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Consumer-Brand Relationships: A Contrast of Nostalgic & Non-Nostalgic Brands

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ABSTRACT

This research examined how consumer brand relationships change when one contrasts brands perceived as nostalgic with brands perceived as non-nostalgic. Paired comparisons of brands in six product categories revealed that brand attachment, self-brand connections, and storytelling, as well as, the propensity to offer the brand as a gift and to collect brand-derived products, depend on the nostalgic status of the brand. On a sample of 606 consumers, the results showed that a brand's nostalgic status has a positive effect on attachment, self-brand connections and storytelling. These effects had not previously been considered in nostalgia research. Furthermore, the nostalgic status of a brand has positive effects in terms of intention to purchase the brand as a gift and to collect brand-derived products. Moreover, ANOVA results illustrate that consumer relationships with nostalgic brands are systematically stronger than with non-nostalgic brands. Finally, results indicated that product category moderates all of the dimensions of brand relationships while gender does not.

Keywords: nostalgia; nostalgic brands; consumer-brand relationships; self-brand connections; brand attachment; storytelling.

The nostalgic retro trend has become an international phenomenon and is affecting the entire marketing mix. In the food industry, for example, Cadbury has repackaged four children's brands to capture their parents' attention by using nostalgic appeals. In the cosmetics sector, l'Occitane-en-Provence relates "a true story" inspired by the founder's "childhood in Provence, who recreates the tradition of this region, after buying an old steam distiller, a relic from the past". In entertainment, the TV series *Mad Men* built a true success story based on the aesthetic and the fashion of the sixties, thereby creating a new vintage trend that inspired the most contemporary designers.

Brands also use nostalgic appeals to expand their target market and create a link between generations: "Kinder ... created for kids, ideal for everyone". The new Vespa, the new Mini, the new Beetle and the new Fiat 500 are redesigned to attract Baby Boomers and Generation Y (Brown, Kozinets, & Sherry, 2003). Similarly, a nostalgic atmosphere can be achieved through the interior design of retail outlets. This is the case of the Ralph Lauren boutiques, which reproduce an iconography of the past and play on the nostalgic and a romantic vision of the traditional elite's Anglo-Saxon home (Hetzl, 1998). Nostalgia is also present in virtual space. For example, Nutella has dedicated an Internet chat room for customers to share "childhood memories and good times". Ralph Lauren, in honor of its 40th anniversary, collected memories online of "the first polo shirt or the first suit worn at one's first job".

Nostalgia is widely used in marketing strategies, and three types of academic research are typically undertaken on this topic. Beginning with Holbrook (1990, 1993) and Holbrook and Schindler (1989, 1994, 1996, 2003), the first stream takes an interest in antecedents (age, gender and predisposition to nostalgia), in sensory stimuli (auditory, olfactory, taste and visual) (Batcho, 2007; Batcho et al., 2008) and in relationships with products or brands associated with nostalgia: consumption preferences, purchase intention and sensitivity to advertising (Merchant et al., 2013; Muehling & Pascal, 2011; Pascal, Sprout, & Muehling,

2002; Sierra & McQuitty, 2007; Stern, 1992). The second stream expands Sedikides' work on the psychological functions of nostalgia (Wildschut et al., 2006; Zhou et al., 2012) and on its antecedents, such as the need to belong seen as a psychological antecedent in terms of preference for nostalgic products (Loveland, Smeesters, & Mandel, 2010). A third stream of research develops scales to measure nostalgia proneness (Holbrook, 1993; Holbrook & Schindler, 1991).

However, as suggested by Muehling and Pascal (2011), research has yet to establish to what extent the relationships that consumers develop with brands that are considered nostalgic are stronger than the relationships that they have with brands that are not considered nostalgic. Therefore, the objective of this article is to answer the following question: What are the positive effects of the nostalgic status of a brand on consumer brand relationships? In particular, it investigates nostalgia-attachment links and it integrates new variables such as self-brand connections and storytelling about the brand, which have not previously been included in research on nostalgia. It also considers the intention to purchase the brand as a gift or to collect derived products from brands that evoke nostalgia for their managerial relevance. Moreover, in line with Muehling and Pascal (2011), it studies the moderating effects of product category and gender to answer the following question: When one compares a nostalgic brand with a non-nostalgic brand, to what extent do consumer brand relationships differ according to product category and gender? In this way, this article contributes to a deeper understanding of the links that consumers develop with (their) nostalgic brands.

The first section presents the conceptual background and the hypotheses related to the effects of brand perception – nostalgic compared with non-nostalgic – on consumer brand relationships and then discusses the expected moderating effects of product category and gender. The second section exposes the research design and data collection. The third section

follows with the results of the research obtained from a sample of 606 individuals. Finally, the conclusion stresses the contributions, limits and future research agenda.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

The aim of this research is to compare the strength of the relationships that consumers maintain with two types of brands in the same product category: those that evoke nostalgia and those that do not. These differentiation effects are tested in six product categories, based on a paired comparison of brands. First, the definitions of nostalgia in marketing and the definition of a “brand considered as nostalgic” are reviewed before justifying the variables used to measure consumer brand relationships in connection with nostalgia.

Nostalgia and Nostalgic Brands

At the end of the 17th century, the term nostalgia appeared in medical vocabulary (Hofer, 1688) to designate medical disease linked to “homesickness”. The modern definition of nostalgia in particular came from the reflections of Rousseau and Kant that consider nostalgia as a painful regret for the past. Finally, on the initiative of Davis (1979), the social sciences understood nostalgia as a way to preserve one’s identity when confronted with the major transitions in life.

Its integration into marketing research is more recent (Holbrook & Schindler, 1989) and corresponds to a postmodern concept of nostalgic and regressive consumers (Brown, Kozinets, & Sherry, 2003; Goulding, 1988). Several definitions have been proposed, but that of Holbrook and Schindler (1991, p. 330) has become the reference: “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)". According to this definition, Lambert-Pandraud and Laurent (2010) assert that similar nostalgic preferences for branded perfumes exist, conveyed when consumers were in their formative years, between the ages of 15 and 30.

Loveland, Smeesters and Mandel (2010, p. 393) define nostalgic brands as "brands that were popular in the past and are still popular now", and the non-nostalgic brands are defined as "brands that are popular now (but were less so in the past or did not exist in the past)". The perception of a brand as nostalgic highlights the tendency that consumers have to "materialize their memories". The transfer of an experience (intangible) to a brand (tangible) enables them to see a bygone period in their lives (Kessous & Roux, 2008). Nostalgia therefore contributes to maintaining interpersonal relationships and acts on two levels (Sedikides, Wildschut, & Baden, 2004; Wildschut et al., 2006): an abstract level, favoring the development of mental connections with people, now absent, but who had a particular importance in the past (Batcho, 2007), and a concrete level, expressed by particular attitudes and behaviors. From this literature review, one can define nostalgic brands as those preferred brands that were common (popular, fashionable, or widely circulated) when one was younger (in early adulthood, in adolescence and in childhood) and that are still popular and preferred by the respondent who maintains vivid memories of their helping him/her to retain strong links with his/her past.

This definition is in line with those of Holbrook and Schindler (1991), Loveland, Smeesters and Mandel (2010) as well as Lambert-Pandraud and Laurent (2010). For example, Loveland, Smeesters and Mandel (2010, p. 393) said "... when the goal of belonging is activated, individuals consistently show an increased preference for nostalgic products. Nostalgic recollections often involve interactions with close others and consuming former popular

brands can help individuals feel reconnected with important people from their past, with whom they consumed those brands”.

Next, the selected variables linked with nostalgia are presented below.

Brand Relationships Variables Linked to Nostalgia: Main Effects

Fournier’s contribution (1994) makes it possible to link attachment and nostalgic connections; the work of Escalas and Bettman (2003) highlights the importance of individual-brand connections in the construction of their identity. In particular, Escalas and Bettman (2003) emphasize that brands can be the vectors of social integration, by enabling one to connect with one’s own past. These two contributions justify upholding attachment and self-brand connections as relevant variables linked with nostalgic brands. This study also takes into account three behavioral consequences with managerial relevance, such as the propensity for gift-giving and storytelling, as well as brand-related object collections.

Attachment to a brand. The concept of attachment has been developed in social psychology to better understand interpersonal relationships (mother-child relationships, cf. Bowlby, 1969, 1982) and material relationships (individual-object relationships, cf. Baudrillard, 1968; Richins, 1994 a, b). Its transfer to marketing proceeds from the research of Fournier (1994), who considers that the brand, as a partner, has a particular meaning for the individual.

