

Examining the Influence of Nostalgic Versus Informative Advertising on Persuasion Process and Brand Attachment

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Abstract

Nostalgia is actually a concept with great interest for researchers in different domains such as marketing. Several studies underlined the potential that nostalgia has for persuasive advertising. Despite theoretical relevance, little is known about the real impact of nostalgic advertising style on brand attachment. This research investigates the impact of the ad capacity to evoke nostalgia on persuasion process and brand attachment in the food industry. To test the relationship between variables, an experiment including two different advertisement style was conducted on 360 individuals in Tunisia. We used structural equation modelling to test the conceptual model. The results indicated that nostalgic ad has some more favorable responses of consumers than the informative ad. Also, it appears that past orientation has a positive impact on nostalgia proneness that can explain the positive reaction of the individuals to the nostalgic ad and brand attachment. This research provides empirical insight into the brand attachment literature and can be considered as a source of information for managers who wish to target consumers through nostalgic persuasive communication. Limitations and future research directions are stipulated.

Keywords: ad-evoked nostalgia, nostalgia proneness, brand attachment, persuasion process, temporal orientation, informative advertising

1. Introduction

Nowadays, retro marketing has become an effective marketing tool allowing the purchase of a variety of new products while still referring somehow to the past (Youn & Jin, 2017). Nostalgia appeared in some various domains such as literature, sociology and marketing (e.g., Davis, 1979; Doane & Hodges, 1987; Holbrook, 1993; Stern, 1992). However, the use of nostalgia in the marketing domain still in an embryonic phase (Wen et al., 2019). In fact, even with the growing use of nostalgia in advertising literature, few studies have explored the effects on the persuasion process and brand attachment despite the recognition of its persuasive power by some researchers (Marchegiani & Phau, 2010).

The majority of researches have been limited to print ads and verbal or visual nostalgic cues (e.g., Marchegiani & Phau, 2010; Muehling, 2013; Muehling & Pascal, 2011, 2012; Muehling et al., 2014; Pérrusson, 2003; Pascal et al., 2002). Some academics explored the importance of old songs to evoke different nostalgic feelings (Chou & Singhal, 2017) while others underlined the relationship with several concepts such as brand image, charitable donations behaviors and recently, online marketing (Hallegatte & Marticotte, 2014). The widespread use of nostalgia was correlated with nostalgia proneness to explain the consumer's behavior (Holbrook, 1993; Holbrook & Schindler, 1991, 1994, 1996, 2003). Thus, academics have explored the product or brand relationships with several types of nostalgia (Stern, 1992), as well as consumption preferences and sensitivity to nostalgic advertising (Sierra & Shaun, 2007; Muehling & Pascal, 2011).

With the development of theoretical research on nostalgia, the association with brand attachment became one of the hot spots in the marketing field. In fact, some scholars pointed out the existence of causal relationship between nostalgia and brand attachment (Fournier, 1994; Baker & Kennedy, 1994; Heilbrunn, 2001; Kessous, 2008; Kessous et al., 2015; Wen et al., 2019; Li et al., 2019). However, the literature revealed a few researches studying the impact of nostalgia on consumers in the Tunisian context, but the consumer's responses and brand

attachment were ignored (Ben Hassine & Karaa, 2004; Lefi & Gharbi, 2011). Accordingly, this study seeks to answer the two following research questions:

RQ1: How does evoked nostalgia in advertising affects the consumer's response and brand attachment?

RQ2: What is the real impact of nostalgic ad vs informative ad style on consumers' behavior?

This article will be organized as follow: In the next section, the literature review related to nostalgia, brand attachment and persuasive advertising will be presented. Then, we will outline the hypotheses and will present the methodology used. After that, we will present the main findings. At the end, we will discuss the results and will conclude with the theoretical, managerial implications and futures directions.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Nostalgia

Some authors defined nostalgia as a preference toward objects from the past (Holbrook & Schindler, 1991), a desire for the past or a taste for possessions and activities from days gone by (Holbrook, 1993; Baker & Kennedy, 1994). Other authors considered nostalgia as a positive feeling towards the past (Holak & Havlena, 1998) allowing the identification of the individual present (Summers et al., 2001) or an emotional feeling produced by thoughts associated with an idealized past (Madrigal & Boerstler, 2007). Moreover, it seems that nostalgia is a bittersweet affective reaction (Divard & Robert-Demontrond, 1997). In the same time, other scholars tried to qualify nostalgia as "a positive feeling, emotion, or mood produced by reflection on things (objects, persons, experiences, ideas) associated with the past" (Gineikiene, 2013; Muehling et al., 2014). Though, nostalgia is positive for some individuals, but can leads to some negative feelings such as loneliness (Sedikides et al., 2008; Wildschut et al., 2006).

