
How Nostalgia Affects Brand Equity? Consumers' Attitudes Towards Nostalgic Generational and Transgenerational Brands

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Abstract:

Purpose: The article aims to expand the nostalgic brand management area by empirically examining the impact of nostalgia on all components of brand equity and, consequently, on the consumers' attitudes and purchase intention.

Design/methodology/approach: The research was conducted in the form of direct and indirect communication with 1000 Polish respondents using the personal and online survey techniques. Two main stages of research were carried out in the fourth quarter of 2018.

Findings: The results confirm that consumers are nostalgic towards both generational and transgenerational brands, what positively affects the perceived quality of brands, associations connected with them, as well as consumers' loyalty. The rating of nostalgic brands equity is higher than in case of brands perceived as non-nostalgic, with the exception of brands from the automotive industry. The nostalgic brands equity depends on age of the respondents but is not dependent on the consumers' gender. It was also confirmed that brand equity is rated higher in case of nostalgic transgenerational brands than the generational ones.

Practical Implications: The results can serve as a guide for managers in implementing the nostalgic brand strategy.

Originality/value: The consumers' attitudes were evaluated considering the type of the nostalgic brand.

Keywords: Transgenerational nostalgic brand, generational nostalgic brand, brand equity, consumer attitude, nostalgia.

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1. Introduction

In recent years, we have observed a strong tendency to take marketing initiatives referring to emotions, experiences, and memories of consumers. Nostalgia became one of the foundations of the link between the consumer and the brand. In contrast to the generally accepted definition describing nostalgia as longing, well known from the classic literary works, in case of marketing this concept has positive meaning. Nostalgia in marketing is defined as the preference for people, places, products, and brands that were more popular in times of youth, adolescence, childhood or even before the birth of a consumer (Holbrook and Schindler, 1991).

In recent years, we have observed a strong tendency to undertake marketing initiatives referring to emotions, experiences, and memories of consumers. Nostalgia became one of the foundations of the bond between the consumer and the brand. This area of research is still evolving in the academic literature, which results in rapid growth and development in both the theoretical and practical aspects of the research. Several researchers suggest that nostalgic themes in advertising, packaging and branding are capable to enhance consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions toward a brand (Belk, 1990; Havlena and Holak, 1991; Hoolbrook, 1993; Baker and Kennedy, 1994; Rindfleisch *et al.*, 2000; Brown *et al.*, 2003; Loveland *et al.*, 2010; Muehling and Pascal, 2011; Chen, 2014). The results of these research confirmed the positive impact of nostalgia on the attitudes and behaviours of consumers. Holak *et al.* (2007), Chatzipanagiotou *et al.* (2016), Gineikiene and Diamantopoulos (2017), as well as Ford *et al.* (2018) confirmed the positive impact of nostalgia on selected elements of brand equity, however the complex analysis of nostalgic brand equity's components was not conducted. Kessous *et al.* (2015) examined how brand attachment, self-brand connections, and storytelling, as well as the propensity to offer the brand as a gift and collect brand-derived products, depend on the nostalgic status of the brand, based on paired comparisons of nostalgic and non-nostalgic brands in six product categories. However, the assessment of all elements of brand equity, based on paired comparison of generational and transgenerational nostalgic and non-nostalgic brands for different products categories and different consumers' demographic characteristics has not yet been studied. In this regard, a knowledge gap in the existing literature on nostalgic branding was recognised.

In line with the research of Kessous *et al.* (2015) concerning the differences in evaluation of different characteristics of nostalgic and non-nostalgic brands, the following questions were formulated: Is the brand equity higher for nostalgic brands than for non-nostalgic brands? Are the differences in assessment of the equity for generational and transgenerational brands? Do the demographic characteristics of consumers influence the equity of nostalgic brands and, as a result, consumers' attitudes towards these brands? And, finally, does the nostalgic brand category affect the brand equity level?

The current investigation aims to expand the nostalgic brand management area by empirically examining the impact of nostalgia on all components of the brand equity and, consequently, on the consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions. Due to these arguments, the topic was chosen.

