

What Was Old Is New Again: The History of Nostalgia as a Buying Motive in Consumption Behavior

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper investigates the history of nostalgia from the origin of the concept to its contemporary use as a buying motive in consumption behavior.

Design/methodology/approach – The literature was reviewed to examine the roots of nostalgia as a medical disease to its contemporary use in consumer behavior.

Research limitations/implications – The literature indicates that nostalgic feelings can indeed influence consumption behavior. Future research could be undertaken to provide clarity in answering: do emotions trigger nostalgia, or does nostalgia trigger emotions, or is nostalgia an emotion itself?

Keywords – nostalgia, consumer behavior, consumption, emotion

Paper Type – Literature review

Introduction

History may not repeat itself but it often recycles. What is old for some may be new for others. A recurring theme in the market place is using people's penchant for nostalgia in offering products that remind consumers of yesteryear. Many products that have been revived, remade, reissued, re-released, re-launched, reproduced, recreated and reinvented were successfully reintroduced years and decades later (Brown, 1999).

Nostalgia themes are evident across many product categories such as clothing, cars and entertainment. In the mid-1990s Nike reintroduced its Air Force 1 sneaker originally launched in 1982 and sportswear brand Puma revived its archived fashions (Anonymous, 2004). Automakers also jumped on the "nostalgia bandwagon" through reintroducing or "retro-marketing" (Brown, 1999) past automobiles combined with current technology. In the late 1990s and early 2000s the following are among the automobiles reintroduced (original production dates in parentheses): Volkswagen Beetle 1998 (1954), Ford Mustang Mach1 (1969), and BMW Minicooper (1959). As recently as 2006, DaimlerChrysler planned to reintroduce the Challenger (1970) and General Motors the Camaro (1966).

The motion picture and television industries have also used nostalgia to attract viewers. The popular television series *Mission Impossible* aired from 1966-1973, spawned three Paramount Pictures films starring Tom Cruise (Vlasic and Naughton, 1998). Likewise, in 2005 Sony Pictures released "Bewitched", a remake of the classic 1964-1972 sitcom. Even more recently two films popular in the 1980s, *Fame*, the *Karate Kid* and *Clash of the Titans* were remade in 2009 and 2010 respectively. In a similar vein, both Nick at Nite and the TvLand Network, devote programming schedules to classic television (Odiome, 2002). While nostalgia is associated with the objects from the past, the above examples show that it is also a current trend. These are just a few of the numerous examples to illustrate that marketers have used nostalgia-based products to stimulate or respond to consumer demand. Furthermore, it is difficult to think of a product category that has not been affected by recycling 'waves of nostalgia'.

Nostalgia, like fear and humor, provides a powerful motivation to behavior. Because of its importance and pervasiveness in marketing, the purpose of this paper is to investigate the history of nostalgia from its origins as a concept to its role as a buying motive in consumption behavior.

Early conceptions of nostalgia

The word nostalgia is derived from the Greek (Liddell and Scott, 1958, pp. 467, 31): *νοστω* (pronounced nosto) to return home and *αλγία* (pronounced algia) a painful condition. Thus, nostalgia is a longing to return home or homesickness. Although the term nostalgia was coined in the 17th century to represent a medical condition, it was alluded to thousands of years earlier. For example, Homer (c. 800 BCE), in the *Odyssey*, relates that Ulysses cried and rolled on the ground when thinking about returning home. The Old Testament of the Bible (c. 500 BCE), Psalm 137:1 states, “Yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion”.

One of the earliest references to nostalgia, was by a Swiss physician named Hofer who discussed it in his MD dissertation (1688/1934). He viewed nostalgia as a disease that originated from the inner brain where, at that time, it was thought animal spirits resided. He used the term nostalgia to describe the extreme emotional condition experienced by members of the Swiss military who were sent far away from home. Hofer hypothesized that the constant thought of home over an extended time period caused movement of animal spirits in the brain. The condition was often characterized by feelings of sadness and depression with some of its victims even attempting suicide. Hofer was regarded as the first physician to depict nostalgia as a clinical condition (Havlena and Holak, 1991). The key insight of Hofer’s thinking was that the mind could affect the body (Martin, 1954). For much of the 17th to 19th centuries, nostalgia was explained as a medical disease and scholars had varying ideas about who its victims were, its symptoms, causes and cures.

