

Extending the Reminiscence Bump Effect in Nostalgic Advertising from the United States to South Korea

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Research has suggested that advertisements framed in reference to the reminiscence bump (i.e., adolescent and early adulthood years) are more effective than advertisements that focused on other periods within a U.S. sample. The current study examines whether the bump effect varies across culture (the United States vs. South Korea). Using a 3 (time frames: bump advertisements, non-bump past advertisements, present-focused advertisements) × 2 (nations: the U.S. and South Korean participants) between-subjects design, our results showed that the effectiveness of the reminiscence bump-framed advertisements was not affected by nations. Across the United States and South Korea, the reminiscence bump-framed advertisements elicited a greater feeling of positive nostalgia, more positive attitude toward the advertisement, and stronger purchase intention. In addition, the positively evoked nostalgia mediated the effect of the bump-framed advertising on both ad attitude and purchase intention.

Keywords: nostalgic advertising, the reminiscence bump, cultures

There has been growing research interest in the concept of nostalgia in sociology (Davis, 1979) and psychology (Wildschut, Sedikides, Arndt, & Routledge, 2006) over the decades. Similarly, the positive effect of nostalgia on consumer responses has been investigated by marketing researchers (Holbrook & Schindler, 1991; Huang, Huang, & Wyer, 2016; Lasaleta, Sedikides, & Vohs, 2014; Merchant, Ford, Dianoux,

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& Herrmann, 2016a; Muehling, Sprott, & Sultan, 2014). Ample evidence demonstrates that exposure to nostalgic advertising evokes memories of one's past (e.g., Holak & Havlena, 1998), triggers bittersweet emotions (e.g., Baumgartner, 1992), and can enhance advertising effectiveness (e.g., Merchant, Ford, & Rose, 2011). In fact, many leading companies such as Apple, Adobe, Nike, Microsoft, Nintendo, Target, and McDonald's have adopted nostalgic themes in their recent campaigns (Hesterberg, 2020). For example, the Microsoft nostalgic campaign for the Internet Explorer browser particularly targeted millennials (Gen Y) to evoke their early years by showing iconic items from the 1990s. The Nintendo campaign also targeted millennials by telling stories of two siblings playing Nintendo-based games during the 1980s and 1990s. Audience targeting is an essential part of campaigns, and nostalgia-reliant campaigns have been used to target a particular age group. Recently, researchers have identified the critical period in an individual's past (i.e., the *reminiscence bump*; Berntsen & Rubin, 2002) that is most effective for eliciting positive responses to nostalgic advertising (e.g., Ju, Choi, Morris, Liao, & Bluck, 2016). The reminiscence bump refers to a well-established phenomenon in cognitive psychology: When individuals look back at their own lives, they recall inordinately more events from the period when they were in adolescence to their early adulthood. Despite significant interest in this phenomenon in psychology, only a few reminiscence bump-related studies exist in the marketing literature (Ju, Choi et al., 2016; Tung & Ritchie, 2011).

In addition, although nostalgia has been argued to be a pancultural construct (Hepper et al., 2014), the majority of nostalgia research has been conducted in the United States and the United Kingdom (Muehling et al., 2014; Wildschut et al., 2006). Only a handful of studies have examined the effect of nostalgic advertising in a cross-cultural context (United States and France: Merchant, Ford, Dianoux, & Herrmann, 2016b; United States and India: Jain, Merchant, Roy, & Ford, 2017). None of these have taken potential reminiscence bump effects into account.

The present study thus fills this gap in the literature by testing the use of reminiscence bump-framed advertising across cultures. The reminiscence bump only focuses on a part of nostalgic memories that are from one's adolescence and early adulthood. Remarkably, it has been shown that these memories increased the positive effects of evoking nostalgia on consumer responses in U.S. advertising (Ju, Choi et al., 2016). In fact, previous studies suggest that the reminiscence bump effect appears cross-culturally (e.g., American, Dutch, Polish, and Japanese: Janssen, Chessa, & Murre, 2005; Janssen, Gralak, & Murre, 2011; Kawasaki, Janssen, & Inoue, 2011). Thus, this research builds on the previous findings of a bump effect in U.S. advertising (Ju, Choi et al., 2016), extending its scope to an Asian country (i.e., South Korea). The present study provides a first test of the effectiveness of bump-framed advertising in a non-Western nation. One applied goal is to assess the advisability of using reminiscence bump-framed nostalgic advertising campaigns for targeting East Asian consumers, the subregion of Asia including China, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Macau, Mongolia, and Taiwan (Prescott, 2015), beginning with the test case of South Korea.¹ Among Asian countries, South Korea is one of the largest economies (Mullen, 2017). The value of U.S. goods exported to South Korea is 3.4 billion U.S. dollars per month (Statista, 2021). As such, it is important to understand the efficacy of targeting this market with nostalgic advertising.

¹ The present study is a starting point that tests the effect of bump-framed advertising on consumers in the East Asian context. Because clearly not all Asians are the same, further research would need to explore other Asian countries.

