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***How the Corona Pandemic Made us Nostalgic for the  
Immediate Past***

*An Exploration of Nostalgia during the Corona Pandemic*

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**Abstract** This article explores and illustrates the rationalising and disenchanting effects of the Corona pandemic and their manifestations in nostalgia. We find that previous research has not addressed the way in which consumers long for the past the way they do during the pandemic. Through a qualitative multi-method study of the nostalgic longings of consumers during the pandemic, we show how consumers are nostalgic for consumption experiences from an *immediate* past that *can* be recovered. Our analysis contributes to extant literature by explaining immediate nostalgia, further differentiated as four manifestations, each providing a platform for marketers to understand and act upon nostalgia during and after the pandemic. These manifestations separate ‘immediate’ nostalgia for ordinary experiences, extraordinary experiences, social nostalgia and fear-of-missing-out (FOMO) nostalgia.

**Keywords** Rationalisation; disenchantment; nostalgia; Corona pandemic; consumption experiences, immediate nostalgia

## Introduction

What happens when we are robbed from what used to make our lives special and how do we deal with replacing the enchanting experiences of pre-pandemic life with the mantra-resembling rules and recommendations which consumers live with during the Corona pandemic? Mainly, consumers become nostalgic for life before the pandemic and find enchantment in experiences which have now been made difficult to partake in. Enchantment explains how mythical, romantic and magical components are built into consumption. Furthermore, nostalgic consumption builds upon these mythical, romantic and magical constellations of the past. However, the traditional mechanics of nostalgia are challenged in the event of the Corona pandemic, referring to both the time aspect of nostalgia, and that the experiences consumers are nostalgic for are traditionally not recoverable.

One of the ways in which the mechanics of nostalgia differ during this pandemic is with regards to the time aspect. In nostalgia literature, time follows the trajectory of past-present-future, where consumers long for something that is associated with the past. For example, consumers are said to be nostalgic about products such as cars, music or clothes, for different places and time periods (Holbrook, 1993; Holbrook & Schindler, 2003; Cantone et al. 2020; Kessous & Roux, 2008). During the Corona pandemic, this trajectory is challenged in the way that consumers experience a longing toward a past that *can* be reconstructed in the future (in the form of an alleviation of restrictions) and that consumers long toward the past constituting the time directly before the outbreak of the pandemic. We argue that this type of nostalgia differs from previous definitions of nostalgia as it challenges both the time aspect and the recoverability of what consumers are longing for. In attempting to define this different form of nostalgia, we choose to use the term ‘immediate nostalgia’ in order to illustrate this. Using the term ‘immediate’, we define the past referred to by consumers as the time directly before the outbreak of the pandemic, as opposed to the ‘dear departed past’ referenced by previous nostalgia literature (Holbrook, 1993). In the case of immediate nostalgia, consumers also showcase longings for experiences that have not been considered in previous literature.

Essential for this study is also the stream of sociological literature (described in Hartman & Brunk, 2019; p. 670) “which highlights how nostalgia can simultaneously be backwards-oriented and melancholic and forward-looking and utopian, rendering nostalgia a

multi-modal phenomenon (Higson, 2014; May, 2017; Pickering & Keightley, 2006)”, as nostalgia in this study is analysed in relation to all different aspects of consumption.

Nostalgia for the immediate past has not been elaborated on by any established studies but considered by Brunk et al. (2020) during the beginning of the pandemic, who comment on the clash between traditional nostalgia and the different form of nostalgia apparent in the event of the Corona pandemic. We argue that this ‘immediate nostalgia’ is created due to the pandemic and can function as a form of (or possibly in the place of) re-enchantment, as presented in Ritzer’s (2010) model of disenchantment in order to deal with the present situation. Further, nostalgia is a common way for marketers to attribute enchanting effects to different offerings. Nostalgia emerges from personal experiences of the past (Holbrook, 1993). In order to attract consumers, e.g., car manufacturers can use nostalgic cues in order to play on the nostalgic preferences of consumers which have a personal connection to a certain time period and thereby bind enchanting properties to the new product offering. How the usage of nostalgia marketing creates enchantment for consumers is studied by Hartmann and Brunk (2019) on brands and products. However, rather than looking at how nostalgia in turn creates enchantment, we are analysing how rationalisation and disenchanted consumption during the Corona pandemic has created the phenomenon of immediate nostalgia.

The analysis made by Weber (1905/2002) on the rationalising trajectories of modernity are deemed the cause for the loss of mythical and magical components in the sociological context, manifested, for example, in both common management practices that belong to production as well as within brand management. Ritzer (2010) elaborates on this notion and claims that rationalisation itself has disenchanting effects on consumption. He argues that the principles of rationalisation are realised through seeking efficiency, calculability, predictability and control. This has disenchanting effects because it removes the mythical, magical and romantic aspects of life. We choose to compare this to the development and use of restrictions during the Corona pandemic, rationalising the lives of consumers further, and in different ways compared to before the pandemic.

In the implementation of nostalgia literature on the current pandemic situation, we find an important problematization of nostalgia, which is a divide between definitions. Kessous and Roux (2008) use the origins of nostalgia which is derived from the Greek words ‘nostos’ (return) and ‘algos’ (pain), roughly translating to feelings of homesickness, a pain of being

away from home. This is contrasted toward one of the basic assumptions that “nostalgia is a longing for a past which can no longer be recovered” (as suggested by Brunk et al. 2020). Consumers are, during the Corona pandemic, longing for a future replication of a past which arguably *can* be recovered, but which is also not necessarily clearly continuous nor discontinuous, and instead conveys a state of freedom. Consumers long toward the future possibility of living like they used to in the ‘immediate’ past before the pandemic, choosing themselves which consumption experiences they want to partake in.

In this article we show that traditional definitions of nostalgia are challenged with regards to their relationship with the time aspect and whether nostalgia necessarily implies a longing for a *past that cannot be recovered*. We imply that immediate nostalgia has been manifested in four distinct ways during the pandemic, all with different implications for marketing managers.

### **Purpose Statement**

This study explores and illustrates the rationalising and disenchanting effects of the Corona pandemic and their manifestations in nostalgia.

### **Research Questions**

How has the Corona pandemic affected the nostalgic longings of consumers?

How are these longings manifested in the lives of consumers?

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Nostalgia**

The concept of nostalgia has been explored in a number of different fields such as history, sociology, psychology, marketing and consumption (Hobsbawn, 1983; Davis, 1979; Fodor, 1950; Nawas & Platt, 1965; Cited in Holbrook, 1993, p. 245). Although the term nostalgia is today broadly used, its origins lay in medicine. Hofer (cited in Kessous & Roux, 2008, p. 194) showed how there among Swiss soldiers were common with homesickness which caused mental disorders and could lead to suicides. In order to treat this, the only thing that helped was for the soldiers to return home. The name comes from the Greek words' "nostos" – return and "algos" – pain (Kessous & Roux, 2008).

The term nostalgia refers to a longing for the past, a yearning for yesterday, or an affection for activities associated with days of yore (Holbrook, 1993). There is a triple dimension of time: past/present/future occurring in most studies. The concept of nostalgia is either individual and refers to each person's relation to time, or communal which is displayed on a societal level compared to individual (Kessous & Roux, 2008; Brown et al., 2003).

Nostalgia has been proven to be important in its connection to consumption as consumers consume in order to regain the feeling of the "dear departed past" (Holbrook, 1993). Holbrook and Schindler (2003) show how men display preferences for car types that peaked in popularity when they were young, a trait also found among women when it comes to movies as well as film stars (Holbrook, 1993, 2003).

