

What kind of product does the person who feels Nostalgia buy? Examine the effect of product types

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

1. Introduction

The fashion that has been prominent in Korean society since the last few years is retro. This

phenomenon started with some of famous dramas were broadcasted with high ratings, causing a retro hot wind in Korean society. Also, themes of 1980s' and 1990s' films were popular in Korea these day. TV programs show also produced explosive responses by creating and planning images in the 1980s' and 1990's. Due to these influences, bars in the style of rock cafe in the 90 's became very popular, and music and films in the 90' s got good response even in the 90 's who had not experienced the 90' s many times. Not only that, but also the diverse brands that have recently become very popular in Korea are in the second episode due to this retro trend. Such a retrospective is not merely an outgrowth of old fashioned past, but its application can be broadly defined in various ages.

The concept of retro can be explained academically as nostalgia. According to Holbrook and Schindler (2003), the nostalgia is a preference formed by the experiences of people in the past, especially in childhood and adolescence, and the preferences thus formed persist throughout a person's lifetime. These preferences are influenced by various cultures and products such as music, movies, drama, food, fashion, and act as a psychological mechanism or motive force for attitude (preference, purchase, etc.) of products and brands. Nostalgia also evokes positive emotions rather than negative emotions, reminding them that past experiences were warm and good (Havlena & Holak, 1991). Thus, nostalgia can be used as an effective marketing strategy to induce a positive reaction by causing a positive emotion of consumers.

Many researches have been carried out in the field of marketing focusing on the effects of various nostalgia. However, existing studies have been limited to past products causing nostalgia, and the product itself was not considered in various aspects. Especially, it seems that there is little research on the types of products that affect attitude change and purchase intention in the role of nostalgia. Therefore, this study attempts to find out what kinds of products consumers want to purchase according to the type of product when Nostalgia, which was not understood by existing researches, manifests, and provides theoretical and practical implications.

2. Literature review and hypotheses

2.1. Nostalgia

People appear in an emotional state where they want to see the world they want in the future in the light of the past, and to avoid the present. This 'emotional aspiration for the past, past related activities, preference for ownership' is explained in nostalgia (Holbrook, 1993). In a similar context, Davis (1979) argued that Defining the Nostalgia as " positively thinking of the past where he lived by believing 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, gratitude, etc.) as well as negative emotions (sadness, loss, etc.) about the past that have passed and gone. In other words, it has a bittersweet attribute where both positive emotions and negative emotions exist at the same time. However, since the positive emotions generated by recalling the past are comforting the present, negative emotions are suppressed and positive feelings emerge (Naughton & Vlasic, 1998). In other words, the individual tends to selectively re-interpret positive elements through a positive emotional filter, which is a positive effect of nostalgia (Belk 1991; Holak and Havlena 1998).

Such nostalgia is caused by various causes. The psychological factors of individuals are frustration and loneliness (Wildschut et al., 2006). Another cause is the past memories with the close ones (Holak & Havlena 1992). Especially when people remember memories that they have spent special moments with close people, a sense of empowerment leads to a sense of psychological stability and mental tranquility (Mikulincer et al., 2003). The effect of this nostalgia is to reduce anxiety and avoidance in interpersonal relationships. (Routledge et al., 2011; Zhou et al., 2008).

In recent years, there has been a tendency to prefer nostalgic brands and advertisements as a way to reduce the anxious feelings caused by economic difficulties (Loveland et al., 2010), and the preference for childhood, especially when the bond with others is strong automobiles, movies, and music affect consumers' preferences and consumption patterns (Sedikides et al., 2006). In addition, consumption experience through the nostalgia has been shown to be categorized in various ways (Holbrook & Schindler, 2003).

In addition, Holbrook & Schindler (2003) found that the more nostalgic or stronger the emotions were, the higher the desire for belonging (Loveland et al., 2010). This leads to a positive consumption preference phenomenon. These backgrounds include a variety of personalities such as consumer self-concept (Davis, 1979), social cohesion (Wildschut et al., 2010), meaning of life (Routledge et al., 2011), memory, psychological characteristics have been identified as affecting.

2.2. Experience-based nostalgia (experience goods) and product-based nostalgia (consumption goods)

The preference for Nostalgia brands and products varies according to individual characteristics. It was found that the higher the preference for nostalgia (Schindler and Holbrook 2003), the higher age (Holbrook 1993), the stronger sense of belonging to nostalgia (Wildschut et al. 2006), the stronger the preference for Nostalgia brand or product. Thus, nostalgia influences consumer behavior (Muehling and Sprött 2004).

The function of the social side of the nostalgia is to restore the social connectedness that has been undermined or weakened in various ways in personalized modern society. Nostalgia gives me a sense of warm connection and social bonding to the social relationships that surround me now through recalling meaningful relationships of the past.