Equating nostalgia with homesickness over time resulted in several classes of theories. In chronological order, these include: (1) physiological and anatomical theories, (2) environmental theories, (3) mental (or psychological theories), (4) instinct theories, and (5) combined physical and mental theories. Each is discussed in turn.

First, physiological and anatomical theories were similar to the description and explanation of nostalgia offered by Hofer (1688). Le Goic (1890) thought that homesickness was the effect of poor cerebral circulation resulting in melancholy (McCann, 1941). Thomas’ (1937) contended that the memory of experiences associated with home could temporarily make an individual unable to function normally when away from home (McCann, 1941).

A second set of theories attempted to explain nostalgia in terms of the environment. Scheuchzer (1732), a German-Swiss physician, proposed that nostalgia was the result of an abrupt change in atmosphere which caused an acute change in one’s body pressure which in turn drove blood from the heart to the brain resulting in sentimental or nostalgic feelings (Sedikides, Wildschut and Baden, 2004). Because they traveled from mountains to valleys and back, this was thought to be the explanation for why this condition only affected members of the Swiss military. Some military physicians believed that nostalgia was the result of damage to the eardrum and brain caused by constant cowbell ringing in the Swiss Alps. However, this theory was debunked when it was discovered that soldiers from other countries were equally afflicted (Davis, 1979; McCann, 1941). In another environmental theory, Guthrie (1909) thought that familiar surroundings become a part of an individual’s personality and nostalgia results when an individual is placed in strange surroundings.

Mental (or psychological) theories viewed nostalgia as a disorder of the mind, sometimes resulting in mild or partial insanity (Peters, 1863). While Papillon (1874) agreed that nostalgia might be a mental disorder, he believed that there was a difference between nervous disorders and insanity. He contended that an insane person could not be healed by trying to make them feel better; a homesick person could be made well simply by returning home. Marbe (1925) did not consider nostalgia a disease but a mental state typified by melancholia and depression (McCann 1941).

The fourth set of theories regard instincts. Hall (1897) proposed that two instincts affected homesickness. The *oikotropic* instinct predisposed an individual toward home, while the *oikifugic* instinct drove a person away from home. When these conflicting instincts struggle to control the individual’s behavior, homesickness occurs. In another view Seabury (1924) hypothesized that when a “love of home” instinct controls one’s emotions the individual will experience homesickness.

Some authors proposed combining physical and mental theories of homesickness. Conklin (1935) distinguished between physiological (i.e. heart palpitations, high blood pressure, vomiting, diarrhea) and psychological (i.e. nausea, lump in the throat, loneliness) symptoms of homesickness. McCann (1943) argued that homesickness was physically related to the sympathetic division of the autonomic nervous system, which is activated when an individual has a strong desire to return home that cannot be satisfied. This created a psychological desire that was aroused by feelings of inferiority, fear, and distress.

Until the middle of the 20th century nostalgia was still regarded as a form of melancholy or depression related to homesickness (McCann, 1941). However, as the term was “demedicalized” and “demilitarized,” the meaning of nostalgia changed to a general longing for the past (Davis, 1979, p. 4). Physicians and psychologists’ studies no longer treated the condition as a disease, its occurrence was no longer limited to the military and it was used in everyday parlance by the 1950s. In a survey of college students, by Davis in 1979, nostalgia was identified with words like “warm, old times, childhood and yearning” rather than homesickness. Thus, nostalgia was re-conceptualized to refer to any yearning for the past (Davis, 1979).