Nostalgia can be found among people when they experience that they either are reliving the past or longing for the past to return in the future. This often triggers when they are being reintroduced to products from the past and is used by companies when they display a certain brand or a product. This stream of consumer and marketing literature sees nostalgia as a preference, an emotion which is often used in order to increase consumption (Holbrook, 1993; Holbrook & Schindler, 2003; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982, Hartmann & Brunk, 2019) and can occur on both an individual and on a macro level - as showcased by Brunk et al. (2018) and their study of nostalgia marketization in the former East Germany. By introducing products and brands from the past, consumers are allowed to restore a sense of community as they regain qualities that were lost in the past. Within consumer and marketing literature,

nostalgia is said to be triggered among individuals who experience a loss of social belonging and insecurity (Loveland et al., 2010; Zhou et al., 2013) - building on the concept's origins of "homesickness" (Kessous & Roux, 2008).

Another important dimension of nostalgia to be added for the analysis is that of continuity versus discontinuity (Kessous & Roux, 2008). These categorisations provide an understanding of the time aspect which differs from the triple dimension of past-present-future (Hartman & Osterberg, 2013) as it refers to the 'length' of the nostalgia experienced. *Continuity* refers to "long-standing" nostalgia, i.e., referring to a past state which one longs back to, whereas *discontinuity* refers to "first-time nostalgia" of single-occurrence events, e.g., a specific trip or one's graduation. In the possibly more recent take, Cantone et al. (2020) analyses what happens to nostalgia in the post-postmodern setting. They argue that nostalgia in the post-postmodern era is characterized by a longing for a better future - in comparison to the postmodern era in which nostalgia was a key characteristic for consumers longing for the past. Although also the post-postmodern era allows consumers nostalgic experiences of the past there is no yearning for the past to return, but rather the future to come.

However, as described in the introduction, this study analyses nostalgia in a setting that is different from previous studies. By doing so, we aim to contribute to nostalgia literature by analysing manifestations of nostalgia that focus on a longing for a future that will return to the past, in this case to the time before the Corona pandemic. It is important to acknowledge that we are not trying to challenge the meaning of the concept of nostalgia, i.e., longings for the past when "things were better than they are now" (Holbrook, 1993; p. 245). Immediate nostalgia refers to the same concept, but also attempts to add to it. By analysing nostalgia in the Corona pandemic, we find nostalgic longings towards experiences that have not previously been studied and that is built on the notion that these can be recovered in the future once the pandemic is over. Therefore, for this study, it is of importance to look at sociological literature as it highlights that nostalgia is a phenomenon with many dimensions and, in addition to being melancholic and backwards oriented as consumer and marketing literature suggests, it can also be forward looking and utopian (May, 2017). In line with this stream, future dimensions of nostalgia have recently been studied by Hartman and Brunk (2019) who find three modes of nostalgia that are used in order to re-enchant experiences, allowing (mainly) marketers to utilise the past in order to improve the present. Following in

the footsteps of Brunk et al. (2020) who argue for the existence of nostalgia in the Corona pandemic that refers to the near past, the concept of immediate nostalgia that we analyse is applied to a new and different time setting as it stems from the longing for how things were just before the Corona pandemic. In turn, this means that it challenges a basic assumption within nostalgia literature: that nostalgia is a longing for a past that can no longer be recovered (Brunk et al. 2020).

## **Enchantment**

To understand why consumers are experiencing nostalgic longings for the time before the outbreak of the Corona pandemic, we study enchantment in relation to consumption experiences as it captures individuals' experiences of prominent societal processes. The implementation of findings attributed to different forms of nostalgia have defined the phenomenon of *enchantment*. In utilizing different forms of nostalgia, marketers can “make the ordinary special” (Hartmann & Ostberg, 2013, p.883) and thereby attribute a “magical” component onto different forms of consumption. Enchantment is a medium for marketers to ascribe “genuine” and authentic qualities to different forms of consumption. A number of studies have found empirical evidence that showcases how there in our modern world exists an increased desire for enchanted consumption (Ritzer, 2010; Hartmann & Brunk, 2019; Arnould, Price, & Otnes, 1999; Langer, 2004; Kozinets 2002; Thompson 2004; Belk & Tumbat, 2005).

Although enchantment is a way for marketers to re-ascribe interest in e.g., brands, this will not be the focus in this report. Instead, we use enchantment as a medium to describe the linkages between rationalization (Ritzer and Weber, cited in Ostergaard et al. 2013) of the time during the pandemic and the disenchantment of consumption experiences, which is further developed in the experience section below. A comment should naturally be made that (dis-)enchantment and nostalgia are not always associated with each other but are found to be most prevalent in that way in this study. Weber (1905/2002) (also cited by Ritzer, Ostergaard et al., Baudrillard and many more) refers to disenchantment broadly as a result of the distancing from magical, religious and mythical aspects of human society.

It is described by Weber (1905/2002) how modern societies have been subject to a shift toward rationality. In *The protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber describes how

beliefs in religion and magic have steadily 'declined' into e.g., Protestantism, to further 'decay' into capitalism. Capitalism in Weber's sense challenges the magical aspect of everyday life, and he describes how rationalism has instead "generated a propensity for massive capital accumulation across many communities of Northern Europe and the United States". This focus on capital is what Weber argues has led to what he calls "the triumph of the Capitalist West's instrumental rationality". As a reaction to this, capitalistic efforts of production and consumption are argued to be means of attaining salvation.

As a response towards Weber's rationalised and disenchanting world, Ritzer (2010) describes how seeking to re-enchant things is the way for consumers to cope with disenchantment. Some have argued that re-enchantment is the core motivation and explanation of consumer culture (Ostergaard et al., 2013). By consuming, people attempt to rediscover the enchanting potential within culture, quoted by Ritzer (Ostergaard et al, 2013; p. 337) in order to "enchant a disenchanting world". Hartmann & Ostberg (2013) develop these ideas and apply them on authenticating brands. Further, Hartmann & Brunk (2019) studies how nostalgia marketing creates enchantment, illustrating how the past may be referenced in order to trigger enchantment among consumers.

Re-enchantment (and enchantment) is how consumers "recover" aspects of "the mythical, magic, romantic and spectacular". This is argued By Hartman and Ostberg (2013) to occur in a process of "rationalisation–disenchantment–authenticating re-enchantment". However, authenticity is not central in our analysis. Rather, notions of inauthenticity are seen as a form of disenchantment in which consumers experience 'unreal' feelings with regards to the current pandemic. There are disruptions of reality that can be linked to the notions of rationalised disenchantment that Weber and Ritzer describes. Due to this, the process used by Hartman and Ostberg (2013) is altered and refrains from the use of authenticity.

Further, Ritzer (1998) describes how the general development of social life organised through markets follows the rationalising principles of the fast-food industry. The marketplace aims to satisfy consumers' desire for enchantment through 'new cathedrals of consumption' (analogous to the mediaeval European cathedrals) that are designed to attract and enchant consumers. However, because these cathedrals of consumption remain rationalised, the enchantment they give is short-lived. Looking back at the notions of Weber, as rationalisation is synonymous with the loss of mythical, magic and unpredictable moments, Ritzer (2010)



means that rationalisation itself is disenchanting. Re-enchantment in his sense should be interpreted as a form of return to a prior cultural form, a rediscovery of something that used to exist but now is gone (Ritzer, cited in Ostergaard et al. 2013; p. 338). Weber (1905/2002) argues that disenchantment in the modern world is permanent, and that enchantment cannot be regained. Ritzer (2010), however, challenges this and says that enchantment persists, and that re-enchantment is possible.

