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Nostalgia Marketing and Its Impact on the Film Industry

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AUTHOR: Forero Sotelo, Lina Maria

Tutor: Miguel Molina, Maria Rosario de

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To God;

To my family;

To my incredible advisor, María;

To my sister (a true representative of Generation Z);

To my amazing long-distance friends (3+1);

And to the version of myself who arrived in Spain with the dream and purpose of completing this
Master's degree.

RESUMEN

En una era definida por la transformación digital y la saturación de franquicias, el marketing de nostalgia ha surgido como un mecanismo estratégico central para la industria cinematográfica contemporánea. El presente trabajo de fin de máster examina cómo se emplea la nostalgia de manera sistemática para potenciar el compromiso del consumidor, fortalecer la lealtad a la marca y cerrar brechas generacionales, utilizando a The Walt Disney Company como caso representativo. Siguiendo la metodología de estudio de caso de Yin (2009), la investigación utiliza un enfoque de triangulación de métodos mixtos que integra la revisión de literatura, materiales promocionales, análisis de contenido basado en Instagram y datos de rendimiento de mercado. El análisis se centra en una cronología estratégica que abarca desde *Alicia en el país de las maravillas* (2010) hasta lanzamientos recientes y futuros como *La Sirenita* (2023), *Lilo & Stitch* (2025) y *Freakier Friday* (2025).

Los hallazgos revelan que la nostalgia funciona como un recurso multidimensional y no como un mero reclamo estético. Al identificar seis categorías nostálgicas —continuidad narrativa, herencia de marca, asociación con celebridades, claves visuales, referencias musicales y elementos simbólicos—, el estudio establece una jerarquía clara donde la narrativa y la herencia de marca actúan como los principales motores del compromiso. Además, la investigación identifica una marcada división generacional: los Millennials se involucran a través de una nostalgia basada en la memoria, mientras que la Generación Z experimenta una "nostalgia mediada" amplificada por plataformas como Instagram y Disney+.

En última instancia, la disertación concluye que el marketing de nostalgia facilita un "ciclo virtuoso" de reconsumo. Al empaquetar estratégicamente narrativas familiares a través de ecosistemas digitales, Disney transforma el patrimonio cultural en una ventaja competitiva sostenible, asegurando su relevancia a largo plazo en el panorama del "Marketing 6.0".

Palabras clave: marketing de nostalgia, Disney, industria cinematográfica, Millennials, Generación Z, comportamiento del consumidor, branding, remakes, transformación digital, streaming, compromiso de la audiencia.

RESUM

En una era definida per la transformació digital i la saturació de franquícies, el màrqueting de nostàlgia ha sorgit com un mecanisme estratègic central per a la indústria cinematogràfica contemporània. El present treball de fi de màster examina com s'utilitza la nostàlgia de manera sistemàtica per a potenciar el compromís del consumidor, enfortir la lleialtat a la marca i tancar escletxes generacionals, utilitzant The Walt Disney Company com a cas representatiu. Seguint la metodologia d'estudi de cas de Yin (2009), la investigació utilitza un enfocament de triangulació de mètodes mixtos que integra la revisió de literatura, materials promocionals, anàlisi de contingut basat en Instagram i dades de rendiment de mercat. L'anàlisi se centra en una cronologia estratègica que abasta des d'*Alicia en el país de les meravelles* (2010) fins a llançaments recents i futurs com *La Sireneta* (2023), *Lilo & Stitch* (2025) i *Freakier Friday* (2025).

Els resultats revelen que la nostàlgia funciona com un recurs multidimensional i no com un mer reclam estètic. En identificar sis categories nostàlgiques —continuïtat narrativa, herència de marca, associació amb celebritats, claus visuals, referències musicals i elements simbòlics—, l'estudi estableix una jerarquia clara on la narrativa i l'herència de marca actuen com els principals motors del compromís. A més, la investigació identifica una marcada divisió generacional: els Millennials s'involucren a través d'una nostàlgia basada en la memòria, mentre que la Generació Z experimenta una "nostàlgia mediada" amplificada per plataformes com Instagram i Disney+.

En última instància, la dissertació conclou que el màrqueting de nostàlgia facilita un "cicle virtuós" de reconsum. En empaquetar estratègicament narratives familiars a través d'ecosistemes digitals, Disney transforma el patrimoni cultural en un avantatge competitiu sostenible, assegurant la seua rellevància a llarg termini en el panorama del "Màrqueting 6.0".

Paraules clau: màrqueting de nostàlgia, Disney, indústria cinematogràfica, Millennials, Generació Z, comportament del consumidor, branding, remakes, transformació digital, streaming, compromís de l'audiència.

ABSTRACT

In an era of digital transformation and franchise saturation, nostalgia marketing has emerged as a core strategic mechanism for the contemporary film industry. This thesis project examines how nostalgia is systematically employed to enhance consumer engagement, strengthen brand loyalty, and bridge generational gaps, using The Walt Disney Company as a representative case. Following Yin's (2009) case study methodology, the research utilizes a mixed-methods triangulation approach—integrating literature review, promotional materials, Instagram-based content analysis, and market performance data. The analysis focuses on a strategic timeline from *Alice in Wonderland* (2010) to recent and forthcoming releases like *The Little Mermaid* (2023), *Lilo & Stitch* (2025), and *Freakier Friday* (2025).

The findings reveal that nostalgia operates as a multidimensional resource rather than a purely aesthetic appeal. By identifying six nostalgic categories —narrative continuity, brand heritage, celebrity association, visual cues, musical references, and symbolic elements— the study establishes a clear hierarchy where narrative and brand heritage serve as the primary drivers of engagement. Furthermore, the research identifies a distinct generational divide: Millennials engage through memory-based nostalgia, while Generation Z experiences "mediated nostalgia" amplified by platforms such as Instagram and Disney+.

Ultimately, the dissertation concludes that nostalgia marketing facilitates a "virtuous cycle" of re-consumption. By strategically repackaging familiar narratives across digital ecosystems, Disney transforms cultural heritage into a sustainable competitive advantage, ensuring long-term relevance in the "Marketing 6.0" landscape.

Keywords: nostalgia marketing, Disney, film industry, Millennials, Generation Z, consumer behavior, branding, remakes digital transformation, streaming, audience engagement.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

This chapter introduces the research topic and establishes the foundations of the study. The aim of it is to provide a comprehensive overview of the research. Starting with a summary context of nostalgia marketing within the contemporary film industry, it also outlines the motivation and purpose of the research, defines the objectives and clarifies the scope and delimitations of the study. Additionally, this chapter presents the overall structure of the TFM, offering a clear roadmap for the subsequent chapters.

1.1 Summary

In recent years, the film industry has experienced a growing reliance on nostalgia as a strategic marketing tool. Faced with increasing competition from streaming platforms, changing consumer habits, and content saturation, film studios have sought to minimize risk by revisiting well-known intellectual properties. Nostalgia marketing leverages consumers' emotional connections to past experiences, memories, and cultural products, creating a sense of familiarity and emotional comfort that can influence audience engagement and consumption decisions.

Within this context, nostalgia has become particularly relevant in industries driven by emotional storytelling, such as cinema. The revival of classic films through remakes, sequels, and live-action adaptations reflects a broader trend in which brands capitalize on pre-existing emotional bonds. This strategy not only targets audiences who grew up with the original content but also introduces iconic narratives to younger generations.

Disney represents a leading example of this phenomenon. As one of the most influential entertainment brands globally, the company has increasingly relied on nostalgic content to reinforce brand continuity and emotional loyalty. Recent releases such as *The Little Mermaid* (2023), *Lilo & Stitch* (2025), and *Freakier Friday* (2025) illustrate how nostalgia marketing is used to connect with both Millennial and Generation Z audiences. Understanding how these strategies function and their impact on audience engagement is therefore essential to analyzing current marketing practices within the film industry.

1.2 Motivation and purpose of the study

The motivation for this study arises from the growing prominence of nostalgia marketing and its strategic relevance in contemporary business and marketing contexts. While nostalgia has been widely discussed in academic literature, its application within the film industry —particularly as a tool for engaging multiple generations simultaneously— remains an area of increasing interest.

From a personal and academic perspective, this topic is especially relevant due to its intersection between marketing strategy, consumer psychology, and cultural production. The film industry

provides a rich environment for analyzing emotional branding strategies, as films function not only as commercial products but also as cultural experiences.

The purpose of this study is to examine how nostalgia marketing is strategically employed by Disney in its recent film remakes and to assess its effectiveness in engaging both Millennial and Generation Z audiences. By combining theoretical insights with an applied case study, this research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of nostalgia as a marketing strategy and its role in shaping consumer perception, emotional engagement, and brand loyalty in the modern film industry.

1.3 Objectives

General Objective

To analyze the role and impact of nostalgia marketing in the film industry through a case study of Disney's recent film remakes and sequels.

Specific Objectives

- To review and synthesize existing academic literature on nostalgia marketing, emotional branding, and generational consumer behavior to establish a robust conceptual framework.
- To identify and quantify the key nostalgic elements used Instagram posts for Disney's recent film remakes, determining their prevalence through thematic frequency analysis.
- To analyze how these nostalgic elements are visually and narratively articulated in promotional materials and Instagram-based marketing campaigns.
- To examine audience reception and engagement, specially focusing on the emotional and cultural response of Millennials and Generation Z audiences.
- To assess the effectiveness of nostalgia marketing as a strategic tool for brand continuity, market performance, and long-term audience connection in the film industry.

1.4 Scope and delimitations

This study focuses on the analysis of nostalgia marketing as a strategic tool within the film industry, with particular attention to Disney as a representative case. The research is limited to the examination of selected recent film remakes released by Disney, within a starting point back in 2010 with *Alice in Wonderland* and the most recent ones between 2023 and 2025, namely *The Little Mermaid*, *Lilo & Stitch*, and *Freakier Friday*. These films were chosen due to their strong nostalgic value and relevance to the research objectives.

The study adopts a qualitative approach based on secondary data, including promotional materials, box office performance data, and audience reception indicators such as reviews and ratings. Primary data collection methods, such as surveys or interviews, are not included within the scope of this research. Additionally, the analysis focuses specifically on Millennial and Generation Z audiences, excluding other demographic segments.

While the findings offer significant insights into Disney's strategic framework, they are not intended to be statistically generalized across the entire media sector. Rather, the study aims for analytical

significance within the specific context of major studio “remake culture” and its impact on contemporary audiences.

1.5 Structure of the TFM

This TFM is structured into six main chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the research topic, objectives, scope, and overall structure of the study. Chapter 2 presents the theoretical framework, reviewing relevant literature on nostalgia marketing, consumer psychology, generational marketing, and emotional branding within the film industry. Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology, including the research design, data sources, and analytical approach.

Chapter 4 develops the Disney case study, analyzing the use of nostalgic elements in selected film remakes and their associated marketing strategies. Chapter 5 discusses the main findings of the study, linking empirical results with the theoretical framework and addressing the research questions. Finally, Chapter 6 presents the conclusions of the research, highlighting key contributions, managerial implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

Theoretical Framework

The concept of nostalgia has a long and complex intellectual history, originating far beyond its contemporary use in marketing and media studies. The term was first introduced in the seventeenth century by the Swiss physician Johannes Hofer, who described nostalgia as a medical condition associated with homesickness and emotional distress caused by separation from one's homeland. Over time, this pathological understanding evolved, and nostalgia came to be recognized as a psychological and emotional phenomenon linked to memory, identity, and personal experience (Holotová et al., 2020; Mehdian Rad, 2024).

During the twentieth century, nostalgia gradually shifted from being perceived as a negative emotional state to being understood as a predominantly positive and meaningful experience. Scholars began to conceptualize nostalgia as an effective response that connects individuals to their past, offering emotional comfort, continuity, and a sense of belonging (Holotová et al., 2020; Rana et al., 2021). This reconceptualization laid the foundation for nostalgia's incorporation into cultural production, media, and eventually marketing practices.

In recent decades, nostalgia has gained increasing relevance in consumer research and marketing theory. As markets became more saturated and competition intensified, brands began to leverage emotional strategies to differentiate themselves. Nostalgia emerged as a powerful marketing tool capable of fostering emotional bonds, reinforcing brand authenticity, and enhancing consumer engagement (Holotová et al., 2020; Rana et al., 2021). This evolution gave rise to concepts such as nostalgia marketing, retro marketing, and heritage marketing, which emphasize the strategic revival and reinterpretation of past cultural elements.

The growing prominence of nostalgia marketing is closely linked to broader social and technological transformations. In fast-paced, digitally driven societies characterized by uncertainty and constant change, nostalgia offers emotional stability and familiarity. Digital platforms and social media have further amplified nostalgic experiences by enabling the circulation, reinterpretation, and sharing of past-oriented content across generations (Butcher & Toh, 2025; Holotová et al., 2020). As a result, nostalgia has become a dynamic and participatory phenomenon rather than a purely individual or retrospective one.

Nostalgia marketing has proven particularly influential in cultural and creative industries such as film, television, publishing, and gaming. The resurgence of remakes, reboots, sequels, and retellings reflects a strategic reliance on familiar narratives that reduce market risk while appealing to both older and younger audiences (Butcher & Toh, 2025; Goldman, 2023; Heinze & Krämer, 2015). These practices demonstrate how nostalgia can successfully bridge generational divides by combining historical references with contemporary innovation.

This chapter reviews the academic literature on nostalgia marketing, consumer psychology, generational dynamics, and media remakes to establish a theoretical foundation for the present study. By synthesizing key contributions from marketing, media, and cultural studies, the chapter provides

the conceptual basis for analyzing nostalgia marketing in the film industry and, subsequently, for examining Disney as a representative case of contemporary nostalgic strategy.

Building on this historical and conceptual evolution, the following sections examine nostalgia from a marketing and consumer behavior perspective. The literature review first clarifies the concept of nostalgia in marketing, establishing its key definitions and theoretical foundations. It then explores the psychological and emotional mechanisms underlying nostalgic appeal, the role of generational differences in shaping consumer responses, and the application of nostalgia marketing within media and cultural industries, particularly film. Finally, the chapter addresses the implications of nostalgia for brand loyalty and audience engagement, providing a comprehensive framework to support the empirical analysis developed in subsequent chapters.

2.1 Concept of Nostalgia in Marketing

Nostalgia has progressively evolved from a psychological and cultural concept into a strategic tool widely employed in marketing and media industries. In the context of marketing, nostalgia is increasingly framed as an emotional mechanism that can be intentionally activated to influence consumer attitudes and behaviors. Contemporary scholarship emphasizes that nostalgia should not be understood merely as a sentimental longing for the past, but rather as an active process of meaning construction that links past experiences, cultural memory, and present consumption practices (Rana et al., 2021).

In contemporary research, nostalgia is predominantly understood as a vehicle; a positive, emotionally rich experience that connects individuals to personally or collectively meaningful aspects of the past. This reconceptualization laid the foundation for the emergence of nostalgia as a strategic tool in marketing and consumer research (Mehdian Rad, 2024; Rana et al., 2021). Rather than being a passive emotional reaction, nostalgia is now widely recognized as a deliberately activated response capable of shaping attitudes, preferences, and behaviors.

Mehdian Rad (2024) provides one of the most comprehensive conceptualizations of nostalgia marketing to date and defines nostalgia marketing as the strategic use of past-related cues—such as symbols, narratives, characters, aesthetics, or cultural references—to evoke emotional responses that positively influence consumer perception and engagement. Importantly, Rad distinguishes nostalgia marketing from simple retro imitation, emphasizing its intentionality, psychological grounding, and strategic alignment with brand objectives.

A key contribution to the conceptual development of nostalgia marketing is the distinction between different types of nostalgia. Recent literature differentiates between historical nostalgia and imaginative nostalgia. Historical nostalgia refers to longing for a personally experienced past, whereas imaginative nostalgia involves emotional attachment to a past that is mediated, reconstructed, or idealized through cultural products (Butcher & Toh, 2025; Mehdian Rad, 2024). This distinction is particularly relevant in media and entertainment contexts, where audiences may feel nostalgic toward stories, characters, or aesthetics they did not personally experience; and the blending of these two

forms allows brands and media producers to appeal simultaneously to older consumers with direct memories and younger audiences who engage nostalgically through cultural exposure.

Audiovisual studies further enrich this understanding by emphasizing nostalgia's narrative and symbolic dimensions. Cenizo (2021) argues that nostalgia in audiovisual fiction operates through the evocation of collective and cultural memory, relying on intertextual references and shared symbolic codes. In this sense, nostalgia is not limited to individual lived experience but is constructed through media texts that audiences recognize as culturally meaningful.

Building on this distinction, Austin (2023) frames nostalgia as a forward-looking and transformative strategy rather than a purely retrospective one. In her analysis of contemporary media reimagining, nostalgia is presented as a process of reinterpretation that allows familiar narratives to be adapted to current social values and audience expectations. Nostalgia, therefore, functions as a dynamic mechanism that preserves emotional continuity while enabling innovation and cultural updating.

Within this framework, nostalgia operates across both individual and collective dimensions. Individual nostalgia draws on personal memories and lived experiences, while collective nostalgia is rooted in shared cultural memory, media texts, and historically significant narratives (Goldman, 2023; Mehdian Rad, 2024). This distinction is particularly relevant for media and cultural industries, where audiences may feel nostalgic toward texts, they did not personally experience but recognize as culturally iconic.

Taken together, these perspectives suggest that nostalgia marketing is best understood as a strategic, emotionally driven practice that combines memory, cultural recognition, and reinterpretation. Rather than reproducing the past unchanged, nostalgia marketing selectively reconstructs it, creating emotionally resonant experiences that connect audiences to both familiar and contemporary meanings.

As a result, nostalgia marketing has become increasingly prevalent across industries, particularly in contexts characterized by rapid technological change, cultural fragmentation, and social uncertainty. In such environments, nostalgia offers emotional stability, familiarity, and meaning, reinforcing its relevance as a contemporary marketing strategy (Holotová et al., 2020; Rana et al., 2021).

Building on this conceptual understanding of nostalgia as a strategic and emotionally driven marketing practice, it is necessary to examine the psychological mechanisms through which nostalgic cues influence consumer perception, decision-making, and brand relationships.

2.2 Consumer psychology and emotional branding

From a consumer psychology perspective, nostalgia is closely associated with emotional processes that influence perception, decision-making, and long-term brand relationships. Extensive research shows that nostalgic stimuli predominantly evoke positive affect, including emotions such as warmth, happiness, comfort, security, and a sense of belonging (Holotová et al., 2020; Rana et al., 2021). These emotions contribute to favorable cognitive and behavioral responses, positioning nostalgia as a particularly effective emotional trigger within marketing contexts (Cui, 2015; Dam et al., 2024).

Nostalgia marketing is especially powerful because it operates at an emotional level that extends beyond functional product attributes. Emotional branding literature highlights that nostalgic cues

strengthen emotional attachment by linking brands to meaningful personal memories, formative life stages, or culturally significant moments (Mehdian Rad, 2024; Rana et al., 2021). Through this process, brands become embedded within consumers' self-concepts, reinforcing feelings of self-continuity and identity coherence. Such emotional bonds are particularly valuable in mature or saturated markets, where differentiation based on functional features alone is increasingly limited (Dam et al., 2024).

A key psychological effect of nostalgia lies in its ability to reduce perceived risk and uncertainty. Familiar references from the past enhance trust and credibility, making consumers more receptive to marketing messages and brand communications (Holotová et al., 2020). This mechanism is especially relevant in experience-based industries, such as entertainment and media, where consumption decisions involve high levels of emotional and experiential risk. By drawing on recognizable narratives, characters, or aesthetic styles, nostalgic content lowers uncertainty and increases consumers' willingness to engage.

Nostalgia also functions as an emotional coping mechanism. In periods characterized by rapid technological change, social instability, or cultural fragmentation, consumers tend to seek emotionally meaningful content that offers reassurance and psychological comfort (Butcher & Toh, 2025; Rana et al., 2021). Nostalgic narratives provide a sense of stability and continuity, helping individuals emotionally navigate change while maintaining a connection to familiar cultural references. This psychological function helps explain the growing reliance on nostalgia-driven strategies in branding and entertainment.

Digital environments have further transformed how nostalgic emotions are experienced and mediated. Research on digital nostalgia marketing highlights that online platforms enable continuous access to past-related content, allowing consumers to revisit, reinterpret, and share nostalgic experiences across time and space (Tapas et al., 2025). Social media platforms, in particular, amplify nostalgic emotions by facilitating interaction, participation, and collective memory-building. Through comments, shares, remixes, and user-generated content, nostalgia becomes a shared emotional experience rather than an individual one.

Social media strategies play a crucial role in activating and sustaining nostalgic engagement. Promotional campaigns that incorporate nostalgic imagery, storytelling, or cultural references encourage emotional sharing and audience participation, strengthening emotional bonds between consumers and brands (O'Keefe-Smith, 2023). These strategies are especially effective in the film industry, where anticipation, emotional connection, and community engagement are central to audience reception.

The psychological effectiveness of nostalgia is also reflected in entertainment consumption outcomes. Research on box office performance indicates that films drawing on familiar narratives, recognizable intellectual properties, or culturally embedded references benefit from heightened audience interest and emotional engagement (Pangarker & Smit, 2013). Nostalgia-driven familiarity not only attracts audiences but also reinforces emotional investment, contributing to stronger initial reception and sustained engagement.

Overall, the literature suggests that nostalgia functions as a powerful emotional mechanism within consumer psychology, enhancing branding effectiveness by fostering trust, emotional attachment, and engagement. Its impact is particularly pronounced in digitally mediated and experience-based

industries, where emotional resonance, familiarity, and identity connection play a decisive role in shaping consumer behavior.

While nostalgia operates as a powerful emotional mechanism across consumer contexts, its effects are not uniform across audiences, making generational differences a critical factor in understanding how nostalgic strategies function in contemporary markets.

2.3 Generational marketing: Millennials and Generation Z

Generational differences are central to understanding how nostalgia operates in contemporary markets. Research consistently indicates that consumers from different age groups interpret nostalgia in distinct ways, shaped by their formative life experiences, cultural exposure, and technological environments (Cui, 2015). Age influences not only the intensity of nostalgic responses but also the type of nostalgia consumers engage with, making generational segmentation a critical consideration in nostalgia marketing strategies (Butcher & Toh, 2025).

Older generations are more likely to experience direct or historical nostalgia, grounded in personal memories of a lived past. In contrast, younger generations, particularly Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996) and Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012) (Mehdian Rad, 2024) frequently engage with imaginative or mediated nostalgia, which is constructed through cultural narratives, audiovisual fiction, and media texts rather than firsthand experience (Butcher & Toh, 2025; Cenizo, 2021). This form of nostalgia allows younger audiences to develop emotional attachment to past eras, characters, or aesthetics they did not directly experience but have come to recognize as culturally meaningful.

Marketing literature emphasizes that nostalgia marketing is inherently generational but not generationally exclusive. Mehdian Rad (2024) argues that nostalgia strategies are most effective when they successfully blend familiar elements from the past with contemporary reinterpretations. This blending approach enables brands to appeal simultaneously to older consumers through historical nostalgia and to younger audiences through imaginative nostalgia, creating shared emotional ground across age groups.

Empirical studies in the film industry further support this distinction. Research on audience segmentation demonstrates that different age groups respond to distinct narrative, aesthetic, and emotional cues (Pangarker & Smit, 2013). While older audiences are often motivated by emotional familiarity and memory activation, younger audiences are driven by curiosity, cultural relevance, visual appeal, and narrative innovation rather than memory alone (Butcher & Toh, 2025; Shackleford et al., 2026). The strategic combination of legacy elements with modern storytelling techniques enables nostalgic content to bridge generational divides.

Technological mediation plays a decisive role in shaping these generational dynamics. Digital platforms, streaming services, and social media facilitate continuous access to past cultural products, enabling Millennials and Generation Z to encounter nostalgic content through remakes, reboots, adaptations, and curated media archives (Holotová et al., 2020; Rimscha & Ehrlich, 2024). Through these platforms, nostalgia becomes a shared cultural experience rather than a purely individual memory.

Social media further amplifies this effect by encouraging interaction, reinterpretation, and collective engagement with nostalgic content. Promotional strategies that leverage digital storytelling, participatory culture, and fan communities strengthen nostalgic connections among younger audiences (O'Keefe-Smith, 2023). This digital circulation allows nostalgic narratives to remain relevant within fast-evolving media environments.

Studies comparing adaptations and original film releases indicate that familiarity and brand recognition have become increasingly important in attracting heterogeneous audiences (Fondevila-Gascón et al., 2023). Austin (2023) reinforces this perspective by demonstrating how reimagined narratives can function as generational bridges, preserving emotional continuity for older viewers while aligning with contemporary values and aesthetics valued by younger audiences.

As a result, in this context, nostalgia marketing emerges as a flexible and effective cross-generational strategy. By strategically combining memory-based appeal with reinterpretation and digital mediation, brands and media producers can address diverse audience segments within an increasingly fragmented and competitive media landscape.

These generational dynamics are particularly visible in the film industry, where nostalgia-based strategies are widely employed to address diverse audiences while managing creative and commercial risk.

2.4 Nostalgia Marketing in the Film Industry

The film industry represents one of the most prominent and strategically relevant contexts for the application of nostalgia marketing. Characterized by high production and distribution costs, intense competition, and significant uncertainty regarding audience reception, the industry increasingly relies on familiar intellectual properties as a risk-mitigation strategy. As a result, remakes, sequels, reboots, adaptations, and retellings have become central components of contemporary film production and distribution strategies (Heinze & Krämer, 2015; Kim et al., 2021).

Research on nostalgia, retro, and heritage marketing highlights that films drawing on established narratives, recognizable characters, and culturally embedded stories benefit from increased visibility and audience recognition (Dam et al., 2024). These strategies leverage collective cultural memory and emotional attachment, reducing perceived risk for audiences when choosing among a wide range of entertainment options. Familiarity plays a decisive role in audience decision-making, particularly in experience-based industries such as film, where consumption outcomes are uncertain prior to viewing.

From an audiovisual perspective, nostalgia in film operates through multiple expressive dimensions, including narrative structures, visual aesthetics, music, and intertextual references. Cenizo (2021) demonstrates that nostalgic audiovisual fiction strategically evokes collective memory by incorporating symbolic cues that audiences recognize and emotionally interpret. Iconic scenes, soundtracks, character archetypes, and visual styles serve as emotional triggers that activate nostalgic responses, encouraging both engagement and interpretive participation. These mechanisms allow films to resonate across different generations, even when audiences did not directly experience the original historical or cultural context.

Digital nostalgia marketing further amplifies these effects by extending nostalgic narratives beyond the cinematic text itself. Promotional materials such as trailers, posters, teasers, and social media campaigns increasingly emphasize iconic elements from earlier films or franchises, reinforcing emotional recognition before release (Holotová et al., 2020; Tapas et al., 2025). Through digital platforms, nostalgic content becomes part of an ongoing transmedia experience, sustaining anticipation and emotional connection throughout the promotional cycle.

Empirical research on box office performance supports the strategic value of nostalgia-based film production. Studies indicate that familiarity, franchise recognition, and prior audience awareness are significant determinants of commercial success (Kim et al., 2021; Pangarker & Smit, 2013). Films associated with well-known intellectual properties benefit from stronger initial attendance, reduced marketing uncertainty, and greater audience trust. Complementary research identifying milestone films further highlights the long-term cultural and economic value of influential cinematic texts that continue to be revisited, reinterpreted, and reintroduced to new audiences over time (Bioglio & Pensa, 2018).

Adaptations and remakes are particularly prominent within contemporary film markets. Comparative analyses of adaptations versus original film releases reveal a clear trend toward familiar content, especially in broadband and streaming-driven societies where content saturation intensifies competition for audience attention (Fondevila-Gascón et al., 2023). Fairytale retellings, live-action adaptations, and franchise expansions exemplify this tendency, as they draw on shared cultural narratives while updating themes, aesthetics, and values for contemporary audiences (Goldman, 2023).

Importantly, remakes and adaptations should not be understood merely as repetitive practices. Heinze & Krämer (2015) conceptualize remaking as a cultural and industrial process that balances repetition with innovation, allowing studios to preserve narrative familiarity while introducing creative reinterpretation. Austin (2023) similarly argues that reimagined narratives function as strategic bridges between past and present, maintaining emotional continuity for long-standing audiences while aligning with contemporary social norms and expectations.

Taken together, these studies demonstrate that nostalgia marketing in the film industry operates at the intersection of emotional appeal, cultural memory, and industrial strategy. By combining familiarity with innovation, and emotional resonance with commercial pragmatism, nostalgia-driven film production has become a central mechanism through which studios manage risk, attract diverse audiences, and sustain long-term brand value in an increasingly competitive media landscape.

Beyond its role as a production and promotional strategy, nostalgia marketing also has important implications for long-term audience relationships, brand loyalty, and sustained engagement within media franchises.

2.5 Brand loyalty and audience engagement

A consistent and well-documented finding across the literature is the strong relationship between nostalgia, brand loyalty, and sustained audience engagement. Nostalgic content fosters deep emotional attachment by reconnecting audiences with meaningful memories, familiar narratives, and

culturally significant symbols. These emotional bonds encourage repeat consumption, positive word-of-mouth, advocacy, and long-term commitment to brands and media properties (Butcher & Toh, 2025; Rana et al., 2021).

In the context of the media and film industries, nostalgia-driven engagement often extends beyond passive consumption. Audiences actively compare original texts with remakes or reinterpretations, discuss differences and similarities, and participate in evaluative and interpretive practices, particularly within digital environments (Holotová et al., 2020). This participatory engagement strengthens brand ecosystems by fostering emotional investment, community interaction, and sustained relevance over time.

Research on retro marketing highlights that nostalgic strategies are particularly effective in building emotional loyalty rather than transactional loyalty. By activating emotional memories and identity-related associations, nostalgic content reinforces long-term consumer–brand relationships that persist beyond individual releases (Holotová et al., 2020). This emotional loyalty is especially valuable in franchise-based industries, where maintaining audience interest across sequels, adaptations, and reboots is essential for long-term success.

