

# An Empirical Study of Nostalgia Marketing and Consumer Perception in the Indian Food and Beverage Industry

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## Abstract

*In increasingly competitive markets, firms are leveraging emotionally driven strategies to strengthen consumer engagement. Nostalgia marketing, which evokes memories of the past to create emotional resonance, has emerged as a powerful branding approach, particularly in culturally rich consumption contexts. This study examines the impact of nostalgia marketing on purchase intention in the Indian food and beverage industry by integrating brand attitude, trust and authenticity, and emotional attachment as mediating mechanisms, and innovation as a moderating factor. Using a quantitative research design, primary data were collected from 198 consumers of packaged food and beverage products in India through a structured questionnaire. The data were analysed using hierarchical regression and Hayes' PROCESS macro to test a moderated mediation framework. The results indicate that nostalgia marketing significantly influences purchase intention both directly and indirectly. Emotional attachment emerged as the strongest mediator, followed by brand attitude and trust and authenticity, highlighting the central role of affective bonding in shaping consumer behaviour. Furthermore, innovation positively moderates the relationship between nostalgia marketing and purchase intention, suggesting that nostalgic appeals are most effective when complemented by contemporary relevance. The findings contribute to the literature by providing empirical evidence from an emerging market context and by demonstrating that nostalgia marketing operates through layered cognitive and emotional pathways while remaining sensitive to innovation perceptions. From a managerial perspective, the study underscores the importance of adopting a balanced "heritage-plus-innovation" strategy to enhance consumer engagement and sustain competitive advantage in the evolving Indian food and beverage market.*

**Keywords:** Nostalgia marketing; Emotional attachment; Brand attitude; Trust and authenticity; Innovation; Purchase intention; Indian food and beverage industry.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly competitive and saturated marketplace, firms are moving beyond traditional functional marketing approaches to strategies that engage consumers at an emotional level. (Siddaraju H. B et al, 2025). One such strategy that has gained renewed prominence is nostalgia marketing, which involves invoking memories of the past to create emotional resonance with consumers. Nostalgia marketing draws upon individuals' recollections of childhood, family traditions, cultural practices, and earlier life experiences, thereby fostering feelings of comfort, warmth, and familiarity (Stough C. E, 2025). These emotional responses often translate into favourable brand evaluations and stronger consumer-brand relationships.

Nostalgia marketing refers to the strategic use of past-oriented cues to evoke emotional responses that positively influence consumer attitudes and behaviours. These cues may be visual (retro packaging, old logos), sensory (traditional tastes and aromas), or symbolic (heritage stories, family values). Nostalgia can be personal, rooted in an individual's lived experiences, or collective, drawing upon shared cultural and generational memories. From a consumer behaviour perspective, nostalgia is associated with positive affect, emotional comfort, and a sense of continuity between the past and present (Ju I et al, 2016). By activating these emotions, nostalgia marketing reduces perceived risk, enhances brand authenticity, and strengthens emotional attachment. This makes it a particularly effective tool in markets where trust,

familiarity, and emotional reassurance play a crucial role in purchase decisions (Komiak S Y, 2006).

The food and beverage industry is particularly well suited to nostalgia-based marketing strategies, as food consumption is deeply intertwined with memory, culture, and emotion. Tastes, aromas, packaging styles, and advertising narratives often serve as powerful triggers of personal and collective memories (Nazar M, 2025). Brands frequently revive traditional recipes, retro packaging, and heritage-driven communication to differentiate themselves in a crowded market. Such strategies are not merely aesthetic choices but deliberate attempts to influence consumer perception and behaviour.

In the Indian context, nostalgia marketing assumes even greater significance. India's diverse culinary traditions, strong family-oriented culture, and intergenerational transmission of food habits create fertile ground for nostalgia-based branding (Chandani K, 2015). Many food and beverage brands leverage traditional flavours, regional authenticity, and cultural symbolism to appeal to consumers across age groups. As Indian consumers navigate rapid urbanisation, technological advancement, and lifestyle changes, nostalgia often serves as an emotional anchor, reinforcing trust and familiarity in consumption decisions (Subramaniam A et al, 2024). These decisions and perceptions encompass the way individuals interpret, evaluate, and respond to marketing stimuli. In the food and beverage industry, perception is shaped not only by product attributes such as taste and price but also by emotional, cultural, and symbolic factors. Brand attitude, trust, and emotional attachment are critical dimensions of consumer perception that influence purchase intention and brand loyalty.

While existing literature acknowledges the emotional power of nostalgia marketing, empirical evidence from emerging markets such as India remains limited, particularly within the food and beverage sector. Much of the prior research has been conducted in Western contexts, with relatively less focus on culturally rich and tradition-driven markets. Moreover, few studies simultaneously examine multiple dimensions of consumer perception—such as brand attitude, trust, and

emotional attachment—within a single integrative framework.