## **Consumption Experiences**

Although the full effects of the pandemic on consumption and consumption experiences have not yet been mapped and analysed - the pandemic is not over at this writing moment - we argue that the way we experience consumption has been rationalised and disenchanted. In the event of the pandemic, many arenas for (cathedrals of) consumption have been restricted with regards to their accessibility and physical capacity (if not shut down entirely), leaving consumers with nostalgic longings toward consumption as it was before the pandemic. In this way, we connect the chronology of rationalisation-disenchantment with the effects of the pandemic on consumption experiences.

Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) describe how “consumption such as eating or dressing that (...) provide objective, tangible benefits that also involve a substantially subjective, hedonic, or symbolic component”. Furthermore, Gupta (2012; p. 188) shows results in their study which exemplify how “customer orientation, unique company capabilities, barriers to imitation, internal marketing, employee empowerment, and visionary leadership is found to be interrelated with experience marketing”. Also, Pine & Gilmore (1998; 2002) provide a backdrop for how companies act (and should more so) as if their consumption experience contained an admission fee, emphasising how the experience component of consumption is valuable. This naturally implies that not only the tangible good or the service represents the consumption; rather the product and/or service in collaboration with the experience associated with it.

Bhattacharjee and Mogilner (2014) further develop the field of experience consumption, i.e., differentiating ordinary experiences from extraordinary experiences. The authors portray experiences as not only a form of consumption, but also identity creation. The ways in which consumers are subject to this form of experience consumption is shown also to depend on

age. Older subjects were shown to define their identity to a larger extent through ordinary experiences (going to the store, meeting friends), while younger subjects were shown to do that through extraordinary experiences (travel, concerts, graduations). This ties to the lives of the subject consumers, who - if they are young - view their future as “extensive” versus - if they are older - view it more important to experience happiness during the ‘limited’ time which is remaining. In order to achieve success in any market there exists a growing importance of understanding consumption experiences. Therefore, an analysis over consumers' nostalgic longings for consumption experiences during the Corona pandemic should prove useful for marketing managers, as well as other actors in the market, for the time during as well as the time following the pandemic.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Approach**

There already exists extensive literature of both nostalgia and (dis-)enchantment. However, from the Corona pandemic a societal focus towards ‘immediate’ nostalgia has emerged. This area has received little attention in previous literature, giving us the opportunity to explore a different setting. With the purpose of examining the rationalising and disenchanted effects the Corona pandemic has had on consumer consumption experiences and how this is manifested in immediate nostalgia, an inductive approach best supports the purpose of this study as we want to understand consumers and their actions, rather than finding statistical correlations (Bell et al., 2019). In order to create an understanding of how consumption experiences have been disenchanted during the pandemic and created immediate nostalgia, rationalisation is used, drawing from the ideas of Weber (1905/2002) and Ritzer (2010) and their views of contemporary consumption in a capitalistic society. The findings of immediate nostalgia are compared and analysed with reference to previous literature in order to explore its differences and similarities.

Enchantment in consumption gives an insight into how nostalgia is created as there is a connection of reconnecting to the past, e.g., nostalgic references to childhood memories, as well as longings for a future that holds a past. Due to the inherent time aspect of nostalgia and the more immediate type of nostalgia analysed in this study, enchantment is viewed through a lens of time. In this study, consumption represents everything that can be consumed, from

material products and experiences (Attanasio, 1999; Bhattacharjee & Mogilner, 2013) to more abstract things, e.g., feelings, fantasies and fun (Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

## Research Design

In order for us to analyse how the Corona pandemic has disenchanted consumption and created immediate nostalgia, an inductive qualitative research approach within an empirical context is used as a basis for our investigation. While the disenchantment of consumption in the pandemic can be studied from a passive ‘bystander’ standpoint, how it affects consumers and, in turn, creates immediate nostalgia among them cannot. Therefore, an interaction with the individuals who participate in the process need to be accounted for which is why personal interviews were chosen. However, in order to strengthen our analysis, we also sample netnographic content, i.e., institutional data as well as pop cultural material such as different media platforms and newspaper and journal articles, as it helps to capture different dimensions of the disenchanted consumption and immediate nostalgia that takes place, offering depth to the analysis. Our research design follows Bell et al’s. (2019) framework of how qualitative research should take form and permeates the different steps in the research process.

**Table I** Types of Data Sources

Source	Type	Purpose of usage
Interviews (semi-structured)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 interviews with consumers - including 2 test interviews (ranging between 30 and 60 minutes)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand rationalisation and disenchanted consumption during the Corona Pandemic</li> <li>• Analyse the creation of immediate nostalgia</li> </ul>
Pop cultural material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newspaper articles</li> <li>• Television</li> <li>• Journal articles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find data that illustrates the rationalisation in society during the Corona pandemic</li> <li>• Finding suggestions for nostalgic longings for the time before the pandemic</li> </ul>
Institutional material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government websites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about governmental actions (restrictions, lockdowns)</li> </ul>

In order to capture consumers' thoughts and understandings regarding the studied phenomenon, we conducted 10 semi-structured interviews that provided us with 68 pages of transcribed material that amounted to 8 hours of recorded audio. In addition to this, 2 test

interviews were conducted prior to the official ones in order to try out and analyse our chosen framework. We chose to use interviews as the analysed phenomenon would not have been able to gain sufficient data from observations. Interviews on the other hand allow us to understand consumers behaviour and enables reconstruction of events and situations, which are essential for our analysis (Bell et al., 2019). The interviews followed a guide that revolved around the aspect of time and rationality. This was done because the aspect of time is fundamental in all nostalgia literature, and rationality is central in understanding disenchantment. A purposive sampling according to Flink (2014) was used with the only requirement that the respondents were Swedish consumers that had been affected by the Corona pandemic. However, due to the applied theoretical framework, a spread among age was desired which resulted in a group of respondents varying from 17-84 years of age, living in 5 different cities in Sweden.

The analysis of the empirical material began with a manual coding of all the interviews. The coding process was closest to Strauss and Corbin's Approach to Coding (Flick, 2014, p. 403) and began with open coding that focused on conceptualisation and categorisation of the different phenomena found in our data. These findings were driven forward by a theoretical approach, allowing us to find similarities and differences compared to other studies on the subjects. As patterns emerged, we refined, grouped and related the different codes to form an understanding of causes, phenomena and consequences. Eventually, we moved into selective coding and integrated our different categories of our findings into theory, reaching an understanding where the collection of new data would not have added to the concept (Bryman et al., 2019; Flick, 2014). As we continued on our analysis, we used Spiggle's (1994) analytical procedure suggestions. By continuously developing our conceptualisation and analysis from new findings, iteration allowed us to improve our results as we gained a broader understanding. By identifying nostalgia connected to a different time frame and how it resonates from disenchanted consumption experiences in the Corona pandemic, we could categorise and explore the dimensions among our four manifestations of immediate nostalgia and construct our own models that come to function as framework for our analysis.

## **Research Context**

The timeframe of our study was between January and June of 2021. However, the analysis was grounded in the perspective of both the distant past, the immediate past, the present and the future. The analysis aimed to generate a snapshot of consumers' sensemaking of immediate nostalgia during the spring of 2021. Although the Corona pandemic has had a global spread and affected markets and consumers all over the world, our study only focuses on Swedish consumers. This is important to acknowledge as local practices and ideologies affect the research results (Moisander & Valdtonen, 2006) which perhaps has been even more evident during this pandemic as each country has had their own governmental strategy, i.e., different restrictions, lockdowns and recommendations which in turn have affected consumption in various ways. As such, our findings should be viewed as dependent on the local setting for Swedish consumers, which should be held in regard if the results from this study would be used in order to analyse a similar phenomenon in a different market. However, we naturally aim toward providing an all-encompassing analysis of the topic.

