



NOSTALGIA AND MIGRATION: EXPLORING CONSUMER BEHAVIORS IN ETHNIC STORES

Lily Ballesteros Quintero¹

Enlace ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3611-909X>

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Summary

This paper investigates the intersection of nostalgia, migration, and consumer behavior within the context of ethnic stores. It reaffirms nostalgia's role as a driving force for consumption, emphasizing sensory triggers like tastes and sounds that evoke past emotions and memories. Drawing on empirical evidence, the study connects migration motivations with consumer choices, revealing that migrants seek products from their homelands to satisfy cravings for familiar items and cultural connections.

This study underscores the importance of adaptation, language proficiency, and cultural adaptability in migrants' lives. It also explores the pricing dynamics of products in ethnic stores and their impact on consumer behavior. Importantly, it highlights the role of ethnic stores as cultural bridges, fostering recommendations and connections between diverse communities.

Keywords. J15 Economy of minorities, races, indigenous peoples and immigrants; O15 Migration; D12 Consumer economics: empirical analysis

¹ PhD in Management - Paris 8 University, Paris, France. Master's in business and Market Economics - Paris 13 University, Paris, France. MBA - University Carlos III de Madrid, Madrid, Spain. Professor and Researcher, Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences, Universidad El Bosque, Bogotá, Colombia. E-Mail: lballesteros@unbosque.edu.co

NOSTALGIA Y MIGRACION: EXPLORANDO EL COMPORTAMIENTO DE LOS CONSUMIDORES EN TIENDAS ETNICAS

Resumen

Este estudio investiga la intersección de la nostalgia, la migración y el comportamiento del consumidor en el contexto de las tiendas étnicas. Reafirma el papel de la nostalgia como motor del consumo, enfatizando los desencadenantes sensoriales como los sabores y sonidos que evocan emociones y recuerdos pasados. Basándose en evidencia empírica, el estudio relaciona las motivaciones de la migración con las elecciones de los consumidores, revelando que los migrantes buscan productos de sus lugares de origen para satisfacer sus antojos de artículos familiares y conexiones culturales.

Este estudio subraya la importancia de la adaptación, la competencia lingüística y la adaptabilidad cultural en la vida de los migrantes. También explora la dinámica de precios de los productos en las tiendas étnicas y su impacto en el comportamiento del consumidor. Es importante destacar el papel de las tiendas étnicas como puentes culturales, fomentando recomendaciones y conexiones entre comunidades diversas.

Palabras Claves. J15 Economía de las minorías, las razas, los pueblos indígenas y los inmigrantes; O15 Migración; D12 Economía del consumidor: análisis empírico

MIGRAÇÃO E NOSTALGIA: EXPLORANDO COMPORTAMENTOS DO CONSUMIDOR EM ESTABELECIMENTOS ÉTNICOS

Resumo

Este artigo analisa a intersecção entre a nostalgia, migração e o comportamento dos consumidores no contexto dos estabelecimentos de comércio étnico. Reafirma o papel da nostalgia como impulsionador do consumo, a qual enfatiza respostas sensoriais, como sabores e sons, que evocam memórias e emoções passadas.

Fundamentando na evidência empírica, o artigo associa as motivações de migração com as escolhas do consumidor, revelando que os migrantes procuram produtos do seu país de origem de forma a satisfazer os seus desejos por elementos familiares e ligações culturais.

O estudo sublinha a importância da adaptação, competência linguística e adaptabilidade cultural nas vidas dos migrantes. Explora também a dinâmica de preços nos estabelecimentos de comércio étnicos e o seu impacto no comportamento do consumidor. De forma importante, destaca o papel dos estabelecimentos de comércio étnico como pontes culturais, cultivando recomendações e conexões entre diversas comunidades.

Palavras chave. J15 Economia das minorias, raças, povos indígenas e imigrantes; O15 Migração; D12 Economia do consumidor: Análise empírica

1. INTRODUCTION

Building upon the insights from a compelling case study that explored the dynamics of establishment and operation of various ethnic businesses by migrants in developed countries, this article delves into the captivating realm of nostalgic commerce from a consumer perspective. Our earlier study, "Risks and Opportunities: The Development of Business from migration. A Case Study in France" (Ballesteros, 2021) shed light on how migration often spurs entrepreneurial ventures, with businesses created to reconnect with cultural memories and cherished traditions. Our exploration takes a consumer-focused approach, unraveling the intricate interplay of nostalgia and its profound impact on consumer behavior.

As migrants courageously venture into entrepreneurship, driven by a desire to reconnect with their places of origin, they create unique establishments that resonate with their heritage. Our previous study explored the mechanics of how these businesses often evolve through intuition, defying conventional norms and governmental guidelines, presenting both opportunities and risks for their owners.

These businesses become powerful instruments of social and economic inclusion for diverse migrants. By creating spaces where personnel can effortlessly communicate with foreign clientele, they kindle a comforting sense of nostalgia, bridging the divide between past and present, homeland and adoptive country.

As we embark on this thought-provoking expedition, we endeavor to unearth the motivations and emotions that underpin consumer choices in the realm of sentimental commerce. Whether driven by a yearning for fragments of home or a profound desire for cultural connection, our exploration seeks to paint a vivid and comprehensive portrait of nostalgic commerce,

capturing it from the unique perspective of the consumer.

This article is structured into four distinct parts, each contributing to a comprehensive exploration of its subject. In the literature review, we delve into the intertwined themes of nostalgia, migration, and consumer behavior, drawing upon existing research to establish a strong theoretical foundation. At the methodological level, we provide insight into our research approach, using a questionnaire that combines closed and semi-open questions to gather valuable data. Following this, we present the results gleaned from the questionnaire, shedding light on the perspectives and experiences of our respondents. In light of our exploration into the intersection of nostalgia, migration, and consumer behavior within ethnic stores, our study aims to answer the following question: How do nostalgia and migration intersect with consumer behaviors in ethnic stores, and what role do sensory triggers, cultural connections, and pricing dynamics play in shaping consumer choices and fostering community connections?. Finally, we round off our study with a general discussion, where we connect our findings with existing literature, and a conclusion that synthesizes our key insights, emphasizing their implications and potential for future research in this dynamic field.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

As we embark on our study, it is essential to trace the origins of nostalgia to its fundamental roots. Drawing upon insights from Srivastava et al. (2023) research, the genesis of nostalgia can be traced back to the medical realm, where it was initially explored as a profound form of homesickness. This notion found its voice through the accounts of soldiers deployed far from their homes, encapsulating the symptoms of longing and melancholy they experienced. Etymologically, nostalgia originates from the Greek words "Nostos," signifying a return home, and "Algos," representing pain. This medical lens eventually gave way to a psychological perspective, particularly within the context of consumer behavior. Notably, as the

realm of consumerism intersects with marketing, the study of nostalgia continued its evolution. With consumers as a focal point, the exploration of nostalgia persisted, now under the scrutiny of marketing researchers seeking to unravel its intricate ties to consumer behavior.

