From memory to loyalty: The role of nostalgia in fostering Brand Trust, attachment and love

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Abstract

Nostalgia is considered one of the effective marketing instruments used owing to its beneficial influence on consumer behavior toward a brand. Nostalgia emotions might evoke positive experiences, memories and love towards a brand that can enhance brand loyalty. The purpose of this research is to investigate the role that nostalgia emotions play in increasing brand trust, attachment and love, and how this brand love can lead to brand loyalty. Data was gathered through an online questionnaire. The study population consisted of players of Nintendo games. 431 questionnaires were distributed. A total number of 393 complete and valid questionnaires were collected with a response rate of 91.2%. Results revealed that nostalgia emotions have a significant positive effect on both brand trust and brand attachment and that brand trust and brand attachment were significantly and positively related to brand love that affects brand loyalty. Also, the results showed that both brand trust and brand attachment mediate the relationship between nostalgia emotions and brand love. The results suggested that marketers should consider nostalgia while developing the organization's marketing strategy as it can have a deep impact on consumer behavior toward the brand.

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Introduction

Companies in the modern era frequently include nostalgic themes in their marketing strategies, with the goal of attracting customers to their brands (Hartmann and Brunk 2019). As nostalgia-driven marketing tends to make people feel more conforming, this strategy has worked well, as Nostalgia can charm consumers by transforming the mundane into the extraordinary (Hartmann and Brunk 2019). Consumers have embraced nostalgia-themed games, restaurants, photographs, music, costumes, films, and other nostalgic merchandise. Nostalgic marketing fundamentally relies on nostalgia emotions (Cui, 2015). Numerous firms have yet to acknowledge the significance of nostalgia emotions in fostering brand trust and brand attachment which in turn can foster brand love that can lead to brand loyalty which is the ultimate objective of any marketer. Nintendo, an early participant in the gaming business, solidified its name in the 1980s with the release of iconic titles such as Super Mario and The Legend of Zelda (Sheff 1994; Arsenault 2017). The brand not only dominated Japan in the 1980s and 1990s but also secured a foothold in Western markets (Sheff 1994). A significant tactic in Nintendo's sustained success is its utilization of commodified nostalgia via classic video games (Cuff and Terry 2017). Nintendo capitalizes on its history to attract an older demographic of players while simultaneously introducing a younger audience to the legacy content that has shaped modern gaming, thereby commodifying both nostalgia for the company and for classic gaming. The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of nostalgia emotions on both brand trust and brand attachment in the context of the video gaming industry and how these variables can influence brand love that can lead to brand loyalty. The study also examines the mediating roles that brand trust and brand attachment play in the relationship between nostalgia emotions and brand love.

Literature review and hypothesis development:

Nostalgia emotions and brand trust

Nostalgia is the emotional attachment to previous objects that brings warmth and connection (Holbrook & Schindler, 1991; Wen et al., 2019). Nostalgia is typically a nice emotion associated with longing. Sedikides et al. (2008) found that nostalgia can be triggered by reminiscing about personal and loved ones' past experiences. According to Mercer (2016), nostalgia is typically associated with memories of past events. Nostalgia is not a contemporary phenomenon; it has been a subject of academic inquiry since the seventeenth century, when it was regarded just as a condition of the brain (Boym 2001). Nostalgia has frequently been characterized as a bittersweet convergence of yearning and anguish for a more joyous era and location (Boym 2001; Sedikides and Wildschut 2018). Sedikides and Wildschut (2018) characterize nostalgizing as an individual's emotional endeavor to link to a personally significant and identity-forming event through an idealized perspective. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines nostalgia as a "wistful or excessively sentimental yearning for a return to some past period or irretrievable condition," akin to homesickness. Such definitions indicate that nostalgia serves as a fundamental component of an individual's identity, stemming from their prior emotional experiences. Currently, sentimentality serves as a synonym for nostalgia, reflecting the affectionate and reflective essence of the emotions both words want to convey.

Perception of brands as reliable and accountable for consumers' interests and welfare, as well as for guaranteeing safe interactions with consumer-owned brands, is known as brand trust (Delgado-Ballester, 2003). Brand trust is established when a brand instills confidence in its value among customers (Hidayati, 2021) and direct consumer experiences with the brand can foster and enhance this trust (Doney & Cannon, 1997). Brand trust is a significant outcome of nostalgia (Kubiak & Ouda, 2020). As brand nostalgia evokes memories of earlier customer encounters, Wen et al. (2019); Zhang & Tao (2022) and Hidayati (2021) assert that nostalgia proneness significantly influences the brands' predictive validity in fostering trust. Escandon-Barbosa et al. (2024) assert that nostalgia, which evokes happy memories, may bolster brand trust by rekindling sentiments of stability and security. Consumers with emotional attachment are more likely to cultivate trust in a brand, so bridging the gap between brand trust and nostalgia susceptibility (Zaman et al., 2025; Zhang & Tao, 2022).

By attempting to reach families as a wider audience rather than only concentrating on teens or young children, Nintendo has been able to establish itself as a popular game and console development firm in the West (Lima & Varga, 2023; Arsenault 2017). Franklin (2018) discovered that memories of Nintendo games that make people feel nostalgic make them more likely to buy the games again, although hedonic value was a greater predictor than nostalgia alone. Moreover, Cuff (2017) claimed that Nintendo's use of nostalgia as a product through platforms like the Virtual Console builds trust and emotional connections, especially among the elderly who are attached to the brand's history. Hence, the following hypothesis is developed:

H1: Nostalgia emotions have a significant effect on Brand trust.