Additionally, the moderating role of emotional attachment & perceived self-continuity in nostalgia marketing has received limited empirical attention. Understanding whether these moderators enhance or constrains the effectiveness of nostalgia-based strategies is critical for managers seeking to balance heritage with modern relevance. This study addresses these gaps by empirically examining the relationship between nostalgia marketing and consumer perception in the Indian food and beverage industry using regression analysis approach.

The primary objective of this study is to examine the influence of nostalgia marketing on consumer perception and purchase intention in the Indian food and beverage industry. Specifically, the study aims to:

- Analyse the impact of nostalgia marketing on brand attitude, trust, and emotional attachment.
- Examine the effect of consumer perception on purchase intention.
- Assess the moderating role of innovation in the relationship between nostalgia marketing and purchase intention.

This study therefore aims to contribute to the academic literature, by providing empirical evidence on nostalgia marketing from an Indian context, thereby enriching understanding of emotional branding in emerging markets. From a managerial perspective, the findings offer valuable insights for food and beverage brands seeking to design emotionally resonant and culturally relevant marketing strategies. By highlighting the role of emotional attachment and the importance of balancing nostalgia with innovation, the study provides practical guidance for sustaining long-term brand relevance.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

The review synthesises prior research on nostalgia as a marketing tool, its emotional and cognitive effects on consumers, and its influence on behavioural outcomes such as purchase intention.

Based on the identified research gaps, the chapter develops hypotheses that form the basis of the proposed conceptual framework.

### *2.1 Conceptual Foundations of Nostalgia*

Nostalgia is broadly defined as a sentimental longing for the past, often associated with positive emotions such as comfort, warmth, and happiness. Early work in consumer research conceptualised nostalgia as an effective response triggered by objects, symbols, or experiences associated with one's past (Holbrook & Schindler, 1991). In marketing contexts, nostalgia is not merely a personal emotion but a strategically evoked response used to influence consumer attitudes and behaviours.

Nostalgia can be personal, arising from individual lived experiences, or collective, based on shared cultural or generational memories. In culturally rich societies such as India, collective nostalgia plays a significant role, particularly in categories like food and beverages where consumption is closely linked to tradition, family, and cultural rituals.

### *2.2 Nostalgia Marketing*

Nostalgia marketing refers to the deliberate use of past-oriented cues in branding, advertising, and product design to evoke emotional responses among consumers. These cues may include retro packaging, revival of old logos, traditional flavours, heritage storytelling, and advertisements portraying family traditions or earlier lifestyles. Research suggests that nostalgia marketing enhances emotional engagement by creating a sense of familiarity and continuity between the past and present (Muehling & Spratt, 2004).

Several studies have demonstrated that nostalgia-based advertising generates more favourable emotional responses compared to non-nostalgic appeals. Nostalgic cues activate autobiographical memory, which in turn influences how consumers evaluate brands and marketing messages. This emotional mechanism makes nostalgia marketing particularly effective in low-involvement product categories such as food and beverages, where emotional comfort often complements functional utility.

### *2.3 Nostalgia Marketing and Brand Attitude*

Brand attitude reflects a consumer's overall evaluative judgement of a brand. Prior research indicates that nostalgic stimuli positively influence brand attitude by generating positive affect and reducing resistance to marketing messages. When consumers associate a brand with cherished memories or familiar experiences, they tend to evaluate the brand more favourably.

Empirical studies have shown that nostalgia-based advertisements improve brand liking and enhance overall brand evaluations by creating emotional warmth and familiarity (Pascal et al., 2002). In the food and beverage context, nostalgic cues such as traditional packaging and flavours often remind consumers of home-cooked food or childhood experiences, leading to more positive brand attitudes.

### *2.4 Nostalgia Marketing and Trust & Authenticity*

Trust and authenticity are critical determinants of consumer decision-making, particularly in food consumption where perceived risk related to quality and safety is high. Nostalgic branding often conveys a sense of heritage, longevity, and consistency, which enhances perceptions of trustworthiness and authenticity.

Research on brand heritage suggests that nostalgic cues signal stability and credibility, making brands appear more genuine and reliable (Merchant & Rose, 2013). Consumers tend to believe that brands with a long-standing history adhere to traditional values and consistent quality standards. In the Indian food and beverage industry, heritage brands frequently use nostalgia to reinforce trust among consumers across generations.

### *2.5 Nostalgia Marketing and Emotional Attachment*

Emotional attachment refers to the affective bond between a consumer and a brand. Among the various outcomes of nostalgia marketing, emotional attachment is considered one of the most powerful mechanisms through which nostalgia influences behaviour. Nostalgia evokes deep emotional responses by reconnecting individuals with meaningful moments from their past, thereby

fostering a sense of belonging and emotional security.