Numerous researches in marketing field focused on defining, measuring, categorizing, analyzing and testing nostalgia for a better understanding of consumer's response to nostalgic advertising (e.g., Baker & Kennedy, 1994; Havlena & Holak, 1991; Stern, 1992; Pérrusson, 2003; Kessous, 2008; Lefi & Gharbi, 2011; Muehling & Pascal, 2012; Marchegiani & Phau, 2013; Chou & Singal, 2017; Scola & Gordon, 2018; Srivastava et al., 2018; Li et al., 2018). Through the literature, it appears that nostalgia has been used in several advertising messages and through several media such as television, radio or even the press while attempting to intentionally arouse nostalgia through images, lyrics and/or nostalgic music (Chou & Singhal, 2017).

Above all, some researches demonstrated the positive effects of nostalgia-themed advertising on consumers' responses to the brand (Marchegiani & Phau, 2010; Muehling & Pascal, 2011). Although, Unger et al. (1991) wondered about the elements of the ad that could cause nostalgia. There results established a preliminary understanding of advertising stimuli and highlighted six dimensions respectively past family experiences cues, good ancient days, temporal symbolism, early music, early advertising figures or brands and patriotism. As such, these authors classified friends as the second most common source of nostalgia and underlined the importance of places and events on the nostalgic experience. So that, nostalgia can also include the reminiscence of past events such as birthdays (Wildschut et al., 2006).

2.2 Nostalgia Proneness and Past-Present Contrast

Some scholars such as Holbrook and Schindler (1991) focused on the comprehension of nostalgia proneness defined as psychological trait, which can vary according to the consumers, regardless of time or age. Moreover, Reisenwitz et al. (2004) defined nostalgia proneness as consumers' "*inherent tendency to experience nostalgic feelings*" (p. 58). This propensity to feel nostalgic more or less frequently (Cheung et al., 2017) is simply an aspect of an individual's lifestyle, or even a general characteristic of consumption. Furthermore, it came out that nostalgia has an impact on the preferences of consumers toward products of the past (Holbrook, 1993; Holbrook & Schindler, 1996). This is consistent with the positive impact of nostalgia proneness on the intent to purchase products related to the consumer's personal past (Sierra & McQuitty, 2007).

Thus, scholars qualified nostalgia proneness as a potential variable that modifies the behavioral response to a stimulus linked to the past. In addition, existing marketing researches have largely explored the relationship between time orientation and nostalgia proneness. Drawing on Goulding (2001) research, individuals with high level of nostalgia proneness will desire products from the past that is always considered as more beautiful than it actually was.

According to Argawal and Tripathi (1980), the temporal orientation of an individual defined as his tendency to visualize one of the three time zones: past, present and future orientation. This temporal orientation depends on consumer age and gender (Klineberg, 1968; Lessing, 1968; Kessous, 2009). That being said, the temporal

orientation can also vary in its content under the influence of cultural differences (Bergadaà, 1989). Though academics usually distinguish four framework times (“traditional time”; “modern time”; “post-modern time” and “emerging time”) requiring specific consumption behaviors (Bergadaà, 1988, 1989, 1990, 2005; Grant, 2003).

Traditional time is the referent for individuals with a nostalgic temperament because the present still filled with traditions that came from the past, but also from the future. Indeed, Spears and Amos (2012) suggested that the temporal orientation towards the past is not automatically opposed to the present and the future orientation. In the same perspective, Batcho (1995) argued that strongly nostalgic people evaluate the time when they were young more favorably than people who are weakly nostalgic. To a better understanding of the temporal orientation, Todorova (2010) said that young people associate nostalgia with a process of acceptance of the contemporary era.

Hence the first hypothesis is formulated as follow:

H1: Past orientation (as opposed to present orientation) has a positive effect on nostalgia proneness

Despite the rich debates on nostalgia proneness literature, past research offers little knowledge about its impact on the consumers’ response to the ad. For this aim, Pérrusson (2003) introduced an important variable that will help to a better understanding of the mechanism of persuasion, which is the ad capacity to evoke nostalgia and to get nostalgic feelings. Accordingly, H2 was formulated as follows:

H2: Nostalgia proneness has a direct impact on the ad capacity to evoke nostalgia

2.3 The Ad Capacity to Evoke Nostalgia vs Emotional Reaction

Interestingly, past research pointed out the importance of verifying that the ad is really generating nostalgia. The concern here is to distinguish between nostalgic emotions caused by the ad and those related to retrieving a happy memory that has nothing to do with the ad. In fact, Baker and Kennedy (1994) argued that consumer with positive attitude towards the past will be more sensitive to nostalgia stimuli. Therefore, what can be gathered from the previous studies is that the pleasant nature of nostalgia has a positive impact on the affective reactions, beliefs toward Ad, attitude toward Ad, and purchase intention of the promoted brand.