Studies on reconsumption behavior further explain nostalgia’s role in sustaining engagement. Audiences derive psychological and emotional benefits from re-experiencing familiar films and television content, including comfort, enjoyment, emotional reassurance, and a sense of continuity (Shackleford et al., 2026). These benefits increase the likelihood of repeat viewing and strengthen loyalty toward specific media brands, franchises, and storytelling universes. Reconsumption thus becomes an active mechanism through which nostalgia reinforces long-term audience relationships.

Remakes and reinterpretations play a central role in this process. Rather than simply reproducing existing content, remade films invite audiences to revisit familiar narratives while simultaneously evaluating their contemporary adaptations (Heinze & Krämer, 2015). This dual process sustains engagement by combining emotional familiarity with curiosity and critical comparison. When familiarity is effectively balanced with innovation, nostalgia-driven remakes can deepen long-term brand attachment and encourage continued audience investment (Butcher & Toh, 2025).

The persistence of nostalgic engagement is further illustrated by the growing prominence of fairytale retellings and culturally iconic narratives. Such texts draw on shared cultural memory while adapting themes, aesthetics, and values to contemporary contexts, enabling sustained relevance across generations (Goldman, 2023). Similarly, research on milestone films highlights how culturally influential cinematic texts maintain long-term significance through continuous reinterpretation and reintroduction to new audiences (Bioglio & Pensa, 2018).

Media convergence further amplifies these effects by allowing nostalgic content to circulate across multiple platforms, formats, and distribution channels. Through streaming services, social media, and transmedia storytelling, nostalgic films and franchises remain present within everyday cultural consumption, reinforcing audience engagement and brand visibility over time (Rimscha & Ehrlich, 2024).

Taken together, these findings suggest that nostalgia marketing functions as a long-term relational strategy rather than a short-term promotional tactic. By fostering emotional attachment, encouraging

reconsumption, and sustaining participatory engagement, nostalgia transforms brands and media properties into enduring cultural references. This capacity to maintain relevance, loyalty, and emotional resonance across generations positions nostalgia as a central mechanism for long-term audience engagement within contemporary media industries.

Overall, the literature demonstrates that nostalgia marketing functions as a multidimensional strategy that combines emotional psychology, generational dynamics, and industrial practice. Within the film industry, nostalgia has become a key mechanism for managing risk, engaging diverse audiences, and sustaining long-term brand value. This theoretical framework provides the foundation for the empirical analysis developed in the following chapters, with particular focus on Disney as a leading example of nostalgia-driven film production and promotion.

2.6 Summary of key concepts

1. Nostalgia

Nostalgia is a complex emotional state characterized by a sentimental longing for personally or collectively meaningful aspects of the past. Contemporary research conceptualizes nostalgia as a predominantly positive emotional experience that reinforces identity continuity, emotional comfort, and social connectedness rather than as a purely melancholic feeling (Holotová et al., 2020; Rana et al., 2021).

2. Nostalgia Marketing

Nostalgia marketing refers to the strategic use of past-related cues—such as symbols, narratives, characters, aesthetics, or cultural references—to evoke emotional responses that positively influence consumer perception, engagement, and behavior. Unlike simple retro imitation, nostalgia marketing is intentional, psychologically grounded, and aligned with long-term brand objectives (Mehdian Rad, 2024). In the film industry, nostalgia marketing leverages cultural memory to reduce uncertainty, enhance emotional resonance, and strengthen audience relationships.

3. Historical (Direct) Nostalgia

Historical nostalgia describes emotional longing for a past that individuals have personally experienced or remember through lived events. It is grounded in autobiographical memory and is most commonly observed among older audiences who have direct emotional connections to earlier cultural products or historical periods (Mehdian Rad, 2024; Rana et al., 2021). In film, historical nostalgia is activated through faithful remakes, sequels, or references to original narratives that audiences associate with their own past experiences.

4. Imaginative (Indirect/Mediated) Nostalgia

Imaginative nostalgia refers to emotional attachment to a past that is not personally experienced but is instead mediated, reconstructed, or idealized through cultural texts such as films, television series, or digital media. This form of nostalgia is particularly relevant among Millennials and Generation Z, who engage nostalgically with stories, aesthetics, and characters they encounter through media convergence rather than lived experience (Butcher & Toh, 2025; Cenizo, 2021; Mehdian Rad, 2024;

Tapas et al., 2025) Imaginative nostalgia allows younger audiences to participate emotionally in shared cultural memory.

5. Emotional Branding

Emotional branding is a marketing strategy aimed at creating strong emotional connections between consumers and brands by associating products or services with meaningful feelings, memories, and identity-related experiences. Nostalgia plays a central role in emotional branding by fostering trust, emotional attachment, and long-term consumer–brand relationships (Mehdian Rad, 2024; Rana et al., 2021). In media industries, emotional branding supports long-term engagement across franchises and storytelling universes.

6. Generational Marketing

Generational marketing refers to the strategic segmentation of audiences based on shared formative experiences, cultural references, and media consumption patterns associated with specific age groups. In nostalgia marketing, generational marketing enables brands to address heterogeneous audiences by blending historical and imaginative nostalgia within the same narrative or campaign (Butcher & Toh, 2025; Cui, 2015).

7. Digital Nostalgia

Digital nostalgia describes the experience and circulation of nostalgic content within digitally mediated environments, including social media platforms, streaming services, and online communities. Digital technologies enable continuous access to past cultural products and facilitate collective nostalgia through sharing, interaction, and participatory practices (Holotová et al., 2020; Tapas et al., 2025).

8. Remakes, Reboots, and Adaptations

Remakes, reboots, and adaptations are film production strategies that reinterpret existing narratives, characters, or intellectual properties for contemporary audiences. These practices balance familiarity with innovation, allowing filmmakers to preserve emotional resonance while updating content to align with current cultural values and audience expectations (Austin, 2023; Heinze & Krämer, 2015).

9. Reconsumption

Reconsumption refers to the voluntary revisiting of previously consumed media content, such as films or television series. Studies show that reconsumption provides psychological benefits including comfort, emotional reassurance, and enjoyment, reinforcing audience loyalty and sustained engagement (Butcher & Toh, 2025; Shackelford et al., 2026). Nostalgia is a key driver of reconsumption behavior in media franchises.

10. Brand Loyalty and Audience Engagement

Brand loyalty and audience engagement refer to the sustained emotional, cognitive, and behavioral relationship between audiences and media brands. Nostalgia strengthens these relationships by encouraging reconsumption, participation, and emotional investment, particularly within franchise-based film industries (Holotová et al., 2020; Rana et al., 2021; Shackelford et al., 2026).

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

This research follows a structured and sequential research process designed to ensure coherence between theoretical foundations and empirical analysis. The study begins with an extensive literature review on nostalgia, nostalgia marketing, consumer psychology, generational marketing, and their application within the film industry. This theoretical phase establishes the conceptual framework that guides the empirical stage of the research.

Based on the insights derived from the literature review, the study then moves to an applied analysis in the form of a case study focused on the Walt Disney Company as a representative example of nostalgia marketing in contemporary cinema. The research process integrates theory and practice by using established concepts from the literature to analyze real-world film marketing strategies and audience responses. The final stage consists of interpreting the empirical findings in relation to the research questions and drawing conclusions regarding the role and impact of nostalgia marketing in the contemporary film industry, allowing theoretical insights to be connected with observed marketing practices and audience responses.

3.1 Research process

The literature review was conducted using a multi-stage screening approach inspired by the PRISMA framework, which is widely used to document and justify the selection of academic sources in a transparent manner (Page et al., 2021).

The research process followed a systematic and sequential approach designed to ensure theoretical rigor, transparency, and coherence between the literature review and the applied case study. The process was structured into four main stages: (1) source identification and database selection, (2) initial screening, (3) selection criteria application, and (4) final filtering and corpus definition.

Stage 1: Source Identification and Database Selection

The first stage consisted of identifying relevant academic sources related to nostalgia, nostalgia marketing, consumer psychology, generational marketing, and their application within the film and media industries. Two primary academic databases were used for this purpose:

- **Scopus**, due to its high academic credibility and extensive coverage of peer-reviewed journals in marketing, media studies, communication, and cultural studies.
- **Google Scholar**, used as a complementary database to broaden the scope and capture interdisciplinary research, book chapters, and emerging studies not always indexed in Scopus.

Initial keyword searches included combinations of terms such as *nostalgia*, *nostalgia marketing*, *nostalgia in the film industry*, *retro marketing*, *film remakes*, *media convergence*, *Disney*, *generational marketing* and *trends in the film industry*.

This initial search yielded approximately 356 results in Scopus and over 800 results in Google Scholar, reflecting the broad and interdisciplinary nature of the topic.

Stage 2: Initial Screening

Given the large number of results, an initial screening was conducted to exclude sources that were clearly unrelated to the research focus. This stage involved reviewing titles, abstracts, and keywords to identify papers that addressed nostalgia primarily in non-relevant fields (e.g., clinical psychology without marketing or media relevance, medical studies, or unrelated sociological topics).

This preliminary screening significantly reduced the number of potentially relevant sources and allowed the research to focus on studies directly connected to marketing, media, film, and audience behavior.

Stage 3: Selection Criteria

Following the initial screening, a set of explicit inclusion criteria was applied to ensure consistency and academic quality. The selected sources had to meet the following conditions:

- **Topical relevance:** Direct connection to nostalgia, nostalgia marketing, emotional branding, film and media industries, or audience engagement.
- **Recency:** Priority was given to recent publications, particularly from the last ten years, to reflect contemporary industry practices and current academic debates.
- **Academic credibility:** Only peer-reviewed journal articles, academic book chapters, recognized scholarly publications and theses dissertations were included.
- **Language:** Sources were limited to publications written in English or Spanish, ensuring accurate interpretation and analysis.
- **Disciplinary relevance:** Preference was given to studies from marketing, communication, media studies, cultural studies, and film studies.

Stage 4: Filtering and Final Selection

After applying the selection criteria, a more refined filtering process was conducted through full-text reading. This stage aimed to assess the conceptual depth, methodological relevance, and theoretical contribution of each source.

As a result of this process, approximately 55 high-quality academic sources were identified as potentially relevant. From this group, a final selection of 28 core papers was made based on their direct contribution to the research objectives and their suitability for supporting both the literature review and the Disney case study.

This four-stage process described is visually summarized through the PRISMA flow diagram (Figure 3.1), which outlines the progression from the initial identification of academic sources to the final

corpus of literature used in this study. The diagram provides a clear overview of each filtering stage and the criteria applied to refine the dataset in alignment with the research objectives.

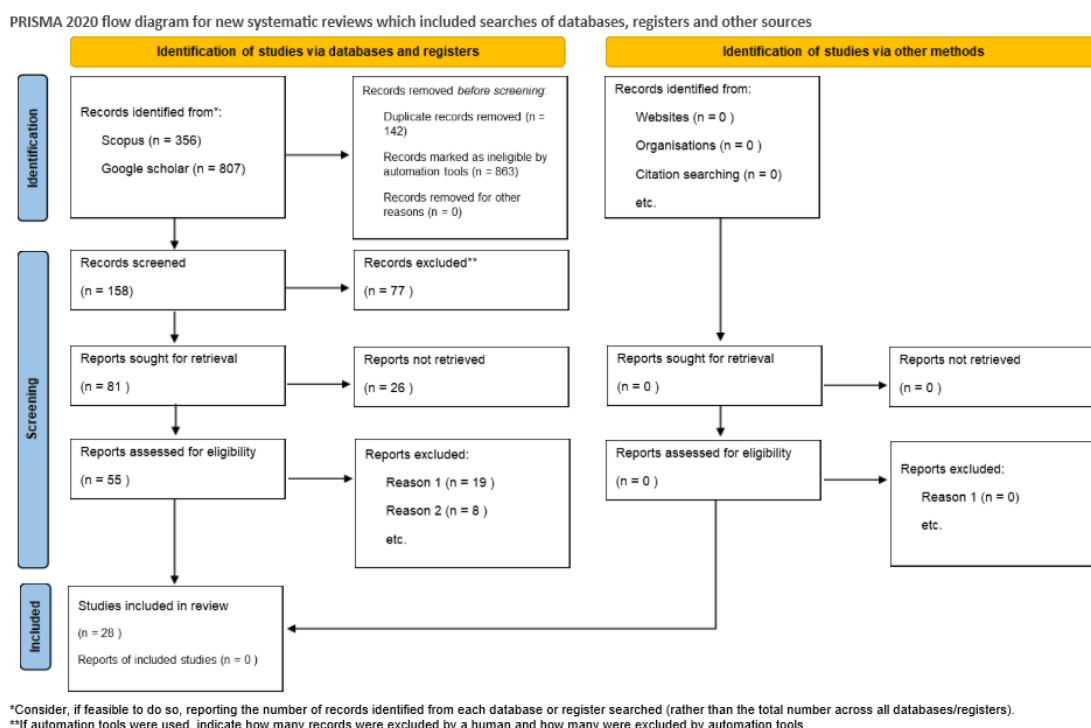


Figure 3.1: Flow Diagram.

Source: own elaboration.

These selected works form the theoretical and analytical foundation of the study and are consistently referenced throughout Chapters 2, 4 and 5.

This structured research process ensured a rigorous and focused theoretical framework, allowing the study to move from a broad exploration of nostalgia marketing to a precise and applied analysis of its use within the contemporary film industry.

3.2 Research questions

In line with the objectives of the study and the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 2, the research is guided by a central guiding question that frames the broader industry context:

Background Research Question:

- *How is nostalgia marketing transforming the strategic and emotional landscape of the contemporary film industry?*

Building on this, the study addresses the following primary and secondary research questions:

Main Research Question:

- **R1:** How does Disney strategically employ nostalgia marketing in its recent film remakes and sequels to bridge the generational gap between Millennial and Generation Z audiences?

Secondary Research Questions:

- **R2:** Which nostalgic elements are identified most prominent and frequent within Disney's promotional content?
- **R3:** How do these nostalgic elements influence audience engagement, and to what extent do they foster brand loyalty among different consumer cohorts?

These questions are designed to align with a qualitative, exploratory research approach and to connect theoretical insights with applied analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Together, these questions allow the study to explore nostalgia marketing at both an industry level and a firm-specific level, while also addressing emotional, generational, and perceptual dimensions.

3.3 Research design

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, integrating a robust theoretical framework with an applied qualitative case study based on the principles outlined by Yin (2009). To complement the qualitative analysis, descriptive statistics —specifically frequency tables— are utilized to summarize the occurrence of specific themes within Instagram posts. This provides a clear empirical foundation for the subsequent thematic evaluation, ensuring that the qualitative findings are supported by the frequency of observed phenomena.

The theoretical component is based on a comprehensive review of academic literature, which provides the conceptual tools necessary to frame and interpret nostalgia marketing as an emotional marketing practice, as well as, a cultural and strategic phenomenon. The applied component is developed through an in-depth case study of Disney, allowing the research to examine how theoretical concepts such as historical and imaginative nostalgia, emotional branding, and generational marketing are implemented within the real-world context of Disney's marketing and film production. This design effectively bridges theory and practice, using the case study method to explore complex marketing strategies within their natural setting.

Mixed-methods designs are particularly suitable for research that seeks to integrate theoretical perspectives with real-world applications (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

3.4 Strategy of inquiry

The strategy of inquiry adopted in this research is qualitatively driven, relying on secondary data to explore meanings, narrative, and symbolic elements. While the study utilizes basic descriptive numerical data to identify the prevalence of some nostalgic elements, the core analytical focus remains on the qualitative interpretation of emotional appeals rather than complex statistical testing (Krippendorff, 2018).

Secondary data are especially suitable for this study because the analysis centers on films, promotional materials, audience discourse, and industry outcomes that are publicly available and accessible. This strategy allows for a comprehensive examination of marketing practices, audience reception, and industry outcomes without the need for primary data collection.

A central element of the methodological framework of this study is the application of triangulation, used to enhance analytical depth, reduce bias, and strengthen the robustness of the findings. In line with Yin's methodological recommendations, triangulation allows the researcher to examine the phenomenon from multiple perspectives, increasing construct validity and reinforcing the credibility of the results (Yin, 2009).

This study applies triangulation by integrating multiple data sources and analytical perspectives. Promotional materials, industry outcomes (such as box office data), and audience reception metrics are analyzed in parallel to provide a comprehensive understanding of nostalgia marketing practices and their outcomes. The convergence of insights across these diverse sources increases construct validity and helps identify consistent patterns in Disney's use of nostalgic strategies.

3.5 Case selection: Walt Disney Company

The Walt Disney Company has been selected as the focal case study due to its central position in the global film industry, as well as, its strategic relevance and leadership in the use of nostalgia marketing as a core brand strategy. Disney represents a paradigmatic example of a media brand that systematically leverages nostalgia through its extensive catalog of iconic films, remakes, sequels characters, and adaptations rooted in intellectual properties.

The case study focuses on Disney's live-action adaptations and recent film that explicitly draw on nostalgic elements, such as *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Lilo & Stitch*, and *Freakier Friday*. These films provide relevant examples of how historical and imaginative nostalgia are blended to appeal simultaneously to Millennials and Generation Z, while maintaining brand continuity, cultural relevance and audience engagement. This case selection followed a purposive logic, focusing on a company that exemplifies the strategic use of nostalgia across multiple generations (Yin, 2009).

3.6 Data collection

This study relies exclusively on multiple secondary data sources, collected from publicly available and academically reliable platforms in order to capture the various dimensions of nostalgia marketing and audience engagement. The use of secondary data is particularly appropriate given the exploratory nature of the research and its focus on media texts and institutional marketing strategies rather than individual, primary consumer behavior.

To facilitate the triangulation mentioned in the strategy of inquiry, the data collection process is divided into three main components:

3.6.1 Promotional materials

Promotional materials are gathered and analyzed to identify the specific “nostalgic cues” embedded in Disney’s marketing strategies. This dataset includes official trailers, teasers, posters, and visual content from Disney’s official websites and social media platforms, with a primary focus on Disney’s official Instagram account. Particular attention is given to the use of familiar imagery, visual aesthetics, music, narrative framing, intertextual elements and iconic characters that evoke emotional recognition and cultural memory.

3.6.2 Box office and industry data

Secondary data related to commercial performance and market reception are collected from industry reports, trade publications, and established databases such as Box office Mojo. These metrics provide the “quantitative” context necessary to assess the market relevance of nostalgia-driven strategies of the selected films. Furthermore, this data supports the analysis of audience reach and brand loyalty, serving as a benchmark for the commercial impact of nostalgic appeals within the film industry. The use of secondary industry data is common in film and media research to assess market performance and audience reach (Pangarker & Smit, 2013).

3.6.3 Audience reception

Audience reception is examined through a variety of qualitative secondary sources, including audience ratings, user-generated reviews, both collected from Rotten Tomatoes and IMDb, and media articles discussing the films’ reception and cultural impact. These sources allow the researcher to observe how nostalgia influences brand perception and community engagement.

Data is collected from multiple secondary sources to enable triangulation and enhance credibility (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

3.7 Data analysis method

The study employs qualitative content analysis as the primary analytical method. This technique allows for the systematic identification, coding, and interpretation of recurring themes and patterns related to nostalgia marketing across diverse data sources. This approach is particularly effective as it enables rigorous, systematic interpretation while remaining flexible enough to capture nuanced meanings and symbolic appeals (Krippendorff, 2018).

The analysis follows a theory-driven (deductive) approach, guided by the key conceptual framework developed in Chapter 2. The key analytical categories include:

- Nostalgia Types: Historical vs. imaginative nostalgia.
- Strategic Pillars: Emotional branding and generational marketing.
- Outcome Metrics: Audience engagement and cultural resonance.

Data are coded and categorized according to these theoretical dimensions, enabling a structured comparison between theory and empirical observations.

To ensure methodological rigor, the analytical process is structured into four distinct stages:

1. Identification: Isolating specific nostalgic cues —such as visual motifs, music, or character archetypes— within the films and promotional materials
2. Classification: Mapping these identified cues onto the theoretical dimensions.
3. Categorization: Utilizing frequency tables to summarize the occurrence of these cues, providing a quantitative overview of the most prevalent nostalgic strategies.
4. Interpretation: Evaluating how these elements converge to foster emotional engagement and generational appeal, bridging the gap between Disney's strategic intent and audience response.

This structured approach ensures consistency between the theoretical framework and the empirical findings, allowing for a transparent and replicable link between nostalgic strategies and their market outcomes.

3.8 Validity and reliability

To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, this research incorporates several forms of triangulation, a strategy essential for strengthening methodological rigor in case study research (Yin, 2009).

Data Triangulation: Achieved by synthesizing diverse secondary sources, including promotional materials, audience reception metrics, and industry performance data.

Methodological Triangulation: Implemented through a mixed-methods approach that integrates qualitative content analysis with the examination of quantitative indicators, such as box office performance, audience ratings and frequency-based thematic coding.

Theoretical Triangulation: Applied by integrating multiple theoretical lenses specially nostalgia marketing, consumer psychology, generational marketing, and media studies. This multi-dimensional theoretical framework allows for a more balanced interpretation of Disney's strategies and avoids reliance on a single explanatory model.

Furthermore, the research process and analytical steps are transparently documented to ensure procedural reliability and consistency. While qualitative case studies do not aim for statistical generalization, this study seeks analytical generalization (Yin, 2009). This means the findings are intended to be conceptually transferable to similar contexts within the broader film and media industries.

Ethical Considerations: As this study relies exclusively on publicly available secondary data, it does not involve direct interaction with human subjects. Ethical integrity is maintained by ensuring the accurate representation of all secondary sources and avoiding the use of private or sensitive data. All industry metrics and audience discourses utilized are accessible in the public domain, ensuring compliance with academic research standards.

3.9 Limitations

While the research design is robust, certain limitations must be acknowledged:

First, the focus on a single case study —Disney— necessarily limits the statistical generalizability of the findings to the broader film industry. However, as previously noted, the study prioritizes analytical generalization, offering a conceptual blueprint that may be applied to other media conglomerates.

Second, the exclusive reliance on secondary sources precludes direct access to internal, proprietary marketing decision-making processes at Disney. Similarly, while audience reception is captured through public discourse, it does not allow for the granular psychological profiling possible through primary methods like interviews or focus groups.

Finally, audience reception data and qualitative content analysis are inherently interpretative. While triangulation and thematic coding are used to mitigate bias, the analysis remains subject to the nuanced nature of symbolic and emotional interpretation, so it may reflect subjective opinions.

Despite these limitations, the chosen methodology remains the most appropriate for the exploratory objectives of this research. It provides a comprehensive and multifaceted understanding of the strategic role of nostalgia marketing within the contemporary film industry, serving as a foundation for future empirical inquiry.

CHAPTER 4

Disney Case Study: Nostalgia in its Films

4.1 Chapter's Introduction: Background, Context and Evolution of Nostalgia Marketing within the Film Industry

As extensively discussed in Chapter 2, nostalgia marketing has traditionally been closely associated with the revival and reinterpretation of tangible goods, where “retro” and “vintage” aesthetics become the focal attribute of products redesigned or re-released to entice both existing and new consumers. Classic examples include the renewed popularity and demand for analogue and digital cameras that evoke past functional and aesthetic values, transforming ordinary consumer products into emotionally charged cultural artifacts that resonate across age groups and consumption histories (Holotová et al., 2020; Rana et al., 2021).

However, in this postmodern digital era, characterized by rapid technological transformations, global uncertainty following pandemics, political conflicts, and economic volatility, nostalgia has expanded far beyond the realm of tangible products into more intangible domains —strongly linked to media consumption— most notably the film and entertainment industries. The rise and popularization of streaming platforms and on-demand viewing such as Netflix and Disney+ have reshaped how media content is consumed and audiences engage with audiovisual content, opening the door to nostalgia practices which accelerate the trend of remakes, reboots, and reinterpretations of familiar narratives. This shift is not simply a return to the past but a strategic repackaging and reinterpretation of cultural memory for contemporary audiences (Cenizo, 2021; Mehdián Rad, 2024).

One clear manifestation of this cultural nostalgia is evident in social media practices. Holotová et al. (2020) emphasize that social media platforms play a decisive role in transforming nostalgia into a dynamic and participatory marketing strategy. Trends such as Throwback Thursday and more recent viral movements like “2026 is the new 2016”, where individuals nostalgically revisited images, styles, and viral cultural moments from a decade earlier, exemplify how digital communities collectively revisit and valorize past cultural moments, blending memory with current identity performance and reinforcing shared cultural references across generations. These digital rituals, driven largely by TikTok and Instagram, contribute to a climate in which nostalgia becomes not only a personal emotional experience but as a shared social and cultural phenomenon (Di Placido, 2026). This participatory dimension amplifies nostalgic engagement in ways that transcend traditional product nostalgia, embedding it firmly in everyday cultural expression.

The impact of nostalgia extends well beyond social media into the music and live entertainment industries, but it is worth noting how it closely remains linked to the film industry. For example, former Disney Channel star Hilary Duff marked her long-anticipated return to music in late 2025 and early 2026 with her *Small Rooms, Big Nerves* tour, performing in cities such as London, Toronto, Brooklyn,

Los Angeles, and Las Vegas, and including live renditions of her early 2000s hit “What Dreams Are Made Of” from *The Lizzie McGuire Movie* — a song that has come to symbolize generational nostalgia for many Millennials and older Gen Z fans (Brow, 2025; Hamedy, 2025).

Hilary Duff’s recent return to music, marked by her 2025 single *Mature* and her reconnection with Millennial audiences through the legacy of her Disney Channel work, has been widely interpreted as a nostalgic cultural moment (Hamedy, 2025). This comeback demonstrates how cultural products of the past can be reactivated in contemporary performance contexts, bridging emotional connections across time and contributing to broader nostalgic currents in media, just like Holotová et al. (2020) highlighted the popularity of remixed and recontextualized nostalgic content, where older cultural products are adapted to contemporary formats, and their examples include the reuse of classic songs, scenes, or characters in short-form videos, memes, or digital challenges. These types of trends allow younger audiences to engage with past cultural references in playful and accessible ways, even when they lack direct personal experience of the original content.

Similarly, global entertainment and marketing campaigns such as Netflix’s celebration of *Stranger Things* with themed events and merchandise activations further illustrate how nostalgia functions as a strategic tool for fostering engagement and consumer participation across generational lines. Netflix’s campaigns for the final season of *Stranger Things* included large-scale experiential events and promotional merchandise that invoked the show’s 1980s setting, bringing retro aesthetics and collective cultural memory to the forefront of contemporary media consumption (Richwine, 2025).

Linked to it, Holotová et al. (2020) note that these visual cues —the revival of retro aesthetics, including vintage color palettes, analog-inspired visuals, and nostalgic typography— are especially effective on visually oriented platforms such as Instagram, where aesthetics play a central role in engagement. By adopting retro visual styles, brands can evoke nostalgia instantly without relying on extensive narrative explanation.

And as a final and more direct example of how nostalgia shapes broader film industry strategies. The release of sequels and reboots of beloved franchises — such as the 2025 *I Know What You Did Last Summer*, which brought back original cast members Jennifer Love Hewitt and Freddie Prinze Jr. alongside a new generation of characters — highlights a commercial logic that leverages cultural memory for renewed audience attention and box office performance (Mallikarjuna, 2025; Telemundo Entertainment., 2025). Likewise, ongoing developments in long-running franchises such as *Scream 7* (scheduled for 2026 release) reflect how nostalgic elements are embedded in narrative continuity and audience expectations (Juneau, 2025). Across genres, anniversaries of classic films are celebrated through curated events and releases that invite audiences to re-experience cinematic milestones, reinforcing nostalgia as a pervasive cultural force in contemporary entertainment (Diaz, 2025).

This broader cultural context has significantly impacted the film industry’s production and marketing practices. Nostalgia marketing has become a salient strategy not only in promoting sequels and legacy franchises but also in reintroducing past narratives to new audiences, creating platforms for engagement that span generational boundaries. In an environment where streaming platforms recombine, repurpose, and circulate content globally, nostalgia serves as both an emotional anchor and a strategic mechanism for sustaining audience interest.

Within this landscape, The Walt Disney Company stands as an exemplary case of how nostalgia marketing informs production and promotional decisions at the highest industrial level. Disney's sustained investment in live-action remakes, sequels, and reinterpretations of its classic content — from *Alice in Wonderland* (2010) to *Lilo & Stitch* (2025) — demonstrates a deliberate strategy to activate cultural memory and emotional familiarity across demographic segments. As a leader in the global film industry, Disney's approach to nostalgia marketing offers a fertile ground for analyzing how emotional branding, generational engagement, and media convergence coalesce in contemporary film production and audience discourse.

Accordingly, this case study seeks to explore how Disney uses nostalgia marketing in its recent film remakes and sequels to engage both Millennial and Generation Z audiences. It examines which specific nostalgic elements are most prominent and how these elements shape audience reception and brand perception within a media ecosystem characterized by digital participation, historical reference, and intergenerational cultural resonance.

4.2 Overview of Walt Disney history and its nostalgia strategy

Since its foundation in 1923, The Walt Disney Company has played a central role in shaping the global entertainment landscape. Originally established as the Disney Brothers Cartoon Studio by Walt Disney and Roy O. Disney in California, the company began with a primary focus on animated short films. From its earliest years, Disney distinguished itself through technological experimentation, narrative innovation, and the creation of emotionally compelling characters that transcended mere entertainment. This trajectory culminated in the release of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* in 1937, the first full-length animated feature film in history. This milestone not only transformed animation into a commercially viable and culturally legitimate art form but also established Disney's enduring association with imaginative storytelling, emotional resonance, and family-oriented entertainment (Kumar & Upadhyay, 2024; Voigt et al., 2017).

Throughout its history, Disney has continuously evolved in response to technological, cultural, and industrial shifts. During what is often referred to as the “Golden Age of Animation” (1937–1967), the company consolidated its reputation as a storyteller deeply rooted in literary traditions, many of which traced back to Victorian-era narratives. Fleming (2025) demonstrates that Disney's creative identity was shaped not only by twentieth-century cinematic innovation but also by a long-standing engagement with nineteenth-century literary culture, particularly children's literature. Many of Disney's foundational films, including *Alice in Wonderland*, *Peter Pan*, *The Jungle Book*, and *Treasure Island*, originated in Victorian texts, illustrating how Disney's narrative framework has long been embedded in historical cultural memory. Rather than simply adapting these works, Disney reinterpreted them across decades, reinforcing a continuous dialogue between past literary traditions and modern entertainment practices (Fleming, 2025).