In parallel, as depicted in the research conducted by Barnwell et al. (2023) regarding nostalgia and forestalgia², professionals from various advertising agencies provide a comprehensive perspective on nostalgia. Their insights reveal nostalgia's facets, including personal memory highlighting, evoking past emotions, referencing specific eras, and idealized historical representations. These professionals recognize nostalgia's enduring emotional resonance and employ it as a tool to forge emotional connections between experiences and contemporary products. Their strategic application of nostalgia seeks to evoke feelings of happiness, warmth, and comfort, underscoring a purposeful directive within the advertising landscape.

Complementing this, Srivastava's et al. (2023) analysis uncovers the multifaceted origins of nostalgia, stemming from three distinct factors: social, internal, and external. These factors encompass both positive and negative variables within their respective domains. Notably, the social factor brings forth a blend of positive and negative variables, the internal factor similarly encompasses both positive and negative dimensions, while the external factor tends to lean more toward negative variables. Remarkably, despite these antecedents, nostalgia often culminates in positive outcomes. Strikingly, out of a total of 60 outcome variables scrutinized, only a mere 5 of them reflect negative associations.

Furthermore, Li et al. (2023) research highlights a significant connection between nostalgia and positive emotions. However, this link was not observed with life satisfaction, suggesting a unique relationship. To this

effect, gratitude emerges as a possible mediator, bridging the gap between nostalgic feelings and overall well-being. Indeed, instances of state gratitude, induced through nostalgic triggers, were found to positively influence overall emotional well-being. This effect can be attributed to the interplay of positive emotions, where state gratitude—a sentiment elicited through nostalgia—contributes to an extended elevation of positive affect, ultimately enhancing an individual's sense of well-being.

Migration

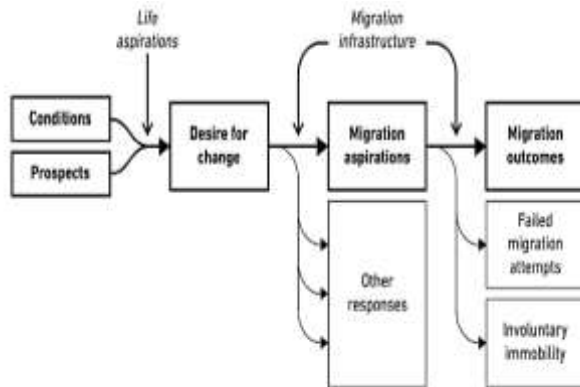
As presented in Figure 1 by Carling (2017), migration is the outcome of a desire for change and also the capacity to achieve these aspirations. The desire for change could be "to ensure survival, escape repression, finance children's education, fulfill professional ambitions, or other reasons". In the majority of the cases migration is done with the aim of improving, "If there is hope that things will get better, hardships might be easier to endure". In all cases, migration is one of the options to create a change. These findings align with the outcomes of the HSBC expat survey. In this survey, 63% of respondents reported an augmentation in their disposable income. Additionally, 92% indicated that places like Australia, Switzerland, and Jersey provide stable living conditions. Moreover, 90% recommended the quality of life in countries such as Spain, Switzerland, Australia, New Zealand, and Cyprus. Furthermore, 71% expressed positive sentiments about the quality of life in the MENAT³ region (HSBC Group, 2023). As shown by the European Migration Network (2023), Another pivotal catalyst propelling migration is the stark reality of climate change. This pressing concern not only threatens to deteriorate living conditions and decimate livelihoods for countless local populations but has also manifested itself in the form of staggering statistics. In 2021 alone, climate change was the driving force behind a staggering 23.7 million internal displacements worldwide, with an annual estimate surpassing 20 million. While the brunt of this crisis is borne by those

² Forestalgia: a consumer's yearning for an idealized future

³ Middle East, North Africa and Türkiye

internally displaced, it's crucial to acknowledge that some are compelled to cross international borders, often in dire need of international protection. This underscores the increasingly complex interplay between climate change and global migration dynamics.

Figure 1. A model of the mechanisms that produce migration. Source: Carling (2017).



However, when considering the emotional impact of migration, Falicov (2002) draws an analogy between the loss caused by migration and the loss caused by death in Latino communities. "Migration loss has special characteristics that distinguish it from other kinds of losses. Unlike the clear-cut, inescapable fact of death, migration as loss is both larger and smaller. It is larger because migration brings with it losses of all kinds: gone are family members and friends who stay behind, gone is the native language, the customs and rituals, the land itself. The ripples of these losses touch the extended kin back home and reach into the future generations born in the new land. Yet, migration loss is also smaller than death, because despite the grief and mourning of physical, cultural and social separation, the losses are not absolutely clear, complete and irretrievable". In light of these distinctive qualities that set migration loss apart, it becomes essential to explore the ways in which migrant communities navigate and adapt to these profound changes in their lives. Resilience, in this context, emerges as a key theme, as these communities grapple with the complexities of migration-induced loss. A resilient person is defined by Okech (2012, as cited in Akbar & Preston, 2019), as

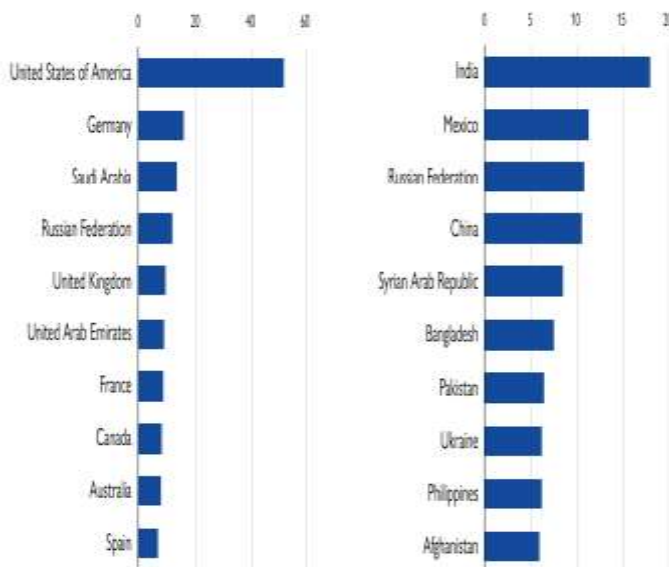
the person "who possess strengths that assist them in recovering from negative experiences; benefit from and contribute to a network of relationships in their communities; seek to restore order and balance to their lives during crises". For Simich & Roche, (2012) Resilience manifests in two discernible dimensions, each playing a crucial role in the lives of refugees and forced migrants. The first dimension is profoundly personal, rooted in the unique amalgamation of personal attributes, life experiences, and individual histories. Within this realm, resilience finds its expression in the remarkable strength and adaptability of individuals as they confront and surmount the challenges of displacement. These personal characteristics, such as determination, resourcefulness, and the ability to find meaning amidst adversity, not only aid in the reconstruction of individual lives but also contribute significantly to the larger community resilience.

The second dimension of resilience operates within the sphere of social perception and expectation, drawing strength from the surrounding social world that envelops refugees and forced migrants. This social world encompasses family, social networks, and the broader community. Here, resilience takes on a collective dimension as shared experiences and communal support systems become pivotal. The perceptions and expectations of the social milieu can shape and bolster resilience, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual reliance among those who have been uprooted. These external facets of resilience not only facilitate individual coping but also lay the foundation for the creation of robust support networks within communities, ultimately fortifying the collective ability to overcome the challenges posed by displacement. As for the key numbers about migration generated in 2020 (Table 1 and 2), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2021) presents the total number of migrants, number of men and women, and the top destinations and origins, in the World Migration Report 2022.