Modern conceptions of nostalgia

As in the previous centuries, until the late 20th century nostalgia was still regarded as a form of melancholy or depression related to homesickness (McCann, 1941). However, as the term was “demedicalized” and “demilitarized” nostalgia’s meaning changed to a general longing for the past (Davis, 1979, p. 4). Physicians and psychologists’ studies no longer treated the condition as a disease, its occurrence was no longer limited to the military and it was used in everyday speech by the 1950s. In a survey of college students, by Davis (1979), nostalgia was identified with words like “warm, old times, childhood and yearning” rather than homesickness. Thus, nostalgia was re-conceptualized to refer to any yearning for the past (Davis, 1979).

Beyond rethinking nostalgia as a longing for the past, Davis (1979) differentiated among three levels of nostalgia. First-order or “simple nostalgia” is related to the belief that things were better in the past. Second-order or “reflexive nostalgia” involves an appraisal of the past for historical accuracy rather than viewing the past sentimentally. For example, a person experiencing second order nostalgia might ask himself if things were really as he remembers them. With third-order or “interpreted nostalgia” the individual considers the nostalgic experience in terms why he might be feeling nostalgic.

Using a temporal context, Nawas and Platt (1965) categorized nostalgia as past, present or future-oriented. Past-oriented nostalgia involves a desire to return to an earlier time in one’s life, which could go back as far back as the womb. Present-oriented nostalgia involves a reaction due to the inability to adjust to the stresses of the current environment, which involves insecurity as a trigger of nostalgia. Finally, future-oriented nostalgia involves whether an individual is pessimistic (more nostalgic) or optimistic (less nostalgic) about the future.

Not only have scholars in medicine, psychology, and sociology, among other disciplines, proposed various conceptions of nostalgia, but there have also been several views of the term used in consumer research. Selected definitions are shown in Table I.

Author	Definition of Nostalgia
Davis (1979,18)	Yearning for yesterday; “a positively toned evocation of a lived past in the context of some negative feeling toward the present or impending circumstance”.
Belk (1990, 670)	“A wistful mood that may be prompted by an object, a scene, a smell or strain of music”.
Holbrook and Schindler (1991, 330)	“A preference toward objects that were more common when one was younger, in adolescence, in childhood or even before birth”
Baker and Kennedy (1994, 169)	“A sentimental or bittersweet yearning for an experience, product or service from the past”.
Holak and Havlena (1998, 218)	“A positively valenced, complex feeling, emotion or mood produced by reflection on things (objects, persons, experiences, ideas) associated with the past”
Merriam-Webster (2007, from m-w.com)	“A state of homesickness; a wistful or excessively sentimental yearning for return to or of some past period or irrecoverable condition”

Table 1.
Selected
Definitions of
Nostalgia

An examination of these modern definitions of nostalgia reveals that despite their semantic differences, fundamentally they mostly deal with pleasant feelings about or longing for some object from the past. However, there is mention that these feelings may also involve melancholy emotions as well.

Nostalgia in consumer research has been examined in several contexts, from causes to consequences. These contexts include: (1) how nostalgia is aroused, (2) the effect of personal characteristics on nostalgia, (3) the impact of discontinuity or catastrophic events on nostalgia, and (4) the consequences of nostalgia on emotions and preferences.

Arousing Nostalgia

Consumer research shows that nostalgia can be aroused or triggered through: (a) advertising, (b) scents, and (c) consumption experiences. While there are doubt other triggers, only these three have been discussed.

Nostalgia and advertising

Nostalgia is a pervasive and effective means of advertising (Naughton and Vlastic, 1998). Stern (1992) analyzed the use of personal and historical nostalgia appeals using advertisements in periodicals and direct mail catalogues. She showed that the effectiveness of personal or historical nostalgia in advertising depends on the product category, benefit claim and consumer self-concept. Historical nostalgia involves the desire to return to a past that is viewed as better than the present and personal nostalgia specifically focuses on the romanticized remembrance of one's childhood as warm and secure. Further, experiencing personal nostalgia does not depend on actually having a happy childhood rather it is based on one that is recreated and fictional. Stern (1992) concluded that use of personal nostalgia appears to be better for products that are privately consumed and provide comfort. For example, common items such as Ovaltine and Rice Crispies which are considered comfort foods can generate memories of good times (Stern, 1992). Conversely, historical nostalgia is more effective for products that are publicly consumed, project status and image, and target the consumer's ideal self. Stern (1992) also believed that the use of nostalgia in marketing would become more prevalent as consumers became discontented with the present or anticipated a bleak future and therefore wanted to return to a more pleasant past.

