

ATTRACTING NEW SPORT FANS THROUGH COLLECTIVE EMOTION:  
STIMULATING HISTORICAL NOSTALGIA

A Dissertation

by

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## ABSTRACT

The importance of history and tradition in spectator sports is widely recognized, yet most major sports are losing younger fans who feel less connected to sport teams and leagues than previous generations. This study aims to examine the influence of historical nostalgia, grounded in the collective memory theory, and to identify practical implications that can effectively engage and attract new young sport fans to the sports scene. The study examined the causal relationship between historical nostalgia and the traditional values it embodies, such as pride, need for belonging, and connectedness, as well as their impact on predictive sport fan behaviors.

To achieve the objectives of this study, an experimental design was utilized that can identify causal relationships by systematically changing one or more variables. An online experiment was conducted with a between-subject design, involving 381 participants aged 18 or older. Two video clips were used as stimuli, and the study performed analysis of variance and multivariate analysis of variance to check for successful random assignment and manipulation checks. Hypotheses were tested using moderated mediation analysis in SPSS PROCESS.

The study found that while there was no significant direct effect of historical nostalgia on attendance intention, pride, and the need for belongingness and connectedness played a mediating role between historical nostalgia and attendance intention. Although there was no moderating effect of involvement in any posited paths, the mediating effect of the need for connectedness was stronger in the historical nostalgia-stimulated group with lower levels of team identification.

This study provides a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between historical nostalgia, pride, and attendance intention in the context of sports, which has been largely neglected in nostalgia literature. The findings of this study could contribute to the

development of effective marketing strategies for sport organizations that aim to attract new young sport fans to the stadium by helping them understand how to evoke historical nostalgia among sport fans.

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## CONTRIBUTORS AND FUNDING SOURCES

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

**1.1 Background**

Within the culture of spectator sport, history and tradition garner invaluable brand heritage and legacy for fans to admire (Merchant & Rose, 2013). Despite the rich histories and traditions of professional sports, however, all major spectator sports (except esports and basketball) are losing younger fans (VanDriel et al., 2022). Younger fans are less emotionally attached to traditional sport teams and leagues compared to previous generations, and such disconnection raises an important question which sport practitioners must address. Vicarious experiences of collective emotion of past glory of sport teams with rich histories and traditions warrants scholarly attention, as nostalgic marketing techniques such as throwback jersey days and legends games days sell tickets as spectator sport consumers enjoy reliving and celebrating the glorious and revered pasts of teams they follow (Aiken & Sukhdial, 2004).

While nostalgia generally refers to a mixed emotion defined as an emotional state in which an individual yearns for an idealized or sanitized version of an earlier time period experienced (Stern, 1992), researchers emphasize that historical nostalgia, a distinct form of nostalgia also known as vicarious nostalgia, can be experienced by individuals wherein they long for a time in history that they have not personally experienced. Merchant and Rose (2013) suggested that people living in the present age may crave nostalgia due to the unbridled individualism and extreme competition that can result in individuals' sense of alienation from other people, institutions, and the past. In this regard, marketing strategies that can stimulate nostalgia are frequently emerging as a means to entice consumers by implanting a positive image of the past (e.g., historic pride, sense of belonging, sense of connection, sense of affiliation, etc.)

that is different from the current society where individualism and competitive competition are rampant.

Understanding consumers' experience of historical nostalgia is essential to capitalizing on this emotion in marketing domain. While several researchers have examined whether historical nostalgia prompts certain behavioral responses, the question of whether it can induce people to learn and feel values from past legacies—such as time-honored community values—has not yet been investigated with a robust theoretical foundation. Moreover, no studies have been conducted on the causality of the conditions causing nostalgia and that of historical nostalgia on the responses it precipitates. Finally, an investigation of the impact that such stimuli might have on sport fans has been neglected. Given that leveraging historical nostalgia can be effective in bringing new sport fans to the stadium, we must thoroughly scrutinize how it can be stimulated and how fans experience and respond to this emotion.

The purpose of this dissertation was to examine the impact of historical nostalgia, based on the foundation of collective memory theory, and to identify managerial implications that can effectively engage and attract new young sport fans to the sports scene. Through experiments, I aimed to examine the causality of historical nostalgia on the traditional values conceptualized as its core (e.g., pride, needs for belonging, and connectedness), as well as other pertinent predictive sport fan behaviors. To achieve this goal, I conducted experiments employing nostalgic cues to evoke historical nostalgia. A realistic strategy to trigger historical nostalgia would implement a stimulus comprised of a video clip in social media (i.e., YouTube), which are often presented to members of younger generations. This study provides new knowledge to the existing literature related to historical nostalgia and offers strategic implications to practitioners, with the aim of reversing the problematic decline of young fans of traditional sports.

## 1.2 Problem Statement

Sports can comprise an entire lifestyle for both participants and fans alike, providing visual entertainment and forging connections unlike any other community (Warner & Dixon, 2016). Now more than ever, Americans are polarized over political, social, environmental, and economic issues, but their divisions can be bridged by the common appeal of sports (Klein, 2020). Sports also involve substantial emotional and financial stakes which exert a very real impact on people (Goldlust, 2018). However, despite the power that sports have in society, they are facing a major challenge that, if ignored, could fundamentally undermine the landscapes of professional and collegiate sports alike. Popularity is not the issue, but rather the manner and degree of game attendance (Meyer, 2010). While that is not explicitly negative—older fans are usually more engaged and have a greater amount of disposable income than younger ones—it is a problem for the long-term health of leagues because they may have enough earning from their supporters and sponsors but are still limited by how long fans numbers will endure (Maese, 2020). As a fanbase ages, a league loses touch with the younger generations of fans that give life to a league as both supporters and advertisers. Greater support for a game from young people brings more value and excitement to a league.

While sport fans are aging, younger generations are increasingly spending their leisure time engaged in online games (e.g., esports) or using smartphone apps (e.g., social media and shared content), rather than watching sports (Kuss & Griffiths, 2017). This is particularly true in football, leading to the need for a new, supplemental fan base. Although football is arguably the most beloved sport in the United States, the numbers for college football home attendance have continued to fall, and likewise, the attendance of young fans at NFL games is dropping (Maese, 2020). Stahl (2021) reported that one critical reason why football league fanbases are aging is

that these leagues are not enough is being done to appeal to younger fans. This phenomenon can be compared to differences in how the NBA approaches younger consumers. Specifically, while the NBA actively tries to appeal to and reach out to younger generations through a strong social media presence, the NFL has been slow to embrace social media and reluctant to allow players to demonstrate individuality and personality (Abdourazakou & Deng, 2019; VanDriel et al., 2022). As a result, unlike the NBA, the NFL comes across as stodgy and old-fashioned to many young people (Stahl, 2021). Unless practitioners can find a way to connect with those young people, the leagues may eventually find themselves in serious trouble. Accordingly, to maintain the stability of football, younger people, who will make up the majority of the future population, should be encouraged to take a greater interest in the game.

A recent trend in marketing is to leverage nostalgia-based campaigns (i.e., ‘retro marketing’) whose primary objective is to trigger a psychological response in young people’s consumption. This approach is having the desired impact, with some notable examples. Bachem (2020) reported that younger generations wear retro clothes that were fashionable in the past and become interested in that era through the sense of nostalgia associated with the style from another era. In general terms, nostalgia can be categorized as personal and historical nostalgia experiences (Stern, 1992). Most research to date has focused on evaluating the effect of nostalgia on how adults and/or older people recall their experiences from memory; this can be described as ‘personal nostalgia’. So, to delve into nostalgia deeper, how does this concept translate into young people encountering different eras before their time, that is, before they were even born? In particular, in the context of sports, what kind of response can we expect to see in young sport fans when triggered by nostalgia stimuli that they have never directly experienced before and expose them to traditional values, such as valuing collective emotions and behaviors that are

different from the current society where individualism and competitive settings are rampant? Unfortunately, few studies in the current nostalgia literature consider these questions.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

Historical nostalgia does not derive from any direct link to the past but rather arises from a perceived attachment to an object, event, or memory that a consumer has never personally experienced, yet longs for (Baker & Kennedy, 1994). The concept can be characterized as a yearning for the traditional, conservative, and wholesome community values of the past, themselves being individually constructed combinations of fantasy and reality (Merchant & Ford, 2008). If the conceptual premise of historical nostalgia is applied to the context of sport fans, the more youthful of this cohort would be driven by establishing connection with one another, allied with both a strong concept of shared traditional values, and a collective pride emanating from potential access to previous generations' accumulated historical sporting culture (Volkov et al., 2008).

Despite the clear emotional dimension in the values of shared traditional heritage, evoked by historical nostalgia, existing research mainly focuses on behavioral aspects, such as consumption behavior (e.g., Chou & Singhal, 2017; Holak et al., 2007). Furthermore, although sports may appeal to a unique sense of traditional values and nostalgia, research on sports-related nostalgia has been limited to sports tourism (e.g., Cho et al., 2019) and volunteering (e.g., Cho & Lee, 2022). This means that it has gone largely unexamined whether people can experience the traditional values, allegedly prompted by historical nostalgia, without having directly witnessed or participated in the event around which that nostalgia revolves. This gap in literature directs the third research question: What effect can historical nostalgia have on the perception of traditional values?

Existing studies suggest that nostalgia can satisfy certain psychological needs (Holbrook & Schindler, 1991). For example, consumers with unmet social or emotional requirements are more likely to select products which evoke nostalgia and, by doing so, allow them to relive their past and share similar experiences with others. Holbrook and Schindler (1991) argued that consumers yearning for bygone days sate these desires with purchases that stimulate nostalgia. Most studies in this area have examined the sentiment from the perspective of consumers' actual personal experiences, rather than contrived or intrinsic legacies.

How might the experience of historical nostalgia satisfy the needs of those who were not actually exposed to, or present at, the happening that drives the emotional response? In the specific context of sports, could historical nostalgia manufacture a desire in youth fans to access and share in the excitement, jubilation, or even disappointments of events that predate them, and then prompt them to act on that desire? It remains unclear whether fans will opt to attend sports events to meet their psychological needs for belonging, connection, and pride, all of which are suggested as factors subject to the influence of historical nostalgia. Given this knowledge gap, I presented the following research question: What role does historical nostalgia play in stimulating people's psychological desires and inducing specific behaviors to satisfy them?

#### **1.4 Purpose of the Study**

I attempted to address the three research questions via the conceptual model of historical nostalgia (Merchant & Ford, 2008). In this broad agenda, the purpose of the study was threefold. First, in a sport context, I tested whether participants' perception of traditional values (i.e., those grounded in interpersonal relationships, community ethos and pride regarding affiliation) were enhanced by their perceptions of nostalgia-evoking cues. Second, I examined whether participants intended to participate in a sporting event to act on any desires for traditional values



awoken or nurtured by historical nostalgia stimulus cues. Third, I used an experimental design to investigate whether sports marketing, informed by nostalgia, was an effective strategy for attracting new fans, and contrasted the findings with present sport material and instances where participants (prospective fans) were subjected to no stimulus. Additionally, this study explored the impact of vicarious emotion, considered another form of collective emotion, alongside the effects of historical nostalgia and a no-stimuli condition, aiming to provide valuable insights into treatment effectiveness and address potential placebo effects arising from participants' expectations in the experimental cue. Ultimately, I aimed to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on historical nostalgia and its strategic implications for practitioners, specifically focusing on addressing the concerning decline in young fans of traditional sports.

### **1.5 Significance of Study**

This study was expected to provide several important theoretical and practical implications. Foremost, this study is important and original in using an experimental approach to investigate the causal relationship between conceptually defined historical nostalgia and the phenomena attributed to vicarious experience. There has been a lack of scholarly investigation of the effectiveness of historical nostalgia in prompting interest in the value of the traditional heritage that it is expected to invoke, with a sound theoretical background. Previous research primarily focused on consumer behavior, resulting in a limited analysis of the intrinsic value that historical nostalgia can offer, particularly in the context of a robust theoretical framework. The absence of such knowledge prevents a nuanced and holistic understanding of the phenomenon of historical nostalgia and its possible consequences and applications. Drawing on the collective memory theory, this study links the desire to experience the value of traditional heritage evoked by historical nostalgia to the behavioral intentions it induces. By linking the psychological

response individuals have to historical nostalgia to how they behave, this study is expected to contribute results conspicuously absent in the existing literature on historical nostalgia.

In addition to its theoretical implications, the findings of this research provide several meaningful practical implications. Studies have investigated the effects of historical nostalgia in situations which are difficult to experience in real life (e.g., contrived laboratory environments), and historical nostalgia responses to various stimuli, such as advertisements or posters. Although these studies have provided meaningful results, their strategies are not realistic in practice. In contrast, this study aimed to present practical implications by accurately identifying boundary conditions for younger generations and then conducting research based on social media stimuli, which these fans can and indeed have already encountered in real life. These findings provide practical implications for younger generations not only in sports, but also in education, politics, and marketing. Above all, the importance of this study lies primarily in its potential to make a practical contribution by offering a feasible and effective strategy for attracting new fans to the stadiums to address the crisis wherein the number of young sport fans has fallen significantly over the past decade.