Table 1 Total of migrants, 2020. Source. International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2021)

Total of migrants	Sum of in million	In % global population
Women	135	3,50 %
Men	146	3,70 %
Total of migrants	281	3,60 %

Figure 2. Top 10 destinations (left) and origins (right) of international migrants in 2020 (millions). Source. International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2021)



Out of this overall figure, a significant portion (169 million) comprises workers, who have contributed a substantial sum of 702 billion USD through remittances. Even in the face of the pandemic, the decline in these numbers hasn't been substantial. As indicated by the United Nations (2019), the portion of a migrant's earnings sent as remittances to their household constitutes 15% of their total income. Table 2 presents the top 10 of countries receiving and sending international remittances.

Table 2. Top 10 countries receiving/sending international remittances (2005–2020) (current USD billion). Source. International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2021)

Top countries receiving remittances	Top countries sending remittances
India	United States
China	United Arab Emirates
Mexico	Saudi Arabia
Philippines	Switzerland
Egypt	Germany
Pakistan	China
France	Russia Federation
Bangladesh	France
Germany	Luxembourg
Nigeria	Netherlands

Business, migration and nostalgia Within the realm of consumer behavior in Chinese time-honored brand restaurants, the recent research of Bu et al. (2023) offers a nuanced perspective. These insights highlight a particularly captivating discovery: immersing consumers in nostalgic experiences triggers a surge of positive emotions, substantially amplifying their intention to revisit these establishments. This revelation underscores the profound influence of nostalgia in fostering enduring connections with patrons, drawing them towards choices that align with cherished memories.

Moreover, this study delves into the intricate interplay between consumer attitudes towards nostalgia and their perceptions of brand quality and image. This interconnection illuminates how consumer predispositions towards nostalgia actively shape their assessments of a brand's authenticity and excellence. Notably, this research makes a two-fold contribution. Firstly, it fills a noticeable research gap by exploring brand innovativeness and authenticity within the distinctive landscape of Chinese time-honored brand

restaurants⁴. Secondly, it provides actionable insights, guiding these establishments to navigate the delicate equilibrium between innovation and heritage preservation, ultimately enhancing the authenticity of their service offerings.

These findings are reminiscent of the observations made in Palomino-Tamayo et al. (2022) study, where Venezuelan migrants across several Latin American countries (Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Panama, and Chile) exhibit a preference for brands associated with nostalgia. The social distance within these diaspora communities encourages an affinity towards food, services, and entertainment that evoke a sense of familiarity. These insights, as well as those from our own study (Ballesteros, 2021), underscore the resonance of nostalgia in shaping consumer choices. For instance, many business owners opt to establish their shops in proximity to their related diaspora, fostering a sense of closeness to their homeland. This involves considerations such as hiring staff fluent in the customer's language and incorporating decorations that resonate with the country or region, creating an environment that evokes a sense of connection with their place of origin. These dynamics emphasize the potential for businesses to capitalize on the nostalgia-driven preferences of migrant communities, forging meaningful connections and enhancing customer experiences.

3. METHODOLOGY

In this particular case study, the approach to subject selection was meticulous and comprehensive, involving the recruitment of volunteer migrants from diverse regions across the globe. Utilizing an online platform, we strategically targeted individuals who met the specified criteria outlined in our research parameters. These criteria included adults over 18 years who identified as migrants and were currently residing in a country different from their country of origin. The recruitment process aimed to ensure a diverse representation of migrant populations, encompassing various cultural backgrounds, migration motivations, and demographic profiles. Upon expressing interest in participating, potential subjects were provided with detailed information about the study, including its objectives, the nature of participation, and assurances of confidentiality and anonymity. This ensured informed consent from all participants before their inclusion in the study.

Additionally, the use of online platforms allowed us to reach migrants residing in different geographical locations, facilitating a more comprehensive understanding of migration dynamics across regions. Tables 3 and 4, illustrates the migrants countries of origin and their respective destinations. The forms were made up of 18 questions, which sought to understand their origins, motivations to migrate, adaptation, and consumer behavior. Overall, the selection process for our study was guided by a commitment to inclusivity, diversity, and comprehensive representation within the migrant community. Through the strategic recruitment of volunteer participants and the utilization of online surveys, we aimed to capture a broad range of experiences and perspectives, shedding light on the complex dynamics of migration and its impact on individuals lives.

⁴ Best brand retained from centuries of business and handicraft competition, representing inestimable brand, economic and cultural value (Zhang et al., 2021).

Table 3. *Country of origin. Source. Own Elaboration*

Country of origin	Number of respondents	%
United States	16	53,33%
United Kingdom	3	10,00%
France	2	6,67%
Brazil	1	3,33%
Canada	1	3,33%
Colombia	1	3,33%
Japan	1	3,33%
Mexico	1	3,33%
Portugal	1	3,33%
Romania	1	3,33%
South Africa	1	3,33%
The netherlands	1	3,33%
Total	30	100,00%

Table 4. *Country of destination. Source. Own Elaboration*

Country of destination	Number of respondents	%
United States	5	16,67%
Mexico	4	13,33%
United Kingdom	4	13,33%
Germany	2	6,67%
Netherlands	2	6,67%
Spain	2	6,67%
China	1	3,33%
Czech Republic	1	3,33%
Denmark	1	3,33%
France	1	3,33%
Greece	1	3,33%
Hungary	1	3,33%
Japan	1	3,33%
Kuwait	1	3,33%
New Zealand	1	3,33%
Rusia	1	3,33%
Taiwan	1	3,33%
Total	30	100,00%

For the realization of this case study, the questions were divided into six fundamental fields:

Demographics: These questions capture essential demographic data about the respondents, including

their background, language, and migration-related details. This information helps us segment and analyze survey responses based on different participant characteristics.

Migration experience: This information seeks to help us analyze the different experiences of the participants.

Adaptation: These questions explore the respondents' exposure regarding adaptation to their new home country and their language skills. Understanding these aspects is crucial as they can impact shopping habits.

Consumer behavior: These questions delve into the participants' nostalgia and their shopping behaviors related to products from their place of origin.

Pricing of products: These questions focus on the practical aspects of shopping in establishments that offer products from the respondents' home country.

Diversity and recommendations: These questions assess the respondents' satisfaction with the range of products available in these stores and their likelihood to recommend them to others. This category provides insights into the quality and appeal of such establishments.

4. RESULTS

To form a more holistic perception of the respondents' backgrounds, Figure 3, offers valuable insights into their geographical origins and current residences. This matrix serves as a vital tool for discerning the diverse migration experiences within our study cohort. It aids in capturing the nuanced dynamics of individuals' transitions from their places of birth to their present locations, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of their migration journeys. By delineating the distribution of respondents' origin and destination locations, we are equipped with essential contextual information that underpins the analysis of their experiences, adaptability, and the influence of cultural and linguistic factors on their migration decisions.

