The Power of Emotion: How Nostalgia and Trust Drive Brand Engagement Through Emotional Involvement

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Abstract

With today's fast-moving market, comprehension of the psychological factor influencing consumers' buying decisions is key to effective brand engagement. The research analyzed the contributions of nostalgia proneness and trust in brand to shaping emotional involvement and its associated effects on brand engagement. With a quantitative research method, 309 consumers of South Punjab, Pakistan, were collected data from to analyze how emotional involvement mediates the associations among nostalgia proneness, brand trust, and brand engagement. The results reveals that both nostalgia proneness and brand trust positively influence emotional involvement, which has a positive effect on brand engagement. Additionally, emotional engagement acts as an essential mediator, enhance the indirect impact of trust and nostalgia on brand engagement. These findings underscore the significance of emotional ties in consumer-brand relationships, offering beneficial perception to marketers who seek to instigate greater engagement. This study adds to branding and consumer behavior scholarship by shifting the spotlight to the psychological and emotional aspects of brand engagement, especially in developing countries such as Pakistan.

Keywords: Nostalgia Proneness, Brand Trust, Emotional Involvement, Brand Engagement, Consumer Behavior, Psychological Factors, Pakistan.

Introduction:

Understanding the psychological aspects that affect customer behavior and brand interactions is pivotal now more than ever due to the dynamic and competitive nature of today marketing. Two major psychological factors that have a large impact on how consumers feel about companies and brand trust and nostalgia proneness. Brands that make customers think of important cultural or personal milestones have been shown to trigger positive emotional responses from those with nostalgia proneness, or the inclination to feel nostalgic and remember the past (Gilal et al., 2020). Increasing focus has been given in recent years to the role of emotions in consumer behavior, particularly when seen through the lens of nostalgia (Srivastava et al., 2023). As per Barnwell (2018), Nostalgia proneness the willingness to create and be influenced by nostalgia memories

have been established to be a crucial psychological concept with an impact on consumer perspective and behavior. Such emotional response that is commonly a trigger for sentiments of coziness, comfort, and longing brings about a platform that foster rich emotional connections among customers and business firms. Emotional engagement and nostalgia proneness influencing brand trust and engagement are discussed in this research. Customer loyalty is influenced by brand trust (Cardoso et al., 2022), and experience brand connections, while nostalgia can heighten it through evoking good emotions and increasing positive brand memories (Li et al., 2019). Customer emotional association with a brand is referred to as emotional involvement, and is a mediator variable between brand trust, brand engagement, and proneness to nostalgia (Choi et al., 2024). Consumers' behavior is strongly influenced by how they feel emotionally, particularly the emotional responses associated with nostalgia. An individual's tendency to induce and be shaped by sentimental feelings is referred to as nostalgia proneness (Hussain & Alhabash, 2022). Strong loyalty can be created between customers and businesses through nostalgia feelings of closeness, craving, and convenience (Bibudis Vicente & Mårtensson, 2024). Research has identified that customers' want and perceptions of the brand can be influenced by nostalgia emotions, often exhibiting them to favor firms that stimulate similar effect (Heyns, 2021). Brand trust the confidence in a brand being trustworthy and sincere-is one critical effects of nostalgia (Kubiak & Ouda, 2020). According to Escandon-Barbosa et al., (2024), nostalgia that retrieves positive memories could enhance brand trust by reawakening feelings of stability and security. Emotionally attached consumers are more inclined to develop faith in a brand, and in doing so, close the brand trust-nostalgia proneness gap (Zhang & Tao, 2022). Therefore, high investment moderates the influence of brand trust on nostalgia proneness and enhanced brand engagement. In this research, brand engagement is the most crucial dependent variable. This research aims to explore how emotional engagement impact brand engagement, which then impacts nostalgia proneness and brand trust. Understanding these links can help marketers to understand the emotional dynamics that create deeper relationships between consumers and brands.

Problem Statement:
In today's competitive market, it is essential to understand the psychological processes that determine consumer behavior to develop sound brand engagement. Two of the psychological attributes brand trust and nostalgia proneness positively determine consumer attitudes and decision-making. Literature indicates that the interaction of these two attributes has a significant influence on emotional engagement, which in turn affects customer decisions and brand interactions (Bazi et al., 2023). Emotional involvement is a measure of the intensity of a consumer's affective bond with a brand and is an important predictor of brand loyalty and word-of-mouth (Kumar et al., 2015). Nevertheless, despite increased remembrance of emotional involvement in branding, little is finite known about how brand trust and nostalgia susceptibility individually influence consumer-brand relations, namely within the regional context of Punjab, Pakistan. Due to Punjab's unique consumer market, Well-established cultural tradition, and changing brand choices, it is imperative to study how these psychological drivers affect brand interaction in this particular environment. This research is designed to analyze the processes by which brand trust and nostalgia susceptibility contribute to brand engagement, or the level of attachment, involvement, and dedication customers demonstrate towards a brand. Focusing on Punjab allows this research to provide region-specific findings that can assist companies and marketers in formulating region-specific strategies for building brand loyalty and long-term customer relationships in the region.