## **1.6 Overview of Dissertation**

This dissertation proposal extends and departs in several ways from previous work on the role of historical nostalgia in sport fan behavior. Chapter II discusses the theoretical foundation of historical nostalgia based on a thorough review of the literature. Studies on historical nostalgia and behavioral intentions are thoroughly discussed to develop a conceptual framework of relationships between one another. Chapter III describes the methodology employed in this study, including experimental design, manipulation, instruments used, participants selection, data collecting procedure, and data analysis.

CHAPTER II  
LITERATURE REVIEW

**2.1 Nostalgia**

Nostalgia is tied to a longing for the days gone by—for people, opportunities and events that evoke a warm glow (Sweeney, 2020). Due to cognitive biases, such as seeing the world through rose-tinted spectacles, people tend to perceive past events more positively and view the future with skepticism. This tendency is known as declinism when applied to people's beliefs about an institution or a society (Etchells, 2016). Indeed, declinism has been variously described as ‘a trick of the mind’ and ‘an emotional strategy’, comparable to a comforting reference point when the present seems intolerably bleak (Sedikides et al., 2008). The scientific literature often addresses nostalgia as it relates to one’s personal life. To date, scholars have primarily focused on the effects of nostalgia, as evidenced throughout this research. As these stimuli are initially processed through the amygdala, the brain’s emotional epicenter, emotion is a strong precursor for subsequent feelings of nostalgia. These memories usually revolve around significant events, loved ones, and places where people have previously spent time. Nostalgia can also be triggered by cultural media, such as movies, television shows, music, and video games, not to mention the natural world, such as beautiful landscapes and weather-related phenomena.

Despite often being initially triggered by negative feelings, nostalgia helps boost mood and augment positive feelings, which can flow from a perceived sense of warmth or from nostalgic reflections that inform coping strategies. One method of boosting mood is to address problems that hinder happiness. For instance, Batcho (2013) discovered that a positive correlation exists between nostalgia proneness and successful methods of coping at all stages, including planning and executing coping strategies and reframing the issue in question in a more

positive light. Batcho (2013) found that the coping mechanisms that are common among nostalgia-prone individuals often prove beneficial during stressful periods. Specifically, it appears that nostalgia leads to an increased focus on devising and implementing coping strategies, which then provides a more robust support framework to fall back on in challenging times and situations.

As one type of nostalgia, personal nostalgia, according to Havlena and Holak (1991), is a connected response derived from recalling people's own individual pasts. An individual's actual experiences are the foundation of personal nostalgia, which constitutes a yearning for a past that has been lived (Baker & Kennedy, 1994) as well as the items, recollections, and people connected with this past (Goulding, 2001). Personal nostalgia entails a quest for a past that has been idealized in memory. The individual undergoing this sort of nostalgia recalls objects and occurrences in a more positive light than reality would suggest. A nostalgic person experiences happiness, warmth, and joy, but also feels that they can never return to the past. They view yesteryear as representing the way things ought to be and mourn the way life has changed (Bricklin, 2001; Stern, 1992). A nostalgic individual thus seeks the object of their nostalgia as well as the era in which it existed (Akhtar, 1996).

Personal nostalgia performs a variety of roles. For instance, it provides continuity and identity in shifting situations (Iyer & Jetten, 2011), which then function as an anchor of stability. Changing conditions lead people to feel insecure and uncertain of themselves, causing them to seek refuge in recollections of their past as a sort of shield against concerns about an unknowable future (Nawas & Platt, 1965). Personal nostalgia also makes people feel less lonesome (Zhou et al., 2008). When individuals become lonely, they are prone to recalling past occurrences involving friends and family in order to re-experience times that were more joyful. Many factors

impact how a person experiences personal nostalgia, such as age, nostalgia proneness, intensity of personal experiences, and discontinuity (Merchant & Rose, 2013).

As there are many sources available that enable people to access sports with ease, various kinds of experiences should be considered in detail from the sport fans' perspective. This study suggests that there are two types of experiences related to sporting events which trigger nostalgic recollections. The first type is a direct, in-person experience at a sport venue, such as that special moment when a spectator physically enters the stadium to witness a sporting event, or a direct experience or a direct experience of a live-broadcast of a sporting event. The second type is an indirect experience with pre-recorded media acting as the intermediary (e.g., television, radio, the internet, newspapers, magazines, books) through which an individual watches recorded historical footage of a sporting event and learns of the results of the event through the running commentary, even though the event has already ended. In this study, I focus on the latter type of experience, historical nostalgia, which is explained in more detail in the next section.

### **2.1.1 Historical Nostalgia**

Many people feel a strong draw to the past, with some experiencing the pull so keenly that they even believe themselves to have been born into the wrong era. Historical nostalgia is a phenomenon whereby people long for a time in the past that they have not actually lived through. Different from personal nostalgia, historical nostalgia occurs when people miss something that they never experienced first-hand (Croft, 1989). Age does not influence this feeling. For example, Goulding (2002) reported that 25-year-olds experience nostalgia for the 1960s, an era that predated them by years. Historical nostalgia consists of a longing for conventional, conservative, and community values of past times and is made up of a combination of fantasy

and reality that reflects each individual (Rose & Wood, 2005). Sohn (1983) contends that historical nostalgia should be viewed as a form of paramnesia, which is the sensation that someone has seen or heard something previously, possibly based on nothing but fantasy.

Historical nostalgia can transport people; for instance, people feel transported to another era when attending an opera (Sohn, 1983). Visiting a museum allows people to withdraw from the real world both in terms of time and place, taking them to the past (Joy & Sherry, 2003). Historical nostalgia enables the past to become the present; this sensation is accompanied by a sense of loss and sadness upon realizing that the past was nothing more than an imagination (Daniels, 1985). Thus, historical nostalgia grows into a quest for an ephemeral mirage. This identification with the past (Goulding, 2002) impacts people's thoughts, actions, and behavior. Through objects that transport them back to the golden era, people experience the 'golden' past vicariously (Rose & Wood, 2005).

### **2.1.2 Conceptualization of Historical Nostalgia**

Historical nostalgia is the indirect experience of a specific era, event, or object which can be triggered by various contexts (Goulding, 2002). To better understand the nostalgia experience, especially historical nostalgia, it is critical to accurately distinguish the response to nostalgia and the context that triggers the reaction. However, no conceptualization of historical nostalgia has been made, leaving instead ambiguity for researchers in terms of related temporal aspects. Therefore, in this study, historical nostalgia is conceptualized based on its temporality.

Historical nostalgia is an emotional response to something an individual has not experienced personally. Although it has also been defined as imagining events from a time one has not experienced (Marchegiani & Phau, 2013), the emphasis is on a period or era rather than a specific event. For example, according to Merchant and Rose (2013), historical nostalgia

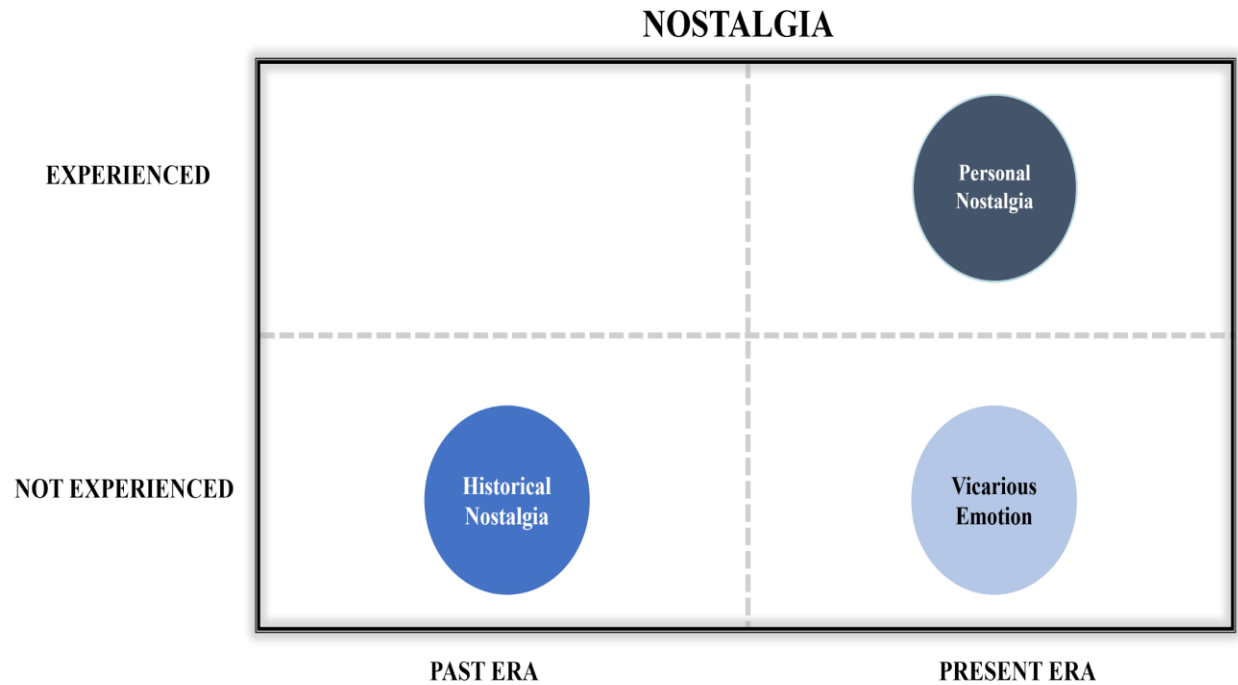
provides an experience that indirectly suggests the circumstances of an era before an individual was born, as if that individual had been present in that era, thereby making them yearn for that era.

Apart from historical nostalgia, vicarious emotion is generally characterized as being unrestricted by time. In other words, individuals can feel surrogate emotions about events occurring at the same time or with a specific person, and they can even feel vicarious emotions by predicting future events (Hall et al., 2019). In this respect, although historical nostalgia can be categorized as a vicarious emotional response, its context can be completely different from that of other vicarious emotional responses.

To better investigate the effect of historical nostalgia, this study attempts to clearly distinguish between elements that stimulate historical nostalgia and those that stimulate vicarious emotional responses. Historical nostalgia is conceptualized in this study as an experience that directly recalls a past era that an individual has not experienced. In contrast, vicarious emotion is conceptualized as indirectly experiencing an event that has occurred during one's generation but which one has not experienced directly, so it can be said that vicarious emotion is different from personal nostalgia, which indicates a response experienced directly and simultaneously with the event. Figure 1 illustrates how historical nostalgia is conceptualized in this study.

Conceptualized historical nostalgia can also be applied to sport contexts. Sport fan experience can be better understood by comparing historical nostalgia with vicarious emotion to determine whether past events cause the imagined experience of effects that younger generations did not actually experience. More specifically, we can better understand the value of historical nostalgia in a sport context by employing nostalgia triggers that represent an era that an individual has never experienced at all but to which they have temporal proximity.

**Figure 1** *A Conceptualization of Historical Nostalgia*



### **2.1.3 Effects of Historical Nostalgia**

Previous studies suggest that the concept of historical nostalgia can encourage individuals to engage in types of social behavior with others that were previously highly regarded, including forging a sense of community and developing a sense of belonging (Volkov et al., 2008). The socialization component of historical nostalgia can be better understood from the perspective of motivation. Fans and spectators may experience shared nostalgia when it rekindles positive memories tied to their previous interaction with other group members. This is because historical nostalgia can boost a longing for what can be described as traditional, conservative, and wholesome community values from the past (Volkov et al., 2008). Therefore, historical nostalgia can be discerned as arising from past group or social experiences which, in turn, formed the foundation of the nature of sport fans' engagement and interaction with one another. Participants



may recount and exchange stories about their daily lives, as well as relishing positive nostalgic feelings, set against an opportunity to develop friendships by participating in sporting event gatherings with their fellow group members. Furthermore, for some people the very point of participating in a sporting event is to meet up with fellow group members and immerse themselves in their shared positive experience of nostalgia.

Indeed, previous studies have intimated that social themes pervade nostalgic memories (Wildschut et al., 2006). Significantly, when artificially manipulated, nostalgia fosters a sense of social connectedness. Nostalgic participants (vs. the control group) in research studies are observed as doing the following: they (1) experience lower attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance (Wildschut et al., 2006), (2) feel more loved, protected, socially supported, connected to and trusting of others (Zhou et al., 2008), (3) report stronger feelings of empathy, pursue to be near unfamiliar people, desire social interaction with others—even members of the fan base for the opposing team—, and have an express intention to connect more with friends (Stephan et al., 2014), and (4) feel more capable of being able to provide support to others, expressing altruistic intentions, donating money to charity, and helping others in general (Stephen et al., 2014).