However, the unpleasantness of nostalgia was ignored. This aspect refers to unsatisfied desire to return to a bygone era and not the nostalgia for unhappy events (Pérrusson, 2003). We distinguish between the nostalgic affective reactions that result from the nostalgic connection to the ad (Kessous & Roux, 2006), and the emotional reactions corresponding to the unsatisfied desire to revive a bygone era. So that, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H3. a: The ad’s capacity to evoke nostalgia has a positive impact on the intensity of nostalgic affective reactions.

H3. b: The ad’s capacity to evoke nostalgia has a positive impact on the emotional reactions.

2.4 Persuasion Process

A growing number of research has supported the idea that nostalgic ads (compared to informative ads) are effective in evoking emotions and affective responses (Muehling et al., 2014; Muehling & Pascal, 2011; Bambauer-Sachse & Gierl, 2009; Marchegiani & Phau, 2011). So that, it appears that a nostalgic ad will have a positive effect on the attitude towards the ad, towards the brand and the purchase intentions (Pascal et al., 2002). These relationships and links have also been demonstrated by Pérrusson (2003) and Boulbry (2004).

Besides, other scholars such as Homer and Yoon (1992) have shown that the emotional reaction generated by the ad will have a positive impact on the beliefs toward the ad. Furthermore, Pérrusson (2003) assumed that the intensity of the emotional reactions felt towards a nostalgic ad is greater than those felt towards another style of advertising. Indeed, even if the person does not feel nostalgia, his reaction to this type of message is better than his reaction to other advertising styles such as the informative ad that shows the product features and benefits rather than using emotion (Gerasymenko, 2012).

As such, we formulated the following hypotheses:

H4.a: The nostalgic affective reactions have a positive impact on (a) Beliefs toward the ad (b) then attitude toward the ad (c) attitude toward the brand (d) purchase intention (e) and brand attachment

H4.b: Emotions for nostalgic ad (as opposed to informative ad) is more likely to produce favorable impact on (a) Beliefs toward the ad (b) then attitude toward the ad (c) which formed attitude toward the brand (d) purchase intention (e) and brand attachment

Based on Batra and Stayman’s (1990) emotional transfer model, we expect that:

H5: Beliefs toward the ad will have a direct impact on attitude toward the ad (b) which is more likely to have direct impact on attitude toward the brand (c) generating a direct impact on purchase intention (d) and brand attachment

2.5 Brand Attachment

The emergence of the attachment concept was in psychology field. Initially, it has been linked to mother and child relationship in order to understand the separation effect. Consistent with Aron and Westbay (1996) generalizations, attachment represented the emotional connection between a person and a specific object (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998). Some scholars such as Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) suggested that brand attachment is nothing more than a psychic investment in an object or may be a long-term emotional connection to a brand (McQueen et al., 1993; Feldwick, 1996; Heilbrunn, 1996; Lacoeyuilhe, 1997; Ratier, 2003). That said, attachment theories are based on the study of the interpersonal relationships of human beings who seek to form strong emotional bonds with other people or objects (Maissoneuve, 1966; Bowlby, 1969).

For example, Wen et al. (2019) said that the consumer shows strong emotions toward the brand that produce a desire for the brand. This brand-self connection reveals how the consumers are cognitively and affectively related to a brand (Escalas, 2004; Hemsley-Brown & Alnawas, 2016). Existing literature shown many attempt to clarify the dimensions of brand attachment. In fact, Cristau (2001) stated that there is an affective duality of attachment, as being a strong and lasting emotional relationship with two components respectively psychological dependence and friendship.

Many scholars emphasized the importance of nostalgia for brand attachment. Some of them introduced the concept of nostalgic attachment. For example, Fournier and Yao (1997) believed that nostalgic attachment is one dimension of the brand attachment. This idea was closely re-examined by Belaïd and Lacoeyuilhe (2005). According to them, nostalgic attachment is nothing more than an emotional factor of brand attachment. Based on the various theoretical findings, it is widely accepted that there is a significant relationship between nostalgia and brand attachment, but the empirical studies still in an embryonic stage.

Besides, the relationship between the ad capacity to evoke nostalgia and brand attachment seems to be exploratory since the causal relation has not been tested previously. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H6: There is a significant relation between ad capacity to evoke nostalgia and brand attachment.

The conceptual model presented in Figure 1 was proposed based on the literature review and the hypotheses formulated.

