

# The Influence of Nostalgic Songs in Advertising on Consumer Purchase Intentions: A Case of South Korean Market

<sup>[1]</sup>Eungyo Ji, <sup>[1]</sup>Maidul Islam

<sup>[1]</sup><sup>[1]</sup>International Business, Keimyung University, Daegu, South Korea  
 Corresponding Author Email: maidul@kmu.ac.kr

*Abstract— The aim of this study is to explore the effectiveness of product advertisement using nostalgic songs and its influence on consumer purchase intention particularly, within the Korean context. Nostalgia for marketing and advertising strategy brings positive emotions and comfort to consumers. Especially, this can lead to beneficial outcomes such as brand loyalty and sales in challenging times such as the post-COVID-19 era. Nostalgic songs can be a strategic tool in creating an emotional connection with consumers. The data for this research was collected by a survey methodology and investigates how nostalgic songs possibly influence consumer experiences, emotional connections, and ultimately, purchase intentions. A total of 257 data were collected from mainly Korean participants, revealing significant emotional and cognitive impacts of nostalgic stimuli. The results of this study include descriptive statistics, reliability and validity test, factor analysis, and Pearson correlation analysis that were conducted in this study suggest that applying nostalgic songs to commercial can enhance Purchase intention. The findings indicate that consumers engage with nostalgic stimuli emotionally and cognitively and have several practical implications for marketers and future researchers. Developing the emotional connection and cognitive engagement of consumers can help marketers to achieve their advertising strategies by incorporating nostalgic properties in their commercial.*

**Keywords:** Nostalgia, Purchase intention, Consumer Behavior, Music, South Korea.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the recent past, applying nostalgia became one of the significant strategies for advertising tools in the marketing field as marketers are exploring innovative ways to capture consumers' attention. The feelings of nostalgia leverage positive emotions toward the products that have been marketed with such a strategy and bring sales and brand loyalty accordingly (Cui, R. 2015). Nostalgia advertising appears more after challenging economic statements such as the global COVID-19 pandemic, especially because nostalgia evokes comfort for familiarity in uncertain periods. With the recognition of the rise of effectiveness that nostalgia advertising is providing, this study aims to investigate the implications on consumer behavior and purchase intentions. The use of nostalgic music in advertisements improves customer experience and builds positive emotional connections with brands and products. Nostalgic music may have the potential strength to capture consumer's attention by bringing back memories from the past and emotional responses (Nwankpa, C.M et al 2023). In general, Korean consumer preferences are influenced by its deep-rooted cultural heritage and sentiments, vibrant aesthetics and strong sense of community and social harmony (Han, 2020). Moreover, cultural symbols and rituals also play an important role in consumer purchase patterns (Kim and Lee, 2018). The impact of K-Pop on consumer purchase intention is huge due to its catchy melodies, nostalgic songs and attractive performance. The influence of K-Pop is beyond purchasing

music albums but also fashion products, food, etc. (Kim, and Kim, 2019). Therefore, the main objective of this study is to understand the effectiveness of advertising using nostalgic music in influencing customer purchase intentions. As nostalgia-driven advertising evokes more attention in the media, it is critical to understand the underlying mechanisms for Korean consumers' purchase intentions.

This research attempts to contribute to the existing knowledge of advertisement techniques by assessing the effectiveness of nostalgic music as a form of marketing strategy. The study will expand the current understanding of music with nostalgia influences consumer purchase intention. Apart from this current paper also provide significant information to the marketer to build better marketing strategy by using nostalgic songs.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Nostalgia Advertising

#### Definition of Nostalgia

The idea of nostalgia has grown with researchers proposing various definitions to capture its core concept. Chou and Singhal (2017) stated that nostalgia is "a preference (general liking, positive attitude, or favorable effect) towards objects (people, places, or things) that were more common (popular, fashionable, or widely circulated) in the past." It is distinguished by a longing for a certain period or place in the past, which is typically driven by emotions. Building on this definition, Batcho (2013) broadens the idea of nostalgia to

involve the social component by claiming that nostalgia represents not only personal memories from the past but also a desire for a sense of belonging and connection from social relationships. Furthermore, nostalgia has been examined with the idea of cognition. Routledge et.al. (2008) indicated that nostalgia provides a self-related intention by supporting individuals' senses of consistency and identity. They argue that nostalgia accelerates a coherent self-narrative, providing individuals with a connection between their past and current situation. The feeling of pleasure and also partially sadness when thinking about what happened in the past. Thus, nostalgia can be defined in emotional, cognitive, and social aspects. It draws out positive personal emotions associated from the past, tiger personal memories and associate a sense of connection and belonging which may lead to engagement while making purchases.

