

1 We want to express our gratitude to all the reviewers for careful reading and valuable comments. We believe the advice
2 will help us bring a better version of this paper. To begin with, we want to apologize for the typos and unclear writings.
3 We will correct them in the final version, and add the broader impact section. It appears that there is a major concern
4 regarding the contributions of our paper comparing with two lines of previous work, which we make clear first.
5 The first line of research is the various (unbiased) propensity estimation methods in the recommendation literature. The
6 papers mentioned by the reviewers all assumes on a click model: $p(\text{click} = 1|x) = p(\text{expose} = 1|x) \cdot p(\text{relevance} = 1|x)$.
7 Note that the implicit assumption being made is: $p(\text{expose} = 1, \text{relevance} = 1|x) = p(\text{expose} = 1|x) \cdot$
8 $p(\text{relevance} = 1|x, \text{expose} = 1) = p(\text{expose} = 1|x) \cdot p(\text{relevance} = 1|x)$, so $p(\text{relevance} = 1|x, \text{expose} = 1) =$
9 $p(\text{relevance} = 1|x)$, suggesting that $\text{relevance} \perp \text{exposure} | x$, i.e. relevance is independent of exposure given the
10 features. This may not be true (or at least cannot be examined) in many scenarios, unless we are able to collect every
11 single factor that may affect the users’ decision making process into x . The merit of our approach is that we get rid of
12 the dependency on the click model assumption, and provide an alternative solution for researchers and practitioners who
13 suspect the validity of $\text{relevance} \perp \text{exposure} | x$ in their data. In practice, the gain from our approach depends on the
14 degree of violation on the above assumption. Therefore, compare with the prior work, we introduce new perspectives
15 and a feasible solution to this challenging problem. As for empirical evaluations, we have also tried our best to add
16 more baselines according to the reviewers’ requests (Table R.0). We ran into some trouble replicating the baselines with
17 the published implementation, but we keep the our implementation as consistent as possible with the original work.
18 The other line of prior work is distribution-robust optimization (DRO), which is a vast domain. While our model
19 also belongs to this category, the critical component that we argue for robustness is the propensity score distribution,
20 which to the best of our knowledge has not been studied before. The majority of papers in this domain have a different
21 emphasis on the robustness of feature distribution or data generating distribution, which do not apply to our problem
22 since the propensity score does not have a generative nature. From a technical perspective, the challenging part is that
23 the propensity score term is placed on the denominator, so it requires extra proofs and arguments to obtain the duality,
24 relaxation and concentration results. Our contribution is also novel in this regard.
25 **To Reviewer#1.** We thank Reviewer#1 for the insightful questions. We compare our work with other DRO and
26 unbiased propensity estimation method as above and provide empirical comparisons with the mentioned baseline, where
27 our approach still shows better performance. The reason why POP only give minor improvements in simulation is a
28 consequence of the simulation setup where popularity is not directly related to exposure. The ORACLE methods may
29 experience fluctuation because we have added random noise on the oracle to simulate the data, so ORACLE is only an
30 unbiased estimation, but the variance can be large. Finally, we agree that the benefit of our approach is less significant
31 when having access to the exposure strategy (which would be ideal), but this rarely happens in reality.
32 **To Reviewer#2.** We thank Reviewer#2 for pointing out the insufficiency of our manuscript, and we provide a refined
33 analysis on the prior literature, including their weakness and comparisons with our work, in the above paragraph two.
34 As we mentioned, uncertainty in exposure has not been well-handled by the unbiased propensity estimation methods,
35 since they rely on another implicit assumption (the assumption for the click model) that may not be correct. Our
36 approach provides an alternative solution that is free from the assumption. As for the empirical evaluations, we managed
37 to add one set of additional experiment for the suggested baselines. It is possible that we have not tuned the baselines to
38 perfection, but based on the initial result, the proposed approach still outperforms the propensity estimation approaches.
39 **To Reviewer#3.** We thank Reviewer#3 for the suggestions on further improvements. We apologize for the inconsistent
40 scale in Table 1 where we forgot to multiply by 100 on Goodreads’ results. Here, we provide a more detailed comparison
41 with the mentioned literature in the beginning and add one set of experiment to include the SOTA baselines, where our
42 approach still outperforms the propensity estimation approaches. As we mentioned in our response to Reviewer#1, the
43 inconsistent performance of POP and ORACLE in simulation is a consequence of how we generate the data.
44 **To Reviewer#4.** We thank Reviewer#4 for the advice on providing a more in-depth comparison with the counterfactual
45 recommendation literature and include more SOTA methods as baselines, which we provide at the beginning of this
46 rebuttal. We wish to point out that the primary focus of recommendation is on the supervised learning part. Although
47 we introduce a counterfactual learning component, the final model should still be examined in the supervised learning
48 setting. The analysis for the identifiability issue, on the other hand, is a heated topic for the sensitivity analysis and
would require another research paper to explore under the recommendation setting, which we pursue as future work.

	MovieLens-1M simulation data					MovieLens-1M real data				
	URL-MF*	LtR*	ExpoMF	DM	ACL-MLP	URL-MF*	LtR*	ExpoMF	DM	ACL-GMF
Hit@10	16.33(.2)	19.31(.4)	16.26(.9)	16.99(.8)	21.58(.1)	63.71(.2)	64.24(.1)	62.50(.7)	63.33(.8)	64.32(.2)
NDCG@10	7.26(.3)	7.91(.3)	7.24(.6)	7.47(.5)	8.42(.2)	33.19(.2)	33.43(.1)	32.85(.4)	32.97(.5)	33.70(.1)

Table R.0: Extra results on Movielens-1m simulation and real-world data. **URL-MF***: *Unbiased Recommender Learning from Missing-not-at-Random Implicit Feedback, WSDM’20* (the published code is not executable); **LtR***: *Unbiased Learning to Rank with Unbiased Propensity Estimation, SIGIR’18* (the published code is for search ranking); **ExpoMF**: *Modelling User Exposure in Recommendation, WWW’16*; **DM**: *Modelling Dynamic Missingness of Implicit feedback for Recommendation, NeurIPS’18*; **ACL-X**: the proposed adversarial counterfactual approach with model X as f_θ and g_ψ . Results have been multiplied by 100.