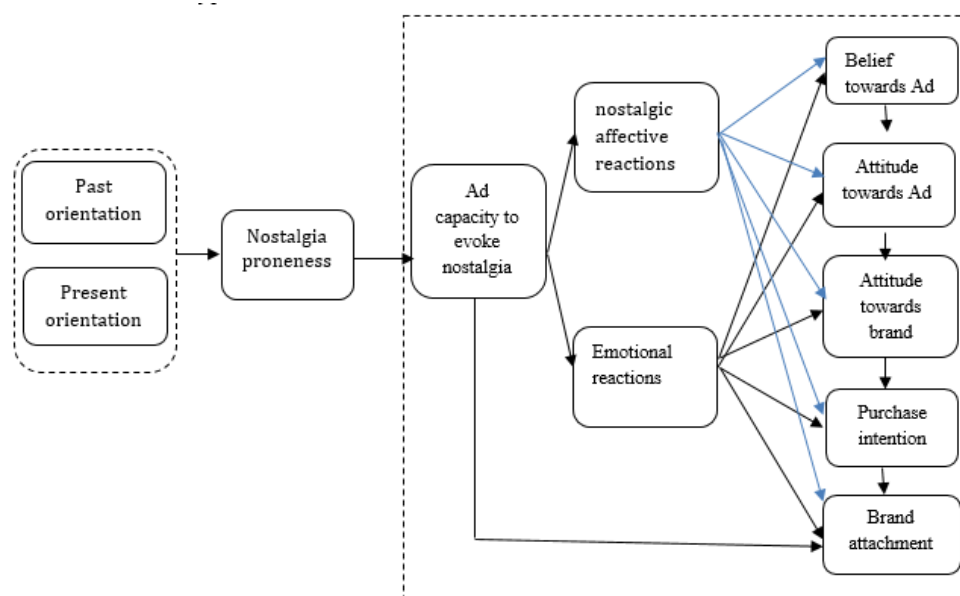


Figure 1. Conceptual model

3. Methodology

The conceptual model was tested using an experiment on 2 television ads of Tunisian food products. The participants were randomly chosen. In general, it is recommended to use an unknown brand and ad in order to generate attitudes based on the information of the ad (Brown & Stayman, 1992). However, in our study, we try to examine the relationship between evoked nostalgia and brand attachment that requires a consumer experience with the brand. That's why we decided to choose a well-known Tunisian brands and Ads.

3.1 Procedure

The experiment was conducted in a special room well equipped. Participants had been briefed about the study. At the beginning, each experimental group of 7 participants were invited to respond to a couple of general questions regarding nostalgia proneness and time orientation. After watching the ad, participants filled out the questionnaire and were thanked and dismissed.

3.2 Sampling

The population of this study is composed of persons willing to participate to the experiment. That being said, we judged that the most efficient way to access the population of the study was through a random sampling method. Nunnally (1978) and Schwab (1980) recommended that the ideal sample should be 10 times the number of items. But, Hinkin (1995) indicated that a sample ratio of 1/5 is sufficient. Consistent with the results of a meta-analytical study, DeVillis (1991) found that a sample of 300 respondents is generally acceptable to apply most statistical methods. Accordingly, 360 respondents were judged appropriate for our study.

3.3 Pre-test

The experimental conditions were pretested with a random sample of 105 respondents before the main data collection. The reliability and validity of the scales were tested. Likewise, some items were deleted after the exploratory factor analysis and others needed to be reformulated to ensure a better comprehension. Based on the obtained results, many items of the initial scale were revised.

3.4 Measures

We used existing scales on the literature. Following previous researches, past orientation was measured using Usunier and Valette-Florence (2007) scale and completed by the one-dimensional scale of Urien (1998) for the present orientation. Those scales have a good validity and reliability in their original context. Numerous scales were found in the literature measuring the nostalgia proneness. Definitely, the most known is Holbrook's Nostalgia Index (NI) (1993) presented in long version (20 items) and short version (8 items). But this scale has been criticized because it didn't measure nostalgia proneness directly and has serious problems related to reliability when changing the context (Shields & Johnson, 2016). For these reasons, we preferred the Pérrusson (2003) combined with Boulbry (2004) scales.

In the same perspective, the ad capacity to evoke nostalgia was also measured using Pérrusson (2003) and Boulbry (2004) scales. Emotional reactions and nostalgic affective reactions were measured with Derbaix (1995) scale. Belief toward ad was measured with items retrieved from Derbaix (1995) scale. Then, the attitude toward ad and toward the brand were measured based on items retrieved from Fine Falcy (1997) scale.

To measure the purchase intention variable, Helme-Guizon (1997) recommended the use of one item "*This ad made you want to buy the brand: definitely/definitely not*". Finally, the brand attachment was measured using five items retrieved from Belaid and Lacoëuilhe (2005) on a likert-scale of five points from "1" strongly disagree to "5" strongly agree.

All the scales were translated to Arabic language. In fact, Fehri (2004) argued that the scales translated to Arabic language gives more satisfactory results in the Tunisian context. That said, we decided to use the method of double translation widely used in cross-cultural research. All items have been translated by two experts and then, they have undergone a re-translation from Arabic to French language. Furthermore, the two version of the measurement scales were evaluated by three professors of Marketing recognized by their cross-cultural researches and they confirmed that there is no difference between the original and translated scales.

