

Chung, Hyunseung

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What Kind of Product Does the Person Who Feel Nostalgia Buy? Examine the Effect of Product Types

Hyun Seung Chung[†]

Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Business, Yonsei University, Seoul, Republic of Korea

ABSTRACT

Recently in Korea, retro style is all the vogue. The retro style began with Korean soap operas, movies, and many of famous TV shows and now it has a positive effect overall in Korea trend. Result from this trend, a lot of brands, products, and fashion which were caught on the past are enjoying a renaissance, and the people who pursue the retro style are seen at various ages. This retro style can be explained as 'nostalgia'. Nostalgia can arouse positive emotions than negative emotions and people would recall that the past experiences were warm enough because of these positive emotions. Therefore, Nostalgia is an effective marketing strategy to induce positive responses by evoke positive emotions of consumers. On marketing field, there are many researches that focus on the various effect of nostalgia. However, existing studies have been limited to past products causing the Nostalgia, and the product itself has not been considered in various aspects. Especially, there are little researches on the types of products that affect attitude changes and purchase intention in the role of nostalgia. Therefore, this study aims to provide the theoretical and practical implications to search for what types of products that consumers want to purchase according to the type of product when the nostalgia is evoked. This research is composed of one experiment and the study and 67 undergraduates at the university in Korea and 48 participants on online survey are took part in. This study is designed by 2X2 factorial design (nostalgia and types of product). Participants were given each scenario that nostalgia situation and control situation, and show each types of product (based of goods vs based of experience) checked purchase intention and wrote amount of money that willing to pay. To test this study, I use t-test, ANOVA, and Process Modeling to analyze. The result of manipulation check was good enough and the main effect show that consumers in the context of nostalgia are more likely to purchase. Finally, the interaction effect of nostalgia and types of products shows that consumers with nostalgia were more likely to purchase experience based products than just product based ones. As in previous studies, this study also found that nostalgia increases purchase intentions. It seems that nostalgia has raised consumers' purchasing intentions by reminding them of past positive recall. And experience based products increased consumers' purchasing intention more than product based one. In other words, it would be more effective to promote products based on experience (travel, events, etc.) through advertising with nostalgic effects.

Keywords: Nostalgia, Experience based, Product based, Purchase intention

I . Introduction

A prominent form of fashion in South Korean society in the past few years has been retro. The phenomenon of retro fashion emerged when a few famous dramas were broadcasted on television, achieved high ratings, and, in turn, caused a sensation in South Korea. Amid the resurgence of themes and imagery from films released in the 1980s and 1990s, such television programs produced explosive responses by using and recreating similar themes and imagery. Under the same influence, bars in the style of rock cafes from the 1990s also became very popular, as did music and films from the era, even among consumers who had not lived through that decade. At the same time, diverse brands have recently become popular again in South Korea due to the retro trend. However, the trend represents not only an outgrowth of fashions from the past but also their applications that have been broadly defined in various eras.

From an academic standpoint, the concept of retro fashion can be explained as nostalgia. According to Holbrook and Schindler (2003), nostalgia refers to a person's preference for the past informed by his or her past experiences, especially during childhood and adolescence, that can persist throughout his or her life. Such preferences are influenced by various cultural products, including music, films, television dramas, food, and clothing, and act as a psychological mechanism or driving force for attitudes that influence preferences and purchase decisions, among other things. Nostalgia necessarily evokes positive instead of negative emotions by reminding people that their past experiences were also positive, if not better than their more recent experiences (Havlena & Holak, 1991). Thus, nostalgia can be used as an effective marketing strategy to induce positive reactions in consumers by appealing to their emotional states.

Although numerous marketing studies have been conducted to identify the effects of various forms of nostalgia, they have been limited in scope to past products that cause nostalgia, and various aspects of the products themselves have not been considered.

In particular, research on the types of products that affect attitudinal change and purchase intentions mediated by nostalgia has been scarce. In response, the aim of my study was to pinpoint which types of products consumers want to purchase under the influence of nostalgia, as well as to describe the theoretical and practical implications of the findings.

II . Literature review and hypotheses

A. Nostalgia

People develop emotional states characterized by nostalgia when they desire the future world to reflect the past and want to avoid the present. The “emotional aspiration for the past, past related activities, [and a] preference for ownership” can be explained by nostalgia (Holbrook, 1993). By comparison, Davis (1979) has defined nostalgia as “positively thinking of the past” in which individuals believe “that everything was better than it is now, based on negative feelings about the present and the future.”