## **Ethical Considerations**

The interviews were, due to the ongoing pandemic, conducted over Zoom and Microsoft Teams in order to avoid the possible health risks of meeting our respondents in person. As the interactions were synchronous, less risks synonymous with digital interviews were faced. In addition to this, it could also result in the respondents being more comfortable, leading to more accurate results (Bell et al., 2019). Prior to every interview the subject was informed about the purpose of the study and in what ways the material from the interview could be used. This meant that they agreed and gave consent to being recorded and that the recording would be transcribed, analysed and would be used in the study in the form of quotes and paraphrases. As a way to secure the anonymity of every interview subject we followed the frameworks of Flick (2014) and Kozinets (2015) and de-personalized information in quotes and paraphrases in order to make personal identification of the subjects more difficult, reaching a satisfying level of anonymity.

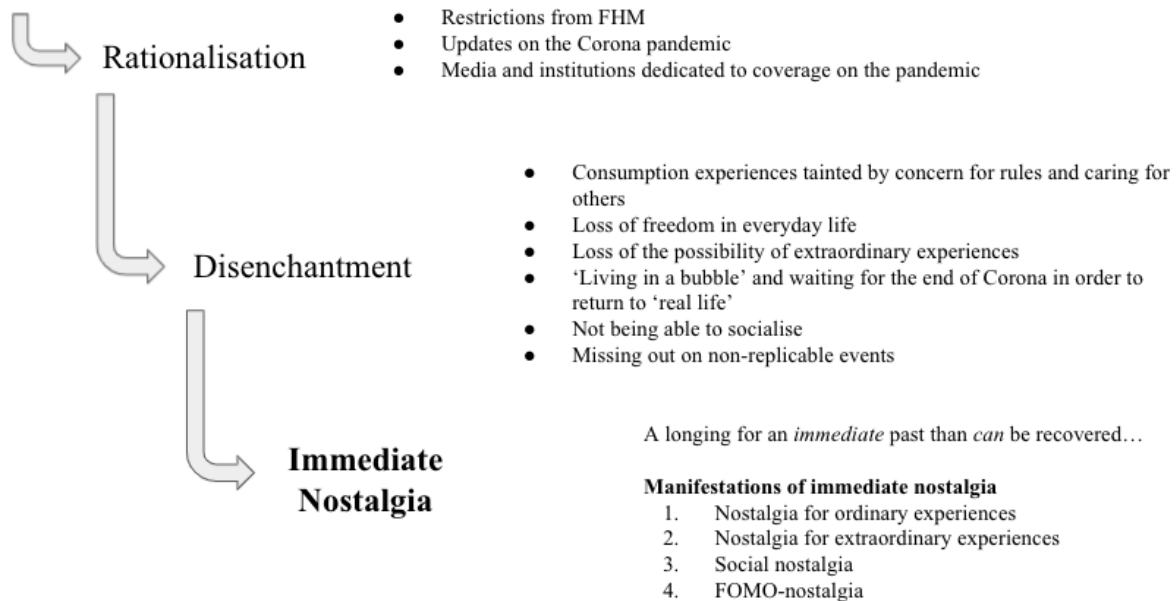
The other forms of data collected, e.g., scientific studies from different journals, articles and other netnographic content, was publicly available and accessed on the internet at the time of access. No sensitive information could be identified from the data used in this study.

## Analysis

The story of this analysis builds upon how consumers during the Corona pandemic undergo a process of rationalisation and disenchantment, in line with the findings of Ritzer (2010), which in turn leads to our exploration of ‘immediate’ nostalgia, a concept which is arguably conceived during the pandemic. We use consumption experience literature as a backdrop for the analysis, as it is the experiences embedded in consumption that are argued by respondents to be most ‘disenchanted’ during the pandemic. An initial chapter is devoted to elements of rationality during the Corona pandemic, before analysing the disenchanting effects of the pandemic and how we suggest ‘immediate nostalgia’ is created and manifested in four distinct ways.

### Model I The Three-Part Process of Immediate Nostalgia

#### Corona Pandemic



#### Rationalisation

Our findings suggest that there is an agreement among consumers that both our society at large as well as their individual lives are, to a higher degree than before the Corona pandemic, structured by recommendations from scientific experts.

Lisa: Our trust towards science and research has increased which is good. You see on the news every morning and hear what people talk about and such, maybe it was a bit stronger in the beginning of the pandemic but as time has passed some things that

have been said was wrong which made me lose some trust in them, but overall my trust has increased and I believe so overall for most people.

This quote illustrates how rationalisation affects consumers' lives during the pandemic as they more so than before are confronted with recommendations on how to conduct their lives. By continuously being exposed to media they are encouraged to follow rules and stay updated on information regarding the progression of the pandemic.

Newspapers contain sections which are entirely dedicated to coverage of the Corona pandemic. The Swedish newspaper SvD, for example, reserves a page specifically for updates regarding the pandemic, posting updates online approximately ten times per day (SvD, 2021). Similarly, public TV broadcaster SVT conducts live reporting on the same topic through their website in video form (SVT, 2021). It is also made readily available by institutions to print guidelines in paper format in order to use in crowded areas, where readers are told to adhere to five rules which have been established by experts in order to avoid contamination (meeting few people, keeping distance, staying at home, having a Corona test if they have symptoms and travelling safely) (Vårdgivarguiden, 2021). In addition to this, the global development of vaccines has started the vaccination process by the Swedish government who are recommending all citizens to take the vaccine when it is their turn.

It should be argued that there exists a rationalized mindset, following Weber's (1905/2002) notion of the modern world in which capitalistic societies are steered forward by an (undesired) rationality that is rooted in "social, cultural and economic consequences". Societies strive toward calculability, efficiency, predictability and control (Ritzer, 2010), through, for example, imposing guidelines and reminders, such as those above, on society and individual consumers.

But how is rationalisation during the Corona pandemic different compared to rationalisation before the outbreak? Both Weber (1905/2002) and later on Ritzer (2010) utilise and describe rationalisation as the driving force for disenchantment and also (re)-enchantment. Through the rise of capitalism, modern industrial societies were created in which the 'enchanted' aspects of cultural and ideological forms of old were eliminated and replaced by a rational logic. These modern societies of rationality are dominated through scientific- and economical rational discourses and have driven out (more so than before) beliefs of magic, religion and

myths. During the pandemic, the discourses of a rational living have been manifested in different settings. For example, institutions as well as markets and other individuals are constantly imposing rational logic onto consumers, e.g., by following restrictions and instructing how to be efficient and move forward in different markets (Vårdgivarguiden, 2021; Hernandez, 2020; EH, 2020). The Swedish government has controlled - and is - continuing to control how different actors in society should behave through restrictions and recommendations (Regeringskansliet, 2021), and as shown above, different channels of media are constantly distributing information surrounding this and other information regarding the pandemic.

Compared to the situation before the outbreak of the Corona pandemic, consumers are no longer as free to explore and experience the rationalised modern world.

Interviewer: So, these restrictions have affected your freedom?

Fredrik: Yes, they have. It is taken away because the restrictions do not allow me to do what I wanna do, such as going to school or meeting up with friends after work.

What Fredrik is describing occurs among most consumers as they cannot consume experiences in the way they did before. Instead, they have restrictions imposed on them and are given information that discourages irrational choices. In comparison to what Ostergaard et al. (2013; p. 338) says, the rational consumer has not during the pandemic been able to freely make choices in their own best interest. Although there are neither restrictions from dogmas nor mysticism as in prior eras, there are however restrictions that sprung from the rationalised modern world as of today. We argue that the situation during the pandemic is a development of our rationalised modern societies that does not follow the ordinary trajectory of development. The *iron cage* of rationality (an attempt to visualise the effects of rationality) that eliminates the enchanting aspects of life, described by Weber (cited in Ostergaard et al. 2013; p. 339) transformed the modern world through the progress of rational sciences. We are in no way implying that our society, during the Corona pandemic, has moved away from the modern world described by Weber. Rather, we hint that an 'additional' and 'temporary' iron cage of rationality has been created which has led to further eliminations of enchanting aspects of life.