3.5 Main Data Collection

The questionnaire included four parts. In the first part, respondents were encouraged to spontaneously express their degree of agreement or disagreement with items related to nostalgia proneness and temporal orientation. Afterwards, the respondents were invited to watch the nostalgic ad before starting to answer the questions in Part II. This part begins with instructions concerning the semantic differential scale used to measure beliefs towards the ad, attitude toward the brand and the ad. The remaining questions used a five-point Likert-type scale.

In the last part, participants watched the informative ad and answered the same questions as part II. In order to avoid the contamination effect, the order of the items on each scale has been changed. At the end, the respondent gave some personal information regarding age, occupation and gender (part IV). Each participant who completed the questionnaire received a small gift. Table 1 provides key demographic information about the sample.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics

Details		Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Female	150	41.6
	Male	210	58.3
Age	Less than 25 years old	61	16.9
	25–44 years old	118	32.7
	45–64 years old	137	38.0
	Above 65 years old	42	11.6
Occupational status	Employed	145	40.2
	Unemployed	74	20.5
	Student	66	18.3
	Retired	75	21.0
Sample size (n)		360	100

4. Empirical Results

4.1 Statistical Approach

The data were analyzed in two stages. First, we used SPSS 22.0 to perform reliability analysis, exploratory factor analysis and correlation analysis. Second, we used structural equation modeling (SEM) technique performed by Amos 21.0 to examine hypotheses in the proposed conceptual model. Table 2 shows the results of the exploratory factor analysis using the principal component extraction method and the Varimax rotation technique.

Table 2. Constructs reliability and factor loadings

Constructs	Factor 1 loadings	Factor 2 loadings	KMO	Jöreskog's rho (ρ)	Cronbach's alpha(α)	The Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Present orientation			0.799	0,647	0.873	0.731
PRO1	0.783					
PRO2	0.894					
PRO3	0.914					
PRO4	0.844					
Past Orientation			0.657	0,843	0.831	0.644
PSO1		0.777				
PSO2		0.880				
PSO3		0.708				
Nostalgia proneness			0.756		0,804	0.572
NSP1		0.829		0.812		
NSP2		0.713				
NSP3		0.856				
NSP4		0.752				
NSP5	0.874			0.859	0,804	
NSP6	0.805					
NSP7	0.823					
NSP8	0.769					
Ad capacity to evoke nostalgia			0.909	0,949	0.949	0.704
ACN1	0.931					
ACN2	0.914					
ACN3	0.897					
ACN4	0.874					
ACN5	0.869					
ACN6	0.848					
ACN7	0.770					
ACN8	0.764					
Nostalgic affective reactions			0.666		0.957	0.887
NRC1	0.954			0.957	0.957	
NRC2	0.952					
NRC3	0.949					
NRC4		0.850		0.886	0.759	
NRC5		0.764				
NRC6		0.761				
NRC7		0.671				
Emotional reactions			0.901		0.959	0.762
EMR1	0.686			0.950	0.959	
EMR2	0.867					
EMR3	0.771					
EMR4	0.866					
EMR5	0.902					
EMR6	0.719					
EMR7	0.859					
EMR8	0.877					
EMR9	0.874					
EMR10	0.879					
EMR11		0.856		0.797	0.797	0.564
EMR12		0.826				
EMR13		0.856				
Belief toward ad			0.909	0.933	0.934	0.696
Bad 1	0.842					
Bad2	0.867					
Bad3	0.866					
Bad4	0.903					
Bad5	0.885					
Bad6	0.853					
Attitude toward ad			0.742	0.826	0.890	0.697
Aad1	0.813					
Aad2	0.801					
Aad3	0.889					
Aad4	0.819					
Aad5	0.850					
Attitude toward brand			0.600		0.980	0.705
Ab1	0.991					
Ab2	0.991					
Brand attachment			0.883	0.943	0.944	0.780
Bat1	0.902					
Bat2	0.866					
Bat3	0.939					
Bat4	0.943					
Bat5	0.879					

Nevertheless, discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the square root (AVE) of each construct with its correlations with other constructs as indicated by Fornell and Larcker (1981). The results showed that the discriminant validity of all the constructs was satisfied. In fact, all the values in the diagonal form are greater than 0.5 for the variance extracted (AVE) of the measured constructs. Also, the square root AVE of each construct was superior to the correlation between that construct and any other construct in the model (see Table 3 below).