Figure 3. Countries of origin and destination of the respondents. Source. Own Elaboration

Origin	China	Czech Republic	Denmark	France	Germany	Greece	Hungary	Japan	Kuwait	Mexico	Netherlands	New Zealand	Russia	Spain	Taiwan	United Kingdom	United States	Total
Brazil											1							1
Canada															1			1
Colombia														1				1
France										1							1	2
Japan																	1	1
Mexico																	1	1
Portugal					1													1
Romania						1												1
South Africa																1		1
The Netherlands																	1	1
United Kingdom	1																	2
United States		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	2		16
Total	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	4	2	1	1	2	1	4	5	30

In the context of migration within our study, it is notable that 53.3% of the individuals in our sample originate from the United States, a country not included among the top 10 countries of origin according to the IOM's report. In stark contrast, the United States stands out as the foremost preferred destination country for migration, constituting 16.67% of our sample and securing the top position in the IOM's ranking. Furthermore, our research findings corroborate the prominence of several other countries, such as Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, and Spain, as prominent destination countries, mirroring their recognition within the IOM's report. Additionally, alongside the United States, our research and the IOM report concur in identifying Mexico as a notable country of origin.

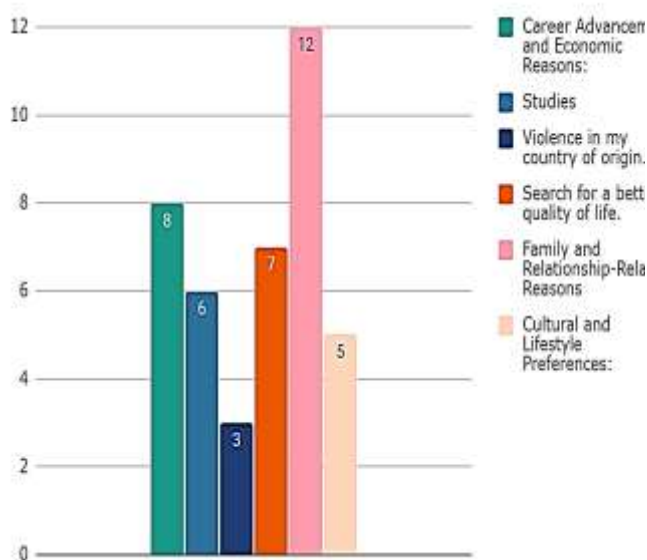
Table 5. Native language of respondents. Source. Own Elaboration

Native language	Respondents	%
English	21	70,00%
French	2	6,67%
Portuguese	2	6,67%
Spanish	2	6,67%
Dutch	1	3,33%
Japanese	1	3,33%
Romanian	1	3,33%
Total	30	100,00%

As illustrated in Table 5, 70% of the survey participants identify English as their mother tongue. Notably, within this cohort, 28.5% (equivalent to 20% of the overall sample) have selected a destination country where English serves as the official language. This particular choice simplifies one aspect of the adaptation process to their new surroundings. Conversely, for the remaining 80% of respondents, their native language diverges from the official language spoken in their chosen destination country.

The objectives, aspirations, and necessities associated with relocating to another country are deeply personal, often stemming from a variety of motivations. For some, the allure lies in pursuing employment opportunities, reuniting with family members, or pursuing educational endeavors. Others embark on this journey seeking refuge from the tumultuous specters of warfare, persecution, or natural disasters. And there are those whose decisions are influenced by the far-reaching impacts of phenomena such as climate change and environmental concerns. These diverse and personal factors underpin the intricate tapestry of human migration, illustrating the multitude of pathways and motivations that lead individuals to venture across borders in pursuit of a new life. In our study, the use of an open-ended question yielded valuable insights from our respondents, allowing us to uncover a diverse range of motivations for their migration. Interestingly, a portion of our participants expressed multiple motives, highlighting the complexity of human decision-making. To systematically analyze and present these responses, we have undertaken the task of categorizing them into distinct groups, each representing a different facet of their experiences. The visual representation of these categories can be found in Figure 4, offering a concise overview of the multifaceted nature of the data we have collected.

Figure 4. *Motives for migration.* Source. Own Elaboration



In the complex tapestry of migration, individuals embark on journeys for diverse reasons, with their motivations deeply intertwined with their unique circumstances and dreams. Leading the way, a substantial 12 respondents took the path of migration to reunite with loved ones or follow their hearts in matters of family and relationships. Love, marriage, and the desire to be with family members were the compelling forces guiding their journeys. In parallel, 8 individuals set forth on their migration to seek career advancement and economic prosperity. The pursuit of better job prospects fueled their decision to leave their homeland. For 7 respondents, the pursuit of a better quality of life was cited as the driving force behind their migration. This aspiration encompassed economic well-being, improved social opportunities, and overall life satisfaction.

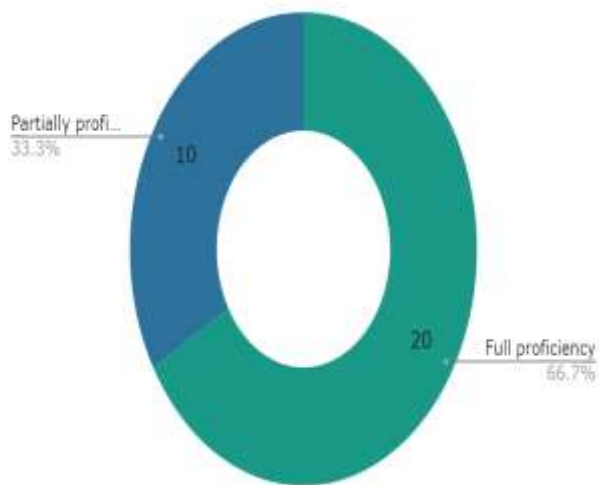
Education served as a beacon for 6 respondents, propelling them beyond their homeland's borders in pursuit of academic enrichment. Their belief in the transformative power of education shaped their migration paths. Amidst the diverse motivations, 5 respondents embarked on migration guided by cultural and lifestyle preferences. They sought new horizons, embracing diverse cultures, languages, or environments that resonated with their personal ethos and aspirations. Lastly, a poignant realization of violence in their country of origin propelled 3 individuals to seek refuge elsewhere. Their journeys were a quest for peace, safety, and security.

These multifaceted motivations weave a rich narrative of human experiences, illustrating the deeply personal and diverse reasons that underlie the choice to leave one's country of origin. In each journey, hope, ambition, and the pursuit of a brighter future take center stage.

Regarding the duration of residency in a new country varies among the respondents in our study. Notably, 13 individuals reported living in their new country for a relatively shorter period, specifically between 0 and 5 years. This group constitutes approximately 38% of our sample. In contrast, an equal number of respondents, 13 to be precise, have accumulated more than a

decade of experience in their current country of residence, reflecting a substantial and enduring connection. Additionally, 4 respondents fell within the intermediate category, with a residency duration falling between 5 and 10 years. These findings underscore the diversity of migration experiences within our sample, with varying durations of adaptation and integration into their respective new environments. It's worth noting that a significant proportion of our respondents, nearly 62%, have lived in their new country for more than 5 years, indicative of a substantial long-term presence in their adopted homelands.

