Applied Project Submission Form

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The reinvention of the cinemas in Dublin: Strategy and adaptation in the streaming era

A study on consumer behaviour and competitive transformation in the audiovisual industry

By:

Nalleli Itze Zarate Ahuet

51810778

Independent College Dublin
December, 2025

Acknowledgements

For my family, my life partner, my friends, and for all the chance encounters I have had on my beautiful island.

And to myself, for fighting for my dreams with honesty and respect, with the conviction that we deserve a better world.

Abstract

The pandemic and digitalisation have radically transformed the audiovisual industry, accelerating the positioning of streaming platforms in more intimate environments, as well as refining cinema as a collective and symbolic space.

The research offers various elements that influence consumer decision-making and the adaptation of new audiovisual consumption habits. This is done from a general perspective with an emphasis on Dublin. It also looks at trends in the audiovisual sector, in which both algorithms and artificial intelligence are decisive factors in the choice, prediction and reconfiguration of the act of watching films.

Using mixed techniques and a pragmatic epistemological approach, the study suggests that the future of audiovisual media will be hybrid, segmented and dynamic, considering that both cinema and streaming are adapting to new modalities in order to remain relevant to their audiences.

Keywords: streaming platforms, cinema, hybrid model, audiovisual content, consumption habits, algorithms, Artificial Intelligence, pandemic, digitisation

Table Acronyms

AI— Artificial Intelligence

CSO — Central Statistics Office

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Chapter I

1. Introduction

The audiovisual industry has undergone several changes throughout history; however, nothing was as decisive as the pandemic and digitalisation. This transformation not only shaped the way society consumes audiovisual products, but also the context in which it does so, ranging from an intimate, home environment derived from the use of streaming platforms to a more collective and sensory environment in spaces such as cinemas.

The ways in which users experience, adapt and relate these two models to their daily activities have been redefined, and as a result, they now have the choice to decide where, how and when they consume this content.

While streaming offers convenience, accessibility and flexibility, cinema continues to offer a sensory and immersive experience with elements such as the big screen, 4K audio and special features aimed at different targets, as well as new activities such as festivals, film clubs and personalised memberships with the aim of attracting and retaining audiences.

This research aims to understand the impact of streaming platforms on traditional cinemas in Dublin and how they interrelate in this audiovisual context. Through a mixed

methodology, combining interviews, surveys and bibliographic review, and the pragmatic epistemological paradigm, a comprehensive study of the current audiovisual world is offered.

1.1 Background of Research

Thanks to my interest in the entertainment industry, mainly in film, this subject of study is relevant to me both personally and academically. Therefore, through this research, I intend to explore the boom that digitisation and the growth of streaming platforms have had and the significance this has generated among consumers in Dublin over the last decade.

During this study, I will focus on examining and analysing the proliferation of streaming platforms such as Netflix, Prime Video and Disney Plus and their alteration and impact on the consumption habits of these residents. I am also interested in the interconnection between cultural and technological habits and the modes of consumption of audiovisual products.

Similarly, I will evaluate consumer preferences in terms of their schedules, preferences, and consumption patterns using mixed techniques that will help me discover the audiovisual habits of the inhabitants of this city.

Finally, throughout this thesis, I will analyse the communication and marketing strategies that these spaces are using to attract, retain, and adapt in this context.

1.2 Rationale for the study

People's daily lives have been affected by digitalisation, and the entertainment market has not been left behind. In the wake of the pandemic, everyday activities such as going to the cinema, watching a film or doing various other activities took on new meaning; they also became a challenge, which, in certain cases, technology was able to adapt to, significantly reshaping both the industry and people's new consumption habits.

For this reason, both out of personal and professional interest in the subject, I want to better understand the habits of consumers in Dublin, a market sector characterised by its dynamism and youth, and the ways in which they are experiencing this cultural and audiovisual transformation.

1. 3 Research Question

What is the influence of streaming platforms on traditional cinemas in Dublin and their effects on new viewing habits?

1. 4 Statement of the research objectives

In order to properly examine the subject of study, the research question has been divided into five themes and sub-questions for a better approach.

- **Themes and sub-questions**

Theme 1. Changes and evolution in audiovisual consumption habits

- Before and after the pandemic
- Growth and boom of streaming platforms
- Effects of the pandemic on audiovisual consumption
- Current consumer landscape in Dublin

Theme 2. Consumption preferences: cinema or home?

- One-click access or big screen experience
- Massification of streaming consumption
- Essential factors for going to the cinema

Theme 3. Engagement in the digital age

- Algorithms and recommendations systems
- Social dimension of cinema: individual vs. collective experience
- Digital marketing and audience targeting strategies

Theme 4. Differentiators and market competition

- Cinema vs. streaming: sound, image, screen experience
- Competitive drivers: pricing, access, exclusivity
- Audience preferences and perception of value

Theme 5. Trends in the audiovisual industry

- Forecast and innovation in the film sector
- Reinvention of traditional cinemas

- Cinema as a cultural, recreational and social experience

1.5 Information Gathering and Data Collection

The methodology used for the study is the epistemological-pragmatic paradigm, which integrates a positivist perspective, reflected in the surveys, while also helping to obtain subjective experiences—through interviews—(interpretative approach).