Literature Review
2.1 Nostalgia Proneness and Emotional Involvement:
Nostalgia proneness is the propensity of an individual to feel nostalgic, which is typified by a sentimental yearning or wistful admiration for previous events or times (Routledge et al., 2011). This emotional reaction is frequently linked to pleasant memories that arouse sentiments of coziness, coziness, and emotional fulfillment (Koay & Tey, 2024). According Higson (2014), those who are more prone to nostalgia are more inclined to deliberately seek out nostalgia experiences, such as going back to see old media, goods, or brands that bring back memories of time. In consumer's research, the connection between brand engagement and nostalgia proneness has been extensively studied. Brand engagement has been proven to rise as a result of nostalgia's considerable improvement of emotional ties with brands (Vredeveld & Kara, 2022). Customers with greater nostalgia proneness score are more likely to have favorable opinions of companies that bring back memories, which encourages more in-depth interaction (Acilar, 2024). Nostalgia proneness refers to a single tendency to frequently experience nostalgic feelings, which are often connected with positive emotions, sentimental memories, and a strong sense of connection to the past (Holbrook, 1993). Studies indicate that nostalgia is a psychological resource that promotes emotional well-being and reinforces consumer-brand relationships (Sedikides et al., 2015). Brands that are capable of inducing nostalgia can form more intense emotional connections with consumers, resulting in greater brand attachment and involvement (Kim & Sullivan, 2019). Brand engagement is the degree of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral commitment a consumer has in a brand (Brodie et al., 2011). As consumers feel nostalgia, they will be more emotionally attached to a brand, and this boosts their engagement (Weingarten & Wei, 2023). Nostalgic brand strategies, for example, utilizing retro design, vintage ads, or stories about brand heritage, have been proven to increase consumer engagement and advocacy behaviors (Dam et al., 2024). On the other hand, emotional involvement can be described as the extent to which individuals are emotionally attached to things, people, or events (Meeprom & Fakfare, 2021). There have been several studies on emotional involvement in terms of consumer behavior, more so concerning the extent to which consumers feel emotionally attached to brands or products (Harrigan et al., 2018). Moreover, personal identity formation and the development of substantial, long-term connections are greatly reliant on emotional involvement (Shaver & Mikulincer 2006). This implies that the emotional involvement triggered by nostalgia could have both protective and adaptive functions. When nostalgia is coupled with emotional involvement, it can become a psychological sanctuary from the challenges of the contemporary world (Adams & Ghanem, 2024). In addition, research by Nguyen & Duong (2025), suggests that the emotional connection of nostalgia memories often determines the way individuals perceive and relate to their past, thereby solidifying their emotional bond with the experiences.

H1: Nostalgia Proneness (NP) positively influences Emotional Involvement (EI).
2.2. Brand Trust and Emotional Involvement:
In order to be aware of consumer behavior and customer loyalty, brands have become the focus of definitions of brand engagement and brand trust in recent decades. Consumers' faith in the ability of the brand to deliver on its obligations and meet expectations consistently is understood as brand trust (Ismail, 2022). It is a key driver of forming long-term relationships with customers since it affects their probability to buy, refer, and stay loyal to a brand (Upadhyaya et al., 2025). Choi et al., (2024) define Brand engagement as the emotional bonding and active involvement that customers possess since it affects their probability to buy, refer, and stay loyal to a brand. This can be seen in actions like advocacy, frequent use, and feelings of being part of a brand

community (Wong, 2023). This type of engagement tends to be on the basis of common values, experiences, and an emotional affiliation with the brand rather than a transactional relationship (Pansari & Kumar, 2017). By Steinert & Dennis, (2022), emotional engagement is the degree to which one is emotionally invested in something, an event, or idea. It can be seen as the emotional bond that a customer behavior, which may drive their brand loyalty and shopping behavior Beyond mere cognitive evaluations, it captures stronger emotional reactions and depicts how deeply one's moods and sentiments are intertwined with one's experience of a brand (Wilhelm & Grossman, 2010). According to Vivek et al., (2012), customers prefer to spend effort, time, and attention into their interaction with a brand where they feel a sense of affection towards the brand. Greater favorability towards the brand and more brand attachment become the consequences as a result of this emotional relationship (Park et al., 2010, Mured, 2011). In contrast, the degree of a person's active interaction and contact with a brand is termed as brand engagement (Harrigan et al, 2018). This is a construct that has been studied extensively in marketing literature and is thought to be a multidimensional construct that incorporates behavioral, emotional, and cognitive aspects Brand engagement can take many different forms, including word-of-mouth, digital engagement, repeat business (Loureiro et al., 2017; Shah et al, 2017). According to Sprott et al. (2009), emotionally engaged consumers are more likely to have a positive perception of the brand and invest in it, hence fostering loyalty to the brand and improving the experience of the customer. Consumers who get involved with brands put their Self-concept in alignment with the brands and, in the process, feel a greater identification and belonging (Kini et al., 2024).

