



Impact of Nostalgia Food Marketing on Life-Satisfaction in Old Generation Cohort of Rajasthan

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ABSTRACT

The concept of nostalgia is well recognized. The use of nostalgia marketing has its potential effect on brand attitude and purchase intention, little is known about whether it also positively impacts customers' psychological wellbeing, specifically their level of life satisfaction. This gap is most apparent for older consumers, who tend to be the ones who have actually witnessed the time period most nostalgic advertising campaigns call back to, but are not usually the ones to be studied for nostalgia marketing. This study aims to examine the possible relationship between the nostalgic marketing exposure and the life satisfaction of the elderly population of Rajasthan using the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) theoretical approach. Primary data was collected from 136 people in Rajasthan. In the recommended model, the external stimulus (S) is the stimuli of nostalgia marketing, internal response at the organism level (O) is the nostalgia proneness, self-continuity, and emotional involvement, and the behavioural-psychological consequence (R) is life satisfaction. The results reveal that the nostalgic food marketing stimuli are positively correlated to life satisfaction among the older Rajasthani consumers largely through the process of self-continuity and emotional involvement, with some differences between employed and non-employed respondents. The study has implications for marketers and policy makers who want to consider the psychological wellbeing dimension of nostalgic advertising and into an unexplored group the S-O-R paradigm.

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1. Introduction

Nostalgia marketing is a technique of marketing, that has long been studied with the focus on its role in selling a food product; how it makes a food product feel comfortable, reliable and emotionally inviting helps to encourage the purchase of the product (Holbrook, 1993; Holbrook & Schindler, 2003). Another, more muted subject has received much less attention: does nostalgic food marketing actually enhance the quality of life for customers whether or not they buy into it? Based on a small but growing body of psychological research, nostalgia is an emotional state that could promote greater subjective well-being by reconnecting the past and present selves (Sedikides, Wildschut, Routledge, & Arndt, 2015). If this is true, then Nostalgic taste and nostalgic food marketing also affecting the general satisfaction with life of people, as well as the sales of food products.

This is especially true of older consumers, whose biographies are not in question, but rather the point of nostalgic cues, which can seldom be borrowed from old radio jingles or sweet products that have long since gone off the shelf. While past studies have shown that nostalgia contributes to feelings of safety and connectedness for older adults (Fleury, Sedikides, Wildschut, Coon, & Komenich, 2022) and can buffer against threatening wellbeing when dealing with a shrinking time horizon (Hepper et al., 2021), it remains untested whether nostalgia

marketing in general (or nostalgia marketing in particular) is beneficial to wellbeing in a semi-urban, culturally different setting like Rajasthan, India.

As for the context of this question, in Rajasthan older adults are more often than not part of the household family and have a central place in the extended family, but also live in an environment where retro is a growing form of digital advertising. This is both an academic and practical question as to whether this type of marketing is indeed effective at enhancing the life satisfaction of older Rajasthani consumers or just a good sales tactic without any underlying psychological gain.

Thus, the three objectives of this study were to: (1) To examine the positive relationship between nostalgia proneness elicited by the nostalgia food marketing stimuli and life satisfaction among the older generation of the Rajasthani population (2) To study self-continuity in the relationship between the nostalgia marketing with food stimuli and satisfaction among older generation of the Rajasthani population.

2. Literature Review

Research on nostalgia has grown over time, and since the 1990s in particular, it has been used more and more in marketing and other fields of economics (Lasaleta et al., 2014). Scholars shows their interest to investigated the notion of nostalgia, its impacts, and influences in many facets and fields in the social sciences and humanities (Li et al., 2019).

The Greek words "nostos," which means to come home, and "algia," which denotes a painful state, are where the word nostalgia originates (Davis, 1979). This gives rise to the idea that nostalgia is an unpleasant feeling and a desire to go back home (Davis, 1979). Home is a crucial component that is highlighted by many, particularly in relation to family and friends.

