



A Journey to the Past: Nostalgic Marketing and Its Influence on Sporting Goods Purchases through Nationalism and Consumer Culture

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ABSTRACT

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Nostalgic marketing, sports goods, consumer nationalism, consumer culture, purchase intention

Nostalgic marketing has emerged as an effective strategy for establishing emotional connections with consumers. In the sports goods market, this type of marketing can encourage consumers to make purchases by stimulating a sense of nationalism and emphasizing specific cultural elements. Nevertheless, the mechanisms through which these factors influence consumer behaviour and purchasing decisions have not yet been comprehensively investigated. Accordingly, the present study seeks to examine the effect of nostalgic marketing on the intention to purchase sports goods, with consumer nationalism and consumer culture serving as mediating variables. This research is descriptive-survey in nature and applied in purpose. The statistical population consisted of all customers of sports goods in sports stores in Rasht city. A sample of 384 individuals was selected through convenience sampling. The research instruments comprised standard questionnaires on nostalgic marketing, consumer nationalism, consumer culture, and purchase intention. The validity of the questionnaires was confirmed by 11 experts, and their reliability was verified using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. Data analysis was conducted through structural equation modelling using Smart PLS software (version 3.3). The findings indicated that nostalgic marketing exerts a significant positive effect on the intention to purchase sports goods. Furthermore, consumer nationalism and consumer culture function as effective mediators in this relationship. Thus, the utilization of nostalgic marketing can serve as a powerful tool for enhancing the purchase of sports goods. Managers are advised to strengthen emotional bonds with consumers by incorporating cultural elements and a sense of nationalism into the design of marketing campaigns. Policymakers may also leverage this approach to support domestic production and reinforce national identity, particularly in the development of sports markets.

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1. Introduction

In today's competitive world, nostalgic marketing has attracted significant attention as an innovative strategy for creating emotional connections between brands and consumers ([Nwankpa & Egwakhe, 2023](#)). This approach can influence purchasing decisions by recreating past memories and reviving positive emotions ([Cho, 2023](#)). In the sports goods market, this type of marketing holds considerable potential to increase consumers' purchase intention by stimulating a sense of nationalism and emphasizing consumer culture ([Bi, Pang, Chen & Perkins, 2024](#)).

On the other hand, consumer nationalism, as a psychological variable, can strengthen individuals' valuation of national and local products, while consumer culture shapes consumers' purchasing behaviors and preferences. Nevertheless, despite the importance of this subject, comprehensive and in-depth studies examining the role of nostalgic marketing and the mediating effects of these two factors on the purchase intention of sports goods remain limited.

The focus of the present study is to investigate the impact of nostalgic marketing on the purchase intention of sports goods in Iran—a market long dominated by foreign brands ([Askarian et al., 2017](#))—where domestic brands face serious challenges due to the lack of strong emotional connections with consumers ([Ahmadi et al., 2018](#)). Nostalgic marketing can address this challenge by establishing emotional bonds through the recollection of past memories. For instance, the nostalgic sentiment derived from the sporting and personal life of Ali Karimi has led to greater purchase intention among consumers ([Fathi et al., 2016](#)).

Therefore, the central question arises: How can nostalgic marketing influence consumer purchasing behavior through the mediating variables of consumer nationalism and consumer culture? Can the application of this strategy effectively guide consumers' preferences toward

specific sports products? This issue is particularly important in countries where national and cultural identity hold significant value among consumers.

In the complex and turbulent conditions of the present era, where competition among brands has intensified dramatically, marketers are constantly seeking creative and impactful methods to attract consumers. One of the increasingly prominent approaches is placing emphasis on historical and nostalgic elements. Nostalgia, defined as a longing and yearning for the past, can serve as a powerful tool in stimulating consumers' emotions and fostering their loyalty. Consumers who experience nostalgia toward a particular brand, product, or experience tend to show a greater inclination to purchase related products ([Phau et al., 2016](#)).

Since brands can readily create emotional and affective bonds with customers by showcasing their credibility, heritage, and stability, nostalgia-based marketing has become one of the most effective strategies for attracting and retaining customers ([Xia et al., 2021](#)). In the field of marketing, nostalgia is recognized as a tool for building emotional connections between the brand and the consumer. This connection can lead to increased purchase intention because individuals are naturally drawn to familiar experiences and pleasant memories.

In the context of sports goods, nostalgic marketing—through the recreation of memorable sporting moments or iconic products from the past—can exert a profound influence on consumer preferences and encourage purchase behavior. Research indicates that nostalgia, as a positive and memorable emotion, can stimulate consumers toward purchasing by creating deeper attachment between the consumer and the brand ([Cho & Chiu, 2021](#)). In other words, this attachment ultimately motivates consumers to strengthen their relationship with the brand and contributes to brand loyalty ([Eshfagh et al., 2019](#)). Consequently, loyal customers are more inclined to engage in repeat purchases.

Indeed, contemporary marketers strive to encourage greater purchase and engagement by incorporating nostalgia into their advertisements and marketing campaigns. This underscores that emotional factors play a critical role for companies seeking to maintain strong customer relationships. For this reason, modern marketing experts aim to make maximum use of nostalgia across various domains, particularly in commerce, and pursue marketing strategies grounded in nostalgic appeal ([Shafiee Roudposhti et al., 2018](#)).

