Nostalgia and giving to charity: a conceptual framework for discussion and research

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• Academic work involving nostalgia has shown it to evoke a basket of emotions. This paper proposes a conceptual model that links nostalgia to charitable giving. We argue that the nostalgia evoked by certain NPOs (not-for-profit organizations) is likely to have a bearing on both emotional and familial utility derived by the donor. This in turn is likely to drive the donor commitment to the NPO. Thus, by evoking nostalgia, certain NPOs are likely to emotionally engage their current and potential donors, which could facilitate the creation of long-term intimate relationships between them and their donors. However, the extent to which the NPO can evoke nostalgia is likely to depend upon the nostalgia proneness of the donor, the emotional importance of the past experiences evoked by the NPO, and the characteristics of the NPO such as the extent to which the NPO can alleviate the feelings of alienation, discontinuity, and the need for authenticity experienced by the donor. The paper provides a series of research propositions and proposes a research agenda.

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Introduction
Charitable giving has stagnated in the U.S. over the last 30 years (Burke, 2001). Philanthropic institutions have found it increasingly difficult to raise needed funds from givers (Eikenberry, 2005). In fact, this has been seen in other countries as well. Over the past 10 years charities in the U.K. have also been finding it increasingly difficult to raise funds (Sargeant et al., 2000). There are a number of reasons for this malaise in giving. First of all, many current givers only give small amounts to charities. It has been shown that individuals give less than 2% of their personal income to charities (Burke, 2001). Second, the bulk of givers are older adults (Kottasz, 2004). Third, there has been an increase in the number of charitable organizations (Sargeant et al., 2000), which raises the competitive intensity across a larger number of organizations fighting for a share of a limited pool of donor funds. The picture is not a promising one.

The key challenge for Marketing Managers of not-for-profit organizations (NPOs) is to increase the amount of giving among current givers and to attract new and younger givers.

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To achieve this, NPOs are urged to engage their givers with appeals that interest and involve them. They can facilitate this engagement through the identification of emotional constructs that can drive commitment to NPOs and increase charitable giving. Recently, Sargeant et al. (2006) proposed a perceptual model of donor giving behavior which showed significant linkages between such perceptual dimensions as emotional utility (giving to feel better about oneself) and familial utility (giving connected to a family member affected by the cause associated with the charity) and commitment which in turn was found to drive donor giving. While this study took a major step in the right direction, the authors noted that additional research into other driving perceptual constructs is warranted.

One such potentially relevant affecting construct is nostalgia. Academic work involving nostalgia has shown it to be a very powerful array of emotions (Davis, 1979; Gardener, 1985). It evokes a poignant mixture of mental pain and joy (Frued, 1926; Akhtar, 1996). The American Heritage Dictionary (1972) defines nostalgia as a 'longing for things, persons, or situations that are not present'. It is basically a longing for a perceived 'utopian' past (Bassin, 1993; Batcho, 1998) without the actual acceptance that it is gone (Kaplan, 1987). Nostalgia has been found to affect old and young alike (McCann, 1941), and it appears to be not only a longing for a past which has been personally experienced, but it also represents a longing for a 'lost past paradise' (Peters, 1985) which one has never actually been experienced (Stern, 1992). There is an increasing use of nostalgia in the marketing of consumer goods (Baker and Kennedy, 1994). A good example of this can be seen in the attempt to 'reenact the reunion' with the lost past with appeals of 'vintage retro' (Bassin, 1993), traditions, rituals, and the ideal images of the American community. One can easily see these attempts in the use of the songs of the 1960s and 1970s and the strong emotional connections made between the past and such products as automobiles, hamburgers, and soft drinks. If a song was associated with warm actual or perceived memories, the attaching of the song to a product or service can trigger warmth and positive feelings about the associated product or service.

What might the connection be between nostalgia and charitable giving behavior? Sargeant et al. (2006) suggest that familial utility may actually be affected by nostalgia since desire for the situation experienced or perceived to have been experienced when a loved one was still alive may influence giving in memory of that loved one. However, the authors are not aware of any research that has been done to understand the relationship between the experience of nostalgia and charitable giving and the factors that influence this relationship. The contribution of this study lies in its attempt to explain nostalgia and to suggest how nostalgia may affect charitable giving and also to discuss ways in which the characteristics of the donors and NPOs could influence this relationship.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. A detailed discussion of the nostalgia literature is presented. This is then followed with a proposed conceptual model that links nostalgia and giving to charity. A series of 11 research propositions are then justified and presented which are connected to the various linkages shown in the proposed model.

Nostalgia

There is much academic discussion on nostalgia. Many scholars have described it as a fatal disease, which everyone experiences at one time or another (Hoffer, 1934). Many others have called it a hook of continuity in changing times (Tannock, 1995). They argue that the more dissatisfied consumers are with life as it is today, the more they will want to revert back to the ways of the past (Baker and Kennedy, 1994). Still others argue that since baby boomers are approaching middle age, they are becoming increasingly nostalgic (Unger et al., 1991; Stern, 1995). As a result, there is a growing interest in the use of nostalgia in marketing (Baker and Kennedy, 1994).
There are four broad definitions of nostalgia. The first is the temporal definition: 'A positive feeling for the past, with a negative feeling for the present or future ... THINGS WERE BETTER ... THEN THAN NOW' (Davis, 1979, page 18). The second focuses on the emotions felt while experiencing nostalgia: 'A wistful mood that may be prompted by an object, a scene, a smell or a strain of music' (Belk, 1990, page 670). Holbrook and Schindler (1991), define nostalgia on the bases of what cued the occurrence of nostalgia: 'A preference toward objects that were more common when one was younger'. Finally Holbrook (1993) provides a more comprehensive definition: 'A longing for the past or a fondness for possessions and activities associated with the days of past' (page 245).