For Fournier (1994), nostalgic attachment is divided into two factors: the self-concept connection, which expresses the congruity among the past, present, real or ideal self-image and the image that he/she has of the brand; and the nostalgic connection, which corresponds to a transfer of an individual’s memories of the brand. These two factors, the self-concept connection and the nostalgic connection, are significantly correlated. There is also a

significant correlation between passionate attachment and nostalgic connection (Fournier, 1994). The self-concept connection and attachment are also very strongly associated and the more a brand approaches a consumer's real or desired image, the more the consumer tends to integrate it into his/her daily life. Fournier (1994) called for further studies to deepen the investigation of the relationships between these concepts. Moreover, recent research suggests that people are more personally attached to brands that remind them of past situations and experiences (Sultan, Muehling, & Sprott, 2010).

Therefore, one can advance the hypothesis of a positive link between brands considered as nostalgic and attachment, as stated by hypothesis **H1**:

H1: Consumer attachment to a brand is stronger for brands perceived as nostalgic, than for brands perceived as non-nostalgic.

Self-brand connections. Marketing stresses the relationships between possession research and self-concept connection research (Sirgy, 1982). Certain possessions re-establish the events and feelings that one experienced in the past (Belk, 1988, 1990). Other possessions have a transitional character that demonstrates an evolution in the identity of the individual (Myers, 1985). According to Sedikides et al. (2008), a key function of nostalgia is to facilitate the continuity between the self's past and present. Indeed, nostalgia makes it possible to bring positive past perceptions to the surface, favoring a reconnection with one's experience and contributing to one's feelings about the meaning of life (Routledge et al., 2008).

The link between nostalgic connections and the self has been highlighted in relationships with brands (Fournier, 1994, see above). Brands are considered as playing an important role in the process of constructing one's identity (Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 1998). Escalas and Bettman (2003) showed that self-brand connections originate from interpersonal relationships, the object being the construction and communication of an identity that corresponds to that of

the group. One can therefore suppose that brands evocative of nostalgia favor the development of stronger self-brand connections, which leads to hypothesis **H2**.

H2: Self-brand connections are stronger with brands perceived as nostalgic than with brands perceived as non-nostalgic.

Once the affective and identity anchoring of nostalgic brands is assessed, it is also important to establish the nostalgic effects at the behavioral levels. Managerial implications justify the choice of storytelling about the brand, the propensity to offer the brand as a gift and collecting derived products.

Behavioral Consequences Linked with Nostalgia: Main Effects

Storytelling about the brand. Since 2004, Nutella, for example, has dedicated a website to consumers to chat about shared emotions during “Nutella parties” (Cova & Pace, 2006). Ralph Lauren has a site that enables individuals to post stories about their memories of “the first polo shirt or the first suit worn to a first job”.

Marketing research also asserts the positive link between emotional consumption and word-of-mouth communications (Ladhari, 2007). Moore and Bowman (2006) and Moore, Wilkie and Lutz (2002) also suggested a positive relationship between trans-generational brands and word-of-mouth communications. Escalas (2004) and Delgado and Escalas (2004) showed that brands strongly associated with the self, allow consumers to generate narratives that provide meaning to their own personal histories. In the same vein, Batcho (2007, p. 363) stressed that nostalgia “facilitates or may be facilitated by the sense of connectedness to others” and strengthens community. This is consistent with the narrative theories of self. Wildschut et al., (2010) also suggested that nostalgia strengthens social connectedness. Finally, Woodside, Sood and Miller (2008) also advocated that storytelling “is

playful and a proper pleasure” for consumers, allowing them to re-experience meaningful episodes of their relationships with the brand. According to them, narrators particularly “enjoy the nostalgia of reliving earlier experiences” (p. 100).

When brands considered as nostalgic echo a personal story, they should therefore generate more storytelling, as stated by hypothesis **H3**.

H3: Storytelling is greater for brands perceived as nostalgic than for brands perceived as non-nostalgic.

The propensity to offer the brand as a gift. Beyond its monetary value, a gift has a particular affective and symbolic importance. It makes it possible to create and to maintain interpersonal relationships, as well as to mark life’s important events (Lowrey, Otnes, & Ruth, 2004; Mauss, 1925; Sherry, 1983). Anthropological approaches stress that the giver chooses the gift according to the significant properties that he/she wishes to transmit to the receiver, and according to the events that mark his/her own past in reference to the “good old days” (Sutton, 2008). This research establishes an explicit link with nostalgia. Such a link can also implicitly be found in analyses of the motivations for gift-giving, as a way to perpetuate the memory of a departed person with whom one was associated (Lowrey, Otnes, & Ruth, 2004).

Therefore, one can suppose that nostalgic connections are a mirror of the transmission processes and from then on, would favor the propensity to make a gift of a brand that one has personally known in happy times. This leads to hypothesis **H4**.

H4: The propensity to give a brand as a gift is greater for brands perceived as nostalgic than for brands perceived as non-nostalgic.

The propensity to collect a brand’s derived products. Belk (1995, p. 479) defines collecting as "the process of actively, selectively and passionately acquiring and possessing things

removed from ordinary use and perceived as part of a set of non-identical objects or experiences". Belk, Wallendorf, Sherry, Holbrook and Roberts (1988), Belk, Wallendorf and Sherry (1989) and Belk (1995) applied nostalgia to the special case of collecting, and they investigated the ways in which collections of memorabilia, souvenirs, and other relics preserve memories that enhance people's lives. Collecting is one of the playful, favorite activities of children and qualitative research stresses the relationships between collecting and nostalgia (Belk, 1990; Belk et al., 1988). A collection allows a collector to re-experience an idealized past and therefore a feeling of security and continuity (Belk et al., 1988; Belk, 1990). Moreover, another main function of collecting is "a means of distinction and self-definition" (Long & Shiffman, 1997).

Collector and fan clubs search for their favorite brand memory objects. For example, Coca-Cola is the largest brand collectible in the world (Slater, 2001) that evokes a "full gamut of individual emotion, nostalgia, patriotism, romance, love, pride-among collectors" (Slater, 2000, p. 207). The Internet allows brand communities to exchange their beloved brands on dedicated websites such as www.Barbiecollector.com or crazyforbarbie.com, as well as on more general website such as eBay.

Based on qualitative research, collecting is related to nostalgia; however, such a relationship has not been tested quantitatively, leading to **H5**.

H5: The propensity to collect brand-derived products is stronger for brands perceived as nostalgic than for brands perceived as non-nostalgic.

Exploration of the Moderating Effects of Gender and Product Category

There has been research on the relationships between gender and the tendency for nostalgia. Baker and Kennedy (1994), for example, following Davis' (1979) counterintuitive

proposition, suggested that men and women may differ in how they relate to nostalgia-evoking objects. Such findings have not been replicated in other studies (Reisenwitz, Iyer, & Cutler, 2004; Sherman & Newman, 1977-78). Moreover, recent studies, using experimental designs did not reveal any significant gender differences in frequency of nostalgia (Hepper et al., 2012; Routledge et al., 2011; Sedikides, Wildschut, & Baden, 2004; Wildschut et al., 2006; Wildschut et al., 2010; Zhou et al., 2008). These uncertainties call for more investigation regarding such a gender effect. In addition, from a managerial standpoint, marketing scholars emphasize the need to investigate gender effect related to nostalgia: “likewise, future research might endeavor to see whether individual differences such as age or gender affect nostalgia’s influence in advertising” (Muehling & Pascal, 2011, p. 120). The above arguments lead to exploration of the potential moderating status of gender that may or may not moderate the relationships between consumers and their nostalgic brands.

The literature does not explicitly report the moderating effect of the product category on the relationships between consumers and brands perceived as nostalgic. Nevertheless, nostalgic brands are usually those consumers grew up with (Langer, 1997). This is particularly “true for foods and drinks” (Langer, 1997, p. 61) that may be considered as “social in nature being consumed in social settings” (Loveland, Smeesters, & Mandel, 2010, p. 399). Other nostalgia evoking brands also refer to product categories related to early independence and a sense of belonging (Wildschut et al., 2010), such as cars, which may be purchased to demonstrate social status (Braun-Latour, La Tour, & Zinkhan 2007; Loveland, Smeesters, & Mandel, 2010). Thus, the potential moderating status of product category which may or may not moderate the relationships between consumers and their nostalgic brands will be systematically explored.

To shed light on the issues of moderation by gender and product category, these two potential moderation effects will be examined.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This section addresses data collection, the selection of scales and their psychometric qualities.

Data Collection

The selection of brands and product categories was derived from preliminary studies presented below. The questionnaire pre-test and its method of administration are also exposed. Then, the final questionnaire and final sample is detailed.