Nostalgia emotions and brand attachment

Drawing on the foundational principles of attachment theory in psychology, Park et al. (2010) and Shimul (2022) delineate brand attachment as the intensity of emotional and cognitive bond linking the brand to the self. According to Wen et al. (2019), customer-brand relationship is identified as the consumer's unique feelings toward the brand, including happiness, contentment, sadness, love, discontent, and so forth (Hidayati, 2021). This definition relates to the Connection-Prominence Attachment Model (CPAM) that elucidates brand attachment through two factors. The first one represents the relationship between the brand and the consumer's self-perception. This pertains to the cognitive and affective relationship consumers establish with the brand, leading to a sense of unity with it (Shimul, 2022; Mikulincer & Shaver 2010; Thomson et al. 2005). The second factor addresses the prominence of brand-related emotions and thoughts. This illustrates how frequently fluid brand memories and emotions are perceived (Park et al. 2010). Consequently, those two metrics contribute to the growth and fortification of the consumer's brand attachment (Shimul, 2022).

Aged brands with a "history" and sustained stability over generations might hold special significance for consumers by embodying "a life narrative," allowing for continuity across generations. Stability is one of the factors contributing to brand choice. This stability fosters connections among family members, allowing for emotional attachment and nostalgic connections (Rhajbal et al., 2017; Holbrook & Schindler, 1991). Brand identity is driven by symbolic attributes, evoked by personal identities and cultural values. This might be interpreted as an alignment between the self-concept and the brand's personality (Rhajbal et al., 2017). Nostalgia helps people feel strong emotional ties to the brand. Due to its association with favorable childhood memories, customers may experience positive emotional attachment toward a Nintendo game (Franklin, 2018).

Prior research concluded that consumers are more likely to develop attachment to a brand if they are more nostalgic. (Franklin, 2018; Wen & Liu, 2019; Hidayati, 2021; Rhajbalet et al., 2017). Wildschut et al. (2006) and Rhajbal et al., (2017) considered nostalgia proneness to positively influence brand attachment. Schultz et al. (2000) posited that customers' prior experiences evoke nostalgia, which subsequently influences the intensity of their attachment to particular brands. Hidayati (2021) posited that nostalgia constitutes one of the elements of brand attachment. Reid and colleagues (2015) discovered that scent-evoked nostalgia might serve as a predictor of scent-evoked favorable effects, self-continuity, self-esteem, and social connectivity. While Wen and Qin (2019) assert that nostalgia emotions exert a more significant influence on brand trust than on brand attachment. Consequently, the subsequent study hypothesis is formulated:

H2: Nostalgia emotions have a significant effect on Brand Attachment

Brand Love and Brand Trust

The notion of brand love was first presented over 30 years ago (Shimp and Madden, 1988). Utilizing psychological theories of love between people (Sternberg, 1986), early researchers extended the concept of love to branding, proposing that brand love encompasses affection, closeness, and devotion (Ahuvia, 2015; Shimp and Madden, 1988). Since that time, academics have formulated numerous conceptualizations of brand love by examining the nuances of the relationship between consumer and brands (Palusuk et al., 2019; Zarantonello and Pauwels-Delassus, 2015). Brand love is defined as a favorable relationship that customers form with brands. This interaction, often characterized as emotional, passionate, and enduring, fosters memories that consumers appreciate throughout time, hence strengthening their connection with the brand (Gumparthi and Patra, 2020). The link between customers and well-established brands is profound, ongoing, and expanding. Influential brands have strengthened their standing by cultivating profound and impactful relationships with their customers, fostering a sense of affection for their products and brand. Brand love is arguably the most significant emotional aspect in establishing consumer preference and drive. Brand affection yields significant outcomes, including reluctance to switch brands, diminished consumer anxiety, enhanced brand loyalty and commitment, sustained brand engagement, reduced price sensitivity in marketing, and the transformation of customers into fervent brand advocates (Haji Babaei and Ghobadi Lemoki, 2020).

Sternberg's triangle theory of interpersonal love uses the ideas of "brand commitment," "brand closeness," and "brand enthusiasm" to assess brand love (Sternberg, 1986). Customers' satisfaction with a brand may elevate to the status of love when they regard that brand as a part of their identity (Na et al., 2023; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Unal, S. & Aydın, H., 2013). Consumers that trust a brand are more confident in the brand's capacity to fulfill its commitments and consistently satisfy their expectations (Zaman et al., 2025; Ismail, 2022). Consequently, Upadhyaya et al. (2025); Atulkar (2020) and Lien et al. (2015) assert that brand trust is a crucial factor in establishing enduring consumer relationships, as it influences their likelihood to purchase, recommend, and remain loyal to a company or a brand (Zaman et al., 2025; Madadi et al., 2021). Moreover, Chaudhuri & Holbrook (2001) and Na et al. (2023) argue that despite ambiguity, consumers' emotional reactions to a brand and their level of trust in it are both important determinants of their brand loyalty.