Nostalgia is an age-old idea in spere of marketing that has developed over time. Nostalgia origins from Greek word nostos back home and algo means discomfort grief. It was first described by Swiss doctor Johannes Hofer in 70s (Wilson,) the meaning of this modest term is different languages as in German heimweh, English homesickness, French maladie du pays (Hoffman & Senter 1978). Nostalgia is not mere past rather a crepuscular notion (Davis,1979). Two types of nostalgia restorative & reflective by Pierre Nora (Lieux de memoire). This word was first used in medical domain. The thoughts activated by our inner memory which can linked to different product. A repeated memory of individual past has no fringe it always resides in their heart. But sometime when it negatively impacts someone then it's a matter of concern. its depiction of the long reach of grief and the insistence of memory has always felt timeless to the receptor. Everyone experiences nostalgia, regardless of their age, gender, social class, race, or membership in other social groups. Reliving one's past is a self-relevant emotion known as nostalgia (Sedikides et al., 2004)

Nostalgia (Holbrook, 1993) is a bittersweet yearning for the past, which is warm and somewhat sentimental, but at the same time, it has a significant and important quality. If a product or advertisement evokes such a feeling, Holbrook and Schindler (2003) showed that it leads to a "nostalgic bonding"-a bond that beyond mere preference for a brand. Nostalgia researchers have noted the difference between nostalgia as an ephemeral emotional response to a specific cue and nostalgia proneness as a more stable individual disposition to experiencing nostalgia in marketing.

In previous research, nostalgia has a significant role, especially regarding the psychological functions (e.g., self-continuity restoration) of nostalgic experience, which is the sense of continuity between past and present self (Sedikides et al. 2015). This factor is crucial for the well-being of individuals. The role of nostalgia as a psychological protective barrier to the older adult's recognition of his or her finite life span is addressed by Hepper et al. (2021). In 2022, Fleury and her colleagues carried out a follow-up study and showed that nostalgia is associated with "feeling safe" in healthy ageing, which in turn has a positive effect on emotional (and even cognitive!) functioning in later life.

3.1 Nostalgia Marketing

In recent studies of consumer behaviour conducted recently continue to validate the effectiveness of the brand or product-related stimuli developed around the nostalgic properties of a brand and a product in eliciting individual differences in nostalgia proneness. Volpert and Michel (2022) conducted a pair of controlled experiments to test the hypotheses that utilitarian brands with resurrected brand narratives that include references to the history of the brand would generate more positive consumer responses than those that contain only present-oriented elements in their brand narratives, and that the effect would be mediated by consumers' own brand nostalgia. This discovery suggests that the response of the consumer to a marketing message that is clearly constructed by invoking consumers' past-oriented cues is significantly influenced by the level of past-oriented cues required by the individual consumer: marked by a positive pathway between the stimulus to the pronouns. Supporting evidence is provided by Zhang and Tao (2022) who conducted a study on online marketing contexts and how they relate to consumers' nostalgic feelings and their downstream outcomes for consumer-brand relationships; their findings suggest that the relationship between online marketing context and consumers' nostalgic feelings is mediated by their nostalgia proneness, such that the nostalgic feelings elicited by the marketing context correlates more strongly with the downstream consumer-brand relationship outcomes when consumers are higher in nostalgia proneness (when controlling for the proneness itself as a covariate). The two studies come to the same conclusion; namely that there is a positive relationship between nostalgia-related marketing stimuli and consumers' nostalgia proneness, which would be expected to extend to older populations with longer life histories, like those living in Rajasthan who might have more materials to draw upon in their lives to be tied to a marketing stimulus invoking their feelings of nostalgia (Volpert & Michel, 2022; Zhang & Tao, 2022)

Most foundational nostalgia marketing scales were developed in Western, individualist markets, raising questions about their applicability elsewhere. Jain, Merchant, Roy, and Ford (2019) addressed this by developing an emic (culturally-specific) scale to measure ad-evoked nostalgia in India, identifying five dimensions past imagery, physiological reactions, positive emotions, negative emotions, and collective nostalgia. Their work suggests that collective, family-oriented nostalgia may carry distinct weight in the Indian context compared with the individually-oriented nostalgia captured by Western scales, which is directly relevant to a state like Rajasthan where family and community identity remain culturally central.