### ***The Implication of Nostalgia Advertising***

In the field of Marketing Nostalgia often indicates the strategic employment of sentiment desire from the past to initiate emotional attachment to influence purchase intention. Nostalgic advertising tried to evoke emotional connection to echo consumer attitude, behavior towards the product or brand. Use of nostalgic advertising got enough attention in academic and industries. Nostalgia advertising builds on the consumers' nostalgia and their emotional attachment to nostalgic cues. Holak and Havlena (1998) defined nostalgia advertising as the employment of nostalgic concepts, images, or phrases in advertising to provoke memories and emotions among consumers. The purpose of nostalgia advertising is to trigger positive reactions and generate an emotional connection with the brand or product by depending on shared cultural memories and personal experiences. One of the most important effects of nostalgia advertising is the impact on consumers and how it influences their purchase intention. According to Lammersma and Wortelboer (2017), nostalgia advertising can enhance consumers' willingness to pay. Advertisements using nostalgic aspects may improve the perspective of consumers in terms of product quality, authenticity, and product value, which impacts their purchasing intentions. Additionally, nostalgia advertising affects brand impressions as well. In advertising, nostalgia may play a significant role as a persuasive strategy by improving brand friendliness and building a positive brand image. Advertisers can establish the emotional link between customers and their brands by using nostalgia as their strategy which may result in increased brand loyalty and favorable brand associations.

Nevertheless, the success of nostalgia advertising may vary depending on the targeted demographics, product category, and cultural differences. When using nostalgia advertising for marketing, it is essential to consider both consumer characteristics and cultural significance. Different generations with different backgrounds may react differently to nostalgic aspects.

### **Consumer Purchase Intention**

#### ***Definition of Consumer Purchase Intention***

Different researchers conceptualized and defined consumer purchase intentions differently in their research papers. As per Schiffman and Wisenblit (2019), consumer purchase intention is nothing but consumer likelihood or inclination to buy certain kind of products or services. A similar statement was drawn by Majid Esmaeilpour and Zahra Mohseni (2019). It is an emotional state that represents individuals' cognitive and emotional evaluations of a product or service, driving their behavioral desires to purchase. Consumer purchase intention may range from uncertain desire or interest to a determined decision to purchase. There are a variety of factors that impact consumer purchase intention. Ajzen (1991) suggested the theory of planned behavior, which states that three significant elements affect consumer purchase intention: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Individuals' attitudes reflect their perceptions of the products and services, personal standards capture the social expectations associated with the purchase, and perceived behavioral control refers to individuals' belief in their capability of purchasing behavior.

#### ***Nostalgia Advertising and Consumer Purchase Intention***

Nostalgia has been shown to possibly enhance customer purchase intention through a variety of procedures. Nostalgia brings happy feelings and reminiscence of the past, which leads to a positive intention toward the marketed products or services. When consumers have a certain experience related to the element of nostalgia that is used in product advertising, they tend to have more positive opinions of the items, viewing them as better quality and value. Nostalgia may also influence consumer purchasing intentions by creating a sense of social connection and self-persistence. Sedikides and Wildschut (2016) found that nostalgia increases individuals' feelings of social connectivity, making them more likely to purchase products that bring back a sense of belonging or shared memories. Furthermore, nostalgia promotes feelings of self-persistence, in which consumers see a link between their past and current selves. This connection creates a sense of stability that influences their intention to buy products or services with a consistent self-concept. There are different forms of nostalgic stimuli including music. Previous studies have conducted the experimental approach to investigate the relationship between nostalgia and purchase intention using old songs as their nostalgic stimuli. According to Chou et al. (2010), lyrics of nostalgic music with high relevance to the advertisement increased consumers' attitudes towards the advertisement. Therefore, the paper proposes the following hypothesis

