Conceptualising Personal and Historical Nostalgia as Travel Motives

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ABSTRACT
This conceptual paper reviews the literature that recognises the growing importance of nostalgia within the consumer goods markets and the existence of several types of nostalgia. It proposes a research model which explores the significance of nostalgic emotions within a leisure travel context. Specifically, it seeks to examine personal and historical nostalgia’s relevance as travel motives that influence travel attitudes and travel intentions toward a tourist destination. Perceived travel risk is also investigated as a potential moderator between travel attitudes and travel intentions. Relevant theories are reviewed as an attempt to explain the various relationships. Lastly, the paper concludes with a set of hypotheses.

Keywords: Personal Nostalgia, Historical Nostalgia, Travel Motives, Travel Attitudes, Travel Intentions, Perceived Travel Risks.

BACKGROUND OF NOSTALGIA
There is an escalating use of nostalgia in the marketing of consumer goods and within the leisure and entertainment industry (Baker and Kennedy 1994; Goulding 2001; Holak, Matveev and Havlena 2007; Merchant and Ford 2008). An increasing number of companies are using nostalgia as a source of competitive advantage by positioning their products in such fashion, thus creating emotional attachments to brands and influencing individuals’ preferences through the connection to previous experiences or eras (Fournier and Yao 1997; Holbrook 1993; Holbrook and Schindler 1994; Kessous and Roux 2008).

Activities in the past that served as subjects for nostalgic emotions are said to often become leisure activities later on which are viewed as unique or special (Holak and Havlena 1992; Mannell and Iso-Ahola 1987). Clearly, the so called ‘pleasure travelling’ forms part of such group of activities (Mannell and Iso-Ahola 1987; Moschis and Ünal 2008). Moreover, travel has often been found to be the response to what is missing, yet desired, in a person’s life (Dann 1981). In addition, feelings have been identified as unique contributors to persuasion where empathetic consumer responses occur in reference to emotion-oriented messages (Deighton, Romer and Mcqueen 1989).

Lastly, there is the belief that even though consumers cannot literally return to the past, they can recreate it through nostalgic consumption activities (Havlena and Holak 1991; Stern 1992b). This
argument appears valuable to the tourism industry since travelling can offer individuals the chance to physically revisit the place that has awoken longing sentiments in them.

GAPS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Despite the increasing attention placed upon nostalgia in the marketplace and consumer life, the domain still lacks a solid theoretical structure (Sierra and McQuitty 2007). The majority of the market research has been centred in the study of its antecedents and consequences in terms of consumer behaviour (Kessous and Roux 2008) with focus on brand attachment (Fournier and Yao 1997), brand preference (Holbrook and Schindler 1989), and individual collection of brand objects (Belk 1988, 1990).

Within the academic literature, scarce mention can be found pertaining to the possible impact of nostalgia upon consumers’ intentions to engage in leisure travel. An exception is provided by Sellick (2004) who identified nostalgia as the biggest travel motivator among mature Australians. However, the author failed to clearly specify which type of nostalgia was manifested and no additional studies dedicated to further exploring such finding have been identified yet.

The present research seeks to tackle a perceived weakness within the marketing theory by proposing a conceptual model that explores the relevance of nostalgic emotions as travel motives (Sellick 2004), whilst differentiating among two greatly recorded types of nostalgia, i.e. personal and historical nostalgia (Baker and Kennedy 1994; Havlena and Holak 1991; Stern 1992a). The findings could potentially allow destination managers and marketer practitioners to formulate more effective strategies in order to meet consumers’ needs and wants by better understanding their travel motivations. The following section covers a review of pertinent literature specifically related to nostalgia, personal nostalgia, historical nostalgia, travel attitudes, travel intentions, and perceived travel risks.
RELEVANT THEORY AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Nostalgia

Nostalgia was defined by Holbrook and Schindler (1991, 330) as “a preference (general liking, positive attitude, or favourable affect) toward objects (people, places, or things) that were more common (popular, fashionable, or widely circulated) when one was younger (in early adulthood, in adolescence, in childhood, or even before birth)”. Drawn from the principle that nostalgia is older and more fundamental than human nature itself, Havlena and Holak (1991) stated that everyone in the world is susceptible to it, regardless of age and temperaments. Dai (1997) goes further into the idea by stating that nostalgia is not only a kind of remembrance, but also a kind of right.