1.6 Expected Outcome

The aim is to analyse the impact of streaming platforms and new ways of consuming and experiencing cinema. In addition, to offer an updated view of consumer experiences and expectations, whether in traditional cinemas and/or at home.

It also examines some business models in this increasingly hybrid market, with the hope that the result will be useful for both the general public and professionals, with relevant information on the trends, perspectives and challenges that are defining new forms of entertainment consumption in the audiovisual world.

Chapter II

2. Literature Review

The aim of the literature review was to identify the factors that explain changes in consumption habits, viewers' motivations and the elements that influence decision-making, particularly among cinema-goers and those who opt for streaming. It took into account various academic debates on the transformation of consumption habits in this digitalised context, in which the expansion of streaming platforms and new film trends play a predominant role. The collection, analysis, and interpretation of this data were essential to support the theoretical framework on which the research is based.

2.1 Changes and evolution in audiovisual consumption habits

Various factors have influenced consumer habits, but few have been as significant as digitalisation and the COVID-19 pandemic, as lockdown accelerated the use of streaming platforms and, even before the end of 2020, there had already been a drastic change in both the context and consumption of audiovisual products (Soren, 2024).

Before the global outbreak, cinema and television still retained their symbolic and cultural value, but when lockdown measures forced the temporary closure of cinemas and productions were suspended, a reconfiguration of the media ecosystem began, along with an acceleration of the structural

changes that had been brewing, leading to greater dependence on platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video.

As Vlassis mentions:

> "the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic could favor concentration dynamics in the audio-visual market due to the action of global streaming platforms" (Vlassis, 2021, p.2).

2.1.1 Growth and boom of streaming platforms

These platforms not only offered content to consumers, they also created a sense of continuity and normality in a changing context. Similarly, digital infrastructure was put to the test.

Feldmann et al. (2020) assert that there was also an increase in Internet traffic during the first months of lockdown, mainly, due to the massive use of on-demand streaming services.

This intensification of domestic consumption changed access times, platforms and devices.

2.1.2 Effects of the pandemic on audiovisual consumption

The viewer experience has also changed. Foley (2021), in the study Trends in streaming video usage at a university during the COVID-19 pandemic, observed that content is no longer consumed in defined blocks, but is now fragmented throughout the day depending on the consumer's availability.

This has led to more individualised, mobile and functional habits, where the audiovisual product accompanies other daily activities, such as cooking, working, exercising, which considerably weakens the collective ritual that cinema used to represent. Moreover, shorter but more frequent viewing sessions are observed, especially among young people.

Despite the digital dominance, the situation in cinemas is not homogeneous. Soren (2024) argues that although many viewers have adopted new habits, some still value the cinema space for its technical quality and symbolic effect. In Dublin, this dilemma is observed in institutions such as the Irish Film Institute, which reopened with adapted proposals, but still faces uncertainty about its place in the future of entertainment.

2.1.3 Current consumer landscape in Dublin

Finally, McGuinness (1999) recalls that audiovisual media are not only forms of entertainment, but also serve as instruments of cultural identity. In contexts such as Dublin, cinema played an important socialising role. Currently, that role competes with algorithms, personalised habits and the logic of mass consumption.

Currently, that role competes with algorithms, personalised habits and the logic of mass consumption.

In conclusion, the pandemic was a turning point that not only accelerated the adoption of streaming, but also redefined the place of cinema in everyday life, forcing the industry to rethink its business and value model in the face of a fragmented and digitally interconnected audience.

2.2 Consumption preferences: cinema or home?

Watching a film or series at home is determined by different factors. This dilemma reflects not only digital transformations, but also an evolution in audience expectations, motivations and habits in the digital age.

2.2.1 One-click access or big screen experience

The ability to view content at the click of a button has revolutionised the user experience. As Tryon (2013) points out, digitisation has allowed entertainment to be integrated into the daily routine, reducing the role of cinema as an exclusive social space:

> "People now expect immediate access, personalisation and compatibility across multiple devices" (Tryon, 2013, p. 45).

Although Barker (2009) warned about the sensory uniqueness of cinema in the digital age, this vision is still valid for certain audiences who seek an experience of total disconnection, more associated with rituals or special events.

In contrast, the comfort of home, flexible schedules and the absence of travel have been determining factors in the growth of mass streaming consumption. Lotz (2017) analysed how platforms transformed the passive viewer into an active user, who now selects, compares and even marathons content according to their own rhythms and activities.

2.2.2 Massification of streaming consumption

In turn, Nieborg and Poell (2018) explained that the algorithmic logic of these platforms has altered the form of cultural production and consumption in favour of faster, shallower and more performance-oriented viewing dynamics, which poses new challenges for capturing and maintaining the viewer's attention.