Preliminary Studies: Selection of brands and product categories. A sample of 52 individuals was interviewed face to face and was asked the following question: “Can you cite the products and/or brands that you associate with good times in your life?” A list of 45 brands, which were sources of nostalgic memories, was thereby obtained. Brands that were cited more than three times by different respondents were selected. This procedure reduced the number of brands perceived as nostalgic to 30. In order to draw up a list of brands perceived as non-nostalgic, the list of the 30 nostalgic brands was sent to a market research company that specializes in consumer branding¹. The company provided a list of 30 non-nostalgic brands that had not been cited in this study's qualitative interviews. All of them presented high brand awareness and had been on the market for quite a while. The two lists of 30 brands (30 considered as nostalgic and 30 as considered non-nostalgic) were further checked in a second sample of 40 respondents of different ages and genders to ensure their high degree of brand

¹ This firm is a specialist in surveys and wishes to remain anonymous. Its assistance is gratefully acknowledged.

awareness. The six weakest brands in the two lists were eliminated, leaving two final lists of brands considered as nostalgic (24) and non-nostalgic (24).

Finally, to verify the nostalgic or non-nostalgic perception of the 48 retained brands, the 52 respondents were contacted a second time. Experimental psychologists working on memory and cognition applied to autobiographical memories explicitly mention the time lags used between data collections: they vary from 3, 5 months (Thompson, 1982), 6 months (Friedman & de Winstanley, 1998) and 2 years (Golden, 1992). Thompson et al. (1996) also clearly stress that estimates become less accurate the longer the interval between the time of the event and the time when participants make their judgments. So, in order to avoid a memory bias, the period between the initial face-to-face interview and the later e-mail questionnaire was more than one year.

In the e-mail questionnaire, they were asked to indicate “to what extent they perceived the brand as nostalgic” on a five-point Likert Scale, ranging from “not at all nostalgic” to “very nostalgic”. This verification confirmed, with no modifications, the membership of the 48 brands in the two categories of 24 brands perceived as nostalgic compared with 24 brands perceived as non-nostalgic. The brands perceived as nostalgic had a mean evaluation that was systematically superior to that of the non-nostalgic brands².

The resulting 48 brands are distributed in six product categories (see Table 1). This number of brands complies with the guidelines of Moore, Wilkie & Lutz (2002) in their study of the intergenerational influence and the guidelines of Loveland, Smeesters and Mandel (2010) in their study on preferences for nostalgic products.

-- Insert Table 1 about here--

² *t*-test and Mann-Whitney U test found a systematically significant difference between the two categories of brands. Moreover, the convergence of respondents' classifications was attested by the Kappa of Cohen superior to 0.7 and significant at the 5% significance level. Furthermore, a post hoc MDS analysis was run. Based on this MDS analysis, a map provides a clear picture. This map is derived from Euclidean distances between brands using a metric multidimensional analysis (PROXSCAL). The quality of the adjustment with two dimensions was satisfactory (99% of variance accounted for; Tucker congruence coefficient: 0.995). The horizontal principal axis opposes “nostalgic brands” (positioned to the right) and “non-nostalgic” (positioned to the left).

Questionnaire pretest and administration. The questionnaire was pretested on a sample of 45 individuals. Data collection took place in the lecture halls of a university in the south of France, in a retirement association meeting room, and in a high-speed train station. Finally, 606 questionnaires, well distributed across ages, were analyzed (see Table 2).

- - Insert Table 2 about here- -

The questionnaire has three parts. First, respondents were asked to select the brand (in the nostalgic list) most associated with memories from the past. The sentences used in the questionnaire were as follows: “This questionnaire will require you to describe your thoughts and evocate feelings toward a particular brand that is important for you because it evokes rich remembrances of the past for you. It is a brand you are emotionally close to. It is a brand that reminds you vividly of past day-to-day or important events. Today, you still buy this brand occasionally when you see it on the shelves”. Next, they indicated their degrees of agreement or disagreement with items, evaluating the strength of five brand-relationships constructs (attachment, self-brand connections, storytelling, and the propensity to give an item as a gift and to collect brand-related products).

This same logic was applied in the second part of the questionnaire. Participants were instructed to select a brand from the second list of 24 non-nostalgic brands: a brand well known to them and possibly used but not associated with any particular memories. “Select in the same product category, a brand that you know and have eventually bought but which is not associated with particular memories”.

Then, respondents evaluated the non-nostalgic brands with the same items already used for the nostalgic brands. Finally, the third part of the questionnaire gathered socio-demographic information.

Selection of Scales and Psychometric Qualities

Two affective concepts and three behavioral consequences were taken into account. The measurements retained for the two affective concepts (brand attachment and self-brand connections) and the three behavioral consequences (storytelling, propensity to give as a gift and propensity to collect brand-related products) are presented below.

Attachment to the brand. The one-dimensional five-item scale, currently integrated in studies on consumer brand relationship measurement (Louis & Lombard, 2010) was selected. After dropping one item, its reliability and validity increased to satisfactory level (Cronbach Alpha = 0.90 and Jöreskog $\rho = 0.91$), in line with those found in previous studies for three product categories: pantyhose, women's deodorant and detergent.

Self-brand connections. The seven-item self-brand connections scale, developed by Escalas and Bettman (2003), was used to measure self-concept connections. After a process of back translation and item screening and Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis, the final version of the scale included four items with a satisfactory internal consistency (Cronbach Alpha = 0.84 and Jöreskog $\rho = 0.87$).

The discriminant validity between the two scales above was assessed following Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criteria. These two scales did not depart significantly from normality.

Storytelling. The following statement was used: "I tell stories about this brand to other people", measured on a 5-point Likert scale.

The propensity to give the brand as a gift. To determine whether the consumer had already offered the brand as a gift, the following question was asked: "Have you already offered this brand as a gift? (Yes-No)". For those respondents who answered "yes", they were asked further "approximately how many times, using a four-level frequency scale (1 time/2 to 5 times/6 to 10 times/more than 10 times)".

Propensity to collect brand-related items or products. One item was used: “Do you collect or have you collected in the past items or products related to this brand?” Respondents who answered “yes” were counted as having a propensity to collect.

RESULTS

The results are presented in two sections. The first section tests the direct effect of the status of the brand, nostalgic *versus* non-nostalgic, on consumer brand relationship constructs. The second section investigates the potential moderating effects of product category on one side and gender on the other side, on the five-brand relationship constructs.

Direct Effects of Nostalgic vs. Non-Nostalgic Brands on Consumer Brand Relationships

Following Loveland, Smeesters and Mandel (2010), ANOVA tests were run for the hypotheses on direct effects.

The means of every brand relationship constructs were significantly higher for nostalgic brands at the one percent risk level (Table 3). The largest positive effect occurred for storytelling ($F = 219.7$; $p = 0.000$). Therefore, brands considered as nostalgic favor the development of more narratives which enables consumers to transmit their “personal story” through their relationships with nostalgic brands.

The smallest effect was observed for gift-giving ($F = 80.0$; $p = 0.000$). Nevertheless, this is a strong effect going from global gift-giving of 38.2% to particular nostalgic brand gift-giving of 52.6%.

Overall, H1 to H5 are supported. These results are important since they make it possible to establish that attachment and self-concept connections are stronger for brands considered as

nostalgic. These effects have not been reported by previous studies. Moreover, “storytelling”, “propensity to offer the brand as a gift” and “to collect brand derived products” are also significantly higher for brands considered as nostalgic, than for brands that were not.

--Insert Table 3 about here --

The section below examines the potential moderating effect of product category and gender.

Exploring the Moderating Effects of Product Category and Gender

Nostalgic brand perception is a repeated measure collected from 606 respondents evaluating first, the nostalgic brands, and second, the non-nostalgic brands, out of a potential set of 96 pairs of brands. Eleven pairs were not selected by the respondents (2 for candies, 1 for breakfast, 3 for cleaning products, 4 for apparel and 1 for vehicles), leading to a total of 85 usable pairs of brands.

The between-subject factors are the six product categories, and the within-subject factor is nostalgia. The repeated measure variable, nostalgia, has only two levels, and thus the sphericity condition is automatically met. Cell sizes are far from being equal because brand pairs were freely selected by respondents within the product category (see Appendix 1). Almost half of the sample (296) addresses food products while other product categories resulted in a smaller sample.

Table 4 presents the means for nostalgic brands compared with non-nostalgic brands for five relationship constructs, crossed by product category and gender.

- - Insert Table 4 here - -

Table 5 illustrates the MANOVA tests of the potential moderating effects of product category and gender on brand attachment, self-brand connections, storytelling, propensity to offer the brand as a gift, and to collect brand related products. Gender does not moderate

brand attachment ($F = 0.12$; $p < 0.727$), self-brand connections ($F = 0.509$; $p < 0.476$), storytelling ($F = 0.373$; $p < 0.541$) and gift-giving ($F = 0.530$; $p < 0.467$), but it does moderate the propensity to collect ($F = 8.09$; $p < 0.005$).