*Hypothesis 1: There is a significant positive effect of nostalgic songs when it comes to consumer purchase intention.*

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### Data Collection

The survey's major objective is to collect sample data experimentally to demonstrate the relationship between nostalgic music and purchase intention in the Korean context. Google Forms is used for conducting survey online, and we targeted the participants of this survey to be Korean residents. The survey was conducted for 12 days from April 4th to April 15th, 2024. The main questions were designed by providing ratings on a scale of 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). The questionnaire used in this study was adapted from a previous research paper (Gergov, T., & Stoyanova, S. 2013), with minor revisions made to satisfy the specific needs of the present study.

Participants were asked to provide basic demographic information and the questionnaire was designed with a division of three sections to gather detailed responses. Following that, participants answered the questions that were designed to analyze their emotional response to nostalgic songs, to capture their perspectives and attachment to it. Finally, the survey measured the connection between nostalgic songs and purchase intentions coming from the participants, intending to consider the impact of nostalgic stimuli on their purchase process. The survey revealed insights into various consumer behaviors in the Korean market by applying a structured approach and letting the participants answer questions about dynamic aspects related to nostalgic music itself and the purchase intention linked to it. The methodology of this study is structured to provide a theoretical understanding of nostalgic songs and the impact of purchase intention when it is applied. To ensure the accessibility of Korean participants, the questionnaire was designed in English and translated into Korean. The final responses that we collected were a total number of 257, and it was collected anonymously across Korea via the online survey.

#### Sample Demographic Description

As a result, 275 responses were gathered from a diverse range of age brackets. The age distribution is 14 years old to 40 years old and above, and most respondents are 21 to 25 age group with a percentage of 42.80% which represents the major age group of this study. A detailed age distribution indicates that 0.78% of the respondents were under 15, 30.74% were aged between 15 and 20, 14.79% fell within the

26 to 30 age bracket, and smaller percentages were distributed in the remaining age groups (Table 1). Even though this survey was able to collect data from a wide age range, the core of responses within the 21 to 25 age group provided a notable trend in the demographics of participants. On top of that, the survey collected the respondents' occupational status. It demonstrated that most of the respondents are identified as students with a percentage of 66.15%. 35.68% of employed individuals followed. The smaller percentage of 8.17% fell into the "other" category, including recent graduates and actively job-seeking individuals. The collection of occupational status states that the significant respondents are university students, aligning with the fact that the major age group of respondents is 21 to 25. Moreover, the gender distribution showed that the majority was female participants with 78.6%, while male participants accounted for 21.4%. Finally, 99.6% of the responses were from Koreans, and only 0.4% were non-Koreans. This demographic composition highlights the empirical nature of our study within the Korean context, reflecting a strong representation of the local population and consumer behaviors within the Korean context. The following Table 1 shows an overall summary of these demographic distributions.

**Table 1.** Demographic data of the respondents

Variable	Description	Frequency (%)	Sample
Age	under 15	0.78%	
	15~20	30.74%	
	21~25	42.800%	
	26~30	14.79%	
	31~35	6.23%	
	36~40	2.33%	
	40+	2.33%	
Occupation	Student	66.15%	
	Employee	25.68%	
	Others	8.17%	
Gender	Female	78.6%	
	Male	21.4%	
Nationality	Korean	99.6%	
	Non-Korean	0.4%	

**Table 2.** Frequency of agreement with the items of the Scale of Nostalgia and Purchase intention

variable	Items	Disagree (1~2)		Uncertain (3)		Agree (4~5)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
Nostalgic songs	I love to listen to past/old songs often.	25	9.73	31	12.06	201	78.21
	I am closely attached to past songs.	25	9.73	32	12.45	200	77.82

variable	Items	Disagree (1~2)		Uncertain (3)		Agree (4~5)	
		n	%	n	%	n	%
	When I listen to old songs, I become full of positive emotions.	16	6.23	58	22.57	183	71.21
	Listening to old songs makes me nostalgic most of the time.	19	7.39	24	9.34	214	83.3
Purchase intention	The nostalgic songs inspire me for my future decisions.	141	54.86	54	21.01	62	24.12
	The emotions related to the past are a big deal in my present feelings and choices.	29	11.28	45	17.51	183	71.21
	I think my purchasing decisions are influenced by my past emotions and feelings.	70	27.24	65	25.29	122	47.47