#### **2.1.4 Historical Nostalgia and Behavioral Intention**

Behavioral intention has been defined in several ways, including some which focus on the intensity of an individual's intention (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), an individual's expectations of their own behavior (Ajzen 1991), and how often they engage in physical activity (Courneya, 1994). Ajzen (1991) contends that intention is closely tied to actual conduct and that strong intentions are highly predictive of a person's actual, observed behavior. Ajzen and Fishbein (1975) suggest that intention and subsequent actual behavior are challenging to accurately measure because the relationship between intention and actual behavior is affected by intrinsic

characteristics such as beliefs and desires as well as a host of extrinsic factors. However, they also propose that behavioral intentions are more useful for understanding what a person will do going forward. In this respect, studying whether and why young students will attend sporting events through a behavioral intention construct can provide significant insights for understanding important consumer behavior.

### **2.1.5 Nostalgia and Sport**

Sport atmospheres create unique environments which forge group cultures within which participants can experience nostalgia through social gatherings with fellow group members. Fairley (2003) argued that people feel nostalgia for places, objects, and social experiences. A nostalgic response can potentially be evoked by the external environmental impacts ingrained in sporting cultures, which influence memories to help create positive recollections of the past. This attribute of sports can help elucidate the connection between sports and nostalgia. Moreover, nostalgia is elicited by a wide array of experiences pertaining to sports. People's memories are more likely to retain impressive events, which can be explained by the phenomenon of flashbulb memories, a type of memory which closely resembles a photograph which captures a scene and setting in which people found themselves when a flash went off.

Brown and Kulik (1977) contended that flashbulb memories have a primary 'live' aspect which can be perceived almost visually. The concept of flashbulb memories elucidates how sports act as vectors for nostalgia. Although people might not have experienced an event personally, mass media such as film, video broadcasting, and photography enable people to easily access and vicariously experience memorable sport moments, as they do their own flashbulb memories (Snyder, 1991). With prior experiences informing their perceptions, positively viewed flashbulb memories elicit nostalgia. Sport merchandise can trigger flashbulb

memories if people identify themselves with the merchandise. Gammon and Ramshaw (2013) stated that sport merchandising revolves heavily around sport products' representation of certain sporting eras. People are attracted to objects that form a connection to their past successes or their favorite teams; hence individuals with positive recollections of past sport products are more likely to procure vintage products or reproductions which evoke nostalgic emotions. In summary, various attributes of sports are closely tied to the notion of nostalgia. The particular social and emotional characteristics of sports enable people to forge their own positive emotions and memories, and such favorable experiences from their pasts lay the foundation for nostalgia.

Prior research has found that favorable memories of popular sport teams, environments, socialization, and personal and group identities can evoke nostalgia among sport fans, and sport teams and players play a major role in developing sport fan equity through this effect (Biscaia et al., 2016). Fans cultivate a shared attachment to specific players or teams (Kwon et al., 2005), which in turn influences sport fan value (Biscaia et al., 2016). Because nostalgia stems from experiences and recollections (Cho et al., 2014), nostalgic feelings toward athletes and sport teams must therefore be closely tied to sport fan equity as well as sport fans' behavioral intentions.

Researchers have identified nostalgia as a key construct underpinning individuals' behavior in a variety of settings, including sport (Cho et al., 2020), consumer behavior (Chou & Singhal, 2017), and leisure (Cho, 2020). Research has demonstrated how nostalgia impacts individuals' behavioral intentions. For instance, Malhotra et al. (2022) reported empirical evidence that nostalgia inspired tourists to return to past travel destinations. Similarly, Li (2015) found that nostalgic remembrances promote pro-social behavior of individuals, demonstrating how nostalgia plays a central role in decision-making processes.

Fairley (2003) stated that nostalgia is evoked by phenomena such as people, locations, memories, and objects from individuals' prior personal experiences; in the context of sports, nostalgia is typically elicited by athletes, teams, and competition venues and atmosphere. Robinson and Trail (2005) examined spectators' allegiance to a team and noted that in addition to feeling an intense connection to a particular team, or even in lieu of attachment to a particular team, an individual might feel a connection to the coach or a specific player on that team, among other aspects of that team. Positive memories of sport phenomena and events, sport fans assign particular emotional value to specific teams, players, or stadiums, thereby transforming them into objects of nostalgia.

Though nostalgia is closely related to participants' emotions and representative phenomena associated with a particular sport, nostalgia is distinct from motivation. Sport spectators' motivation has been measured through the analysis of a range of variables such as physical prowess and attraction, vicarious accomplishment, escape, aesthetic fulfillment, dramatic action, social interaction and family dynamics (Trail & James, 2001). Kim and Mao (2021) noted that teams and athletes play essential roles in motivating spectators and fans. That said, nostalgia is a double-edged sword from an emotional perspective; when people are dissatisfied with their present circumstances, they may experience nostalgia derived from their positive recollections of objects such as players, team, and stadiums (Fairley & Gammon, 2005). Despite the differences between the two, motivation and nostalgia are closely related. For instance, individuals dissatisfied with their present circumstances tend to engage in nostalgia to escape their day-to-day routines. Such nostalgia may be triggered by visible cues such as players, teams, and venues, as well as by invisible aspects pertaining to prior sport experiences such as music or features of stadium atmospheres such as sounds or smells. Finally, people's motivation

to attend sports gatherings may be impacted by nostalgia. In conclusion, individuals' past recollections related to specific objects affect their emotional affinity for their favorite teams, athletes, or sports, which can influence their behavioral intentions.

### **2.1.6 Team Identification**

Wann (2006) explained team identification as the degree to which an individual experiences an emotional connection to a sport team. Wann (2006) proposed that this connection is constant and will not vary over time or as a result of wins or losses. The extent of fans' identification with sport teams has been intensively examined by experts to explain sport fans' consumption behavior. James and Delia (2019) classified spectators into four segments, high, medium, low, and not a fan depending on their level of allegiance with teams in their research of sport fans' mindsets and societal effects.

Kwon et al. (2007) posited that highly identified fans are more likely to buy team-licensed apparel to reinforce their team affiliation. Apostolopoulou and Papadimitriou (2018) confirmed this by demonstrating that fans' expenditures on sport licensed products was positively correlated with their team identification. Supporting evidence was cited by Dale et al. (2005) in their study on rugby fans. Gwinner and Swanson (2003) found that levels of American football team identification were positively correlated with more favorable interpretations of the teams' corporate sponsors' public images and brands. Bristow and Sebastian (2001) found variations in perception of and attitude towards a certain sport team, according to individual fans' allegiance to the team.

Due to the significant impact of team identification, it has been determined that sport fan behaviors can be moderated by the extent of this construct. For example, it has been found that team identification changes the sport fan's focus of the game and perceived atmosphere in the

stadium (Lee et al., 2017). In addition, the influence of changing one's purchasing behavior in purchasing a specific sponsored product was revealed as well (Theodorakis et al., 2009). Team identification can play a crucial role in enticing sport fans to act or not act in a certain way. In this regard, it can be inferred that team identification will contribute significantly to understanding the behavior of young sport fans related to attending sport games.

### **2.1.7 Involvement**

Zaichkowsky (1994) described an individual's perception of their relevance to something according to their intrinsic desires and priorities. Scholars in sport marketing field have infrequently employed fan involvement as a predictive factor of sport consumption behavior. Trivedi (2020) argued that sport fans' engagement in a sponsorship campaign created positive emotional assessments of the sponsor. Koo and Lee (2019) empirically assessed that fans' sport involvement was correlated with their understanding of sport sponsorship, sponsors' public image, and fans' intention to buy the sponsors' merchandise. Beaton et al. (2011) explained sport involvement as someone's perception of their engagement in a sport as a central aspect of their life, providing both symbolic significance and pleasure. Beaton et al. (2011) described involvement as a three-dimensional model incorporating pleasure, centrality, and symbolism by using the four stages (awareness, attraction, attachment, and allegiance) of Funk and James' (2001) Psychological Continuum Model. Other prior studies have focused on sport involvement's role as a moderator in the relation between predictors and outcome variables (e.g., Du et al., 2019; Koo & Lee, 2019). These existing findings indicate that involvement can have a significant impact in modulating sport fan behavior. In this regard, taking into account the involvement in a particular object in a particular behavior by fans is an effective means of better understanding the behavior of sport consumers.

The research gaps that have been presented so far may prevent us from better understanding sport fan behavior. In particular, it is necessary to bridge this research gap at this time as it is of paramount importance to attract young sport fans to the stadium. Based on these research gaps, new relationships of constructs were established, and hypotheses were established accordingly. The next section provides a theoretical background and outlines the explanations of the hypotheses to be tested in this study.

## **2.2 Theoretical Background**

### **2.2.1 Collective Memory Theory**

Collective memory theory, also known as social memory theory, is a multidisciplinary framework investigating the processes by which societies construct and disseminate past memories (Assmann, 1995; Halbwachs, 1980). It aims to comprehend how collective memories contribute to forming group identities, shape social cohesion, and influence historical narratives (Olick et al., 2008). Drawing from the work of Maurice Halbwachs, a sociologist in the early 20th century, collective memory theory emphasizes the social nature of remembering and forgetting. It proposes that individual memories are socially constructed and influenced by group contexts, highlighting the significance of collective representations and shared narratives in the formation of collective memory (Halbwachs, 1992).

Scholars from various disciplines, including sociology, psychology, history, anthropology, and cultural studies, have expanded upon Halbwachs' ideas, resulting in a more comprehensive theoretical framework for collective memory theory (Nora, 1996; Wertsch, 2002). These scholars have examined the processes involved in forming, maintaining, and transmitting collective memories within societies. They have investigated how social frameworks encompass cultural, linguistic, and institutional contexts shape the construction and

transmission of collective memory. These frameworks provide shared symbols, narratives, and practices that influence memory formation and transmission (Middleton & Edwards, 1990).

Memory work, a central concept in collective memory theory, involves active and ongoing processes such as remembering, forgetting, commemoration, and memorialization (Hoskins, 2011; Radstone, 2008). These processes contribute to the formation and evolution of collective memory. Memory work is influenced by social frameworks and mnemonic communities, which are social groups that share common memories and engage in collective memory practices. Through communication, interaction, and commemorative rituals, mnemonic communities shape and perpetuate shared memories. Thus, collective memory theory recognizes the importance of these social dynamics in constructing and transmitting collective memory (Hirsch, 1997; Schudson, 1995).

Another key aspect of collective memory theory is the role of sites of memory. These can be physical or symbolic spaces that hold significance concerning collective memory. Examples include monuments, museums, memorials, historical events, and cultural artifacts (Assmann, 2011; Nora, 1989). Sites of memory serve as tangible representations of shared narratives and contribute to the perpetuation of collective memory. They play a crucial role in preserving and transmitting memories across generations, providing physical or symbolic reminders of the past (Edensor, 2005; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998).

By employing a multidisciplinary approach, collective memory theory provides a valuable framework for understanding how societies construct and transmit their understanding of the past. It explores the dynamic interplay between individual and collective memories and the social and cultural factors that influence memory formation. By examining collective memory, the theory offers insights into the complexities of collective identity, social cohesion, and



historical representation. By recognizing the significance of social frameworks, memory work, mnemonic communities, and sites of memory, collective memory theory provides a comprehensive analysis of the multifaceted processes involved in constructing and transmitting collective memory (Erll & Nünning, 2010; Olick, 2007).

The application of collective memory theory may provide valuable insights into the utilization of historical nostalgia as a means to predict and attract young sport fans to stadiums. By leveraging shared memories and narratives associated with past sporting events and experiences, sport organizations can foster a sense of historical continuity and emotional connection among young fans. Through strategically employing symbols, rituals, and commemorative practices rooted in collective memory, such as incorporating references to esteemed athletes, iconic moments, or significant milestones, sport entities can evoke a profound sense of nostalgia that resonates with young fans and enhances their inclination to attend live sporting events. Consequently, the integration of collective memory theory offers the potential to inform effective strategies aimed at engaging and attracting young sport fans to stadiums, thereby contributing to the vibrancy and enduring success of sport communities.

## **2.3 Hypotheses Development**

### **2.3.1 The Relation between Historical Nostalgia and Attendance Intention**

Based on the collective memory theory, the current study examines a broad spectrum of prior research into nostalgia-driven consumer behavior, undertaken to discover how and why historical nostalgia is a factor impacting the behavior of sport fans. Collective memory theory (Halbwachs, 1980) posits that historical nostalgia significantly influences consumer behavior and attitudes. Based on this theory, Stern (1992b) argued that fictional thoughts rooted in collective memory are pivotal in shaping consumers' brand attitudes, particularly when evoking an

imagined past. Thus, historical nostalgia, deriving from collective memory, has the potential to elicit positive emotions and recollections from a previous era, providing consumers with a rewarding experience that could, in turn, impact their intention to attend events. Furthermore, Khan and Hussainy (2018) contend that nostalgic cues have the ability to sway cognitive and affective attitudes, guiding individuals toward certain consumer actions.