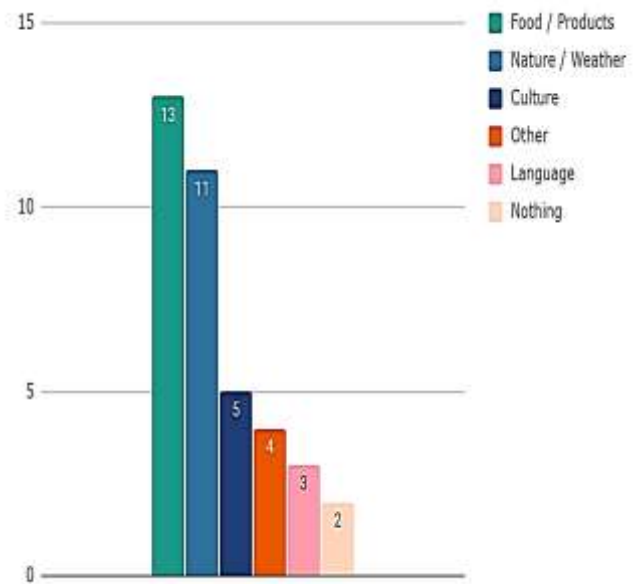
Figure 5. *New language proficiency.* Source. Own Elaboration



When it comes to language, our survey showed that many participants have become quite proficient in the language of their new country (Figure 5). A majority of 20 respondents reported being able to speak it well. Another 10 mentioned they have some knowledge of it. Importantly, none of the participants said they couldn't speak the language at all. This suggests that everyone in our study is making an effort to communicate and connect with their new communities. These results highlight how determined and adaptable these individuals are when it comes to bridging language barriers and fitting into their new homes.

Remarkably, our survey reveals a significant trend among the respondents, with a resounding 100% expressing a sense of successful adaptation to their new countries. This high level of adaptability not only speaks to their resilience but also hints at the emotional and cultural components at play in their migration journeys. As described by Akbar & Preston (2019) "Migrant resilience is regarded as successful outcomes to the serious threats towards adaptation and development" Emotional resilience, often arising from a strong sense of determination and optimism, seems to empower these individuals to navigate the challenges of living in a new environment. Moreover, cultural adaptability, characterized by an openness to embrace the customs and traditions of their host countries while preserving elements of their own cultural identity, is a fundamental aspect of their successful integration. These findings emphasize the rich tapestry of human adaptability and the remarkable capacity of individuals to establish a sense of belonging and connection in unfamiliar cultural landscapes.

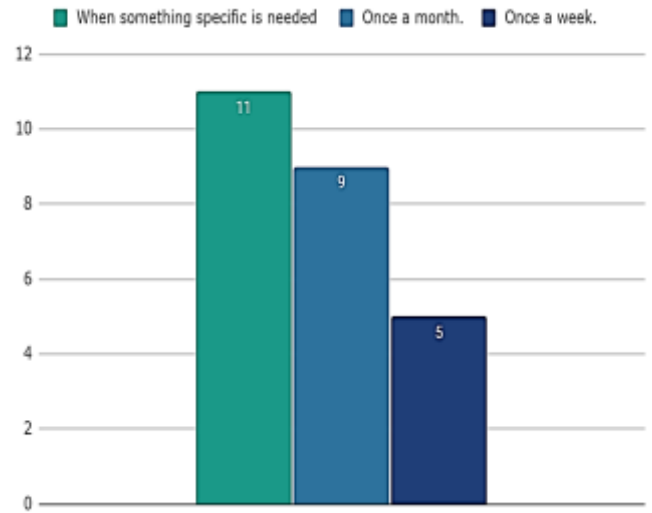
Figure 6. *Nostalgic elements.* Source. Own elaboration



In the realm of nostalgia, our survey (Figure 6) unearthed multiple emotions and sentiments. When asked about the primary triggers of nostalgia, respondents identified a diverse array of factors. For 13

individuals, it's the taste of familiar food and products that takes them on a heartfelt journey to their place of origin. Nature and weather, reminiscent of the landscapes and climates of their homeland, were cited by 11 respondents as powerful nostalgia inducers. Interestingly, two respondents expressed that they long for 'nothing' from their place of origin, suggesting perhaps a seamless transition to their new surroundings. For three respondents, the sound of their native language resonates deeply with their sense of nostalgia, bridging the emotional gap between their past and present. An additional four individuals cited 'other' factors that evoke nostalgia. Finally, for five respondents, it's the facets of culture, with its traditions, customs, and rituals, that transport them back to the cherished memories of their home country. These findings illuminate the intricate interplay between nostalgia and various elements of life, reflecting the profound impact of longing for the familiar amidst the backdrop of a foreign land.

Figure 7. Shopping behavior in Ethnic Stores. Sources. Own Elaboration



Among the 30 participants in our survey, a significant majority of 26 individuals, constituting approximately 87%, actively engage in shopping at ethnic stores, where they can readily access products from their homeland (Figure 7). These stores serve as cherished hubs for connecting with their cultural heritage and satisfying their cravings for familiar items. However, it's important to note that a small fraction of 4 respondents, representing about 13%, do not partake in shopping at these establishments. Among the 26 who do, their shopping frequency (figure 8) varies: 5 respondents, approximately 19% of those who shop, make weekly visits, immersing themselves regularly in the comforts of their native products; 9 individuals, constituting around 35%, opt for a monthly shopping routine, balancing their cultural preferences with other sources of provision, and 10 respondents, making up roughly 38%, visit these stores primarily when they have specific needs, a testament to the convenience and unique offerings these establishments provide.

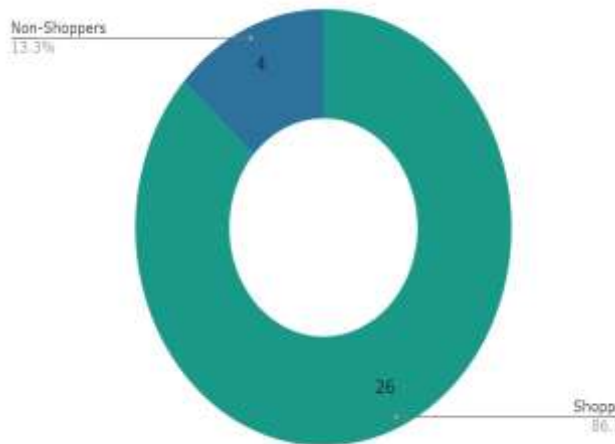
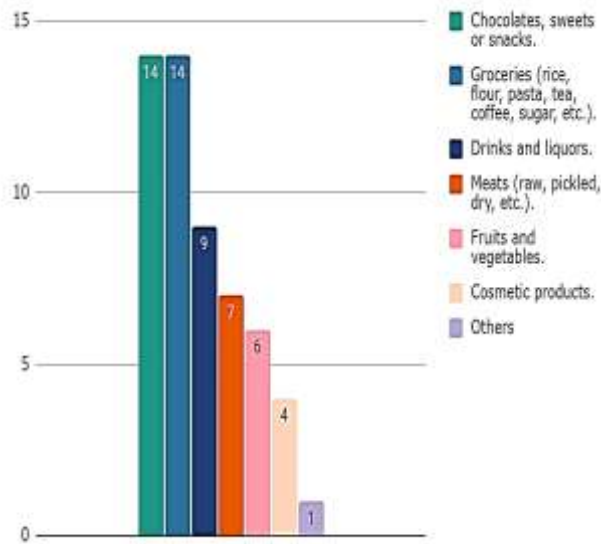