As Ritzer (2010) addressed enchantment in consumption, he argued for how the new means of consumption can be seen as ‘cathedrals of consumption’ that are both enchanted as well as rationalised. However, as rationalisation in society has increased during the Corona pandemic while the possibility of enchantment has diminished (further elaborated on) the balance within our ‘cathedrals of consumption’ has shifted. With the loss of enchantment, rationalisation is experienced differently, as we argue that there is no countermeasure to it.

Among consumers, the restrictions imposed by the government are mostly followed, however, in differing ways. Because of differing life situations, consumers behave differently and have varying experiences of the current situation. They express confidence toward science also prior to the outbreak of the pandemic and state that this has made them more prompt to follow recommendations imposed by governmental experts. One thing to note is that some highlight the media exposure that also non-experts have been given and how this has a negative impact on people.

Fredrik: ... There is always an expert that makes a statement and if not then it is a non-expert that is invited in order to express their opinion. It is weird how we give a platform for these people that have no scientific backup for their claims ... all different opinions create gaps in society between people.

Although our respondents express confidence towards scientific claims, what Fredrik brings up illustrates how rationalising notions among people with distrust might have negative effects, further leading them astray from indulging in the rationalised way of living that Weber assigned to the modern capitalistic societies (Ostergaard et al, 2013).

Consumers experience the rationalisation of the present in different ways. For example, they express acceptance for the restrictions imposed and are content with them (keeping distance in stores, having a limited number of seats at a table), though exceptions can be found:

Lisa: ... it is shown when you are in a store, that you have to wait outside in line. We were out in town this Saturday because my friend visited and we had to que in line in the rain outside three or four stores, which we did since he was visiting, but that is not fun. It made that experience more boring.

This suggests that, although consumers may be understanding of the restrictions during the pandemic, the rationalising effects of these may cause consumers to render their consumption experiences as unpleasant, thus being disenchanted

## **Disenchantment**

Despite the acceptance of the restrictions there is an agreement among consumers that the present is less exciting and romantic than the time before the pandemic and this is mainly because of the disappearance of the possibility of extraordinary experiences. In line with the findings of Bhattacharjee and Mogilner (2013), younger consumers experience greater happiness from extraordinary experiences (concerts, travels, weddings) and thus to a larger degree feels that their lives have been disenchanted as they can virtually only partake in ordinary experiences (shopping, socialising, eating out). In comparison, older consumers express a lesser loss of excitement as they experience greater happiness from ordinary experiences (Bhattacharjee & Mogilner, 2013), with the exception of the elderly who are a vulnerable group and can hardly indulge in these activities either.

Although authenticity is not the focus in this study, it has been established in literature how consumers interpret disenchanted experiences as inauthentic (Hartmann & Ostberg, 2013), a pattern also shown by our respondents. A number of the consumers describe how the time during the Corona pandemic is perceived as “living in a bubble”; a time that is not real (authentic), and thus their experiences do not matter. We argue that this ‘in-authentication’ is a form of disenchantment of the present. Ritzer’s (Ostergaard et al., 2013) ‘cathedrals of consumption’ in today’s society cannot be fully accessed, leaving consumers with a sentiment of emptiness. The rationalisation in society disenchant consumption as consumers no longer have the same opportunities to consume a steady flow of fantasies, feelings and fun (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). This suggests the synonymy between in-authentication and disenchantment.

Another prominent theme which repeatedly emerges in our analysis is that of social deprivation with the disenchantment and nostalgic longing that follows when making sense of the present situation.

Karin: ...what has affected me the most is that I do not have as much social contact, I have lost sight of what I want and what I am doing... feels like I am working so that time will pass and so that we can go back to reality in some way...

This displays how the deprivation of social events has disenchanting effects on the lives of consumers. When looking to “go back to reality”, Karin displays how the state of the present (in a social interaction sense) is disenchanted. She further describes:

Karin: It feels like you are not really human anymore, that you live in a dystopia where there is a little human contact which makes you isolated and... confused (laughs).

It is, hence, suggested that the present has been mostly stripped from enchantment. However, some respondents find the time during the pandemic as an opportunity to be close to, for example, their partner:

Åsa: I am very thankful that I live together with my boyfriend, we are doing everything together, more so now than before. We have not been together for very long, but we have gotten a lot of time together because of Corona...

However, this analysis is provided by the fact that one has a partner to socialise with. The pandemic may therefore also have enchanting effects on consumers’ experiences of the present. Further, respondents of the study comment on the present time in different ways; some of which challenged how real the present actually feels to live in. For example, one respondent expressed:

Karin: It does not always feel like it (the present time) is real, but I have realized that the more routines you have, the more it feels like you are alive (laughs). When I was a newcomer (to Helsingborg) and did not know people at all, then it did not feel like I was living for real. Some mornings I could wake up and if I did not leave my apartment before 12 o'clock I did not know what day it was or what I was doing, it is like everything flows together into a ‘stew’...

This quote re-enforces the disenchantment of the present according to the causality described by Hartmann & Ostberg (2013, p. 894,) where (re-)enchantment and (re-)authentication are largely analogous. This feeling of not living “for real” is created due to the disenchantment that consumers experience and can be compared to the notions of authenticity that Hartmann and Ostberg describe. It must naturally, however, be commented that the authors’ analysis is based on re-enchantment and re-authentication of brands, and not consumption in its entirety.

Further, it is also evident that consumers want to return to a time of more freedom, a future that contained the freedom of the past in which they could be enchanted by a variety of different experiences in many different settings. Consider the following statements:

Lisa: You used to have more free will before compared to now. Of course, you do what you want to do but with certain limitations, and I suppose it is the feeling of being able to do exactly what you want that made it seem more like you lived in the present before.

and...

Fredrik: ... to be able to meet up with some friends after work, just that feeling of having the freedom to do anything. What specific thing that is I do not know, I almost do not remember. But it is a longing for having the possibility.

Hence, we have during the Corona pandemic ended up with consumption that has been disenchanted by a loss of freedom, which has sparked a form of nostalgia that differs from their other associations. Instead of being nostalgic towards a certain time period (such as one’s youth or the 80’s) or a product or an experience, consumers are now feeling nostalgic towards the immediate past (the time directly prior to the outbreak) in which they experienced freedom that gave them access to enchantment. Building on Weber’s notion of disenchantment (described in Ostergaard et al., 2013), our society during the Corona pandemic has reached a higher level of modernity which has further elevated the loss of enchantment.