3.2 Nostalgia and Self-continuity

In few researches provide evidence has established the link between the nostalgia marketing stimulus and self-continuity. In a PRISMA style model systematic review of the literature on nostalgia in advertising, Srivastava, Sivakumaran, Maheswarappa, and Paul (2022) given there are four thematic categories emerged as underlying dimensions of effective nostalgia advertisement appeals, of which one is self-restoration and continuity, while apart from these two factors are culture and social relationship. From their synthesis, they infer that nostalgic ad appeals that have a bittersweet tone and highlight the attractiveness of and longing for the past act, in part, by restoring consumers' sense of a continuous identity that connects their past and present selves; and that enhancing the continuity-restoring properties of these ads is one of the key mechanisms by which nostalgic advertising is known to produce changes in brand attitudes and purchase-related outcomes. Given that this continuity theme emerged from a collection of the empirical nostalgia-advertisement literature, it was expected that nostalgia marketing appeals to consumers that evoke the older generation, who have a much longer personal timeline to evoke with such appeals, would be positively linked to increased self-continuity (Srivastava et al., 2022) last hypothesis are based on evidence based idea, nostalgia and self-continuity are sources of wellbeing. Specifically when individuals growing older. Perhaps related and more directly relevant is a multi-study investigation of adult lifespan by Hepper, Wildschut, Sedikides, Robertson, and Routledge (2021) who found that when people in the older generation

perceived a decrease in their time horizon, they had a greater nostalgic tendency, which in turn led to greater psychological well-being, when compared with the well-being costs that are typically associated with aging. There are two similar study, where researchers explored the differences in the levels of self-sufficiency and life satisfaction between Canadian and Chinese populations with different ages by Ji, Imtiaz, Su, Zhang, Bowie, and Chang (2022). Findings suggested older and adults are more satisfied & self-sufficient then younger generation.

3.3 Nostalgia and Life-satisfaction

There is different but similar trend of research has examined nostalgia's marketing with direct relationship with subjective wellbeing. Li et al. (2023), conducted a experimental research in which they explore how nostalgia positively effects emotional and cognitive elements of subjective well-being of individuals. This is also relevant in context with life satisfaction. This specially operates in the enhanced gratitude state of mind. When fond memories made people appreciative of what they are having at this stage. Wulf et al., (2022) during outbreak of covid 19 in the moment of stress wellbeing of individuals positively associated along with nostalgic theme media. Clinical and gerontological research offers further support for a genuine causal link between nostalgic reflection and life satisfaction among older adults specifically. Aydogdu, Tastan, and Kublay (2023) conducted a randomised controlled trial of instrumental reminiscence therapy -- a structured, nostalgia-based intervention grounded in Roy's adaptation model -- and found that it produced measurable increases in life satisfaction and happiness among older participants. While this was a therapeutic intervention rather than a marketing stimulus, it lends credibility to the idea that a deliberately designed nostalgic experience can meaningfully shift an older person's reported life satisfaction, which is the central premise this study seeks to test in a marketing context.

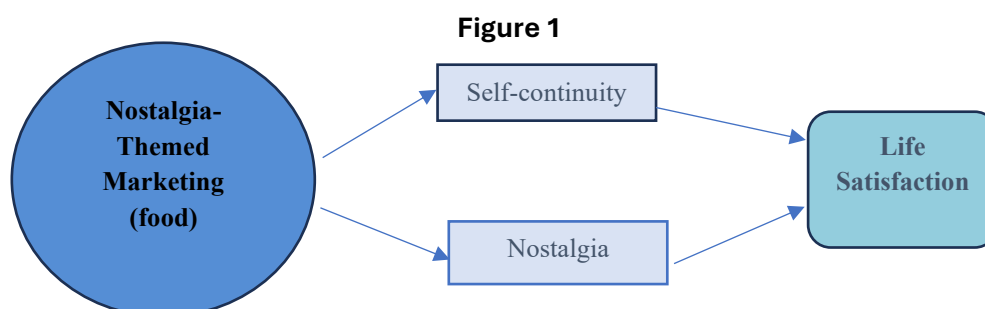
4. Hypothesis

On the basis of this literature, we framed following hypothesis.