Figure 8. Shopping Frequency in Ethnic Stores. Sources. Own Elaboration

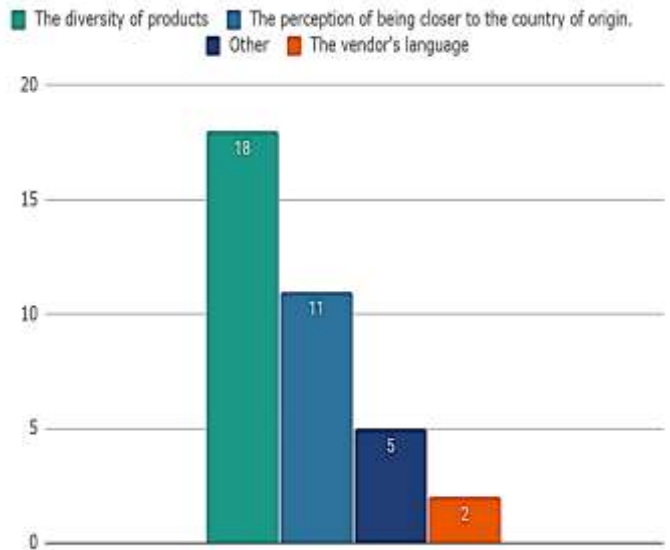
Figure 9. Popular Product Categories. Source. Own Elaboration



We noted a wide range of preferences when it came to product categories that drew our respondents to ethnic stores. For 14 individuals, the allure of chocolates, sweets, and snacks is irresistible, providing them with a delightful taste of their cultural heritage. Equally popular are groceries such as rice, flour, pasta, tea, coffee, and sugar, with another 14 respondents turning to ethnic stores to procure these essential pantry items, ensuring that their culinary traditions are faithfully upheld. Additionally, 7 respondents seek meats in various forms, whether raw, pickled, or dried, reflecting their commitment to preserving the original flavors. Fruits and vegetables, appreciated for their freshness and cultural significance, entice 6 respondents to make regular visits. Meanwhile, 9 individuals are drawn to ethnic stores for their selection of drinks and liquors, showcasing their desire for familiar beverages. Cosmetic products hold appeal for 4 respondents, enhancing their connection to cultural grooming practices. Notably, 4 respondents expressed that they find 'nothing' at these stores that compels them to shop there, and 1 respondent mentioned 'other' products (books), highlighting the personalized nature of these shopping preferences. These diverse choices underscore the rich mosaic of cultural and culinary

connections fostered by ethnic stores, and the shopping preferences of the expat people.

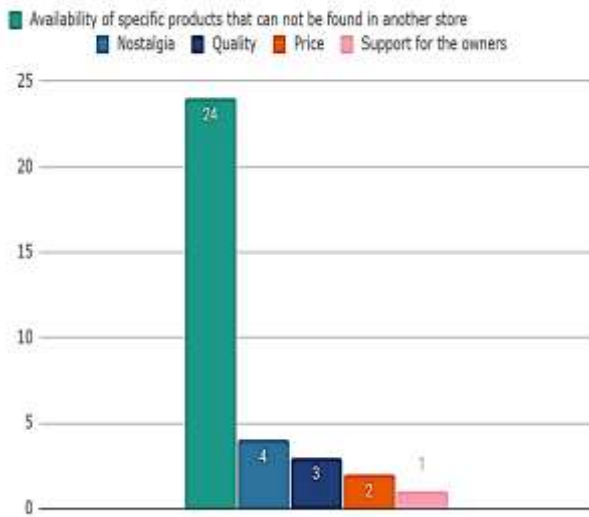
Figure 10. Key Attractions of Ethnic Stores. Source. Own Elaboration



When it comes to the reasons behind respondents' preference for shopping at ethnic stores, a multifaceted picture emerges. As shown in Figure 10 for a notable 18 individuals, the diversity of products offered at these establishments is the primary draw. The rich variety of goods allows them to connect with their cultural roots and find the flavors, ingredients, and products that evoke cherished memories of their country of origin. Additionally, 11 respondents value the perception that shopping at ethnic stores brings them closer to their homeland, fostering a sense of cultural proximity and nostalgia. In the "other" category, 2 respondents state that as they are Americans, they are motivated by the availability of American products in numerous stores, making their shopping choices less reliant on the need for specialty shops. Finally, for 2 respondents, the language of the vendor makes the difference. These findings collectively underscore the significance of cultural ties, product variety, and the perception of closeness to one's homeland as key factors influencing the choice of where to shop.

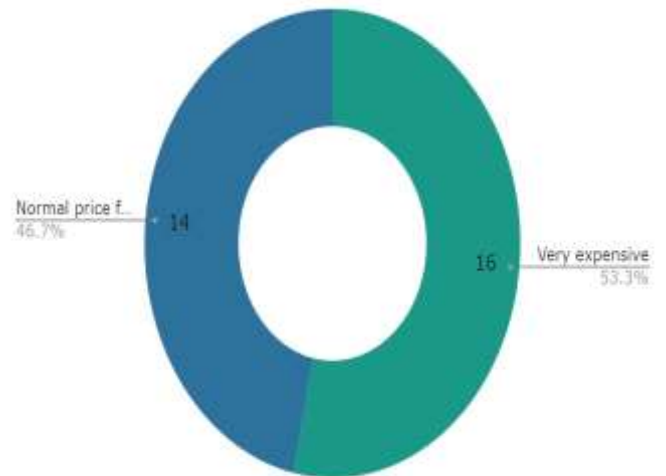
community all play integral roles in the shopping experience.

Figure 11. *Reasons for Visiting Ethnic Stores.* Source. Own Elaboration



When delving into the reasons for respondents' preference for shopping at ethnic stores, a variety of motivations emerge. As shown in Figure 11, a significant majority of 24 respondents emphasize the availability of specific products unique to these stores, products that are often elusive in mainstream retail establishments. This indicates a clear recognition of the distinctive offerings that cater to their culinary and cultural preferences. Additionally, 4 respondents cited nostalgia as a compelling reason for their patronage. Nostalgia plays a pivotal role in fostering a sense of connection to their country of origin, making these stores a cherished bridge to their past. For 3 individuals, quality was a defining factor in their choice, as they place a premium on the excellence of the products available at these establishments. Price also plays a role, albeit a somewhat smaller one, with 2 respondents noting it as a consideration. Finally, 1 respondent highlighted their support for the owners as a significant motivator for their patronage. These diverse motivations collectively underscore the multifaceted appeal of ethnic stores, where unique products, emotional connections, and a sense of