Table 3. Test of Discriminant Validity – Fornell-Larcker criterion

construct	Bd att	Ab	Ad cap	B ad	Prt Or	Ps Or	Nos P	Nos rec	Emo R1	Emo R2
Bd att	0,780									
Ab	0,118	0,705								
Ad cap	0,249	0,291	0,704							
B ad	0,117	0,617	0,320	0,696						
Prt Or	0,009	0	0,154	0,032	0,731					
Ps Or	0,002	0	0	0,006	0,004	0,644				
Nos P	0,285	0,118	0,277	0,168	0,028	0,020	0,572			
Nos rec	0,102	0	0,186	0,021	0,014	0,011	0,145	0,887		
Emo R1	0,184	0,067	0,239	0,155	0,044	0,020	0,206	0,316	0,762	
Emo R2	0,071	0,091	0,187	0,063	0,018	0,003	0,108	0,298	0,226	0,564

Note. Prt Or, present orientation; Ps Or, past orientation; Nos P, nostalgia proneness; Ad cap, ad capacity to evoke nostalgia; ER, emotional reaction; B ad, belief toward ad; Aad, attitude toward ad; Ab, attitude toward brand; B att, brand attachment.

4.2 Structural Model and Hypotheses Testing

Structural equation modelling (SEM) were conducted to support the proposed model and test the hypotheses. The assessment of measurement and structural model was based on numerous indices, including chi-square test statistics, comparative fit index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and the standardized root mean squared error (SRMR). The fitting indices of the structural model are as follows: $\chi^2 = 4569,983$ ($p < 0.001$); $\chi^2/df = 5,655$; RMSEA = 0.077, SRMR = 0.085; CFI = 0.741; TLI = 0.707; BIC = 5568,254/ (7382,265). Some indices are inferior to the acceptable limit. This can be explained by the complexity of the model and the sample size. The overall fit of the measurement model to data was acceptable for the nostalgic ad. All composite reliability (CR) values were greater than the minimum criteria of 0.70, confirming convergent validity (Hair et al., 2010).

Concerning the informative ad, the fitting indices of the structural model are as follows: $\chi^2 = 2632.370$ ($p < 0.000$); $\chi^2/df = 9.538$; RMSEA = 0.156, SRMR = 0.105; CFI = 0.793; TLI = 0.756; BIC = 3076.828 (2066.23). Some indices are inferior to the acceptable limit. This can be explained also by the complexity of the model and the sample size. The overall fit of the measurement model to data was acceptable for the informative ad. All composite reliability (CR) values were greater than the minimum criteria of 0.70, confirming convergent validity (Hair et al., 2010). Thus, it was deemed appropriate to test the hypothesized paths (Table 4).

Table 4. Testing research hypotheses with structural equation modeling

Causal relationship	Estimate (γ)	S.E.	C.R.	P	Empirical remarks
Past orientation → nostalgia proneness	0.528	0.082	6.440	**	H1 confirmed
Present orientation → nostalgia proneness	0.210	0.064	3.465	**	
nostalgia proneness → ad capacity to evoke nostalgia	0.554	0.066	8.343	**	H2 confirmed
Ad capacity to evoke nostalgia → nostalgic affective reactions	0.814	0.040	9.959	**	H3. a confirmed
Ad capacity to evoke nostalgia → emotional reaction	-0.445	0.039	-8.143	**	H3. b rejected
nostalgic affective reactions → beliefs toward the ad	0.282	0.060	5.862	**	H4.a confirmed
nostalgic affective reactions → attitude toward the ad	0.148	0.053	2.801	0.005	
nostalgic affective reactions → attitude toward the brand	0.602	0.115	8.525	**	
nostalgic affective reactions → purchase intention	0.218	0.100	4.331	**	
nostalgic affective reactions → brand attachment	0.549	0.054	10.111	**	
Beliefs toward the ad → attitude toward the ad	0.635	0.076	6.624	**	H5 confirmed
attitude toward the ad → attitude toward the brand	0.678	0.180	6.144	**	
attitude toward the brand → purchase intention	0.555	0.054	10.350	**	
purchase intention → brand attachment	0.295	0.077	2.936	0.003	
ad capacity to evoke nostalgia → brand attachment	0.696	0.119	5.870	**	H6 confirmed

Note. SE: standard estimation; CR: critical ratio; ** (significant at $p < 0.05$).

The results confirm a significant direct and positive effect between past/present orientation and nostalgia proneness ($t = 6.440$ and $p = 0.000$; $t = 3.465$ and $p = 0.000$) and the regression coefficient between these two variables is respectively 0.528 and 0.210. These results supported H1. Likewise, nostalgia proneness has a direct impact on the ad capacity to evoke nostalgia. Table 4 indicated that $t = 8.343$ and $p = 0.000$. Thus, the nostalgia proneness will help the consumer to a better response to ad using nostalgia. As expected, this result supported H2.

Similarly, a significant structural link was found between the ad capacity to evoke nostalgia and nostalgic affective reactions generated by the ad ($t = 9.959$ and $p = 0.000$) and we confirm the hypothesis H3. a. Similarly, the structural link between the ad capacity to evoke nostalgia and emotional reactions is significant ($t = -8.143$ and $p = 0.000$) and the regression coefficient between these two variables is equal to -0.445. We notice that the effect is direct but it is negative. Hypothesis H3.b is rejected. This result can be explained by the fact that the respondent who doesn't feel nostalgia connection to the ad will have a negative emotional reaction referring to a recall of negative memories related to the past.