H2: Brand Trust (BT) positively influences Emotional Involvement (EI).
2.3. Emotional Involvement and Brand Engagement:
Emotional engagement is an important factor in influencing consumer-brand relationships, as emotions have a strong influence on decision-making, brand attitude, and customer loyalty (Kankam & Charnor, 2023). Emotional engagement is the level of emotional attachment a consumer has toward a brand, which affects their attachment, engagement, and long-term commitment (Fernandes & Moreira, 2019). When customers feel highly emotionally engaged, they tend to form a sense of belongingness and affinity for a brand, which strengthens their engagement through regular interactions, word-of-mouth promotion, and future purchase intentions (Khattak et al 2021, Shimul & Phau, 2023). Brand involvement is a multidimensional construct consisting of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral elements (Hollebeek, 2011). Those who are more emotionally engaged with a brand are more likely to show increased brand involvement through active involvement in activities associated with the brand, such as word-of-mouth communications, giving feedback, and championing the brand among their networks (Dessart et al., 2015).Studies indicate that emotional connection enhances brand involvement by creating a feeling of individual relevance and emotional tie to the brand, resulting in long-term brand loyalty and advocacy (Rather et al., 2022). The self-congruity theory (Sirgy, 1986) affirms this relationship by detailing that consumers connect with brands that are consistent with their self-identity and emotional values. Emotional involvement acts as a link between consumer identity and brand engagement, strengthening consumer-brand relationships (Japutra et al., 2018). Studies have found that consumers who are emotionally involved have been observed to show increased levels of involvement across various touch points, including online communities, social media, and physical stores (Bowden & Mirzaei, 2021). With the interlinked relationship between brand engagement and emotional engagement, this study postulates the following:

H3: Emotional involvement has a positive and significant impact on brand engagement.
2.4 Mediation Effect:

The relationship between brand trust and nostalgia proneness is mediated through emotional engagement, meaning that brand trust is enhanced when nostalgia stimulates greater emotional involvement with a brand. The tendency to reminisce and relate to past experiences, referred to as nostalgia proneness, triggers emotional responses that lead to increased emotional engagement with a brand (Youn, 2020). As per Fernandes & Moreira (2019), Brand trust building is largely based on emotional involvement, which is the level of a customer's emotional connection with a brand. Emotionally involved consumers are likely to perceive that a brand is trustworthy, reliable, and aligned with their own values (Wannow et al., 2024). As stated by Brown et al., (2003), Individuals tend to strongly identify with brands that make them recall happy memories from the past. Such an emotional attachment, referred to as nostalgia proneness, renders consumers more susceptible to brands that make them feel warm and comfortable. When brands use nostalgic appeals, for instance, vintage designs, vintage ads, or old brand slogans, they evoke emotions that give rise to a deep sense of affiliation (Chen, 2022). When consumers feel emotionally connected with a brand, they tend to interact with it whether by being its follower on updates, telling others about it, or returning for repeated buys. Research has indicated that emotions evoked through nostalgia make such involvement stronger so that consumers grow personally connected to a brand. The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) Model demonstrates this phenomenon wherein nostalgia (stimulus) shapes emotions (organism), and these, in turn, direct consumer behavior (response).

H4: Emotional involvement mediates the relationship between nostalgia proneness and brand engagement.

As per Delbaere et al., (2021), Trust is the basis of solid relationships, be it among people or between brands and consumers. As a brand upholds its word consistently, consumers can feel secure and reliable. This trust builds a stronger emotional bond since people feel more attached to brands whose word they have faith in.Emotional engagement is key in converting trust to engagement (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019). When customers trust a brand, they are likely to care about its success emotionally and will hence engage actively with it, endorse it, and be loyal to it over the long term. Attachment theory affirmatively upholds this by emphasizing that trust creates stable emotional relationships, and these lead to increased engagement.

H5: Emotional involvement mediates the relationship between brand trust and brand engagement. 2.5.

Underpinning Theory:

The theoretical framework of this research is based on Attachment Theory and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), both of which are powerful theories to understand how emotional variables influence consumer-brand relationships. Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1969) describes how people develop emotional connections with others, objects, and even brands. People form attachments in terms of familiarity, trust, and emotional security, as proposed by this theory. In the case of this research, nostalgia susceptibility acts as an influential driver of emotional connection because it triggers memory and feelings that increase the consumers' attachment to the brand (Merchant & Rose, 2013). The emotional engagement produced through nostalgia intensifies brand involvement and encourages consumers to be more likely to stick to the brand and engage with it. Studies have indicated that brands that relate to nostalgic feelings tend to enjoy long-term loyalty from consumers based on the emotional value attached to them (Youn & Jin, 2017). The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) offers another vital perspective for the understanding of brand trust's influence on consumer engagement. TPB proposes that three