Conceptual Framework

Nostalgic Advertising

Nostalgia is defined as the “positively toned evocation of a lived past in the context of some negative feeling toward the present or impending circumstance” (Davis, 1979, p. 18). This definition has been widely used in social science (e.g., Cheung, Sedikides, & Wildschut 2017; Hepper, Ritchie, Sedikides, & Wildschut, 2012). Feeling nostalgia is generally positive: It is linked to psychological benefits such as increased self-regard (Wildschut et al., 2006), reduced loneliness (Zhou, Sedikides, Wildschut, & Gao, 2008), better depression management (Hussain & Alhabash, 2021), increased social connectedness and optimism (Cheung, Sedikides, & Wildschut, 2016), self-continuity (Sedikides, Wildschut, Gaertner, Routledge, & Arndt, 2008), meaning in life (Sedikides et al., 2017), and strengthened motivation (Sedikides & Wildschut, 2016).

These positive psychological outcomes have led researchers to examine how nostalgia can be applied in marketing. From that perspective, nostalgia can essentially be understood as “a preference (general liking, positive attitude, or favorable affect) toward objects (people, places, or things) that were more common (popular, fashionable, or widely circulated) when one was younger (in early adulthood, in adolescence, in childhood, or even before birth)” (Holbrook & Schindler, 1991, p. 330). The marketing literature shows that advertising that has a nostalgic appeal has positive effects such as enhancing attitudes toward products and brands, strengthening purchase intent (Ju, Kim, Chang, & Bluck, 2016; Muehling et al., 2014), eliciting greater willingness to pay for products (Lasaleta et al., 2014), and increasing charitable giving (Ford & Merchant, 2010; Merchant et al., 2011). Previous nostalgic advertising studies have focused on comparing the effects of past-focused advertisements (childhood, e.g., “remember when you were a kid”: Muehling et al., 2014; or general past times, e.g., “looking back on the years,” “the good old days”: e.g., Youn & Jin, 2017) versus those of present-focused advertisements. Studies have also compared the effects of personal nostalgic advertising (events within a person’s lifetime) versus historical nostalgic advertising (events before the person’s birth; Muehling & Pascal, 2011; Stern, 1992). Personal nostalgic advertising outperformed historical advertising (Muehling & Pascal, 2011). As life unfolds, the future shrinks while the past stretches, and people tend to think back over the decades of their lifespan. Previous research has demonstrated that one life period, the *reminiscence bump* years (during adolescence or early adulthood), is preferential for evoking nostalgia (Holbrook & Schindler, 1989, 1994, 1996; Schindler & Holbrook, 1993, 2003). The present study focuses on personal nostalgic advertising that compares multiple past-focused advertisements with present-focused advertisements. Therefore, it is expected that exposing individuals to ads featuring a reminiscence bump year is likely to generate more positive nostalgia than ads focused on other periods of life.

The Reminiscence Bump

The *reminiscence bump* refers to the cognitive phenomenon that, when asked to recall the events of their life, people more frequently recall life events experienced in adolescence and early adulthood as compared with other past periods (e.g., Koppel & Berntsen, 2014; Koppel & Rubin, 2016; Rubin & Berntsen, 2003). Studies demonstrate that consumers show more favorable reactions to objects

(e.g., songs, movies, movie stars, automobiles, and fashion models) associated with this early life stage (Holbrook & Schindler, 1989, 1994, 1996; Schindler & Holbrook, 1993, 2003). There are several theoretical explanations for the reminiscence bump (cognitive, biological, identity, and life script accounts; e.g., Holmes & Conway, 1999; Rubin et al., 1998). First, the cognitive account claims that individuals experience more novel events during the early period, which makes people remember the events better. Second, the biological account argues that people have optimum cognitive capacities in their late adolescence–early adulthood period (Rubin et al., 1998). Third, the identity account asserts that people remember the bump period better because it is a critical period for defining their own identity (Rubin et al., 1998). Finally, the life script account suggests people remember more lifetime events during the bump year because many culturally accepted lifetime events happen in a definite order (Holmes & Conway, 1999). The current research adopts the life script account (Glück & Bluck, 2007) as it best explains the effect of bump-framed advertising on consumer preferences. This account suggests that people remember more events from the bump period because it is a critical period for positively defining an adult identity. Memories recalled from the bump period include both positive and negative lifetime events, but positive events are more frequently recalled than negative ones (Rubin & Berntsen, 2003). These memories from the bump period make people felt empowered (i.e., high sense of control over events; Glück & Bluck, 2007). The reminiscence bump period, which recalls more positive memories than other periods (Glück & Bluck, 2007) is particularly meaningful for ad effectiveness. The bump-positive emotion scenario gives a rationale for a bump-positive nostalgia mechanism in which the bump-framed advertising evokes more positive nostalgia among consumers.

Such effects have been empirically demonstrated in samples in the United States (Ju, Choi et al., 2016). For example, researchers recruited two age-homogenous groups (i.e., Gen X and baby boomers) and designed advertising messages relevant to individuals' reminiscence bump years (i.e., when they were between 15 and 24 years of age) for each age group, dependent on their current age. Findings show that bump-framed messages evoked greater positive nostalgia (e.g., recalling pleasant and fond memories) and a more favorable consumer response than advertisements framed in either the present or other past periods (Ju, Choi et al., 2016).