There are cognitive as well as affective dimensions to the experience of nostalgia (Werman, 1977; Baumgartener, 1992). The cognitive side focuses on the memories of the past and the affective side involves the emotions that these memories evoke. Research has shown that by stimulating the consumer's memory, they can be made to feel the emotions they felt when they had the original experience (Braun-LaTour and LaTour, 2005). The emotions that are associated with nostalgia are complex. The nostalgic experience does not comprise all positive emotions, but it is a 'bittersweet' experience (Davis, 1979).

Nostalgia evokes both positive and negative emotions (Holak and Havlena, 1992). By remembering the past the person feels warmth, joy, and affection (Holak and Havlena, 1998). At the same time there is a feeling of sadness and loss with the realization that the past cannot be recreated (Holak and Havlena, 1998).

Nostalgia is evoked by a variety of triggers (Schindler and Holbrook, 1993; Holbrook and Schindler, 2003). Nostalgia can be triggered by sensory experiences (pleasurable sensorial experiences from the past), links with the individual's homeland (bonding with objects associated with a distant land), items that remind the individual of rites of passage, friends, and loved ones (objects representing close social relationships), objects linked with aspects of continuity and security, and items associated with the arts, culture, and entertainment (mental or spiritual freedom). Researchers have also found that men and women have different triggers for nostalgia (Baker and Kennedy, 1994). There are two types of nostalgia, personal or direct nostalgia and vicarious nostalgia.

**Personal nostalgia**

This is based on the person's direct experiences. It is a longing for the lived past (Baker and Kennedy, 1994) and the things, memories, and people associated with this past (Goulding, 2001). Personal nostalgia is a search for an idealized past. The person experiencing this kind of nostalgia remembers things and events more positively than they actually were. The individual experiencing nostalgia feels warmth, happiness, and joy along with a sense of loss that the past is not going to return. They look to the past as if it represents the way things should always be and regret the fact that things have changed (Bricklin, 2001; Stern, 1995). Therefore, the person experiencing nostalgia is not only looking for the object of nostalgia but the time before it was lost (Akhtar, 1996; Lomsky-Feder and Rapoport, 2000). Personal nostalgia serves different functions. It serves as an anchor of continuity and identity (Rubin et al., 1998) during changing circumstances in life (Noble and Walker, 1997). When circumstances change, people feel insecure and unsure of themselves and therefore tend to revert to the memories of the past for comfort and support amidst fears of an uncertain future (Nawas and Platt, 1965). It also helps alleviate feelings of loneliness (Lomsky-Feder and Rapoport, 2000). When people feel lonely they tend to remember past events with friends and family and relive the times which were happier. The personal nostalgia an individual experiences is influenced by many factors, including age, nostalgia proneness, intensity of personal experiences, and discontinuity.
Age

Is personal nostalgia purely a factor of aging? Certainly as people age, they develop a preference for bygone days (Davis, 1979). Those born between 1946 and 1964, referred to as baby boomers, frequently remember events and feelings shared among them by recalling the days gone by. Some say that nostalgia is a part of the normal aging process. For example, Batcho (1995) found that as people age they got more nostalgic and remembered the times of their youth with considerable nostalgia as they entered older stage in life. However, some studies show that nostalgia is not purely a function of age. Nostalgia rises and wanes across different age groups depending on the experiences and the demands imposed by life. For example, Batcho (1995) found that young college students were found to be more nostalgic than the elderly given certain subjects. Larsen et al. (2001) measured the emotions felt by students graduating and the emotions felt by students moving out of their dormitories. These instances made the individuals feel the emotions of nostalgia. The respondents were found to experience both the positive emotion of happiness and the negative emotion of regret at the same time.

Nostalgia proneness

Some individuals show higher propensities or proneness for nostalgia than others (Holbrook, 1993). Therefore, even among the same age group some individuals may be more nostalgic than others. Nostalgia proneness is thus a facet of a person’s personality. Holbrook (1993, p 246) defined nostalgia proneness as ‘a facet of individual character—a psychographic variable, aspect of life-style, or general customer characteristic—that may vary among consumers’. Batcho (1998) also showed that a person highly prone to nostalgia, rather than being depressed, would have a better capacity for emotionality. Therefore, he or she would be very happy when experiencing happiness and very sad when experiencing sadness. His or her capacity to feel emotions more intensely would increase the likelihood of the individual to experience both the ‘sweet’ and the ‘bitter’ emotions of nostalgia.