In terms of the factors that influence consumer decision-making, several studies identify certain key elements that interfere in the decision to consume films at home or in cinemas. In this regard, Jenner (2023) highlights that cost, immediate availability, type of content and ease of access are the main motivators. Market fragmentation and oversupply also generate ‘choice fatigue’, leading users to prioritise familiar or more lifestyle-integrated platforms.

2.2.3 Essential factors for going to the cinema

However, despite the digital dominance, cinema remains a sought-after experience for certain audiences.

According to Barker (2009), many consumers appreciate the opportunity to immerse themselves in a story without interruptions, in a more visual and auditory environment that is often difficult to replicate at home.

Therefore, decisions such as going to the cinema or streaming are determined by a combination of factors ranging from price, convenience and schedules to emotional factors such as ritual, shared experience and immersion.

Studying these motivations is essential for streaming platforms and cinemas in order to adjust their value proposition, while both maintain their relevance in an audiovisual context in which consumers want to be in control.

2.3 Engagement in the digital age

From content distribution channels to audience interaction, everything is closely linked in the digital age. Streaming platforms and social media are creating new ways of thinking about engagement, personalisation and loyalty, and their impact on the consumer experience.

2.3.1 Algorithms and recommendations systems

One of the most noticeable changes is the role of recommendation algorithms. According to Napoli (2014), these tools influence what is seen and the perception of one's own tastes. By reinforcing previous consumption patterns,

algorithms encourage a personalised experience that reduces exposure to diverse choices. This algorithmic “confirmation” logic becomes a form of sustained engagement, although it can limit cultural discovery.

2.3.2 Social dimension of cinema: individual vs. collective experience

The social dimension of cinema has been challenged by these new ways of consuming it. Viewers are replacing traditional cinema experiences with watching productions at home.

As a result, some venues, as Lotz (2017) states, have adjusted their customer loyalty strategies. Similarly, Screen Ireland (2023) notes that cinemas in Dublin have incorporated various tactics such as personalised memberships, themed screenings and film clubs, with the aim of strengthening their relationship with the public.

In contrast, digital platforms are increasingly turning to the creation of their own content, as well as various partnerships and the acquisition of entertainment studios to retain the interest of their users and viewing time.

2.3.3 Digital marketing and audience targeting strategies

Digital marketing is a fundamental part of this process. D'heer and Courtois (2016) emphasise that social networks are both promotional channels and spaces for active participation, where users recommend, comment and generate content

around what they see. This dialogue raises symbolic communities, especially among the youth market, which may feel an affinity with this collective identity based on shared consumption.

Similarly, understanding current mechanisms such as consumer choice and perception is key to gaining a holistic view of the role of cinema and audiovisual content. Audience participation in these areas is being built on multiple levels, from algorithmic personalisation to social-digital belonging, as well as its relevance in the creation of marketing campaigns that appeal to the emotions.

2.4 Differentiators and market competition

Today, there are several factors at play in audiovisual competitiveness, from the supply of content, the multiple distribution channels and the differentiators between traditional cinema and streaming platforms. This section therefore looks at how sound, image, technology, exclusive content, price and perceived value influence viewer choice and shape competition between models.

2.4.1 Cinema vs. streaming: sound, image, screen experience

The big screen, surround sound and a collective atmosphere are the distinctive features of the cinema. These components undoubtedly offer a unique auditory and sensory experience.

This contrasts with streaming, which prioritises accessibility and convenience.

However, the gap between the home environment and the cinema has narrowed with tools such as surround sound systems, 4K screens, and high-speed connections. This, coupled with the availability of exclusive content, series, documentaries, and premieres, has reinforced the added value of streaming platforms.

2.4.2 Competitive drivers: pricing, access, exclusivity

Competition is also expressed in terms of convenience and price. The Central Statistics Office (CSO, 2025) report shows that 71% of users in Ireland consume audiovisual content through digital platforms, in part because of their low cost and immediate availability. Meanwhile, cinemas face challenges with ticket prices, fixed schedules and the additional costs of the in-person experience, which can range from transport, food and travel time.

Streaming platforms have also begun to establish a symbolic value of their own. As Jenner (2020) points out, their frequent, personalised and socially shared use, through recommendations, profiles and network communities, is generating new forms of digital identity and belonging. For many young people, these platforms are not just consumption tools, but communities that define their lifestyles and cultural affinities.

2.4.3 Audience preferences and perception of value

Finally, the curation of content also becomes a competitive terrain. Authors such as Jenner (2018) assert that, unlike the abundance of content on streaming platforms, cinemas can differentiate themselves through selective, curated, and even more culturally significant programming.

Therefore, competition between cinemas and streaming is based on multiple levels: technical, economic, symbolic and experiential, which are fundamental for analysing the relationship between the various formats and their ways of attracting, satisfying and retaining audiences, which are characterised by being more demanding, fragmented and specialised.