The Bump Across Cultures

While previous studies clearly show the positive effect of nostalgic advertising on U.S. consumers, no study has investigated if this effect holds for Eastern Asian consumers. Because numerous multinational companies create international advertising (e.g., Nike's "Just do it" and Apple's "Think different"), understanding cultural drivers is key in strategic campaign development in international advertising (e.g., localized versus standardized approach; Kanso, 1992). For example, different international markets are often characterized in terms of individualism-collectivism (Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey, & Chua, 1988). Consumers in individualistic cultures are thought to value independence, achievement, and autonomy while those in collectivistic cultures emphasize interdependence, harmony, and social hierarchy (Hofstede, 1980). Nostalgia has been claimed as a pancultural emotion that occurs across nations (Hepper et al., 2014). Regarding the contents of nostalgia, a comprehensive cross-cultural study (including samples from 18 countries across five continents; $N = 1,704$) showed similar nostalgia features except in African countries (Hepper et al.,

2014). In terms of the reminiscence bump, ample studies have shown that the bump effect is found cross-culturally, for example, in North American, European, and Asian countries. The reminiscence bump effect holds in countries that span the individualism–collectivism spectrum, including Germany (Leist, Ferring, & Filipp, 2010), the Netherlands (Janssen et al., 2005), Denmark, Turkey (Scherman, 2013), Malaysia (Haque & Hasking, 2010), Japan, China, Bangladesh, the United Kingdom, and the United States (Conway, Wang, Hanyu, & Haque, 2005). This cross-cultural consistency is in line with the life story account of the bump (Glück & Bluck, 2007) that defines the adolescent–early adult years as a critical period for developing an adult identity (Habermas & Bluck, 2000) regardless of one’s nationality. Based on the literature, it is expected that the effect of bump-framed nostalgic advertisements will be found across the two cultures studied, extending previous nostalgic advertising findings in the United States to South Korea.

- H1: Reminiscence bump-framed advertising, not only compared with present-framed advertising, but also compared with advertising framed to focus on non-bump past years, will evoke greater positive nostalgia. The effect is expected to occur in both the United States and South Korea.*
- H2: Reminiscence bump-framed advertising, as compared with not only present-framed advertising, but also compared with advertising framed to focus on non-bump past years, will elicit (a) more positive attitudes toward the advertisement, and (b) higher purchase intent. Effects are expected to occur in both the United States and South Korea.*
- H3: The effect of bump-framed (vs. non-bump and present-framed) advertising on both attitudes toward the advertisement and purchase intent will be mediated by evoked positive nostalgia across the entire sample (both nations).*

Method

To test the proposed hypotheses, this study employed a 3 (time-framed messages: bump, non-bump, and the present) × 2 (nations: the United States, South Korea) between-subjects experimental design to avoid repeat exposure to multiple conditions. Participants were recruited in the United States and in South Korea. A specific year in each condition was included to compare the effects of different time-framed messages.

Translation From English to Korean

Three bilingual (Korean–English) communication scholars independently reviewed and translated the U.S. version of all measures to Korean. Few discrepancies were observed, and they were resolved based on discussion such that before data collection began all three translators agreed that the U.S. version had been adequately translated to Korean. Furthermore, a professional from a consumer panel company reviewed the stimuli before the study launch. Except for the language difference, procedures for conducting the experiment were identical in the United States and South Korea.

Recruitment in the United States

In 2017, participants in the targeted age range (i.e., those who were born in the years between 1966 and 1977) were recruited via an online panel (MTurk) and received monetary compensation for participation. A total of 173 American participants were recruited. Six were outside the required age range, 13 failed to complete the entire questionnaire (i.e., answered 10% or less of the questions), and three failed the manipulation check (i.e., after the exposure to the advertisement, participants were asked "What year was indicated in the ad?"). Participants who answered the year as being within 5 years were included (> 90% of participants in the final sample provided the exact correct year). Exclusion of the 22 participants due the reasons stated above gave a final sample of 151 participants (48% male; age range 41–51, $M = 45.40$, $SD = 3.03$). In the bump condition, the average age of participants in 1990 was 18 years, ranging from 14 to 24 years. In the non-bump condition, the average age of participants in 2006 was 34 years, ranging from 30 to 40 years.

Recruitment in South Korea

South Korean participants ($N = 103$) were recruited via a major professional research panel company, EMBRAIN in South Korea. The company recruited participants in the targeted age range, thereby ensuring that all participants were in the correct range. As a manipulation check, they reported the year described in the ad and, as in the U.S. sample, the authors excluded those who failed the manipulation check. Participants who answered the year as being within five years were included (>90% of participants provided the exact correct year). This gave 78 participants (51% male; age range 40–49, $M = 44.21$, $SD = 2.77$). In the bump condition, the average age of participants in 1990 was 17 years, ranging from 13 to 22 years. In the non-bump condition, the average age of participants in 2006 was 33 years, ranging from 29 to 38 years.