factors determine consumer behavior: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Brand trust, in this research, plays a role in having positive attitudes and perceptions regarding the reliability of a brand, thus promoting greater emotional involvement. When customers trust a brand, they become more emotionally attached, and this makes them more likely to commit to the brand through advocacy, purchase, and interactive engagement (Bilro et al., 2019). Attachment Theory and TPB together explain the mediating role of emotional involvement between nostalgia susceptibility, trust in the brand, and engagement with the brand. Attachment Theory focuses on emotional ties created via nostalgia, while TPB points towards the contribution of trust to intentions to perform or not perform some behavior. A synthesis of both approaches delivers an overall perspective regarding how customers create intense, emotion-based connections with brands and thus engage more. Through the use of these theories, this research adds to the existing literature on consumer-brand relationships, providing evidence of the psychological processes underlying brand loyalty and engagement in an emotionally charged marketplace.
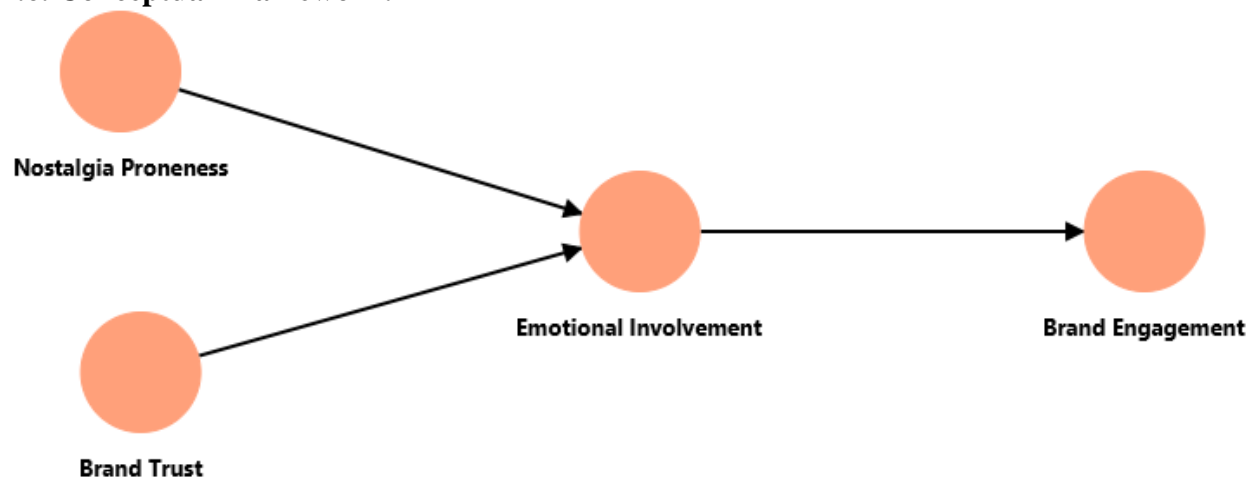
2.6. Conceptual Framework:

Figure: 1. Conceptual Framework
Source: Authors Work

Methodology

3.1 Research design

The relationship between brand trust, emotional involvement, brand engagement, and nostalgia proneness is researched in this study using a quantitative methodology. To collect data from a consumer of South Punjab, a cross-sectional survey was employed. The data collected was analyzed using the model of structure equations, which produced strong insights into the psychological and emotional elements of consumer-brand connections.

3.2. Data Collection

This study collected into to analyze the connections between brand engagement as the dependent variable (DV), emotional involvement as a mediator, and nostalgia proneness and brand trust as independent variables (IVs). The survey was completed by 309 people, providing a representative and varied sample. To ensure accuracy and reliability in recording responses and actions, the structured questionnaire was created to measure all variables using validated scales. To determine their direct and indirect effects on emotional involvement and brand engagement, emotional involvement was positioned as a crucial mediator.

3.3. Analytic Method

This study analyzes the association between brand trust (BT), emotional involvement (EI), and brand engagement (BE), and nostalgia proneness (NP) using structural equation model (PLS-SEM). The analysis identifies the process by these variables taking into account both direct and indirect impacts. The proposed model is validated by path analysis, which determines path coefficient, t-statistics, and p-value. According to the findings, emotional involvement has a significant mediating role, including the significance of emotional bonds that effect consumer behavior and brand engagement.

3.3.1. Why we use smart PLS?

The research analyzing nostalgia proneness (NP) and brand trust (BT) as independent variables (IVs), emotional involvement (EI) as a mediator, and brand engagement (BE) as the dependent variable (DV) is an example of a model that uses smart PLS (Partial Least Squares Structure Equation Modeling), Which is a perfect tool for analyzing complex relationships in models that include latent variables. The main reason why can be used in this case for employing smart PLS is that it efficiently manages models with multiple constructs, both formative and reflective.In comparison to other methodologies, including covariance-based SEM, Smart PLS isless prone toassumptions such as normality, and thus it is particularly beneficial in studies with small sample sizes.Smart PLS is a good method for estimating the relationships between NP, BT, EI, and BE in this model even when data might not entirely meet the assumptions demanded by conventional SEM approaches. The role of emotional involvement as a mediator between BT and BE and between NP and BE is another instance of the direct and indirect effects that can be examined due to Smart PLS. since it gives accurate estimates of significance levels, the bootstrapping element of the method ensures correct testing of hypotheses. All in all, Smart PLS provides an overall method of examining intricate mediating relationships within consumer behavior that offers a systematic way of comprehending how emotional engagement affects the relationship between brand engagement, brand trust, and nostalgia.

3.4. Measurement Scale:

To ensure the reliability and validity of the constructs, well-established measurement scales were used in this study. Nostalgia proneness was assessed using the scale developed by Holbrook and Schindler (2003), which captures individuals' tendencies to experience sentimental emotions related to the past. Brand trust was assessed through the Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) scale, which measures consumer beliefs about a brand's credibility and reliability. Emotional involvement was determined through Cohen's (2009) scale, which considers the degree to which consumers are emotionally involved and engaged with a brand. Finally, brand engagement was assessed through the Keller (2001) scale, which considers consumer interaction, commitment, and passion towards a brand. All the items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, where participants rated their degree of agreement to each statement: (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree). This methodology allows the study to capture the subtleties of consumer feelings and attitudes and enables a full analysis of the interrelations among nostalgia proneness, brand trust, emotional engagement, and brand engagement.