2. 5 Trends in the audiovisual industry

Innovation, hybrid competition, and cultural transformation are three essential aspects for the future of both and for creating meaningful experiences for their consumers. Both streaming platforms and traditional cinema will have to reinvent themselves to remain the preferred choice among their audiences.

2.5.1 Forecast and innovation in the film sector

One of the most debated points is the coexistence or confrontation between the two models. For Tryon (2013), digital platforms have transformed viewers' expectations in

terms of availability and access. This has forced the film industry to rethink its distribution models and release windows. The case of simultaneous releases (cinema and streaming) during the pandemic opened up a new landscape of discussion on economic sustainability and value perception.

For his part, Lobato (2019) argues that the global expansion of streaming is redefining not only content consumption, but also expanding to what content is produced and for what purposes. Netflix, for example, is now betting on local production with international projection, while cinemas face the challenge of attracting an audience that is now guided by algorithms and not by billboards.

This discussion is also supported by the analysis of Aveyard (2016), who argues that film consumption in non-theatrical spaces, such as the home, transport or mobile devices, has been underestimated in critical theory. However, these practices are dominant and redefine the relationship between spectator and content. Thus, cinema has shifted from the theatre to the everyday routine, blurring spatial and symbolic boundaries.

2.5.2 Reinvention of traditional cinemas

In this universe, cinema must reinvent its proposal. According to Crisp (2021), one of the possible ways is its approach as a cultural and social experience, autonomous from the content. Film events, festivals, special screenings or value-added

functions represent a strategy to attract audiences seeking more than entertainment: a collective and symbolic experience. This trend is especially strong in cities with an artistic and youthful offer, such as Dublin.

On the other hand, the data indicate a growing diversification in consumption habits. According to the CSO report (2023), the Irish population aged 18-34 is the one that most combines formats: they occasionally go to the cinema, but consume streaming on a daily basis. This suggests a functional coexistence of both models, although not always equal in terms of attention and time spent.

2.5.3 Cinema as a cultural, recreational and social experience

Finally, Lotz (2022) proposes that the future lies not so much in competition, but in mutual adaptation. While platforms adopt cinematic elements (premieres, digital events, immersive marketing), cinemas explore the integration of digital tools and loyalty strategies. So innovation will not only be technological, but relational and symbolic.

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is another tool that increasingly influences both personalisation and the consumer experience. It will also be used for data interpretation and will transform the way we conceive of the audiovisual market, as established by the European Audiovisual Observatory (2024).

The future of the audiovisual world will be hybrid, segmented and highly dynamic. Identifying these trends will enable each

of the participants to understand their role and anticipate challenges in the entertainment sector, and at the same time, capture trends and opportunities to generate experiences that emotionally connect with diverse and changing audiences.

The literature review validates and clarifies to a large extent the research question by showing that today's audiovisual consumption is not explained solely by access or cost, but by a combination of symbolic, cultural, technological and emotional factors.

This review has guided the design of both the questionnaire and the interviews (aimed at the general public and specialists), and identifies the key variables to be measured or explored in depth: from frequency and patterns of consumption, to perceptions of value, motivations for choice and expectations about the future of film and streaming, globally and, with a particular context, in Dublin.

Chapter III

3. Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology applied in this research: the philosophical approach, the method, and the design of the data collection tools and sampling.

Two data collection methods were used due to the depth and nature of the study: secondary research, which consists mainly of the analysis of bibliographic and digital references, as well as government documents; and primary research, detailed below.

3.1 Philosophy Employed

The research used a mixed methodological approach, with qualitative and quantitative techniques. Similarly, a methodology with a pragmatic epistemological paradigm was used, comprising both a positivist and interpretative perspective.

According to Kaushik and Walsh:

> "Pragmatism supports the mixing of research methods to get an in-depth understanding of the research problem and its solution. Pragmatism values individuals' views and life experiences" (Kaushik and Walsh, 2019 as cited in Elgeddawy & Abouraia, 2021).

Through the positivist approach, applied via surveys, trends in consumer habits were explored. Likewise, through an interpretative perspective, captured in interviews, both the subjective experiences of viewers and business strategies were analysed.

3.2. Method

It used a mixed methodology because it allows for a better understanding of a complex phenomenon that requires both

objective data (consumer behaviour) and meaningful interpretations (the reasons behind this behaviour). A purely quantitative or qualitative approach would have been insufficient to address this research.

The qualitative part included two semi-structured interviews with programmers, cinema managers and audiovisual sector specialists, with the aim of providing an overview of how cinemas are responding to competition from streaming and changing audience expectations.

The quantitative part consisted of 50 online/face-to-face questionnaires targeting cinema audiences in Dublin, with open and closed questions to analyse behaviours, preferences and motivations. In addition, secondary sources such as reports and databases from the Central Statistics Office (CSO), Screen Ireland and the Irish Film Institute were used to identify consumer trends in Ireland over the last decade.