Nostalgia and scent

Hirsch (1992), using Freud's recognition that a link exists between odors and emotions, proposed that the scent of odors also have the ability to trigger positive and negative memories. Olfactory-evoked recall holds that odors can bring back positive and negative memories. Hirsch (1992) surveyed people to determine what smells or odors reminded them of their childhood. People born before 1930 reported that natural smells (e.g. pine, horses, sea air) reminded them of childhood. Interestingly, people born from 1931 to 1979 cited artificial odors like scented-markers, Vaporub, food and even airplane fuel. There was no significant gender difference in scent-induced nostalgia. Hirsch (1972) concluded that in attempting to evoke nostalgia it would be more effective to target younger consumers with food odors rather than natural smells. The opposite would be true for older consumers.

Nostalgia and consumption experiences

Seeking to characterize their consumption experiences, Goulding (1999, 2001) studied people visiting a historical museum to determine their reactions to various stimuli. Nostalgia emerged as one of several themes and the responses were categorized as either existential or recreational. "Existential nostalgics" describe nostalgia as a means of escapism with familiar objects and settings providing a means to do so, "recreational nostalgics" much less so. Existential nostalgics experienced role loss (e.g. work relationships, family structure) and were more nostalgic than recreational nostalgics. In addition to these nostalgia triggers several personal characteristics have been shown to affect nostalgia

Personal characteristics influencing nostalgia

There are several personal characteristics that affect nostalgic behavior. Three are in intrinsic characteristics: (a) age, (b) nostalgia proneness, and (c) materialism; and one extrinsic—discontinuity. Each is discussed in turn.

Age

While the original concept of nostalgia was associated with homesickness, Holbrook and Schindler (1991, p. 330) broadened the meaning by defining nostalgia as a “preference (general liking, positive attitude or favorable affect) toward objects (people, places or things) that were more common (popular, fashionable, or widely circulated) when one was younger (in early adulthood, in adolescence, in childhood, or even before birth).” They propose that age is an explanation for nostalgia. The idea is that nostalgic feelings depend on age related developmental changes in consumers that occur over time.

Holbrook and Schindler (1989) examined the relationship between age and the development of musical tastes. An exploratory study was performed to investigate whether popular musical preferences peak at a certain age. Results showed a preference for music that was popular during the period of late adolescence or early adulthood. Outside these developmental stages, either prior or subsequent music was less preferred.

Schindler and Holbrook (1993) investigated whether a critical period of preference formation existed for the development of tastes in personal appearance (i.e. physical aesthetics). The results provided evidence that preferences in personal appearances develop during a specific age range rather than over the course of one’s life. Results also revealed that the peak age for the development of taste in personal appearance was similar to that found in earlier research on music and movies further supporting the idea that nostalgic feelings are associated with an individual’s critical period (i.e. age).

Holbrook (1993) investigated whether age and nostalgia proneness represent two discrete facets of nostalgia. In preferences for old movies, their research showed that age and nostalgia proneness are separate and distinct constructs. In a similar vein, Holbrook and Schindler (1994, 1996) used age, sex and attitude toward the past as a predictor of consumers’ aesthetic tastes for cultural products (e.g. hedonic or aesthetic products). In these two studies, experiments revealed that an age related preference peak exists for tastes in movie stars and films. Consumers with a more favorable attitude toward the past (high nostalgia proneness) had stronger preferences for cultural products associated with earlier periods in time than did consumers with less favorable attitudes toward the past (low nostalgia proneness).

