



Impact of emotional marketing: Exploring the influence of nostalgia marketing on generation z  
fast food purchases

Graduating Project

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Rennes, France

2024



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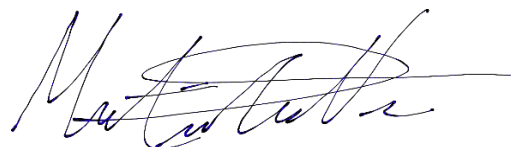
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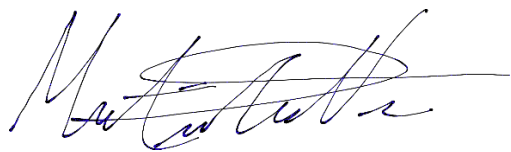


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## Glossary

**Nostalgia marketing:** A type of emotional marketing that seeks to awaken feelings of nostalgia in the target audience to influence their purchasing decisions.

**Emotional marketing:** A marketing strategy that focuses on connecting emotionally with consumers to generate lasting bonds and loyalty towards the brand or product.

**Loyalty:** Customer commitment to a brand or product, which manifests itself in a continued preference and repeat purchase.

**Positive connections:** Favorable emotional bonds that consumers develop towards a brand or product, which can influence their purchasing decisions.

**Value perception:** The subjective perception that a consumer has about the value or benefit of a product in relation to its price.

**Purchase decision:** The process by which a consumer chooses to purchase a product or service after evaluating their options and the influence of external factors, such as emotions or marketing.

Consumer behavior: The study of how individuals decide to spend their available resources on goods and services, influenced by personal, cultural, social and psychological factors.

Marketing strategies: Set of actions planned by a company to promote and sell its products or services effectively, attracting and retaining customers.

## Abstract

Marketing has always had as one of its main challenges devising strategies to appropriately impact potential customers to stimulate demand for a certain product. There are several types of marketing that exist, with nostalgia marketing being a type of emotional marketing that aims to awaken nostalgia as an emotion in the target audience to influence their decisions. The effectiveness of nostalgia marketing can be measured from several angles, among others: The degree of loyalty, positive connections, the perception of the value of the product and the purchasing decision that it can generate in potential customers.

This study evaluated how emotional marketing based on nostalgia impacts generation Z in the fast-food industry for a given market. It considers as study variables: The degree of loyalty, positive connections, the perception of the value of the product and the purchase decision with respect to the type of marketing. It initiates with a presentation of the state of the art of theoretical studies by several authors who develop the topic. A methodology for data collection through a survey that is applied to final grades (Secondary) students at the Gustavo Morales School in the city of Bogotá is also presented, justified and executed.

The results obtained were analyzed using the statistical software SPSS and SmartPLS4. In this way, it was possible to measure the coherence of the results to find that

the data obtained positively prove the hypotheses raised at the beginning of the study. The study proves statistically that emotional marketing based on nostalgia impacts generation z according to the variables established above. Additionally, the segmentation of the impact on the clusters identified in the study allows choosing combinations of marketing types to design more effective strategies to achieve the expected result in the marketing campaigns directed at these fast-food customers.

### **Keywords**

Nostalgia marketing, Emotional connection, Purchase decision, Customer affinity, Fast food industry, Generation Z, Consumer behavior, Marketing strategies.

## Resumen

El marketing siempre ha tenido como uno de sus principales desafíos idear estrategias que impacten adecuadamente a los clientes potenciales para estimular la demanda de un determinado producto. Existen varios tipos de marketing, siendo el marketing de nostalgia un tipo de marketing emocional que busca despertar la nostalgia como emoción en el público objetivo para influir en sus decisiones. La efectividad del marketing de nostalgia puede medirse desde varios ángulos, entre otros: el grado de lealtad, conexiones positivas, la percepción del valor del producto y la decisión de compra que puede generar en los clientes potenciales.

Este estudio evaluó cómo el marketing emocional basado en la nostalgia impacta a la generación Z en la industria de la comida rápida para un mercado específico. Considera como variables de estudio: el grado de lealtad, las conexiones positivas, la percepción del valor del producto y la decisión de compra con respecto al tipo de marketing. Se inicia con una presentación del estado del arte de estudios teóricos de varios autores que desarrollan el tema. También se presenta, justifica y ejecuta una metodología para la recolección de datos a través de una encuesta aplicada a los estudiantes de grado final (secundaria) del Colegio Gustavo Morales en la ciudad de Bogotá.

Los resultados obtenidos fueron analizados utilizando el software estadístico SPSS y SmartPLS4. De esta manera, se pudo medir la coherencia de los resultados para encontrar que los datos obtenidos demuestran positivamente las hipótesis planteadas al inicio del estudio. El

estudio prueba estadísticamente que el marketing emocional basado en la nostalgia impacta a la generación Z de acuerdo con las variables establecidas anteriormente. Adicionalmente, la segmentación del impacto en los clústeres identificados en el estudio permite elegir combinaciones de tipos de marketing para diseñar estrategias más efectivas y lograr el resultado esperado en las campañas de marketing dirigidas a estos clientes de comida rápida.

### **Palabras clave**

Marketing de nostalgia, Conexión emocional, Decisión de compra, Afinidad del cliente, Industria de comida rápida, Generación Z, Comportamiento del consumidor, Estrategias de marketing.

## 1. Introduction

In the past, the meaning of nostalgia was associated as a negative feeling, as if it were almost as like an illness in the psychological field, being synonymous with depression or melancholy (Kazlauske & Gineikiene, 2017). This definition took a radical turn in 1979, when the sociologist Fred Davis through his book “Yearning for yesterday” describing nostalgia as a positive feeling, which gave way to the fact that today nostalgia is no longer considered as a state of mood and is attributed as a preference, a desire for an idealized past to which feelings of pleasure are attributed (Khan, K., & Hussainy, S. K, 2019). Being then this past a previous position located in any part of time where there was a preference towards certain things, places, and people, generating in the individual feelings of pleasure, happiness, or longing for what is known or common.

Precisely making use of this preference, nostalgia plays an important role in the way marketing communication can be carried out since it is directly related to consumers' emotions (Şeniz, Akkaya, 2020). Through these emotions, emotional marketing is defined, as a strategy that aims to evoke emotions in the target market and intends that these emotions are positive, thus associating itself with a brand or company (Pribadi, R. Rivai & Suharto, 2020). This strategy turns out to be very effective since it appeals to feelings, especially positive ones, pretending to evoke memories within the consumer through a stimulus, activating this preference and finally driving them to purchase behavior.

An appropriate marketing strategy can drive the consumer's purchasing decision. This strategy is useful to determine the economic value of a company, its goods, and services. Furthermore, this strategy is a way to achieve the company's objectives since the sales potential of a proposal is limited to the number of people who know about it (Pribadi, R. Rivai & Suharto, 2020). Hence, when nostalgia marketing is used correctly, this strategy allows not only to contribute to obtaining significant revenue for a company but also to help build and maintain a base of loyal consumers (Özhan, Akkaya, 2020). The importance of customer acquisition turns out to be useful in the fast food industry; in a market saturated with competitors, it is vitally important to have an impact with an effective marketing strategy, which turns out to be a differentiating factor. Using nostalgia marketing, these food products can provoke nostalgic emotions and memories associated with significant events, which translates into a purchasing preference that can increase the company's revenue.

Based on the above, the following document will explore different studies related to emotional marketing, mainly, the one that evokes nostalgia and how this seems to have a positive influence on the consumer's mind, according to the literature consulted, different hypotheses that will be studied through the characterization of the population (generation Z), to which a survey was applied, whose results were analyzed by means of the software's SPSS and SmartPLS4 to determine how marketing that evokes nostalgia has an impact on this population when purchasing products offered by fast food chains. Finally, these results were reviewed based on the proposed methodology, obtaining clarifying conclusions for each given hypothesis.

## 1.1 Justification of the Project

The fast-food industry, being one of the largest, has seen how consumer preferences have changed, particularly those of generation Z who, due to being born in a more modern world, have preferences that require a deeper understanding. Investigating the impact of emotional marketing strategies, specifically those that evoke nostalgia, in this demographic market is essential due to its great influence and magnitude.

This entire study is important because it will help companies adapt to the changing preferences of their consumers using emotional marketing, specifically the one which evokes nostalgia towards new generations. At the same time, it will be possible to determine whether nostalgia marketing effectively affects the consumer's purchasing decision, among other factors, such as: cultivating loyalty, increasing brand recognition and customer engagement. The above will help different brands to be able to embrace a different approach to obtain these benefits that will allow them to continue growing in this new and changing world.

## 1.2 Research Question

Marketing has been evolving over the years just like people because we are now in a digital age where new generations are more difficult to satisfy in terms of the expectations they have, so companies must follow this evolution looking for new ways to connect with its customers to continue promoting their loyalty and attraction. In this way, by understanding the emotions that influence purchasing decisions, such as the emotion of nostalgia, which is one of the strongest and has the greatest impact on human beings, companies can achieve better development in their marketing strategies.

On the other hand, the fast-food industry is one of the largest today, which encompasses many brands that have been durable over time because they have implemented emotional marketing to continue standing out in the market. In this way, by studying and deepening whether emotional marketing strategies, specifically those that evoke nostalgia, affect the customer's purchasing decision, taking the fast-food industry as an example, significant conclusions can be drawn so that other companies or even other industries know how and if it is beneficial to adopt emotional marketing within their brands. In addition, it can be determined if emotional marketing ends up affecting consumer purchasing decisions and in the same way affects other factors, such as: their emotional connection with the brand, if it helps customer loyalty or if it encourages brand differentiation. In essence, the central question of this research is:

How do emotional marketing strategies, specifically those that evoke nostalgia, impact Generation Z's fast food industry product purchasing decisions?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Fast Food History

The need for food has been a concern that human beings have had for more than 35,000 years, food governed by the human and social context of the time in question in our current society, food is part of a big business, which is why its production has been industrialized and adapted to the needs people demands (B. Bogin, 1998). Our modern society demands speed and convenience in our food and for these fast foods are seen as a solution. Since 1950 in the United States, recognized fast food chains industrialized their food preparation process to respond to the rapidly growing lifestyles after the war, where productivity was increasing, being the convenience and competitive prices offered by Fast food chains a determinant factor of this form of food to be included in the lives of Americans (E. Tillotson, 2008). This differentiating factor of fast food endures in modern times, being a globally accepted way of eating and with a wide variety of options. This is where companies must devise a way to impact most of the target market so that they include in their daily diet the products offered.