The objective of this paper is to identify and assess the attitudes of consumers towards nostalgic brands based on the brand equity concept. Reaching this objective can help in providing a thorough understanding of development of the nostalgic brand concept. In order to assess consumers' attitudes towards transgenerational and generational nostalgic brands, the concept of nostalgia in marketing, as well as the concept of the brand equity are discussed. The results of own quantitative empirical research are also presented.

2. Nostalgia in Brand Management

The issue of nostalgia in marketing and brand management is described in the context of market changes known as "retro-revolution" and has been developed by researchers since the last decade of 20th century (Belk, 1990; Holbrook, 1993; Baker and Kennedy, 1994; Rindfleisch *et al.*, 2000; Brown *et al.*, 2003; Wildschut and Sedikides, 2006; Loveland *et al.*, 2010).

Nostalgia, like other feelings, can be a strong motivation for consumers. Due to its importance, nostalgia is described as a factor determining the attitudes and behaviour of consumers. Based on the results of empirical research, Davis (1979) defined nostalgia as a positive evocation of the past, longing for the past and adoring the past. According to this author, nostalgia appears because people evoke positive memories when they experience unpleasant moments. In psychology, nostalgia is often described as an affective-cognitive construct in which the cognitive component includes remembering, reflecting and evaluating things, people and events of the past, and the affective component describes emotions related to the past (Batcho, 1995; Wildschut *et al.*, 2006).

Although the original concept of nostalgia was associated with homesickness, Holbrook and Schindler (1991) expanded its meaning by defining nostalgia as a preference (general liking, positive attitude or positive influence) for objects (people, places or things) that were more common (popular, fashionable or used) in earlier years (in early adulthood, during adolescence, in childhood, and even before the birth of a consumer). This approach is represented by many researchers and widely used in marketing. While explaining the concept of nostalgia, Havlena and Holak (1991) and Stern (1992) emphasize that nostalgic attitudes can be generated both based on one's own past experience and based on memories of others. It should be emphasized, however, that nostalgia is not always limited to early adulthood, adolescence, or childhood. Elderly people may be nostalgic towards things and events related to later periods of life (e.g. from the times of their children's youth or grandchildren's childhood).

A nostalgic brand is therefore a brand associated with close or distant, own, or historical past. Based on the various classifications of the phenomenon (Baker and Kennedy, 1994; Holak *et al.*, 2007; Kessous and Roux, 2008; Grebosz-Krawczyk, 2018), two basic categories of nostalgic brands can be distinguished:

- generational brands, based on true nostalgia (referring to one's own, direct, and personal memories), having an individual or collective character,
- transgenerational brands based on true nostalgia (referring to own, direct, and personal memories) or simulated nostalgia (referring indirectly to individual experiences or memories of other people, e.g. parents, grandparents, as well as collective experiences or memories, so-called historical nostalgia).

The results of previous research on the use of nostalgia in developed and developing markets prove differences in consumer behaviours and attitudes (Ford *et al.*, 2018; Barry, 2016; Heinberg *et al.*, 2020). Some researchers state that consumers in emerging markets are more optimistic about the future than consumers in developed markets (Barry, 2016; Heinberg *et al.*, 2020). Although we are currently witnessing the rapid growth of emerging markets, the childhood of today's consumers in these markets is often associated with difficulties such as product availability. Even a generation of Polish millennials grew up in an environment where foreign brands represented the highest quality and prestige (Hung *et al.*, 2007). Consumers from emerging markets have seen many local brands replaced by global brands (Thelen *et al.*, 2006), and as a result they can rate foreign brands higher than local brands, even if the local ones provoke nostalgic feelings (Sharma, 2011). Heinberg *et al.* (2020) confirmed that emotional attachment to the local brand is much weaker in emerging markets than in developed markets.

However, other research shows that consumers in emerging markets are feeling more pressure nowadays than consumers in developed markets and therefore imagine living in the past as "simpler and better". According to this point of view, consumers from developing markets can respond even more positively to nostalgic marketing than consumers from developed markets. Holak *et al.* (2007) show that nostalgic brand positioning can increase local brand equity in emerging markets. Elliot and Percy (2007) believe that it is the attitude of buyers towards the brand that determines its equity to the greatest extent.