IV. RESULTS

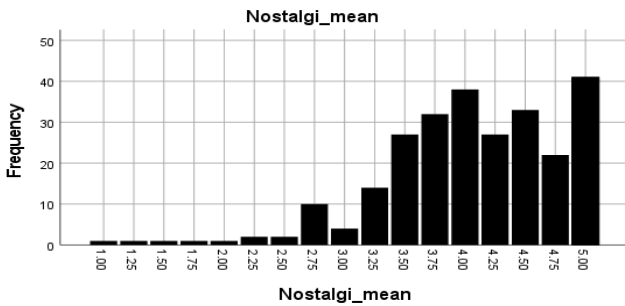


Figure1. Frequency distribution of the nostalgic songs

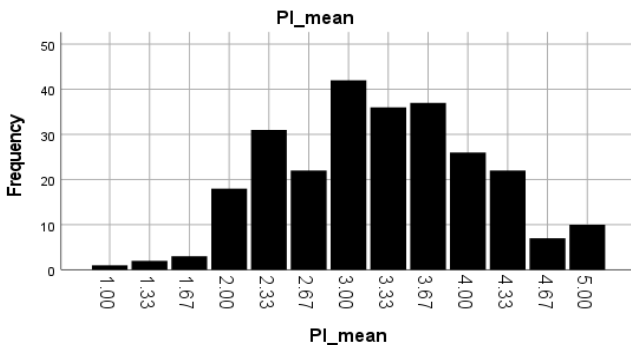


Figure 2. Frequency distribution of the consumer purchase intention when the ads are nostalgic

Reliability Analysis

The questionnaire of this paper was though adopted from earlier research paper (Table 3) which have had done reliability test, we have used SPSS 27.0 version to obtain reliability and validity of the item questions to evaluate consistency (Nunnally, 1978). Cronbach's alpha measures the degree to which items on a scale from the questionnaire correlate with one another, implying whether the result indicates a single underlying structure. A higher  $\alpha$  coefficient suggests more correlation among the items, indicating that they are related to the identical underlying concept or trait.

Cronbach's alpha analysis provides researchers with the result of the measurement of the instrument's dependability (Bland & Altman, 1997). When the items are highly interrelated, it demonstrates that there is a high  $\alpha$  coefficient with good internal consistency and reliability in the scale. A low  $\alpha$  coefficient indicates a low correlation among the items, presenting concerns about the coherence and reliability of the scale (Streiner, 2003). Methodologists propose an  $\alpha$  coefficient of 0.65 to 0.8 or higher for good internal consistency (George & Mallery, 2003). Table 4 shows  $\alpha$  coefficient for both nostalgic songs (0.744) and purchase intention (0.652) is higher than the cut-off value of 0.65. It shows that the elements from the scales hold a significant degree of variance, supporting the idea that they represent the desired construct reliably and consistently.

Table 3. Scale development

Variables	Authors	Number of Items	Likert Scales
			(1= Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly agree)
Nostalgic songs	Teodor Gergov & Stamos Stoyanova (2013)	4	5
Purchase Intention	Teodor Gergov & Stamos Stoyanova (2013)	3	5

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis is a method for categorizing similar

variables or item questions into dimensions, revealing hidden variables or constructs. Factor loading is a correlation coefficient that measures the relationship between a symptom

and a factor. Its principal purpose is to extract many individual items into a smaller set of dimensions. This analytical method helps reveal variable collections, unveil patterns with large datasets, and build connections between multiple variables.