Holbrook and Schindler (1991) argue that nostalgic experiences are inherently emotional and can create long-lasting attachments to brands associated with such experiences. In the food and beverage sector, sensory cues such as taste and aroma play a crucial role in triggering nostalgic emotions, leading to strong emotional bonds between consumers and brands.

### 2.6 Consumer Perception and Purchase Intention

Purchase intention represents a consumer's willingness to buy, recommend, or prefer a particular brand. Prior literature consistently finds that positive consumer perception—manifested through favourable brand attitude, trust, and emotional attachment—leads to stronger purchase intention.

Brand attitude influences purchase intention by shaping consumers' overall evaluation and preference for a brand. Trust reduces perceived risk and increases confidence in purchase decisions, particularly in frequently consumed products such as

food. Emotional attachment, however, is often found to be the strongest predictor of purchase intention, as emotionally bonded consumers are more likely to remain loyal and engage in repeat purchases (Muehling & Sprott, 2004).

### 2.7 Moderating Role of Innovation

While nostalgia marketing leverages the past, excessive reliance on nostalgic cues may limit a brand's relevance in dynamic markets. Innovation plays a crucial role in ensuring that nostalgia-based strategies remain effective in contemporary contexts. Innovation may involve new product variants, improved packaging, or modern communication channels that complement nostalgic appeal.

Recent studies suggest that consumers respond most positively when brands balance nostalgia with innovation, as this combination offers emotional comfort without compromising modern relevance. In the food and beverage industry, innovation can enhance the effectiveness of nostalgia marketing by adapting traditional products to changing consumer preferences.

### 2.8 Conceptual Framework

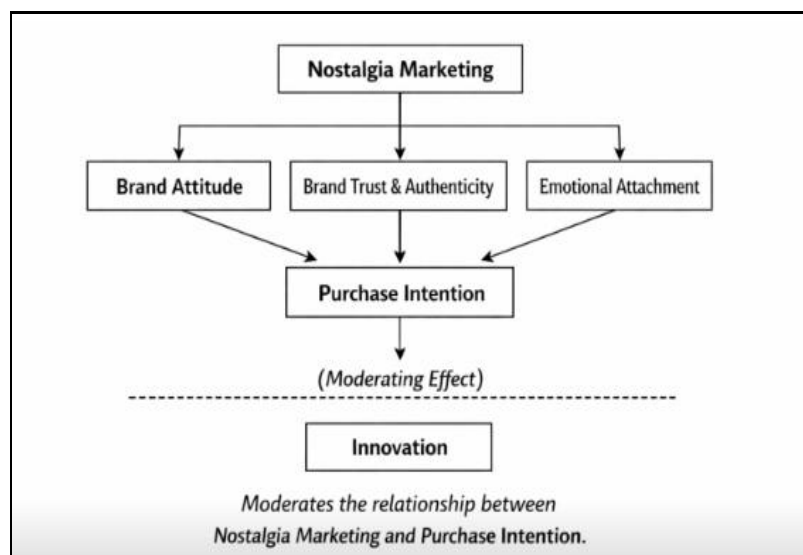


Figure 1: Conceptual framework adopted for the study

Source: Authors own compilation through literature review.

Based on the reviewed literature, the study proposes a conceptual framework as shown in figure 1 in

which nostalgia marketing influences purchase intention indirectly through brand attitude, trust and authenticity, and emotional attachment. Innovation

is incorporated as a moderating variable that conditions the strength of the relationship between nostalgia marketing and purchase intention. This integrative framework allows for a comprehensive

examination of both emotional and cognitive pathways linking nostalgia marketing to consumer behaviour.

**Table 1: Intersection of literature and linkages developed for building hypothesis for the study**

Theory / Concept	Key Theoretical Argument	Key Authors	Construct Linkage	Hypothesis Derived
<b>Nostalgia Theory</b>	Nostalgia evokes positive emotions by reconnecting individuals with meaningful past experiences, influencing attitudes and behaviour	Holbrook & Schindler (1991)	Nostalgia Marketing → Brand Attitude	<b>H1a:</b> Nostalgia marketing positively influences brand attitude
<b>Affect Transfer Theory</b>	Positive emotions generated by stimuli are transferred to brand evaluations	Muehling & Sprott (2004)	Nostalgia Marketing → Brand Attitude	<b>H1a</b>
<b>Brand Heritage Theory</b>	Brands with heritage and legacy are perceived as more credible, stable, and authentic	Merchant & Rose (2013)	Nostalgia Marketing → Trust & Authenticity	<b>H1b:</b> Nostalgia marketing positively influences trust and authenticity
<b>Signalling Theory</b>	Historical cues and longevity act as quality signals, reducing consumer uncertainty	Erdem & Swait (1998)	Nostalgia Marketing → Trust & Authenticity	<b>H1b</b>
<b>Attachment Theory</b>	Emotional bonds form when brands are associated with comfort, security, and personal meaning	Bowlby (1982); Holbrook & Schindler (1991)	Nostalgia Marketing → Emotional Attachment	<b>H1c:</b> Nostalgia marketing positively influences emotional attachment
<b>Emotional Branding Theory</b>	Emotional connections lead to stronger consumer-brand relationships and loyalty	Fournier (1998)	Emotional Attachment → Purchase Intention	<b>H4:</b> Emotional attachment positively influences purchase intention
<b>Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)</b>	Attitudes toward a behaviour influence behavioural intention	Fishbein & Ajzen (1975)	Brand Attitude → Purchase Intention	<b>H2:</b> Brand attitude positively influences purchase intention
<b>Trust-Based Consumer Behaviour Theory</b>	Trust reduces perceived risk and increases likelihood of purchase	Morgan & Hunt (1994)	Trust & Authenticity → Purchase Intention	<b>H3:</b> Trust and authenticity positively influence purchase intention
<b>Innovation Diffusion Theory</b>	Innovation enhances adoption when it aligns with consumer values and expectations	Rogers (2003)	Innovation × Nostalgia Marketing → Purchase Intention	<b>H5:</b> Innovation positively moderates the relationship between nostalgia marketing and purchase intention