Analysis and Finding
4.1. Demographical Statistics

Data for this study were collected from consumers residing in South Punjab. A total of 319 questionnaires were distributed across various cities, including Multan, Bahawalpur, and other districts within the region. After excluding 10 incomplete responses, the final dataset consisted of

309 valid questionnaires. Participants were selected to ensure diversity in demographic factors such as age, gender, and occupation, reflecting a more representative consumer base. The study targeted working professionals, business owners, and general consumers who actively engage with brands in their daily lives. This approach allowed for a deeper understanding of how nostalgia proneness, brand trust, and emotional involvement influence brand engagement in a real-world consumer setting. The findings provide insights into the emotional and psychological factors that drive consumer-brand relationships in the socio-cultural context of South Punjab.

Demographic Characteristics	Number	Percentage	Total
Gender			
Male	201	65.0	65.0
Female	108	35.0	100.0
Age			
25y-34y	276	89.3	89.3
35y-44y	20	6.5	95.8
45y-54y	13	4.0	100.0
Above 55y	0	0	0
Occupation			
Executive, Professional	25	8.1	8.1
MiddleManagement	7	2.3	10.4
Workers	29	9.4	19.7
Student	248	80.3	100.0

Table 1 Demographical Characteristic
Source: SPSS Outcome

4.2 Data Review and Initial Assessments

To reduce any potential mistakes, the first and most important stage in data analysis is filtering the data. Data screening is carried out using SPSS to evaluate normalcy and handle missing values. Furthermore, the information is imported into SPSS and integrated into this research. In addition to a validity analysis of demographic characteristics, other analysis are conducted. The statistics so show there are no missing values. Adjust this based on these variables. Brand engagement as DV with relate reference, nostalgia propensity and brand trust as IV emotional involvement as mediator.

4.3 PLS-SEM Model

Software tools are used in advanced study methodologies to examine data outcomes. PLS-SEM is unique among these because of its easy-to-use interface and extensive use by researchers (Hair et al., 2011). By forecasting endogenous constructs, PLS-SEM's main goal is to improve comprehension of variable fluctuations (Hair et al., 2012). A measurement model and a structural model are two of the PLS-SEM models used in this investigation. Strict validity and reliability tests most be performed on the measurement model, particularly in light of the presence of mediating and moderating effects (Hair et al., 2016). The structure model is used in this study to assess the significance of assumptions.

4.4. Review of Measurement Model and Factor Loading:

To determine whether the measurement model is adequate, a number of criteria are taken into consideration (Hair et al. 2021). Complex reliability was used to test uniformity reliability in the assessment of the measurement model, whereas individual item reliability we are first evaluated to determine reliability. The average variance removed was also used to assess for convergent validity. A suitable performance was defined as composite reliability values greater than 0.70, the

square of loadings greater than 0.7, and average variance extracted (AVE) values greater than 0.50 (Hair et al., 2011).

Benchmarks from Comrey and lee (1992) were used in this study; 0.71 was considered exceptional, 0.63 good, 0.45 ordinary, and 0.32 low. Additionally, the presented table displays the cross-loadings of variables, convergent validity, and internal consistency reliability.

Variables	Items	VIF	Cross Loading	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Nostalgia Proneness	NP1	1.545	0.629	0.796	0.797	0.848	0.412
	NP2	1.500	0.671				
	NP3	1.518	0.669				
	NP4	1.495	0.690				
	NP5	1.364	0.629				
	NP6	1.417	0.586				
	NP7	1.411	0.607				
	NP8	1.426	0.647				
Brand Trust	BT1	1.731	0.713	0.876	0.877	0.902	0.536
	BT2	1.694	0.682				
	BT3	1.845	0.751				
	BT4	1.744	0.746				
	BT5	1.968	0.713				
	BT6	1.910	0.753				
	BT7	2.168	0.767				
	BT8	1.810	0.726				
Emotional Involvement	EI1	1.267	0.852	0.629	0.629	0.844	0.729
	EI2	1.267	0.856				
Brand Engagement	BE1	1.650	0.675	0.910	0.912	0.924	0.527
	BE2	1.727	0.684				
	BE3	1.743	0.673				
	BE4	1.755	0.706				
	BE5	2.143	0.756				
	BE6	1.958	0.746				
	BE7	2.394	0.780				
	BE8	2.106	0.746				
	BE9	2.107	0.760				
	BE10	1.887	0.717				
	BE11	2.025	0.734				

Table 2
Source: PLS-SEM Measurement Model Output
4.5 Fornell-Larcker Criteria:

The Fornell-Larcker test was utilized to check whether the variables were valid or not (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The square root of average variance extracted (AVE) was computed first for each variable. Then, the relationship between different variables in the framework was examined. The square root of AVE is highlighted and compared with other constructs in the table. Moreover, the data was tested using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, which established strong validity since the square root of AVE is higher than the correlations of each construct.

	BE	BT	EI	NP
BE	**0.726**			
BT	0.725	**0.732**		
EI	0.566	0.582	**0.854**	
NP	0.573	0.595	0.548	**0.642**

Table 3Fornell-Larcker criteria
Source: PLS-SEM Measurement Model Output
4.6 Hetrotrate - Monotrate (HTMT)

The HTMT ratio of correlation is also referred to as the "discriminant validity evaluation tool." Discriminant validity is deficient when the value of HTMT is nearly equal to 1. Henseler et al., (2015) suggested that the
HTMT method has better performance, achieving greater sensitivity and specificity percentages, using a monte Carlo simulation
analysis. HTMT correlations are compared to a specific standard
when HTMT is used as a standard. The value shows that the constructions are not highly distinguishable if it is larger than this value. The
table indicates that, as per the outcomes of the present analysis, HTMT values are lower than 0.9, implying excellent discriminant validity.