3.3. Sampling

Sampling for this research was based on the accessibility and proximity of participants, both interviewees and cinemas. This includes the digital marketing specialist and the cinema programmer. Likewise, for the survey, Lighthouse Cinema and Savoy were used, venues located in the Dublin city centre, with an age range of 18 to 34 years.

3.4. Data Analysis

Finally, the data obtained through the mixed methodology was analysed and interpreted for the writing of the paper. To this end, a triangulation approach was used, combining the findings obtained from the surveys, interviews and literature review carried out throughout the project. The aim was to validate and cross-check the data and verify the results obtained.

Additionally, the information obtained in both interviews was prioritised for the coding of the following table:

Thematic Coding			
Theme	**Participant**	**Keywords**	**Quote**
Changes and evolution in audiovisual consumption habits	Participant 1	Flexibility, schedules, cinema, streaming, pandemic, digitalisation, popcorn,	"The flexibility from online streaming has a lot more value for me personally as compared to cinema".

Consumption preferences: cinema or home?	Participant 1	Diary activities, home, cinema, consumption preferences, audiences, habits, motivations	“I can watch for like 20 minutes, half an hour, go to sleep and I can watch the movie in two, three, four days”.
Engagement in the digital age	Participant 2	Immersive, sensory experiences, marketing, engagement, crowd, value, recommendations	“The symbolic and cultural value of cinema is not dying out, only mutating; to understand this, we need to understand who we are talking to and how”.
Differentiators and market competition	Participant 1	Audiovisual elements, streaming platforms, Netflix, Amazon Prime, Disney, family, kids	“If there is any specific time of the year when there's a new film coming or a movie comes around or something, they want to go. So it's more like a kind of family day out for that”.

Trends in the audiovisual industry	Participant 2	Artificial intelligence, comfort, algorithms, immersive experience, hybrid competition, cultural transformation	“We are aware that Artificial Intelligence and algorithms are a great challenge for those of us who work in film, so we must focus more on generating business strategies in line with this new reality”.

Table 1. Interview coding

Source: information obtained from interviews

This information, identified with the keywords, was relevant for prioritizing and structuring the results information and its discussion.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The institution's privacy policies were consulted in order to protect the integrity and ethics of each research participant.

Likewise, clear and direct communication was maintained regarding the project's objectives, both with interviewees and respondents, sharing the approved Ethics Form A to minimise bias.

Furthermore, participation was anonymous and voluntary, and the consent and confidentiality form was obtained from the participants.

The researcher maintained a neutral stance and was supervised by academic Klaus Walter to avoid errors in the administration of the questionnaires, the interpretation and analysis of the results, and the conclusions of the study.

Chapter IV

4. Findings and Discussions

The aim of this chapter is to explore the findings obtained from primary and secondary research, as well as from the triangulation of interviews, surveys and literature review. It offers an understanding of how digitisation and the pandemic have redefined the relationship between cinema, streaming and viewers, identifying consumer behaviour patterns and motives.

The analysis is presented through the five sub-themes that make up this study, which are *Changes and evolution in audiovisual consumption habits, Consumption preferences: cinema or home?, Engagement in the digital age, Differentiators and market competition,* and *Trends in the audiovisual industry*.

Understanding how streaming is impacting cinemas, both in general and specifically in Dublin, makes each finding relevant for considering the cultural, symbolic and technological dimensions that interact in this change in the world of entertainment.

To this end, the 50 survey responses were collated with the two interviews conducted throughout the research, serving as support and cross-referencing with the bibliography to validate the data.

4.1. Changes and evolution in audiovisual consumption habits

The survey results showed that 50% of participants watch more series or films at home after the pandemic, while 26.1% maintain the same level of consumption. In contrast, 23.9% watch less.

The following figure shows the significant increase in audiovisual consumption after COVID-19:

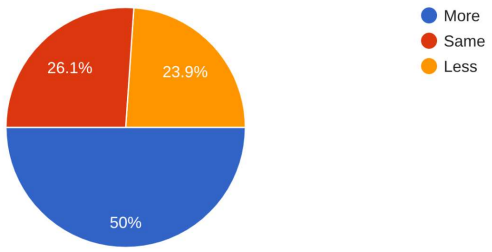


Figure 1. Effects of the pandemic on audiovisual consumption
Source: survey conducted for this study

In this regard, the findings from the interviews are focused on the same path:

> "Definitely, one of the aspects that changed the most after the pandemic was our approach to streaming platforms; from being unknown, they became, in many cases, the gathering place for families", (Interviewer 2).

Likewise, in the triangulation of this section, it stands out that both digitisation during the pandemic transformed and defined the new roles of cinema (Foley, 2021; Soren, 2024). Evidence from the survey, interviews and literature review suggests that consumers are constantly exploring, adjusting and modifying new ways of experiencing audiovisual products.

4.2 Consumption preferences: cinema or home?

As shown in the results of the chapter *Changes and evolution in audiovisual consumption habits*, the pandemic had a fundamental impact on the entertainment sector. It

accelerated the transition to streaming and consolidated more segmented viewing habits, in which viewers no longer associate cinema solely with a social or symbolic activity, but also as an individual act that coexists with everyday life.