According to a study by Song et al. (2012), consumer trust in a brand might be affected by their emotional reactions to it. Several studies revealed that brand trust positively influences brand love and loyalty (Bae & Kim, 2023; Huang, 2017; Albert & Merunka, 2013). Brand love is favorably influenced by

brand trust. Asiyah and Irfayanti (2022) confirmed in their study the direct effect of brand love on brand trust. This demonstrates that brand affinity can enhance customer trust, as the product instills a sense of pride in consumers. The results revealed that utilizing BHS brand sarongs instills a sense of pride and joy in consumers, since they offer not only comfort and superior quality but also convey a significant social impression and status.

Research undertaken by Zhang et al. (2020) and Na et al. (2023) has recently shown the relationship between brand trust and brand love. Nintendo and Sony are leading video game publishers, establishing brands through their games that consumers trust and value. This trust leads to love, loyalty and continuous purchase of games, as consumers are satisfied with the quality content and hedonic value. This loyalty can result in higher prices or rebuying of games, demonstrating the importance of trust and love in the gaming industry. Consequently, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Brand trust has a significant effect on Brand love

Brand Love and Brand Attachment

According to Loureiro et al. (2012), for a brand to be loved, people must develop an emotional connection to it, see it as unique and indispensable, and long for its absence. Despite the widespread acknowledgment of attachment as a fundamental component of brand love among scholars (Thomson et al., 2005; Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Batra et al., 2012; Loureiro et al., 2012), there exists a paucity of research demonstrating that emotional brand attachment serves as a precursor to brand love. Kaufmann et al. (2016) posited that customers' connection with a brand can sometimes evoke feelings of brand love. Simultaneously, according to the concept provided by Loureiro et al. (2012) and the study of Hajjid et al. (2022) brand attachment serves as a precursor to brand love. Consequently, it can be asserted that consumers who experience satisfaction with a brand will, if this satisfaction persists, cultivate an emotional connection to the brand, ultimately fostering a profound emotional attachment that leads to brand love and loyalty (Li, et al., 2025; Hajjid et al., 2022; Lin et al., 2022; Yang, 2021; Ghorbanzadeh & Rahehagh, 2021). Therefore, the researchers put forth the subsequent hypothesis:

H4: Brand Attachment has a significant effect on Brand love

Brand Love and brand Loyalty

Brand love is a crucial element in cultivating consumer loyalty, referring to a profound emotional bond that transcends utilitarian benefits to generate lasting consumers' emotions towards the brand (Saeedi, 2025; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Batra et al., 2012). This emotional connection influences behavior in ways unparalleled by conventional marketing strategies. Brand love is based on psychological attachment and affection theory, where customers feel sort of joy, passion, and attachment towards the brand (Saeedi, 2025; Sarmad et al., 2024; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Batra et al., 2012; Albert & Merunka, 2013). Affection is demonstrated by brand advocacy, heightened purchase frequency, and resistance to competitive options (Saeedi, 2025; Albert & Merunka, 2013). Brand love enhances the humanization of brands, making them entities that consumers respect, trust, and adore (Malär, Krohmer, Hoyer, & Nyffenegger, 2011). It transforms the consuming process into an emotionally resonant experience, wherein the brand becomes ingrained in the consumer's identity and way of life (Saeedi, 2025). By purchasing and consuming brands, consumers can express who they are, feel hedonistic pleasure and excitement (Horvath and Adıgu ~ ¨zel, 2018), and have fun (Japutra et al., 2019). Intrinsic happiness is the primary factor driving consumer interest in purchasing (Dittmar and Drury, 2000). Customers who are already familiar with a brand are more likely to demand and buy more from it when they learn about its sustainability effects, which eventually leads to brand loyalty (Shaikh et al., 2019). According to Zhang et al. (2020), brand love increases favorable emotions and behavioral patterns such customer engagement, good word-of-mouth, brand advocacy, and brand loyalty. Brand loyalty is higher among customers who are more emotionally invested in and devoted to a brand (Huang, 2017). According to several studies (Alic and Mujkic, 2023; Bazi et al., 2023; Bigne et al., 2020; Drennan et al., 2015; Laroche et al., 2012; Le, 2021; Mody and Hanks, 2020; Mujkic et al., 2020; Tanveer et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2020), brand loyalty and brand love are strongly positively correlated. Consequently, the following hypothesis has been developed:

H5: Brand love has a significant effect on Brand loyalty

Prior research identified brand trust as both a precursor (Albert and Merunka, 2013) and a result of brand love. Kaufmann et al. (2016) asserted that the cultivation of brand trust can amplify profound affection and emotions towards the brand, and that consumers' brand love can foster a robust emotional connection characterized by positive sentiments about the brand, which may subsequently enhance the brand- trust relationship. Albert and Merunka (2013) showed that brand trust positively influences brand love. When consumers perceive that the brand fulfills their expectations, they develop an emotional connection with it (Ahmed et al., 2014). Consequently, brand trust might enhance consumers' love for such brands. As brand trust is a must for brand love the following hypothesis is articulated as follows:

H6: Brand trust mediates the relationship between Nostalgia emotions and brand love.