## **2.2 Emotional Marketing and Fast Food**

In search of this differentiating factor is where emotional marketing or branding has its place, whose strategy is carried out by trying to target the emotional aspects of consumers by generating a positive association. A well-structured emotional marketing strategy can form sufficiently strong bonds and create personal connections with consumers (Pribadi, R. Rivai & Suharto, 2020). The progressive increase in food brands worldwide, coupled with an increase in consumer sensitivity regarding food marketing, has made it almost mandatory to understand and respect consumers' emotions when formulating strategies such as emotional marketing (Kashif, Awang, Walsh & Altaf, 2015). In the modern era it is important to know the motivations and beliefs of consumers, especially when talking about fast food since this type of feeding can be perceived as something negative, this is where emotional marketing can take part, beyond their convictions.

## **2.3 Social Context of Generation Z**

It is clear that the marketing used in previous generations is different from our time, mainly due to the socioeconomic context of each period, allowing the environment to shape in some way the passions, convictions and thoughts of consumers. In generation Z, a

generation that refers to people born after the emergence of the world wide web, from the mid-1990s to the beginning of the 2000s, this social context has its characteristics, especially knowledge of technology and of the Global world (Wood, S. 2013). That is why to apply a marketing strategy in this population group, its main characteristics and behaviors must be identified (Figure 1), along with a determining factor: technological advance and global connectivity. Generation Z spends a significant amount of time on social media and video platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, and YouTube, searching for engaging content of interest to them.

However, exposure to these platforms does not necessarily involve a high retention time on ads. According to a study by Alison Munch, it has been shown that digital advertising that evokes emotions has the potential to capture the attention of Generation Z, the majority of respondents reported that a digital ad that provokes an emotion is very likely to motivate them to pay attention to it, thus increasing their exposure to the message (Munch, A. 2021). This shows that the way to impact this generation is aligned with the objectives of emotional marketing, finding a place therefor marketing that evokes nostalgia.

**Figure 1.***Main characteristics of generation z*

Integrity	Openness
Honesty	Creativity
Fairness	Open-Mindedness
Loyalty	Humor
Responsibility	Curiosity
Judgment	Sense of Adventure
	Spontaneity
	Perspective-Taking
	Tolerance
Tenacity	Care
Eagerness	Understanding Others
Hard work	Thoughtfulness
Motivation	Compassion
Determination	Kindness
Competition	
Drive	

*Note.* The figure presents a model to describe the characteristics of Gen Z. Source Seemiller, C., & Grace, M. (2018). *Generation Z: A Century in the Making* (1st ed.) [Figure]. Routledge. From: <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429442476>

**2.4 Positive Connections Towards the Brand**

Extracting or creating a nostalgia factor in the product is a determining factor to generate the desired feelings, however it is not only about generating it but also about using this factor to generate long-term business, giving the brand a meaning, therefore, the consumer behavior model can be a guide to structure emotional marketing strategies oriented towards the generation Z. This model tells us that consumer behavior is divided into three reaction processes, the emotional reaction, the cognitive reaction and the behavioral. The emotional reaction awakens the inner memory through direct or indirect contact with the product, associating it with diversity, people and/or events. The cognitive reaction, in this case nostalgia, by generating positive feelings, can inspire product preference by consumers,

who will then want to satisfy their emotional needs by consuming nostalgic products. The generation of these positive feelings will be investigated in the present study to find out whether emotional marketing that evokes nostalgia from the fast-food industry forms positive emotional connections with Generation Z towards the brand, for the above the next hypothesis emerged: **Positive brand connections are formed** Emotional nostalgia marketing, used in the fast-food industry, forms positive emotional connections with Generation Z towards the brand.

The behavioral reaction is the last stage, where people's attitude towards the past is linked to the purchase behavior of nostalgic products (Cui, R. 2015). In relation to generation Z and its affinity for technology, it is essential to participate in digital marketing, since consumers are exposed to this information at any time and place, with mobile devices being a platform for the development of relationships with consumers (Magbanua, C, et al. 2021). Fast food companies make use of consumer behavior to generate advertising content through the Internet, especially social networks, in this way creating feelings of nostalgia through their stories, these can create a connection between consumer and the brand, which can extend over time.

## 2.5 Product Perceived Value

Advertising influences consumers' cognitive attitudes towards brands, which leads to generating purchase intentions in them. It has been evidenced that advertising that generates nostalgia can have a greater impact on consumers' attitude towards advertising, purchase intention and the brand itself (Khan, K., & Hussainy, S. K, 2019). According to a study carried out by Angelica Espinoza, generation Z associates the term nostalgia with positive or ambivalent emotions, in addition, it is evident that this is the generation that has the highest consumption of industrialized food, associating fast food with moments of happiness in community, events or celebrations (Espinoza. A, 2021). Therefore, emotional marketing of nostalgia by appealing to positive emotions that evoke memories can generate in consumers a purchase intention guided by the remembrance of past moments, feeling part of it.

Several studies on nostalgia have shown that consumers' preferences are determined by objects or products that were popular when they were young, and these preferences are maintained throughout life. For example, the taste for music, food, movies, or vehicles is formed at an early age (Loveland, E. et al, 2010). Many companies use nostalgia marketing to position their products in the market, in this way they differentiate themselves from their competition, creating an emotional link between consumer and brand, influencing the purchasing preference of the product by connecting the consumer with past experiences (Rana, S. et al, 2022). It is necessary to evaluate the target market before applying a

nostalgia marketing strategy, this to target products that consumers may have consumed in the past, allowing the company to adapt to consumer preferences and generating the purchase intention arises through positive memories in relation to this preference. It is at this point that we will examine in this study how the Nostalgia emotional marketing positively influences the emotions of Generation Z, causing greater value to be generated towards the brand's products in the fast-food industry. In accordance with the previous statement, the next hypothesis is: **Increased perceived product value.** Emotional nostalgia marketing, used in the fast-food industry, influences the emotions of Generation Z, generating a higher perceived value for the brand's products. In other words, it generates price insensitivity.

## **2.6 Customer Affinity**

As has been shown, nostalgia marketing is an effective marketing strategy that directly impacts the consumer's subconscious, through the generation of memories that allude to the past, thus cultivating a purchase intention. According to research conducted in 2005, fast food television commercials appealed to nostalgia through the “good old days” when food was simple, tasty, and honest (Brewis. J & Jack Gavin, 2005). This strategy of appealing to nostalgia by remembering what fast food was like in the past was applied by the fast-food company “Whendy's” in its response to mass-produced frozen hamburgers. Through its “fresh never frozen” campaign, the company seeks to highlight the freshness of the meat in its

hamburgers. The word “freshness” is used by the brand to convey sensations of fresh and healthy foods, as they have been characterized since its foundation (Otto, N et al. 2022).

Another example of how fast-food companies make use of nostalgia marketing is applied by the McDonalds company, in its 2015 “Arch Enemies” campaign (this video is presented in the methodology because takes part of the survey), the brand uses animated characters that have been part of popular culture long ago, characters such as Batman and Joker, Mario and Browser, SpongeBob and Plankton, among others (Stash Magazine, 2015). The brand's purpose in bringing past characters that can be considered "Arch Enemies" to our times is to evoke feelings of nostalgia and tenderness as well as being in tune with its slogan "I'm lovin' it", reminding us that we all deserve some love. These examples are two different perspectives on how to apply marketing that evokes nostalgia, from “Whendy's” appealing to the freshness of the past, to “McDonald’s” bringing back iconic figures from the childhood of many of its consumers, where finally in any of the two examples it seeks to create that link between consumer and brand through nostalgia.

## **2.7 Brand Loyalty and Purchase Decision**

Emotional marketing that evokes nostalgia allows to generate positive feelings between consumer and brand. These feelings not only achieve a purchase intention, but brand loyalty

is also a consequence of this cognitive process, the greater the feeling of nostalgia that occurs towards a brand, the greater the consumer's loyalty (Rana, S et al. 2020). If the consumer has become familiar with the brand through the different stages of his life, his perception towards it in aspects of quality, trust and attitude in general will turn out to be positive, creating a relationship of loyalty that will be maintained over time. This is why part of the following study aims to answer this last statement, seeking to find out whether the emotional marketing that evokes nostalgia improves the customer affinity (loyalty and customer engagement) with the brand, among Generation Z in the fast-food industry, this being the next hypothesis: **Improvement in customer affinity with the brand.** Emotional nostalgia marketing, used in the fast-food industry, improves customer affinity (loyalty and customer engagement) with the brand in Generation Z.

Also, emotional marketing that evokes nostalgia can be a way for the consumer to feel part of something, allowing that apart from the exclusivity of the product or its price, the emotional link generated can differentiate the brand from the competition, even the "customer engagement" is considered more effective when applying this strategy than a relatively low price (Pribadi, R. Rivai & Suharto, 2020). A study conducted in 2010 demonstrated that brands that evoke nostalgia create positive cognitive and affective impacts, resulting in more favorable purchase intentions than brands that do not use nostalgia evoking marketing (Kessous and Roux, 2010). In short, emotional marketing that evokes nostalgia allows the consumer to create good memories, as well as a unique atmosphere towards the brand, which allows a positive relationship that increases perceived authenticity and loyalty over the years, which ultimately has an impact on the purchase intention of new and

frequent consumers. Based on the above literature, one of the purposes of this study is to find the relationship between the purchasing process in generation Z, derived from the use of nostalgia marketing by fast food brands, creating the last hypothesis: **Impact on purchase decision.** Emotional nostalgia marketing, used in the fast-food industry, affects Generation Z's purchase decision.