Holbrook (1993) developed a nostalgia proneness scale, which is widely used and cited. This scale utilizes a battery of 20 questions that measure both the proneness for personal nostalgia and vicarious nostalgia but do not address the cognitive and emotional elements of the experience of personal nostalgia. It indicates how prone a person is for nostalgia and therefore how likely the individual will prefer consumption items which evoke nostalgia. Batcho (1995) created and tested the nostalgia inventory, which examined nostalgia as a personality trait. This scale looked at personal nostalgia and segregated individuals into high nostalgia and low nostalgia groups. Individuals who were in the high nostalgia group perceived the past as more favorable than those in the low nostalgia group (Batcho, 1998). Therefore, people who are more prone to nostalgia are more open to nostalgic appeals, branding strategies, and advertising (Zimmer et al., 1999). For the high nostalgia prone individuals, the consumption of goods and services acts as a means of experiencing nostalgia (Holbrook and Schindler, 2003). They are more open to nostalgic appeals and hence consume products which enable them to experience nostalgia.

Personal experience

Nostalgia is influenced by personal experience. The more intense the past experiences, the stronger the memories associated with those experiences (Baumgartener, 1992; Lomsky-Feder and Rapoport, 2000). Events which have been more intense or more significant are retained (hence more vivid) in the autobiographical memory more than less intense and less important events (Sehulster, 1989). In a study of the recall of 25 seasons of Metropolitan opera, Sehulster (1989) found that individuals recalled those seasons better which were associated with intense emotions or
significant events linked to them. For instance, one individual remembered the 1979–80 season of opera more than any season because it was the first his wife and he had attended together. Novel events are also better remembered (Rubin et al., 1998). These events are remembered better because they are subject to more elaborate cognitive processing (due to their novelty), as they are distinct from other events. Events associated with life scripts are also better recalled. Life scripts refer to developmental changes that are expected to take place at various points of life and different life phases that people are expected to live through at different ages (Bluck and Habermas, 2000; Clarke, 1995). For example—graduation, marriage, childbirth are part of the life script. Since these events are recalled better, people get more nostalgic about these events as they have special memories surrounding the events. Does this mean nonsignificant events are not recalled? Schulster (1989) found that though the recall was better than for less intense events, the accuracy of the events was not precise and there was much distortion.

Discontinuity

People experiencing discontinuity tend to become nostalgic (Davis, 1979). Negative and stressful events in life may result in depression and negative feelings which the individual must deal with (Tesser and Beach, 1998). This is evident when a loved one passes away, one moves to a new country, loses a job, or any event which disturbs the equilibrium of life. When faced with these disjunctive episodes, individuals tend to draw on inner resources so that they can restore the sense of stability, security, and continuity (Elson, 1992). The individual then clings to objects and events experienced in the past. The individual looks out for stimuli which enable them to stimulate past memories. This could be a strain of music, an object or anything that could take the individual back in time and make him or her remember the past and experience nostalgia. This leads the individual to revive the past and re-experience the memories and the warmth of the past (Ornstein and Ornstein, 1985). Nostalgia provides a mesh of security and helps the individual to overcome the insecurity brought on by discontinuity. Best and Nelson (1985) found that men who were more mobile and travelled a lot tended to be more nostalgic than women who stayed at home. Mehta and Belk (1991) found that Indian migrants to the US kept objects from their homes in India, and often indulged in personal nostalgia while coping with the separation from their homeland. The objects of nostalgia also become a mechanism for the maintenance of a sense of continuity (Belk, 1990). For example, when a loved one dies, their belongings become objects that remind them about the person and bring back memories and emotions associated with the deceased person.

Vicarious nostalgia

‘It deals with nostalgia for a period outside of the individuals living memory’, (Goulding, 2002, p 542). Vicarious nostalgia is not linked to any direct past personal experience. Unlike personal nostalgia it is the grieving for the loss of something that was never directly experienced by the individual (Croft, 1989; Baker and Kennedy, 1994). It is not influenced by age. Goulding (2002) found that even 25-year-olds felt nostalgic for the era of the 1960s, which they never experienced. Vicarious nostalgia represents a yearning for traditional, conservative, and community values of bygone eras. Experiencing vicarious nostalgia is an individualized blend of fantasy and reality (Rose and Wood, 2005). It is remembering times which an individual has not personally experienced but longs for. Sohn (1983) argues that vicarious nostalgia should be considered as paramnesia, the feeling that one has seen it before or heard it before, the basis of which could be pure fantasy. Vicarious nostalgia is transformative (Sohn, 1983). For example, by attending an Opera, the audience feels transported to another era. The visit to a museum becomes
a retreat from the real world, both spatially and temporally and a transportation to the real past (Joy and Sherry, 2003). When indulging in vicarious nostalgia the past becomes the present, which is followed by a feeling of loss and melancholy that the past was but a thought and not a reality (Daniels, 1985). As a result, vicarious nostalgia becomes a quest for an illusion that can never be found. This identification with the past influences thought, action, and behavior (Goulding, 2002). Individuals experience the authentic 'golden' past vicariously by consuming objects that help take them back to that time (Rose and Wood, 2005). The factors that influence vicarious nostalgia are: nostalgia proneness, discontinuity, alienation and the loss of the feeling of community (Daniels, 1985), and the feeling that the authentic 'golden' past is being lost and needs to be preserved (Stern, 1992).