Design and Procedure

The study used a two-factor between-subjects design with three advertising² time-frame conditions (bump years vs. non-bump years vs. present) by two nations (the United States and South Korea). In each country, participants were randomly assigned to one of three advertisement conditions. The product advertised across all conditions was an LED Smart HD TV. To evoke positive nostalgia, advertisements in all conditions used positive references to popular culture. The past-framed conditions included names of the most popular songs and movies (i.e., United States: *Box Office* and *Billboards Chart*; South Korea: TV ratings and album sales in each year; see Figure 1). In the bump-framed ad condition, 1990 was used as it is the center year of the sampled participants' reminiscence bump. Throughout the procedure, no references to the reminiscence bump were made. The following description was included for the U.S.-version bump-framed advertisement.

In 1990, *Home Alone* & *Ghost*, the most popular films, were in the theater. "Hold On" by Wilson Phillips & "It Must Have Been Love" by Roxette, the most popular songs, were

² Note that our stimuli were display ads that could be used on various digital platforms.

playing. We were enjoying the 90s. Where were you? Travel back in time with "LED Smart HD TV."

For the non-bump past-framed advertisement, 16 years were added from the center year of the bump, to ensure a past period outside the bump range. The following description was included for the past-framed non-bump advertisement.

In 2006, *Pirates of the Caribbean 2* & *Night at the Museum*, the most popular films, were in the theater. "Bad Day," by Daniel Powter & "Temperature," by Sean Paul, the most popular songs, were playing. We were enjoying the 2000s. Where were you? Travel back in time with "LED Smart HD TV."

For the present-framed advertisement, names of the most popular movies and songs during the study period (i.e., 2017) were included.

In 2017, *The LEGO Batman Movie* & *Split*, the most popular films, are in the theater, "Shape of You," by Ed Sheeran, & "Bad and Boujee," by Migos featuring Lil Uzi Vert, are playing. We are enjoying our present. Where are you? Make this moment enjoyable with "LED Smart HD TV."

Please note that the translated versions of the Korean ad stimuli are shown in Appendix 1. After exposure to the advertisements, participants answered two manipulation-check questions: (a) "What year was indicated in the ad?" and, to assess past focus, (b) "Reminds me of the past" (7-point scale; Muehling & Sprott, 2004). They then answered questions related to the central dependent variables (DVs), evoked positive nostalgia, attitude toward the advertisement, and product purchase intention. Evoked positive nostalgia was measured by nine items, $\alpha_{\text{United States}} = .98$ and $\alpha_{\text{South Korea}} = .98$ (e.g., "Helps me recall pleasant memories," "Makes me feel nostalgic," and "Evokes fond memories"). This measure offered an assessment of positive nostalgic feelings, and the scale was highly reliable across cultures. Other more comprehensive multifactorial measures of nostalgia might also be used in future research (Merchant, Latour, Ford, & Latour, 2013). Attitude toward the advertisement was measured using four items, $\alpha = .96_{\text{United States}}$ and $.86_{\text{South Korea}}$ (i.e., 1 = "bad" to 7 = "good"; 1 = "negative" to 7 = "positive"; 1 = "unfavorable" to 7 = "favorable"; Muehling, 1987, p. 33; and "How much did you like the advertisement?" where 1 = "Not at all" and 7 = "Completely"; Summers, Smith, & Reczek, 2016, p. 5). Purchase intent was measured by four items, $\alpha_{\text{United States}} = .98$ and $\alpha_{\text{South Korea}} = .94$ (i.e., "It is very likely that I will buy the advertised product"; "I will purchase the advertised product the next time"; "I will definitely try the advertised product"; Putrevu & Lord, 1994, p. 83; "How likely would you like to purchase it?" where 1 = "Not at all" and 7 = "Completely"; Summers et al., 2016, p. 5). Finally, participants reported their demographic information (i.e., gender and age) and were thanked for participation.



Figure 1. Stimuli for the U.S. condition and the South Korea condition.

Results

Preliminary Analysis

A preliminary analysis of the manipulation checks on past focus was conducted. In the U.S. condition, participants rated the bump-framed advertisement³ ($M_{\text{Bump}} = 5.87$, $SD = 1.23$ vs. $M_{\text{Present}} = 2.24$, $SD = 1.67$, $t(101) = 12.61$, $p < .001$, $d = 2.04$) and non-bump advertisement ($M_{\text{Non-Bump}} = 4.08$, $SD = 1.93$ vs. $M_{\text{Present}} = 2.24$, $SD = 1.67$, $t(96) = 5.05$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.02$) as more past-framed than the present-framed advertisement. Similarly, in South Korean condition, participants rated the bump-framed advertisement ($M_{\text{Bump}} = 5.14$, $SD = 0.85$ vs. $M_{\text{Present}} = 3.87$, $SD = 1.11$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.28$) and non-bump advertisement ($M_{\text{Non-Bump}} = 4.46$, $SD = 0.98$ vs. $M_{\text{Present}} = 3.87$, $SD = 1.11$, $p < .05$, $d = 0.56$) as more past-framed than the present-framed advertisement. The samples from both the United States and South Korea thus met the manipulation-check criteria.

Evoked Positive Nostalgia

Hypothesis 1 proposed that in both the U.S. and South Korean participants, the bump-framed advertisement would elicit more positive nostalgia than in other periods. A two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted, including time frame of advertisement, and nation, as independent variables (IVs), and evoked positive nostalgia as the DV. There was a main effect for time frame of advertisement, $F(2,$

³ M_{Bump} refers to a mean score of a reminiscence bump-framed advertisement; $M_{\text{Non-Bump}}$ indicates a mean score of a non-bump-framed advertisement; M_{Present} shows a mean score of a present-framed advertisement.