### 3. Hypothesis Formation

For the development of this study, four hypotheses have been formulated that will be tested and analyzed to solve the main research problem. It will be examined whether consumers are more likely to form positive connections, which influence them to buy products when the brand develops emotional marketing strategies that take advantage of nostalgic elements or, on the contrary, if this has no relationship with the consumers' purchasing process.

Additionally, it will be investigated if emotional nostalgic marketing, which is used by brands in the fast-food industry, also contributes to increase consumer loyalty and customer engagement. Likewise, it will be investigated whether brands in the fast-food industry adopting this emotional marketing approach of nostalgia will cause the customer to experience positive emotions and generate a higher perception of value towards the brand. These were the hypotheses developed for this study:

- **Hypothesis 1. Positive brand connections are formed.** Emotional nostalgia marketing, used in the fast-food industry, forms positive emotional connections with Generation Z towards the brand.
- **Hypothesis 2. Impact on purchase decision.** Emotional nostalgia marketing, used in the fast-food industry, affects Generation Z's purchase decision.

- **Hypothesis 3. Improvement in customer affinity with the brand.** Emotional nostalgia marketing, used in the fast-food industry, improves customer affinity (loyalty and customer engagement) with the brand in Generation Z.
- **Hypothesis 4. Increased perceived product value.** Emotional nostalgia marketing, used in the fast-food industry, influences the emotions of Generation Z, generating a higher perceived value for the brand's products. In other words, it generates price insensitivity.

## 4. Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the methodology used, focused on the quantitative part and a cross-sectional study will be carried out to find the answer to the question and understand if indeed emotional marketing, specifically the one which evokes nostalgia, can influence Generation Z's fast food industry product purchasing decisions. Likewise, it will be possible to investigate by testing the hypothesis whether nostalgia marketing can influence other factors, such as: Brand loyalty, emotional connection, general brand perception, perceived product value and finally Purchase decision.

### 4.1 Selection of Sample

To focus our study on the target population, which in this case was Generation Z, the sample selection was based on the age of the participants, looking for a place where most people of this generation could meet, between 14 and 19 years old. For this reason, the present study was applied to the final year students at the “Gustavo Morales Morales” school in the city of Bogotá in the country Colombia (see **Appendix 1**), because it is a common meeting place for people of different socio-economic strata and ages. These data are important in the interpretation of results and allow the study to be contextualized in the

social context of the population analyzed. Furthermore, according to a study carried out in 2023, final year students in this age range stated that fast food is their favorite, being consumed at least once a week and even weekly (Noriega K et al, 2023). Based on this study, the chosen population is ideal for carrying out this research, allowing us to explore and obtain more reliable results.

## **4.2 Survey Design**

To collect the data for the research, a survey was designed through Microsoft Forms because it is a simple, reliable and ideal tool for this type of study. The survey will be disseminated directly in classrooms of the last courses, our attention will be focused on this demographic group. Additionally, it is sought to obtain a minimum of 200 responses, distributed between men and women to obtain more extensive information.

The survey of 25 questions written in Spanish (because the sample was located in Colombia) was developed, which will vary between: Closed (dichotomous and trichotomy), multiple choice and rating scales questions, it would take approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete and the only limitation I find for this methodology is that the questionnaire may be too long and therefore the participants would give random answers to complete it in a faster way.

The structure of the survey presents, at the beginning, a brief description about the purpose of this study, so that participants have the context when responding to the questions. In the first place it's important to know demographic data so the survey has questions about age, gender and socioeconomic stratum. Based on the proposed hypotheses, different questions are created that aim to answer each of them. To develop these questions, research was carried out to structure a series of key questions for the development of the survey. In this way, reliable answers were obtained that directly aim to answer the problem question.

#### ***4.2.1 Psychometric and Psychological Foundations of Consumer Behavior in Fast Food Advertising***

The selection of questions regarding the observation that some fast-food chains incorporate childhood elements in their advertising is grounded in the theoretical framework presented by Halaoui and Gharbi (2020). Their research delves into nostalgic marketing's role in advertising and its effect on consumer behavior. These questions probe into consumers' susceptibility to nostalgia, an emotional inclination triggered by memory recall, such as childhood experiences, within advertising contexts. The authors of the study argue that nostalgia, by activating memories that are pleasing and satisfying, also functions to form the bond between the customers and the brands, making them close friends and at the same time they tend to sponsor them. The nostalgic traditions in the fast-food industry can result in the complexity of emotions that people are forced to endure through advertising, where they demonstrate both positive and negative emotions and thus shape their brand attitudes and

purchase intentions, as shown in research. Along with that, in addition, individual and collective nostalgia is the main one. These questions assess the emotional reaction the consumer has upon encountering some familiar elements of childhood belonging to either broader cultural memories or individual and personal experiences. These elements give new meaning and perspective to both the ad and the brand.

Inclusion of questions Number 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5 is the reflection of psychometric and psychological models that advocate the part of nostalgia and emotional attraction in consumer behavior as the driving force behind these questions. May advertising be more appealing to me if it reflects my past? Question 1.3 is associated with the concept of nostalgia as a sentiment and a mental process, which can influence a person's consumer choices. It has been found by Crespo-Pereira et al. (2021) that ads which use nostalgia to bring forward the good old times make consumers connect memories with the products, and then experience happiness when thinking of this product. These sentimental connections are not just the help of the public to see the brand, but they also create a greater positive mood toward it. Moreover, question 1.4, "Are the food brands that remind me of my past or my childhood I experienced the most, most appealing to me?" "How does doing this make a differentiation bet" the Company and its major competitors" was asked in the next question. 1.4. which delved into memories that consumers could attach to brands in the past. Chenet al. (2020) argues that nostalgia, which mingles with memories, enables the creation of the feeling of closeness and security which leads to the automatic increase in consumer brand loyalty. Such powerful emotional linkage will, likely, be a significant determinant of brand choice, mainly in the tightly competitive fast-food business.

On the other hand, question 1.5, "I feel that some fast-food brands really understand my generation," is a question that points to the perception that a brand is akin to its customer's sociocultural identity. Gu et al (2021) argues that the consumer-brand relationship is immensely benefited when the consumer believes that the brand has the same understanding and ethical values, as well as shares the same background and experiences with the consumer. This is especially in terms of generational identity are critical consumption choices and where the people show injection in brand loyalty describe increased buying. A brand's ability to respect and support the experiences and principles of a single generation can be a factor that increases the preference to the brand. In short, the questions are formulated with a view to unravel nostalgic and generational reunion as the factors that determine brand preference, thus touching on both the intellectual and emotional dimension of consumer behavior in the fast-food industry context.

#### ***4.2.2 Exploring the Influence of Nostalgia in Fast Food Chains' Advertising***

The construction of survey questions is based on psychometric and psychological principles that are used to investigate the impact of emotions and memories on consumer behavior. To be exact, "Sometimes, I choose a fast-food restaurant because its advertisement made me laugh" is the first question which comes from the emotional response theory. According to this concept, emotions such as laughter can play the greatest role in the decision-making process. Rosengren et al. (2020) further argue that ad-induced

happy emotions tend to result in a more positive consumer evaluation of a brand, and thus, more are the chances of such a brand being chosen. In this case, the advertisement produced a happy emotional state, and cognitive resistance was reduced, which led to the preference of the brand that had evoked these bright feelings.

The second question, "I'm excited to try new fast-food products if their advertising reminds me of my favorite children's TV series," can be answered in the field of personal nostalgia. As Gilal et al (2020) reported, nostalgia leads to pleasant emotions which are connected to personal memory, consequently, increasing the consumer's willingness to try new products. In this case, some advertisements that might elicit memories of childhood, television programs can provoke such emotions as nostalgia which in turn makes it more probable that the consumer will want to buy the new product. These two illustrations illuminate how emotional reactions, whether they are recurrent or attached to the past, can influence the audience's attitude towards products or brands through acquiring an understanding of consumer psychology and psychometrics.

Based on psychometric and consumer psychology theories, particularly on concepts such as perceived relevance and brand loyalty, the following questions were chosen. Question 2.3, which suggests that the likelihood of visiting a fast-food chain increases if an influencer mentions it with references to the respondent's childhood, is based on the idea that consumers respond more favorably to advertisements that they perceive as personally relevant. According to Hanaysha et al. (2021), the perceived relevance of an advertisement significantly impacts brand loyalty. This effect occurs when the message touches on

emotional aspects or past experiences, such as childhood memories, thus strengthening the consumer's connection with the brand. This connection is vital to fostering loyalty, as consumers tend to value and respond positively to content that resonates with their personal experiences, motivating them to engage more with the brand and maintain their loyalty.

Question 3.1 assesses the respondent's agreement of always eating at a single fast-food restaurant; this item is related with brand loyalty, specifically behavioral. Brand loyalty is a maintained adherence to a preferred product or service through repeated purchases. The behavior loyalty displayed through these repeated purchases, which is both the base for companies in their aim to retain the customers for more time and reaffirm the manufacturer's ideas concerning the production of replicated items that will sell successfully. The author takes sides with the idea and gives evidence stating that consistent behavior is loyalty of a particular brand, those consumers will be less inclined to be impacted by competitors.

The impact of advertising creativity on consumer behavior is considered on the basis of the topic of how the selection of question 3.2 influences the principle of advertising creativity. In the truest sense of the study, advertising creativity can be seen as an instrument that shapes both the brand's image and originality. Thus, the designer connects the product, the creative idea, and the brand by imparting the sense of brand authenticity, which in turn will increase the chance a consumer decides to recommend the brand. This is supported by Busser and Shulga's (2019) findings that authentic communication through creative elements strengthens consumer loyalty and trust in the brand. Signaling theory, however, goes further the creativity makes the company's brand authentic through the values and thus, people look

at the company with more trust.