Focusing on emotions is effective in investigating consumer behavior pertaining to nostalgic marketing (Muehling & Pascal, 2012), and prior studies have indicated that nostalgic stimuli generally elicit pleasant emotions. For instance, Muehling and Pascal (2012) assert that feelings of nostalgia generally connote positive emotional states. This sentiment can influence consumer attitudes and purchasing intention, with studies revealing it as a determinant in people's behavior across a breadth of contexts including advertising (Holbrook & Schindler, 2003), tourism (Cho et al., 2020), and leisure pursuits (Cho et al., 2019).

According to Mitchell (1986), positive associations with a specific item or event are transferable to any other related elements. That is, positive emotions towards a stimulus can create a favorable attitude towards an affiliated brand. Wen et al. (2019) explains that nostalgia-prone consumers demonstrate greater positivity towards items that evoke it (Wen et al., 2019). Muehling (2013) reported that nostalgic stimuli leave consumers more receptive when evaluating brands and advertisements. Muehling and Sprott (2004) discovered that sentimentality-themed advertising built more positive associations with brands than general publicity campaigns, and Muehling (2003) found that stimuli incorporating such cues increase brand favoritism.

In the context of historical nostalgia, fictional thoughts are pivotal in shaping consumers' brand attitudes (Stern, 1992) because they reference an imagined past (Muehling, 2013), and brand attitudes shaped by it tend to be more positive overall. Harvey (2017) postulates that

consumer consumption is significantly driven by historical nostalgia as it rewards them with pleasant recollections from a past era (although these recollections may be real or imagined, because they are drawn from collective memory). Khan and Hussainy (2018) argued that people's cognitive and affective attitudes can be swayed by nostalgic cues, inclining them towards certain consumer actions. In combination, the evidence makes a compelling case for nostalgia's key role in molding decision-making. Applied to sporting contexts, it is reasonable to assume that historical nostalgia, conveyed to fans in video clips, could invoke positive consumption intentions in comparison to a control group. On that basis, I developed the following hypothesis:

H1: Historical nostalgia will positively affect attendance intention.

### **2.3.2 The Mediating Role of Pride**

According to the collective memory theory (Halbwachs, 1980), historical nostalgia can play a significant role in shaping consumer behavior (e.g., purchasing behavior and attendance intention) by connecting to feelings of pride. When individuals experience historical nostalgia, it tends to elicit positive emotions such as pride, success, and compassion, as supported by previous research (Cheung et al., 2020). The experience of pride, in particular, has been found to significantly impact consumer behavior.

Baumeister et al. (2007) proposed that individuals adapt their behavior in response to feelings of pride. In consumer behavior, pride has been shown to stimulate consumers' purchase intentions, indicating that individuals who experience pride are more likely to engage in purchasing behaviors related to the nostalgic experience (Chang et al., 2019). Moreover, pride

influences individuals' inclination to identify themselves as supporters of a specific team or brand, fostering a sense of loyalty and connection (Decrop & Derbaix, 2010; Holbrook et al., 2014). This identification as a supporter can increase engagement in word-of-mouth recommendations, where individuals actively promote and advocate for the nostalgic experience to others (Holbrook et al., 2014).

In the context of attendance intention, studies focusing on football fans have reported a positive effect of pride on their intention to revisit stadiums (Chang et al., 2019; Montez, 2021). The sense of pride associated with the nostalgic experience creates a desire to continue participating in the event or activity, driving individuals to express their support by attending future events. This study hypothesized the interplay between historical nostalgia, pride, and attendance intention by synthesizing the existing literature and the conceptualization of historical nostalgia. With pride as a suggested outcome of exposure to historical nostalgia, I posit that its mediating effect on the relationship between historical nostalgia and attendance is greater in the exposure group than another group influenced by vicarious emotion, or in the control group. I therefore established the following hypothesis:

H2: Pride will positively mediate the relation between historical nostalgia and attendance intention.

### **2.3.3 The Mediating Roles of Needs for Belonging and Connectedness**

According to collective memory theory, historical nostalgia can evoke a strong desire for belonging and connection among individuals (Halbwachs, 1980). Collective memory theory proposes that our sense of self and identity are intricately tied to our connections with others and

the social groups we belong to, and memories are constructed and maintained collectively within these social contexts. Historical nostalgia accesses shared cultural and social experiences that have shaped a group's identity and sense of belonging. When individuals experience historical nostalgia, it triggers a desire to reconnect with the collective memories and social bonds associated with that nostalgia. This longing for belonging and connection stems from the understanding that one's identity is deeply intertwined with the group and the shared past experiences. In this respect, historical nostalgia can stimulate a strong desire for belonging and connection among individuals.

According to Lee and Kao (2021), historical nostalgia can prompt longing in individuals to re-engage with past, positive social pursuits that were regarded as components in constructing a sense of community and developing a sense of belonging. Lee and Kao (2021) infer that even those not directly involved at a particular event can gain access to collective emotions, when reminiscences of it rekindle positive memories already attached to previous interactions with their group members. This is attributable to historical nostalgia evoking a yearning for "how life used to be", or at least how life is felt to have been. This perception can draw on conventional, conservative, and morally upstanding community values, which summon a bygone era (Volkov et al., 2008). Historical nostalgia's origins can therefore be seen in group social interactions that celebrate a shared past, which influence how non-sport fans might relate to one another.

Behaviors are often rooted in yearning for a sense of belonging and connection to others, which itself can be elicited by historical nostalgia. This inclination steers people toward activities which satisfy these needs, a phenomenon that usually underpins strong communities. For instance, multiple studies show increased community engagement in people whose sense of belonging and connection to their environment is stronger (Chai & Kim, 2012; Zhao et al.,

2012). A slew of research has also firmly established how significantly a sense of belonging and connection influence engagement in community advocacy behavior (Cheung & Lee, 2020).

In the context of sports, young individuals who experience sport-themed historical nostalgia may have a heightened desire for social belonging and connection compared to those who do not experience such nostalgia. Attending sports events allows young fans to share stories, engage in nostalgic conversations, and form friendships with like-minded individuals (Slavich et al., 2018). The experience of mingling with fellow group members and immersing oneself in shared nostalgia serves as a primary motivating factor for attending these events. Stephan et al. (2014) suggest that this sentiment can foster a more profound need for social connection, while Wildschut et al. (2006) found that individuals inclined to nostalgic feelings demonstrate a stronger empathic capacity, seek physical proximity to strangers, and prioritize social interaction and feelings of connection with others. Based on these observations, it is reasonable to assume that the need for belonging and connection can positively mediate the relationship between nostalgia and behavioral intentions.

H3: The need for belonging will positively mediate the relation between historical nostalgia and attendance intention.

H4: The need for connection will positively mediate the relation between historical nostalgia and attendance intention.

#### **2.3.4 The Moderating Role of Team Identification and Involvement**

The extent of fans' sense of identification with their team is subject to increasing attention in sport management literature, as a major variable in patterns of collective character-affecting

behavior in supporters. Team identification correlates with one's extent of affiliation to a team, essentially a form of collective identity itself (Tajfel, 1982; Wann & Branscombe, 1990). Fans identifying strongly with a team are likely to internalize its sporting accomplishments and cultivate a positive attitude towards it (Madrigal & Chen, 2008; Wann, 2006). Team identification constitutes a personal state which impacts attributions while a game is in progress, likely making it a contextual variable, or an internal source (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974) affecting cognitive and affective experience. Therefore, people are likely to have already formed a sense of team identification before encountering nostalgic cues in the temporal dimension. This may, in turn, have implications for personal reactions to nostalgia.

Similar to team identification, sense of involvement can impact sport fans' cognitive and affective experience and their conduct, given it is a comparatively stable psychological state, tied to personality (Park et al., 2021). This concept has been variously defined as a person's subjective evaluation of their concerns and preferences, and the importance, personal relevance, and significance of an attitude (Zaichkowsky, 2012). As an activated attitude, involvement colors a person's motivation toward an item or activity (Mittal & Lee, 1989) and encourages people to pursue relevant goals and objectives (Poiesz & de Bont Cees, 1995). People's high degree of involvement regarding a particular event may impact certain thoughts and actions related to it.

In this study, I first conceptualized team identification as that made manifest toward a university sport team while attending their matches, and second, conceptualized their involvement as how much engagement they demonstrate as a member of the school community. I predicted a moderating effect of team identification and involvement on the relationship between historical nostalgia and attendance intention. The key idea is that young people's personal state of team identification and involvement, and their sense of community membership

(which could conceivably have been established prior to the experiment), will influence the extent to which they emotionally process pride and their perception of need for belonging and connection, thus affecting their behavioral intent (in this particular case, attendance intention). I therefore submit the final hypotheses as follows:

H5-1: Team identification will moderate the mediation effect of pride.

H5-2: Team identification will moderate the mediation effect of the need for belonging.

H5-3: Team identification will moderate the mediation effect of the need for connection.

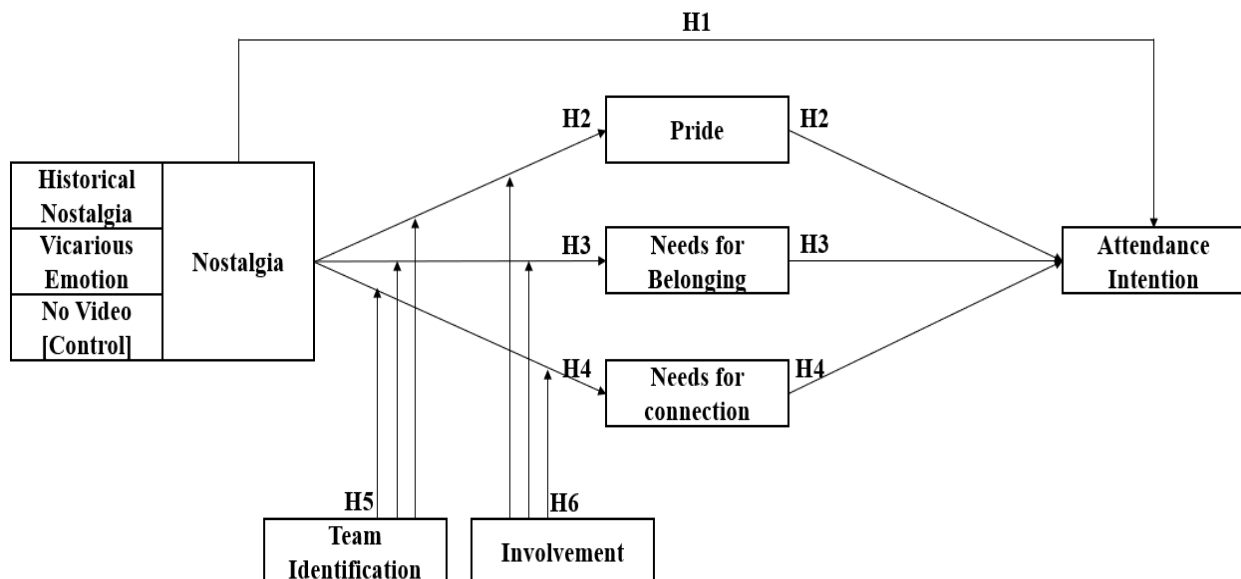
H6-1: Involvement will moderate the mediation effect of pride.

H6-2: Involvement will moderate the mediation effect of the need for belonging.

H6-2: Involvement will moderate the mediation effect of the need for connection.

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual causal model based on the hypothesized relationships among the research constructs.

**Figure 2** *A proposed conceptual model*





## CHAPTER III

### METHOD

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the causal relationship between historical nostalgia and the outcomes of historical nostalgia by conducting an online experiment using a between-subject experimental design. Participants were randomly assigned into groups according to the stimulus types (i.e., video stimulating historical nostalgia; video stimulating vicarious emotion; none) examining the effect on sport consumption behavior (e.g., sport event attendance intention). The moderating roles of the participants' team identification and involvement as members of the affiliation community were tested on the causal effect of historical nostalgia on needs for connection and belonging and pride. Accordingly, I measured perceived historical nostalgia, attendance intention, and needs for connection and belonging, pride, team identification, and involvement. The research design is described in the next section.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

I conducted this study utilizing an experimental design that can identify causal relationships by observing the effect of systematically changing one or more variables. In order to achieve the study's objectives, an online experiment was performed with a between-subject design. I randomly assigned participants into three groups (control group, comparison group, experimental group) and performed a manipulation check before testing the hypothesis. Next, I tested the hypotheses by assessing causal relationships among historical nostalgia, psychological needs and behavioral intentions. The moderating effects of constructs that might influence the results were also examined: (1) participants' involvement in the university community and (2) participants' team identification with the Texas A&M University football team, which might have a significant impact on the decision-making process.