223) = 43.16, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .28$, for nation, $F(2, 223) = 7.40$, $p = .007$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$, and a two-way interaction effect, $F(2, 223) = 10.66$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$. As predicted, a follow-up t -test revealed that participants in the bump-framed condition ($M_{\text{Bump}} = 5.32$, $SD = 1.33$) had higher scores than those in either the non-bump ($M_{\text{Non-Bump}} = 3.93$, $SD = 1.43$, $t(144) = 6.13$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.02$) or present-framed condition ($M_{\text{Present}} = 2.87$, $SD = 1.58$, $t(155) = 10.47$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.68$). For nation, no significant difference was found between the two nations ($t < 1.68$). Specifically, there was no significant difference between the Korean-bump and U.S.-bump conditions ($t < 1.60$) or the Korean and U.S. non-bump past conditions ($t < 1.46$), but a difference was observed between Korean present-framed advertisement and U.S. present-framed advertisement. In the present condition, the South Korean sample ($M_{\text{South Korea}} = 3.84$, $SD = 1.14$) had a higher positive nostalgia score than the U.S. participants ($M_{\text{United States}} = 2.24$, $SD = 1.44$, $t(81) = 5.22$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.19$). Thus, Hypothesis 1 was supported: The bump-framed advertisements cross-culturally evoked higher positive nostalgia than the other past-framed or the present-framed advertising.

Attitude Toward Advertising

Hypothesis 2a proposed that in both the U.S. and South Korean participants, the bump-framed advertisement would elicit more positive attitude toward the advertisement than the advertisements in the other time frames. The ANOVA for attitude toward the advertising showed a main effect for time frame, $F(2, 223) = 13.09$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$, as expected. There was no effect for nation, $F(2, 223) = 0.08$, $p = .78$, $\eta_p^2 = .00$, or an interaction effect, $F(2, 223) = 1.06$, $p = .35$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. A t -test revealed that those in the bump-framed ad condition ($M_{\text{Bump}} = 5.11$, $SD = 1.44$) had higher scores than those in either the non-bump past ($M_{\text{Non-Bump}} = 4.55$, $SD = 1.36$, $t(144) = 2.46$, $p = .02$, $d = 0.40$) or present-framed ad conditions ($M_{\text{Present}} = 3.84$, $SD = 1.29$, $t(155) = 5.87$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.93$). Thus, H2a was supported: Bump-framed advertisements, cross-culturally, elicited more positive attitudes toward the advertisements than ads framed as either non-bump past or present.

Purchase Intent

Hypothesis 2b proposed that in both the U.S. and South Korean participants, the bump-framed advertisement would elicit stronger purchase intent than advertisements in other time frames. The ANOVA for purchase intent also showed, as expected, a main effect for time frame, $F(2, 223) = 8.60$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$. Follow-up t -tests revealed that participants in the bump-framed ad condition ($M_{\text{Bump}} = 4.06$, $SD = 1.78$) had higher scores than those in either the non-bump ($M_{\text{Non-Bump}} = 3.36$, $SD = 1.54$, $t(144) = 2.50$, $p = .014$, $d = 0.42$) or present-framed ad conditions ($M_{\text{Present}} = 2.93$, $SD = 1.46$, $t(155) = 4.34$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.69$). There was also a main effect for nation, $F(2, 223) = 11.74$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$, but no two-way interaction $F(2, 223) = .79$, $p = .45$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. In terms of the main effect for nation, participants in the South Korean condition ($M_{\text{South Korea}} = 3.88$, $SD = 1.00$) showed higher scores than those in the U.S. condition ($M_{\text{United States}} = 3.20$, $SD = 1.87$, $t(227) = 2.96$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.45$). Thus, H2b was supported: Bump-framed advertisements cross-culturally strengthen purchase intent as compared with ads framed in non-bump past years or present-framed ads (see Table 1, summary of hypotheses 1 and 2).

Table 1. Mean Differences Among Bump, Non-Bump, and Present Conditions.

Dependent Variables	Conditions					
	Bump		Non-Bump		Present	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Evoked positive nostalgia	5.32 ^a	1.33	3.93 ^b	1.43	2.87 ^c	1.58
Advertising attitude	5.11 ^a	1.44	4.55 ^b	1.36	3.84 ^c	1.29
Purchase intent	4.06 ^a	1.78	3.36 ^{bc}	1.54	2.93 ^{bc}	1.46

Note. a, b, and c are significantly different from each other, and b and c are not significantly different from each other.