Nostalgia proneness
Like personal nostalgia, there are some people who are more prone to indulge in vicarious nostalgia than others. The Holbrook (1993) scale measures how prone a person is likely to be nostalgic. It does not measure the intensity of the experience of vicarious nostalgia being experienced by the individual. People who are more prone to be nostalgic are more likely to be influenced by nostalgic appeals.

Discontinuity
Davis (1979) argues that when individuals face discontinuity, they tend not only to indulge in personal nostalgia but also are open to experiencing vicarious nostalgia. Therefore, like personal nostalgia, vicarious nostalgia can also serve as a basis for coping with discontinuity. When faced with uncertainty and anxious circumstances, individuals tend to go back in time and link with the past as that gives a sense of security. It represents an 'old tweed coat' (Davis, 1979), suggesting that as many things may change, there are always things that remain the same. For example, a visit to the museum can transport the individual to the past, thus generating vicarious nostalgia. This helps the individual escape from the present and experience a sense of stability in the past. Thus, the link to the past provides a hook of continuity in turbulent times (Davis, 1979; Tannock, 1995) since it facilitates an escape from the problems of reality by allowing the individual to seek shelter in the security of the past (Baudrillard, 1983).

Alienation
Alienation refers to the separation of human beings from fellow human beings and from their institutions (Kanungo, 1979, p 120). This could be related to the workplace, the changing face of the family, etc. In the past, the perception was that people had stronger connections and roots with family and other social institutions. Unbridled individualism leads to extreme competition which can result in the tendency for individuals to feel that their interests are incompatible with those of others. Hence, a positive outcome for one might mean a negative outcome for another (Waterman, 1981). Adding to this, the fast pace of life has led to pressures, frustrations, and a lack of interpersonal involvement (Bewes, 1997; Lears, 1998). This has led to individuals leading more private lives and society becoming impersonalized (Chase and Shaw, 1989). Some people no longer have strong ties to others. The result of this can be a loss of belongingness and security. Even if individuals feel the need to be associated with groups, they may be unable to build these relationships thus leading to frustration and insecurity, which in turn creates a sense of meaninglessness in life and loneliness (Kanungo, 1979). By indulging in vicarious nostalgia, it may be possible for individuals to indulge in the values of community of the past, of times when family and social groups had a presence in everyday life (Daniels, 1985). Thus, the transference to another era through vicarious nostalgia becomes a way of healing the sense of
insecurity and loneliness. By identifying with specific objects of nostalgia, individuals indulge in the times when community values were stronger. Individuals experiencing vicarious nostalgia will feel that they are a part of a group sharing the same interest and hence form a collective identity. This creates a 'neo tribe' where the group shares something in common that is mutually valued. This becomes a basis for socializing and building alternate communities (Maffesoli, 1996). This therefore serves as the foundation for a larger identity for the marginalized individual (Price et al., 2000).

An example of this is the reliving of the mountain man myth fantasy, where a group of people get together and live, dress, eat, and drink just like the mountain man did many years ago. Not only does it enable them to relive the days when there was a strong sense of community, but it also helps create a social group of people for friendship, bonding networking among those with a common interest (Belk and Costa, 1998). Historical anachronist groups share a love of the life and times and values of some common interest period in history, and can be seen in large numbers in the U.S. and Europe.

Search for authenticity

Authenticity of an object refers to its perceived genuineness (Trilling, 1972). Authenticity gives a feeling of purity and sacredness. For some people nothing appears as how it should be. Products, fashion, art, and even the role of the family is perceived to have deteriorated. Lears (1998) argues that the individualist culture of pleasure seeking has created a disillusionment of everyday life. It is this discontentment with the present that creates an urge to seek the 'golden age' of the past (Chase and Shaw, 1989). For some individuals, they cannot believe what has happened around them (Baudrillard, 1983). This has prompted a feeling of deterioration and decline with a need for authenticity (e.g., the Coke catch phrase 'The Real Thing' as suggested by Belk et al., 1989) and for a simpler and more authentic way of life away from present day complexities (Seremetakis, 1994). Thus, when the present is no longer appealing, individuals want to simulate (Baudrillard, 1983) and create an alternate 'authentic' reality (Firat and Venkatesh, 1995). This authentic object of the past is perceived to be genuine, true, and eternal.

Vicarious nostalgia therefore offers a link to the past and the values associated with that past (Lears, 1998). The authenticity of the past becomes resurrected by the experience of nostalgia and the individual relives the authentic past. Nostalgia becomes a way to take refuge away from everyday life into the values of the past. This is reflected in the consumption undertaken by the individual. For example, Belk (1991) argues that individuals consume antiques or antique looking memorabilia because they evoke a time associated with the era antique belongs to, which is valued or admired by the owner. It is these positive emotions that give a sense of continuity and a feeling of authenticity and nostalgic escapism. Imagine how appeals that link individuals to times of perceived warmth and security could trigger donors to give monies to those charitable organizations.