## **Immediate Nostalgia**

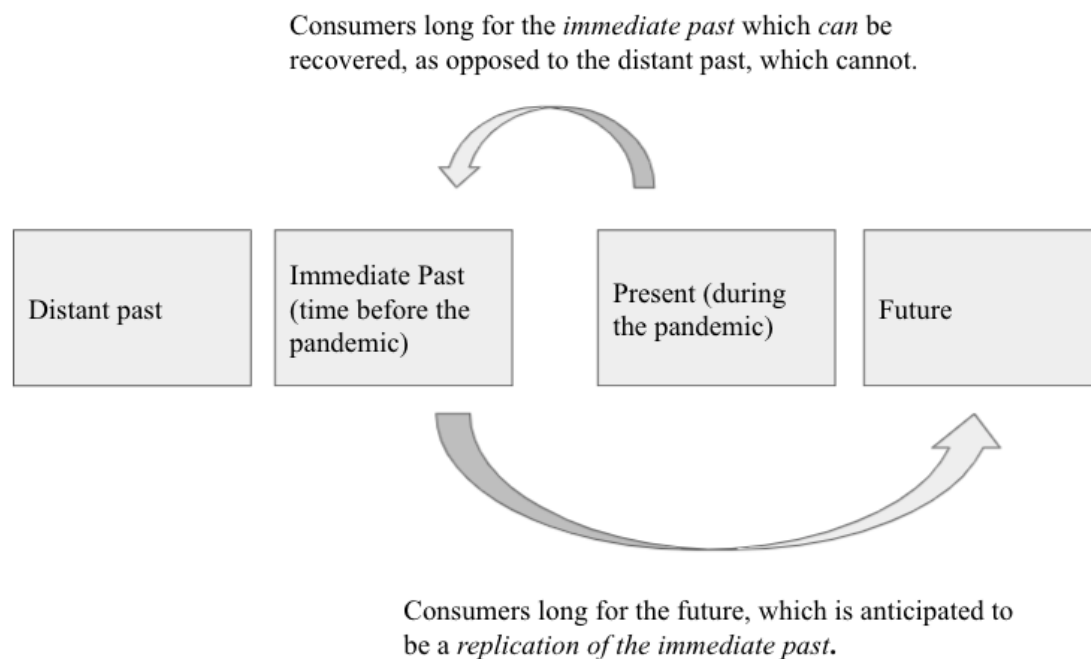
Traditionally in studies, nostalgia is a form of homesickness and affects individuals mainly during their youth, e.g., leading to future preferences of cars, movies and food (Holbrook, 1993; Brunk et al. 2018; Holbrook & Schindler, 2003), also commonly translated to “a dear departed past” (Holbrook, 1993). Instead, we argue that what we call ‘immediate nostalgia’ relates to the “recent past” that occurred directly before the pandemic. Immediate nostalgia cannot be said to have either more or less impact on consumers, rather it is somewhat different. Consumers long for life the way it was, directly before the outbreak of the pandemic, and their longing diverges into nostalgia towards ordinary experiences, extraordinary experiences, escaping social and FOMO-nostalgia. Drawing from the discussion of Brunk et al. (2020) “what we are really witnessing is nostalgia for a past that held the promise of a future”. However, the time aspect of the past in the case of Brunk et al. is challenged, as we suggest that immediate nostalgia aims at the *recent* past which *holds* a promise for the future. Immediate nostalgia does not follow the traditional trajectories of a past/present/future timeline, which is depicted in model II.

Furthermore, consumers themselves interpret there being a divide between nostalgia referring to the distant past versus nostalgia referring to the ‘immediate past’. Consider the following statement:

Ann. It feels like the time before the outbreak was a long time ago. I mean, I do not know if it had just been occurring for a couple of months it had been one thing, but now it has been over a year... it feels like it was a long time ago, but I do not believe that you can refer to it as “the past”.

Also, immediate nostalgia challenges the basic assumption of nostalgia literature: that nostalgia is a longing for a past that can no longer be recovered (Schindler & Holbrook, 2003; Brunk et al. 2020). Consumers are not longing for a return of the past which holds ‘utopian’ values (Brown, 2003), but instead a return to a replicable past.

## Model II Immediate Nostalgia



Immediate nostalgia displays Cantone et al's. (2020) post-postmodern nostalgia reflections as well as more traditional notions of 'home-sickness' towards the past (Holbrook, 2013; Holbrook & Schindler, 2003, Brunk et al. 2018). Consider the following:

Interviewer: Do you long to return (to the state before the pandemic)?

Ann: Yeah of course you do, you want the simplicity that was, of course you want that! You long to return to... that it will be as it were. I want to be able to consume as I did, to socialise with friends and go out after work with some colleagues. And travel, I want to travel again!

As per the above, there is a longing for the past, but mostly for the future after Corona in which they can return to the state for which they now have nostalgic reminiscences. Consumers wish to bring the enchantment of the immediate past into the future.

**Table II** The Four Manifestations of Immediate Nostalgia

<b>Manifestation of Immediate Nostalgia</b>	<b>a longing toward...</b>
<i>Nostalgia for ordinary experiences</i>	... a return to partaking in ordinary, mundane experiences, a state of freedom, without disenchantment caused by imminent restrictions  <b>Examples:</b> leaving the home, physically attending school or work, shopping, eating out...
<i>Nostalgia for extraordinary experiences</i>	... a return to partaking in extraordinary experiences, identity defining activities and memory making.  <b>Examples:</b> traveling, attending concerts, larger social constellations like birthday parties
<i>Social nostalgia</i>	... a return to social, communal and memory making aspects of the consumption experience.  <b>Examples:</b> meeting friends and family, meeting new people...
<i>FOMO (fear of missing out) nostalgia</i>	... a return to partaking in non-replicable consumption, not missing out on milestones in life. Consumers also consider the missing-out of other consumers' life experiences.  <b>Examples:</b> graduations, weddings, social gatherings...

### **Nostalgia for Ordinary Experiences**

Consumers are collectively experiencing a nostalgic longing toward partaking in mundane and ordinary consumption experiences of everyday life as described by Bhattacharjee and Mogilner (2013). These aspects of consumption have during the pandemic been prohibited or - at least - disenchanting. Although everyday consumption, such as attending school or work or going grocery shopping does not appear enchanting, it does adhere to the concept of cathedrals of consumption that Ritzer (2010) talks about. By not partaking in them at all or by following the imposed restrictions, consumers do not experience the same levels of enchantment that they did before. However, the enchantment that they gain from these ordinary experiences is not necessarily important on a daily basis, but during the timespan of over a year, we argue that it has disenchanting effects on the lives of the consumers. By having their ordinary experiences disenchanting or completely taken away, consumers have lost their daily routines in life that gave them a continuous inflow of enchantment. Instead,

they now need to create routines on their own in order to regain the enchantment that was lost:

Fredrik: Now you are forced to do things just to have something to do. You force yourself to sit down at your computer and study a couple of hours per day, or week. Before you had to go to school and be there for 3-4 hours, then you could meet friends and get more work done - I am also laid off from work now - and you could go out later in the evening and get a beer with friends on both weekends and weekdays. I want to get back to that.

Rather than having longings for something romanticized in the past (Holbrook, 1993), people long for ordinary life to return and having things to do during the days that satisfy their need for enchantment. Compared to nostalgic longings for something particular in the past, this immediate nostalgia encompasses ordinary experiences that occurred in the immediate past, prior to the outbreak of the Corona pandemic.

Although not expressed as the most prominent part of disenchanting consumption experience, retail consumption experiences illustrate how restrictions disenchant ordinary consumption experiences:

Lisa: You notice the restrictions a lot if you are out in the stores, that you have to wait outside and wait in a queue. We were out in town this Saturday because my friend visited, and we had to queue outside in the rain for 3-4 stores. We did so because he was here on a visit, but that is not fun. It made that whole experience boring.

Further, the regulations surrounding the Corona pandemic have, in Sweden, not directly forced stores to close. However, consumers experience disenchanting effects during these consumption experiences, adding to their longings toward returning to the state immediately before the pandemic started.