Mediating Role of Evoked Positive Nostalgia

Hypothesis 3 proposed that positive nostalgia elicited by the ads would mediate the effect of bump-framed (vs. non-bump past and present-framed) advertising on both attitude toward advertisement and purchase intent. Because there is no significant difference between the United States and South Korea in terms of evoking positive nostalgia, mediation analyses were conducted with the whole sample. Hypothesis 3 was tested using the bootstrapping procedure of the PROCESS macro (model 4; Hayes, 2013). First, two dummy variables were created to test the mediation hypothesis: dummy 1 (bump = 1, non-bump = 2) and dummy 2 (bump = 1, present = 2). The bootstrap results confirmed that the effects of bump (vs. non-bump) advertising on ad attitudes ($B = -1.00$, $SE = .18$, 95% bias-corrected CI = -1.38 to $-.69$) and purchase intent ($B = -1.02$, $SE = .20$, 95% bias-corrected CI = -1.48 to $-.66$) were mediated by evoked positive nostalgia. Furthermore, the direct effects of bump (vs. non-bump and present) on the focal dependent variables were significant, indicating that evoked positive nostalgia resulted in partial rather than full mediation (see Figures 2a and 2b).

The results also confirmed the significant mediating role of evoked positive nostalgia for the positive effects of bump (vs. present) advertising on ad attitudes ($B = -1.40$, $SE = .21$, 95% bias-corrected CI = -1.83 to -1.02) and purchase intent ($B = -1.68$, $SE = .23$, 95% bias-corrected CI = -2.15 to -1.27). Furthermore, the direct effects of bump (vs. non-bump and present) on ad attitudes became nonsignificant, indicating full mediation, and purchase intent was significant, indicating partial mediation. Thus, H3 was supported (see Figures 3a and 3b).

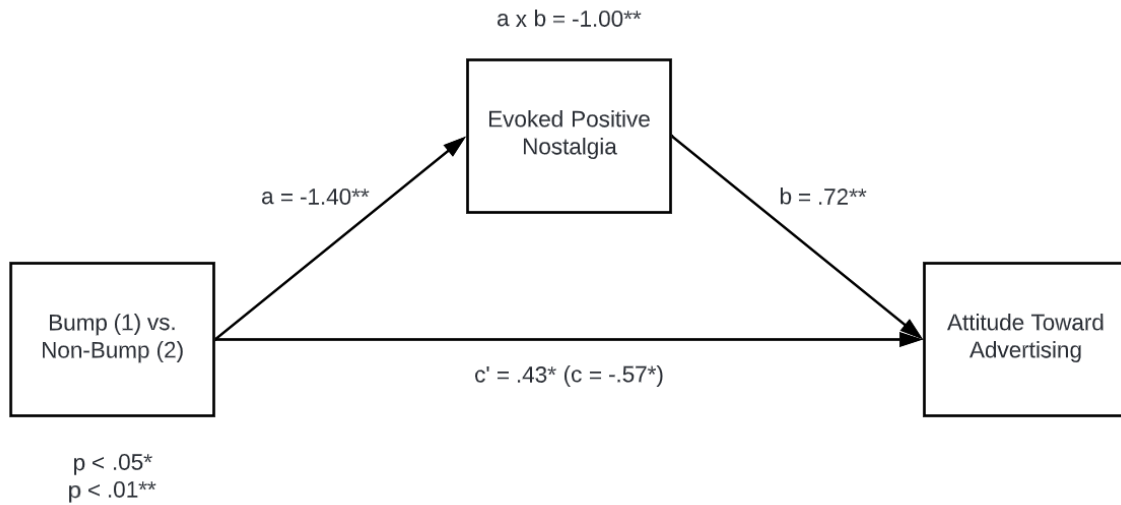


Figure 2a. Mediation model: Bump versus non-bump on attitude toward advertising.

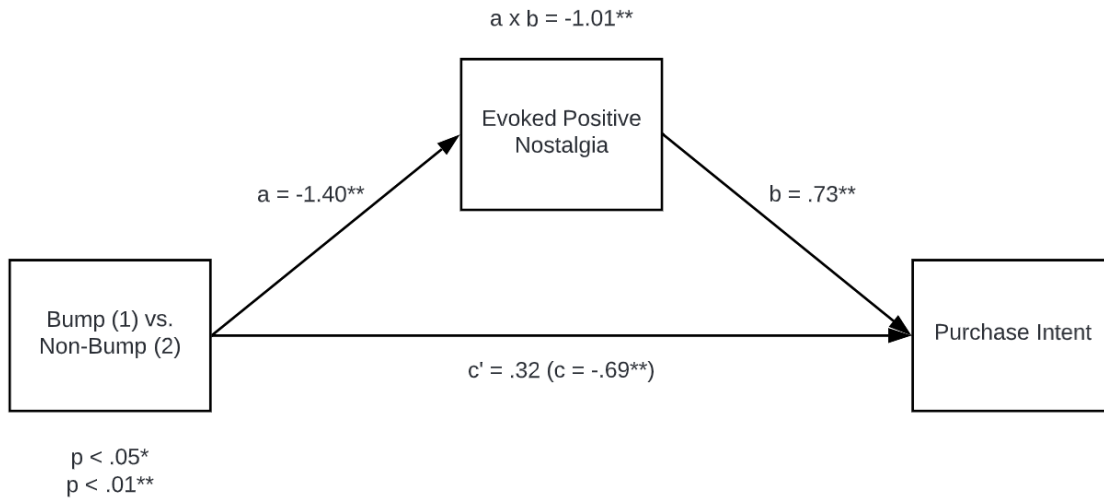


Figure 2b. Mediation model: Bump versus non-bump on purchase intent.