Giving behavior

As per the charitable giving literature, giving may result in a direct gain to the giver. This gain could be either emotional or economic. Emotional benefits include a warm glow (Andreoni, 1990), prestige, and respect (Olson, 1965) in the community, self-esteem (Mathur, 1996), recognition (Kottasz, 2004), peer pressure (Webber, 2004), and the alleviation of negative feelings (Cialdini et al., 1987). Economic benefits include tax benefits, invitations to gala events (Kottasz, 2004; Sargeant et al., 2006), etc. Sargeant et al. (2006) summarized the intrinsic determinants of giving under three categories: familial utility (benefits to family members either alive or in memoriam), emotional utility (emotions felt), and demonstrable utility (a direct economic
benefit accruing to the giver like the chance to
attend a performance, dinner, event, etc).
In this burgeoning era of relationship
marketing, the focus is on establishing long-
term intimate relationships between buyers
and sellers. Equally appropriate is the establish-
ing of a relationship between donor and
recipient (Belk, 1979). For this to happen, it
is proposed that commitment and trust are
vital to maintain relationships (Morgan and
Hunt, 1994). Trust is the confidence in the
other party's reliability and integrity (Morgan
and Hunt, 1994) and in the not-for-profit
literature, trust has been found to be influ-
cenced by organizational factors: professional-
ism demonstrated by the charity and the
quality of its communications (Sargeant
et al., 2006). Commitment is the enduring
desire to maintain a valued relationship
(Morgan and Hunt, 1994). The higher the
emotional utility (emotions felt out of giving)
and familial utility (link to family), the greater
the degree of commitment and the greater the
level of giving that is exhibited by the donor to
that charitable organization (Sargeant et al.,
2006). The perceived demonstrable benefits
(selfish gains like invitations to gala events
(Kottasz, 2004)) associated with charitable
giving helps to persuade nondonors to become
donors, but it does not drive commitment
(Sargeant et al., 2006).

**Conceptual model**

Looking to the work of Sargeant et al. (2006),
charitable giving is affected by commitment,
which in turn is affected by trust and by
emotional and familial utility, which are
intrinsic, while trust is driven by organizational
elements such as organizational professional-
ism and quality of communications, which are
extrinsic.

Our model (Figure 1) builds on the work of
Sargeant et al. (2006). We propose that the
emotional engagement associated with nostal-
gia is likely to have a bearing on both emotional
and familial utility. The two types of nostal-
gia—personal nostalgia and vicarious nostalgia
are likely to impact the emotional utility and
familial utility derived by the giver, which in
turn would drive commitment. The effective
use of advertising cues to elicit nostalgic
reactions to ads or communications would be
expected to affect the donor's feelings
about the organization doing the communicat-
ing/advertising. The positive potential associ-
ated with the reliving of fond personal
experiences and memories (personal nostal-
gia) and/or the connection to a happier past
(vicarious nostalgia) should enhance the
chance of donor giving to the charity in
question. However, the extent to which the
NPO can evoke nostalgia depends upon the
nostalgia proneness of the giver, emotional
importance of the past experiences evoked by
the NPO and the characteristics of the NPO
such as the extent to which the NPO can
alleviate the feelings of alienation and dis-
continuity in the giver, and the level to which
the NPO can fill in the need for authenticity for
the giver. We will now present research
propositions on the bases of the model.

**Research propositions**

From the nostalgia literature review it is
evident that nostalgia evokes a bundle of
emotions that engage the person experiencing
nostalgia. The giving behavior literature has
also shown that there are emotional benefits
arising out of giving. This section first presents
a set of six research propositions that lay out
the bases of the relationship between nostalgia
and giving to charity. The next five propo-
sitions then provide specific circumstances
under which nostalgic appeals by NPOs are
likely to provide emotional benefits to the
donor and hence create stronger bonds with
him.

**Personal nostalgia and charity giving**

With changing circumstances in life and aging,
people remember the past with increasing
fondness. They remember the experiences
they have undergone. They begin to long for
Nostalgia and giving to charity

Figure 1. Conceptual model.

the past (Baker and Kennedy, 1994) and the things, memories of experiences, and people associated with this past (Goulding, 2001). The triggering of nostalgia is associated with fond memories of friends and loved ones who may have died. Nostalgia opens a variety of positive and negative emotions. Though there is often a sense of loss, there is also comfort and warmth in the memories. In a charitable giving context, when thinking of one’s loved ones, the individual is likely to feel a personal affinity for the people being remembered. This personal affinity should motivate the individual to donate to a charity in memoriam (Sargeant et al., 2006). In this case, the likelihood is that the giver will feel a connection to the past loved one through the giving of a gift in that individual’s name (Fischer et al., 1996). This acts as a platform for the individual to experience nostalgia and hence be closer to the loved one. For example, if someone has lost a relative to cancer, by giving to charities associated with cancer in the name of the lost relative, this will help to keep the memory of the loved one alive and bring the individual a step closer to that lost relative or friend. This is what is described by Sargeant et al. (2006) as familial utility arising out of giving, which benefits family members either alive or in memoriam. As a result, the following research proposition is offered:

\[ P1: \text{Personal nostalgia is likely to lead to higher levels of familial utility} \]