Nostalgia includes positive feelings-warmth, comfort, joy, and gratitude, among others-as well as negative emotions such as sadness and a sense of the loss of the past. As such, nostalgia has a bittersweet nature in which both positive and negative emotions coexist. However, because positive emotions generated by recalling the past are comforting in the present, negative emotions felt during nostalgic experiences are suppressed in favor of positive ones (Naughton & Vlasic, 1998). In that sense, a nostalgic individual tends to selectively reinterpret elements of the past as being positive via the filter of positive emotions, which is the major positive effect of nostalgia (Belk, 1991; Holak & Havlena, 1998).

Nostalgia emerges due to various factors. At the individual level, psychological factors of nostalgia include frustration and loneliness (Wildschut et al., 2006), as well as memories of the past compared to memories of more recent times (Holak & Havlena, 1992). When people remember special moments that

they spent with others close to them, they gain a sense of empowerment that prompts a sense of psychological stability and mental tranquility (Mikulincer et al., 2003). Nostalgia thus reduces anxiety and avoidance in interpersonal relationships (Routledge et al., 2011; Zhou et al., 2008).

In recent years, consumers have tended to prefer nostalgic brands and advertisements as a way to reduce their anxiety caused by financial challenges (Loveland et al., 2010). In that dynamic, the preference for aspects of childhood, especially when bonds with past others were strong, affect consumers' preferences and consumption patterns, particularly when it comes to automobiles, movies, and music (Sedikides et al., 2006). Experiences with consumption based on nostalgia have also been categorized in various ways (Holbrook & Schindler, 2003).

Holbrook and Schindler (2003) have also found that the stronger the sense of nostalgia, the higher the desire for a sense of belonging (Loveland et al., 2010), which promotes positive consumption preferences. Of course, that dynamic is influenced by a variety of individual traits, including consumer self-concept (Davis, 1979), perception of social cohesion (Wildschut et al., 2010), assumed meaning of life (Routledge et al., 2011), memories, and other psychological characteristics identified to affect XXXX.

B. Experience- versus product-based nostalgia and consumption

The preference for nostalgia-oriented brands and products varies according to individual characteristics. Researchers have found that higher the preference based on nostalgia (Schindler & Holbrook, 2003), the higher the person's age (Holbrook, 1993), the stronger his or her sense of belonging due to nostalgia (Wildschut et al., 2006), and the stronger his or her preference for nostalgia-oriented brands and products. In that way, nostalgia indeed influences consumer behavior (Muehling & Sprott, 2004).

The function of the social aspect of nostalgia is to restore social connectedness undermined or

weakened in various ways in modern society. Nostalgia gives individuals a sense of positive connection and social bonding in their current social relationships by recalling meaningful relationships from the past. Individuals who experience nostalgia feel less lonely because of those increased social connections (Zhou, Sedikides, Wildschut, & Gao, 2008). In short, strengthening social connections is an inevitable psychological function of nostalgia (Wildschut, Sedikides, Routledge, Arndt, & Cordaro, 2010).

Lasaleta, Sedikides, and Vohs (2014) have also identified social connections as an important outcome variable of nostalgia. According to their results, people who felt nostalgia had an increased sense of social connection and lower perceived value of money than those who did not. As a result, those authors concluded that nostalgia lowers people's desire for money, motivation to pursue money, and sensitivity to price, whereas their willingness to pay increases. Following the same logic, I first hypothesized that:

H1: Consumers with nostalgia are more likely to make purchases than ones without nostalgia.

Most studies on nostalgia have focused on memory-based nostalgia, which is directly experienced by an individual. Nostalgia relies on memories based on personal experience; the stronger the past experience, the more memorable it becomes. The more important an individual's experience is, the higher the level of nostalgia will be (Baumgartener, 1992). Therefore, even if people remember the same past time, the strength of their nostalgia varies depending on their experiences with those times.

XXX also refers to the importance of experience in the study of human happiness. Customers can increase their happiness by making purchases to gain experience instead of buying material goods (Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003), which can be explained by the difference in time to have a hedonic response (Frederick & Loewenstein, 1999). The feeling of happiness upon purchasing a new item fades quickly, whereas the pleasure of an experience-based purchase lasts longer (Nicolao, Irwin, & Goodman, 2009). At the

same time, Nicolao et al. (2009) found that purchasing positive experiences differs from purchasing products and that such experiences linger in the consumer's memory such that, as time passes, any negative experience disappears in favor of more positive ones. In that sense, purchasing experiences represents process consumption instead of simple consumption, the former of which emphasizes the consumption of time more than money and the participation in experiences more than ownership of materials (Lovelock, 1983). Based on that evidence, nostalgia, which is based on products present when nostalgia arises, is temporary such that memories will not outlast experience-based nostalgia. Moreover, nostalgia based on products will be less robust in terms of brand and product preferences or purchases than nostalgia based on experience. Because nostalgia affords a sense of social connectedness, it generates a greater preference for the experience of sharing memories with others than for products that can only be enjoyed alone. Based on that logic, I also hypothesized in Figure 1 that:

H2: Experience-based nostalgia induces a higher intention to make purchases than product-based nostalgia.