### 3.2 Participants

Under the approval of the Institutional Review Board, participants consisting of students 18 years of age or older attending Texas A&M University were recruited using a convenience sampling method derived from Qualtrics platforms. I asked each participant at the beginning of the survey if he or she is willing to participate in the experiment; those who express a willingness to participate in the study were shown a series of brief video clips and asked to continue answering the survey questions, while those who did not were automatically excluded from the study. If participants spent less time than expected in responding to the survey after watching the video clips, their responses were omitted from the study.

The targeted sample size for the current study was initially set at a minimum of 280 participants. The rationale of this sample size was based on the need to have enough participants per construct in the theoretical model, which includes seven constructs, to perform effective path modeling. Kline (2015) recommended a minimum of 20 participants per construct for such modeling. Hence, a minimum sample size of 140 was computed. However, to account for the typical response rate range, which is between 28% and 68% (Baruch, 1999), it was deemed safe to recruit at least twice as many participants (i.e., approximately 280 participants). The final sample size of the study exceeded the initial target, reaching 381 participants (Group 1:  $n = 107$ ; Group 2:  $n = 117$ ; Group 3:  $n = 127$ ).

Table 1 shows the demographic traits of the study participants. In terms of sample characteristics, male participants constituted 59.6% ( $n = 227$ ) of the sample, while female participants constituted 40.4% ( $n = 154$ ). The age of the participants ranged from 19 to 24 years ( $M = 21.07$ ). The majority of participants were White or Caucasian (75.6%,  $n = 288$ ), followed by Hispanic or Latino (16.5%,  $n = 63$ ), Black or African American (4.2%,  $n = 16$ ), Asian or

Pacific Islander (3.1%,  $n = 12$ ), Native American (.3%,  $n = 1$ ), and others (.3%,  $n = 1$ ). The distribution of the academic year among the participants was 52 freshmen (13.6%), 177 sophomores (46.5%), 104 juniors (10.4%), 44 seniors (11.5%), and 4 graduate students (1%).

**Table 1**

*Demographic Characteristics of the Study Participants*

Variables	Description	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	227	59.6
	Female	154	40.4
Age	19	31	8.1
	20	93	24.4
	21	142	37.3
	22	63	16.5
	23	39	10.2
	24	13	3.4
Ethnicity	Native American	1	.3
	Asian or Pacific Islander	12	3.1
	Black or African American	16	4.2
	Hispanic or Latino	63	16.5
	White or Caucasian	288	75.6
	Others	1	.3
Academic Year	Freshman	52	13.6
	Sophomore	177	46.5
	Junior	104	27.3
	Senior	44	11.5
	Graduate Student	4	1.0

Drawing on previous research, efforts were made in this study to minimize confounding effects on outcomes by investigating differences in individual characteristics. For example, Gebauer et al. (2008) suggested that the congruence between an individual's chronic mood and their mood experienced during a specific event could play a significant role in determining the positive or negative impact of past recall. In light of these findings, I assessed participants' chronic mood state prior to exposing them to experimental stimuli. Moreover, the mood state was assessed both before and after viewing a video clip to evaluate whether random assignment was conducted appropriately, by comparing chronic mood and mood congruence before and after the stimulus across groups.

To address the possibility that a participant's mood at the time of surveying and pre-existing attitude towards the TAMU football team may have influenced the experimental results, I conducted a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to compare the differences between the three groups in terms of chronic mood (measured by the PANAS), pre-attitude towards the TAMU football team. Also, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to investigate whether there was a significant difference in mood before and after the stimulus was presented to the participants. The results showed that there were no significant differences in chronic mood or pre-attitude towards the TAMU football team among the three groups, as indicated by a non-significant Wilks' Lambda value of .93 [ $F = .199, p = .939, \eta^2 = .001$ ]. In addition, there were no significant differences in pre-mood and post-mood between the groups or before and after the stimuli, as indicated by a non-significant Wilks' Lambda value of .93 [ $F = .028, p = .866, \eta^2 < .001$ ]. These findings suggest that the participants were evenly distributed among the three groups.

### **3.3 Experimental Stimulus**

Two experts knowledgeable in both the concept of nostalgia and collegiate football confirmed that each video is commensurate with its intended category (a clip from a Texas A&M University football team historical documentary that evokes sport nostalgia and a clip of recent Texas A&M University sport content highlights). I selected two video clips from Texas A&M University's YouTube channel. I showed the footage to the participants and measured their individual historical nostalgia responses to those clips through a pretest to evaluate whether the video clips used as stimuli were appropriate for the main study. All video clips used content of similar playing times and video quality and only consisted of video content students can access easily.

For the manipulation check, group differences in perceived historical nostalgia were investigated. Also, according to Ashmore et al. (2004), historical nostalgia induced by stimulus cues might create reminiscence functions with group-regard evaluation. Cheung et al. (2018) asserted that a person's reminiscence function differs depending on the extent to which nostalgia is stimulated. Therefore, manipulation check was performed through measuring the historical nostalgia and reminiscence function, and determine whether this experimental stimulus can prompt nostalgia as suitably as intended.

### **3.4 Psychometric Measures**

For the questionnaire, I employed scales with established reliability and validity from previous studies. Specifically, I used the 20 items of The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson et al., 1988) scale to measure chronic mood and three items measuring pre-attitude towards Texas A&M University football team from Yoon et al. (2009) to assess that the random assignments were performed properly. Moreover, given that individuals' susceptibility to

experiencing nostalgia can vary, the effectiveness of random assignment was assessed using seven items from Özhan and Akkaya's (2020) nostalgia proneness scale. I also adopted two items from Gebauer et al. (2008) to use mood congruency to test whether the random assignment was successful, as it can significantly influence outcomes. In addition, demographic information such as participants' gender, age, and academic year was collected to better understand the characteristics of the participants.

To conduct the manipulation check, 12 items from the Modified Reminiscence Functions Scale (MRFS) developed by Washington (2009) were adapted and revised to measure each participant's reminiscence function. Additionally, 12 items used in Merchant and Rose's (2013) study on historical nostalgia were employed for the manipulation check. For hypothesis testing, the study utilized a combination of established scales to measure various constructs. Specifically, team identification was assessed using five items from James et al. (2019) and involvement in the Texas A&M University community was measured using nine items from Zaichkowsky (1994). Pride was measured using five items adopted from Chang et al. (2017). The need for belongingness was measured using four items from Leary et al. (2013) and Mellor et al. (2008), while the need for connection was measured using three items from Hoye et al. (2015). Additionally, four items associated with behavioral intention from Duffett (2015) were adopted and revised to measure participants' intention to attend football games. All items were measured on a seven-point scale, and the wordings of all the items are presented in the APPENDIX.

### **3.5 Procedures**

Before conducting the main experiment, a pretest was conducted to confirm two aspects: first, that the participants were randomly assigned to their respective groups; and second, that the

selected video clips effectively stimulated historical nostalgia in the participants. In addition, I performed confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to ensure the validity and reliability of the measurements I intend to use. Participants were recruited from Texas A&M University through various channels, including the bulk mail system, student body social media, and online classes. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions (i.e., a clip from a Texas A&M University football team historical documentary that evokes historical nostalgia; a clip of this season's Texas A&M University football highlights; no video). By comparing the documentary of the history of the Texas A&M University football team and recent Texas A&M University football team highlights, I investigated whether stimuli causing nostalgic recollections of the past are as effective in evoking historical nostalgia in the context of sports and temporal aspects. Several statistical analyses were performed on this data, detailed descriptions of which are presented in the next section.

### **3.6 Statistical Analysis**

I conducted frequency testing to identify the overall characteristics of the participants. I conducted a descriptive analysis to calculate the mean and standard deviation of the variables and assess the normality of the data. A correlation analysis was performed to examine the basic relationships between the variables and check whether there is a multicollinearity issue in the collected data. I conducted CFA to ensure the validity and reliability of the measurements used in this study. To confirm the success of random assignment, I conducted MANOVA. To check the manipulation, we performed MANOVA and Bonferroni post-hoc tests. Finally, with the PROCESS macro for SPSS (Model 4 and 9), I conducted a mediated moderation analysis to test my hypotheses and examine the mediation effects of a sense of pride, and needs for belonging and connectedness on the relationship between historical nostalgia and attendance intention,

while also investigating the mediated moderation effects of team identification and involvement.

All analyses were performed using SPSS 27.0 (SPSS IBM, 2022) and Mplus 8.3 (Muthén & Muthén, 2021) at an alpha level of .05.



## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### 4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for the measured variable. Descriptive statistics were computed using SPSS 27.0 (SPSS IBM, 2022). The mean scores of the measured variables ranged from 4.410 to 5.539, with corresponding standard deviations ranging from 1.095 to 1.764. The normality of the variables was confirmed as skewness and kurtosis values were within the acceptable range of -2 to +2 and -7 to +7 respectively, in accordance with the recommended criteria (Hair et al., 2010). Also, because all the bivariate correlation coefficients were below .85, there was no indication of a multicollinearity issue in the data. As shown in Table 2, the Cronbach's alpha value showed adequate internal consistency and confirmed that reliability was established.

I further conducted the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) employing Mplus 8.3 (Muthén & Muthén, 2021). Initially, I constructed and assessed a full measurement model to evaluate the psychometric properties of constructs. However, the factor loadings of the three items did not meet the minimum cutoff of .50, as established by Hair et al. (2006). More specifically, three items were excluded from the need for belonging scale and were therefore not included in the analysis. Subsequent exclusion of these items from the analysis resulted in a more satisfactory model fit ( $\chi^2 = 20505.826$ ,  $df = 630$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = .076; the CFI = .936; the Tucker–Lewis index (TLI) = .930; the Standardized Root Mean squared Residual (SRMR) = .042. These fit indices overall indicated acceptable model fit.

**Table 2***Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among Variables*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Pride	1					
2. Need for Belonging	.253**	1				
3. Need for Connectedness	.504**	.424**	1			
4. Behavioral Intention	.472**	.323**	.548**	1		
5. Involvement	-.087	-.229**	-.230*	-.101*	1	
6. Team Identification	.163**	-.300**	-.024	.080	.479**	1
<i>M</i>	5.270	4.474	4.997	5.539	4.410	4.948
<i>SD</i>	1.182	1.211	1.119	1.095	1.764	1.630
Skewness	-.425	.354	-.146	-.495	-.204	-.773
Kurtosis	-.387	-.257	-.031	-.131	-.994	-.346
Cronbach's alpha	.909	.904	.899	.936	.920	.965

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$  \*\* $, p < .01$ .

In examining the validity of both reminiscence functions and historical nostalgia, the manipulation check items for these variables were excluded from the analysis. This was because the categorical conditions of perceived historical nostalgia were used as the independent variable in the main experiment, rather than the manipulation check items. This approach is consistent with prior research studies in various academic fields that have used experimental study designs, including works by Lee and Yi (2019; 2022).

**Table 3***Psychometric Properties of Measurement Model*

Factor & Items	<i>f</i>	CR	AVE
<i>Pride</i>		.911	.673
1. The video clip makes me want to tell others that I am a fan of TAMU football team.	.834		
2. The video clip makes me feel a higher status about my team.	.871		
3. The video clip makes me proud of TAMU football team.	.871		
4. The video clip makes me feel pride because I am a fan of TAMU football team.	.885		
5. I have prideful feeling of TAMU football team.	.794		
<i>Need for Belonging</i>		.916	.609
1. I try hard not to do things that will make other people avoid or reject me.	.796		
2. I need to feel that there are people I can turn to in times of need.	.690		
3. I want other people to accept me.	.831		
4. I do not like being alone.	.763		
5. I have a strong need to belong.	.844		
6. It bothers me a great deal when I am not included in other people's plans.	.819		
7. My feelings are easily hurt when I feel that others do not accept me.	.745		

<i>Need for Connectedness</i>	.902	.754
1. I want to feel more connected to the world around me.	.902	
2. I want to feel closer to people around me.	.829	
3. I want a stronger sense of connection to society.	.873	
<i>Attendance Intention</i>	.932	.776
1. I will attend TAMU football game	.958	
2. I desire to attend TAMU football game	.977	
3. The video clip did not increase attendance intention of TAMU football game.	.752	
4. The video clip had a positive influence on my attendance intention of TAMU football game.	.814	
<i>Involvement</i>	.995	.951
1. To me, being a member of Texas A&M University community is important	.982	
2. To me, being a member of Texas A&M University community is interesting.	.971	
3. To me, being a member of Texas A&M University community is relevant	.970	
4. To me, being a member of Texas A&M University community is exciting	.975	
5. To me, being a member of Texas A&M University community means a lot to me	.969	

6. To me, being a member of Texas A&M University community is appealing	.964		
7. To me, being a member of Texas A&M University community is fascinating	.974		
8. To me, being a member of Texas A&M University community is valuable	.981		
9. To me, being a member of Texas A&M University community is involving	.985		
10. To me, being a member of Texas A&M University community is needed	.982		
<i>Team Identification</i>		.966	.802
1. How strongly do your friends see you as a fan of the Texas A&M football team?	.922		
2. How strongly do you see yourself as a fan of the Texas A&M football team?	.953		
3. How strongly do your friends see you as a fan of the Texas A&M football team?	.896		
4. During the season, how closely do you follow the Texas A&M football team via any of the following: in person or on television, on the radio, on television news or a newspaper, or the Internet?	.908		
5. How important is being a fan of the Texas A&M football team to you?	.961		

6. How much do you dislike the Texas A&M football team greatest rivals?	.782
7. How often do you display the Texas A&M football team name or insignia at your place of work, where you live, or on your clothing?	.832

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*Note.* The control group completed the survey after the word "video clip" was removed, as they did not watch any video.

