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How nostalgia in advertising increases brand love: a cross-country study / Grappi, S., Pauwels-Delassus, V., Pedeliento, G., Zarantonello, L.. - In: THE JOURNAL OF PRODUCT & BRAND MANAGEMENT. - ISSN 1061-0421. - 33:7(2024), pp. 869-887. [10.1108/JPBM-12-2023-4857]

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28/06/2026 22:41

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Grappi, S., Pauwels, V., Pedeliento, G. and Zarantonello, L. (2024), "How nostalgia in advertising increases brand love: a cross-country study", *Journal of Product & Brand Management*.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-12-2023-4857>

which has been published in final form at <https://doi.org/10.1108/JPBM-12-2023-4857>

How nostalgia in advertising increases brand love: A cross-country study

Abstract

Purpose: This paper aims to investigate the extent to which nostalgic advertising can foster brand love. It examines the effects of two common forms of nostalgia in advertising—i.e. personal and historical nostalgia—on consumers' love towards a brand in both a developed (the UK) and a developing country (India).

Design/methodology/approach: A pretest-posttest quasi-experimental study was conducted with two representative samples of consumers (i.e. 277 British and 255 Indian). Respondents were randomly exposed to one ad evoking either personal or historical nostalgia, or a non-nostalgic ad.

Findings: The results indicate that the use of nostalgia in advertising increases brand love in both countries. However, the effectiveness of each type of nostalgia varies depending on the country considered. In the UK, personal nostalgia increases brand love more than historical nostalgia, whereas, in India, historical nostalgia was found to be more significantly related to brand love than personal nostalgia.

Practical implications: The primary implication for marketers is to consider nostalgic advertising as a critical lever to building longer-term value for a brand (i.e. brand love) whilst being mindful of the country-specific differences regarding how such a lever should be executed to achieve effectiveness be effective.

Originality: The paper contributes to the advancement of the brand love literature by clarifying whether, and under what circumstances, the use of specific types of nostalgia in advertising increases consumers' love towards a brand.

Keywords: brand nostalgia; nostalgic advertising; personal nostalgia; historical nostalgia; brand love; developed countries; developing.

How nostalgia in advertising increases brand love: A cross-country study

1. Introduction

Contemporary overcrowded markets require companies to develop meaningful brands that are capable of eliciting positive emotions (Tellis *et al.*, 2019; Mingione *et al.*, 2020). Despite the array of consumers' positive emotions towards brands being wide and featuring different levels of intensity (Palusuk *et al.*, 2019), recent research has primarily been focused on identifying what drives consumers to experience the highest form of positive emotion towards a brand (i.e. brand love) and unveiling which outcomes loved brands enjoy compared to others that are less likely to generate such extremely positive emotions (see, e.g. Albert and Merunka, 2013; Bairrada *et al.*, 2018; Batra *et al.*, 2012; Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen, 2010; Bıçakcıoğlu *et al.*, 2018; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Granot *et al.*, 2013; Huber *et al.*, 2015; Roy *et al.*, 2013; Vernuccio *et al.*, 2015).

Research has found that brand love can be fostered in many ways, including communication via social media (Arya *et al.*, 2022; Song and Kim, 2022), product design (Hemonnet-Goujot and Valette-Florence, 2022), the creation and nurturing of brand communities (Palazon *et al.*, 2018; Paruthi *et al.*, 2023), advertising investments (Nguyen and Feng, 2021) and through marketing actions aimed at increasing consumer-brand identification (Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen, 2010).

However, despite the literature offering a nearly endless list of propulsors of brand love, research focusing on the role of advertising in creating brand love remains in short supply (Nguyen and Feng, 2021). In particular, a thorough investigation at the extant literature on the relationship between brand love and advertising reveals a dearth of studies focusing on whether nostalgic advertising—a form of advertising created to provide consumers with a connection to the past (Holbrook and Schindler, 1991; Stern, 1992)—fosters or hinders consumers' love for brands.

Bridging this gap is of great importance for both theoretical and empirical reasons. Scholars have often shown that brand love has deep personal/autobiographical roots, implying that people tend to fall in love with brands that resonate with their past (Albert *et al.*, 2009; Bagozzi *et al.*,

2017; Batra *et al.*, 2012; Langner *et al.*, 2016; Zarantonello *et al.*, 2016). A closer look at the role that nostalgic advertising plays in generating and reinforcing consumers' feelings of brand love allows for a better understanding of the psychological mechanisms through which brand love is formed, as well as the various levers that marketers can deploy to facilitate the formation of this positive brand-linked emotion.

Made popular in the 1990s, nostalgic advertising has recently made a significant comeback (Barnwell *et al.*, 2022; Diaz, 2021; Hartmann and Brunk, 2019; Srivastava *et al.*, 2023). This comeback may be related to the fact that people tend to seek comfort in nostalgia, especially when they experience negative events, since nostalgia makes people feel hopeful and more optimistic about the future (Stern, 1992). The recent global pandemic has arguably triggered an increase in emotionally charged cues in advertising, including nostalgia (Mangiò *et al.*, 2021, 2024). In recent years, the return of nostalgia in brand communication has been so widespread that Advertising Week (2021) underscored nostalgia in advertising as a trend to watch. Moreover, Vanity Fair commented on the commercials broadcasted during the 2022 Super Bowl as 'a feast of millennial nostalgia' (Murphy, 2022). Kantar (2023) identified nostalgia as one of the key trends witnessed across many of 2023's Kantar Creative Effectiveness Awards winners, including TV winner, KFC Heritage.

Many brands now utilise nostalgia in their advertising strategies and tactics, including popular global icons such as Disney, Gucci, Netflix, Coca-Cola, Nintendo, Vans and many others. In the UK, for instance, Frankie & Benny's launched the 'Bring It Back' campaign in April 2023 to advertise a menu with dishes and prices from 2003. Kellogg's introduced a twist on its classic 'Crunchy Nut Flakes' in December 2022, and Weetabix's Weetos added a caramel flavour to its range due to its association with indulgence and nostalgia. Furthermore, Nestlé celebrated the 70th anniversary of 'Shreddies', continued their partnership with Nick Knowles and encouraged consumers to share their favourite memories of Shreddies using the hashtag #Shreddies70 (Mintel, 2023).

The growing importance garnered by nostalgia (Cattaneo and Guerini, 2012; Vredeveld and Kara, 2022) has resulted in an increasing body of research examining the effects of nostalgic advertising on brand outcomes (e.g. Banerjee and Shaikh, 2022; Gilal *et al.*, 2020; Hallegatte *et al.*, 2018; Vredeveld and Kara, 2022). A recent meta-analysis on nostalgic advertising has shown that nostalgic messages are more persuasive than non-nostalgic messages, resulting in consumers' stronger brand preferences and higher rates of brand attitude (Cheng and Yan, 2023). However, empirical evidence of this form of advertising indeed being useful for creating brand love remains lacking.

Additionally, although nostalgia is a pancultural emotion with causes and consequences that may vary across different countries (Hepper *et al.*, 2014), nostalgic advertising has primarily been investigated within developed countries, whilst studies comparing the effectiveness of nostalgic advertising across countries at different levels of development are relatively rare (Merchant *et al.*, 2016; Ford *et al.*, 2018; Jain *et al.*, 2019).

Therefore, the aim of this research is twofold. The first aim is to determine whether brand love can be increased through nostalgic advertising, whilst the second is to verify how the relationship between nostalgic advertising and brand love is invariant across developed and developing countries. To this end, a pretest-posttest quasi-experimental study with an untreated control group was conducted with British and Indian adult consumers.

This paper aims to answer the following research questions: Does nostalgic advertising increase brand love? How is the relationship between nostalgic advertising and brand love different across developed and developing countries?

The contribution of this research to the branding and advertising literature is twofold. First, it offers an initial empirical analysis connecting brand love with nostalgic advertising. Second, it provides insights into how brand love can be increased by nostalgic advertising across countries at different levels of development.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. It first reports the conceptual background of the study and the hypotheses developed. Then, it reports the methodology adopted and presents the data analysis process and results. It then reflects on the theoretical and managerial implications derived from the study, its limitations and future research directions.