In this regard, the following graph shows the frequency with which consumers use streaming platforms in Dublin: 37% of respondents use them daily, followed by 28.3% who use them between 3 and 6 times a week, and 23.9% who use them once or twice a week. These results show that streaming is now part of consumers' daily activities, such as working, eating or spending time at home in their immediate environment.

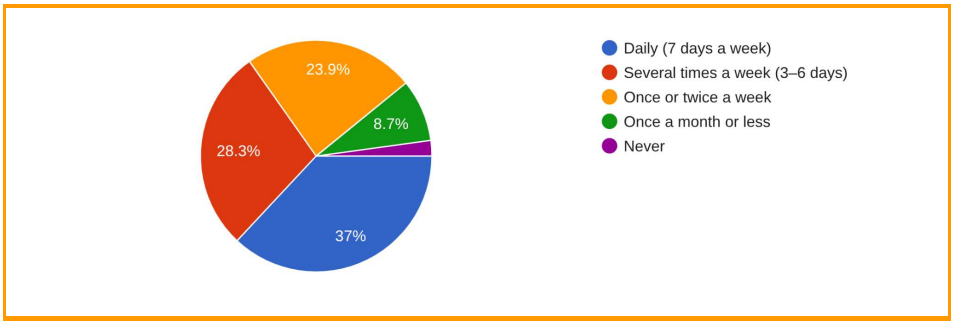


Figure 2. Frequency of use of streaming platforms vs. cinema
Source: survey conducted for this study

Similarly, factors such as accessibility, type of content and price were analysed as decisive when it comes to watching audiovisual products at the cinema or at home. As shown in the question, *What factors influence your decision to watch a film at home or go to the cinema?* The result was that 37% of

respondents preferred the availability of films, followed by comfort with 30.4%, and image and sound quality with 19.6%. This indicates that, even with the boom in streaming, the essential factor in determining whether or not to go to the cinema remains the film listings.

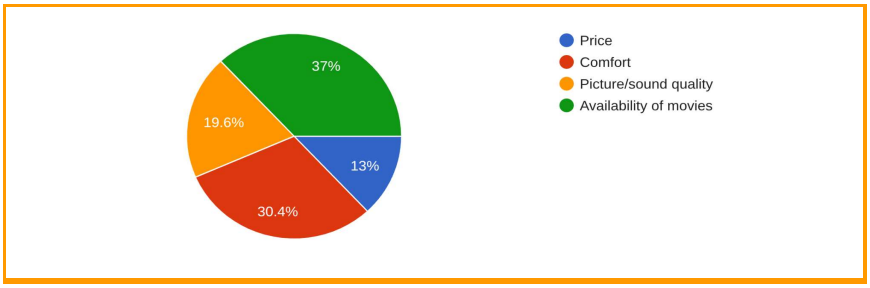


Figure 3. Factors in consumer decision making: cost, convenience, availability, content
Source: survey conducted for this study

Another relevant factor in this regard is choice fatigue caused by oversaturation of options at home (Jenner, 2020; Lotz, 2017). This ties in with the insight gained from interview 1:

> "There is probably an excess of demand for what we can see on platforms such as Netflix, Amazon and Disney; often, we don't even finish what we are watching, or our intention to do so is almost non-existent".

Overall, survey data reflects that platforms are becoming integrated into consumers' daily routines, while interviews and literature reviews reveal something noteworthy: saturation and difficulty in choosing content. In short, the choice is not

intrinsically between home and cinema, but rather between experience and convenience.

4.3 Engagement in the digital age

In the digital age, loyalty and engagement are established through a combination of factors involving algorithm personalisation and social validation. Therefore, in this section, we selected two of the key questions that determined how viewers select their content. Is it an individual decision, or are others influential in making them feel part of a group?

In response to the question *To what extent do other users' comments influence your decision to watch a film or series?*, 35.6% said that their decision is moderately influenced by others, while 20% said very much. This process is carried out through reviews posted on various social networks such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and Letterbox. This coincides with what some researchers express, that audiovisual consumption includes social and collective components, even when it takes place at home.

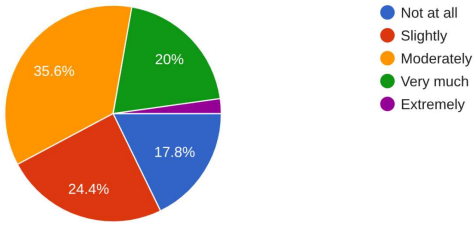


Figure 4. Social dimension of cinema: individual vs. collective experience
Source: survey conducted for this study

In this order, when asked *Do you follow the recommendations offered by streaming platforms?*, 52.2% responded that they do so occasionally, 26.1% responded that they do, and 21.7% responded that they do not.