3. Brand Equity Concept

The brand equity as a theoretical concept has been developed since the 1980s. In recent years, many authors have presented differing opinions and views on this subject. As a result, a multitude of models were created to assess the brand equity. These models can be divided into marketing models (Aaker, 1991; 1996; Keller 1993) and financial models (Ailawadi *et al.*, 2003; Srinivasan *et al.*, 2005). In the first approach, brand equity measurement has behavioural basis, and consumer behaviour and attitudes are assessed. For financial models, the total brand value is estimated

based on accounting data. Both trends complement each other as they provide supplementary information about the market condition of the brand. The most popular are definitions, conceptualisations, and determinants of brand equity according to Farquhar (1989), Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993).

Brand equity—in the context of marketing – is the overall impression, beliefs and feelings of the consumer regarding the brand. Brand equity can be defined as consumer-based brand equity perceived by the consumer, resulting from knowledge about it and resulting from various marketing activities of the brand on the market (Keller 1993; Aaker, 1996). The brand equity is a multilevel construct. Its foundation contains elementary components, such as general emotional and cognitive predisposition to the brand, while higher levels refer to more advanced psychosocial forms, among others establishing relationships with the brand. One of the first recognized concepts of brand equity was the one proposed by Farquhar (1989), based on the perception of equity as a measure of the value added by a brand to a product. In turn, Aaker (1991), representing the marketing perspective, was one of the first to combine the psychological and financial approach, defining brand equity as a set of assets and liabilities related to the brand, its name, symbol and other elements that determine the value of a product or service marked with a given brand for the buyer.

Aaker (1991) distinguished five basic elements of the brand: brand awareness, associations with the brand, perceived brand quality, brand loyalty and other indicators describing the market condition of the company. An interesting point of view of the brand equity was presented by Keller (1993). He was the first to introduce the consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) model, defined as the diverse impact that brand knowledge has on consumer response to marketing activities related to that brand. The consumer-based brand equity is associated with a situation where the consumer has a high level of brand awareness, and strong, positive associations with the brand are recorded in his memory. In their model, Elliot and Percy (2007), referring to the Aaker and Keller concept of brand equity, pay attention to the attitude of consumers and their perception of the brand, which was depicted as an umbrella surrounding the other components of equity.

4. Research Methodology

The objective of this research was to identify and assess the attitudes of consumers towards nostalgic brands based on the brand equity concept. The scientific problem was developed through the formulation of following hypotheses:

H1: *Consumers assess the nostalgic brands equity better than the non-nostalgic brands equity.*

H2: *Demographic characteristics of consumers do not affect the assessment of the nostalgic brands equity.*

H3: *The nostalgic transgenerational brands equity is rated higher than the nostalgic generational brands equity.*

In order to test these hypotheses, in addition to desk research, own empirical research was conducted. Two main stages of research were carried out among 1000 Polish consumers in the fourth quarter of 2018. A method of random-quota sampling was used. Based on the data of the Polish Central Statistical Office (2019), the sample reflected the structure of population in Poland in terms of age (over 19 years) and sex (Table 1).

Table 1. *Sample characteristic*

	19-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 +	Σ
F	3.70%	8.90%	9.10%	7.70%	10.20%	13.60%	53.20%
M	3.80%	9.40%	9.30%	7.40%	8.80%	8.10%	46.80%

Source: Own study based on research results.

The first stage was based on the qualitative research. The direct method of collecting information was used, based on the personal interview technique (CAPI) to identify nostalgic brands. Respondents answered the question “Indicate the brands related with your past”. Based on the research results, a list of 24 nostalgic brands (indicated min. five times) and its 24 non-nostalgic analogues was created. Brands addressed both for women and men, were selected for the study. The number of brands was selected based on the research experiences of Moore *et al.* (2002), Loveland *et al.* (2010) and Kessous *et al.* (2015). 10 brands are present on the global scope and 14 brands on the local one, representing 8 sectors (Table 2).