2. Conceptual background and hypothesis development

2.1. On the meaning of brand love

The concept of brand love was introduced more than 30 years ago (Shimp and Madden, 1988). Drawing on psychological theories of interpersonal love (Sternberg, 1986), early scholars stretched the love concept to branding, suggesting that brand love is a combination of passion, intimacy and commitment (Ahuvia, 2015; Shimp and Madden, 1988). Since then, researchers have developed a wide array of conceptualisations of brand love by focusing on the specificities of consumer-brand relationships (Palusuk *et al.*, 2019; Zarantonello and Pauwels-Delassus, 2015). Although some proposed a view of brand love as a unidimensional construct (e.g. Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006), others rapidly realised that brand love is better conceptualised and operationalised if it is intended as a multifaceted, multi-dimensional construct. For example, brand love has been conceptualised as a construct underlying the dimensions of *affection*, expressed as uniqueness, intimacy, duration, memories, dreams and *passion*, comprising pleasure and idealisation (Albert *et al.*, 2009). An alternative conceptualisation views brand love as being composed of several dimensions, including self-brand integration, passion-driven behaviours, positive emotional connection, long-term relationship, attitude valence, anticipated separation distress, and attitude strength (Batra *et al.*, 2012; Bagozzi *et al.*, 2017). Additionally, brand love has also been viewed as a feeling that requires the simultaneous presence of a consumer's deep affection for a branded product and an anticipated separation anxiety if the product is not available (Rossiter, 2012).

Despite being notable for having defined the complexity of the brand love construct, these studies are limited in scope since they were built on concepts and measures of brand love based on

data collected in single developed countries, such as the US or France. Thus, subsequent studies have been concerned with conceptualising, operationalising and measuring brand love in different countries. One of these studies provided a multi-country validation of brand love across countries at different levels of development—namely the US, Russia and Indonesia—and showed that consumers from these three countries share a similar concept of brand love as a multifaceted feeling composed of consumer-brand connection (fantasies, thoughts, attachment and self-expression) and consumer gratification (pleasure and ideologisation) (Zarantonello *et al.*, 2016). Another study used existing conceptualisations and measures of brand love to derive a new one that could work in both the US and Portugal (Pontinha and do Vale, 2020). It defined brand love as the result of a dynamic interaction between five integrated emotional dimensions: passion-driven behaviour, commitment, affection and connection, consumer-brand identification and brand relationship. Finally, a third study (Sajtos *et al.*, 2021) tested Bagozzi *et al.*'s (2017) scale in five countries, namely Australia, China, France, the UK and the US, and found that adaptations were necessary in all countries except for Australia.

2.2. Nostalgia in advertising

Nostalgia is commonly defined as ‘a preference (general liking, positive attitude, or favourable affect) towards 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’ (Holbrook and Schindler, 1991, p. 330). Studies on nostalgia in advertising emerged in the 1990s, following a ‘boom’ of nostalgia-themed commercials. Two main reasons are behind this boom (Stern, 1992). The first is the so-called *fin de siècle* effect, wherein advertisers attempted to capitalise on the cultural anxiety at the end of the millennium by providing consumers with a sense of security through nostalgic advertising. The second is the ageing of the baby boomer generational cohort, who found an opportunity to feel young again by watching ads anchored to the past.

Nostalgic advertising can assume two principal forms: personal nostalgia and historical nostalgia (Stern, 1992). The former leverages an individual's actual past experiences, whilst the latter is associated with events that the individual did not directly experience. Both types of nostalgic advertising imply that consumers will view the past, whether individually or collectively, as superior to the present. Both types of nostalgia can be evoked by advertisers using one or a combination of executional elements such as music, jingles and visual images (Havlena and Holak, 1991; Srivastava *et al.*, 2023; Unger *et al.*, 1991).

Although scholars have been encouraged to distinguish between the two different types of nostalgia (Marchegiani and Phau, 2010), advertising studies have often treated nostalgia as a unified concept and examined the relationship that consumers' advertising-evoked nostalgia has with selected outcomes such as attitude and purchase intention (Özhan and Akkaya, 2020), brand-related constructs such as brand attachment (Langaro *et al.*, 2020), self-brand connection (Srivastava *et al.*, 2019; Youn, 2020), brand engagement (Youn, 2020), and even broader societal goals such as life satisfaction (Ju *et al.*, 2017) and health recommendations (Morton *et al.*, 2020).

Contributions that differentiate between personal and historical nostalgia are comparatively shorter offers and have specifically attempted to assess which type of nostalgia is more effective and under what circumstances. Despite testing the various outcomes of nostalgic advertising (see Table I)—such as its ability to evoke positive/negative emotional responses (e.g. Marchegiani and Phau, 2013; Muehling and Pascal, 2011), generate positive attitudes towards the advertising itself and/or towards the advertised brand (e.g. Muehling and Pascal, 2011, 2012; Muehling, 2013), create positive brand/message-related cognitive responses and message recall (e.g. Muehling and Pascal, 2011), foster purchase intention (e.g. Chang and Feng, 2016; Chou and Singhal, 2017; Koh, 2023) and foster involvement (e.g. Gilal *et al.*, 2020) and self-reflection (Muehling and Pascal, 2012)—studies comparing personal and historical advertising have shown that personal nostalgia outperforms historical nostalgia. Since nostalgic thoughts are self-related in nature due to their connection or association with an individual's real or idealised past, it is unsurprising that

advertising messages evoking personal nostalgia outclass those evoking historical nostalgia (Cheng and Yan, 2023; Marchegiani and Phau, 2010).

- TABLE I ABOUT HERE -

However, despite the temptation to generalise the comparative superiority of personal versus historical nostalgia, scholars have cautioned against such generalisations, noting that the effect of nostalgic advertising on consumers' behaviour is contextual and idiosyncratic (Cheng and Yan, 2023; Muehling *et al.*, 2014). Most of the studies mentioned thus far were conducted in single or multiple developed countries, whilst research conducted in developing countries remains relatively scarce (Gilal *et al.*, 2020; Jain *et al.*, 2019; Merchant *et al.*, 2016; Srivastava *et al.*, 2019). More generally, there is a need for further research examining advertising-evoked nostalgia in emerging markets (Cheng and Yan, 2023; Merchant *et al.*, 2016). Moreover, additional research is required to compare the effects of nostalgic advertising across developed and developing countries, especially if advertising messages are spread without any adaptation.

To the best of our knowledge, only a few studies have tested the different effects evoked by personal and historical nostalgia in advertising in developing countries. It has been found that historical nostalgia has a stronger effect than personal nostalgia in India (Chou and Singhal, 2017). Additionally, for Pakistani consumers, historically nostalgic advertising has the strongest effect on consumer engagement (Gilal *et al.*, 2020). Finally, although the construct of advertising-evoked nostalgia works similarly across individualistic (e.g. the US) and collectivist (e.g. India) countries, respondents from countries scoring high in collectivism are more strongly impacted by advertising stimuli that evoke a collective dimension of nostalgia when compared to those that are more egocentric (Jain *et al.*, 2019). In all of these studies, differences in terms of individualism/collectivism were used to explain the greater effect of history compared to personal nostalgia in developing countries.

2.3. Nostalgic advertising and brand love

The literature has established a relationship between nostalgia in advertising and brand responses whilst providing several empirical tests about the effectiveness of the two types of nostalgia (i.e. personal and historical) on selected brand outcomes (e.g. Langaro *et al.*, 2020; Srivastava *et al.*, 2019; Youn, 2020). However, brand love has not been examined in relation to nostalgic advertising to date, despite this latter form of advertising primarily aiming at generating positive emotions among its audiences. Besides practical reasons, the need to disentangle the relationship between brand love and nostalgic advertising is evident due to the existing connections between these two phenomena.

