Ecuador_weekly_additionals National_Ecuador_weekly_events
                                             0:9002
          1: 311
                                             1: 571
          2: 42
                                             2: 95
          4: 69
                                             3: 49
          5: 83
                                             5: 48
                                             7: 144
                                             8: 42
          National_Ecuador_weekly_bridges locale_Ambato_weekly_holidays
          0:9800
                                         0:9619
          1: 151
                                         1: 332
          locale_Quito_weekly_holidays locale_Quito_weekly_additionals oil_weekly_avg
                                                                     Min. : 1.00
1st Qu.: 46.00
          0:9783
                                      0:9779
          1: 168
                                      1: 172
                                                                      Median : 93.00
                                                                      Mean : 94.81
                                                                      3rd Qu.:138.00
                                                                      Max. :208.00
                                                                      NA's :901
          oil_weekly_max
                          oil weekly min
          Min. : 1.00
                          Min. : 1.00
          1st Qu.: 47.00
                          1st Ou.: 46.00
          Median : 94.00
                          Median : 90.00
          Mean : 95.57
                          Mean : 93.33
          3rd Qu.:139.00
                          3rd Qu.:136.00
          Max. :207.00
                          Max. :205.00
          NA's :901
                          NA'S :901
```

# Transforming the sales count using Log:

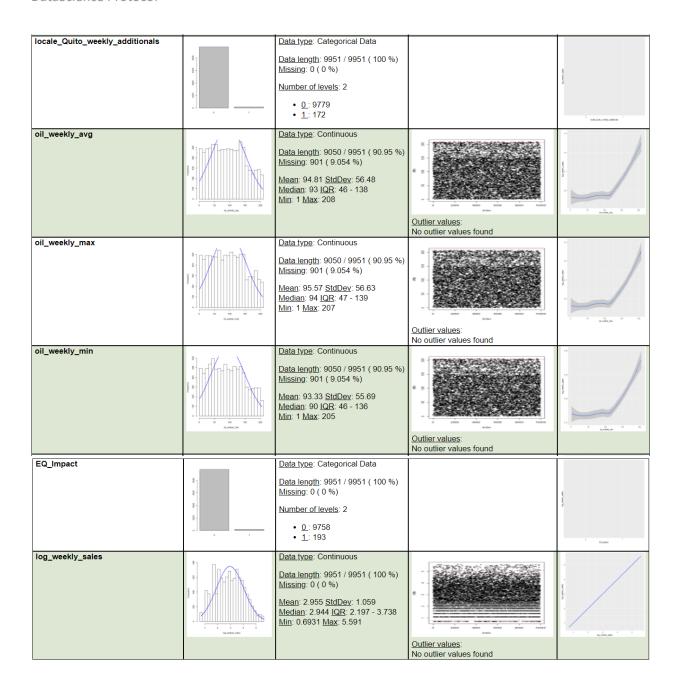




# **Data Exploration & Visualization**

Variable	Distribution	Descriptive Statistics	Outliers	Dependent Variable Distribution
YYYYWW		Data type: Categorical Data  Data length: 9951 / 9951 ( 100 %)  Missing: 0 ( 0 %)  Number of levels: 245		en e
ww		Data type: Categorical Data  Data length: 9951 / 9951 ( 100 %)  Missing: 0 ( 0 %)  Number of levels: 53		
store_nbr	# # # # # # # # # # # # # # # # # # #	Data type: Categorical Data  Data length: 9951 / 9951 (100 %)  Missing: 0 (0 %)  Number of levels: 4  46: 2582 47: 2636 48: 2557 50: 2176		
item_nbr	2	Data type: Categorical Data  Data length: 9951 / 9951 ( 100 %)  Missing: 0 ( 0 %)  Number of levels: 7		
item_class	# - # - # - # - # - # - # - # - # - # -	Data type: Categorical Data  Data length: 9951 / 9951 ( 100 %)  Missing: 0 ( 0 %)  Number of levels: 5		
weekly_transactions	B B B B B B B B B B B B B B B B B B B	Data type: Continuous  Data length: 9951 / 9951 ( 100 %)  Missing: 0 ( 0 %)  Mean: 490.4 StdDey: 267.6  Median: 491 IQR: 267 - 722  Min: 1 Max: 942	Outlier values: No outlier values found	The state of the s
onpromotion	# - # - # - # - # - # - # - # - # - # -	Data type: Categorical Data  Data length: 8377 / 9951 ( 84.18 %) Missing: 1574 ( 15.82 %)  Number of levels: 2  • False: 4531  • True: 3846		entropy of the state of the sta

	1		
