



LUNDS
UNIVERSITET

BUSN39

Degree Project in Global Marketing - Master Level

International Marketing and Brand Management

Spring 2023

Echoes of the past

A Qualitative Study on Personal and Historical Nostalgia and their
Impact on Consumer Identity

Authors:

Filippa Möller, 980630

Linnéa Wrobel, 990611

Supervisor: Hossain Shahriar

Examiner: Carys Egan-Wyer

Word count: 25990

Abstract

Title: Echoes of the past

Date of the Seminar: 2nd June 2023

Course: BUSN39 Degree Project in Global Marketing

Authors: Filippa Möller and Linnéa Wrobel

Supervisor: Hossain Shahriar

Examiner: Carys Egan-Wyer

Key Words: Nostalgia, personal nostalgia, historical nostalgia, Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), Belk, Goffman, Holt, identity, identity myths, self-presentation, possessions, consumption

Thesis Purpose: The purpose of this study is to explore young consumers' identity creation in the context of nostalgic consumption and marketing. The study seeks to deepen the understanding of how young consumers construct their identities by exploring the impact of two forms of nostalgia, personal and historical.

Theoretical Perspective: To analyze the empirical data and gain insight into consumer identity formation, this study employs a Consumer Culture Theory perspective and utilizes three different theoretical lenses. The theories employed include Belk's concept of possessions and the extended self, Goffman's perspective on self-presentation, and Holt's definition of identity myths.

Methodology: In order to reach the objectives of this study and to understand the impact of nostalgia on consumer identity creation, a total of 14 in-depth semi-structured interview questions were conducted. Further, the study followed an abductive approach. The data were analyzed with guidance from Rennstam & Wästerfors, as well as the framework Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

Analysis: When analyzing the material, it showcased that young consumers use different consumption habits connected to nostalgia in order to form their identities. It showed that they use both tangible aspects of consumption, such as clothing, but also intangible aspects, such as movies and music. This categorization became the themes, and subthemes in the analyses.

Main Findings & Contributions: This study was both supported by existing literature, as well as contributed to the literature. The main contributions, in summary, are that (1) young consumers construct their identities by engaging in nostalgic consumption, encompassing both tangible and intangible aspects, (2) they shape romanticized nostalgic narratives that contribute to the formation of their identities, (3) these consumers blend personal and historical nostalgia, which is conceptualized by us as relational nostalgia, to shape their sense of self. Through these processes, it can be concluded that nostalgia becomes a significant factor in the construction of young consumers' identities.

Acknowledgments

This thesis is the final project of the master's program in international marketing and brand management. This academic year has been an inspiring journey filled with interesting courses and impressive professors. As we reflected on the process of writing this thesis, we can conclude that it has been an enjoyable and rewarding journey, despite occasional moments of stress and challenges. During the writing process, there are multiple people that have supported us with their motivation and time. Firstly, we would like to express our gratitude to our supervisor, Hossain Shahriar. He has provided us with guidance, valuable insights, expertise, and support throughout this research process. His encouragement and engagement have been fundamental for the development of this thesis, as well as for overcoming any possible hurdles. We would also like to thank all of our respondents, as this thesis would not have been possible without them and their invaluable participation. A heartfelt thank you to all of our family and friends, their support and encouragement have aided us greatly from beginning to end.

Lastly, we would like to thank each other for the effort and mutual support provided throughout this writing process. Despite any difficulties or problems, we have continually worked together to finish this thesis and achieve the best result possible.

Lund, Sweden, 31st of May 2023

Filippa Möller

Linnéa Wrobel

Table of Content

1 Introduction	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Problematization	3
1.3 Research Purpose	6
1.4 Delimitations	7
1.5 Outline of the thesis	8
2 Literature Review	9
2.1 Nostalgia	9
2.1.1 Nostalgia: a brief introduction	9
2.1.2 Nostalgia in Consumption and Marketing	10
2.1.3 Personal and Historical Nostalgia	12
2.2 Consumer identity	13
2.2.1 Identity: a general overview	14
2.2.2 Consumer identity creation	15
2.2.3 Marketplace Myths and identity creation	17
2.3 Identity Creation and Nostalgia	19
2.4 Summary of the Literature Review	20
3 Theoretical Framework	21
3.1 Belk - Possessions and the Extended Self	21
3.2 Goffman - Self-presentation	22
3.3 Holt - Identity Myths	23
3.4 Summary of the Theoretical Framework	24
4 Methodology	25
4.1 Research Philosophy	25
4.2 Research Approach	26
4.3 Data Collection Method	27
4.3.1 Semi-structured interviews	27
4.3.2 Interview Guide	28
4.4 Sampling Technique	29
4.5 Data analysis	31
4.6 Quality of the Study	33
4.7 Limitations	35

4.8 Ethical considerations	36
5 Empirical Findings	37
5.1 Tangible Nostalgic Consumption: Touching the Past	37
5.1.1 Fashion Flashback: Nostalgia in Fashion and Trends	37
5.1.2 Relics of the Past: The Nostalgic Significance of Items	42
5.2 Intangible Nostalgic Consumption: Visualizing the Past	47
5.2.1 Pop Nostalgia: Bridging the Gap between Past and Present in Pop Culture	47
5.2.2 Time-Traveling Experiences: Nostalgia in Experiences	54
5.3 Summary of the Findings	58
6 Discussion	59
6.1 Tangible vs. Intangible Nostalgic Consumption	59
6.2 Consumer Identity Creation Through Nostalgic Narratives	61
6.3 Relational Nostalgia	63
7 Conclusion	66
7.1 An Overview of Key Findings	66
7.2 Practical Implications	68
7.3 Limitations and Future Research	69
Reference list	70
Appendix A: Interview Guide	82

List of tables

Table 1: Compilation of the respondents	31
Table 2: Coding frame	33

1 Introduction

Nostalgia has been a common research subject across multiple areas, dating back to the year 1688. While nostalgia has been around for a long time, it remains relevant, with big companies using nostalgia as a marketing tool to attract and engage consumers. This opening chapter will also shed light on the connection between young consumers and nostalgia, presenting arguments for the relevance of this age group. Furthermore, it will provide an overview of the key elements that underpin the relationship between nostalgic consumption and marketing, and how it influences consumer identity creation. The beginning of this chapter will introduce the background of nostalgia relevant to this thesis. This is followed by the problematization, research purpose, delimitations, and outline of the thesis.

1.1 Background

Nostalgia has become a prevalent aspect of today's marketing and consumption across many different product categories, ranging from cars to entertainment (Rutherford & Shaw, 2011). This might be because of nostalgia's multifaceted nature, where it can be used to rejuvenate and reintroduce products, shape brand attitudes, or communicate a rich brand history (Reisenwitz, Iyer & Cutler, 2004). Research on nostalgia dates back to Johannes Hofer, who was the first to use the term in the year 1688 (Anspach, 1934). However, its popularity grew further through marketing and consumer research around the 1990s (Goulding, 2001; Holbrook, 1993; Holbrook & Schindler, 1991; Havlena & Holak, 1991; Stern, 1992). Despite being around for a long time, nostalgia remains highly relevant. Durai and Vidhya (2019) highlight that nostalgia in advertising is among the most influential trends today, explaining that by taking individuals back in time instead of focusing on the future, it creates a cognitive connection with the product. Hence, it is interesting to understand the role of nostalgia in the process of consumption and consumer identities.

Big companies use nostalgia as a marketing tool to attract and persuade consumers, some examples are Nintendo, Coca-Cola, and Walmart. Nintendo's commercial aimed to evoke nostalgia in those who grew up in the 80s and 90s, showcasing playing videos-games with your

siblings, as well as the feeling of growing older and drifting apart from loved ones (Hesterberg, 2021). Nintendo then illustrates the brothers reuniting as adults, playing the new Nintendo Switch. This commercial takes the individual back to the fun feeling of playing video games as a child, but also growing up with a sibling (Hesterberg, 2021). Further, Coca-Cola partnered with Netflix's *Stranger Things*. The third season of the tv-series takes place in the summer of 1985, right around the time that Coca-Cola's "New Coke", a modified version of their original recipe, is introduced to the public (Haasch, 2019). Lastly, Walmart produced a commercial in 2019 to advertise their grocery pickup service, which showcased classic movie-themed cars. The advertisement was one of the most discussed during the Golden Globe Awards and attracted a lot of attention (Sweeney, 2019).

Apart from feeling nostalgic about their own past, individuals can also experience nostalgia for a time period they have not personally lived through. This is called historical nostalgia, and its popularity can be spotted in movies, the fashion industry, and items among mostly younger consumers (Marchegiani & Phau, 2011). According to psychologist Batcho (2021), historical nostalgia is often triggered by dissatisfaction with one's present situation. Deloitte's 2022 survey connected to Gen Z and Millennials around the globe, showed that they are concerned about climate change, the cost of living, geopolitical conflicts, wealth inequality, and the pandemic (Deloitte, 2022). This implies that the younger generation is particularly dissatisfied with the numerous uncertainties that exist in the present world. According to Gemignani (2022) the reappearance of previous fashion trends, especially from the '70s to the early 2000s, may be connected to young adults longing for a better time era. This is illustrated by young adults' expressions connected to previous time periods, such as "born in the wrong generation" and that the "past was better", despite lacking the experience of that era (Gemignani, 2022). The sense of "being born in the wrong generation" can be attributed to the way social media has popularized past time periods, often portraying only certain aspects of those periods while ignoring their harsh realities (Iyer, 2023).

Social media platforms, particularly TikTok, have played a significant role in promoting the surge of nostalgia, especially among the younger generation. This is evidenced by the fact that TikTok is mostly used by young individuals, and in 2021, the popular hashtag #nostalgia had around 18.9 billion views (Cavender, 2021). There are various types of trends such as "unlocking memories you forgot about", and accounts devoted to creating videos reminding the viewers of the past, with some videos getting millions of likes and views (Cavender, 2021).

The majority of users on TikTok, more specifically 71.3%, are between the ages 18 to 34 (Oberlo, 2023). Furthermore, according to Kemp (2023), consumers between 20-29 use social media the most and account for around one-third of the social media audience. Social media advertising, and its fast-paced environment, make it more difficult to create outstanding content for an audience that is constantly information-exposed (Caballero, 2020). However, Caballero (2020) continues to explain that brands are using these rapid changes by constructing marketing strategies that enable consumers to travel back to the past.

Traveling back in time to get a sense of the past is underscored by Belk (1988) as a key symbol of people's possessions and one's identity. The symbolism of possessions and consumption holds a considerable weight in shaping individuals' identities (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995), as does nostalgia itself (Davis, 1979). However, as mentioned above, there are two distinct forms of nostalgia – personal and historical – and exploring how these different types influence the construction of consumer identity, especially among young consumers who seem to have a significant connection to nostalgia, presents an intriguing area for further exploration.

1.2 Problematization

Nostalgia has been studied in various fields, such as psychology, sociology, management, marketing, and consumer research (Hofer, 1988 cited in Anspach, 1934; Davis, 1979; Brown & Humphrey, 2002; Sierra & McQuitty, 2007; Ju, Kim, Chang & Bluck, 2016). This study contributes to the area of consumer research in general, and Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) in particular. In regard to consumer research and CCT, there is an abundance of research on nostalgia and its role in consumer behavior (Goulding, 1999; Lasaleta, Werle & Yamim, 2021), preference (Holbrook, 1993; Holbrook & Schindler, 1991), and experiences (Cruz & Buchanan-Oliver, 2014; Hamilton & Wagner, 2014; Holbrook & Schindler, 2003) within a wide range of areas. Nostalgia is established as a rather impactful aspect of consumer behavior, somewhat because of its motivational nature, for example regarding healthy food consumption (Goulding, 1999; Lasaleta, Werle & Yamim, 2021). Regarding nostalgic consumption preferences, together with an individual's nostalgia proneness, age is an influential factor when it comes to shaping consumers' preferences (Holbrook, 1993). Holbrook and Schindler (1991) further expand this notion, arguing that consumers' music preferences reach their peak when they enter early adulthood. Research regarding nostalgic consumption experiences emphasizes that experience-based memories and nostalgia, such as experiencing food or places associated

with home, induce powerful emotions, and can lead to nostalgic bonding (Cruz & Buchanan-Oliver, 2014; Holbrook & Schindler, 2003).

In addition, nostalgia is a prevalent aspect of advertising research, mainly focusing on the influence of nostalgic advertising on consumer responses (Muehling, Sprott & Pascal, 2002; Muehling, Sprott & Sultan, 2014; Reisenwitz, Iyer & Cutler, 2004; Stern, 1992). The authors' findings suggest that the incorporation of nostalgia in advertising can shape a favorable inclination towards a brand, enhance brand attitudes, and result in a more favorable response compared to non-nostalgic advertisements. Furthermore, a handful of scholars within this field have conceptualized nostalgia into two different forms; personal nostalgia, which has been personally experienced earlier in life, and historical nostalgia, referring to times that have not been experienced personally, such as before one was born (Marchegiani & Phau, 2010; Muehling & Pascal, 2011; Stern, 1992). Both Marchegiani and Phau (2010) and Stern (1992) argue that this categorization of nostalgia can provide further insights regarding nostalgia's utility within advertising and consumption, hence being useful within future research. However, within consumer research, nostalgia has mostly been treated as a single and holistic concept, and not sorted into the two distinct forms of personal and historical nostalgia. As a result of this, less attention has been paid to understanding nostalgia as a more comprehensive construct, leading to nostalgia mainly being used as what advertising research refers to as personal nostalgia (Cruz & Buchanan-Oliver, 2014; Emontspool & Kjeldgaard, 2012; Lasaleta, Werle & Yamim, 2021). Thus, applying the notion of the two categorized forms within consumer research could broaden the understanding of the connection between consumer culture and nostalgia.

Furthermore, as identity is a central aspect of CCT, an abundance of researchers within the field have explored and studied the connection between consumption and different aspects of identity (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Askegaard, 2015; Hartmann & Brunk, 2015; Schau, 2018). Some scholars have, for example, studied the impact of cultural and ethnic identity (Bardhi, Ostberg & Bengtsson, 2010; Emontspool & Kjeldgaard, 2012), while others have studied identity in the context of age or stages of life (Schau, Gilly & Wolfinbarger, 2009; Weber & Francisco Maffezzoli, 2022). Additionally, marketplace myths, which are described to be useful resources for identity projects within consumption, have been researched by a handful of CCT scholars (Coskuner-Balli, 2013; Holt, 2004; Thompson, 2004). Holt (2004) describes how myths address cultural anxieties, stress, and consumers' desired identities by

being fabricated to adhere to an imaginary world rather than the ordinary one. He further states that these myths serve as a means to lessen the consumers' identity burdens, thereby serving as a measure for forging emotional connections between consumer and brand.

There are scholars that have studied nostalgia and identity in relation to consumer behavior (Baker & Azzari, 2020; Belk, 1988, 1990; Sierra & McQuitty, 2007; Vignolles & Pichon, 2014). These studies focus on various aspects of consumer behavior associated with nostalgia and identity formation. For example, Vignolles and Pichon (2014) explore the connection between nostalgic food consumption and identity, while Baker and Azzari (2020) investigate the impact of nostalgic advertising in public spaces on consumer identity. Sierra and McQuitty (2007), on the other hand, examine nostalgia in the context of social relationships. Belk (1988; 1990) highlights how the presence of the past in our belongings contributes to our identity, and only touches upon that individuals can experience nostalgia for eras they have no personal connection to. Despite the fact that Belk (1988; 1990) briefly mention nostalgia regarding an era with no personal connection, previous research has mainly focused on personal nostalgia, and less attention has been directed to studying historical nostalgia.

In an effort to further expand the knowledge on identity creation and nostalgia, this study integrates identity myths as an important element in consumer identity creation related to nostalgia, as it has received relatively less attention thus far. There are some scholars that have studied the subjects of consumer identity, nostalgia consumption, myths, and identity together in different contexts (Belk & Costa, 1998; Brunk, Giesler & Hartmann, 2018; Emontspool & Kjeldgaard, 2012; Södergren, 2022; Thompson & Tian, 2008). For example, both Belk and Costa (1998) and Södergren (2022) put emphasis on the mythical aspects and consumption, as they study specific myths, namely the "mountain man myth" and the "Viking myth". Brunk, Giesler, and Hartmann (2018) also emphasize the mythical aspect, but not in the context of a specific myth, but rather in the specific context of the German reunification. Emontspool and Kjeldgaard (2012), however, focus on the nostalgic aspect rather than the mythical, as they study the role of nostalgia and cultural reflexivity in consumption, in the context of culture and migration. Thompson and Tian (2008) emphasize both myths and identity in their study of the co-constructive relationship between commercial mythmaking and popular memory. Although previous research has examined the significance of identity myths in consumer identity creation, the focus has mostly been on understanding the myths. However, in this study, identity

myths are rather adding a layer to the understanding of consumer identity creation in relation to nostalgia.

In conclusion, a common aspect among studies on nostalgia within consumer research is that they more or less use the holistic form of nostalgia, and do not incorporate the concept of nostalgia in the two distinct forms of historical and personal. Hence, the research has not emphasized the possible implications this distinction might have on insights regarding consumers' identity construction in the context of nostalgia, which is the research gap we will address in this study. Further, there are identified limitations within the literature on identity myths and nostalgia, as they mainly focus on the myth aspect rather than examining how consumers utilize and incorporate it in regard to their identities. By integrating the concepts of consumer identities and nostalgia as two distinct forms, as well as myths in the context of identity, this thesis aims to address this research gap and limitation in an effort to broaden the understanding of nostalgic consumption and consumer identities.

1.3 Research Purpose

As discussed in previous sections, a research gap has been identified within the domain of CCT, specifically the absence of research on nostalgia's different forms and their impact on consumers' identity creation. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to explore and deepen the understanding of consumers' identity creation in the context of nostalgic marketing and consumption, thereby aiming to generally contribute to the stream of consumer identity within the field of CCT, as well as the stream on nostalgia. The utilization of personal and historical nostalgia, as opposed to previous research within CCT which has primarily used a single and holistic form of nostalgia (Brunk, Giesler & Hartmann, 2018; Cruz & Buchanan-Oliver, 2014; Emontspool & Kjeldgaard, 2012), can broaden the concept of nostalgia. Thus, this can enable a deeper understanding of the various elements of nostalgia's different impacts on consumer culture and identity. This can be beneficial for marketers as they might be able to better utilize nostalgia in their marketing strategies. Gaining a better understanding of different forms of nostalgia can, for example, aid in targeting specific groups of consumers.

Another aspect that will be utilized in order to get a more comprehensive understanding of consumers' identity projects is myths. As nostalgia (Stern, 1995) and consumer myths (Holt, 2004) are both described to be tools to create imaginary worlds, this aspect will be incorporated

as a measure to be able to deepen our analysis of the relationship between nostalgia and consumer identity creation. Furthermore, considering the information provided in the background regarding the connection between nostalgia and young consumers, this study will specifically target this demographic. In light of this, the following research question has been established in order to address the identified gap:

- How do young consumers construct identities based on personal and historical nostalgia?

1.4 Delimitations

When conducting this study, it is important to address possible delimitations which can impact its results. Firstly, as the research question is aimed at young adults, the data collected for this thesis will be affected as there presumably are differences between age demographics. Consequently, the findings and conclusions made in this study may not be applicable beyond this age group. Young adults were deemed suitable because of their tendency to feel nostalgic, not only for times they have experienced but also for previous eras before their time, as discussed in the background. Since this study puts emphasis on both personal and historical nostalgia, it was of interest to study a group that has displayed both forms. Furthermore, the argument for focusing on young consumers in this study also stems from them being the primary users of social media platforms, such as TikTok (Oberlo, 2023). As mentioned in the background, nostalgia is a popular hashtag and #nostalgia had around 18.9 billion views (Cavender, 2021). Recognizing this correlation, the study made the connection between nostalgia and young consumers, regarding it as an interesting focus for this study. Nevertheless, as mentioned before, the findings of this study might not be relevant to other age groups.

Furthermore, this study also features a delimitation of a geographical nature, namely in the context of Sweden. This is deemed a suitable delimitation in order to avoid any geographic and cultural factors having an influence on the results. As Bhattacharya, Lux, and Kemp (2015) mention, nostalgia is a complex phenomenon that can differ between cultures. If this study had explored multiple cultures, it would have been necessary to delve into the nostalgic elements of each and every one of them. However, due to time limitations, we decided to focus on one culture to receive deep insights. As the interviews featured videos aiming to evoke nostalgia among the respondents, the videos had to truly reflect nostalgia within the chosen culture. As the researchers of this study are Swedish and are knowledgeable in Swedish nostalgic elements,

Sweden as the chosen culture of the respondents was deemed most suitable. Furthermore, there appears to be a link between uncertainties and historical nostalgia (Batcho, 2021), which could be related to the CCT's discourse on marketplace myths and consumer identity. Holt (2004) notes that the anxieties and aspirations that form consumer identities are typically shared within a country. Consequently, the uncertainties associated with nostalgia may differ across countries.