- - Insert Table 5 here - -

Product category moderates all effects of nostalgia. Attachment is higher for nostalgic brands (3.25), in particular, apparel products for women (3.68) and vehicles for men (3.66). Global attachment level is similar for women and men and for nostalgic (3.25 compared with 3.29) as well as non-nostalgic brands (2.49 compared with 2.50). Attachment is lower for non-nostalgic brands (2.50), in particular, games for women (2.21) and candy for men (2.18). The Box M test ($F = 2.174$; $p = 0.000$) rejects the hypothesis of homogeneous covariance matrices, but with the sizes of the nostalgic or non-nostalgic groups being equal, one can discard this constraint (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2008). The multivariate test, using Pillai trace, shows that brands perceived as nostalgic generate a significantly higher attachment ($F = 144.2$; $p = 0.000$) than non-nostalgic brands (H1 supported). Product category moderates this relation ($F = 2.31$; $p < 0.043$) and respondent gender does not. Finally, the triple interaction of nostalgia, product category and gender has no significant effect on attachment. The first set of graphs (Appendix 2) shows the strong effect of perceived nostalgia on attachment, moderated by product category but not by respondent gender.

Self-brand connections are higher for nostalgic brands (2.85), in particular, apparel products for women (3.39) and for men as well (3.27), with vehicles being a close second for men. Global brand connections are similar for women and men, for nostalgic (2.83 and 2.89) as well as non-nostalgic brands (2.18 and 2.21). Self-brand connections are lower for non-nostalgic brands (2.18), in particular, cleaning products for women (1.94) and breakfast for men (1.98). The Box test shows that the hypothesis of homogeneous covariance matrices is verified. The multivariate test, using Pillai trace, shows that brands perceived as nostalgic

generate significantly stronger self-brand connections ($F = 141.91$; $p = 0.000$) than non-nostalgic brands (H2 supported). Product category moderates this relation ($F = 2.8$; $p < 0.02$), and gender does not. Finally, the triple interaction of nostalgia, product category and gender has no significant effect on self-brand connections. The second set of graphs (Appendix 3) shows the strong effect of perceived nostalgia on self-brand connections, moderated by product category.

Storytelling is higher for nostalgic brands (3.27) in particular, vehicles for both men (3.80) and women (4.14). Global storytelling is similar for men and women, for nostalgic (3.24 and 3.28) and non-nostalgic brands (2.14 and 2.09). Storytelling is lower for non-nostalgic brands (2.11), in particular, cleaning products for women (1.63) and for men (1.63). The multivariate test, using Pillai trace, shows that brands perceived as nostalgic generate significantly higher storytelling ($F = 219.693$; $p = 0.000$) than non-nostalgic brands (H3 supported). Product category moderates this relation ($F = 2.358$; $p < 0.039$) and respondent gender does not. Finally, the triple interaction of nostalgia, product category and gender has no significant effect on storytelling. The third set of graphs (Appendix 4) shows the strong effect of perceived nostalgia on storytelling moderated by product category.

Gift-giving is higher for nostalgic brands (0.52), in particular, games for both men (0.77) and women (0.77). Global gift-giving is similar for men and for women, for nostalgic (0.49 and 0.55) and non-nostalgic brands (0.21 and 0.23). Gift-giving is lower for non-nostalgic brands (0.22), in particular, vehicles for women (0.00) and for men (0.04). The multivariate test, using Pillai trace, shows that brands perceived as nostalgic generate significantly higher gift-giving ($F = 80.02$; $p = 0.000$) than non-nostalgic brands (H4 supported). Product category moderates this relation ($F = 9.67$; $p = 0.000$) and respondent gender does not. Finally, the triple interaction of nostalgia, product category and gender has no significant effect on gift-

giving. The fourth set of graphs (Appendix 5) shows the strong effect of perceived nostalgia on gift-giving moderated by product category.

Collecting is higher for nostalgic brands (0.27), in particular, games for women (0.39) and cleaning for men (0.63). Collecting is lower for non-nostalgic brands (0.06), in particular, candy for women (0.01) and for men (0.00). The multivariate test, using Pillai trace, shows that brands perceived as nostalgic generate significantly larger gift collecting ($F = 112.48; p = 0.000$) than non-nostalgic brands (H5 supported). Product category moderates this relation ($F = 6.597; p = 0.000$) but respondent gender does not ($F = 8.09; p < 0.005$). This exception might be explained by the very nature of collected artifacts appealing more to boys than to girls³.

Finally, the triple interaction of nostalgia, product category and gender has no significant effect on collecting. The last set of graphs (Appendix 6) shows the strong effect of perceived nostalgia on collecting moderated by product category and respondent gender.

DISCUSSION

The results are in line with Belk et al. (1988), Belk (1995), Fournier (1994), Holbrook and Schindler (1989, 1994, 1996, 2003), Loveland, Smeesters and Mandel (2010), but differ from those of Unger, McConocha and Faier (1991).

Belk et al. (1988) were among the first to suggest a link between nostalgia and a propensity to collect artifacts linked to a brand. As an example, Slater (2000) cited Coca Cola as the most-collected nostalgic brand. Fournier's (1994) pioneering work showed that brand attachment and nostalgic connections are linked. The results strengthen these early theoretical advances using a substantial number of brands (2 x 24) in six product categories and on a

³ It seems that the small toys included in cleaning products (model cars, trains, etc.) appealed more to boys than to girls, see <http://www.enviedepius.com/article/ma-maison/linge/la-saga-du-cadeau-bonux.aspx>

large sample. In addition, to the best knowledge of the researchers, this is the first study to compare and test the effects of nostalgia on the five different brand relationship constructs.

Following the distinction between public and private possessions (Bearden & Etzel, 1982; Richins, 1994 b), the results show that for socially visible product categories (apparel and vehicles), nostalgic brands generate higher scores on all brand relationship constructs (except propensity to collect). These results distance themselves from Unger, McConocha and Faier (1991) who, in the domain of advertising, stressed the unsuitability of nostalgic ads for product category other than food. These results extend the effect of nostalgic brands outside food products to cleaning products, games, apparel and vehicles.

Wallendorf and Arnould (1988) and Csykszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) showed that favorite objects or possessions related to personal memories are different for men and women. Product category moderation was discussed by Holbrook and Schindler (1989, 1994, 1996, 2003). The moderating effects of gender and product category have not been systematically investigated for nostalgic brands. In the current study, gender moderation is rejected for all brand relationships except for the propensity to collect, where the difference between nostalgic and non-nostalgic brands is higher for men ($\delta = 0.28$) than for women ($\delta = 0.18$). This moderation is stronger for cleaning ($\delta = 0.34$) and breakfast ($\delta = 0.21$) and lower for games ($\delta = 0.03$). These intriguing results are linked to the very nature of collected artifacts (cars and miniature trains; balls provided inside cleaning packages obviously targeted boys).

On the theoretical level, four findings are underscored. The first one is the validation of the nostalgia-attachment link that was promoted by Fournier (1994). The second one is the significant effect of nostalgia on storytelling which was not included in previous quantitative studies. The third one is the confirmation of the nostalgia-self-brand connection relationships

previously emphasized by Fournier (1994). The fourth and final one is the clear indication that product category moderates all brand relationships.

On a managerial level, this research shows the advantage firms could have by considering the nostalgic status of their brands. The mean scores of the five relationship constructs are significantly higher for brands perceived as nostalgic, than for brands perceived as non-nostalgic. The highest effect was observed for storytelling. Thus, a brand with sizable nostalgia equity generates more storytelling. This kind of brand helps consumers connect with a time period they like to talk about in positive terms, thus providing free, positive word-of-mouth advertising. This is effective because nostalgic memories are mostly positive (Zhou et al., 2008). Therefore, rather than spending most of the communication budget advertising the brand, it would be wise to set apart some percentage of the budget to provide open space and channels to amplify positive word-of-mouth initiated by consumers. Developing chat forums on social media to collect old memories or to set up autobiographical advertising campaigns (Braun-LaTour, LaTour, & Zinkhan, 2007) may also be beneficial.

Marketing socially visible products and brands could involve the use of “nostalgia”. For the consumer, nostalgia is a way to reconnect with his/her past, to communicate a certain image and to make the values he/she believes in more public, thereby telling his/her “story” to the members of his/her group (MacInnis, Park, & Priester, 2009; Park et al., 2010). Finally, managers who want to develop “attachment”, “self-brand connections”, or “storytelling” could promote the nostalgic aspect of their brand, even if it is in a non-food category.

This study has two possible limitations. The first limitation is related to the internal validity of the results. It is possible that this study may suffer from a test effect because the same respondents answered questions on two types of brands. The second is related to the structure of the sample. In spite of an effort to achieve “representativeness”, the resulting

sample had a majority of women and a disproportionate amount of people who were relatively well off and educated.

The results of this study open several avenues for future research. First, it would be interesting to build an advanced SEM model of the effects of brand perception – nostalgic or non-nostalgic – on consumer-brand relationships. Such a model would make it possible to identify the strength of the links between the variables according to the perception studied. It would be also interesting to investigate the moderating role of time style orientation (Usunier & Valette-Florence, 2007) and generation on brand relationship concepts.

