

## Abstract

**Title:** A Study of Millennials' Susceptibility to Nostalgia During Times of Uncertainty: A Focus on Nostalgic Consumption During Covid-19.

Nostalgic consumption is becoming increasingly more prevalent among the Millennial Generation. With the Covid-19 pandemic disrupting the lives of many across the world, nostalgic feelings are heightened as individuals look towards the past and consume accordingly.

Prior literature defines nostalgia as a homesickness while further analysis reveals more recent studies taking a modernistic view of nostalgia incorporating an attitude formation and experience dimension to the concept. The discontinuity hypothesis suggests that people who experience disruption in their lives tend to cling onto the past more intensely than those who experience continuity. Such theory will be explored further as it explains why consumers have a definite desire for items from the past.

This study aims to generate an in-depth insight into millennials' susceptibility to nostalgia during Covid-19; further analysing the link between millennials, nostalgia, the discontinuity hypothesis and as a result, nostalgic consumption. Through the adoption of a marketing perspective, the researcher was able to bridge a gap within the literature by identifying Covid-19 as a contextual opportunity to explore the discontinuity hypothesis amongst the millennial generation.

Quantitative primary research was pursued by distributing an online survey questionnaire and in turn, gathering data from 156 respondents. The survey investigated millennials' attitudes as well as their nostalgia levels, consumption behaviours and how they are coping through Covid-19. A Logistic Regression, Kruskal-Wallis H test and a Chi-Square Test for Independence was used to assess nostalgia levels across younger and older millennials as well as males and females. While older millennials were deemed more nostalgic than their younger counterparts, nostalgia levels did not differ between gender. By conducting a Principal Component Analysis, the researcher was able to extract two core attitudes of millennials while coping through Covid-19; Acceptance and Denial. Those feeling in-denial of Covid-19 having occurred, are highly nostalgic and have a strong preference towards retro products- in line with the discontinuity hypothesis. Positive feelings were the highest-rated post-nostalgic consumption feeling; while music, movies and TV series from a bygone era were the most engaged retro categories. Furthermore, this study found a significant correlation between highly nostalgic respondents and an extreme preference for retro products.