It has been discussed by scholars how items of ordinary consumption may cause nostalgia, be it for example food brands from East Germany (Brunk et al., 2018) or movies from one's youth (Holbrook, 1993). However, we argue that the manifestation of nostalgia referencing ordinary consumption experiences in the immediate past is different. Consumers are not



longing for a dear departed past and therefore consume mundane products from that time, but instead long for a time when they could partake in ordinary consumption experiences without the disenchantment of the ongoing pandemic. They want to regain their freedom of doing things when and how they want. Consider the following statement:

Fredrik: This feeling of freedom reflects the daily life that I am talking about, that I had before. If I want to then I go to school, if I want to then I meet my friends after work, if I want to I do this and that... That feeling of freedom is the longing that I carry with me today - it is not that I am excited over the thought of being at Nordstan (shopping mall in Gothenburg) together with 800 people but more what I talked about before, meeting up with friends after work. Just that feeling of freedom to do things as you like.

The nostalgic longings displayed above of regaining freedom over everyday life is a direct effect of the ordinary consumption experiences that have been disenchanting. Both younger and older consumers express these longings, even though Bhattacharjee and Mogilner (2013) argue that older consumers place a higher importance on ordinary experiences. That also young people express longings for ordinary experiences we believe is because of the length of the ongoing pandemic, as it has stripped them from their daily inflow of enchantment for over a year in this writing moment.

### **Nostalgia for Extraordinary Experiences**

With regards to extraordinary experiences, the traits among consumers align with the findings of Bhattacharjee and Mogilner (2013), in contrast to the above. Younger consumers exhibit longings for extraordinary experiences and express discontent with the pandemic due to this. Rather than being altered by restrictions as ordinary experiences, many of the extraordinary ones have been forbidden and canceled. Consider the following statements:

Karin: ... Before Corona I was in New Zealand. I was traveling around a lot, finding new and cool places, going to parties and concerts and meeting new people in larger groups. Now this summer me and my girls wanted to go to Greece but ended up at Visingsö instead...

and...

Oscar: I always went to La Gravé for 2 weeks during Christmas to go all in with some friends there - that you always looked forward to. Then I also went to Norway 3-4 times per year, a longer weekend alone or with friends. That really defines my life, my passion - and that is not the case anymore.

What Karin and Oscar implies is that some of their most precious experiences are now gone. With the loss of extraordinary consumption experiences, consumers are losing the possibility to explore their identity. Discontinuous nostalgia mainly triggers from extraordinary experiences that become memorable for the individual. Especially among younger people there exists a drive to create one's identity in order to gain control over life when they transition over to adulthood (Kessous and Roux, 2008). Now that the Corona pandemic has taken away these possibilities, they feel an emptiness and long for the future in which the freedom of the immediate past will return.

Feelings of emptiness create nostalgic longings and are reinforced by the fact that consumers know what to expect. By having traditionally nostalgic longings for events in the (distant) past, e.g., one's childhood home, first car, family vacation (Holbrook, 1993), they are also nostalgic about memory-making (Brunk et al. 2018) on a personal level through extraordinary experiences, in addition to the actual experiences themselves. As for the example with Karin in which she prior to the pandemic lived life abroad and consumed a steady flow of extraordinary experiences but now cannot, she is no longer in control of defining her own identity.

Extraordinary experiences often have a social aspect and therefore have been shut down rather than restricted during the Corona pandemic. The chance of identity creation through extraordinary consumption experiences is therefore removed and the possibility for enchantment gone, increasing longings for social interaction.

### **Social Nostalgia**

Consumers long toward a replication of the immediate past with regards to the possibility of partaking in social interaction. Brown et al. (2003) references the communal nostalgia generated by memory making on a societal level over time, which could be compared to this manifestation of immediate nostalgia. However, communal nostalgia described in the analysis of Brown et al. references a long-term and continuous memory making process

which is subject to nostalgia. In the case of immediate social nostalgia, consumers long to a past where communal memory making was possible. In contrast to communal nostalgia as referenced by Brown, this type of immediate nostalgia firstly aims toward the immediate past, and secondly aims toward a state of ability to socialise instead of social belonging.

As communal memories are not made in the same way during the pandemic, we argue there is no traditionally communal nostalgic past to long back to, except from the case that every consumer has experienced the pandemic collectively. We argue for this case with the background that nostalgia is felt for enchanted aspects of the past, and that the time during the pandemic is disenchanting. In order to deal with this, consumers long to a future where they have this ability to socialise:

Lisa: More, my friend I live with really wants to have a huge garden party this summer as soon as you can have it where everyone can invite their groups of friends, everyone who does not know each other .. just to be with as many people as possible. So, it's the social things (that we have been deprived of) ...

As illustrated by the above, a response to the disenchantment and immediate nostalgia experienced in the present, consumers make plans for the future in which they are able to partake in short-term communal memory making. Consumers seek to meet friends and family, as well as meeting new people and enjoying the freedom of not being subject to restrictions. We argue that consumers are accustomed to a continuous (Kessous and Roux, 2008) flow of memory making through social interaction which has, at least partially, come to a halt. In experiencing this deprivation of social interaction, consumers long toward a future where they can make up for all of the social interaction that they have missed.

The social nostalgia created during the pandemic can, however, be nuanced in the way that consumers render some social interaction excessive and unwanted. Consider the following statements:

Lars: ... and how do I slow down committing to stupid decisions when I'm going to places, I do not really need to visit. For example, going to X University. I do not want to go to (Swedish city). What is the point in going there for three hours (when i could stay at home instead)?

and

Ann: I think people are very happy... (we had a) Teams Meeting - (client) responsible for land and forest - they were people who lived far up in Värmland, but instead of the three travelling to us - it is a long way to go for a one hour meeting... so the father (client) sat... in an office, one in another office and the third in a tractor. So, everyone was like 'oh my god what this will simplify and be good'.

Both of the above respondents expressed a nostalgic longing toward a future of more social interaction than during the pandemic, but also found ways in which the pandemic proved to have an opposite effect. This suggests that, even though consumers are nostalgic toward the 'immediate past', they are still able to find positive aspects of the present situation which also hold promises for the future.

Consumers also experience immediate nostalgia toward discontinuous events in a similar way to that of social immediate nostalgia. However, we argue for a case where this is a separate form of immediate nostalgia.

### **FOMO-nostalgia**

In the final manifestation of immediate nostalgia, respondents exhibit a particular sense of nostalgia towards events in the past which could not be replicated at any other moment.

Åsa: I can feel for others - those who graduate high school - or you guys who will get your degree. What other big things are there... turning 25 and such. Those big happenings, they will not come again really. For me, turning 18, graduating high school, turning 25 and also graduating from Chalmers, all of those things were big events that have happened. I took them for granted. Riding 'studentflak' (a tradition during the graduation ceremony), having a graduation ceremony, completing my degree, all of those things are milestones in life.

Also, consumers that have experienced certain irreplaceable experiences showcase a 'thankful' nostalgia toward these events. Also consider the following:

Åsa: I am happy and thankful that I got to experience them, but at the same time I can get a little nostalgic and sad for those who did not. I feel very sorry for those who started studying at university last year and who have not got the chance to experience “the life of a student”. They have been forced to experience all of these things at distance while I had the real experience and now how it is.

We argue that consumers are experiencing this thankfulness because these special events actually took place for them but are not possible to recreate for those who would have experienced them during the pandemic. Respondents experience nostalgia toward their own experiences also because of the loss of this specific experience for others. This has created a nostalgic sense of loss directed toward other people who do not have the ability to experience such events because of the pandemic. Hartmann and Brunk (2019) provide the case of reluctant nostalgia, where the consumer feels melancholy when reminiscing over fond memories. However, this is not the case during the Corona pandemic. Instead, consumers experience a sense of reluctance for what other consumers will not be able to experience because of the current situation.