Individuals who experience nostalgia feel less lonely because of increased social connections (Zhou, Sedikides, Wildschut, and Gao, 2008). In sum, strengthening social connections is an inevitable psychological function of nostalgia (Wildschut, Sedikides, Routledge, Arndt, and Cordaro, 2010). The study of Lasaleta, Sedikides and Vohs (2014) also introduces social connections as an important outcome variable of the nostalgia. According to them, people who felt nostalgia increased their sense of social connection, lower the value of money than those who did not feel nostalgic perception. As a result, it is demonstrated that the desire for money is lowered, less effort is paid to pursue money, price sensitivity is lowered, or willingness to pay is higher. Based on this logic, I set the following hypothesis.

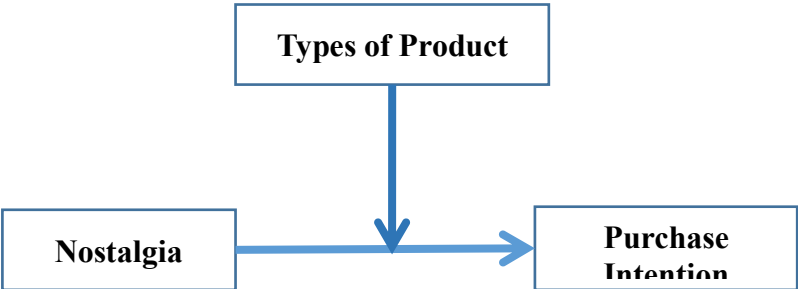
H1. Consumers with nostalgia are more likely to purchase than those who do not.

The majority of studies on nostalgia have focused on memory-based nostalgias, which have been directly experienced by the 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 you remember the same age, the strength of the Nostalgia felt by each person will naturally vary depending on how the individual's experience was at that time.

It also refers to the importance of experience in the study of human happiness. Customers can increase their happiness by purchasing experiences that they buy to gain experience instead of buying possessive material products (Van Boven and Gilovich, 2003). In other words, buying experience gives customers more happiness than purchasing products. The reason for this can be explained by the time difference that adapts to the hedonic response (Frederick and Loewenstein, 1999). The feeling of happiness when purchasing a new item adapts quickly as time goes by, but the pleasure adaptation for an experience purchase lasts longer than the purchase of the product (Nicolao, Irwin, and Goodman, 2009). Therefore, it has a long effect. In particular, in the study fo Nicolao et al. (2009), the positive experience is different from the purchase of the product, and it remains long in the customer's memory, and as the time goes by, the negative experience disappears and the more positive memory is saved emphasizing importance of experience. In other words, it is process consumption rather than simple consumption. This feature emphasizes the consumption of time more than money in empirical consumption, and emphasizes the part related to the time concept because it focuses on people who participate in experience rather than on property (Lovelock, 1983). Based on this evidence, nostalgia, which is also based on the product when the nostalgia is introduced, is temporary, so the memory will not last longer than the experience-based nostalgia. Also, Nostalgia based on products will be less favorable to brand and product preference or purchase than nostalgia based on experience. And since the nostalgia itself forms a social connection, it will give a greater preference to the experience of sharing memories with others, rather than products that can be enjoyed alone. Based on this logic, we set the following hypothesis.

H2. Experience-based nostalgia will have a higher intention to purchase than product-based nostalgia.

<Figure 1> Research Model



3. Experiment

3.1. Method

This study examined whether experience-based nostalgia and product-based nostalgia affect product purchase. To do this, 48 participants 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. 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; $\alpha = .971$).

3.2. Result

Manipulation Check.

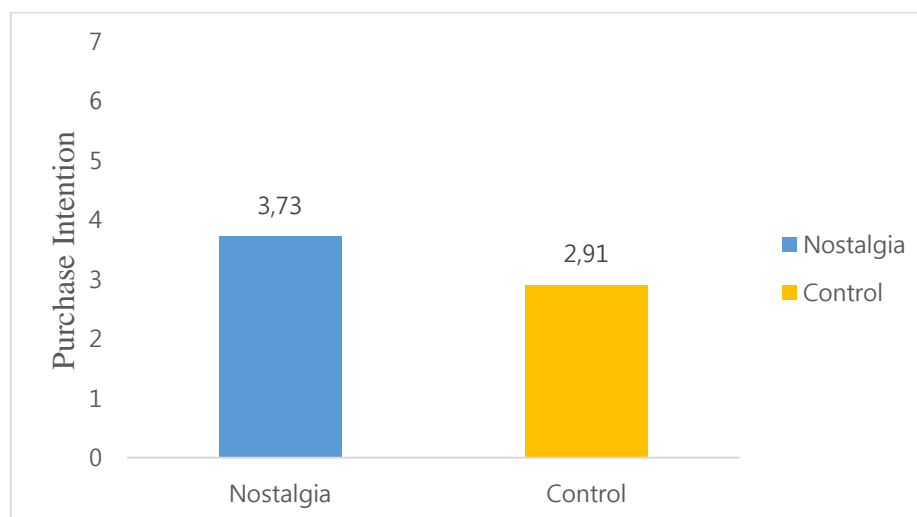
The results of evaluating how respondents felt nostalgia to assess whether respondents met each condition showed that the groups that provided the nostalgic scenarios felt more nostalgia than the scenarios associated with everyday life. ($M_{nostalgia} = 4.67$ vs. $M_{control} = 3.54$; $t_{111} = 2.15$,