The prior research of Schindler and Holbrook on age related stages for nostalgia in determining consumer preferences focused on aesthetic products, so these authors sought to demonstrate that nostalgic effects were not limited to arts and entertainment. Subsequently, Schindler and Holbrook’s (2003) investigated the effects of early experience in determining consumer preferences for automobile styles. Again, their results found a preference peak for cars that were popular when men were young. Interestingly, women did not display any inclination for the automobile styles of their youth.

In summary, the overall findings indicate that there is a link between age and preference development. Age is not the only variable that impacts nostalgia. Some consumers are predisposed to nostalgic preferences, even among those in the same age group. That predisposition is discussed next.

Nostalgia Proneness

Nostalgia proneness is a predisposition to nostalgia; according to Holbrook (1993, p. 245) it is “a potential facet of individual character—a psychographic variable, aspect of lifestyle, or general customer characteristic—that may vary among consumers, independent of time- or age-related factors.”

Zimmer, Little and Griffiths (1999) examined how nostalgia proneness and an additional personality trait, the need for uniqueness, influences consumer perception of historical branding. Historical branding consists of fictional history and nostalgic branding strategies. Fictional history branding strategies invents a background to establish legitimacy for a new product. Nostalgic branding strategies attempts to evoke nostalgia through the use of old images on a new product. Nostalgia proneness was described earlier as an individual difference that influences a person’s propensity to become nostalgic. Need for uniqueness is defined as the degree to which an individual pursues differentness relative to others. Differentness is realized through consumption of products that develop and enhance one’s identity.

These authors hypothesized that people with high nostalgia proneness and high need for uniqueness: respond more favorably to nostalgic and fictional history branding than people with low nostalgia proneness and low need for uniqueness. Moreover, when the highly nostalgia prone (high need for uniqueness) know that a historical branding strategy is being used they will respond more favorably than will those with high nostalgia proneness (high need for uniqueness) that do not know. When perceived quality and brand image are used as dependent variables results showed that those

high in nostalgia proneness and low in need for uniqueness had more favorable ratings than did those low in nostalgia proneness. Similarly, those high in need for uniqueness with low nostalgia proneness rated brands more favorably than did those low in need for uniqueness. In summary, the study demonstrated that nostalgia proneness and need for uniqueness are personality traits that can influence consumer perceptions of quality and brand image.

These studies suggest that in addition to age affecting consumer preference for nostalgic products, there is also a difference between consumers having high and low nostalgic proneness as well as a need for uniqueness in their preferences for nostalgic products.

Materialism

Rindfleisch, Freeman and Burroughs (2000) proposed a relationship between nostalgia and materialism in shaping consumer preference. Materialism suggests an orientation toward the present in satisfying current wants. It was also posited that high nostalgia proneness would correspond to low levels of materialism. Their results revealed nostalgia and materialism are negatively correlated related, which suggests that consumers high in nostalgia proneness are less likely to respond to appeals for high status products because they tend to be low in materialism. In addition to intrinsic factors affecting nostalgia, there is also an extrinsic factor—discontinuity.

Discontinuity and Nostalgia

Davis (1979) hypothesized a relationship between discontinuity and nostalgia. Discontinuity was defined as a significant disruption from normality and included: personal (e.g., divorce, friend's death, job loss), collective (e.g. war, economic depression, natural disaster), or transitional events (e.g. adolescence to adulthood). Davis (1977) proposed that nostalgia serves as a shield against life's uncertainties.

Davis (1979) also argued that nostalgia allows individuals to preserve their identity by maintaining internal continuity in the face of external discontinuity. Thus, nostalgia provides a positive emotional and comforting place that gives refuge from the current instability. Nostalgia and identity are related since nostalgia allows one to connect the past to the present which plays an integral part in developing a sense of who we are and what we are about. Davis (1979) believed that nostalgia acts as a psychological buffer amidst (1) fear, discontent, anxieties or uncertainties, and (2) when emotions and cognitive circumstances threaten identity continuity. When an individual's sense of self is threatened, nostalgia provides a coping mechanism by which people can maintain or reconstruct their identity.