Given the growing importance of sports, the rapid expansion of various sporting disciplines, and the rising population of passionate fans, it is essential to examine the impact of nostalgic marketing on the purchase intention of sports goods. The foundation of nostalgic marketing is that sports organizations create nostalgic stimuli (objects, individuals, experiences, and memories) in the form of sports services or products to stimulate fans, thereby increasing their desire and enthusiasm to purchase items associated with their favorite category or personality ([Tavassoli, 2020](#)). For example, the use of past professional athletes' uniforms to recall a team's historical glory, or the incorporation of nostalgic figures through images and logos on clothing and other merchandise, can influence individuals' psychological and emotional states and direct them toward purchase. Researchers have stated that the more familiar an individual is with a nostalgic personality, the greater the emotional arousal. This feeling represents a natural inclination commonly observed in most people, and a significant relationship exists between sports fans' purchase intention and nostalgic feelings ([Cho et al., 2019](#)).

Furthermore, with the rapid growth of international trade, consumers in various countries are significantly exposed to foreign goods. This phenomenon has heightened the interest of consumer behavior researchers in examining the tendencies of consumers in a particular country or region toward foreign products. These positive or negative tendencies may stem from numerous factors, such as perceived quality and cost of the

products themselves, along with consumer value-related influences. Substantial efforts have been made to understand how consumer values affect purchasing behavior, highlighting the global significance of this issue ([Ju et al., 2016](#)). Higher living standards, increased purchasing power, the rapid development of global communications, and the globalization of markets have contributed to the fact that people today possess far greater knowledge about other countries and their products. As a result, consumers are gaining increased awareness of products and services available worldwide.

Nevertheless, with the beginning of the third millennium, the world is witnessing a simultaneous rise in consumer nationalism and globalization ([Sharma, 2013](#)). While it might seem unnecessary to discuss consumer nationalism in an era of heightened global awareness, consumer nationalism is actually increasing in many countries and represents one of the key challenges facing globalization ([Anet et al., 2013](#)). In other words, in reaction to the sense of insecurity caused by globalization, interest in national identity is growing. This provides an explanation for why globalization has not diminished consumer nationalism in the economic dimension ([Mahmoudi et al., 2017](#)).

Based on the points raised, it can be argued that consumer nationalism refers to individuals' tendency to support domestic and national products, often accompanied by pride and commitment to national identity. Nostalgic marketing can strengthen this sentiment, particularly when sports products are presented as symbols of national pride or historical events. Individuals with a strong sense of belonging to their country are more attracted to products associated with national culture and history. Therefore, consumer nationalism can act as a mediator that strengthens the relationship between nostalgia and purchase intention.

In addition, the consumption pattern of any society plays a prominent role in that society's ability to achieve development. Hence, for a



country like Iran that aspires to development, consumer culture holds considerable importance. Consumer culture is compatible with development when aligned with the society's production pattern; otherwise, it is considered import-oriented and typically functions as an anti-development element ([Hahm et al., 2021](#)). In developed countries, consumer culture has historically been shaped based on the production pattern and continues to be so. In such societies, even encouraging greater consumption can contribute to economic growth, as increased consumption generates higher demand for domestically produced goods, which in turn stimulates production, employment, and overall economic prosperity. One characteristic of developing countries is the inconsistency between their consumption culture and production patterns. In other words, they consume goods that they do not produce themselves. This situation leads to the promotion of consumer culture, resulting in increased imports of consumer goods. The rise in imported goods causes capital outflow and hinders the accumulation of wealth necessary for investment ([Nwankpa & Egwakhe, 2023](#)).

Considering the aforementioned points, consumer culture can be defined as the set of values, beliefs, and consumption behaviors shaped by society. Nostalgia can highlight specific cultural elements and exert a significant influence on consumption norms ([Cho, 2023](#)). In the sports goods market, emphasizing consumer culture can satisfy consumers' need for cultural and social identity. This not only increases purchase intention but also reinforces sustainable consumption patterns. Therefore, efforts should be made to change societal consumption behavior. However, unfortunately, studies conducted on consumption to date have made only very limited direct references to its cultural aspects. Macro-level consumption theories have largely focused on economic variables, whereas all human social behaviors are formed within culture, and their cohesion or lack thereof is entirely dependent on the society's culture and cultural patterns ([Liu &](#)

[Lapinski, 2024](#)). Thus, to expand upon previous studies, there is a need for a scientific investigation into the role of consumer culture in the purchase intention of sports goods.

To address the research problem, a review of previous studies was conducted. It was determined that nostalgia is recognized as one of the influential emotional elements in marketing, and numerous studies have examined its impact on consumer behavior. [Bagheri and Ghiasabadi \(2018\)](#) demonstrated in their research that nostalgic advertising can influence attitude toward the brand, emotional response to the brand name, and purchase intention, although the effect of such advertisements through perceived self-continuity and brand attitude was not significant. Similarly, [Mahmoudi et al. \(2017\)](#), in a study on sports tourists, showed that nostalgia has a positive effect on their behavioral intentions.