$p < .05$). Therefore, it was confirmed that the manipulation of nostalgia, which is the subject of this study, was appropriate.

Intention to purchase.

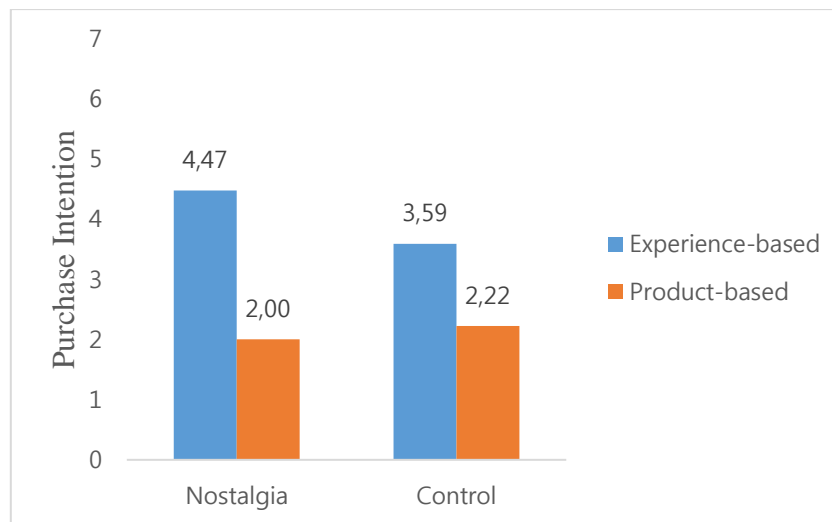
Hypothesis 1 predicted that consumers who have Nostalgia are more likely to purchase than those who do not. And hypothesis 2 predicted that experience-based nostalgia would be more likely to purchase than product-based nostalgia. In order to verify hypothesis 1, ANOVA was conducted in the experiment 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. $M_{control} = 2.91(.31)$; $F= 7.204$, $P < .001$). 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 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 and product type was significant, and hypothesis 2 was supported ($F = 7.29$, $p < .001$)

<Figure 3> Interaction effect



4. Discussion

In this study, two hypotheses were set and one experiment was conducted. And all the hypotheses were supported. Based on the results of this study, it is likely that products based on experience rather than products that are simply nostalgic, fashionable retro products, or fashion can be more favorable to consumers. In other words, if you show ads with Nostalgic effects on products based on experience (travels, events, etc.), or if you develop products that can bring about Nostalgia, consumers are likely to make more purchases. In the experiment conducted in this study, when asked about how much to purchase and how much to purchase, the experiential base was ₩48,253(≅ \$42.61), the product base was ₩ 27,181 (≅ \$24.00), and the difference between the two averages was significant ($T_{111} = 1,432$, average of ₩39,339 ≅ \$34.74 in total).

In addition, this study focuses differently from the previous studies. In previous studies, most of them have been based on the product, or have some behavior when simple nostalgia is expressed. In this study, however, it is found that the experience - based products have higher purchase intention than the product - based products. Therefore, this study showed a new viewpoint that has not been shown in previous studies.

Although this study implies the above implications, it has the following limitations at the same time. First of all, previous researches had shown that nostalgia is higher as age increases. However, this study was conducted only in the early-20s through mid-30s. Therefore, I think it is necessary to examine nostalgia for various ages. In addition, the stimuli used in this study were also set up with products that could affect the early-20s through mid-30s. Therefore, it is necessary to consider stimulant products in consideration of products that may affect various age groups.

Secondly, according to Baumgartner (1992), nostalgia is divided into experiential nostalgia and vicarious nostalgia. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out research to distinguish nostalgia as two sub-elements and to find out which type of product is preferable to consumers.

Finally, in previous studies argued that preference for products is increased due to positive emotions when nostalgia expressed. However, as mentioned earlier, previous studies have been conducted through product-based products rather than most experience-based ones. It is necessary to examine whether the nostalgia influences the purchase intention due to the genuine positive emotions, and it is necessary to investigate what kind of product changes to the emotional state and affects the purchase intention of the product.

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Appendix I

Nostalgia stimuli



The bag used in high school students in the 90s' drama. JANSPORT 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.