As the company expanded, its business model also underwent significant transformation. According to Voigt, Buliga, and Michl (2017), Disney evolved from a small, production-centric animation studio into a multi-segment entertainment ecosystem integrating film, television, music, merchandising, theme parks, and, later, digital streaming. Early partnerships with distributors such as Margaret

Winkler enabled broader audience reach, while the creation of iconic characters like Mickey Mouse established Disney's capacity to generate intellectual property with enduring cultural value.

The opening of Disneyland in 1955 marked a decisive shift toward experiential entertainment, further embedding Disney's narratives within everyday consumer life. By the time the company formally adopted the name The Walt Disney Company in 1986, it had already established a diversified business model structured around storytelling, emotional engagement, and cross-platform brand extension (Voigt et al., 2017).

A defining characteristic of Disney's long-term strategy has been its sustained use of nostalgia—long before the concept was formally theorized as “nostalgia marketing” in academic literature. Through systematic re-releases of its classic films across cinema, VHS, DVD, Blu-ray, and eventually digital platforms (Havard & Davis, 2024; Pitre, 2023), Disney institutionalized a model of cultural continuity that aligns closely with later scholarly concepts of heritage and retro marketing. This approach allowed Disney to maintain relevance while capitalizing on existing emotional attachments, reinforcing collective cultural memory while continuously renewing audience engagement (Heinze & Krämer, 2015; Holotová et al., 2020).

In the contemporary era, nostalgia has become even more deeply embedded in Disney's corporate and creative strategy. A crucial turning point in this process was the company's strategic acquisitions of Pixar (2006), Marvel (2009), Lucasfilm (2012), and 21st Century Fox (2019). These acquisitions not only expanded Disney's content portfolio but also reinforced a logic of brand extension based on familiar intellectual properties with strong nostalgic appeal. Rather than relying solely on new original films, Disney increasingly invested in remakes, sequels, and live-action adaptations of its animated classics—such as *The Lion King*, *Aladdin*, and *The Little Mermaid*—blending nostalgic familiarity with contemporary visual effects and modern storytelling sensibilities (Kumar & Upadhyay, 2024). This aligns with Mehdián Rad's (2024) conceptualization of nostalgia marketing as the deliberate activation of past-related cues—characters, music, narratives, and aesthetics—to generate positive emotional responses and strengthen brand engagement.

From a consumer psychology perspective, Disney's nostalgia strategy operates simultaneously at both individual and collective levels. For many Millennials and older audiences, Disney films are closely associated with childhood memories, emotional comfort, and identity formation. In contrast, younger audiences, particularly Generation Z, often experience Disney nostalgia in a mediated or imaginative form through streaming platforms and social media rather than through firsthand exposure to original releases (Butcher & Toh, 2025; Cenizo, 2021). By blending historical nostalgia (rooted in lived experience) with imaginative nostalgia (constructed through cultural exposure), Disney has positioned itself as a bridge between generations, sustaining brand loyalty while continuously renewing its audience base. As Kumar and Upadhyay (2024) note, “Disney has something to offer everyone and ensures its consumers keep coming back for more.”

Technological and industrial transformations have further amplified Disney's nostalgic strategy, particularly with the implementation of its direct-to-consumer model in 2017 and the subsequent launch of Disney+ on November 12, 2019 (Havard & Davis, 2024). This strategic shift reflected broader industry trends indicating that traditional television consumption was rapidly being replaced by digital and on-demand media, what others authors such as Jake Pitre (2023) refers to what is called “The

streaming age”. Havard and Davis (2024) argue that Disney’s entry into streaming was not a radical departure but rather the latest stage in a long-standing corporate tradition of adapting to new media technologies to sustain audience engagement. Disney+ allowed the company to regain full control over its content distribution, enabling it to strategically curate its archive of classic films and franchises in ways that reinforced nostalgia-driven consumption patterns.

Pitre (2023) conceptualizes Disney+ as more than a streaming platform, framing it instead as a mechanism of “brand futurity.” According to his analysis, Disney+ operates as a space where the company simultaneously mobilizes nostalgia and projects its cultural relevance into the future. By positioning legacy content alongside new original productions, Disney constructs a narrative in which its past, present, and future are seamlessly interconnected. This strategy strengthens emotional attachment while also encouraging ongoing engagement through anticipation of upcoming releases.

One particularly important aspect to highlight regarding Walt Disney’s success throughout its history and its diversification strategy is how it has fostered economies of scope through synergies within its business model, which functions as a virtuous cycle for the company. This can be summarized in the primary focus on growth achieved mainly through inorganic means (Kumar & Upadhyay, 2024; Voigt et al., 2017).

Overall, Disney’s historical trajectory framed in Figure 4.1: “Walt Disney Company Timeline and Its Major Milestones.” demonstrates that its magical recipe can be understood as the result of a long-term strategic alignment between storytelling, technological adaptation, and nostalgia-driven branding. Rather than treating nostalgia as a temporary marketing tactic, Disney has embedded it into its corporate identity, creative production processes, and audience engagement practices (Kumar & Upadhyay, 2024; Voigt et al., 2017). From its origins in early animation to its present-day streaming empire, Disney has consistently leveraged emotional storytelling, technological adaptation, and cross-generational engagement to maintain cultural relevance (Havard & Davis, 2024; Pitre, 2023).

Its long-standing commitment to narrative continuity, combined with its strategic use of remakes, sequels, and digital platforms, positions Disney as a paradigmatic case for examining how nostalgia marketing operates within the contemporary film industry, particularly in relation to cross-generational audience engagement (Butcher & Toh, 2025; Cenizo, 2021; Mehdian Rad, 2024).

Building on this historical and strategic overview, the next section (4.3) will shift from a broad corporate perspective to a focused analysis of specific films. By examining recent Disney live-action remakes and sequels, this study will explore how nostalgia marketing is operationalized in practice — through narrative choices, visual aesthetics, promotional strategies, and audience reception— providing empirical insight into the mechanisms through which Disney translates its nostalgic legacy into contemporary cinematic production.

Walt Disney Company Timeline and Its Major Milestones

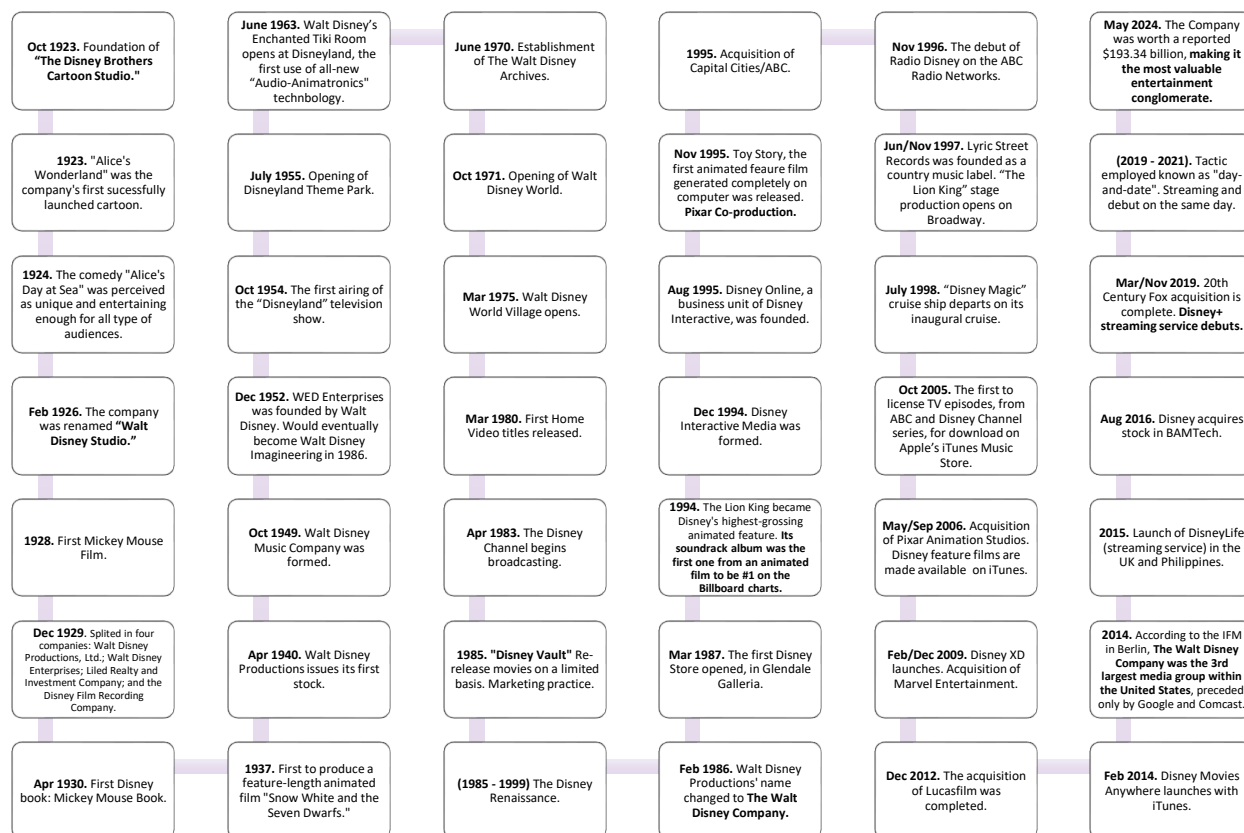


Figure 4.2: Walt Disney Company Timeline and Its Major Milestones.

Source: own elaboration based on some authors (Fleming, 2025; Havard & Davis, 2024; Kumar & Upadhyay, 2024; Pitre, 2023; Voigt et al., 2017)

4.3 Films overview

This section provides a general overview of the films selected for analysis in the present case study, offering a concise presentation of each title in terms of its narrative premise -based on the description of each one on the company's platform (*Disney+*, n.d.)-, year of release, and relevance to the research objectives. Specifically, the analysis focuses on four recent Disney productions and compares them to each of their original animated versions and previous prequels — *Alice in Wonderland* (2010), *The Little Mermaid* (2023), *Lilo & Stitch* (2025), and *Freakier Friday* (2025) — which are directly based on or inspired by earlier iconic films: *Alice in Wonderland* (1951), *The Little Mermaid* (1989), *Lilo & Stitch* (2002), and *Freaky Friday* (2003), respectively. Rather than engaging in detailed textual or visual analysis at this stage, the purpose of this section is to situate each film within Disney's broader nostalgia strategy and clarify the rationale behind its inclusion in the study.

These films were selected because they exemplify Disney's contemporary reliance on remakes, reimaginings, and legacy-based continuations, all of which actively mobilize nostalgic elements such as familiar characters, narratives, music, and aesthetics. Furthermore, they represent different

moments in Disney's historical catalogue and target both Millennials —who largely grew up with the original versions— and Generation Z —who primarily encounter these stories through digital platforms and contemporary adaptations. By briefly outlining what each film is about and the context of its production, this section establishes the foundation for the subsequent analysis of how nostalgic strategies are operationalized, how they shape audience reception, and how they contribute to Disney's ongoing brand positioning in the contemporary film industry.

4.3.1 Alice in Wonderland: General Overview.

THEN	NOW
 Alice in Wonderland 0+ 1951 • Action and Adventure, Anim...	 Alice in Wonderland 9+ 2010 • Action and Adventure, Fant...
Year of release: 1951. Rating: 0+. Genre: Action and Adventure, Animation, Fantasy. Duration: 1h 22m.	Year of release: 2010. Rating: 9+. Genre: Action and Adventure, Fantasy. Duration: 1h 49m.
Narrative Premise	
“Join Alice as she chases the White Rabbit into a topsy-turvy world that gets “curiouser and curiouser” as her fantastical adventures unfold. Meet the Mat Hatter, March Hare, Tweedledee & Tweedledum, the Cheshire Cat, the Queen of Hearts and more unforgettable characters, all set against a backdrop of awe-inspiring splendor. Contains tobacco depictions.”	“Tumble down the rabbit hole with Alice in this imaginative twist on one of the most beloved stories of all times. Alice (Mia Wasikowska), now 19 years old, returns to discover her true destiny. This Wonderland is a world beyond imagination and unlike anything ever seen before. The extraordinary characters come to life richer and more colorful than ever. There's the Mad Hatter (Johnny Depp), the White Queen (Anne Hathaway), the Red Queen (Helena Bonham Carter), the White Rabbit (Michael Sheen) and more. Contains tobacco depictions.”

Relevance to the study: All over the time, Disney has been characterized and known for paying tribute to its classics through remakes and live-action adaptation, but it was not until 2010 with Alice in

Wonderland that this trend became particularly popular within the film industry. A live-action movie that serves as a reimagined thematic sequel, released just before the 60th anniversary of its original version. This film represents a turning point in Disney's creative and marketing strategies, all aligned with its corporate approach; making it an excellent starting point and reference for the examples proposed for analysis.

4.3.2 The Little Mermaid: General Overview.

THEN	NOW
	
Year of release: 1989. Rating: 6+. Genre: Animation, Romance, Musicals, Fantasy. Duration: 1h 28m	Year of release: 2023. Rating: 9+ Fear. Genre: Romance, Musicals, Fantasy. Duration: 2h 21m
Narrative Premise	
"Ariel, the fun-loving and mischievous mermaid, is enchanted with all things human. Disregarding her father's order to stay away from the world above the sea, she swims to the surface and, in a raging storm, rescues the prince of her dreams. Determined to be human, she strikes a bargain with the devious sea witch Ursula and trades her fins and beautiful voice for legs. With her best friend, the adorable and chatty Flounder, and her reluctant chaperone Sebastian, the hilarious, reggae-singing Caribbean crab, at her side, Ariel must win the	"The Little Mermaid" reimagines the beloved story of Ariel, a curious mermaid who longs to experience life on land and, against her father's wishes, visits the surface. Ariel finds herself on an unexpected journey of self-discovery as she encounters a prince, a sea witch, and an incredible new world. Some flashing lights sequences or patterns may affect photosensitive viewers."

prince's love and save her father's kingdom - all in a heart-pounding race against time."

Relevance to the study: This musical is a live-action adaptation of Disney's 1989 animated feature film of the same name that acts as a celebratory remake of a classic and beloved princess movie. It is an extraordinary example of Disney's efforts to revive and maintain older classics while appropriately updating them with more inclusive approaches.

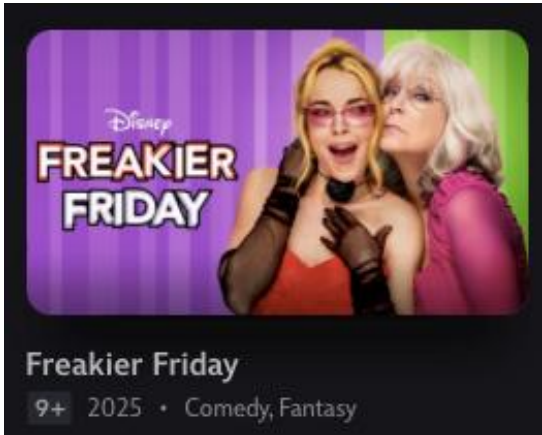
4.3.3 Lilo & Stitch: General Overview

THEN	NOW
 Lilo & Stitch 6+ 2002 • Action and Adventure, Ani...	 Lilo & Stitch 6+ 2025 • Action and Adventure, Co...
Year of release: 2002. Rating: 6+ Violence, Fear. Genre: Action and Adventure, Animation, Science Fiction. Duration: 1h 32m	Year of release: 2025. Rating: 6+ Violence, Fear. Genre: Action and Adventure, Comedy, Science Fiction. Duration: 1h 52m
Narrative Premise	
"Get ready to crash-land on Earth with Stitch, a runaway genetic experiment from a faraway planet. As he wreaks havoc on the Hawaiian Islands, he becomes the mischievous adopted alien "puppy" of an independent little girl named Lilo, and together they learn about loyalty, friendship and 'Ohana, the Hawaiian tradition of family."	"A live-action retelling of Disney's 2002 animated classic, "Lilo & Stitch" is the wildly funny and touching story of a lonely Hawaiian girl and the fugitive alien who helps to mend her broken family. Directed by Dean Fleischer Camp, the Oscar-nominated filmmaker behind the animated feature film "Marcel the Shell with Shoes On", the film stars Maia Kealoha, Sydney Elizebeth Agudong, Billy Magnussen, Tia Carrere, with Courtney B. Vance, and Dan Lin, with Tom

Peitzman and Ray Halprin serving as executive producers.”

Relevance to the study: This science fiction comedy film is a live-action animated remake of the story of two adorable and special characters -Lilo and Stitch- that resonates with an entire generation that grew up watching them in movies and their television series. This new version stays true to the original one in terms of events and their development, with some minor changes in the details of its ending; once again, as an attempt to reflect the social and cultural trends of the new century. Last but not least, it is worth highlighting its performance at the global box office in the year of its release, as well as its position in the ranking of the highest-grossing films of all time worldwide.

4.3.4 Freakier Friday: General Overview

THEN	NOW
 Freaky Friday 6+ 2003 • Comedy, Fantasy	 Freakier Friday 9+ 2025 • Comedy, Fantasy
Year of release: 2003. Rating: 6+ Violence. Genre: Comedy, Fantasy. Duration: 1h 39m	Year of release: 2025. Rating: 9+ Violence, Coarse Language. Genre: Comedy, Fantasy. Duration: 1h 53m
Narrative Premise	
“Dr. Tess Coleman (Jamie Lee Curtis) and her teenage daughter Anna (Lindsay Lohan) have one thing in Common: they don’t relate to each other on anything. Not clothes or men or Anna’s passion to be in a rock band. Nothing. Then one Friday night, a little mystic mayhem changes their lives and they wake up to be the biggest freak-out ever -Tess and Anna are trapped	“”Freakier Friday”, a sequel to the beloved 2003 film with a multigenerational twist stars Jamie Lee Curtis and Lindsay Lohan as Tess and Anna Coleman. The story picks up years after Tess and Anna endured an identity crisis. Anna now has a daughter of her own and a soon-to-be stepdaughter. As they navigate the myriad of challenges that come when two families merge,

inside each other's body. With Tess's wedding on Saturday, the two must find a way to switch back... and fast. Literally forced to walk in each other's shoes, will they gain respect and understanding for the other's point of view?"

Tess and Anna discover that lightning might indeed strike twice. "Freakier Friday" is directed by Nisha Ganatra. The producers are Kristin Burr, Andrew Gunn, and Jamie Lee Curtis, with Nathan Kelly, Ann Marie Sanderlin, and Lindsay Lohan serving as executive producers. Other returning cast members from the original film include Mark Harmon, Chad Michael Murray, Christian Vidal Mitchell, Haley Hudson, Lucille Soong, Stephen Tobolowsky, and Rosalind Chao. They are joined by Julia Butters, Sophia Hammons, Manny Jacinto, and Maitreyi Ramakrishnan.

Some flashing lights sequences or patterns may affect photosensitive viewers."

Relevance to the study: This comedy is presented as the sequel to one of the most memorable Disney films for Millennials. Its story is brought back two decades later, including a multigenerational twist. It places special emphasis on starring the original cast while also introducing new stars relevant to the new generations. It is also important to mention the significant role that nostalgia plays through the film's original soundtrack.

4.4 Film Analysis: Identification of Nostalgic Elements

This section develops the empirical core of the case study by identifying and analyzing nostalgic elements embedded in Disney's promotional materials, including official posters, trailers, marketing campaigns and selected social media content. The analysis is grounded in the theoretical framework established in Chapter 2 and follows the methodological logic outlined in Chapter 3. Specifically, it applies a qualitative content analysis informed by Yin's (2009) case study approach and triangulation principle. Through methodological triangulation, insights from multiple academic sources were systematically examined to define and operationalize the nostalgic elements guiding the analysis. This process ensured conceptual consistency between theory and empirical observation while strengthening construct validity (Yin, 2009).

The identification of nostalgic elements was deductive derived from recurring dimensions highlighted in the literature on nostalgia marketing, emotional branding, digital nostalgia marketing, retro and heritage marketing, and media convergence (Holotová et al., 2020; Mehdian Rad, 2024; Rana et al., 2021; Tapas et al., 2025). These studies emphasize that nostalgia operates through specific visual, musical, narrative, and symbolic cues - loaded with vintage and retro influence - capable of activating emotional memory and reinforcing brand attachment. Accordingly, these dimensions were selected as the primary analytical categories for the film analysis.

A key conceptual reference guiding this section is the "Nostalgia Cycle in Promotional Practices" proposed by Rana et al. (2021) in *Promoting through Consumer Nostalgia: A Conceptual Framework and Future Research Agenda*. The model (see Figure 4.4) situates nostalgia within a broader memory–

promotion framework, illustrating how marketing practices deliberately activate personal and collective memories to shape consumer perceptions and behavioral responses. In this cycle, nostalgic elements function as strategic touchpoints connecting consumers' affective recollections with contemporary promotional efforts. In other words, nostalgia becomes the bridge where memory, emotion, and marketing communication intersect, and it is precisely there that nostalgic elements represent a core stone of the different promotional marketing practices.

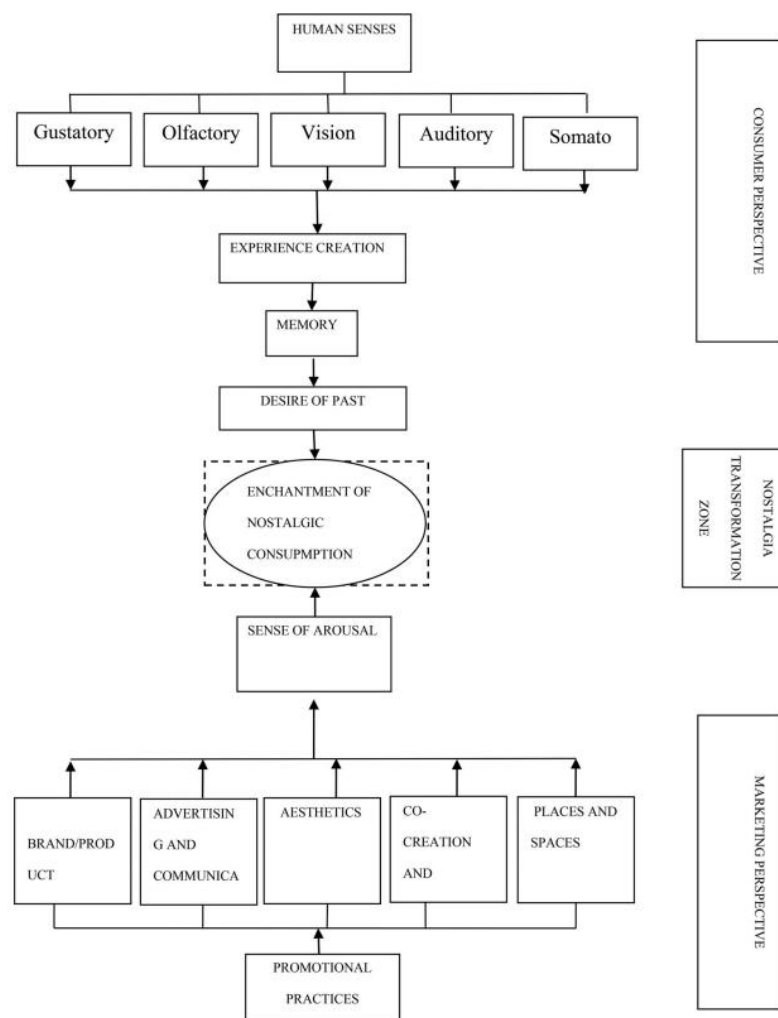


Figure 4.4: "Nostalgia Cycle in Promotional Practices."

Source: Rana et al. (2021)

Building on this framework, the present analysis examines how Disney's promotional strategies embed and circulate nostalgic cues across different media formats. By systematically identifying visual references, musical callbacks, narrative continuities, and symbolic motifs linked to earlier versions of the films, this section evaluates how nostalgia is operationalized as a promotional resource. This structured approach allows for a comparative assessment of how Disney activates both historical nostalgia and imaginative nostalgia to engage Millennial and Generation Z audiences, in alignment with the study's research questions.

4.4.1 Nostalgic Elements in *Alice in Wonderland* (2010)

With the aim of identifying and highlighting the most relevant nostalgic elements that this film includes, as well as those around which the different marketing campaigns were developed, it is important to start by mentioning what Fleming (2025) examines in Chapter 2 of *Animating the Victorians*, titled “Alice from Gag to Franchise,” regarding Disney’s long-standing adaptation history of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* —a foundational Victorian text written by Lewis Carroll— and how this relationship shaped both the company’s creative processes and its franchise development.

It traces the whole process starting from the early experimental cartoon shorts of the 1920s to the eventual release of the 1951 animated feature *Alice in Wonderland*. Fleming notes that Disney’s adaptation history with Carroll’s work was not instantaneous; it emerged from decades of iterative creative attempts, including gag-based shorts, research reports, unfinished drafts, and evolving narrative approaches. This long gestation reveals the company’s commitment to refining familiar literary sources for animated storytelling, illustrating how early Hollywood animation —specially Disney’s— drew directly from the Victorian period known as the “Golden Age of children’s literature” and continued this tradition that shaped the company’s culture around which its films still revolve.

Fleming’s analysis shows that the transposition of Victorian literary material into Disney’s animated universe helped institutionalize Disney’s strategy of repackaging familiar past narratives for emerging markets and audiences, a strategy that resonates with modern concepts of nostalgia marketing and cultural memory activation seen in contemporary Disney practices.

Given that the premiere of *Alice in Wonderland* (2010) preceded the official launch of Instagram on October 6, 2010 (Fernandez Ortega, 2025), the digital promotional ecosystem at that time differed significantly from the social media environment familiar today. Consequently, the nostalgic elements identified in this analysis are derived primarily from a qualitative examination of the films themselves — both the original 1951 animated version and the 2010 live-action adaptation — as well as from official theatrical posters and documented marketing campaigns used during the film’s release. Because Disney’s promotional strategies at the time relied on pre-Instagram platforms, one key aspect of the 2010 marketing effort was its Facebook campaign, which featured interactive content and fan engagement initiatives tied to the film’s characters and world (Olin, 2010).

The visual and promotional materials consulted for this purpose were obtained from secondary online image databases and archival film repositories, alongside curated fan-based galleries that catalogue official promotional assets (*Alice in Wonderland* (2010), n.d.; *Alice in Wonderland* 2010, n.d.; *Alice in Wonderland* (2010 Film) – Gallery., n.d.; *Alice in Wonderland* (2010) Poster Gallery, n.d.) In addition, contemporaneous industry and advertising coverage —such as campaign documentation published on professional marketing platforms (see Figure 4.4.1.2) — was reviewed to contextualize the strategic framing of the film’s promotional narrative. While these sources function as repositories rather than scholarly authorities, they provide access to the original visual materials necessary for systematic content analysis.

Accordingly, the findings presented below emerge from the triangulation of (1) direct film viewing, (2) examination of official promotional posters and campaign visuals, and (3) secondary documentation of marketing practices at the time of release. This multi-source approach strengthens the reliability of the analysis while maintaining transparency regarding the nature of the materials examined.

Official Promotional Posters

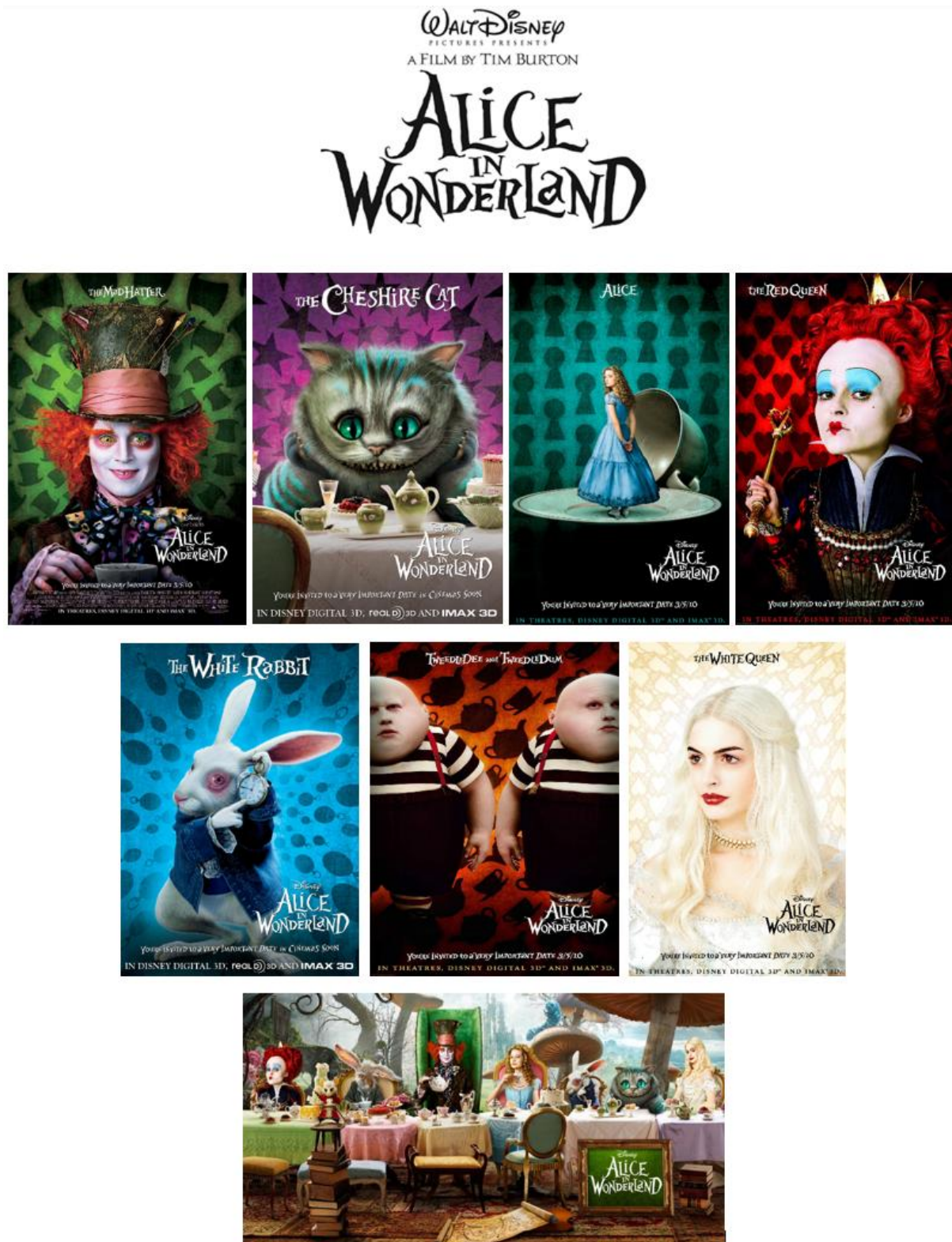


Figure 4.4.1: A Collection of *Alice in Wonderland*, Promotional Posters.