Brand love has been conceptualised as a positive relationship that consumers establish with brands. This relationship—which is sometimes described as intense, passionate and enduring—generates memories that become cherished by consumers over time and contribute to building a strong connection with the brand (Gumparathi and Patra, 2020). Similarly, the definition of nostalgia revolves around the idea of positive remnants of the past that people enjoy revisiting (Rana *et al.*, 2021). Although these memories are often positively valenced for their ability to connect the present with positive emotions felt and positive experiences lived in past times (Holak and Havlena, 1998), they naturally hold a ‘bittersweet’ taste since they inevitably generate a feeling of loss and frustration for the good times gone (Merchant *et al.*, 2013; Muehling *et al.*, 2014; Zhao *et al.*, 2014). Similarly, brand love has also been both positively and negatively valenced by the force of feeling loss and anxiety that could stem from being unable to continue engaging in a relationship with the loved brand (Bagozzi *et al.*, 2017; Batra *et al.*, 2012; Rossiter, 2012). The emotional connotations of brand love and nostalgia in both positive and negative valence, as well as the common reference to a temporal dimension going back in time, form the basis for a hypothesis in this study related to nostalgia (personal and historical) in advertising increasing brand love.

Therefore:

H1: Nostalgia (personal and historical) in advertising increases brand love.

The few studies available to date suggest that nostalgia works differently across countries and cultures (Merchant *et al.*, 2016; Jain *et al.*, 2019). Briefly, despite further research being needed in this domain, empirical findings have shown that personal nostalgia outperforms historical nostalgia in Western, developed and individualistic countries, whilst historical nostalgia has better outcomes than personal nostalgia in non-Western, developing and collectivistic countries. Differences in nostalgia perception may be affected by different personality traits that are more common within a certain culture (Stefaniak *et al.*, 2022). Developed countries are characterised by higher levels of individualism (Santos *et al.*, 2017), where autonomy, independence and self-esteem are emphasised. In developed countries, people place a high value on uniqueness and individual accomplishment, and they focus more on themselves and their immediate family (Hofstede, 2001).

Conversely, emerging countries present higher levels of collectivism (Stefaniak *et al.*, 2022) and attribute greater importance to their history and heritage than people living in developed countries (Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede *et al.*, 2010). People in emerging countries attribute high levels of importance to social interactions and expect social bonds to be long-lasting (Heitzman and Worden, 1995), emphasising interdependence and connectedness with others (Kim *et al.*, 1994). Moreover, it has been found that historical nostalgia reflects more social interaction and social bonds (Stern, 1992). Since historical nostalgia is based on collective memory, its use in advertising should be more effective for people living in emerging countries because these appealing factors align with their dominant self-construal. On this topic, a recent meta-analysis of nostalgic advertising persuasiveness (Cheng and Yan, 2023) revealed that despite the extant literature not showing significant differences between the effectiveness of personal and historical nostalgia in advertising across individualistic and collectivist countries, this result needs to be viewed cautiously since it can be biased by the fact that the majority of studies are generally conducted in developed countries, which has led to a potential overestimation of the superiority of personal nostalgia over historical.

Therefore, in developed countries, people may link nostalgia more to their own personal experiences, whilst in developing countries, people may be more sensitive to historical nostalgia due to its sense of continuity and meaning. Thus, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H2: In a developed country, personal nostalgia in advertising increases brand love more than historical nostalgia.

H3: In a developing country, historical nostalgia in advertising increases brand love more than personal nostalgia.

The conceptual framework tested is summarized in Figure 1.

- FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE -

3. Methodology

The present research aims to verify the influence of nostalgic advertising on brand love in developed and developing countries. To this end, it is essential to consider the initial, pre-treatment level of brand love to avoid the risk of artefacts or misleading results. Additionally, the inclusion of the control group is crucial since it can provide a more rigorous test of the hypotheses. Therefore, this study was structured as a pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design with an untreated control group (Cook and Campbell, 1979), which is a widely used experimental design (Cook and Wong, 2008). Therefore, a 3 (types of nostalgia: personal nostalgia; historical nostalgia; control condition) \times 2 (brand love before ad exposure: high; low) experimental design was utilised. To control for the influences exerted by extraneous variables potentially present but unrelated to the experimental design, consumer brand attitude (adapted from Sorescu and Gelb, 2000) and demographic characteristics were controlled in the analyses.

The UK and India were identified as suitable contexts for testing the hypotheses. These two countries were chosen for two main reasons. First, they are significantly different in terms of the two dimensions of individualism and collectivism (Hofstede, 2001), with the UK being highly individualistic and India highly collectivistic. Second, they are prototypical examples of forms of developed and developing countries. According to the World Bank (2022), India is a lower-middle-

income economy with a gross national income per capita of \$2,380, whilst the UK is a higher-income country with a gross per capita income of \$48,890. In terms of purchasing power parity, India's gross national income is \$8,210, whilst that of the UK is \$54,920.

The Coca-Cola brand was chosen due to being a top global brand (Interbrand, 2022) with unparalleled popularity in both developed and developing countries. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of love towards the Coca-Cola brand using the scale developed by Zarantonello *et al.* (2016), which proved effective in multi-country settings.

Participants were randomly assigned to one of the three experimental scenarios: an ad evoking personal nostalgia; an ad evoking historical nostalgia; a non-nostalgic ad (control group). The survey was administered via Qualtrics, taking approximately 10 minutes to complete. Appendix 1 details the pre-tests conducted to validate the stimuli.

The main study used the developed and pretested stimuli and measured the (personal and historical) nostalgia associated with the ads and brand love at two different time points (i.e. before and after the manipulation)¹. Brand attitude (adapted from Sorescu and Gelb, 2000) and respondents' demographic characteristics were also measured. All utilised scales and their sources are reported in Appendix 2 (see Table IV), along with the preliminary analyses testing the psychometric characteristics of the measures run on the total sample of respondents collected.

4. Data analysis and results

4.1. Participants

The survey was administered via a market research agency (Qualtrics) to British resident and Indian resident adult consumers representative of the corresponding national populations in terms of age, gender and geographic area. The UK sample consisted of 277 adult consumers, comprising 138 men (49.8%) and 139 women (50.2%), with an average age of 41 years (SD =

¹ Memory effects were minimised by randomising the question order and including filler questions.

13.71). Of these, 83.8% were from England, 8.3% from Scotland, 5.1% from Wales and 2.9% from Northern Ireland. The Indian sample included 255 adult consumers, comprising 123 men (48.2%) and 132 women (51.8%), with an average age of 38 years ($SD = 12.93$). Of these, 41.6% were from North/Northeast India, 22% from South India, 16.5% from East India, 13.7% from West India and 6.3% from Central India.

4.2. Manipulation check

After conducting the preliminary analyses ascertaining the psychometric characteristics of the measures (see Appendix 2), the analysis progressed to testing the hypotheses. First, the manipulation checks were examined. To evaluate the effectiveness of the manipulation used to stimulate different types of nostalgia associated with each specific ad, respondents were asked to rate the personal and historical nostalgia they felt in each experimental condition. Muehling and Pascal's (2011) scale was used to measure nostalgia. Respondents exposed to an ad evoking personal nostalgia reported stronger personal nostalgia ($M = 4.99$; $SD = 1.40$) when compared to the control group ($M = 4.12$; $SD = 1.44$; $t(303) = 4.81$; $p < 0.001$) and the group exposed to an ad evoking historical nostalgia ($M = 4.60$; $SD = 1.59$; $t(445) = 2.76$, $p < 0.01$). Similarly, respondents exposed to an ad evoking historical nostalgia reported stronger historical nostalgia ($M = 4.70$; $SD = 1.59$) when compared to the control group ($M = 3.04$; $SD = 1.55$; $t(310) = 8.22$, $p < 0.001$) and the group exposed to an ad evoking personal nostalgia ($M = 3.77$; $SD = 1.90$; $t(445) = -5.58$, $p < 0.001$).