Alternatively, question 3.3 examines the relationship between the degree of entertainment an advertisement can obtain and the degree of consumer engagement. According to Katemi, Arasa and Nganu (2023), various marketing strategies such as promotions, contests and the like can encourage user engagement and thus grow their loyalty to the brand. The varying stimuli, if desirable, may in turn change consumer behavior, and thus enhance the degree of brand loyalty.

#### ***4.2.3 Emotional Cues and Quality Perception***

Rajavi et al. (2022) estimated that an ad that creates positive feelings is a huge influence of how the brand is seen and treated by the consumer. More so, a brand that successfully triggers the consumer with an emotional message would be able to transmit these emotions along with the brand, therefore reinforcing the emotional bond between the consumer and the brand. In this connection more than one individual may prefer than those others who feel sympathetic "3.3. I'm more inclined to defend a fast-food chain if their ads make me feel good," since the positive emotional response builds on brand loyalty. This question is designed to explore the relationship between the emotional response generated by advertising and the consumer's tendency to protect the brand, aligning with the theory of "brand experience" and its impact on consumer behavior.

Additionally, the author reveals that advertising costs, especially when the ads are discriminative and detailed, have an impact on people's perception of product quality. The study brings forward the idea that buyers frequently describe highly developed ads as a reflection of good quality of the services or the product that they are buying. This consequence can be traced back to the accessibility diagnostic model one of the main concepts, which puts forward the assumption that when one has no objective signals, the radio or the press ad, then becomes the only reliable cue-another being peripheral cues. Thus, the question "4.1. Fast food chains with more elaborate advertisements are likely to use better quality ingredients" is constructed to figure out the problem of how the perceived complexity of advertising is associated with the perceived quality of ingredients in fast food chains which is indicative of the signaling effect of advertising in consumer psychology.

The theory of the graphics functions is based on the psychometric and psychology principles, and in particular, this is the service quality perception and customer behavior, which is analyzed through the SERVQUAL model and the expectation disconfirmation theory. Question 4.2 is the link between investment in creative advertising and the perceived quality of products in a fast-food chain. As mentioned by these conceptual definitions, creative advertising can affect (change) purchase which leads to a thought that a customer may experience feeling that the item he/she purchased is of optimal quality, and purchase will not be an issue. Conversely, the third question deals with the customer's willingness to wait longer if the fast-food restaurant has positive advertising. According to the SERVQUAL model, a powerful advertisement and branding company can tangibly and empathize with the consumer and hence render them to tolerate some operational downsides

to the service, such as undue time-lags. The gain-loss theory implies consumers might become indeed more patient than they set expecting when the brand's entire image is quite favorable, even if not as expected at the beginning (Etuk et al, 2022).

#### ***4.2.4 Nostalgia Marketing Example: “Arch Enemies”***

Each question in the survey is grounded in psychometric and psychological theories, following the approach outlined by Zhao et al. (2022) on the influence of advertising on consumer behavior and brand loyalty. Subsequently, a video of a nostalgia emotional marketing campaign from MacDonalds was presented, considering that this company is one of the largest successful fast-food brands and has launched several emotional marketing campaigns on the market. The campaign launched in 2015 called "Arch Enemies" (which was explained previously in the literature review) will be displayed with the idea of showing an example to our sample.

These questions aim to understand our sample in terms of their purchasing decision, customer affinity with the brand, perceived value of the product and positive connections with the brand, these objectives are aligned with the hypotheses raised. The first question, "After seeing this ad, I'm looking forward to visiting McDonald's even more," is based on the theory of reasoned action, which explores how advertising can impact a consumer's behavioral intention, specifically their willingness to visit an establishment after viewing an

ad. The second question, "Watching this video made me want to share it on my social networks," measures the consumer's propensity to share content, reflecting an emotional connection with the advertisement, a critical aspect for understanding brand diffusion on social media. Additionally, the third question, "After watching the ad, I feel that McDonald's food might be of better quality than I thought," is designed to assess perceived quality, a key element in the relationship between advertising and brand loyalty as discussed by the author. Finally, the fourth question, "This type of advertising makes me more likely to choose McDonald's over other fast food options," explores how advertising can strengthen a consumer's predisposition to prefer one brand over others, which is essential for understanding the dynamics of brand loyalty in a competitive market. Each question is structured to capture different aspects of consumer behavior and perception, based on the theory and analysis developed.

### **4.3 Data Collection**

After achieving our goal of 200 responses (203 obtained), the questionnaire was closed, and the responses were downloaded for purification and coding through Excel. In the second instance, SPSS software was used, because it is a tool that allows us to manage a large amount of data to extract information from it in a few clicks and to perform a statistical analysis through visual reports. Through this software, the labels for each variable were

categorized and the data was coded into numbers. For example, when participants chose between 5 responses (e.g. Totally disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and totally agree), the responses were coded as follows: "5" for totally agree and "1" for totally disagree. At this point, two participants were removed because their responses did not show concordance, responding neutrally to all the questions and one of the participants did not want to continue answering, leaving a total of 201 responses analyzed.

#### **4.4 Description of Variables**

After coding the data through SPSS, the variables are classified to characterize the responses obtained, for which a description of the variables and a cluster analysis are made to know the reliability of the study and the demographic characteristics with the objective of profiling the sample.

##### ***4.4.1 Statistics of Scalar Variables***

Table 1 offers a structured view of the distribution of responses for each survey item, to bring a better understanding of the data's characteristics. The descriptive statistics reveal patterns in the students' responses, which are key to understanding the role of nostalgia

marketing among Generation Z. The central tendencies in the variables suggest that students generally lean toward moderate to favorable responses, indicating a generally positive reception to the concepts measured, such as emotional connection, purchase decisions, and brand loyalty. The spread of the data, focusing on the standard deviations, indicates a diversity of opinions, reflecting the individual differences within this demographic. Such variability is necessary in capturing a comprehensive view of the target population's attitudes.

**Table 1.**

*Descriptive metrics for scalar variables*

Variable	Mean	Std	Min	p 25%	p 50%	p 75%	Max
<i>age</i>	16.40	1.16	14	16.0	16.0	17.0	19
<i>h<sub>11</sub></i>	3.65	1.06	1	3.0	4.0	4.0	5
<i>h<sub>12</sub></i>	3.60	1.14	1	3.0	4.0	4.0	5
<i>h<sub>13</sub></i>	3.65	1.23	1	3.0	4.0	5.0	5
<i>h<sub>14</sub></i>	3.38	1.20	1	2.0	4.0	4.0	5
<i>h<sub>15</sub></i>	3.37	1.25	1	2.0	4.0	4.0	5
<i>h<sub>21</sub></i>	2.74	1.23	1	2.0	2.0	4.0	5
<i>h<sub>22</sub></i>	3.49	1.23	1	2.0	4.0	4.0	5

$h_{23}$	3.18	1.26	1	2.0	3.0	4.0	5
$h_{31}$	3.43	1.18	1	3.0	4.0	4.0	5
$h_{32}$	3.16	1.24	1	2.0	3.0	4.0	5
$h_{33}$	2.75	1.32	1	2.0	2.0	4.0	5
$h_{34}$	3.03	1.26	1	2.0	3.0	4.0	5
$h_{41}$	3.22	1.21	1	2.0	4.0	4.0	5
$h_{42}$	3.51	1.11	1	3.0	4.0	4.0	5
$h_{43}$	3.49	1.19	1	3.0	4.0	4.0	5

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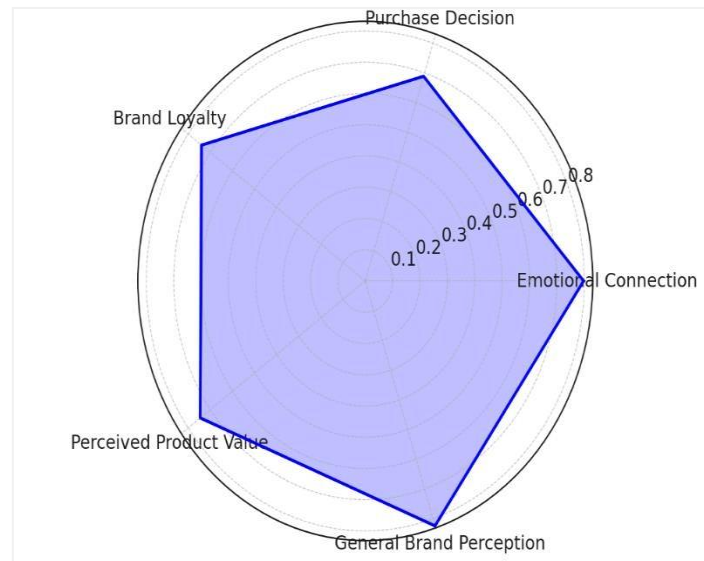
Source: Self-made

#### ***4.4.2 Reliability Analysis***

The reliability analysis conducted using Cronbach's Alpha provides vision into the internal consistency of the survey items grouped by their respective dimensions. These reliability scores confirm that the survey items used in this study are generally reliable, with each set of items cohesively measuring the intended dimension of nostalgia marketing's impact on Generation Z. In addition, this radar chart (spider plot) visualizes these coefficients, offering a clear comparison of the internal consistency across the different dimensions.

**Figure 2.**

*Radar chart of Internal Consistency of Survey Dimensions*



*Note.* This type of plot highlights the relative reliability of each dimension, with the shape and area of the plot indicating the strength of internal consistency. Source: Self-made

The Cronbach's Alpha value for Emotional Connection is 0.797, which represents good internal consistency. This suggests that the items in the questionnaire designed to measure Emotional Connection are adequately matched and represent this construct consistently. For the Purchase Decision area, the Cronbach's Alpha is 0.689, which is okay, but not as good as the other dimensions. This means that not all questions in this dimension are measured uniformly, but it may be the case due to respondent variability or a possible issue with the item design that needs refinement. The Brand Loyalty part has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.740, which is a good figure, apart from among the Emotional Connection dimensions. From this, it can be concluded that the survey questions for Brand Loyalty always result in the only reliable dimension that constitutes among the respondents. The Perceived Product Value

dimension has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.745, which also indicates good reliability, i.e. the items recording respondents' feelings about the product are like each other. Finally, the Brand dimension, the overall perception of the brand, has Cronbach's alpha of up to 0.824, meaning high inter-item reliability. This shows that items discriminating against the brand also provide a consistent measurement of this dimension.