Source: (*Alice in Wonderland* (2010), n.d.; *Alice in Wonderland* 2010, n.d.; *Alice in Wonderland* (2010 Film) – Gallery., n.d.; *Alice in Wonderland* (2010) Poster Gallery, n.d.)



Figure 4.4.1.1: Alice in Wonderland (2010) Official Poster.

Source: (Alice in Wonderland (2010 Film) – Gallery., n.d.)

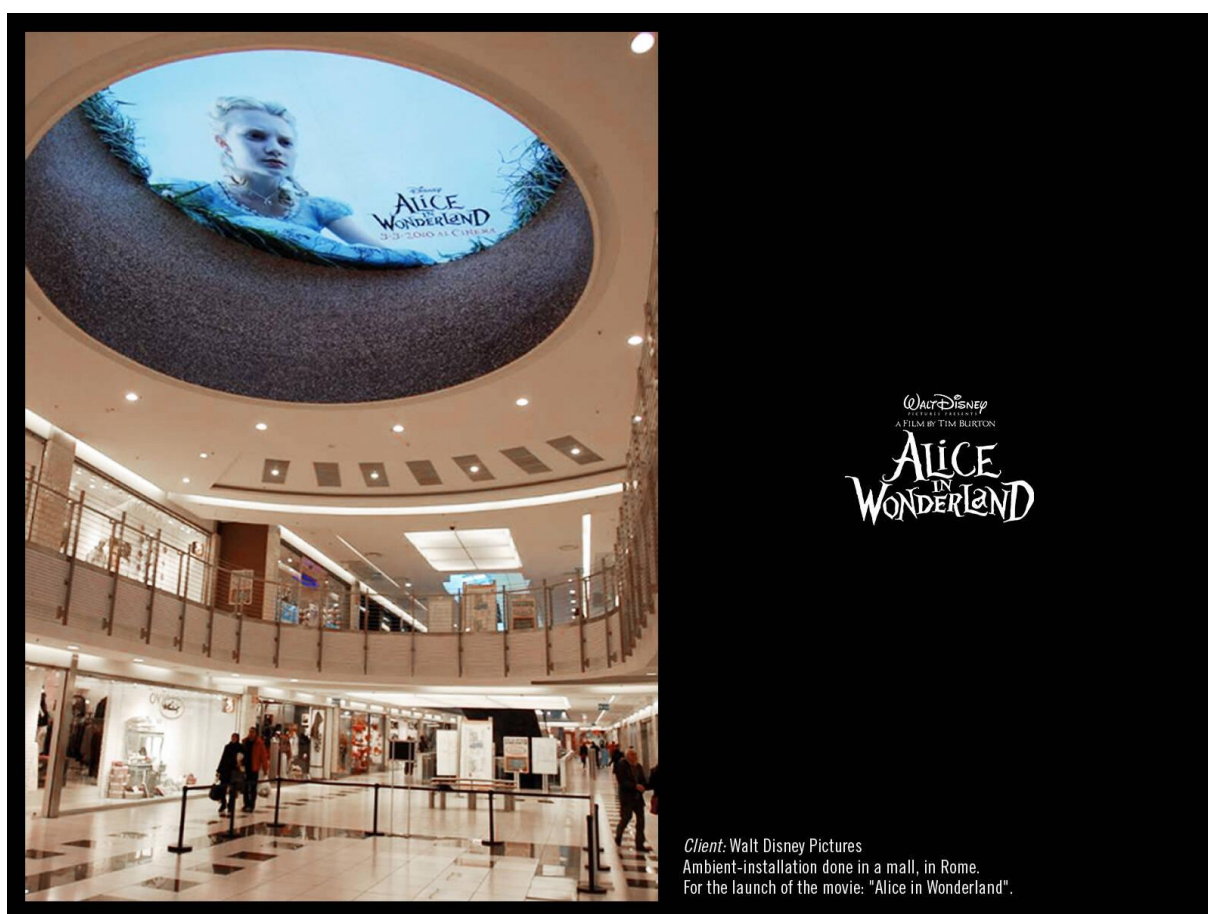


Figure 4.4.1.2: Alice in Wonderland (2010) Immersive Campaign, Rome.

Source: Ads of the world (Look Alice Campaign Disney, n.d.)

Alice in Wonderland Official Trailer: (*Alice in Wonderland 2010 Trailer*, n.d.)

Table 4.4.1 *Nostalgic Elements Identified: Alice in Wonderland (2010).*

VISUAL	
Clothing – Character Specific Costuming	▪ The promotional posters focused on showcasing the most memorable main characters of the film wearing exaggerated outfits inspired by the Victorian era. For example, one of them prominently features the Mad Hatter (Johnny Depp) in his attire (top hat, vest, bow tie, layered fabrics), and another, corresponding to the Red Queen —formerly called the Queen of Hearts— (Helena Bonham Carter), retaining the very distinctive traits of the character (large head and short stature), as well as her well-known outfit (black dress with pointed white collar and small golden crown). ▪ Alice’s costume design (blue dress reinterpretation) visually references the 1951 animated film, while incorporating darker, textured fabrics aligned with Tim Burton’s gothic aesthetic. ▪ The White Queen’s pale, ethereal styling evokes classical fairy-tale femininity associated with Disney’s earlier princess archetypes. (See Figure 4.4.1) These costumes blend historical nostalgia (Victorian aesthetics) with imaginative nostalgia, reconnecting audiences with the visual memory of the 1951 animated film while modernizing the aesthetic for contemporary viewers.
Period Setting	▪ The posters and promotional images, as well as the different scenes throughout the movie, highlight a stylized 19th-century British fantasy setting (reinforcing the storytelling of the original 1951 version of Alice). ▪ Architectural backgrounds and ornamental framing echo illustrated editions of <i>Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland</i> (Victorian literary heritage, as discussed by Fleming (2025)). (See Figure 4.4.1.1) The period framing reinforces Disney’s connection to literary heritage and aligns with the concept of heritage marketing (Holotová et al., 2020), activating cultural memory beyond the 1951 film.
Color Palette	▪ Emphasis on staying true to the previously used color palette (1951 film), especially the characteristic color associated with each character. ▪ Blue tones particularly linked to Alice and the White Rabbit, red reserved for the Red Queen imagery, purple for the Cheshire Cat, green for the Mad Hatter and orange for Tweedledee and Tweedledum. ▪ Dominant use of deep reds, burnt oranges, and golden tones in posters. ▪ Contrast between warm hues and high-saturation fantasy colors. →(See Figure 4.4.1) Warm tones generate emotional warmth and familiarity (Mehdian Rad, 2024; Rana et al., 2021). Simultaneously, color resonance connects visually to the animated film’s palette, reinforcing continuity.
Illustrative Composition and Film Quality	▪ Posters resemble illustrated fantasy book covers. ▪ Composition centers iconic characters in theatrical portrait style. ▪ Typography integrated into ornamental frames. ▪ Scenes recreated as flashbacks. →See Figure 4.4.1.1 These characteristics evoke pre-digital fantasy illustration styles, aligning with retro aesthetic cues and reinforcing narrative mythmaking (Pitre, 2023).

MUSICAL	
Familiar Sound Cues	▪ Trailer sound design incorporates whimsical orchestration reminiscent of Disney's classic animated scoring traditions. ▪ Musical cues build suspense while echoing fairy-tale tonalities. Music functions as an emotional memory trigger (Rana et al., 2021), activating associative recall of earlier Disney fantasy storytelling.
NARRATIVE	
References to Specific Scenes	The promotional campaign repeatedly highlights: ▪ The tea party scene. ▪ The Red Queen's "Off with their heads!" ▪ Alice falling through the rabbit hole – Immersive campaign (see figure 4.4.1.2). ▪ The White Rabbit running with his pocket watch. ▪ The Cheshire Cat's fading smile. ▪ The recreation of the original 1951 poster with all the characters sitting at the tea party (see Figure 4.4.1). These scenes function as intertextual anchors (Cenizo, 2021), immediately recognizable to audiences familiar with the 1951 version.
Character Dialogue and Language	▪ Language appropriately according to 19th-century England. ▪ Trailers include iconic phrases linked to Carroll's text and Disney's adaptation. ▪ The storytelling frame repositions Alice as older, introducing narrative innovation while retaining symbolic continuity. Balances historical nostalgia (recognizable narrative universe) with innovation — aligning with Mehdian Rad's (2024) framework of blending old and new.
Storytelling Frame and Narrative Continuity	▪ Although the 2010 version is framed as a sequel-like reinterpretation, promotional material emphasizes return to Wonderland. ▪ Campaign messaging focuses on "returning" rather than "retelling." Encourages re-experience behavior (Shackleford et al., 2026), fostering emotional continuity.
SYMBOLIC CUES	
Vintage Typography	▪ Typography aligned with Tim Burton's gothic aesthetic (see Figure 4.4.1). ▪ Ornamental serif fonts reminiscent of Victorian-era book covers. ▪ Decorative framing elements around the title. Typography acts as a visual time marker, reinforcing heritage aesthetics.
Iconic Symbols	▪ Playing cards ▪ The pocket watch ▪ The Cheshire Cat grin These are long-standing cultural symbols associated with Disney's adaptation and Carroll's text — reinforcing brand memory.

BRAND HERITAGE	
Historical Brand Identity	▪ The Disney logo is used in promotional posters and official trailers in both campaigns (1951 and 2010) with their respective changes and updates appropriate to the time, but maintaining its essence and aesthetic. ▪ The Disney logo appears before trailers in its contemporary form but associated with fairy-tale castle imagery. ▪ The campaign leverages Disney's established authority in fantasy storytelling.
	It activates collective brand memory (Mehdian Rad, 2024) and reinforces intergenerational trust.
CELEBRITY ASSOCIATION	
▪ Casting Johnny Depp, Anne Hathaway and Helena Bonham Carter (popular actor of the 2000s) bridges generational appeal. ▪ Promotional focus on recognizable faces creates cultural familiarity.	

Source: Own elaboration.

Alice in Wonderland (2010) represents a clear case of nostalgia marketing operating through visual, narrative, symbolic, and brand-based cues simultaneously, by blending historical nostalgia (based on Victorian literary roots), activation of imaginative nostalgia (1951 animated memory), its strategic alignment with brand heritage continuity and the early use of social media (Facebook platform) to extend nostalgic engagement, which aligns directly with Rad's integrative framework.

4.4.2 Nostalgic Elements in The Little Mermaid (2023)

In Chapter 3 of *Animating the Victorians*, titled "Animating Hans Christian Andersen," Fleming (2025) extends his historical analysis by examining how Disney adapted the fairy tales of Hans Christian Andersen — a central figure of nineteenth-century literary culture — into animated films that later became enduring cultural touchstones with strong nostalgic resonance. The chapter explores the sustained relationship between Andersen's works and Disney's production history, with particular attention to emblematic adaptations such as *The Little Mermaid*.

Fleming (2025) demonstrates that Disney's animators and writers did not merely translate Andersen's stories to the screen, but engaged closely with the original texts, the conventions of fairy-tale storytelling, and the broader Victorian literary context that shaped their narrative structure and moral framework. By situating Disney's adaptations within this literary lineage, Fleming highlights how the process of adaptation involves an ongoing negotiation between the meanings embedded in the source material and the shifting cultural expectations of contemporary audiences. Narrative elements are therefore not reproduced unchanged; rather, they are reinterpreted and reshaped to align with evolving social norms and audience sensibilities — a dynamic that is particularly visible in the 2023 live-action reimagining of *The Little Mermaid*.

This historical perspective reveals how Victorian narratives, initially rooted in literary tradition, gradually became integrated into Disney's expanding media ecosystem. By tracing this trajectory, Fleming underscores the ways in which Disney's creative legacy is built upon the reinterpretation of literary pasts that are continuously reframed for new generations. In this sense, *The Little Mermaid* serves as a compelling case through which to examine Disney's capacity to transform canonical texts into long-lasting franchises that preserve emotional and symbolic continuity over time. Such continuity not only sustains the cultural relevance of these stories, but also anticipates Disney's contemporary use of nostalgia as a strategic resource within its broader marketing and branding practices.

Official Promotional Posters

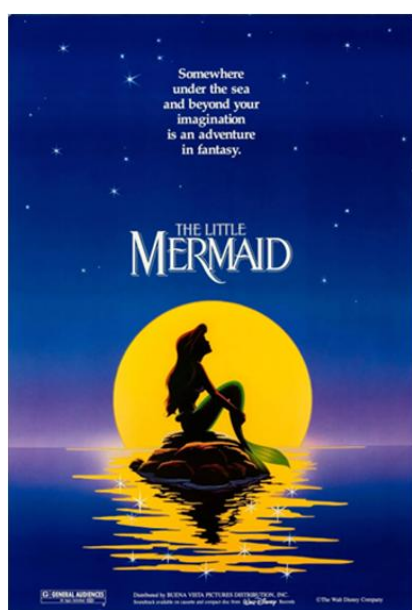


Figure 4.4.2: The Little Mermaid 1989 Theatrical Release Poster/1997 Reissue Poster by John Alvin.

Source: (*The Little Mermaid Gallery*, n.d.)



Figure 4.4.2.1: The Little Mermaid (2023) Posters Revival.

Source: (*The Little Mermaid (2023)*, n.d.)



Figure 4.4.2.2: The Little Mermaid (2023) Official Posters.

Source: (*The Little Mermaid* (2023), n.d.)

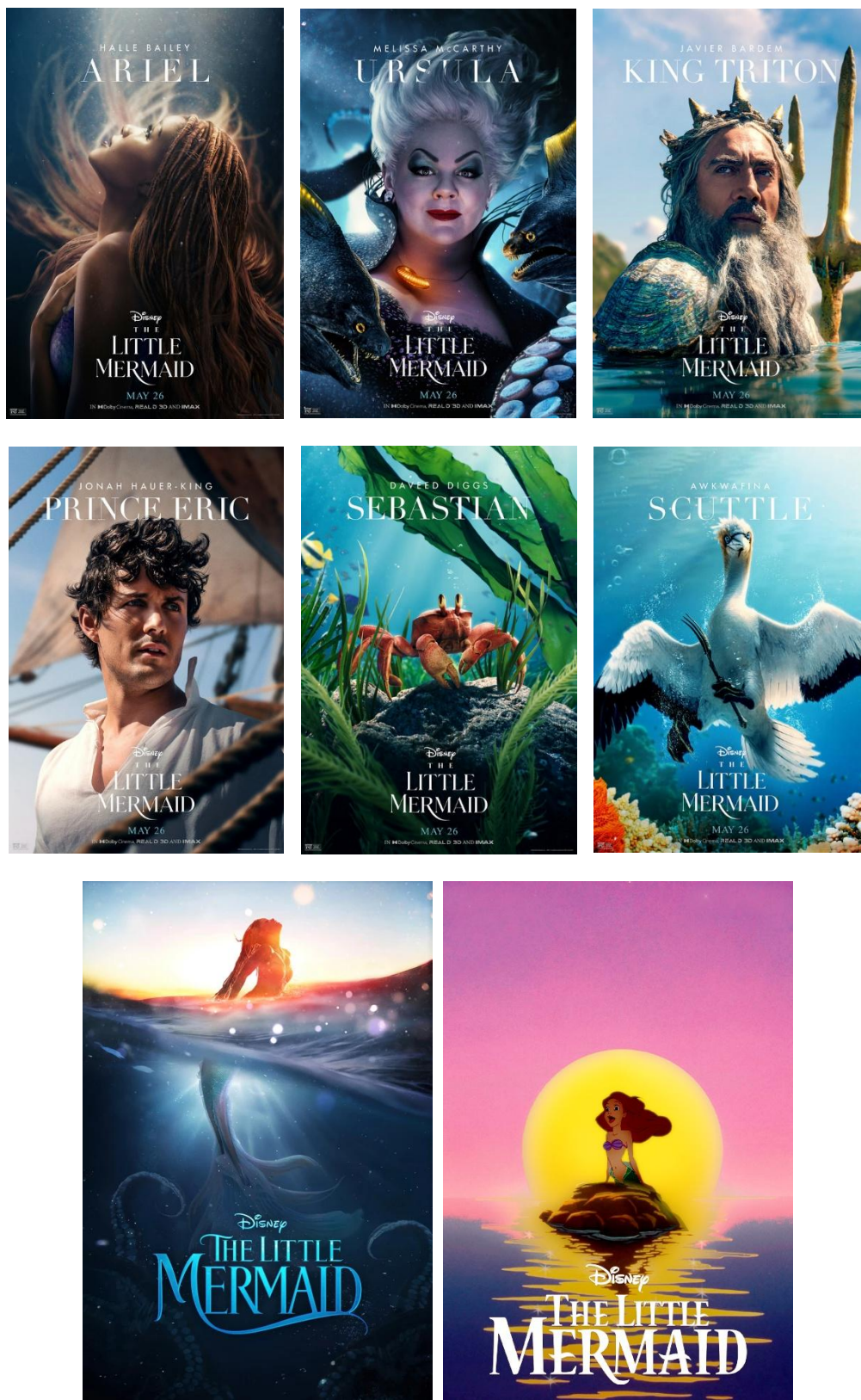


Figure 4.4.2.3: A Collection of The Little Mermaid Promotional Posters.

Source: (*The Little Mermaid* (1989), n.d.; *The Little Mermaid* (2023), n.d.; *The Little Mermaid Poster* 2023, n.d.)

Table 4.4.2 *Nostalgic Elements Identified: The Little Mermaid (2023).*

VISUAL	
Clothing – Character Specific Costuming	▪ Ariel’s live-action costume design closely reproduces the iconic purple seashell top and green tail color palette associated with the 1989 animated film as well as her iconic red hair is also visually preserved. (See Figure 4.4.2.2). ▪ Prince Eric’s costume styling (white shirt with open collar) evokes maritime and 19th century European royal aesthetics, which maintains continuity with the original prince archetype and reinforces fairy-tale historicity. (See Figure 4.4.2.3). ▪ Ursula’s dark silhouette, dramatic makeup, and tentacular costume replicate the exaggerated theatrical villain aesthetic established in 1989. (See Figure 4.4.2.2) The preservation of core costume identifiers (see Figure 4.4.2.3) maintains iconographic continuity and operates as a direct visual bridge to the 1989 animated classic, allowing audiences who grew up with the original film to immediately recognize the characters. This aligns with nostalgic brand recall and heritage reinforcement.
Period Setting	▪ Promotional posters emphasize underwater fantasy landscapes and coastal European-inspired architecture (see Figure 4.4.2.2) ▪ The oceanic setting is portrayed as luminous, magical, and painterly — closely aligned with the animated film’s romanticized seascape. ▪ Instagram visuals frequently showcase coral reefs, bioluminescent effects, and dreamlike underwater lighting. The environmental continuity sustains the fairy-tale atmosphere of the 1989 version and recreates a familiar fantasy world while enhancing realism through CGI. This aligns with Mehdián Rad’s (2024) framework of blending historical emotional memory with contemporary technological adaptation.
Color Palette	▪ Dominant use of deep ocean blues, turquoise contrasted with golden sunlight tones in posters. ▪ Warm hues (orange and gold) appear prominently in sunset scenes and romantic imagery of Ariel and Eric (particularly in posters and Instagram visuals). ▪ Purple and green hues associated with Ursula. ▪ Teaser posters employ same silhouette framing and colors with glowing light). The color palette mirrors the emotional coding of the 1989 animation — blue for longing, gold for romance, purple/green for villainy — creating visual resonance with childhood memory while modernizing through cinematic realism.
Illustrative Composition and Film Quality	▪ The official and some other teaser posters such as 1. Ariel seated on a rock, facing horizon at sunset and 2. Ariel swimming upwards to the surface trying to reach with her hand the light that filters through the water (see Figures 4.4.2 and 4.4.2.1), directly recreate the iconic original theatrical release poster of 1989 and the animated VHS cover art. ▪ Framing emphasizes upward gaze, longing posture, and dreamlike horizon. ▪ High-resolution photorealistic rendering replaces traditional animation but maintains the compositional structure. ▪ Instagram carousel posts frequently juxtapose legacy imagery with updated stills. This visual replication functions as a deliberate intertextual callback, activating recognition memory and reinforcing narrative continuity.

MUSICAL	
Familiar Sound Cues	▪ Classic soundtrack revival. ▪ Orchestral arrangements retain Alan Menken’s original melodic structure. ▪ Marketing highlighted the return of original composer Alan Menken. ▪ The promotional campaign heavily featured “Part of Your World”, “Under the Sea” and “Kiss the Girl” in teaser trailers and Instagram clips. ▪ Instagram posts include short musical clips used as background audio. ▪ Instagram posts promoted song snippets before release. ▪ Behind-the-scenes clips of Halle Bailey performing iconic songs emphasized authenticity and continuity. Music acts as one of the strongest emotional triggers of autobiographical memory (Rana et al., 2021). The reuse of familiar and original melodies reinforces cross-generational recognition and emotional recall.
NARRATIVE	
References to Specific Scenes	Promotional material on Instagram and trailers repeatedly referenced the most iconic scenes: ▪ “Part of Your World” performance. ▪ Shipwreck of Prince Eric’s ship and Ariel rescuing him. ▪ “Under the Sea” performance. ▪ Ursula’s contract moment. ▪ The transformation scene from mermaid to human. ▪ The “Kiss the Girl” boat sequence. These scenes function as intertextual anchors, immediately recognizable to audiences familiar with the 1989 film. Their repetition in trailers and posters strengthens recognition and anticipatory nostalgia. It supports Cenizo’s (2021) concept of mediated nostalgia through re-encounter.
Character Dialogue and Language	▪ Trailer lines replicate or slightly adapt iconic dialogue from the original. ▪ Emphasis on iconic lines such as Ariel’s longing for “the world above” are echoed in trailers. ▪ Ursula’s rhetorical and manipulative tone mirrors her animated villain’s theatricality animated predecessor. Preserving familiar dialogue rhythms reinforces narrative memory and continuity while slightly adapting language for modern sensibilities.
Storytelling Frame and Narrative Continuity	▪ The promotional narrative emphasizes “returning to the beloved classic.” ▪ Marketing repeatedly references the 1989 film as a cultural milestone. ▪ Social media posts frame the film as a “reimagining” rather than replacement. ▪ Marketing emphasized “a new generation’s Ariel.” This balances historical nostalgia (Millennials) with imaginative nostalgia (Gen Z), aligning with cross-generational engagement strategies. The campaign constructs a continuity bridge rather than rupture, fostering what Pitre (2023) would describe as brand futurity — projecting legacy into contemporary media cycles.

SYMBOLIC CUES	
Vintage Typography	Fairy-tale typography (see Figure 4.4.2.3): - Title typography in posters closely resembles the stylized serif design of the 1989 logo structure. - Metallic gold gradients evoke fairy-tale book covers. - Fonts with ornamental flourishes used in posters. Typography functions as a symbolic marker of Disney's fairy-tale heritage and reinforces historical brand consistency.
Iconic Symbols	Repeated symbolic imagery and cultural symbols in posters and Instagram posts includes: - The seashell necklace. - Triton's trident. - Ursula's tentacles. - Ocean waves framing Ariel. - Ariel's silhouette as a cultural icon. - The Disney castle logo preceding promotional materials. These symbols operate as condensed narrative signifiers — instantly evoking story memory without exposition.
BRAND HERITAGE	
Historical Brand Identity	- The Disney castle logo precedes trailers. - Marketing repeatedly and explicitly referenced the 1989 animated film as "beloved". - Promotional materials invoked Disney's legacy of princess storytelling. - Promotional messaging highlights "from the studio that brought you..." This activates brand heritage and reinforces Disney's authority in fairy-tale narratives. Activates collective brand memory and reinforces trust in Disney's fairy-tale legacy (Voigt et al., 2017).
CELEBRITY ASSOCIATION	
Cultural relevance: - Halle Bailey's casting generated extensive social media discourse. - Casting Halle Bailey became central to the campaign narrative. - Promotional posts emphasized her voice as a defining feature. - Social media posts often combine nostalgic imagery with contemporary representation discourse. (Main characters being more inclusive). - The marketing leveraged interviews and red-carpet appearances to frame the film as both classic and culturally progressive. - Key actors (popular ones at the time) – promotional posters, relevance. Celebrity integration bridges generational audiences, merging legacy content with contemporary cultural relevance.	

Source: Own elaboration.

4.4.3 Nostalgic Elements in *Lilo & Stitch* (2025)

The promotional strategy surrounding the live-action adaptation of *Lilo & Stitch* (2025) -known as “There’s one in every family” campaign- (Paltridge, 2025) demonstrates a deliberate return to one of Disney’s most unconventional marketing campaigns. Rather than developing an entirely new promotional approach, the studio revived and reinterpreted the disruptive campaign originally implemented for the 2002 animated release. At the time, the marketing strategy for *Lilo & Stitch* broke away from traditional promotional conventions used by Disney and the broader film industry. Instead of relying solely on conventional trailers and character introductions, the campaign introduced the character of Stitch as a chaotic intruder who “invaded” iconic scenes from other well-known Disney films such as *The Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Aladdin*, and *The Lion King* (see figure 4.4.3). These teaser advertisements portrayed Stitch disrupting familiar narratives and visual moments from Disney’s most beloved classics, positioning the character as a rebellious outsider within the Disney universe and immediately capturing audience attention (Ebiri, 2025).

This unconventional strategy proved highly effective, generating widespread discussion and distinguishing the film within a crowded animation market. Scholars and marketing analysts have since described the campaign as revolutionary because it intentionally subverted Disney’s own brand imagery while simultaneously reinforcing audience familiarity with its existing intellectual properties (Benhamou, 2017). By integrating Stitch into recognizable cinematic moments (see Figure 4.4.3.3), the campaign not only highlighted the character’s mischievous personality but also activated nostalgic associations with earlier Disney films, creating a humorous intertextual dialogue with the studio’s own legacy. As several commentators have noted, the promotional materials effectively turned Disney’s archive of classic films into a marketing platform for the new character, generating curiosity and organic word-of-mouth engagement (Marsh, 2026; Nahandian, 2024).

More than two decades later, the promotional campaign for the 2025 live-action adaptation revisits this same disruptive logic, adapting it to contemporary digital platforms and social media environments. Promotional posters, teaser materials, and Instagram content once again present Stitch as a playful agent of chaos interacting with recognizable Disney imagery and visual motifs (see Figure 4.4.3.5). By echoing the original campaign’s humor, irreverence, and intertextual references, the marketing strategy simultaneously celebrates the legacy of the 2002 film while reintroducing the character to new audiences. As commentators on Disney’s marketing history have observed, the original campaign remains one of the studio’s most distinctive promotional strategies, precisely because it challenged conventional advertising norms and leveraged nostalgia, humor, and brand self-parody to capture public attention (Cruz, 2025; Savla, 2025).

In this sense, the promotional campaign for *Lilo & Stitch* (2025) can be interpreted as a strategic act of marketing nostalgia in itself: by recreating elements of the earlier campaign, Disney not only promotes the new film but also reactivates collective memories associated with the original release. The following analysis therefore examines how the campaign integrates the nostalgic elements selected as the primary analytical categories for the film analysis (visual, musical, narrative, symbolic, brand heritage and celebrity association), drawing on promotional posters and social media materials to identify the mechanisms through which nostalgia is mobilized within the film’s contemporary marketing strategy.

Official Promotional Posters Lilo & Stitch (2002) VS Lilo & Stitch Live Action (2025)



Figure 4.4.3: Lilo & Stitch (2002) Official Posters.

Source: (*Lilo & Stitch* (2002), n.d.)

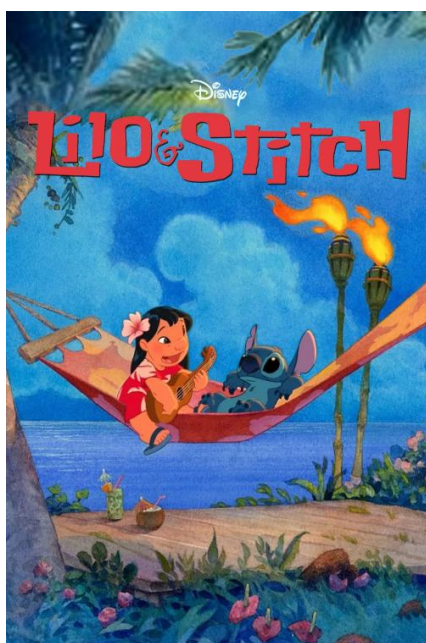


Figure 4.4.3.1: Lilo & Stitch (2002).
Source: (*Lilo & Stitch* (2002), n.d.)



Figure 4.4.3.2: Lilo & Stitch Live Action (2025).
Source: (*Lilo & Stitch* (2025), n.d.)



Figure 4.4.3.3: Lilo and Stitch Marketing Campaign, Original Animated Version.

Source: (Ebiri, 2025)



Figure 4.4.3.4: Lilo and Stitch Marketing Campaign, Live Action Version.

Source: (*Lilo & Stitch* (2025), n.d.)