1.5 Outline of the thesis

For the reader to gain a comprehensive and coherent understanding of this thesis and its findings, it will follow a structured design. Following the first chapter, *introduction*, previous existing literature on the research areas touched upon in this thesis will be presented and reviewed in the second chapter *Literature Review*. Here, previous research and literature on the topics covered are presented to identify the literature to which this study contributes and illustrate the research gap that this thesis aims to fill.

In the third chapter, *Theoretical Framework*, this thesis presents the theoretical lenses utilized to analyze its findings. This includes the works of Russel W. Belk, Erving Goffman, and Douglas Holt. Next will be *Methodology*, the fourth chapter, where the methods for data collection and the overall scientific method will be discussed and argued for. This will aid with transparency and give the reader greater insights into what and how data has been collected and why.

In the fifth chapter *Analysis*, the data and empirical material will be processed and analyzed in order to provide a foundation and support for answering the thesis' research question, as well as fulfill the purpose of the study. The sixth chapter, *Discussion*, will feature a discussion of the analysis and its findings in relation to existing literature, where their connections, contradictions, and contributions will be discussed. The final seventh chapter, *Conclusion*, will provide a brief summary of the study and its findings, followed by practical contributions and potential limitations. This section will also provide suggestions for future research, with a basis in interesting findings or possible areas for deeper elaboration. Lastly, a reference list and appendix will follow, where material such as an interview guide will be presented.

2 Literature Review

This chapter aims to examine previous literature relevant to this present study, focusing on literature that facilitates the understanding of how personal and historical nostalgia influences consumer identities. The chapter begins with a concise background on nostalgia and proceeds to explore its incorporation in marketing and consumer research. Additionally, it highlights relevant studies that explore personal and historical nostalgia. The second part of this chapter illustrates the knowledge of consumer identities, an important aspect of the Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) field. It also presents literature that investigates the intersection of identity and nostalgia and concludes with a summary that illustrates how these various bodies of literature are interrelated.

2.1 Nostalgia

This section will present and review relevant existing literature on the broad subject of nostalgia. It will commence with subsection 2.1.1, where the subject and its origin will be introduced. The following subsection 2.1.2 will provide the reader with an overview of the state of research regarding nostalgia within marketing and consumer research. The final subsection, 2.1.3, will introduce the notion of nostalgia as two different forms, and the literature on the subject, to provide the reader with a coherent understanding of the concept.

2.1.1 Nostalgia: a brief introduction

The concept of nostalgia dates back to 1688, as Johannes Hofer first described it as a medical condition, and has since developed in a wide range of research areas such as management, sociology, and marketing (Brown & Humphrey, 2002; Davis, 1979; Hamilton, Edwards, Hammill, Wagner & Wilson, 2014; Havlena & Holak, 1991). These different areas of research still commonly use the definition of nostalgia stemming from Hofer's definition, namely that it is a longing or yearning for home (Davis, 1979; Havlena & Holak, 1991; Stern, 1992). Gandini (2020) argues that nostalgia has developed from being seen as a disease to becoming the zeitgeist, which is defined as "the general intellectual, moral, and cultural climate of an era" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.), of the 21st century. Hence, it may not come as a surprise that it has also become a common field within consumer and marketing research (Holbrook & Schindler, 2003; Rutherford & Shaw, 2011). Therefore, the following subsection will focus on discussing how nostalgia has been used and studied within marketing and consumption.

2.1.2 Nostalgia in Consumption and Marketing

The concept of nostalgia has transformed over time, from being a negative feeling of longing within the medical field to becoming a prominent strategy for brands and companies to position themselves within a market (Rana, Raut, Prashar & Quttainah, 2020; Reisenwitz, Iyer & Cutler, 2004). Since this transformation, nostalgia has become an established area within marketing and consumer research (Rana et al., 2020). The research regarding nostalgic marketing has to a great extent been quantitative (Holbrook & Schindler, 2003) or focused on its impact on factors such as brand attitude or purchase intent (e.g. Muehling & Sprott, 2004; Youn & Jin, 2016). For example, Jun, Park, and Kim (2022) conducted research on nostalgia marketing and its effect on consumers' evaluation of brand extensions, in an effort to illustrate that nostalgia can influence consumers' buying behavior. They found that the impact of nostalgia on the brand extension evaluation varied depending on what form of nostalgia they used. Similarly, Ju, Kim, Chang, and Bluck (2016) argued that nostalgia marketing can be an impactful strategy for brand management, as they studied what effect nostalgia marketing had on consumer decisions within a wide range of products. In their findings, they suggested that nostalgic advertising had a bigger impact than present-focused advertising on consumers' perceived self-continuity. Moreover, Hamilton and Wagner (2014) studied the link between experiential consumption and nostalgia and highlights the transformation of everyday activity into a unique experience in small businesses. They illustrated that marketers in smaller businesses can establish an experiential environment by using commercialized nostalgia that incorporates a sense of belonging. Their findings further showed that by organizing consumption spaces that trigger collective and personal nostalgia, an intertwining of collaborative and engaging processes takes place, producing a valued and profound nostalgic experience (Hamilton & Wagner, 2014).

Consumer research regarding nostalgic consumption, however, has focused more on the consumers and their behavior with an interpretive approach (Brunk, Visconti & Veresiu, 2013; Cruz & Buchanan-Oliver, 2014; Goulding, 1999; 2001; 2002; Holbrook, 1993; Holbrook & Schindler, 1991; 2003). For example, Holbrook (1993) studied the relationship between nostalgia proneness and age in the context of shaping consumer preferences, where he found that they seemed to operate independently. Hence, he argued that age and nostalgia proneness influences preferences by affecting patterns of consumers' tastes. Similarly, Goulding (2002)

studied vicarious nostalgia, stating that individuals' cognitive age, the age one might feel or look like, could be affected when they experienced a strong sense of nostalgia. Holbrook and Schindler (2003) explored nostalgic bonding and nostalgia's role in consumer behavior through different interpretive methods, concluding that there were a number of different types of nostalgic experiences, such as *homeland*, *rites of passage*, and *security*. In regards to security, the authors state that consumers can experience nostalgic bonding to objects which they associate with continuity, providing them with a sense of security in troubled times. Further, they suggest that security-oriented nostalgia and its yearning for a lost stability is accompanied by an underlying pain or distress.

Further, the concept of homeland and culture, as well as ethnic consumer culture, is a notable area within nostalgic consumption research, as researchers have aimed to investigate its impact on consumption practices (Cruz & Buchanan-Oliver, 2014; Emontspool & Kjeldgaard, 2012; Goulding, 2001; Hartmann & Brunk, 2019, Kessous, 2015). Cruz and Buchanan-Oliver (2014) studied nostalgia's role in cultural food consumption among immigrants, meaning that it could be bittersweet as it could symbolize home as well as remind the consumer that they were in fact not in their country of origin. Kessous (2015) similarly studied how culture influenced brands that are considered nostalgic and their relationship to consumers, as well as in what situations its influence could be considered negative or positive. She, however, argued that the "sweet" side of nostalgia was more prominent than the "bitter". Research regarding nostalgic consumption has also been conducted to examine nostalgia's influence on consumer behavior within specific circumstances, such as nostalgic marketing in the context of the German reunification (Hartmann & Brunk, 2019) or the role of nostalgia in sport consumer behavior after the Covid-19 pandemic (Cho, Oh & Chiu, 2021). When studying nostalgia regarding the German reunification, Hartmann and Brunk (2019) found that even though East Germans celebrated the newfound access to Western products, some felt a sense of lost specialness; products that were previously valued as exclusive were now mundane. This caused uneasiness regarding the developing consumer culture, making them miss aspects of the past despite the scarcity of products (Hartmann & Brunk, 2019).

Additionally, some scholars within consumer research have highlighted the memory aspect of nostalgia, such as Marcoux (2017) who examined how memories and souvenirs can be used as a measure to forget, rather than remember. He states that digital objects do not have the same tangible presence as material objects, but at the same time, he argues that the difference

between material and digital objects should not be exaggerated in the context of memory practices. Brunk, Giesler, and Hartmann (2018) also discussed memories and how it shapes marketization through hegemonic memory-making, which is a process where dominant or ruling groups shape collective memory and historical narratives to affect societal perceptions. They further challenge the notion of stable and fixed memories, arguing that memory is actually fluid and dynamic, which means that memories are fluctuating and subject to change, much like history itself.

2.1.3 Personal and Historical Nostalgia

As mentioned in previous sections, there has been a considerable amount of research on nostalgia in consumer and marketing research, however, in many of these studies the focus has mostly been on nostalgia as a holistic concept. To get a more comprehensive understanding of nostalgia, some academics have dedicated time to developing the phenomenon further by focusing on different types of nostalgia (Baker & Kennedy, 1994; Davis, 1979; Stern, 1992). Davis (1979) discussed three orders of nostalgia: simple nostalgia, reflexive nostalgia, and interpreted nostalgia. Davis (1979) explained that simple nostalgia refers to the belief that things were better in the past and a desire to return to that time, even though it is impossible to do so. Reflexive nostalgia entails a critical examination and the question of whether it was truly as wonderful as one remembers. Lastly interpreted nostalgia involves comparing the significance of nostalgic feelings to present circumstances in order to improve one's life situation (Davis, 1979). Further, Baker and Kennedy (1994) presented three different levels of nostalgia: real nostalgia (a direct experience), simulated nostalgia (no direct experience), and collective nostalgia (experienced within a culture, generation, or nation).

However, several scholars delve into the notion of distinct forms of nostalgia, commonly known as "personal" and "historical" (Batcho, 2021; Holak & Havlena, 1992; Marchegiani & Phau, 2010; Stern, 1992). These concepts are explained by Stern (1992) in her research study of nostalgia in advertising text. Stern (1992) argued that situating nostalgia in a cultural context and analyzing it through stimuli gives a new perspective on nostalgia. Stern (1992) separated nostalgia by dividing it into personal and historical nostalgia and then analyzed each type in advertising communications. The author defined historical nostalgia as "the way it was" and explained that this refers to returning to a past that is considered better than the present. It is characterized by a time previous to when the individual was born and highlights that the past

is created through imagination (Stern, 1992). Personal nostalgia is instead explained as “The way I was” and is a time from the individual's own past and is created through memory (Stern, 1992).

Expanding on these two types of nostalgia, more recent research has been made connected to them. Marchegiani and Phau (2010) discovered how personal and historical nostalgia appeal in advertising; they suggest that the two forms have various effects on consumer behavioral responses, such as cognition, emotions, attitude, and purchase intentions. In this article, they connected historical nostalgia to the theory of collective memory, described as follows: “Basically, “collective memory” is explained as being shared, passed on, and even constructed by the group or modern society” (Marchegiani & Phau, 2010, p.84). In a later article, Marchegiani and Phau (2013), provided additional details about the two types of nostalgia. Nevertheless, this time their research focused on exploring and comparing personal and historical nostalgia, in relation to the common emotions associated with them.

Additionally, there has been more research on personal and historical nostalgia, not only in advertising but also in entertainment media and tourism (Muehling, 2013; Muehling & Pascal, 2011; Marchegiani & Phau, 2012; Natterer, 2014; Verma & Rajendran, 2017). It has been demonstrated that both personal and historical nostalgia has an effect on consumers' attitudes, however, personal nostalgia tends to be more effective in creating positive responses from consumers (Muehling, 2013; Muehling & Pascal, 2011). Moreover, the examination of the various types of nostalgia in relation to movies, music, and video games, has led to the conclusion that personal nostalgia seems to be salient and has a greater influence on purchasing entertainment media and spreading word-of-mouth recommendations (Marchegiani & Phau, 2012; Natterer, 2014).

2.2 Consumer identity

This section will review relevant literature on consumer identity relevant to this thesis. The first subsection, 2.2.1, offers a general overview of identity in the context of CCT and mostly discusses the process behind it, such as imagination. The second subsection, 2.2.2, delves into more specific research studies and is more focused. Lastly, in section 2.2.3, the discussion explores how consumers construct and make sense of their identities in relation to marketplace myths.

2.2.1 Identity: a general overview

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between consumption and identity, this section will focus on identity in a more general form within CCT. According to Arnould and Thompson (2005), Consumer Culture Theory is a collection of theoretical viewpoints that shed light on the association among consumer actions, cultural meanings, and the marketplace. Instead of looking at a specific attribute of a character, CCT focuses on the beliefs and doings of the consumer. As specified by Arnould and Thompson (2005), there are four dimensions within CCT "... (1) consumer identity projects, (2) marketplace cultures, (3) the sociohistorical patterning of consumption, and (4) mass-mediated marketplace ideologies and consumers' interpretive strategies" (p.871).

Schau (2018) stated that identity is a complicated phenomenon that includes 4 different parts: personality, self-concept, identity project, and self-presentation. Personality is a collection of attributes that creates an individual's character and are believed to be rather consistent and supported by genetically inherited characteristics (Schau, 2018). Furthermore, self-concept is characterized by the beliefs an individual holds about oneself, whereas an identity project is an intentional arrangement of symbols, objects, scripts, and practices to establish a specific identity. Lastly, self-presentation is the performance of one's identity project in a social setting (Schau, 2018).

According to Schau (2018), identity is created through choices, directed by purpose, and is not a rigid phenomenon but rather something fluid that changes across time and space. Schau (2018) contended that a person's identity project is influenced by their social roles, such as being a student or an athlete. To be able to maintain these social roles and build identity projects, one needs support from the marketplace, such as school-material for the student. One can have multiple social roles which concludes that the building of an identity project is a constantly shifting and evolving process (Schau, 2018).

The concept of imagination plays a significant role in understanding the process of identity creation through consumption. While imagination encompasses various themes, a crucial focus of CCT is on how it facilitates the construction and performance of identities. There is a great collection of theories connected to imagination, for instance, Kant (1956, cited in Schau, 2018) differentiated between two forms, reproductive and productive, and believed that imagination is controlled by the individual's cultural and social network. Meanwhile, Anderson (1983 cited

in Schau, 2018) recognized that imagination plays a crucial part in the development of communities, particularly in the case of nations as a social construct. As Schau (2018) mentioned, there is extensive research on imagination and academics do not completely agree on this complex phenomenon. However, the purpose of this thesis is not to investigate imagination but to understand its position in relation to identity, a relationship that most academics can agree exists. Therefore, in short, individuals attempt to transform into their desired selves by consuming goods they imagine will facilitate the development and maintenance of their identity (Bocock, 1993). Moreover, Schau (2000) made the following connection between imagination, consumption, and identity “People consume as a result of imagined relationships between objects, between objects and humans, and between humans individually and collectively.” (p.55). Further, Schau (2018) also highlighted that one’s consumer identity is not only limited to tangible goods such as possessions but also extends to intangible goods such as experiences.

2.2.2 Consumer identity creation

Different scholars frequently discuss the connection between constructing identity and the market’s role as a source of mythical and symbolic resources (Belk, 1988; Bocock, 1993; Hill & Stamey, 1990; Holt, 2002; McCracken, 1986). The process of creating these identities with guidance from the market is referred to by scholars within CCT as consumer identity projects (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Askegaard, 2015; Larsen & Patterson, 2018). According to Arnould and Thompson (2005), consumer identity projects are not simple individual acts of consumption, but rather “social arrangements” that use the market to mediate the relationship between lived culture and social resources, and the essential ways of life and the material and symbolic resources they rely upon. Furthermore, Schau and Gilly (2003) suggested that identity projects are driven by goals, however, Thompson and Tambyah (1999) argued that these objectives are often implicit and not clearly defined.

In their article, Larsen, and Patterson (2018) discussed consumer identity projects and highlighted two different ontological positions called: ascribed and achieved/acquired identity. The ascribed identity position can be categorized as an essentialist position where the individual identity is established at birth and determines their position in society and their approach to social interactions (Larsen & Patterson, 2018). Furthermore, the authors explained that this position demonstrates the use of two criteria, similarity and difference, used to identify

individuals, and this identification remains stable over time. Similarly, Gabriel and Lang (2015) explained that identity is derived from family lineage and that an individual cannot change this, as it is not a matter of choice or preference. On the other hand, achieved identity is discussed in consumer culture and argues that identity is not something fixed, but fluid and subjective (Larsen & Patterson, 2018). The authors explained that achieved identity is shaped within the social context and is bound to a specific time frame, incorporating a sense of past, present, and future. Jenkins (2014, cited in Larsen & Patterson, 2018) argued that identity in this position is a social construct that ascends from the relationship between the individual and the society. Furthermore, within this position, there is an importance of material objects in identity creation (Larsen & Patterson, 2018).

Several scholars have examined the influence of possessions and brands and their symbolic significance on identity (Belk, 1988; Elliot & Wattanasuwan, 1998; Solomon 1983; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988). Solomon (1983) argued that the personal experience gained from using different products is a key aspect in shaping consumers' perception of social reality, behavior, and self-concept. The author explained that the main reason for the purchase and the usage of it is the symbolism that the product obtains. In this spirit, Belk (1988) argued that possessions and their symbolic value are significant in constructing one's identity. He asserted that "the functions that possessions play in the extended self involve the creation, enhancement, and preservation of a sense of identity. Possessions help us at all ages to know who we are" (Belk, 1988, p. 15). Likewise, Wallendorf and Arnould (1988) conducted a study on the personal and symbolic meanings of possessions and concluded that possessions serve as markers of identity and expressions of self.

According to Schau (2018), individuals utilize the marketplace and possessions to express their identity projects, a process known as self-presentation. Self-presentation is discussed by Goffman (1959) and is described as the conscious and visible aspects of one's identity. It influences our efforts to manage and influence the way others perceive us. Furthermore, Goffman (1959) stated that individuals always try to adapt and adjust their behaviors and appearances in order to present themselves in a specific way and guide how others perceive them. Thompson and Hirschman (1995) explained that consumption allows individuals to create a desired self-image by embracing styles communicated through their possessions. Schau and Gilly (2003) conducted research on self-presentation in online environments, exploring how consumers construct their identity using possessions and computer-mediated

platforms. In their article, they distinguish between operating and ideal values in identity creation (Wiley, 1994, cited in Schau & Gilly, 2003). Operating values are actually practiced by a given person on a daily basis, such as wearing a watch. On the other hand, ideal values are those that an individual strives to embody but may not be able to in reality, which they are comparing to the consumer who engages in nostalgia (Davis 1979, cited in Schau & Gilly, 2003).

Various scholars have examined the connection between identity projects and possessions in a range of settings, including homelessness, drug addiction, cosmopolitanism, and migration (Hill, 1991; Hill & Stamey 1990; Thompson & Tambyah, 1999; Üstüner & Holt, 2007). Hill (1991) and Hill and Stamey (1990), investigated the connection between possessions and homelessness. Their findings indicated that, although possessions are few among homelessness, they hold great significance as they represent a better past or opportunities for the future, ultimately contributing to one's sense of self. Furthermore, Hill (1991) explained that homeless individuals draw upon their past experiences to picture a home life. Belk (1990) noted that those with a rich sense of their past use it to define their identity, which can be helpful in creating a sense of self when their current identity is challenged, a common occurrence among the homeless (Hill, 1991). Furthermore, Üstüner and Holt (2007), studied poor migrant women in a Turkish squatter and specified three modes of acculturation: "Migrants reconstitute their village culture in the city, shutting out the dominant ideology; or they collectively pursue the dominant ideology as a myth through ritualized consumption; or they give up on both pursuits resulting in a shattered identity project." (p.41).

2.2.3 Marketplace Myths and identity creation

Marketplace myths, which are created to meet the competitive characteristics and needs of market structures, are another stream within the field of CCT. However, in the context of this thesis marketplace myths are considered as a part of consumer identity, as the primary focus will revolve around exploring identity myths in relation to young consumers. These myths offer interpretations and analogies that fulfill various ideological purposes (Thompson, 2004). Similarly, Holt (2006) explained that myths are narratives and images that purposefully use historical elements as a foundation, continuously reshaping and reviving a nation's ideology. Further, Coskuner-Balli (2013) stated that a myth is an accepted idea that represents the main values and establishments of a society or a part of it. Various scholars have explored the

potential benefits of incorporating myths in branding strategies, including the use of myths in advertising and cultural branding (Cayla & Arnould, 2008; Holt, 2004; Johar, Holbrook, & Stern 2001; Pineda, Sanz-Marcos & Gordillo-Rodríguez, 2020). Holt (2004) discussed the concept of iconic brands and explained that these kinds of brands are performers of identity myths and that the most successful iconic brands are forward-thinking, anticipating, and adjusting to the forefront of cultural developments. Their narratives encourage people to question their assumptions about themselves rather than simply outlining benefits, character traits, or sentiments (Holt, 2004). In addition, according to Pineda, Sanz-Marcos, and Gordillo-Rodríguez (2020), the process by which a brand becomes iconic involves its ability to address and ease societal conflicts effectively. In this spirit, Cayla and Arnould (2008) argued the following “However, the myths iconic brands resolve are existential contradictions people feel between their own lived experience and society’s prevailing ideologies, rather than the binaries of classic mythology.” (p.99-100).