Table 2. *Characteristic of nostalgic brands indicated by respondents*

Brand	Sector	Geographical scope	Brand category*/Age group
N1	automotive	global	TG
N2	food	local	TG
N3	food	local	TG
N4	sport	local	TG
N5	cosmetic	global	TG
N6	food	global	TG
N7	food	local	TG
N8	cosmetic	local	TG
N9	clothing	global	TG
N10	automotive	global	TG
N11	clothing	global	TG
N12	food	global	G (34-45)
N13	food	local	G (19-24)
N14	food	global	G (25-34)
N15	household goods	local	G (45-54)
N16	household chemistry	local	G (55-64)
N17	clothing	global	G (55-64)
N18	clothing	global	G (45-54)
N19	household goods	local	G (65+)
N20	clothing	local	G (34-45)
N21	automotive	local	G (65+)
N22	clothing	local	G (65+)

N23	food	local	G (55-64)
N24	cosmetic	local	G (65+)

Note: * G-generational, TG-transgenerational

Source: Own study based on research results.

The second stage was based on the quantitative research. The indirect method of collecting information was used, based on the online survey technique, to evaluate the consumers' attitudes towards nostalgic brands.

An important element was the proper operationalization of the nostalgia construct by defining measures that express it in a quantitative manner. Each brand was rated based on an Evoked Nostalgia Scale (NOST), created by Pascal *et al.* (2002) to evaluate the degree of nostalgia. The reasons for this choice were: a limited number of statements to be assessed (10), the possibility of using this tool in Polish conditions and the possibility of using it in various age groups of respondents. The versatility of Pascal *et al.* also allows comparisons of nostalgia initiated by both local and global brands. The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 means "definitely disagree" and 5 – "definitely agree".

The brand equity operationalization was based on the Aaker brand equity model based on the assessment of brand awareness, brand loyalty, perceived brand quality and declared purchase intention of branded products. The study was based on the answer to the question about brand awareness and 5 specific questions that made it possible to assess and then compare the nostalgic and non-nostalgic brand equity (Table 3). In the questionnaire a 5-point Likert scale was applied.

Table 3. Operationalization of brand equity

Construct	Symbol	Operational measurement of the construct
Brand equity	A	Do you know the X brand?
	PQ	X brand products are of high quality
	ASS1	I have positive associations with the X brand
	ASS2	I have negative associations with the X brand*
	L1	I would choose products brand X first
	L2	I would choose X brand products first, even if it would be more expensive than others

Note: * inverted statement

Source: Aaker D.A. (1991), *Managing Brand Equity*, Editions Free Press, New York, p. 17-21.

5. Research Results

Nostalgic brands awareness:

Brand awareness is one of the most important factors determining brand equity. The analysis of research results confirms high recognition of nostalgic brands in case of most nostalgic transgenerational brands. In six cases, transgenerational nostalgic brands were identified as well-known by over 90% of respondents, and in the next

five cases by over 80% of respondents. Only in one case of a transgenerational nostalgic brand only 76% of respondents recognized it.

The recognition of nostalgic brands is higher than for non-nostalgic brands for almost all transgenerational brands. Only in two cases, the nostalgic brands were recognized by a smaller number of respondents than the non-nostalgic brands. However, the indications differences were not significant. Nostalgic transgenerational brands representing the automotive, food and cosmetics industries are the most often recognized by all groups of respondents (recognition by over 90% of respondents). Over 80% of indications were obtained in the clothing and sports sector.

The analysis of research results also indicates a high recognition of nostalgic brands for most nostalgic generational brands in specific age groups of respondents. However, the level of awareness of nostalgic generational brands is lower than that for transgenerational brands. In seven cases, generational nostalgic brands were identified as well-known by over 90% of respondents. In the next five cases, the recognition of generational nostalgic brands exceeds 80% of responses. Research results confirm that in nine cases brand recognition is higher for nostalgic brands than for non-nostalgic brands. In four cases, the non-nostalgic brand was recognized by a larger number of respondents than the generational nostalgic brand.

In the case of nostalgic brands, we can notice slightly higher levels of the average percentage of brand awareness, both for generational and intergenerational brands (Table 4). The average knowledge of nostalgic brands was 0.9 and 0.82 for non-nostalgic brands. A similar relationship was observed for the median. It is worth noting that the standard deviation is smaller for nostalgic brands, so the variation in the percentage of brand awareness is smaller.