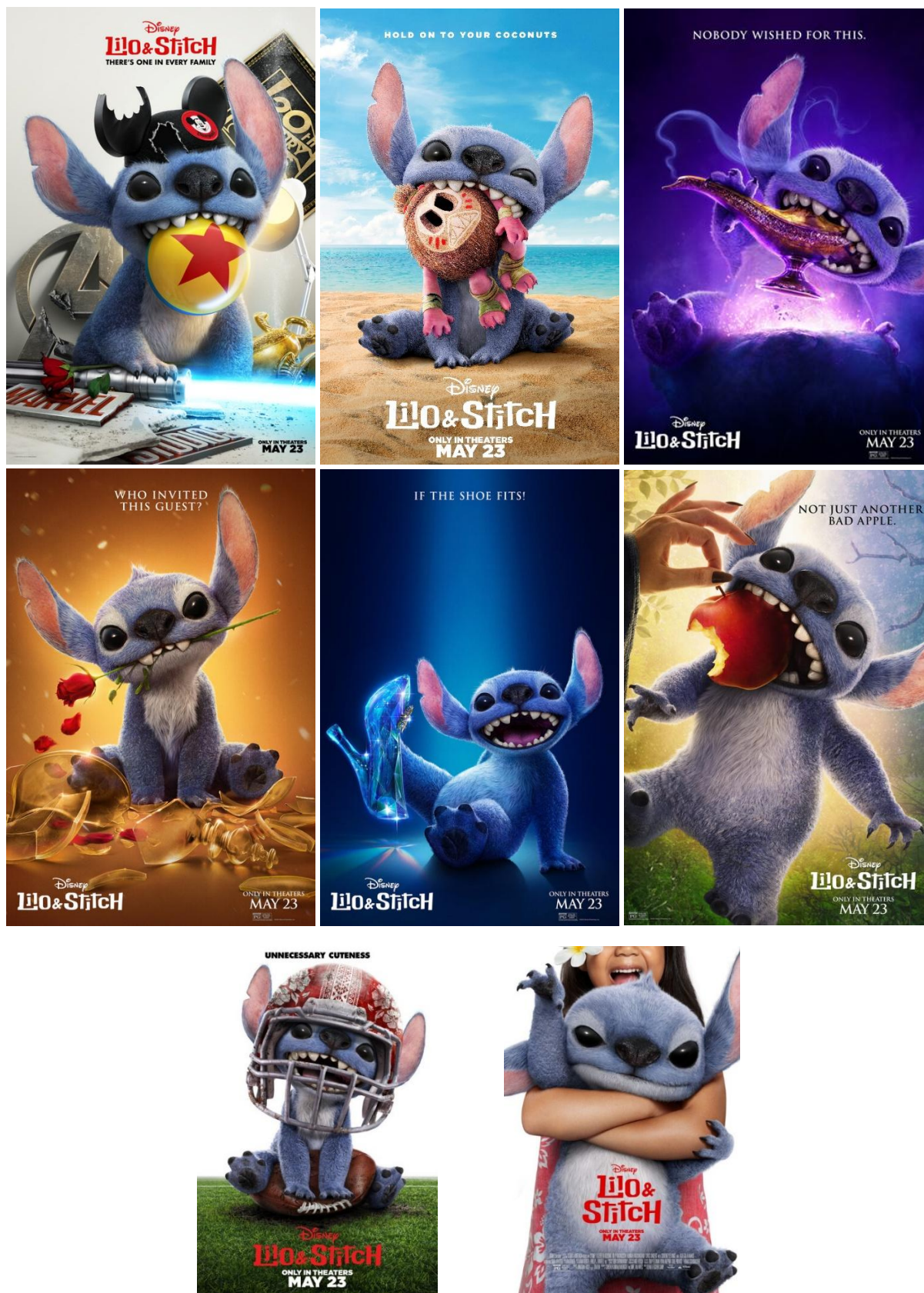


Figure 4.4.3.5: *Lilo & Stitch* Live Action Promotional Posters.

Source: (*Lilo & Stitch* (2025), n.d.)

Table 4.4.3 *Nostalgic Elements Identified: Lilo & Stitch Live Action (2025).*

VISUAL	
Clothing – Character Specific Costuming	The promotional posters for Lilo & Stitch (see Figure 4.4.3.1 and 4.4.3.2) emphasize the preservation of the iconic character aesthetics such as: ▪ Stitch’s distinctive bright blue color, large ears, and mischievous facial expressions ▪ Lilo’s classic red dress with white floral patterns ▪ Hawaiian environment cues ▪ Tropical color combinations that visually recall the 2002 animated original All these visual elements are not merely aesthetic but function as iconic markers that immediately connect the live-action adaptation to its predecessor, reinforcing visual memory schemas associated with childhood viewing.
Period Setting	▪ The whole film’s aesthetic and modern context reflect a mix between the late 1990s and early 2000s ▪ Hawaiian culture is highlighted through hula, surf, and local’s traditions, as well as, the rural life of some of its islands ▪ The posters and promotional material still frequently showcase lush tropical landscapes, ocean vibes, beach scenes, vibrant natural environments and Hawaiian cultural motifs These elements visually echo the Pacific Island setting that defined and characterized the tone and atmosphere of the animated version.
Color Palette	The promotional visual language on Instagram posts relies heavily on tropical color palette, dominated by vibrant: ▪ Ocean blues ▪ Fiery sunset oranges ▪ Colors associated to tropical vegetation (greens) ▪ Warm earth tones This palette reflects both the original film’s vibrant aesthetic and the cultural vibrancy of the Hawaiian setting. The Instagram promotional images maintain this color scheme through bright lighting and saturated tones, ensuring visual coherence with the original aesthetic. The continuity of color design contributes to the nostalgic resonance by visually linking the new adaptation with its predecessor.

Illustrative Composition and Film Quality	One of the most distinctive nostalgic features of the original <i>Lilo & Stitch</i> promotional campaign was the illustrative composition of its posters and advertisements. The 2002 campaign famously depicted Stitch invading iconic scenes from classic Disney films such as <i>The Lion King</i> (see Figure 4.4.3.4), <i>Beauty and the Beast</i>, and <i>Aladdin</i>. These advertisements combined the visual language of traditional Disney illustrations with humorous disruption, positioning Stitch as a rebellious character within the Disney universe. Although the 2025 campaign does not replicate these crossover posters exactly, its promotional materials still draw on the same playful visual logic. Several Instagram posts (see Figure 4.4.3.5) portray Stitch being mischievous and interacting with familiar Disney iconography or appearing in unexpected situations, echoing the humorous and chaotic tone that defined the original campaign. This continuity of visual humor reinforces the nostalgic identity of the franchise. Shift from traditional animation to live-action CGI: the special effects in this movie film were of great importance to its quality and the replication of important scenes of great complexity. The 2002 posters feature hand-drawn animation aesthetics characteristic of Disney's early-2000s animation style. In contrast, the 2025 promotional images present a more realistic rendering of Stitch through digital effects. However, despite this technological transformation, the visual marketing preserves the character's exaggerated expressions and playful personality. This combination of updated technology with recognizable character design illustrates how Disney balances modernization with nostalgia, allowing the franchise to evolve while maintaining visual continuity.
MUSICAL	
Familiar Sound Cues	The different campaigns (Instagram promotional videos and short clips) reference and use the film's musical heritage through background audio cues and thematic associations. Outstanding original soundtrack, such as: ▪ Light instrumental renditions of "Hawaiian Roller Coaster Ride" ▪ Themes reminiscent of Elvis Presley songs (Burning Love) These choices evoke the original film's iconic soundtrack legacy and function as auditory triggers of nostalgia. Music in this campaign plays a supportive yet significant role in activating affective memory. Familiar melodic cues heighten emotional engagement and reinforce narrative continuity across versions, consistent with nostalgia's psychological impact (Rana et al., 2022).

NARRATIVE	
References to Specific Scenes	From Instagram posts, several narrative cues reflect familiar sequences and relational dynamics: ▪ Profile shots of Lilo and Stitch together ▪ References to familial and friendship bonds ▪ Group scenes involving key supporting characters These visual narratives mirror and highlight central narrative themes from the 2002 original — particularly the emphasis on ‘ohana’ (family) and belonging, famously summarized in the phrase “Ohana means family. Family means nobody gets left behind or forgotten” or “This is my family (...) It’s little and broken, but still good”. These thematic elements were one of the most emotionally resonant aspects of the 2002 film. Instagram captions and promotional imagery frequently reference the relationship between Lilo and Stitch, emphasizing companionship, friendship, and the formation of unconventional families. By foregrounding this narrative theme, the marketing campaign directly connects the emotional core of the original film with the new adaptation.
Character Dialogue and Language	Although posters themselves contain minimal dialogue, the Instagram promotional posts and captions often incorporate language that echoes the narrative tone of the original film. References to “ohana,” friendship, and belonging appear frequently within captions and promotional descriptions. This repetition of iconic language reinforces narrative continuity and reminds audiences of the emotional messages associated with the original story.
Storytelling Frame and Narrative Continuity	The campaign positions the 2025 film as a reimagining rather than a replacement of the animated classic. By referencing the original storyline and highlighting recognizable character relationships, the promotional narrative frames the new film as a continuation of a beloved cultural story. This strategy reflects Disney’s broader approach to live-action adaptations, which often rely on nostalgia while introducing updated visual storytelling techniques. This narrative framing evokes the storytelling logic of the original film, making the adaptation a continuity extension rather than an entirely fresh narrative universe. It demonstrates how Disney marketing uses familiar narrative frames to position retellings as emotionally resonant continuations.
SYMBOLIC CUES	
Vintage Typography Font	The typography used in the promotional posters maintains stylistic similarities to the original film’s title design. The playful, rounded lettering associated with the <i>Lilo & Stitch</i> brand is preserved, reinforcing the visual identity of the franchise. It visually references the original animated logo while modernizing its design, which helps audiences connect the new film with the earlier version.
Iconic Symbols	Several symbolic elements repeatedly appear on Instagram promotional materials: ▪ Ocean imagery ▪ Surfboards ▪ Tropical flowers ▪ Hawaiian clothing style and patterns These symbols represent the cultural environment that defined the original film and serve as visual shorthand for the narrative setting.

BRAND HERITAGE	
Historical Brand Identity	First, the return of the phrase such as, “ohana” in captions and visual contexts operates as a cultural symbol that resonates deeply with audiences familiar with the original film, and the presence of beloved characters (Lilo, Stitch) in their classic roles reinforces brand heritage.
	Second, symbols of family and emotional belonging (especially in the Hawaiian cultural context) reinforce a sense of collective memory and emotional continuity. This aligns with Holotová et al.’s (2020) notion that retro marketing fosters emotional attachment through shared cultural symbols.
	And finally, the promotional materials also reinforce Disney’s broader brand identity through the presence of the Disney logo, references to classic storytelling, and visual connections to other Disney properties. The original campaign’s crossover advertisements explicitly referenced other Disney classics, highlighting the studio’s extensive cultural archive; Although the 2025 campaign is more centered on social media engagement, it still draws upon the brand’s legacy by emphasizing the film’s status as a beloved Disney story returning to the screen.
CELEBRITY ASSOCIATION	
There are two different ways to approach this topic, one is related to the use of celebrity associations connected to the legacy of the original film while the other one involves the role of celebrity association and cultural representation in reinforcing the film’s nostalgic appeal. The first one relates to the way in which the animated <i>Lilo & Stitch</i> (2002) became culturally distinctive not only for its characters and setting but also for its musical and celebrity references, particularly the extensive use of songs by Elvis Presley. The integration of Elvis’s music played an important role in shaping the film’s identity and contributed to its unique cultural tone, blending Hawaiian cultural elements with American pop-culture nostalgia. In the context of the 2025 adaptation, promotional materials and social media posts continue to evoke this cultural connection, indirectly referencing the musical legacy that defined the original film. These associations function as nostalgic cues by linking the franchise to recognizable figures and cultural icons that audiences already associate with the story. On the other hand, the casting of Maia Kealoha as Lilo introduces a new generation of audiences to the story while maintaining a strong connection to the film’s Hawaiian cultural context. Kealoha, a young actress from Hawaii, became widely associated with the promotional campaign through interviews, press appearances, and social media content released alongside the film’s marketing materials. Kealoha’s casting reinforces the cultural authenticity of the film’s Hawaiian setting, which was a defining element of the original animated version. By highlighting local representation in the promotional campaign, Disney not only preserves the cultural identity associated with the story but also aligns the new adaptation with contemporary industry discussions surrounding diversity and representation. In this sense, the presence of a new lead actress functions simultaneously as a renewal of the franchise and as a mechanism that strengthens its nostalgic resonance by preserving the emotional and cultural elements that audiences associate with the original film.	

Source: Own elaboration.

4.4.4 Nostalgic Elements in *Freakier Friday* (2025)

The analysis of nostalgic elements in *Freakier Friday* (2025) requires first situating the film within the historical and cultural context of its predecessor, *Freaky Friday* (2003). The original film, produced by Disney and directed by Mark Waters, became one of the most recognizable family comedies of the early 2000s. Starring Jamie Lee Curtis and Lindsay Lohan, the film told the story of a mother and daughter who unexpectedly swap bodies and are forced to experience each other's lives, ultimately strengthening their relationship through empathy and mutual understanding. The narrative combined humor, family dynamics, and elements of teen culture that resonated strongly with audiences at the time, contributing to the film's lasting popularity and cultural relevance.

More than two decades later, *Freakier Friday* (2025) revisits this narrative universe through a sequel that continues the story of the characters originally portrayed in the 2003 film. The return of Curtis and Lohan to their iconic roles represents a central nostalgic element in itself, as it reconnects audiences with the performers who originally defined the franchise. Their reappearance not only reinforces narrative continuity but also activates collective memory among viewers who grew up with the earlier film. This strategy reflects a broader trend within the contemporary film industry in which studios increasingly rely on sequels, remakes, and reboots to reactivate established intellectual properties and appeal to cross-generational audiences.

From a marketing perspective, the promotional campaign for *Freakier Friday* (2025) emphasizes this intergenerational continuity by highlighting the reunion of the original cast and by referencing visual, narrative, and cultural elements associated with the 2003 film. Posters, trailers, and social media content frequently evoke iconic moments, character dynamics, and themes from the earlier production, while simultaneously introducing new characters and updated storylines designed to appeal to contemporary audiences. This combination of familiarity and novelty represents a key mechanism of nostalgia marketing, in which past cultural texts are reintroduced in modified forms that resonate with both returning fans and new viewers.

Furthermore, the cultural context surrounding the release of the sequel reflects the evolving media environment in which Disney now operates. While the original film emerged in the early 2000s within a traditional theatrical distribution model, the 2025 sequel is promoted within a highly interconnected digital ecosystem dominated by social media platforms, streaming services, and online fan communities. As a result, nostalgia functions not only as a narrative device but also as a marketing strategy that encourages audience participation through digital engagement, memory sharing, and intergenerational cultural references.

Within this framework, the following analysis examines how nostalgic elements are mobilized in the promotional materials of *Freakier Friday* (2025), including official posters and social media content. The analysis focuses specifically on visual, musical, narrative, symbolic, brand heritage and celebrity association elements, identifying the ways in which the film's marketing strategy draws upon the legacy of the 2003 original while adapting its imagery and themes to contemporary promotional practices.

Official Promotional Posters Freaky Friday (2003) VS Freakier Friday (2025)

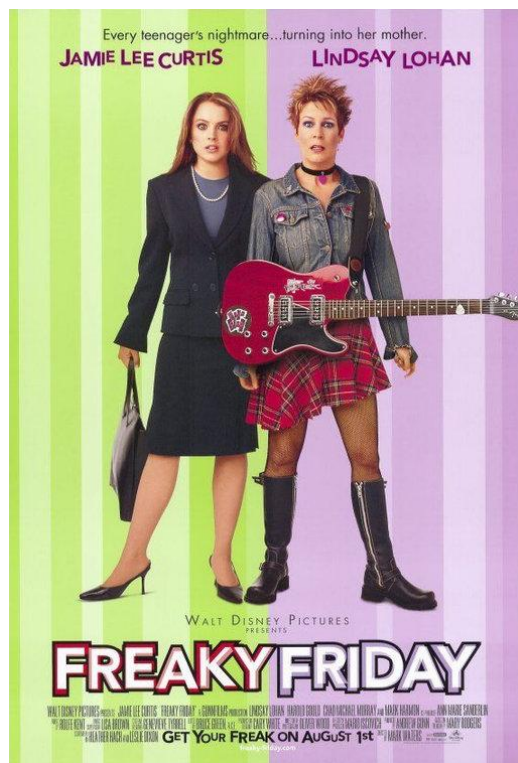


Figure 4.4.4: Freaky Friday Official Poster.
Source: (*Freaky Friday* (2003), n.d.)



Figure 4.4.4.1: Freakier Friday Official Poster.
Source: (*Freakier Friday* (2025), n.d.)



Figure 4.4.4.2: Freaky Friday (2003) Promotional Posters.

Source: (*Freaky Friday* (2003), n.d.)



Figure 4.4.4.3: Freakier Friday (2025) Promotional Posters.

Source: (Freakier Friday (2025), n.d.; Freakier Friday Movie Poster Gallery, n.d.)

Table 4.4.4 *Nostalgic Elements Identified: Freakier Friday (2025).*

VISUAL	
Character Continuity – Clothing	The most relevant visual nostalgic elements in this movie include: ▪ Character continuity: the return of Jamie Lee Curtis and Lindsay Lohan as the central characters, visually reinforcing the connection between the 2003 film and the 2025 sequel (see Figure 4.4.4.1) ▪ Iconic character juxtaposition: posters continue to place the two main characters side-by-side, recreating the visual composition of the original promotional materials where mother and daughter stand side by side, emphasizing the comedic contrast between their roles through clothing and posture (see Figure 4.4.4) ▪ Costume contrast: clothing continues to represent generational identity, a visual trope already used in the 2003 film. However, the updated visuals reflect the passage of time; both characters now appear as adults, reinforcing the evolutions of their relationship while maintaining their recognizable identities, which allows audiences to immediately recognize the characters while also highlighting the intergenerational development of the story (see Figure 4.4.4.3).
Period and Cultural Setting	First of all, the promotional posters and Instagram posts retain the core visual theme of the original culture of the early 2000s and its characteristics (bold colors, simple backgrounds, character expressions emphasize and comedic tone). These design choices mirror the aesthetic conventions of family comedies released during that period while at the same time updating the story to modern family situations by including: ▪ New characters ▪ New lifestyles ▪ Generational and intercultural references
Color Palette	Color functions as another nostalgic cue. Purple and green were the main colors of the official promotional poster of the movie in 2003 while promotional materials prominently feature vibrant warm colors, particularly reds and yellows tones (see Figure 4.4.4.2), which emphasize the energetic and comedic tone of the film. These colors also reflect the visual aesthetic associated with early-2000s teen films. ▪ The marketing materials for <i>Freakier Friday</i> (2025) maintain a similar color palette while adapting it to contemporary design trends. Purple and green were used again as the main colors of the official promotional poster of the prequel in 2025 (see Figure 4.4.4.3). Bright tones continue to dominate posters and social media visuals, helping to recreate the playful atmosphere of the original films and visually connect the sequel with its predecessor.

Illustrative Composition and Film Quality	The composition of the 2003 promotional poster is particularly iconic: Curtis and Lohan stand facing forward while holding each other's personal belongings, visually symbolizing the body-swap narrative central to the film (see Figure 4.4.4). This simple yet effective composition immediately communicates the premise of the story and became one of the most recognizable promotional images associated with the film. The promotional materials for the 2025 sequel echo this compositional strategy by again placing the two protagonists at the center of the frame in a symmetrical arrangement. However, the updated posters often include additional characters or more dynamic visual elements, reflecting the expanded narrative scope of the sequel (see Figure 4.4.4.3). The Instagram promotional posts frequently use split-screen imagery or side-by-side character framing, further reinforcing the theme of dual identity that defined the original film. The technological evolution between the two films is visible in the promotional materials. The 2003 posters reflect the photographic style and graphic design conventions typical of early-2000s cinema marketing. In contrast, the promotional materials for <i>Freakier Friday</i> (2025) demonstrate the influence of contemporary digital design and high-resolution cinematic photography.
MUSICAL	
Familiar Sound Cues	Music played an important role in shaping the cultural identity of the 2003 film. The character of Anna Coleman, portrayed by Lindsay Lohan, is introduced as a teenage musician who performs in a rock band (Pink Slip). This element contributed to the film's association with early-2000s pop-rock culture and youth identity. Promotional materials for the 2025 sequel reference this musical heritage through visual cues associated with performance and youth culture. Several Instagram posts include imagery related to music and performance, indirectly referencing the musical aspects of the original narrative. These cues serve as nostalgic reminders of the cultural context in which the original film became popular.

NARRATIVE	
References to Specific Scenes (Iconic Story Moments)	The central narrative device of <i>Freaky Friday</i> —the body swap between mother and daughter— remains one of the most recognizable elements of the franchise. The promotional materials for the 2003 film explicitly highlight this premise through visual cues and comedic expressions that suggest role reversal (see Figure 4.4.4.3). In the marketing campaign for <i>Freakier Friday</i> (2025), this narrative concept is again emphasized. Instagram promotional posts often reference the chaos and humor associated with characters experiencing unfamiliar situations, echoing the comedic premise of the original story. These references help audiences recall the original narrative while anticipating the new developments introduced in the sequel. The recreation and continuity of iconic story moments such as: ▪ The mini earthquake at the party after reading the prophecy ▪ Changing bodies (sleep positions of the characters) at midnight ▪ The screaming at the mirror and touching faces after realizing the change ▪ The run face to face and body crash to try to swap bodies again ▪ The change of style and outfits of the characters in their new bodies ▪ The swap bodies back to normal at the concert scene (performance of the iconic song “take me away” by the Pink Slip band)
Character Dialogue and Language	The language and dialogue of the different characters used in this movie have been aligned with the trends followed by the new generations of society nowadays. Although promotional posters themselves contain minimal dialogue, the captions and textual elements accompanying Instagram promotional posts frequently reference themes of generational conflict, family dynamics, and humorous misunderstandings. These themes closely mirror the language and comedic tone that characterized the original film. The repetition of these narrative themes reinforces continuity between the two films and reminds audiences of the emotional and comedic framework that defined the original story.
Storytelling Frame and Narrative Continuity	The promotional campaign positions <i>Freakier Friday</i> (2025) not simply as a remake but as a continuation of the narrative world introduced in the 2003 film. The “Here we go again” accompanied by the arrows indicating the change of the pointed character’s body (see Figure 4.4.4.3) emphasize the return of the original protagonists and their evolving relationship, the marketing materials frame the sequel as an extension of a familiar story. This narrative framing allows the film to capitalize on nostalgic attachment while also presenting new conflicts and generational dynamics that resonate with contemporary audiences.

SYMBOLIC CUES	
Vintage Typography/Font	Typography plays an important symbolic role in the promotional materials for both films. The original <i>Freaky Friday</i> poster features bold, playful lettering that reflects the comedic tone of the story. The typography communicates a sense of energy and humor consistent with early-2000s family films The title design used for <i>Freakier Friday</i> maintains similar stylistic elements while modernizing the typography to reflect contemporary graphic design trends. This continuity in visual branding reinforces the connection between the two films (see Figures 4.4.4 and 4.4.4.1).
Iconic Symbols	Several symbolic visual cues appear consistently in the promotional materials (see figure 4.4.4.3): ▪ Contrasting outfits representing generational identity ▪ Expressive facial reactions emphasizing comedic conflict ▪ Mirrored poses and character gestures between characters, symbolizing identity reversal and role exchange These visual symbols communicate the theme of identity exchange that lies at the heart of the story and serve as recognizable markers linking the sequel with the original film.
BRAND HERITAGE	
Historical Brand Identity	The promotional materials for both films prominently feature Disney branding, reinforcing the studio's reputation for family-oriented storytelling. By revisiting a well-known Disney property, the sequel draws upon the cultural legacy associated with the original film and the broader Disney brand.
CELEBRITY ASSOCIATION	
A particularly significant nostalgic element is the return of Jamie Lee Curtis and Lindsay Lohan, whose performances were central to the success of the original film. Their reappearance in the sequel acts as a powerful form of celebrity-driven nostalgia, reconnecting audiences with the performers who originally defined the characters. Promotional posters and Instagram content frequently highlight the reunion of the two actresses, framing their return as a central aspect of the film's appeal. This strategy strengthens the emotional connection between the new film and the cultural memory of the original production Two important aspects to highlight: ▪ Celebrity association, using the reunion of the original cast as a central promotional strategy. ▪ Social media nostalgia strategy, where Instagram posts reference earlier moments from the franchise such as the use of behind-the-scenes images and character reveals, so the campaign encourages audiences to recall their memories of the original movie (2003) while engaging new audiences.	

Source: Own elaboration.

4.5 Box Office Performance and Audience Reception

Comparative Overview of Performance Data

This section presents a comparative analysis of the commercial performance and audience reception of the selected films for the Disney case study —*Alice in Wonderland* (2010), *The Little Mermaid* (2023), *Lilo & Stitch* (2025), and *Freakier Friday* (2025), see Tables 4.5 (Annexes E I, II; F) and 4.5.1 respectively (Annexes G I, II; H I, II and I). The data has been collected from Box Office Mojo (retrieved on April 9th, 2026) and is complemented by audience and critic ratings from IMDb and Rotten Tomatoes. The objective of this analysis is to contextualize the market performance of each film and assess the extent to which nostalgia-driven strategies contribute to commercial success, audience engagement, and brand loyalty within the contemporary film industry.

Table 4.5 Box Office Performance: Comparative Chart

Film	Domestic Box Office	International Box Office	Worldwide Total	Global Ranking (Year)	All-Time Ranking
Alice in Wonderland (2010)	\$334.2M (32.6%)	\$691.3M (67.4%)	\$1.025B	#2 (2010)	#57
The Little Mermaid (2023)	\$298.2M (52.3%)	\$271.5M (47.7%)	\$569.6M	#11 (2023)	#220
Lilo & Stitch (2025)	\$423.8M (40.8%)	\$614.2M (59.2%)	\$1.038B	#4 (2025)	#52
Freakier Friday (2025)	\$94.2M (61.5%)	\$59.0M (38.5%)	\$153.2M	#35 (2025)	-

Source: Own elaboration (*Box Office Mojo*, n.d.)

Table 4.5.1 Audience Reception and Reviews: Comparative Chart

Film	IMDb Rating	Rotten Tomatoes		
		Tomatometer	Popcornmeter	Rating
Alice in Wonderland (2010)	6.4/10 (467k)	51% 275 reviews	55% 250k+ ratings	3,4 out of 5
The Little Mermaid (2023)	7.2/10 (178k)	67% 349 reviews	93% 10k+ V.ratings	4,6 out of 5
Lilo & Stitch (2025)	6.7/10 (94k)	72% 218 reviews	91% 10k+ V.ratings	4,6 out of 5
Freakier Friday (2025)	6.2/10 (38k)	73% 228 reviews	91% 2.5k V.ratings	4,5 out of 5

Source: Own elaboration (*IMDb*, n.d.; *Rotten Tomatoes*, n.d.)

Individual Film Performance Analysis

Alice in Wonderland (2010) stands out as a major commercial success, surpassing \$1 billion in worldwide box office revenue and ranking second globally in its release year. Its strong international performance (67.4%) highlights its global appeal (see Table 4.5). However, this commercial success contrasts with its relatively moderate critical and audience reception with a rating of 6.4/10 by IMDb and 3.4 out of 5 by Rotten Tomatoes (see Table 4.5.1), suggesting that its performance was driven more by spectacle, brand recognition, and novelty than by critical acclaim.

In contrast, *The Little Mermaid* (2023) achieved a more balanced reception, with moderate box office results but significantly stronger audience approval. While its worldwide gross remained below that of other films in the sample -*Lilo & Stitch* case- (see Table 4.5), its exceptionally high audience score in Rotten Tomatoes (93%) indicates strong emotional engagement, likely driven by nostalgic attachment to the original animated classic, standing out for having the highest audience rating of the entire sample with 7.2/10 and 4,6 out of 5 by IMDb and Rotten Tomatoes respectively (see Table 4.5.1)

Lilo & Stitch (2025) emerges as the most successful film in the sample in terms of overall performance. Surpassing \$1 billion globally and ranking among the top 60 highest-grossing films of all time holding the prominent #52 spot in the historical chart (see Table 4.5). it demonstrates both strong commercial viability and high audience approval (91%) with the best second audience rating in the sample by IMDb and Rotten Tomatoes, represented by 6,7/10 and 4,6 out of 5 respectively (see Table 4.5.1). This suggests an effective alignment between nostalgia-driven marketing, brand heritage, and contemporary audience expectations.

Finally, *Freakier Friday* (2025) presents a different pattern. Despite achieving high audience and critic scores (see Table 4.5.1), its box office performance is significantly lower than the other films. Its domestic-heavy revenue distribution (61.5%) indicates a more localized appeal, likely tied to generational familiarity with the original film, its cast and the nostalgic around its return, rather than broad global recognition of the franchise (see Table 4.5). However, it is important to highlight that the impact of the release of this sequel more than 20 years later broke local records and generated an entire trend on social media that promoted the rewatching of its predecessor film, which benefited the Disney+ platform, so it is a great example of the virtuous circle around which the company itself (Disney) work.

And last but not least, it is essential to highlight the overall results that each of these four movies had in the year corresponding to their release. Each of them occupied important positions, two of them within the top 10 (*Alice in Wonderland* and *Lilo & Stitch*) and all of them within the top 35 of their respective year (see Table 4.5). For the above, each of these movies represents a prominent example within the Disney universe.

CHAPTER 5

Findings

This chapter synthesizes the main findings derived from the Disney case study, integrating the results of the film analysis (Section 4.4), and the performance comparison (Section 4.5) with the theoretical framework established in previous chapters. The objective is to critically examine how nostalgia marketing operates within the contemporary film industry, identify the most prominent nostalgic elements in Disney’s Films, establish the relationship between nostalgia strategies and commercial performance, examine the role of generational audiences (Millennials and Gen Z) and evaluate strategic relevance and effectiveness of Nostalgia Marketing through the lens of The Walt Disney Company as a paradigmatic case.