In the same perspective, results shown the positive impact of the nostalgic affective reactions and the different elements of the persuasion process confirming the hypothesis H4. a.

In line with the results on Table 3, three interactions were found between beliefs toward the ad and attitude toward the ad ($t = 6.624$, $p = 0.000$), attitude toward the ad and attitude toward the brand ($t = 6.144$, $p = 0.000$), attitude toward the brand and purchase intention ($t = 10.350$, $p = 0.000$), purchase intention and brand attachment ($t = 2.936$, $p = 0.003$). Consistent with the literature review, the hypothesis H5 is supported.

Likewise, a relationship was also found between the ad capacity to evoke nostalgia and brand attachment ($t = 5.870$, $p = 0.000$). As projected, the evoked nostalgia has a positive impact on the brand attachment. This finding supported the hypothesis H6.

In order to test the intensity of consumers' response to nostalgic ad, we compared the results issued from two ads (nostalgic ad vs informative ad). Results are shown on the following Table 5.

Table 5. Hypothetical path coefficient sources of the nostalgic vs informative structural model

Ad type	The relationship between latent variables	Estimate (γ)	S.E.	C.R.	P
Nostalgic ad	Emotional reaction → Beliefs toward the nostalgic ad	0.878	0.155	10.321	**
	Emotional reaction → attitude toward the nostalgic ad	0.254	0.150	2.453	0.014
	Emotional reaction → attitude toward the brand	1.287	0.355	8.608	**
	Emotional reaction → purchase intention	0.945	0.278	9.731	**
	Emotional reaction → brand attachment	0.420	0.053	6.280	**
Informative ad	Emotional reaction → Beliefs toward the informative ad	0.653	0.062	13.242	**
	Emotional reaction → attitude toward the informative ad	0.233	0.056	4.141	**
	Emotional reaction → attitude toward the brand	0.190	0.067	2.835	0.005
	Emotional reaction → purchase intention	0.436	0.068	6.383	**
	Emotional reaction → brand attachment	0.135	0.051	2.647	0.088

Note. SE: standard estimation; CR: critical ratio; ** (significant at $p < 0.05$).

Based on those results, all the persuasive process was influenced positively with the emotional reactions. Thus, the structural links between variables are all significant at $p < 0.05$. Furthermore, the positive impact of the emotional reactions on beliefs toward the ad was stronger for the nostalgic ad ($\gamma_{\text{nostalgic}} = 0.878$) than the informative ad ($\gamma_{\text{informative}} = 0.653$).

Similarly, the impact of the emotional reaction on attitude toward the ad was stronger for the nostalgic ad ($\gamma_{\text{nostalgic}} = 0.254$) than the informative ad ($\gamma_{\text{informative}} = 0.233$). Likewise, as shown in Table 5, the impact of the emotional reaction on attitude toward the brand was stronger for the nostalgic ad ($\gamma_{\text{nostalgic}} = 1.287$) than the informative ad ($\gamma_{\text{informative}} = 0.190$).

Besides, the effect of the emotional reaction on purchase intention of the promoted brand was greater for the nostalgic ad ($\gamma_{\text{nostalgic}} = 0.945$) than the informative ad ($\gamma_{\text{informative}} = 0.436$).

Also, the effect of the emotional reaction on brand attachment for the brand using nostalgic ad was stronger and significant compared to the informative ad ($\gamma_{\text{nostalgic}} = 0.420$; $\gamma_{\text{informative}} = 0.131$). Collectively, these results supported the hypothesis H4. b.

That said, results confirmed that even if the consumer doesn't feel a nostalgic connection with the ad, the consumer responses to the ad using nostalgia are better than other style of advertisement.

5. Discussion

In this study, we tried to understand the relationship between the past/present orientation and nostalgia proneness as claimed by Kessous (2009) study. The relationship between nostalgia proneness and past temporal orientation has been established in accordance with the findings of Godbole et al. (2006) as well as Hallegatte (2013) and Hallegatte et al. (2018).

Our results gave empirical credibility to Grant's (2003) statement that the present is filled with traditions coming from the past. In addition, Cattaneo and Guerini (2012) said that nostalgia will have a strong effect on consumers' behavior if there is a combination of brands from the past with some adjustments to the present. This is what Brown et al. (2003) call "the insoluble paradox between two opposed desires of enjoying the advantages of progress and technology, and being reassured by products that recall the good old days when everything was simpler". Therefore, following the recommendations of Madrigal and Boerstler (2007), nostalgic ad for current products should not choose the reproduction of the past only, but his combination with the present to get the maximum of benefit from this advertising style.