The results of the study provide evidence of adequate construct validity. Specifically, the factor loadings of each item on its respective construct were above the recommended threshold of .50 (Hair et al., 2006). As shown in Table 3, the study's constructs indicated convergent validity, with construct reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) exceeding the recommended cut-off values of .70 and .50, respectively (Kline, 2015). Moreover, the study's constructs demonstrated discriminant validity, as the square root of the AVEs exceeded all of the possible correlation values, ranging from .780 to .975 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Kline, 2015). Lastly, there were no issues of multicollinearity in the data, as all correlations among latent constructs were below the recommended threshold of .85 (Kline, 2015).

#### **4.2 Manipulation Check**

To assess whether each condition engendered the intended difference in reminiscence functions and historical nostalgia, a MANOVA was conducted. The stimulus type was included as a fixed factor, while the mean score of its manipulation-check items was used as a continuous dependent variable (i.e., reminiscence functions and historical nostalgia). As reported in Table 4, the MANOVA and Bonferroni post-hoc tests indicated that participants who watched a historical

documentary regarding Texas A&M University's football team (i.e., experimental group) had the highest reminiscence functions and historical nostalgia condition, followed by the group who watched their university's football highlights (i.e., comparison group) and the non-stimulus group (i.e., control group). These findings suggested that the manipulation was successful.

**Table 4**

*Summary of MANOVA and Post-hoc Test*

Variable	Group	<i>M</i>	Wilks' $\lambda$	<i>F</i>	Partial $\eta^2$	Post-hoc
Reminiscence Functions	a	4.611	.785*	11.610*	.058	c > b > a
	b	5.091				
	c	5.381				
Historical Nostalgia	a	3.612	45.063*	.193	c > b > a	
	b	4.460				
	c	4.797				

*Note.* \*  $p < .001$ ; a = Control Group; b = Comparison Group; c = Experimental Group

### 4.3 Hypotheses Testing

In order to test established hypotheses, I employed the Process Macro (Hayes, 2017) to perform a moderated mediation analysis, aimed at testing hypotheses. Specifically, I employed Model 4 and Model 9 with 5,000 bootstrap resamples, and included the group type ( $0 = control\ group, 1 = comparison\ group, 2 = experimental\ group$ ) as an independent variable, while pride, the need for belongingness, and the need for connectedness were set as mediators, and involvement and team identification as moderators. The analysis ultimately aimed to investigate

the relationship between these variables and attendance intention as the dependent variable.

Table 5 presents the path estimates of total, direct, and indirect effects.

**Table 5**

*Path Estimates of Direct and Indirect Effects*

Effects	Estimate	SE	95% CI	
			LLCI	ULCI
<b>Total Effects</b>				
<i>DV: Attendance Intention</i>				
Comparison Group	.685	.130	.430	.941
Experimental Group	1.013	.128	.762	1.265
<b>Direct Effects</b>				
<i>DV: Pride</i>				
Video Type	.597*	.068	.464	.731
Comparison Group	.786*	.138	.515	1.057
Experimental Group	1.205*	.136	.938	1.471
<i>DV: Need for Belonging</i>				
Video Type	.604*	.070	3.656	4.021
Comparison Group	1.012*	.140	.737	1.288
Experimental Group	1.229*	.138	.40	1.03
<i>DV: Need for Connectedness</i>				
Video Type	.556*	.064	.430	.683
Comparison Group	1.250*	.125	1.004	1.495



Experimental Group	1.490*	.123	.907	1.390
<i>DV: Attendance Intention</i>				
Video Type	.133*	.065	.006	.261
Comparison Group	-.018	.125	-.271	.234
Experimental Group	.237	.131	-.020	.495
Pride	.215*	.046	.126	.305
Need for Belonging	.087*	.044	.001	.173
Need for Connectedness	.337*	.051	.236	.438
<hr/> <b>Indirect Effects</b>				
<i>Through Pride</i>				
Video Type	.129*	.034	.065	.200
Comparison Group	.167*	.050	.006	.234
Experimental Group	.255*	.067	.129	.389
<i>Through Need for Belonging</i>				
Video Type	.053*	.026	.003	.106
Comparison Group	.092*	.046	.006	.187
Experimental Group	.111*	.054	.007	.218
<i>Through Need for Connectedness</i>				
Video Type	.187*	.038	.117	.266
Comparison Group	.445*	.079	.296	.612
Experimental Group	.409*	.076	.268	.566

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ ; LLCI: lower level of confidence interval; ULCI: upper level of confidence interval.

Hypothesis 1 posited a significant effect of historical nostalgia on attendance intention. However, the results showed that historical nostalgia did not have a significant impact on attendance intention. Specifically, the group that was exposed to historical nostalgia content showed a non-significant effect on attendance intention ( $\beta = .237$ ;  $SE = .131$ ; 95%  $CI = -.020, .495$ ). Likewise, the group that was exposed to vicarious emotion content also exhibited a non-significant direct effect on attendance intention ( $\beta = -.018$ ;  $SE = .129$ ; 95%  $CI = -.271, .234$ ). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was rejected.

The current study's results provided evidence in support of Hypothesis 2, revealing that pride mediated the relationship between historical nostalgia and intention to attend. Specifically, the results of pairwise contrast of the indirect effect was more pronounced in the experimental group ( $\beta = .255$ ;  $SE = .067$ ; 95%  $CI = .130, .392$ ) compared to the comparison group ( $\beta = .167$ ;  $SE = .050$ ; 95%  $CI = .006, .234$ ), highlighting the critical role of historical nostalgia in shaping attendance intention. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was accepted.

Hypotheses 3 and 4 were supported as significant indirect effects were observed for needs for belonging and needs for connectedness, respectively. Specifically, the mediating effect of need for belonging was greater in the experimental group ( $\beta = .111$ ;  $SE = .054$ ; 95%  $CI = .007, .218$ ) compared to the comparison group ( $\beta = .092$ ;  $SE = .046$ ; 95%  $CI = .006, .187$ ), whereas the comparison group ( $\beta = .445$ ;  $SE = .079$ ; 95%  $CI = .296, .612$ ) showed a stronger mediating effect of need for connectedness than the experimental group ( $\beta = .409$ ;  $SE = .076$ ; 95%  $CI = .268, .566$ ).

Table 6 shows the results of a moderated mediation analysis, displaying only statistically significant index of partial moderated mediation. The current study provides evidence that team identification can play a crucial moderating role in the relationship among historical nostalgia,

the need for connectedness, and behavioral intention. The index of partial moderated mediation for this relationship was estimated to be .083 ( $SE = .035$ , 95%  $CI = .019, .155$ ), supporting Hypothesis 5-3. Figure 4 illustrates a graph presenting the visualization of the result of the moderated mediation analysis.

The results showed that team identification also moderates the indirect path through pride among individuals who experienced vicarious emotions, as the index of partial moderated mediation for this relationship was estimated to be -.049 ( $SE = .026$ , 95%  $CI = -.106, -.004$ ). However, no significant moderating effect of team identification was observed on the experimental group, leading to the rejection of Hypothesis 5-1 (index of partial moderated mediation = -.030,  $SE = .025$ , 95%  $CI = -.083, .013$ ). The study also found no statistically significant moderating effect of team identification on the mediation effect of the need for belonging, rejecting of Hypothesis 5-2 (index of partial moderated mediation = -.010,  $SE = .011$ , 95%  $CI = -.036, .007$ ).

In terms of involvement, the results showed that involvement as members of the affiliation community did not serve as a significant moderator for hypothesized paths, leading to the rejection of Hypotheses 6-1 (index of partial moderated mediation = -.014,  $SE = .023$ , 95%  $CI = -.063, .029$ ), 6-2 (index of partial moderated mediation = .004,  $SE = .009$ , 95%  $CI = -.015, .024$ ), and 6-3 (index of partial moderated mediation = -.045,  $SE = .033$ , 95%  $CI = -.116, .013$ ).

**Table 6***Conditional Indirect Effects*


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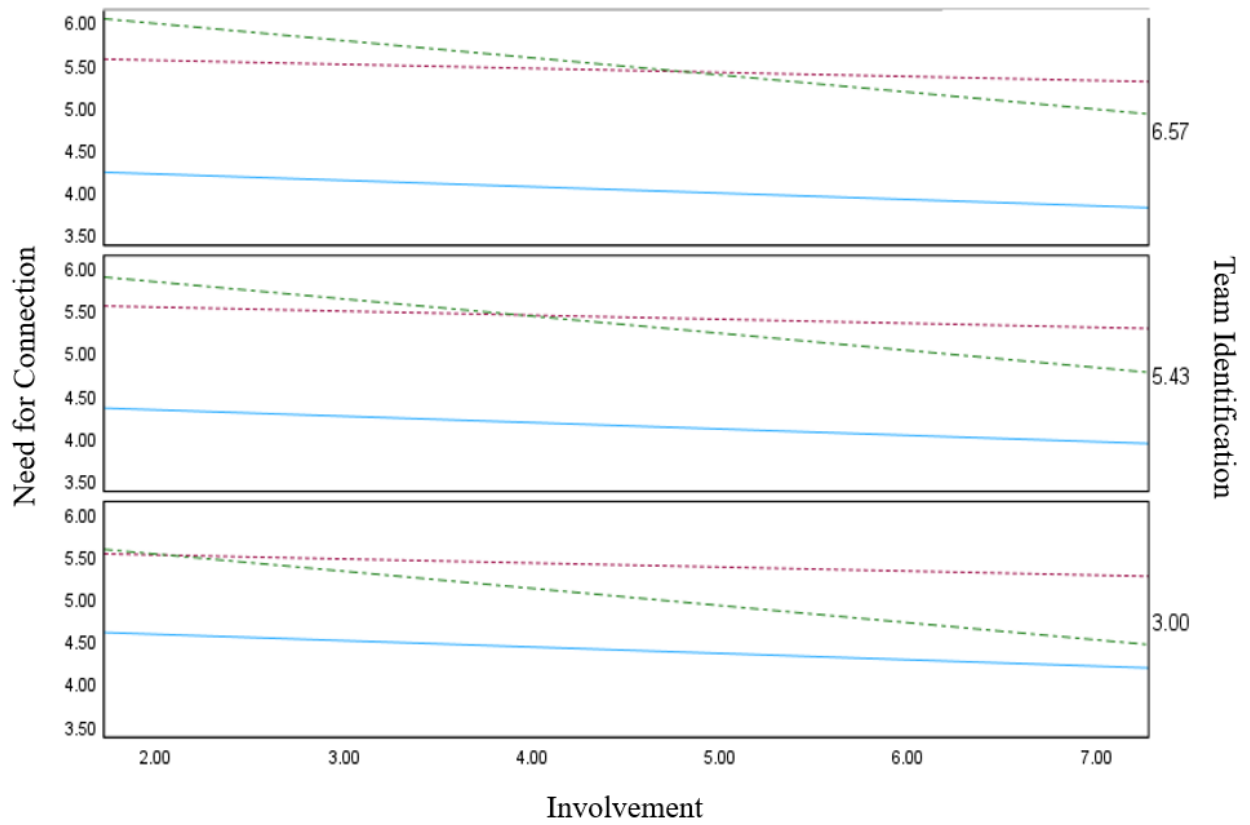
*Through Needs for Connectedness (Reference Group vs. Experimental Group)*

<b>Moderator 1</b>	<b>Moderator 2</b>	<b>Effect</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>95% CI</b>	
				<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
Involvement	Team Identification				
2.384	3.000	.319	.120	.116	.587
2.384	5.430	.520	.130	.293	.801
2.384	6.570	.614	.152	.345	.939
4.300	3.000	.233	.092	.072	.430
4.300	5.430	.433	.083	.279	.606
4.300	6.570	.528	.106	.331	.748
6.300	3.000	.142	.106	-.061	.355
6.300	5.430	.343	.074	.207	.494
6.300	6.570	.437	.088	.271	.615

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*Note.* *LLCI*: lower level of confidence interval; *ULCI*: upper level of confidence interval; reference group indicates the control group.