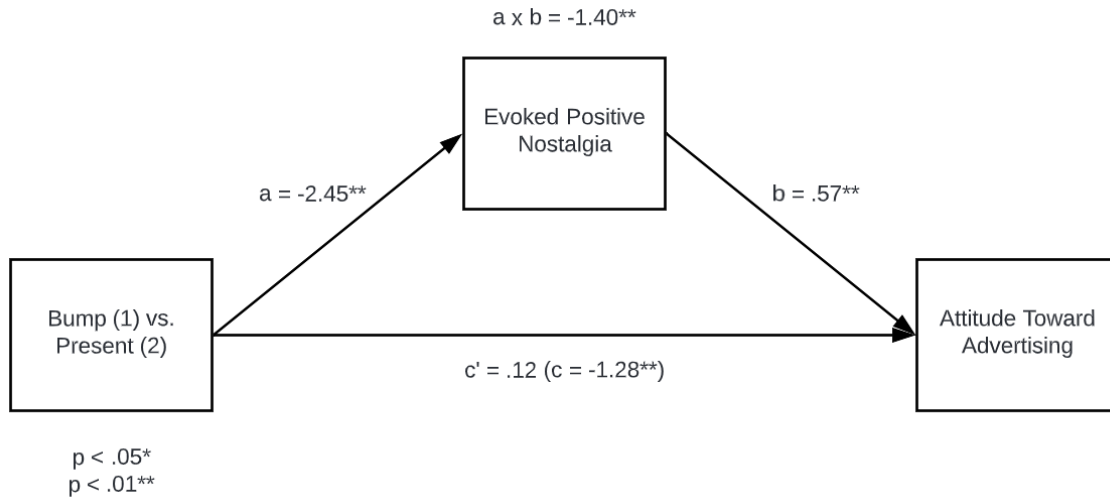


Figure 3a. Mediation model: Bump versus present on attitude toward advertising.

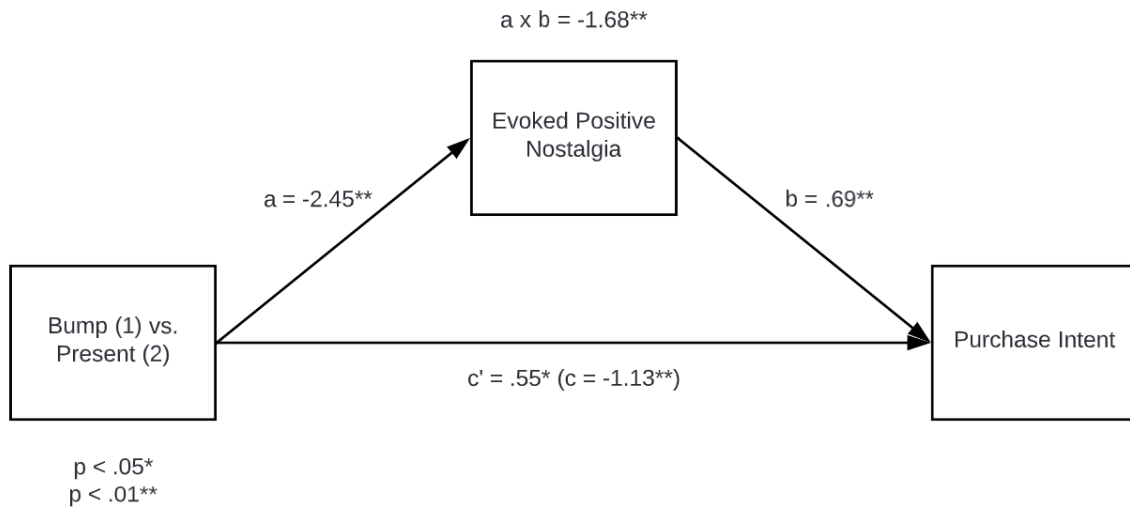


Figure 3b. Mediation model: Bump versus present on purchase intent.

General Discussion

This research makes important contributions to the advertising literature. First, the present study validated the effectiveness of reminiscence bump-framed nostalgic advertising. In the United States, a few studies have shown that advertising that focuses on one's reminiscence bump years is more effective than advertising that focuses on other past periods or the present (Ju, Choi, et al., 2016). The present study extended the bump effect in South Korea. Based on Conway and colleagues' (2005) study showing that the reminiscence

bump effect exists in both North American and in Asian cultures, we proposed that such bump effects for nostalgic advertising would extend to South Korea. Based on the idea that people recall more positive memories from the bump year, this research predicts that the recalled memories from the bump year will lead to greater "positive" nostalgia (e.g., recalling pleasant and fond memories). Our findings support the idea that higher positive nostalgia for the bump years exists in both the United States and South Korea. The bump-framed advertising evoked greater positive nostalgia, more favorable recollection of one's personal past, positive attitude toward advertising, and stronger purchase intent across both the U.S. and South Korean participants. The findings support the previously observed pattern (the bump > non-bump > present) across different dependent variables (positive nostalgia, ad attitude, brand attitude, and purchase intent) in both cultures. The findings also showed that evoked positive nostalgia played a significant mediating role in the positive effect of the bump-framed advertisements on both advertising attitude and purchase intention.