In conjunction with studying cultural branding, scholars have not only examined the connection between the brand and myths but also directed their attention toward consumers and how their identity creation is linked to myths (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Arsel & Thompson, 2011; Holt, 2004; Luedicke, Thompson & Giesler, 2010; Thompson, 2004; Üstüner & Holt, 2007). Arnould and Thomspson (2005) emphasized that consumers are attracted to particular consumer activities or brands as a result of marketplace myths, and then use these commercially mediated meanings to advance their personal and collective identity projects. Arsel and Thompson (2011) argued that this perspective needs to be broadened and investigates a different relationship between consumer identity projects and marketplace myths. The authors argued that “Rather than being an iconic resource for identity construction (Holt 2004), the consumers in our study experienced a marketplace myth as a threat to the value of their identity investments in a field of consumption” (p. 792). However, there are a lot of scholars that have agreed with Holt's (2004) definition of the relationship between identity and marketplace myth, especially the argument that consumers seek out these myths to help solve conflicts or contradictions in their daily lives (Holt, 2002, 2006; Luedicke, Thompson & Giesler, 2010; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995; Thompson, 2004). For example, Luedicke, Thompson, and Giesler (2010) investigated consumer identity work connected to myths and moral beliefs. They highlighted that individuals can use the myth of a moral protagonist as a coping mechanism to handle uncertainties, doubts, and anxieties.

2.3 Identity Creation and Nostalgia

Identity and nostalgia have been discussed in previous literature (Davis, 1979; Belk, 1988, 1990; Stern 1992). Davis (1979) explained that nostalgia works as a tool that individuals use in the ongoing process of forming, maintaining, and reshaping their identities. Furthermore, Davis (1979) clarified that nostalgia can provide protection for one's personal identity in a world characterized by threats and discontinuity. Belk (1990) also addressed identity, but explored the impact of time dimensions (past and future) and the possession of items from the past, and how this defines identity. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the sense of connection to the past seems to be particularly important when an individual's current identity is questioned (Belk, 1990). Stern (1992) discussed briefly that personal and historical nostalgia has a connection to one's sense of self, where she connected personal nostalgia to one's self-concept and historical nostalgia to self-image.

In the field of consumer and marketing research, Sierra and McQuitty (2007), also explored nostalgia from a collective perspective by explaining consumer behavior through Social Identity Theory in a nostalgic context. One's membership in a group from a previous period can impact consumers' attitudes and emotions toward that time period and the individual's tendency to buy nostalgic products (Sierra & McQuitty, 2007). Additionally, within the field of consumer research, Baker and Azzari's (2020) article centered on the connection between identity and nostalgia. The authors discussed consumer identities by examining advertisements and public places, which are frequently associated with the feeling of nostalgia, and exploring the ways in which nostalgia influences consumer identities, behaviors, and choices.

Further, Brown and Humphrey (2002) investigated identity by looking at collective identity and nostalgia in the management field. Their article illustrated that groups create collective identities through shared storylines and that collective nostalgia creates an understanding of current circumstances, self-esteem, and reactions to threats (Brown & Humphrey, 2002). Furthermore, they discussed nostalgia as a way of accessing a shared heritage of values and believed that it is authentic and relevant to one's identity, and acts as support during times of organizational change (Brown & Humphrey, 2002).

Between Holt's (2004) explanation of myths as creating imaginary worlds and Stern's (1995) argument that nostalgia also is a useful tool for that same purpose, there seems to be a

connection. There are multiple scholars who have made that connection between nostalgia, memory, and myths (Armstead & McKinney, 2019; Brunk, Giesler & Hartmann, 2018; Södergren, 2022; Thompson & Tian, 2008). Some of them have studied specific myths (Belk & Costa, 1998; Södergren, 2022). As an example, Södergren (2022) studied the “Viking myth” and argued that consumers utilize these nostalgic myths, or sanitized versions of history, to associate with values they do not feel are present in modern society. However, he further discussed the dilemma which consumers face, namely the possible collective guilt regarding less romanticized parts of history. In light of this, Södergren (2022) stated that the “Viking myth” is misappropriated by white supremacists to vindicate xenophobia, leading to questions regarding such collective guilt. Similarly, Thompson and Tian (2008) studied the relationship between popular memories and mythmaking in the context of the “New South” in the United States. They emphasized the mythmakers’ side, arguing that mythmaking was a way of ideologically recreating the historical legacy of the South from before the civil war.

2.4 Summary of the Literature Review

This chapter has explored the foundational literature that underpins our study, focusing on two main bodies of work: Nostalgia and Consumer Identity. The review discovered that there are multiple studies on both marketing and consumer behavior (Brunk, Visconti & Veresiu, 2013; Cruz & Buchanan-Oliver, 2014; Goulding, 1999; 2001; 2002; Holbrook, 1993; Holbrook & Schindler, 1991; 2003) connected to nostalgia, where things like proneness, brand attitudes, experiences, nostalgic bonding, and objects were highlighted. Furthermore, some researchers have looked more closely into two different forms of nostalgia, namely personal and historical (Batcho, 2021; Holak & Havlena, 1992; Marchegiani & Phau, 2010; Stern, 1992). The authors have focused on different aspects, such as investigating emotions and consumer responses. Furthermore, this chapter showcased that consumer identity is a well-studied phenomenon, which has focused on things like possessions (Belk, 1988; Solomon, 1983), self-presentation (Goffman, 1959; Schau & Gilly, 2003), and ascribed as well as achieved identity (Larsen & Patterson, 2018). Moreover, the research on marketplace myths and their impact on identity creation has also been reviewed in this chapter (e.g. Holt, 2004; Luedicke, Thompson & Giesler, 2010). The review of these bodies of literature has provided a familiarity with the existing knowledge in the fields of choice for this study, allowing us to find our distinct approach to contribute to the field.

3 Theoretical Framework

This section will explain the theoretical lenses that will be utilized when analyzing the empirical material. It delves deeper into Belk's (1988) theoretical perspective on possessions and the extended self, providing a more comprehensive understanding. Furthermore, this section highlights the important features of Goffman's (1959) understanding of self-presentation. Lastly, it discusses Holt's (2004) discourse on marketplace myths, particularly focusing on identity myths, as this contributes to the understanding and purpose of this study.

3.1 Belk - Possessions and the Extended Self

In his theory on possessions and the extended self, Belk (1988) suggests that individuals incorporate possessions into their self-identity, thus extending the limits of their sense of self. He explains that the things individuals own or surround themselves with become a part of who they are. In his article, there are multiple aspects that can be considered as a part of the extended self in different ways, such as clothing, abstract ideas, experiences and places, and other people. Belk (1988) also highlights that the home, and the possessions within one's home, can be seen as a part of the extended self. In addition, Belk (1988) goes on to discuss how even other people can be incorporated into the extended self, such as family members, friends, or ancestors. He further argues that this means that a spouse's achievements could create a sense of personal success for a person, as the spouse is seen as a part of one's own identity. Belk (1988) suggests that viewing other people as a part of the extended self forms a foundation for self-understanding and provides personal development.

Furthermore, Belk (1988) highlighted that our sense of self is closely tied to our personal history and that possessions can be a practical tool in preserving the memories and emotions associated with one's past. For instance, he mentions that souvenirs can remind individuals of a travel experience, or heirlooms that symbolize the family heritage. Furthermore, Belk (1988) explains that individuals tend to exclude possessions that remind them of unpleasant times, and instead they value possessions associated with positive memories and feelings, which can be achievements, romances, or enjoyable experiences. McCracken (1986, cited in Belk, 1988),

explains that individuals and cultures create romanticized and nostalgic views of a distant “golden age” to uphold values that never truly existed. Belk (1988) built upon this argument, stating that this impossibility of knowing the past transforms antiques from that era into potent symbols that enable individuals to connect with the past and imagine its characteristics being bestowed upon them. Furthermore, he establishes a connection between possessions and Davis' (1979) explanation of nostalgia, where he highlights that nostalgia is a perpetual work of building, maintaining, and reshaping one's identity.

Belk (1988) also discusses how possessions can be used to communicate information about oneself to other individuals. He states that the way one communicates can be through usage, style, brand, and also in the way that the possessions are displayed. Hence, people can make perceptions about other people based on the possessions they own. For example, as the possession of money is often perceived as a symbol of power or success, luxurious or expensive material objects can be used in order to signal such attributes. Furthermore, housing, clothing, and automobiles are often regarded as a “second skin”, influencing how others perceive us (Belk, 1988). Belk's (1988) theory on possessions and the extended self contributes to both the understanding of young consumers' identity creation and their use of nostalgic possessions. His theory is used to gain a more comprehensible overview of how consumers integrate different consumption aspects of historical and personal nostalgia into their identities.

3.2 Goffman - Self-presentation

The second theoretical perspective utilized revolves around Erving Goffman's (1959) concept of self-presentation. According to Goffman (1959), self-presentation is closely connected to our sense of identity and is the more concrete and intentional aspect. He argues that individuals strive to shape others' perceptions of themselves through intentional performance. Connected to this, he introduces the concept of impression management, which can be seen as the different techniques the individual uses to perform a distinctive appearance and to please the target audience. In order to illustrate this, he established a connection between theatrical performances and the interactions that individuals engage in during their everyday life, this is called the “dramaturgy” metaphor (Goffman, 1959).

In relation to this metaphor, he introduces the distinction between the front stage and the backstage. The front stage represents the public realm, where individuals strategically project

positive and desired characteristics, aiming to shape how others perceive them. This performance involves using possessions and objects to present oneself in the most favorable light to others. Furthermore, the management of the performance includes expressions that can be seen as both verbal and non-verbal cues. Verbal cues are easier to control, however, non-verbal cues can be spontaneous and unconscious which makes them harder to control (Goffman, 1959). In contrast to the front stage, the backstage symbolizes the private sphere, where individuals can set aside their roles or prepare for the performance.

In the context of everyday life, the role an individual undertakes can be an attempt to receive a specific response from their surrounding people, ultimately seeking to gain higher social status (Goffman, 1959). This can be related to another interesting concept explored by Goffman (1959), namely idealization, wherein individuals have the ability to present an idealized self. This idealized self often encompasses qualities such as elevated socio-economic status, professional success, sophistication, and other desirable qualities that align with societal norms and values.

Overall, Goffman's (1959) framework provides valuable insights into the complex phenomenon of self-presentation by emphasizing the more intentional construction of identity, impression management, and the performance dynamics that shape our interactions in daily life. By applying Goffman's framework to this study, it can illustrate how individuals perform and present their identities through nostalgia by highlighting the interaction between social context, personal experience, and the desire to create and maintain a nostalgic self-presentation and identity.

3.3 Holt - Identity Myths

This study will also explore the empirical findings through the lenses of cultural branding and iconic brands, as explored by Douglas Holt (2004). However, the main emphasis of this paper lies not in the process of brands becoming iconic, but rather on how consumers utilize these brands, their products, and the identity myths generated by the brands to shape their own consumer identities. The analysis of how consumers utilize identity myths will serve as a primary framework when examining the empirical findings.

Holt (2004) argues in his theory of “cultural branding” that consumers are experiencing anxieties and desires, and addresses this through the identity myths created by brands to solve

these contradictions. These myths vary depending on what society needs at a given historical moment (Holt, 2004). Many brands construct identity myths by using imaginary worlds rather than the real world that people encounter in their daily lives. These myths reflect the aspired identities of the audience through imaginative expressions (Holt, 2004). Furthermore, the author explains that there are existing culturally damaged divides in society, resulting in what individuals are experiencing as personal anxieties. The myths help ease these personal anxieties by assisting individuals in creating a sense of purpose in their lives and realizing their aspired identities during times of stress (Holt, 2004). The myth becomes embodied in the brand which develops the brand into a symbol. Consequently, when individuals are consuming the brand's products, they are experiencing the myth. According to Holt (2004), customers utilize iconic brands as a representation of their identity, creating an emotional connection to the brand, and carrying the weight of their identity problems. He states the following "They grab hold of the myth as they use the product as a means to their identity burdens" (p. 8). He goes into detail about how the anxieties and desires that shape consumers' identities are often shared among individuals within a country. The identity construction is dependent on the nation's historical changes, which have an impact on the whole nation (Holt, 2004).

In summary, Holt (2004) provides an interesting perspective to this study by highlighting how consumers rely on identity myths in times of uncertainty and anxiety. This can be connected to the works of Holbrook and Schindler (2003), as well as Batcho (2021), who highlight that people turn to nostalgia in situations such as challenging times or when they are dissatisfied with the past. Hence, the theory of identity myths can aid the understanding of how young consumers use personal and historical nostalgia in relation to identity formation, particularly when they experience anxieties and identity burdens.

3.4 Summary of the Theoretical Framework

This chapter summarizes three relevant theories and highlights their key aspects in relation to this study. The theories proposed by Belk (1988), Goffman (1959), and Holt (2004) will contribute to achieving the study's objectives by offering different angles on identity creation. The diverse viewpoints presented by these authors will enable us to gain an overall picture of the influence of personal and historical nostalgia on consumer identity creation.

4 Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodological approach used in this thesis to achieve its purpose and to address the research question. It begins with an overview of the research philosophy and then proceeds to explain the research approach, data collection method, and sampling method. Further, this chapter presents an explanation of the data analysis undertaken, including a coding table to provide a deeper understanding of the coding procedure. Lastly, there is a presentation of the quality of the study and ethical considerations.

4.1 Research Philosophy

Ontology refers to the researcher's underlying assumptions regarding the nature of reality and how it can be studied (Easterby-Smith, Jaspersen, Thorpe & Valizade, 2021). To effectively address our research question, we aimed to gain an understanding of the respondents' viewpoints on how different forms of nostalgia influence their construction of consumer identity. Hence, we adopted a relativist ontology position as it recognizes that a phenomenon can be perceived and defined in multiple ways depending on cultural-historical contexts such as age, background, and interests (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). The cultural-historical context in which individuals are raised can significantly influence the respondent's perspective on, specifically, personal nostalgia. Due to unique upbringings and personal experiences, individuals may have different emotional connections to nostalgia. As a result, there is no single truth that can fully answer our research question. Rather multiple truths exist depending on the respondents, aligning with the characteristics of the relativist position (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). Thus, we considered this position to be the most suitable for our study.

This assumption of our ontological position is linked to our epistemology position since it is providing the foundation for what can be known and how it can be known (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). In this thesis, the social constructionism perspective provided guidance rather than being a solid frame. This position acknowledges that reality is a complex phenomenon that is socially constructed and gets its significance through the interactions of individuals in their daily life (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). Moreover, we intended to enhance the overall comprehension of how nostalgia influences the formation of consumer identity. To achieve this, we prioritized human interests and utilized a small sample size, which aligns with the principles of social constructionism (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021).

4.2 Research Approach

In this thesis, we utilized an abductive approach to guide this research. This study focused on consumer identity creation and its connection with personal and historical nostalgia, a subjective feeling that can vary among individuals. In order to analyze and understand the empirical findings, we used the theoretical frameworks presented in the third chapter. An abductive approach is characterized by connecting the available data to theory. Since we used theoretical frameworks to analyze the data, but still wanted new insights to be able to arise from the data, an abductive approach seemed to be the most appropriate in this thesis. Furthermore, we chose this approach as it acknowledges the dynamic nature of research and the need for ongoing refinement and adjustment of theories and concepts (Alvesson & Sköldbberg, 2009). As we are investigating nostalgia, which may be influenced by different contextual factors and is subject to individual interpretations, the abductive approach enabled us to connect our insights to theory by allowing for plausible interpretation (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021).

Based on the choice of an abductive approach, as well as the need to gain in-depth insights, qualitative methods were the most suitable. By adopting a qualitative approach, we can explore how young consumers construct their identities based on personal and historical nostalgia. Flick (2023) explains that qualitative research is known to enable comprehension of respondents' experiences, the underlying meanings, as well as the corresponding practices and discourses. Similarly, Creswell (2009) argues that the qualitative method enables the exploration and interpretation of the viewpoints held by individuals or groups on human or social dilemmas. Furthermore, our research question and our epistemological position required us to collect qualitative data consisting of words from the participants, rather than collecting numerical data and formulating hypotheses (Creswell, 2009; Rennstam & Wästerfors, 2018). Our attention has been centered on comprehending the meanings, processes, and qualities of our respondents, which are best captured through a qualitative approach (Rennstam & Wästerfors, 2018). The arguments above justify the use of the qualitative approach in this thesis. This approach enabled us to obtain detailed answers and thorough knowledge of the phenomenon of nostalgia in consumer identity construction. Additionally, to effectively address our research question, it was critical that we gained an understanding of the young

consumers' experiences and the significance they attach to both personal and historical nostalgia. Moreover, we have adopted a qualitative approach as it aligns with our relativist and social constructionist position, which is a commonly used combination (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021).

4.3 Data Collection Method¹

In this study, we used qualitative interviews as our data collection method. We chose to utilize qualitative interviews in order to gain valuable insight into the beliefs and opinions of the respondents (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). The choice of qualitative interviews helped us to gain an understanding of the respondents' experiences in relation to nostalgic consumption and their understanding of this. Qualitative interviews are also known for their adaptability (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021), which was important in our study as nostalgia is a personal and individual feeling. The choice of interviews allowed us to obtain information that would be difficult to access through other data collection methods, such as ethnography, since in-depth verbal cues were important for our interpretation of the respondents' thoughts. In order for us to gain in-depth insight from the respondents, we needed to approach their perspectives with sensitivity and understanding, while also guiding them to explore their viewpoints (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). This was achieved with the assistance of a semi-structured approach.

4.3.1 Semi-structured interviews

The purpose of this thesis is to uncover the individual consumers' perceived thoughts regarding how they construct their identities based on personal and historical nostalgia. As mentioned above, the data was retrieved from qualitative interviews, which can provide detailed and rich information collected from the respondents' own experiences and understandings (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). According to the authors, there are three different ways of conducting qualitative interviews: unstructured, structured, and semi-structured. In this thesis, we used semi-structured interviews, as they provide flexibility in terms of allowing for different orders and methods of discussion, while still enabling a somewhat structured approach to cover specific topics (Bryman & Bell, 2017; Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). Furthermore, Smith and Pietkiewicz (2014) suggest conducting one-on-one interviews, to make the respondents feel comfortable and to obtain detailed answers. Similarly, Bryman and Bell (2017) argue that the

¹ Parts of 4.3 were also used in BUSR31, 2023.

presence of multiple interviewers during the interview can make the environment feel threatening to the respondent. This also motivated us to conduct semi-structured interviews, as we aimed to cover similar topics in each individual interview, while still permitting personalized adaptations such as different follow-up questions. This approach enabled us to gain a comprehensive understanding of the respondents' perspectives, while also maintaining a consistent flow throughout the interviews.

4.3.2 Interview Guide

In relation to conducting semi-structured interviews, we established an interview guide (see **Appendix A**). An interview guide is characterized by an informal approach, with questions or topics that can be covered in different orders (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). Following the suggestions of Easterby-smith et al. (2021), we began by revisiting our research question and design to gain an understanding of the purpose behind conducting our interviews. Additionally, to get a successful outcome of the interviews, we formulated the questions in our interview guide in a way that would give a sense of meaningful conversation, thereby enhancing the respondents' engagement in the process (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). Furthermore, the authors emphasize the significance of questions that are straightforward and easily understandable for the respondents, while avoiding using academic terminology or delving into theoretical concepts. They also underscore the importance of questions that encourage reflection and open-ended responses, while also allowing for non-leading follow-up questions. By developing and implementing the interview guide based on these recommendations, we were able to obtain in-depth answers from the respondents. We put a lot of focus into the process of constructing the interview guide, and prior to starting the interviews for our thesis we did a pilot interview. As Bryman and Bell (2017) clarify, this enabled us to identify questions that were perceived as repetitive or uncomfortable by the respondents, which helped us modify some of them and their structure. For instance, there were some questions that they could not answer spontaneously, which indicates that the questions were too difficult (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). During the pilot interview, we came to the realization that there was no need to clearly define historical or personal nostalgia. Our questions naturally led to a discussion of these two distinct concepts.