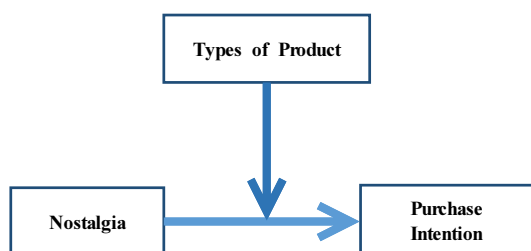


Figure 1. Research Model

III. Experiment

A. Method

This study examined whether experience-based nostalgia and product-based nostalgia affect product purchase. To do this, 48 participant conducted online

survey and 67 undergraduate students participated experiment. A total of 113 participants participated in the study. The participants were 2 × 2 with the nostalgic group, the control group, the experience base, and the product base. Experimental stimulation applied the method of previous research using Zhou et al. (2012). First, nostalgia should be presented with the following scenarios, followed by three emotional emotions.

“Bring to mind a nostalgic event in your life. Specifically, try to think of a past event that makes you feel most nostalgic. Take a few moments to think about the nostalgic event and how it makes you feel.”

On the contrary, the control group was made to think about ordinary everyday life, and this also wrote three words that came up after reading the scenario. The scenario of the control group is as follows.

“Bring to mind an ordinary event in your daily life—an event that took place in the last week. Take a few moments to think about the ordinary event and how it makes you feel.”

Later, I asked for purchase intentions to provide product photos and scenarios to explore experience-based nostalgia and product-based nostalgia. For the product photos and scenarios presented in this study, the manipulation check was carried out through a preliminary investigation, and for the preliminary investigation, two product and control groups were organized. Control groups were excluded from this experiment. This is because the purpose of this study is to explore the intent of purchasing control groups and those who feel nostalgia based on the characteristics of the products rather than comparing them. I also asked how much I would buy if I actually bought it. The stimuli used in this study were trips in the experience-driven nostalgia stimuli, and a bag in the product-based nostalgia stimuli. The reason for the select those stimuli was that most of the respondents had a lot of experience of traveling on train alone or with their friends during their childhood, and it was judged to be enough to recall nostalgia because particular bags were popular in certain ages. The stimuli used in this study are attached in ‘appendix

1'. After that, I inserted manipulation check items to see how much the nostalgia appeared and felt. Finally, I put a simple demographic question.

The average age of respondents was 24.15 years (at least 20 years old and up to 36 years old), 63 of whom were male and 70 were female.

This experiment used 3 items for manipulation check which were made by Wildschut et al., (2006). Items were "Right now, I am feeling quite nostalgic"; "Right now, I am having nostalgic feelings"; and "I feel nostalgic at the moment" (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree; $\alpha = .896$). And using 4 items to complete purchase intention that composed of 'I am likely to purchase this product,' 'I am willing to buy this product,' 'I will try to purchase this product,' 'I will buy this product' (Spears et. al., 2004; $\alpha = .971$).

B. Result

1. Manipulation Check

The results of evaluating how respondents felt nostalgia to assess whether respondents met each condition showed that the groups that provided the nostalgic scenarios felt more nostalgia than the scenarios associated with everyday life. ($M_{nostalgia} = 4.67$ vs. $M_{control} = 3.54$; $t_{111} = 2.15$, $p < .05$). Therefore, it was confirmed that the manipulation of nostalgia, which is the subject of this study, was appropriate. In addition, a preliminary study to identify the characteristics of a product showed that products with a sense of nostalgia felt more than a control group ($M_{experience} = 5.16$ vs. $M_{product} = 4.31$ vs $M_{control} = 2.14$; $t = 2.94$, $p < .01$).

Hypothesis 1 predicted that consumers who have Nostalgia are more likely to purchase than those who do not. And hypothesis 2 predicted that experience-based nostalgia would be more likely to purchase than product-based nostalgia. In order to verify hypothesis 1, ANOVA was conducted in the experiment with nostalgia expression (nostalgia expression versus control) as an independent variable and purchase intention as a dependent variable. As a result of hypothesis 1,

nostalgia was higher than the control group ($M_{nostalgia} = 3.73$ (.50) vs. $M_{control} = 2.91$ (.31); $F = 7.204$, $P < .001$) in Figure 2. Therefore, hypothesis 1 was supported.