Table 4. Brand awareness – research results

Brand awareness (A)	n	Av.	St. dev.	Min	Q25	Median	Q75	Max
A_N_G	1000	0,90	0,23	0,00	1,00	1,00	1,00	1,00
A_NN_G	1000	0,87	0,25	0,00	0,75	1,00	1,00	1,00
A_N_TG	1000	0,91	0,14	0,00	0,91	1,00	1,00	1,00
A_NN_TG	1000	0,81	0,21	0,09	0,64	0,82	1,00	1,00

Note : *N-nostalgic, NN-non-nostalgic, G-generational, TG-transgenerational

Source: Own study based on research results.

The difference in the percentage of nostalgic and non-nostalgic brands' awareness is statistically significant. The strength of dependence for generational brands is weak ($Z=2.999$, $p=0.003$, $r_c=0.221$), and strong for transgenerational brands ($Z=13.907$, $p=0.000$, $r_c=0.655$). The strength of dependence for all brands is moderate ($Z=2.999$, $p=0.003$, $r_c=0.221$).

It was found that gender does not affect the knowledge of nostalgic and non-nostalgic brands. Similar conclusions were formulated for the impact of the education level on nostalgic and non-nostalgic brands awareness. It was also seen that there are relationships between the nostalgic and non-nostalgic brands awareness in various age groups. Statistically significant differences between particular age groups regarding knowledge of nostalgic and non-nostalgic brands were found ($H=53.153$, $p=0.000$, $\epsilon^2=0.053$). Generational nostalgic brands are characterized by the highest level of awareness in the age groups 45-54 and 65+. In contrast, in younger age groups (19-24 and 25-34) and in the age group 54-65, non-nostalgic brands were recognized by a larger number of respondents.

Associations with nostalgic brands:

Most transgenerational nostalgic brands provoked positive associations. In four cases, associations with these brands were indicated as positive or very positive by over 80% of respondents. In the next four cases, over 70% of respondents rated associations connected with the intergenerational nostalgic brand as positive or very positive. Only in one case, the brand has positive associations with less than 60% of respondents.

Transgenerational nostalgic brands evoke positive associations among a larger group of respondents than non-nostalgic brands. The highest differences are visible in the case of food, clothing and sports and cosmetics brands. In the automotive sector, two nostalgic brands have received different ratings and it is difficult to generalize the results for the entire industry. Transgenerational nostalgic brands, like their non-nostalgic counterparts, rarely bring negative associations to consumers. However, the test results are not conclusive. In eight cases, transgenerational nostalgic brands have more negative connotations than non-nostalgic brands. It can be concluded that nostalgic brands arouse more emotions, hence the slightly higher level of negative associations. Consumers' memories may also contain references to the times of the communism and the difficult availability of products and their poorer quality.

The biggest differences in the case of negative associations are observed for automotive and food brands. In these cases, nostalgic brands have definitely more negative associations than non-nostalgic brands. This may be related to many years of experience in using these brands, especially in times of more unreliable cars and the use of inferior quality models and lower quality food products. This is confirmed by research results regarding the perceived quality of brands. Definitely smaller differences (in favour of nostalgic brands) are visible in the sports and sportswear sectors.

In the case of eleven nostalgic generational brands, respondents more often confirmed positive or positive associations with the brand than in the case of non-nostalgic brands. Only in the age group 65+, positive associations with the brand were more frequent for non-nostalgic brands. However, generational nostalgic brands have fewer positive associations than the transgenerational nostalgic brands. The largest

differences in the assessment of positive associations associated with nostalgic and non-nostalgic brands can be seen in the age groups 45-54 and 55-64.

Nostalgic generational brands have fewer negative associations than transgenerational brands. In 10 cases respondents more often pointed to negative associations related to non-nostalgic brands. Possibly, there is a greater sentiment for brands specific to a given generation of recipients and more personal associations. Generational nostalgic brands evoke negative associations most often among respondents in the age groups 19-24 and 35-44, and least often in the groups 25-34 and 55-64.