- H1: Nostalgia marketing stimuli is positively associated with nostalgia proneness among older-generation consumers in Rajasthan.
- H2: Nostalgia marketing stimuli is positively associated with self-continuity among older-generation consumers in Rajasthan.
- H3: Nostalgia proneness is positively associated with life satisfaction among older-generation consumers in Rajasthan.
- H4: Self-continuity is positively associated with life satisfaction among older-generation consumers in Rajasthan.

5. Research Framework of Study

This research is based on the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), self-continuity and nostalgia theory. This model can be explained as shown in Figure 1, (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974), which is based on the external stimuli (S) processed by internal state (o) and then produces behavioural responses (R). In the model proposed here, nostalgia-related marketing stimuli, such as nostalgia-packed packaging, nostalgia advertising campaigns, or nostalgia-related references to previous decades, are used as stimuli (S). The



latter is a nostalgic marketing that also works, partially, by reinforcing a sense of belonging to an in-group of a generation or region, as proposed by Tajfel and Turner's (1979) social identity theory, which was also used by Sedikides et al. (2015). It should be noted that the resulting response (R) in this study is life satisfaction, and not purchase intention as is usually the case in nostalgia food marketing research, as it is in this study that the psychology of wellbeing response is studied.

6. Research Methodology

This study used with a quantitative method of research design, with cross sectional survey design. The older generation cohort (50–59 years) was targeted and structured questionnaires were used to collect primary data from 136 persons from urban and semi-urban areas in Rajasthan with the help of the researcher and with assistance in the online and offline form. Purposive and convenience sampling methods were employed to make sure that all respondents were in the age range of the older generation.

There are 136 respondents used in this study. The total sample consists of 60% females (n=82) and 40% males (n=54). Most of them of the respondents were married and from the state of Rajasthan. The females were all homemakers who were not working and the males were all working professionals (either employed or retired). Respondents' age varied between 60 and 85 years with a mean age of 68.3 years.

6.1 Scale Measures

Nostalgia proneness was measured using items adapted from Holbrook's (1993) nostalgia scale from Southampton Nostalgia Scale (Thomson et al., 2005), India-specific emic scale to better capture culturally relevant dimensions. Self-continuity was assessed using items adapted from Sedikides et al. (2015) framework. Life satisfaction, the study's primary response (R) variable, was measured using a well-established satisfaction-with-life measure consistent with that used in prior nostalgia-wellbeing research, for life satisfaction uses Diener et al. (1985) Satisfaction with Life Scale. All items were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

6.2 Data Analysis Plan

Descriptive statistics were used to summarise the demographic profile of the sample. Cronbach's alpha was calculated to assess the internal consistency of each scale, with 0.70 treated as an acceptable threshold.

6.3 Descriptive Analysis

In Table -1 the construct-level represent all descriptive statistics. There are four constructs like Nostalgia marketing (NM), Self continuity, Nostalgia Proneness (NP), and Life Satisfaction (LS) -- were measured on a five-point Likert scale and showed means clustering near the scale midpoint (range: 2.61-2.72), with standard deviations between 0.91 and 1.03, indicating reasonable variability in responses across the sample.

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis

Construct	No. of Items	Mean	SD
Nostalgia Marketing (NM)	4	2.61	1.01
Self-Continuity (SC)	4	2.71	0.96
Nostalgia Proneness (NP)	4	2.72	0.91
Life Satisfaction (LS)	3	2.65	1.03

6.4 Assessment of measurement Model

The assessment of the measurement model was check by using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Table 2, represents all standardized factor loadings exceeded the recommended threshold of .60 (range: .627-.874), supporting item-level validity. All constructs demonstrated acceptable internal consistency (Cronbachs alpha ranging from .834 to .848 and composite reliabilities (CR) ranging from .836 to .850), with values both above .70. Average variance

extracted (AVE) ranged from .564 to .633, all above the .50 it was all construct having required convergent validity by Fornell and Larcker (1981).