Moreover, there is a positive and significant relationship between nostalgia proneness and the ad capacity to evoke nostalgia. This result is similar to the findings of Pérrusson (2003). Our study underlined the positive impact of ad capacity to evoke nostalgia and brand attachment. Referring to the literature review, we can explain this result by the desire of individuals to pass on their stories. Indeed, the ad used the simulated nostalgia or even nostalgia for tradition (Kessous, 2009). Thus, the brand attachment allows a timeless inscription of the memory. So that, the story associated with the brand or product must be perpetuated in time and space.

Drawing on the persuasion process, a positive and direct effect of nostalgic affective reactions on beliefs toward the ad, attitude toward the ad and attitude toward the brand were established. Thus, when consumer feels nostalgic, it will have a strong intention to buy the promoted brand. These results are in line with the findings of Mackenzie, Lutz and Belch (1986), Kessous and Roux (2010) and Hemsley - Brown (2023).

The findings further shown that the use of nostalgia on advertising have a significant and superior impact on consumer responses compared to informative advertising. Up to now, this point of view has been debated by many scholars but no empirical study verified this fact (Homer & Yoon, 1992; Ben Hassine & Karaa, 2004; Pascal et al., 2002; Muehling & Pascal, 2011). Likewise, our study demonstrated empirically that intensity of emotional reactions for a nostalgic ad are higher than those of informative ad.

Also, our findings concur with the literature and demonstrated the existence of a significant and positive link between belief toward the ad and attitude toward the ad (McKenzie et al., 1986; Burke & Edell, 1989; Pérrusson, 2003; Boulbry, 2004; Kessous, 2009). Besides, as emphasized by Sierra and McQuitty (2007), the attitude toward the ad will generate attitude toward the brand and purchase intention.

5.1 Research Implications and Conclusion

This research empirically enriches the understanding of the mechanism by which nostalgia influences consumers' responses and brand attachment as previously debated at the literature review level. It makes several significant contributions to theory development.

First, this research contributes to the understanding of nostalgia effects on the Tunisian consumer. It also creates a starting point from which future scholars can further explore other possible influences of nostalgia. Second, the combination between the past and present (Youn & Jin, 2017) has an impact on nostalgia proneness. Then, the significant and positive link between nostalgia proneness (individual variable) and the ad capacity to evoke nostalgia (reaction) was established for the first time in a Tunisian context.

Despite the importance of this two variables, scholars have tested their impact on consumer behavior separately. However, understanding the persuasion process requires testing these two variables together. This result explains the failure of some ads to trigger nostalgia despite the respect of some nostalgic stimuli like nostalgic scenes, vocals, music... This finding will help specialists for a better targeting of consumers.

Furthermore, this study deepens our scholarly understanding of evoked nostalgia and provides an empirical justification for the existence of relationship between evoked nostalgia and brand attachment.

Finally, this research confirmed the central influence of nostalgia on beliefs towards the ad, attitude towards the ad, attitude towards the brand, purchase intention, brand attachment and peripheral influence through the emotional reactions that explain the different variables of the persuasion process.

From a managerial perspective, the findings suggest that practitioners can use the personal nostalgia instead of focusing on the backward-looking dimension of nostalgia. It is not necessary for the ad using nostalgia to look old-fashioned. In fact, the ad must be able to evoke emotional and nostalgic affective reactions in order to get a positive influence on the persuasion process. The specialist can use many stimuli (music, voice, story, place). Also, nostalgia proneness come out as promising segmentation variable explaining how consumers can react to advertisement. Managers should take for granted that consumers with high propensity to nostalgia will be more attached to the promoted brand than other consumers.

5.2 Limitations and Future Research

This study has some limits. First, we used only one type of food product (yogurt) and one type of nostalgia (personal) to test brand attachment, which might cause some concern about the external validity of the research results. It is possible that the effects might be different if another type of product was selected.

Second, the conditions of the experiment were hypothetical and different from the real conditions. This is because all the participants have undergone forced exposure to the ad which can skew the results and weakens the possibility of generalization of the findings.

Third, the results issued from the random sample does not allow the generalization to the entire population and may lack representativeness. In fact, most of the participants in the survey were residents of only three governorates of Tunisia (total number is twenty-four governorates).

Future research can test the effects of the experimental variables using different demographic samples. Additionally, the age and gender may be added to examine the possible moderation on the persuasion process. Keeping up with the recommendation of Loveland et al. (2010), future research should consider other variable to a better understanding of nostalgia effect such as the need for stimulation, pessimism and the need to belong to the past period.

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Authors' contributions

Dr. Leila Lefi and Prof. Abderrazak Gharbi were responsible for study design. Dr. Leila Lefi was responsible for data collection and drafted the manuscript. Prof. Abderrazak Gharbi revised it. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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