## **4.5 Cluster Analysis On Survey Responses**

### ***4.5.1 Cluster Definition***

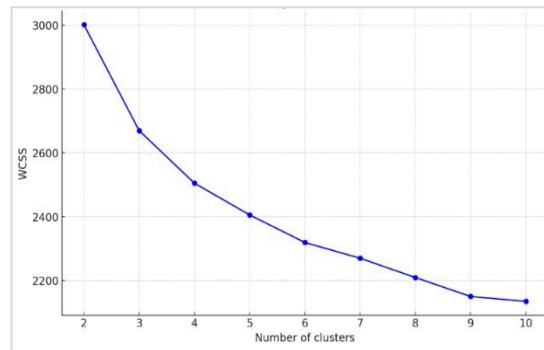
Cluster analysis is a technique used to group a set of objects (in this case, survey responses) in such a way that responses in the same group (or cluster) are more like each other than to those in other groups. This can help identify distinct segments within the respondents based on their answers, providing understandings into different profiles or personas within the data.

The **two-step clustering algorithm** was chosen for this analysis due to its ability to handle both categorical and continuous variables efficiently (Díaz et al, 2011). Unlike other clustering methods, such as K-Means, which requires all input variables to be continuous, or hierarchical clustering, which can become computationally expensive with large datasets,

the two-step algorithm is well-suited for datasets with mixed data types. This method first applies to a pre-clustering step, typically using a modified version of K-Means, to group similar data points into smaller, manageable sub-clusters. These sub-clusters are then aggregated using hierarchical clustering, which allows for the identification of more stable and well-defined clusters.

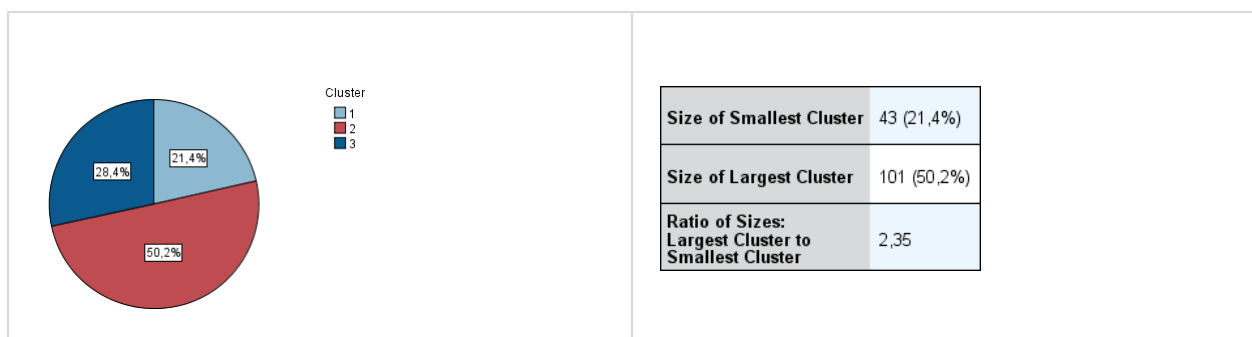
Now, the elbow method was used to decide the optimal number of clusters, and based on the analysis, four clusters were selected. In specific, the elbow plot is shown in

**Figure 3.** Despite this figure initially suggested, the choice was three. While the elbow plot indicated that the optimal number of clusters might be four, choosing three clusters provided a more deterministic and clear segmentation of the data. A higher number of clusters could introduce ambiguity, where some clusters might overlap or not be as distinctly separated, leading to less interpretable results. By opting for three clusters, the analysis prioritized clarity and interpretability, ensuring that each cluster represents a distinct group within the sample population.

**Figure 3.***Elbow plot for optimal number of clusters*

*Note.* Made with software IBM SPSS version 25. Source: Self-made

This approach also mitigates the risk of overfitting the clustering solution to the data. Overfitting can occur when too many clusters are used, making the solution overly specific to the sample and less generalizable. In contrast, selecting three clusters ensures that each group is robust, with enough data points to make the analysis meaningful and actionable for the purposes of the study.

**Figure 4.***Cluster sizes*

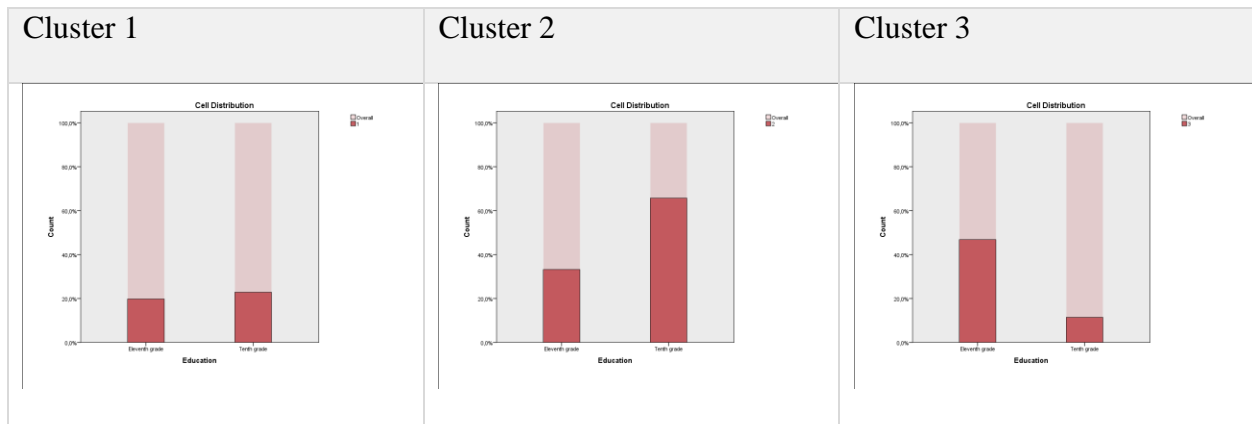
*Note.* Made with software IBM SPSS version 25. Source: Self-made

### 4.5.2 Demographic or Socioeconomic

**4.5.2.1 Academic Level:** The academic level distribution reveals that certain clusters, such as Cluster 2, have a larger representation from specific academic levels (e.g., tenth grade). This distribution can help identify which academic segments are more likely to fall into specific clusters, potentially reflecting different academic pressures or social influences on their responses.

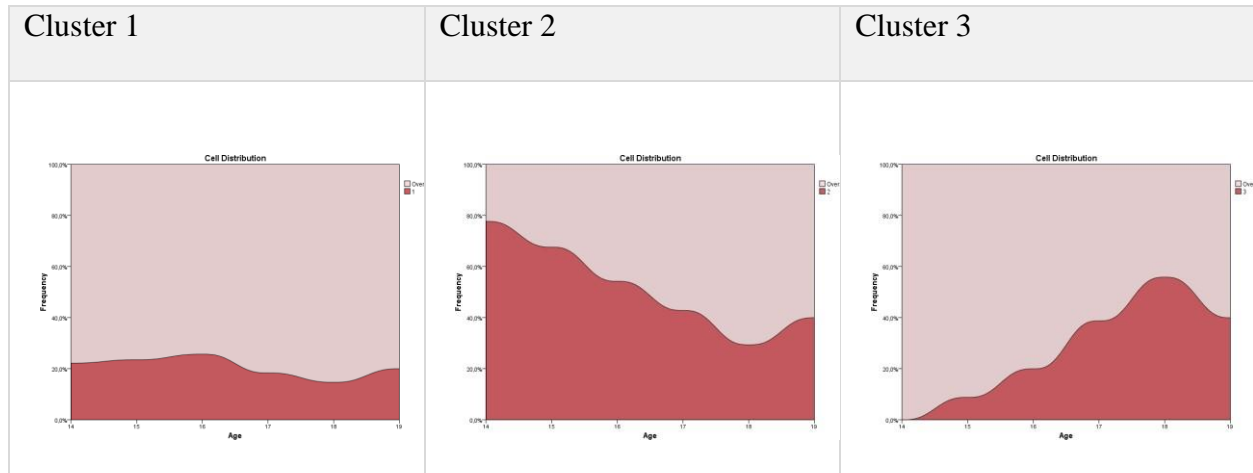
**Figure 5.**

*Categorical frequencies of academic level by cluster*



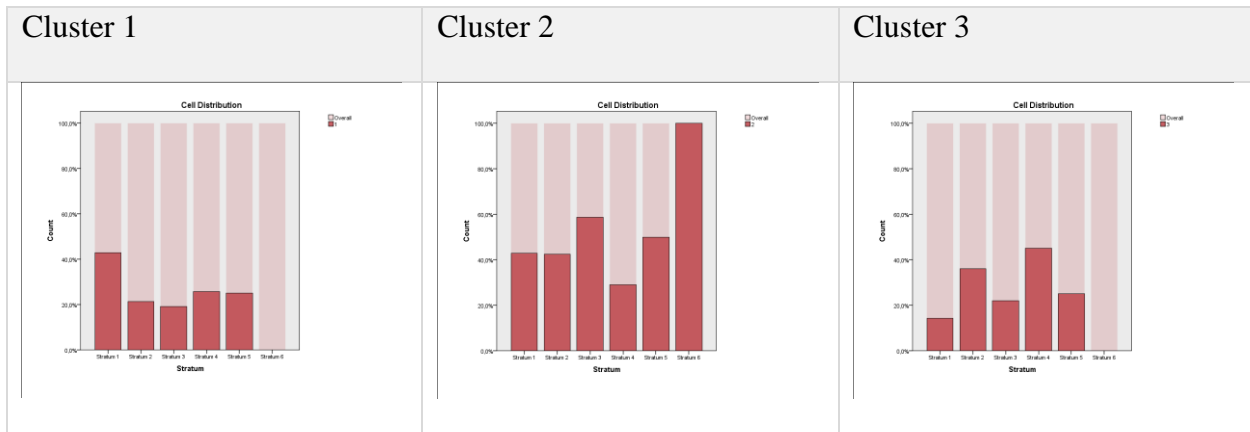
Note. Made with software IBM SPSS version 25. Source: Self-made

**4.5.2.2 Respondent's Age:** The mean age varies across clusters, with Cluster 3 having the highest average age and Cluster 2 the lowest. This suggests that Cluster 3 may represent a slightly older demographic within the sample, while Cluster 2 is characterized by younger respondents.