5.1 Comparative of Disney’s Nostalgia Marketing Campaigns

The outcomes presented in Table 5.1 are the comparison of the compiled results regarding the nostalgic elements identified in Tables 4.4.1; 4.4.2; 4.4.3 and 4.4.4 corresponding to each analyzed movie.

Table 5.1 Comparative Summary of Nostalgic Elements in Disney Films Marketing

Nostalgic Category	Alice in Wonderland (2010)	The Little Mermaid (2023)	Lilo & Stitch (2025)	Freakier Friday (2025)
Visual Elements	Recreation of characters, costumes, fantasy world aesthetics and color palette inspired by 1951 film.	Character design continuity, underwater world aesthetics and color palette referencing animated film.	Poster composition referencing 2002 film, Hawaiian setting vibes and characters visual continuity.	Character juxtaposition posters, costume contrast and early-2000s visual aesthetic continuity.
Musical Elements	References to original film music and orchestral fantasy tone.	Strong use of original songs and musical identity (nostalgic soundtrack).	Strong use of iconic songs, Hawaiian music and Elvis Presley cultural references.	References to early-2000s pop-rock youth culture and band identity.
Narrative Elements	Return to Wonderland story and classic characters.	Same narrative structure and iconic scenes from 1989 film.	Themes of family, belonging, and friendship maintained.	Continuation of body-swap story and intergenerational narrative.
Symbolic Cues	Vintage typography, iconic objects (clock, hat, tea party imagery).	Shell imagery, ocean symbolism, iconic character silhouettes.	Stitch as cultural icon, surf/Hawaii symbolism.	Typography style, mirrored poses, identity swap symbolism.

Brand Heritage	Disney classic remake strategy.	Disney Renaissance film legacy.	Disney cult classic and early 2000s Disney era.	Disney early 2000s teen film nostalgia.
Celebrity Association	Johnny Depp and iconic character portrayal.	Halle Bailey and legacy Disney princess role.	Cultural relevance of Stitch and cast.	Return of Jamie Lee Curtis and Lindsay Lohan.
Marketing Strategy Nostalgia	Posters referencing original film imagery. Interactive campaign pre-Instagram era.	Heavy social media nostalgia and music promotion.	Replication of the 2002 disruptive marketing campaign.	Reunion marketing and social media nostalgia campaign.

Source: Own elaboration.

The results presented in Table 5.1.1 are the metrics derived from the analysis of the different marketing promotional strategies, official posters and movie posts on Instagram presented all along the tables in section 4.4 and the Annexes A; B and C; and were obtained through descriptive statistics by creating and analyzing frequency tables (see Annex D) based on the data present in the aforementioned section and annexes.

Table 5.1.1 *Comparative Ranking of Nostalgic Elements Across Films*

(Being 1 = Most Relevant Nostalgic Element in Marketing Strategy)

Nostalgic Category	Alice in Wonderland (2010)	The Little Mermaid (2023)	Lilo & Stitch (2025)	Freakier Friday (2025)
Visual Elements	1	2	3	4
Musical Elements	6	1	2	6
Narrative Elements	2	3	1	2
Symbolic Cues	5	5	4	5
Brand Heritage	4	4	1	3
Celebrity Association	3	3	4	1

Source: Own elaboration

The cross-sectional analysis of the films summarized in Tables 5.1 and 5.1.1 reveal the way in which nostalgia operates through a multidimensional framework, encompassing visual, musical, narrative, symbolic, brand heritage, and celebrity-driven elements. While all four films rely on nostalgia as a marketing strategy, the specific nostalgic mechanisms differ depending on the historical origin of the film and its cultural position within Disney's portfolio. Each of the four films analyzed—*Alice in Wonderland* (2010), *The Little Mermaid* (2023), *Lilo & Stitch* (2025), and *Freakier Friday* (2025)—demonstrates a distinct configuration of these elements, confirming that nostalgia is not a homogeneous construct but a flexible and adaptive strategy.

For instance, *Alice in Wonderland* relies heavily on visual spectacle and aesthetic reinterpretation, emphasizing iconic imagery and stylistic continuity with the original 1951 animation. In contrast, *The Little Mermaid* prioritizes musical nostalgia, visual and narrative continuity, particularly through the preservation of iconic songs, character identities, and narrative structure from the 1989 animated classic that evoke emotional resonance. Meanwhile, *Lilo & Stitch* demonstrates a different nostalgic strategy centered on marketing replication -disruptive nostalgia- and brand heritage, as the promotional campaign intentionally recreated the disruptive marketing strategy used for the original 2002 film, thereby activating nostalgia not only through narrative, musical and visual elements but also through promotional practices themselves. Finally, *Freakier Friday* stands out for its strong emphasis on celebrity association and intergenerational narrative continuity. By preserving key elements associated with the original 2003 film —particularly the central characters and the body-swap premise— the campaign successfully reconnects with audiences who grew up with the original while introducing the story to new viewers. The comparative analysis consequently demonstrates that nostalgia marketing constitutes a central component of Disney’s contemporary film promotion strategy, particularly in the context of remakes, sequels, and live-action adaptations.

Taken together, these findings indicate that Disney’s nostalgia marketing strategy operates across multiple dimensions, including visual design, music, narrative continuity, symbolic cues and branding, celebrity association, and promotional strategy replication. Rather than relying on a single nostalgic mechanism, Disney strategically combines different nostalgic elements depending on the film’s legacy, target audience, and cultural relevance. This confirms that nostalgia within Disney’s film marketing is not merely aesthetic but strategic, functioning as a tool for cross-generational engagement, brand continuity, and franchise sustainability.

Therefore, based on these results, it can be concluded that Disney adapts its nostalgia marketing strategies according to the type of film while maintaining nostalgia as a central element of its overall promotional strategy, and the outcomes of the case study can be grouped as follows:

- Remakes: Visual + Narrative + Musical (*Alice in Wonderland* and *The Little Mermaid*)
- Franchise Revival: Brand Heritage + Narrative (*Lilo & Stitch*)
This film can be classified as a franchise revival rather than a simple remake. While it is based on the original 2002 animated film, its strategy goes beyond retelling the story. It reactivates the entire franchise identity
- Sequels: Narrative + Celebrity Association (*Freakier Friday*)

These findings reinforce theoretical models that describe nostalgia as a combination of sensory, cognitive, and emotional stimuli (Mehdian Rad, 2024; Rana et al., 2021), and demonstrate how these dimensions can be strategically combined to produce different audience responses.

It is also important to highlight how the results found in *Alice in Wonderland* (2010) and the rest of the films released more than ten years later -*The Little Mermaid* (2023), *Lilo & Stitch* (2025) and *Freakier Friday* (2025)- create a strong comparative foundation that evidences the evolution of Disney’s nostalgia marketing campaign and its application in transitioning from traditional to digital forms through social media platforms (Instagram) over time, which aligns with the theory related to the evolution of marketing whitening the technological environment presented in the eBook “Marketing 6.0: The Future is Immersive”.

While *Alice in Wonderland* (2010) illustrates Disney's transitional approach to nostalgia marketing — relying primarily on visual continuity, literary heritage, and early social media engagement (Facebook)— *The Little Mermaid* (2023), *Lilo & Stitch* (2025) and *Freakier Friday* (2025) demonstrate a more technologically integrated and musically driven nostalgic strategy, amplified through Instagram-based participatory culture. The comparison between these four films reveals how Disney's nostalgic practices evolved from mainly symbolic visual referencing toward multi-platform emotional activation, and the results of Disney's most recent films -*Lilo & Stitch* and *Freakier Friday*- are great examples that reflect a fully integrated, platform-driven nostalgia model in the streaming and social media age.

5.2 Most Prominent Nostalgic Elements Identified in Disney's Films

Taking into consideration the results regarding the nostalgic elements from most to least relevant per film in Instagram posts (see Annex D), a final overall ranking was calculated, and is presented in Figure 5.2.

Nostalgic Element	fi	fr	%	Rank
(1) Visual	21	0,45	45%	4
(2) Musical	19	0,40	40%	5
(3) Narrative	27	0,57	57%	1
(4) Symbolic	12	0,26	26%	6
(5) Brand Heritage	24	0,51	51%	2
(6) Celebrity Association	22	0,47	47%	3

Total # of IG Post	47
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Figure 5.2: Ranking of the Nostalgic Elements in Disney's Instagram Marketing Strategy

Source: Own elaboration

The classification in Figure 5.2 is determined by presenting, from greatest to least importance, the most relevant nostalgic elements used by Disney as a marketing strategy in the promotional posts of its films on Instagram. The overall ranking is established in the following manner: (1) Narrative, (2) Brand Heritage, (3) Celebrity Association, (4) Visual, (5) Musical, and (6) Symbolic elements. This hierarchy aims to reflect the dominant trend observed in some of Disney's most recent releases - analyzed in the case study- and, more specifically, in their promotional strategies on platforms such as Instagram.

The prominence of narrative elements as the most influential category can be explained by Disney's long-standing emphasis on storytelling as the core of its brand identity. Across all four case studies, narrative continuity —through remakes, sequels, and adaptations— emerges as the primary mechanism through which nostalgia is activated. This aligns with theoretical perspectives that frame nostalgia as a cognitive and emotional process rooted in memory reconstruction and storytelling structures (Rana et al., 2021). By revisiting familiar plots, character arcs, and iconic scenes, Disney

ensures that audiences reconnect not only with the content itself but with the meanings and emotions associated with it.

The second position, brand heritage, further reinforces this logic. Disney's extensive archive of intellectual properties and its historical legacy as a cultural institution allow it to leverage nostalgia at a structural level. As discussed in previous sections, the company systematically reuses, reframes, and redistributes its content across multiple platforms, a strategy that reflects what scholars describe as heritage or retro marketing (Holotová et al., 2020) and as Cenizo (2021) expressed, "The audiovisual industry is one of the sectors in which retro-marketing is most rooted; through remakes, reboots, and spin-offs of movies and TV series. Cinema makes an almost constant use of retro-marketing." The strength of this category is particularly evident in cases such as *Lilo & Stitch* (2025), where the replication of past marketing campaigns demonstrates how brand memory itself becomes a central promotional asset, and *Freakier Friday* (2025), where the use of hashtags (#TGIF) referencing iconic moments of the movie is so recurrent and encourages active user interaction.

In third place, celebrity association highlights the increasing importance of recognizable figures in activating nostalgic engagement. The return of original cast members or the incorporation of culturally relevant celebrities functions as a bridge between past and present, reinforcing emotional continuity. This finding is consistent with contemporary research on nostalgia marketing, which emphasizes the role of familiar faces in enhancing authenticity and audience identification (Marchegiani, 2010; Rana et al., 2021). In films like *Freakier Friday* (2025), this element proves particularly significant in driving audience connection despite more limited global reach. In addition to this, celebrity casting is used in many cases with the aim of attracting younger and more mainstream audience to a film (Higson, 2014), which is evidenced in the cast of films such as *Alice in Wonderland* (2010) and *The Little Mermaid* (2023).

The relatively lower ranking of visual and musical elements —fourth and fifth respectively— does not diminish their relevance and should not be interpreted as a lack of importance, but rather as an indication of their context-dependent impact within nostalgia marketing strategies. In particular, musical elements require a more nuanced interpretation. Disney soundtracks have historically played a central role in shaping the emotional and cultural legacy of its films (Hollis & Ehrbar, 2006), and in cases where such legacy is strongly established, music becomes a primary driver of nostalgic engagement. Iconic songs associated with films such as *The Little Mermaid* or other classic productions function as powerful reminiscent triggers, capable of evoking deep emotional responses and reinforcing audience attachment.

However, the strength of this element is not uniform across all cases, as it depends heavily on the pre-existing cultural resonance and recognition of the soundtrack itself. This explains why musical nostalgia cannot be generalized as consistently dominant across all films analyzed. At the same time, contemporary digital platforms such as Instagram play a crucial role in amplifying and reactivating these musical elements, facilitating their circulation through short-form videos, trends, and user-generated content. In this sense, rather than diminishing the role of music, social media environments contribute to extending its reach and reinforcing its nostalgic value, particularly when supported by a strong legacy.

Finally, symbolic elements, such as typography or retro design features, occupy the lowest position in the ranking. This suggests that, although these cues contribute to the overall nostalgic atmosphere, they function primarily as supporting elements rather than primary drivers of engagement. Their subtlety may limit their effectiveness in fast-paced digital contexts, where more explicit and emotionally resonant signals are required to capture audience attention.

Overall, this ranking reflects a broader transformation in nostalgia marketing within the contemporary media landscape. The findings indicate that Disney's current strategy prioritizes meaning-driven and emotionally anchored elements (narrative and brand heritage) over purely aesthetic or stylistic cues. This evolution is consistent with theoretical frameworks that conceptualize nostalgia as a multidimensional construct, where emotional and cognitive dimensions tend to outweigh sensory ones in shaping consumer behavior (Mehdian Rad, 2024).

Moreover, the observed tendency underscores the importance of cross-generational storytelling and digital adaptability. By emphasizing narrative continuity and leveraging its brand legacy, The Walt Disney Company successfully engages both Millennials —through lived nostalgia— and Generation Z —through mediated and platform-driven experiences. In this sense, the hierarchy of nostalgic elements identified in this study not only reflects current industry practices but also provides insight into the evolving logic of nostalgia marketing in the age of social media and streaming.

5.3 Relationship Between Nostalgia Strategies and Commercial Performance

A comparative examination of the four films reveals several key patterns regarding the relationship between nostalgia strategies and commercial performance, understood as the box office success as well as the audience reception and the movie's rating.

First, films that combine nostalgia with strong franchise ecosystems and global brand recognition — such as *Alice in Wonderland* (2010) and *Lilo & Stitch* (2025)— tend to achieve the highest box office performance. Both films exceeded \$1 billion in global revenue and demonstrated strong international reach, suggesting that nostalgia is particularly effective when embedded within widely recognized and expandable intellectual properties.

Second, the data highlights a distinction between commercial success and audience reception. While *Alice in Wonderland* (2010) achieved exceptional box office results, it recorded the lowest audience and critic scores among the sample. Conversely, *The Little Mermaid* (2023) and *Freakier Friday* (2025) received significantly higher audience approval despite lower commercial performance. This indicates that nostalgia can generate strong emotional engagement and audience satisfaction even when it does not translate into an equivalent financial success represented at the box office.

Third, the type of nostalgia strategy appears to influence performance outcomes. As identified previously in Section 5.2, *Lilo & Stitch* (2025) relies heavily on brand heritage and disruptive nostalgia, which appears to translate effectively into both commercial success and audience engagement. In contrast, *Freakier Friday* (2025), which is more dependent on celebrity association and narrative continuity, demonstrates strong audience reception but limited market reach.

5.4 Generational Engagement: Millennials vs. Generation Z

This section examines the role of generational audiences—specifically Millennials and Generation Z—in shaping the consumption and reception of Disney’s nostalgia-driven film strategies. Drawing on the findings of the latest Fandango Moviegoing Trends & Insights Study (Spring 2026), this analysis contextualizes the behavioral patterns, motivations, and preferences of these two key demographic groups and relates them to the performance and marketing strategies identified in previous sections.

The results of the study mentioned highlights that Millennials and Generation Z are currently the most influential audiences in theatrical moviegoing, both in terms of attendance frequency and engagement levels. Notably, 87% of Gen Z and 82% of Millennials reported attending at least one movie in theaters in the past year, with both groups averaging approximately seven visits annually. These figures confirm that younger generations continue to play a central role in sustaining cinema attendance, contradicting earlier assumptions that streaming platforms would significantly diminish theatrical consumption among these cohorts.

Despite similarities in attendance frequency, the study identifies distinct motivational drivers between these two generations. Millennials tend to approach moviegoing as a form of escapism, using cinema as a way to disconnect from daily routines and responsibilities. In contrast, Generation Z perceives moviegoing primarily as a social and communal experience, valuing the shared environment of theaters as a space for interaction and collective enjoyment. This distinction is particularly relevant when analyzing Disney’s marketing strategies, as it suggests that nostalgia may function differently depending on the audience segment being targeted.

From a strategic perspective, Disney’s nostalgia-driven content appears to effectively engage both generations, although through different mechanisms. For Millennials, nostalgia is often rooted in lived experience and childhood memory, as many of the films analyzed—such as *The Little Mermaid* (1989), *Lilo & Stitch* (2002) and *Freaky Friday* (2003)—form part of their formative cultural background. The reintroduction of these narratives through remakes, live actions and sequels activates what has been described in the literature as historical nostalgia, reinforcing emotional attachment and brand loyalty. This dynamic is reflected in the strong audience reception observed in films like *The Little Mermaid* (2023), which achieved high audience approval ratings despite moderate box office performance, and this is also evidenced in the audience rating obtained by *Lilo & Stitch* (2025) and *Freakier Friday* (2025) (see Section 4.5).

In contrast, Generation Z engages with nostalgia in a more mediated and constructed manner, often through digital platforms, social media, and streaming services. The Fandango study indicates that Gen Z audiences are particularly influenced by social-first experiences and digital content ecosystems, including user-generated content, memes, and short-form video platforms, such as, TikTok and Instagram. This aligns with the promotional strategies observed in Section 4.4, where Instagram campaigns and online engagement played a central role, especially in the marketing of films like *Lilo & Stitch* (2025) and *Freakier Friday* (2025). Contrarily to the natural nostalgia crave from Millennials (Fandango, 2026), for Gen Z, nostalgia is not necessarily tied to personal memory but rather to cultural familiarity and digital circulation, which can still generate strong emotional engagement.

Another key finding of the study relates to consumption patterns and spending behavior. Generation Z audiences are more likely to invest in premium theatrical experiences, including formats such as

IMAX and enhanced concessions, emphasizing the experiential dimension of cinema. Millennials, on the other hand, tend to adopt a more value-conscious and planned approach to moviegoing, reflecting differences in life stage, economic priorities, and consumption habits. These distinctions further reinforce the idea that Disney's multi-layered strategy —combining spectacle, emotional storytelling, and cross-platform engagement— is well-suited to addressing the expectations of both segments simultaneously.

Importantly, both generations demonstrate a sustained interest in non-traditional and nostalgic content formats, including re-releases, franchise expansions, and alternative programming such as concert films and special screenings. This trend directly supports the broader argument of this thesis: that nostalgia is not merely a retrospective phenomenon, but a dynamic and evolving strategy that adapts to contemporary consumption environments and it is strongly impacting the film industry.

In the context of this Disney case study, the interaction between generational behavior and nostalgia marketing becomes particularly evident. Films such as *Alice in Wonderland* (2010) and *Lilo & Stitch* (2025) illustrate how large-scale productions can leverage both visual spectacle and nostalgic familiarity to attract diverse audience segments, achieving strong commercial performance. Meanwhile, films like *The Little Mermaid* (2023) and *Freakier Friday* (2025) demonstrate how nostalgia can foster high audience engagement within more niche or localized markets, particularly when driven by generational recognition, music and celebrity association.

Overall, the analysis suggests that Millennials and Generation Z should not be understood as homogeneous audiences, but rather as distinct segments with complementary motivations and consumption patterns. Disney's ability to engage both groups simultaneously —through a combination of historical nostalgia, digital engagement, and cross-generational storytelling— constitutes a key factor in the effectiveness of its nostalgia-driven strategy. Consequently, understanding these generational dynamics is essential for assessing the broader market relevance and future sustainability of nostalgia marketing within the film industry.

5.5 Effectiveness of Nostalgia Marketing for Disney

The findings suggest that nostalgia operates as a multidimensional strategic asset rather than a guaranteed driver of commercial success. Its effectiveness depends on several interrelated factors, including:

- The scale and recognition of the intellectual property
- The type of nostalgia strategy employed (visual, musical, narrative, symbolic, brand heritage, or celebrity-driven)
- The film's ability to engage both existing and new audiences
- Its positioning within global versus local markets

In particular, for Disney nostalgia appears to be most commercially effective when combined with global franchise structures and cross-platform brand ecosystems, as seen in *Lilo & Stitch* (2025). At the same time, nostalgia plays a crucial role in fostering audience loyalty and emotional engagement, as evidenced by the high audience scores of *The Little Mermaid* (2023) and *Freakier Friday* (2025).

Overall, the comparative analysis demonstrates that nostalgia-driven strategies contribute significantly to both audience engagement and commercial performance, but their impact varies depending on how they are implemented. Disney's ability to combine nostalgia with technological innovation, franchise expansion, and global distribution enables it to maximize both emotional resonance and market reach.

These findings reinforce the argument that nostalgia should not be understood as a standalone marketing tactic, but rather as a strategic component embedded within broader business and creative frameworks. The variability observed across the four films further highlights the importance of aligning nostalgia with brand strength, audience expectations, and distribution strategies in order to achieve sustained success in the contemporary film industry.

5.6 Addressing the research questions

This section synthesizes the empirical findings of the Disney case study in direct relation to the research questions guiding this thesis. By integrating the results of the film analysis, audience data, and theoretical framework, it provides clear and structured answers to the background, main, and secondary research questions.

Background Research Question

- How is nostalgia marketing transforming the strategic and emotional landscape of the contemporary film industry?

This question has been addressed throughout Chapter 4, especially in sections 4.1 and 4.2. The findings confirm that nostalgia marketing has evolved from a tactical promotional tool into a comprehensive strategic paradigm within the contemporary film industry. As suggested by Rad (2024), Holotová (2020), and Rana et al. (2021), nostalgia operates as a multidimensional construct that combines emotional, cognitive, and sensory triggers to influence consumer behavior. The Disney case study demonstrates that this transformation is particularly evident in the integration of nostalgia across production, marketing, and distribution systems, rather than being confined to isolated campaigns.

From a strategic perspective, nostalgia contributes to what Holotová et al. (2020), Higson (2014) and Marchegiani (2010) conceptualize as heritage-based branding, where past cultural assets are systematically leveraged to reinforce present value. The results show that Disney's approach aligns with this framework, transforming legacy content into a renewable strategic resource through remakes, sequels, and platform-based distribution. This is further reinforced by Shackleford et al (2026) analysis of media convergence, which highlights how digital ecosystems enable the continuous circulation and reinterpretation of nostalgic content.

Emotionally, nostalgia marketing reshapes audience relationships with media by fostering affective attachment, identity reinforcement, and a sense of continuity (Cenizo, 2021). The findings demonstrate that nostalgia is no longer limited to individual memory recall but operates within a broader cultural and digital context, where audiences actively engage with and reinterpret content. This aligns with Pitre's (2023) concept of "brand futurity," in which nostalgia is used not only to revisit the past but to construct ongoing narratives that project the brand into the future.

Furthermore, the results reflect broader industry shifts identified by Kotler et al. (2024) in Marketing 6.0: The Future is Immersive, where brands increasingly rely on emotionally rich, immersive, and hybrid experiences to engage consumers. In this context, nostalgia functions as a bridge between physical memory and digital interaction, reshaping both the strategic and emotional dimensions of film consumption.

Main Research Question

- **R1:** How does Disney strategically employ nostalgia marketing in its recent film remakes and sequels to bridge the generational gap between Millennial and Generation Z audiences?

This question has been addressed throughout Chapters 4 and 5, especially in sections 4.3, 4.4 and 5.1 (see Annexes A, B, C and D). The findings indicate that The Walt Disney Company employs nostalgia marketing through a dual-layered strategy that simultaneously targets Millennials and Generation Z, effectively bridging the generational gap.

For Millennials, nostalgia is activated through direct emotional recall, drawing on childhood memories associated with original films, characters, and soundtracks. This aligns with the notion of “historical nostalgia” described by Mehdian Rad (2024), where lived experiences form the basis of emotional engagement. The use of remakes such as *The Little Mermaid* (2023) and sequels like *Freakier Friday* (2025) reinforces this connection by preserving core narrative elements and iconic references.

For Generation Z, nostalgia operates through mediated and constructed experiences, as suggested by authors such as Butcher and Toh (2025) and Tapas et al. (2025). Younger audiences engage with these narratives primarily through digital platforms such as Instagram and Disney+, where content is recontextualized into short-form, interactive formats. This reflects the findings of the Fandango Moviegoing Trends & Insights Study (2026): “Generational Shifts. Who is Driving the Future of Theatrical?”, which highlights that younger audiences are more likely to discover and engage with film content through digital and social media channels.

Disney’s strategy therefore combines narrative continuity, brand heritage, and platform integration, allowing the same content to resonate differently across generations. This approach supports Higson’s (2014) argument that contemporary cinema increasingly relies on cultural recycling and reinterpretation to maintain relevance in global markets. By blending familiarity with innovation, Disney successfully creates a shared cultural space where both generational cohorts can engage with the same narratives, albeit through different experiential pathways.

Secondary Research Questions

- **R2:** Which nostalgic elements are identified most prominent and frequent within Disney’s promotional content?

This question has been addressed in Chapter 5 sections 5.2. The analysis identifies a clear hierarchy of nostalgic elements, ranked as follows:

(1) Narrative, (2) Brand Heritage, (3) Celebrity Association, (4) Visual, (5) Musical, and (6) Symbolic elements.

This ranking supports the theoretical framework proposed by Rana et al. (2021), which emphasizes the multidimensional nature of nostalgia, operating through a combination of affective, cognitive, and

sensory stimuli. However, the empirical results refine this perspective by demonstrating that not all elements contribute equally to audience engagement. The ranking presented in Figure 5.2 reveals a clear hierarchy in which narrative elements emerge as the most dominant, reinforcing the importance of storytelling continuity and recognizable plot structures. This finding aligns with Higson's (2014) perspective on the centrality of narrative recycling in contemporary cinema.

Brand heritage, ranked second, reflects the strategic use of historical assets as described by Holotová et al. (2020). The consistent presence of iconic characters, franchises, and legacy references across promotional materials highlights the role of brand memory in shaping consumer perception.

Celebrity association also plays a significant role, supporting Marchegiani's (2010) argument that familiar figures enhance authenticity and emotional resonance. Visual and musical elements, while still relevant, function more as supporting cues, with their impact depending on the strength of their cultural legacy. In particular, the findings nuance existing theory by showing that musical nostalgia becomes highly influential only when linked to well-established and recognizable soundtracks.

- **R3:** How do these nostalgic elements influence audience engagement, and to what extent do they foster brand loyalty among different consumer cohorts?

This question has been addressed in Chapter 5 sections 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5. The findings demonstrate that nostalgic elements significantly enhance audience engagement and brand loyalty, although their impact varies across generational groups and contextual factors.

From an engagement perspective, nostalgia operates as an affective trigger, increasing attention, emotional involvement, and content sharing (Rana et al., 2021). The strong audience scores observed across the analyzed films—particularly in platforms such as Rotten Tomatoes—indicate that nostalgia-driven strategies effectively resonate with viewers. This is further supported by the Fandango Moviegoing Trends & Insights Study (2026), which highlights that audiences are more likely to engage with content that feels familiar, emotionally meaningful, or culturally recognizable.

In terms of brand loyalty, nostalgia contributes to the development of long-term relationships between consumers and brands, as proposed by Holotová et al. (2020). For Millennials, this loyalty is rooted in emotional memory and personal experience, while for Generation Z, it is shaped by repeated exposure and digital interaction. This dual mechanism reinforces the idea that nostalgia can function both as a retrospective and prospective force, strengthening not only past connections but also future engagement (Pitre, 2023).

Moreover, the findings align with Kotler et al. (2024), who argue that modern marketing strategies must create immersive and emotionally engaging experiences to sustain consumer interest. Disney's integration of nostalgic elements across films, social media, and streaming platforms exemplifies this approach, transforming passive consumption into active participation.

However, the results also indicate that the effectiveness of nostalgia is context-dependent. While it can significantly enhance engagement, it does not guarantee commercial success, as evidenced by variations in box office performance across the case studies. This supports Goldman (2023) perspective that audience behavior is influenced by multiple factors, including market conditions, competition, and content quality.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusions

This research has examined how nostalgia marketing operates within the contemporary film industry through the case of The Walt Disney Company, integrating theoretical perspectives with empirical analysis of selected films, promotional strategies, and audience reception. The findings demonstrate that nostalgia is no longer a peripheral or purely aesthetic marketing device, but rather a core strategic mechanism embedded within the production, distribution, and communication processes of major entertainment companies. Disney's trajectory, from its early animated productions to its current position in the digital streaming era, illustrates how the systematic use of nostalgia—through narrative continuity, brand heritage, and cross-generational appeal—can sustain long-term cultural relevance and economic success.

More broadly, the study confirms that the increasing use of nostalgia marketing within the film industry reflects deeper structural transformations driven by rapid technological change and evolving consumption patterns. The expansion of digital ecosystems, combined with the widespread integration of social media platforms such as Instagram, has redefined how audiences interact with film content. In this context, nostalgia is no longer experienced as a static recollection of the past, but as a dynamic, continuously mediated experience that circulates across platforms, formats, and communities.

This transformation has led to the emergence of a strategy centered on constant cross-platform integration, where films are no longer isolated products but components of broader media ecosystems. As demonstrated in the Disney case, nostalgic content is strategically distributed and reactivated through cinema releases, streaming services such as Disney+, and social media environments, generating multiple points of contact with audiences. This interconnected system encourages re-consumption behaviors, as viewers revisit familiar narratives in new formats, contexts, and moments, reinforcing emotional attachment and brand engagement.

In turn, these dynamics contribute to the formation of what can be described as a virtuous cycle of nostalgic consumption. The continuous circulation of familiar content stimulates audience demand, which drives engagement on digital platforms; this engagement then feeds back into the promotion and visibility of the content, further strengthening its cultural and commercial impact. Streaming platforms benefit from increased viewership of legacy content, while social media amplifies its reach and relevance, creating a self-reinforcing loop that enhances both audience loyalty and market performance.

Within this evolving landscape, Disney's approach represents a particularly illustrative example of how such a cycle can be effectively leveraged. By combining a strong heritage base with technological adaptation and strategic integration across platforms, the company has been able to transform nostalgia into a sustainable competitive advantage. Its ability to connect past, present, and future narratives—while simultaneously addressing different generational audiences—positions Disney as a

benchmark for understanding how nostalgia marketing can be successfully operationalized in the contemporary film industry.