Kessous and Roux, (2008) provide the two dimensions of ‘continuity’ vs ‘discontinuity’ nostalgia. Continuity may in this case represent long-standing nostalgia while discontinuity refers to “first time nostalgia” (graduation, weddings etc.). However, the analysis of Kessous and Roux (2008) is based on nostalgia connected with consumption of products and brands, whereas this study considers consumption experiences. Consider the following statement:

Karin: ...It feels like I have entered a 25-year crisis although I have nearly 3 years left. I feel that I am experiencing it now because the time that leads up to the age of 25 has been erased (laughs), which is why I am ahead with 2-3 years... the fun has ended.

The loss of discontinuity nostalgia showcased above triggers a fear of missing out in which social anxiety stems from the beliefs that others had fun and took part in extraordinary experiences while they themselves could not. Among consumers there is a divide between those who missed out on them versus those who had the chance to partake in such experiences before the pandemic. While ‘experienced’ consumers showcase the previously mentioned form of nostalgia towards others, the younger respondents who have lost the opportunity of these identity-defining experiences of “first time nostalgia”, are instead

showcasing FOMO. This resonates with Bhattacharjee and Mogilner's (2013) notions of ordinary- and extraordinary experiences can be seen regarding the aspect of age.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

Our analysis of how consumption experiences during the Corona pandemic have been disenchanted due to rationalisation has introduced the concept of immediate nostalgia. Our findings show how the Corona pandemic has rationalised the lives of consumers through, for example: restrictions, shutdowns, recommendations and media coverage. This has disenchanting effects for consumption experiences as consumers no longer have the ability to consume "normal" levels of enchantment. By having disenchanted consumption experiences, consumers' lives are rid from the enchantment that they continuously experienced before the pandemic. This creates nostalgic longings for the future in which they can return to life as it was, immediately prior to the outbreak of the pandemic.

The notion of immediate nostalgia is explored through four manifestations; (1) Nostalgia for ordinary experiences - a return to ordinary life by going to school or work, shopping and eating out with friends, consumption experiences that are disenchanted during the Corona pandemic. Consumers want their freedom back and have daily routines in their life as they are tired of sitting at home in front of their computers. Life during the pandemic deprives them of enchantment, making them long for the time before the pandemic. (2) Nostalgia for extraordinary experiences - having the possibility to consume non-mundane experiences such as traveling abroad, attending concerts or larger social constellations like parties. While ordinary consumption experiences mostly have been restricted, these extraordinary ones are often impossible. The immediate nostalgia stemming from the lack of extraordinary experiences are more evident among younger consumers as they lack an element of creating their identity (Kessous & Roux, 2008). They are longing both for the chance of consuming extraordinary experiences again that are rich in enchantment, as well as having the possibility of memory-making for the future. (3) Social nostalgia - a return to social and communal aspects of consumption experiences. People are longing for the possibility of spending time with friends and family as well as meeting new people as they are longing for a "return to the past" where communal memory making was possible. (4) FOMO-nostalgia - not being able to partake in non-replicable consumption, a fear of missing out. By missing out on certain 'milestones' in life such as graduation or turning 25 because of the Corona pandemic,

consumers are nostalgic about these events that cannot be replicated at any other moment. However, those who experienced more of these milestones (generally older consumers) are instead thankful for their own nostalgic memories, a sentiment which is strengthened due to them simultaneously feeling sorry for those who missed theirs. Combined, these four manifestations of immediate nostalgia tell us how and why consumers experience nostalgic longings during the Corona pandemic. The analysis also illustrates how the disenchantment of consumption experiences has created the concept of immediate nostalgia and how it differs in relation to earlier studies on nostalgia.

Even though many studies have analysed the concepts of both nostalgia (Holbrook, 1993; Holbrook & Schindler, 2003; Kessous & Roux, May, 2017, Cantone et al. 2020; Pickering & Keightley, 2006) and enchantment (Weber, 1905/2002; Ritzer, 1998, 2005, 2010; Gell, 1992; Bennett, 2016; Ostergard et al. 2013; Holbrook, 2003), as well as the two together (Hartmann & Brunk, 2019; Kitson & McHugh, 2015) we enrich the stream of nostalgic literature by introducing the concept of ‘immediate nostalgia’. It is of importance to acknowledge the findings of Hartmann and Brunk (2019) as they argue that nostalgic consumption is more than just being about the past and can be both progressive and forward looking. However, while they argue that the past can be used and leverage a better present and future, consumers in the Corona pandemic simply want the future to come in which the immediate past returns. With a timeframe of just over a year (present time of this writing), consumers are not reminiscing and long for particular enchanted experiences in the distant past. Rather, they want to return to a general state of living, free of disenchanting consumption experiences where they have the freedom to once again consume and be enchanted. Thus, our findings showcase how immediate nostalgia differs from previous nostalgia literature as it (1) refers to the immediate past rather than the distant past and (2) refutes a basic assumption of nostalgia literature: that nostalgia is a longing for a past that can no longer be recovered.

Our findings provide a platform for marketing managers to understand nostalgia and its influence over consumers’ consumption experiences. We argue that marketing strategies will benefit from being tailored to consumers’ wish to return to the former normal state of living before the pandemic. Our analysis of immediate nostalgia for ordinary consumption experiences suggests that marketing communication should correspond with consumers’ longing toward having freedom in everyday life experiences. Also, firms should display that they are looking forward to the enchanting everyday habits from before the pandemic, when

this is possible. Further, although it is not uniformly shown in this study, older consumers may be especially prone to ordinary experience marketing (Bhattacharjee & Mogilner, 2013). Our analysis of extraordinary consumption experiences points marketing strategies in a direction where marketers should welcome consumers back to the consumption experiences when they are made possible by reminding them of how enjoyable these experiences were in the past. Furthermore, it is important for marketers to understand how extraordinary experiences are a vital form of identity creation, especially for younger consumers, who may be encouraged by firms to make up for the identity-creating time lost during the pandemic. Our analysis of immediate nostalgia directed toward social consumption provides a framework for marketers to understand how consumers are longing back to consumption as a communal activity, and a way to create communal memories. Therefore, marketers should tailor the marketing of social activities thus that an increase in this consumption in the future will bring them closer to friends and family again. In the meantime, we suggest marketers to add a social component to consumption where this is feasible considering the current restrictions. Lastly, marketers need to understand that consumers have, during the pandemic, been robbed from non-replicable experiences, and that consumers who have actually experienced these are more thankful for them than before the pandemic. Marketers should leverage this by making sure that consumers who have ‘missed out’ on non-replicable events should compensate for this when restrictions allow for it. Simultaneously, ‘thankful’ consumers should be encouraged to facilitate consumers who have ‘missed out’ to experience similar experiences in the future. Given that these experiences may overlap with extraordinary experiences in their nature, mainly younger consumers may be subject to this implication (Bhattacharjee & Mogilner, 2013).

This study implies that immediate nostalgia has been manifested in a number of ways during the pandemic, all with implications for marketing managers. Fundamentally, traditional definitions of nostalgia are challenged with regards to their relationship with the time aspect and whether nostalgia necessarily implies a longing for a *past that cannot be recovered*. In order to further understand the concept of immediate nostalgia, we suggest that further research should be conducted aimed more narrowly at brands and practices. Because the concept of immediate nostalgia is arguably emerging now during the Corona pandemic this study barely manages to scratch the surface of its nature. Further, we suggest that researchers should analyse how (or if) consumers return to the habits they exhibited before the pandemic. If the pandemic were to continue for several years, it should also be considered what happens



to 'immediate' nostalgia if the immediate past that we argue for becomes more distant. Finally, it should be explored if consumers actually will experience the future that they anticipated through their nostalgic longing during the pandemic. What are the long-term effects on a societal level for consumers who 'miss out' on identity-defining experiences which should have taken place during the pandemic? Will consumers experience the future as the salvation they were longing for?

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