city	\$ - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 -	Data type: Categorical Data  Data length: 9951 / 9951 ( 100 %)  Missing: 0 (0 %)  Number of levels: 2  • Ambato : 2176  • Quito : 7775	
state	E - Notes Nagarius	Data type: Categorical Data  Data length: 9951 / 9951 ( 100 %)  Missing: 0 ( 0 %)  Number of levels: 2  Pichincha: 7775  Tungurahua: 2176	No. of the second
National_Ecuador_weekly_holidays	8 - 8 - 8 -	Data type: Categorical Data  Data length: 9951 / 9951 ( 100 %)  Missing: 0 ( 0 %)  Number of levels: 3  0: 8569 1: 994 2: 388	Manual Continue Continue
National_Ecuador_weekly_additionals	2 2 2 8	Data type: Categorical Data  Data length: 9951 / 9951 ( 100 %)  Missing: 0 (0 %)  Number of levels: 5	The state of the s
National_Ecuador_weekly_events	1 1 1	Data_type: Categorical Data  Data_length: 9951 / 9951 ( 100 %)  Missing: 0 ( 0 %)  Number of levels: 7	
National_Ecuador_weekly_bridges	8 -	<u>Data type</u> : Categorical Data <u>Data length</u> : 9951 / 9951 ( 100 %) <u>Missing</u> : 0 ( 0 %)	
	B	Number of levels: 2  • 0: 9800  • 1: 151	
locale_Ambato_weekly_holidays		• <u>0</u> : 9800	The state of the s



### **Data Summary - Selected variables:**

```
weekly_transactions National_Ecuador_weekly_additionals oil_weekly_max
Min. : 1.0 Min. :1.00
                                              Min. : 1.0
1st Qu.: 53.0
                                              Median :104.0
Mean :490.4
                Mean :1.07
                                              Mean :105.6
3rd Qu.:722.0 3rd Qu.:1.00 Max. :942.0 Max. :3.00
                                              3rd Qu.:154.0
                                              Max. :212.0
item_nbr_695758 item_nbr_699745 item_nbr_741201 item_nbr_1110679
0:8456 0:8420 0:8381 0:8427
1:1495
            1:1531
                          1:1570
                                       1:1524
item_nbr_1247036 onpromotion_0 onpromotion_1 store_nbr_46 store_nbr_47
0:8667
         0:5420 0:6105 0:7369 0:7315
1:1284
             1:4531
                         1:3846
                                     1:2582
                                                1:2636
store_nbr_48 WW 2
                 item_class_2802 item_class_2850 city_Quito
0:7394 0:9761 0:6925 0:7117 0:2176
1:2557
         1: 190 1:3026
                              1:2834
                                            1:7775
log_weekly_sales
Min. :0.6931
1st Qu.:2.1972
Median :2.9444
Mean :2.9548
3rd Qu.:3.7377
Max. :5.5910
```

#### RandomForest parameters for tree:

n\_estimators = number of trees in the foreset

max\_features = max number of features considered for splitting a node

max\_depth = max number of levels in each decision tree

min\_samples\_split = min number of data points placed in a node before the node is split

min\_samples\_leaf = min number of data points allowed in a leaf node

bootstrap = method for sampling data points (with or without replacement)

# **Working Files**

# SQL server:

1. Generate flat file → 1-SQL.sql

#### Jupyter Notebooks:

- 2. EDA  $\rightarrow$  2-EDA-R.ipynb
- 3. Feature selection (multivariate) → 3-Fearture Selection-PYTHON.ipynb
- 4. Feature selection (univariate analysis) → 4-Univariate analysis-R.ipynb
- 5. Model selection → 5-Pre Processing and Modeling Include Train Metrics-R.ipynb
- 6. Hyperparameters and finetuning → 6-Hyperparameters Finetuning-PYTHON.ipynb

#### Excel:

7. Weekly Prediction Results for cluster 14 seafood items.xls