In the context of nostalgic marketing and cultural mediators, [Vieira and Sousa \(2020\)](#) found in a study conducted in Portugal that nostalgic marketing in the sports domain increases brand attachment and trust among football fans. Additionally, [Anet et al. \(2013\)](#) examined the role of consumer nationalism in preferring domestic over foreign brands and concluded that this factor has a considerable impact on the evaluation of sports goods. The results of [Dorsazan et al. \(2021\)](#) also indicated that consumer nationalism and ethnocentrism, mediated by performance quality, can positively influence the preference for domestic brands over foreign ones.

Alongside these discussions, [Ranjbarian et al. \(2010\)](#) investigated consumer ethnocentrism and purchase intention and found that consumer ethnocentrism is affected by various factors that can play an important role in choosing between domestic and foreign products. Moreover, [Eshfagh et al. \(2019\)](#) concluded that experiential and nostalgic marketing have a positive effect on customer satisfaction and purchase intention, both directly and through experiential values. On the other hand, [Fathi et al. \(2016\)](#) demonstrated that

nostalgia has a significant impact on football fans' purchase intention, and [Mahmoudi et al. \(2017\)](#) confirmed that nostalgia and group identity have positive effects on sports consumers' behavior.

At the international level, [Riaz et al. \(2022\)](#) in Pakistan examined the impact of nostalgic advertising on purchase intention and found that such advertisements have a positive and significant effect on Pakistani consumers' purchase intention. Furthermore, studies in Korea and Japan by [Hahm et al. \(2021\)](#) showed that nostalgia arising from major sporting events, particularly the 2002 World Cup, had a positive effect on football viewership intention and spectator behavior. [Scola et al. \(2023\)](#) found that nostalgic feelings, especially in relation to products from older brands, can strengthen consumers' emotional interactions with their favorite teams and influence their purchasing behavior. [Banerjee and Shaikh \(2022\)](#) concluded that brand nostalgia can reinforce a sense of identity continuity and affect consumers' willingness to purchase newly developed products from a brand. Finally, [Cho \(2023\)](#) stated that sports nostalgia can be employed as an effective strategic tool to enhance brand value and purchase intention, ultimately promoting consumption in the sports and leisure industries.

Although numerous studies have examined the impact of nostalgia on consumer behavior, a significant research gap remains regarding the direct effect of nostalgic marketing on the purchase of sports goods, mediated by consumer nationalism and consumer culture. Previous studies, such as [Vieira and Sousa \(2020\)](#) and [Riaz et al. \(2022\)](#), have primarily focused on the direct effects of nostalgia on purchase intention or brand loyalty in general contexts. However, a comprehensive examination of this influence within the sports goods market — particularly by considering the role of cultural and national factors — has received limited attention.

This gap is especially evident in markets like Iran, where national identity and cultural values play a pivotal role in purchasing decisions ([Niknam and Milasi, 2025](#); [Farokhian et al., 2017](#)).

There is a noticeable lack of studies that specifically address the mediating role of consumer nationalism and consumer culture in strengthening the effect of nostalgia on the purchase of sports goods. The present study addresses this gap by simultaneously analyzing the impact of nostalgia and cultural-national factors on purchase intention. It offers a novel framework that illustrates how nostalgic marketing can guide purchasing behavior by stimulating a sense of nationalism and aligning with cultural values. This approach not only expands theoretical knowledge in the field of sports marketing but also provides practical strategies for designing effective marketing campaigns.

Furthermore, the importance of this research lies in understanding the influence of nostalgia on the purchasing behavior of sports goods consumers. Such insights can assist manufacturers and marketers in developing more effective strategies to enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty. Particularly in sports marketing, where fans have a strong attachment to memorable teams and athletes, the use of nostalgic images and symbols can serve as a powerful tool to evoke emotions and encourage consumers to purchase related merchandise.

In addition, paying attention to mediating factors such as consumer nationalism and consumer culture can lead to a better understanding of consumer purchasing behavior in domestic markets. This, in turn, can contribute to the development of strategies aimed at strengthening domestic production and reducing reliance on foreign products.

Therefore, the present study aims to examine the effect of nostalgic marketing on the purchase intention of sports goods through the mediating roles of consumer nationalism and consumer culture. It is expected that the findings of this research will provide effective solutions for improving the purchase of domestic sports goods and offer innovative ideas for domestic producers to compete with foreign brands.

Accordingly, the present study seeks to answer the following question:

How does nostalgic marketing affect the purchase intention of sports goods through the

mediating roles of consumer nationalism and consumer culture?