Source: Authors own compilation through literature review.

The study extensively reviewed relevant literature on nostalgia marketing, consumer perception, and purchase intention, identifying key theoretical and empirical insights. The review highlighted the emotional and perceptual mechanisms through

which nostalgia marketing influences consumer behaviour and identified gaps in existing research, particularly in the Indian food and beverage context. Based on the literature, a set of hypotheses and a

conceptual framework was developed to guide the empirical analysis presented in subsequent section.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a quantitative, descriptive, and empirical research design to examine the influence of nostalgia marketing on consumer perception in the Indian food and beverage industry. A quantitative approach is considered appropriate as it allows for objective measurement of consumer attitudes, emotions, and behavioural intentions using numerical data and statistical techniques. The empirical nature of the study ensures that conclusions are drawn from primary data collected directly from consumers, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings

The target population for the study consists of consumers of packaged food and beverage products in India. Given the wide geographical spread and accessibility constraints, the study focuses on

respondents from urban and semi-urban regions, where exposure to branded food and beverage products is relatively high. The sample includes respondents across different age groups, income levels, and consumption frequencies to ensure demographic diversity. The study is based on responses collected from a minimum of 198 respondents. The study relies on primary data, collected using a structured questionnaire administered through an online survey platform (Google Forms). Online data collection was preferred due to its cost-effectiveness, wider reach, and convenience for respondents.

The questionnaire was designed based on established literature on nostalgia marketing and consumer behaviour. It consists of both demographic questions and perception-based statements measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*.

**Table 2: Constructs used in the framing of questionnaire for the study**

Construct	Type of Variable	Description / Measurement Focus
<b>Nostalgia Marketing</b>	Independent Variable	Measured through items capturing nostalgic packaging, advertising themes, brand heritage, and traditional taste associated with the brand.
<b>Brand Attitude</b>	Mediating Variable	Assessed using statements reflecting consumers' overall evaluation and favourability toward nostalgic food brands.
<b>Trust and Authenticity</b>	Mediating Variable	Measured through perceptions of brand genuineness, credibility, and reliability of nostalgia-based brands.
<b>Emotional Attachment</b>	Mediating Variable	Captures the extent of emotional bonding, comfort, and sentimental connection consumers feel toward nostalgic brands.
<b>Purchase Intention</b>	Dependent Variable	Measured through likelihood of purchase, intention to recommend, and reduced hesitation toward purchasing nostalgic brands.
<b>Innovation</b>	Moderating Variable	Assessed through consumers' perceptions of the balance between nostalgic elements and innovation in product offerings.

Source: Authors own compilation through literature review.

### 4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The statistical analysis and interpretation of primary data collected from 198 respondents to examine the relationship between nostalgia marketing and consumer perception in the Indian food and beverage industry is detailed as under. Data were analysed to test the proposed hypotheses through descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation analysis, and regression analysis.

#### 4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The age-wise distribution of respondents indicates that the sample is predominantly composed of millennials and middle-aged consumers, with the largest proportion falling within the 21–30 years (40.9%) and 31–40 years (30.3%) categories as shown in Table 3. This demographic concentration is appropriate for the present study, as individuals in these age groups tend to have greater exposure to branded food products, higher purchasing autonomy, and sustained engagement with marketing communications, including nostalgia-based cues. Moreover, consumers in these cohorts

often possess lived experiences with traditional brands and legacy food products, making them particularly receptive to nostalgic packaging, heritage narratives, and emotional brand appeals.