Table 2: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Construct	Item	Std. Loading	Alpha	CR	AVE
Nostalgia Marketing	NM1	.874	.837	.836	.564
	NM2	.712			
	NM3	.627			
	NM4	.769			
Self Continuity	SC1	.737	.848	.850	.587
	SC2	.779			
	SC3	.785			
	SC4	.762			
Nostalgia Proneness	NP1	.854	.838	.841	.572
	NP2	.702			
	NP3	.745			
	NP4	.713			
Life Satisfaction	LS1	.817	.834	.837	.633
	LS2	.734			
	LS3	.831			

6.5 Discriminant validity based on Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Table 3 presents the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) values used to assess discriminant validity among the latent constructs in the model. Discriminant validity ensures that each construct is conceptually and statistically distinct from others. According to Henseler et al. (2015), HTMT values below 0.85 indicate acceptable discriminant validity. In this study, all HTMT values fall below the 0.85 threshold, HTMT ratios range from .156 to .612.

6. Discussion

On the basis of the last result, the result is proved to be true and the hypotheses are developed during study and assessment inspection is conducted. The model S-O -R is instead applied to psychological health and wellbeing, that has not

been much examined in the sphere of nostalgia marketing research. They would also question the concept that “nostalgia food marketing” extends beyond brand attitude and buying, but also effects on the life satisfaction of older consumers identified in clinical studies that show nostalgia reminiscing can impact on the life satisfaction of older adults (Aydogdu et al., 2023).

A significant mediation effect through self-continuity would support the theoretical account offered by Sedikides et al. (2015) and extend it into a marketing context: nostalgic food advertisements may work not simply by making a brand feel familiar, but by helping older consumers feel that their past and present selves remain meaningfully connected. Similarly, if collective or family-oriented nostalgia items (adapted from Jain et al., 2019) prove especially strong predictors, this would support the idea that nostalgia operates somewhat differently in Rajasthan's family-centred, collectivist cultural context than in the more individually-oriented Western contexts where much of the foundational literature originates.

In the course of study, we observed that there are distinguishable differences between employed and unemployed male and female in the group, in Rajasthan. We end this discussion

Table 3: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio

	NM	SI	NP	LS
NM	-			
SC	.177	-		
NP	.156	.184	-	
LS	.612	.282	.270	-

by proposing that the role of the household does not only affect daily life experiences with food nostalgia, but also its impact on general life satisfaction.

7. Limitations and Future Scope

There are several limitations encounters during current study that should be taken into account. First, the data collected for the current research is limited to older generation cohort of Rajasthani consumers with reference to their life-satisfaction with food. Although, it would limit the variability and generalisability of the results. Second, to understand the general aspect of consumer satisfaction in food with longitudinal design would be better. Mostly, it will be best to learn about the impact of nostalgic proneness and nostalgic theme marketing in food consumption pattern in satisfying them over the long term. Third, the study is based on self-reported data collected using structured questionnaires that can cause bias, for example, social desirability. Finally, nostalgia is dealt with in a generalized way in the study, not specifically highlighting different types of nostalgia (i.e., personal nostalgia, Historical nostalgia, cultural and vicarious nostalgia) and no focus is placed on the effect of the nostalgia with food on different generations cohort in Rajasthan which may produce different behavioural outcomes.

Based on this research, it has established a preliminary and basic framework of the understanding of the behavioural aspect of nostalgia marketing in food. Looking at the practical side of the research, it will be suggested that companies should use nostalgic or retro theme marketing campaigns in food products, targeting older age group. Not only the consumers of Rajasthan, they also obtaining significant value in psychological and commercial aspect. Nostalgia should be taken to be communicating tool at companies. The future directions for research in studying the concept of food nostalgia will be aimed at studying the concept with a different generation. The same research will be repeated at other geographies and additional researcher will conduct the study using longitudinal research design. ■

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