Despite sharing similarities, the ideas of brand love and brand attachment differ in ways that are like two sides of the same coin (Moussa, 2015). Stated differently, the two conceptions differ in intensity but share conceptual similarities (Hwang and Kandampully, 2012). An intense emotional reaction to a target was not always necessary for brand loyalty. However, according to Bergkvist and Bech-Larsen (2010), brand love necessitates the strength of an emotional reaction toward a target. This emotional reaction toward a target is brand attachment that Gomez-Suárez (2019), considered an antecedent of brand love, which includes aspects of passion, connection, and affection (Thomson et al., 2005). Therefore, the following hypothesis is raised:

H7: Brand attachment mediates the relationship between Nostalgia emotions and brand love.

Proposed research Model

The research model was constructed according to the above hypotheses as outlined below:

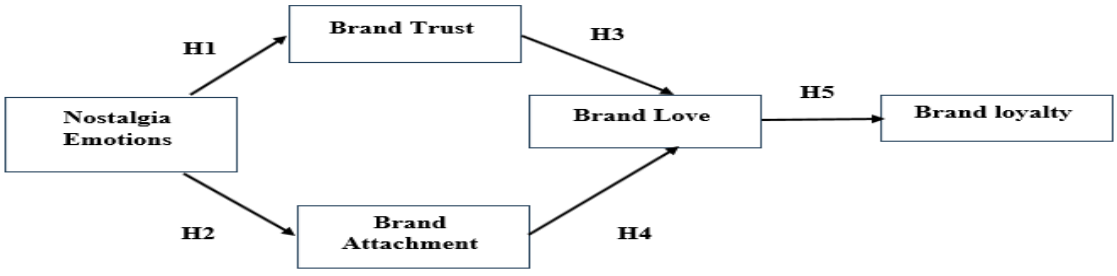


Figure 1: The proposed research Model

Study Sector and data collection

Established in Kyoto, Japan, as a little enterprise specializing in handcrafted playing cards, Nintendo has transformed into one of the largest video game manufacturing corporations globally. Over the decades, the international consumer electronics company has evolved into a global leader in the gaming console business, acclaimed for its innovative gaming consoles and cherished franchises. Nowadays, Nintendo is among the top ten gaming companies in the world. Nintendo possesses a rich history characterized by its family-friendly allure and a consistent array of popular titles based on its intellectual properties, like Mario, Zelda, and Pokémon, which exemplify its adaptability and inventiveness. These titles are today regarded as seminal games from the golden era of gaming in the 1980s and 1990s, serving as a fundamental form of nostalgia for game players worldwide. A multitude of classic exclusive Nintendo titles have reemerged on the brand's contemporary platforms, enabling many generations of children to encounter the magic of Nintendo on the device of their age (Sheff 1994; Arsenault 2017). In 2024, Nintendo's revenue was recorded at just over 11 billion U.S. with a net income amounting to three billion U.S. dollars in 2024 (Statista, 2024).

The data was gathered through an online questionnaire. The study population consisted of players of Nintendo games. 431 questionnaires were distributed. A total number of 393 complete and valid questionnaires were collected with a response rate of 91.2%.

Measurement Scales

The measurement scales of this research were adopted from several sources. Nostalgia emotions were measured using Ju, et al. (2016) scale, brand trust was measured using Kabadayi and Alan (2012). Brand attachment was measured using Aureliano et al. (2018), while Brand love was measured using Zarantonello

et al. (2016) scale. And finally, brand loyalty was measured by Rizomyliotis et al. (2021) scale. The initial section of the questionnaire gathered demographic information from the participants, encompassing age, gender, education, and occupation. The various components of the measures were assessed using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree".

Data Analysis and results

Descriptive analysis of the study sample

Table (1) Demographic characteristics of respondents

		Frequency	Percent
Age	21 - 30	158	40.4
	31 - 40	123	31.1
	> 40	112	28.5
	Total	393	100
Gender	Female	215	54.8
	Male	178	45.2
	Total	393	100
Education	undergraduate	89	22.5
	graduate	199	50.8
	Postgraduate	105	26.7
	Total	393	100
Occupation	Private sector	142	36.2
	Public sector	125	31.8
	Student	89	22.5
	unemployed	37	9.5
	Total	393	100

As shown in table (1) Individuals in the 21-30 age group constitute the largest proportion 40.4%, followed by the 31-40 age group at 31.1%, while those over 40 constitute 28.5%. for the sample distribution by gender females constitute 54.8% of the sample while males constitute 45.2%. For the educational level, the results show the percentages of participants belonging to three educational categories are graduates (50.8%), postgraduate studies (26.7%), and undergraduate studies (22.5%). For the occupation of the respondents 36.2% of participants belong to the private sector, while public sector workers represent 31.8% of the sample. In contrast, students constitute 22.5% and the unemployed 9.5% of the sample.

Discussion of the results of statistical tests

This section aims to present the results of the tests obtained using the Smart-Pls program. The most important of these tests are Cronbach's alpha to determine the reliability of the study's statements, in addition to validity tests. The following table shows the test results.

Table (2) the Results of Cronbach's alpha test

variables	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Brand Love	0.991	0.992	0.992	0.907
Brand Loyalty	0.972	0.973	0.982	0.947
Brand Trust	0.974	0.974	0.981	0.927
Brand attachment	0.986	0.986	0.988	0.922
Nostalgia Emotions	0.986	0.986	0.988	0.921

Source: Based on Smart-Pls v4 output.