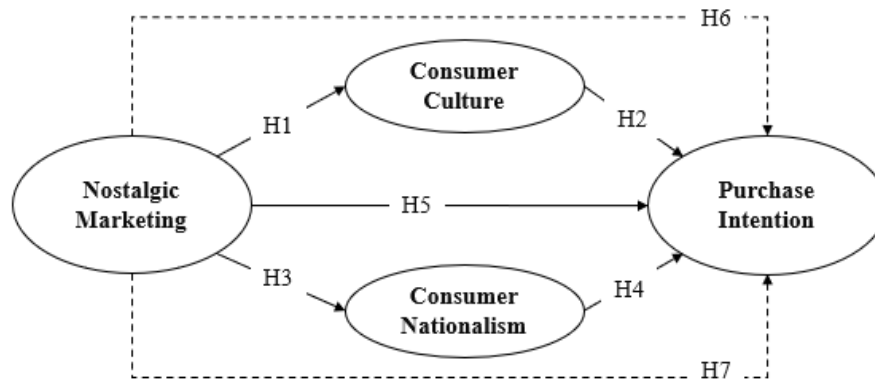


Figure 1. Research Conceptual Model

2. Methodology

This study is applied in purpose and descriptive-survey in terms of method and strategy. A quantitative research approach was employed to test the proposed research model. The statistical population of the study consisted of all customers purchasing sports goods in sports stores across Rasht city. To determine the minimum sample size for partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), the “10 times rule” was applied. According to this rule, the sample size should be at least 10 times the number of latent variables (Hair et al., 2017). Given four latent variables in the model (nostalgic marketing, consumer nationalism, consumer culture, and purchase intention), the minimum sample size was initially calculated as 40 participants. However, previous research has indicated that estimations based on small samples in PLS-SEM may lack precision (Goodhue et al., 2012). Larger sample sizes generally produce more reliable PLS estimates and allow for greater confidence in the findings. Moreover, due to the complexity of multivariate analyses and the need to estimate multiple parameters, a larger sample is typically required. Consequently, the sample size in this study was increased to 384 participants. Data were collected through convenience sampling, with

participants responding to the questionnaire online. The research questionnaire consisted of two main sections. The first section gathered demographic information of the participants, while the second section collected data related to the four primary variables of the study: nostalgic marketing, purchase of sports goods, consumer culture, and consumer nationalism.

The nostalgic marketing variable was measured using 5 items adapted from Pascal et al. (2002). Consumer nationalism was assessed with 4 items drawn from Erkaya (2019) and Shimp and Sharma (1987). Consumer culture was measured using 9 items adapted from Hajizadeh Meimandi and Usefi (2013). The dependent variable, purchase intention, was evaluated with 3 items taken from Putrevu and Lord (1994) and Hung et al. (2011). All items were designed on a five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.”

To assess face and content validity, the initial questionnaire was submitted to a panel of 11 experts in sports management, and necessary revisions were made based on their feedback. The reliability of the research constructs was confirmed using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient and composite reliability (Table 2). Confirmatory factor analysis

was also employed to evaluate the construct validity of the instruments (Table 2). Convergent validity was examined through the average variance extracted (AVE) (Table 2), and discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Table 3).

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the demographic characteristics of the participants via SPSS software (version 27). Structural equation

modeling using the partial least squares approach (PLS-SEM) was performed with Smart PLS software (version 3.2) to test the research hypotheses. Statistical tests including T-statistics, path coefficients, the significance of path coefficients, and the coefficient of determination (R^2) for endogenous constructs were utilized. Finally, the hypotheses were tested using the T-value and effect size (Table 5).

3. Research Findings

The findings of the study are presented in two sections: descriptive and inferential. The

demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the sample

Variable	Sub-component	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	133	38.2
	Female	215	61.8
Education	Below diploma	8	2.3
	Diploma and associate degree	74	21.3
	Bachelor's degree	123	35.3
	Master's degree and higher	143	41.1
Marital Status	Single	235	67.5
	Married	113	32.5
Age	Mean	27.2	Standard Deviation 5.9

In this study, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed to evaluate the construct validity of the research instrument. This method is used to examine the degree of fit between the hypothesized model and the actual data. In other words, confirmatory factor analysis assesses whether the factors specified by the researcher can explain the variance of the observed variables according to the defined pattern.

The results of this analysis, conducted using Smart PLS 3.2 software, indicated that all items of the research instrument had acceptable factor

loadings, and no items were removed (Table 2). Factor loading represents the strength of the relationship between the latent variable and its corresponding observed variable. The higher the factor loading of an indicator, the greater its role in explaining the construct. Factor loadings typically range between 0.5 and 0.7, although the minimum acceptable value is 0.4. The factor loadings obtained from testing the conceptual model (Figure 2) confirmed that all components possessed appropriate factor loadings.

Table 2. Evaluation of reliability, convergent validity and factor loading of the research instrument

Variable	Code	Item	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Homogeneous Reliability	AVE
Nostalgic Marketing	NM1	Purchasing classic sports goods reminds me of the past.	0.758	0.812	0.869	0.814	0.571
	NM2	Purchasing sports goods helps me recall pleasant memories.	0.784				
	NM3	Purchasing sports goods makes me think about my younger days.	0.732				
	NM4	Purchasing sports goods brings back happy memories for me.	0.793				