Our interviews began with introductory questions and icebreakers, followed by questions regarding our main topic, and concluded with closing questions designed to show our appreciation for the respondent's participation (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). Our icebreaking

elements were not questions, but advertisements with entertaining characteristics that made the respondent feel comfortable early in the interview process. According to Smith and Pietkiewicz (2014), reducing tension during interviews is crucial for retrieving personal and complex discussions. We began to show a commercial from Walmart, which is provided in the appendix, that showcases various characteristics from different time periods, all while promoting Walmart's pick-up service. This advertisement is inclusive as it employs many different nostalgic elements, which is one of the main arguments for using it in this thesis. In addition, we presented a commercial featuring *Stranger Things* that align with the historical nostalgia aspect of our research purpose. Since the series is set in a different time era, it helped us in understanding the influence of historical nostalgia on consumer identity creation. Lastly, we incorporated TikTok videos that highlighted lots of elements that resonate with the memories and experiences of the Swedish respondents, thereby making it more relevant to personal nostalgia. Following the discussion of these advertisements, the respondents engaged in a broader conversation regarding consumer identity creation in relation to nostalgia. The interviews lasted between 40-60 minutes.

To retrieve high-quality data from the respondents, we used a technique called laddering (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). In the initial step, we used the laddering-up technique to uncover values that are connected to the respondents' answers. This involved asking "why" questions, as exemplified in our interview guide by questions like "Why do you think you felt that way?". Further, we continued by applying the laddering-down technique, which enabled us to obtain more detailed answers. This involved asking questions like "Can you describe this experience?" to gather specific examples and illustrations of the respondents' experiences (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021).

4.4 Sampling Technique

The sampling technique used for the data collection in this thesis has been based on a combination of convenience and purposive sampling designs. These were deemed most suitable in the context of this study, in consideration of the empirical data needed, as well as the study's aim. The purposive aspect of the sampling technique is mainly a method for ensuring that the chosen respondents are suitable for the study and its purpose. This was deemed a suitable approach as clear criteria regarding the respondents had been established, thereby establishing what sample units we needed (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). Our primary

criterion was that the respondents had to fit into a specific age demographic, which was young adults, in order to be eligible for participation. As this is one of the major delimitations of this study and its research question, it was fundamental to find individuals of that exact group. We determined the age span according to Arnett, Žukauskienė, and Sugimura's (2014) definition of young adults, namely persons between the ages of 18 to 29.

The second criterion used for identifying respondents was that they had to be familiar with the companies whose commercials were shown during the interviews. The aim of this criterion was to ensure that the primary focus was on the nostalgic content of the commercial, and not the actual company behind it. Hence, if the respondents were aware of the company behind the commercial, they would not have to focus on understanding what was advertised, but rather the content. Furthermore, another aspect of this criterion is that we wanted the respondents to be familiar with the companies in order to ensure some degree of recognition or personal connection. This was deemed suitable as we wanted to evoke a reaction as well as provide an icebreaking element. In **Table 1**, we showcase our respondents. For the purpose of maintaining their anonymity, while still ensuring a human touch in the analysis, we have assigned them pseudonyms. This not only respects their privacy, but also aids the understanding of the analysis chapter, as it allows for an easy recollection of who made specific statements. Furthermore, our initial goal was to conduct 15 interviews, but we realized that after interviewing 14 respondents, the information gained was becoming repetitive and we felt that the obtained empirical material was sufficient.

Pseudonyms	Age	Gender	Occupation
Adam	26	Male	ERP-Consultant
Bella	21	Female	Media & communications student
Charlie	19	Male	Jobseeker
Daniella	24	Female	Marketing student
Ebba	29	Female	Financial consultant
Filip	24	Male	Small business owner
George	28	Male	Industry
Hannah	23	Female	HR-student
Iris	25	Female	Informatics student
Johanna	24	Female	Marketing assistant
Klara	24	Female	Private banker
Lisa	25	Female	Management student
Marcus	26	Male	Service Management student
Nina	22	Female	Informatics student

Table 1: Compilation of the respondents

4.5 Data analysis

During the interviews, in addition to recording them, we continuously took notes regarding findings that were deemed interesting or noticeable. In this thesis, we followed Rennstam and Wästerfors' (2018) three steps of data analysis: sorting, reducing, and arguing. Further, we also employed the framework Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as a guide. IPA's goal is to assist researchers to comprehend individuals' experiences and how they develop meaning from them (Smith & Pietkiewicz, 2014). IPA assisted us in identifying important themes, analyzing them appropriately, and recognizing their interconnections.

When sorting the collected data and material, it is of utmost importance to devote sufficient time for careful analysis (Rennstam & Wästerfors, 2018). In accordance with these directives, we started by sorting the material and reading it at a slow and thorough pace in order to identify topics and themes which were relevant to the study's purpose. As a measure to prevent important insights to be missed, we processed the interview transcriptions multiple times, as well as compared them to our notes taken during the interviews (Smith & Pietkiewicz, 2014). When sorting the material, we followed Rennstam and Wästerfors' (2018) advice on how to group it, by using initial and focused coding that ultimately turned into themes. The initial coding consisted of labels that were closely aligned with the data, the initial codes that showed similarities were transformed into more broader and descriptive labels in the focused coding phase. The focused coding was reinvented into subthemes that seemed suitable for explaining and grouping the empirical material. Ultimately, this resulted in the identification of the themes: *Tangible Nostalgic consumption* and *Intangible Nostalgic consumption*. The different stages of coding are shown in **Table 2**. Both the subthemes and themes were suitable for the purpose of this study and allowed us to provide answers to our research question.

However, worth mentioning, during the coding phase we also reduced data that would not contribute to any new or interesting perspectives, as recommended by Rennstam and Wästerfors (2018). The last step, arguing, includes the process of arguing for the findings in relation to previous literature. By connecting the empirical evidence with analytical perspectives within the literature, we could argue for the importance of our findings and contribute with valuable insights and concepts.

Initial	Focused/Subthemes	Themes
Parents' old style	Appearance/ Fashion Flashback	Tangible Nostalgic Consumption
Childhood trends		
Retro fashion		
Childhood books	Ownership/ Relics of the past	
Old style photographs		
Technology from the past		
Movie	Mental participation/ Pop Nostalgia	Intangible Nostalgic Consumption
Music		
Videos games		
Comic books		
Restaurant	Active participation/ Time-Traveling Experiences	
Museum		
Party		
Theatre		

Table 2: Coding frame

4.6 Quality of the Study

When conducting research, one substantial aspect of ensuring its usefulness and legitimacy is to establish the quality of the study. Nevertheless, there are no universal prerequisites for

determining the quality of a study, thus sometimes making it challenging to establish (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). Furthermore, according to Creswell (2009), there is a difference between qualitative and quantitative research in regard to quality, as connotations for reliability, validity, and generalizability are different. This study will primarily evaluate its academic quality through validity, reliability, and generalizability in accordance with Easterby-Smith et al. (2021).

To foster validity in a constructionist research design, Easterby-Smith et al. (2021) state that a sufficient amount of diverse perspectives has to be included in the research. In order to achieve this, we aimed at having a sample of respondents that were as diverse as possible. Since the diversification was limited regarding nationality and age due to our delimitations and sample criteria, we emphasized variety within gender, occupation, and within the chosen age span.

The second principle stated by Easterby-Smith et al. (2021) is reliability, which is characterized by the possibility for other observers to reach the same observations. However, this can be difficult to establish within interpretative research, as it is dependent upon personal interpretations. Nevertheless, Easterby-Smith et al. (2021) also state that in order to retain validity, a study's methodology must be transparent. Hence, we have placed great emphasis on transparency throughout our method regarding aspects such as our selected data collection and analysis methods, as well as the selection of respondents. In addition to this, we have also focused on clarity and transparency by explaining and arguing for our method choices. Creswell (2009) further argues that the research approach in qualitative studies should be perceived to be consistent, and thereby reliable. As a measure to foster consistency, the data collected for this study was continuously compared during the collection process. This approach was deemed suitable as a way of avoiding possible differences in defining themes among us authors, thereby making them consistent and coherent (Creswell, 2009). The IPA framework, which has provided direction for our analysis, has also aided consistency in this study and its analytical approach.

Lastly, Easterby-Smith et al., 2021 state that generalizability measures how possible it is for the research's findings to be applicable within other contexts. One common critique of non-probability sampling, which is used in this study, is that it could be problematic to make it applicable to a larger group within the population, in relation to the sample group (Easterby-

Smith et al., 2021). However, we do not aim to outline the population as a whole concerning identity construction and nostalgia, but rather to examine some of the underlying aspects in-depth. Furthermore, it may be possible to apply our theoretical understanding to consumer groups in other contexts, such as other age groups. There are other essential factors to take into consideration regarding the quality of a study, for example, it is important to avoid bias and “cherry-picking” when collecting and analyzing the empirical data and material (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). As a measure to avoid these risks, the data has been handled and processed in its entirety. Hence, in order to accurately depict the empirics, the themes in the analysis have been chosen in context to all of the collected material as a whole.

4.7 Limitations

It is essential to acknowledge that all research methods have limitations, hence our chosen method as well. As stated in the section above, results stemming from a non-probability sampling design are difficult to apply to a larger population as it is not possible to determine the probability of a specific member of the population being chosen (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). While the choice of convenience and purposive sampling method was largely based on the need for a sufficient amount of data within a limited time frame, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. Convenience sampling raises the issue of representation, as it is not possible to draw conclusions regarding a bigger population as the sample is collected in proximity to the researcher. As this study puts emphasis on gaining in-depth insights, rather than broad and large-scale ones, our aim has not been to provide results that can be applied to other groups or populations. Both convenience and purposive sampling can also raise the risk of potential bias, as the sample is chosen either by proximity or how well they fulfill certain criteria (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). In order to lessen the risk for bias, we prioritized being as transparent as possible regarding our sampling methods, as well as focused on acquiring a sample that was as diverse as possible within our delimitations.

Easterby-Smith et al. (2021) further discuss additional risks of conducting qualitative research through interviews, namely the possibility of the researcher influencing the empirics. Therefore, the interview guide’s questions have been constructed to be as non-leading and open-ended as possible, using laddering techniques in the follow-up questions to encourage interviewees to elaborate, but without leading.

4.8 Ethical considerations

There have been numerous ethical aspects to take into consideration during this study, both for the sake of the interview participants as well as the general integrity of the research itself (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021). To ensure the anonymity and privacy of the participants, pseudonyms were used when presenting their answers and quotes. In order to foster trust and security, we were adamant that the participants obtained adequate information about the study and what kind of interviews we were conducting. Emphasis was also put on transparency and the voluntary consent of the participants, as they were thoroughly informed about how their answers would be managed, as well as the fact that they could withdraw their participation at any time during the process. This was a measure to manage the ethical issue of the control and usage of data, which makes the researcher responsible for its correct and proper use (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021).

5 Empirical Findings

In this chapter, the collected empirical data will be presented and analyzed in order to outline the empirical findings of this study. The analysis will be conducted with the help of the theoretical framework to deepen the understanding of the findings in the context of existing research. This chapter will present the empirical findings through the two identified themes in the collected data. These themes are labeled Tangible Nostalgic Consumption and Intangible Nostalgic Consumption and consist of two subthemes each. Further, excerpts from the interviews will be used as support to illustrate and argue for this study's findings.

5.1 Tangible Nostalgic Consumption: Touching the Past

The first of the themes discovered within the collected data illustrates how individuals utilize material objects to incorporate nostalgic aspects into their present lives and identities.

Nostalgia must probably be connected to a physical thing, I think. That thing then creates a memory ... The Tamagotchi, for example, it was with me for a long time. Something that only happens once doesn't really have the same... Then it's more of a memory, right?

-Nina, Female, 22 years old

This quote illustrates how important physical objects can be in regard to nostalgia, as memories can be easily connected to them. In this study, we label this as tangible nostalgic consumption, as the nostalgic aspect is manifested through the usage or display of concrete objects. The theme is further divided into two subthemes, namely nostalgia in *Fashion and Trends* and *Nostalgic Significance of Items*, which have been discussed by numerous respondents. These are differentiated, as Fashion and Trends primarily focus on nostalgia within the physical presentation, and Items concern nostalgic belongings and ownership.

5.1.1 Fashion Flashback: Nostalgia in Fashion and Trends

One aspect of consumers' usage of nostalgia in regard to their identities, which numerous respondents mentioned, was the recurring cycles of fashion and trends. When asked about their own experiences with nostalgia, one respondent said:

For me, it's mostly fashion trends. Like, when I've looked through my dad's clothes and found clothes that I think are cool and that I am able to use, that's nice.

-Adam, Male, 26 years old

The respondent's answer indicates that his parents have had an impact on his sense of nostalgia and clothes, making it somewhat difficult to determine whether his nostalgic consumption of clothes could be stemming from personal or historical nostalgia. Belk (1988) argues that one's family can be incorporated into the extended self, meaning that the respondent might see his family as a part of himself and his identity. This could, in turn, have created an incentive for him to use his father's old clothes to further strengthen this connection. Moreover, this might be facilitated by the fact that the father's old clothes might not feel foreign, even though they might have been used before the respondent was born, since the respondent somewhat feels that his father already is a part of his extended self. In that sense, the father's clothes feel more personal than they might actually be. Furthermore, Belk (1988) highlights that clothing can be seen as a second skin, influencing how others perceive oneself. This can be connected to Adam's quote as he highlights that he thinks his dad's clothes are cool, indicating that he sees them as a means for others to perceive him as cool or trendy.

Numerous of the other respondents also referred to their parents when speaking about the nostalgic consumption of clothes, meaning that the parents' old styles were nostalgic for them. However, as some of the clothing trends appropriated from the respondents' parents are from decades before the respondents were born, such as the 70s or 80s, it could be argued that it is primarily historical nostalgia that has had an impact in those cases, and not personal. One instance where the historical aspect of nostalgia was more prominent was when a respondent stated that she consumed 70s-style clothes because she thought they looked good:

I don't know if there are any other reasons. I just think it fits me, how I look. Like the vibe.

-Ebba, Female, 29 years old

Despite not explicitly stating that historical nostalgia plays a part in her interest in 70s fashion, her reasoning behind the appeal of the *Coca-Cola x Stranger things*-commercial implies that it might indeed be an underlying factor:

I think the 80s feel fun because of, like, the Yuppie era. Everything was glossy and sparkly and luxurious, everyone bought jacuzzis and TVs in the bathroom and stuff like that. That was like the happy days somehow. And it's probably kind of the same as with the 70s and 60s, or like that's why we romanticize and like it ... Like, in those decades the colors were brighter, there was fun music, and when you look back at that it feels like people were more happy and carefree, even though I did not live then.

-Ebba, Female, 29 years old

The respondent's answer indicates that there is some form of historical nostalgia affecting her perception of that time era, especially as she herself acknowledges that it might be a romanticized image. This can also be connected to Goffman's (1959) notion of self-presentation, as she says that 70s fashion suits her "vibe" and thereby consume clothes from that decade, as her desired self-presentation is associated with her positive perception of the 70s. It is further an illustration of what McCracken (1986, cited in Belk, 1988) describes as consumers idealizing a "golden age", and visualizing it in a way that was never true. The underlying reasons for nostalgic clothing consumption are further elaborated by another respondent, who also discussed nostalgic fashion trends and why she thought it was popular:

For example, vintage is now in, perhaps reminding us of a time when the vintage trend was at its peak and it's giving us a sense of what it was like to live during that time. Maybe we think it looks good, but I don't think that's the basis for it. We want the lifestyle they had. We want to bring it back. We want to look like them, we want to do what they do. It's considered popular today to be like they were back then. It creates a feeling that we can experience a different period even though we haven't really lived through it.

-Bella, Female, 21 years old

In the quote above, the respondent gives another reason why recurring nostalgic fashion is popular. She argues that trends could be a way for younger people to participate in a time they have not experienced. As she says it is partially because individuals want to manifest the kind of lifestyle that they associate with the clothes, it can be connected to both Goffman's (1959) idea of self-presentation and Belk (1988). The artifacts which Belk (1988) discusses are in this instance nostalgic clothes and fashion, and these are transformed into symbols that create a connection between individuals and these past times, thereby enabling them to imagine that they possess characteristics typical for that time era. For example, the respondent Ebba said she liked 70s fashion because it fit her vibe and that decades such as the 70s were "happy days". In accordance with Belk (1988), that could mean that buying 70s clothes enables her to incorporate those happy days in her life today. This can also be seen as an example of Goffman's (1959) front stage, where the respondents use possessions to present themselves in a favorable light toward others. In this instance, that would mean that the respondents try to control their outward image by embodying the past through clothes.

A finding of interest regarding nostalgic consumption of fashion is that it can be seen as personal nostalgia in the sense that parents provide a personal connection, however, many of these trends were not experienced by the respondents themselves. None of the respondents experienced decades past the 80s, and most did not experience a large part of the 90s either. In light of this, one can argue that this kind of consumption is mainly influenced by historical nostalgia and not personal. However, one should not disregard the connection to the past through the respondents' parents, a somewhat secondary personal nostalgia. This form is conceptualized in this study as relational nostalgia, as it is primarily created through an individual's relationship with another. Relational nostalgia blurs the line between historical and personal nostalgia, constituting a blended form, stemming from the parents' narration of the past that they have experienced. This is illustrated in the quote below:

Then I know that many people also like 70s clothes and so on, and I think it's also a way to relate to that time and maybe look back at what your parents wore and in some way want to experience it again. Or relive what they have experienced. In some way, the things you consume can contribute to who you see yourself as and who others see you as.

-Daniella, Female, 24 years old

The respondent uses the phrases “experience it again” and “relive” when talking about her parents’ previous clothing styles. This implies that she might indeed see her parents’ past as somewhat incorporated into her own past and thereby emulate their past clothing styles as a way to truly experience it. The quote also indicates that nostalgic consumption of clothes seems to be a way of entirely transforming, or at least a part of, ourselves. As clothes are worn on the body, it might provide consumers the possibility to envelop themselves completely in the associated context of the clothes, much like an actor transforming into a role with the help of a costume. This can be connected to Goffman's (1959) notion of the front stage, as consumers can use clothes to perform a role and influence how others perceive them. One example of this is another respondent’s answer when she was asked if wearing nostalgic clothes made her feel a certain way:

Yes, I often feel like my mom when she was young. I have a lot of pictures of her from when she was my age, and I thought she had a really good style, you know ... She's one of my role models, I look up to her. So maybe it's not strange that I somehow want to emulate a younger version of her.

-Lisa, Female, 25 years old

The respondent’s answer illustrates how her respect toward her mother and the will to emulate her encourage her feeling of nostalgia. In order to connect to her mother whom she admires and looks up to, Lisa therefore uses clothes that she associates with her mother's past. This indicates that consuming certain clothes can make someone feel like a completely different person, in this case her mother. Hence, by mimicking her mother from when she was young, Lisa tries to incorporate attributes of her mother into her own identity. This indicates that nostalgic fashion could aid the consumer with one of the tools to create or imitate a whole persona, much like Belk’s (1988) idea of incorporating other persons into the extended self. Hence, Lisa may use clothes as a means to incorporate her mother into her identity, aiding her in her self-understanding and personal development (Belk, 1988).

5.1.2 Relics of the Past: The Nostalgic Significance of Items

The second category of tangible nostalgic consumption refers to physical items. It differentiates from the former category as clothes are worn and displayed on the body, while this category emphasizes the value of obtaining objects. Personal nostalgia has been a prominent factor among the respondents' answers regarding items. This is illustrated in the quote below, where a respondent was asked why she chose to buy disposable cameras.

My mom always made photo books when we were younger, where she printed photos and then wrote under them what year it was and what happened. I always look through those photos when I am at home, it feels like those moments are more... It feels like it tells more of a story than if I were to take a photo with my phone or something like that. It's also the feeling of having something physical to remember ... it feels more real and easier to reach that moment.

-Iris, Female, 25 years old

The respondent's answer indicates that personal nostalgia has played a big part in her decision to purchase a disposable camera, as physical photos are a distinct memory from her past. Even though her mother is a prominent reason why it feels nostalgic, this shows a more straightforward form of personal nostalgia rather than the relational form, as she is nostalgic regarding something that she experienced herself. The respondent also states that physical photographs provide a sense of realness and make it easier to relive the moment in which it was taken. Hence, the item in itself might not induce a feeling of nostalgia, however, the usage of it and its results do. This is related to Belk's (1988) statement that the sense of self is intertwined with one's personal history and that possessions play a role in preserving memories and emotions associated with the past. The ownership and utilization of the camera does in turn provide her with the possibility of going back to her past and her past feelings and selves.

Another way of using nostalgic items is as a means of distancing oneself from the status quo. One respondent, for example, spoke about how some nostalgic items remind her of her view of society as somewhat homogenous:

Dad has saved one of those old flip phones. It's so fun, because every time I see it, I just think, "damn, how uncomplicated it was back in the day." But now it's much more important

to have the latest phone or, I don't know... There's a bigger requirement for that kind of stuff in society, I think. You're supposed to be a certain way, look a certain way. I mean, if you look back at class photos from that time, everyone looked totally crazy, and everyone was different. Now, I feel like you see a more homogeneous group.