Table (2) results provide an indicator of the reliability of the scales used in the research. They are based on three key indices: Cronbach's alpha index, composite reliability (rho_and rho_c), and average variance extracted (AVE). The outcomes of the former table are the following:

- Cronbach's alpha: This table indicates the reliability of the instrument employed in measuring the variables. In this respect, when the alpha values are high (higher than 0.7), it means that the instrument is highly dependable. Alpha values in this table range from 0.972 to 0.991, indicating that the reliability in measuring all variables is above average.

- Composite reliability: It is an indicator of the reliability of the variables by using the internal relationship between them. The values are on the scale of 0.973 to 0.992, which is a strong reliability scale of the variables. This makes the instrument reliable, and it shows consistency in the variables and relevance.
- Average Variance Extracted (AVE): This metric determines variance that is explained by the variables in comparison with noise. The values in the table range between 0.907-0.947, which are all above the acceptable level (0.5), implying that the tool has an excellent accountability to describe the variance of the variables.

Based on these findings, it is possible to specify that the instrument which was utilized to quantify the variables is highly reliable and valid, and that the information obtained is precise and reliable.

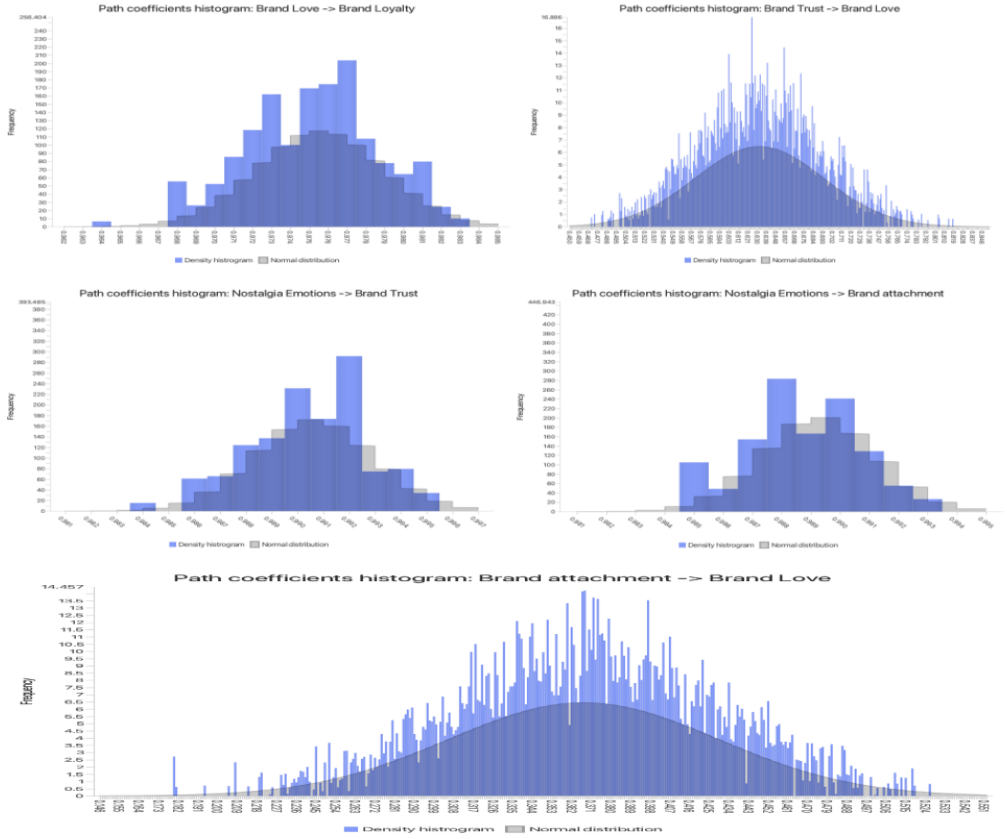
Table (3) Model fit

test	model
SRMR	0.036
d_ULS	0.776
d_G	5.886
Chi-square	10.769
NFI	0.955

Source: Based on Smart-Pls v4 output.

The model fit result shows that the model was fitted to the data, as illustrated in Table 3. The value of SRMR is 0.036, which is excellent since it is lower than 0.08, which denotes that the model fits better on the data. The d ULS was set at 0.776, showing optimal variance between the examined variables. A good fit between the variables is also exhibited by the value of d_G, which was 5.886. Although the value of 10.769 in the Chi-Square test does not eliminate an error by any means, it is not too high. And lastly, the NFI value of 0.955 is exceptional, indicating that there is a good fit between the model and the data. On the basis of such outcomes, we can conclude that the model fits the data well with no serious concerns. The results of the normal distribution of path coefficients in the case study model are provided by the following figure.

Figure (2) Normal distribution of path coefficients



Source: Based on Smart-Pls v4 output.

