

# New study looks at who makes more money in Hollywood

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Actress Jennifer Lawrence

With the Golden Globe awards newly announced and the Academy Awards soon to be presented, chatter around the water cooler is likely to include speculation about Hollywood stars: Was Jon Voight the oldest ever Golden Globe winner at age 75? (No.) Was Jennifer Lawrence one of the youngest at age 23? (Not by a long shot.)

For Hollywood stars, top acting honors translate to fame and notoriety, but not necessarily fortune, according to Timothy Judge, professor of management at the University of Notre Dame, and his colleague Irene De Pater.

In their recent study, "Age, Gender, and Compensation: A Study of Hollywood Movie Stars," forthcoming in the *Journal of Management Inquiry*, Judge and De Pater found that young female actresses earn more than young male actors, but that the men age "better" in the sense that their salaries increase over time, whereas those of the actresses do not.

Judge and De Pater examined the available earnings records of 265 Hollywood film actors and actresses who starred in movies between 1968 and 2008 and exhibited star power according to an equation factoring in rankings in film credits, the number of [films](#) and leading roles, and Academy Award and Golden Globe award nominations and wins.

They discovered that female movie stars obtain their highest average earnings per film when they are 34 years old, after which their earnings per film decrease rapidly. Male movie stars achieve their highest average earnings per film much later, when they are 51. However, the men don't weather a sharp drop-off in earnings afterward. In fact, their average earnings per film never decrease after peaking.

There are many reasons why the per-film earnings of Hollywood stars may be more related to their gender and age than to any other factor. As evidenced in the Golden Globes on Jan. 12, the average age of winning actresses was 42 years, while the average age of winning actors was nearly decade older at close to 52 years.

"We came to the conclusion that the work of older actresses may be less valued than the work of their male counterparts," Judge says. "In fact, we found there are far fewer roles available for female [movie stars](#) over age 45.

"While we may all enjoy Hollywood's movies and its stars, there are broader workplace implications

from the study," Judge says. "Our study is a unique examination of the gender-wage gap in that it combines the impact of gender and age on [earnings](#) of an equally successful group of people in a highly specific field where workers are essentially free agents paid by their expected market value. Therefore, the study findings of a significant [age](#)-gender gap are important to all of us gathered around the water cooler."

Provided by University of Notre Dame

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