Best and Nelson (1985) investigated two of Davis' (1979) discontinuity propositions: (1) people who experience discontinuity are more likely to become nostalgic, and (2) men are more nostalgic than women. Their results showed first that respondents who experienced discontinuity, such as divorce, separation, death of a child or sibling, or failing health, were significantly more likely to be nostalgic than those not experiencing discontinuities. Second, men were not more nostalgic than women. Both findings were consistent with Davis' (1979) discontinuity hypothesis.

Batcho (1995) also tested Davis' (1979) discontinuity hypothesis on several variables. On men versus women, he found no significant gender differences. On time orientation he found that nostalgia was generally associated with the view that the past was better than the present, but was not associated with dissatisfaction with the present or worry about the future. He also found that younger adults displayed more nostalgia than older adults, which is contrary to the discontinuity hypothesis.

Hunt, Godoble, and Shehryar (2005) tested the discontinuity hypothesis by determining whether nostalgia depends on the nature (positive or negative) of past experience. They found that participants with a largely positive past were more nostalgic when facing an uncertain or doubtful future than when they had a positive future outlook. When faced with a negative future, participants with a positive past were more nostalgic than those with a negative past. These findings suggested that nostalgia is triggered by a bleak future outlook which is consistent with the discontinuity hypothesis. A positive future outlook did not trigger nostalgia.

Wildschut et al. (2006) examined what triggers nostalgia. They found that negative affect (i.e. lonely, scared, sad, and depressed) was the most frequent trigger of nostalgia, which is consistent with Davis' idea that nostalgia occurs amid fear, discontent, angst and uncertainty. These findings are also consistent with the discontinuity hypothesis and suggest that people may call up nostalgic memories to defend against negative feelings.

In summary, results of these studies demonstrate that the discontinuity hypothesis has received mixed results; although the bulk of the research tends to support the discontinuity hypothesis.

Particularly, when consumers encounter periods of discontinuity they tend to become more nostalgic and have positive feelings for things that remind them of their past; and that nostalgic behavior of consumers is a defense mechanism used to deal with negative emotions about the present or concern for the future.

Consequences of nostalgia

Nostalgia has an impact on both emotions and preference formation. Each is discussed in turn.

Nostalgia and Emotions

The relationships between nostalgia and emotions are still tenuous. Is nostalgia a positive emotion only or both positive and negative? Do emotions trigger nostalgia? Or does nostalgia trigger emotions? Or is nostalgia the emotion?

Some researchers, for example, Holbrook and Schindler (1991), recognized nostalgia as a purely positive emotion. Others, such as Havlena and Holak (1991), believed that it contains both pleasant and unpleasant aspects; they use the term bittersweet in referring to nostalgia indicating both good and bad feelings.

Holak and Havlena (1998) identified six emotional factors tend to be associated with nostalgia: tenderness, irritation, elation, loss, fear, and serenity. Further, they also demonstrated that in addition to positive emotions, nostalgia contained a dimension of negative emotion such as irritation, loss, and fear resulting from knowing that the past cannot be relived. Over several studies, Holak and Havlena (1992, 1998) and Havlena and Holak (1996) established that nostalgia is a complex, multi-dimensional construct containing both positive and negative emotions. While it may evoke “warm and fuzzy” feelings, a sense of loss can accompany nostalgic feelings.

Although many of the above researchers treat nostalgia as a consequence, Goulding (1999, 2001, 2002) demonstrated that when people feel happy and in control nostalgic tends to occur at low levels. When people feel sad and powerless they experience higher levels of nostalgia and prefer objects providing short-term distraction from the present. Similarly, Wildschut et al. (2006) found that negative affect (i.e. lonely, scared, sad, and depressed) often triggered of nostalgia. Thus, nostalgia can be a cause and a consequence of nostalgia.

Several researchers believe that a person can have an emotional preference for objects that were common even before birth (Holbrook, 1991); and Havlena and Holak (1996, 2007) use the terms interpersonal or virtual nostalgia. Both result from indirect experience through the recollections of friends and family (interpersonal) or non-personal communications, such as historical books, art, movies, museums (virtual nostalgia).