4.3. Test of hypotheses

H1 was tested next. To test this hypothesis, which posits that nostalgia (personal and historical) in advertising increases brand love, a pairwise t -test analysis was conducted for the experimental conditions. Respondents rated items measuring brand love before and after exposure to an ad evoking one type of nostalgia (i.e. personal or historic). A test of statistical difference of the latent mean of the brand love construct measured before and after ad exposure was performed to

assess the extent to which being exposed to a nostalgia-evoking ad increases brand love. The results indicate that exposure to nostalgic advertising increases brand love for both personal nostalgia ($M_{\text{before}} = 4.21$, $SD_{\text{before}} = 1.69$; $M_{\text{after}} = 4.31$, $SD_{\text{after}} = 1.77$; $t(219) = 2.17$, $p < 0.05$) and historical nostalgia ($M_{\text{before}} = 4.13$, $SD_{\text{before}} = 1.68$; $M_{\text{after}} = 4.24$, $SD_{\text{after}} = 1.81$; $t(226) = 2.48$, $p < 0.05$). Exposure to the control ad did not increase brand love ($M_{\text{before}} = 3.93$, $SD_{\text{before}} = 1.33$; $M_{\text{after}} = 3.97$, $SD_{\text{after}} = 1.56$; $t(84) = -0.61$, $p = 0.54$). Therefore, H1 is supported.

To test the other hypotheses postulating that, in a developed country (i.e. the UK), personal nostalgia in advertising will increase brand love more than historical nostalgia (H2) and that, in a developing country (i.e. India), historical nostalgia in advertising will increase brand love more than personal nostalgia (H3), separate analyses were conducted on each country. In the UK and India separately, a test was implemented to determine whether the nostalgic advertising (versus control group without treatment) increased the dependent variable (brand love) to distinguish the effect according to whether the respondents had already developed high (vs. low) levels of brand love before the treatment. Thus, a 3 (types of nostalgia: personal nostalgia; historical nostalgia; control condition) \times 2 (brand love before ad exposure: high; low) analysis of variance was performed. Different levels of brand love characterising respondents before the exposure to the nostalgic ad were identified to better disentangle the effect of nostalgic advertising on brand love: those that already developed a solid and structured brand love towards Coca-Cola (i.e. those sharing a high level of brand love before) versus those who demonstrated lower levels of brand love at the time of the study. Thus, participants were classified into high/low brand love before ad exposure groups based on the construct's median value. The median values for brand love were 3.54 for the UK (low brand love ≤ 3.54 ; high brand love > 3.54) and 5.08 for India (low brand love ≤ 5.08 ; high brand love > 5.08).

The UK results (see Table II) revealed a significant interaction effect between existing brand love and type of advertising: $F(2, 268) = 5.48$; $p < 0.01$; $\eta^2 = 0.04$ (see Figure 2). Given the significance of the interaction, the effects of the three types of ads (i.e. personal nostalgia, historical

nostalgia, control condition) on the level of brand love were examined separately for respondents with high or low brand love before ad exposure.

- TABLE II ABOUT HERE –

- FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE –

The results indicated a significant difference among the three types of ads for the group of respondents scoring high in brand love before ad exposure: $[F(2, 268) = 5.63, p < 0.01]$, whilst no difference was observed for respondents scoring low in brand love before ad exposure $[F(2, 268) = 2.08, p = 0.13^2]$. Fisher's least significant difference (LSD) pairwise comparisons were conducted to evaluate the differences among the types of ads for those with high brand love before ad exposure (see Table II). The ad evoking personal nostalgia led to significantly higher scores of brand love when compared to both the ad evoking historical nostalgia and the control (i.e. non-nostalgic ad). Therefore, H2 is supported for respondents characterised by high brand love before ad exposure. For those with low brand love before ad exposure, the results suggest that the ad evoking personal nostalgia had no differential effects when compared to the ad evoking historical nostalgia or the control (i.e. non-nostalgic ad).

The results for Indian consumers are reported in Table III. Here, the results also revealed a significant interaction effect between the two dimensions $[F(2, 246) = 3.27; p < 0.05; \eta^2 = 0.03]$ (see Figure 3). Therefore, it is appropriate to examine the differences among the three types of ads (i.e. personal nostalgia, historical nostalgia and control condition), focusing specifically on respondents characterised by high or low brand love before ad exposure.

- TABLE III ABOUT HERE –

- FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE –

² The results indicate that different ad types have different effects on brand love after ad exposure. Personal nostalgia increased brand love ($M_{\text{low brand love before exposure; personal nostalgia}} = 3.60; M_{\text{brand love after exposure; personal nostalgia}} = 3.72; t(162) = -1.98, p < 0.05$) but not historical nostalgia ($M_{\text{low brand love before exposure; historical nostalgia}} = 3.35; M_{\text{brand love after exposure; historical nostalgia}} = 3.43; t(164) = -1.41, p = 0.16$). Regarding the control condition (non-nostalgic ad), the results are as follows: ($M_{\text{low brand love before exposure; non-nostalgic advertising}} = 3.59; M_{\text{brand love after exposure; non-nostalgic advertising}} = 3.60; t(69) = -1.98, p = 0.88$). However, the observed increases in brand love are not significantly different depending on the type of ad used as stimulus.

There was a significant difference among the three types of ads for respondents scoring high in brand love before ad exposure in the Indian sample [$F(2, 246) = 3.27, p < 0.05$]. However, no difference was observed for respondents scoring low in brand love before ad exposure [$F(2, 246) = 1.44, p = 0.24^3$]. Fisher's LSD pairwise comparisons were conducted to evaluate the differences among ad types for high brand love before ad exposure (see Table III). The ad evoking historical nostalgia led to significantly higher scores of brand love when compared to both the ad evoking personal nostalgia and the control (i.e. non-nostalgic ad). Therefore, H3 is supported for respondents characterised by high brand love before ad exposure. For those scoring low in brand love before the exposure, the ad evoking historical nostalgia showed no differential effects when compared to the ad evoking personal nostalgia or the control ad.

Finally, it is important to note that in both countries, age, gender and brand attitude were controlled to strengthen the results. The results indicated that, in both the UK and India, brand attitude had a significant effect: the correlation between brand attitude and brand love after ad exposure was 0.55 ($p < 0.001$) for the UK group and 0.46 ($p < 0.001$) for the Indian group. Age only had a significant effect in India, indicating that the effects were stronger for older consumers (correlation between brand love after ad exposure and age = 0.18, $p = 0.04$). However, gender was found to be non-significant for both the UK and Indian samples.

5. Discussion and implications

5.1. General discussion

This study aimed to answer two research questions: whether nostalgic advertising can increase the feelings of love consumers nurture towards a brand, and whether the relationship

³ The results indicate that the effects of different ad types on brand love after exposure are also statistically significant for respondents scoring low for brand love before exposure ($M_{\text{low brand love before exposure; personal nostalgia}} = 3.94$; $M_{\text{brand love after exposure; personal nostalgia}} = 4.13$; $t(152) = -3.12, p < 0.05$; $M_{\text{low brand love before exposure; historical nostalgia}} = 4.10$; $M_{\text{brand love after exposure; historical nostalgia}} = 4.29$; $t(174) = -3.84, p < 0.05$). Regarding the control condition (non-nostalgic advertising), the results are as follows: ($M_{\text{low brand love before exposure; non-nostalgic advertising}} = 3.74$; $M_{\text{brand love after exposure; non-nostalgic advertising}} = 3.87$; $t(64) = -1.43, p = 0.16$). However, the observed increases in brand love are not statistically different depending on the type of ad used as stimulus.

between nostalgic advertising and brand love is invariant across developed and developing countries. The findings confirmed that nostalgic advertising is indeed a driver of brand love, offering marketers and advertisers potent leverage to stimulate the formation of emotional bonds with consumers. Moreover, the findings also indicate that the causal mechanism connecting nostalgic advertising and brand love varies depending on whether this form of advertising targets consumers from developed or developing countries.