The findings in the graphs show how the path coefficients among the various variables in the brand model were distributed. The distribution of coefficients is quasi-normal in most graphs, and this increases the credibility of the statistical models and suggests that the relationships between the variables yield an anticipated result. The correlation between the variables of brand love and brand loyalty is within a normal range, meaning that the interconnection is quite strong and foreseeable. The correlation by its average value between two concepts, brand trust and brand love, also seems to be characteristic of normal distribution, which reveals that consumer trust is also essential in developing brand liking. There is a slight variance between the correlation between "Nostalgia Emotions" and "brand trust" results, and this indicates that the influence of emotions on trust is not so simple. Such inconsistency also happens in the distribution of the relationship between the variables of the concept of Nostalgia Emotions and brand attachment, implying that different individuals might have varying impacts of Nostalgia Emotions on brand attachment. The connection involving the terms of brand attachment and brand love is associated with normal distribution, which means that the influence of emotional attachment is powerful and consistent and affects the level of consideration of a consumer to a brand. In general, the findings demonstrate that the model overrepresents true relations among the variables. And the Variance Inflation Factors are obtained through the following table.

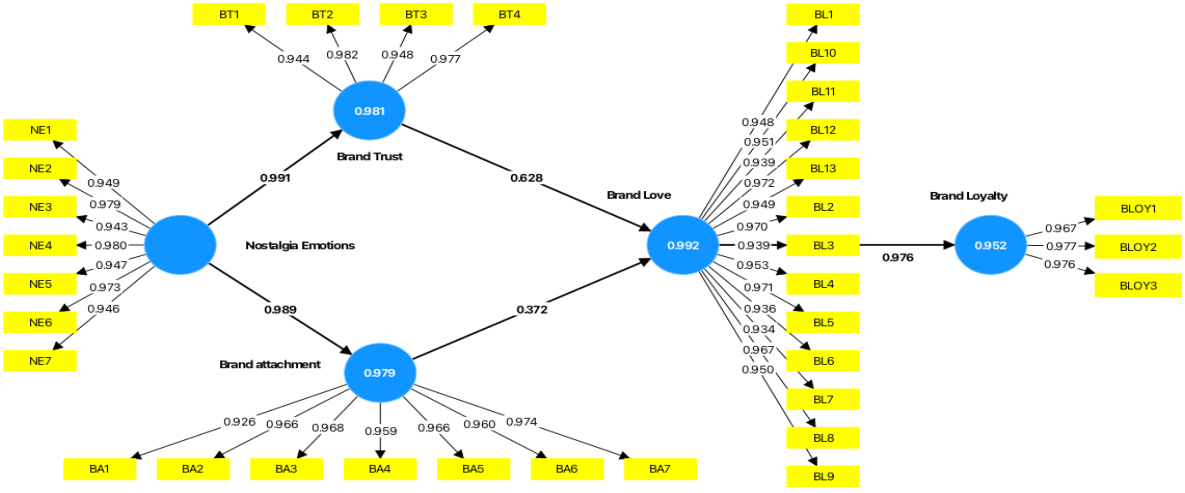
Table (4) variance inflation factors result

path	VIF
Brand Love -> Brand Loyalty	1.358
Brand Trust -> Brand Love	1.875
Brand attachment -> Brand Love	1.453
Nostalgia Emotions -> Brand Trust	1.256
Nostalgia Emotions -> Brand attachment	1.291

Source: Based on Smart-Pls v4 output.

The previous table shows the paths and the corresponding variance inflation factors (VIFs). The values analysis reflects that none of the values are in a high range, which portrays the lack of multicollinearity issue among the variables. As an example, the VIF of the path of Brand Love -> Brand Loyalty was 1.358 which is healthy, representing no extreme multicollinearity. It is the same case with the other path, which includes an example of Brand Trust -> Brand Love (VIF = 1.875), Brand Attachment -> Brand Love (VIF = 1.453), Nostalgia Emotions -> Brand Trust (VIF = 1.256), and Nostalgia Emotions -> Brand Attachment (VIF = 1.291). These values are all active within the standard range, meaning that there is no issue of multicollinearity. In total, one can arrive at the conclusion that multicollinearity does not have any strong negative impact on the variables of this model. The results of the path analysis of the study hypotheses are demonstrated in the following figure after checking the goodness of the model.

Figure (3) path analysis result



Source: Based on Smart-Pls v4 output.

The figure above indicates that the value of the explanation coefficient was 98 in the Brand Trust variable, and it implies that the Nostalgia Emotions variable explains 98 percent variance in Brand Trust. The % of variance in the Brand Attachment is also due to Nostalgia Emotions, which corresponds to 97.9, whereas the rest of the percentages can be explained by other factors but not captured by the model. Brand Trust and Brand Attachment also provide an explanation for the variance of Brand Love that is approximately 99, and brand love also explains the variance of brand loyalty, which happens to be 95.2, and the rest of the percentage is attributable to other factors that were not taken into consideration in the model of study. The next table indicates Path coefficients.

Table (5) Path coefficients

	path	Coef.	mean	(STDEV)	T statistics	P values
H1	Nostalgia Emotions -> Brand Trust	0.991	0.991	0.002	7.414	0.000
H2	Nostalgia Emotions -> Brand attachment	0.989	0.989	0.002	5.579	0.000
H3	Brand Trust -> Brand Love	0.628	0.632	0.062	10.183	0.000
H4	Brand attachment -> Brand Love	0.372	0.367	0.062	6.018	0.000
H5	Brand Love -> Brand Loyalty	0.976	0.976	0.003	6.968	0.000

Source: Based on Smart-Pls v4 output.