A second research perspective would be to put the consumer in a real or experimental purchasing situation. Indeed, one can wonder whether an individual confronted with multiple offers in a store and exposed to promotional effects would still show preferences and purchase intention as favorable as the declarative mode by questionnaire. It would also be useful to measure the propensity of consumers to pay a higher price for the acquisition of a brand that is considered nostalgic and therefore identify the characteristics of corresponding brands and those of individuals more sensitive to brands considered as nostalgic. Following Ratnayake, Broderick and Mitchell (2010), another avenue of research could investigate the neural reaction of consumers exposed to nostalgic versus non-nostalgic brands and/or advertising.

A third research track would be to focus on the comparison of the nostalgic anchorage of trans-generational compared with generational brands. Trans-generational brands attempt to reach consumer targets belonging to different generations, whereas generational brands have marked a particular generation. Because these brands have appeared at different moments in history, one could suppose that the scores of the customer brand relationship variables being studied are higher for the generations born when the brand came on the market. However, it is also possible that the trans-generational influence of grandparents, parents and children may generate a link that transcends the supposed partitioning of generations. This suggests that

future research could test the effects of the type of brand – generational compared with trans-generational – on consumer brand relationships and assess their relative nostalgic equity. Following Lehmann, Keller and Farley (2008), it would therefore be useful to integrate nostalgia in the measurement of brand equity and to assess its weight.

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Table 1. Nostalgic and Non-Nostalgic Brands

Brand status	Candy	Breakfast	Cleaning products	Games/toys	Apparel	Vehicles
Nostalgic brands	Carambar	Nestlé	Mirror	Lego	Petit Bateau	Fiat
	Malabar	Banania	Bonux	Mattel	Levi's	Ford
	Haribo	BN	Mir	Playmobil	Kickers	Solex
	Kinder	Nutella	Eau Ecarlate	Nintendo	Converse	Vespa
Non-nostalgic brands	Freedent	Poulain	Ajax	M.B	Esprit	Smart
	Kit Kat	Ricoré	Mr Propre	Sony	Etam	Honda
	Kiss Cool	Kellogg's	Cif	Ravensburger	Birkenstock	Skoda
	Lutti	Delacre	Omo	Hot Wheels	Le Coq Sportif	Volkswagen

Table 2. Structure of the Final Sample by Socio-Professional Category and Age

Socio-professional category	<i>N</i>	%
Farmers	8	1.3%
Artisans, shopkeepers, CEOs	29	4.8%
Executives and intellectual professionals	113	18.6%
Intermediate professions	57	9.4%
Employees	106	17.6%
Workers	6	1%
Retired	111	18.3%
Unemployed	22	3.6%
Students	154	25.4%
Total	606	100%

Age Class	<i>N</i>	%
[65-84]	119	19.6%
[45-64]	172	28.4%
[35-44]	118	19.5%
[24-34]	197	32.5%
Total	606	100%

Table 3. Mean Brand Relationships by Nostalgic Status of the Brands (ANOVA)

Construct	Nostalgic brands	Non-nostalgic brands	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	Results
Attachment*	3.25	2.50	144.2	0.000	H1 supported
Self-brand connections*	2.85	2.19	141.9	0.000	H2 supported
Storytelling**	3.27	2.11	219.7	0.000	H3 supported
Gift-giving**	0.52	0.22	80.0	0.000	H4 supported
Collecting**	0.27	0.06	112.5	0.000	H5 supported

* = 5-point Likert scale

** = zero one indicator variable

Table 4. Mean Brand relationships by Product Category and Gender

Constructs	Brands	Gender	Candy	Breakfast	Cleaning	Games	Apparel	Vehicles	Total
Attachment	Nostalgic	Women	3.04	3.37	3.01	3.07	3.68	3.48	3.25
		Men	2.82	3.22	3.13	3.28	3.59	3.66	3.29
	Non-nostalgic	Women	2.45	2.59	2.73	2.21	2.62	2.46	2.49
		Men	2.18	2.47	2.46	2.70	2.33	2.70	2.50
Self-brand connections	Nostalgic	Women	2.69	2.75	2.44	2.85	3.39	2.99	2.83
		Men	2.40	2.77	2.50	2.95	3.27	3.25	2.89
	Non-nostalgic	Women	2.06	2.30	1.94	2.08	2.46	2.07	2.18
		Men	2.07	1.98	2.38	2.13	2.32	2.53	2.21
Storytelling	Nostalgic	Women	3.20	3.07	2.89	3.90	2.85	4.14	3.28
		Men	3.00	2.73	3.00	3.52	2.96	3.80	3.24
	Non-nostalgic	Women	1.84	2.00	1.63	2.66	2.02	2.48	2.09
		Men	1.84	1.76	1.63	2.91	1.89	2.15	2.14
Gift-giving	Nostalgic	Women	0.75	0.37	0.04	0.77	0.77	0.05	0.55
		Men	0.76	0.35	0.00	0.77	0.48	0.17	0.49
	Non-nostalgic	Women	0.27	0.17	0.00	0.27	0.47	0.00	0.23
		Men	0.33	0.14	0.13	0.34	0.22	0.04	0.21
Collecting	Nostalgic	Women	0.23	0.22	0.33	0.39	0.15	0.10	0.25
		Men	0.27	0.31	0.63	0.48	0.19	0.22	0.32
	Non-nostalgic	Women	0.01	0.18	0.04	0.01	0.02	0.05	0.07
		Men	0.00	0.06	0.00	0.07	0.00	0.06	0.04

Table 5. Multivariate Tests for the Moderating Effects of Product Category and Gender (MANOVA)