Research at the interface of brand love and nostalgic advertising is limited, despite this form of advertising mainly being aimed at stimulating the formation of positive feelings towards a brand. Although brand management scholars have explored various strategies and tactics to foster brand love (see Gumparthy and Patra, 2020 and Palusuk *et al.*, 2019 for comprehensive reviews), they have largely overlooked nostalgic advertising as a possible driver of brand love. The current study not only confirms that nostalgic advertising drives brand love, but also shows that exposure to nostalgic ads increases brand love regardless of the type of nostalgia evoked (personal or historical) and regardless of whether consumers already have a love for the brand. Additionally, the control group, exposed to a non-nostalgic ad, did not show any significant change in brand love levels before and after ad exposure.

In line with previous studies highlighting the ability of nostalgic advertising to stimulate positive emotional responses (e.g. Marchegiani and Phau, 2013; Muehling and Pascal, 2011), the present study reveals that a single exposure to nostalgic advertising can form the basis of—or reinforce—existing brand love. This outcome aligns with the essence of nostalgia as an inherently human feeling (Phillips, 1985) that is predominantly positive (Sedikides and Wildschut, 2016) and maintains psychological comfort (Zhou *et al.*, 2012) whilst being connected to positive effects when evoked (Maher *et al.*, 2021).

Besides empirically confirming the causal connection between nostalgic advertising and brand love, this study also examined whether this causal mechanism is consistent across countries. Specifically, it tested the extent to which the relationship between nostalgic advertising and brand

love is invariant, depending on whether the advertising recipients are from a developed (predominantly individualistic) country or a developing (predominantly collectivistic) country.

Drawing on previous findings suggesting that historical nostalgia is more effective than personal nostalgia in developing (more collectivistic) countries and that personal nostalgia is more effective than historical nostalgia in developed (more individualistic) countries (see Chou and Singhal, 2017; Gilal *et al.*, 2020; Jain *et al.*, 2019), the present paper hypothesised that in a developing country like India, historical nostalgia fosters brand love more effectively, whereas in a developed country like the UK, brand love is more effectively achieved through personal nostalgia. The findings indicate that among UK respondents, the ad evoking personal nostalgia led to significantly higher scores of brand love when compared to both the ad evoking historical nostalgia and the control, non-nostalgic ad. Conversely, among Indian respondents, the ad evoking historical nostalgia led to significantly higher scores of brand love when compared to both the ad evoking personal nostalgia and the control, non-nostalgic ad. The findings provide support and expand on previous research showing that the connection between personal nostalgia and brand love in developed countries, and between historical nostalgia and brand love in developing countries, is only evident if recipients already have a high level of brand love before ad exposure. For respondents with a low level of love towards the brand before ad exposure, no significant difference was observed among the three experimental conditions (i.e. personal nostalgic ad, historical nostalgic ad and non-nostalgic ad) across countries (i.e. the UK and India). Thus, exposure to specific nostalgic ads appears to differentially boost—but not create—brand love.

Finally, the findings related to control variables are noteworthy. In India, age was found to have a significant effect, providing further evidence suggesting that historical nostalgia is particularly effective among older consumers (Chou and Singhal, 2017). Conversely, in the UK, the effect of age did not affect the relationship between personal nostalgia and brand love, even if a negative correlation between the two variables (-0.12) can be found. This suggests that personal nostalgia is leaned to affect brand love among younger consumers more than older ones. Since the

youth are often framed as a generational cohort characterised by both a high desire to create their own identity and a need to testify their belongingness (Gentina, 2016), nostalgia could represent a means through which they could reinforce their self-concept (Sirgy, 1982) and emotional connections with brands. Future research could further examine the effect of age to better explain these insights.

5.2. Theoretical implications

The results of this study contribute to both brand love and nostalgic advertising research. This study is pioneering in its investigation of whether the extremely positive feeling consumers nurture towards a brand (Batra *et al.*, 2012) can be fostered via nostalgic advertising, which is inherently emotionally charged (Zhao *et al.*, 2014). It also stands as the first to assess whether the ability of nostalgic advertising to create or reinforce brand love varies across countries with different levels of development, thereby filling a knowledge gap highlighted by previous studies (Merchant *et al.*, 2016; Jain *et al.*, 2019). Whilst current studies on brand love often overlook nostalgia, the logical connection between these two constructs becomes apparent when considering that a brand's ability to foster positive emotions depends on its capacity to elicit positive emotional sensations (Park *et al.*, 2016). The prevalent view in the brand love literature is that brands must mirror the consumers they target to stimulate brand love (Palusuk *et al.*, 2019; Khan *et al.*, 2021; Wong, 2023), which has led to the neglect of marketing strategies—including advertising—as determinants of brand love. In contrast, studies focusing on what marketers can do to generate brand love are less common than those focusing on consumer perceptions or cognitions of brands that precede the formation of brand love. This theoretical gap arises from the fact that brand love studies are often rooted in identity theory (Ahuvia *et al.*, 2014; Vernuccio *et al.*, 2015), which tends to downplay the active or proactive role of marketers in favour of consumers' cognitions or emotional perceptions of brands.

This study enhances the current understanding of the mechanisms through which nostalgia fosters brand love in different types of consumers, which are distinguished by their level of brand love (high versus low), by differentiating between personal and historical nostalgia and considering the country's audience development level (developed versus developing countries). The present study found that nostalgia amplifies brand love, regardless of the pre-existing level of brand love. Unlike findings from other studies, this study observed that exposure to nostalgic ads increases brand love for both personal and historical nostalgia. However, when segmenting consumers across countries, the results indicate that for those in developing countries such as India, which score high in collectivism, historical nostalgia is a stronger driver of brand love than personal nostalgia. Conversely, in developed countries such as the UK, which score high in individualism, personal nostalgia is more effective. Therefore, the present paper provides findings that contrast with previous research (Chou and Singhal, 2017; Gilal *et al.*, 2020; Jain *et al.*, 2019) in support of a view of nostalgia as a universal feeling (Phillips, 1985; Loveland *et al.*, 2010) that is triggered differently depending on the psychological and cultural mechanisms through which consumers make sense of nostalgia and how nostalgia is portrayed, leading to the achievement of desired outcomes.

5.3. Managerial implications

This paper offers practical insights for managers in two key areas: sustaining brand love and adapting advertising strategies to foster brand love, depending on the target audience. Brand love is increasingly recognised as a crucial goal in consumer-brand relationships (Fetscherin *et al.*, 2021), and this paper highlights the role of advertising in its development. Although advertising is often seen as a short-term visibility lever, the present paper demonstrates that nostalgic advertising can have longer-term effects on brand love. Therefore, managers should design communication activities that not only aim towards visibility but also evoke emotional connections to the cherished memories associated with a brand. Notably, nostalgic advertising is particularly effective in enhancing brand love among those who already have a strong connection with the brand. This

suggests that nostalgic advertising is most effective for brands already considered as ‘love marks’ and underlines the importance for brand managers to have a sharp understanding of who the target customers are to connect with through nostalgic advertising messages.

Furthermore, this paper offers valuable recommendations for global marketers on the need to adapt to local contexts and specific demographic audiences. Although nostalgia is a universal emotion, this study shows that it can enhance brand love differently for various audiences. For instance, historical nostalgia is more suitable for strengthening consumer-brand bonds in consumers from developing countries, especially older consumers. Thus, based on the results of our study, a recommendation is made for managers and advertisers to avoid a ‘one-fits-all’ approach to nostalgic advertising and instead develop target messages that can be better received by different audiences.

Finally, despite the advantages of using nostalgia in advertising to enhance brand love, practitioners must remember that whilst nostalgia provides an emotional connection with multiple audiences, the related advertising should strive to remain dynamic in tone and style. Brands utilising nostalgic elements should be cautious of the risk of obsolescence and commoditisation associated with an over-emphasis on the ‘old’ times. Creating connections through cherished old memories of consumption should not compromise the brand’s modern relevance (Ford *et al.*, 2018) or alter its authenticity strategy (Napoli *et al.*, 2016).