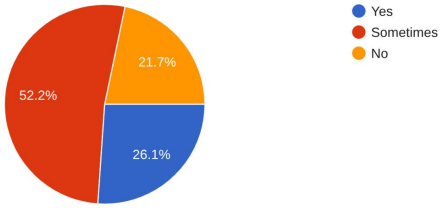


Figure 5. Relevance of streaming recommendations
Source: survey conducted for this study

This means that most users take into account, either fully or moderately, the suggestions and preferences of streaming algorithms when making their choices. This leads them to delegate this selection process to algorithms, which can result in longer stays on platforms and, in certain cases, greater engagement with the brand.

As Liu explains:

> "Platforms use algorithms to capture attention, shape user behaviour, and convert that attention into traffic and consumption. Specifically, algorithms rank content based on user behaviour, such as dwell time and level of engagement" (Liu, 2025, p. 98).

Triangulating survey results with the literature, D'Heer and Courtois (2016) argue that streaming platforms strengthen communities through content interaction and recommendations, which reinforce a sense of belonging. In addition, Lotz (2017) points out that users are no longer a passive audience, but rather personalise their consumption.

Users are shaping their visual experience, intrinsically linked to the influence of others' opinions, but also to the effect of algorithms.

> "By targeting users' psychological responses, recommendation algorithms guide consumer behaviour during engagement and trigger purchase intentions at the cognitive and emotional levels, making consumption determined by both content and psychological factors" (Liu, 2025, p. 100).

4.4 Differentiators and market competition

This subsection offered important findings, as it gathered essential information for understanding how differentiation and segmentation are shaping the audiovisual market.

Surveys and interviews confirmed that, despite the convenience of streaming, the cinema experience continues to be a competitive advantage over platforms, thereby continuing to attract and retain audiences. It is noteworthy that these spaces still have a differentiating and valuable character in the market.

When survey participants were asked if they believe that the technical experience of cinema (screen and sound) is better than at home, 78.3% of respondents said yes, while 21.7% said no.

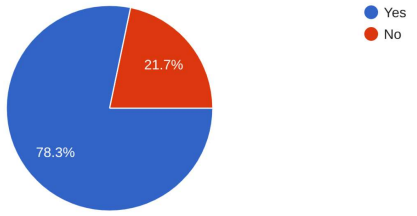


Figure 6. Technical experience at the cinema
Source: survey conducted for this study

When asked why the screen and sound are better in the cinema, responses such as sound quality, screen size and atmosphere stood out as the most predominant sensory and experiential aspects of the cinema.

Based on this data, these insights were coded:

1. **Sensory and technical experience at the cinema:** includes screen size, sound quality and projection in the venue. This reinforces the idea that infrastructure enhances the consumer experience.
2. **Emotional and immersive experience:** atmosphere, recreational space with friends, perception that cinema is 'an experience in itself' were some of the expressions used by participants when asked why they choose cinema over streaming, demonstrating that the collective experience remains relevant today.

"Because the cinema is an experience in itself, that is the reason going to a cinema is really nice, because of the experience (sound, visual quality, screen)" said one respondent.

Similarly, in this regard, respondent 1 stated:

"I haven't been to the cinema in a long time because the screening times in Dublin are strange and uneven, and when I can go, it's already too late. But without a doubt, the first thing I look for when I go is that the theatre has good sound, that it's consistent in every seat, and that they have good popcorn".

3. **Limitations and variability:** some participants mention that, on occasion, the sound volume can be loud or the seats uncomfortable, and even that the films are not to their liking, which shows that not all cinemas and experiences are equally enjoyable for everyone.

On this topic, interviewer 2 stated when asked *What elements do you think differentiate traditional cinema versus streaming?*

> "The elements that most influence me as a film programmer are the availability of independent or arthouse films and the range of world premieres on offer. What sets us apart is that we offer different content that is difficult to find elsewhere, for example on Amazon or Netflix. However, we must not become complacent because more niche platforms, such as Mubi, are beginning to emerge".

The triangulation provided key insights for understanding the research question, as it showed that while cinemas continue to face challenges such as ticket prices, costs and schedules, they have significant differentiators such as technical aspects, content diversification and symbolic and social aspects.

On the other hand, the updated report (CSO, 2025) showed that the number of internet users accessing platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Disney Plus in Ireland increased from 69% in 2024 to 71% in 2025, indicating steady growth in audiovisual consumption.

> "At the cinema, I find it very difficult to sit through the whole film. Streaming offers me more flexibility than the cinema. Therefore, personally,

the flexibility that platforms offer me is much more valuable to me than going somewhere" (interviewer 1).

4.5 Trends in the audiovisual industry

Innovation, flexibility, hybrid competition, and cultural transformation are essential to understanding the future of the audiovisual industry, as reflected in both the interviews and surveys, as well as the literature review on this subtopic. These factors will have a direct impact on the success or failure of both cinemas and streaming.