Nostalgia creates a fantasized reunion with the idealized past. The person experiencing nostalgia is not only looking for the object of nostalgia, but the time before it was lost (Akhtar, 1996; Lomsky-Feder and Rapoport, 2000). Thus, an academic institution could evoke nostalgia in their appeals for donations by stimulating the school day memories (Braun-LaTour et al., 2004) among its ex-students. Hence by giving to his school, the individual would feel closer to his school days, reminding him of the memories of the past and thus experiencing nostalgia. This could result in feelings of elation, happiness, and warmth (Holak and Havlena, 1998). As a result, personal nostalgia would therefore contribute to emotional benefits (Sargeant et al., 2006). Therefore, we expect that the emotions evoked by personal nostalgia are likely to result in emotional utility. Thus we can say that:
P2: Personal nostalgia is likely to lead to higher levels of emotional utility

Commitment is the enduring desire to maintain a valued relationship (Morgan and Hunt, 1994), and those who develop a commitment to nonprofits will maintain that relationship as it serves to reduce uncertainty and vulnerability (Sargeant et al., 2006). Certainly the more personal association the donor develops with the charity, the more committed he or she will be to that charity (Sargeant and Lee, 2004). The emotion of nostalgia triggered by giving in memoriam (familial utility) would be expected to strengthen the commitment to the charity (Sargeant et al., 2006). Logically then charity giving becomes a way for the giver to reconnect with the past or feel close affinity to his lost loved one. This commitment to the charity drives giving behavior. Thus:

P3: Personal nostalgia is likely to result in familial utility, which produces higher levels of commitment, which in turn is likely to drive giving behavior.

P4: Personal nostalgia is likely to result in emotional utility, which produces higher levels of commitment, which in turn is likely to drive giving behavior.

Vicarious nostalgia and charity giving

Vicarious nostalgia is a longing for a past not personally experienced by the individual (Baker and Kennedy, 1994). As previously discussed, it is a response to alienation and need for authenticity. One of the main premises is that associating with certain objects of the past will allow the individual to relive the past vicariously through these objects of consumption (Belk, 1991; Rose and Wood, 2005). By associating with objects or events of the past they vicariously relive the emotions of this past (Belk, 1988). The triggers of vicarious nostalgia are experiential and evoke the emotions of nostalgia (Holbrook and Schindler, 2003). In a charity-giving context, when someone goes to the Opera or symphony, the experience evokes the emotions of vicarious nostalgia for a past era. Offerings such as operas and music recitals/performances give the donor fulfillment and elation and transport him or her to another era (Goulding, 2001), provide an intellectual ascendance (Davis, 1979), offer mental or spiritual freedom (Holbrook and Schindler, 2003), and alleviate a sense of loss of history (Goulding, 2001). Vicarious nostalgia also helps create a community where the group shares something in common that is mutually valued (Daniels, 1985; Maffesoli, 1996). Being associated with and giving to causes that evoke vicarious nostalgia aids in the recapturing of positive feelings (Fischer et al., 1996). It follows, therefore, that vicarious nostalgia will also be able to create emotional utility (Sargeant et al., 2006). Hence, the following proposition is posited:

P5: Vicarious nostalgia is likely to lead to emotional utility.

The desire to be associated with a group of people with similar values and beliefs in causes that coincide with those of the potential donor will drive commitment to the cause (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). By being associated with and giving to these causes, the giver can gain emotional utility through vicariously reliving the ‘golden era’. This emotional utility would then drive commitment (Goulding, 2002) to the cause, which in turn will drive giving behavior (see Figure 1). Thus, it is proposed that:

P6: The emotional utility derived through vicarious nostalgia is likely to drive giving behavior mediated by commitment.

Factors influencing nostalgia and giving to charity

As discussed in the paper earlier, certain factors influence nostalgia among individuals. The factors that influence nostalgia are
nostalgia proneness, discontinuity, personal experiences, search for authenticity, and alienation. It is therefore argued that since these factors influence nostalgia they would also have a bearing on how nostalgia could influence giving to charity.

A review of the nostalgia literature has shown us that certain people are more likely or prone to nostalgia than others. Nostalgia proneness is a facet of a person's personality. People who are more prone to nostalgia are more open to nostalgic appeals, branding strategies, and advertising (Zimmer et al., 1999). Individuals who were in the high nostalgia proneness group perceived the past as more favorable than those in the low nostalgia proneness group (Batcho, 1998). Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that the level of nostalgia proneness of the donor is likely to affect the extent of emotional benefit derived by the giver through supporting the charitable cause. Therefore, we propose that:

\[ P7: \text{High nostalgia prone donors are likely to derive more emotional and familial utility by associating with NPOs that evoke nostalgia.} \]

People experiencing discontinuity tend to become nostalgic (Davis, 1979). Negative and stressful events in life may result in depression and negative feelings which the person would want to cope with (Tesser and Beach, 1998). The individual then clings to objects and events experienced in the past. This leads him or her to revive the past and re-experience the memories and emotions of bygone days (Ornstein and Ornstein, 1985). Nostalgia provides a mesh of security and helps overcome the insecurity that discontinuity brings. For example, in the context of personal nostalgia, when a loved one dies, his or her belongings become objects that remind the individual about the person and bring back memories and emotions associated with the deceased person. In the context of vicarious nostalgia too, when faced with uncertainty and anxious circumstances individuals tend to go back in time and link with the past not personally experienced by them in order to feel a sense of security. It represents an old comfortable ‘tweed coat’ (Davis, 1979), signifying that as much as many things may change, there are always some things that remain the same. We argue that in the context of giving to charity, NPOs that can assure continuity to donors facing discontinuity are likely to provide emotional benefits to the giver by evoking nostalgia. Therefore, we propose that:

\[ P8: \text{Donors facing discontinuity are more likely to derive emotional utility from the personal/vicarious nostalgia evoked by associating with certain NPOs that can assure a sense of continuity.} \]