	NM5	Purchasing sports goods reminds me of the good old days.	0.708				
Consumer Nationalism	CN1	People in Iran should always buy Iranian-made sports goods instead of imports.	0.820	0.755	0.845	0.775	0.58
	CN2	Only sports goods that are not available in Iran should be imported.	0.824				
	CN3	Real Iranians should always purchase Iranian-made sports goods.	0.629				
	CN4	We should buy sports goods produced in Iran instead of letting other countries get rich off us.	0.746				
Consumer Culture	CC1	Using branded sports goods gives me personality.	0.643	0.885	0.907	0.887	0.521
	CC2	Buying branded sports products is very important to me.	0.725				
	CC3	After using a sports item for a while, it becomes repetitive for me.	0.685				
	CC4	After using a sports item for a while, I replace it.	0.768				
	CC5	Variety in using sports goods keeps me energetic.	0.743				
	CC6	If I had enough money, I would buy any sports good I wanted.	0.749				
	CC7	Buying new sports goods is important to me.	0.767				
	CC8	The quality of a sports good is more important to me than its price.	0.727				
	CC9	I spend as much as I have and do not see the need to borrow.	0.681				
Purchase Intention	PI1	I will probably purchase sports goods that remind me of the past.	0.881	0.845	0.906	0.848	0.764
	PI2	If I need to buy nostalgic sports goods, I will purchase them.	0.875				
	PI3	I intend to purchase sports goods that have created good feelings in me in the past.	0.865				

In this study, the acceptable threshold for composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha coefficients was considered to be above 0.7. As shown in Table 2, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients (ranging from 0.755 to 0.885) and composite reliability values (ranging from 0.845 to 0.907) indicate good reliability of the research instrument.

Convergent validity of the research variables was examined using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) index. According to [Henseler et al. \(2015\)](#), the acceptable value for this index is above 0.5. The results confirmed that the condition for convergent validity was met. Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker

criterion (Table 3). Discriminant validity indicates the uniqueness of a measurement instrument; that is, if the correlation of the instrument with other instruments measuring different constructs is low, the instrument possesses discriminant validity. The interpretation of this matrix is that the square root of the AVE for each construct should be greater than its correlations with other constructs.

In this study, the values on the main diagonal (in bold) must be greater than the values below and to the right of them. As shown in Table 3, this condition is satisfied, indicating that the structural model demonstrates acceptable discriminant validity.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity of Research Constructs Using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Dimensions	Nostalgic Marketing	Consumer Culture	Purchase Intention	Consumer Nationalism
Nostalgic Marketing	0.756			
Consumer Culture	0.618	0.722		
Purchase Intention	0.497	0.580	0.874	
Consumer Nationalism	0.713	0.640	0.504	0.761

The structural model was evaluated using the coefficient of determination (R^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and significance coefficients (T-values) (Hair et al., 2017) (Table 4). The R^2 value ranges from 0 to 1 and indicates the model's fit at three levels: weak (0.25), moderate (0.50), and strong (0.75). In this study, the R^2 values were at

an acceptable level, indicating a good fit of the structural model. Additionally, the Q^2 criterion was used to determine the model's predictive power. The results showed that all research dimensions had Q^2 values greater than zero, confirming that the model has adequate predictive relevance (Table 4).

Table 4. Structural Model Evaluation

Dimensions	R Square	R Square Adjusted	Q^2 (Predictive Relevance)
Consumer Culture	0.38	0.382	0.183
Purchase Intention	0.371	0.376	0.269
Consumer Nationalism	0.507	0.509	0.278
Nostalgic Marketing	Exogenous	Exogenous	Exogenous

According to Henseler et al. (2009), the SRMR was used to evaluate the measurement and structural models. The recommended value for

SRMR is less than 0.08. In this study, the SRMR value was 0.076, which falls within the acceptable range.

