

Markdown for Dprep

Team 4

2025-02-20

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1 The Nostalgia Effect: How Release Year and Genre Shape IMDb Movie Ratings Over Time

<https://github.com/course-dprep/team-project-spring-2025-team-4>

1.1 Introduction

This project aims to explore how nostalgia influences IMDb movie ratings by analyzing the relationship between a film's release year and audience perception, with genre as a moderating factor. As nostalgia increasingly shapes consumer preferences, understanding its impact on movie reception can reveal biases in ratings and cultural memory effects. This study provides insights into how audiences evaluate films over time, helping industry professionals leverage nostalgia in content creation, marketing, and distribution strategies.

1.2 Motivation

In today's entertainment industry, maximizing audience engagement and profitability is crucial, and nostalgia has been identified as a key factor influencing movie reception (Ulker-Demirel et al., 2018). While studies have explored whether nostalgia motivates audiences to watch remakes and reunions (Tetik & Türkel, 2023) or influences viewer engagement (Andrade, 2023), little research has examined how nostalgia manifests in IMDb user ratings and whether it directly impacts the perceived quality of a movie. From an academic perspective, this study contributes to film studies, behavioral psychology, and consumer research by empirically analyzing rating patterns over time and assessing whether nostalgia bias or selective survival bias systematically influence IMDb ratings. Additionally, it examines how factors such as genre interact with this relationship, offering a deeper understanding of audience preferences and cultural memory in film evaluation.

From a real-world and managerial standpoint, this research has direct implications for film studios, streaming platforms, and marketers in shaping their content strategies. If older films receive higher ratings due to nostalgia rather than objective quality, this insight could influence decisions on which films to remake, re-release, or highlight in marketing campaigns. Streaming platforms can refine their recommendation algorithms by accounting for nostalgia-driven biases, improving user engagement and retention. Additionally, movie studios could leverage these findings to predict the potential success of sequels and franchise revivals, ensuring they appeal to audiences who value nostalgic elements. Understanding how genre moderates this

effect also allows industry professionals to tailor their approach depending on whether certain film types (e.g., sci-fi, drama, or animation) are more influenced by nostalgia than others. Ultimately, this study provides a data-driven framework for maximizing audience appeal, optimizing content distribution, and making strategic investment decisions in the evolving film industry.

1.3 Research Question

To what extent is (i) IMDb movie user rating influenced by the (ii) movie released year? And to what extent does (iii) movie genre influence this relationship?

1.4 Data

For this study, we used publicly available datasets from IMDb’s non-commercial dataset repository (IMDb Non-Commercial Datasets). Link to the website: <https://developer.imdb.com/non-commercial-datasets/>

Specifically, we utilized two key datasets: `title.ratings.tsv.gz` – Provides IMDb user ratings, including: • Average Rating (DV) from the `averageRating` field. • Number of Votes from the `numVotes` field.

`title.basics.tsv.gz` – Contains movie metadata, including: *Release Year (IV) from the startYear field*. Genre (Moderator Variable) from the `genres` field. *Country (Control Variable - U.S.), filtered to include only U.S. releases.

Why IMDb? IMDb provides a high-quality dataset for analyzing trends in movie ratings over time, the influence of genre, and country-specific variations. The structured dataset ensures a methodologically sound approach for studying how IMDb user ratings evolve with release year and genre differences.

1.5 References

- Tetik, T., & Türkeli, Ö. (2023). POPULAR CINEMA AS NOSTALGIA INDUSTRY: REUNIONS, REMAKES, AND REQUELS. *Sinecine: Sinema Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 14(1), 7-31. <https://doi.org/10.32001/sinecine.1253910>
- Ulker-Demirel, E., Akyol, A. and Simsek, G.G. (2018), “Marketing giant and consumption of art products: the movie industry”, *Arts and the Market*, Vol. 8 No. 1, pp. 80-98. <https://doi.org/10.1108/AAM-06-2017-0011>
- Andrade, S. (2023). The impact of nostalgia and social setting on consumer motivation to watch a movie at the cinema vs. through streaming. *Handle.net*. <http://hdl.handle.net/10400.14/42261>