For this investigation, we used IBM SPSS 27.0 to conduct principal axis factor analysis with varimax rotation to investigate the underlying structure of the nine items measuring attitudes toward nostalgic songs and purchase intention. The criteria of a minimum eigenvalue of 1.0 was used for factor identification. The initial element is an independent variable that reflects consumers' interactions with nostalgic songs. The second element represents the dependent variable, which indicates how the consumers'

purchase intentions are influenced by nostalgic songs. One of the item questions (NS\_3) from nostalgic songs and other one from purchase intention (PI\_1) did not fall under the same factor, hence was eliminated for further consideration. Table 4 shows the reliability scores and factor loadings, whereas table 5 illustrates Mean, Standard deviation, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) as well as Composite Reliability (CR). Participants rated a 5-point Likert scale regarding the item statements about the relationship between nostalgic songs and purchase intention, with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 5 indicating strong agreement. The dependability and factor loading of the scale items are shown below.

**Table 4.** Factor loads of the items on the Factors after Rotation & Cronbach's Alpha

Code	Items	1	2	Cr- Alpha
NS_1	I love to listen to past/old songs often.	<b>.632</b>	.119	<b>.744</b>
NS_2	I am closely attached to past songs.	<b>.764</b>	.285	
NS_4	When I listen to old songs, I become full of positive emotions.	<b>.760</b>	.117	
NS_5	Listening to old songs makes me nostalgic most of the time.	<b>.796</b>	.032	
PI_2	The nostalgic songs inspire me for my future decisions.	.235	<b>.683</b>	
PI_3	The emotions related to the past are a big deal in my present feelings and choices.	.094	<b>.780</b>	
PI_4	I think my purchasing decisions are influenced by my past emotions and feelings.	.071	<b>.801</b>	

**Table 5.** Mean, Standard Deviation, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) & Composite Reliability (CR)

Variable	Items	Statistics			Composit Reliability (CR)
		Mean	Std.Dev	AVE	
Nostalgic songs	I love to listen to past/old songs often.	4.051	0.743	0.548	0.828
	I am closely attached to past songs.				
	When I listen to old songs I become full of positive emotions.				
	Listening to old songs makes me nostalgic most of the time.				
Purchase Intention	The nostalgic songs inspire me for my future decisions.	3.265	0.829	0.572	0.701
	The emotions related to the past are a big deal in my present feelings and choices.				
	I think my purchasing decisions are influenced by my past emotions and feelings.				

### Pearson Correlation Analysis

The Pearson correlation table plays a fundamental role in statistical research, providing valuable insights into the connections between variables in a dataset (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). It calculates correlation coefficients to demonstrate the strength and direction of linear relationships between pairs of variables. Correlations are essential in explanatory data analysis for revealing patterns, trends, and

links in the data. As an example, in marketing research, correlations between demographic factors and consumer behavior metrics may provide essential insights about target audience preferences and purchase behaviors. With coefficients ranging from -1 to 1, correlations at these extremes suggest strong positive or negative linear relationship, respectively, whilst correlations around zero indicate weak or insignificant interactions. In addition, the significance level (p-value) assigned to each correlation

coefficient defines its statistical significance. A correlation that is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) indicates a strong relationship between the variables (Field, 2013). A p-value below 0.05 implies that the observed relationship was unlikely to occur by chance alone. However, it is important to emphasize that correlation does not indicate causation, and other factors may impact the apparent relationships between variables (Field, 2013). Despite these limitations, the Pearson correlation table remains a valuable tool for research in a variety of fields, offering a systematic structure for examining and analyzing correlations within large datasets. The Pearson Correlation Analysis (table 6) revealed that there is a significant relationship ( $p < 0.001$ ) between nostalgic songs and purchase intention. The positive correlation coefficient value (0.348) indicates that there is a positive linear relationship between nostalgic songs and purchase intention. In other words, an increase in the value of nostalgic songs will increase the value of purchase intention.