**Figure 4** Visualization of Moderated Mediation Results



*Note.* Solid line represents control group; Dotted line represents comparison group; and dash-dotted line represents experimental group.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

#### **5.1 The Relation between Historical Nostalgia and Attendance Intention**

The results of Hypothesis 1 showed that there was no statistically significant direct effect of historical nostalgia on attendance intention. This finding contrasts with the positive impact of personal nostalgia on various aspects of behavior, including behavioral intention, as reported in numerous existing studies (e.g., Cho et al., 2019; Cho et al., 2020). However, historical nostalgia involves a longing for a past that one did not personally experience. Evidence suggests that it may have different effects on behavior than personal nostalgia due to differences in the nature of the nostalgic experience (Sedikides et al., 2008). Specifically, personal nostalgia may be more emotionally charged and involve more vivid memories, whereas historical nostalgia may be more abstract and less emotionally intense (Batcho, 2013).

One plausible explanation is that the specific context of the investigation contributed to the lack of statistically significant relationship between historical nostalgia and behavioral intention. Factors such as the characteristics of the study participants (e.g., age, mood, interest), the nature of the stimuli (e.g., context, platform, content) used to elicit historical nostalgia, or the specific behavior being investigated could have played a role in producing different results. For example, Abeyta et al. (2015) argued that the age of participants can influence the effect of nostalgia on behavior. Also, the context in which nostalgia is evoked can influence its impact on behavior (Batcho, 2013). Moreover, the platform and content used to elicit nostalgia might also influence its effect on behavior (Zhou et al., 2021). Lastly, the results imply that existing studies might have omitted factors that can better bridge historical nostalgia and behavioral intention.

Psychology and marketing have extensively studied nostalgia, with most studies

focusing on personal nostalgia (e.g., Batcho, 2013; Sedikides et al., 2008). Existing research consistently demonstrated that personal nostalgia positively affects behavior, including behavioral intention (Abeyta et al., 2015; Cheung & Yue, 2014). For instance, Cheung and Yue (2014) found that personal nostalgia mediated the relationship between decision-making styles and consumption preferences. While the current investigation did not find a significant relationship between historical nostalgia and behavioral intention, it does not invalidate the previous research on nostalgia. Rather, it highlights the need for further research to understand the nuances of nostalgic experiences and how they impact behavior in diverse contexts.

## **5.2 The Mediating Role of Pride**

The current study builds upon recent research suggesting that nostalgia can positively influence consumer behavior, specifically attendance at events (Cheung & Chan, 2018; Holak & Havlena, 1998). The study aimed to investigate the mediating role of pride in the relationship between historical nostalgia and attendance intention in the sport context. The results showed that pride can play a mediating role between historical nostalgia and attendance intention, with the emotional connection between fans and their team's past achievements leading to a sense of pride, which in turn motivates attendance intention.

The finding that historical nostalgia positively affects attendance intention through the mediating role of pride aligns with the principles of collective memory theory (Halbwachs, 1980), which emphasize the social construction of memory and the significance of shared narratives and representations. Historical nostalgia, as a form of emotional attachment to the past, reflects the collective memory of a group and fosters a sense of pride, reinforcing the connection between individuals and their shared identity, thus influencing their intention to attend events related to that collective memory.

The finding of this study aligns with empirical evidence from previous research highlighting the significance of pride in shaping consumer behavior (e.g., Kim & Kim, 2016; Zhang et al., 2018). The results also indicate that historical nostalgia does not always affect behavioral intention directly. Instead, it implies that a sense of pride can be a factor that can better bridge the relationship between historical nostalgia and behavioral intention. One possible explanation is that the historical stimuli used in this study delivered participants with successes and legacies achieved by previous generations, which resulted in a sense of pride despite not having lived at the time. This study's findings support previous research by Chang et al. (2019) showing that the positive emotions stimulated by historical nostalgia can help fans generate feelings of pride, which in turn affect their intention to visit the team's origin.

These results have important practical implications for sport event marketers and organizers. By promoting a sense of pride in fans, they may be able to increase attendance at their events. For example, highlighting the team's past achievements and promoting fan involvement in commemorating the team's history can help enhance fans' sense of pride and lead to increased attendance. These strategies can be particularly effective for events that incorporate historical elements or celebrate anniversaries of the team's past successes. By aligning with the principles of collective memory theory, which emphasizes the social construction of memory and the influence of shared narratives, sport event organizers can tap into fans' emotional connection to the team's past, fostering a sense of pride and attracting greater attendance (Schoenstedt et al., 2018; Wann et al., 2008).

Overall, the findings of this study contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex relationship between historical nostalgia, pride, and attendance intention in the sport context. Future research could explore the role of other emotions and psychological factors that may



mediate the relationship between nostalgia and attendance intention, such as team identification or social bonding (Wann et al., 2001).

### **5.3 The Mediating Roles of Needs for Belongingness and Connectedness**

The current study investigated the mediating role of the need for belongingness and connectedness in the relationship between historical nostalgia and attendance intention. The results confirmed Hypotheses 3 and 4, indicating that the need for belongingness and connectedness plays a crucial role in this relationship. These findings align with the principles of collective memory theory, which emphasize the role of social frameworks, mnemonic communities, and memory work in shaping and perpetuating shared memories. By recognizing the mediating effects of these psychological factors, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between individual experiences, group identity, and collective memory.

The findings of this studies are also consistent with empirical evidence from previous studies that have reported the mediating effects of these needs on the relationship between nostalgia and behavioral intention (Cheung & Chan, 2018; Hwang, 2013; Li et al., 2018). The study further supports the mechanism of the mediating effects, suggesting that individuals who experience feelings of loneliness often seek belongingness and connectedness, and historical nostalgia can help alleviate this feeling by promoting a sense of belongingness to society (Routledge et al., 2013).

This study also found that the elements of sport teams' pedigree history and legacy positively impressed participants and led to a greater need for belongingness and connectedness with the team community, ultimately leading to higher attendance intention. These findings are consistent with previous research, which have shown that nostalgia can enhance feelings of

social connectedness and belongingness by promoting a sense of continuity and coherence between the past, present, and future selves (e.g., Cheung & Chan, 2018; Hwang, 2013; Li et al., 2018; Sedikides et al., 2008). Overall, the findings of these studies suggest that the need for belongingness and the need for connections can serve as important mediators in the relationship between nostalgia and attendance intention.

#### **5.4 The Moderating Role of Team Identification**

The moderating effects of team identification and the type of stimulus used to evoke historical nostalgia (Kim & Chalip, 2019) were tested in investigating the mediating effect of the need for connectedness on the relationship between historical nostalgia and attendance intention to spectate football. Interestingly, the results showed that the mediating effect of the need for connectedness was significant in the historical nostalgia-stimulated group with lower levels of team identification. This suggests that the need for connectedness may play an important role in the decision-making process of less-identified fans (Kim & Chalip, 2019).

The findings of this study imply that the type of stimulus used to evoke historical nostalgia was also important in determining the strength of the mediating effect of the need for connectedness. Specifically, the historical nostalgia-stimulated group with lower levels of team identification exhibited a stronger mediating effect than the non-stimulus group (Kim & Chalip, 2019). This is likely because the historical nostalgia stimulus was more personally relevant and connected to the spectators' past experiences and memories of attending sport matches, increasing their need for connectedness to the team and other fans. The study suggests that historical and cultural heritage displayed in sports can evoke positive psychological states and influence behavioral intentions, which may be a possible reason for the stronger mediating effect

of the need for connectedness in the historical nostalgia-stimulated group with lower levels of team identification (Kim & Chalip, 2019).

As the results of the contrast analysis among the groups, greater team identification indicated the greater mediating effect of pride on the relationship between nostalgia and behavioral intention, within comparison group. This result aligns with the analysis of team identification by Lock and Heere (2017). As the authors of the paper emphasized the importance of salient team identification, this study also reaffirmed the salient effect of team identification on behavioral outcomes. Specifically, the mediating role of pride is similar to the concept of self-esteem. When a fan with high team identification tends to have more self-esteem, which in turn increases behavioral intentions. However, team identification in the experimental group did not show a significant moderating effect. Also, there was no significant moderating effect of team identification on the mediation effect of the need for belonging.

One possible explanation is that team identification may not always play a moderating role in the relationship between historical nostalgia and attendance intention. Previous research has shown that the strength of team identification may vary depending on the context, such as the level of competition or the team's current performance (Wann et al., 2018). Therefore, it is possible that team identification only played a moderating role in certain subgroups of the sample, which could explain the limited moderating effect of team identification in the current study.

Another possible explanation is that different emotional states may have different effects on the relationship between historical nostalgia and attendance intention (Gebauer et al., 2008). Specifically, it is possible that vicarious emotion, which was stimulated by watching a video of a large crowd cheering for the team, may have a stronger effect on pride than on other

psychological variables, such as the need for belonging or connectedness. This could explain why team identification only moderated the mediation effect of pride in the group that was stimulated by vicarious emotion.

Historical nostalgia, stimulated by watching a video of the team's past successes, may have a stronger effect on the need for connection than on other psychological variables. This could explain why team identification moderated the mediation effect of the need for connection in the group where historical nostalgia was stimulated. These findings are consistent with previous research that has suggested that nostalgia can increase the desire for social connectedness (Stephan et al., 2014).

### **5.5 The Moderating Role of Involvement**

This study investigated whether involvement in affiliated institutions moderates the mediation effect of pride, need for belonging, and connectedness on the relationship between historical nostalgia for sport team and attendance intention. The findings of this study suggest that the hypotheses 6-1, 6-2, and 6-3 have been rejected, indicating that involvement in affiliated institutions does not moderate the mediation effect of pride, need for belonging, and connectedness on the relationship between historical nostalgia on sport team and attendance intention. This outcome can be attributed to several factors.

One possibility is that the relationship between historical nostalgia and attendance intention is not as complex as previously posited. It is possible that historical nostalgia indirectly influences attendance intention through pride, the need for belonging, and connectedness, without the need for additional psychological mechanisms. That is, the experience of historical nostalgia might lead to a desire to attend a sporting event, without the need for other psychological variables to moderate this relationship. For example, Ko et al. (2019) found that

historical nostalgia directly predicted sport consumption behavior without any moderating factors, suggesting that the relationship between historical nostalgia and attendance intention might not be as complex as previously suggested.

Another explanation for the study's findings could be related to the nature of involvement in affiliated institutions. While previous research has suggested that involvement in affiliated institutions can be a significant predictor of attendance intention, it is possible that other factors, such as the strength of nostalgic attachment to the team, might be more relevant in predicting attendance intention. For example, Bouchet et al. (2015) found that nostalgic attachment to a sport team strongly predicted attendance intention, even when controlling for other factors such as team identification and involvement in affiliated institutions. These findings suggest that the strength of nostalgic attachment to a team might be more relevant than involvement in affiliated institutions in predicting attendance intention.

In sum, the findings of this study might be explained by the possibility that the relationship between historical nostalgia and attendance intention is more straightforward than expected, and that involvement in affiliated institutions might not be as significant a factor for predicting attendance intention as previously presumed.

## **5.6 Theoretical Contribution and Implications**

This study makes a significant contribution to the literature on nostalgia by filling a gap in the limited attention given to the impact of historical nostalgia on attendance intention in sports management. By examining this relationship, the study provides a more nuanced understanding of the role of nostalgia in consumer behavior. Unlike previous research that has focused solely on the effect of nostalgia on behavioral intention, this study takes a holistic approach to examine the underlying psychological processes that lead to action among the

current young generation of sports fans. By doing so, the study expands our knowledge of how nostalgia influences attendance behavior in sports and sheds light on the complex interplay between nostalgia and consumer behavior.

Historical nostalgia and its positive impact on attendance intention, mediated by factors such as pride, need for belonging, and need for social connectedness, have significant theoretical implications within the framework of collective memory theory. Firstly, this finding contributes to the understanding of how collective memory operates as a powerful force in shaping individuals' attitudes and behaviors. Collective memory theory emphasizes the social nature of remembering and the role of shared narratives and representations in constructing collective memory. The recognition of historical nostalgia as a significant determinant suggests that the emotional connection to past events and experiences plays a crucial role in influencing attendance intention, providing insights into the dynamics of collective memory formation and transmission.

Moreover, this research underscores the relevance of social and psychological factors in the formation and transmission of collective memory. Pride, need for belonging, and need for social connectedness emerge as mediating mechanisms through which historical nostalgia influences attendance intention. These findings align with the principles of collective memory theory, which emphasize the role of social frameworks, mnemonic communities, and memory work in shaping and perpetuating shared memories. By recognizing the mediating effects of these psychological factors, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between individual experiences, group identity, and collective memory.

This study contributes to the existing literature on nostalgia from a contextual perspective. It underscores the significance of accounting for contextual factors in exploring the

association between nostalgia and behavior. By highlighting the role of contextual factors, this study enhances the comprehension of the complex interplay between nostalgia and behavior and underscores the importance of considering the characteristics of participants, stimuli, and behavior. Specifically, it is essential to acknowledge that the perceptions and emotions associated with nostalgia may differ depending on the generation and the stimuli involved, which can lead to varying research outcomes. As Generation Z is emerging as a new consumer group, research has focused on investigating this cohort through social media stimuli, such as YouTube, to elicit more specific and targeted outcomes. This approach yields more focused insights into the preferences and attitudes of this new generation of consumers.