**Figure 6.***Frequency distribution of age by cluster*

*Note.* Made with software IBM SPSS version 25. Source: Self-made

**4.5.2.3 Socioeconomic Stratum:** The distribution of socioeconomic strata across clusters indicates that certain clusters are more prevalent in particular socioeconomic groups. For instance, Cluster 0 may have a higher representation from lower socioeconomic strata, while Cluster 1 might have respondents from higher strata. This suggests that socioeconomic background plays a role in shaping the perceptions and attitudes reflected in the survey responses.

**Figure 7.***Socioeconomic stratum distribution by cluster*

Note. Made with software IBM SPSS version 25. Source: Self-made

**4.5.2.4 Gender:** Gender distribution shows some variation across clusters. For example, Cluster 2 appears to have the more balanced gender distribution, while Cluster 1 has a higher proportion of males. This could indicate gender-based differences in how respondents perceive and respond to the survey's nostalgia marketing constructs.

**Figure 8.**

*Categorical frequencies of gender by cluster*



Note. Made with software IBM SPSS version 25. Source: Self-made

### ***4.5.3 Profiling***

Profiling each cluster involves examining the average responses and characteristics of the respondents within each cluster to understand the unique features that distinguish them. This profiling can help identify the demographic and attitudinal characteristics that define each cluster. Each cluster represents a unique segment of the student population, distinguished by age, gender, academic level, and socioeconomic status.

Therefore, these profiles provide valuable information for tailoring marketing strategies to different segments, ensuring that campaigns resonate with the specific characteristics and needs of each group. Understanding these profiles can help in designing more effective

nostalgia marketing campaigns that appeal to the distinct motivations and preferences of each cluster.

**Table 2.**

*Profiling of each cluster*

Cluster	Demographics background	Behavioral response
Cluster 1. Thenostalgia- driven traditionalists	This cluster tends to be predominantly male and is more representative of lower socioeconomic strata. The age distribution within this cluster leans slightly younger, with many students in earlier academic levels, such as tenth grade. The prevalence of lower socioeconomic status in this cluster suggests that these individuals may have more grounded, perhaps traditional, values, which aligns with their strong response to nostalgic marketing.	Members of this cluster exhibit a significant emotional connection to nostalgic marketing. They are highly receptive to campaigns that evoke memories of the past, especially those that resonate with simpler, more traditional experiences, which are often idealized. This aligns with the emotional marketing theories discussed, where nostalgia serves as a powerful trigger, eliciting feelings of comfort and familiarity. For this group, the appeal to nostalgia effectively translates into a stronger

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		brand loyalty and a positive perception of brand authenticity.
Cluster 2. The pragmatic socializers	Cluster 2 is characterized by a balanced gender distribution and includes a younger demographic, with many respondents in the lower age range of Generation Z. Academically, this cluster has a higher representation from tenth-grade students, and it spans across various socioeconomic strata, suggesting a diverse social group.	This cluster shows a more pragmatic approach to nostalgia marketing. While they appreciate nostalgic elements, their purchasing decisions are influenced by a combination of emotional appeal and practical considerations, such as product quality, price, and social influence. Their responses suggest that nostalgia marketing works best when integrated with contemporary, relatable content that aligns with their current social experiences and values.
Cluster 3. The independent pragmatists	Cluster 3 stands out as the oldest group within the sample, with a higher average age compared to the other clusters. This cluster also shows a strong representation of higher academic levels	Members of this cluster exhibit a more independent and pragmatic stance toward nostalgia marketing. They tend to be less influenced by emotional appeals and more by

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and slightly higher socioec- onomic strata. The gender is	logical, considerations. While they recognize and can appreciate nostalgic	value-driven
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slightly skewed, with a balanced yet slightly male-dominated composition.	elements in marketing, these do not significantly alter their purchasing decisions, which are more heavily influenced by practical factors such as product quality, inno- vation, and utility.
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*Note. Profiling of each cluster. Source: Self-made*

## 5. Analysis and Results

For the analysis of the responses obtained through the survey, the statistical technique of structural equation modeling (SEM) was applied, through the SmartPLS4 software. This software facilitates the analysis of the relationships that occur between multiple variables, both dependent and independent, which will allow us to test the proposed model. This software was used because it presents an intuitive interface to handle complex models such as the one in this study. Through different relationship indicators we can calculate the incidence of certain variables on others and how these trigger a certain behavior, thus indicating their reliability.

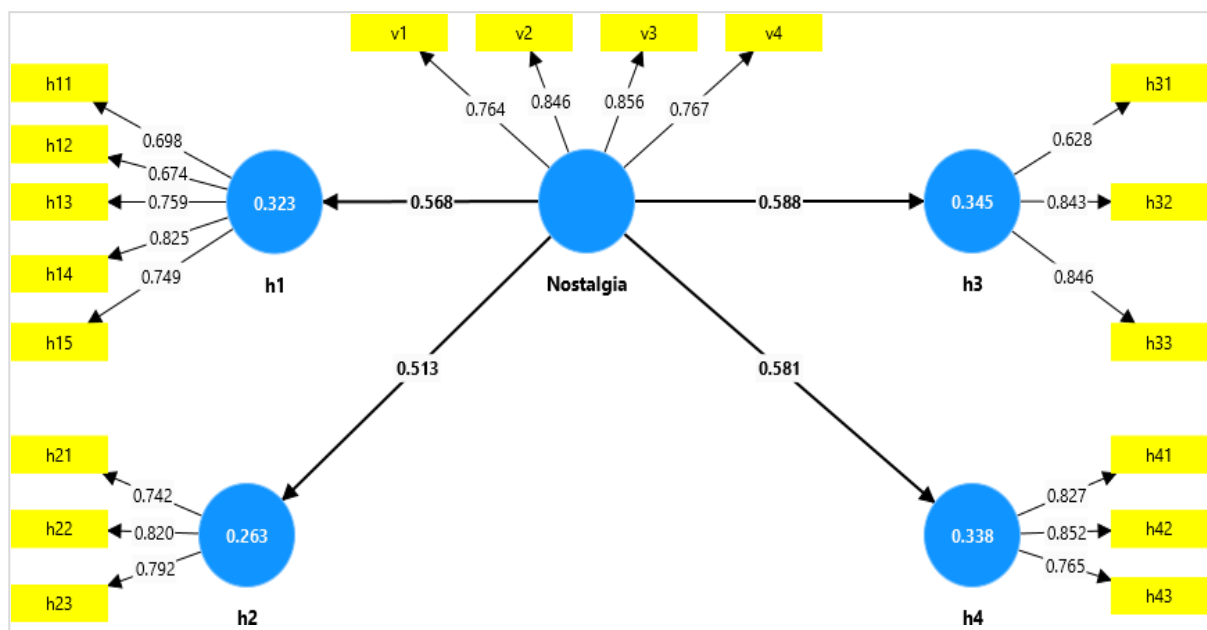
### 5.1 Structural Model Equation

The structural equation model presented serves as a comprehensive framework for examining the impact of nostalgia-evoking marketing on four critical constructs that influence Generation Z's behavior within the fast-food industry (Beltrán & Blanco, 2016). At the heart of the model is the "Nostalgia" construct, which encapsulates the essence of nostalgic marketing and is measured by several observable variables that strongly correlate with the latent construct of nostalgia. The model posits that nostalgia exerts a direct influence on four key latent constructs: the formation of positive emotional connections with

the brand, the impact on purchase decisions, the enhancement of customer affinity, and the increase in perceived product value. These relationships are depicted through path coefficients, which suggest that nostalgic marketing has a moderate to strong effect on these dimensions, indicating its potential power in shaping consumer behavior.

**Figure 9.**

*Estimated structural equation model.*



*Note.* SEM graph, with estimated factor loadings, for nostalgia impact on consumer behavior in fast-food industry for Generation Z. Made with software SmartPLS version 4. Source: Self-made

The model further elaborates on how each of these four latent constructs is quantified through their respective observable variables, with factor loadings providing evidence of the strong representation of these constructs. The explained variance within the model reflects the degree to which nostalgic marketing accounts for changes in each of these areas,

highlighting the significant role it plays in influencing emotional connections, purchase decisions, brand loyalty, and perceived value among Generation Z consumers. This model not only aligns with the study's hypotheses but also offers a robust empirical framework to evaluate the effectiveness of nostalgic marketing strategies. By examining these relationships, the model sheds light on how nostalgic marketing can engage Generation Z more effectively in the fast-food sector, ultimately influencing their purchasing behavior, brand affinity, and perception of product value.

## **5.2 Model's Quality**

In the context of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis, the criteria of Outer Loadings, Construct Reliability, Construct Validity, Collinearity Statistics (VIF), and Model Fit play essential roles in evaluating the model's quality. Outer Loadings represent the correlation between each indicator and its associated construct, reflecting the extent to which each indicator is representative of the construct. A high outer loading value suggests a significant correspondence between the indicator and the construct, ensuring that the selected indicators are appropriate for measuring the specific construct. Construct Reliability, assessed through metrics such as Cronbach's Alpha or Composite Reliability, provides a measure of the internal consistency of the indicators within a construct. This criterion verifies that the indicators behave consistently in measuring the same construct, which is essential for ensuring the model's accuracy. On the other hand, Construct Validity

focuses on determining whether the construct is well represented by its indicators, considering both convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity ensures that related indicators are effectively correlated, while discriminant validity ensures that the constructs are distinct from each other, avoiding overlap between them.