Ultimately, this research highlights that nostalgia is not simply about revisiting the past, but about reconfiguring it within present-day media environments to shape future consumption patterns. As technological innovation and audience behaviors continue to evolve, the strategic use of nostalgia will likely remain a central driver of engagement, making it an essential area of study for both academics and industry practitioners.

6.1 Academic contributions

This research contributes to the evolving body of literature on nostalgia marketing by providing an empirical application within the contemporary film industry. The study offers four primary contributions to the field:

- **Refinement of Theoretical Hierarchies:** The study reinforces and extends the theoretical frameworks established by Rad (2024), Rana (2021) et al., and Holotová et al. (2020) by demonstrating that nostalgia operates as a multidimensional construct with varying degrees of strategic weight. Rather than treating nostalgic cues as uniform, these findings introduce a strategic hierarchy —identifying narrative continuity and brand heritage as the dominant drivers of engagement— thereby refining existing models for more precise application in media studies.
- **Nuancing Cross-Generational Dynamics:** This research advances the work of Cenizo (2021) and Butcher and Toh (2025) by offering a granular distinction between memory-based nostalgia (prevalent among Millennials) and mediated/imaginative nostalgia (prevalent among Generation Z). By mapping these differences, the study provides a nuanced explanation of how nostalgic resonance is constructed for audiences who may lack a direct chronological link to the original source material.
- **Expansion into Digital and Immersive Ecosystems:** The research contributes to the discourse on digital marketing contexts (Pitre, 2023; Shackleford et al., 2026) by illustrating how nostalgia is amplified through platform-specific affordances on Instagram and Disney+. It documents a shift from passive consumption to participatory, platform-driven nostalgia, aligning the case of Disney with the latest paradigms of Marketing 6.0 (Kotler et al., 2024).
- **Methodological Integration:** Finally, the thesis contributes a robust methodological framework by applying a triangulated qualitative approach (Yin, 2009). By synthesizing the analysis of filmic texts, promotional artifacts, and social media discourse, this study offers a replicable template for future scholars seeking to examine complex marketing strategies across fragmented media landscapes.

6.2 Limitations of the Study

While this study provides significant insights into the operationalization of nostalgia marketing, it is subject to certain limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results.

Case Study Specificity: By focusing exclusively on The Walt Disney Company as a representative case, the findings may reflect institutional strengths —such as Disney’s unique century-long heritage— that are not easily replicable by smaller studios or newer media entities.

Methodological Boundaries: The reliance on secondary data, while appropriate for an exploratory analysis of marketing strategies and public discourse, precludes a direct psychological measurement of individual audience members. Consequently, the study captures perceived engagement rather than internal cognitive or emotional processing.

Temporal Constraints: Given the rapid evolution of digital platforms and "remake culture," the findings represent a specific moment in the digital streaming era (2010–2025). As AI-driven content and new social media architectures emerge, the "virtuous cycle" of nostalgia may evolve into forms not fully captured within the current scope of this research.

6.3 Future Research Lines and Cross-Industry Implications

While this research focused specifically on the film industry and the Disney ecosystem, the findings open several avenues for future academic inquiry and cross-sector application:

- **Cross-Sector Nostalgia Synergies:** Future research should explore how non-media industries (e.g., fashion, food and beverage, and hospitality) can capitalize on the "nostalgia cycles" generated by major film releases. The "virtuous cycle" identified in this study suggests that a film remake is not just a cinematic event, but a cultural phenomenon. For example, brands can leverage "mediated nostalgia" by launching limited-edition products —such as the Hannah Montana 20th Anniversary beverage by Starbucks— that align with the digital conversation and aesthetic "vibes" of a franchise’s anniversary or remake.
- **The "Nostalgia Merchandise" Ecosystem:** There is significant room to study the impact of "nostalgic retail" collaborations. Other industries can profit by synchronizing their product launches with the secondary data trends identified here, such as the spike in Instagram engagement for specific "nostalgic cues." By releasing accessories, apparel, or immersive "pop-up" experiences that mirror the visual aesthetics of a remake, third-party brands can tap into the pre-existing emotional loyalty of Millennial and Gen Z audiences.
- **Comparative Industry Analysis:** Subsequent studies could apply the Mixed-Methods framework used in this thesis to other legacy-driven industries, such as gaming (e.g., Nintendo’s remake strategy) or luxury fashion (e.g., the revival of "archival" 90s designs). This would determine if the Strategic Hierarchy (narrative and brand heritage) remains the dominant driver of engagement outside of the film context.
- **Transition to Primary Data:** To deepen the findings of this secondary-data-driven study, future researchers could employ primary methods, such as neuromarketing or longitudinal surveys. This would allow for a more precise measurement of the physiological and psychological

impact of nostalgic cues, validating whether the high frequency of certain themes in promotional materials correlates directly with deep-seated consumer nostalgia.

6.4 Managerial recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the following recommendations are proposed for marketing practitioners and decision-makers within the film and entertainment industries:

- **Prioritize "Narrative Anchors" over Pure Aesthetic:** Managers should avoid relying solely on visual or musical nostalgia (superficial cues). The study reveals that long-term engagement is driven by narrative and brand heritage. Recommendations include ensuring that remakes or sequels maintain a "core emotional truth" of the original intellectual property (IP) while modernizing the social context to remain relevant to contemporary values.
- **Segment Strategies for "Memory" vs. "Discovery":** Marketing campaigns must be bifurcated to address the dual nature of nostalgic audiences. For Millennials, the focus should be on authenticity and emotional continuity (Protecting the Memory). For Generation Z, who may be experiencing the IP for the first time through a remake, the focus should be on shareability, aesthetic "vibes," and participatory content on platforms like Instagram and TikTok (Mediated Discovery).
- **Cultivate the "Virtuous Cycle" through Platform-Specific Content:** Rather than simply reposting trailers, managers should develop platform-native nostalgic content. For instance, using Instagram to showcase behind-the-scenes "heritage" footage or "then and now" comparisons. This reactivates the legacy content on streaming platforms (like Disney+) while maintaining high engagement on social media, effectively turning the promotional campaign into a self-sustaining ecosystem.
- **Manage "Nostalgia Fatigue" through Innovation:** To prevent brand dilution, companies should implement a hybrid strategy of "innovation-led nostalgia." This involves blending familiar legacy elements with significant technological or narrative shifts (e.g., the use of hyper-realistic CGI or diverse casting). By strategically "reconfiguring" the past rather than just repeating it, managers can sustain market interest and avoid the risks of repetitive "remake culture."

6.5 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda Addressed

This Master's Thesis (TFM) is aligned with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. By analyzing digital transformation and the systematic implementation of nostalgia marketing within a global media leader in the film industry, such as The Walt Disney Company, this research explores how innovative brand strategies contribute to several key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Specifically, the study highlights how the reconfiguration of legacy content promotes Quality Education (SDG 4) through cultural literacy and fosters Gender Equality (SDG 5) by modernizing representation. Additionally, it highlights how the entertainment industry generates Economic value and Growth (SDG 8) while examines how Disney's digital shift represents a significant innovation in

Media Infrastructure (SDG 9) and, ultimately, encourages Responsible Consumption (SDG 12) through the dematerialization of content in a circular digital ecosystem.

Social Development Goal (SDG)	Alignment within the TFM
SDG 4: Quality Education	Cultural Transmission: The study analyzes how nostalgia and social media act as a tool and vehicle for cultural literacy. Disney remakes and prequels serve as a bridge that transmits and teaches younger generations (Gen Z) about narrative history and evolving societal values.
SDG 5: Gender Equality	Representative Modernization: The study evaluates the reconfiguration of characters and plots in recent Disney remakes and prequels. The findings highlight a strategic shift toward diverse and empowered representations that challenge traditional gender stereotypes. The analysis of recent remakes (e.g., <i>The Little Mermaid</i>) identifies a strategic shift toward diverse casting and empowered female narratives, challenging historical gender stereotypes.
SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	The study highlights how the entertainment industry generates economic value through innovation, intellectual property management, and audience engagement. The case of The Walt Disney Company illustrates how strategic marketing and media diversification can stimulate growth across creative sectors such as film production, advertising, tourism, and digital services.
SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	The study examines the transition from traditional cinema models toward streaming ecosystems and digital promotion. Platforms such as Disney+ and Instagram represent examples of innovation in content distribution and audience interaction. Disney's transition to Disney+ and its integrated digital ecosystem, reflect a major innovation in the "creative infrastructure" of the film industry, utilizing Big Data and social media (Instagram) to optimize the global distribution of cultural content.
SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	The study focuses on the "Virtuous Cycle of Nostalgic Consumption." This concept promotes a "circular economy of content," where existing intellectual property is reconfigured and "recycled" in digital formats, reducing the need for new physical resources. Nostalgia marketing encourages the re-use and re-consumption of existing intellectual property through remakes, sequels, and archive content. This may reduce reliance on entirely new production models, which aligns with sustainable, low-waste consumption models; although it also raises questions regarding intensive digital consumption and platform energy demand.

Social and Environmental Reflection

From a social perspective, nostalgia marketing can strengthen intergenerational cultural connection and shared identity through familiar narratives. From an environmental perspective, digital distribution may reduce some physical production and distribution processes, but growing streaming consumption also carries energy and data infrastructure costs. Therefore, future industry strategies should combine innovation with greater social accessibility and environmental responsibility.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX (A) The Little Mermaid (2023) Instagram Content Analysis.

Post Theme	Nostalgic Category	Description	Source
First-look content	5,2	Establishes continuity between the live-action remake and the 1989 animated classic.	Disney [@disney]. (2022, Sept. 10). <i>Out of the sea, wish I could be... part of that world. Disney's The Little Mermaid is coming to theaters</i> [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CiTjGLRMtXa/
Ariel character poster reveal	1	Recreates the iconic image of Ariel in the ocean adding an inclusive update.	Disney [@disney]. (2022, Oct. 13). <i>Halle Bailey is Ariel. Disney's The Little Mermaid, in theaters May 26, 2023.</i> [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CjqZRCLrocS/
Early promotional teaser	1,2	Strengthen the underwater fantasy world consistent with the aesthetic of the original film, maintaining its continuity, and reconnecting through music.	Disney [@disney]. (2023, Feb. 15). <i>Continuing the #Disney100 celebration with this new look at #TheLittleMermaid! Just 100 days until it arrives in theaters!</i> [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CosPyipvFUH/
Ariel identity-focused post	1,5	Reinforces Ariel as a cultural and symbolic Disney figure by recreating the original 1989 promotional poster.	Disney [@disney]. (2023, Mar. 8). <i>Check out the new poster for Disney's #TheLittleMermaid and see the official trailer debut during the #Oscars this Sunday on ABC!</i> [Image]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CpiMhuosp2t/
Trailer	3	It reinforces familiar relationships and story dynamics.	Disney [@disney]. (2023, Mar. 13). <i>Watch the new trailer for #TheLittleMermaid and see the movie in cinemas May 26!</i> [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CptbzxksFy7/

Movie poster	1,4	Emphasizes on main characters (maintaining their recognizable features as classic Disney characters), ocean aesthetics and lighting that replicate the animated film's visual identity.	Disney [@disney]. (2023, Mar. 13). <i>The all-new poster for #TheLittleMermaid arrives! See the movie only in cinemas May 26!</i> [Image]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CptcEAvqGQE/
Cast reaction to the trailer	6,3	Creates expectation, reinforces Disney's legacy and the film's cultural memory through the most iconic scenes.	Disney [@disney]. (2023, Mar. 17). <i>"I literally have the chills right now." 🥰 Watch as the cast of #TheLittleMermaid reacts to the traile</i> [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/Cp5jq1gOeNZ/
Film branding and promotional post	5,3,2,6	Connects the remake with the original Disney animated classic and activates nostalgia by referencing the legacy of the original film and its iconic music.	Disney [@disney]. (2023, Apr. 13). <i>The story. The music. The heart. The cast and filmmakers of Disney's #TheLittleMermaid talk about bringing this incredible tale to life.</i> [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/Cq-4X1DLSe-/
Tickets released	6,2,3	It highlights Halle Bailey as Ariel and Melissa McCarthy as Ursula promoting the purchase of movie tickets, while reinforcing the connection with the legacy of Disney princesses in this beloved classic.	Disney [@disney]. (2023, Apr. 26). <i>Gadgets and TICKETS a-plenty! 🌟 See Disney's #TheLittleMermaid only in theaters on May 26! 🎫 Get tickets now</i> [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CrgH7aCtILY/
Iconic scenes reference	1,3	Visual callbacks to key moments from the original film.	Disney [@disney]. (2023, Apr. 26). <i>Ariel 🐬 Ursula 🐬 King Triton 🐬 Prince Eric 🐬 Sebastian 🐬 Flounder 🐬 Scuttle. See Disney's #TheLittleMermaid only in theaters May 26!</i> [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CrgCMJsM7_u/

Promotional clips (song-related)	2	Clips that references the iconic songs from the original soundtrack, activating musical nostalgia.	Disney [@disney]. (2023, May. 8). <i>Timeless.</i> Experience Disney's #TheLittleMermaid, only in theaters May 26. [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/Cr9jgSlM3vI/ Disney [@disney]. (2023, May. 22). <i>"I'm getting chills just thinking about it." Go under the sea with the cast, filmmakers, and songwriters behind the music.</i> [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CshjGI_Npbn/
Behind the scenes	6	Focus on the actors building emotional connection and audience familiarity.	Disney [@disney]. (2023, May. 10). <i>Go behind-the-scenes of #TheLittleMermaid to see how this cast became a family!</i> [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CsEr2MFAXTa/
Music clip	2	Highlights the role of soundtrack and familiar melodies.	Disney [@disney]. (2023, May. 13). <i>Go under the sea with Sebastian and Ariel in Disney's #TheLittleMermaid, only in theaters May 26.</i> Get tickets [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CsMAZTJPYGO/
Performance content	2	Reinforces the importance of songs within the narrative and audience memory.	Disney [@disney]. (2023, May. 15). Watch and you'll see... Halle Bailey's iconic performance of "Part of Your World" at @Disneyland! [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CsPplpgM6my/
Ursula character post	1,4,6	Transformation of Melissa McCarthy into Ursula, maintaining iconic villain imagery associated with the original film (special emphasis on her facial expression and costume referencing the original character design).	Disney [@disney]. (2023, May. 17). <i>Melissa McCarthy becomes...</i> [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CsUx5mztv4T/

Source: Own elaboration

ANNEX (B) Lilo & Stitch (2025) Instagram Content Analysis.

Post Theme	Nostalgic Category	Description	Source
Live-action announcement	1	Focus on Stitch design maintaining the same visual identity, character appearance as well as its voice and language from the 2002 animated film.	Disney [@disney]. (2024, Aug. 10). <i>Experiment 626 has entered the chat! The live-action #LiloAndStitch is coming only to theaters in Summer 2025!</i> [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/C-eeEA-x-4C/
Stitch disruptive marketing reel	5,2	Replicates the disruptive marketing style used in the 2002 campaign, reinforcing franchise memory.	Disney [@disney]. (2024, Nov. 25). <i>Stitch CRASHES into theaters May 23, 2025. #LiloAndStitch.</i> [Reel]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/reels/DCzU14HvZKH/
Stitch interacting with Disney content	5,3,1	Posters composition that replicates the illustrative style of the 2002 promotional materials while portrayed Stitch disrupting familiar narratives and visual moments from Disney's most beloved classics.	Disney [@disney]. (2024, Nov. 27). <i>You never know how far Stitch will go</i> 🧠 [Poster]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/DC4eVskyKy9/?igsh=M2NoMm84cnZmaWlv (2025, Mar 19). <i>Magic Mirror on the wall, who is the fairest ~experiment~ of all?</i> 🍎 / <i>He is Beauty, he is Beast</i> 🧚‍♀️ [Posters]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/DHYzez-JzAH/?igsh=cWFvcDdndmxwcmZ0/ / https://www.instagram.com/p/DHY61hIJR9b/?igsh=MWFkZHY3djFpMDc1MA%3D%3D
Stitch disrupting familiar narratives	5,3,1,2	Reinforces the chaotic and humorous marketing identity associated with the original film campaign by replicating the scene mix between the Lion King and Stitch.	Disney [@disney]. (2024, Dec. 18). <i>Long live the...King?</i> [Reel]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/reels/DDui6suPQNs/

First trailer	3,2	Emphasizes on the relationship between the characters, maintaining the emotional storytelling continuity and its original soundtrack.	Disney [@disney]. (2025, Mar. 12). <i>'Ohana means family. Family means nobody gets left behind or forgotten.</i> [Reel]. https://www.instagram.com/reels/DHGu_jxJ2Fb/
Film promotional reel	3,2	Reinforces storytelling continuity and emotional themes from original film, highlighting iconic scenes and music.	Disney [@disney]. (2025, Apr. 23). <i>In ONE MONTH, Stitch arrives in theaters!</i> [Reel]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/reels/DIy4aBpppRY/
Tickets promotion	4,1,3	The characters of Lilo and Stitch promote cinema tickets by acting as symbolic characters representing Disney's early 2000s animation era, while mimicking some popular reactions proper of millennials and Gen Z in specific situations.	Disney [@disney]. (2025, May. 6). <i>Mood. Get your tickets for #LiloAndStitch! Only in theaters May 23.</i> [Reel]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/reels/DJVxIYQxvUF/
Promotional reel with tropical setting	3,1,2	Reinforces Hawaiian setting/culture and tropical visual identity from the original film. Iconic scene.	Disney [@disney]. (2025, May. 8). <i>Surf's up. #LiloAndStitch is coming to theaters May 23! Get tickets now!</i> [Reel]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/reels/DJZuFYcJx0T/
Stitch humorous content	5,2,4	Continues the narrative concept from the original campaign where Stitch invades other Disney universes.	Disney [@disney]. (2025, May. 19). <i>He came, he saw, he caused chaos. Check out the unexpected visitor to #Disneyland70!</i> [Reel]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/reels/DJ1iHQ6PEgU/
Behind Stitch	6,5	It shows the film production process regarding Stitch's voice, reinforcing Disney's legacy and the continuity of the franchise	Disney [@disney]. (2025, May. 19). <i>Bts: behind the Stitch (with Chris Sanders)</i> [Reel]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/reels/DJ15-b8J8ca/
Chaos on the carpet	4,1,5,6	Reinforces Stitch as a Disney cultural icon and franchise symbol and emphasizes the return of the franchise and nostalgia associated with the original film.	Disney [@disney]. (2025, May. 19). <i>Chaos on the carpet.</i> [Reel]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/reels/DJ2COKUp8Eq/

Behind the scenes	6,3,5	Promotes actors involved in the live-action adaptation, connecting audience with new cast while reinforces audience engagement through cast promotion and film production insights.	Disney [@disney]. (2025, May. 22). <i>D23 inside Disney goes behind-the-scenes of #LiloAndStitch! From favorite moments on set to magical memories at Disneyland.</i> [Reel]. Instagram.
Stitch brand identity reel	5,2	Reinforces Stitch personality and humor consistent with original character portrayal.	Disney [@disney]. (2025, May. 23). <i>Caught in the act of almost turning the iconic Cinderella Castle into a roll of chaos. Don't miss the troublemaker.</i> [Reel]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/reels/DJ_znZAsTqU/
Final promotional reel	3,1	Shows scenes that resemble iconic and funny moments from the original animated film.	Disney [@disney]. (2025, May. 23). <i>Off the leash and into theaters #LiloAndStitch is NOW PLAYING in theaters!</i> [Reel]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/reels/DKAI PtDRGPW/
Box office milestone	5,3,2	It highlights the magnificent reception by the public and the box office success through iconic scenes and a popular song among the millennial and Gen Z generations.	Disney [@disney]. (2025, May. 26). <i>He's cute and fluffy and now has the biggets Memorial Day opening weekend of all time!</i> [Reel]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/reels/DKIE 2F7Pc7i/

Source: Own elaboration.

ANNEX (C) Freakier Friday (2025) Instagram Content Analysis

Post Theme	Nostalgic Category	Description	Source
Early teaser post	5,6	Introduces the sequel by referencing the legacy of the 2003 film, activating early 2000s nostalgia	Disney [@disney]. (2024, June 24). <i>The Colemans are back and coming to theaters in 2025! The sequel to Freaky Friday is now in production!</i> [Picture]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/C8msf8WJjFc/
Nostalgic post	2,5	Movie reconsumption. It promotes rewatching the prequel by reminding viewers of one of the most iconic scenes from the original 2003 film.	Disney [@disney]. (2025, Feb. 8). <i>The guitar solo that defined a generation.</i> 🎸 ⚡. <i>Stream Freaky Friday on @DisneyPlus.</i> [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/DFytZE5yJ0I/
Throwback nostalgic post	3,1,4	Recalls the narrative and most iconic scenes of the original film, creating a direct connection with the sequel.	Disney [@disney]. (2025, Feb. 21). <i>This just in: Today has never felt freakier. Stream Freaky Friday on @DisneyPlus.</i> [GIF Carousel]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/CosPyipvFUH/
First trailer	3,1,4,6	Emphasizes return of the franchise and its connection to early 2000s Disney films.	Disney [@disney]. (2025, Mar. 14). This summer is about to get Freaky FREAKIER. 💜💚 Watch the trailer for Freakier Friday and experience it only in theaters August 8. [Trailer]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/DHL5BtgJJO0/
Movie poster	1,6,3,4,5	Recreates the iconic pairing and visual dynamic from the original film posters. Side-by-side character positioning replicates the original poster's composition.	Disney [@disney]. (2025, Mar. 14). <i>We are so back. Freakier Friday is only in theaters August 8.</i> [Image]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/DHL5RmxJdMx/
Trailer Teaser	3,1,4,6	Suggests continuation of the body-swap storyline through visual cues. Highlights identity exchange, reinforcing the symbolic concept of role reversal	Disney [@disney]. (2025, June 6). <i>Get FREAKing ready 🙌 Watch the new trailer for Freakier Friday and experience it only in theaters August 8.</i> [Trailer]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/DKkJUb5JmAF/

Reel (scene highlight)	3,5,6	Reinforces the familiar mother-daughter dynamic central to the story. Mixing the old and new cast.	Disney [@disney]. (2025, July 8). <i>What? We're ready! 😊 In 1 month, Freakier Friday arrives only in theaters August 8!</i> [Reel]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/DL2ky94xc6d/
Movie tickets released	1,4,3,6	Reinforces symbolic concept of dual identity and role Exchange.	Disney [@disney]. (2025, July 11). <i>Get your freakin' tickets NOW! 🎫 Watch Freakier Friday only in theaters August 8. Link in bio.</i> [Reel]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/DL-MQt1pqsl/
Cast promotional return	6,5,3	Highlights the return of Jamie Lee Curtis and Lindsay Lohan, reinforcing nostalgic connection.	Disney [@disney]. (2025, July 11). <i>The switch is SO back! 🔄 Get tickets NOW for Freakier Friday only in theaters August 8. Link in bio.</i> [Reel]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/DL-yF1vzzO1/
Pink Slip performance for #Disneyland70	2,6,5	Emphasizes actor recognition and emotional connection with returning cast while creating synergy within Disney's business model through a nostalgic musical legacy associated with the film.	Disney [@disney]. (2025, July 16). <i>Best freakin' day EVER! Jamie Lee Curtis, Julia Butters, Sophia Hammons, Manny Jacinto, and Chad Murray kick off a Pink Slip reunion for #Disneyland70.</i> [Reel]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/reels/DMJpnoUJZSe/
Promotional Trailer by the Cast	3,6,1	Reinforces the narrative continuity of the original story, its humor and the situational confusion linked to the premise of body swapping, emphasizing its return but reinforced with generational themes and more complex family relationships.	Disney [@disney]. (2025, July 18). <i>The switch of the summer ↔ Experience Freakier Friday only in theaters August 8. Get tickets now. Link in bio.</i> [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/DMQbkKJxFOU/
World Premier	2,3,6,5	Promotes broader cast while reinforcing audience familiarity through music and the original actors legacy.	Disney [@disney]. (2025, July 23). <i>The cast and filmmakers had a FREAKin' blast last night at the world premiere of #FreakierFriday!</i> [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/DMdMq9iRUXJ/

Pink Slip Reunion	2,6,3,5	The return, performance and reunion of the original band members stands out as a central engine of nostalgia.	Disney [@disney]. (2025, July 24). <i>So FREAKIN' ready for Pink Slip's reunion! See Freakier Friday only in theaters August 8.</i> [Video]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/DMgGDqyppV4/
Movie Release	1,4,5	Use of language and trending expressions typical of the millennial and Gen Z generation on social media "TGIF". It also references key moments that resemble iconic scenes from the original film.	Disney [@disney]. (2025, Aug. 8). TGIF!! Freakier Friday is NOW PLAYING in theaters! [Reel]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/reels/DNGZbz1RbgZ/
Then VS Now	5,6,3,1,4	A nostalgic memory unlocked, which recalls the beginnings of the franchise and its continuity 22 years later.	Disney [@disney]. (2025, Aug. 8). <i>Times flies when you're having fun! 🕒 Check out our stories for more great blasts from the past!</i> [Post]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/p/DNGbSteRc8i/
The Cast	6,3,5	Synergy between Disney world movies and the theme of the movie through social media games by the cast. Audience participation and interaction is encouraged.	Disney [@disney]. (2025, Aug. 8). There are no wrong answers! Which Disney character would you swap places with? [Reel]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/reels/DNEgRsvsFuW/
Behind the scenes	5,6,3	Reinforces Disney production legacy and continuity of the franchise, highlighting the humor and situational comedy characteristic of the original film by the cast.	Disney [@disney]. (2025, Aug. 16). Get a behind-the-scenes look at the Freakier Friday table read. [Reel]. Instagram. https://www.instagram.com/reels/DNbGr-Syy-K/

Source: Own elaboration.

Annexes A, B, and C correspond to the process of analyzing promotional post on Instagram for The Little Mermaid (2023), Lilo & Stitch (2025) and Freakier Friday (2025) respectively. Each annex summary the main nostalgic cues identified in the Instagram promotional content of the film. This approach allowed for a systematic comparison of nostalgic marketing strategies across the four films. Posts that were selected directly from Disney's official Instagram account (@disney, n.d.) and were examined using visual and content analysis. The posts were categorized according to the nostalgic elements identified in the literature review, including (1) visual, (2) musical, (3) narrative, (4) symbolic, (5) brand heritage, and (6) celebrity association elements.

ANNEX (D) Frequency Tables: Nostalgic Elements in Instagram Posts by Movie

Descriptive Statistics: Frequency Tables

1. NOSTALGIC ELEMENTS FOR THE LITTLE MERMAID (2023) INSTAGRAM CONTENT ANALYSIS

Nostalgic Element	fi	fr	%
(1) Visual	6	0,40	40%
(2) Musical	7	0,47	47%
(3) Narrative	5	0,33	33%
(4) Symbolic	2	0,13	13%
(5) Brand Heritage	3	0,20	20%
(6) Celebrity Association	5	0,33	33%

Total # of IG Post	15
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2. NOSTALGIC ELEMENTS FOR LILO & STITCH (2025) INSTAGRAM CONTENT ANALYSIS

Nostalgic Element	fi	fr	%
(1) Visual	7	0,47	47%
(2) Musical	8	0,53	53%
(3) Narrative	9	0,60	60%
(4) Symbolic	3	0,20	20%
(5) Brand Heritage	9	0,60	60%
(6) Celebrity Association	3	0,20	20%

Total # of IG Post	15
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3. NOSTALGIC ELEMENTS FOR FREAKIER FRIDAY (2025) INSTAGRAM CONTENT ANALYSIS

Nostalgic Element	fi	fr	%
(1) Visual	8	0,47	47%
(2) Musical	4	0,24	24%
(3) Narrative	13	0,76	76%
(4) Symbolic	7	0,41	41%
(5) Brand Heritage	12	0,71	71%
(6) Celebrity Association	14	0,82	82%

Total # of IG Post	17
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Conventions	
Variable:	Nostalgic element (1 - 6)
fi:	Absolute frequency
fr:	Relative frequency

Note: The elements ranked from first to third place have been highlighted in purple, with an additional one in green in case of a tie.

Source: Own elaboration.

ANNEX (E) Worldwide Box Office by Year of Release.

I. Worldwide Box Office 2010 and 2023.

2010 Worldwide Box Office

2010 ▾						
Rank ^	Release Group	Worldwide ↕	Domestic ↕	% ↕	Foreign ↕	% ↕
1	Toy Story 3	\$1,066,969,703	\$415,004,880	38.9%	\$651,964,823	61.1%
2	Alice in Wonderland	\$1,025,467,110	\$334,191,110	32.6%	\$691,276,000	67.4%
3	Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1	\$960,283,305	\$295,983,305	30.8%	\$664,300,000	69.2%
4	Inception	\$828,258,695	\$292,576,195	35.3%	\$535,682,500	64.7%
5	Shrek Forever After	\$752,600,867	\$238,736,787	31.7%	\$513,864,080	68.3%
6	The Twilight Saga: Eclipse	\$698,491,347	\$300,531,751	43%	\$397,959,596	57%
7	Iron Man 2	\$623,933,331	\$312,433,331	50.1%	\$311,500,000	49.9%
8	Tangled	\$591,794,936	\$200,821,936	33.9%	\$390,973,000	66.1%
9	Despicable Me	\$543,239,815	\$251,639,815	46.3%	\$291,600,000	53.7%
10	How to Train Your Dragon	\$494,878,759	\$217,581,231	44%	\$277,297,528	56%
11	Clash of the Titans	\$493,214,993	\$163,214,888	33.1%	\$330,000,105	66.9%
12	The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader	\$415,686,217	\$104,386,950	25.1%	\$311,299,267	74.9%
13	The King's Speech	\$410,867,243	\$135,453,143	33%	\$275,414,100	67%

2023 Worldwide Box Office

2023 ▾						
Rank ^	Release Group	Worldwide ↕	Domestic ↕	% ↕	Foreign ↕	% ↕
1	Barbie	\$1,447,138,421	\$636,238,421	44%	\$810,900,000	56%
2	The Super Mario Bros. Movie	\$1,360,650,924	\$574,934,330	42.3%	\$785,716,594	57.7%
3	Oppenheimer	\$975,811,333	\$330,078,895	33.8%	\$645,732,438	66.2%
4	Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3	\$845,555,777	\$358,995,815	42.5%	\$486,559,962	57.5%
5	Fast X	\$704,875,015	\$146,126,015	20.7%	\$558,749,000	79.3%
6	Spider-Man: Across the Spider-Verse	\$690,542,303	\$381,311,319	55.2%	\$309,230,984	44.8%
7	Full River Red	\$670,491,959	-	-	\$670,491,959	100%
8	Wonka	\$634,502,312	\$218,402,312	34.4%	\$416,100,000	65.6%
9	The Wandering Earth II	\$615,023,132	\$5,023,132	0.8%	\$610,000,000	99.2%
10	Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning Part One	\$571,125,435	\$172,640,980	30.2%	\$398,484,455	69.8%
11	The Little Mermaid	\$569,626,289	\$298,172,056	52.3%	\$271,454,233	47.7%
12	No More Bets	\$532,600,264	-	-	\$532,600,264	100%
13	Elemental	\$496,444,308	\$154,426,697	31.1%	\$342,017,611	68.9%

Source: Box Office Mojo.