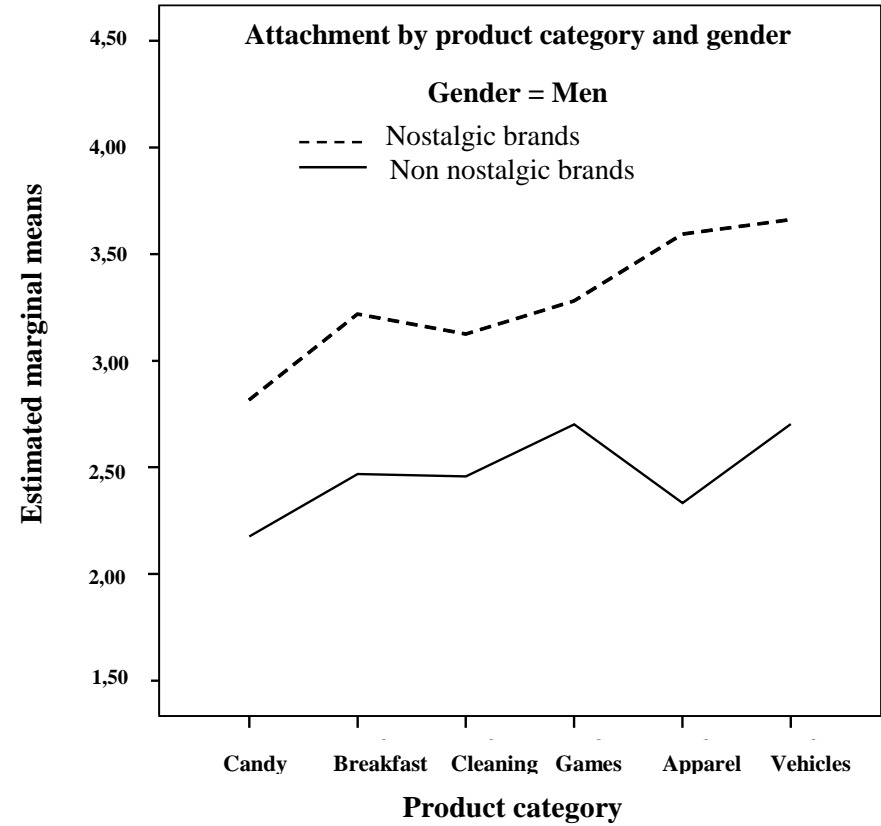
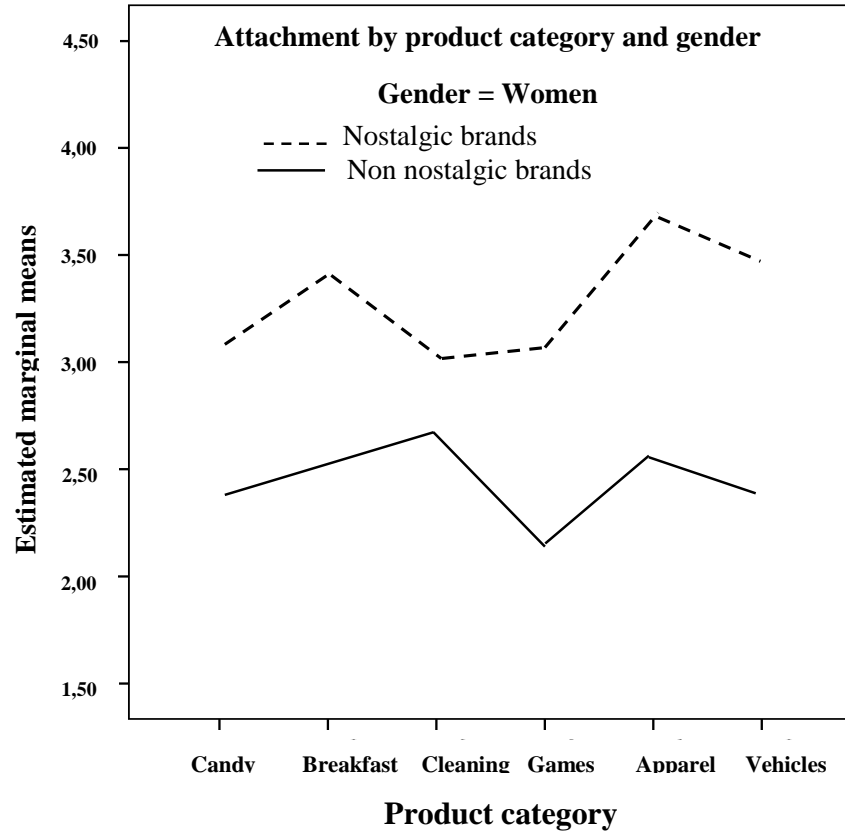
	Effect	<i>Pillai trace</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Eta</i> ²	<i>Power</i> ^b	Results
Attachment	Nostalgia	0.195	144.20 ^a	0.000	.195	1.000	H1 supported
	Nostalgia X Product Category	0.019	2.31 ^a	0.043	0.019	0.745	Moderation supported
	Nostalgia X Gender	0.000	0.12 ^a	0.727	0.000	0.064	No moderation
	Nostalgia X Product Cat X Gender	0.004	0.50 ^a	0.778	0.004	0.187	No moderation
Self-brand connections	Nostalgia	0.193	141.910 ^a	0.000	0.193	1.000	H2 supported
	Nostalgia X Product Category	0.023	2.806 ^a	0.016	0.023	0.836	Moderation supported
	Nostalgia X Gender	0.001	0.509 ^a	0.476	0.001	0.110	No moderation
	Nostalgia X Product Cat X Gender	0.012	1.403 ^a	0.221	0.012	0.497	No moderation
Storytelling	Nostalgia	0.270	219.693 ^a	0.000	0.270	1.000	H3 supported
	Nostalgia X Product Category	0.019	2.358 ^a	0.039	0.019	0.756	Moderation supported
	Nostalgia X Gender	0.001	0.373 ^a	0.541	0.001	0.094	No moderation
	Nostalgia X Product Cat X Gender	0.007	0.879 ^a	0.495	0.007	0.317	No moderation
Gift giving	Nostalgia	0.119	80.02 ^a	0.000	0.119	1.000	H4 supported
	Nostalgia X Product Category	0.075	9.67 ^a	0.000	0.075	1.000	Moderation supported
	Nostalgia X Gender	0.001	0.530 ^a	0.467	0.001	0.112	No moderation
	Nostalgia X Product Cat X Gender	0.002	0.294 ^a	0.916	0.002	0.124	No moderation
Collecting	Nostalgia	0.159	112.48 ^a	0.00	0.159	1.000	H5 supported
	Nostalgia X Product Category	0.053	6.59 ^a	0.00	0.053	0.998	Moderation supported
	Nostalgia X Gender	0.013	8.09 ^a	0.005	0.013	0.810	Moderation supported
	Nostalgia X Product Cat X Gender	0.008	.900 ^a	0.480	0.008	0.324	No moderation

a = exact test; b computed with alpha = 0.05.

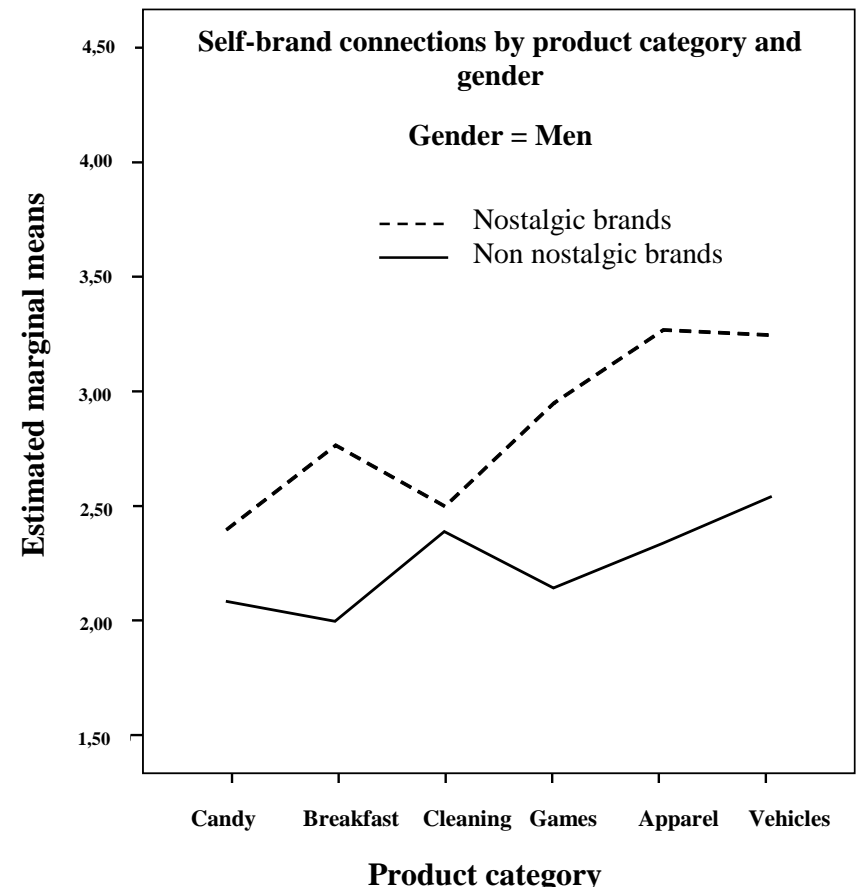
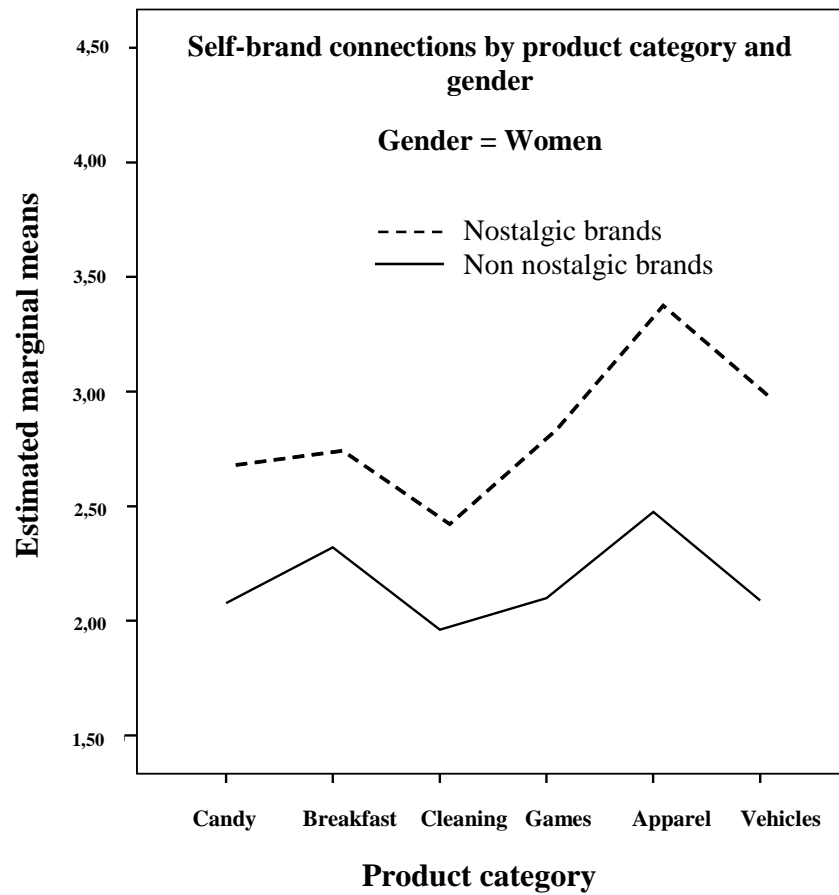
APPENDIXES