-Klara, Female, 24 years old

Klara states that she associates nostalgic items with a time when life was easier and there was room for individual uniqueness, something she does not associate with today's consumption society. Her feeling of nostalgia stems from a sense of simplicity and individuality, which the old phone symbolizes. She speaks about her old school photos, which indicates that she feels personal nostalgia toward this time when the societal pressures felt less burdensome and there was room for individuality. In the context of Goffman's (1959) front and backstage, this could be an indication that Klara wants to get off the front stage and have a break from the role she might feel that she has to play. This is, according to Goffman (1959) achieved by entering the backstage, which Klara might associate with past times as she felt that there were fewer roles to play then. In light of this, the use of nostalgic items could be a way for consumers to incorporate a sense of uniqueness into their identity. Another respondent also spoke about consumption, and what she thought was a turning point in society:

You just think of consumerism, you know? Our parents may be a bit more like; "let's move forward, development", and we are a bit more backward-looking. And that's because they grew up in the consumerism of the eighties. They've just been riding a damn wave, you know? They had a bit of a recession when they entered the workforce, but they've just made housing careers and had a good job market, they've had salary increases that we won't experience.

Food prices were falling, everything just rolled on for them. It won't be the same for us.

-Johanna, Female, 24 years old

These two quotes both indicate that there may be a changing opinion on consumption among young adults. Johanna argues that their generation is more backward-looking, which may indicate that young adults today strive for nostalgic consumption as a way of resistance to the constant strive for new things. An interesting aspect is, however, that nostalgic products in many cases are part of the consumption society as they are not always second-hand or such. For example, polaroid cameras or LP record players can still be newly produced and modernized even though it gives the feeling of nostalgia, as it is a kind of product that might

be associated with the past. In that sense, it might be the image of the products that are appealing, as that image, in turn, can influence one's self-perception or self-presentation by purchasing or using the items.

Items can also provide a gateway to historical nostalgia, as some items are clearly associated with nostalgia or certain decades. This is illustrated in one respondent's answer when speaking about the 60s:

I think, for example, like reggae was gaining popularity then, or at least I associate that with the 60s. I feel relaxed, and it reminds me not to take everything so seriously. Oh, and I just actually bought an LP [player] not long ago, it reminds me of that time.

-George, Male, 28 years old

The respondent's personal anxiety generates a desire to connect and identify with the 60s (Holt, 2004). In order to alleviate this anxiety he consumes products, like an LP player, which allow him to perform an identity myth through historical nostalgia. In this case, George's personal anxiety could be factors such as the sense of responsibilities and seriousness of adulthood, as he reminisces about the 60s as a way of lessening a feeling of seriousness. As Belk (1988) noted, the impossibility of knowing the historical past allows individuals to consume artifacts from that specific time period and turn them into symbols, disregarding the fact that their assumptions of the past might not be true. In this case, George consumes things that remind him of the 60s and symbolizes attributes and values from that time era, enabling him to incorporate them into his life today. The purchase of an LP player further enables him to submerge in the 60s in more ways than one, as the item in itself provides a connection to that decade, but also the fact that he can now play his LP records with reggae music. Further, the LP player can be seen as a symbol for his private sphere (Goffman, 1959), where he can relax and disconnect from the seriousness and demands.

Despite the fact that both historical and personal nostalgia can be felt regarding physical items, the occurrence of personal nostalgia was the more prominent form when the respondents spoke of possession of items. This is an indication that items are mostly used by the consumer to incorporate their own history and roots in their identity projects. This is highlighted in the quote below:

I bought a lot of Tintin comic books that I sometimes read, only because I loved Tintin as a kid. And I still have them displayed in my room because I like to look at them.

-Filip, Male, 24 years old

The quote above illustrates how the respondent incorporates personal nostalgia in his life, not only by revisiting his childhood by reading comic books but also by displaying them in his home. As an individual's home can be seen as a strong source for identity and sense of self (Belk, 1988), Filip's display of nostalgic comic books may be a way of incorporating his personal past into his life, in addition to incorporating it simply by owning or using them. Even though individuals' homes can be a way of altering their own self-concept as it can be a central part of one's identity, displaying artifacts at home could be a way of also affecting one's self-presentation through having guests and visitors, for example. In that sense, items could be compared to the previous subtheme of fashion, as it may be a way of influencing others' perceptions of oneself, in a more external context.

The subthemes of Fashion and Items are alike in multiple ways. For example, both Fashion and Items can be used as artifacts (Belk, 1988) and the associations made with the items or clothes, and the time they come from, might not have been real to begin with. However, there is a difference in regard to the reasons for wanting to incorporate the past through the two categories of tangible nostalgic consumption. George explains that his LP player and the remembrance of the 60s remind him "not to take everything so seriously", which might help him to deal with the anxieties of today. This indicates that he uses it as a tool to manage internal thoughts and perceptions. The use of nostalgic fashion, however, seems to be used in order to manage one's external image, embodying a persona that associates with a past time.

Another difference between the two is that the form of nostalgia which is labeled as relational nostalgia in this study, is more prominent within Fashion than Items. This could be a result of the circular nature of trends and clothing, as it might blur the boundaries between different time eras. For example, the respondent Hannah stated:

But then I also generally believe that fashion comes and goes. It's very clear now that what was fashionable 20-30 years ago is trendy again, you know.

-Hannah, Female, 23 years old

This statement indicates that the fashion cycle has brought back trends from decades when many young adults' parents might have been around their age, hence that the parents might have influenced some trends' revival. When it comes to Items, however, the evolution might not be seen as circular, but rather as linear. As an example, the following was said when a respondent was asked why she thought young adults were nostalgic:

It was such a development from us finding it so much fun to draw on those strange tablets [magnetic drawing boards] that didn't do anything at all, to getting our first little computer that was so tiny, which we could only play games on. Or when we got our first phone, I mean, there has been such a development with the products, they are newer and better. So I think that has a lot to do with it too.

-Lisa, Female, 25 years old

The respondent emphasized the development which has occurred throughout her upbringing, where products and electronics have evolved. She mentioned children's activities and products such as phones, highlighting that they have developed a lot since she was younger. This indicates that the sense of the past is particularly strong, as those objects have not come back, but rather evolved forward. In light of this development, it is reasonable to assume that objects such as technical products do not have the same circular trends, as the standards for the products increase. Hence, it is not deemed beneficial to bring back old objects to the same extent as clothing trends. As these kinds of products may not have the same circular comeback as fashion trends, the feeling of loss might be more prominent and the objects become associated with a "lost" time. There are however exceptions where retro trends arise because of the different performance. An example is the disposable camera, where the lower quality of the photos is what some consumers prefer. Marcus (Male, 26 years old) explained that it was because "...you want to have that old feeling in the picture. It feels more authentic, you know" when asked if it would not be easier to simply use a smartphone or such. His answers indicate that the usage of a nostalgic product, such as a disposable camera, is a way to integrate a feeling of authenticity into his daily life. This shows that he somewhat associates the present with something fake or inauthentic, in contrast to the past. The disposable camera becomes a symbolic possession that reflects Marcus's alignment with authenticity and allows him to incorporate this into his extended self (Belk, 1988). Hence, his way of connecting to that lost time is by using an artifact that symbolizes that time, even if its performance might lack in relation to newer products.

5.2 Intangible Nostalgic Consumption: Visualizing the Past

The previous theme focused on tangible possessions, however in this theme we will focus on the intangible aspects of nostalgic consumption, and how they incorporate this into their consumer identities. In contrast to the previous theme, where one could actually touch the nostalgic possessions, this theme revolves around the visualization associated with intangible belongings. The respondents consistently mentioned that they consume music, movies, tv-shows or experiences as a way to create a feeling of nostalgia, indicating that these intangible aspects are just as significant in shaping consumer identities as tangible goods. This theme will be divided into two subthemes in order to clarify the function intangible consumption, connected to personal and historical nostalgia, plays in the formation of consumer identities. The first subtheme will look at how young consumers use pop culture to evoke nostalgia and incorporate this into their identity. The second subtheme demonstrates how young consumers seek out experiences that trigger nostalgic feelings, and how this influences their perception of themselves.

5.2.1 Pop Nostalgia: Bridging the Gap between Past and Present in Pop Culture

Something recurring among the respondents was the discussion about the consumption of tv-shows, movies, music, and video games and how this evokes nostalgia. A lot of the respondents expressed that they watch tv-series and movies to escape from today's uncertainties and anxieties. One respondent's answer to the question "So, why do you think TV series like Stranger Things and Bridgerton are appealing to you?" offers an interesting perspective within this theme:

I also think that we are a bit disappointed with how our society looks. Not all aspects of society, but some aspects. We are looking for something better. And since we can't predict the future, what it looks like, it's easier to go back and look at how it was before our time and find positive aspects with it.

- Bella, Female, 21 years old

The statement above reflects a lot of the respondents' answers, as there is a reoccurring romanticizing about a past they have not experienced. The respondent expresses that she is unsatisfied and disappointed with how our society looks today. To deal with this, she turns on

these tv-shows that portray a past time era that she recognizes to be better. Another respondent answers similar to the same question:

You get a certain glimpse of different things, like behavior, fashion styles, and those types of things and a little bit of how it was. And that's really interesting for young adults today. Many young people maybe aren't so satisfied with how their everyday life is or how their upbringing was or how the past few years have been. So then they can dream themselves away and see how it was back then when times were supposed to be better.

-Adam, Male, 26 years old

Both of the answers symbolize that young consumers are dissatisfied with their present circumstances and use nostalgia in tv-shows as a tool to escape current life situations. This can be linked to Holt's (2004) discussion regarding identity myths. Brands create these myths to assist consumers in solving perceived uncertainties and anxieties in today's society, and to provide them with a sense of purpose and meaning that helps construct and maintain their identities. In this case, young consumers use the myth that "things were better before" to assist them in constructing their identities. The respondents use consumption habits, such as TV shows infused with historical nostalgia, to seek out romanticized narratives of the past that offer a sense of purpose and meaning in the present. The respondents' dissatisfaction with today's society can be connected to their concerns about the uncertainties of the current state of the world, which led them to watch tv-shows and movies connected to a different time era. One respondent brings up Covid-19 as an example:

A time that seemed pretty happy and fun and there may have not been as many problems. Maybe a lot of young people think of it this, with like corona and uncertainties on many fronts. So perhaps they want to escape a bit, even to a time that you yourself haven't experienced.

-Filip, Male, 24 years old

Similarly, another respondent expresses concerns about climate change and how this has contributed to the disappointment of today's society:

Climate change, for example, I think is a big aspect. We are very affected by how climate change will affect us and our children. And then maybe we long for a time when it wasn't like

that. Our generation is partly disappointed with how our society looks and wants to go back to another time era.

-Bella, Female, 21

Based on the answers listed above, it appears that the respondents are concerned with societal events that have either happened recently or are currently happening, and are seeking comfort in a time they have not personally experienced. Holt (2004) provides an explanation as to why the respondents are experiencing this sense of historical nostalgia, namely that the myths individuals experience is connected to what society requires at a particular moment in time. The respondents perceive that the current state of the world is evoking uncertainties, and hence, they are searching for comfort and purpose during these uncertain times. Many of the respondents find this comfort by consuming iconic brands that create these romanticized narratives of the past, such as Netflix, and in particular, series like *Stranger Things* and *Bridgerton*. Through these series, they are trying to connect to a past time or culture that they perceive as more stable and desirable, in order to relieve themselves from the anxieties of today's society. Ultimately, the use of these brands and series helps the respondents to find meaning, which once again can be connected to Holt's (2004) discussion about iconic brands and identity myths. The following statement, in which the respondent stresses the topic of love, is an illustration of how nostalgic aspects in TV shows are used by consumers. Moreover, it is interesting to notice that romanticizing the past—regardless of the subject—seems to be tied to modern issues:

I think with Bridgerton, it's mainly about the love aspect. That one is dissatisfied with today's society, how one date in today's society compared to then. And one would have liked to experience it oneself. And then you can do that through the movie or the series, that is to experience it that way.

-Bella, Female, 21 years old

But also, by another respondent:

I think seeing clips or movies from other times can give you perspective on relationships and everything. Today's view on dating and romance gives me the ick. I think it can be quite nice to understand what you should value and are worthy of.

-Daniella, Female, 24 years old

The answers above show more specific examples of scenarios where they express dissatisfaction with today's dating and romantic norms, and by immersing themselves in the tv-show *Bridgerton*, they can escape the contemporary dating culture and instead embrace values from another time period. As the respondents consume the show, they are also constructing their identities in relation to how they imagine and romanticize the broader themes of love and romance portrayed in the show. This can further be connected to Holt's (2004) discussion about brands creating myths by using imaginary worlds, which allows individuals to construct their aspired identities based on imaginative expressions. The respondents above imagine their ideal view of love, and by consuming these tv-shows they can experience the myth. This results in the relief of their identity problems and helps them find purpose in their own lives. As Daniella highlighted, these TV shows help her understand "what you should value and are worthy of", allowing her to connect with an identity myth that reflects her desires and aspirations. Further, the statements made by Daniella and Bella can be linked to Belk's (1988) argument that individuals create a romanticized narrative that upholds values that were nonexistent in the time era they refer to. Since they do not have first-time experience of that time era, they can imagine the values of love and incorporate them into their extended self. Holt (2004) also highlights that there are divides within society that create personal anxiety. This can be illustrated by George's answer to the question "Can you think of specific events or driving forces that may have influenced our increased openness to nostalgic consumption and marketing?":

I think that like in the 60s... Like during the hippie time. Things seemed so nice. Things like fashion, music, and attitudes toward life. Everyone was more welcoming, and now it's more "us against them." It probably felt much more relaxed back then and not so uptight and superficial as today.

-George, Male, 28 years old

The respondent states that the current state of society is characterized by "us against them" which suggests that there is a divide in society where different groups are in opposition to each other, which may result in tensions. The respondent seems to think that the 60s was a much more welcoming era and might reflect his desires for a more inclusive and joined society. Another respondent expressed similar feelings towards this time era:

Well, I can imagine that it was all about 'peace and love', you know, innocence and just going with the flow, chilling out. Nowadays, there are more demands. Of course, it might just be a romanticized view because we didn't experience that time ourselves. But it feels that way. Nowadays, the media shapes what is right and wrong. At that time, it feels like there was only a phone booth, that's it. It feels like there was more acceptance back then.

-Klara, Female, 24 years old

Both of the respondents seem to share the idea that this era was more chill and relaxed, with fewer divides and demands. One interesting aspect within Klara's answer is that she is aware that it only is a romanticized view, but still imagines that time period to be better, probably due to the burdens she feels in the present time. The idealized narrative helps her deal with her present identity concerns. When asked about their consumption habits, both individuals acknowledged engaging with music or movies from this era. As mentioned underneath the previous theme "Tangible nostalgic consumption: Touching the Past", George expressed that he listens to Reggae because he associates that with the 60s. However, Klara expressed that she watches movies and listens to ABBA, which reminds her of a more welcoming time:

This might be weird since it might not be exactly peace and love but perhaps the ABBA movies are a bit in that direction. Both the music and the films give me welcoming feelings.

-Klara, Female, 24 years old

The respondent's consumption patterns, such as listening to reggae music and watching movies related to the 60s-70s, can be related to both Belk's (1988) theory of the extended self and, once again, Holt's (2004) discussion about identity myths. Belk (1988) states that individuals incorporate possessions into the self, resulting in an extended version of identity. In this case, the respondents' consumption of reggae music and movies that they associate with another time era becomes a way of constructing their identity and the extended self. Until now, the discussions have primarily revolved around pop culture that reflects another historical period. Often, this can be related to discontentment with the present era, leading to identity burdens. However, through the lens of pop culture, they can handle these burdens and instead shape consumer identities that they believe align with their expectations, attitudes, and characteristics.

Nonetheless, another aspect that was often mentioned among the respondents was the consumption of pop culture connected to one's past, also referred to as personal nostalgia. Adam shared that watching a movie in the present can induce joy for him as it reminds him of his past. It is not just the happy memories of watching the movie itself, but also the positive memories of everything related to that period:

Other aspects might be that one has, not only good memories of the movie, but also good memories of everything... of the time when you watched the movie and the time around it. That is, you saw it often with people you cared about, and you had fun together. That makes you remember it well, and it gives a good feeling to see it again now.

-Adam, Male, 26 years old

Adam also mentions that his fondness for that period of his past comes from memories of watching those movies alongside loved ones and sharing this experience with them. By revisiting and preserving those memories of the past, Adam can recreate and reinforce his identity tied to that time period. Belk (1988) emphasized that our sense of self is intertwined with our personal history and that possessions can function as reminders of past experiences and emotions. In this context, consuming pop culture from one's past, such as rewatching movies, can be helpful in engaging in nostalgic elements and work as a tool for self-expression and identity formation. Furthermore, as mentioned above, Adam emphasizes the social aspect of consuming movies, indicating that watching them with people he cared for made the memory even stronger. As Belk (1988) highlights, our identity is closely linked to or associated with other people and serves as a foundation for the understanding of ourselves and personal growth. Sharing this experience with others adds a layer of meaning, and reinforces the importance of personal nostalgia in shaping one's sense of self. Similarly to Adam, Bella also highlights the social aspect after watching the Walmart commercial:

One becomes very nostalgic when seeing this, one gets flashbacks to when one sits with the family and watches these movies. I watched Lightning McQueen when I was little, and even today haha, but it makes me think of memories with family and friends.

-Bella, Female, 21 years old

Bella shared that she began watching Lightning McQueen when she was young and continues to watch it to this day. Connecting the memories to your loved ones seems to be an important

aspect of wanting to go back to past memories. Bella also explained that since she lives in another city than her parents, these memories become extra important, especially when she needs security. Among the respondents, the aspect of security emerges frequently, as they express how certain elements of their childhood provide security and aid in navigating present uncertainties. This can be illustrated by Marcus's answer where he mentions that he has started watching a series he watched back in elementary school:

I have started watching “How I Met Your Mother” again. And I watched it when I was very young, back in elementary school, so it definitely gives me a sense of nostalgia. I would say it's a mixture of feeling happy and sad at the same time. It feels like everyone wants to somehow go back in time. When times were simpler.

-Marcus, Male, 26 years old

In his answer, Marcus highlights that things were simpler before, but he also points out an interesting aspect of being happy and sad at the same time as he watches this show. This duality suggests that while he longs to go back in time, he recognizes the impossibility of doing so. The show serves as a bridge between the past and present, offering a bittersweet reminder of how things were. Interestingly, although this bittersweet feeling, it seems like the feelings of happiness outweigh the sadness for Marcus. This observation is based on the fact that he actively chooses to watch the show, suggesting that he may use these positive feelings as a coping mechanism for the negative emotions he experiences. By consciously selecting and immersing himself in this particular TV show from his past, Marcus uses it as a tool to shape his identity and find solace in nostalgic experiences. Another respondent discusses the nostalgic connection to video games he played at a younger age, however, this respondent does only feel happiness:

But if I played an old game that I played when I was younger, then I get such crazy nostalgia.

Like with WoW. If I played WoW now, I would get such nostalgia it's insane. I feel pure happiness, honestly, just happiness.

-Charlie, Male, 19 years old

In the quotation, it is obvious that the respondent associated gaming with very happy feelings. To delve deeper into the reasons behind this, the following question was asked: “Why do you

think that it evokes such happy feelings for you today?”. Charlie gave an interesting and insightful answer:

I mean that it feels like there is so much, in the sense that you have to live up to things. And then you become disappointed in yourself. It feels like there are so damn many demands on you now than there were before. And that's why it may be harder to feel happy emotions and that's why I think many people are happy when they get to feel emotions in that way.

-Charlie, Male, 19 years old

Charlie's answer showcases the challenges he faces in finding happiness within today's society. He firmly believes that life was simpler in the past, primarily due to fewer demands. Symbolically, video games represent a source of happiness for him, and this sentiment grows even stronger due to his belief that today's society is incapable of offering him the same level of happiness. As Belk (1988) mentioned, possessions can serve as symbolic markers that help individuals express and understand who they are. By engaging in the game, Charlie can strengthen his sense of self and maintain a link to his personal history. Furthermore, an interesting take on this could be to view it from Holt's (2004) understanding of identity myths, which often are manifested through imaginative expressions and the creation of imaginary worlds. In Charlie's case, World of Warcraft (WoW) can represent such an identity myth, offering a symbolic representation of a past era in his life defined by fewer complexities and demands. While the brand itself may not have intentionally crafted this identity myth, WoW has become a personal narrative that Charlie embraces to navigate the challenges of the present. In Charlie's experience, WoW functions as a symbolic intangible possession that aligns with both Holt and Belk's ideas, serving as an identity myth and a marker of personal history.