II. Worldwide Box Office 2025.

2025 Worldwide Box Office

2025 ▾						
Rank ^	Release Group	Worldwide ↕	Domestic ↕	% ↕	Foreign ↕	% ↕
1	Ne Zha 2	\$2,267,446,370	\$23,308,176	1%	\$2,244,138,194	99%
2	Zootopia 2	\$1,866,647,950	\$428,130,160	22.9%	\$1,438,517,790	77.1%
3	Avatar: Fire and Ash	\$1,485,960,366	\$404,300,486	27.2%	\$1,081,659,880	72.8%
4	Lilo & Stitch	\$1,038,027,526	\$423,778,855	40.8%	\$614,248,671	59.2%
5	A Minecraft Movie	\$960,387,780	\$424,087,780	44.2%	\$536,300,000	55.8%
6	Jurassic World: Rebirth	\$869,146,189	\$339,640,400	39.1%	\$529,505,789	60.9%
7	Demon Slayer: Kimetsu No Yaiba Infinity Castle	\$738,592,910	\$136,948,029	18.5%	\$601,644,881	81.5%
8	How to Train Your Dragon	\$636,596,299	\$262,958,100	41.3%	\$373,638,199	58.7%
9	F1: The Movie	\$634,042,436	\$189,642,436	29.9%	\$444,400,000	70.1%
10	Superman	\$618,723,803	\$354,223,803	57.3%	\$264,500,000	42.7%
11	Mission: Impossible - The Final Reckoning	\$598,767,057	\$197,413,515	33%	\$401,353,542	67%
12	Wicked: For Good	\$539,042,601	\$342,915,090	63.6%	\$196,127,511	36.4%
13	The Fantastic Four: First Steps	\$521,858,728	\$274,286,610	52.6%	\$247,572,118	47.4%

Rank ^	Release Group	Worldwide ↕	Domestic ↕	% ↕	Foreign ↕	% ↕
33	Chainsaw Man - The Movie: Reze Arc	\$162,259,754	\$43,438,461	26.8%	\$118,821,293	73.2%
34	Elio	\$154,291,182	\$72,987,454	47.3%	\$81,303,728	52.7%
35	Freakier Friday	\$153,176,952	\$94,186,236	61.5%	\$58,990,716	38.5%
36	28 Years Later	\$151,329,249	\$70,446,897	46.6%	\$80,882,352	53.4%
37	Dog Man	\$146,049,728	\$97,970,355	67.1%	\$48,079,373	32.9%
38	Tron: Ares	\$142,249,983	\$73,161,014	51.4%	\$69,088,969	48.6%
39	Bridget Jones: Mad About the Boy	\$140,433,351	-	-	\$140,433,351	100%

Source: Box Office Mojo.

ANNEX (F) Movie's Rank: All-time Top Lifetime Grosses Worldwide by Box Office Mojo

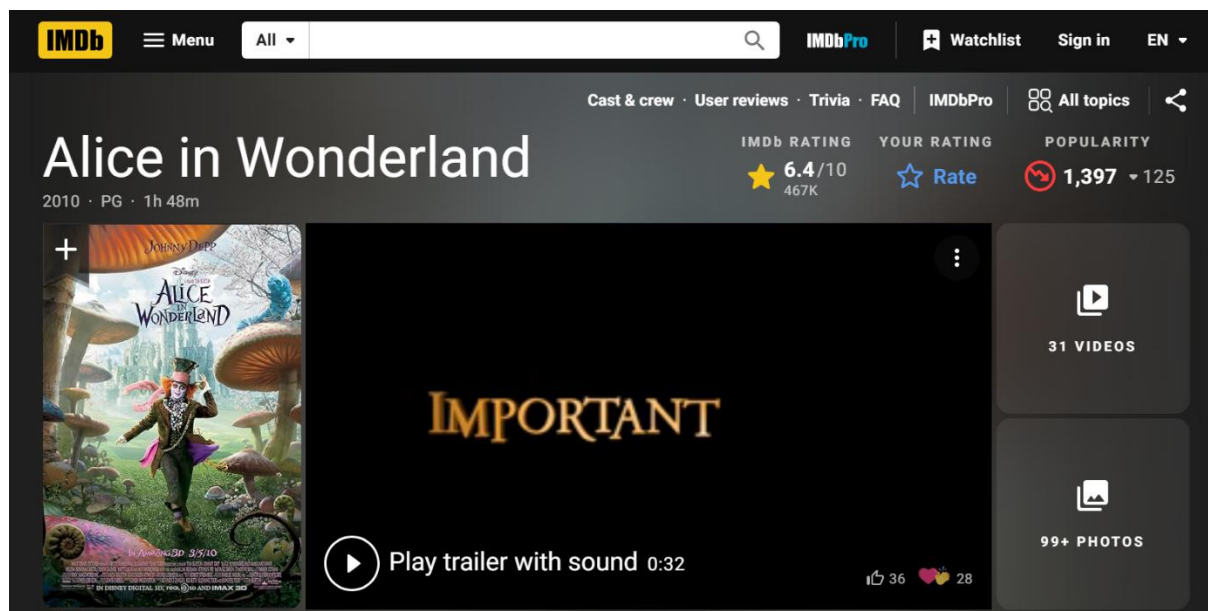
Rank	Title	Worldwide Lifetime Gross	Domestic Lifetime Gross	Domestic %	Foreign Lifetime Gross	Foreign %	Year
50	Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides	\$1,046,721,266	\$241,071,802	23%	\$805,649,464	77%	2011
51	Star Wars: Episode I - The Phantom Menace	\$1,046,515,409	\$487,576,624	46.6%	\$558,938,785	53.4%	1999
52	Lilo & Stitch	\$1,038,027,526	\$423,778,855	40.8%	\$614,248,671	59.2%	2025
53	Despicable Me 3	\$1,034,800,131	\$264,624,300	25.6%	\$770,175,831	74.4%	2017
54	Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone	\$1,029,374,615	\$319,765,078	31.1%	\$709,609,537	68.9%	2001
55	Finding Dory	\$1,029,266,989	\$486,295,561	47.2%	\$542,971,428	52.8%	2016
56	Zootopia	\$1,025,521,689	\$341,268,248	33.3%	\$684,253,441	66.7%	2016
57	Alice in Wonderland	\$1,025,468,216	\$334,191,110	32.6%	\$691,277,106	67.4%	2010
58	The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey	\$1,017,453,991	\$303,030,651	29.8%	\$714,423,340	70.2%	2012
59	The Dark Knight	\$1,008,477,382	\$534,987,076	53%	\$473,490,306	47%	2008
60	Jurassic World: Dominion	\$1,001,978,080	\$376,851,080	37.6%	\$625,127,000	62.4%	2022

Rank	Title	Worldwide Lifetime Gross	Domestic Lifetime Gross	Domestic %	Foreign Lifetime Gross	Foreign %	Year
218	Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning Part One	\$571,125,435	\$172,640,980	30.2%	\$398,484,455	69.8%	2023
219	Fifty Shades of Grey	\$569,651,467	\$166,167,230	29.2%	\$403,484,237	70.8%	2015
220	The Little Mermaid	\$569,642,672	\$298,172,056	52.3%	\$271,470,616	47.7%	2023
221	Kong: Skull Island	\$568,652,812	\$168,052,812	29.6%	\$400,600,000	70.4%	2017
222	The Smurfs	\$563,892,376	\$142,614,158	25.3%	\$421,278,218	74.7%	2011
223	Cars 2	\$559,853,036	\$191,452,396	34.2%	\$368,400,640	65.8%	2011
224	King Kong	\$556,907,510	\$218,080,025	39.2%	\$338,827,485	60.8%	2005

Source: Box Office Mojo.

ANNEX (G) Audiences Rating by IMDb

I. Alice in Wonderland (2010) and The Little Mermaid (2023)



The screenshot shows the IMDb page for the 2010 film "Alice in Wonderland". The page features a dark theme with a yellow IMDb logo in the top left. A search bar and navigation links like "Menu", "IMDbPro", "Watchlist", and "Sign in" are at the top. The movie title "Alice in Wonderland" is prominently displayed in white, with its release year "2010", rating "PG", and runtime "1h 48m" below it. To the right, the IMDb Rating is shown as a yellow star with "6.4/10" and "467K" votes. Next to it is the "YOUR RATING" section with a blue star and a "Rate" button. The "POPULARITY" section shows a red circle with a white number "1,397" and a small downward arrow with "125". Below the title, there is a movie poster on the left and a large video player in the center. The video player has the word "IMPORTANT" in large, stylized letters and a play button icon. Below the play button, it says "Play trailer with sound 0:32". To the right of the video player, there are two buttons: "31 VIDEOS" and "99+ PHOTOS". At the bottom right of the video player, there are icons for likes (36) and a heart (28).

IMDb

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All topics

Alice in Wonderland

2010 · PG · 1h 48m

IMDb RATING

★ 6.4/10
467K

YOUR RATING

★ Rate

POPULARITY

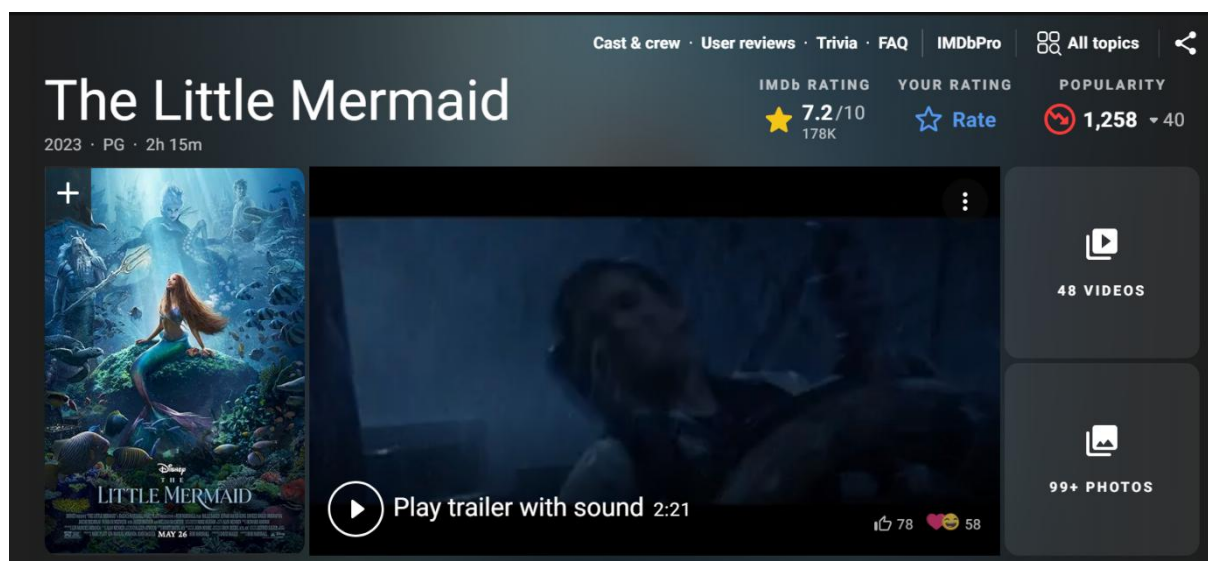
1,397 ↓ 125

31 VIDEOS

99+ PHOTOS

Play trailer with sound 0:32

36 28



The screenshot shows the IMDb page for the 2023 film "The Little Mermaid". The page features a dark theme with a yellow IMDb logo in the top left. A search bar and navigation links like "Menu", "IMDbPro", "Watchlist", and "Sign in" are at the top. The movie title "The Little Mermaid" is prominently displayed in white, with its release year "2023", rating "PG", and runtime "2h 15m" below it. To the right, the IMDb Rating is shown as a yellow star with "7.2/10" and "178K" votes. Next to it is the "YOUR RATING" section with a blue star and a "Rate" button. The "POPULARITY" section shows a red circle with a white number "1,258" and a small downward arrow with "40". Below the title, there is a movie poster on the left and a large video player in the center. The video player has a play button icon and the text "Play trailer with sound 2:21". To the right of the video player, there are two buttons: "48 VIDEOS" and "99+ PHOTOS". At the bottom right of the video player, there are icons for likes (78) and a heart (58).

IMDb

Menu

All

IMDbPro

Watchlist

Sign in

EN

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All topics

The Little Mermaid

2023 · PG · 2h 15m

IMDb RATING

★ 7.2/10
178K

YOUR RATING

★ Rate

POPULARITY

1,258 ↓ 40

48 VIDEOS

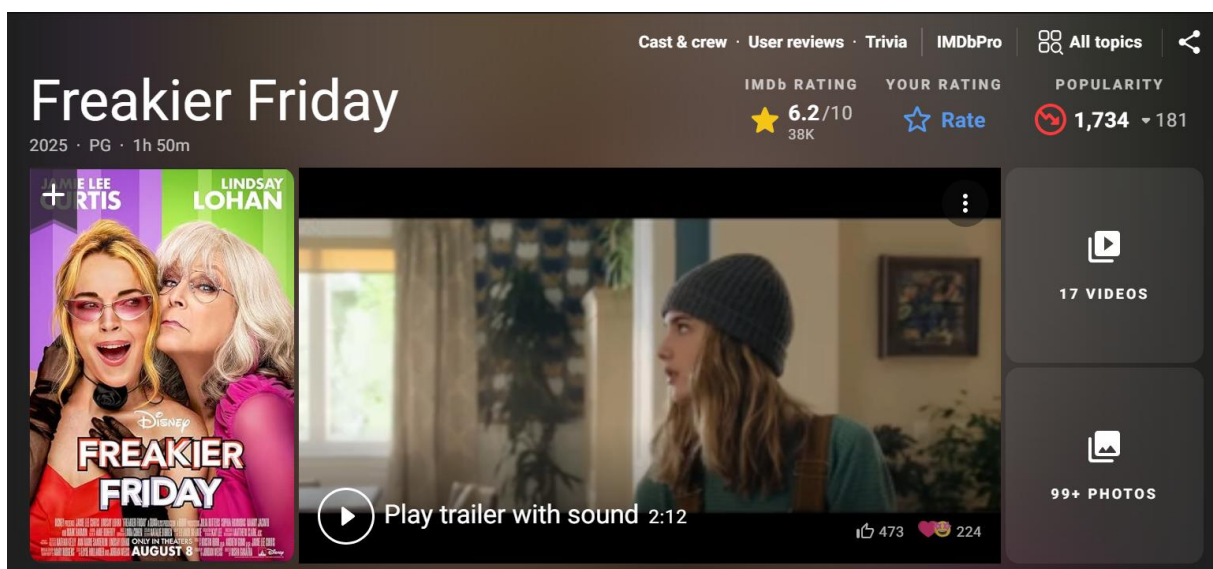
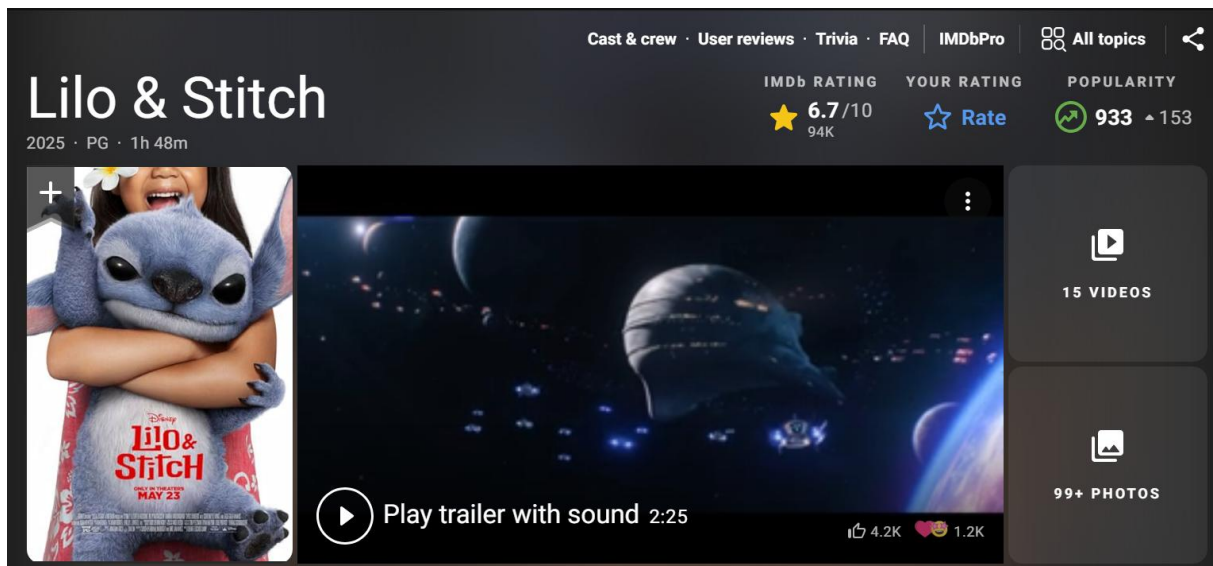
99+ PHOTOS

Play trailer with sound 2:21

78 58

Source: IMDb.

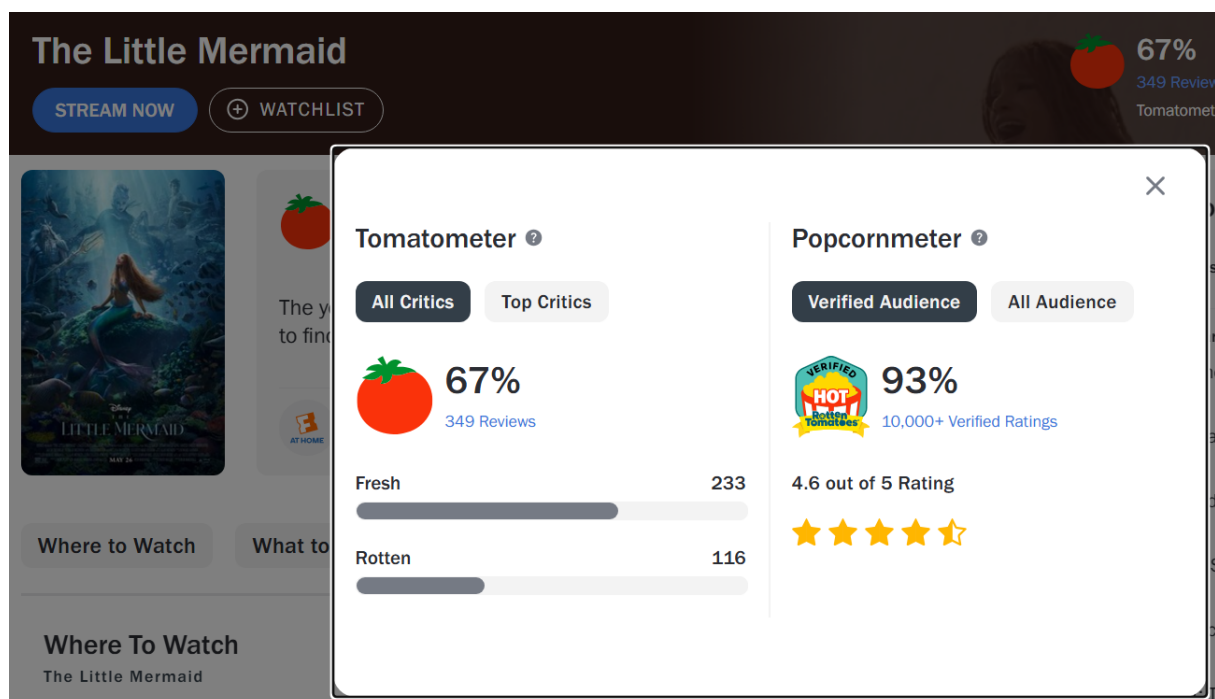
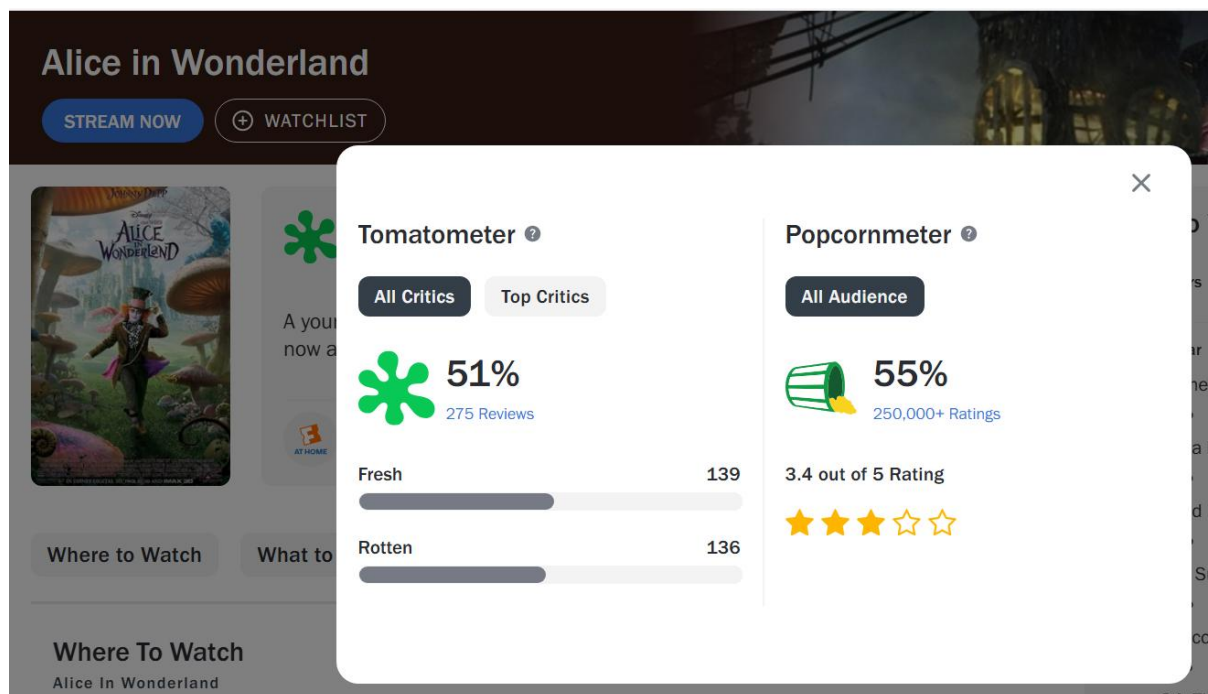
II. Lilo & Stitch (2025) and Freakier Friday (2025)



Source: IMDb.

ANNEX (H) Audiences Rating by Rotten Tomatoes

I. Alice in Wonderland (2010) and The Little Mermaid (2023)



Source: Rotten Tomatoes.

II. Lilo & Stitch (2025) and Freakier Friday (2025)

Lilo & Stitch 72% 218 Reviews

[STREAM NOW](#) [WATCHLIST](#)

 Stitch where I want to go. Hawaii is my home.

Tomatometer All Critics Top Critics

 **72%** 218 Reviews

Fresh 158

Rotten 60

Popcornmeter Verified Audience All Audience

 **91%** 10,000+ Verified Ratings

4.6 out of 5 Rating

★★★★★

Where To Watch

Where To Watch

Lilo & Stitch

Freakier Friday 73% 228 Reviews

[STREAM NOW](#) [WATCHLIST](#)

 Tess and her mother swap bodies.

Tomatometer All Critics Top Critics

 **73%** 228 Reviews

Fresh 167

Rotten 61

Popcornmeter Verified Audience All Audience

 **91%** 2,500+ Verified Ratings

4.5 out of 5 Rating

★★★★★

Where to Watch

Where To Watch

Freakier Friday

Source: Rotten Tomatoes.

ANNEX (I) Critics and Audiences Reviews by Rotten Tomatoes

The Little Mermaid

What To Know

Critics Consensus

With Halle Bailey making a major splash in the title role, Disney's live-action *Little Mermaid* ranks among the studio's most enjoyable reimaginings.

[Read Critics Reviews](#)

Audience Says

Halle Bailey is outstanding in *The Little Mermaid* – and most of the other new additions to this version of the story hit the mark as well.

[Read Audience Reviews](#)

Lilo & Stitch

What To Know

Critics Consensus

Recapturing the adorable charm of the original if not quite matching its rambunctious sense of imagination, *Lilo & Stitch* emerges out of the crate as one of the better live-action remakes of a Disney classic.

[Read Critics Reviews](#)

Audience Says

Old and new fans beware: Cuteness and mischief team up in *Lilo & Stitch* to make sure nobody gets left behind.

[Read Audience Reviews](#)

Freakier Friday

What To Know

Critics Consensus

Freakier Friday doesn't reinvent the original's story so much as it swaps the formula around for a frothy good time, with Jamie Lee Curtis and Lindsay Lohan easily slipping back into roles that fit them like mixed-and-matched gloves.

[Read Critics Reviews](#)

Audience Says

TGIFF! Steeped in nostalgia and bursting with good, clean fun, *Freakier Friday* is a heartfelt celebration of family, with Curtis and Lohan serving up all the cozy, freaky feels.

[Read Audience Reviews](#)

Source: Rotten Tomatoes.

ANNEX (J) Declaration of use of generative AI



DECLARACIÓN DE USO DE INTELIGENCIA ARTIFICIAL GENERATIVA (IAG) EN EL TFG-FADE / UPV

1. Indica el uso realizado de la Inteligencia Artificial Generativa (IAG):

- ☐ NO he utilizado herramientas de IAG en el desarrollo del TFG
- ☒ SÍ he utilizado herramientas de IAG en el desarrollo del TFG.

2. Si has utilizado herramientas de IAG, indica cuáles

ChatGPT, Gemini

3. **Declaración ética y legal.** Confirmando que al utilizar la IAG:

- ☒ No he facilitado datos confidenciales sin autorización.
- ☒ No he utilizado materiales protegidos por derechos de autor sin permiso o sin acogerse a una excepción legal (dominio público, licencias CC o derecho de cita).
- ☒ No he introducido datos personales sin autorización.
- ☒ He respetado los términos de uso de las herramientas y no las he empleado de forma engañosa, fraudulenta o maliciosa.

4. **Descripción del uso técnico.** Declaro haber hecho uso de herramientas de IAG (ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot u otras) en los siguientes apartados del TFG y para las tareas que se detallan a continuación:

	Documentación / búsqueda de información	Revisión o reescritura de texto propio	Apoyo en análisis o tratamiento de datos	Generación esquemas o gráficos	Traducción o resumen bibliografía	Presentación
Introducción	NO	SI	NO	NO	NO	SI
Marco Teórico	NO	SI	NO	NO	SI	NO
Metodología	SI	SI	NO	NO	SI	NO
Resultados / análisis de datos	NO	SI	SI	NO	NO	SI
Discusión / propuestas mejora	NO	SI	SI	NO	NO	NO
Conclusiones	NO	SI	SI	NO	SI	NO
Referencias bibliográficas	SI	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Presentación o materiales complementarios	NO	SI	SI	NO	NO	SI

5. Indica qué **tipo de IAG** has utilizado en los distintos apartados del TFG (si aplica):

	IAG Texto	IAG búsqueda y gestión bibliográfica	IAG código	IAG imágenes o multimedia	IAG análisis de datos o modelado
Introducción	SI	NO	NO	NO	NO
Marco Teórico	SI	SI	NO	NO	NO
Metodología	SI	SI	NO	NO	NO
Resultados / análisis de datos	SI	NO	NO	NO	SI
Discusión / propuestas mejora	SI	NO	NO	NO	NO
Conclusiones	SI	SI	NO	NO	SI
Referencias bibliográficas	NO	SI	NO	NO	NO
Presentación o materiales complementarios	SI	NO	NO	NO	NO

6. **Ejemplos.** Indica, al menos, tres ejemplos de instrucciones o prompts que has utilizado al interactuar con herramientas de IAG (si procede).

1. Act as a bilingual (English and Spanish) business manager with more than 10 years of experience in marketing research. Assume the role of an advisor and tutor, guiding me through the development of my master's thesis focused on nostalgia marketing within the film industry. 2. Help me refine my overall research approach on nostalgia marketing in the film industry and clarify how this connects with Disney as a case study. 3. Based on my topic, suggest how I could logically structure my literature review chapter and justify its relevance to my research questions. 4. Review the following paragraph and help me improve clarity, coherence, and academic tone without changing the original meaning. 5. Provide me with general feedback on the following section, let me know how I can make it more concise, focused and argumentative.

7. **Reflexión personal.** En una o dos frases, valora brevemente las fortalezas y limitaciones del uso de la IAG en tu trabajo y si te ha ayudado en tu proceso de aprendizaje.

The use of AI has been of great help in the development of my thesis, especially in key points such as: summarizing information and bibliographic sources; reviewing, improving writing and grammar; and guidance in structuring ideas. For me, time-saving is its greatest strength and difficulties related to contextual understanding are a weakness and limitation.

Firma del estudiante Lina Forero

Fecha: 06.05.2026