Variable	BE	BT	EI	NP
1.BE	1			
2.BT	0.810	1		
3.EI	0.738	0.781	1	
4.NP	0.672	0.714	0.770	1

Table 4 Hetrotrate - Monotrate (HTMT)
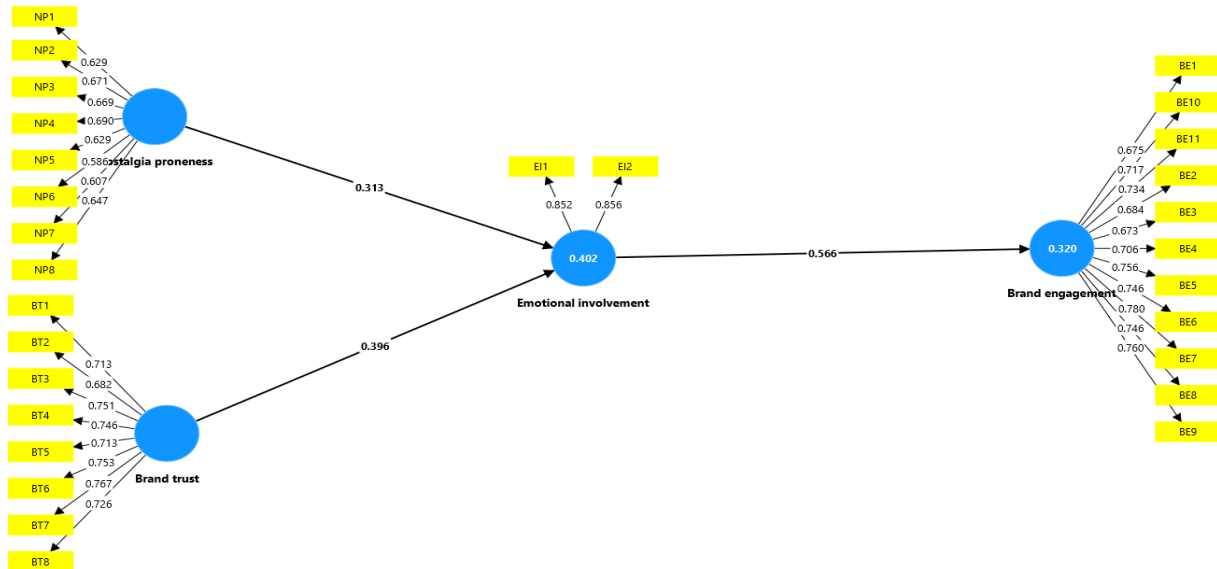**Source: PLS-SEM Measurement Model output.**

Figure 2 Measurement Model
Source: PLS-SEM Measurement Model Output.

4.7 Evaluation of Structure Model

To identify the significance of the trend coefficients, 5,000 resamples were used in the bootstrapping approach to assess the correlations between the hypotheses. The PLS-SEM technique was utilized to examine the direct and indirect connections between the constructs of brand engagement (BE), emotional involvement (EI), brand trust (BT), and nostalgia proneness (NP). With a path coefficient of 0.472 and t-statistics of 4.356 (P<0.001), the findings showed that brand trust (BT) considerably impacted emotional involvement (EI). Similarly, with a t-statistics of 14.095 (P<0.001) and a path coefficient of 0.747, brand engagement (BE) was strongly positively impacted by emotional involvement (EI). Additionally, it was discovered that nostalgia proneness (NP) had a positive impact on emotional involvement (EI), as evidence by a t-statistics of 4.030 (P<0.001) and a path coefficient of 0.438. These results support the strong and significant correlations between the variables, highlighting the mediation function of emotional involvement in the relationship between brand engagement and both nostalgia proneness and brand trust.

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values	Decision
BT -> EI	0.472	0.469	0.108	4.356	0.000	Supported
EI -> BE	0.747	0.752	0.053	14.095	0.000	Supported
NP -> EI	0.438	0.449	0.109	4.030	0.000	Supported
NP -> EI -> BE	0.327	0.337	0.083	3.929	0.000	Supported
BT -> EI -> BE	0.352	0.355	0.093	3.792	0.000	Supported

Table 5. Evaluation of Structural Model
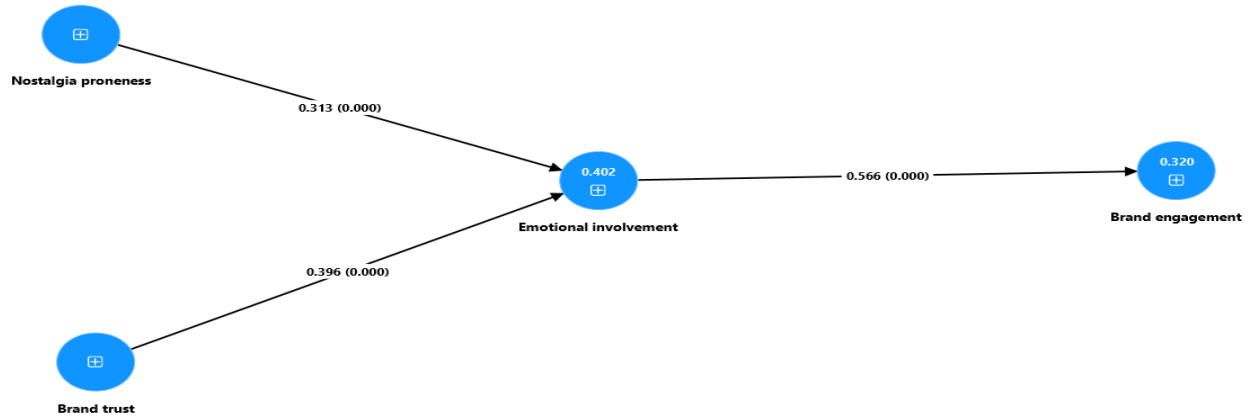**Source: PLS-SEM Structural Model Output**