Practical Implications

This research has four major implications. First, nostalgic appeal can be an effective strategy for coping with advertising avoidance and intrusiveness. Consumers are living in a message-saturated world and their attention span is getting shorter and shorter (Wertz, 2019). Research consistently suggests that many consumers show negative reactions to advertising (Pathak, 2017). This study suggests that nostalgic advertising can have a positive impact despite these issues. Traveling back to a past period is a highly personal recollection process, which facilitates consumers' engagement with the ad. Such engagement subsequently brings a more positive emotional state. In sum, the consumer audience is more likely to accept ads that they find more nostalgic.

Second, the present study tested and validated the past claim that *not all nostalgia ads are equally positive and effective*. One nostalgic ad can be more effective than another nostalgic ad because of enhanced positive memories associated with certain periods in one's past. Past research shows there is a certain time (or year) that makes people respond better to nostalgic stimuli (Ju, Choi et al., 2016). This study successfully demonstrated that the advertisement focusing on the reminiscence bump year was more effective than an advertisement focusing on other time periods. This finding gives an additional targeting option for practitioners. For example, marketers may want to target an age-segmented group with bump-framed messages, maximizing the message effect on the target consumers.

Third, the most unique implication is that the present study found a consistent effect of the bump-framed message in a cross-cultural environment. This study confirmed that the bump effect is stable across both the U.S. and South Korea. The bump-frame (vs. other periods) message evoked significantly higher nostalgic feelings among participants from both countries. This suggests that, triggered by the bump-framed message, people recollect their favorable past and generate more positive emotional states regardless of culture. In the context of international advertising, which campaign strategy to adopt (e.g., standardized vs. localized advertising) is an important issue. The bump application can be an effective *standardized ad* approach for international and cross-cultural campaigns. For example, Starbucks, a global corporation, could use this bump-framed message as a *standardized ad* approach in its international campaign during holiday seasons (e.g., Christmas and New Year's Day).

Four, the bump technique can be applied to other types of marketing strategies involving online video advertising and the interior design of retail stores to target a specific age group. With the premise that ads focusing on the reminiscence bump year are more effective than ads focusing on other time periods, retailers selling age-specific products could use this bump principle to attract potential customers by decorating their stores with popular items from the target customers' reminiscence bump year.

Limitations and Future Research

Although this research provides important insights into the topic of nostalgic advertising, some limitations need to be acknowledged. First, this study included only one age group (i.e., 40–51 years) for both the U.S. and South Korean samples. Although the previous studies have suggested that the bump effect holds regardless of age, testing bump effect with multiple age groups will strengthen the external validity of the present study findings. Second, this study chose the United States and South Korea to represent Western and Asian cultures, respectively. However, there are many other countries that represent Asian cultures (e.g., China and Japan) and Western cultures (e.g., European countries such as France and the United Kingdom). Therefore, more research is needed to verify that the bump effect is indeed transcultural, rather than a culture-specific phenomenon. Third, like many other previous studies, this study mainly framed the effect of the bump on key advertising variables (e.g., ad and purchase intent) that advertisers have more control over. However, little is known about the effect of the bump on other elements of marketing where marketers have less or little control, such as consumer-generated reviews. Future research could extend the present study by changing a study context from a company-to-consumer perspective to a consumer-to-consumer communication. It would be interesting to see if the bump effect can be amplified (vs. attenuated) via consumer-to-consumer online communications. Fourth, this study did not include ad quality as a manipulation check. To avoid ad quality-related issues, it is strongly recommended to include an ad quality check in future research. Fifth, although a TV is considered a product for targeting the general population (Willcox, 2018), there may be a potential bias regarding product involvement and affordability. Future researchers need to control for those variables to avoid potential confounding. Finally, although results showed a positive effect of the bump-framed advertising in the United States and South Korea, it is likely that the content of evoked nostalgia may differ across cultures. Therefore, future research may want to investigate the relationship between the bump-advertising effect and the content of nostalgia.

Conclusion

Reminiscence bump-framed messages are effective in nostalgic advertising (Ju, Choi et al., 2016). The current study examined the effect of bump-framed messages cross-culturally. The findings show that bump-framed messages increase positive attitudes toward advertising and purchase intent in both the United States and South Korea. That is, the nostalgic advertising effects hold regardless of any cultural differences between the two nations.

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Appendix: Three Text Descriptions in the Korean Advertisements Translated Into English

In 1990, Seoul Soup & Three Families Under One Roof, the most popular TV dramas. "Mean Person," by Kim, Ji-ae & "With Laughter," by Lee, Seon-hee, the most popular songs, were playing. We were enjoying the '90s. Where were you? Travel back in time with "LED Smart HD TV."

In 2006, Jumong & The Sky, the most popular TV dramas. "In the Street," by Sung, Si-Kung, & "Don't Know a Man," by Buzz, the most popular songs, were playing. We were enjoying the 2000s. Where were you? Travel back in time with "LED Smart HD TV."

In 2017, Shine Eun-soo & First Love Again, the most popular TV dramas. "Flower," by Seo, In-kook, & "YESTERDAY," by Block. B, the most popular songs, were playing. We were enjoying the 2000s. Where were you? Travel back in time with "LED Smart HD TV."