However, recognition has also been made of nostalgia as a private emotion since each person has different symbolic meanings associated with particular incentives (Baker and Kennedy 1994). As such, variations among individuals and gender as to the type of stimuli that will evoke nostalgic sentiments and the intensity with which they will manifest are likely to exist. This highlights the importance of focusing on segmentation bases that are associated with nostalgia or with the effects of attitudes held toward the past (Goulding 2001; Holbrook and Schindler 1996).

Holak and Havlena’s (1992) study concluded that both tangible objects and intangible presentations, such as music, film, and food, can be depicted in the list of what constitutes a nostalgic stimulus. Furthermore, their findings included subjects such as holidays, religious observances, family and friends, jewellery, photographs (especially black and white), antiques, toys, books, cars, and school-related experiences (Havlena and Holak 1991). For destination managers and marketers, understanding if a location is likely to serve as a cue for nostalgic emotions is of particular importance in order to be able to promote it in such light.

An appraisal of the existing literature reveals that several authors have differentiated between various types of nostalgia. For example, Davis (1979) cited in Holbrook and Schindler (1991) identified first, second, and third order nostalgia; Belk, Wallendorf and Sherry (1989) mentioned collective nostalgia;
Havlena and Holak (1991) discussed personal or private as well as collective or societal variants; Stern (1992a) described historical nostalgia; Baker and Kennedy (1994) referred to real or true nostalgia, and stimulated nostalgia; Havlena and Holak (1996) unveiled personal, cultural, interpersonal or intergenerational, and virtual nostalgia; and Boym (2001, 41) focused on restorative and reflective nostalgia. A brief description of each type can be seen in Table 1. In spite of the different kinds of nostalgia mentioned, personal and historical nostalgia seem to comprise the essence of them all by distinguishing if the individual personally or vicariously experienced the situation that is causing the yearning. As such, they will be the ones further explored within the context of this revision.

**INSERT TABLE 1 HERE**

**Personal Nostalgia**

As implied by its name, personal nostalgia is directly and strongly linked to an individual’s own and idealised past (Stern 1992a), usually referring to times ranging from ten to seventy years back (Holak and Havlena 1992). It was firmly argued by Davis (1979), cited in Havlena and Holak (1991), that while experiences undoubtedly draw from the past, they must refer to a personal history in order for nostalgia to be true. It was the author’s opinion that an individual cannot feel nostalgic about something or sometime that s/he did not directly experience.

Within personal nostalgia, memories are those of a sentimentalised home of the individual’s childhood (Stern 1992a). Consequently, the sentiment recollects filtered and adorned scenes of a home that summons fond memories, allowing for the reshaping of incidents and relationships. According to Miller (1990) and Stern (1992a), consumption experiences that offer people a taste of youth, fuel the current personal nostalgia boom.

In relation to personal nostalgia, products have been found to be important signifiers of self-concept in American culture, serving as reminders of moments in the personal past (Stern 1992a). Moreover,
they were termed as personal storehouses of meaning that represent symbols of security, expressions of self-concept, and signs of connection to, or differentiation from, other members of society (Wallendorf and Arnould 1988). This self-concept incorporates traces of brands recalled from personal past that help individuals locate the sense of who they are today, in memories of who they used to be and of the products that they consumed (Stern 1992a). The possible significance of locations as contributors to an individual’s self-concept appears unexplored as of yet.

**Historical Nostalgia**

Whereas personal nostalgia is directly and strongly linked to an individual’s own and idealised past, historical nostalgia includes external sources that cover the whole past and that are outside an individual’s personal experience as plausible triggers of the emotion (Havlena and Holak 1991; Holak and Havlena 1992; Holbrook 1993). Holbrook and Schindler (1991) believed it possible for an individual to psychologically identify him or herself with figures, experiences, or cultural moments dating from before his/her own birth. The idea was corroborated by Havlena and Holak’s (1996) study where a group of interviewees included references to more distant periods of American history to explain their conceptualisation of nostalgia.

Consequently, events that form part of a relevant past and that are outside an individual’s personal experience could also elicit nostalgic sentiments. Furthermore, provoked feelings can greatly resemble those evoked by ‘true’ nostalgic messages (Havlena and Holak 1991). Noticeably, Stern (1992a) highlighted the relative need for imagination, verisimilitude, and empathy when evoking historical nostalgia since the moment or era predates the perceiver’s real life experiences.