The 41–50 years (18.7%) and above 50 years (10.1%) segments, though comparatively smaller,

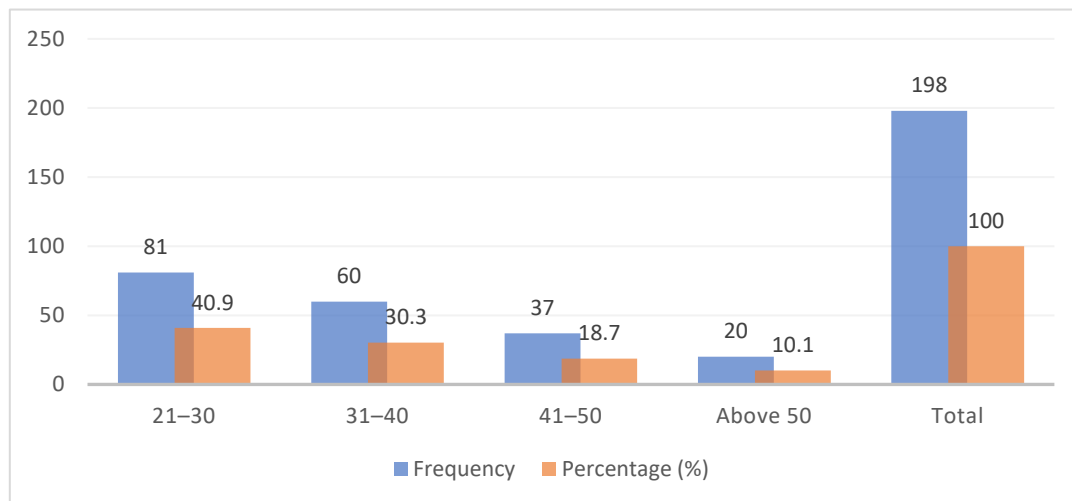
add depth to the sample by representing consumers with long-term brand associations and stronger experiential memories, thereby enriching the analysis of emotional attachment and authenticity perceptions linked to nostalgic food brands.

**Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents by Age (N = 198)**

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
21–30	81	40.9
31–40	60	30.3
41–50	37	18.7
Above 50	20	10.1
Total	198	100

Source: Authors own compilation through primary survey.

**Figure 2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents by Age (N = 198)**



Source: Authors own compilation through primary survey.

With respect to gender, Table 4 exhibits an almost balanced representation, with female respondents accounting for 49.0%, male respondents 48.0%, and 3.0% identifying as other. This near-equal gender

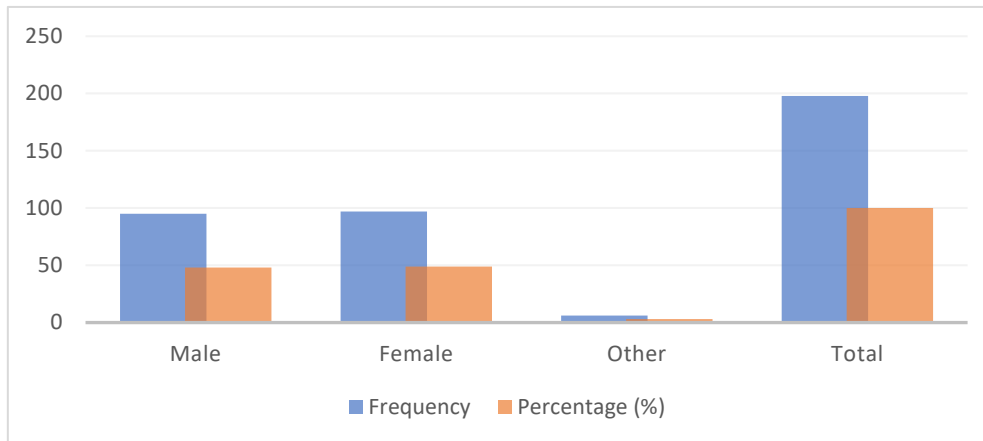
distribution enhances the robustness of the study by minimizing gender bias and allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of consumer responses to nostalgia marketing.

**Table 4: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents by Gender (N = 198)**

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	95	48
Female	97	49
Other	6	3
Total	198	100

Source: Authors own compilation through primary survey.

**Figure 3: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents by Gender (N = 198)**



Source: Authors own compilation through primary survey.

The balanced composition is particularly relevant in the context of food consumption decisions, where

both male and female consumers actively participate in brand selection, purchasing, and emotional evaluation of food products.