Events which have been more intense or more significant for the individual are retained (hence more vivid) in the autobiographical memory more than less intense and less important events (Best and Nelson, 1985). In a study of the recall of 25 seasons of Metropolitan Opera, Sehulster (1989) found that individuals recalled those seasons better which had intense emotions or significant events linked to them. Events associated with life scripts are also recalled better. For example—graduation, marriage, and childbirth are more effectively remembered. Since these events are better recalled, people get more nostalgic about these events as they have special memories around these events. Therefore, we argue that NPOs associated with these significant personal events are likely to evoke nostalgia among the donors by allowing them to relive or re-associate with the past. Thus, it is proposed that:

\[ P9: \text{NPOs connected with 'significant' personal events in the donors' lives are likely to benefit from the use of using nostalgic appeals as they would enable the donor to derive emotional utility.} \]

For some people nothing appears as how it should be. Products, fashion, art, and even the role of the family is perceived to have
deteriorated. It is this discontentment with the present that creates an urge to seek the 'golden' past (Chase and Shaw, 1989). Thus, when the present is no longer appealing, individuals want to simulate (Baudrillard, 1983) and create an alternate 'authentic' reality (Firat and Venkatesh, 1995). This authentic object of the past is perceived to be genuine, true, and eternal. Vicarious nostalgia therefore offers a link to the past and the values associated with that past. Thus, we argue that donors that seek authenticity are likely to derive emotional benefits by giving to NPOs that assure a sense of authenticity. Arts organizations, museums, Operas, etc. would be organizations that could provide emotional benefits to the donor by evoking vicarious nostalgia. As a result, the following proposition is posited:

**P10:** Donors seeking authenticity are likely to derive emotional utility of the vicarious nostalgia evoked by associating with NPOs that assure authenticity.

Unbridled individualism leads to extreme competition and thus some people tend to feel alienation. Adding to this the fast pace of life has led to pressures, frustrations, and a lack of interpersonal involvement. This has resulted in individuals leading more private lives and an impersonalized society (Chase and Shaw, 1989). By indulging in vicarious nostalgia individuals indulge and crave in the values of community of the past, of times when family and social groups had a presence in everyday life. By identifying with specific objects of nostalgia individuals also feel that they are a part of a group sharing the same interest and hence form a collective identity. This helps to create a 'neo tribe' where the group shares something in common that is mutually valued. This becomes a basis for socializing and building alternate communities. In the NPO context, we argue that donors feeling alienation are likely to derive emotional benefits from NPOs that can evoke nostalgia by reliving the times when a sense of community pervaded society. This can also create bases for socialization. As a result, it is proposed that:

**P11:** Donors experiencing alienation are likely to derive emotional utility by associating with NPOs that evoke nostalgia and help alleviate the sense of alienation.

**Discussion and implications**

The authors have not been able to find any academic studies which have focused on the relationship between nostalgia and charitable giving. This paper has contributed to theory development by synthesizing the current literature and presenting a conceptual framework with proposed linkages between nostalgia and giving to charity. A host of research propositions have also been presented which explore linkages in detail. Even though this manuscript presents a conceptual argumentation, a series of proposed managerial implications are now discussed which might stem from the findings of future studies.

**Research agenda**

Through the discussion on the relationship between nostalgia, giving to charity, and the factors affecting the relationship, the following sections will elucidate a research agenda.

**Personal nostalgia and giving to charity**

One area of research need involves the development and testing of how personal nostalgia influences giving to charity and what factors can influence this relationship. Through this paper it has been argued that personal nostalgia is likely to evoke emotional and familial utility which is likely to influence giving to charity. Can any NPO evoke nostalgia among any donor? It has been argued that there are specific factors which can enable an NPO to evoke nostalgia among specific types of consumers. We argue for the role of significant life events, and NPOs which are related to...
these events should be able to evoke memories related to these events and, therefore, evoke nostalgia and hence build stronger bonds with the donors. We have also argued that this is likely to vary based upon the proneness for nostalgia among the donors and the discontinuity those donors might be experiencing.

Vicarious nostalgia and giving to charity

Another relevant area for research involves the role of vicarious nostalgia and its relationship with charitable giving. It has been argued here that vicarious nostalgia evokes emotions which could help the NPO develop emotional bonds with the donors. This could be relevant to NPOs which can assure a sense of authenticity to donors. We have also argued that this is likely to vary depending upon the proneness for nostalgia among the donors and the discontinuity and alienation that donors are experiencing.