6.3. Limitations and future research

The results, theoretical contributions and managerial implications of this study should be considered in light of its limitations. The primary limitation is related to the methodology used, which relied on a pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design. Despite its effectiveness in advertising research (Armstrong and Patnaik, 2009), this approach has inherent biases. The stimuli were limited to fictitious print advertising featuring a well-known global brand like Coca-Cola in only two countries. As such, further research should aim to replicate this study using real advertising campaigns, involving lesser-known brands (including local brands) across more countries and

through various media channels. Examining other media (e.g. TV or online advertising) either independently or simultaneously could also provide deeper insights. People often pay more attention to messages from multiple sources than from a single source (Davtyan *et al.*, 2016), suggesting that the impact of nostalgia could be amplified across diverse advertising formats.

Further studies could also explore brands from different product categories and varying levels of brand awareness or equity. The application of nostalgia in international markets might be influenced by the perceived authenticity of the brand's nostalgia and the cultural heritage strength of the country. Notably, future studies could manipulate these variables. In this study, nostalgia was manipulated through print advertisements (visual and text). However, future research could focus on using nostalgia through music—a method known for its emotional appeal and effectiveness in advertising (Henard and Rossetti, 2014). More generally, the results of our research offer evidence suggesting that cultural differences can trigger different emotional responses to brands pursuing nostalgic advertising, thereby opening the door to new research in which these differences are tested on a large number of cultural contexts sampled to infer the significance of these results at the cross-cultural level (Cadogan, 2010). Furthermore, direct comparisons between different (developed vs. developing) countries could lead to further important advancements.

Additionally, future research could analyse the effect of nostalgic advertising on specific demographic groups, such as millennials, for whom nostalgia can help maintain consumers' identities during major life transitions (Davis, 1979). Investigating the impact of nostalgic advertising on Generation Z in different countries could be particularly enlightening, especially given this cohort's focus on authenticity and veracity in brand communication (Gentina, 2016).

Lastly, future studies should explore the effects of personal and historical nostalgia in advertising on other emotional responses that consumers have towards brands, such as brand attachment (e.g. Park *et al.*, 2008) or brand passion (Albert *et al.*, 2013). These emotions, like love, are positively connoted but occupy a less extreme position on the brand-consumer emotional continuum.

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Table I. Studies testing the effectiveness of personal and historical nostalgia in advertising

Author(s)	Study aim	Country	Outcomes	Results
Muehling and Pascal (2011)	To investigate whether and/or to what extent consumers' information-processing tendencies and ad-based responses are differentially influenced by the introduction of nostalgic cues (either 'personal' or 'historical' in nature) embedded in an advertisement.	USA	Self-directed thoughts, positive affect, attitude towards the ad, attitude towards the brand, brand-/message-related thoughts, ad message points recalled	Personal nostalgia generally outperforms both historical and non-nostalgic advertising when measures of self-directed thoughts, positive affect and attitude towards the ad are considered. When cognitive measures such as brand-/message-related cognitive responses and message recall are considered, a personally nostalgic ad is shown to be comparable to a historical nostalgic ad, but inferior to a non-nostalgic ad.
Marchegiani and Phau (2012)	To examine the influence of nostalgic-themed music on cognitive and attitudinal responses towards advertisements with personal, historical and non-nostalgic appeals.	Australia	Attitude towards the ad, attitude towards the brand	Music is shown to positively enhance participants' attitudes towards the ad both in the personal and in the historical nostalgia condition, whilst attitude towards the brand is not significantly improved by the music under any condition.
Muehling and Pascal (2012)	To test whether personal and historical nostalgic ads will prompt more self-reflection than non-nostalgic ads and to test whether, when compared to non-nostalgic ads, exposure to nostalgic ads will generate higher levels of ad involvement. More specifically, to determine whether personal and historical nostalgic ads will generate higher levels of ad involvement than non-nostalgic ads.	USA	Attitude towards the brand, self-reflection, ad involvement	The personal nostalgic ad generated significantly more favourable ad attitudes than either the historical nostalgic ad or the non-nostalgic ad. No statistically significant differences were observed between the historical and non-nostalgic ads. Both nostalgic ads yielded significantly more favourable brand attitudes than the non-nostalgic ads. No significant differences in brand attitude were obtained between the two nostalgic ads. The personal nostalgic ad generated higher self-reflection scores than both historical nostalgic and non-nostalgic ads. Finally, both of the nostalgic ad treatments yielded statistically higher levels of ad involvement than the non-nostalgic ad, but no significant differences were observed between the personal and historical nostalgic ad conditions.
Marchegiani and Phau (2013)	To examine differences in the emotional responses of respondents experiencing personal or historical nostalgic reactions to advertising appeals.	Australia	Intensity of emotions	No change between nostalgic ad types was observed for feelings of irritation and serenity/calm. Feelings of upbeatness/elation, loss/regret and warmth/tenderness were found to be higher for personal versus historical nostalgia.
Muehling (2013)	To examine the relative influence of personal and historical nostalgia on the formation of consumer brand attitudes.	USA	Attitude towards the ad, attitude towards the brand	Personal nostalgia is significantly related to attitude towards the ad, whilst historical nostalgic response was not significantly related to attitude towards the ad. Personal nostalgic response was significantly related to attitude towards the brand, but the measure of historical nostalgic response was not significantly related to attitude towards the brand.

Chang and Feng (2016)	To compare historical and personal nostalgic appeals with the potential influences of consumption context and consumer self-construal.	Taiwan	Attitude towards the ad, attitude towards the brand, and purchase intention	When an interdependent self-construal is primed, attitude towards the ad, attitude towards the advertised brand, and purchase intentions will be higher when historical nostalgia (rather than personal nostalgia) is used in an ad for a publicly consumed product. When an interdependent self-construal is primed, attitude towards the ad, attitude towards the advertised brand and purchase intentions will be higher when personal nostalgia (rather than historical nostalgia) is used in an ad for a privately consumed product. When an independent self-construal is primed, the type of nostalgic appeal will not affect individuals' attitudes towards the ad, attitude towards the advertised brand, or purchase intentions, regardless of the consumption context of the product (public or private).
Chou and Singhal (2017)	To explore the ability of old songs used in personal and historical nostalgic ads to prompt purchase intention.	India	Attitude towards the ad and purchase intention	Historical nostalgic songs made participants more favourable towards the ad than personal nostalgic songs. The direct relationship between historical or personal nostalgia and purchase intention was found to be non-significant.
Gilal <i>et al.</i> (2020)	To test whether personal and historical ads influence customers' participation in brand resurrection movements.	Pakistan	Participation in brand resurrection movements	The effect of nostalgic ads on participation in brand resurrection movements is stronger for historical nostalgic advertising than for personal nostalgic advertising.
Koh (2023)	To test the effect of personal vs. historical advertising on intention to purchase.	USA	Purchase intention	The effectiveness of personal/historical nostalgic advertising on purchase intention depends on the type of product promoted (public or private product), as well as the nostalgic advertisement's ability to evoke positive or emotional feelings. When a public product is promoted, exposure to personal nostalgic advertising leads to a higher level of intention to purchase through increased mixed emotions and favourable attitudes towards advertising relative to exposure to historical nostalgia-themed advertising.