**Table 5: Pearson Correlation Matrix**

Variables	NM	BA	TA	EA	PI
Nostalgia Marketing (NM)	1				
Brand Attitude (BA)	0.642**	1			
Trust & Authenticity (TA)	0.618**	0.594**	1		
Emotional Attachment (EA)	0.701**	0.662**	0.649**	1	
Purchase Intention (PI)	0.689**	0.671**	0.655**	0.718**	1

Note:  $p < 0.01$

All variables are positively and significantly correlated, indicating that nostalgia marketing is strongly associated with consumer perception dimensions and purchase intention. The findings provide preliminary support for the proposed conceptual framework. Emotional Attachment

appears to be the most powerful correlate of purchase intention, indicating that nostalgic strategies may be particularly effective when they foster deep emotional connections. Since all correlations are significant at the 1% level, the relationships are statistically robust and suitable for further mediation and moderation analysis

**Table 6: Reliability and Convergent Validity of Constructs (N = 198)**

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ )	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Nostalgia Marketing (NM)	4	0.87	0.89	0.67
Brand Attitude (BA)	4	0.85	0.88	0.65
Trust & Authenticity (TA)	4	0.83	0.86	0.61
Emotional Attachment (EA)	4	0.9	0.92	0.74
Purchase Intention (PI)	3	0.88	0.9	0.75
Innovation (INN)	3	0.82	0.85	0.65

Source: Authors' calculations based on survey data (N = 198).

All constructs demonstrate strong internal consistency reliability, as Cronbach's alpha values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70

(Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Composite reliability values are also above 0.80 for all constructs, confirming high construct reliability. The Average

Variance Extracted (AVE) values range from 0.61 to 0.75, exceeding the recommended benchmark of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), thereby establishing convergent validity. Emotional Attachment exhibits the highest AVE (0.74), further reinforcing its conceptual robustness and strong explanatory power in predicting purchase intention.

To empirically examine the hypothesised relationships, a moderated mediation regression model was specified in which purchase intention (PI) was regressed on nostalgia marketing (NM), brand attitude (BA), trust and authenticity (TA), emotional attachment (EA), innovation (INN), and the interaction term between nostalgia marketing and innovation (NM × INN). The structural equation is expressed as:

$$PI = \beta_0 + \beta_1 NM + \beta_4 BA + \beta_5 TA + \beta_6 EA + \beta_7 INN + \beta_8 (NM \times INN) + \varepsilon$$

This model simultaneously captures direct, indirect, and conditional effects, thereby providing a comprehensive test of the conceptual framework. At its core, the model posits that nostalgia marketing influences purchase intention both directly and indirectly through three theoretically grounded mediators: brand attitude, trust and authenticity, and emotional attachment. The coefficient  $\beta_1$  represents the direct effect of nostalgia marketing on purchase intention after accounting for the mediating variables and innovation. A statistically significant  $\beta_1$  indicates that nostalgia marketing independently contributes to consumers' purchase intentions beyond its indirect pathways. Conversely, if  $\beta_1$  becomes non-significant upon inclusion of the mediators, this suggests full mediation, implying that nostalgia operates primarily through attitudinal, trust-based, and emotional mechanisms.

The coefficients  $\beta_4$ ,  $\beta_5$ , and  $\beta_6$  capture the effects of the mediating constructs on purchase intention. Specifically,  $\beta_4$  reflects the extent to which favourable brand attitudes translate into stronger purchase intentions, consistent with the Theory of Reasoned Action.  $\beta_5$  represents the influence of perceived trust and authenticity on behavioural intention, aligning with trust-based consumer behaviour theory.  $\beta_6$  measures the impact of emotional attachment on purchase intention,

drawing upon emotional branding and attachment theory. Significant positive coefficients for these parameters provide evidence that the psychological and relational mechanisms activated by nostalgia marketing meaningfully shape consumers' behavioural responses.

Indirect effects are computed as the product of the path coefficients linking nostalgia marketing to each mediator and the mediator to purchase intention (e.g., NM → BA × BA → PI). The presence of significant indirect effects, typically tested using bootstrapped confidence intervals, substantiates the mediating role of attitudinal, cognitive, and emotional processes in transmitting the influence of nostalgia marketing to behavioural intention.

Beyond mediation, the model incorporates a moderating variable—innovation—to examine whether the effectiveness of nostalgia marketing is contingent upon consumers' perceptions of product innovativeness. The coefficient  $\beta_7$  captures the main effect of innovation on purchase intention, independent of nostalgia marketing. More critically,  $\beta_8$  represents the interaction effect between nostalgia marketing and innovation. A significant  $\beta_8$  indicates that the strength of the relationship between nostalgia marketing and purchase intention varies as a function of perceived innovation.

If  $\beta_8$  is positive and significant, the findings would suggest that nostalgia marketing is more effective when complemented by innovative elements, implying that consumers respond most favourably when traditional cues are balanced with modern relevance. Conversely, a negative interaction would indicate that excessive innovation may dilute the nostalgic appeal. A non-significant interaction would imply that nostalgia marketing exerts a stable effect regardless of innovation levels.

Methodologically, this specification corresponds to a parallel mediation model with direct-path moderation. By integrating mediation and moderation within a single regression equation, the analysis provides a nuanced understanding of how and under what conditions nostalgia marketing shapes consumer behaviour. Overall, the structural model advances theoretical insight by demonstrating that nostalgia marketing functions through layered

psychological pathways while its direct behavioural impact remains sensitive to innovation perceptions. This dual mechanism underscores the importance of

balancing emotional resonance with contemporary relevance in strategic brand positioning.