Figure. 3 Path coefficient and P-values
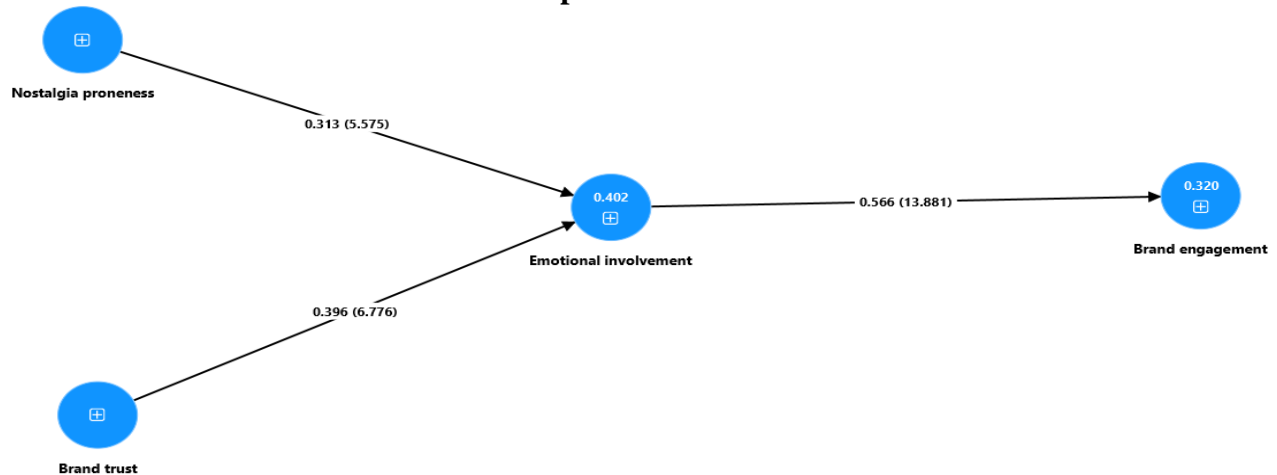**Source: PLS-SEM Structural Model Output**

Figure. 4Path coefficient and T-values
Source: PLS-SEM Structural Model Output
4.8 R-Square value:

The coefficient of determination, or R-squared, is a measure of how well a model explains variation and is used to evaluate model goodness (Hair et al., 2017). Chin (1998) classifies R-squared values as moderate, weak, and substantial, respectively, at 0.19, 0.33, and 0.60. Model suitability for endogenous latent variables is moderate to weak, as shown by R-Square values of 43% and 20%. The degree of variance in the dependent construct that may be accounted for by independent factors is represented by R-squared, accounting to Elliott and Woodward (2007).

Variables	R-square	R-square adjusted
EI (Emotional Involvement)	0.320	0.318
BE (Brand Engagement)	0.402	0.398

Table 6. R-Square
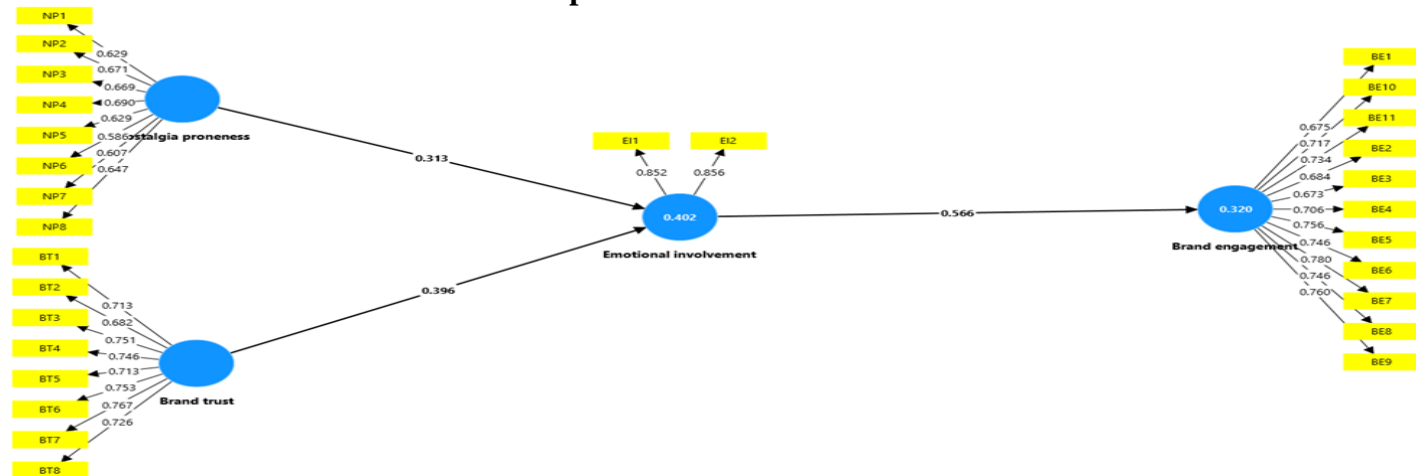**Source: PLS-SEM Structural Model Output**