5.2.2 Time-Traveling Experiences: Nostalgia in Experiences

When analyzing the interview, another interesting theme could be identified; the influence of experiences on the construction of consumers' identities, shaped by both personal and historical nostalgia. Interestingly, more than half of the respondents expressed that they had engaged in certain experiences that evoke nostalgic feelings. In certain cases, the actions were intentional, with the sole purpose of immersing oneself in the nostalgic aspects of the experience. In other cases, there seems to be something more unintentional where the nostalgic aspect becomes an

added bonus, enhancing the overall experience. In the interviews, two of the respondents were from the same city and mentioned the same museum they feel nostalgic about:

I went to the naval museum to reminisce about when I was young, sitting there and making boats and such. But it's not that they displayed anything nostalgic specifically for me, but rather the experience itself was nostalgic.

-Klara, Female, 24 years old

Klara elaborates that while the museum itself did not have any nostalgic exhibitions; it was rather the experience of visiting that particular museum that evoked nostalgia for her. She can recall specific activities, such as making boats, which she connects to her childhood and past memories. Another girl also mentioned this particular museum:

The naval museum makes me feel very nostalgic because I used to go there when I was young. Especially in the bow gallery, as I had a performance with a school choir there when I was little. So it evokes those feelings for me.

-Hannah, Female, 23 years old

In Hannah's case, the nostalgic elements of this museum were different. She did not think about the boats, but about the bow gallery where they had choir performances. An interesting aspect here is that both of the respondents mentioned the same museum, but had different nostalgic experiences connected to it. The combination of place and experience, which both are important parts of identity creation according to Belk (1988), gives rise to nostalgic sentiments. The museum itself becomes more of a collective benchmark, while the specific experience within it contributes to individual identity formation. Revisiting the museum can be seen as a way for the respondents to preserve and enhance their current identities by re-engaging in these nostalgic memories. Revisiting places that symbolize a past experience is something commonly mentioned, and can further be illustrated by another respondent that revisits a grocery store that she always went to when she was a kid:

And I know the best thing. Flygfyren! I mean, for me to be at Flygfyren. A store in Norrtälje. I mean, I love going in there. When I was little there was a section where all parents could dump their children. So we could play and they could shop alone. That's probably one of the coziest memories. But just being there, it's such damn nostalgia.

-Johanna, Female, 24 years old

As Johanna mentions above, it is not the grocery store itself, but being at the store that she describes as the best thing ever. As mentioned before, reconnecting with old personal memories by actively seeking out and incorporating experiences from the past in their extended self (Belk, 1988), is a common practice among the respondents. It seems that by experiencing this positive feeling of familiarity they can enhance the sense of self. However, there is another aspect of the experience that is interesting to take into consideration. Some of the respondents discussed that they have engaged in experiences that have evoked a sense of historical nostalgia within them. As an example, Nina shares her experience attending a Gatsby-themed party. Although she was uncertain about whether it qualifies as nostalgia or not, her response to the following question “Can you think of something in any form of media or in real life that has made you reflect on something from the past?”, suggests that she was indeed associating this specific event to nostalgia:

Then I started thinking about something, this might not be nostalgia, but when I hosted a Gatsby-themed party. I have seen The Great Gatsby film, and I feel like the fashion, style, and jargon from that era appear much more classy, if I can say that? That evening, I truly felt like I got to experience a night from that time era, both the clothes but also the vibe.

-Nina, female, 22 years old

The answer above indicates that the respondent is interested in that time period, and when she hosted that party she really felt that she got to experience a night from that era. In the quote above, there are multiple hints of consumption related to nostalgia, such as watching a movie or the fashion sense of that time, which also relates to the other themes. However, in this particular case, she wanted to highlight the event and experience. This experience can be seen as Nina's way to incorporate the event and its associated aspects into her extended self (Belk, 1988). However, another way to look at it is through the lens of self-presentation (Goffman, 1959). By consciously choosing to recreate the aesthetics and atmosphere of the 1920s, Nina is presenting herself in a specific way to others. Through this self-presentation, she not only creates an experience for herself and the guests but also aligns herself with the fashion and “vibes” as she herself describes it. By connecting to this historical nostalgia, the act of hosting the party becomes a means of expressing this side of her to others. Another interesting

perspective on experiences connected to nostalgia and identity creation is the following quote by Iris:

I directly think about the Forrest Gump shrimp restaurant, Bubba Gump in the United States. When I visited the restaurant or saw the commercials, I felt so much nostalgia as I relate it to the Forrest Gump movie, which is an old movie that I watched when I was younger. That was also the biggest reason for me to go there, and it really felt like I was in the movie.

-Iris, Female, 25 years old

Iris discusses that she feels nostalgic for this movie since she watched it when she was younger, which seems to be a clear indication of personal nostalgia. However, when asked if she would like to add something in the end she answered:

I think I have two different interpretations of nostalgia; one from when I was younger and one where I romanticize things I have not experienced. It's like the Bubba Gump restaurant, we would never have eaten that if we didn't refer to Forrest Gump and the time era in which it takes place.

-Iris, Female, 25 years old

The respondent's answer initially reflects personal nostalgia as she discusses the restaurant, but later shifts to historical nostalgia as she reflects on the time era in which the movie takes place. There seems to be a combination of the different types of nostalgia that makes her feel like this is an important experience for her. There is a twofold interpretation of nostalgia which reflects a somewhat more complex interplay between personal and historical nostalgia in influencing consumer identities. Another interesting part about Iris's answer is that the second form of nostalgia she refers to needs to be romanticized. When discussing historical nostalgia, romanticizing becomes a common pattern among the respondents, for instance, Klara also mentions this. This might be attributed to their subconscious awareness that past time eras had their own challenges and difficulties. However, in order to cope with present identity burdens, individuals overlook these aspects, and selectively focus on the positive side of the era or even imagine it to be in a certain way that may not accurately reflect historical reality. This selective focus allows them to imagine positive characteristics being bestowed upon them through different types of nostalgic consumption (Belk, 1988).

5.3 Summary of the Findings

In summary, this chapter explored the role of personal and historical nostalgia in shaping consumer identities. The analysis revealed two main themes: Tangible nostalgic consumption and Intangible nostalgic consumption, both of which are intertwined with the two forms of nostalgia. Both tangible and intangible aspects of nostalgia, including fashion, items, pop culture, and experiences, provide opportunities for individuals to incorporate elements of the past into their present lives. The interaction between personal memories, family influences, and historical narratives has given insight into an additional form of nostalgia, conceptualized as relational nostalgia in this study, which emphasizes the impact of relationships between individuals when creating nostalgic associations. Further, this chapter has examined how consumers utilize myths and romanticized narratives in their identity creation, finding that consumers sometimes have an active role in influencing myths. These main findings will be further explained and contextualized in the next chapter.

6 Discussion

In the previous section, this study analyzed and presented its findings based on the collected empirical data. In this chapter, the connections, contradictions, and contributions of these insights will be presented in the context of previous literature. This will aid the understanding of the relation between nostalgia and identity creation, including identity myths, aligning and contributing with insights within those bodies of literature (e.g., Brunk, Giesler & Hartmann, 2018, Holbrook & Schindler, 2003; Holt, 2004; Belk, 1998; Schau & Gilly, 2003). However, the perspectives and insights also contribute to the broader academic discourse within CCT.

6.1 Tangible vs. Intangible Nostalgic Consumption

The findings of this study expand the existing literature on the construction of consumer identities by both aligning with and contributing to the work of various scholars (Belk, 1988; Bocoock, 1993; Hill & Stamey, 1990; Holt, 2002; McCracken, 1988). While previous research has explored the role of possessions, symbolism, and nostalgia in consumer identity creation, this study delved deeper into the impact of individuals' consumption habits, influenced by personal and historical nostalgia, on the creation of consumer identities. It found that consumers incorporate nostalgic elements into their identities in mainly two ways, through tangible nostalgic consumption or intangible nostalgic consumption.

Regarding the tangible aspects of nostalgic consumption, the findings of this study illustrate that people use possessions associated with personal nostalgia to connect to their past and reinforce their sense of identity. The study additionally explores historical nostalgia and its relation to possessions. Respondents in the study mentioned using fashion styles, in a few cases also items, associated with past decades as a means to connect with historical nostalgia. This is consistent with Belk's (1988) theory that people identify with a romanticized distant age and imagine themselves embodying its characteristics. Interestingly, in tangible consumption, historical nostalgia seems to be more closely related to an external process, such as Goffman's (1959) theory of self-presentation, in which people intentionally manage how others view them by dressing in nostalgic fashion and possessions. Personal nostalgia, on the other hand, seems to be more connected to an internal process, where the significance of nostalgic possessions lies in preserving and maintaining one's current identity rooted in personal past experiences. This study contributes a valuable perspective by highlighting that, in certain cases, historical

nostalgia is more prevalent when it comes to adding new dimensions and layers to one's identity, whereas personal nostalgia is primarily focused on preserving and nurturing the existing identity. However, in the context of intangible nostalgic consumption, the distinction between internal and external processes is less evident. Intangible nostalgic consumption can be both personal and historical, hence utilized in order to either add dimensions to or nurture one's identity, but it is primarily an internal process and not external. Thus, it is mainly used for the individual's sake and not for others, regardless if it is to develop or nurture their identity. This might be explained by the fact that intangible nostalgic consumption is more difficult to display as it has no physical form, hence may be imperceptible to others than oneself.

Furthermore, there are exceptions where internal and external processes occur simultaneously. The exception discovered in this study is individuals' homes, where individuals can store and display their tangible nostalgic objects. In accordance with Belk's (1988) notion that homes are a prominent source for an individual's identity, this aids consumers to incorporate the nostalgic aspect into their sense of self. However, a home does not only provide the opportunity to affect one's current identity and self-concept but also to influence one's self-presentation. This is, for example, achieved by exhibiting tangible nostalgic objects in the home, which then serve as a display of identity for visitors and guests. In that manner, consumers can incorporate both personal and historical nostalgia into both their personal sense of self and their self-presentation through their homes.

This distinction between internal and external processes can further be an interesting take on Goffman's (1959) notion of the backstage and front stage. The front stage in this sense would be possessions such as clothes, which are used to present oneself in a desired way, hence aiming to shape others' perceived image. The backstage, however, could be interpreted as individual homes. This is based on Goffman's (1959) explanation, namely that the backstage represents a private sphere where individuals can set aside their roles and be their "true" selves, much like a private home. This would also be in line with this study's finding that personal nostalgia is more of a process to nurture one's existing identity, while historical nostalgia is used to add new dimensions. However, much like this study's finding on the blend of the two forms of nostalgia, which will be discussed in section 6.3, there might be instances when the front stage and the backstage blend together. This might occur when a consumer tries to incorporate and

display nostalgic possessions in their home, hence trying to transform their backstage as well. This could be an effort to homogenize their front and backstage to transform their identity in multiple areas.

This differentiation between the two forms of nostalgia and how they manifest through consumption contributes to the literature on nostalgia in consumer research (Goulding, 1999; 2001; 2002; Holbrook, 1993; Holbrook & Schindler, 1991; 2003). It clarifies the influence of how different consumption practices related to personal and historical nostalgia impact young consumers, giving a broader understanding of consumption and possessions within the nostalgia literature. Additionally, it contributes to the literature that explores the relationship between identity formation and nostalgia (e.g., Baker & Azzari, 2020). Previous literature has treated nostalgia as a holistic concept. This study, however, underlines the distinct forms of nostalgia and argues that recognizing this distinction adds new perspectives, such as the internal and external process of consumer identity creation. These contributions further expand on Stern's (1992) work, which touches upon identity in connection to personal and historical nostalgia. This study adds to that understanding by focusing on consumption rather than advertising, highlighting the impact of nostalgic consumption habits on self-presentation, but also on identity creation from a more individualistic perspective.

6.2 Consumer Identity Creation Through Nostalgic Narratives

In the empirical data, it was a recurring theme that the respondents used romanticization of the past to contribute to their consumer identity. This section of the discussion adds to the current body of literature on myths and the construction of identity (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Arsel & Thompson, 2011; Holt, 2004; Thompson, 2004; Luedicke, Thompson & Giesler, 2010; Üstüner & Holt, 2007). Both Holt (2004) and Luedicke, Thompson, and Giesler (2010) emphasize that myths can serve as coping mechanisms for the uncertainties, doubts, and anxieties prevalent in modern society, allowing individuals to manage their current identity burdens. This study supports this perspective by demonstrating that young consumers, when experiencing uncertainties, actively seek out consumption practices that evoke nostalgia. By engaging with these practices, they expand their present identities by both addressing existing anxieties and incorporating the values and characteristics of a previous era. For example, many respondents in the study turned to tv-series, highlighting different time eras, as a means to escape current issues and identity burdens. The consumers enacted what Holt (2004) defines

as “identity myths”, which are narratives invented by the brand to help consumers deal with contemporary challenges. It is worth noting, in this paper, Netflix was one of the brands that potentially contributed to the formation of these identity myths, based on current anxieties and uncertainties. However, the findings of this paper present a different perspective on the creation of identity myths. In this paper, the consumers took an active role in shaping these myths to address their personal present burdens, instead of relying solely on brands creating them. Through their imagination and consumption choices, they formed these myths and imaginative worlds connected to nostalgia, enabling them to embrace values they believe are lacking in today's society and strengthen their desired identities.

The findings of the utilization of romanticized myths support Södergren's (2022) conceptualization of nostalgia as a tool for incorporating values that are absent in present society. Nonetheless, this thesis expands this further by revealing diverse consumption habits utilized to forge a connection with nostalgic identity myths. This study's findings on intangible nostalgic consumption, particularly pop culture, enhance Södergren's (2022) insights by highlighting the motivations of young consumers who engage in nostalgic consumption. For instance, these findings reveal that nostalgic consumption is not only triggered by the absence of values but also the desire to cope with and escape present uncertainties. In essence, consumers engage in nostalgic identity myths not only to incorporate values into their identity that contemporary society lacks, but also to break free from existing values to lighten their identity burdens.

Additionally, the findings in this thesis draw upon the existing literature on consumer identity creation (Larsen & Patterson, 2018; Schau, 2000; Schau, 2018; Schau & Gilly, 2003) and contribute to the literature on consumer identities. Schau (2000) emphasizes the significance of imagined connections between objects, the relationship between objects and individuals, and the relationship between individuals both individually and collectively in influencing consumption and the construction of consumer identities. This paper suggests that the imagined and romanticized relationship the respondents create with previous time eras through consumption facilitates the development and maintenance of their identity. Bocoek (1993) also highlights the importance of imagination in transforming into the desired self, which in this study the respondents do by incorporating the imagined and romanticized desired characteristics from a distant time era into their current identity through historical nostalgic consumption. Furthermore, this study contributed to Gilly's (2003) discussion on ideal and

operational values. While they argue that it can be hard to maintain ideal values related to nostalgia, this study suggests that it is possible to maintain these values in reality through both tangible and intangible nostalgic consumption. For instance, in historical nostalgia, individuals expressed that watching tv-series from another time era could actually help them to incorporate those values into themselves in the present time.

Furthermore, the discussions above provide another interesting perspective. Larsen, and Patterson (2018) discuss consumer identity projects connected to two different positions, ascribed and achieved identity. Ascribed identity is connected to one's birth, and is based on factors such as family lineage and societal norms. Achieved identity is however more fluid, and here the individual actively participates in shaping and constructing their identities. The two different positions of identity can be connected to personal and historical nostalgia, and how consumers construct their identities based on this. Connecting to the previous discussion, the study's findings on identity myths and nostalgic narratives can reflect the dynamic nature of achieved identity. Young consumers actively engage in these narratives, where they can utilize consumption choices to craft their achieved identity. However, ascribed identity is more closely linked to personal nostalgia. Young consumers seek to reconnect with past ascribed aspects of their identity that have been influenced by family and social norms. However, it is important to acknowledge that nostalgia is a complex phenomenon, and the relationship between ascribed identity and personal nostalgia, as well as achieved identity and historical nostalgia, is also dynamic. For instance, individuals may also employ personal nostalgia to enrich achieved identity.

6.3 Relational Nostalgia

One of the areas to which this study contributes is the understanding of nostalgia and its different forms. Even though not specifically within the research area of CCT, numerous scholars have divided nostalgia into two forms; personal and historical (Batcho, 2021; Holak & Havlena, 1992; Marchegiani & Phau, 2010; Stern, 1992), a distinction utilized throughout this study in order to broaden the understanding of nostalgia within CCT. The respondents provided multiple clear examples of both historical and personal nostalgia, in accordance with Stern's (1992) definition. Using this distinction between the two forms of nostalgia has provided insights regarding their roles in consumption and how they differ. An example of this is that personal nostalgia was more prominent in regard to the possession of nostalgic items, or

that most respondents referred to historical nostalgia when speaking of nostalgic pop culture, such as movies.

However, even though this study's insights support Stern's (1992) notion of two distinct forms of nostalgia, it also expands the understanding of the relationship between the two. Specifically, this study suggests that there is a blended form, where the boundary between historical and personal nostalgia is blurred. This form is conceptualized as relational nostalgia in this study, as it stems from individuals' relationships with others. The common definition that separates personal and historical nostalgia is that it is either personally experienced or occurred before one was born (Stern, 1992). In contrast, this relational nostalgia can be experienced as both historical and personal, making it difficult to categorize. One frequent factor of this form was the influence of parents, such as in regard to clothes and trends. Many of the trends mentioned by the respondents could be traced back to their parents' youth, hence often before they themselves were born. Some even said that they wanted to "relive" or embody their parents' youth, indicating that they somehow related to it even though it was before their time. Hence, one could argue that the parents might be seen as a part of their children's identity from the children's point of view, which is in line with Belk's (1988) notion that family can be seen as a possession in the extended self. Therefore, this incorporation of the family into the extended self could be a reason for the boundary between what aspects young adults feel are their upbringing or heritage, and what is their parents'. As Belk (1988) states that personal history is an important part of one's sense of self, and this relational nostalgia "disguises" the parents' past as a personal past, this enables individuals to utilize their parents' past in their own construction of identity. This contributes to the literature stream on identity creation (e.g., Bocoock, 1993; Hill & Stamey, 1990; Holt, 2002; McCracken, 1988; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1988), as it provides an alternative approach to how young consumers utilize nostalgia in their identity creation.

Another suggestion made by Belk (1988) is that spouses' achievements could create a feeling of personal success, as the spouse is incorporated into the extended self. In that sense, the same could be true for other family members, such as parents, as indicated in this study. Thus, the "achievement" in this case would be the parents' past, perhaps viewed as an achievement by their children as they might think that things were better then, and therefore might feel a sense of envy. This increasingly vague line between an individual's memories and heritage, in turn, causes the line between historical and personal nostalgia to blur as well.

This finding can also be connected to Brunk, Giesler, and Hartmann (2018), as they argue that memories are fluid and changeable rather than fixed, originating from the influence of other narratives. In the case of individuals incorporating their parents' or families' nostalgia and heritage into their own identity, they have to rely on other individuals' descriptions and discourse. This might even impact personal memories and nostalgia, for example from a time one was too young even to remember clearly, as one might have to rely on others' retelling. Thus, memories and nostalgia might dynamically change along with the narrative, much like what Brunk, Giesler and Hartmann (2018) argue. In light of this, it might be difficult to determine what form of nostalgia those memories induce, as it concerns a personal experience but one's remembrance of it is based upon other narratives than one's own. This idea further aligns with Schau's (2018) notion that identity is dynamic and fluid, changing over time. If the memories, which one's identity is partly built upon, are fluid, then it is reasonable to assume that the identity is as well.

Another interesting finding is that relational nostalgia was more prominent when the respondent spoke of tangible nostalgic consumption rather than intangible, meaning that it was often connected to a physical object. One possible explanation for this is that the respondents are somewhat aware of the fact that it is a "borrowed" sense of nostalgia, where it might feel like personal nostalgia even though it is not. Hence, since the personal aspect of relational nostalgia in a sense is fabricated, it might be more important to attach it to a real tangible object that the person in question can actually experience. Marcoux (2017) discussed how material objects had a more tangible presence in comparison to digital objects, however, he argued that within memory practices this difference should not be overemphasized. If applying this notion, nostalgic digital objects could be compared to intangible nostalgia, as it does not physically exist in the same sense as tangible nostalgia. However, this could indicate that contrary to Marcoux (2017), this distinction between tangible and intangible might be rather important in the context of relational nostalgia, as there is a difference between tangible and intangible nostalgia in regard to what form instigates the feeling of relational nostalgia the most. Since multiple respondents displayed this form of nostalgia when speaking of nostalgic consumption, this may be an important aspect of understanding consumers' nostalgic consumption behavior.

7 Conclusion

In this final chapter, the study's findings are summarized, illustrating their significance in relation to the research question at the beginning of the study. Additionally, this chapter addresses the limitations of this study, and potential directions for future research areas are suggested.