Additionally, Collinearity Statistics, specifically the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), are used to detect potential multicollinearity issues among the indicators. High VIF values would indicate the presence of multicollinearity, which could affect the stability and interpretation of the model's coefficients, whereas low values suggest that collinearity is not a significant problem. Finally, the Model Fit criterion allows for the assessment of how well the proposed model represents the observed data. This criterion includes various indices that measure the overall fit of the model, providing a comprehensive view of the model's adequacy in describing the relationships among variables. The numerical results obtained show that the indicators exhibit strong correlations with their respective constructs, which is indicative of adequate construct validity. Construct reliability is high, suggesting consistent and precise measurement of the latent variables. Moreover, the VIF values indicate that multicollinearity is not a significant issue, facilitating the interpretation of the model's coefficients. Finally, the model fit indices confirm that the proposed model adequately fits the data, supporting its applicability within the study's context.

### ***5.2.1 Path Coefficient***

The structural model presented reveals the relationship between nostalgia and the four proposed hypotheses, as evidenced by the path coefficients. These coefficients reflect the intensity with which nostalgia affects the dependent variables in each hypothesis, showing a consistent trend in its positive influence. The figures suggest that nostalgia plays a significant role in shaping participants' responses, translating into a notable impact on the outcomes anticipated by the hypotheses. Each hypothesis displays a variation in the magnitude of this relationship, allowing for the interpretation of how nostalgia can modulate perceptions and behaviors in different contexts.

The consistency in the coefficients suggests a homogeneous influence of nostalgia across the different hypotheses, highlighting its capacity to shape connections with the proposed variables. This pattern underscores the relevance of nostalgia as a factor that, when integrated into the model, can influence various dimensions of consumer behavior, especially in contexts where emotionality plays a decisive role. The variation in the coefficients also allows for an appreciation of how nostalgia differentially articulates depending on the specifics of each hypothesis, offering an integrated view of its impact on the set of variables studied.

**Figure 10.**

*Path coefficients of nostalgia's influence on hypotheses*

Matrix		List
		<b>Path coefficients</b>
Nostalgia -> h1		0.568
Nostalgia -> h2		0.513
Nostalgia -> h3		0.588
Nostalgia -> h4		0.581

*Note:* Made with software SmartPLS version 4. Source: Self-made

### ***5.2.2 Outer Loadings***

In the analysis of the outer loadings, it is evident that each item significantly impacts its respective hypothesis within the structural equation model. Although some factor loadings are slightly below the commonly accepted threshold, the decision was made to retain all items in the model. This choice is based on the fact that these loadings, despite being close to the reference values, still provide an adequate representation of the constructs, preserving the model's validity and integrity. By doing so, each item continues to contribute substantially to the overall analysis, effectively reflecting the proposed relationships between the constructs and the observed items.

## 5.3 Quality Criteria

### 5.3.1 *F-Square*

The f-square criterion is used to measure effect size within the context of structural equation modeling, particularly in the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach. This criterion assesses the impact that an independent variable has on a dependent variable within the model, quantifying how much the independent variable contributes to explaining the variance in the dependent variable beyond what is explained by other variables in the model. In essence, f-square allows for the determination of the relevance of an independent variable in explaining the behavior of a dependent variable, which is crucial for understanding the strength of the relationships within the proposed theoretical model.

The values obtained for the relationships between nostalgia and the proposed hypotheses indicate that nostalgia has a significant impact on the formation of positive brand connections, purchase decisions, customer affinity with the brand, and the perception of product value. This highlights the importance of nostalgia as an influential factor in the behavior of Generation Z consumers within the fast-food industry. The high values obtained in all cases confirm that nostalgia surpasses the significance threshold in the model, reinforcing its decisive role in influencing the dependent variables studied. These results

suggest that marketing strategies that evoke nostalgia can be highly effective in strengthening the relationship between consumers and brands in this sector.

## Figure 12.

### *Impact of nostalgia marketing*

	f-square
Nostalgia -> h1	0.477
Nostalgia -> h2	0.356
Nostalgia -> h3	0.528
Nostalgia -> h4	0.510

Made with software SmartPLS version 4. Source: Self-made.

## 5.4 Construct Reliability and Construct Validity

There are some key measures for assessing the reliability and validity of the variables related to nostalgia and the hypotheses ( $h_1$ ,  $h_2$ ,  $h_3$ ,  $h_4$ ) in the proposed model. These measures are:

**Cronbach's Alpha:** An indicator of the internal consistency of the items that compose the constructs. A value that is closer to 1 is an indicator of higher internal consistency. In the table, the values range from 0.675 to 0.823, showing that, in a majority of cases, the

constructs are internally consistent, although  $h_2$  and  $h_3$  are lower values (0.689 and 0.675, respectively), indicating that it may be necessary to examine the questions and hypotheses related to these ideas.

Composite Reliability ( $\rho_a$  and  $\rho_c$ ): These two measures analyze the construct reliability and in addition the total variance that the items of the measurement explain. Generally, reliability of measures is good if the coefficient is 0.7 or higher. In the model, most values for and exceed this the determinant, except for  $h_2$ , where  $\rho_a$  is 0.694 and  $\rho_c$  is 0.828, respectively, and indicating marginal reliability for this hypothesis.

Average Variance Extracted (AVE): This diagnostic tool computes the percentage of the variability in the construct that the measure explains compared to the variance caused by measurement error. A cutoff of 0.5 was chosen as a result of a vote for the indicators. AVE values in the table range from 0.552 to 0.665, suggesting that the constructs are clear and precise enough to cover the variability of the elements, with all the values exceeding the minimum acceptable threshold.

**Figure 13.***Reliability and validity of constructs*

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Nostalgia	0.823	0.830	0.883	0.655
h1	0.798	0.812	0.860	0.552
h2	0.689	0.694	0.828	0.617
h3	0.675	0.720	0.820	0.607
h4	0.747	0.750	0.856	0.665

Made with software SmartPLS version 4. Source: Self-made.

Although some hypotheses, such as  $h_2$  and  $h_3$ , show slightly lower reliability values, the overall indicators suggest that the model is reliable and valid for exploring the proposed relationships in the hypotheses, thereby allowing for the proper analysis of the effects of nostalgia marketing on purchase decisions, brand affinity, and perceived value among Generation Z consumers in the fastfood industry.

## 5.5 Discriminate Validity

Discriminate validity is essential in evaluating structural equation models (SEM) as it ensures that each construct in the model measures a unique concept and does not significantly overlap with other constructs. In this context, the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) is a modern and effective criterion for assessing discriminant validity. HTMT compares the

correlations between different constructs with the correlations within the same construct, allowing for the identification of whether the constructs are truly distinctive. If HTMT values are below a predetermined threshold (typically 0.85), discriminant validity is considered established, indicating that the constructs capture unique aspects of the model and are not excessively correlated with each other.

In the presented table, the HTMT values between Nostalgia and hypotheses  $h_1$ ,  $h_2$ ,  $h_3$ , and  $h_4$  suggest that the constructs are distinctive, thereby supporting the model's discriminant validity. This means that each construct measures specific aspects and does not excessively overlap, which is crucial for accurately interpreting the model's results. In summary, the reported values reinforce the idea that the constructs within the model capture different dimensions of the studied phenomenon, allowing for a clearer and more segmented understanding of the influence of nostalgia-based emotional marketing on the purchasing decisions and perceptions of Generation Z in the fast-food industry.

#### Figure 14.

*HTMT ratio for discriminant validity in the nostalgia model*

Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) - Matrix		Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) - List		Fornell-Larcker criterion		Cross loadings	
	Nostalgia	h1	h2	h3	h4		
Nostalgia							
h1	0.679						
h2	0.678	0.848					
h3	0.766	0.753	0.823				
h4	0.739	0.813	0.774	0.762			

Made with software SmartPLS version 4. Source: Self-made.

Discriminant validity is a fundamental concept in evaluating structural equation models, referring to the ability of a construct to be distinct from other constructs within the model. This means that each construct must be unique and not overlap with others. Discriminant validity is assessed using several criteria, with the Fornell-Larcker criterion being one of the most recognized. This criterion compares the variance a construct shares with its indicators, known as the square root of the AVE (Average Variance Extracted), to the variance shared between the construct and other constructs within the model, represented by the correlations between constructs. For discriminant validity to be met under this criterion, the square root of the AVE for each construct should exceed the correlations that the construct has with any other in the model. This comparison ensures that the construct is measuring something that does not significantly overlap with what other constructs measure, which is essential for the model's validity.

In the presented table, the main diagonal shows the square root of the AVE for each construct, while the other values correspond to the correlations between the different constructs. It is evident that each value on the main diagonal is greater than any other correlation in the corresponding row or column, suggesting that the Fornell-Larcker criterion is satisfied. This indicates that each construct in the model is sufficiently distinct from the others, thereby reinforcing the reliability of the measurements and the inferences that can be drawn from the results obtained from the model. This fulfillment of discriminant validity is crucial, as it ensures that the constructs do not overlap with each other, allowing the conclusions drawn from the analysis to be valid and supported by data that accurately

reflect the underlying structure of the nostalgia model study.

### Figure 15.

*Fornell-Larcker criterion for assessing discriminant validity in the model*

Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) - Matrix		Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) - List		Fornell-Larcker criterion		Cross loadings	
	Nostalgia	h1	h2	h3	h4		
Nostalgia	0.809						
h1	0.568	0.743					
h2	0.513	0.636	0.785				
h3	0.588	0.556	0.570	0.779			
h4	0.581	0.629	0.558	0.551	0.816		

Made with software SmartPLS version 4. Source: Self-made.

## 5.6 Collinearity Statistics

Collinearity occurs when two or more independent variables in a regression model are highly correlated with each other, complicating the interpretation of the coefficients and reducing the model's precision. This phenomenon arises when one independent variable can be largely predicted from the others, leading to imprecise estimates of the regression coefficients and increased variability in the results. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) is a metric used to assess the degree of collinearity among the independent variables. VIF measures how much the variance of an estimated coefficient is increased due to collinearity

with other variables. Generally, a VIF above 5 or 10 indicates significant collinearity, suggesting that a variable might be redundant within the model, while a low VIF indicates that there is not a high correlation between the independent variables.