Appendix 1. Inter-Subject Cell Size

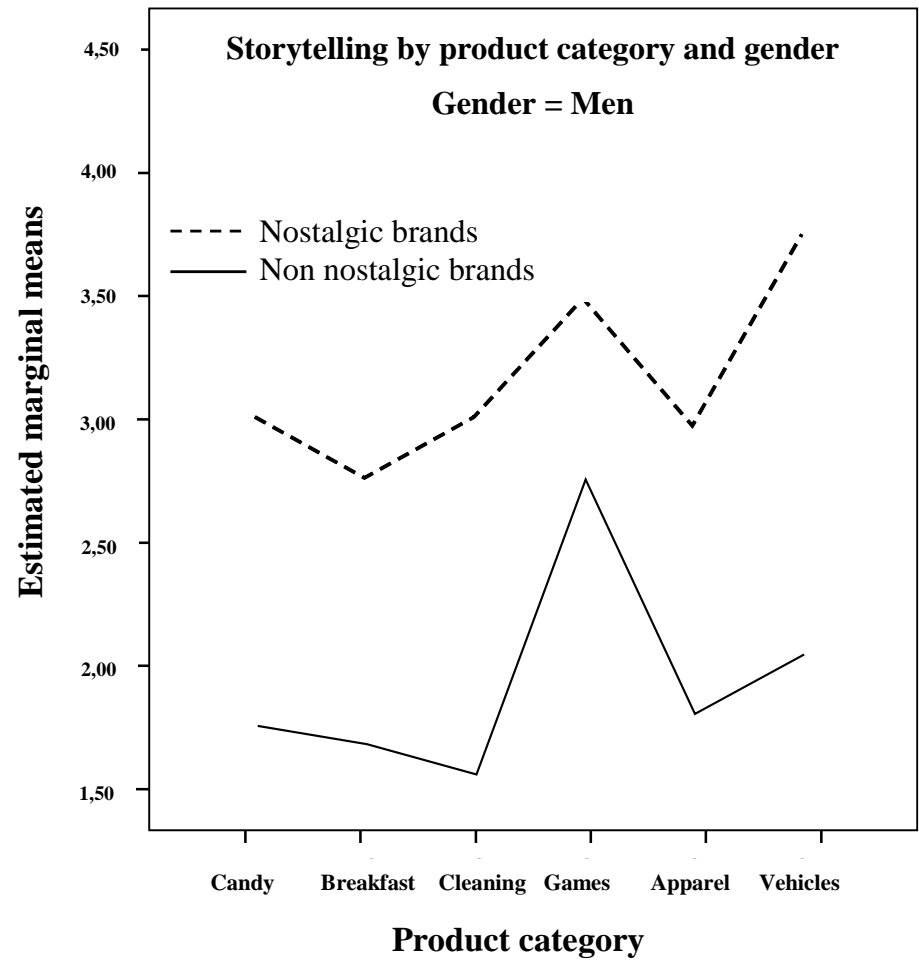
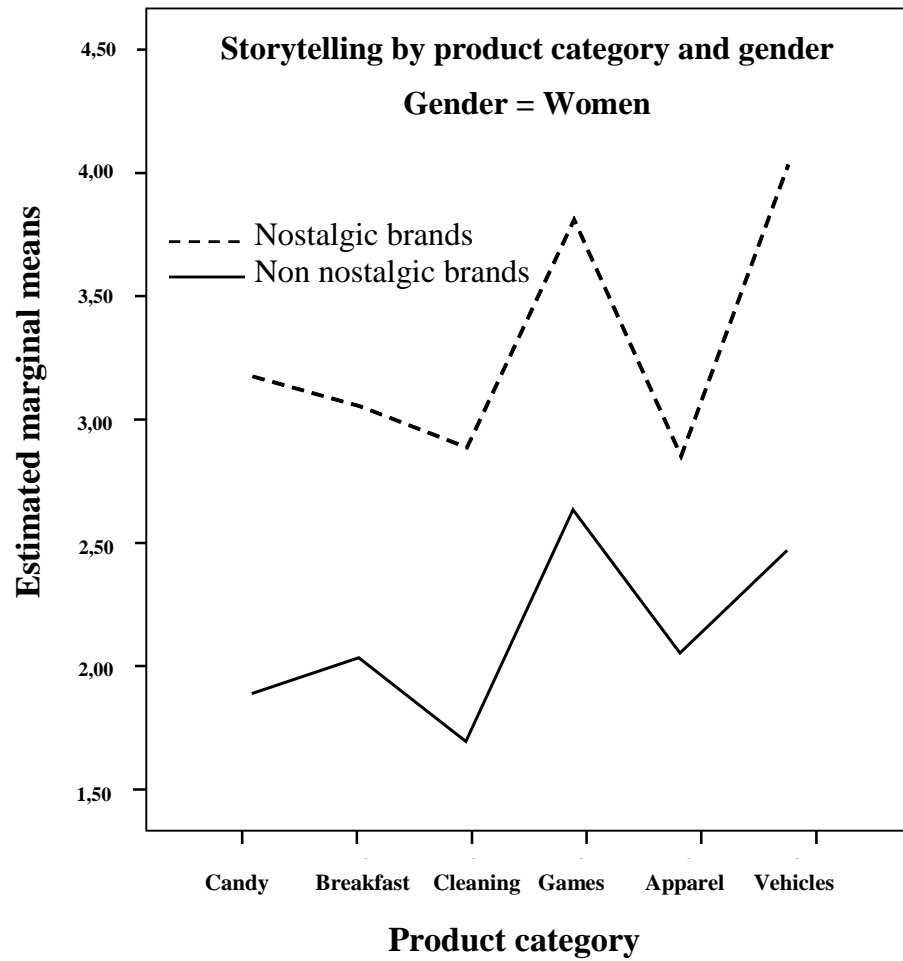
		Gender		
		1 Women	2 Men	Total
Product	1 Candy	88	49	137
category	2 Breakfast	110	49	159
	3 Cleaning	27	8	35
	4 Games	70	56	126
	5 Apparel	47	27	74
	6 Vehicles	21	54	75
	Total		363	243



Appendix 2. Attachment by Product Category and Gender



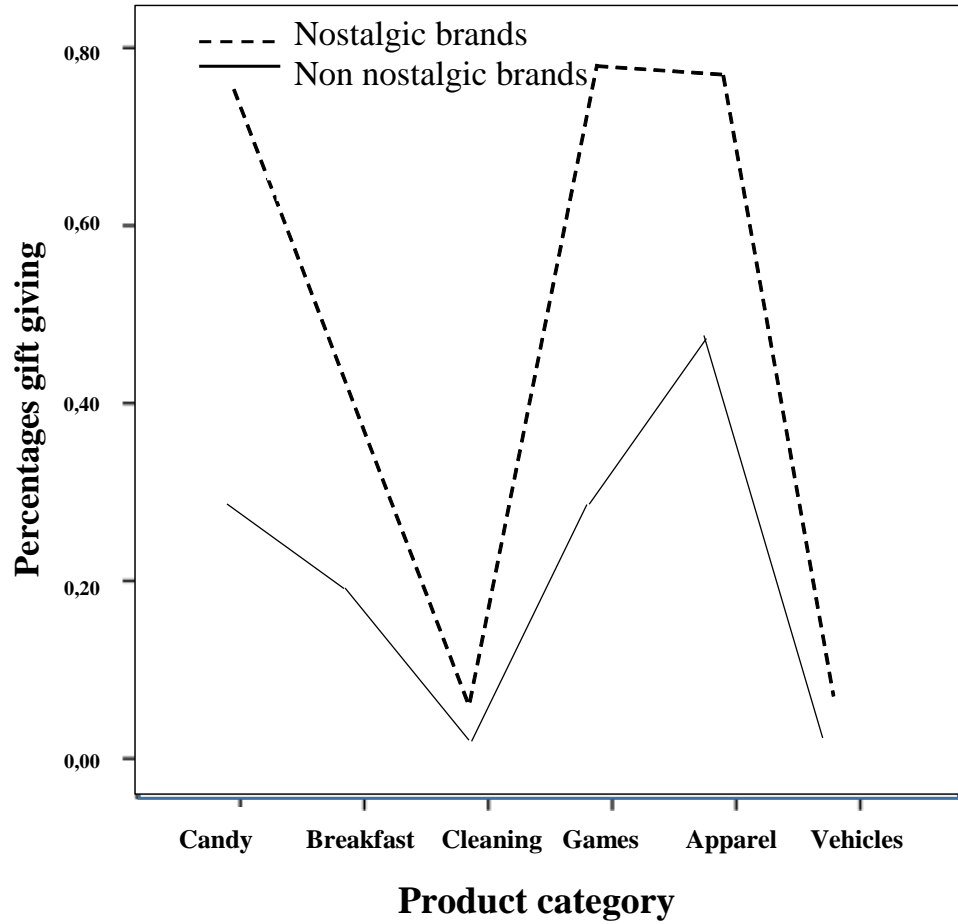
Appendix 3. Self-Brand Connections by Product Category and Gender