7.1 An Overview of Key Findings

Our research has been focusing on getting a comprehension of young consumers, and how personal and historical nostalgia can influence their identity creation. To answer our research question, we have looked into literature bodies within CCT, more specifically consumer identities but also the research that has been done in connection to nostalgia. Consequently, the goal of this essay was to answer the following question:

- How do young consumers construct identities based on personal and historical nostalgia?

The empirical findings of this study conclude that both personal and historical nostalgia influence young consumer identities. The findings showcased that the consumers utilize different consumption habits, both tangible and intangible, encompassing areas such as fashion, items, pop culture, and experiences, all infused with nostalgic elements. These nostalgic elements influence the way individuals shape and sustain their identities. Our discussion provides insight into how we contribute to the existing literature and suggests different contributions and perspectives that provide an answer to the research question of this thesis. It could be concluded that young consumers construct their identities through the utilization of nostalgic consumption, both tangible and intangible, through the creation of romanticized nostalgic narratives, and through the blend of personal and historical nostalgia. This blended form has been conceptualized as relational nostalgia.

Firstly, this study shows that young consumers construct their identities based on both tangible and intangible consumption connected to personal and historical nostalgia. In tangible nostalgic

consumption, a lot of the possessions hold sentimental value for young consumers and serve as a way for them to preserve and maintain their current identity in relation to personal nostalgia. On the other hand, historical nostalgia can be seen as more of an external process, where self-presentation is an important aspect and individuals intentionally manage how others perceive them by dressing nostalgic or displaying nostalgic possessions. Hence, personal nostalgia seems to be more relevant when preserving and supporting the present identity, whereas historical nostalgia is more prominent when it comes to adding new dimensions and layers to one's identity. However, intangible nostalgic consumption is primarily an internal process rather than an external one, regardless of whether it's personal or historical nostalgia. Hence, it can be used to both add layers to and preserve young consumers' identities.

Furthermore, the study also emphasizes the importance of nostalgic narratives in the formation of young consumers' identity creation. Young consumers engage in romanticized myths and imaginative worlds through nostalgic consumption, helping them to cope with current identity burdens and uncertainties. Through their imagination and consumption choices they embrace values they believe are lacking in today's society and strengthen their desired identities. These nostalgic narratives can be both a part of their own past, but also a distant time era they have not lived through. The narratives can be intentionally shaped by consumers themselves, indicating their role in influencing identity myths that resonate with present personal identity burdens.

Lastly, this study proposes a new perspective, more specifically a blend between personal and historical nostalgia that blurs the line between the two forms. In this study, this is conceptualized as "relational nostalgia". Relational nostalgia highlights how young consumers incorporate the past of other individuals, with whom they have close relationships, into their own sense of self. Thus, they are able to incorporate their parents' past into their own past, creating nostalgic connections to times and experiences which they have not really experienced. These relational nostalgic aspects are thereby accessible for these individuals to incorporate into their own identities through, for example, clothing. However, as relational nostalgia is dependent upon the narratives of others and a somewhat fabricated sense of nostalgia, associating it with physical objects may make it feel more solid and "real". This was noticeable as relational nostalgia was more evident within tangible nostalgic consumption than with intangible.

Overall, this study highlights that both personal and historical nostalgia play a significant role in influencing young consumers' identities. It has studied how consumers incorporate nostalgic elements into their identities in different ways, concluding that the two main methods were through tangible or intangible nostalgic consumption. Moreover, this study has emphasized the importance of nostalgic narratives and myths in regard to coping with identity burdens and uncertainties. Finally, it has also proposed a new form of nostalgia, namely relational nostalgia, as a means to further deepen the understanding of nostalgia in consumer identities.

7.2 Practical Implications

This study contributes with valuable implications for marketers and professionals within consumer research by providing an extended view of nostalgia within consumer identity creation. This broadened view distinguishes between different aspects and forms of nostalgic consumption, providing insights regarding how consumers incorporate them into their identities through tangible and intangible nostalgic consumption. This understanding, in addition to the added perspective of personal and historical nostalgia, can aid marketers in better targeting and engaging consumers based on their nostalgic preferences or the brand's intended marketing goals. Insights regarding how consumers use nostalgic consumption in their identity creation could further enable brands to utilize both tangible and intangible nostalgic aspects, by offering a range of products, experiences, or content that align with different nostalgic preferences.

The findings in this study suggest that nostalgia is utilized in different ways by consumers in order to shape their identities, both externally and internally. It further suggests that consumers incorporate nostalgic elements in their identity and consumption in order to address existing anxieties or uncertainties, as well as to retrieve values that they perceive as lost in today's society. By understanding these underlying factors and what sort of nostalgia consumers use to cope with them, marketers and practitioners can tap into specific nostalgic narratives to effectively create meaningful brand experiences. Furthermore, the concept of relational nostalgia can provide practical insights into the dynamic aspects of nostalgia, as it illustrates how nostalgic consumption can stem from different motivations in comparison to personal or historical nostalgia. This can provide understanding regarding intergenerational transmissions of nostalgia to young adults, as well as the potential of targeting consumers based on their sense of relational nostalgia.

7.3 Limitations and Future Research

In qualitative and interpretive research stemming from interviews, one prominent limitation is the reliance on the respondents' narratives, as well as on the researchers' interpretation. As individuals' perceptions of nostalgia may be highly subjective and impacted by various factors, such as upbringing or cultural context, the study is limited to the sampled individuals' points of view. Despite adopting measures to lessen the impact of the researchers when interpreting the collected data, as discussed in the methodology chapter, it is necessary to acknowledge that different researchers could have made different assumptions and interpretations. Furthermore, this study's validity is primarily limited because of the small sample size as a result of a limited time frame. Hence, when conducting future research, a longer period of time could make it possible to conduct a more extensive study on identity creation and nostalgia, taking into consideration different circumstantial factors. For example, additional data collection methods could complement the interviews, such as netnography in order to study how nostalgia is expressed online.

When conducting research on a specific age group, it is important to acknowledge that they might represent distinct experiences, characteristics, and preferences which differ from other age groups. As this study has solely focused on nostalgia among young adults in regard to its empirics and data, the results may therefore not be applicable to other age groups or consumers in general. Additionally, the fact that this study focuses on Swedish young adults also serves as a limitation, as nostalgia might be influenced by different cultural aspects. A suggestion for future research would be to study other age groups as well in order to investigate whether there are any noticeable differences between them in the sense of historical and personal nostalgia. This sort of comparison might also be interesting to make between countries and cultures.

Furthermore, the concept of relational nostalgia, which has been conceptualized in this thesis, could be an interesting aspect to study further. For instance, the impact of this could be incorporated into other aspects of consumer and marketing research, such as how this might impact brand attitude or nostalgia proneness. Another interesting aspect that future research could study is whether there are any differences in terms of relational nostalgia between age groups or generations. Another take on this could be to examine if relational nostalgia can be experienced with earlier generations, for example, grandparents or such. This could aid in understanding the underlying factors of nostalgia and its origin.

Reference list

Alvesson, M. and Sköldböck, K., (2009). *Reflexive methodology: New vistas for qualitative research*. Sage.

Anspach, C. K. (1934). Medical dissertation on nostalgia by Johannes Hofer, 1688. *Bulletin of the Institute of the History of Medicine*, vol. 2, no. 6, pp. 376-391. Available online: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44437799> [Accessed April 2 2023]

Armstead, C. C., & McKinney, E. C. (2019, December). "Wearing Vintage with a Shaved Head": Balancing Historic Authenticity with Personal Authenticity in Retro Sewing. In *International Textile and Apparel Association Annual Conference Proceedings*, vol. 76, no. 1, Iowa State University Digital Press, Available online: <https://www.iastatedigitalpress.com/itaa/article/id/8809/> [Accessed 16 April 2023]

Arnett, J., Žukauskienė, R., & Sugimura, K. (2014). The new life stage of emerging adulthood at ages 18-29 years: Implications for mental health, *The Lancet Psychiatry*, vol. 1, pp. 569-576, Available online: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269393724_The_new_life_stage_of_emerging_adulthood_at_ages_18-29_years_Implications_for_mental_health [Accessed 14 April 2023]

Arnould, E. J., & Thompson, C. J. (2005). Consumer culture theory (CCT): Twenty years of research. *Journal of consumer research*, vol. 31, no. 4, pp. 868-882, Available online: <https://academic.oup.com/jcr/article/31/4/868/1812998> [Accessed 2 April 2023]

Arsel, Z. & Thompson, C. (2011). Demythologizing Consumption Practices: How Consumers Protect Their Field-Dependent Identity Investments from Devaluing Marketplace Myths, *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 37, no. 5, pp. 791–806, Available online: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/656389> [Accessed 3 May 2023]

Askegaard, S. (2015). Consumer culture theory (CCT), *The Wiley Blackwell encyclopedia of consumption and consumer studies*, pp. 124-127, Available online: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9781118989463.wbeccs054> [Accessed 17 May 2023]

Baker, S. M., & Azzari, C. N. (2020) The dark side of nostalgic bonds, in Jacobsen, M. H. (eds.), *Nostalgia now*, [e-book] London; Routledge, pp. 165-182, Available through: Lusem University Library Website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/library> [Accessed 15 May 2023]

Baker, S. M., & Kennedy, P. F. (1994). Death by nostalgia: A diagnosis of context-specific cases, *ACR North American Advances*, vol. 21, pp. 169-174, Available online: <https://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/7580/volumes/v21/na-21> [Accessed 2 April 2023]

Bardhi, F., Ostberg, J., & Bengtsson, A. (2010). Negotiating cultural boundaries: Food, travel and consumer identities. *Consumption, Markets and Culture*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 133-157, Available online:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10253860903562148> [Accessed 2 April 2023]

Batcho, K. I. (2021). The role of nostalgia in resistance: A psychological perspective, *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 227-249, Available online: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14780887.2018.1499835> [Accessed 11 April 2023]

Belk, R.W. (1988). Possessions and the extended self, *Journal of consumer research*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 139-168, Available online: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2489522> [Accessed 16 May 2023]

Belk, R.W. (1990). The Role of Possessions in Constructing and Maintaining a Sense of Past, *Journal of Consumer research*, vol. 17, pp.669-676, Available online: <https://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/7083/volumes/v17/> [Accessed 6 May 2023]

Belk, R. W., & Costa, J. A. (1998). The mountain man myth: A contemporary consuming fantasy. *Journal of consumer research*, vol. 25, no. 3, pp. 218-240, Available online: <https://academic.oup.com/jcr/article-abstract/25/3/218/1795630> [Accessed 19 April 2023]

Bocock, R. (1993), *Consumption*. London; Routledge.

Brown, A. D., & Humphreys, M. (2002). Nostalgia and the narrativization of identity: A Turkish case study, *British Journal of Management*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 141-159. Available online: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1467-8551.00228?casa_token=arsrq2hwnoAAAAAA%3AaxrbBj9k-Ph3eUcHGxQyC6exb9TYLxXjGjf0OgwAE9qIRSJsDS2Nwb6DV3cG8KE3jth2I8XRP7MSuw [Accessed 20 May 2023]

Brunk, K. H., Giesler, M., & Hartmann, B. J. (2018). Creating a Consumable Past: How Memory Making Shapes Marketization, *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 44, no. 6, pp. 1325–1342, Available online: <https://academic.oup.com/jcr/article-abstract/44/6/1325/4159195> [Accessed 8 April 2023]

Brunk, K. H., Visconti, L. M., & Veresiu, E. (2013). Expanding the Theoretical Boundaries of Consumer Acculturation: Investigating the Role of Institutional Forces and Nostalgic Consumption *Advances in Consumer Research*, vol. 41, pp. 94–99, Available online: <https://eds.p.ebscohost.com/eds/detail/detail?vid=4&sid=e7cc835e-4050-45db-a625-4a20c736138b%40redis&bdata=JkF1dGhUeXBIPWlwLHVpZCZzaXRIPWVkcY1saXZlJnNjb3BIPXNpdGU%3d#AN=99579393&db=bth> [Accessed 19 April 2023]

Bryman, A., & Bell, E. (2017). *Företagsekonomiska forskningsmetoder*. Malmö: Liber AB.

Caballero, V. (2020). The Nostalgia Generation: Romanticizing the Past to Capture the Attention of Young Consumers, *Forbes and Fifth*, vol. 17, pp. 149-164, Available online: <http://www.forbes5.pitt.edu/article/nostalgia-generation> [Accessed 3 April 2023]

Cavander, E. (2021). TikTok's nostalgia-fueled obsession with the early 2000s, Available online: <https://mashable.com/article/nostalgia-on-tiktok> [Accessed 23 May 2023]

Cayla, J. & Arnould, E.J. (2008). A Cultural Approach to Branding in the Global Marketplace, *Journal of International Marketing*, vol. 16, no 4, pp. 86-112, Available online: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1509/jimk.16.4.86> [Accessed 24 April 2023]

Cho, H., Oh, G. E., & Chiu, W. (2021). Compensatory consumption during the COVID-19 pandemic: exploring the critical role of nostalgia in sport consumer behaviour, *Journal of Marketing Management*, vol. 37, no. 17-18, pp. 1736-1763, Available online: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0267257X.2021.2001028?casa_token=DZpVgJsDTr8AAAAA%3A_0C7JfRxA8HgMdJEXb4uz-Gcc3usX7mt592fl6xrGPUDmrNSAeUlkmh61jLilqPGe5oIPhm5SZ6R3Q [Accessed 20 May 2023]

Coskuner-Balli, G. (2013) Market practices of legitimization: Insights from Consumer Culture Theory, *Marketing Theory*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 193–211. Available online: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1470593113477888?casa_token=2UXQ5JZxvJ0AAAAA:6KdvotsaQAZWHxjQcl5vQd-f4_5ypn-Uap3hUnDTj_1SqE11GzwmZRMryjCoAIWuLkQ8u7DP7avD [Accessed 18 May 2023]

Creswell, J.W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*, 3rd edn, SAGE Publications Ltd.

Cruz, A. G. B. & Buchanan-Oliver, M. (2014), The Bittersweet Taste of Home: a Baudrillardian Interpretation of Nostalgic Food Consumption in Acculturation, *Advances in Consumer Research*, vol. 42, pp. 447-448, Available online: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Angela-Cruz-6/publication/280903147_The_Bittersweet_Taste_of_Home_A_Baudrillardian_Interpretation_of_Nostalgic_Food_Consumption_in_Acculturation/links/55d26ae608aec1b0429eeddf/The-Bittersweet-Taste-of-Home-A-Baudrillardian-Interpretation-of-Nostalgic-Food-Consumption-in-Acculturation.pdf [Accessed 23 May 2023]

Davis, F. (1979). *Yearning for yesterday: a sociology of nostalgia*. New York: Free Press

Deloitte. (2022). The Deloitte Global 2022 Gen Z and Millennial Survey, Available online: <https://www2.deloitte.com/se/sv/pages/about-deloitte/articles/genz-and-millennial-survey-2022.html> [Accessed 5 April 2023]

Durai, T. & Vidhya, J. (2019), Nostalgia in advertising: An effort to influence consumer buying decision, Available online: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331981661_Nostalgia_in_advertising_An_effort_to_influence_consumer_buying_decision [Accessed 20 May 2023]

Easterby-Smith, M., Jaspersen, L.J., Thorpe, R. & Valizade, D. (2021). *Management and Business Research*, 7th edn, SAGE Publications Ltd.

Elliott, R. & Wattanasuwan, K. (1998). Brands as symbolic resources for the construction of identity, *International Journal of Advertising*, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 131-144. Available online: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02650487.1998.11104712> [Accessed 6 May 2023]

Emontspool, J. & Kjeldgaard, D. (2012). Cultural Reflexivity and the Nostalgia for Glocal Consumer Culture: Insights from a Multicultural Multiple Migration Context, *Research in Consumer Behavior*, vol. 14, pp. 213-232, Available online: [https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/S0885-2111\(2012\)0000014015/full/html#idm45953921105568](https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/S0885-2111(2012)0000014015/full/html#idm45953921105568) [Accessed 3 April 2023]

Firat, A. F., & Venkatesh, A. (1995). Liberatory postmodernism and the reenchantment of consumption, *Journal of consumer research*, vol. 22, no. 3, pp. 239-267. Available online: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2489612.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Ad847f23799d06a7995953763725df6d4&ab_segments=&origin=&initiator=&acceptTC=1 [Accessed 5 May 2023]

Flick, U. (2023). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, 7th edn, London: SAGE Publications.

Gabriel, Y. & Lang, T. (2015). *The Unmanageable Consumer: Contemporary Consumption and its Fragmentation*, London: SAGE Publications.

Gandini, A. (2020). *Zeitgeist Nostalgia: On populism, work and the 'good life'*, John Hunt Publishing.

Gemignani, I. (2022). GEN Z'S OBSESSION WITH NOSTALGIA RUNS DEEPER THAN YOU THINK, Available online: <https://www.hercampus.com/life/gen-z-nostalgia/> [Accessed 5 May 2023]

Goffman, E. (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, London: Penguin Books.

Goulding, C. (1999). Heritage, nostalgia, and the "grey" consumer. *Journal of marketing practice: applied marketing science*, vol 5, no. 6/7/8, pp. 177-199, Available online: <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/EUM0000000004573/full/html> [Accessed 14 May 2023]

Goulding, C. (2001). Romancing the Past: Heritage Visiting and the Nostalgic Consumer. *Psychology & Marketing*, vol. 18, no. 6, pp. 565–592, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/library> [Accessed 4 May 2023]

Goulding, C. (2002). An Exploratory Study of Age Related Vicarious Nostalgia and Aesthetic Consumption, *Advances in Consumer Research*, vol. 29, pp. 542-546, Available online: <https://eds.p.ebscohost.com/eds/detail/detail?vid=8&sid=e7cc835e-4050-45db-a625-4a20c736138b%40redis&bdata=JkF1dGhUeXBIPWlwLHVpZCZzaXRIPWVkcY1saXZlJnNjb3BIPXNpdGU%3d#AN=000180515900157&db=edswss> [Accessed 5 May 2023]

Haasch, P. (2019) New Coke is the weirdest pop culture throwback in Stranger Things 3, Available online:

<https://www.polygon.com/2019/7/6/20683542/stranger-things-3-new-coke-1985-coca-cola-where-to-buy> [Accessed 3 April 2023]

Hamilton, K., Edwards, S., Hammill, F., Wagner, B., & Wilson, J. (2014). Nostalgia in the twenty-first century, *Consumption Markets & Culture*, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 101-104, Available online: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10253866.2013.776303?casa_token=-TenPQrFOIMAAAAA:R3oZUQzYAgaaRBJNR1OhhWByleSy7vYifryJ6yh8hsKvI0IGK3cDXoRMMYy8UBPS-DedErDtFM0ZQ [Accessed 16 May 2023]

Hamilton, K., & Wagner, B. A. (2014), Commercialised nostalgia: Staging consumer experiences in small businesses, *European Journal of Marketing*, vol. 48, no. 5/6, pp. 813-832, Available online: https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/EJM-05-2012-0325/full/html?casa_token=RalRnha-JEMAAAAA:ahO2CvwiUG8mTb5cv8jmbUBEmWxBhcLtg3aGmmXDSUw7edp_ZHulP6Ax8jdvmWa2XijeIEu4jNHXdEE1QTzyD2_InJV2zF4Tp65qZCmSxzeeyYot9Wd [Accessed 4 May 2023]

Hartmann, B. J., & Brunk, K. H. (2015) Negotiating The Merger of Contrasting Consumer Cultures: Ideological Myth and Identity, *Advances in Consumer Research*, vol. 43, pp. 358–363, Available online: <https://search.ebscohost.com.ludwig.lub.lu.se/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=bth&AN=113467153&site=eds-live&scope=site> [Accessed 7 April 2023].