In the presented table, the VIF values range from 1.179 to 2.078. These values are relatively low, indicating that there is no concern for collinearity among the variables in the model. This range suggests that each variable contributes unique information and is not excessively correlated with the others, which is beneficial for the model's stability and precision. The absence of high VIF values implies that the model is robust and that the coefficient estimates are reliable. Overall, the results show that collinearity should not be an issue in interpreting the effects of the independent variables in this model, reinforcing the validity of the conclusions that can be drawn from the analysis.

**Figure 16.**

*VIF for multicollinearity assessment in the nostalgia model*

Outer model - List		Inner model - Matrix	Inner model - List
			<b>VIF</b>
h11			1.524
h12			1.488
h13			1.624
h14			1.982
h15			1.503
h21			1.298
h22			1.431
h23			1.329
h31			1.179
h32			1.503
h33			1.462
h41			1.669
h42			1.708
h43			1.318
v1			1.509
v2			1.988
v3			2.078
v4			1.642

Made with software SmartPLS version 4. Source: Self-made

## 5.7 Model Fit

The next table shown makes an elaborate comparison between the model that was used (saturated) and the estimated model using various goodness-of-fit tests in the context of structural modeling to judge the quality of the model. Each of these indicators highlights a different facet of the model's performance in replicating the data.

SRMR criterion represents the distance between the model's actual and predicted values. SRMR is lower in a saturated model, demonstrating its adequacy to the actual data, as the

divergence is lower between the actual and predicted values, while in the estimated model with higher SRMR, the deviation is higher and the fit is not as good.

$d_{ULS}$  is the total discrepancy between the measured score that was obtained by Ferreira and the student's measure by the unweighted least squares (ULS) method can be considered as an amount of this discrepancy. Smaller numbers in the saturated model suggest that this model is more compatible with the observed data, while the estimated model shows a higher deviation, so the fit is less accurate. The distance between the observed and estimated matrices is called the  $d_G$  distance indicator. In the saturated model, the  $d_G$  value is smaller, meaning that the observed and estimated data are more similar to each other. However, the estimated model has a larger distance, representing a weaker relationship between the actual data and the model predictions.

Chi-square, statistical criterion quantifies the difference between the observed data and the target model. In the saturated model, the chi-square is smaller, denoting that the model is more aligned with the observed data and thus has a lower deviation. In contrast, the estimated model demonstrates a larger chi-square value, which could be interpreted as the discrepancy of the model predictions with the actual data.

The performance of the model is measured relative to the null model that does not account for the independence of the variables. The NFI is higher in the saturated model,

indicating a greater relative improvement and thus a better fit. Considering that the estimated model where the NFI is lower implies that the model is less improved compared to the null model: this result is the reason why less significant is a better fit.

Similarly, these indices allow a proper comparison of how well each model fits the observed data and thus provide the differences between a saturated model, which is the best possible fit, and an estimated model, which is a simpler and more realistic data fit.

**Figure 17.**

*Comparison of model fit statistics between saturated and estimated models*

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.077	0.132
d_ULS	1.012	2.970
d_G	0.363	0.511
Chi-square	422.116	534.975
NFI	0.733	0.662

Made with software SmartPLS version 4. Source: Self-made

## 6 Conclusions and Practical Recommendations

The main purpose of the study was to find a relationship between emotional marketing of nostalgia, present in the fast-food industry, and how it directly affects the purchasing decision of Generation Z, impacted by this type of marketing.

The study was carried out requiring different activities and resources such as: the design of the survey, its application in a defined target group, Microsoft Forms as a data collection tool, statistical analysis software such as SPSS and SmartPLS4 and the construction of a model for data analysis. All these activities and resources worked properly and managed to positively test the hypotheses raised within the study. It is important to highlight that the hypotheses proposed to be tested turn out to be independent of each other, which means that emotional marketing that evokes nostalgia impacts each of them, especially when they focus on improve the emotional connection and the general perception of the brand.

The proposed model shows that nostalgia is a central pillar that exerts a direct and significant influence on the key dimensions of the study. The path coefficients of the model reflect that nostalgia has a significant impact on all the dependent variables defined based on the hypotheses. The fit indices indicate that the model is adequate for the data provided, therefore, this suggests that the methodological approach has a solid basis, with reliable and valid results. Based on the above, we can affirm that the present study allows us to explore

the relationships between nostalgia marketing and purchasing decisions in Generation Z.

The result of the measurement of perceived brand value with a Cronbach's Alpha index of 0.824 indicates that there is a strong relationship in how participants perceive brands that employ nostalgic marketing strategies, indicating that emotional marketing that evokes nostalgia improves the overall perception of the brand. However, despite the positive impact of nostalgic marketing, we found that the "Purchase Decision" dimension has a slightly lower Cronbach's Alpha index than other dimensions, being 0.689; this may indicate that despite the positive impact of nostalgia in the model, there is some variability in how these dimensions directly influence the purchase decision. It is recommended that, to refine the elements that measure this dimension, additional questions be asked focused on better capturing the motivations and purchasing behaviors of Generation Z.

The marketing study carried out through the survey in this work, shows three very well-defined clusters identified: The nostalgia-driven traditionalists, the pragmatic socializers and the independent pragmatists. This segmentation allows us to understand how different subgroups of this generation respond to emotional marketing strategies that evoke nostalgia. Choosing three clusters, instead of four, favored the interpretability and clarity of the data, ensuring that each cluster represents distinct groups with specific patterns of behavior and perception.

Marketing strategies that evoke nostalgia are effective in Cluster 1, as this subgroup demonstrates a strong emotional connection to campaigns that allude to memories of the

past and traditional experiences. Based on their socioeconomic status and slightly more traditional values, campaigns that emphasize community elements, local historical references, or family values can strengthen brand loyalty. Likewise, combining nostalgic elements with offers that emphasize the value or affordability of products can further improve this group's level of affinity and authenticity for the brand. For cluster 2, we find a population that is more pragmatic towards marketing that evokes nostalgia, where factors such as product quality, price and social influence are more valued. Marketing strategies that could be effective for this group may be those that combine elements that generate nostalgia with modern relevance. By integrating elements from the past with current trends, highlighting how these elements fit with their current lifestyle and ensuring that campaigns are visible on digital platforms and social media can be decisive in increasing loyalty and purchasing behavior since this population group is very active in these media. Cluster 3, characterized by being more independent and logic-oriented, can respond more optimally to campaigns that highlight the superior or unique characteristics of the product offered, such as its exclusivity, long-term value or advanced features. Therefore, emotional marketing strategies that evoke nostalgia should play a secondary role compared to the more pragmatic factors that guide their purchase decision, such as product quality, innovation and/or utility. The addition of elements that generate nostalgia in a subtle way, without occupying the focus of attention, can add value without deviating from the important aspects.

Finally, the aim of this study was to find the relationship that existed between nostalgia marketing and purchasing decisions in Generation Z, finding that emotional marketing that evokes nostalgia is a valuable strategy for fast food brands whose purpose is to capture the

attention of Generation Z, since it was shown that nostalgia is a determining factor, especially in the generation of positive emotions and the perceived value towards the brand, which can guide consumer behavior, however, in order to maximize the impact on purchasing decisions, fast food brands should consider adjusting their messages and strategies with other types of techniques, where not only is it sought to generate strong emotional connections but also these connections are transformed into effective purchasing decisions. Based on the clusters analyzed, to produce marketing campaigns that have a significant impact on each of these clusters, nostalgia marketing must be combined with other types of marketing (for example: marketing evoking exclusivity or on delivering value and innovation) in different proportions depending on the cluster to which you want to address the impact.

## 7 Limitations and Future Directions

The limitations of the study carried out can be found by carefully reviewing the target group that was analyzed. There are limitations related to the Culture (Latin American), to the geographical area (Colombia specifically Bogotá) to the fast-food companies available in this area (McDonalds, KFC, Subway, etc.), etc. A future parallel or similar research carried out in another geographical area and with a different culture is recommended to complement the conclusions of this study.

Other limitations can be found, and they are typical of survey research depending on its quality. In order to maximize the quality of the work performed, uncompleted or defective surveys were discarded; Additionally, with the identification of clusters according to the obtained results, the biases that may be present are minimized; however, these defects inherent to the type of study and the tool used to collect the data are not completely corrected.

Due to the above limitations, it is recommended to expand the field of research and adapt it to a constantly evolving environment where participants face different cultural, technological and psychological factors, which can play a crucial role in the way consumers interact with different brands and make purchasing decisions. In addition, expanding the research to other cultures and generational groups other than Generation Z can serve to

obtain better research by having a richer comparison of how nostalgia marketing is perceived and how it influences other cultures or age ranges, covering a larger population, which would help to understand whether nostalgia marketing operates in a similar or different way when it is extended to other groups.

As a third recommendation, it is suggested to expand the research focus to other industries such as: entertainment, technology, among other sectors. This will allow to have a better understanding of how nostalgia marketing influences different consumer contexts, achieving more relevant findings and a more complete vision of the whole environment. On the other hand, it is suggested to improve the study by doing a longitudinal analysis with the objective of analyzing consumers during a longer period of time in their daily lives in order to obtain key results and conclusions on whether nostalgia marketing continues to be a factor that influences consumer loyalty or if its effect decreases over time after repeated exposure to these stimuli.

Finally, because the world is immersing in a technology revolution, it is proposed for a following research to focus on how these emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and augmented reality can be incorporated to be strategies that open new frontiers of how consumers experience nostalgia, with which it could be evaluated how nostalgia marketing could be transformed to be more dynamic and attractive, adopting these technology approaches that could recreate certain consumer experiences in a creative, personalized and interactive way, getting them to connect and form better positive relationships with the brand.

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