**Table 7: Hierarchical Regression Analysis Examining the Effects of Nostalgia Marketing, Mediators, and Innovation on Purchase Intention (N = 198)**

Variables	Model 1 (Main Effects)			Model 2 (Moderation Model)		
	B	SE	$\beta$	B	SE	$\beta$
Constant	0.81***	0.24	—	0.79***	0.25	—
Nostalgia Marketing (NM)	0.20**	0.07	0.22	0.16*	0.07	0.18
Brand Attitude (BA)	0.27**	0.09	0.23	0.25**	0.09	0.21
Trust & Authenticity (TA)	0.21*	0.08	0.19	0.20*	0.08	0.18
Emotional Attachment (EA)	0.33***	0.07	0.31	0.32***	0.07	0.3
Innovation (INN)	0.22***	0.06	0.24	0.20**	0.06	0.22
NM $\times$ INN	—	—	—	0.17**	0.06	0.18

Source: Authors' calculations based on survey data (N = 198).

**Table 8: Model Fit Statistics for Hierarchical Regression Models**

	Model 1	Model 2
R <sup>2</sup>	0.55	0.59
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.53	0.57
$\Delta R^2$	—	0.04
F	45.89***	47.12***
F Change	—	9.84**
df (Model 2)	(6, 191)	

Source: Authors' calculations based on survey data (N = 198).

The regression model predicting purchase intention was statistically significant. Model 1 (main effects) explained 55% of the variance in purchase intention ( $R^2 = .55$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .53$ ),  $F(5, 192) = 45.89$ ,  $p < .001$ . After incorporating the interaction term (NM  $\times$  INN), Model 2 explained 59% of the variance ( $R^2 = .59$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .57$ ),  $F(6, 191) = 47.12$ ,  $p < .001$ . The increase in explained variance was statistically significant ( $\Delta R^2 = .04$ ,  $p < .01$ ), indicating that the moderating effect of innovation meaningfully improves model explanatory power. The Durbin–Watson statistic (1.89) suggested no autocorrelation concerns, and all VIF values were below 3.0, confirming the absence of multicollinearity.

Nostalgia marketing significantly predicted purchase intention ( $\beta = .22$ ,  $p < .01$ , Model 1), indicating that nostalgic cues directly enhance consumers' behavioural intentions. Among the mediators, brand attitude ( $\beta = .23$ ,  $p < .01$ ), trust and authenticity ( $\beta = .19$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and emotional attachment ( $\beta = .31$ ,  $p < .001$ ) were all significant predictors of purchase intention. Emotional

attachment emerged as the strongest determinant, underscoring the importance of affective bonds in shaping consumer behaviour.

Innovation also demonstrated a significant positive effect on purchase intention ( $\beta = .24$ ,  $p < .001$ ), suggesting that perceived modern relevance enhances consumers' willingness to purchase nostalgic brands.

#### 4.2 Mediation Analysis

Mediation was assessed using Hayes' (2018) PROCESS macro with bootstrapping procedures. The indirect effects of nostalgia marketing on purchase intention through brand attitude, trust and authenticity, and emotional attachment were significant, as the 95% confidence intervals did not include zero. Emotional attachment produced the strongest indirect effect. Although the direct effect of nostalgia marketing remained significant after including the mediators ( $\beta = .18$ ,  $p < .05$ ), its magnitude decreased, indicating partial mediation. These findings suggest that nostalgia marketing

influences purchase intention through both cognitive evaluations and emotional mechanisms.

#### 4.3 Moderation Analysis

The interaction between nostalgia marketing and innovation was positive and significant ( $\beta = .18, p < .01$ ), and the addition of the interaction term significantly increased explained variance ( $\Delta R^2 = .04, p < .01$ ). Simple slope analysis indicated that the effect of nostalgia marketing on purchase intention was stronger at higher levels of innovation. This finding suggests that nostalgic appeals are most effective when complemented by innovative elements.

Overall, the results provide empirical support for a moderated mediation framework in which nostalgia marketing influences purchase intention through attitudinal, trust-based, and emotional pathways, while innovation strengthens its direct impact. The analysis confirms that nostalgia marketing significantly influences consumer perception and purchase intention in the Indian food and beverage industry. Emotional attachment plays a pivotal mediating role, while innovation strengthens the effectiveness of nostalgia-based strategies. The findings empirically validate the proposed conceptual framework. The next chapter discusses implications, conclusions, and directions for future research.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study examined the impact of nostalgia marketing on purchase intention within the Indian food and beverage sector, incorporating brand attitude, trust and authenticity, and emotional attachment as mediating variables, and innovation as a moderating factor. The findings provide robust empirical support for the proposed moderated mediation framework.