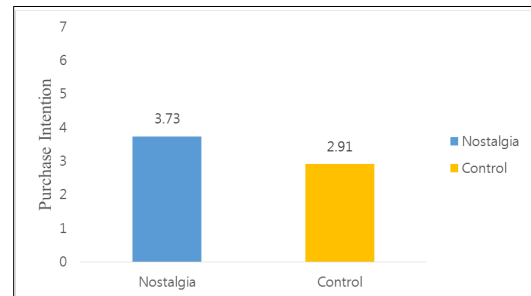


Figure 2. Result of nostalgia expression and purchase intention

In order to test the second hypothesis, two-way ANOVA with nostalgia expression (nostalgia expression versus control) and product type (experience-based versus product-based) as independent variables and purchase intention as a dependent variable. The results of the analysis in Figure 3 show that the nostalgia based on the product has little effect on the purchase intention ($M_{nostalgia} = 2.00$ (.58) vs. $M_{control} = 2.22$ (.34); $F = .113$, $P = .744$). In addition, the effect of nostalgia based on experience was not significant on purchase intention ($M_{nostalgia} = 4.46$ (.43) vs. $M_{control} = 3.59$ (.39); $F = 2.26$, $P = .157$). However, in the case of nostalgia, experience-based averages were higher than those based on products, and there was no significant difference in the control group. Therefore, the interaction effect between nostalgia

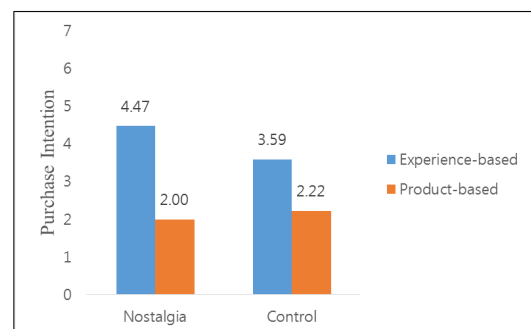


Figure 3. Interaction effect

and product type was significant, and hypothesis 2 was supported ($F = 7.29$, $p < .001$)

IV. Discussion

In the study, two hypotheses were formulated, and an experiment was conducted. All of the hypotheses found support, and based on the results of the study, it is likely that products based on experience instead of products that are simply nostalgic, fashionable retro products, or fashionable items can be more favorable to consumers. Those results imply that advertisements with nostalgia-inducing effects for products based on experience (e.g., travel and events) and the development of products that cause nostalgia can encourage consumers to make more purchases. In the experiment, when asked about how much they would spend on purchases, respondents' average reply for experience-based products was ₩48,253 (~ US \$42.61) and for product-based products was ₩27,181 (~ \$24.00), and the difference between the two averages (₩39,339 or ~ \$34.74) was significant ($T_{111} = 1,432$).

Unlike previous studies, my study was not based on products or behavior in response to nostalgia. The findings revealed that respondents have greater purchase intentions toward experience-based products than product-based ones, which constitutes a dynamic not previously revealed by researchers.

The results of this study also show that the more granular the product is, the more useful it can be. Currently, retro is in vogue all over the world. Therefore, if the product is also subdivided according to the characteristics of the consumers who purchase the product, the customer's satisfaction will be sufficiently enhanced. In addition, it is believed that young consumers who have not experienced retro experience can appeal not only to older consumers but also to younger consumers if they set a segment of the product as a segment of new consumers.

In interpreting those implications, readers should observe the following limitations of the study. First,

although scholars have shown that nostalgia increases with age, my respondents were all in their early-20s to mid-30s. Therefore, it is necessary to test my hypotheses in more age-diverse samples. Moreover, the stimuli used were products geared toward affecting people in their early-20s to mid-30s. Therefore, it is also necessary to consider product-based stimuli that might affect a wider range of age groups.

Second, according to Baumgartner (1992), nostalgia can be classified as experiential nostalgia or vicarious nostalgia. Accordingly, it is necessary for researchers to distinguish nostalgia according to its elements and to determine which types of product are preferable to consumers under the influence of nostalgia.

Last, based on previous studies, scholars have argued that preference for products is increased due to positive emotions when nostalgia expressed. However, most such studies have been conducted with XXX-based products instead of experience-based ones. In response, it is necessary for researchers to examine whether nostalgia influences purchase intentions due to genuine positive emotions, as well as to investigate what kinds of products alter consumers' emotional states and affects their intention to purchase those products.

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Appendix I

Nostalgia stimuli



The bag used in high school students in the 90s' drama. JANSPORE with me during my school days. Because the past is so precious. I miss those days.



My old friend, who was on a train with my old friend during my school days, is invaluable, so I take a train with my friend and go on a trip again.

Control stimuli



The 'superbreak' which can be called icon bag of sports is a simple and casual design and various colors are developed so that both men and women can choose the color that suits their taste,



Where I wanted to go quietly alone, I leave by train alone. To make more memories.