Appendix 4. Storytelling by Product Category and Gender

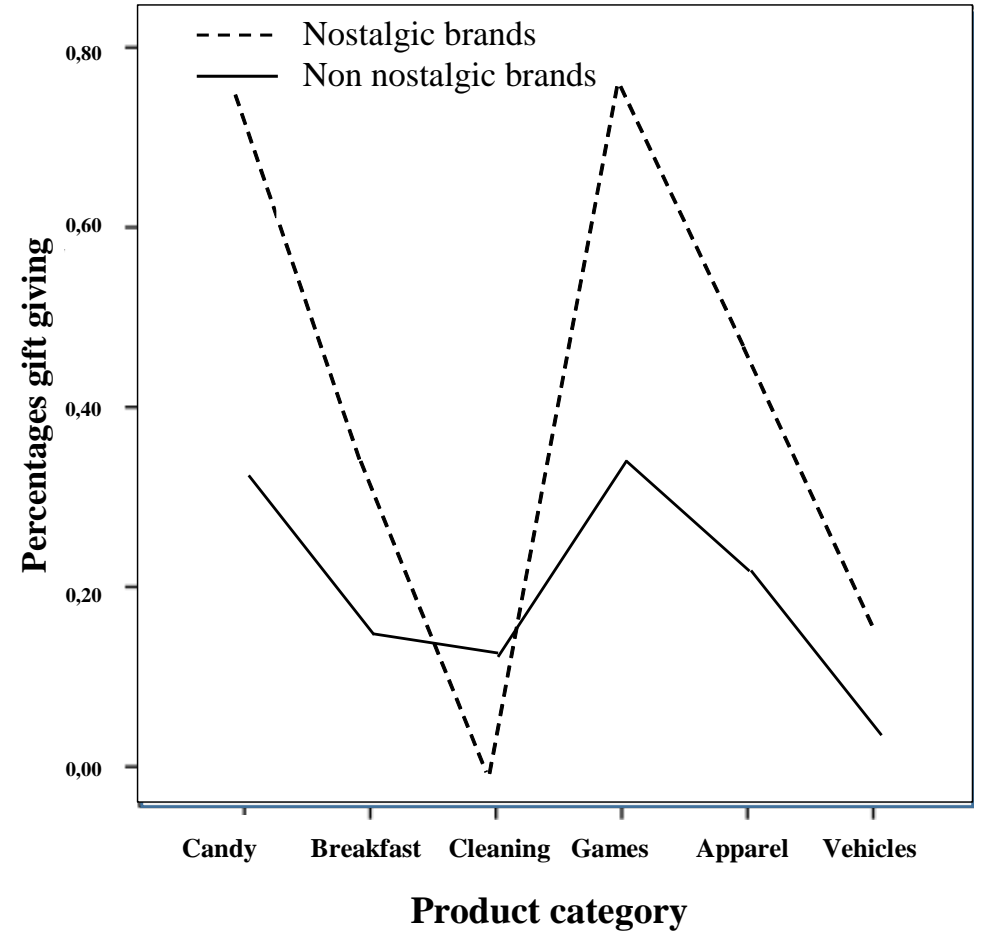
Gift-giving by product category and gender

Gender = Women



Gift-giving by product category and gender

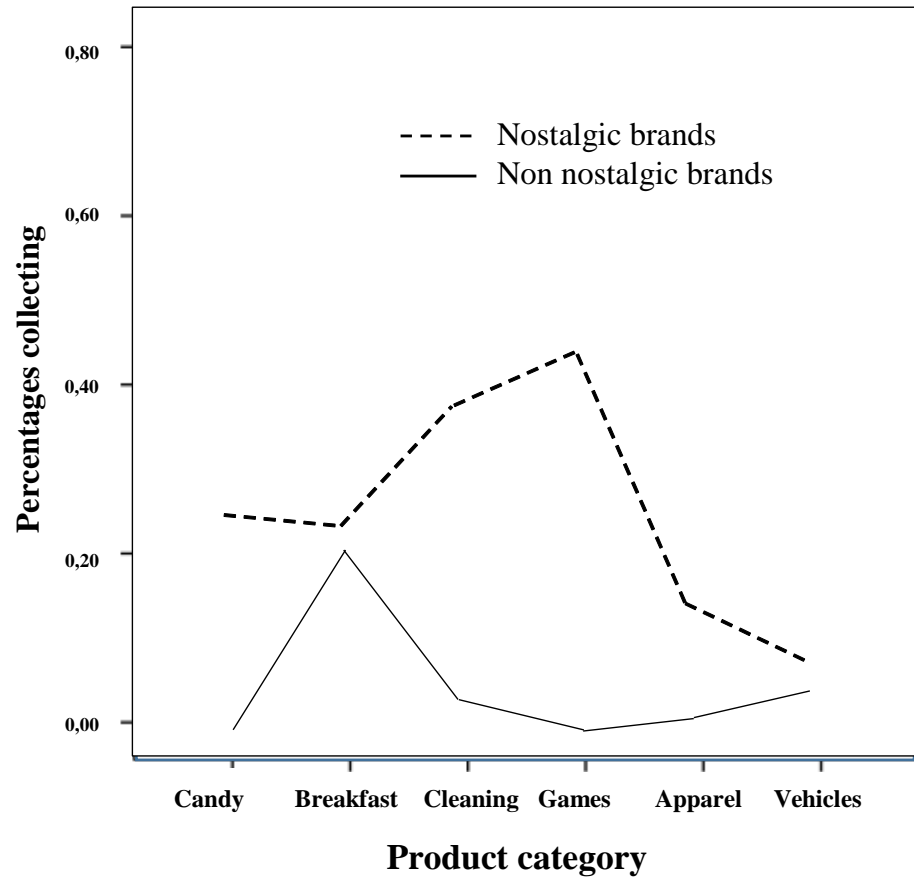
Gender = Men



Appendix 5. Gift Giving by Product Category and Gender

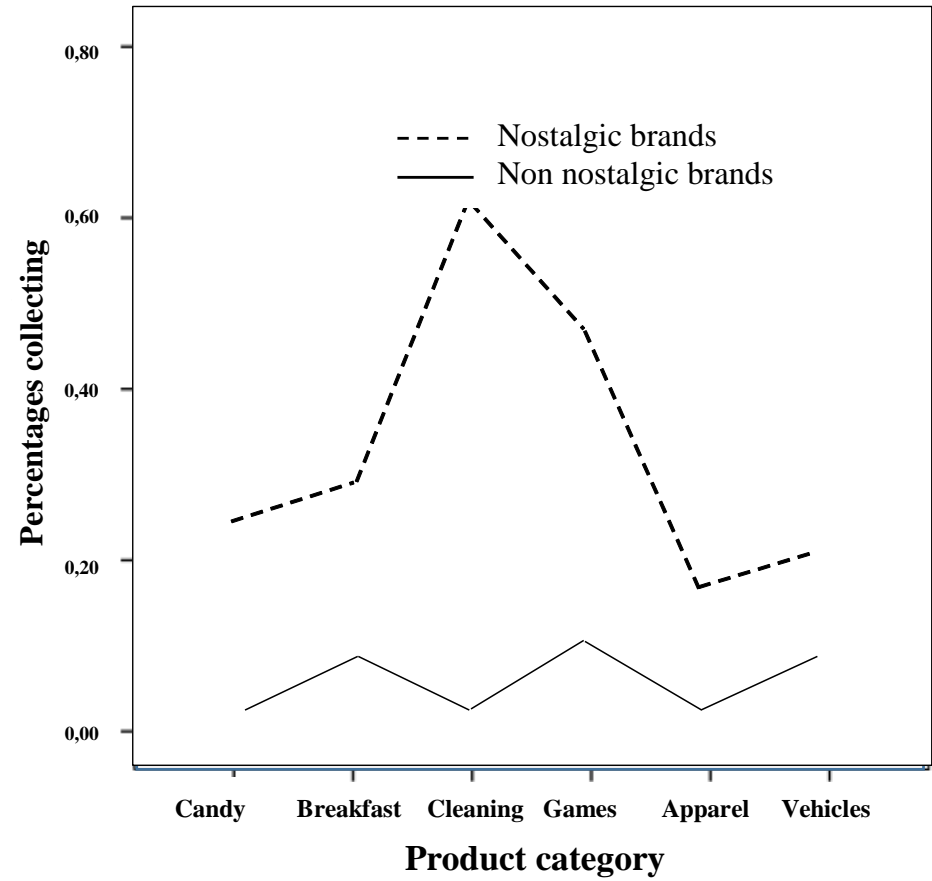
Collecting by product category and gender

Gender = Women



Collecting by product category and gender

Gender = Men



Appendix 6. Collecting by Product Category and Gender