Measurement of nostalgia

The current paper has proposed several propositions which can be quantitatively tested in future research programs. In order for researchers to test the proposed model, it is necessary to be able to assess the intensity of nostalgia being experienced by the donor. Unfortunately, the authors have not been able to identify a scale for this measurement either on the vicarious or personal levels. Holbrook’s (1993) nostalgia proneness scale utilizes a battery of 20 questions that measure the proneness for personal nostalgia and vicarious nostalgia, but it does not measure actual experience of nostalgia (Schindler and Holbrook, 2003). Batcho’s (1995) nostalgia inventory examines nostalgia as a personality trait. Baumgartener (1992) developed a scale to look at the effect of music on evoking autobiographical memories and the emotions these memories evoke, but this scale again does not address the nostalgia experience. There are several older scales (e.g., the antiquarianism scale (McKenchie, 1974) and experience scale (Taylor and Konrad, 1980)) which measure personal dispositions towards the past but not the experience of nostalgia. As described earlier in this manuscript, in order to effectively measure nostalgia, it would be necessary to measure the experiencing of both of its dimensions—cognition and affect (Werman, 1977; Baumgartener, 1992). Cognition refers to the recall of the past memories and affect refers to the emotions these memories evoke. Personal nostalgia is comprised of autobiographical memories and the emotions these memories evoke. Vicarious nostalgia is comprised of the fantasized reality in the minds of individuals and the emotions it evokes. See Figure 2, for a proposed framework to measure nostalgia.

Examining the relevant literature to identify work reflecting these components is a necessary step in scale development. In terms of

Figure 2. Template for measuring nostalgia.
personal nostalgia, an initial study of the literature shows that the Grayson and Shulman (2000) scale of Indexicality measures memories of the past being evoked by possessions. This offers a promising starting point, but there would be a need to adapt the scale to a charitable giving context. Beatty and Ferrell's (1998) scale to measure negative emotions also has promise; however, this scale was developed for studying impulse buying habits. The 1998 scale developed by Coulter (1998) measures positive emotions but with regard to reactions to TV programs. No direct scale exists at this point, so scale development is an important avenue.

In terms of vicarious nostalgia, a scale developed by Coyle and Thorson (2001) measures the psychological transportation to a world created by a 'website'. Though this is not directly measuring vicarious nostalgia, it could be adapted to measure the transportation to the fantasized reality of vicarious nostalgia. This warrants more work by studying the dimensions of fantasy and the identifying scales that could be adapted for measuring vicarious nostalgia.

Other relevant areas

Nostalgia could be used as a tool by NPOs to bond with the donors, more effectively among nostalgia prone donors. Would this have an adverse effect on the low nostalgia prone donors? Would this isolate the forward looking or progressive donors? Holbrook and Schindler (1996) concluded that high nostalgia prone consumers are more open to nostalgia appeals than low nostalgia prone individuals. Schindler and Holbrook (2003) stated that since nostalgic appeals evoking the past may not be successful among the low nostalgia prone individuals, they recommend that more progressive appeals need to be used which could evoke the heritage of the product or brand but also cue modernity. For example, they studied the effect of nostalgic features and appeals in the context of cars. They found that low nostalgia prone individuals were not stirred by these appeals and hence recommended more progress-related appeals like 'It is not your father's Oldsmobile' (p 285). In the context of charitable giving too, it would be appropriate to argue that the nostalgic appeals would not work as well among low nostalgia prone consumers. However, there is no research currently which elaborates whether the effects of nostalgic appeals would be detrimental. As recommended by Schindler and Holbrook (2003), one can argue that the nostalgic appeals would need to be altered. However, the extent to which they would need to be altered and the effects of that could be interesting areas for future research.

This paper has also argued that giving in memoriam would help to cope with the discontinuity with the death of a loved one. Is there a relationship between the grief reaction and nostalgia while giving in memoriam? Is giving in memoriam only an action of grief reaction? Would this wane over a period of time? A review of the literature on grief shows that there are three phases of grief (Goaldor, 1985). The first phase is comprised of disbelief in the death of the loved one. It is a phase of shock. The second phase refers to the beginnings of coping with the death. This involves a searching for meaning in the death. This also involves searching for the dead individual in his/her belongings and memories. The final phase is recovery. This involves proceeding with life and overcoming the pain involved. However, this does not mean that the individual stops grieving for their loved one. Scharlach (1991) found that when some adults were reminded of the death of their parent, they cried even years after the death of that parent. Nostalgia refers to the remembering of the events of the past and reliving the positive emotions with a sense of loss. Thus, one can argue that getting nostalgic for a loved one who is dead, allows them to cope with the loss and the grief involved with the death. Bonnano and Kaltman (1999) argued that one of the means of coping with the death of an individual is to develop 'continued bonds with the deceased' to 'foster the continuity of identity' (p 562). Therefore, it appears that by giving in the memory of the deceased the
Nostalgia and giving to charity

giver remembers the loved one and it gives a sense of continuity. Therefore, one can argue that it helps in the grieving process as it aids recovery from the grief. However, we recommend that this specific relationship between grief and nostalgia be studied in greater detail in future research.

There is growing interest in memoriam tribute funds in the US and UK. Could this be because of the personal nostalgia these funds evoke? Conceptually it appears that there could be a relationship between the two. However, this area needs to be studied in greater detail as there could be various other variables that could also account for this increase of this interest. What appears clear from an analysis of the literature is that nostalgia could have an important impact upon donor giving and warrants empirical investigation.

Biographical notes

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