When asked whether he considered a model of collaboration between cinemas and platforms to be viable, interviewee 2 stated:

"We are likely to see more and more collaborations between cinema and streaming, through premieres, partnerships or events. Dublin has a strong film scene, we just need to get organised so that we can develop better strategies together".

When respondents were asked: *Do you think streaming platforms and traditional cinema can coexist, or will one eventually replace the other?*, 67.4% of participants responded that both could coexist in the long term, 19.6% believe that streaming will eventually replace cinema, and 6.5% of respondents are unsure.

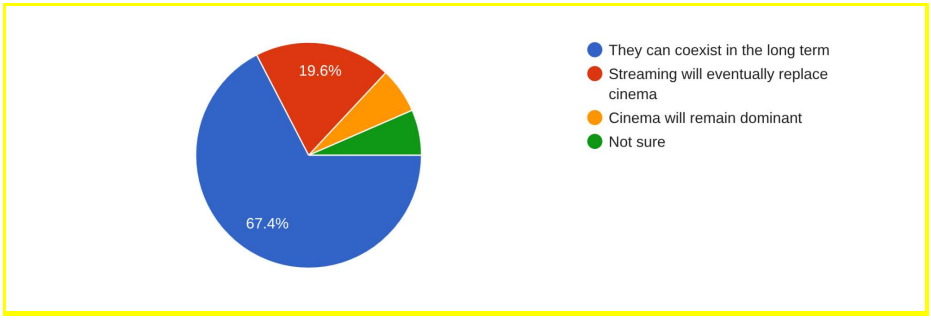


Figure 7. Cinema and streaming: future coexistence?
Source: survey conducted for this study

This brings something significant: most of them see it as a competition in which both models can co-create synergies, as the interviewee also mentions, for the benefit of their audiences.

It will be a priority to identify some of the most prominent players in this industry, ranging from cinemas, platforms, creators and distributors, whose role will be vital in understanding the roles of each, their challenges and limitations. Identifying growth opportunities based on their audiences and generating experiences that reinforce their loyalty and engagement.

Furthermore, Jenner (2023) and Lobato (2019) argue that the increasing use of Artificial Intelligence and algorithms impacts user autonomy by shaping preferences and influencing content discovery on streaming platforms. This process not only segments audiences, but also makes them increasingly dependent on algorithmic personalisation.

> “Through these mechanisms, algorithms reproduce consumption culture continuously, embedding specific behavioral norms into users’ daily practices. In addition, users further internalize recommended content into their lifestyles and social expression via participation, sharing, and interaction” (Liu, 2025, p. 100).

AI is also experimenting with interaction in content and content personalisation. For example, it has begun to use technology to create characters that users can interact with in their own way, as well as props and settings in the narratives of productions.

However, human supervision is necessary to protect users' personal data. Similarly, it is important to monitor how creative automation can reproduce inequalities and ethical and editorial biases (Crawford, 2021).

In triangulation, authors such as Lotz (2022) and Crisp (2021) reveal that cinema is part of a more sensory and immersive experience, even ritualistic; while streaming is integrated into everyday life, appealing to convenience, flexibility and immediate access, with an increasingly widespread use of digital tools that help optimise supply and demand through the use of AI and personalised algorithms.

Chapter V

5. Conclusion

Consumption habits and audiences for audiovisual content accelerated following the pandemic and digitalisation. While cinema offers a collective and sensory experience, streaming provides convenience and personalisation.

Consumers want to be in control of their daily activities and carry them out in a way that saves them time, money and effort, but with flexibility, availability and immediate access. In this sense, streaming accompanies users in other activities in their routine. However, audiences will demand greater adaptability, meaningful experiences and emotional connection, so both formats must evolve to remain complementary.

It is observed that audiovisual consumption in general, with a focus on Dublin, will be hybrid, with the coexistence of streaming and cinema through innovation, loyalty strategies, and immersive events.

In addition, the use of artificial intelligence will reshape the user experience thanks to tools that profile their interests and tastes and reinforce the added value of streaming platforms.

The film industry must evaluate these significant adjustments and build audience loyalty with marketing and communication

strategies that enrich its symbolic and cultural value. Analysing these mechanisms, both in terms of consumption habits and perception, is essential for cinema and streaming to prevail as options in the audiovisual industry.

5.1 Limitations

The research had some limitations, such as the time available for its preparation. Despite academic and professional interest, being in a foreign country with a different language and unfamiliarity with the processes, conducting interviews and drafting information took longer than expected.

However, due to the interest in social and cultural issues, relevant information was gathered from both the interviews and the surveys, and timely access was gained to various specialists in the field.

Aware that the sample of respondents is not purely representative of the population, the findings presented are validated and current, going beyond consumption in Dublin and potentially useful in a global context.

5.2 Recommendations

Some of the recommendations include continuing specialised research on children and young people, understanding how they consume audiovisual products and the different devices they use to do so. Updated studies on the use of artificial intelligence and selective algorithms and their impact on

building new audiences, as well as ethical and moral approaches that are intertwined in this landscape.

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