**Table 6.** The Pearson Correlation analysis of scale items.

		NS_avg	PI_avg
NS_avg	Pearson Correlation	1	.648**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	257	257
PI_avg	Pearson Correlation	.648**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	257	257

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## V. DISCUSSION

In recent times, there has been a considerable increase in marketing strategies that use nostalgic elements. It helps the consumers to evoke old memories from the past and leads the positive perceptions of related products as we stated earlier in this paper. Nostalgia adopts various forms in the marketing field, including music, retro product designs, and vintage phrases, all of which are deliberately used to increase engagement between consumers and brands or products while advertising. Earlier research done by Chou and Singhal (2019) have drawn very similar conclusion which is align with our research results. Our research result illustrated that nostalgic marketing can positively influence consumer purchase intention in Korea. In other words, if consumers encounter any commercial with nostalgic songs, that connect them emotionally due to their familiar songs or melodies, they are more likely to generate a positive attitude towards the product. Furthermore, it can also create a sense of credibility and authenticity of the brand value as it connects with consumer personal experiences and memories. This sense of credibility and trustworthiness can be extremely valuable in the highly competitive market in South Korea. Apart from these, current study provides a thorough understanding of

how nostalgic marketing methods impact purchase intention from Korean consumers more especially in the age group of 15 years to 30 years which occupied around 85% of this researched sampled (Table 1).

In the independent variable of the questionnaire, we examined the consumers' impressions of the nostalgic songs. Participants responded with good perspectives towards the nostalgic songs, demonstrating a positive emotional connection with the old songs. On top of that, the study investigates how the emotional connection of nostalgic music affects consumer behavior, especially purchase intentions. Taking that into consideration, the dependent variables of the questionnaire evaluate the participants' purchase intentions when they are exposed to nostalgic songs. Results of this study found that when consumers are exposed to familiar tunes, it brings them back in time, reminiscing polished memories and experiences led to positively influence consumers' willingness to make purchases. Appealing to these nostalgic feelings, marketers may apply the emotional resonance of nostalgic music to increase customer purchase intentions.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The finding of this study shows that, there is a substantial relationship between nostalgic songs and Korean consumers' purchase intention which was hypothesized nostalgic songs bring more positive effects in terms of consumer purchase intention than non-nostalgic songs. The influence that nostalgic songs bring was reflectively described in the survey using two variables from the questionnaire. The first variable included the independent questions regarding consumer's perspectives of old songs that evoke nostalgia, and the second variable included the dependent questions about purchase intentions when involving nostalgic songs. Table 2 shows that 78.21% (201) of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that they love to listen to old songs often and 83.3% (214) of the respondents said that listening to old songs makes them nostalgic most of the time. On the other hand, when it comes to purchase intention 71.21% (183) of the respondents agreed that the emotions related to the past are a big deal in his/her present feeling and choices. Whereas approximately half of the respondents think their purchase decision is influenced by his past emotions and feelings. Only 27.24% (70) of them disagreed with this and 25.29% (65) were not sure about the influence of emotions and past feeling in purchase decision. Figure 2 and Figure 3 also clearly shows the majority of the respondent perceive that nostalgic songs have influence on purchase decision. The study's target participants are Korean with the majority being between the ages of 21 and 25 which represents university students. Given the fact that consumers who are in their 20s are the center of economic trends (Park et al., 2009), most responses came from active consumers. The results that are found from the factor analysis and Pearson correlation analysis revealed a

statistically significant relationship between nostalgic songs and purchase intentions, emphasizing the beneficial implications for the marketing field.

## VII. LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

### Limitation

Since nostalgia is triggered by unique factors from individuals, nostalgia may differ from one another. This may be a typical observation in research that involves nostalgia as the studies keep showing that it is subjective and personal. Thus, even slight variations in methodologies might result in different consequences due to the subjective nostalgic experiences of individuals. The circumstance that possibly limits this study is that there is less clarification on the term "old songs". Each participant may identify nostalgia with different songs from their past, depending on the unique life influences that they experienced. Even within the same age group, people may reminisce about music from different eras whichever emphasizes nostalgia and good memories over personal preferences. Therefore, more specific criteria and definitions of "old songs" are required. On top of that, this study decided to collect data from all over Korea by conducting an online survey. However, the main respondents were university students and lie in the age group of 20 to 25 years. Hence the result of this study may not be generalized to the whole population. Having a wider range of samples from all other age groups may give a more comprehensive understanding of the population.

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