Source: Authors' own work

Table II. Results: UK sample

		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	Hypothesis	15.21	1	15.21	2.96	0.27
	Error	7.65	1.491	5.13		
Brand attitude (covariate)	Hypothesis	42.53	1	42.53	40.70	0.00
	Error	280.08	268	1.05		
Gender (covariate)	Hypothesis	0.36	1	0.36	0.34	0.56
	Error	280.08	268	1.05		
Age (covariate)	Hypothesis	0.54	1	0.54	0.52	0.47
	Error	280.08	268	1.05		
Brand love before (high vs. low)	Hypothesis	135.24	1	135.24	30.91	0.02
	Error	10.10	2.307	4.38		
Type of advertising (personal nostalgia, historical nostalgia, no nostalgia)	Hypothesis	4.06	2	2.03	0.36	0.74
	Error	11.41	2.007	5.68		
Brand love before × type of advertising	Hypothesis	11.46	2	5.73	5.48	0.005
	Error	280.08	268	1.05		

Fisher's LSD pairwise comparisons to evaluate the three types of nostalgia's pairwise differences for high brand love before condition

Level of brand love before	Type of advertising	Mean difference	Std. error	<i>p</i>	
	Personal nostalgia	No nostalgia	0.49	0.26	0.049
		Historical nostalgia	0.62	0.19	0.00
High brand love before	Historical nostalgia	No nostalgia	-0.12	0.27	0.65
		Personal nostalgia	-0.62	0.19	0.00
	No nostalgia	Historical nostalgia	0.12	0.26	0.65
		Personal nostalgia	-0.49	0.19	0.049

Source: Authors' own work

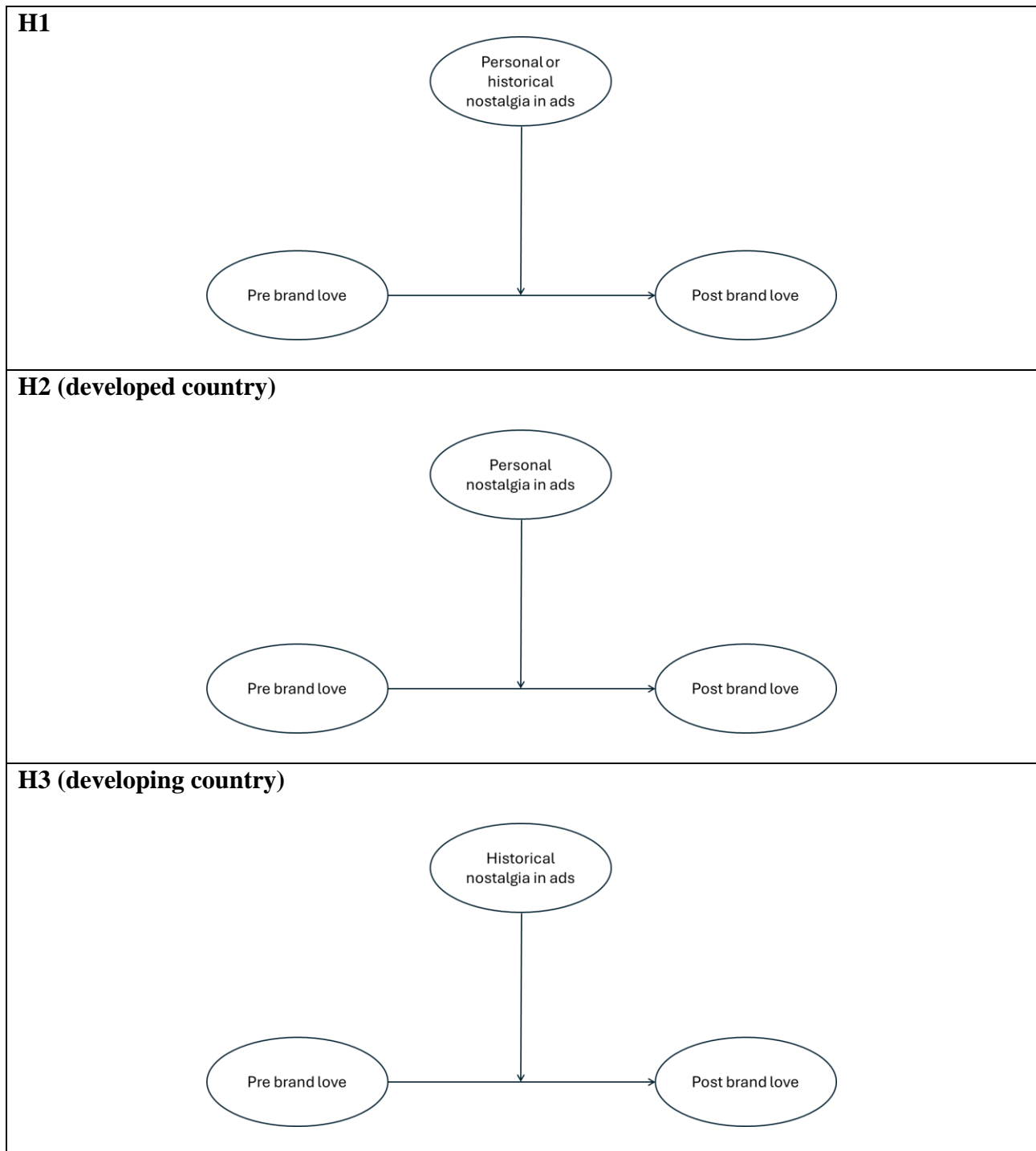
Table III. Results: Indian sample

		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Intercept	Hypothesis	56.30	1	56.53	12.72	0.11
	Error	6.69	1.505	4.45		
Brand attitude (covariate)	Hypothesis	17.66	1	17.66	19.78	0.00
	Error	219.69	246	0.89		
Gender (covariate)	Hypothesis	0.44	1	0.44	0.49	0.48
	Error	219.69	246	0.89		
Age (covariate)	Hypothesis	3.47	1	3.47	3.89	0.05
	Error	219.69	246	0.89		
Brand love before (high vs low)	Hypothesis	122.73	1	122.73	48.95	0.01
	Error	5.83	2.324	2.51		
Type of advertising (personal nostalgia, historical nostalgia, no nostalgia)	Hypothesis	2.11	2	1.05	0.36	0.74
	Error	5.84	1.999	2.92		
Brand love before × type of advertising	Hypothesis	5.84	2	2.92	3.27	0.04
	Error	219.69	246	0.89		

Fisher's LSD pairwise comparisons to evaluate the three types of nostalgia's pairwise differences for high brand love before condition

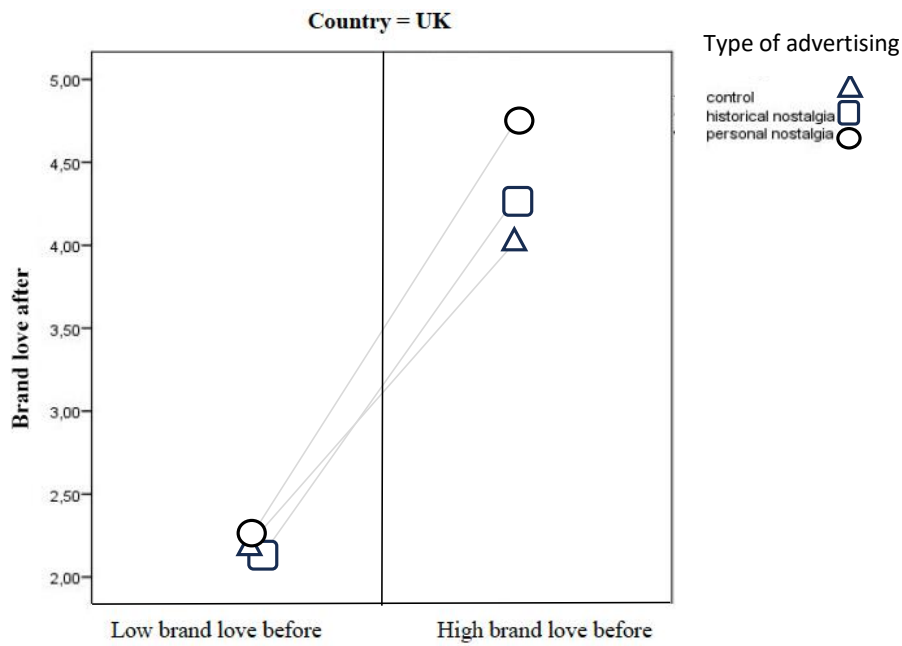
Level of brand love before	Type of advertising	Mean difference	Std. error	<i>p</i>	
	Personal nostalgia	No nostalgia	0.20	0.29	0.48
		Historical nostalgia	-0.36	0.18	0.04
	Historical nostalgia	No nostalgia	0.57	0.28	0.04
	High brand love before	Personal nostalgia	0.36	0.18	0.04
No nostalgia		Historical nostalgia	-0.57	0.28	0.04
		Personal nostalgia	-0.20	0.29	0.48