Nostalgic brands perceived quality:

Analysis of research results shows a positive assessment of the perceived quality of nostalgic brands by consumers. The research results confirm the high assessment of the level of perceived quality in the case of most nostalgic transgenerational brands. In seven cases, over 80% of respondents rated nostalgic brand products as high-quality products and in two cases over 70% of respondents. Only in one case of a nostalgic transgenerational brand, most respondents did not rate a nostalgic product as a high-quality product.

Research also confirms that perceived quality is higher for nostalgic brands than for non-nostalgic brands for most transgenerational brands. Only for the automotive brand, the perceived quality of the non-nostalgic brand was rated higher than the perceived quality of the nostalgic brand. Nostalgic transgenerational brands from the cosmetics industry are rated the highest in terms of perceived quality. Over 80% of respondents rated the products of these brands as high-quality products. A similar level is achieved in the food, sport, and clothing sectors. In the automotive sector, two nostalgic brands have received extreme ratings therefore it is problematic to generalize results for the entire industry.

In case of generational nostalgic brands, the positive assessment of perceived quality by consumers is higher than in the case of transgenerational brands. Over 60% of respondents (for selected age ranges) rated nostalgic brand products (characteristic for their generation) as high-quality products. Lower scores were obtained in only one case. In the six cases examined, over 80% of respondents rated the products of a generational nostalgic brand as high-quality products. In addition, in three cases over 70% of respondents, in four cases it was over 60% of respondents from a given age group. In the case of generational nostalgic brands, perceived quality was assessed at a high level regardless of the product category (except for the automotive industry). Research results also confirm that perceived quality is higher for nostalgic brands than for non-nostalgic brands for most generational brand pairs. Only in the case of a brand from the automotive industry, the perceived quality of a nostalgic brand was rated lower than the perceived quality of a non-nostalgic brand.

Perceived quality is higher for nostalgic brands than for non-nostalgic brands for all age groups. The youngest groups of respondents assess the quality of products

characteristic of their generation better and the oldest (65+) the worst, what might be caused by poorer quality of the products in the times of older consumers' youth.

Loyalty towards nostalgic brands:

Analysis of research results in most cases confirms the relatively high level of consumer loyalty to transgenerational nostalgic brands. 37 to 70% of respondents declared their willingness to buy a nostalgic brand product first. Only for the automotive brand the score was just 15%. Research results also confirm that loyalty to transgenerational nostalgic brands is definitely higher than for non-nostalgic brands. The differences range from 5 to even 29 percentage points. The exception is the automotive and sports brand. The relationship of the consumer with the brand known for years evokes nostalgic feelings conducive to choosing the brand's products is clearly visible. Consumer decisions can also be influenced by content stored in latent memory, e.g. through a positive attitude towards a brand known from the past. Analysis of the research results concerning purchase intention of more expensive brands' products, in most cases, shows a high level of consumer loyalty to transgenerational nostalgic brands. Respondents preferred to choose the more expensive nostalgic brand in all the studied cases of transgenerational nostalgic brands (except for the automotive industry).

Over 60% of respondents declared their willingness to buy a more expensive transgenerational nostalgic brand product in two cases. In the next three cases it was over 40% of respondents. The research results confirm once again that loyalty to transgenerational nostalgic brands is definitely higher than for non-nostalgic brands. The differences range from 7 to even 26 percentage points. A significant advantage of loyalty to transgenerational nostalgic brands from the food and cosmetics sectors was observed. Although the research is declarative, it means that consumers respond positively to transgenerational nostalgic brands, being aware of choosing nostalgic brand products, with emotional attachment to it, expressed by a positive opinion about the brand and a willingness to make effort in case of its unavailability.

Research results prove the high level of purchase intentions also for generational nostalgic brands (for particular age groups). Consumers also prefer these nostalgic brands when higher prices for their products are recommended. In all cases of nostalgic generational brands (except for brands from the automotive industry, for the 65+ group) the declared willingness to buy was higher than for non-nostalgic brands. However, in the situation where higher prices were proposed, in all cases consumers declared purchase intention of generational nostalgic brands' products.