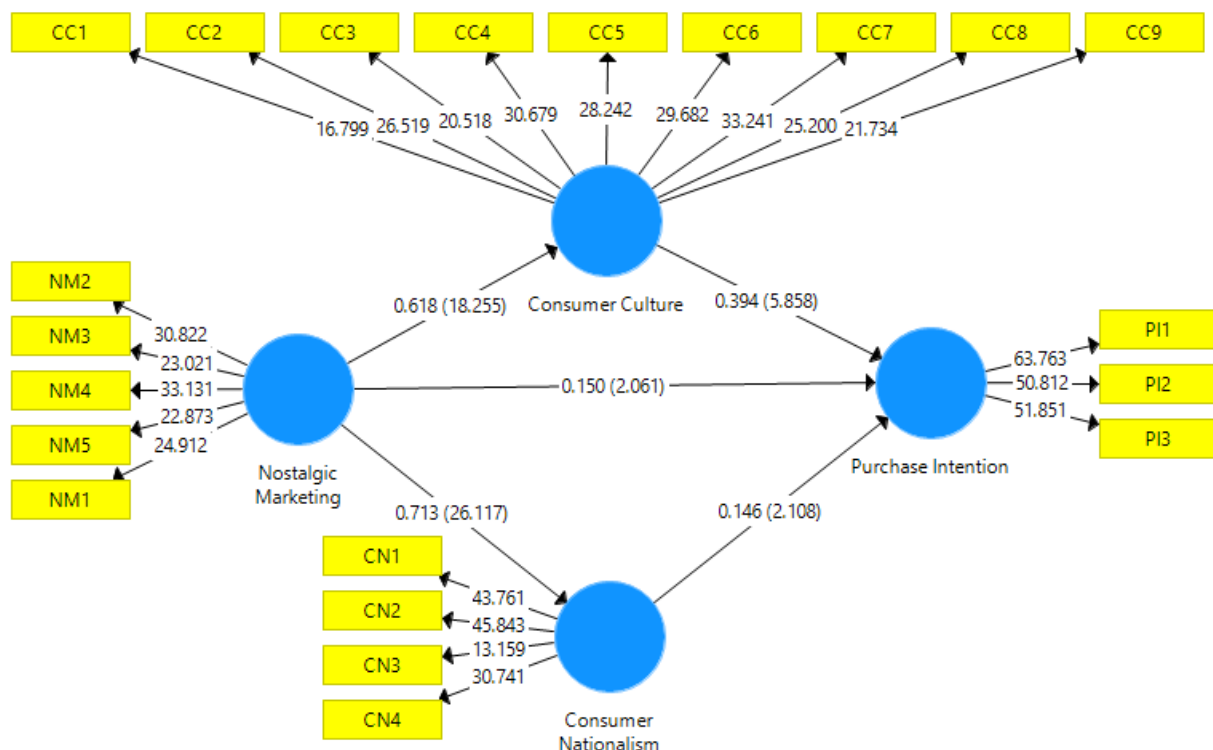


Figure 2. Structural model of research

Table 5. Examination of the Direct Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient	T-Statistic	P-Value
H1	Nostalgic Marketing → Consumer Culture	0.618	18.225	0.001
H2	Nostalgic Marketing → Purchase Intention	0.15	2.061	0.041
H3	Nostalgic Marketing → Consumer Nationalism	0.713	26.117	0.001
H4	Consumer Culture → Purchase Intention	0.394	5.858	0.001
H5	Consumer Nationalism → Purchase Intention	0.146	2.108	0.042

The primary criterion for assessing the significance of relationships between variables is the t-statistic (t-value). If the observed t-value is greater than 1.96, the relationship is significant at the 0.05 level, and if it exceeds 2.58, it is significant at the 0.01 level. This statistic only indicates the significance of the relationships and does not reflect their strength.

As shown in Table 5, the t-statistics for the research variables indicate that all direct

hypotheses are statistically significant (t-value > 1.96). Therefore, based on Table 5, it can be concluded that the effect of nostalgic marketing on consumer culture (t = 18.225), purchase intention (t = 2.061), and consumer nationalism (t = 26.117) was direct and significant. Additionally, the direct effects of consumer culture (t = 5.858) and consumer nationalism (t = 2.108) on purchase intention were also significant.

Table 6. Examination of the Indirect (Mediating) Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient	T-Statistic	P-Value
H6	Nostalgic Marketing → Consumer Culture → Purchase Intention	0.243	5.368	0.001
H7	Nostalgic Marketing → Consumer Nationalism → Purchase Intention	0.104	2.01	0.045

As presented in Table 6, the t-statistics indicate that all indirect hypotheses of the study are statistically significant (t-value > 1.96). Therefore, based on the results, the effect of nostalgic marketing on purchase intention through the mediating role of consumer culture was positive

and significant (t = 5.368). Furthermore, the effect of nostalgic marketing on purchase intention through the mediating role of consumer nationalism was also positive and significant (t=2.01).

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the effect of nostalgic marketing on the purchase intention of sports goods through the mediating roles of consumer nationalism and consumer culture. The research was conducted among all customers purchasing sports goods in sports stores in Rasht city.

The findings revealed that nostalgic marketing has a significant positive effect on the purchase intention of sports goods. This result is consistent with previous studies that have confirmed the influence of nostalgic feelings on purchasing

decisions ([Shafiee Roudposhti et al., 2018](#); [Vieira and Sousa, 2020](#); [Ju et al., 2016](#)). Nostalgia can create strong emotional connections with consumers by evoking positive memories and feelings from the past. Sports marketers can utilize this strategy to generate deeper emotions among fans and increase their willingness to purchase related products. Particularly for sports fans who are emotionally attached to memories of past teams and players, this type of marketing can strengthen emotional bonds and enhance motivation to buy associated merchandise ([Merchant et al., 2011](#)).

Based on the present findings, managers can create special appeal for customers — especially older generations — by introducing limited-edition or reissued versions of popular past sports products. Additionally, sports store managers can strengthen brand image and establish stronger connections with consumers by organizing sports events focused on shared customer memories and collaborating with legacy brand ambassadors or renowned athletes. Emotional advertising that emphasizes pleasant memories and positive feelings can also encourage customers to make purchases. Ultimately, since customers are strongly influenced by their emotions and memories, managers should leverage this capability in designing their marketing strategies to differentiate their brands from competitors and increase sales.

The results indicate that consumer nationalism has a significant positive effect on the purchase intention of sports goods. This finding aligns with previous studies ([Anet et al., 2013](#); [Dostie et al., 2017](#)), which have shown that consumers with nationalistic attitudes exhibit a greater tendency to purchase domestic products. Consumer nationalism becomes particularly important in markets facing intense foreign competition. In the sports goods sector, individuals with a strong sense of national belonging prefer products that symbolize their national identity and cultural heritage. This preference can play a vital role in strengthening domestic industries and increasing the market share of locally produced sports goods. As a cultural factor, consumer nationalism not only influences consumer preferences but can also reduce the desire for foreign products.