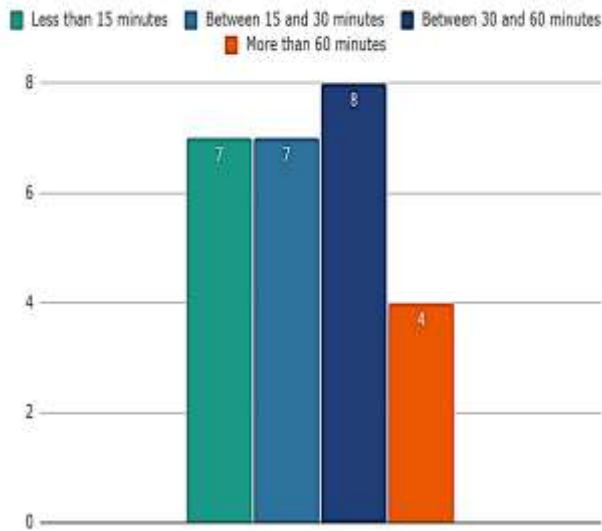
Figure 12. *Perception of product prices.* Source. Own Elaboration



The survey results shed light on the pricing dynamics of products offered at ethnic stores and their impact on consumer behavior. In response to the perception of prices (Figure 12), a substantial of 16 respondents characterized the prices of products in these establishments as 'very expensive,' while 14 others considered them to be at a 'normal price for the type of products.' Notably, none of the participants found the products to be 'rather cheap,' indicating that affordability might be a notable consideration for this group. This sentiment is further corroborated by the responses to the question "If the price was more affordable, would you go more often?", where 17 respondents expressed that they would visit these stores more frequently if the prices were made more affordable. This indicates that price sensitivity plays a significant role in influencing their shopping choices, and a reduction in prices could potentially encourage greater patronage. However, it's important to acknowledge that 13 respondents did not express a willingness to increase their visits even if prices were

lowered, suggesting that other factors may also be at play in their decision-making process. These findings illuminate the nuanced interplay between price perceptions and consumer behavior within the context of ethnic stores, highlighting the potential impact of pricing strategies on customer retention and loyalty.

Figure 13. *Travel Time to Ethnic Stores.* Source. Own Elaboration



When examining the time respondents are willing to invest in visiting ethnic stores, a diverse range of preferences becomes evident. A substantial group of 8 respondents indicates a willingness to commit between 30 and 60 minutes for these shopping excursions. This suggests a deliberate effort to access specific products and maintain cultural connections, even if it requires a moderate time investment. Similarly, 7 individuals express a preference for spending between 15 and 30 minutes, reflecting a balance between convenience and access to their desired items. On the other hand, 7 respondents are willing to dedicate less than 15 minutes, indicating a desire for quick and efficient shopping experiences. In contrast, 4 individuals are prepared to devote more than 60 minutes, signifying a heightened commitment to acquiring culturally significant products that may not be readily available elsewhere. These diverse travel time preferences highlight the varied ways in which individuals prioritize

their cultural and culinary connections, with some valuing efficiency and others embracing longer journeys to satisfy their unique preferences.

Figure 14. *Consumer Satisfaction with Product Diversity in Ethnic Stores.* Source. Own Elaboration

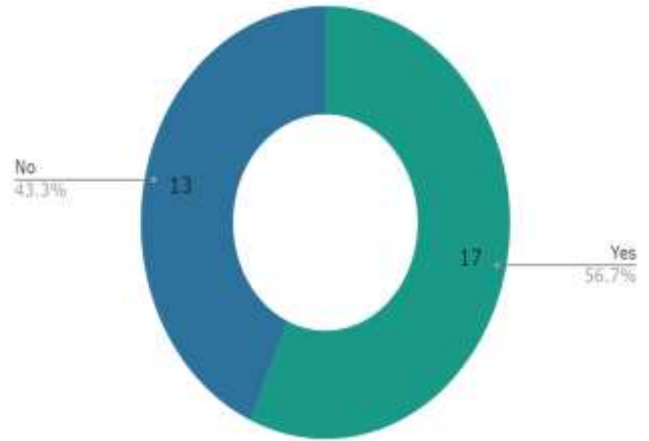
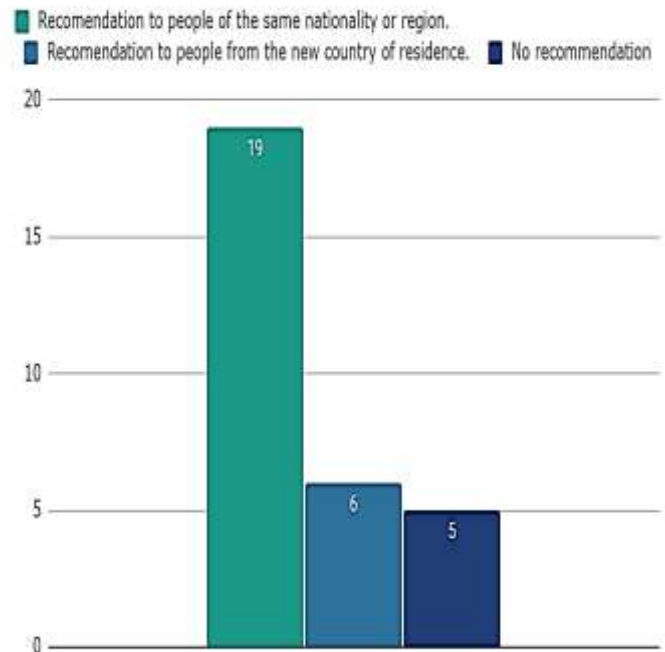


Figure 15. *Recommendations for Ethnic Stores Among Customers*



The survey delves into respondents' perceptions of product diversity within ethnic stores and their propensity to recommend these establishments to

others. Regarding the diversity, an equal number of 17 respondents express satisfaction with the diversity of products available, suggesting that these stores effectively cater to a broad range of cultural preferences. However, 13 respondents voiced dissatisfaction, indicating potential opportunities for enhancing the product variety to better meet the needs of a diverse clientele. Moving to the second question, 19 respondents are enthusiastic about recommending these establishments to people of their nationality or region, underscoring the role of these stores in preserving cultural connections and fostering a sense of community. Additionally, 6 respondents express a willingness to recommend these stores to individuals from their new country of residence, further highlighting the potential for these establishments to bridge cultural gaps and promote cross-cultural understanding. Significantly, none of the respondents indicated a reluctance to recommend these stores, suggesting a strong endorsement of their cultural significance and the value they bring to the community. These findings collectively underscore the integral role of ethnic stores in satisfying diverse cultural preferences and fostering intercultural connections within the community.

In summary, the results of our survey provide a comprehensive overview of the complex dynamics surrounding ethnic stores, their products, and the motivations of shoppers. These establishments, with their diverse product offerings, serve as cultural bridges, enabling individuals to connect with their roots and satisfy their cravings for the tastes of home. While pricing, product diversity, and travel time are considerations for some, the overarching sentiment is one of appreciation for the unique offerings and cultural connections facilitated by these stores.

5. DISCUSSION

The results of our study strongly resonate with the insights provided by the literature on nostalgia and migration. The deep emotional connection to one's place of origin, often ignited by sensory triggers like tastes, and sounds, was a recurring theme among our respondents. This aligns seamlessly with Srivastava's

research, which emphasizes how nostalgia often finds its roots in sensory experiences that rekindle past emotions and memories. For our participants, the taste of familiar food and products and the sound of their native language served as potent nostalgia inducers.