According to the findings given at the table above, we may conclude the following:

H1: The relationship between nostalgic emotions and brand trust is strong and significant, showing a positive relationship between the variables at a p-value of 0.000, a t-statistic of 7.414, and a regression coefficient of 0.991. This ensures that nostalgic feelings play a key role in brand trust.

H2: Effect of nostalgic emotions on brand attachment, a regression coefficient of 0.989 was obtained with a t-statistic of 5.579 and statistical significance with p-value of 0.000; this shows that the impact of nostalgic emotions on brand attachment is strong and involves a statistically significant level. This implies that nostalgic feelings positively affect the degree of emotional connection customers hold towards a brand.

H3: The impact of brand trust on brand love, the regression coefficient was 0.628, t-statistic: 10.183, and p-value: 0.000, and it implies that the positive relationship between brand trust and brand love is strong and statistically significant. This implies that the customer with loyalty to a company will be more likely to fall in love with that company.

H4: The impact of brand attachment on brand love, the regression coefficient was 0.372 and the t-statistic was 6.018 with a p-value of 0.000, meaning that brand attachment has an excellent, moderately significant, positive impact on brand love. It affirms the fact that powerful brand attachment may increase love towards a brand.

H5: The correlation between brand love and brand loyalty was, as we see, strong and significant, as the regression coefficient is 0.976 with the t-statistic 6.968 and p-value 0.000. This implies that those customers who adore a brand have high chances of staying loyal to it.

Each of these hypotheses were supported, and there were convincing arguments that emotional forces including nostalgia, trusting the brand, are major weapons in brand attachment, brand love, and brand loyalty. All of them had a statistically significant relationship (p-value lower than 0.001), indicating the effectiveness of the model offered. And in the next table are shown the Total indirect effects.

Table (6) Total indirect effects

path	Coef.	mean	(STDEV)	T statistics	P values
Brand Trust -> Brand Loyalty	0.612	0.617	0.060	10.185	0.000
Brand attachment -> Brand Loyalty	0.363	0.359	0.060	6.010	0.000
Nostalgia Emotions -> Brand Love	0.990	0.990	0.002	521.328	0.000
Nostalgia Emotions -> Brand Loyalty	0.966	0.966	0.005	214.174	0.000

Source: Based on Smart-Pls v4 output.

The table exhibits the indirect effect of some factors on brand loyalty. The findings show that brand trust is a major driver of loyalty, as its coefficient is 0.612, and the p-value is 0.000, a value that is significant. A moderate effect of brand attachment on loyalty was also found with a coefficient of 0.363 and a p-value of 0.000, ensuring the significance of the results. When it comes to emotion affecting nostalgia, the findings indicated a significant impact on brand love with a coefficient and a p-value of 0.990, 0.000, respectively, which states that it was strongly significant. Concerning the influence of loyalty, the coefficient was equal to 0.966, and the p-value was 0.000, which also confirmed the importance of the findings. Based on these findings, it is possible to conclude that brand trust, attachment, and corresponding warrant nostalgia have a great contribution to the aspects of loyalty and brand love, and the findings are statistically calculated. The following table depicts Specific indirect effects.

Table (7) Specific indirect effects

H	path	Coef.	mean	(STDEV)	T statistics	P values
H6	Nostalgia Emotions -> Brand Trust -> Brand Love	0.622	0.626	0.062	10.046	0.000
H7	Nostalgia Emotions -> Brand attachment -> Brand Love	0.368	0.364	0.061	6.008	0.000

Source: Based on Smart-Pls v4 output.

These findings in the above table reveal that there is a high positive correlation between nostalgia and brand love across two principal mediators, that is brand trust and brand attachment.

In accordance with the hypothesis H6, which states that brand trust is the mediating variable between nostalgia and brand love, the findings support the hypothesis that a correlation between nostalgia and brand love relationship is statistically significant and strong. The correlation coefficient of brand trust (0.622) indicates a high positive effect on the relationship between nostalgia and brand trust, and such influence plays a critical role in strengthening brand love. This finding is determined by the t-statistic (t = 10.046) and p-value (p = 0.000) which are significant to prove the fact that brand trust is a key factor in the relationship between nostalgia and brand love.

Considering hypothesis H7, according to which brand attachment mediated the correlation between nostalgia and brand love, the results demonstrated the statistically significant correlation, however, it was milder than brand trust. Correlation coefficient was 0.368 that means that brand attachment has an important but not strong influence compared with trust. It could be depicted by t-statistic (t = 6.008) and p-value (p = 0.000), which confirms that brand attachment can be used as a way of establishing brand love based on nostalgic emotions (though to a lesser extent compared to trust).

Based on these findings, we can say that both trust and brand attachment can be considered significant mediators of the relationship between nostalgic feelings and brand love. Brand trust plays a more significant role in reinforcing such relationships whereas brand attachment would lead to the creation of brand love as well as nostalgic feelings, but it cannot reach the intensity of the influence.

Discussion

This research is an empirical study that tested the role of nostalgia in fostering brand trust, brand attachment and brand love and how brand love can impact brand loyalty. Also, the study examines the mediating role that brand trust and brand attachment can play in the relationship between nostalgia emotions and brand love. It was supposed based on the results of the earlier studies that nostalgia have a significant effect on brand trust and brand attachment and that brand trust and brand attachment have a significant impact on brand love which in turn has a significant impact on loyalty, also the researchers added that brand trust and brand attachment modistes the relationship between nostalgia emotions and brand love. The following discussion shows the main insights that underline the effect of nostalgia on brand trust, attachment, love and loyalty.