Hartmann, B. J., & Brunk, K. H. (2019). Nostalgia marketing and (re-) enchantment. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, vol. 36, no. 4, pp. 669-686, Available online: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S016781161930028X?casa_token=UH1u0Kw93kMAAAAA:Zlq8Z35hz7qIGiOwlkJ6VTKWFHw0VgWcs9j92taEV80tonfueVeDhgT7ul6Z Nou_OPIp4s3s [Accessed 14 May 2023]

Havlena, W. J., & Holak, S. L. (1991). The Good Old Days: Observations on Nostalgia and Its Role in Consumer Behavior, *ACR North American Advances*, vol. 18, pp. 323-329, Available online: <https://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/7180/volumes/> [Accessed 16 April 2023]

Hesterberg, K. (2021). 15 Ads That Prove Nostalgia Is a Powerful Marketing Tactic, Available online: <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/examples-nostalgia-marketing-ads> [Accessed 2 April 2023]

Hill, R. P. (1991). Homeless Women, Special Possessions, and the Meaning of Home: An Ethnographic Case Study, *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 18, pp. 298-310, Available online: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2489341> [Accessed 2 April 2023]

Hill, R. P. & Stamey, M. (1990). The Homeless in America: An Examination of Possessions and Consumption Behaviors, *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 17, pp. 303-21 Available online: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2626797> [Accessed 17 May 2023]

Holak, S. L., & Havlena, W. J. (1992). Nostalgia: An exploratory study of themes and emotions in the nostalgic experience, *ACR North American Advances*, Available online:

https://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/7324/volumes/v19/NA-19?utm_source=prince%20george%20citizen&utm_campaign=prince%20george%20citizen%3A%20outbound&utm_medium=referral [Accessed 17 May 2023]

Holbrook, M. B. (1993). Nostalgia and consumption preferences: Some emerging patterns of consumer tastes. *Journal of Consumer research*, vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 245-256, Available online: <https://academic.oup.com/jcr/article-abstract/20/2/245/1793090> [Accessed 2 April 2023]

Holbrook, M. B. & Schindler, R. M. (1991). Echoes of the dear departed past: Some work in progress on nostalgia, *ACR North American Advances*, Available online: <https://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/7181/volumes/v18/NA-18/full> [Accessed 6 April 2023]

Holbrook, M. B. & Schindler R. M. (2003). Nostalgic bonding: Exploring the role of nostalgia in the consumption experience, *Journal of Consumer Behaviour: An International Research Review*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 107-127, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/library> [Accessed 9 May 2023]

Holt, D. B. (2002). Why Do Brands Cause Trouble? A Dialectical Theory of Consumer Culture and Branding, *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 29, no. 1, pp. 70–90, Available online: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/339922> [Accessed 9 May 2023]

Holt, D. B. (2004). How brands become icons: The principles of cultural branding, Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing Corporation.

Holt, D. B. (2006). Jack Daniel's America Iconic brands as ideological parasites and proselytizers, SAGE Publications, vol. 6, no. 3, pp. 355–377. Available online: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1469540506068683?casa_token=l-w8ANq8jb4AAAAA:OCMxmqsLnb29M9rSqHHIN9e8h3UTNwfl_Av7gk_CXcB5zXMrbaz-ozv0ig7hQoAowLZyWtHhCgk [Accessed 4 May 2023]

Iyer, S. (2023), Where “born in the wrong generation” grows problematic, Available online: <https://bestofsno.com/61679/opinions/where-born-in-the-wrong-generation-grows-problematic/> [Accessed 19 April 2023]

Johar, G. V., Holbrook, M. B., & Stern, B. B. (2001). The role of myth in creative advertising design: Theory, process and outcome, *Journal of Advertising*, 30(2), 1-25. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00913367.2001.10673634> [Accessed 4 May 2023]

Ju, I., Kim, J., Chang, M. J., & Bluck, S. (2016). Nostalgic marketing, perceived self-continuity, and consumer decisions, *Management Decision*, vol. 54, no. 8, Available online: https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/MD-11-2015-0501/full/html?casa_token=wESRckqjVUAAAAA:y8Q3Q1_2eNEKH-96mgRVnITUqqAP_mP640mz1LN38b9ij6lJWCQt2aqTnpo1b48QAYxkIQppPdJfbVtG-zCFByiO854hz94t_Uq2E1SpLvDL0iYkj3N1 [Accessed 23 April 2023]

Jun, S. Y., Park, H. K., & Kim, K. H. (2022). The effects of nostalgia marketing on consumers' brand extension evaluation, *Journal of Brand Management*, vol. 29, no. 3, pp. 271-286, Available online: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/s41262-021-00264-4> [Accessed 20 April 2023]

Kemp, S. (2023), DIGITAL 2023: GLOBAL OVERVIEW REPORT, Available online: <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-global-overview-report> [Accessed 20 April 2023]

Kessous, A. (2015). Nostalgia and brands: a sweet rather than a bitter cultural evocation of the past, *Journal of marketing management*, vol. 31, no. 17-18, pp. 1899-1923, Available online: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/0267257X.2015.1088889> [Accessed 22 May 2023]

Larsen, G. & Patterson, M. (2018). Consumer identity projects. In; Kravets, O. Maclaran, P. & Miles, S (eds.), *The SAGE handbook of consumer culture*, pp. 194-213, Available online: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/322868438_Consumer_Identity_Projects [Accessed 6 May 2023]

Lasaleta J. D., Werle, C. O. C. & Yamim A. P. (2021). Nostalgia makes people eat healthier, *Appetite*, vol. 162, Available online: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/ludwig.lub.lu.se/science/article/pii/S0195666321000945?via%3Dihub> [Accessed 6 May 2023]

Luedicke, M., Giesler, M. & Thompson, C.J. (2010). Consumer Identity Work as Moral Protagonism: How Myth and Ideology Animate a Brand-Mediated Moral Conflict, *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 36, no. 6, pp. 1016-1032, Available online: <https://academic.oup.com/jcr/article-abstract/36/6/1016/1859392> [Accessed 23 April 2023]

Marchegiani, C. & Phau, I. (2010). Away from "Unified Nostalgia": Conceptual Differences of Personal and Historical Nostalgia Appeals in Advertising, *Journal of Promotion Management*, vol. 16, no. 1-2, pp. 80-95, Available online: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/10496490903572991?needAccess=true&role=button> [Accessed 20 April 2023]

Marchegiani, C. & Phau, I. (2011). The value of historical nostalgia for marketing management, *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, vol. 29, no. 2, pp. 108-122, Available online: <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/02634501111117575/full/html#idm46097734530848> [Accessed 20 April 2023]

Marchegiani, C. & Phau, I. (2012). The effect of music on consumers' nostalgic responses towards advertisements under personal, historical and non-nostalgic conditions, *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*, vol. 22, no. 1, pp. 27-53, Available online: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09593969.2011.618885> [Accessed 4 May 2023]

Marchegiani, C. & Phau, I. (2013). Personal and historical nostalgia—A comparison of common emotions, *Journal of Global Marketing*, vol. 26, no. 3, pp. 137-146, Available online:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/08911762.2013.804617> [Accessed 15 April 2023]

Marcoux, J.-S. (2017). Souvenirs to Forget, *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 43, no. 6, pp. 950–969, Available online: <https://eds-p-ebSCOhost-com.ludwig.lub.lu.se/eds/detail/detail?vid=4&sid=48d2f3d2-ddd9-4440-87b5-191a61039b91%40redis&bdata=JkF1dGhUeXBIPWlwLHVpZCZzaXRIPWVkcY1saXZlJnNjb3BIPXNpdGU%3d#AN=122289224&db=bth> [Accessed 15 May 2023]

McCracken, G. (1986). Culture and consumption: A theoretical account of the structure and movement of the cultural meaning of consumer goods, *Journal of consumer research*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 71-84, Available online: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2489287.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Afa337efc847605824da4648f95271df3&ab_segments=&origin=&initiator=&acceptTC=1 [Accessed 4 May 2023]

Merriam-Webster (n.d.). Zeitgeist, *Merriam-Webster*, Available online: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/zeitgeist> [Accessed 4 May 2023]

Muehling, D. D. (2013). The relative influence of advertising-evoked personal and historical nostalgic thoughts on consumers' brand attitudes, *Journal of Marketing Communications*, vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 98-113, Available online: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13527266.2011.560613> [Accessed 20 April 2023]

Muehling, D. D., & Pascal, V. (2011). An Empirical Investigation of the Differential Effects of Personal, Historical, and Non-Nostalgic Advertising on Consumer Responses, *Journal of advertising*, vol. 40, no. 2, pp. 107-122, Available online: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.2753/JOA0091-3367400208?casa_token=A-kPZIDhaVEAAAAA:p05vdDtZ3mV_1_qQ3536VRx9VHclxFx-T5ox-4jJLYBLbfW5Z0qhL2xkjqc4YzzZBJN-0Q-T6ey2eq [Accessed 24 April 2023]

Muehling, D. D., & Sprott, D. E. (2004). THE POWER OF REFLECTION: An Empirical Examination of Nostalgia Advertising Effects, *Journal of Advertising*, vol. 33, no. 3, pp. 25-35, Available online: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/epdf/10.1080/00913367.2004.10639165?needAccess=true&role=button> [Accessed 4 May 2023]

Muehling, D. D., Sprott, D. E. & Pascal, V. (2002). The Influence of Evoked Nostalgia on Consumers' Responses to Advertising: An Exploratory Study, *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising*, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 39-47, Available online: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10641734.2002.10505126> [Accessed 3 April 2023]

Muehling, D. D., Sprott, D. E., & Sultan, A. J. (2014). Exploring the boundaries of nostalgic advertising effects: A consideration of childhood brand exposure and attachment on consumers' responses to nostalgia-themed advertisements, *Journal of Advertising*, vol. 43, no. 1, pp. 73-84, Available online:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00913367.2013.815110> [Accessed 20 April 2023]

Natterer, K. (2014). How and why to measure personal and historical nostalgic responses through entertainment media, *International Journal on Media Management*, vol. 16, no. 3-4, pp. 161-180, Available online:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14241277.2014.989567> [Accessed 4 May 2023]

Oberlo (2023). TIKTOK AGE DEMOGRAPHICS, Available online:

<https://www.oberlo.com/statistics/tiktok-age-demographics> [Accessed 6 April 2023]

Pineda, A., Sanz-Marcos, P. & Gordillo-Rodríguez, M.T. (2020). Branding, culture, and political ideology: Spanish patriotism as the identity myth of an iconic brand, *Journal of Consumer Culture*, pp. 1-21, Available online:

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1469540519899977> [Accessed 5 April 2023]

Rana, S., Raut, S. K., Prashar, S., & Quttainah, M. A. (2020). The transversal of nostalgia from psychology to marketing: What does it portend for future research?, *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, vol. 30, no. 4, pp. 899-932, Available online:

https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/IJOA-03-2020-2097/full/html?utm_campaign=Emerald_HR_PPV_November22_RoN [Accessed 16 April 2023]

Reisenwitz, T. H., Iyer, R., & Cutler, B. (2004). Nostalgia Advertising and the Influence of Nostalgia Proneness. *Marketing Management Journal*, vol. 14, no. 2, pp. 55-66, Available through: LUSEM Library website <http://www.lusem.lu.se/library> [Accessed 4 April 2023]

Rennstam, J. & Wästerfors, D. (2018). Analyze! Crafting your data in qualitative research, Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Rutherford, J., & Shaw, E. H. (2011). What was old is new again: The history of nostalgia as a buying motive in consumption behavior. *Proceedings of the Conference on Historical Analysis and Research in Marketing*, vol. 15, pp. 157-166.

Schau, H. J. (2000), Consumer Imagination, Identity and Self-Expression, *Advances in Consumer Research*, vol. 27, pp. 50-56, Available online:

<https://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/8358/volumes/v27/NA-27/full> [Accessed 16 April 2023]

Schau, H. J. (2018). Identity Projects and the Marketplace, in Arnould, E. J. & Thompson C. J (eds.), *Consumer Culture Theory*, London: SAGE, pp. 26-40.

Schau, H. J., & Gilly, M. C. (2003). We are what we post? Self-presentation in personal web space, *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 30, no.3, pp. 385-404, Available online:

https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/10.1086/378616.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A3f436a639435c788d01607859983e47d&ab_segments=&origin=&initiator= [Accessed 20 May 2023]

Schau, H. J., Gilly, M. C., & Wolfenbarger, M. (2009). Consumer Identity Renaissance: The Resurgence of Identity-Inspired Consumption in Retirement, *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 36, no. 2, pp. 255–276, Available online: <https://academic.oup.com/jcr/article-abstract/36/2/255/1942851> [Accessed 7 May 2023]

Schouten, J. W., & McAlexander, J. H. (1995). Subcultures of consumption: An ethnography of the new bikers, *Journal of consumer research*, vol. 22, no. 1, pp. 43-61, Available online: <https://academic.oup.com/jcr/article-abstract/22/1/43/1808114?login=false> [Accessed 5 May 2023]

Sierra, J. J., & McQuitty, S. (2007). Attitudes and emotions as determinants of nostalgia purchases: an application of social identity theory. *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 99-112. Available online: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/10.2753/MTP1069-6679150201> [Accessed 5 May 2023]

Smith, J.A., & Pietkiewicz, I. (2014). A practical guide to using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis in qualitative research psychology, *Journal of Psychology*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 7-14, Available online: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263767248_A_practical_guide_to_using_Interpretative_Phenomenological_Analysis_in_qualitative_research_psychology [Accessed 20 April 2023]

Solomon, M. R. (1983). The Role of Products as Social Stimuli: A Symbolic Interactionism Perspective, *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 319–329, Available online: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259891993_The_Role_of_Products_as_Social_Stimuli [Accessed 10 April 2023]

Stern, B. (1992). Historical and Personal Nostalgia in Advertising Text: The Fin de siècle Effect, *Journal of Advertising*, vol. 21, no. 4, pp. 11-22, Available online: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/4188854.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A0891d92153013b81692a66c0e975485c&ab_segments=&origin=&initiator=&acceptTC=1 [Accessed 5 May 2023]

Stern, B. (1995). Consumer Myths: Frye's Taxonomy and the Structural Analysis of Consumption Text, *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 165-185, Available online: https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2489810.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Ac9275ed76d58a7a210fa6e16c883a439&ab_segments=&origin=&initiator=&acceptTC=1 [Accessed 9 April 2023]

Sweeney, E. (2019). Walmart's famous cars Golden Globes ad racks up 8K mentions, analysis finds. <https://www.marketingdive.com/news/walmarts-famous-cars-golden-globes-ad-racks-up-8k-mentions-analysis-finds/545464/> [Accessed 5 May 2023]

Södergren, J. (2022). The Viking myth: nostalgia and collective guilt, *Consumption Markets & Culture*, vol. 25, no. 5, pp. 449-468, Available online: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10253866.2022.2054807> [Accessed 10 April 2023]

- Thompson, C. J. (2004). Marketplace mythology and discourses of power, *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 31, no. 1, pp. 162-180, Available online: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/383432> [Accessed 21 April 2023]
- Thompson, C. J., & Hirschman, E. C. (1995). Understanding the socialized body: A poststructuralist analysis of consumers' self-conceptions, body images, and self-care practices, *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 139-153, Available online: <https://academic.oup.com/jcr/article-abstract/22/2/139/1822499?login=false> [Accessed 20 April 2023]
- Thompson, C. J., & Tambyah, S. K. (1999). Trying to Be Cosmopolitan, *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 26, no. 3, pp. 214–241, Available online: <https://academic.oup.com/jcr/article-abstract/26/3/214/1815357> [Accessed 4 April 2023]
- Thompson, C., & Tian, K. (2008). Reconstructing the south: How commercial myths compete for identity value through the ideological shaping of popular memories and counter-memories, *Journal of consumer research*, vol. 34, no. 5, pp. 595-613, Available online: <https://academic.oup.com/jcr/article-abstract/34/5/595/1794507> [Accessed 21 April 2023]
- Verma, A., & Rajendran, G. (2017). The effect of historical nostalgia on tourists' destination loyalty intention: an empirical study of the world cultural heritage, *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, vol. 22, no. 9, pp. 977-990, Available online: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10941665.2017.1357639> [Accessed 20 May 2023]
- Vignolles, A., & Pichon, P. E. (2014). A taste of nostalgia: Links between nostalgia and food consumption, *Qualitative market research: an international journal*, vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 225-238, Available online: <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/QMR-06-2012-0027/full/html?journalCode=qmr> [Accessed 15 May 2023]
- Wallendorf, M., & Arnould, E. J. (1988). "My favorite things": A cross-cultural inquiry into object attachment, possessiveness, and social linkage, *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 14, no. 4, pp. 531-547, Available online: <https://academic.oup.com/jcr/article-abstract/14/4/531/1811977> [Accessed 10 April 2023]
- Weber, T. B. B. and Francisco Maffezzoli, E. C. (2022). Naive, connected, and counselor tween girl identity groups: Consumption practices and social identity constructions within consumer culture, *Journal of Consumer Culture*, vol. 22, no. 3, pp. 781–800, Available online: <https://eds-p-ebSCOhost-com.ludwig.lub.lu.se/eds/detail/detail?vid=6&sid=4b8c273b-bdb9-41c6-8754-d90f42faf78b%40redis&bdata=JkF1dGhUeXBIPWlwLHVpZCZzaXRIPWVkcY1saXZlJnNjb3BIPXNpdGU%3d#AN=158632031&db=a9h> [Accessed 5 April 2023]
- Youn, S., & Jin, S. V. (2017). Reconnecting with the past in social media: The moderating role of social influence in nostalgia marketing on Pinterest, *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, vol. 16, no. 6, pp. 565-576, Available online: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/cb.1655?casa_token=krDyFXH7a6EAAAAA:

[7EKxAj5wNeDSRkSBGXKf2L8MXUVEpx4ZliCFQxN8WpI2OwVrVp7K_LcldtsS0rPnyGykuDyZPw3YxTo](#) [Accessed 20 April 2023]

Üstüner, T., & Holt, D. B. (2007). Dominated consumer acculturation: The social construction of poor migrant women's consumer identity projects in a Turkish squatter, *Journal of consumer research*, vol. 34, no. 1, pp. 41-56, Available online: <https://academic.oup.com/jcr/article-abstract/34/1/41/1787195> [Accessed 21 April 2023]

Appendix A: Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Introduction:

My name is [name] and I am conducting a consumer study with my partner for our master's thesis at Lund University. The aim of the study is to understand how young consumers construct their identities based on nostalgia.

I will be recording this interview in audio format for us to revisit and review the material later. This will ensure that we have captured and reflected your information in a rightful way. We will do a transcription of the recorded material, but both the recording and the transcription will be deleted once we have received our grades. We would like to emphasize that all the respondents will remain anonymous, and only my partner and I will have access to the recordings and your personal details. At any point during the interview, you may choose to stop the interview or refuse to answer specific questions. To start, may I ask if you are willing to participate in this study? Do you have any questions before we start?

Personal background:

Age, gender, occupation (eg. working, student, jobseeker)?

Section one: Show nostalgic commercials

Walmart:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ob5AMPppU6gn>

Question 1:

What did you think about the commercial?

- Proposal on follow-up question: Was there anything about the commercial that you particularly liked or disliked? Why/why not?

Question 2:

What did this ad mean to you?/How did it make you feel?

Question 3:

What came into your mind when you saw this ad? Name three such things.

Question 4:

Can you recall/think of an incident/example that this reminded you of?

→ How do you think the ad influenced your thoughts/feelings about this?

Stranger Things X Coca-Cola:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xe3GjCgVUdM>

Question 5:

What did you think about the commercial?

→ Proposal on follow-up question: Was there anything about the commercial that you particularly liked or disliked? Why/why not?

Question 6:

What did this ad mean to you?/How did it make you feel?

Question 7:

After watching the ad, do you think it makes you want to have that Coke? Why/why not?

Question 8:

Can you tell me about other shows like this that you have enjoyed (Shows from another time-era)?

- What particular aspects of these shows are appealing to you?
- Why do you think tv-shows like Stranger Things and Bridgerton, which take place in another time period, are popular among young consumers?

Tiktok videos:

Born early 2000:

https://www.tiktok.com/@inavelsbarnet/video/7102686881460047109?_r=1&t=8bZufn3Wsab

Late 90's:

https://www.tiktok.com/@gravycake/video/7110606747353795846?_r=1&t=8blJHmO02SB

Question 9:

Can you relate to this video?/How did it make you feel?

Question 10:

If they recognized the things: Do you feel like these products/experiences are a part of your childhood and you?

- If Yes: Can you tell me more about this?
- If no: What did you think about when you watched this?

Section two: General questions regarding nostalgia and identity creation

Question 11:

What does the word nostalgia mean to you?

Question 12:

Do you remember seeing anything on any media (social, web, tv, or otherwise) or IRL that made you think about something in your past?

→ Can you describe how it made you feel and why you think you felt that way?

Question 13:

Besides the advertisements you recently viewed, can you think of any own experience with nostalgia consumption/marketing?

→ If yes: Can you describe this experience?

→ If not: try to get the respondent to speak freely about the subject. Give some examples of nostalgic products such as the Polaroid camera, pokemon go, the office/friends, Y2K fashion (juicy couture, 90's fashion), Nintendo, Gameboy

Question 14:

Are there any brands or products that you can think of that you associate with nostalgia?

Question 15:

From your perspective, what are the primary factors that make nostalgia in marketing or consumption appealing/not appealing to you personally?

Question 16:

Do you think there is a difference in the effect of nostalgia marketing and consumption between age groups?

→ Why/Why not?

→ Why do you think it means so much to your own age group?

Question 17:

Do you think there is a difference in what kind of nostalgic products different age groups purchase, and why they purchase them?

Question 18:

Are there any specific driving forces/events that you feel have influenced the way people experience and express nostalgia?

Closing questions**Question 19:**

Lastly, do you have something you would like to add?

Thank you so much for your participation, your answers have aided us greatly and will be of great use to our thesis. Bye!