Therefore, managers should strive to incorporate nationalistic features into product design, advertising, and marketing strategies. For example, using national colors, symbols, or logos associated with the country's culture and history can enhance product appeal. Managers can also stimulate national pride by promoting domestic brands and locally manufactured products, which can increase consumers' willingness to purchase sports goods from these brands. National and

cultural value-oriented advertising campaigns can further support this strategy. Ultimately, a proper understanding of consumers' nationalistic tendencies and aligning them with market needs can lead to increased sales and greater customer loyalty to sports brands.

The findings demonstrate that nostalgic marketing has a significant positive effect on consumer culture. This result is consistent with previous studies ([Dam et al., 2024](#); [Bachem, 2020](#)). It can be argued that nostalgic marketing, by evoking pleasant emotions and memories of the past, exerts a profound influence on the consumption culture of sports goods customers. This type of marketing shifts consumers' focus from purely technical features or product price to the emotional and symbolic values that products convey. In other words, nostalgic marketing can transform consumption patterns from rational decision-making to emotion-driven decisions, encouraging customers to purchase products that create a deeper sense of connection with their past and identity.

In this regard, managers can implement several strategies to facilitate this shift in consumption culture. First, reissuing old products or designing limited-edition nostalgic items can arouse feelings of distinction and belonging among customers. Second, developing emotional advertising campaigns that emphasize shared collective memories can strengthen emotional connections with the brand. Third, employing nostalgic storytelling in marketing — which highlights specific historical or cultural moments related to products — can reinforce a sense of connection to the past. Furthermore, organizing sports events related to past eras or collaborating with legendary sports figures and brands can increase attractiveness for customers. These actions not only direct consumption culture toward emotional and identity-based purchasing but also enhance customer loyalty and create differentiation in a competitive market.

The findings also indicate that nostalgic marketing has a significant positive effect on

consumer nationalism. This result is in line with previous studies ([Sharma, 2013](#); [Vieira and Sousa, 2020](#)) and suggests that nostalgia can stimulate nationalistic feelings and increase consumers' willingness to support domestic products. Nostalgic marketing strengthens consumers' sense of national pride and cultural belonging by highlighting cultural and historical elements associated with a country. This is especially important in markets where domestic industries face strong competition from foreign products. For instance, using national symbols, collective experiences, and shared national memories in the marketing of sports goods can direct consumers toward preferring domestic products. Consequently, nostalgic marketing, through its influence on consumer nationalism, not only supports domestic brands but also indirectly promotes the cultural and economic identity of a country.

Finally, according to the results of this study, consumer culture has a significant positive effect on the purchase intention of sports goods. This finding is consistent with studies by [Dorsazan et al. \(2021\)](#) and [Hahm et al. \(2021\)](#), which have confirmed the role of culture as a key factor in purchasing behavior. Consumer culture can directly influence consumers' attitudes and behaviors in purchase decision-making. For example, in societies where collectivism is more prevalent, consumers pay greater attention to the impact of their decisions on their group or family before making a purchase, whereas in individualistic societies, purchase decisions are primarily based on personal preferences ([Roozmand et al., 2011](#)). This highlights the need for marketers to design strategies according to the cultural characteristics of their target audience in order to effectively reach them.

The results of this study indicated that consumer nationalism, as a mediating variable, has a significant effect on the relationship between nostalgic marketing and the purchase intention of sports goods. This finding is consistent with

previous research by [Anet et al. \(2013\)](#) and [Dostie et al. \(2017\)](#), which confirmed the influence of consumer nationalism on domestic purchasing behavior. In other words, when consumers are influenced by nostalgic feelings, consumer nationalism can play a reinforcing role in their decision-making process regarding the purchase of domestic sports goods.

This result holds strategic importance for managers and policymakers in the sports goods industry, as it demonstrates that combining nostalgic elements with national values can have a substantial impact on consumer behavior. Managers can apply this finding to design marketing strategies that simultaneously focus on creating nostalgic emotions and strengthening national pride. For example, incorporating historical and national cultural symbols in advertising, packaging, and product design can foster a sense of solidarity and national pride among consumers. Furthermore, running advertising campaigns that narrate stories of the country's past sporting achievements or feature national heroes can amplify this effect.

For policymakers, this finding represents an opportunity to support domestic manufacturers and strengthen national brands. They can promote nostalgic marketing and enhance consumer nationalism by providing tax incentives, supporting local producers, and implementing national-scale advertising programs. This approach not only increases demand for domestic sports goods but also strengthens the sports industry against foreign competition.

The findings also revealed that consumer culture, as a mediating variable, significantly influences the relationship between nostalgic marketing and the purchase intention of sports goods. This result aligns with studies by [Dorsazan et al. \(2021\)](#) and [Hahm et al. \(2021\)](#), which confirmed the impact of consumer culture on purchasing behavior. In fact, the effect of nostalgic marketing on purchase intention may vary across societies depending on their cultural

characteristics. For instance, in collectivist societies, consumers may be more influenced by nostalgic advertising that emphasizes family and social values. Therefore, marketers must pay close attention to the cultural characteristics of consumers and utilize this information to design more effective marketing strategies for their target audiences.