Source: Authors' own work

Figure 1. The conceptual model

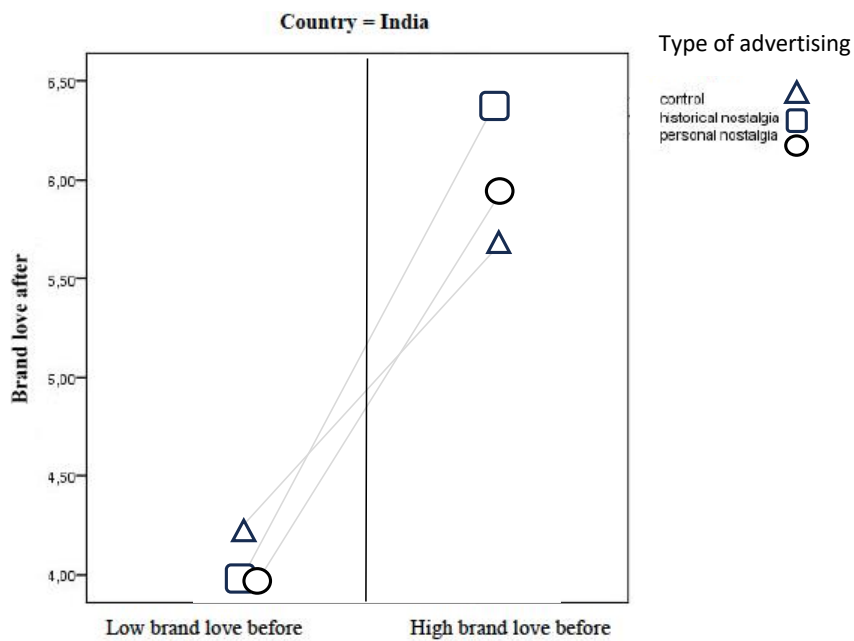
Source: Authors' own work

Figure 2. Interaction effects between the type of advertising (personal nostalgia, historical nostalgia, no nostalgia/control) and brand love (high, low) felt before and after the manipulation (UK)



Source: Authors' own work

Figure 3. Interaction effects between the type of advertising (personal nostalgia, historical nostalgia, no nostalgia/control) and brand love (high, low) felt before and after the manipulation (India)



Source: Authors' own work

Appendix 1. Pretest of the advertising stimuli

Ad stimuli were specifically developed for the purposes of this research and did not correspond to any actual ads used by the brand. They were reviewed and revised based on feedback from four marketing communication/consumer behaviour experts (two per country). The final ads showed black and white images depicting people together (personal nostalgia), country landmarks (historical nostalgia), or geometric motifs (control). Each ad was accompanied by different copy for each condition: “Coca-Cola celebrates the happy memories of your life with you” (personal nostalgia), “Coca-Cola celebrates the history of your country with you” (historical nostalgia), or the control (“Coca-Cola... taste the happiness of your life”)⁴.

The ads were then pretested with a sample of 100 adult consumers specifically selected for this purpose (50 in the UK and 50 in India) who were recruited through a market research agency (Qualtrics). Respondents were selected to represent their country’s population in terms of gender, age and geographic area. Respondents were asked questions regarding the level of personal and historical nostalgia they felt in relation to the ad randomly assigned to them (41 were exposed to the historical nostalgia ad, 29 to the personal nostalgia ad, and 30 to the control condition). Nostalgia (personal and historical) was measured through the scale developed by Muehling and Pascal (2011). Since this scale has already been successfully used in India (Chou and Singhal, 2017), problems of cross-country non-equivalence can be excluded (Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1998).

The results of the pretest indicated that respondents who were exposed to an ad evoking personal nostalgia felt stronger personal nostalgia ($M = 5.51$; $SD = 1.11$) when compared to the control group ($M = 4.14$; $SD = 1.46$; $t(57) = 4.05$; $p < 0.001$) and compared to the group exposed to an ad evoking historical nostalgia ($M = 4.42$; $SD = 1.63$; $t(68) = 4.66$; $p < 0.01$). Similarly, respondents who were exposed to the ad evoking historical nostalgia felt stronger historical nostalgia ($M = 4.86$; $SD = 1.37$) when compared to the control group ($M = 2.95$; $SD = 1.48$; $t(69) =$

⁴ Ad stimuli used in the study are available from the authors upon request.

5.62; $p < 0.001$) and the group exposed to an ad evoking personal nostalgia ($M = 4.18$; $SD = 1.76$; $t(68) = 3.68$; $p < 0.10$). Therefore, the stimuli were deemed adequate for the main study.

Appendix 2. Preliminary analysis

The psychometric characteristics of the measures have been assessed. All variables were subjected to exploratory factor analysis with varimax rotation. All items showed adequate factor loadings and Cronbach's alpha coefficients demonstrated an adequate level of reliability of the measures used (see Table IV). A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was also conducted on the total sample of participants (532 respondents), exhibiting a satisfactory goodness-of-fit ($\chi^2 (979) = 7,048.53$; $p = 0.00$; CFI = 0.97; NNFI = 0.96; SRMR = 0.06, RFI = .96, NFI = .96, IFI = .97), supporting the constructs' dimensionality.

Before testing the hypotheses, an examination of the invariance of the brand love construct in the two countries was conducted. A multigroup structural equation modelling analysis was conducted (Steenkamp and Baumgartner, 1998). Configural invariance for the brand love scale was established since an acceptable group-model fit was obtained: $\chi^2 (130) = 1,642.44$; CFI = 0.92; NNFI = 0.92; SRMR = 0.06, RFI = .90, NFI = .92, IFI = .92. The metric invariance was then tested; the χ^2 difference test between the configural model and the model constraining the majority of factor loadings (eight out of thirteen) to be equal across countries was non-significant ($\Delta\chi^2 (7) = 11.29$, $p > .05$), supporting metric partial invariance. Thus, the brand love construct can be used in both contexts of analysis.

Table IV. Measurement scales, sources and loadings on the corresponding factor, and reliability

indexes

Measure (source)	Loading	Cronbach's alpha
Brand attitude (Sorescu and Gelb, 2000)		0.93
o Bad/Good.	0.77	
o Not likeable/Very likeable.	0.86	
o Not attractive/Very attractive.	0.86	
o Unappealing/Very appealing.	0.86	
Brand love (Zarantonello <i>et al.</i> , 2016)		
Consumer-brand connection		0.97
o I frequently find myself thinking about this brand.	0.87	
o I often fantasise about this brand.	0.90	
o My daydreams often include this brand.	0.91	
o I feel bonded to this brand.	0.91	
o I feel a lot of affection for this brand.	0.88	
o I feel attached to this brand.	0.90	
o It says something about who I am.	0.92	
o It helps me express myself.	0.92	
o This brand says something meaningful.	0.87	
Consumer gratification		0.95
o This brand gives me great pleasure.	0.93	
o This brand makes me feel good.	0.95	
o This brand represents my ideal [product category...].	0.88	
o This brand is close to perfection.	0.87	
Personal nostalgia (Muheling and Pascal, 2011)		0.97
o Makes me think about people, places or things from my youth.	0.84	
o Makes me feel good about a previous time—a time in my life.	0.86	
o Makes me reminisce about a time in my life.	0.87	
o I have warm feelings when reminiscing about this time from my youth.	0.83	
o Evokes good feelings about a time in my life.	0.87	
o Is a pleasant reminder of a time from my youth.	0.86	
Historical nostalgia (Muheling and Pascal, 2011)		0.97
o Makes me feel good about a previous time—a time before my birth.	0.83	
o Is a pleasant reminder of a time before I was born.	0.88	
o Reminds me of an era before my birth.	0.86	
o Makes me wish I could go back to a time before I was born.	0.81	
o Makes me reminisce about a time before my birth.	0.88	
o Evokes good feelings about a time before I was born.	0.89	

Source: Authors' own work