Figure. 5Structural Model
Source: PLS-SEM Structural Model Output

Discussion

Our research significantly validates the hypothesized assumptions, highlighting the pivotal contribution of nostalgia proneness (NP) and brand trust (BT) to emotional involvement (EI), and consequently to brand engagement (BE). Findings point to the influential impact of emotions in consumer-brand relationships, affirming the role of personal attachment towards active involvement and brand loyalty. First, the results validate that nostalgia proneness has a positive effect on emotional involvement (H1). It implies that consumers who are most likely to be nostalgic tend to establish emotional relationships with brands. Nostalgia tends to recall fond memories, and therefore, consumers end up being emotionally connected to those brands that make them reminisce about their experiences, as postulated by Kessous (2015). This relationship is a result of further engagement with the brand because consumers link it to positive experiences from their own past. Equally, findings confirm that trust in the brand has a direct, positive impact on emotional engagement (H2). Trust is a major variable in building customer relationships because individuals are likely to be emotionally involved with brands that they view as dependable and constant (Albert & Merunka, 2013).According to Shahzad et al. (2024), when consumers trust a brand, they feel secure in their interactions, leading to a stronger emotional connection and increased willingness to engage with the brand. Additionally, the research supports that emotional engagement has a strong effect on brand engagement (H3). Those who feel emotionally connected to a brand are inclined to engage with it, recommend it, and stick with it in the long run (Mostafa & Kasamani, 2021). This aspect proves the significance of emotional affiliation in consumer behavior when consumers feel connected to a brand, they engage actively with it, be it word-of-mouth, repeat buying, or social media activity. These results emphasize the central position of emotional involvement in reinforcing consumer-brand relationships. Brand trust and nostalgia proneness, though significant, do not necessarily result in active brand engagement. Rather, they operate through emotional involvement, which is the psychological link that connects past experiences and trust to current consumer behavior. This supports the notion that emotions are not merely ancillary considerations in marketing but core motivators of how consumers experience, engage with, and stick to brands. For example, nostalgia susceptibility by itself can create happy memories of the past, but in the absence of an affective relationship with the brand, these memories remain abstract. It is the intense affective tie created through affective engagement that converts these nostalgia feelings into tangible

engagement like being a follower of a brand, suggesting it to others, or consistently opting for it over other brands. Equally, brand trust guarantees reliability and credibility but without emotional attachment will not necessarily lead to sustained involvement (Mandagi et al., 2024). As Husain et al. 2022 explain, customers are more likely to interact with a brand when they not only trust it but also have an emotional stake in its identity, values, and experiences. This mediation effect implies that brands that are hoping to increase customer engagement need to concentrate on developing emotional experiences. It is not sufficient to merely appeal to nostalgia or establish trust; brands need to actively design influential interactions that elicit emotional reactions. This may be done through storytelling, targeted advertising, nostalgic branding features, and engaging experiences that intensify the consumer's emotional connection. In addition, our results concur with consumer psychology principles, which posit that affective responses influence behavior more strongly than cognitive assessments in isolation. Although nostalgia and trust are cognitive assessments, emotional engagement transforms them into active engagement behaviors. This highlights the significance of brands developing marketing initiatives that appeal to emotions, making consumers not merely remember the past or trust a brand, but engage with and promote it actively. Collectively, these results underscore the importance of emotions in brand relationships. Brands that promote nostalgia or trust can enhance consumer interaction through emotional engagement. This observation is particularly applicable to companies with an emotionally driven market target segment that aims for personal relationships with brands that resonate within their experience and values. By incorporating nostalgic features, sustaining brand trust, and promoting emotional connection, companies are able to build enduring customer relationships and promote substantive brand interaction.

Conclusion
According to the study's conclude that, brand trust and nostalgia proneness are important predictors of brand engagement, with emotional involvement acting as a key mediating factor. Stronger emotional ties between brands and consumers who are more prone to nostalgia increase brand engagement. Brands engagement is further enhanced by brand trust, which also raises emotional involvement. These result highlight the significance of emotional ties in promoting brand engagement and loyalty, indicating that companies ought to provide customers with nostalgic and trust worthy experience.

Limitation
This study has some limitations, including its reliance on self-reported data, which could lead to bias in the responses. Furthermore, the results may not be as broadly applicable as they may be because the sample might not accurately reflect the larger population. To learn more about the dynamics of brand engagement, future studies should use a more varied sample and different techniques like behavioral tracking.

Implication:
This study adds to the content of literature by clarifying the ways in which brand trust and nostalgia proneness collaborate to impact brand engagement. It offers a more effective positions on the part emotions play in customer loyalty by expanding on current theories of emotional engagement and consumer behavior. According to the study, marketers may greatly increase brand engagement by fostering trust and nostalgia through brand messaging, initiatives, and experiences. Marketers should concentrate on developing emotionally charged experiences that connect with customers prior encounters and gradually foster trust.

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