The research findings show that nostalgia emotions have a significant impact on brand trust which means that when customers engage with brands that they have known in the gool old days this can be the start of a trust relationship with this brand specifically if the memories that these customers have about the brand are positive memories. This result aligns with previous studies (Escandon-Barbosa et al.,2024; Zhang & Tao, 2022; Arsenault, 2017; Cuff ;2017) who have concluded that nostalgia emotions play an important role in fostering brand trust. Statistical analysis has also shown that the relationship between emotions and trust is very complex which means that to make customers trust the brands organizations need to fortify that relationship by showing hedonic value of the brand. This result aligns with Franklin (2018) who has concluded that memories of Nintendo games make people feel nostalgic, but it needs hedonic value to make customers buy the game again.

The results also show that nostalgia emotions have an effect on brand attachment which means that customers get attached to those brands that will bring them memories and feelings that have felt in past times, in the context of Nintendo games this result is logic as we have all played Nintendo games such as super Mario and Zelda as kids and now with the new versions of these games, we still play them but nowadays with our kids, telling them how we felt playing those games. This result aligns with the results that previous studies (Shimul, 2022; Rhajbal et al., 2017; Franklin, 2018; Wen & Liu, 2019; Hidayati, 2021). However, the statistical analysis also shows that despite the significant effect of nostalgia emotions on brand attachment, this effect may vary across individuals, which means that the degree of attachment as a result of nostalgia emotions can be different from one person to another.

The results also revealed that brand trust and brand love are positively related, and the statistical analysis demonstrates the importance of consumer trust in fostering brand love which means that for the customer to love the brand he needs to trust in this brand first to be sure that this brand satisfies his needs and level up to his expectations. This result is supported by previous studies (Upadhyaya et al., 2025; Lien et al. 2015) who have suggested that brand trust is a vital element in building long-lasting customer relationships as it affects their purchase intention, world of mouth and they stay loyal to the brand.

The results have also exposed that brand attachment has a strong significant effect on brand love, which means that for a brand to be loved customers need to build affinity connection to it, this connection can induce brand love. As previous studies have concluded, the customers who are satisfied with a brand develop an emotional tie with this brand which can lead to brand love (Loureiro et al. (2012; Hajjid et al. (2022)

Brand loyalty is one of the main factors that can help the organization surpass its competitors, especially in these highly dynamic markets. The study shows that brand love has a significant positive effect on brand loyalty, which is logic,when customers love a brand, it becomes very difficult for them to switch to another brand. Brand love also makes customers want to wait for their favorite brand. And this was the case with Nintendo games, as the company has faced lots of ups and downs, but its fandom keeps growing part of it because of the games offered that relates those fans with their beautiful memories. This result aligns with previous studies (Alic and Mujkic, 2023; Bazi et al., 2023; Bigne et al., 2020; Drennan et al., 2015; Laroche et al., 2012; Le, 2021; Mody and Hanks, 2020; Mujkic et al., 2020; Tanveer et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2020).

Finally, the results showed that both brand trust and brand attachment mediate the relationship between nostalgia emotions and brand love, which means that for nostalgia emotions to evoke customer brand love it needs both brand trust and brand attachment to fortify that relationship. However, the statistical analysis has proven that although both brand trust and brand attachment are significantly

mediating the relationship between nostalgia emotions and brand love, brand trust has a greater effect in strengthening this relationship. This result has solved part of the debate between previous studies about whether brand trust and brand attachment are components of brand love or antecedents of brand love. As this study showed, brand trust and brand attachment are not components of brand love but antecedents of brand love. And this aligns with (Albert and Merunka, 2013; Kaufmann et al.,2016; Ahmed et al., 2014; Moussa, 2015; Gomez-Suárez (2019).

Theoretical and Managerial implications

This study offers significant theoretical and managerial implications. This study is, to the best of our knowledge, among the few studies which have studied all these variables combined. So, this study contributes to the literature by studying the effect of nostalgia emotions on brand trust, attachment, love and loyalty in the context of video gaming, specifically Nintendo games.

In addition to the significant theoretical implications, the study is so important for managers. Nowadays with the changing environments, changing markets and changing customer needs, brand love is a crucial element that can guarantee the success of the marketing strategies. Building brand love can help the organization reach customer loyalty that differentiates the company from its competitors, especially with the intense global competition. For brand love to succeed managers must use marketing instruments such as nostalgia emotions that can help in fostering both brand trust and brand attachment. Finally, even for global firms the adaptation of strategies to fit local environments is very important. Studying customers, understanding their behavior and building emotional connection with them can help in reaching both brand love and brand loyalty. which is the secret of success.

Limitations and future research

This study possesses multiple limitations that future research may address. First this study was applied in the context of the video gaming industry specifically Nintendo games. Consequently, the findings were limited exclusively to this area. Future studies should consider investigating other brands or industries. Second, this study has studied the effect of Nostalgia emotions, brand trust and brand attachment on both brand love and brand loyalty. Therefore, it is recommended for subsequent research to study the effect of different variables on brand love and brand loyalty such as brand personality and brand self-congruity.

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