The study also expands the literature on nostalgia, pride, and consumer behavior by examining the mediating role of pride in the relationship between historical nostalgia and attendance intention. The finding that pride plays a significant role in this relationship is a novel contribution to literature, which highlights the importance of creating a sense of pride in events to enhance attendance. Specifically, the findings of this study can provide significant theoretical implications, particularly in the realm of understanding historical nostalgia. By incorporating the concept of collective memory theory (Halbwachs, 1992), which centers around the shared memory and interpretation of historical events within a specific group or community, a solid theoretical framework for comprehending historical nostalgia might be established. Historical nostalgia effectively taps into this collective memory, evoking positive emotions associated with past experiences, traditions, and cultural heritage. A more robust understanding of historical nostalgia as a collective and emotive phenomenon can be achieved through a comprehensive analysis of the study's results and an exploration of the underlying mechanisms of the theory.

This theoretical advancement contributes to the broader field of nostalgia research and offers valuable insights into individuals' emotional connections with their collective past.

Finally, the study adds to the literature on nostalgia and sport consumption by identifying the psychological mechanisms that mediate the relationship between historical nostalgia and attendance intention and the moderating role of involvement in affiliated institutions and team identification. By identifying these underlying mechanisms, the study provides insights into how nostalgia influences attendance behavior among sport fans.

### **5.7 Practical Contribution and Implications**

This study has several practical implications for marketers, managers, and event organizers. First, highlighting the team's past achievements and providing opportunities for fans to commemorate the team's history can enhance fans' sense of pride and lead to increased attendance. Sport marketers may also incorporate historical elements or celebrate anniversaries of the team's past successes to evoke nostalgic feelings and enhance pride. Additionally, sport event organizers may include design elements that evoke pride, such as displaying team achievements or emphasizing the team's role in the local community. Implementing these strategies may create a more emotionally engaging experience for attendees, enhancing their sense of pride and ultimately leading to increased attendance.

The effectiveness of using historical nostalgia and team highlights can vary based on the level of team identification of the audience. Historical nostalgia can be effective in engaging fans with low team identification, such as new or young fans, by connecting them to the team's history and creating a sense of belonging to the fan community. This is especially important for attracting new and young fans who may not have the same emotional attachment to the team as long-time fans. Sport managers and marketers can foster this connection by highlighting the



team's past achievements, providing opportunities for fans to interact with each other and the team, and integrating historical elements into the event.

In addition, highlighting the team's current success and identity may be more effective in reinforcing fans' emotional connection with high team identification. For fans with high team identification, promoting the team's current achievements and showcasing its unique identity and culture may be more effective in strengthening their emotional connection and attendance intention. In this case, sport event organizers and marketers may focus on emphasizing the team's current success and identity. To maximize the effectiveness of these strategies, sport managers and marketers should consider the audience's level of team identification and carefully choose appropriate stimuli and context to evoke the desired emotional response. Overall, using historical nostalgia and team highlights can effectively engage fans and increase attendance intention.

One practical suggestion based on the findings is that historical nostalgia events or places, such as legend throwback jerseys, historical matches, or sports museums dedicated to team legends, may serve as effective strategies for attracting new, young sport fans. Additionally, using emerging technologies such as virtual, augmented, or mixed reality to showcase how legendary players played sports vividly may also help engage younger fans and encourage them to attend sporting events. Given the potential impact of historical nostalgia on attendance intention, sport organizations can benefit from creating more opportunities for fans to engage with the team's history and tradition, which can help to cultivate a sense of pride, belonging, and connectedness among younger generations of fans who may not have personally experienced the team's history. By tapping into the emotional connection that historical nostalgia can evoke, sport organizations can foster a deeper connection between fans and the team, leading to increased attendance and support.

## 5.8 Limitations and Future Research

There are several limitations to this study that should be considered for future research. Foremost, the present research focuses on the sport of football. While it is true that the number of football enthusiasts has decreased in recent years compared to previous generations, there is still a significant level of interest in football, as indicated by numerous studies. For instance, a recent survey conducted by the Harris Poll revealed that football remains the most popular sport among American adults, with 37% of respondents naming it as their favorite sport (Harris Poll, 2021). In particular, Texas A&M football has a strong following among its students, which is evidenced by the high attendance rates and the enthusiastic support displayed at games. Despite controlling various variables, the current study may offer more valid and practical implications if it examined less popular sports.

I used the historical video available on YouTube as the quality of the video and content was met with the purpose of this study. However, there might be some participants who were already familiar with the video or any figures in the video. As Doyle et al. (2014) argued that the familiarity may lead participants to report biased answers, it may affect the sampling validity. Although I controlled whether the participants already saw the video in the past or not, future research can consider including a newly created video to enhance the validity of the stimuli.

Secondly, the data in this study was obtained through convenient sampling, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other populations. I recruited only students at Texas A&M University because of the lack of resources. As each college football team has different historical aspects, this convenient sampling was inevitable. Thus, the samples may not be representative of the broader population, which may limit the external validity of my study. Studies should be replicated with other samples and sport teams. Also, cross-validation studies in different cultures

and contexts should be conducted in the future to increase generalizability. As this study captured only one sport, it is imperative to further validate the results by utilizing broader sampling frames in various sports environments.

This study did not fully account for changes in fans' thoughts and intentions throughout the football season or group differences. Specifically, the data was collected from the middle of the season at Texas A&M University until after the season ended, and because some data was collected during the non-game season, the intention to attend the game may have been more ambiguous than during the actual season. Also, the study did not consider the potential influence of Texas A&M's performance during the season and its expectations on the variables measured. Additionally, this study used a control group that measured team identification and intention to participate without specific stimulation, which was then integrated with the comparison and experimental groups. As a result, the correlation between team identification and attendance intention was nonsignificant, which may be due to the integration of these data. Therefore, future studies should consider the temporal aspect and team performance to obtain more valid results.

Lastly, the current study utilized attendance intention as a proxy measure of actual behavior because it can examine attitude-to-behavior processes (Chang, 2018). However, there is still a limitation to predicting actual behavior with the proxy measure. The causal effects of attendance intention on behavior may be biased due to the potential criticisms regarding the predictive validity of intention on actual behavior. A number of studies in sport consumer behavior discipline have been conducted with the proxy measure to predict consumers' behaviors but it is crucial to further examine if historical nostalgia leads fans to attend the games.

For future research, it is suggested to explore the potential of leveraging historical nostalgia in fostering intergenerational connections by integrating nostalgia marketing

techniques with technology. This innovative approach has the potential to generate positive educational and entertainment outcomes for both younger and older generations, establishing a shared platform for interaction. For instance, implementing components such as the Virtual Legends Zone, Throwback Sports Arena, and Interactive Nostalgia Hub could offer event attendees immersive virtual reality experiences, authentic recreations of renowned sports events, and engaging displays and exhibits that delve into the evolution of sports. By carefully designing these experiences, a collective appreciation for the history of sports can be nurtured, enabling the younger generation to gain knowledge about traditions and legacies while providing the older generation with exposure to cutting-edge technologies. Ultimately, such initiatives have the capacity to foster unity and create a profound sense of connection within the sport community.

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APPENDIX

Measure	Items
Watson et al. (1988)	Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS)
Indicate the extent you have felt this way over the past week.	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interested</li> <li>2. Distressed</li> <li>3. Excited</li> <li>4. Upset</li> <li>5. Strong</li> <li>6. Guilty</li> <li>7. Scared</li> <li>8. Hostile</li> <li>9. Enthusiastic</li> <li>10. Proud</li> <li>11. Irritable</li> <li>12. Alert</li> <li>13. Ashamed</li> <li>14. Inspired</li> <li>15. Nervous</li> <li>16. Determined</li> <li>17. Attentive</li> <li>18. Jittery</li> <li>19. Active</li> <li>20. Afraid</li> </ol>	
Gebauer et al. (2008)	Perceived mood congruence
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. My current mood is very different from the mood I was in at the time of watching video clip.</li> <li>2. My current mood is very similar to the mood I was in at the time of watching video clip.</li> </ol>	
Yoon et al. (2009)	Pre-attitude
<p>How would you evaluate the claims made about Texas A&amp;M football team?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Negative - - - - - Positive</li> <li>2. Bad - - - - - Good</li> <li>3. Unfavorable - - - - - Favorable</li> </ol>	
Washington (2009)	Reminiscence Functions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Realize we are a group of worth.</li> <li>2. Identify all our good qualities.</li> <li>3. Give us a sense of who we are.</li> <li>4. Remind us that we have skills to cope with present problems.</li> <li>5. Prove that we can do things as well as the next generation.</li> <li>6. Provide understanding and growth.</li> </ol>	

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. Recall our past to help us know who we are now.</li> <li>8. Get current problems in perspective.</li> <li>9. Keep a positive attitude about ourselves.</li> <li>10. Better understand ourselves.</li> <li>11. See how our strengths can help solve a current problem.</li> <li>12. See how satisfying our history has been.</li> </ol>
James et al. (2019)	Team Identification	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How important to you is it that the Texas A&amp;M football team win?</li> <li>2. How strongly do your friends see you as a fan of the Texas A&amp;M football team?</li> <li>3. How strongly do you see yourself as a fan of the Texas A&amp;M football team?</li> <li>4. During the season, how closely do you follow the Texas A&amp;M football team via any of the following: in person or on television, on the radio, on television news or a newspaper, or the Internet?</li> <li>5. How important is being a fan of the Texas A&amp;M football team to you?</li> <li>6. How much do you dislike the Texas A&amp;M football team greatest rivals?</li> <li>7. How often do you display the Texas A&amp;M football team name or insignia at your place of work, where you live, or on your clothing?</li> </ol>
		<p><i>To me, being a member of Texas A&amp;M University community is:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. boring - - - - - interesting</li> <li>2. irrelevant - - - - - relevant</li> <li>3. unexciting - - - - - exciting</li> <li>4. means nothing - - - - - means a lot to me</li> <li>5. unappealing - - - - - appealing</li> <li>6. mundane - - - - - fascinating</li> <li>7. worthless - - - - - valuable</li> <li>8. uninvolving - - - - - involving</li> <li>9. not needed - - - - - needed</li> </ol>
Mellor et al. (2008)	The Needs for Belonging	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If other people don't seem to accept me, I don't let it bother me.</li> <li>2. I try hard not to do things that will make other people avoid or reject me.</li> <li>3. I seldom worry about whether other people care about me.</li> <li>4. I need to feel that there are people I can turn to in times of need.</li> <li>5. I do not like being alone.</li> <li>6. Being apart from my friends for long periods of time does not bother me.</li> </ol>

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. I want other people to accept me.</li> <li>8. I have a strong “need to belong.”</li> <li>9. It bothers me a great deal when I am not included in other people’s plans.</li> <li>10. My feelings are easily hurt when I feel that others do not accept me.</li> </ol>
Hoye et al. (2015)	The Needs for Connectedness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I want to feel more connected to the world around me.</li> <li>2. I don’t want to feel distant from people around me.</li> <li>3. I want a stronger sense of connection to society</li> </ol>
Chang et al. (2017)	Pride	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The clip makes me want to tell others that I am a fan of this team.</li> <li>2. The clip makes me feel a higher status about my team.</li> <li>3. The clip makes me proud of (team name).</li> <li>4. The clip makes me feel pride because I am a fan of (team name)</li> <li>5. I have prideful feeling of (team name)</li> </ol>
Merchant & Rose (2013)	Historical Nostalgia	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I imagined I was living in the past period shown in the video clip</li> <li>2. I fantasized about the past when watching the video clip</li> <li>3. When I saw the video clip, I became lost in the time period(s) shown</li> <li>4. I imagined I was there in the simple and pure times shown in the video clip</li> <li>5. I fantasized I was wearing the clothes in the time periods shown in the video clip</li> <li>6. I imagined I was participating in the traditions and rituals of the past shown in the video clip</li> <li>7. The video clip made me nostalgic for the time period shown</li> <li>8. After seeing the video clip, my imagination was like an avalanche, I thought of all different things about the past</li> </ol> <p><i>Thinking about Texas A&amp;M Football Team...</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Makes me feel happy</li> <li>10. Makes me feel inspired</li> <li>11. Makes me feel enthusiastic</li> <li>12. Makes me feel curious</li> </ol>
Duffett (2015)	Attendance Intention	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I will attend TAMU football game</li> <li>2. I desire to attend TAMU football game</li> <li>3. The video clip did not increase attendance intention of TAMU football game.</li> <li>4. Video clip has a positive influence on my attendance intention of TAMU football game.</li> </ol>
Demographic Information		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is your gender?</li> <li>2. When were you born?</li> <li>3. What is your race/ethnicity?</li> </ol>

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4. What is your current academic year?
  5. Did you watch or attend the Texas A&M Aggies vs. XXX football game?
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