Goulding (2002) also explored the notion of vicarious nostalgia to understand nostalgic aesthetic consumption and identified factors that influence nostalgic reaction and the nature of nostalgic appeal for consumers age 22 to 40. Based on their preferences for objects associated with a period of ten to fifteen years before their birth, these respondents felt they: (1) were born too late, (2) were socialized in their early years with nostalgic people such that repeated exposure to stimulus (stories, clothes, music etc.) from earlier periods occurred, (3) were unhappy with current style and design of aesthetic products, and (4) used nostalgic consumption as a basis for social experience. Further, their preference for these types of products endured over time. Thus, consumers feel nostalgic not only about products that remind them of their past but also about products that existed even prior their birth

While nostalgia may occur when a person feels joy and happiness it might also arise when a person is irritated, feels a sense of loss, or is fearful. Thus, consumer nostalgia is an emotion itself that can be positive or negative; and these emotions can either be a trigger to nostalgia at a higher order (Davis, 1979) or become a consequence of it.

Nostalgia and Preference Formation

Many studies of nostalgia focus on determining the influence of nostalgia on consumer preferences. These include preference for automobiles (Rindfleisch, Freeman and Burroughs, 2000), music, movies and photographs (Holbrook and Schindler, 1989, 1994, 1996); as well as attitudes toward the ad and brand (Muehling and Sprout, 2004). Research on the consequences of nostalgia is summarized in Table 2.

Source	Research Type	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable
Holbrook & Schindler (1989)	Empirical	Age when music preference formed.	Musical Preferences
Holak and Havlena (1992)	Exploratory		Nostalgic Experience
Baker and Kennedy (1994)	Exploratory		Nostalgic Feelings
Holbrook & Schindler (1994)	Empirical	Age, Gender, country of origin, attitude toward the past (ATP)	Liking for the movie star in photograph
Havlena and Holak (1996)	Exploratory		Nostalgic Feelings
Holbrook & Schindler (1996)	Empirical	Age, Gender, country of origin, attitude toward the past (ATP)	Liking for the film
Holak and Havlena (1998)	Exploratory		Nostalgic Experience
Zimmer, Griffiths & Little (1999)	Empirical	Nostalgia, Need for Uniqueness	Brand Image, Perceived Quality
Rindfleisch, Freeman & Burroughs (2000)	Empirical	Nostalgia Materialism	Product Preference
Goulding (2001)	Exploratory		Nostalgic Experience
Holbrook & Schindler (2003)	Exploratory		Nostalgic Bonding
Schindler & Holbrook (2003)	Empirical	Age, gender, product type	Nostalgic Preferences, Nostalgia Proneness
Muehling & Sprott (2004)	Empirical	Nostalgic ad vs. similar non-nostalgic ad	Brand Attitude, Attitude toward the Ad

Table 2. Selected Research on the Consequences of Nostalgia

The table shows that the dependent variable differs by type of research. In exploratory research the dependent variable is usually emotions, feelings or experiences as the outcome of nostalgia, whereas in empirical research the dependent variable is liking, attitude or preference formation as the consequence of nostalgia.

Summary and Conclusion

This paper has provided a history of the concept of nostalgia from its origin to the present. Nostalgia originated as a medical condition that affected its victims physiologically and psychologically from an overwhelming desire to return home to a longing to return to a more pleasant time period in the past. In consumer behavior, the discussion traced the myriad of variables that have been thought to cause or trigger nostalgic behavior, as well as the consequences or outcomes of nostalgia.

Consumer research has shown that nostalgia is triggered by advertising, scent, and consumption experiences. Individual personal characteristics that are positively related to nostalgia include age and nostalgia proneness, which operate independently of each other; while materialism, a third factor, is negatively correlated. Discontinuities, or significant life events, are often a catalyst for nostalgic behavior. Nostalgia creates strong positive or negative emotions and also influences preference formation. Based on the historical analysis, we may conclude that nostalgia is indeed a powerful buying motive in consumption behavior.

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