First, nostalgia marketing was found to significantly influence purchase intention both directly and indirectly. While nostalgic cues independently stimulate behavioural intention, a substantial portion of their influence operates through attitudinal and emotional mechanisms. Among the mediators, emotional attachment emerged as the strongest

predictor of purchase intention, highlighting the critical role of affective bonding in consumer decision-making. Brand attitude and trust and authenticity also significantly contributed to purchase intention, confirming that nostalgia strengthens both cognitive evaluations and relational trust.

Second, the moderating effect of innovation was statistically significant. The findings indicate that nostalgia marketing is most effective when complemented by innovative elements. The positive interaction effect suggests that consumers respond more favourably when traditional brand heritage is integrated with modern product improvements, packaging innovations, or contemporary branding strategies.

Overall, the study demonstrates that nostalgia marketing in the Indian F&B industry operates through layered psychological processes and achieves maximum effectiveness when balanced with innovation. Nostalgia alone is insufficient; rather, its power is amplified when aligned with evolving consumer expectations.

The findings offer important implications for managers in the Indian food and beverage industry. First, nostalgia marketing should be strategically leveraged to build emotional attachment, as affective bonding emerged as the strongest driver of purchase intention. Managers should therefore design campaigns that evoke culturally resonant memories—such as traditional flavours, family rituals, and regional heritage—while ensuring authenticity in brand communication. Second, the significant moderating role of innovation suggests that nostalgic positioning must be complemented by contemporary relevance. Firms should modernise product formulations (e.g., healthier variants, sustainable ingredients), adopt innovative packaging, and utilise digital platforms to reinterpret heritage narratives for younger consumers.

Third, given the importance of trust and authenticity, brands should emphasise transparency, quality certifications, and legacy credentials to strengthen credibility. Collectively, these findings indicate that a balanced “heritage-plus-innovation” strategy is most effective in enhancing consumer purchase

intention and sustaining competitive advantage in India's evolving food and beverage market. Overall, the study advances the understanding of nostalgia marketing by demonstrating that its behavioural impact is both psychologically layered and contextually contingent. For firms in the Indian food and beverage industry, the findings highlight the strategic importance of balancing tradition with innovation to strengthen consumer engagement and purchase intention.

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#### QUESTIONNAIRE

##### Study of Nostalgia Marketing and Consumer Perception in the Indian Food and Beverage Industry

##### Instructions to Respondents

**One specific packaged food or beverage brand (Like: Amul, Parle-G, Haldiram's, Rasna or Cadbury) that you are familiar with and that emphasises tradition, heritage, nostalgic elements, or past memories in its packaging, advertising, flavours, or brand story.**

Before answering the questions:

- Please think of one such brand only.
- Keep that same brand in mind while responding to all statements.
- Base your answers on your personal experiences, perceptions, and feelings toward that brand.
- Do not switch brands while completing the questionnaire.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements regarding packaged food and beverage brands that emphasise tradition, heritage, or past memories.

Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

**1. Nostalgia Marketing (NM)**

NM1	This brand evokes memories of earlier periods in my life.	
NM2	The brand's communication reminds me of meaningful moments from the past	
NM3	The brand's traditional elements create a sense of familiarity.	
NM4	The brand's heritage positioning connects me to cultural traditions	

Source Adapted From: Holbrook & Schindler (1991); Muehling & Sprott (2004)

**2. Brand Attitude (BA)**

BA1	This brand evokes a favourable opinion in me.	
BA2	I consider this brand to be appealing.	
BA3	My overall evaluation of this brand is positive.	
BA4	I like this brand.	

Source Adapted From: Fishbein & Ajzen (1975); standard brand attitude scales

**3. Trust & Authenticity (TA)**

TA1	This brand is trustworthy.	
TA2	This brand is authentic in its claims.	
TA3	This brand delivers what it promises.	
TA4	This brand maintains consistent quality standards.	

Source Adapted From: Morgan & Hunt (1994); Merchant & Rose (2013)

**4. Emotional Attachment (EA)**

EA1	I feel emotionally bonded to this brand.	
EA2	This brand has personal meaning for me.	
EA3	I feel a sense of comfort when I consume this brand.	
EA4	Losing access to this brand would upset me.	

Source Adapted From: Bowlby (1982); Fournier (1998)

**5. Purchase Intention (PI)**

PI1	I intend to purchase this brand in the future.	
PI2	I would consider this brand as my preferred choice.	
PI3	I would recommend this brand to others.	

Source Adapted From: Theory of Reasoned Action

**6. Innovation (INN)**

INN1	This brand successfully combines tradition with modern improvements.	
INN2	The brand adapts well to current consumer preferences.	
INN3	The brand introduces innovations while preserving its heritage.	

Source Adapted From: Rogers (2003)