This finding suggests that the impact of nostalgic marketing on consumer purchase decisions depends not only on the marketing itself but also on how consumer culture is shaped and directed. Managers should understand that nostalgic marketing will only be successful when it aligns with the existing consumption culture of the society and is capable of influencing it. For example, promoting values such as authenticity, cultural identity, and connection with the past can shift consumption patterns toward the purchase of sports goods that reinforce these feelings.

This study offers significant theoretical and practical implications.

Theoretical Implications: By presenting a novel conceptual model, this research contributes to the existing body of knowledge in the field of nostalgic marketing. The model provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the relationships by focusing on the effect of nostalgic marketing on the purchase intention of sports goods through the mediating roles of consumer culture and consumer nationalism. Despite numerous studies in nostalgic marketing, there is a noticeable lack of research on the mediating roles of consumer culture and consumer nationalism, particularly in the sports goods industry. This study demonstrated that nostalgic marketing not only directly affects purchase intention but also intensifies this effect by strengthening consumer culture and consumer nationalism. The novelty of this research lies in the simultaneous analysis of these mediating variables, which have received limited attention in previous studies. These findings highlight the key role of consumer culture and consumer nationalism in strengthening the relationship between nostalgic marketing and

purchase intention and pave the way for future research to examine these constructs and other psychological and social factors in the field of sports marketing more deeply.

Practical Implications: The findings of this study provide several practical recommendations for managers and policymakers in the sports goods industry. Managers can utilize nostalgic marketing by reissuing old products or offering limited-edition nostalgic designs to evoke a sense of belonging and distinction among consumers, particularly older generations. Using symbols, colors, and logos related to national culture and history in product design and advertising can enhance national pride and increase the desire to purchase domestic goods. Organizing sports events focused on shared memories or collaborating with renowned athletes and legacy brand ambassadors can strengthen emotional connections with consumers. Additionally, designing packaging that evokes the country's sporting history and culture can create a positive emotional experience for customers. Policymakers can support this process by offering tax incentives and assistance to domestic producers, thereby promoting nostalgic marketing and strengthening consumer nationalism. These measures not only increase demand for domestic sports goods but also ensure customer loyalty and sustainable growth of the industry.

Like any research, this study has limitations that may have influenced the results and should be addressed in future studies. First, the study was limited to the sports goods industry in Rasht city. This geographical and sectoral focus may reduce the generalizability of the findings to other areas of the sports industry, such as sports services or sporting events (e.g., domestic league competitions). Future research is recommended to examine this topic in other contexts, such as sports services or live events, and compare the results with the current study to provide a more complete picture of the application of nostalgic marketing.

Second, the exclusive use of a quantitative method for data collection and analysis limited the



in-depth understanding of participants' personal perspectives and experiences. This may have reduced the study's ability to identify complex motives and emotions associated with nostalgic marketing. Employing qualitative approaches, such as interviews with experts or consumers, could provide richer data and help uncover unknown aspects of consumer behavior. Therefore, future studies should combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to examine deeper relationships between nostalgic marketing and purchase intention.

Third, this research focused solely on the mediating roles of consumer nationalism and consumer culture and did not consider other factors such as consumers' personality traits or the influence of social media. This limitation may have led to the neglect of other psychological, technological, or social factors affecting purchase intention, which could have provided a more comprehensive explanation of consumer behavior. Future research can contribute to a fuller understanding of this phenomenon by examining these variables, such as the role of social media in enhancing nostalgic marketing.

In conclusion, this study demonstrated that nostalgic marketing, by evoking positive emotions and recalling individual and collective memories, creates a deep emotional bond between consumers and sports goods and significantly enhances purchase intention. This effect is particularly pronounced in the sports goods sector, which is closely linked to national moments of pride and shared fan memories. Consumer nationalism, as a key driver, plays an important role by increasing preference for domestic products, reducing inclination toward foreign brands, and strengthening national pride. This approach is

8. References

[Anet, z., Sajjadi, S. N., & Khabiri, M. \(2013\). Consumer Nationalism Relation with Conspicuous Consumption, Cultural Openness and Perceived Economic Threat in Assessment of Domestic and](#)

especially effective in marketing products such as national team uniforms or indigenous sports equipment. Consumer culture also acts as a key mediator by shaping purchasing behavior through social values and norms, further strengthening nostalgic marketing in collectivist societies that emphasize support for domestic production.

These findings underscore the importance of recognizing cultural, emotional, and identity-related aspects in designing marketing strategies. Managers can stimulate a sense of belonging and national identity among consumers by utilizing national symbols, collaborating with popular athletes, and designing nostalgic products. The theoretical implications of this study lie in providing a novel model for understanding the role of mediators, while its practical implications offer strategies for increasing customer loyalty and achieving sustainable industry growth. Future research can provide a more comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon by exploring other sectors of the sports industry and employing qualitative methods.

5. Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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