Consumer loyalty to nostalgic brands (measured on the basis of declarative purchase intention) is the highest in the youngest groups of respondents (19-24 and 25-34). This applies both to situations where the prices of nostalgic brand products are equal or higher. This may be the consequence of a high assessment of the perceived quality of nostalgic brands by these groups. In case of older consumers, lower loyalty to

generational nostalgic ones may result from the desire to acquire new, previously unknown brands, including foreign brands unavailable in their youth.

Table 5. *Brand loyalty – research results*

Purchase intention	n	Av.	St. dev.	Min	Q25	Median	Q75	Max
L1_N_G	968	3,29	0,90	0,03	1,00	3,00	3,33	4,00
L1_NN_G	965	3,00	0,87	0,03	1,00	2,50	3,00	3,50
L1_N_TG	998	3,34	0,58	0,02	1,00	3,00	3,36	3,75
L1_NN_TG	1000	3,09	0,62	0,02	1,00	2,71	3,09	3,45
L2_N_G	968	3,10	0,91	1,00	2,50	3,00	4,00	5,00
L2_NN_G	965	2,78	0,88	1,00	2,00	3,00	3,25	5,00
L2_N_TG	998	3,11	0,63	1,09	2,70	3,10	3,55	5,00
L2_NN_TG	1000	2,85	0,67	1,00	2,40	2,86	3,25	5,00

Note: *N-nostalgic, NN-non-nostalgic, G-generational, TG-transgenerational

Source: Own study based on research results.

In case of the declared purchase intention when prices are equal, higher average levels can be observed for nostalgic brands than in the case of non-nostalgic brands. A similar relationship was observed for the median. It is worth noting that the standard deviation for nostalgic and non-nostalgic brands is similar, and therefore the differentiation of the results of the declared purchase intention for both types of brands is similar.

When it comes to the declared purchase intention when prices of nostalgic brands are higher, slightly higher average levels for nostalgic brand product than for non-nostalgic brands are observed. A similar relationship was observed for the median. The standard deviation for nostalgic and non-nostalgic brands is similar, so the differentiation of the results of the declared purchase intention for both types of brands is similar.

The difference in the declared purchase intention of nostalgic and non-nostalgic brands (in case of the same prices) is statistically significant, both, for generational ($Z=8.613$, $p=0.000$, $r_c=0.409$) and transgenerational brands ($Z=12.125$, $p=0.000$, $r_c=0.473$). The strength of dependence for both groups of brands is moderate.

The differences in the declared purchase intention, regardless of the price of nostalgic and non-nostalgic brands, are statistically significant, which confirms that the declared purchase intention is higher in the case of nostalgic rather than non-nostalgic brands, regardless of prices for both, generational ($Z=9.368$, $p=0.0000$, $r_c=0.448$) and transgenerational brands ($Z=12.751$, $p=0.0000$, $r_c=0.469$). The strength of dependence (effect size) is moderate in this case. As a result of the analyses, it was found out that gender does not affect the difference in the declared purchase intention of nostalgic

and non-nostalgic brands. Similar results were obtained for the impact of education level on the differences in the declared purchase intention of nostalgic brands.

However, it was also noticed that there are relationships between the difference in declared purchase intention of nostalgic and non-nostalgic brands in different age groups. Therefore, age has an impact on the loyalty towards nostalgic generational brands ($H=45.205$, $p=0.000$, $\varepsilon^2=0,048$) and towards nostalgic transgenerational brands ($H=16.245$, $p=0.006$, $\varepsilon^2=0,016$). Significant differences were identified however only for generational brands and only between 65+ groups and the rest of the age groups.

Nostalgic brands equity:

The analysis of research results confirmed the high level of individual components of nostalgic brands' equity. In order to summarize the brand equity assessment, additional statistical analyses were carried out. Due to the lack of normal distribution of variables, the Wilcoxon pair order test was used. The variable "brand equity" was calculated as the average of the answers given by the consumer (Table 6.).

Table 6. Brand equity – research results

Brand equity (BE)	n	Av.	St. dev.	Min	Q25	Median	Q75	Max
BE_N_G	968	3,64	0,61	1,00	3,25	3,60	4,00	5,00
BE_NN_G	965	3,41	0,60	1,00	3,05	3,40	3,80	5,00
BE_N_TG	998	3,69	0,41	2,15	3,40	3,67	3,98	5,00
BE_NN_TG	1000	3,48	0,42	1,76	3,20	3,47	3,73	4,92

Note : *N-nostalgic, NN-non-nostalgic, G-generational, TG-transgenerational

Source: Own study.