In addition, historical nostalgia promotions tend to feature a quest aimed at a successful consumption experience where individuals who are unable to possess the authentic object or moment, can do so by surrogacy (MacInnis and Price 1987; Stern 1992a). The goal is to enable consumers to immerse themselves in the glory of the past, hoping that a totemic identification will take place which will allow for the extension of the self backwards into history (Belk 1988).
Tested on a travelling motivation context among mature Australians, Sellick (2004) found nostalgia to be the most prevalent travel motive of the population sample. Such motivation was primarily driven by the importance of generational kinship and a desire to reminisce the past.

**Travel Attitudes**

The term attitude has been described as a mental state of readiness to respond and as a form of psychological outcome (Shim, Gehrt and Siek 2005). It has also been recognised to be determined by a person’s motives (Solomon 2007, 234) and is seen as an important predictor of purchase behaviour (Feng, Cai and Zhu 2006; Ha 1998; Kim, Weaver and McCleary 1996; Lutz 1991; Pitts and Woodside 1986).

Psychology theorists identified three underlying components to the attitude construct: cognitive, affective, and cognitive/behavioural (Feng, Cai and Zhu 2006; McDougall and Munro 1994). Within the pleasure travel dominion, Shim, Gehrt and Siek (2005) found the affective component of overall travel attitude to yield the highest correlation coefficient. This highlights the importance of emotions as enhancers of experiences (Tomkins 1980) and as influencers of an individual’s behavioural outcomes.

Based on the proven relationship between motivations, attitudes, and behavioural intentions (Falomir-Pichastor et al. 2008; Fishbein and Ajzen 1975; Iso-Ahola 1982), greater attention should be placed into further developing this area of knowledge in order to comprehend the relevance of nostalgic emotions within the travelling industry. Clearly, the study of travel motivations has been plentiful as an attempt to better satisfy the needs of tourists (Kim, Weaver and McCleary 1996; Sellick 2004; Shoemaker 1989; Stone and Nichol 1999). Reasons for leisure travel motivation include spirituality, social status or prestige, escape, relaxation, family and friends, and cultural enrichment (Crompton 1979; Goeldner and Ritchie 2006, 246; Guinn 1980; Papadopoulos 1986; Shoemaker 1989). However, the present research proposal suggests that nostalgic emotions be explored separately from these other
known motivations in order to first test the validity of the propositions set forward in this paper. If proven valid, further research could measure the relative importance of personal and historical nostalgic motives compared to other motivations for leisure travelling.

Consequently, the following hypotheses are proposed pertaining to the potential relationship between travel attitudes and personal and historical nostalgia respectively:

Hypothesis 1. There is a positive relationship between personal nostalgia and travel attitudes.

Hypothesis 2. There is a positive relationship between historical nostalgia and travel attitudes.

Travel Intention
The relationship between attitudes and behaviour has been studied to a considerable extent within the social science dominion and, more specifically, within the consumer behaviour field (Pitts and Woodside 1986). The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) poses intention as the most proximal determinant of action and as being determined by attitude (Lemmens et al. 2009; Shim, Gehrt and Sick 2005). Of interest to the present research proposal is to consider if individuals’ still manifest a positive relationship between travel attitudes and travel intention given nostalgic travel motivations. As such, it can be hypothesised that for the set context:

Hypothesis 3. There is a positive relationship between travel attitudes and travel intention.

Perceived Travel Risks
Despite a person’s motivation to travel and the presence of positive attitudes, action will not irremediably follow since the prevalence of other factors can prevent it (Crompton 1979; Laroche et al. 2004; Lee and Tideswell 2005; Sellick 2004). Goeldner and Ritchie (2006) classified these factors as barriers or risks. The type of risk that can be experienced includes: criminal, cultural, equipment,
More importantly, risk is known to influence individual perceptions and decision processes, whilst generating anxiety and fear (Dowling and Staelin 1994; Ropeik 2001). According to Reisinger and Mavondo (2005), perceived risk greatly affects an individual’s intention to travel. Furthermore, understanding consumers’ perceptions of travel risk can help marketers unveil actual travel behaviours (Hall, Timothy and Duval 2003; Sellick 2004). Within the tourism context, risk was defined as “what is perceived and experienced by the tourists during the process of purchasing and consuming travel services” (Reisinger and Mavondo 2006, 14). Lastly, tourists perceiving high risks in a destination are more likely to avoid visiting it, consequently experiencing a reduced travel intention (Cleaver, Green and Muller 2000; Lehto, Douglas and Park 2008). Therefore, it is hereby argued that:

_Hypothesis 4. The positive impact of personal nostalgia on travel attitudes will be weaker (stronger) at higher (lower) levels of perceived travel risk._