Regarding the motivations for migration and the subsequent engagement in nostalgic commerce closely correspond to Carling's (2017) research. Carling's work highlights that migration is frequently driven by a desire for change, whether to ensure survival, escape repression, or fulfill professional ambitions. Our study echoes these sentiments, with respondents expressing diverse motivations for leaving their countries of origin. Some sought career advancement and economic prosperity, while others embarked on their migration journey in pursuit of a better quality of life. Education, cultural preferences, and a desire to escape violence also emerged as motivating factors.

These motivations identified in our study directly influence the consumer behavior observed in the realm of nostalgic commerce. Those motivated by a better quality of life or cultural preferences actively engage in shopping at ethnic stores. They seek products that connect them with their cultural heritage and evoke a sense of nostalgia. This resonates with the insights provided by Barnwell et al. (2023), who emphasize the role of nostalgia in shaping consumer choices, particularly within the context of advertising. Our study extends this understanding to consumer behavior in ethnic stores, where products from migrants' homelands serve as powerful nostalgia triggers, fostering enduring connections with patrons.

We found a high level of adaptability among respondents that aligns with the literature's discussion on the resilience of migrants in adapting to new environments. Emotional resilience, stemming from determination and optimism, empowers individuals to navigate the challenges of living in a foreign country, as highlighted by Srivastava's analysis. Additionally, cultural adaptability, which involves embracing new customs

while preserving one's cultural identity, is fundamental to successful integration, echoing the findings of previous research.

The importance of language proficiency in the process of adaptation, as evidenced by our study, is also supported by the literature. Language is a key component of cultural adaptability, and our respondents' ability to speak the language of their new country well indicates their commitment to bridging language barriers and fitting into their new homes. As pointed out, among respondents who had been in their new country for over 5 years, all but one reported full proficiency in the language, demonstrating the significance of language proficiency in achieving a high level of adaptation. This correlation underscores the importance of linguistic skills as a key determinant in the overall successful adaptation process, showcasing how linguistic proficiency can be a powerful tool in building a sense of home in a foreign land.

Our study provides valuable insights into consumer behavior within ethnic stores, where migrants seek products from their homelands to satisfy their cravings for familiar items. The motivations for shopping at these stores, such as the diversity of products offered and the perception of cultural proximity, resonate with the literature's emphasis on nostalgia-driven preferences. Our findings align with Barnwell et al.'s (2023) research, which recognizes nostalgia's role in shaping consumer choices and fostering emotional connections between past experiences and contemporary products. In the case of our study, these emotional connections are deeply tied to migrants' cultural memories and cherished traditions.

Furthermore, the pricing dynamics of products in ethnic stores and their impact on consumer behavior are also consistent with the literature's discussion on price sensitivity. While some respondents found the prices to be on the higher side, others expressed a willingness to visit these stores more frequently if prices were made more affordable. This highlights the potential impact of pricing strategies on customer retention and

loyalty, in line with previous research on consumer behavior.

The strong endorsement of recommendations to both fellow nationals and residents of their new country underscores the significance of ethnic stores as conduits for fostering cultural understanding and unity among diverse communities. The interplay of nostalgia, cultural preservation, and convenience shapes the shopping experiences of individuals living away from their country of origin.

Our findings illuminate the intricate relationship between price, product diversity, travel time, and cultural connections within the context of ethnic stores. As we move forward, these insights can inform strategies to enhance the appeal and accessibility of these establishments, ensuring that they continue to serve as vital cultural hubs in our increasingly diverse global communities.

In summary, our study's findings, provide empirical support for the theoretical frameworks and empirical studies discussed in the literature review. Nostalgia emerges as a powerful force in migration and shaping consumer behavior in the context of ethnic stores. The motivations for migration identified in our study directly influence the consumer choices and preferences observed within nostalgic commerce, highlighting the intricate interplay between migration, nostalgia, and consumer behavior. Additionally, our findings underscore the significance of adaptation, language proficiency, and cultural adaptability in the lives of migrants, aligning with previous research on these topics. Ultimately, our study contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics of nostalgic commerce within the context of migration, enriching the existing literature on this fascinating intersection of culture, memory, and consumer behavior.

6. CONCLUSION

In this study, we embarked on a journey to explore the intricate relationship between migration, nostalgia, and consumer behavior within the context of ethnic stores.

Our findings, strongly rooted in empirical data, have provided valuable insights into this fascinating intersection of culture, memory, and consumer choices. As we conclude our investigation, several key points come to the forefront.

Firstly, our study reaffirms the fundamental role of nostalgia as a powerful driving force for migration. The deep emotional connection to one's place of origin, often sparked by sensory experiences, resonates with the insights of scholars like Srivavava. The taste of familiar food, the aroma of beloved scents, and the sound of one's native language emerged as potent nostalgia inducers, influencing the decision to migrate.

Furthermore, the motivations for migration we identified closely align with previous research, particularly the work of Carling (2017). Whether driven by economic aspirations, a quest for a better quality of life, educational pursuits, or a desire to escape adversity, migrants embark on journeys of change and transformation. These motivations significantly shape their consumer behavior, particularly within the realm of nostalgic commerce.

In the context of ethnic stores, our study sheds light on the motivations that drive individuals to seek products from their homelands. The diversity of products offered, and the perception of cultural proximity play pivotal roles in this consumer behavior. These findings resonate with Barnwell et al.'s (2023) research, highlighting the enduring power of nostalgia in shaping consumer choices. Additionally, our study underscores the importance of adaptation in the lives of migrants. Emotional resilience, cultural adaptability, and language proficiency are key components of successful integration into new environments. The correlation we observed between language proficiency and a sense of adaptation emphasizes the significance of linguistic skills in building a sense of home in foreign lands.

The recommendations provided by our respondents, endorsing ethnic stores to both fellow nationals and residents of their new countries, underline the role of these establishments as cultural bridges. They foster unity among diverse communities by preserving

cultural connections and enhancing intercultural understanding.

Lastly, our study delves into the pricing dynamics of products in ethnic stores, highlighting their impact on consumer behavior. While some consumers found prices to be a concern, others demonstrated a willingness to frequent these stores more if prices were made more affordable. This underscores the potential of pricing strategies in enhancing customer retention and loyalty.

In conclusion, our study contributes significantly to the existing body of knowledge on the intersection of migration, nostalgia, and consumer behavior. It provides empirical support for theoretical frameworks and empirical studies discussed in the literature, enriching our understanding of the complex dynamics within this field. Nostalgia emerges as a powerful motivator for migration and a key driver of consumer choices within ethnic stores. The motivations for migration directly influence these choices, emphasizing the intricate interplay between migration, nostalgia, and consumer behavior. As we move forward, these insights can inform strategies to enhance the appeal and accessibility of ethnic stores, ensuring that they continue to serve as vital cultural hubs in our increasingly diverse global communities. Ultimately, our study encourages further exploration of the rich tapestry of human experiences and behaviors in the context of migration and nostalgia, promising new avenues for research and discovery in the future.

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