In the case of nostalgic brands, slightly higher levels of the average level of brand equity can be noticed. A similar relationship was observed for the median. The standard deviation for groups of nostalgic and non-nostalgic brands is similar, so the brand equity diversity is the same. In the case of transgenerational nostalgic brands, a slightly higher level of average brand equity is observed. A similar relationship was observed for the median. The standard deviation for the capital of nostalgic transgenerational brands is much lower than for generational brands, and therefore the differences in the results of individual respondents are smaller.

The difference in the brand equity assessment of nostalgic and non-nostalgic brands is statistically significant. The strength of dependence for both generational brands ($Z=11.250$, $p=0.000$, $r_c=0.440$) and transgenerational brands ($Z=14.834$, $p=0.000$, $r_c=0.547$) is moderate. The difference in the brand equity assessment of nostalgic generational and transgenerational brands is also statistically significant, but the strength of the relationship is weak in this case ($Z=2.279$, $p=0.003$, $r_c=0.107$).

Therefore, hypothesis 1 was confirmed, according to which the nostalgic brands equity is rated higher than the non-nostalgic brands equity and hypothesis 3 stating

that the nostalgic transgenerational brands' equity is rated higher than the nostalgic generational brands' equity.

6. Conclusions

On the Polish market both nostalgic generational and transgenerational brands can be distinguished. Among the brands associated with positive memories of the past, Polish consumers indicated both local and global brands. Polish consumers are nostalgic towards generational and transgenerational brands, what positively affects the perceived quality of brands, associations associated with them, as well as their loyalty. The rating of nostalgic brands equity is higher than the equity of brands perceived as non-nostalgic with the exception of brands from the automotive industry. It was confirmed that the nostalgic transgenerational brands equity is rated higher than the nostalgic generational brands equity, while at the same time the diversity of individual respondents' results regarding the assessment of nostalgic transgenerational brands equity is much smaller than for generational nostalgic brands. Consumers highly value nostalgic brands associated with their lives. These conclusions prove the strength of brands functioning in the minds of Poles for many generations and at the same time directing the offer to different age groups. In the case of transgenerational brands, consumer feelings can be based on true nostalgia and at the same time be reinforced by simulated nostalgia.

Different elements of brand equity for the nostalgic brands were rated higher than for non-nostalgic brands, what confirms the earlier theses of Chatzipanagiotou *et al.* (2016), Gineikiene and Diamantopoulos (2017) and Ford *et al.* (2018).

As a result of the research, a relationship was found between the product category and the assessment of nostalgic brands. Nostalgic brands representing the food, cosmetics and clothing industry were definitely the highest rated. On the other hand, nostalgic feelings had the least impact on the assessment and attachment to brands in the automotive industry. It should therefore be emphasized that, despite the nostalgic attitude, Polish consumers also take into account the real features of the products when making their choice, and the symbolism is important above all for goods at a lower price.

Verification of hypotheses based on statistical analyses allowed confirming the hypothesis H1, according to which consumers assess the nostalgic brands equity better than the non-nostalgic brands equity. At the same time, the hypothesis H2 was partially confirmed. The gender of consumers does not affect the assessment of the nostalgic brands equity; however, the nostalgic brands equity depends on the age of the respondents. The hypothesis H3 was also confirmed, the nostalgic transgenerational brands equity is rated higher than the nostalgic generational brands equity.

The theoretical considerations and empirical findings enrich the state of knowledge about the possibility of using the phenomenon of nostalgia in brand management on the Eastern European market, due to the assessment of attitudes of Polish consumers towards nostalgic brands. This research encourages further reflection on the positioning of nostalgic brands. It seems interesting to undertake international studies enabling comparison of attitudes of Polish consumers with consumers from other countries, especially from Central and Eastern Europe. It also seems necessary to continue empirical research among consumers regarding their attitudes and behaviour towards nostalgic brands representing other product categories.

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