_Hypothesis 5. The positive impact of historical nostalgia on travel attitudes will be weaker (stronger) at higher (lower) levels of perceived travel risk._

_Hypothesis 6. There is a negative relationship between perceived travel risk and travel intention._

**PROPOSED MODEL**

The preceding discussion of the relationships between nostalgia, attitudes toward travelling, perceived travel risks, and travel intention can best be represented by a conceptual research model as depicted in Figure 1.
CONCLUDING COMMENTS

As mentioned, research related to the nostalgia phenomenon has mostly been centred in its connection to brand attachment, brand preference, and object collection (Belk 1988, 1990; Fournier and Yao 1997; Holbrook and Schindler 1989). Very limited exploration into the tourism realm has been conducted thus far with a clear failure to distinguish between two vastly recorded types of nostalgia, i.e. personal and historical.

The present research proposal aims to enrich the theoretical base of the marketing discipline by reviewing the significance of personal and historical nostalgia as travel motives that can potentially impact upon a person’s travel attitudes and intentions given certain perceived travel risks. The noticeable improvement of distinguishing what type of nostalgic emotion could be elicited as a travel motivation is put forward. Moreover, the usage of Marchegiani and Phau’s (2007a, 2007b) personal and historical nostalgia scales is suggested in order to further test their validity and reliability within a travelling context. To the best of the researchers’ knowledge, these are the only scales specifically developed to measure the two constructs separately.

The above discussion should enlighten consumer behaviour academics and practitioners alike with regard to the possible relevance of personal and/or historical nostalgic emotions as travel motivators. The theoretical and empirical evidence presented posits the clear need for further attention to be placed upon this area of knowledge. An exploration of this matter could potentially reveal an initial profile of consumers who perceive personal and/or historical nostalgia as relevant travel motives, further assisting marketers and managers of touristic destinations in their targeting efforts.

Understanding consumers’ perceptions of the risks associated with a travel destination is important in order to develop appropriate marketing campaigns that highlight the reduced chances of experiencing such negative outcomes and stimulate travel intention. Findings from the proposed study can aid both private and public sectors on how the risks can best be minimised or eradicated to enhance patronage.
from tourism. These strategies must be publicised to the relevant agents in the tourism market to build
into their communication campaigns.

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Figure 1: Conceptual Research Model of Personal and Historical Nostalgia as Travel Motives
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type of Nostalgia</th>
<th>Description</th>
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| Davis (1979) | First order or simple nostalgia | - Expressive  
- Unquestionable belief that things were better in the past and a desire to return to good old days  
- Tendency to filter information that could contradict convictions |
| Second order nostalgia | - Reflective  
- Critical and self-conscious analysis of the past - Were things really like that? |
| Third order nostalgia | - Analytic  
- Greater investigates the nostalgic experience or response |
| Belk, Wallendorf and Sherry (1989) | Collective nostalgia | - The sentimental yearning for the past represents a culture, generation or nation  
- Collectivistic notion makes it more consistent between individuals of similar background |
| Havlena and Holak (1991) | Personal or private nostalgia  
Collective or societal nostalgia | - Private connotation of nostalgia  
- Discontinuities are experienced by contemporaries and a collective identity is formed among the members of the same generation with regards to nostalgic occurrences |
| Stern (1992a) | Historical or simulated nostalgia | - No direct experience exist with the past being described  
- Antiques and collector’s items may elicit it |
| Baker and Kennedy (1994) | Real or true nostalgia  
Stimulated nostalgia | - Sentimental yearning for the experienced past  
- Bittersweet yearning for an indirectly experienced past |
| Havlena and Holak (1996) | Personal nostalgia  
Cultural Nostalgia  
Interpersonal or intergenerational nostalgia  
Virtual nostalgia | - Direct experience with the object of nostalgia with unique meaning attached to it  
- Based on shared symbols with roots in direct personal experience  
- Connection is shared between members of a culture  
- Indirect experience obtained through direct interpersonal contact (recollections of close relatives and friends) with individual focus  
- Indirect, collective experiences which may involve an individual’s own cultural history or a longing for a different cultural environment  
- Based on non-personal communication |
| Boym (2001) | Restorative nostalgia | - Greater emphasis on the nostos  
- Characterises national and nationalist revivals; past is not supposed to show signs of decay  
- Gravitates toward collective pictorial symbols and oral culture |
| Reflective nostalgia | - Greater emphasis in algia, in longing and loss  
- Lingers on ruins and in dreams of another place and time  
- Oriented toward individual narrative |